

**The Crisis of Hyphenated Existence: A Diasporic Study in  
the Select Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri**

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## INTRODUCTION

The traces of migration in human civilizations has a long history to ensure better survival. The process of migration and expatriation is inseparable part of human development from the dawn of human existence on the planet, earth. The modern scientific inventions and developed communication system has encouraged masses to migrate or move across the borders with great ease. The increased flow of migration and immigration has cheered the diasporic population to redefine their existence in their adopted homes. Migration and the development of assimilation with mainstream societies gives rise to multiculturalism, hybridity, identity crisis, and hyphenated existence among diasporic population. Diasporic population often stuck between the old and new world saga in the course of assimilation that demands negotiations of inherited socio-cultural values. The hyphenated existence refers, when a person desires to maintain equilibrium between the two worlds in order to claim their loyalty and belongingness that often ended up in the hyphenation or inbetweenness.

The term, 'diaspora' is of Greek origin, which means, "to sow over or scatter". The historical meaning of the term refers forced expulsion of the people from their original homelands, particularly the forced expulsion of Jews population from the land of Judea based on the religious background. However, with the passage of time, meaning of the term has been changed and has become a self-identity of those people who are living apart from their ancestral homelands. The movement of people from one place to other for permanent settlement comes with certain questions regarding the identity and belongingness among the migrant population and the question of ideal-type of nation state where they can find more similarities of their socio-cultural roots. Although, the settlement of those migrants or diasporic population are permanent in their hostlands yet they refuse to assimilate fully with their new homelands which results in cultural clash, trans-nationality and hyphenated identity.

The meaning of the term is not limited to the dispersed or marginalised people only in the era of globalisation and exploration. William Safran contrasts the historical meaning of the term and claims that not all the immigrants or migrants in

their newly adopted homes are ‘dispersed’ as they are enjoying all the socio-political rights. The modern diasporic populations are not entirely based on those people who have been forcefully displaced or exiled because of wars or any other socio-political calamity like in Syria, Palestine and Afghanistan. The immigrants from India, China or many other South Asian countries, who are residing in America and Europe, cannot be recognised as ‘dispersed’ as they are enjoying all the socio-economic rights like the native citizens do.

The route of assimilation for the immigrant population is not an easy as it seems, it demands negotiations, compromises of the old world values to mingle with newly adopted world. However, not all immigrants successfully assimilates with new socio-cultures because of their eagerness to retain parts of the old world values during the course of assimilation with the new world, which lead them to the crisis of hyphenated identity, hybridity and inbetweenness. Assimilations and resistance are the two sides of the same coin for immigrants because it is not easy to discard the values of old homeland for the sake of newly adopted hostland and at the same time it is impossible to resist new demands of adopted homes forever. The nation and nationalism are two different concepts for the diaspora population as they desire to belong to both the worlds. The modern or voluntary diasporic populations are proactive in the socio-political affairs of their native countries even after living for decades in the host countries, for example, Indian diasporic population in America involve themselves in every political movements of the native country, Kashmiri diaspora in England, Sikh diaspora in Canada. They are using hyphen (-) in their nationalities to show their love and loyalty for both the countries, which often ends up in chaos and confusion regarding their belongingness.

Hyphenated identity is a term, which refers the multiple socially bound features that immigrants think about themselves. The crisis of hyphenated existence are commonly as unbelongingness, inbetweenness, estrangement, hybridity, and in many cases psychological imbalance and socio-cultural alienation. People with hyphenated existence are often stuck between the worlds, the old world values (birthplace) and the new world (migrated to) demands. There is a conflict between the past and the present.

The thesis entitled “The Crisis of Hyphenated Existence: A Diasporic Study in the Select Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri” explored the life of those immigrants who are stuck under the burden of the hyphenated existence. The hyphenated immigrant population do not suffer only in their adopted homes but also in their ancestral homes as well. The study explores the crisis of hyphenated existence among the immigrant population, suffering under the burden of hybridity, alienation, dislocation, unbelongingness, identity crisis, cultural clash and generational conflict. The thesis focuses on the select fiction of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri to highlight the crisis of hyphenated existence among immigrant population. The select works of Bharati Mukherjee are *The Tiger’s Daughter* (1971), *Jasmine* (1989) and the select short stories from *Darkness* (1985) and *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988). The select works of Jhumpa Lahiri are *The Namesake* (2003), *The Lowland* (2013) and the select short stories from *the Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008).

Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri have become leading voices of voiceless immigrants who are stuck under the burden of hyphenated existence. Both the writers have personal experience of immigration and expatriation, which makes it easy to understand the immigrant struggle from the select works not only in their adopted homes but also in their ancestral homes as well. Bharati Mukherjee (July 27, 1940- January 28, 2017) was born in Calcutta to an elite class Brahmin family makes it easy for readers to dive deep into the psyche of the immigrant population to understand the crisis of hyphenated existence. At the age of seven, Bharati Mukherjee’s family moved to England and Europe, which cemented her English language development. Her multiple dislocations from India to England, Germany, Canada and America gave her perfect vision to understand the immigrant life. Bharati Mukherjee’s works display her bitter experience of expatriations and immigration during her stay in Canada and her successful assimilation with American mainstream societies. Her marriage with a Canadian citizen, Clark Blaze was an unusual event for a Brahman woman to marry an outcaste man like Tara, the protagonist of the novel, *The Tiger’s Daughter*. Her select works focused on the struggle of Asian immigrants in American societies and their successful assimilation with adopted homes after multiple negotiations and transformations. *The Tiger’s Daughter* and *Darkness* reflects her bitter experience of miserable expatriate life.



*Jasmine* and *The Middleman and Other Stories* reflects her immigrant struggle in adopted world but ended up with successful assimilation.

Jhumpa Lahiri (July 11, 1967) is a second-generation immigrant writer born to Indian parents in London. She was three years old when her parents decided to move to America. Being a second-generation immigrant, Jhumpa Lahiri can comprehend immigrant family life and the conflict of generations in their adopted homes. Her select works depict the nostalgic first generations and inbetweenness, hybridity of the second-generation immigrant population in their adopted homes. *The Namesake* (2003), her debut novel reflects her personal experience as a second-generation immigrant who has to follow the socio-cultural values, which are unknown to them. The protagonist of the novel, *The Namesake* has a soul from Jhumpa Lahiri's personal life, as his parents wanted him to follow Indian values in his adopted home. Jhumpa Lahiri learned Bengali language in her early age and had to follow things inherited from Indian culture." I feel Indian not because of the time I spent in India or because of my genetic composition but rather because of my parents' steadfast presence in my life" (Lahiri 105). The select works of Jhumpa Lahiri draws attention towards the differences between immigrant generations. The unwillingness of first generation to assimilate fully with adopted cultures and the lack of enthusiasm of second generation to follow traditional values of the old world.

Chapter 1 entitled "Diaspora: Issues and Perspectives" deals with the historical background of 'Diaspora' to understand the different perspectives of migration and expatriation and intends to understand the impacts of the crisis of hyphenated existence among immigrant population. It explores the brief idea of the select works of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri and draws the attention towards the brief biographical sketch of the writers as well. This chapter focuses on the theory of Homi Bhabha, William Safran and other theorists have been discussed to support, interpret and analyse the select works for expected results. It will help to understand the struggle and pangs of hyphenated existence among diasporic population.

Chapter 2 entitled "Myth of Homeland in Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter*" explored immigrant journey from hostland to homeland in Bharati

Mukherjee's novel, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971). The chapter focuses on the immigrant lives who are stuck between the old and new world saga. Furthermore, it explores the inner consciousness of the immigrant population who failed to relate themselves with any of their worlds. The protagonist of the novel, Tara depicts the immigrant population who are reluctant to renounce their past and carry their past baggage wherever they go. Additionally, it also explores the failed attempt of immigrant population on the arrival to their roots and find themselves dangling between the past and present. Tara, the protagonist of the novel, *The Tiger's Daughter* failed to assimilate with new world and remains unsuccessful to claim her old roots in her ancestral world as well.

Chapter 3 entitled "Metamorphosis: An Expedition for Self-Refashioning in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* " gives detailed note of immigrant struggle to assimilate with adopted world in Bharati Mukherjee's novel, *Jasmine* (1989). It explores the success story of an immigrant character who displays courage to discard all the hurdles of the old world to become a part of the new world. Moreover, it explores the process of assimilation and adaptation with adopted world with numerous negotiations and sacrifices. Bharati Mukherjee conveyed a message that there are no harmless ways to assimilate with new world order without any compromise of the past ethics in the novel, *Jasmine*. The assimilation with new world demands rejection of the old world values and courage to grasp the opportunity whatever comes the way to assimilate and redefine their lives. The protagonist accepted every challenge to claim her success in the new world order. Furthermore, it also explores the journey of an immigrant from roots to routes in order to redefine her identity. Bharati Mukherjee's heroine, Jasmine displays the courage to discard her old world values and accepted every role to become part of her dreamland. Jasmine's transformation from a village girl to a successful immigrant shows her determination and will power to step over from the past and focus on her goals in the new world with multiple negotiations to reshuffle her predestined stars.

Chapter 4 entitled "The Complexities of Assimilation and Adaptation in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*" focused on the immigrant family life in Jhumpa

Lahiri's *The Lowland* (2013). This chapter explores the flip-flops of the three generations of an Indian immigrant family in home and abroad. In addition, it highlights the complications of assimilation and adaptation with new world and the cost of maintaining ties with old world. Subhash and Gauri claimed their successful assimilation with new homes but lost their ancestral roots. Subhash's random visits to Holly and his parents in India shows his sense of inbetweenness and betrayal of his old world socio-cultural values. Gauri on the other hand lost herself like the lowland in her hometown. She achieved her academic career and enjoyed her sexual fantasy but lost her family, friends, traditions and her Indianness. The chapter further explores the feeling of guilt among leading characters of the novel even after their successful lives in their dreamlands. Gauri feels guilty because she failed to become a good mother for Bela, wife for Subhash and failed her socio-religious values by discarding her past self. It also focuses on the influence of how new socio-environment affect immigrant behaviour to discard the old world norms and encourage them to assimilate with new world order. Furthermore, it explains the familial complications of immigrant population in their adopted homes. Subhash wishes to maintain harmony between the old-world- parental-responsibilities, and the new world demands. Being second-generation immigrant writer, Jhumpa Lahiri has highlighted the complex relationships between the first and second generations in the novel to understand immigrant complications.

Chapter 5 entitled "The Cultural Clash: A Collision of Generations in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*" described the diasporic dilemma of immigrant generations in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel, *the Namesake* (2003). Jhumpa Lahiri displays the generational clash in Indian immigrant family in the novel. There is an ideological conflict between the first and second-generation immigrants. Ashoke and Ashima wish to safeguard their old world values by transforming the socio-cultural values to their children, born in America through Bengali language, giving them nicknames which is very common in Bengali community. Ashima expects her son to marry an Indian origin woman. Gogol Ganguli and Sonia are least interested in their Indian origin, and cultural values. The uncanny love of Ashoke and Ashima for their Indianness made it impossible for Gogol to live his life as per his desires. People were bullying Gogol because of his unique name inspired from the Russian

writer whose book saved his father's life during a train accident. Gogol lives a dual life to fulfil his parent's desires and a life to claim his presence among the native friends. Furthermore, this chapter explores the deeper insight of the immigrant psyche to understand the broken family relationships, cultural hybridity and the conflict of being and becoming. Lahiri's clear vision of exposing the reluctance of first generation immigrants to discard their old world values for new life in America world shows the dilemma of belongingness. Ashima and Ashoke are more confident in India even after living for decades in America. They are uncertain about their belongingness with American soil. The chapter also focuses on dilemma, alienation, inbetweenness, and the conflict of immigrant generations. Ashima's alienation and loneliness from the beginning to end of the novel exposes her failure in the process of assimilation. It further explores her reluctance in discarding her old world values. She hovers between two worlds even after the death of her husband, and she decides to switch her place after every six months.

Chapter 6 entitled "Hyphenated Existence in the Select Short Stories of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri" has explored the diasporic life of the masses and their struggle to settle in the adopted homes and homes of origins as well. Bharati Mukherjee exposes the racial abuse in the white dominated societies. She confessed in the introduction of the *Darkness* that she was often considered as shoplifter, prostitute or homemaker because of her dark skin in the white dominated Canadian society (Mukherjee xiv)).

Bharati Mukherjee has depicted the racial discrimination of dark skinned immigrants among white dominant societies in the *Darkness. The Middleman and Other Stories* depicts positive note about the successful assimilation with adopted world. Jhumpa Lahiri's collection, *The Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) sketches the first generation's reluctance to assimilate with the new world, which results in cultural clash and the crisis of hyphenated existence among immigrant population and the trauma of arriving in the new lands. Her second anthology, *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) highlights the generational gap among immigrant population in their host lands. It also portrays the duality and inbetweenness of second-generation immigrants and their uncertainty to decide which part of the world they belong to.

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## Chapter 1

### **Diaspora: Issues and Perspectives**

Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder... (Julia Kristeva).

Julia Kristeva has rightly highlighted the inner consciousness of the expatriate thinking in the above lines. Although, a person can enjoy his freedom, money, job and new identity in the host country, yet the feeling of alienation inside his psyche keeps notching him about the foreignness in the adopted lands. It is not every time that the environment, culture, lifestyle and behaviour of the host country makes an individual to think about their own land of origin but the stranger, who is residing inside the psyche of the immigrants, compel them to feel that the land they belong to is not the one where they are. Migration and adaptation are two contrary concepts for the expatriates or immigrants, for them, it is a process of shedding down their ancestral roots for newly adopted routes. Migration leads to adaptation and adaptation to separation. The separation from ancestral roots, which lead them towards the rebirth of new social, cultural and moral adjustments in an alien land, and finally lead them towards the massive transformation in their inherited traditional and cultural traits.

The study of 'diaspora' in the current academic world has become an increasingly trendy field of research because of the incessant movement of people from one country or continent to other for different reasons, like social, cultural and economic securities. The movement of people from one place to other comes with certain questions regarding the identity and belongingness among the migrant population and the question of ideal-type of nation state where they can find more similarities of their cultural roots. However, the settlement of these migrants or diasporic population are permanent in their hostlands yet they refuse to integrate fully with their new homelands which results in cultural clash, trans-nationality and hyphenated identity:

Belonging to a diaspora entails a consciousness of, or emotional attachment to, commonly claimed origins and cultural attributes associated with them...Such origins and attributes may emphasise ethno-linguistic, regional, religious, national, or other features. Concerns for homeland developments and the plight of co-diaspora members in other parts of the world follow from this consciousness and emotional attachment. (Vertovec 1)

The etymological meaning of the term, 'diaspora' as Vertovec stated is "of Greek origin which means 'to sow over or scatter.' The archetype of 'forced expulsion and dispersal, persecution, a sense of loss, and a vision of return has been the historical Jewish experience" (Vertovec 1). The historical reference of the term is vast, which refers the people, who were forced to migrate from their homelands like Jewish expulsion, Armenian diaspora, African diaspora rooted in slavery, recent reference of diaspora of Palestine, millions of displaced people of Syria and Iraq etc. which are rooted in oppression and forced expulsion from their homelands due to the security reasons. Another root of this term is from the Hebrew origin, 'diaspora', refers as 'galut', which means 'exile', an exile from the holy land of Judea. The Hebrew concept of the term relates it to the expulsion of the people from the land of Judea based on their religious background (Eleni 34). However, with the passage of time, meaning of the term has been changed and has become a self-identity of those people who are living apart from their ancestral homelands.

William Safran believes that not all the immigrants or diasporic population can be recognised as 'dispersed' or marginalised in their newly adopted homes because some (volunteer immigrants) are enjoying the same political, social and economic rights in their adopted homes as hosts do. Unlike those who have been deprived of their socio-economic and political rights, like gypsies or Jews. The diaspora population who have been voluntarily migrated to their new homes are unlikely considered as exiled or dispersed. "They have not been exiled or expatriated, and their condition is the result of demographic changes around them. They are, in short, an enclave enjoying full linguistic autonomy and political equality" (Safran 86). Their geographical dislocation from the ancestral homes is not forced but voluntary or by choice in search of better opportunity for future life. "The

Gypsies are a truly dispersed and homeless people” (87) as they have been deprived of their socio-political powers. People who have been forced to exile, Jews from Germany, “their political powerlessness has rendered them subject to persecution and- under Nazi rule-to genocide” (87). The comparison between the dispersed and other diaspora population is not compatible as one is being forced to homelessness and other is moving to make sure better future. “The diaspora consciousness is an intellectualisation of an existential condition” (87). Unlike dispersed population, who have been forced to migrate, “Gypsies have had no myth of return” (87) to their homelands because they do not have any particular notion of their ancestral nation-state. Therefore they do not live in imaginary old world like voluntary migrated population do as they have clear vision of their ancestral homes and keep believing that one day they will return to their old world again.

William Safran (1930), born in Germany to Romanian and Polish parents, has contributed significant knowledge about ethnic, politics, cultural pluralism, immigration and diaspora. William Safran argues that diaspora population whether forced or voluntary migration from their homelands to adopted homes retain following characters:

- 1) They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions.
- 2) They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements.
- 3) They believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it.
- 4) They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate.
- 5) They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity.
- 6) They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.
- 7) They share a common notion of



“peoplehood” not only with the homeland but with ethnic kin in other countries. 8) They are willing to survive as a minority by maintaining and transmitting a cultural and/or religious heritage derived from their ancestral home. 9) In structuring their communities and adapting to their hostlands, diasporas become themselves independent centres of cultural creation; yet their creations continue to contain certain ethno symbols, customs, and narratives of the homeland. 10) Their cultural, religious, economic, and/or political relationships with the homeland are reflected in a significant way in their communal institutions. (Safran)

Robin Cohen has categorised diasporic population into four parts to understand the term thoroughly. The classical use of the term usually defines “Jews experience” (1) or forced expulsion of people from their native homes. However, the meaning of the term “systematically extended” to Arminian, African and other populations who were forced to scatter from their native places. First category refers to the victim or exiled people. “These people conceived their scattering as arising from a cataclysmic event that had traumatized the group as a whole, thereby creating the central historical experience of victimhood at the hands of a cruel oppressor” (1). Second phase begins during 1980s onwards defines as “a metaphoric designation’ to describe different categories of people -expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities” (1). Third category phased during 1990s refers traders, and voluntary migrants. Cohen argued that the “identities have become deterritorialized and constructed and deconstructed in a flexible and situational way”(1). In addition, the fourth and current phase which defines the increased complexity of the idea of ‘home’ “and often the stronger inflection of homeland remains powerful discourse” (2).

The term, ‘diaspora’ is commonly defines any population, which does not live in their country of origin, due to some reasons they have left their original country to settle down in any other place. The population, which is considered ‘de-territorialised or transnational’ or coming from very different ethnic groups, sharing different cultural and social personas can be categorised as diaspora population. “...That is, which has originated in a land, other than which it currently resides and

whose social, economic and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or indeed span the globe” (Vertovec 277).

Due to the globalisation and advancement in the field of science, communication and technology, migration of people from one place to other has become common trend in this ultra-modern world to improve their daily livings. Term ‘diaspora’ is not limited to the forced expulsion of the population from war-torn zones like Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan or any other conflicted country only, but it also represents the population who have migrated to other countries voluntarily like Asian immigrants to the western world specially in Europe and America:

In the contemporary world, globalisation has made home and host societies a ‘single arena of action’ and has made it possible for individuals and groups to participate directly in global processes, because their actions do not have to be mediated by the nation-state. (Sheffer 4)

The term, ‘diaspora’ is not limited to the forced expulsion of the people of particular country or place, but it is a general trend in today’s world of exploration and experiences. “The word diaspora has an ancient origin, although it has been given a modern flavour with the passage of time” (Raj 11). That modern flavour of the term is its vastness towards the changing trend of migration. Due to the scarcity of the labour force and advancement of science and technology in the developed countries, many countries like Canada, Germany and Japan are welcoming the immigrants very warm heartedly to increase their labour force. Many scholars and experts believe that the globalisation is encouraging countries to welcome more people from the third world countries to enhance their economic growth, social and political influence among the third world countries. The current era of globalisation has enhanced the practical, economic, and affective role of diasporas.

The Influence of western media and the glamour of the Hollywood is one of the main source of luring the people of third world, mostly from south Asian countries to settle down in the USA and other western countries. Mostly elite class of third world countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan are moving

rapidly to settle down in the foreign countries to make themselves secure socially and economically. “Initially the word was used to describe the Jewish ‘dispersion’ or ‘scattering’, but through the ages, it had acquired different meanings. Nevertheless, the boom in IT has bridged the gap between Diasporas” (Patel 3). No doubt, the USA is the hub of the world’s largest IT professional companies, more than 50% of IT professionals are foreigners. However, these IT professionals and other economically sound foreign class who have settled down in the USA and other western parts of the world have to face the consequences in their daily lives. People from different social and cultural backgrounds in newly adopted lands have to face the circumstances like identity crisis, cultural clash, hyphenated nationality, feeling of exile and alienation, dislocation, nostalgia, hybridity, multiculturalism, schizophrenia and many other socially bound conditions. As Homi. K Bhabha has pointed out in the *Location of Culture*; the creation of a third space disrupts the logic of “synchronicity and evolution”, which traditionally authorize the subject of cultural knowledge. It makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process and destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated open, expanding code (Bhabha 53).

The migration and adaptation is not only the route to settle down in the adopted lands but a way to confront the traditional and ancestral values, demands a compromise and sacrifice for the sake of new identity and the new settlement in an alien land. It is a process of social and cultural dislocation for new locale and expected exile. “Diasporas, characterised by numerous dislocated sites of contestation and resistance, counteract the hegemonic and homogenising forces of globalisation” (Raj 107). The real struggle of diasporic population does not end only at the suitable site to live but the real strive and struggle begins from the moment they abode, and after abiding in foreign lands internal conflicts getting their edge to find out their own roots. The conflict of routes to roots, which is always brimming inside the psyche of the immigrants, because of the dilemma about their past and present, it is very hard to decide which part of the world they belong to. The myth of the imaginary homeland which they have already left permanently for new abode, but still they kept the myth of their past alive in the psyche with serious question marks on their existence in the adopted homeland.

The nation and nationalism are two different things for the diaspora population, nationalism and citizenship is an ambiguity for them. Diaspora population have their own perspective of looking at the nationality and nationalism, which they never wish to change it with altering places or borders. The nationalism is something sacred for immigrant population to their native countries and the citizenship is a kind of reward, which they have got from the host country. In the contemporary world, mostly, diaspora populations are active in the matters of their native places, like Kashmiri (Indian) diaspora in London and Jewish diaspora in the USA, they have their own organisations to raise the issues regarding the ancestral homelands. Although, they have left those places years before. However, the question of belongingness remains always in their minds while deciding which part of the world they belong to. They suffer serious trauma in their new lands, for them, it is not only the geographical dislocation or a change in place but it is the process of transformation from native to immigrant, located to dislocated, nationality to hyphenated nationality, social to individual and acquaintance to isolation. For them, it is not only a challenge of geographical displacement but also a challenge for the transformation of cultural ideologies. They choose exile and alienation to acquire the dignity, value and freedom, freedom from their traditional bounds to create new possibilities for their future in the possibility of exile.

Hyphenated identity is a term, which refers the multiple socially bound features that individuals use to think about themselves. The crisis of hyphenated existence are commonly as cultural shock, despair, estrangement, frustration and in many cases psychological imbalance, cultural and psychological alienation. People with hyphenated existence are often stuck between the worlds that is in their native (birthplace) and adopted land (migrated to). There is a conflict between the past and the present. The mind of a hyphenated person is like a vacuum which is already filled with the past life experience (traditions, culture, and social moral and religious values) when these people try to adopt new life style, it is like filling a vacuum with no more space left. The replacement and alternatives of their roots, the attachment with their past life is not that much easy to switch with new experiences without any kind of clash. The result of finding alternatives of their old memories and past involvements come with cultural-clash, alienation, dilemma, frustration and many other complications.

The term 'hyphenated' implies a dual identity, transnational and ethno-cultural personality, which evokes questions regarding their nationality and patriotism. Such questions often loom in the minds of immigrants that which part of the world they belong to. The crisis of hyphenated existence among immigrants make them liable to think about their origin and the real sense of belonging-ness in their adopted land and their land of origin as well. They look themselves as oscillating between two cultures and two nationalities, the feeling of conflict and chaos in their minds elevated between two worlds. "During the initial phase, immigrants suppress their ethnicity in the name of pragmatism and opportunism. To be successful in the new world, they must actively assimilate and, therefore, hide their distinct ethnicity" (Radhakrishnan 121). Hyphenated people shackle themselves in the glory of past and the glittering future in the new homes; they enjoy the new life with the fragments of the past, which is enough to question their existence and living like a pendulum between two worlds. "The same logic applies in the case of the hyphenated or diasporic identities where an individual might either nurture a hybrid and multicultural identity or retain the unique cultural values and heritage of both the homeland and the host land" (Chakraborty 27).

Hyphenated people wants to explore and enjoy the meaning of hyphen, with great enthusiasm but at the same time the feeling of estrangement with their origins and memories of past remains always with them. They are being haunted by the spectres of past that encourage them to question their existence in newly adopted homes. They enjoy every moment of their new adopted life under the shadows of uncertainties and duality. Trauma and chaos of their destination and origin that makes them different from the native citizens of a host country and the country of origin as well. However, some immigrants manage to adapt themselves to new culture with the expenses of their ancestral ethos and try to end-up their roots to assimilate with new life. They try to remove everything from their past life but removing everything from their past is not practically possible because of their origin, race and ethnicity. When they fail in first attempt, they try to maintain an equilibrium between two different cultures and nationalities, which lead them towards the cultural clash, dilemma and psychological imbalance and a hyphenate existence:

The hyphen is problematic whether we are willing to face this fact or not. For it requires an act of balancing which is difficult to sustain at all times; it allows not only a floating identity but also a rotating one, it gets directly linked to visibility (in an alien space) and often to fracturing. The relationship of the hyphen to the homeland is not always one of linkages; it may be one of withdrawal and a withholding of the self. (Jain 64)

Hyphenation and isolation are two undeniable features of the immigrant life in the adopted homeland. It is not easy for both, host society and newly migrated population to accept each other with their different social and cultural codes with different backgrounds and origin. For hosts, they (immigrants) are just a group of marginalised and ethnically different people from 'other' parts of the world and for immigrants; it is a relocation from the homeland to hyphenated nationality in the adopted home, which paves the way for the isolation and alienation between natives and immigrants. Therefore, the space of hyphenated identity among immigrant population provoke them to seek new ways to accept their existence in the adopted land. They try to attain new social and cultural identities and accept new social changes, which lead them towards the cultural hybridity and transnational identity. The endeavour for acceptance of new dominant culture with their hybrid experience of diaspora Mishra states:

The hyphen is that which signifies the vibrant social and cultural spaces the vibrant social and cultural spaces occupied by diasporas in nation-states. It also reminds us of the contaminated border, hybrid experience of diaspora people for whom an engineered return to a purist condition is a contradiction in terms because they returned to the quay their ships had gone. (Mishra 432)

Concept of citizenship and nationality is not synonyms for the people who are living in the hyphenated countries or states. For them, citizenship is something given to them by the host country is a kind of reward but not enough to create a sense of patriotism or nationalism, which they feel for their country of birth. They can have their homes in the newly adopted dreamlands but the quest for roots and

spirit of patriotism they cannot have other than the country of their origin. Immigrants can feel economically secure, socially well-being, statistically proud of their new lands but the inner feelings remain always attached to their ancestral homeland.

Settling in the multicultural milieu in a foreign land is not an easy task, especially for the people who are from typical third world background. Tradition, culture, religion, region and many other socially bound activities they used to follow in their ancestral homelands, makes it difficult for them to accept the new changes in new society. The outcome of that stubborn-ness of the immigrants will lead them to the clash with newly adopted world. However, in some societies, immigrants are ready to accept the changes as per the new popular culture but the society does not accept them because of their social and cultural differences and the stereotype and prejudice of the host country towards the immigrants. Multiculturalism is the belief that a society should respect and promote all the various cultures or ethnic groups of which it is composed of, the belief has been promoted and opposed by different societies over time, and remains a vexed political issue in today's ultra- modern world. The debate over multiculturalism often emerge in discussions over immigration, political correctness, and national language.

Migration is not merely an act of adopting a new environment, or accepting new customs or learning new language, it is more profound than it seems to be. It leads a person towards the displacement from his ancestries and the roots. It is an agonising process of alienation and self-blur, migration is a movement towards the estrangement and isolation, which may create an imbalance that can deeply affect an individual's feelings, thoughts and ideas. Hyphenated identity creates a way for different and contrary objectives, like one is to erase past life experience and other is to re-inscribe new social and cultural traits. The concept of individualised life style and community alignment, being and belongingness in new society and self-identity and social identity remain a vexed question in the minds of a hyphenated nationals.

Literature is the mirror of the society and the reflection comes in the form of poetry, stories, essays, fiction and non-fiction. "I hold that a writer who does not passionately believe in the perfectibility of man has no dedication nor any

membership in literature." John Steinbeck. The main purpose of the literature from its origin is to entertain and to instruct. Literature helps us to find out the ways in the dark like a torch in the dark nights. It is one of the most important instrument to mould the views of general-public; it is not only helping us to understand past experiences but also to improve our future life with the help of historical events. Diasporic literature and the study of immigrant life is the outcome of the colonisation and decolonisation, particularly in the third world countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh etc. During and after colonialism, millions of people migrated from these colonies towards the West to improve their social, economic and cultural status. However, they have achieved their goals of economic wellbeing but they failed to shed their past completely and adopt new life style in the host country. They began to face different problems as their origin and the ancestral roots of social and cultural backgrounds were different from the mainstream societies, which lead them to search their identity, nationality, homeless-ness, alienation etc. their hyphenated existence and distorted-self forced them to look for their roots again. "One physical alienation from India at almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of redeeming precisely the thing that was lost, that will, in short, create fictions not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indians of mind"... (Rushdie 10).

The pain, grief and agony of the Indian diaspora population got the classical expression in the works of many renowned writers like Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, V.S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, Bharati Mukherjee etc. Diasporic Indian literature has become the voice of the voiceless Indian origin people, who are living abroad as immigrants. They have explored the crisis of the hyphenated existence among immigrant population in the host countries. They have highlighted the issues of 'other' and have debated the issues like globalisation, consumerism, transnationalism, cultural hybridity and dislocated self. Bharati Mukherjee in her interview with Carb:

We immigrants have fascinating tales to relate... we have experience rapid changes in the history of nations in which we lived. When we uproot ourselves and come here either by choice or out of necessity, we must absorb 200 years of American history and learn to adapt to American society. Our lives are remarkably often heroic. (Carb 29)



Bharati Mukherjee is one of the most renowned Indian born American writer. Her personal experience of being an immigrant with the hyphenated identity in the foreign land gave her first-hand experience about the life of tormented self and duality of immigrant existence. Being a hyphenated or transnational itself is a question mark to the individual's identity, whether they belong to the country before the hyphen or later one. The hyphen is a symbol of variation from the native citizens of a particular country and it provides a kind of unique identity to the people who are living there as immigrants. Mostly, her works are presenting the images of multiple dislocations and in-between-ness of her characters. She brought out the experiences she had encountered in her real life like dislocated self and desire to search for home in the transnational and trans-cultural spaces.

Jhumpa Lahiri is another pearl among the great Indian Diaspora writers, Her novels, *The Namesake* and *The Lowland* are the best voices of the people who are stuck between two worlds and living a life of hyphenated identity. Jhumpa Lahiri has won the Pulitzer Prize in 2000 for her debut collection of short stories, "*Interpreter of Maladies*" published in 1999 and her second novel, *the Lowland*, published in 2013, was a nominee for the Man Booker Prize. She is currently working as a professor of creative writing at Princeton University, New Jersey, America.

Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri are the preeminent voices among the diaspora writers to highlight the issues like hyphenated identity, alienation, and unbelongingness among immigrant population. Their works are the voices of those people who have lost their expressions and identities in the world of alienation and separation. The select works of the writers are the best depiction of those, who are living under the burden of hyphen, which affects their social and psychological life in both the lands. The People, who are migrating to other countries from their homelands does not feel isolated, dislocated and alienated only in the adopted lands but also in their ancestral lands as well, they feel separated and rootless at the place of birth too. The crisis of hyphenated existence in the select fiction of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri have been portrayed such a way as if we are directly talking to the people who are suffering with the crisis of hyphenated existence in both the lands.

Bharati Mukherjee has explored the immigrant-hyphenated lives, in her select works. *The Tiger's Daughter*, portrays a failed attempt by an immigrant to assimilate with new world and failed to reconcile with her roots as well. In another novel, *Jasmine*, the protagonist of the novel successfully adopted new ways of American life while Dimple, the protagonist of *Wife* failed to cope with new culture and killed her husband. The novels like *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Desirable Daughters* are presenting the immigrant psyche who failed to decide their destination. *The Tiger's Daughter* is the portrayal of the people who are alienated in both the lands and *Desirable Daughters* is projecting the life of those who are stuck in their past and present. The hyphenated people are in a process of self-destruction to self-construction mode, They have to renounce parts of their past life and replace them with new experiences because people of hyphenated existence does not have free choice to choose their groups independently as they are supposed to. They are not free to affiliate to the new groups or they cannot disaffiliate old once because of their duality and the hyphen which is enough to display the dilemma and chaos of their identities:

On the one hand, members of various minorities seek to shed the stereotypes that lump them together with others sharing the same origins and work to be recognized instead as individuals. On the other hand, they strive to recover their roots and create new group identities that can give them a sense of heritage and worth. Although these are not really contradictory impulses, and they do not cancel each other out, there is always a tension between them, and this tension is strongly apparent whenever a writer is singled out by the majority as a recognized representative of a minority struggling for self-expression. (Paul 22)

History of diaspora is the history of alienation, isolation and the crisis of hyphenated existence etc. for every achievement they have to pay a kind of price, for every goal, which they have conquered by migrating, is actually a sacrifice of the traditions, which is taking them deeper into the chasm of psychosomatic disorder. The coming of second generation in the adopted lands means more isolation for first generation immigrants even at their homes. The second generation of diaspora

community do not consider themselves as migrants or diaspora, their mentality and the ways of assimilation with new culture means another spurn for the first generation of migrants. The pain, suffering and other issues of hyphenated existence in the works of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri will help us to understand the chaotic life of diaspora population. Their nationality is not only Indian or American but known as Indian-American writers and the hyphen in their nationalities present the space and glimpse of their hyphenated existence in two different worlds.

Bharati Mukherjee (July 27, 1940-January 28, 2017) is one of the most prolific Indian-American writer who has won National Book Critics Circle Award in 1988. Born in July 27, 1940 to a wealthy Bengali family. At the age of eight, her parents moved to London and this was the beginning of the displacement in Bharati Mukherjee's life. During the stay in London for three years, it was the beginning of the language transformation from Bengali to English. "It was the time of forgetting Bengali and acquiring English until I reached an absolute equilibrium." (Blaise and Mukherjee 182). Her first direct encounter with the English speaking people and adopting new language in the name of transformation from mother tongue to newly adopted language, for her learning new language does not mean to add one more language only but it means to transform the ways of apprehending the world.

Bharati Mukherjee has had the worst feeling of expatriation, in Canada with her husband, Clark Blaise, a Canadian born. In many interviews, she has talked about the difficult life and the hostile nature of Canada towards the Asian immigrants. "I had thought of myself... as an expatriate... in Canada, I was frequently taken for a prostitute or shoplifter... domestic... crippling assumptions about me." (Mukherjee 1-2). Due to the hostility and difficulty faced by her in Canada, she decided to relocate to America, where she found herself more comfortable and confident than any other place she used to live. She announced in many interviews that she is writing as an American citizen not an Indian. She died on January 28, 2017 in New York. Her answer on the nationality in 1989 interview with Amanda Meer she proclaimed:

I totally consider myself an American writer, and that has been my big battle: to get to realize that my roots as a writer are no longer, if

they ever were, among Indian writers, but that I am writing about the territory about the feelings, of a new kind of pioneer here in America. I'm the first among Asian immigrants to be making this distinction between immigrant writing and expatriate writing. Most Indian writers prior to this, have still thought of themselves as Indians, and their literary inspiration, has come from India. India has been the source, and home. Whereas I'm saying, those are wonderful roots, but now my roots are here and my emotions are here in North America. (Mukherjee 34)

Bharati Mukherjee's first and second novel, *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife* are the perfect examples of immigrant life in home and abroad. *The Tiger's Daughter* is the story of a young Bengali girl from an elite class, who is returning from the USA after completing her study and her failure to find out roots in her native land. She felt caught herself in between two worlds. This novel is having autobiographical elements of Bharati Mukherjee's personal life experience, Tara is the depiction of Mukherjee's personal life, in real life Bharati Mukherjee finds herself caught between two cultures and two worlds after returning from west to his hometown in India. She felt alienated and expatriate in both the worlds.

Bharati Mukherjee's second novel, *Wife* is a story of an Indian immigrant in the multicultural USA, who failed to cope up in the newly adopted home. Dimple Dasgupta, who migrated to America with her Indian origin husband to find out her new identity and new life. Her too much expectation from the imaginary adopted homeland cost her everything, failed to assimilate as per the demands of the new culture and society. She felt trapped between two worlds, killed her husband, and committed suicide in a neurotic condition. Bharati Mukherjee's other works like *Jasmine*, *The Holder of the World*, *Leave It to Me*, *Desirable Daughters*, *The Tree Bride* and *The Miss New India*. In all her novels, the glimpses of immigration and the life of the expatriates and their struggle for survival remained the core issues to highlight the crisis of hyphenated existence. She depicted the life of expatriates and their suffering in such a way it seems readers are directly interacting to the characters of the novels, cultural clash, alienation, homeless-ness, nostalgia,

dislocated, multiculturalism and rootlessness etc. are the main themes of the works of Bharati Mukherjee.

Jhumpa Lahiri, an Indian-American pearl of the literary world is known for her works like *The Namesake*, *The Lowland* and her collection of short stories, *The Interpreter of Maladies* and *Unaccustomed Earth*. Her mastery in the field of creative writing makes her to enlist among the world famous writers. Her notable awards in the field of literature are, The O. Henry award, the Pulitzer Prize and The Hemingway Award in 1999, in 2002 she has got the Addison Metcalf Award from the American Academy of Art and letters and The New Yorker's Best Debut of the year for her collection of short stories, *the Interpreter of Maladies*. Her novels, *The Namesake* and *the Lowland* are the most appreciated works by the world critics, which presents life of the immigrant population and the conflict of first and second generations. The novels also presents the identity crisis among second-generation immigrants and their feeling of alienation inside home and in society. *The Namesake* and *the Lowland* are the best read to understand the pain, agony and differences among the first and second generations of the immigrants living in adopted worlds. Her other Italian works are *Dove Mi Trovo* (2018) and a memoir, *In Altre Parole* (2015) that is translated in English as *In Other Words* and *Il Vestito Dei Libri* (2016) translated in English as *the Clothing of Books*. She is currently a Professor of creative writing at Princeton University.

Indian diaspora writing has some tenacious goals to achieve in its discourse to highlight the issues regarding the immigrant life. The presentation of identity crisis, sense of belongingness, cultural differences, alienation, crisis of hyphenated existence and multiculturalism are the core issues to highlight for better understanding the life of diaspora population. Indian diaspora writers tried to highlight the issues regarding the life of those, who are living between two worlds and try to identify their roots and belongingness with their past and present. They try to define the process of assimilation with newly adopted cultures, the sense of unbelongingness and crisis of identity, which creates a kind of social discrimination in the different social milieus among immigrants who are not sure about their existence in any of the homes. The conditions like alienation and unbelongingness among immigrants brings them to the verge of socio-cultural clash with adopted

world because it is not easy to shed out the roots of the past life in the newly formed homes even after living there for years. Diaspora writer like Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri have portrayed the crisis of diaspora life in the foreign lands with the dilemma of identity, sense of rootlessness, crisis of hyphenated existence and alienation. Their works are the best portrayal of the caricatures of hyphenated people living in socio-cultural dilemma.

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the brightest star in the constellation of Indian diaspora writers and her thundering voice is the loudest and strongest among the writers who are depicting the life of people who are stuck between the heaven and earth because of their hyphenated existence. Bharati Mukherjee has first-hand experience of hyphenated identity however, she has claimed in many of the interviews that she is writing only as an American writer but most of the critics and writers are presenting her as an Asian-American or Indian-American writer. Only a person with a hyphen in his/her name can understand the real pain and struggle of a hyphenated identity, which Mukherjee has depicted in her novels. Her multiple displacement and replacement or relocation from the age of eight, first to London, Canada and finally to settle in America gives her the feeling of the tormented life of an immigrant. She wrote eight novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972), *Wife* (1975), *Jasmine* (1989) *The Holder of the World* (1993), *Leave It to Me* (1997) *Desirable Daughters* (2002) *The Tree Bride* (2004) and the two collections of short stories, *Darkness* (1985) and *The Middleman and Other Stories*, (1988). In her whole work, one can find the voice of those unvoiced people who have lost their voices under the burden of their hyphenation.

*The Tiger's Daughter*, her first novel published in 1971 is the post-mortem of a person's life, who is living under the burden of hyphen. The novel is known as an immigrant piece of work, which depicts life of the protagonist who is returning from America after long seven years to find out her roots, and her quest through the phases of desire, control, displacement, and integration with old and new life. The novel presents the inner consciousness of the protagonist in her place of birth and her feelings like alienation, nostalgia, dilemma, transnational and identity crisis in her land of origin. The novel explores the struggle, strive of the protagonist in her homeland and the pain, agony, clash of the past, and present. "We do return and

leave and return again, criss-crossing the Atlantic; but whichever side we are on, the dream is always on the other side” (Jordan 5). *The Tiger’s Daughter* is a complete journey of an immigrant from her adopted land to the land of origin, which highlights the every pros and cons of an immigrant life, their struggle and compromise with self and society, first in adopted land and then their stand against the discrimination and alienation at their own place of birth, their in-between-ness and divided worlds.

Tara, the protagonist of the novel is depiction of the immigrant population who return to their roots with the hope of sensibility and their cultural identity, but the wistful and passionate sensibility falls apart into pieces when they come to know the reality of their hyphenated self. The blow of reality at their place of birth, their feeling of unbelongingness provoke them to ask questions like who are they? and where they belong to. The protagonist struggled first in America against the odds of new American culture. However, she managed to assimilate herself in new world order, got married, job, new house and her complete integration into the country of adoption but she failed to assimilate in her native culture. Martha rightly explained the psychological condition of the protagonist in her research work:

The clash between a person's internal and external senses of self can lead to the abandonment of the internal sense. People may find meaning and opportunity for self-expression in the tensions between and among who they themselves think they are and what others think of them. This tension is especially complex because people so often establish who they are by constructing a sense of the place and identity of others around them. (Martha 96)

Tara felt alienated not only because of her American attitude but also because the way she was treated in her native place. For her relatives she was an ‘American aunty’ and her family she was someone who has abandoned her traditional and religious values. Tara began to observe herself from the eyes of others, which makes her nostalgic, alienated and abandoned in her place of birth.

The feeling of ‘otherness’, which Tara felt in adopted land, now feeling same at her place of birth as well. She depicts the psyche of the immigrant population,

who are nostalgic for home country in adopted countries and suffering from alienation on the arrival in their birthplaces, Tara does not feel India her real home anymore because of the contaminated mind setup from adopted world. She has a strange feeling towards the Indian people and Indian culture, her perception of observing things in India with American lenses makes her feel outlandish and alienated; she failed to identify herself as an Indian.

Tara Banerjee, a Brahman girl from Bengal, who travelled to America for study purpose falls in love with an American and got married. Her marriage with an American citizen displays her assimilation with new socio-cultural surroundings in the adopted world. Tara Banerjee Cartwright is an autobiographical element of the author herself who is also married to an American. On this matter, she herself explains:

When I wrote, I certainly did not think of it as autobiographical. But my father felt he recognized himself in the portrait and there were other people just as well. In *The Tiger's Daughter* I was writing about my class, a certain period in Calcutta's history about a class and a way of life that has become extinct. Calcutta soon after changed...  
(Meer and Mukherjee 26)

Tara Banerjee's assimilation with American culture and America can be observed from her comparison of houses at Marine Drive that she found shabby and filthy as compared with American houses. Her comparison of Bombay railway station with hospital and passengers in her compartment with circus animals is the indication of her duality, sense of hybridity and rootlessness in homeland. Her expectation about the India was totally contrary to her mythical homeland. She came with the hopes that returning India would remove all her isolation, loneliness, nostalgia and discomfort of adopted home "but so far the return had brought only wounds" (Mukherjee 25).

Sushma Tandon, a critic of Bharati Mukherjee's fiction has stated that Tara's rootless-ness, isolation and cultural clash at her home brings the vision of the duality and inbetweenness, "The heroine finds it difficult to relate, since her marriage to an American and her Western education brand her as an alienated woman" (Tandon



32). Her westernised thinking provoke her to behave like an American even with her relatives, her bitter response to her nickname which is common in Bengali culture, her ways of looking at relatives and their belongings and the things which she used to admire during her childhood, looks shabby to her. Her shocking behaviour with family and relatives and the omnipresence of her husband, David is the perfect example of the cultural shock, nostalgia and rootlessness:

Since Tara is exposed to the West and has absorbed its values, she must be necessarily alienated and, therefore, even if she tries to voice her continued attachment for, and identity with India, the voice does not carry conviction because it is at variance with the usual stance of indifference and arrogance as these are associated with the Westernized Indian. (Tandon 32)

Displacement is as much of a mental state of being as it is a physical state. Tara used to feel alienated and displaced on the foreign shores, defended her country in the discussions, praying gods to help her to stand against the American odds. In America, she used to create an environment like India by hanging her silk scarves around her room but latter in India, from the very moment she started comparing everything with her American life like houses of Marine Drive seems to her shabby and Indian passengers in her compartment appears her circus animals because of their traditional dress. Noticing mannerism, accent, diction and the love of her relatives for her was irritating, her Indian trip was actually to remove boredom from her American life, her displaced and alienated psyche, she found herself more displaced in India than America, nostalgic for her husband and her Indian-ness has lost in the glamour of the American society:

Tara was literally, neither here nor there. She was a misfit with her Calcutta milieu and she was always under stress in America— trying to be correct, trying not to be a gauche immigrant, trying to be American. Tara is intelligent, highly educated and capable of self-analysis. She is conscious of her instability, insecurity and unhappiness. (Chowdhury 95)

Dilemma and rootless-ness in India and America shows her crisis of the hyphenated identity. Her in-between-ness, conflict of past and present, instability and feeling of alienation at her adopted land and land of origin as well.

Vandana Singh in her critical analysis on the works of Bharati Mukherjee entitled as *The fictional World of Bharati Mukherjee*, has rightly explained the cultural clash of immigrant characters of Bharati Mukherjee. Cultural clash among immigrants remain always there because of their divided personalities between past and present:

They are hovering between two cultures, which gives rise to split characters, tends to unbalance personalities. Having no choice, the individual takes a decision. It can be total extreme case of following the emancipated attitude of American culture, or delve into the past and keep hanging on the former culture. (Vandana 189)

Tara is a divided soul between two cultures, the East and the west, failed to decide which culture she should accept and which one to reject. In America, she sticks to Indian culture and in India; she failed to find her roots of childhood. Her hyphenated identity remained a mystery that which part of the world she belongs to, before hyphen or after hyphen.

After her final self-realisation, she decided to leave for America but stuck in the protesting mob. Tara fails to find her roots in India, her rootlessness, displacement and the feeling of 'other' in her native land forced her to leave for new adopted home, American. She felt disgusted and disturbed in India for which, she was homesick in America, failed to connect herself with her childhood memories. It is ironic that she survived the racial discrimination and hardships in the country like America but became a victim of violence in her native country by the riotous and destructive mob outside the Catelli-Continental hotel. The novel ends in a vogue, Mukherjee did not clear it whether Tara died or survived in the riotous mob but Tara was always thinking about her American husband, David inside the car.

Bharati Mukherjee is the icon of immigrant writing, in her first novel *the Tiger's Daughter*, she has depicted the life of those who failed to find their roots

after returning from the land of adoption and her second novel, *Wife* explores the life of the immigrants who have failed to assimilate with new culture and society in foreign land. The novel published in 1975, is the best depiction of the immigrant life who have failed to cope in newly adopted land. She has explored the experience of immigrants, their survival and strength and their rootlessness in the adopted country. The novel raised the questions about the freedom, cultural bounds, expectations and the reality of the new world order and also focuses on the complications of being hyphenated and in-between-ness. The novel emphasises on the core issue of immigrants, their expectations about the adopted dreamland, their struggle and strive in new lands, experience of the alienation and cultural clash and the courage to survival. Dimple Dasgupta, a young protagonist of the novel is a typical example of those people who are expecting too much from the newly adopted world. Dimple's failure of adopting new culture in America brought her to the extreme point of murdering her husband, her prince charming. Her childhood dream was only to get married, the marriage will bring her freedom and happiness forever, and her second dream was to settle down in America. she was hoping that moving to America will bring her happiness, freedom and cocktail parties but nothing changed much except her alienation and boredom increased in the city of New York flat. Fields Amanda, in her research article explained the complex weaving of new identity:

One should consider the complex weaving of influences making up her identity. Her personal and creative experience testifies to the fact that survival skills and adaptations are necessary when one is transplanted into a new cultural environment. Mukherjee's fiction is well known for its depiction of characters living through immigration and assimilation. (Amanda 325)

Dimple experiences total estrangement from herself and her surroundings because of her escapist nature. She was torn by the conflict between her fantasy world and the reality of her life because she allows her mind to be totally conditioned by the commercials on T.V. and magazines so much, she lost the ability to distinguish them from the world of reality. She was caught in a whirlwind of traumatic emotions, her questioning to her outrageous adultery, and her present confused-self wishing her to become American by any means, Dimple finally kills

Amit to suppress her guilty conscience and also to feel very American, almost like a character in a T.V. serials. Kanika Aggarwal remarked the issues regarding the Dimple's alienation and her failure:

An individual has his/her identity in close affinity with the duty ascribed to him/her by the society. Alienation is a modern concept for such a close knit society, though gradual disintegration of the family structure, loss of relationships and an ever increasing emphasis on the individual is making the modern Indians more and more self-alienated. This self-alienation due to the individual's inability to assimilate oneself with the others or due to the negative influence of certain painful circumstances in one's life, results in the development of psychological disorders. (Kanika 4)

Her fantasies and hopes for America without knowing anything about the real struggle to survive in the glamorous world brought her to cultural shock and alienation. Her indulgence of self-abortion for America, sacrifice of her own blood shows her fanatic nature towards the new land. "Dimple's act of abortion is a sacrament of liberation from the traditional roles and constraints of womanhood" (Maya M. Sharma 15). Dimple wanted to be a Sita, a role model for Indian wives in new multicultural American society. Her initial submission to her husband proves her love and the role of real traditional Indian wife in America milieu.

Dimple's fantasy and imagination about the new world brought her to the moment that she was unable to understand the difference between her real and imaginary world. She was unable to understand the emotions of her husband, Amit, her focus was only to fulfil her dreams of freedom and love for glamorous American world. Homi K, Bhabha in his work, the Location of Culture:

Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliate, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. (Bhabha 3)

Dimple failed to negotiate between her past and present, traditional cultural values and new multicultural social structure. Her half-hearted denial to the past and negotiation with present brought her to the crisis. Her dream of being a free American woman remained unfulfilled because of the discrimination on the basis of her roots. Her encounter with a shopkeeper was first blow to her American-ness and the constant meddling of her husband, which halts her freedom and independence. It was Amit, who hints her to deny the job offer from an Indian American businessman and wanted her to be a good Bengali house wife only. Watching American serials, copying their characters, her alienation at home without her husband and her attraction towards the American glamorous world proved fatal for her at the end of the novel

Rootlessness and alienation of Dimple, which brought her to the extreme point to kill her husband in the alien land was actually the conflict of the East and West, fantasies and the struggle for real life in a foreign land brought which brought her trauma and anxiety to act like as a murderer. Her dream of becoming an American more than the natives of America that lead her to kill her husband to fulfil her American Dream:

Dimple's fantasies take a violent turn, which takes her towards the negative side besides the stress of an alien culture. Mukherjee presents the expectation, dreams, desires of an Indian woman regarding marriage and married life and describes how her illusions of married life get shattered and how she also becomes embittered, estranged and morbid. (Dhivya and Ravindran 74)

Bharati Mukherjee has nicely portrayed the image of the immigrants whose expectations are too high for the adopted homes, their desires, dreams of an imaginary land and the shallowness of the glamorous world. Once they face the real struggle in the world of their dreamland it traumatise them. People with the hyphenated identity especially for the first generation immigrant population, it is extremely terrible to shun everything from their past to settle down in new world. They try to maintain equilibrium between two worlds, which lead them to the cultural shock, alienation, rootlessness and the crisis of hyphenated existence.

The state of exile, sense of loss, pain of separation and dislocation in the novel, *Jasmine* make it to the best portrayal of the immigrant struggle for survival and their quest for identity in an adopted land. The novel published in 1989 is one of the best novel among the works of Bharati Mukherjee, which presents the life story of Jasmine, the protagonist of the novel and her struggle for survival in the foreign land. The novel projects the real skirmish of journey for the survival of Jasmine, the protagonist from her roots to routes, her identity crisis and transformation from Indian Jyoti to Jasmine to Jane, her assimilation with new culture and denial of past life, her firm determination to become a part of an alien world. The novel displays the strained life of the immigrant population between past and present, old and new values, sense of belonging-ness and self-compromise for new identification and new abode. Jasmine's struggle is the vivid pictography of those people who are living under the burden of hyphenation. The crisis of hyphenated existence can be traced in this novel from the struggle of Jasmine for her survival skills, her negotiations and personal transformations, changing jobs with new names with changing personality to adjust in newly adopted domain. "People vested with little or no power may nonetheless exercise control over their identities. Individuals craft images for others to believe in while preserving a different inner self...Paradox offers insights into experiences of belonging and exclusion" (Martha 104).

Jasmine's violent beginning in the alien land depicts the life of the immigrant population, who on their arrival to new lands have to pay the price for being a foreigner to that particular land, they have to retaliate with full force to survive like Jasmine retaliated and punished her rapist. They have to prepare themselves to destroy some parts of their previous life to recreate new traits to adjust in new life. Jasmine lost her innocence and became a murderer; she assassinated her innocence by killing Half-face, her rapist to reincarnate her new identity in American society, she desolate her past for new American life. Helena Grice has remarked that Jasmine's journey is the journey of immigrant life to define their consciousness and the search for new identity, in her research article, *Who Speaks for Us*. Jasmine's isolation from her bitter past experiences and accepting new life in the glamour of free and liberal world are the steps towards the new recognition of her own identity:

In Jasmine the loss of identity that accompanies Jasmine's many moves, from India through America, is figured as a liberation rather than a restriction. When Jyoti/Jasmine/Jane sheds previous lives, she sheds with them the oppressions and heartaches of those earlier incarnations, always moving one-step closer to embracing America as her desh. (Helena 90)

She liberates herself from the roots and her past identity in newly adopted homeland. Her first step in new life was when she accepted the job offer of an 'au pair' and latter her live-in relationship with Bud Ripplemeyer, with every new relationship Jasmine gets new name and every name with new identity. "We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams (Mukherjee 25). Her quest for new identity begins with her transformation from an Indian ideal wife to a murderer then to a 'day mother', love affair with Tylor and her live-in relationship with Bud Ripplemeyer demonstrates her firm determination to redefine her identity.

Her transformation from Jyoti to Jasmine to Jane shuttled her in-between identities, with every changing name her identity gets new twist with new role to play but her firm determination with her present encourage her to cope in every new situation and to shed everything which becomes past for her. Chuen-Shin, in her research article has articulate about the transformation of Jasmine:

It is only through demolition that Jasmine can construct a new self. Clearly put, Jasmine abandons the old self to establish a new American identity. This is why Jasmine burns her husband's suitcase, i.e., as a way of cutting loose the burdens of her past and leaving everything behind. As she leaves the motel, she begins walking toward the unknown on "the first streaks of dawn" to begin her "first full American day" by "traveling light." [4] Significantly, she leaves behind her old suitcase and name as she sets out to find new meaning and their connotations in fulfilment of her American dream to find freedom and self-identity. (Chuen-Shin 68)

To adopt and adjust herself in the new world order, Jasmine accepted every change, shows her firm determination for new identity but the process of changing roles and

her changing identities has no bounds or limits. “Relationships between people shape identities which depends on negotiations and interactions between oneself and others” (Martha 98). Jasmine’s identity remains dependent on her relationships, every new relationship brought her new name and every new name gives her new personality to assimilate with new American society.

Rebirth, murder and other violent transformation of the protagonist in the novel is the depiction of ‘shuttling and shuffling of self’ among the immigrants. Such reinventions and reincarnations among the immigrants are common to shed some parts of their past life to recreate their new identity in the new lands but the process of shedding and recreating of different cultural aspects lead them towards the cultural clash and identity crisis. Kristin Carter-Sanborn pronounced in her research article, *"We Murder Who We Were": Jasmine and the Violence of Identity* that the character of Jasmine in the novel has a “hybrid nature and an ambivalent identity” in her new homeland. “An ambivalent and non-unified, hybrid subjectivity, Jasmine's self-making insists on fixing the differences made between entities comprehended as absolute presences” (Kristine 583). Her past life experiences are still in her psyche, Sukhwinder is the symbolic representation of her past life, which used to haunt her new life in America.

Her transformation and adoption of new identity shows her quest for real identity in new adopted land, first in Indian society, Jyoti to jasmine and in America Jase to Jane. “Her flirtation with "multiplicity" ironically resolves itself into a domestic and domesticated fantasy, a classic American dream of assimilation” (583). Each name with new life and new role shows the determination and compromising self of the protagonist for her survival. Her past life continuously used to haunt her even in America when she was in happiest moments of the life with her crush, Taylor. She left Taylor because of Sukhwinder, who killed her husband in India. Her dressing sense, her adopting new language and her Indian food at home does not give her only American look but American look with Indian taste:

This reification is accomplished in the context of a particular notion of rebirth or transformation that is, as we have seen, metaphorically if



not literally violent. The ways in which Jasmine moves between the metaphorical violence of identity transformation, the notion of representation itself as violence, and the fact of empirical violence raise a number of theoretical and methodological difficulties. (Kristin 584)

Jasmine's journey from an Indian villager to an American lover in Iowa, then to California with Taylor, her agonising trip is the symbolic journey of her real identity. Jasmine's transformation from a traditional dutiful Indian wife to lover of Taylor and an au pair to his daughter, Duff and the reincarnation to become a live in partner of a crippled banker, Bud Ripplemeyer as a Jane. At the end of the novel, she keeps changing her partners and her identities with different roles to claim her share in new mainstream American culture. The author depicts her transformation and transition as a positive and an optimistic journey for her survival in new land but the real quest of identity remains ambiguous.

The novel, *Jasmine* successfully involved the readers to think about the complex social, cultural and psychological identity of the protagonist. Complex identity of Jasmine, the protagonist is actually a complexity of immigrants who are struggling for their identity in new adopted lands. "In her effort to involve readers in the cultural and psychological complexity of what Sudha Pandya calls the immigrant's hyphenated identity"(Geoffrey 151). The novel highlighted the issues related with hyphenated identity of immigrants. Geoffrey Kain has mentioned in his research article, *The Suspended between Two Worlds: Bharati Mukherjee and The Fusion of Hindu and American Myth* that the novel, *Jasmine* is exploring the issues of immigrant life and the crisis of hyphenated existence of the protagonist, her alienation and series of painful experiences from her homeland to adopted land. The novel mainly focus on the transformation and the evolution of the central character, Jasmine. Her assimilation and acceptance of the outer world appearances to adjust in new land for survival. The novel takes us to the psyche of the protagonist to show her "metamorphic identification" and her "hyphenated mythology:

Fates are so intertwined in the modern world, how can a god can keep them straight? Her struggle in America and killing her rapist is the

symbolic response to her new adopted life in America. Her violent response to her rapist, crushing the demon and ensuring her own survival. (Geoffrey 154)

Her continuous cycle of creation and destruction of identity, to assimilate in the prevailing situation with shutting his past life for present shows her firm resolve for new life. "The novel is energetic shuttling between past and present, present and future; dramatize ... the presence of the past (and the past-ness of the present)"(Geoffrey 153). She failed to erase her past fully; her comparison of Du's gifted skills in electrical engineering with her ex-husband Prakash, her life in rural Iowa and re-appearance of Sukhwinder, who killed her husband. Bharati Mukherjee portrays her duality and in-between-ness in these incidents to present her real hyphenated identity to the readers.

*Desirable Daughters*, the novel published in 2002 is the best exploration of the immigrant life, who are living in adopted land physically but their imagination and the pull of homeland remains always in their psyche, Bharati Mukherjee stands high in the projection of duality, alienation, globalisation and transnationalism among the people living under the hyphenated identity. Tara Chatterjee, the protagonist is a youngest among three Bengali sisters in the novel, it is the assessment of Tara's struggle, displacement, identity crisis, clash of past and present, cultural hybridity and her in-between-ness in her new immigrant life. Tara's search for her identity in the American multicultural land and the space of traditions and her past memories, her acceptance of both the cultures and maintaining equilibrium between two different worlds which brought her to the sense of in-between-ness. "expatriate minority communities which have dispersed from an original centre to two or more peripheral or foreign regions, to people who retain their myths about their motherland and feel alienated in the new land"(Safran 23).

Quest for identity in Tara's life begins from her marriage with an Indian-American silicon tech, Bishwapriya. His traditional outlook for Tara force her to divorce him after ten years of their marriage, Tara wants to explore her new life in America but wants to remain attached with her Indian roots:

Transculturation is a phenomenon of contact zones, or rather, social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today. (Pratt 4)

Bish's busy schedule and his foreign tours make Tara alienated in her luxurious apartment in America. Tara's life was limited to her family in America, she was in a great chaos and confusion, on one hand, she wants to explore her American way of life and on the other hand, she wants to leave America for her roots. Her fight between past and present, multicultural life of west and traditional life of her ancestors, her in-between-ness and duality of her personality, she decides to choose her present life with the taste of her traditional values. Tara's in-between-ness and duality brought her to the identity crisis, which lead her to search her roots in India:

A space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary, Greek peras. A boundary is not that which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presenting. (Heidegger 154)

Her visit to India for investigation about her so-called illegitimate nephew was actually search for her traditions and customs. Divorcing her husband was the quest of her new identity in the multicultural America. "The efforts of maintaining both identities – partly Indian, partly American – make her the hybrid of new culture that again poses the question of her real identity" (Surendra3). Bharati Mukherjee successfully portrays the image of an immigrant whose quest for identity and belonging-ness remains always with them. Tara felt alienated and homeless in America until she met with her Hungarian boyfriend, shows her assimilation with new culture and her contact with her sisters shows her in-between-ness:

Exiles or emigrants or expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. If we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties - that our

physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost. (Rushdie 76)

Tara never felt America her home until her submission of her traditions and live-in relationship with Andy, her submission of her alienation and renouncing her past for present. Tara's submission was not enough to feel home in new land, she was "sick of feeling an alien" in her adopted land, she was trapped in her hyphenated existence, her love for American free life and keeping her past intact in her memories affecting her present.

Bharati Mukherjee has explored the lives of people who have migrated to other places and their struggle for location to dislocation, search for roots and ancestral life in the novel *Desirable Daughters*. The novel is the presentation of the helplessness of the protagonist to assimilate in new culture and her nostalgia for past. Tara stuck between two worlds, failed to assimilate herself in new American glamorous life, she failed to find and accept her ancestral roots in homeland as well. Her struggle for roots actually is a struggle of immigrants. "They are tossed in an environment of ambivalence regarding their identity, racism, sexism and other social oppression" (Bhowmick 54). Tara failed to find herself in her new American land but found "solace at her father's house" (54).

*The Namesake* is the first novel of famous Indian-American writer Jhumpa Lahiri, The novel was published in 2003. It is the projection of identity crisis, in-between-ness, cultural clash, displacement and clashes between the generations among the immigrants. Like Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri has first-hand experience of immigrant life, her experience of being a hybrid to her adopted land and a tourist to her native country. The novel glances into the inner conscious of the immigrants psyche and the feeling of alienation not only in adopted culture but also in the adopted home with their second generation. The novel portrays the crisis of first and second immigrant generations their struggle and strive to adjust in new adopted world. Migration and adaptation is something different for second-generation immigrants, the feeling of in-between-ness, rootless-ness and isolation in the place of birth and their ancestral world is common among them. The second

generation of immigrants have to face more problems than the first-generation, the confusion and chaos of their identity and the sense of belongingness remains always like a question mark in their minds:

The kaleidoscopic quality of the world geography, its conditional elasticity and flexibility, leave the contemporary subject at a loss, on shaky ground and struggling to find his or her bearings in a world where new territorialities have emerged at the crossroads between the actual and the virtual. (Kral 75)

*The Namesake* explores the deeper insight of the immigrant psyche, their fragmented family relationships, cultural disturbances, and the conflict of being and belongingness. Jhumpa Lahiri opens up with the crisis of hyphenated existence and the struggle of those people who are living with hyphen in their nationalities. Hyphen is the sign of a question mark in the immigrant's nationality and belongingness. The novel is depiction of social, psychological and cultural differences among the first generation and the second-generation immigrants. Gogol Ganguli, the protagonist of the novel is the presentation of the second generation of immigrants, their struggle, strive, identity crisis and the question of belongingness. Afshin has explained that the novel is the complete post-mortem of immigrant and their exile:

In the Namesake one can easily feel a sense of living in exile, loss of communication, the sense of belonging to nowhere, the inability to feel accepted, complicated social status, difficulties in relationships and different experiences, which first and second generations of Indian immigrants have in the United States. (Afshin 2)

The novel is vivid pictography of the immigrant family life and the first generation immigrants who want to retain and transform their cultural roots to the next generation. The novel explores the clash of cultures between first and second generation of immigrant populations. Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli, first generation immigrant of the novel, want to retain and transmit their old world values to their next generation, Gogol Ganguli and Sonia, which brought them to the cultural clash. "American- Born children of Indian parents, showing how they do well between the

assumptions and dominant form of the American society on the one hand and the values of their ancestral homeland, on the other” (Ashcroft 138).

Ambika sharma in her research Article remarked that the question of identity and belongingness remains always among the immigrant population because of their duality:

The question of identity is always a difficult one for those living in one culture, yet belonging to another. This question frequently lingers in the mind of most immigrants. They feel culturally confused as they are simultaneously living in two cultures. On the one hand, they no longer feel emotionally attached and cannot fully identify themselves with their native culture; while on the other, when they wish to adopt the identity of the new culture, they have not been fully accepted as its members. (Sharma 44)

The cultural clash and sense of unbelongingness among second-generation immigrants are inevitable. Gogol Ganguli, born and raised in America in a traditional Bengali family. His parents wanted him to be traditional and follow their Indian socio-cultural values but American born Gogol, who is unaware about the roots of his parents felt, stuck between two worlds, two identities, two lives and duality of his personality. It is not easy for second-generation immigrants to retain their parental cultural traits in their newly adopted homes. However, they try to maintain the equilibrium between two worlds but mostly they are stuck just like Gogol Ganguli stuck his American life style outside his home and his Indian personality inside with parents. Stuart Hall has nicely discussed the confused life of the immigrants:

Anywhere in the world, diasporic groups are immigrants who know that their traditional native land are reflected intensely in the languages they speak, religion they adopt, and the cultures they produce. They remember their past through memory, imaginary, narrative and fairy-tale and their search for ethnic individuality make them as “individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, and rootless- a race of angels. (Hall 226)

Jhumpa Lahiri portrays the struggle of first generation, Ashima and Ashoke in the America to assimilate in new culture. American culture force them to name their baby in the hospital, which was against their customs, due to their compromising nature they name their child 'Gogol', his father's favourite Russian author. Gogol stuck in his multiple personalities just like his names Gogol, which was unable to identify him as American or an Indian. As a child, he likes his name but with his growing age, he began to hate it because it was the name, which makes him feel ashamed, as it was the symbol of his foreignness in America. He changed his name from Gogol to Nikhil, which indicated his compromise with Indian-ness, and finally he accepted his duality and proudly named himself Nikhil Gogol Ganguli, which was indication of his duality and hyphenated identity.

*The Lowland* is another best literary work of Jhumpa Lahiri published in 2013, which portrays the diasporic dilemma of characters. The novel is the depiction of isolation, guilt and nostalgia of the characters not only because of their migration to other places but also because of their decisions taken on certain situations. *The Lowland* begins with two siblings whose thinking and perspectives are contrary towards the future life. Jhumpa Lahiri's novel is highlighting the role of social milieu in the formation of human behaviour; it is the pictography of the sense of alienation, multiculturalism, displacement, nostalgia, cultural assimilation and the crisis of identity and family relationships:

Whenever the propagation of individual, non-customary, 'extra-national' imitation dominates over mere social imitations or the imitation of the 'national idea', local practices become transnationally relevant, questioned, contested and altered. Interestingly enough, Tarde called this process 'European equilibrium'. (Michael 93)

Sense of alienation and displacement in the novel remains core issues among the characters. Gauri's changing identity, first wife of Udayan and after his death, her marriage with Subhash then moving to America with her second husband, shifting to new home with different mind setup encourage her to redefine herself as per the demands of the social milieu to achieve her new goals in new life.

Changing identity and role of society are the two undeniable facts about the life of those who are living apart from their homelands. Immigrants have to adapt themselves to survive in the new lands, some immigrants change themselves out of choice and some choose to change out of social compulsion for their survival. Gauri's change was her choice in America, at first she wanted to live her life freely and abandoned her husband and daughter to give wings to her dreams in new place. Subhash's sexual relationship with Holly shows the signs of acceptance of newly multicultural society. Relationship of Subhash and Holly was a kind of unique one if we look at it through Indian perspective because there was a ten years age gap and Holly was a divorced yet Subhash was interested in her, which was clear showcase that he was losing the grip of Indianness and adapting himself as per the new society.

Jhumpa Lahiri nicely projects the feeling of nostalgia, alienation, separation and homesickness in her novel *the Lowland*. Subhash, who was working tirelessly days and nights for scholarship to study in America but in America he is felt alienated and estranged. Nostalgia, alienation and exile can be traced from the Subhash's comparison of church, streets and thinking about his brother back in India:

The notion of exile always emphasizes the absence of "home," of the cultural matrix that formed the individual subject; hence, it implies an involuntary or enforced rupture between the collective subject of the original culture and the individual subject. The nostalgia associated with exile (a nostalgia that is structural rather than idiosyncratic) often makes the individual indifferent to the values and characteristics of the host culture. (Jan Mohamed 223)

The study of select fiction of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri will provide us broader vision to understand the psyche of the immigrant population. The study of select fiction of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri will encourage readers to go beyond physical world to understand the nerves of diaspora population even living years in their adopted homes but the quest of ancestral homes and traditional cultural traits are always in their psyche. The struggle of diaspora



population about their existence and identity is one of the most important themes of the selected writers to project the struggle of those people who try to claim both the worlds and end up belonging to nowhere. Migration, multiculturalism and globalisation are the most focused issues of current study of diaspora and the people with hyphenated identity. The negotiation of diaspora population with new culture and accepting new life socio-cultural traits in the adopted homes project the determination of assimilation with new society and disregard their traditional cultural values. The retentions of limited artefacts from the old world and the process of assimilation with new world brings crisis in the concept of “home” and homeland which leads to the question of existential crisis.

## Chapter 2

### **Myth of Homeland in Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter***

The Past! The dark, unfathom'd retrospect!

The teaming gulf! The sleepers and the shadows!

The past! the infinite greatness of the past!

For what is the present, after all, but a growth out of the past!

(As a projectile, utterly form'd, impell'd, passing a certain line, still keeps on, so the present, utterly form'd, impelle'd by the past) (Walt Whitman).

Literature is one of the sharpest weapon of society to unearth the hidden facts and highlight the flaws of prevalent social arena to lead us towards the possible solutions in an artistic manner. It is not only the documented manifestation of past events but it is an artistic impulse to fill the real life blots with different insignia of imaginative sensibility. Literature is the depiction of deep consciousness of society; the way people behave, act, reflects and interprets the social norms and predominant cultural values in a particular manner. Art and literary mechanism functions as a fuel for an imaginative description of social issues in the era of globalisation. Innovations, ultra-modern technologies, advanced transportation and revolution in the communication field has encouraged the masses to move from one country to another in search of better jobs, security, and more earnings. In the era of globalisation, migration or immigration has created a kind of global village, which encourage masses to move towards the developed countries of the world for better livelihood. Moving and settling in adopted places is not as easy as it seems outwardly, people who already have settled in their adopted countries are facing drastic hardships because of their different looks, colour and their reluctance to accept new social and cultural norms, rejection from the host societies and failure in adoption and assimilation with new society fully. However, even immigrant population manages successful transformation in adjusting in new social milieus completely they try to find new groups on the basis of identity and ethnicity and upholding cultural traits from the past to keep their legacy alive in foreign homes. "Important and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor,

or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. Tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilizations” (Huntington 76). Moreover, Diasporic population maintains their ethnic and cultural identity in new homes to preserve their ancestral heritage that raised the question of identity and belongingness among the migrant population in foreign lands. “Culture, of course, is the way of life of a particular people living together in one place.”-T.S. Eliot

Migration or immigration is a common trend in this ultra-modern era of technology. To move from native homeland to adopted homes, which are socially, culturally and ethnically different, gives unique identity to the expatriates in their chosen lands because of their reluctance to mingle with new societies with different ethos and beliefs. Being a unique or different from the majoritarian populace is not easy to raise their own voice against the odds in newly found places. To raise the voice and highlight the issues, which the diasporic population is facing in their adopted and as well as their native lands goes unheard even after decades. However, in contemporary world many voices (writers) have come forward to become the voice of the voiceless population in these new alien lands through the pictographic novels and many other fictitious forms of art. Diasporic writers have depicted the plight of the marginalised societies to give them a voice that can be heard from any part of the world.

The struggle of diasporic population in search of their lost identity in foreign lands, to shape up the lost legacy, they try to form ethnic groups to give new meaning to their ambiguous identity. In the dilemma of identity, diaspora population bid to create a kind of bridge between the past and present by using hyphen (-) in their names and nationalities, which specifies further differences rather than bridging the gap, it widens the space between the ancestral homes and newly adopted homes by nourishing the sense of alienation and inbetweenness. Diaspora writing is one of the most notable research field in recent times to understand the pain, agony, anxiety and identity crisis of the migrant population, whether they have migrated by choice or exiled. Many writers are giving their voices to those people who are feeling voiceless in the ultra-modern arena. Many immigrants, who desire to settle in foreign lands, fail to understand the social and cultural differences in

their adopted societies and their ancestral social milieu. The lack of understanding about the new adopted culture force them to think about the decisions they have made to move to other parts of the world to reside. They want to adopt new social and cultural values but they also desire to maintain their sense of belongingness with their past conventions, the outcome of this chaos and confusion that brings them to the sense of living in the alienated world. Adoption of the hyphenated identity is itself a big question mark on their existence in the adopted lands and the lands of origin as well. Accepting hyphen is the symbolic meaning of asserting that they belong to nowhere, the confusion and indecisiveness of the majority of the immigrants pushing them to the world of darkness where they do not exist socially, culturally and ethnically.

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the famous voices among the diaspora writers to epitomise the difficulties faced by the first generation immigrants. She had first-hand experience of the chaos, confusion and cultural shock in the adopted homes, first in Canada and America and then in home of origin, India as well. *The Tiger's Daughter* is the masterpiece of literary work of Bharati Mukherjee written in 1971. The novel is the depiction of the immigrant psyche who are dwindling between two worlds and are unable to assimilate with any of the world fully because of the hyphenated existence. The novel is based on the struggle of assimilation and alienation of the protagonist which she faced first in foreign home and latter in her ancestral home as well. The protagonist, Tara Banerjee Cartwright, an Indian-born American citizen returning to her birthplace after living for several years away from her native culture is unable to adjust first in her adopted land and latter in her land of origin. She felt uncomfortable with her Indian relatives, shocked to see Indian railway stations, compares her co-passengers with circus characters, which illustrates her faded past and her failure to recollect reminiscence of childhood memories. She felt homesick and tried to defend her ancestral cultural traits in America. However, in India she failed to find her dreamland, which she has fantasised all the past seven years living abroad. Tara fantasies her American life more intensely while being with her family and childhood friends that exposes her to the crisis of identity and belongingness. Moreover, on her arrival neither she felt her ancestral roots nor her relatives accepted Tara as part of their own society. The

variant identity of the protagonist with the fusion of Indian and American-ness brought her to the verge of in-between-ness, alienation and cultural shock among the people whom she used to admire in foreign shores. Tara Banerjee Cartwright is the perfect representation of conflict of East and West in the novel. Bharati Mukherjee, the voice of diaspora population has highlighted the issues regarding the settlement and identity not only in the host land but also in the land of origin as well. Her novel, *The Tiger's Daughter* is exploring the life of those expatriates who are coming back to their native places in hope to find their missing roots but instead of being in home with own ethnic group yet they don't feel home as home and suffer same fate as they used to suffer in adopted lands. *Wife* and *Jasmine*, her two best novels are showing pain and struggle of the expatriates to adjust in new adopted lands.

*The Tiger's Daughter*, published in 1971 is a classic work of the legendary Indian-American writer, Bharati Mukherjee. This beautiful artwork is the reflection of the people who are dangling in the past and present and could not decide which part of the world they belong to. The main theme of the novel is feeling of expatriation, alienation and dislocation after returning from the voluntarily exile to 'home' and end up with the feeling of in-between-ness and belongingness. Bharati Mukherjee has first-hand experience of cultural conflict and confusion of past and present. Novel has autobiographical elements of the writer. In the novel Tara, the protagonist is missing her parental homeland in America while being in America; she is always thoughtful about the traditions, culture and norms of her ancestral abode. Tara, the protagonist trying to find her roots on her return to Calcutta from USA but she is unable to trace her former roots, which she used to dream in her hostel. Her comparison of India with America, letters to her husband to give him detailed description of everything she faced in India portrays her distorted identity and her ambiguousness about her belongingness to the past and confusion with present. She is failing to make peace between the past and present to claim her permanent identity:

Her visit to Calcutta is designed to highlight her expatriate sensibility and to show the extent of psychological distance created as a result of physical separation from her home country and its culture. As the

novel demonstrates, she no longer feels at ease with the Indian way of life, not even when she is in the midst of friends and relatives. (Mehra 239)

Tara's hyphenated nature provoke her to question her identity, belongingness and nationality. The hybrid identity can be observed from her name, Tara Banerjee Cartwright that is the fusion of Indian-American-ness and wanted to keep her past legacy intact, which alienated her first in America and latter in India. Novel, *The Tiger's Daughter* is the best portrayal of the East-West dichotomy, clash of past and present, in-between-ness, duality, alienation, loss of identity, conflict of host and immigrant and cultural shock. Bharati Mukherjee has highlighted the core issues regarding the hyphenated existence of diaspora population in their home of origin and the adopted land. Tara, the protagonist of the beautiful novel is suffering from self-exile; her physical alienation from her native place for seven years changed her perception about the homeland. She is unfit to adjust first in America and then in India because of her undecided past and present. Tara is unable to decide that which part of the world she belongs to. Bharati Mukherjee's heroine in the novel is the exhibition of diaspora population, who are absolutely unable to adjust in both lands and end up in a kind of trauma and chaos because of duality and lack of flexibility to adopt new life style and compromise with her past. At first physical alienation from the homeland for expatriates is a kind of self-motivated exile, latter it becomes their compulsion to live in a kind of identity crisis and feeling of displaced immigrant living in no man's land:

Some diasporas persist—and their members do not go "home"—because there is no homeland to which to return; because, although a homeland may exist, it is not a welcoming place with which they can identify politically, ideologically, or socially; or because it would be too inconvenient and disruptive, if not traumatic, to leave the diaspora. In the meantime, the myth of return serves to solidify ethnic consciousness and solidarity when religion can no longer do so, when the cohesiveness of the local community is loosened, and when the family is threatened with disintegration. (Safran 91)

The novel has a glimpse of autobiographical elements of Bharati Mukherjee. After one year of her marriage with a foreigner, she returned to her dreamland to find her memories but her visit to the world where she was born and raised is unlike her imaginary world. In a same way in the novel, the protagonist, Tara Banerjee returns her mythical home to find some solace, but she failed to reinvent herself, she felt displaced and alienated. She was treated as an immigrant who is in no man's land even with in her family. She failed to recollect her past and places, which she left seven years before. Tara is the portrayal of the Bharati Mukherjee's personal life complications, which she felt after returning to India. "*The Tiger's Daughter* presents a segment of society that Bharati Mukherjee herself grew up in and is familiar with: the upper middle class convent educated westernized boxwallah society, A hangover British Raj. It is the autobiography of a class rather than an Individual" (Tandon 38).

*The Tiger's Daughter* is an expatriate novel, based on the autobiography of a protagonist Tara Banerjee Cartwright, her search for roots, on her arrival after seven years from abroad; she does not feel connected with her childhood memories. The immigrant population carries a sense of exile, displacement and alienation because of their different origin, which separate them from the majoritarian authority and give them a sense of alienation and displacement. They suffer a kind of trauma and alienation not only in adopted land but also in the land of origin on return to their homes. This trauma and cultural shock is not always because of the host society, it is because of the reluctance of the immigrants to accept new cultural laws:

Culture is what defines us, a burden we carry wherever we go. The word 'burden' is meant to convey its positive as well as the negative meaning—a cross to be borne as well as the mainstay, the recurring refrain of our existence. A huge abstraction in itself, the word culture moves easily from being a noun to an adjective and a verb, implying impositions, design and education. Over the centuries, cultures have changed; the major agencies of change being: time in its historical flow, migration as dislocation and belief manifested in religion or through religious conversion. (Jain 23)

Tara, the protagonist of the novel is feeling disgruntled because of her own acts. In America, she carried the legacy of Indian culture that makes her feel “alien and other” among her American friends, however, on her return to India she brought up American cultural traits from her past seven years, which makes her again alien with her own family and relatives. Like Tara, mostly immigrants are living in the denial mode; they deny the truth about their existence at the present to get hold on the past, they try to make peace between present and past but end up in the chaos and confusion. Culture defines whole human nature, it consists of language, set of belief, customs, ritual and ceremonies in a particular society. It defines existence and attachment of an individual towards a particular approach, by mixing or adopting new cultural traits sometimes backfires and paves the way for cultural clash. Tara failed to define her cultural interest first in her hostel room and then in her home with family and relatives. She is confused to choose her home between her adopted home and the home of origin. There is a fear, dilemma, confusion and uncertainty among the immigrant population, which Bharati Mukherjee has invoked in her novel on the possibility of returning home from a certain geographical places related with reminiscence and emotional attachment. They try to retreat the roots, which they have left out years before but the changes which they have got from different places for years. Changes in the home land is unpredictable and unacceptable for them, they continuously deny to accept new fluctuations in them and in their homes of origin, which makes them feel living in no man’s land:

Personal identity is a set of attributes, beliefs, desires, or principles of action that a person thinks distinguish her in socially relevant ways and that (a) the person takes a special pride in; (b) the person takes no special pride in, but which so orient her behaviour that she would be at a loss about how to act and what to do without them; or (c) the person feels she could not change even if she wanted to. Most often, I will argue, the (a) meaning applies, so that for usage in ordinary language personal identity can typically be glossed as the aspects or attributes of a person that form the basis for his or her dignity or self-respect. (Fearon 11)



Tara's, the protagonist is returning home after seven long years missing her touch with childhood memories, felt alienated and nostalgic in her imaginary dream land. The dream of mythical homeland shattered when she failed to reconnect her roots. It makes her realise that her duality has brought her to the verge of identity crisis and un-belonging-ness. Mukherjee's heroine is very sensitive about her existence first in America and then in India. She was pitched up in the environment of social oppression, ambivalent identity, sexism and racism but she stand firm to create her own identity in America but in native land, she has lost her confidence. Tara is the portrayal of the immigrants who are returning home and the treatment they are getting on their arrival that makes them feel same as they used to felt in the foreign lands at the time of arrival:

Bharati Mukherjee's journey to India and Tara Banerjee's journeying back home have the same resounding echo of finding the "Self" after being battered as the "other" in foreign lands. Both of them, after the journey, decide to return this foreign land, home becoming a bygone phase, to which one could return from time to time... the homeland becomes a land unknown and foreign becomes a place of identity .(Singh 104)

Bharati Mukherjee explores the discrimination against the people who come from foreign shores to reconnect their family roots but they fail to recognise their identity within the family. Tara was received at the airport as a foreigner and an immigrant not as a part of the family. She was called "American Aunty" her husband was called "Mleccha husband", it was enough to make her feel 'Other' in the familial Calcutta. She was humiliated for his American behaviour "You think you are too educated for this, don't you?" Aunt Jharna laughed with a quite violence. "You have come back to make fun of us, haven't you? What gives you the right? Your American money? Your mleccha husband" (Mukherjee 45).

The unexpected treatment and behaviour from the nation they always devoted to and the mythical desires to claim their share in the ancestral legacy shattered. Tara began to realise that she is an outsider now in her native place as she was in America before. Her feeling of being an outsider in the childhood dreamland

is not only because of the way she has been received but also because of her westernised outlook and the fusion of east and west, collision of past and the present. Tara felt traumatised and the myth of homeland shattered after her failed attempt to reroot with traditional world, the myth, which she kept always unconsciously in her psyche in America. The reflection of past and the feeling of foreignness began to develop in her deeper unconscious mind. Tara's alienation in Calcutta is not only because of her American outlook but also because of the treatment she meted in her family and relatives. Her disappointment over the comment passed by the family and friends were enough to feel her 'Other' in Calcutta. For her relatives, Tara was too westernised to adjust in her ancestral Indian culture (45).

Bharati Mukherjee sketches the characters who are shuffling between location and dislocation between here and there. Tara's multiple physical and spiritual dislocations in the novel is the exploration of the immigrant psyche, alienation and dislocation is a mental state rather than physical appearance. Mukherjee's assertion of survival strategy amid multiple dislocations and the uncompromised nature of the immigrant population to find out the lost roots in their former routes. Tara is feeling alienated, displaced and dislocated, not only the treatment she meted from the outside world but also because of her inner consciousness. She is divided in faded past memories, her collection of imaginary homeland myths brought her to the mental trauma. She is unable to find solace in any of the places because of her duality and dislocated self. On her arrival, Tara, the protagonist is no more fully Indian as her seven years in the alien culture has changed her perception towards the native place. Her reactions in India towards the Indian infrastructure and the way she perceived Indian culture and her comparison of Indian and American life is a proof that she has lost her touch with the past for which she was crawling for in the West. She is shocked and disgusted by looking at railways and the passengers dresses. Her displeasure and dispassionate manner towards her relatives who called her by the nick name "Tultul". She did not want to be called as Tultul, which was normal during her Indian days, showing the reluctance to her family name is the clear indication of her reluctance to mingle with her past fully and her native cultural legacy. Mostly immigrant population are living

a life of splitted personality because of their lack of enthusiasm towards their past and present, which lead them towards the in-between-ness, duality and the nature of schizophrenia. “Our poor Tultul!” they screamed at her. “How thin you have become!” “And so much darker!” “Tultul, we thought America would-” ...She had not remembered the Bombay relatives’ nickname for her. No one had called her Tultul in years” (Mukherjee 21).

This liminality of migrant experience is no less a transitional phenomenon than a translational one; there is no resolution to it because the two conditions are ambivalently enjoined in the ‘survival’ of migrant life. ...This space of the translation of cultural difference *at the interstices* is infused with that Benjaminian temporality of the present which makes graphic a moment of transition, not merely the continuum of history; it is a strange stillness that defines the present in which the very *writing* of historical transformation becomes uncannily visible. (Bhabha 321)

Tara’s return to her roots with Western mind-setup was not easy task to find her imaginary home that she has hoped for on the arrival. Her strange behaviour with relatives when they call her by nickname ‘Tultul’, she had not heard it for long time while in America. However, for her parents she was not Tara Banerjee Cartwright but ‘Taramoni’. She was not happy with nicknames anymore, relatives were just strangers who are irritating her and breaching her privacy. The nicknames, which she used to cherish in her childhood, sounds strange to her westernised individual mind setup. Bharati Mukherjee’s idea of location, dislocation, relocation and the consequences that immigrants have to face while on return to their roots with blend of Indian and westernised mind setup, on return of Tara, she failed to relate her childhood ‘Indian-ness’, her hope for native ‘roots’ and the Indian sensibility is already lost in the individual western personality. The immigrant perception of perceiving their past is so complicated, Tara’s emotional attachment with Indian-ness was visibly strong from the acts she did in her hostel to create outside look more Indian but in India it seems that quest is already faded on her arrival at the Indian airport. Tara felt homesick and discriminated in Vassar; she is so sensitive about her traditional culture, felt offended even on trivial acts of her western friends.

Her sense of discrimination even when her classmates refuse to share mango chutney, it was not the chutney only but the sense of acceptance and rejection in newly adopted culture. However, she managed to adapt in her new homeland outwardly but inside her psyche, she is still longing for Indian-ness but on her arrival to Indian airport, she is unable to find that solace, which she was expecting, would feel in her native home.

Prevailing sense of alienation and in-between-ness for immigrant population is an inalienable part of their life, the feeling of alienation is not limited to adopted abode only but also in the birth land also. Tara, who was strong believer of her Hindu religious faith in Vassar, cannot recite mantras (Puja) with her mother in India. Whenever, Tara felt low and homesick in foreign shores she used to write her parents detailed note about her sense of displacement, “She prayed to Kali for strength so she would not break down before these polite Americans”( Mukherjee 14). Her attachment with past kept her always in the dilemma of the belongingness, first in Vassar and latter in India. She did not want to mix-up with her American friends but she wanted to share chutney with them to have a sense of security and social acceptance. In India, she felt same, homesick and began to wright her husband every detailed note about the condition of roads, buildings and other events. In foreign shores, Tara felt proud of her genealogy and Indian-ness but in her family, she is comparing every minute detail with American life that shows her hybrid nature and un-belongingness.

The relationships and attachments of the immigrant population with their old and new world is not a static but a dynamic part of their life to claim their share and belongingness in both the worlds. They desire to prove their loyalty with past and present homes but ends up in duality, in-between-ness and heterogeneity. The voices of the expatriate population from the fictional works of Bharati Mukherjee claims that there is a desire, quest and sense of belongingness with their old homes but the co-existence with new chosen life makes it complicated to accept old traits ever again over the newly adopted traits. They live with past memories like a permanent scars in their psyche, which they cannot remove permanently, they have to learn how to live with these scars and hope to find the solace in their present life with their faded memories. Samuel Huntington explains relationship of masses with their past and culture of origin in his book *The Clash of Civilisation*:

People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations and at the broadest level civilization. People use politics not just to advance their interests but also to define their identity: we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against... (Samuel Huntington 75)

Exile and alienation is a state of mind rather than a physical dislocation in this ultra- modern world. It is because of immigrants are unenthusiastic towards new milieu and unable to remain devoted to their traditional regimes even in new social structure. However, they enjoy new social life but the sense of patriotism remains mainly towards the home country. Undoubtedly, there is a kind of geographical displacement but literary it is a place they have chosen out of choice not by force in voluntarily migration In this ultra-modern world, migration is will based act nowadays rather than forced exodus or expulsion from their lands, henceforth there are little reasons to feel exiled or dislocated. Bharati Mukherjee's protagonist, Tara Banerjee is in spiritual alienation and psychologically dislocated rather than physical and social alienation in her hometown. It is Tara's personal choice to remain alienated due to her mental trauma, which she felt first in the reminiscence of parental home and latter about her adopted home as well.

Expatriates and immigrants cherishes and idealise their past memories no matter good or bad, they just create a kind of myth about their homes and homelands. Tara romanticised uncountable myths of the old world home and the illusion of perfect homeland shattered once she confronted realty, her myths of imaginary homeland crushed because she was unable to embrace the changes and differences in her native home on her return. The changes of her native society was unacceptable for her because Tara was just looking at the one side of the coin, she was not able to recognise changes she has got from last seven years while living abroad. Physical displacement is the compound substance of the alienation and loneliness among the immigrant population, Tara is feeling homesick, nostalgic of her past even when she was with her parents. She does not admire sightseeing in her way to Calcutta from airport. "Seven years earlier on her way to Vassar, she had

admired the houses on the Marine Drive, had thought them fashionable” (Mukherjee 22). On her return, she does not admire things, which she used to admire in her childhood days. She is disappointed with her relatives who came there to give her a warm welcome, the ‘shabbiness’ of houses on Marine Drive ‘appalled’ her now. It is not only because of changes in India but also because of her western lenses, she is perceiving things with western mentality which brings her feeling of displaced and alienation.

The alienation and dislocation among diaspora population is not limited to their foreign lands only but also in the ancestral homes when they travel back after certain period of time. It is a feeling of being different from the majoritarian social-institutions. They will feel different and alien among the old homes, old culture and old social environment because they have adopted unconsciously many traits from the new society during the years they were struggling to adjust in adopted societies. Immigrant population will keep that ancestral impulse in adopted homes; they have a quest to relate themselves with the old identities first in adopted homes and latter in their parental houses. They experience a sense of non-acceptance by host societies because of the hybrid nature of their personality, for Tara railway station is a ‘hospital’ “so many sick and deformed men sitting listlessly on bundles and trunks” (Mukherjee 24). Tara, as an immigrant in America attempted to save her old cultural sensibility; she was guarding herself against the odds of her host country. To maintain her relationship with past she used to practice her Hindu religion, prayed Kali (goddess), eating chutney and creating home like environment to feel at her ancestral home. She is feeling lonely with her relatives, Tara is uncomfortable in an environment, which she was creating in an imaginary based. “The immigrant, alienated from his homeland his people and his family, feels the wrench of separation. He had been pushed violently out from the nest of his birth. It proved a shattering experience and he longed to be back yearning for the security and the warmth of the feathery place” (Tandon 13).

Memories are playing a vital role in the lives of immigrants; they feel secure and attached with past reminisce wherever they go. The memories of immigrants are not limited when they are in adopted society but also in the homes of birth as well. Those memories are in form of imagination, nostalgia and renegotiation with past

and people they have left. When Tara was in Vassar her dreamland was India, since childhood she was trained to think positive about the Indian railways as her uncle was working in diesel locomotives, “but this time train ride depressed her” (Mukherjee 26) she is depressed not because of train but because of her western perceptions towards Indian railways. Her dreamland is now America as contrary before, she is homesick and nostalgic because her American husband was not accompanied with her. She is uncomfortable with vendors at Howrah railway station, it is like she is uncomfortable whatever comes her way in her first dreamland, India where she was born and raised. Her strange attitude towards India and her Indian-ness has been faded because of her acculturation, which has pushed her towards the in-between-ness and dislocated.

The lines between two worlds are vaguely very thin, mostly ignored by majority of the expatriates to measure its effects on their lives. They try to amalgamate two different worlds with separate destinations and end up in alienation. Immigrant population keeps shifting their perspective to extent until they fall in the imaginary alien land. Their worlds are based on blend of past and present memories, which remains always apart from each other in their subconscious mind. The lines of separation from past and present are not easy to notice but are very effective to separate one world from another. Tara is not confident about Indian food, Co-passengers and following her husband’s advice: what to eat and what to avoid. “She ordered coke, the Marwari, true to his nature, ordered nothing” ( Mukherjee 26). Everyone in the railway compartment ordered as per his/her nature, Nepali ordered the English food while Marwari ordered nothing and Tara ordered coke as per her newly adopted American culture. She is unconsciously following her American lifestyle in India, which provoke her fellow beings to treat her like a foreigner that makes Tara more alienated and dislocated. “There is a strange fusion of the American and Indian in the psyche of Tara. She can take refuge neither in her old Indian self nor in the newly discovered American self” (Ravindran and Dhivya 65).

Migration, dislocation and relocation is very complex phenomena to understand the real struggle of the immigrant population. Migrating from the hometowns to alien homes seems very easy to understand outwardly but it is very complicated process for someone to uproot oneself from one place and enroot in

other. It leads towards the located to dislocation, however it is not always only physical dislocation but psychological estrangement in both lands. The routes to establish new roots in estranged lands are prone to cross-cultural interactions, which lead to the chaos, confusion, doubtful of acceptance and rejection from the psychological point of view. The association with past and uncertainty in present always lead to the destructive routes that ends up in psychosomatic disorder. Tara is suffering from emotional breakdown because of her uncertainty with current situation, unacceptance of present and more indulgence in her mythical past. Her introduction to co-passengers as “I am Tara Banerjee Cartwright” was enough to observe her relation with America in the railway compartment. Her retention of family name “Banerjee with Cartwright” is showing again affection for her family legacy and love for her present American life.

Reconciliation with alienated past is always painful because of change in both the parties, host and expatriate. It is not easy to accept the changes in the ancestral home for expatriates after spending half of decade in foreign cultures. First Immigrants have to struggle in the adopted homes to accept new environment and new life style and shed their old cultural traits to fit in new societies. Chowdhury has explained the life of expatriates in the adopted homes: “The new immigrant has to deal with people essentially different from him; he has to learn and understand alien ways, language; he has to face unaccustomed problems; in short, he has to survive in a grossly foreign environment” (Chowdhury 94).

Bharati Mukherjee’s works are exploring that how cultural displacement is different from the physical displacement. In the novel, the vision of Bharati Mukherjee was to highlight the issues against the convictions that the immigrant population feels cultural displacement and social alienation only in the adopted countries. The impact of cultural dislocation and social un-belongingness for expatriates are same, whether they are in ancestral homes or the adopted homes. The intensity of being alienated and uprooted is same on the return of immigrant population in their homelands. They face many challenges in a way to enroot themselves, the problem and challenges they face are: rejection from the host society, reluctance to mix-up with all odds of homelands. Relocation in the adopted homes and find their traditional roots with blend of foreign customs complicate the



situation to enroot in the lands which they have left years before in hope of better life style for other parts of the world. Tara coming back to India to find her roots with foreign adaptation complicate the situation to adjust in the homeland, which she has left seven years before:

The darkness outside the window deepened, giving Tara time for unhappy self-analysis. For years, she had dreamed of this return to India. She had believed that all hesitations, all shadowy fears of the time abroad would be erased quite magically if she could just return home to Calcutta. But so far return had brought only wounds. (Mukherjee 30)

Bharati Mukherjee portrays the struggle and effects of cultural up rootedness among immigrant population in their past homes such a way that reader can empathise with the victims who suffers cultural loss and dislocation. To rewrite the past in ancestral homes for the immigrant population is a challenge in which mostly failed to do so. It is a difficult challenge for them to merge with old social values with new mannerisms from the foreign shores, the conflict of past and present is always there to which part of social and cultural life they wish to shun and adopt. The indecisiveness among the diaspora population is a consequence of being different and unique from the host societies whether in home or abroad. Tara's too much expectation from the old homeland brought her to verge of psychosomatic disorder. She created a mythical homeland, where everything is so perfect and will cure her every problem which she has faced in her new home. On her arrival to Mumbai, she begins to realise that her utopian homeland also has flaws that makes it more complicated for her to feel like a home, which she has left seven years before. Sense of rejection in hostlands and hostile nature of homelands is common among immigrant population; it is the divulgence and non-acceptance of present because of different past. Living with traditions with blend of new life hecks lead them to the hybridity in the world of alienation. Tara was defending her Indian culture in America but reluctant to admire Indian-ness while being in India. Her comparison of present life with past, first in adopted land and latter in homeland depicts her inbetweenness and alienation. This alienation does not come from outside world wholly and solely but comes from her mind also, which brought her more wounds and disparity.

The social and cultural rejection does not come from an individual, it comes from an entire social structure, and it does not come directly from the societies to articulate immigrants that they are unwanted in their new homes. It has many ways to make them realise that you are different now, treating as you are not part of the particular society anymore by making them feel you are unwanted guest with different background is worst part of anyone's life. Tara's feeling of rejection in this novel comes indirectly from her family and relatives and her response to those signs make it easier to realise that neither family and relatives nor Tara wanted to mingle with each other. For family she is an 'arrogant Americawali' because of her "American money and mleccha husband" (Mukherjee 45). and for Tara India is worst place to live and felt happy that she did not accompany her American husband. However, both parties were pretending to be normal outwardly but inside their minds, they know from the depth of their hearts and minds neither of them were comfortable with each other. The struggle to assimilate in new societies does not end here on rejection or acceptance but the real struggle begins the moment they desire to become a part of society, which does not embrace their differences in new lands. However, if both parties accept each other with certain compromises the potential problems of adjustment, chances of anxiety and failure of adaptation would make a way for expected isolation and alienation. As Kumar says, "an immigrant away from home idealizes his home country and cherishes nostalgic memories of it and so does Tara in America" (Nagendra 31).

Dislocation and translated self of the protagonist in the novel Bharati Mukherjee has sharply pointed towards the inner consciousness and psychological opinions about the diaspora concern among immigrant population. Tara's fondness for her native colourful and imaginary homeland, which does not exist in real world, she kept her childhood images alive in her psyche to feel her Indian-ness in Vassar College but was unable to accept the existing world in India, where everything challenges her dreams. She failed to realise the truth between myth and reality that lead her to the duality and alienation. Her splitted personality and her too much of expectations from her past brought her to the verge of break down as she failed to recognise her past imagery in current social milieu in India. However, she is willing to mix-up with her family culture but with blend of westernization, which lead her

towards the hybridity and splitted personality. She is divided in two different worlds, East and West ideologies that confronts every passing minute in India. Tara is suffering from psychological, social and geographical dislocations because of her dual personality and love for past.

Tara, the protagonist has been portrayed the victim of her own fate. She is emotionally estranged rather than physical, she is the victim of her own decisions rather than treatment she meted from outside world. Bharati Mukherjee has amazingly opened the inner conscious of the immigrant population that they are indecisive about their identity and belongingness. Tara's imaginary homeland is making her restless first in adopted land and latter in homeland. Throughout the Indian trip, she was always thinking about her American husband, David Cartwright. She has already compromised with the west but failed to realise that until the end. Her identity has been changed whether she like it or not, she has become Tara Banerjee Cartwright from Tara Banerjee, from Indian to American-Indian. First reaction of the Bengal Tiger when he saw his daughter after seven years "what is this? This is not the same girl I sent off to Vassar" ( Mukherjee 35). The expectations of her family and friends seems shallow and broken on her arrival. However, the army of her distant relatives and family from different places came to welcome their little "Taramoni", they squeezed to closer to touch her out of love and respect, their claims of having vivid details and childhood memories of Tara soon faded when they did not find their old Taramoni instead this time she was Tara Banerjee Cartwright. "But now that they were actually in front of Tara, they had nothing to say to her. Surrounding by this army of relatives who professed to love her, and by vendors ringing bells, beggars pulling at sleeves, children coughing on tracks, Tara felt completely alone" (Mukherjee 35).

Expatriation and self-exile leads to the identity crisis among immigrant population. During the stay in foreign shores, to make adaptation in new societies immigrants have to shed parts of their tradition, culture and old life style to make it in newly chosen life. As Tara did in the novel, she marries an American; she has compromised her Hindu Brahman legacy to find her new life in new destination. Although, she returns her home country, she returns with tons of American memories, new sir name, new life style and foreign husband. She is missing her

American husband, comparing things with America and felt alienated even among the army of the relatives and friends who came to welcome her. However, neither Tara was ready to accept the change she has adopted in last seven years in new society, nor relatives and close family members were ready to understand the changes in Calcutta. It brought them to the point where both are feeling strangers. Tara's alienation and dislocation is because of her hybrid nature, it is because she is looking Calcutta through the western lenses, she is behaving with her relatives as Tara Banerjee Cartwright not as their Taramoni, whom they were waiting for seven long years.

Crumbling identity and fragmented self-conscious destabilised Tara from her present to focus on her past that left her divided and splitted from her inheritance. She is losing her self-confidence in India while she was protecting every moment of her Indian roots in America. Although she is visiting her close relatives in Calcutta but her confusion and chaos remains in her inner-conscious about her expatriate self. After seven years from foreign land, she is just a shadow of her past life and missing her real life Taramoni. Alienation and displaced consciousness from her real life brought her to the real sense of up-rootedness even in her real home rather than adopted. She loses her-self to prove her past right rather than living in present, which lead her to the fragmented self and the sense of estrangement from the social and cultural point of view. Bharati Mukherjee has explored splitted and broken identities of the immigrant population who are stuck in the past and present and failed to differentiate between real and imaginary world. Tara is struggling with a psychological conflict rather than physical confrontation with her two worlds, which are torn apart from each other. She is trying to reconcile two halves of her life which are opposite of each other by socially and culturally that lead her to the splitted life in past and present.

*The Tiger's Daughter* believed to be having autobiographical elements of Bharati Mukherjee. On her return to Calcutta, feelings were same as Tara, disturbed by looking at political chaos of Calcutta etc. Bharati Mukherjee's interview with Ameena Meer about the novel: "It is very painful and traumatic, letting go of the old self. *The Tiger's Daughter* was written while I was still an expatriate. Then comes the reconstruction of one self, which is very difficult" (Ameena Meer). Her

confession, being an immigrant in mainstream America is not an easy task. It is a traumatic moment for anyone to claim someone or something that they know from their inner conscious they are not. It was painful moment for Tara to claim America her home when her heart beats for India. She is confused and depersonalised about her identity. Bharati Mukherjee's interview with Ameena Meer about the idea of expatriation or immigration, which she has infused in the novel was not something to show her own life but to open up with the hearts of millions of expatriates who are living in nowhere because of their different past:

I certainly didn't think of it as autobiographical. But my father felt he recognized himself in the portrait, and there were other people who felt that as well. In *The Tiger's Daughter*, I was writing about my class at a certain period in Calcutta's history, about a class and a way of life that's become extinct. (Ameena Meer).

The cultural conflict and isolation among diaspora population, which Bharati Mukherjee has portrayed in the novel, is something which every expatriate feels while living in their adopted lands. The process of cultural transformation and adoption of new social norms creates a kind of space that cannot be fulfilled easily, the adaptation of new life demands sacrifice of old roots to re-root in newly embraced world. Mukherjee has highlighted the space between home and homeland in the novel. However, she was not aware of biographical elements in the novel while she was writing it but for her family, novel was the best projection of their lives during their expatriate days. She has portrayed the changes and depicted the gap of being an individual who belongs to nowhere. In the novel, there is a psychological conflict rather than social and physical conflict depicted by Mukherjee. Tara is trying to redefine herself with every changing social and cultural milieu. She failed to recognise herself first in America and then in India, her homeland, which leads her to the question of her own existence. She is facing crisis of existence because of her failure to recognise her real home. Tara failed to assimilate fully first in her adopted home and then in her homeland, she was fighting a psychological war rather than physical. Bharati Mukherjee has emphasised on the nature of being an immigrant in alien lands and the feeling of alienation and estrangement in their native homes.

*The Tiger's Daughter* is the miniature pictographic work of reputed Bharati Mukherjee about the expatriates and their struggle to find solace in their lives keeping convictions alive in the psyche. The attachment with past and denial of the present is one of the biggest hindrance among the immigrant population in foreign countries to pave the way for smooth life in new world order. Many countries are reluctant to accept war refugees because of their diverse social and cultural upbringings and reluctant to assimilate in new world order in new homes, which results in hostile attitude between host, and immigrants that leads towards some serious consequences. "Members of diaspora communities are by turns mistreated by the host country as "strangers within the gates" or welcomed or exploited for the sake of the domestic and diplomatic interests of the host country. Internal social unity has on some occasions required that minorities be kept as diasporas" (Safran 92). The drawing of character, Tara Banerjee Cartwright in the novel is the projection of firmness towards the past and adopting limited characters of the present life, which definitely leads them towards the nature of hybridity, in-betweenness and alienations among immigrants and their denial to merge with new life style in new lands. Tara belongs to nowhere; she is confused and indecisive about her assimilation and belongingness. She felt chaotic and confused about her assimilation in new home in America seven years before in Vassar. Tara's comparison with present Indian condition with her Past American life as she was still in alien land, same as she was feeling uncomfortable in her first week in Vassar. "If she had not been trained by the good nuns at St. Blaise's to remain composed and ladylike in all emergencies, she would have rushed home to India in the end of her first week"(Mukherjee 13). She has to struggle in both places because of her positive attitude with past rather than present.

Bridging the gap between past and present or in old and new world by using hyphen in the national identities does not go well with many countries. The hyphenated identity among immigrant population and the hyphen in the nationalities is a question mark on their identities and belongingness. For some people hyphen is a bridge between two worlds and for others it creates a sense of alienation and develops a feeling of 'other'. Bharati Mukherjee's interview with Ameena Meer, she stated that her presence was like a bridge between two different worlds and wanted

to highlight the differences and similarities in past and present world. However, she was very comfortable with her acknowledged hyphenated identity:

I was very comfortable in both India and North America. I was a bridge between the two worlds at that time, both being fully poised in my perfect equilibrium: I could remember my Calcutta with distance, humor, affection—and I was functioning extremely well in North America, but I didn't know America well enough to feel lopsided. That was, in a way, my wisest novel. (Ameena Meer)

Tara wanted to maintain equilibrium between two worlds by keeping her past legacy intact in her present life that makes her more uncomfortable in both homes. Former American President Theodore Roosevelt conveyed a message that those people who are living in America with hyphen in their national identities does not belong to America (Carnegie Hall 1915). Hyphenated existence or identity is itself a big question mark about the individual's acceptance in a new society. Tara is using her American Husband's name with her Indian surname with hope that she would be accepted in both places. However, the way she was treated by her relatives and friends appears that she was not married to a person of her choice but a foreigner and an outsider with different cultural legacy.

The self-exile and transformation in social milieu carries an obvious change in the identities of an individual. Tara's strange dilemma about belongingness brought her to the verge of psychological trauma. She is confused about her existence in home and abroad because of her dual nature. The foreignness in her soul, which she is unconsciously following, her relatives and family members can realise her changed behaviour from past seven years. "Madam are you new here?" "Yes and no" said Tara, preparing to hide behind a time magazine" ( Mukherjee 27). Tara is confused, not sure about her whereabouts in India and her identity. She is hiding behind magazine to hide her real self to others. Growing up in different culture rather than her parental social scenario was very difficult to ensure her belonged territory. It is more complicated for an immigrant to ensure his/her identity related to a particular state or country when they have been born and raised in different territories with separate cultures. The confusion in ethnic values and

current social ethos, many immigrants try to find a middle path and overwhelmingly bridging the gap between two different worlds, makes it more complicated to decide which part of the world they belong to. Meanwhile finding a middle path to host and ancestral values to balance the way of life end up in the clash of cultures. However, connecting with the parental expectations, following their pathway in existing social norms lead towards the expected social and cultural conflicts. On Tara's arrival, her relatives were not comfortable with her behaviour and blaming her seven years in America. "Defeated and embarrassed, the relatives attributed Tara's improprieties to her seven years in America" (24). The hyphenated existence of Tara makes it more complex for her to adopt in home and abroad.

Bharati Mukherjee has redefined the crossbreed multicultural population who are suffering from anxiety and divided personalities. Mukherjee had first-hand experience of an immigrant life, before settling herself in America; she has to face the music of being 'other' from a different social and cultural background. She has excellently opened the way to look into the narrow passage of an immigrant mental setup through her work, *the tiger's Daughter*. The novel is the prognosis of struggle to redefine once identity and belongingness in the realm of hybridity. The milieu of hybridized nature and a space of being different is one of the most important challenge which diaspora population have to face at any point of life. Tara is facing challenges in her home because of her indecisiveness about her loyalty towards her past and present; her fragmented and splitted personality makes her restless and questioning her existence and identity. The dogma of perceiving things of human beings is different, Tara's dream of perceiving her past and present life through her illusions. Salman Rushdie has rightly highlighted the issue:

But human beings do not perceive things whole; we are not gods but wounded creatures, cracked lenses, capable only of fractured perceptions. Partial beings, in all the senses of that phrase. Meaning is a shaky edifice we build out of scraps, dogmas, childhood injuries, newspaper articles, chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved; perhaps it is because our sense of what is the case is constructed from such inadequate materials that we defend it so fiercely, even to the death. (Rushdie 19)



The myth of static and unchangeable recognition of identities among diaspora population has been busted in the novel. Bharati Mukherjee has smashed the myth of permanent attachment with past life of immigrants. Tara's marital relationship with an American is a compromise with new social life that shows her commitment and acceptance of new world, she fell in love with an American and was proud of that. However, on the arrival, her perception got changing and she starts thinking that she is married with an outsider who is 'Other' in her culture. Tara does not perceive things wholly but partly, she is too dependent on outside world rather than her inner conscious to gain serenity and peace of her mind. She is using different lenses in different place to perceive her life from beginning to present which suffocates her and pushes her towards the alienation and inbetweenness. Tara unveils the multiple ways to know and feel the immigrant experience in home and abroad. Tara, being born in one place and raised in across the world as Salman Rushdie whispered for Indian born writers in other parts of the world that "we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained" (Rushdie 24). Tara is a translated woman from East to West and vice versa, every time she moved to new place or translated she loses something from old legacy and gains new things from the new life, which lead her towards the alienation and estrangement.

Alienation and dislocation among the immigrant population has thin line between the reality and imagination. The space between past and present, memory and desire is a conscious state of diaspora mentality. They remember past and perceiving things same way as they have left their homelands and in many cases they expect enormous changes in their locale on their return. Their too much expectations from their past life, which has nothing to do with their present scenarios pushes them towards the deep chasm of confusion, dislocated self and alienation. The alienation and isolation of Tara in the novel is self-proclaimed and failure to understand the changes in the real world in Calcutta. An astonishing sight of Howrah station was not less than a shock for her expectations. "For a moment she thought she was going mad. For she felt that the Bengal Tiger, set apart from the smell and noise of the platform, had in her absence moved out of the private world

of filial affection. He seemed to have a symbol of the outside world” (Mukherjee 34).

The expectations which immigrant population have devoted with the memories drastically affect their way of perceiving things on return to their ancestral lands. Tara’s imagination was too high and glamorous than reality that vanished on Indian airport and railway station. Army of family and relatives could not help her to feel the home that she usually had dreamed of. The unexpected emotional state of alienation and isolation begins to grow in her dreamland, the interaction with her family and surrounded world, which was full of beggars, filthy and poor children, noisy ringing bells that makes her more estranged because all her expectations to find peace and serenity in her native country got vanished. The way her family members received her was not enough to impress her insight, it was noisy and filthy, and enough to give her insight the dark imagery about the world in which she has stepped in after seven years. The unexpected situations and reality of the Calcutta has begun to affect her intuition in the mythical homeland.

Bharati Mukherjee succeeds to portray the deteriorated image of Calcutta, the debauched management, political unrest, endemic violence and class conflict. The description of the Catelli-continental, a luxury hotel that was one of the grandeurs of city now in ruins is the signs of the waning state of Calcutta. The drastic changes in political and social structure of Calcutta has gripped the city in a worst kind of turmoil. Tara’s dream of imaginary homeland has shattered from the beginning of her days in India. “Calcutta had already begun to exert its darkness over her, she thought” (Mukherjee 36). The current situation of the city is antagonistic to the mythical world of the protagonist, the vanished hallucinations brought her to the point of conflict with past and exposed her to the feelings of alienation and inbetweenness. However, changes were not limited to the physiological changes but the perception of the people with whom she was grown up in childhood acts oddly. “Changes in the anatomies of the nations or continents are easy to perceive. But changes wrought by gods or titans are too subtle for measurement. At first, the human mind suffers pre-monitions, then it learns to submit” (Mukherjee 9).

Tara evokes her past, how she was using all her silk scarves and other Indian origin clothes in American apartment to reminiscence of past life in India when she was questioning her survival in other part of the world. However, she felt the same situation in homeland on her return after seven years. In India, America is a dreamland now same as she was feeling for India while in college hostel building seven years before. Her sense of alienation is mounting day by day because of the hostile attitude of her relatives. Her relatives who were waiting to welcome her at the airport did not receive her as part of their own society but as an outsider. Little nephews whose names and identities she did not know were touching her feet in “pronam” and mostly relatives hugged her awkwardly and speaking in Bengali, which she had heard after so long time. Tara felt uncomfortable when her relatives called her “our poor Tultul” they screamed at her. How thin you have become! “Tultul, we thought America would-” (Mukherjee 21). On the one hand, they called her Tultul, a childhood nickname and on other side, they made her realise that she is not welcome as “Tultul” but an “American Auntie”. They welcome her as American, an outsider by her nephews. The nickname, American Auntie was a symbolic to an outsider:

Natural surroundings, the flow of streams, the direction of winds affect creative imagination as well as the sense of identity. A sense of place, the architectures which the imagination encounters, the openness towards one’s surroundings, these impart a sense of belonging and reduce the sense of being isolated. (Michael 34)

The haunted memories of past and lack of integration in new cultures and societies are the major hurdles in the life of immigrants to assimilate and adopt in new places. The assimilation process is not limited to foreign lands only but they have to face same fate when they try to return their roots. To claim their association with particular society and culture, which they have left long time ago, it is not easy to claim their past, which they do not want with any kind of change. Tara is suffering same fate, she wanted to be an Indian with American taste and her claims of association with past first in America and latter in India makes her identity more complex. The enigma of diaspora population about their past, they live in one place and assumes their solidarity and attachment with their past, which makes them

different from the host societies. The connection with other cultural heritage makes them different. "Diaspora consciousness" marked by dual or multiple identifications. Hence there are depictions of individuals' awareness of de-centred attachments, of being simultaneously 'home away from home', 'here and there' (Vertovec 6).

Transnationalism among the migrants or diaspora population is due to the mythical representation of their homelands in their subconscious mind. The approaches of migrant population or transnationals towards their home and homelands are unique, they comprise ever changing appearance of imaginary coherence for their past that puts a question mark on their identities. Tara, a Brahmin Bengali girl is missing America same way as she was missing home in her first year of college. Towards the end of her first year in foreign country, she was seized by a vision of terror because mostly her colleagues were preparing to go home. She complained of homesick in her letters to her parents in Vassar College and latter in her home she is nostalgic of American life. Tara used to share her nostalgic feelings with her mother who would immediately prayed to "goddess Kali", who is the symbol of courage and resistance. Robin Cohen has nicely defined the bonds of diaspora population with the past and present, their transitional Identity and duality based on the territory where they are living in present and their place of birth. The connection between two worlds through the imagination and memories keeps them on toes to hold past memories wherever they go. "Moreover, transnational bonds no longer have to be cemented by migration or encased by exclusive spatial claims based on territory and a nation-state" (Robin Cohen 35). The expatriate alienation in their ancestral home lands are bound to happen, it is not only because of the treatment they are getting on their return but the fractured collection of memories from the past. Tara's nickname, 'Tutul' gives her strange feeling because she did not heard it for long time. Her relatives wanted to show off their "American jamai" who was an outsider for them. Tara's husband was an outcaste for her Brahman family that alienated her more from the roots, which she was looking for years, for Tara New York had been exotic place now. Tara kept her American memories intact in her mind that gave her new identity like transnational identity. Vertovec explains trans-nationality: "Therefore, we will examine transnationalism as social morphology, as type of consciousness, as mode of cultural reproduction, as avenue

of capital, as site of political engagement, and as (re)construction of 'place' or locality" (Vertovec 3).

The fractured collection of memories in diaspora from the past and an attempt to maintain numerous individualities in home and abroad lead them towards the more chaos and crisis of identities. The relatives of Tara in Bombay mostly blamed her American self as she wanted to go alone. The cultural differences can be observed in the second chapter of the novel, for Tara travelling alone was self-confident and the part of her American life. However, the same self-confident of Tara was defeat and humiliation for her relatives. "But how will I explain to the Bengal Tiger we are sending you alone?"...Defeated and embarrassed, the relatives attributed Tara's improprieties to her seven years in America" (Mukherjee 24). The stereotype and lack of acceptance in the ancestral homes on return of immigrants after certain period of time. Both host and guests are not ready to accept the flaws of each other, before leaving for home Tara had to promise her relatives that she will keep her eyes shut and she will focus only on good side of India. They do not consider her as an Indian who returned her home after certain period but she is just an American Aunty, a foreigner who is visiting India as a guest not a part of Indian society:

The paranoid threat from the hybrid is finally uncontrollable because it breaks down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside. In the productivity of power, the boundaries of authority - its reality effects - are always besieged by 'the other scene' of fixations and phantoms. (Bhabha 116)

Alienation and in-between-ness among diaspora lead them towards the voiceless-ness among their own people. They feel powerless to express themselves in the host lands. Suppress their inner feelings and voices due to the external forces or the treatment they met with in their territories. Tara symbolises the intricacy of immigrant population on the return to their ancestral homes. Bharati Mukherjee opens up with the imagery of fragmented personalities of diaspora, the influence of multiculturalism and the complication of the hybridity and hyphenation. The protagonist is dealing with unsolidified nature of transnationality and transcultural

that makes her feel alienated and voiceless. Seven years in foreign lands, after extraordinary turns of destiny that had swept Tara from east to west, from Calcutta to Poughkeepsie to Madison and then back to her first place, changed a lot for her in her land of origin. Journey from Calcutta to Madison has changed lot of things for Tara. “ Now on her way back to Calcutta, the gestures, the tones of voices, the deportment and dismissals that she had forgotten in the states suddenly came back with dizzying assurance” ( Mukherjee 30). Tara could not believe the way things are changing so fast, she had not thought that seven years in another country, which brought her new passport, new identity and a Maleecha husband, could vanish so quickly. She could not find her childhood memories to give them new shape with new foreign lenses. Everything, except her father seems alien and hostile for Tara. Initially In America Tara had same hostile attitude towards everything until her compromise with new society by marrying with David Cartwright. Madison had been unbearable for Tara, the chilly winter morning until she had fallen in love with her new life in the shape of David. After seven years to her roots Tara is in same dilemma as she was seven years before, her sensitive nature brought her shame and humiliation in front of aunt Jharna with whom she wanted to be nice by asking about her swollen feet.:

How does the foreignness of the spirit begins? Tara wondered. Does it begin right in the center of Calcutta...“Why do you hate us?” Aunt Jharna demanded. If she were more passionate she might have said, I don’t hate you, I love you, and the miserable child, the crooked feet, the smoking incense holder, I love you all. (Mukherjee 45)

Bharati Mukherjee has explored the notion of agreement and disagreement of diaspora with their past and present. Tara is confused, undecided because of the foreign traits and memories of past she has adopted unconsciously from America. She used to create Indian environment by hanging her silk scarves to make her apartment more like “Indian” and later she thought New York more exotic than Calcutta. The ambivalence of identity among the diaspora population can be found

in the protagonist of the novel. Tara is in fix between realities and imaginary, present and past, outer and inner world, her struggle to find her real identity and roots brought her to the verge of psychosomatic disorder. She recollects her memories from past experiences while in New York; she could not cease musing in Calcutta about “the foreignness of spirit” and the lack of passion to display her love and affection to the relatives. Tara is feeling alienated not in the foreign lands but in her ancestral home with people she grew up. She was startled and shocked the way she was treated as an outsider by her childhood friends. “What nonsense, she was not always so glamorous!” was the reaction one of her friend when asked by another friend that Tara “has not changed one bit, isn’t that just too much!” (Mukherjee 53). It was a shocking embarrassment moment for Tara that people with whom she grew up are observing her with obsessive attention like she is no more there. They are so desperate to study her dress like Sari, hair, lipstick, sunglasses. Their desperation can be observed when they are talking about her sari, which is traditional Indian dress code but for them, “and that sari, it has to be from New York!” (Mukherjee 53). The behaviour of her upper class Bengali friends was obnoxious because unconsciously they do not consider Tara part of their own society but an “outsider or other”. “Tara do not you think Calcutta’s changed unbelievably? I mean can you recognise this place at all? I mean can you recognize this place at all?”... “What nonsense! She better not listen to you people. She is an *Americawali* now, she won’t know you are joking.”(Mukherjee 54).

The occasional cold response from her friends and family she felt quite cut off from the people she love. She was keen to meet her own people she felt they love her when she was in North America. Her illusions of mythical dreamland is shaking and breaking now with every passing moment. The growing political chaos in Calcutta and mounting psychological detachment from her family and friends encourage her to think about returning to New York back. Feeling of being “outsider and Other” is growing in Tara, she is feeling more alienated and estranged with those people who have grew up with her. Tara’s instinct or intuition told her to stay away from the people who were her childhood friends. The more she thinks about their aggressive behaviour more she felt stuck in the land of aliens with unknown people. She starts fearing their tone, errors, upper-class attitude and strangeness of

their queries. The tragic psyche of an immigrant, which Tara has felt her early days in North America started feeling again with more intensity and crankiness with her own people. They admired her every change, which she has adopted in America to start new life but they never bother to ask about her husband as if he was not part of Tara's life anymore.

The growing detachment of Tara with present and finding herself close to past so complicatedly. It is vulnerable for her to open up with her close once. Her growing insecurities and psychological disorder brought her to a feeling of estrangement; she is insecure to share her feelings with her husband because of their different cultures. The cultural clash taking its seat in Tara's life, she is conscious to share anything with David, her husband. "But how could she explain the bitterness of it to the David, who would have laughed at her friends (Mukherjee 57). The immigrant psyche is always catastrophic when two socio-cultures clash each other. Tara born and raised in East and visited alien land and assimilated herself with new socio-cultural life style. She has to struggle to find her new identity, a new name and a new survival tactics. Marriage with an outsider was a kind of survival technique to find new meaning of her life in unknown place. She manages to conquer feeling of her homeland; she adopted new survival tactics in new territory and changed herself as per the demands of the new world order:

She recreates herself into a new personality and forms emotional ties with the place she lives in. This discovery of a new self slowly makes her forget her own native culture. On her return to her native land she finds that her native taste and touch have turned alien to her. Her mind is again torn apart between the cultural clash of two environments and she is forced to fight with her split personality. (Barche and Joshi 37)

However, Tara is keen to return her old Indian-ness but the fusion of American-ness always clash within her psyche. Her past and present is always confronting each other results in splitted personality. She failed to refuge completely first in American-self and latter in Indian-self. The dilemma of being out cast in psyche of Tara is not limited to Indian home only but she is no longer confident about her



husband whether he loves her or not, “Tara was afraid he no longer wanted to make her over to his ideal image, that he no longer loved her” (Mukherjee 63). Mukherjee has highlighted the inner consciousness of the immigrant who is dwindling between two worlds. The cultural space and the crossroads to new destination that leads to identity crisis and inbetweenness. The lack of confidence and splitted personality lead Tara to the verge of mental disorder, as she cannot share her inner world with anyone. Her fear of being abandoned by her husband after reading his letters while her mother “no longer loved her either” because Tara has abandoned her caste willingly to marry with an foreigner. Tara is no longer a real Brahmin for her family especially for her mother. Tara can understand religious sensitivity in her upper caste Brahmin family. She compares herself now with an Australian religious fanatic who was denied to enter their family prayer room:

How to explain our God to these Europeans?”...to Tara’s mother all white men were Europeans and she trusted them only when they were in their proper place. Now Tara saw herself as that unwelcome Australian... disturbed by the authentic religious emotions of her mother, she thought it best to go away. (Mukherjee 63)

Tara fails to realise change in herself rather than blaming outside world, she is misfit in Indian society now because of catalyst of American traits. Her changed personality, blended with Indian and Americanness, makes her misfit among her native relatives and family. She felt unwelcomed in her family like any other European because of her American attitude and marriage to an American an outcaste. The growing discomfort in Tara among her native people shows her dilemma of identity, which forced her to question her existence and belongingness. She felt guilty in prayer room because her failed attempt to connect herself with those prayers emotionally as she felt in her apartment in America. She begins to doubts her religious beliefs and authenticity after realising that she is no more ‘Taramoni’ who can recite those prayers with great zeal during her childhood days but a Tara Banerjee Cartwright who has detached herself from the Indian traditions for years. Tara wanted to leave payer room out of guilt, she failed to connect with her native religious and pious life. She is in dilemma that where to focus, letters from husband or religious rituals of her mother. Mother insists her to stay; she forgot

that Tara is no more her “Taramoni” she is Tara Banerjee Cartwright who has forgotten steps to complete native rituals. The conflict of multiple personalities of Tara drag her to the isolation. She wanted to go back to find her serenity with her husband. Tara feels that she is no more faithful Hindu as she forgot important steps to follow while making sandalwood paste. For Tara it was not simple loss it was the death of her Indianness, “Tara feared, this forgetting of prescribed actions; it was a little death, a hardening of the heart, a cracking of axis and center (Mukherjee 64). Tara knows her Indianness is vanishing out from her inner conscious with every passing moment. Religion and spiritual beliefs system hold a special place in societies since ages. India is one of the most religion following country in the world, Tara knows the importance of religion institutions in native home, when she could not repeat proper steps to perform religious obligatory with her mother she realises that it is the death of her Indianness. Earlier she used to write her mother to pray Goddess Kali if she faces any difficult situation in America but now in India she does not feel same. She was trapped in a gulf between two different worlds. She wanted to chant religious sermons but it was not easy for her with fusion of Americanness. She is feeling foreignness in her own home and questions her own existence and belongingness. “She finds that she is admired neither by her family nor by her friends. While the Indians condemn her marriage to a ‘mleccha’ as having stooped too low, being a Brahman in an upper caste, David, her husband, does not give her much credit...” (Tandon 29).

Immigrant journey from the routes to roots and vice versa is always painful process. In the journey, they have to form new identities. To enroot in new places it is important to dislocate from very first point to establish new identity. Tara’s journey from home to abroad and vice versa remains painful. She has suffered emotional breakdown first in her adopted home and latter in her ancestral home. Tara is the post-mortem of the immigrant psyche who are suffering from alienation, depression, dislocation and inbetweenness. Tara is the iconic presentation of psychological trauma of an immigrant who has faced hardships and survived all slurs and tragic adaptation in foreign lands but failed to recognise her own roots in their native places. Tara failed to understand the legacy of her native place, she is not less patriotic as compare to her friends but felt distant from their passion. Her

friends blaming her seven years in foreign land for lack of Indianness. Tara is a foreigner for her American husband and for her family Tara is out caste who has willingly sacrificed religion, culture and purity of caste by choosing a “maleecha” husband. She is more interested in listening English news rather than local. “I want to listen to the English news.” (Mukherjee 71). The memories of past seven years are contrasting with Tara’s present, she perceives things not as an Indian but as a foreigner, who is on short travel to see new sites. Stuart Hall has talked about the immigrant psyche and the retention of past memories:

The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual 'past', since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already 'after the break'. It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. (Hall 226)

Tara’s friends are more excited about her routine in New York rather than in India. She is excited to share every bit of American life but is unwilling to hear any negative comments from them. They want to learn daily English phrases from Tara but does not want to asking about her husband shows their curiosity about American life rather than Tara. They are only interested about her adjustment in new life not her family with an outcaste, With cold response from her friends, Tara thought that she is not married with her sweet heart David but a foreigner, “this foreignness was a burden” (Mukherjee 78). She wished she had not come to India without her husband but she has to restrict her feeling for her husband because people around will not understand what exactly is going on inside her psyche. It was hard for her to talk about marriage responsibilities with her American husband. The cultural and social differences are visible to Tara she is disturbed and confused that which way to go to find solace and love of David. She is missing David but cannot talk about it with anyone. For her family, it is a sin to marry with an outcaste. Tara can feel the gulf between two worlds as she is observing things through American vision and when asked about her identity in America by her friends, she is feeling guilty as if she wanted to hide something from her new life. “I would hate to be an

immigrant"...I would hate to be a nobody in America" (Mukherjee 73). Tara is jealous of her friends because they are more confident about their identity and existence while Tara is not sure which part of the world she belongs to.

The skirmish between here and there is always budding in the consciousness of immigrant population. They are divided in two parts, present and past. Tara is divided into Indian, American personalities she enjoys reading daily based foreign English newspapers to update herself about the foreign stock markets, and on the other hand she is reluctant to know about the Indian politics. She is trying to balance between present and past that makes her feel more alienated and displaced. Tara knows that her husband can not understand her religious sentiments but still she tries to show her Indian side by helping her mother in the prayer room. She is more interested at the Catelli-Continental in foreign newspapers rather than local news updates. Tara's interest in foreign newspapers, "The Times of London and The New Yorker". She is hoping it will bring her solace and help her to feel her husband closer. Tara is keenly observing her friends English and correcting their grammatical mistakes. Tara can observe the hypocrisy of her friends; they can love foreign movies, people and foreign product but cannot accept "foreign marriage partners." However, Tara is trying to assimilate with her roots but the differences are always there that she has got from last seven years. She is getting upset with her friends on petty issues, mostly those issues were common seven years before. Tara does not like Calcutta anymore, as it is very crowded for her and has many sick people and beggars around. Her friends started judging her when Reena complained Tara about her too much Americanness. "How is it you have changed too much, Tara?"...I mean this is no moral judgement or anything but you have become too self-centred and European" (Mukherjee 128).

Mukherjee's imagery of immigrant psyche in the form of her brilliant characterisation in the novel is a master class artwork. The colliding cultures of immigrant population, protagonist is dwindling in her own society. Her efforts to fuse past and present brought her to the complete alienation and separation from her own people. Tara tried to negotiate her East and West identity but end up in failure of her real identity. Instead of her best efforts to re-conciliate home and abroad Tara is still an outsider or other among her family and friends. She does not want to show

her hands to “Tantric” out of guilt, feeling of sins she has done in other part of the world, She knows it is horrendous crime to marry with an outcaste:

At the same time, we do not stand in the same relation of the 'otherness' to the metropolitan centres. Each has negotiated its economic, political and cultural dependency differently. And this 'difference', whether we like it or not, is already inscribed in our cultural identities. (Hall 28)

Anguish and acuteness of Tara's alienation among her native loved once can be observed the way she questioned her own identity. She is scared of her growing foreignness and alienation. Tara languishes in the solid grip of chaos and confusion because of her infused Americanness. As an immigrant, Tara lost her hold on the traditional identity. Her friends does not accept her as part of their society, they are blaming her past of being different. “Her friends let slip their disapproval of her, they suggest her marriage had been imprudent, that the seven years abroad had eroded all that was fine and sensitive in her Bengali nature (Mukherjee 70). The inbetweenness and un-belongingness in Tara has become her destiny she has realised that her sins are unforgiveable in her native place because of past differences. The identity crisis among immigrant population is due to the past, which they carry wherever they go. Stewart Hall has stated that, there are two different ways of perceiving cultural identities, which defines the true self, First defines ‘cultural identity’ in terms of shared culture, a “sort of collective, one true self hidden inside many other” which are more superficial and ‘artificially imposed selves’ and latter one reflects the ‘common historical’ shared cultural codes (Hall 2). Tara's hidden self is clearly visible to her friends, her artificially imposed self has distorted because of new adopted cultural codes, which defines her new personality in different ways in the ancestral home.

Mounting disintegration between host and the immigrant in the novel, Bharati Mukherjee opens up with deepest thoughts of Tara and her friends. Reena thinks that Tara has changed because of her last seven years in foreign country; she complains Tara's rude behaviour. Meanwhile, Tara does not believe in intense friendship, she purposefully treated Reena little rudely because she wants her to

draw a line between their needs and friendship. The budding differences between East and West in the behaviour of childhood buddies is visible in the novel due to their different priorities. Tara is visibly upset not only to her companions on picnic but it was her frustration and failure to find solace and mythical homeland in Calcutta. Her frustration is the outcome of growing feelings of 'Otherness' among her friends. Bhabha explains the importance of traditions in shaping of identification. "The recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification. In restaging the past it introduces other, incommensurable 'cultural temporalities into the inventions of tradition" (Bhabha 2). Tara has lost her tradition, she cannot remember her puja, and she failed to find her religious, social and cultural roots in her homeland. Her inner conscious is no more an Indian as she can only find faults in Indian life style. From the beginning of her journey in India she started to incline towards her new American life, for her Calcutta is where she can see only poverty, distorted childhood of street kids, beggars, and filthy infrastructure.

Bharati Mukherjee has concluded the novel with absolute chaos and confusion where Tara is uncertain whether she will be free from that horrified situation of Calcutta or not. She failed to reconnect, restore and rejuvenate her past in Calcutta because of her infused Americanness, which she was following unconsciously among her Indian friends. Being an immigrant, Tara rejects Indianness from the beginning of the novel until her proposed exit for America where she used to dream of her native homeland. The crisis of hyphenated existence in Tara is vividly visible to the readers as she failed to find solace in her adopted home first and latter failed again to find her imaginary homeland as well. The bridge, which she wanted to create between her past and present, turned up deeper chasm between two worlds.

The crisis of identity and belongingness in the masterpiece of Bharati Mukherjee can help us to dive deeper in to the psyche of the immigrants who are suffering from hyphenated existence. Tara failed to reincarnate her past in both homes, she has to end up in paradoxical situation where she has nowhere to go. The alienation and dislocation among the people with whom Tara was born is the blueprint of the delusional psyche of those people who believe moving or migrating

to other place would bring them happiness and stability like Dimple Dasgupta, the protagonist of the novel, *the Wife*, suffered mental trauma to become more American. Mukherjee has highlighted the crisis of hyphenated existence beautifully in her novels. The protagonist of the novel expected that migration from India to America will solve every problem in her distorted life but where she faced more challenges than ever before. Dimple killed her husband to become more like American, in this battle she lost her everything, name, identity, and mental stability to prove herself complete American. Mukherjee's two women protagonists of two master works provide lenses to the readers to understand the psyche of the immigrant population whose myths of returning of homeland to find their heart and the myth of moving to other countries to find the solution of every problems.

Mukherjee has vividly explored the concept that the alienation and dislocation among the immigrant population is mostly based on psychological rather than physical. Tara, the protagonist of the novel was always looking for a way to visit her native country to find her heart, she believes that once she would be in India, all her nightmares would vanished and she will find her solace, which she has been looking for seven years in foreign soil. However, she failed to reconnect with her past. Her comparison with Indian culture with America brought her to the point where she found herself in the midst of distorted self and hovering between Present and Past. The ideological conflict among immigrant population is self-created to redefine their new identity, which is contaminated from both the Past and Present.

### Chapter 3

## **Metamorphosis: An Expedition for Self-Refashioning in Bharati**

### **Mukherjee's *Jasmine***

There are no harmless, compassionate ways to remake oneself. We murder who we are so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams (Mukherjee).

Diaspora literature has magnificently highlighted the plight of the marginalised class of society living abroad, particularly from the Asian origin who are living in western countries with the sense of alienation and displaced even after living there for decades. Bharati Mukherjee, an Indian-American writer who has exceptional name and fame among the best diasporic writers in the world of literature has highlighted the life style, alienation, struggle, duality and psychological displacement of the immigrant population in her mostly novels. She has pinpointed the Indian origin diaspora population who are living abroad with hyphen in their identities. In her first novel, *The Tiger's Daughter*, Mukherjee's leading character, Tara Banerjee Cartwright failed to mend her roots in ancestral hometown after seven years of living abroad and adapted western cultural traits. Tara failed to re-root herself with 'Past' about which she used to dream always in America. Tara's identity crisis is because of her duality and indecisiveness about her belongingness. Mukherjee's heroine failed to connect her past life and finally stuck in a chaos and confusion while trying to return her adopted home, America. The novel ends up with chaos, political turmoil and psychological trauma of the protagonist where she felt stuck hopeless and helpless in her car while trying to return her adopted home, America. Mukherjee has explored the journey of an immigrant in the novel who struggles to find her lost touch with her birth place and started mission from routes to roots. Mukherjee's class and her amazing art of storytelling allows readers to jump into the psyche of immigrant or emigrant population effectively to understand the pain, trauma and alienation. The protagonist failed to find her ancestral dreamland due to the catalyst of the new name and identity from new world order. Tara's marriage with a maleecha (white man) is the symbol of adaptation and negotiation of the protagonist with new world.



The second novel, *Wife* (1975) of Bharati Mukherjee has explored the journey of an immigrant from roots to routes in search of self-identity. *Wife*, the novel is based on an Indian woman whose dreams are highly devoted with marriage with a successful neurosurgeon and living abroad free life. Dimple, the protagonist of the novel who was excited to move and live happy and prosperous life in foreign country, although, faced cultural shock, alienation and displacement in the adopted home. The expected shock and mental trauma due to her alienation and cultural differences with new home, to assimilate with new culture, protagonist took the path of violence to feel more aligned with modern Americanness.

Dimple failed to understand the consequences of her dream world. In her mythical world everything is possible and every action brings positive response to respondent; she lost her consciousness in the glamorous world of America. Dimple botched her Indian self to fit in new American culture where she lost her husband and cultural legacy of an ideal Indian wife. Bharati Mukherjee has highlighted the dark side of the unfulfilled dreams of immigrants who are stuck between the reel and real world in foreign lands. Dimple Dasgupta, the protagonist of the novel failed to differentiate between real and imaginary world in her new home, she was extremely absorbed in American television serial characters and begins to think that these characters are the only companion in the world of alienation and separation. Her unfulfilled dreams of fundraising parties and too much expectations from her husband who was struggling to find suitable job in newly adopted place to give her good life. Dimple felt betrayed by the glamour of the West in which she killed her husband and hoping authorities will never catch her like most of the fictitious characters of American serials live freely even after doing heinous crimes like murder etc. The story of the novel is projection of the struggle, cultural shock, and unsettled account of an Indian origin woman who lost her battle in the midst of Indian and Western cultures because of her lack of surviving skills. Dimple failed to assimilate in new culture because of her lack of contact with real world that lead her to buy more ideas from American commercial world, which was far away from the reality.

Bharati Mukherjee's first and second novel is the prognosis of the immigrant population who failed to re-root in their ancestral homes and remains unsuccessful

to assimilate in adopted homes as well. Mukherjee's third novel, *Jasmine* (1989) written in bildungsroman style, unlike other two novels, *Jasmine* narrates the odour of a successful immigrant women who assimilates with new social and cultural milieu with lots of struggle and firm determination. *Jasmine* is the epitome of the immigrant population who are firm to leave their past behind and grab every opportunity to adjust and adopt in new life which they dreamed of. Novel traces the eventful life of the protagonist from her rural typical Punjabi life style to en-route the western shores.

Migration has never been so easy for anyone to fulfil their dreams in foreign shores, it demands firm determination and physical and psychological strength to transform as per the demands of the situation. Mukherjee confessed in her interview with Michael Connell, Jessie Grearson, and Tom Grimes that immigrants have to go through some kind of physical or psychological violence to transform one world to another. "Yes, and I can see that in my own life it's my character Jasmine's case it's been physical violence poor farming family" (Mukherjee 8). Jasmine, the protagonist of the novel has to go through many transformations to prove her quest for new identity and assimilation with new world. However, every transformation of the protagonist in the novel has its own significance to fulfil her dreams. She has to fight for everything she achieved from Jyoti, Jasmine, Jazzy, Jase, and Jane. Mukherjee's heroine fights back with odds and unfavourable situations; from her widowhood to an au pair. The journey from her home, Hasanapur, Punjab to mainstream American life has never been so easy. Mukherjee's heroine is the portrayal of the pain, agony, homelessness, alienation, restlessness, dislocation and assimilation with new life:

We are the outcasts and deportees, strange pilgrims visiting outlandish shrines, landing at the end of tarmacs, ferried in old army trucks where we are roughly handled and taken to roped-off corners of waiting rooms where surly, barely wakened customs guards await their bribes. We are dressed in shreds of national costumes, out of season, the wilted plumage of intercontinental vagabondage. We only ask one thing: to be allowed to land; to pass through; to continue. (Mukherjee 101)

*Jasmine* is the story of an Indian girl who redesign her new life in foreign shores. Bharati Mukherjee has conveyed the message that immigrant and expatriates have to understand that there are no ways to go back and no easy way to resettle in alien lands, they have to struggle and redesign their lives as per the wishes. Jasmine, the protagonist of the novel successfully restructure her destiny from her early age. She fought with odds from her birth, first with traditional Indianness with family who wanted to end her life because she was an unwanted child for her parents because of her female gender, her resistance to the man sitting under the Banyan tree in Hasanapur, a village in Punjab who prophesizing her exile and alienation in future life. Her firm determination and courage to face the adversity to fulfil her husband's wish to find new locale. However, her journey from location to dislocation and to relocation was not an easy task, she has to go through mental trauma, alienation, displacement and has to compromise with every situation to achieve her goal of assimilation.

Transnationalism and transplantations of the migrant population remains the main focus of the Bharati Mukherjee's fiction. Novels mostly deals with the trauma, memory of ancestral homelands and past that affects their newly adopted life, nostalgic about the social and ethnic cultural traits. Mukherjee's protagonist in the novel is description of inventing and re-inventing of selfhood in newly adopted social milieu. Migration and dislocation always disrupts the ancestral identity and provokes to redefine and search for new identity that is suitable to new chosen life. Jasmine's search for new identity brought her to the brink of mental trauma, alienation and multiple personality that emboldens her to accept new challenges with different identities to quench her quest for new identity and belongingness with transformed self in new homeland.

Exile, expatriation and multiple-dislocations of the protagonist in the novel is the main crux of Bharati Mukherjee's fictional works to project the glimpse of life and struggle of the immigrants in alien lands. The young heroine of the novel, born in a village named as Jyoti transformed in to multiple personalities to fulfil her different goals. Jyoti's husband, an ambitious person re-baptised her as Jasmine, a symbol of courage and self-dependent women and freed her from the shackles of the traditional patriarchal Indian rural system. Jasmine is more confident and self-reliant

women who wanted to help her husband by saving money and providing emotional and psychological backing and even fulfilling Prakash's dream of going to America after his death. However, her early widowhood and wish of her husband to settle in America compels her to follow her dreams and adopt new names like Jazzy, Jase and Jane in her dreamland. According to Florence D'Souza, "these dizzying identity and role changes enable her to explore ever new facets of herself as she adapts to the changes her life" (Florence 188). Jasmine presents the different perspective of immigrant life, she embraces both the worlds, past and present life and embraced changes whatever new life offers her in new world. Mukherjee promotes globalisation, multiculturalism, east west harmony, cultural heterogeneity and assimilation in adopted lands for immigrants. Jasmine is the post-mortem of an immigrant who has successfully assimilates with new multicultural American society by embracing the changes from transmigration to transnational. Mukherjee's heroine is not the presentation of the countercultural assault on ancestral cultural and social legacy but guides to embrace the changes to assimilate in new social and cultural life. Adaptation and assimilation in foreign lands is the significant component of survival skills to re-root in foreign shores to begin new life with new hopes and identity. In the novel *Jasmine*, the protagonist is the dreamer, who wanted to fulfil her wishes to adopt and embrace changes not only her physical appearance but adaptation in new social, cultural and psychological as well in alien lands.

Reincarnation and rebirth of Jasmine with different avatars from her village life to illegal immigrant in America witnesses that every avatar of protagonist has a different role to play. Every transformation and adaptation demands negotiations with past to counter present. However, after every transformation, immigrant population needs to focus on surviving skills for beginning of new life in new world. Jasmine is a fighter by birth; she fought in the past for her survival and kept these potential surviving skills until end of the novel. Accepting changes and taking risks for her survival makes her Mukherjee's most successful immigrant character who fought with odds to reinvent and redefine her selfhood instead of bending and accepting defeat:

The potential of fluidity, which Mukherjee attributes to American culture, is epitomised in the main characters' 'metamorphosis' from

gyoti, a Punjabi village girl, to Jasmine, a loving and devoted Hindu wife, to kill, incarnation of destroying goddess, to Jazzy, a remade, non-immigrant, to Jase, a nanry in the home of a New York college professor, and to Jane, live-in partner of a bank official in Iowa. Each of these character-transformations is marked by changes in behaviour and personality, such as her successive 'rebirth' seems analogy to Hindu transmigration of soul. (Tandon 137)

Mukherjee's heroine is born with survival skills, from her childhood she achieved eminence in every role. Jasmine is a successful immigrant, wife, an au pair and a lover. She was the favourite of her 'Master ji' because of her intelligence, her good skills in Urdu and a light house among the school kids who can read English. Mukherjee portrayed the heroine who is full of energy, courage and self-respect. She killed rabid dog in self-defence when mostly villagers were scared and did not help. Jasmine took revenge from Half-face who raped her when there was no one to protect. Her inborn instincts like intelligence, beauty and survival skills remains there. Although, the group of Sikh radicals murdered her husband, Prakash Vih, instead of remaining in shock and living a deprived life of a typical Hindu rural widow, she chose to fight back and fulfil her husband's dream to join her professor Vadhera in America. However, the journey from her homeland to dreamland was not an easy task, she faced so many challenges in the way instead of bending down she decided to challenge every problem and move ahead, her will power and determination to accomplish her mission of America proves her survival skills even in her adverse situations.

Bharat Mukherjee's characters are courageous to endeavour new ways and embrace challenges and transformations in foreign lands. They do not hesitate to adopt, adjust and assimilate in new social milieu. "He needs to own. Owning is rebellion, it means not sharing, it means survival. He ate bugs and worms and rodents. He lived. He is a quick study, all right" (Mukherjee 30). Du, an adopted son of Jasmine and Bud Ripplemeyer is a survivor like Jasmine. He was also as an illegal immigrant like his mother. Du has to eat insects; his sister who kept herself hungry to feed Du projects their negotiation and surviving skills on the foreign

shores. In Mishra's vision, in multicultural societies negotiation and adaptation is the key factor for successful immigration in the mainstream host societies:

Diasporic/multicultural identity requires constant negotiation so as to critique the dominant group (which denies minority identity) as well as self-reflect on its own demands for particularism...The solution, if there were one, would imply that the true content of the universal has been found once and for all and there is no need for a radical imaginary. (Mishra 183)

Coexistence with existing dominant host society makes it difficult for diaspora or immigrant population to adjust without negotiations to claim their own share of belongingness in new world. Mishra claims in his book it is impossible for immigrant population to coexist without shared some universal values and the sense of belongingness with certain communities in the host society to redefine selfhood and to answer the question of being and belongingness in a particular group or society. They have to struggle to fit in new world order for their existence. Jasmine is a gold digger as per Bud Ripplemeyer's ex-wife, Karin and 'day mom' for Duff in California. There is negotiation in every new identity which protagonist is adapting in her journey; she has to compromise repeatedly to assimilate in alien land. Although, Mukherjee does not believe in living past and her protagonist is also reluctant to host her past life. Jasmine is not interested in preserving her horrible past she just tries to move on with what new life offers to survive. Her journey from day mom to live-in partner begins when her past stuck her again in the shape of Sukhwinder, who killed her husband in Punjab. She chose to move again and begins new journey with new identity. "I survived the sniping. My grandmother may have named me Jyoti, but in surviving I was already Jane, a fighter and an adopter" (Mukherjee 40). Immigrants have to go through mass transformation and negotiations with new environments. Mukherjee's characters are resilient to go through: dislocations, alienation and exile to achieve their final destination. However, the destinations are uncertain and dynamic which keep changing but the intricacy and the quest for their fantasy world and search for identity paves the way for their aspirations to assimilate with new world order. "You learn to roll with the waves and hold the vomit in" (Mukherjee 104). Mukherjee's heroine is a kind of

cosmopolitan citizen, who never halts her mission but kept it on to exist in adopted world, she never felt her traditions and ancestral cultural legacy becomes hurdle in her way to achieve goal of becoming naturalised citizen of her dream land. She knows how to turn the waves in her way to world of fantasy. Negotiations and compromises of diaspora population to assimilate with new society is part of the struggle to identify their existence in new lands.

Nostalgia and relapsing of the past life is common among the diasporic population, there is always a kind of dilemma of past and present, a dilemma of factual present and mythical past. Bharati Mukherjee's heroine is strong enough to decide between facts and myths. Jasmine's journey from India to America was not lucid, it was full of challenges and obstacles she could have lost her hopes and committed Sati in the memory of her husband but she decided to fight back the odds to achieve her designated goal. Jasmine is aware about the journey and its fears. "we are the refugees and mercenaries and guest workers; you see us sleeping in airports lounges; you watch us unwrapping the last of our native foods, unrolling our prayer rugs, reading our holy books...a photo of happier times, a passport, a visa a laissez-passer"(Mukherjee 101).

The doubtful existence and the question of being 'Other' is indomitable part of the immigrant life in foreign shores. As Mishra defined that if the "universal subject is non-existent" and the space between host and guest, adopted self and the real self becomes wider. "The divide now is not between a subject position and a transcendental or absolute signified but between the particularism of the multicultural other versus the implied universalism of the Self" (184). Jasmine knows her doubtful existence in foreign shores, her futuristic mental set up and the 'third eye' which she claims in her childhood in the village, Hasanapur of Punjab. The reaction to the prediction of widowhood and exiled life in future, Jasmine protested against the prophecy of astrologer. "What is to happen will happen...fate is fate" (Mukherjee 3). Exile and widowhood was Jasmine's fate and resistance and resilience was her own choice to redefine her stars in her own way. Mukherjee's heroine is strong and courageous to mend her ways from exile to statehood and alienation to assimilation with new signature of life in new world. Instead of tough ways to face she refused to bend down and decided to fight against "my fate and my

will” (Mukherjee 12). She knows her migration to other part of the world will blur her memories and fade her past; she has to find new identity, new place and new existence. She chose to take adventurous risk and kept on her ‘phantom way’ to find new life in new shores. “If the place/terrain from which the universal subject is non-existent, then a space is created for the evolution of the multiple identities, and new forms of multicultural subjectivities” (Mishra 183).

Dislocation and displacement are two common life checks for immigrant population. They desire to move for better life and better security but they do not want to shed their ancestral cultural legacy easily and end up in alienation, inbetweenness and hyphenated existence in their dreamlands keeps their legacy alive in shape of broken past memories. However, the mission of the protagonist of the novel is more sacred than to remember her dreaded past. Jasmine has a past but her focus is on present rather than appalling past events. “I don’t have a child .but I had a past that I was still fleecing. Perhaps still am” (Mukherjee 34).

We are aware that this cannot be Jasmine’s standpoint since her role in the novel is of the naive, but resourceful migrant woman, who tries to survive in America. She is portrayed in the active role, as the woman making sure she has no time for reflection or nostalgia. These cultural and political afterthoughts, therefore, come from an external omniscient voice that sets the whole novel into an ideological and culturally located frame. (Sandra 38)

Mukherjee’s character are bold enough to face the reality. She never forgot her past completely but has a courage to anticipate with what life offers her in present rather than diving in the broken memories of her dead husband, widowhood and her dead father. She evokes her father, who kept his Lahore legacy alive even after decades of losing his status. He would listen Pakistani radio broadcast even after years of partition and exile from the place where he was born and raised. She understands all that pain and nostalgia but knows “he will never see Lahore again and I never have. Only a fool would let it rule his life” (Mukherjee 43). She realises the limits of living in the past so she decided to live in present rather than diving in past, which will bring only pain and sorrow. “Prakash had taken jyoti and created jasmine, and jasmine would complete the mission of Prakash (Mukherjee 97).



Bharati Mukherjee is providing new lenses to readers to understand the real struggle of the immigrant population with in self that is their past and present. Jasmine believes that beholding the past from the shores of alien lands will bring disparity to the half settled lives of her immigrant life. Her view of observing past is different; her past is providing inspiration rather than disparity. She is ready to take adventurous risk for her mission to live 'real life', which Prakash had promised. Jasmine's transformation from different identities, locations, and roles; every role offers her new wings to fly and get closer to dreams of new life.

Migrants and expatriates are aware about their loss and gain in the way to new settlements; they are aware about the negotiations and sacrifices to merge with new life. To lose parts of their traditional and ancestral roots are expected price to re-root in new lands. As Robin Cohen expresses his views: "the newly formed congregation will be engaged in a process of respatialization as new identities and networks have to be re-engineered a long way from home". The sacred thread of past life is constantly under threat, "Sacred and secular space will constantly be under renegotiation with the surrounding communities and with other coreligionists" (Cohen 154). Although, the mission, which they desire to achieve demands some sacrifice and compromises. During their journey towards the particular directions, the holy mission begins with negotiation and compromise with identities like, national to transnational, location to dislocation and re-location, host to guests and assimilation to alienation. As Cohen describes the belongingness and roots. "If ever we were to lose that piece, something within me will have died. I will have lost my roots. That piece of land holds me here, provides me with a sense of identity" (Cohen 154). The piece of land where they born and raised gives a sense of belongingness and identity. However when they start their mission to other alien world they already make negotiation with it. Meanwhile, aboding in foreign shores Jasmine understands the cost of journey from roots to routes but she prefer to follow her dream rather than succumb to conventional past. "There is no dying, there is only an ascending or a descending, a moving on to other planes. Don't crawl back to Hasanapur and feudalism. That jyoti is dead" (Mukherjee 96). She is aware of her changed identity in adopted land from the native to foreign and homeland to alien identity. Jasmine's wit and strength of observing the status of being dislocated and

displaced in American mainstream culture helps her swift adaptation and negotiation with past and begins to acculturate and assimilate with popular culture of current society. To assimilate with popular social milieu in alien lands, she alters the conventional laws and dismantles the stereotype of social and moral codes.

Physical dislocation and cultural displacement is when an immigrant moves from one country to other legally or illegally. Physical displacement is prime issue in the lives of migrants in other parts of the world, which provoke them to search for new locations and identities as per their choices. During the assimilation route, they feel cultural displacement because they have to compromise with certain things to mingle with new milieu. As Bharati Mukherjee's early two novels portrayed the life of those immigrants who failed to resist their past and lacks the knowledge about the host society. In *The Tiger's Daughter*, Mukherjee's protagonist failed in her hometown to find her roots after living in west for seven years, away from her ancestral home. In *Wife*, protagonist failed to assimilate in new culture, in cultural shock she killed her husband and lost everything. However, in third novel, *Jasmine*, Mukherjee projects different perspective of diaspora study where protagonist is happy to change as per the social demands, which lead her to the successful life in foreign country. *Jasmine* is the story of a successful immigrant girl who let her past fade and her eyes on the target to get real free life as per her husband's wish:

The 'Beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past. . . . Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths "of the middle years; but in the fin de siecle, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion, and exclusion. (Bhabha 1)

Mukherjee's third novel is the perfect example of going beyond from the convictions and discover new world order where one can fit in. *Jasmine*, a widow supposed to commit 'sati' or immolate herself in demise of her husband but she chose to live and surpass every obstacle to find her own space and personal identity in alien lands. Bharati Mukherjee is not interested in preserving in conviction; she does not want to live in the shackles of social beliefs, and religious fundamentalism.

Jasmine does not show any interest in protecting her past; she just wished to shed her past to assimilate with new life without caring for dynamic identity. Jasmine is a rebel who starts her fight for survival from the birth, for her parents she was an unwanted girl child but she knows how to survive in different and terrible situations.

Although, past life and memories of ancestral homes always notching immigrants in their new homes. More often in the shape of culture, religion, social and moral duty but in the novel Mukherjee is vividly showing no signs of love and affection for past through her main character. The protagonist is firm to exit from her past life to begin new life with new identity. Mukherjee's characters are too determent to create new identity and find new homes, they are feeling offended "when the American visa bastard turned me down, I tried to kill myself" (Mukherjee 102). Literally, Mukherjee does not bother to save convictions of ancestral life. Jasmine compromises on almost everything to find her new way in new world. Her love for Taylor, live-in relationship with Bud Ripplemeyer even she does not care about identity and roles. She accepts everything whatever come her way and gives her hope to live in alien shores without caring her past social and moral codes. She wants to assimilate and mingle with new social codes "You are entering because you want to. No coercion involved" (Mukherjee 111).

The compromise and transformation of Jasmine with new life in the foreign lands brought her multiple personality with multiple roles to find her own identity. Mukherjee has decentralised the myth of past in the novel, Jasmine is willing to move on with new life and is ready to burn her past once she landed in American shores. Her confrontation with Half-face, a war veteran was a blessing in disguise as she learnt to know how to face the real world in alien shores. It encourages her to face her adversities and learn to defend herself. Jasmine killed Half-face not as a Jasmine but in the avatar of Kali, Hindu goddess, a symbolic to stand against the evil. She burnt her suitcase is symbolic to her past burden which she carries from India; she burnt her past in first day of her landing in America after killing Half-face. "There were rusty metal trash bins, punched with holes for better ventilation. I laid the suitcase inside one and lit it from the bottom. It sputtered and flared. The outside melted, but then cotton and wool ignited" (Mukherjee 120). Mukherjee used Half-face to kill Indian Jyoti and Jasmine who was born and raised in the feudal

Punjab village. Killing Half-face is the symbolic of killing Indianness in the protagonist to prepare for transformation to assimilate with new American Culture. Jasmine decided to let go off her past is the reflection of the Bharati Mukherjee's own life, her claims:

I have joined imaginative forces with an anonymous, driven underclass of semi-assimilated Indians with sentimental attachments to a distant homeland but no real desire for permanent return. I see my "immigrant" story replicated in a dozen American cities, and instead of seeing my Indianness as a fragile identity to be preserved against obliteration (or worse, a "visible" disfigurement to be hidden), I see it now as a set of fluid identities to be celebrated . . . Indianness is now a metaphor, a particular way of partially comprehending the world.(quoted: Timothy 33)

Mostly, Indian origin diasporic writers write about the duality, alienation, displacement and inbetweenness but Bharati Mukherjee's perspective is slightly different, her characters are keen to join hands with new home and does not feel for their past. Jasmine's transformation and translation from Punjab to America is the story of her negotiations and compromises with new life to reinvent herself. Mukherjee guides her heroine towards the multiple changes and Adoption and every Adoption brings new role to play. To accept new roles and demonise traditions is not an easy task for the immigrants. Jasmine chose to compromise in her new life to redefine herself. There is no easy way to change and find new locations to live. Mukherjee's first two novels demonstrates the unsuccessful attempt of the immigrant population who could not decide which part of the world they belong to, but in third novel Mukherjee proves that firm determination and negotiation with past and compromise with present can provide new space for expatriates in new world order. Jasmine has a desire to live in and ready to give consent to present rather than living in past, Bhabha has nicely elaborated in his work *The Nation and Narration*: "One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form" (Bhabha 30).

After the death of Prakash, the heroine decides to fulfil dream of her deceased husband to live in America. Her journey begins with fake documents; she cannot travel legally because of under age so she decides to travel with forged documents to an alien country without any legal job and without any proper arrangement but the inner urge to travel America is so high she can risk her life. She understands the complication to travel such a violent country without proper guidance and proper documentations. “A village girl going to America, without job, husband, or papers? I must be mad! Certainly, I was” (Mukherjee 97). Jasmine begins her journey by an illegal ferry, they could be jailed if caught by the authority “I phantom my way through three continents” (Mukherjee 101). Her first step on foreign soil brought her physical shock, as she has to transform herself from Jasmine to Kali to murder her rapist in self-defence; she lost her chastity in the first day of landing. Jyoti, Jasmine who believes in purity of body and soul has lost her purity in the way to perform last wish of dead husband. John K. Hoppe explains in his research work that Bharati Mukherjee is visibly showing no interest in Jasmine’s past. She is plainly interested in Jasmine’s present and future:

She is plainly disinterested in the preservation of cultures, the hallowing of tradition, obligations to the past; at least, she is not interested in the nostalgic aspects of such preservation. Rather, her current work forwards a distinction between "pioneers" and pitiable others for whom attachments to personal and cultural pasts foreclose possibilities. These pioneering characters undergo personal changes in their movements from culture to culture, changes that Mukherjee characterizes in the strongest terms. (Hoppe 137)

The willingness to assimilate in new culture was the main motive of Jasmine unlike other main characters of Bharati Mukherjee’s fiction who stick to their past and end up in the chaos and cultural sock. She is enthusiastic to murder her past self to enter in new phase whatever new world offers her. However, there is no guaranteed future or identity in near future for her but the quest for stability in the dynamic world of Jasmine is still on to hope for stable identity:

Our lives are remarkable, often heroic.... Although they [the fictional immigrant characters] are often hurt or depressed by setbacks in their new lives and occupations, they do not give up. They take risks they wouldn't have taken in their old, comfortable worlds to solve their problems. As they change citizenship, they are reborn. (Carb 29)

Transformation and transcultural appearance of the characters in the novel is different from other fictional characters of Mukherjee. However, it is not possible to erase past completely from the minds of immigrant population. Mukherjee may have claimed the complete erosion of traditions and the cultural legacy among the immigrants when they find their ways towards the new life but Jasmine kept some of her past life events always with her but never allows those memories to create any kind of hurdle in her mission to assimilate in new life. "That stench stays with me. I am twenty-four now, I live in Baden, Elsa County, Iowa, but every time I lift a glass of water to my lips, fleetingly I smell it. I know what I do not want to become" (Mukherjee 05). The inferiority complex in characters of Mukherjee is also an evident that they have not fully abandoned their past. "We have to be here living like a dogs because they have taken everything from us" (Mukherjee 140). Immigrants are aware about their hyphenated existence; they know the difference between host and themselves. The difference between the characterisation of Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri is very important to observe, Mukherjee's characters are die hard admirers of new life like Jasmine, her past haunts her present life but she is firm to escape from past to start new life. Meanwhile, Jhumpa Lahiri's characters (*The Namesake*) are die-hard devotees of past they willingly follow their ancestral culture and wishes to transfer their past legacy to the next-generation in the adopted home. Although, Mukherjee's heroine murder herself in order to transform and integrate in new life and recreate new identity but the glimpses of past can be visible there also, the culture of past life is not vanished completely from her, from Indian, jasmine she carried a suitcase full of her husband's clothes and idol of Ganapati to worship.

The cultural and ancestral legacy among the diaspora population always comes with a question mark in their lives about the identity and belongingness. Many immigrants feel haunted by the past and could not decide that where to go. Like Bharat Mukherjee's protagonists from last two novels *Tara*, the protagonist of

*the Tiger's Daughter* and Dimple, the protagonist of the novel, *Wife*. Mukherjee has shown us that how past haunted both of the previous heroines in the present. They felt cultural shock and alienation not only in foreign homes but in Ancestral homes as well. However, the projection of Jasmine is different, unlike other two novels, the protagonist of the novel is rejoicing the present over the past but still failed to eradicate past completely from her happy go life. Jasmine felt first physical sock of her new life when she has to retaliate her rapist in self-defence and burn her past to move in new American life. Although, new glamorous life in Manhattan makes Jasmine to forget everything from her past life but not for so long until she faced her husband's murderer in New York. Past stuck her life first time after she moved from Jasmine to Jazzy for Lillian Gordon and Jane for Duff and Taylor. Every new identity comes with new responsibility and new struggle to decide her fate. Jasmine's love for Duff and Taylor helps her to find stable life, new identity and self-respect in America but she has to abandon her first love in America because of her past in the shape of Sukhwinder, Prakash's killer and left for Iowa. Past left her again homeless and reckless. She choose life over death and begins to search for new place to refuge until her destiny took her to Iowa and starts live-in relationship with Bud Ripplemeyer, a banker:

Mukherjee establishes this mortal stasis as a component of the past, and it becomes Jasmine's goal to move away from the past at all costs, including the cost of self-knowledge, a stable identity. In many places throughout the text, Jasmine refers to herself, and her past selves, as ghosts, phantoms, or to herself as an astronaut, moving between worlds, never solidly attached to any. Often, she adopts the trope of reincarnation, describing her various identities as separate lives, lives which must be sealed off from each other. (Hoppe 140)

Jasmine proclaims that past must be forgotten or it will destroy everything whatever we have in present. She disregards her father who was stuck in past where he was rich and wealthy. For Jasmine, present status is more important rather than dwindling in imaginary past that brings only troubles. Although, she failed herself to leave her past completely, she felt "I shuttled between identities" (Mukherjee 77). Mukherjee has explored the assimilation process of third world immigrants and their

struggle with past and present mainstream American culture. The violent past in which she lost her husband, Prakash and decided to commit sati in America. Mukherjee has portrayed the patriarchal Indian society and the selflessness of women who have to follow the male dominated society. Jasmin's intention of committing sati is the significant image of helpless third world women who feels shadow less in male dominated society. Gayatri Spivak illustrates the paradox of Sati in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" where she says, "between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" ( Spivak 306). Jasmine is the presentation of the group of immigrants who are firm to relate their lives with mainstream societies of host countries; she is firm to dive in new world order to find herself new identity and new place with dignity. Mukherjee's creations of Hindu beliefs about the reincarnation of human soul, for Jasmine past is undeniable and 'soul is eternal' which cannot be destroyed by any means.

Adopting new life in foreign lands and assimilating with new culture is always a challenge for the immigrant population. Mukherjee's heroine is enthusiastic to adopt in new society and mingling with new culture but it is not an easy task to move from Kali, the goddess of destroyer, who killed Half-face to American Jase. In America, Lillian Gordon becomes a life saviour who helped her to find space in new world. She taught her how to look like an American, "Walk American, she exhorted me, she showed me" (Mukherjee 132). Lillian Gordon helps her to walk and talk like America and provides her daughters American style clothes to wear but her tongue, which is still oozing blood cannot support her to adopt new language soon. New clothes in American style, it was a magic world for Jasmine where dreams are taking real shape. Blood dripping tongue and American style clothes is the Mukherjee's projection of hybrid nature of immigrant population. Jasmine has a kind of self-doubt and feeling startled in new world with past signs. She knows her documents are forged and she could be deported anytime if caught by authority. Concerned Jasmine adopts new life style out of fear at first, she does not want that authorities know about her doubtful existence in alien land for being



illegal immigrant and different from majoritarian society. “Now remember, if you walk and talk American they will think you were born here” (Mukherjee 134). She faced racial abuse in taxi while travelling to Vadhera, during that incident she met an Asian driver, a man ‘from my part of the world’ who tried to console her. After training from Lillian Gordon that how to look like an American she is losing her grip on all that training. Her Indianness takes birth again, her widowhood returned back. The Indianness, which she wanted to shed, is haunting her again, after enjoying western clothes, shoes and lifestyle for some time she returns to her Indian self again. This time her past comes her way in the form of traditions and culture while living with Vadhera and his family. “American clothes disguised my widowhood” she was happy with new life but her past stuck her again and pulled her back to the Indian life where she has to follow rituals and traditions:

In a T-shirt and cords, I was taken for a student. In this apartment of artificially maintained Indianness. I wanted to distance myself from everything Indian, everything jyoti-like. To them I was widow who should show a proper modesty of appearance and attitude. If not, it appeared I was competing with Nirmala. (Mukherjee 145)

Although, all immigrants and refugees know their limitations in the foreign shores. They understand the significance of being hyphenated in alien lands. To adopt new life it is not easy to maintain past and present. Jasmine understands the importance of the present life so she was struggling to shed her Indianness and traditions, for her past offers only pain and death. Death in the form of Sati, an immolation with her dead husband. Mukherjee’ protagonist wanted to live a free life without any bounds of past, traditions and culture; she knows how to survive in the worst situation to keep her mission on.

Jasmine is a born fighter; she knows how to fight for her survival. She has to fight against rabid dog in her childhood; she has to fight against Half-face. She fought and won, she has to stand against the traditions and half-hearted Indianness found in the place where she was living with prof. Vadhera. Jasmine felt frustrated and suffocated in the house of Vadhera. “ An imaginary brick wall topped with barbed wire cut me off from the past and kept me from breaking into future”

(Mukherjee 148). She felt stuck between two worlds and felt on the verge of break down in the battle of traditions and modern American life. She chose to move out of her past by abandon her half-hearted Indianness. Jasmine got a job as day care Mom to Duff where she felt real American life. Although, everything is perfectly going on but suddenly the shackles of past life seems tightening its noose to pull her back. Meanwhile, staying with Wylie and Taylor, Jasmine felt more American but the touch of Indianness in thoughts is still there. Jasmine falls in love with Taylor in first meeting but equally widow remarriage is still sin for her, she is yet to come out from her traditions. "Adoption was as foreign to me as the idea of widow remarriage" (Mukherjee 170). However, Jasmine has some ideological differences with Taylor and his family but that never became hurdle in her way to become American. She is getting more confidence and becoming self-reliant. After Wylie decides to leave Taylor for her new boyfriend, it was an excellent opportunity for Jasmine to become fully American by living with the one whom she admires from the first meeting. "I had landed and was getting rooted" (Mukherjee 179). In the Park Taylor expresses his love for Jasmine, before she could believe that her American dream is coming true her past stuck her again, this time in her dreamland in the shape of Sukhwinder "that was the man who killed my husband" (Mukherjee 188). This time Sukhwinder again helping the man who predicted the widowhood and exile for Jasmine. She cannot do police complaint against him because she is still an illegal immigrant. Jasmine decided to leave her second love to save her life. The journey to survival remains continue for Jasmine, her past did not allow her to stay there too. She has to move with whom she wants to live. At the end of the novel, her journey is still on. She chose to go with Taylor with Bud's baby in her womb and carrying her past again. "I am not choosing between men. I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness" (Mukherjee 240). She continued her Journey for her survival in the hope of better and stable future but Jasmine is not sure what will her stars bring in future but her struggle for existence is still on with burden of past in her womb:

And yet, through all these traumatic confrontations with wild other otherness, Jasmine's courage and determination to go on never flounder. Her reckless departure for a new beginning in the far west

with Taylor Hayes and Duff at the end of the novel can be seen as measure of her optimistic belief in the unexplored possibility that life offers with each new day.(D' Souza)

Mukherjee's characters does not simply change or transform themselves only but they claim the share from new world order. Jyoti, a village girl transform herself to city Jasmine, who wants to be self-reliant and help her husband in his daily chorus. Jasmine becomes Jase and Jane to claim her Americanness. "Mukherjee's characters do not simply claim America, they transform it, but in a different way in each novel". (Helena Grice 74). To claim share from the new world Jasmine has to go through series of mental trauma and physical violence to take new birth and reinvent herself. Mukherjee's characters have to go through the series of violence to identify themselves. Unlike violence in other novels, in Jasmine violence is the symbolic of positive change in her. If we closely observe the novel Heroine has to face violence from her birth, as she was fifth unlucky girl child for her parents, instead of daughters they were expected son. "If I had a boy, my birth in a bountiful year would have marked me as lucky...but daughters were curses" (Mukherjee 39). Her mother tried to kill her at the time of birth because she was curse for her family, as they have to pay heavy dowry for her marriage. Novel portrays the evil side of Indian society during that era. Due to the heavy burden of dowry parents, prefer boys over girls. The bruise over Jasmine's neck and her survival was indication of her new era who escaped from the death even before her eyes open in this world, "I survived the sniping. My grandmother may have named me jyoti, Light, but in surviving I was already Jane, a fighter and adapter" (Mukherjee 40). In other acts of violence that encourage Jasmine to fight back and transform to diffident identities to find her new life. The fanatic group of Sikh boys killed Prakash in a violent attack, Jyoti's miraculous escape from the attack paves the way for Jasmine to redefine herself and start new journey to reshuffle stars to fulfil dream of her deceased husband. Her journey begins with the intention of self-immolation or commit sati but ended up with multiple identities in an alien land. Rossbach has explained the plight of the immigrant population in the foreign lands with a question mark in their identities and nationalities.

who we were and what we have become, where we were and into what we have been thrown, whither we hasten and from what we are redeemed, what is birth and rebirth...The cosmos and material existence is not a passive principle that can be moulded and shaped according to divine plans; the cosmos has its own powers, which will actively try to make life forget its true roots. (Rossbach 89)

Compromise with the past and shifting in the new life with new identity looks fascinating for common folks but the truth of shifting identities and moving from traditions to modernity in alien land was never an easy task. Jasmine has to lose past for her transformation from one self to other through epidemic violence. "Jasmine's rape signals a crucial moment in her successive transformations and in the formation of her ethics of survival" (Ruppel 186). Jasmine lost her chastity in her new world, raped by a man who helped her to enter illegally, it was again a sign of a physical violence, which provokes her to transform herself from defensive to offensive. Her incarnation to Kali, the goddess of destruction in Hindu mythology to stab her oppressor is a symbolic to her resistance to the familial patriarchy. She killed Half-face and a new self emerges from her who try to survive in foreign shores with self-respect and self-dignity. She is facing violence, and every violence is giving her more strength to fight back with odds and reshuffle her stars to nurture her fate as per her wishes. "If we could just get away from India, then all fates would be concealed. We'd start new fates, new stars. We could say or be anything we wanted. We'd be on the other side of the earth, out of God's sight" (Jasmine 85).

Every episode of violence leaves its marks on the emigrant (Jasmine) life; the imprints are in the form of physical torture or psychological trauma. Jasmine wanted to change her pre-decided fate and somehow she managed to hold her successful rebirth in foreign shores of New York with Taylor and his family. However, fate has decided something else for her; it strikes again in New York in the form of psychological violence. She saw her husband's killer and could not do anything because of her existential crisis, she has no identity of its own in New York she is living in no man's land. The notion of alienation and displacement stuck her, which swiped her away from her loved once and uprooted her again. "For god's sake, we'll call the cops," said Taylor...I told him everything: the marriage, the

bombing, the murder... “Don’t you see that’s impossible? I’m illegal here, he knows that i cannot come out and challenge him” (Mukherjee 189). There is always a sense of dilemma and alienation among immigrants in foreign homes. As Rossbach:

We are all strangers, a fact that becomes bearable in the short term because, if everyone is a stranger, no one is. The abolition of strangeness, exile, and alienation, at least in theory, is attained by raising it to the level of a universal human condition. (Rossbach 90)

Jasmine felt distorted and vulnerable about her existence in new world. An immigrant without legal documents and the quest of being recognised in new society brought Jasmine to the verge of break down. Regardless of her love and attachment with Taylor and Duff she has to take a strong call to move or stay with them with risking all her lives. Jasmine chose to move to another city, Iowa. Stricken by violence, Jasmine was left rootless and displaced. Every time Jasmine’s roll changes with new place and new identity to secure her future. New York violence force her to move Iowa and adopt new temporary identity as Jane, a live in partner of a banker and a mother of adopted Vietnamese boy. Although all the hardships and ‘traumatic confrontations’ with her fate Jasmine didn’t lose hope of living and finding successful life in her dream land. Her ‘courage and determination’ to go on her ill-fated life never stops, even after going with Taylor she is not sure that what will her stars bring her in future but Jasmine’s struggle and optimistic approaches to deal new life will continue.

Mukherjee has changed the view of immigrant life by her master craft in the novel. The routes of heroine has decentred the whole process of assimilation, identification and inescapable past of the diasporic population. Mukherjee has rejected the structure of diasporic life in which they failed to assimilate with new life because of lack of compromise and has decentralised the way readers look towards the immigrants or emigrants in the foreign homes. It is very important to understand the way heroine resists her past legacy to follow her dream even in the critical situations. The translation and transmigration of the protagonist is the anti-centric and anti-convictions of the regular representation of the immigrant life. The urge of identity and the quest to merge with mainstream host society is highly visible in the

character. The desire to redefine her personality and assimilation with new social codes makes the novel unique. The development and desire of embracing the changes and using these changes as a weapon to fight against the odds to associate with new society. Jasmine has enormous will power to embrace extreme radical variations to gain human survival skills for her new life. Jasmine is master class in observing the situation and acts accordingly to make her survival possible in the harsh situations.

Acculturation and relocation is most critical acts among immigrants for the survival in new homes. There are no simple ways to shed past completely and adopt new social traits for diaspora population. They have to struggle and strive to choose proper routes to find new life where they cannot feel alienated or displaced among host societies. Jasmine is a choosy and caution for acculturation in new society to assimilate. Mukherjee murders old identity of her heroine every time to give her new lease of life. The adoption of partial or complete changes in her personality shows her undeterred and willingness to face every chaos in her life to touch her goal. She murdered her past for every new opportunity to grab whatever comes her way and gives hope for survival in alien land. Jasmine has to invent and reinvent herself to enroot in new land so that she can find identity and meaning of her life in the images of dreams. For every new identity Jasmine has to shed parts of its past and adopt new skills for survival. “There are no harmless, compassionate ways to remake oneself. We murder who we are so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams” (Mukherjee 29).

Jasmine is a portrayal of the immigrant population who are in constant development of creating and fabricating new personas and unmaking the past to involve in new life. Mukherjee has opened up with a hypothetical success story of assimilation and Adoption. Jasmine’s exile and expatriation opens new ways and emboldens the will power of those people who are stuck between two worlds. Anu Aneja has compared Jasmine with sweet scent of exile:

Jasmine is a character constantly in the process of fabrication whose making involves an unmaking of the past. Her exile marks the place where all immigrants struggle with antithetical forces and then come

to terms with a third, hybrid way of existence that allows them to move back and forth between two worlds with the least possible dissonance. (Aneja 37)

During the process of transformation and transmigration of the migrant population, mostly feels mutilated due to the contrary past and present. However, compromise with past and retaining some parts of the ancestral legacy in a sense to show loyalty with both cultures and end up in hybridity or hyphenated existence which makes them alienated not only in adopted land only but also in ancestral homes as well. Bharati Mukherjee does not show any sign of emotional attachment with past in the novel. Although, Jasmine never shed her past completely, she was nostalgic and carried her husband's clothes, a burden from the past, Ganapati, a religious belief and a continuous flashback but was very open to accept new changes in her new life:

the dilemma that novel presents is that Jasmine acquires a personality which is culturally split not only because of the process of migration and assimilation, but because of the author's own stereotypical assumptions grafted onto the character, assumptions which the character then carries in form of a burden across the seas. (Aneja 79)

Jasmine embraces changes and moves towards every possible manner to help her new self to mingle with new society. She was willing to murder her past legacy to find new ways in new world order. Jasmine has staked everything for expected exile and alienation in foreign shores. Her search for routes to roots will go on without any boundary and time frame. Jasmine is a character who is in relentless movement to redefine herself with new identity and personality. The myth of transformation and transmigration for anyone who does not want to sacrifice their sacred past for the sake of new expected life is literally impossible. Jasmine is compromising with every moment wherever she has a chance to go with flow and knows how to 'roll with the waves' and assimilate with mainstream society without showing any kind of emotional attachment. She is ready to sacrifice her past legacy for the sake of unexpected future.

Compromise and transformation from national to transnational identity gives unique status to the protagonist of the novel. "Jasmine's path in the United States was, in other words, understood as a linear trajectory from foreigner to American, from border to heartland, and on toward multiculturalism" (Ninh 146). Mukherjee's heroine is ambitious to redefine herself in new world, she is ready to compromise at any cost to find her mythical heaven in alien land. Jasmine is resistant to the notion of being underprivileged and cannot hold her own identity in the mythical world. She compromises her faith, In Hindu religious beliefs one cannot have sexual relationship without marriage, Jasmine is happily carrying baby of Bud. Jasmine compromise her identity and transforms herself in every situation where ever she finds role to fit in. every identity brings Jasmine new roles which she accepts enthusiastically without caring her previous role and responsibility. For Karin, Bud Ripplemeyer's ex, called her "Gold digger" and an opportunistic who does not care about the social and cultural values. The heroine accepts rolls, which might be against her old faith and ancestral morals. She entered America with forged documents. Erin Khue<sup>^</sup> Ninh questions her successful assimilation with mainstream American culture:

Undocumented transnational migrant worker, domestic servant, caretaker, sex worker, and mail-order bride. Considering that she arguably navigates not one but all of these key positions of the third-world woman in her sequence of employment and relationships in the United States, Jasmine's resume' suggests less her successful assimilation than her perpetual liminality. (Ninh 146)

Jasmine went through series of transformations without any inertia about the past legacy and identity. Her only dream was to establish herself in multicultural American society for that she did not hesitate to shed her past and move with new identities with every mode of journey. Mukherjee's heroine is complicit and resilient to fight against the odds and to create some space in the marginal society. Her self-imposed sacred mission and continuous transformation is posing serious threat to her identity and existence. Her continuous negotiation with past and present for the sake of future, which is imposing uncertainty and dilemma because of her frequent compromises and transformations. Jasmine's future is totally ambiguous and



relentlessly relying on the negotiation of her future strategies in the world of alienation and rootlessness. The process of inventing and reinventing in the novel is the strategy of the Bharati Mukherjee to explore the life of an immigrant with the hopes of successful negotiations and assimilation. Mukherjee's heroine has a quest to invent herself and is ready to go beyond the conventional immigrant world to reinvent herself.

Transformation and fragmented self of the protagonist in the novel is symbol of struggle and strive for new life. Mukherjee has opened up with the idea of fragmented self of an immigrant who are in constant search of self-identity and reinvention of inner soul to recognise the inner capacities of adaptation and assimilation in culture. Jasmine negotiated with multiple displacement in the hope of better and stable future in foreign lands. Mukherjee is taking readers on ride to understand the conscious level of the diasporic population specially those who are in constant exploration to find their utopian homeland. The journey of the immigrant population is always a painful process in which the negotiations with past, feelings of displacement, alienation and rootlessness is common to find their suitable destination in foreign shores. Jasmine faces inferiority complex on some occasions but her will power to achieve her goal keeps encouraging her to continue the movement towards new life. Journey to life brought her various changes in personality; she has to go through numerous transformations like:

Jyoti, Jasmine, Jase and Jane via divergent geographical locales like Punjab, Florida, New York, Iowa and finally California. These different phases of her self-development are shaped by external conditions as well as internal transformation. At every step, she revolts against her fate and the path drawn for her. The narrative shuttles between past and present, between India of the narrator's early life and America of her present one. (Sharma 32)

Bharati Mukherjee's protagonist is the pure immigrant soul who does not want to succumb her wishes because of the external pressure. However, she is confused, stuck between old and new world order, in spite of her mutant personality she kept herself in dynamic mode so that she can gradually touch her finishing point

to find solace in foreign land. Jasmine understands the importance of the changing personalities with different roles; she acknowledged that in America nothing is permanent. "In America, nothing lasts. I can say that now and it does not shock me" (Mukherjee 181). In America she felt alienated displaced after Wyle decides to leave Taylor, Jasmine turned to be orphan again because she considers Taylor and Wyle her parents and family. "I realize for the first time in at least a year that America had thrown me again" (181).

Metamorphosis self of protagonist did not help her to forget past which was striking her repeatedly. She felt stuck in old Indianness, where women must follow some rules to please society and new American values where freedom and personal values are more important than social values. Jasmine was in great fix to choose Bud Ripplemeyer, a crippled Iowa banker or her first love of America, Taylor and Duff. "I am not choosing between men. I am caught between the promise of America and old world dutifulness" (Mukherjee 240). She is sacrificing to shed everything for her American dream but cannot leave old dutifulness, which she has learnt from her parents to follow. Jasmine is feeling guilty for Karin, an ex-wife of Bud who still love Bud. Her guilt brought her again to the verge of conflict between past and present values. Robertson has defined Jasmine a successful immigrant who begins her American dream as an Indian villager who was born and brought up in the patriarchal society where women must be self-less and have to sacrifice even their life (Sati) for the dead husbands and they have to respect social and cultural values. At the end of the novel choosing Taylor over Bud Ripplemeyer, although, she is pregnant with Bud's baby shows her strength of taking decisions for self like a typical American who does not bother about social and moral values. Her transformation from village girl to American mainstream can be read as successful assimilation: "Indian village girl, whose grandmother wants to marry her off at 11, into an American woman who finally thinks for herself" (Robertson 139).

The splitted personality of Jasmine does not help her to erase her past completely but emboldens her to take right decisions for life in new world order. Mukherjee's heroine is excited and enthusiastic about her new life she can take decisions to relocate and assimilate in new culture. Jafri has defined the character of

Jasmine as a strong woman who navigate from one world to another without losing her intentions of integration with new social life:

A strong woman, Jasmine navigates in an apparently effortless manner between time, location, memory, desire and self-perception and re-creates herself without disintegrating. Through the horrendous ordeals that she undergoes – assassinations, clandestine immigration, rape, murder, and constant displacements, she retains her stability and emerges unbroken if not unscathed. (Jafri 59)

Jasmine is the portrayal of the courage, ambitious and goal oriented who never felt dismayed over challenges she faced during her journey. Her confrontation with Half-face, who helped her to touch the American shores, wanted something in return. He raped Jasmine and enjoyed her plight of being exiled and alienation. The protagonist could have decide to commit sati or immolation after being raped but no, she chose incarnation of kali avatar to revenge her oppression and lit her husband's clothes. Incarnation of Kali and fighting for her self-respect is the beginning of the new era of Jasmine. She transforms herself to take revenge, which is symbolic of becoming of self-dependent woman. "I could not let my personal dishonour disrupt my mission" (Mukherjee 118). Transformation from Jasmine to Kali, is the the narrative attempt to decentralise the traditional role of women who are bound to keep silent against the white patriarchy. It is Mukherjee's acknowledgment that heroine has rejected to submit in front of the conviction and begins to form her new journey to find her identity.

The constant transformation of Jasmine's identity and the violence, whether physical or mental she faced in her journey unblocks new ways for her to complete her mission. Her continuous changing identities with different roles as Stuart Hall has defines it as "fluidity and non-fixed identity" helped her to rearrange the past and present values and establish the spiritual maturity in newly adopted culture. Changing names and showing flexibility to adopt those names helped Jasmine to survive in new process of social and cultural development. Stewart Hall's views on cultural identity:

Is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything, which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. (Hall 225)

Change is the law of nature and Jasmine changed her personality with the time and situation to achieve new mileage in new society. Stuart Hall explains the importance of the cultural change. For Hall “cultural identity is not fixed essence,” (226). It is a dynamic process and will keeps changing in future. Jasmine cannot follow her past in the present scenario she is quick learner to adopt surviving skills in new lands. For Jasmine nothing is permanent and rooted she is moving with opportunistic waves. For Stuart Hall past is not something which has a ‘fundamental marks’ in our life.

Mukherjee’s heroine is both, a victim and a successful immigrant who assimilates with mainstream culture of America. She is victim of alienation and dislocated self. Jasmine has to compromise her cultural, social and moral identity to invent her new self in America. Every new name comes with new role to play and affects her past legacy, which makes her restless, and alienated. She has to compromise with different men in mainstream America to continue her journey and have to go through many humiliations in her sacred mission to fulfil her dream. “The numbed surrender to various men for the reward of an orange, a blanket, a slice of cheese” (Mukherjee 121). The protagonist was ready to compromise with anyone who can lead her towards the sacred mission of being rooted. Bharati Mukherjee is projecting the idea of establishing roots at any cost. There is a kind of curiosity and diasporic ambiguity in Mukherjee’s heroine who keeps destroying herself in the hope of creating new and modified self. During the journey, Jasmine faced trauma, cultural shock and potential displacement and disgruntled self but one thing remains constant that was her determination, will power and quest to rediscover her inner self. Chuen-Shin Tai has defended the changing names and personalities of Jasmine, as cultural or social identity is not a ‘fixed or unchanged’ thing, it can thrive only when it given space to thrive:

Cultural identity elaborates on how identities often undergo constant transformation implying fluid change, reflected in the way Jasmine changes her name throughout the novel. Clearly, Jasmine shifts identities due to the struggle between her circumstances and actions, voluntary and involuntary, in her daily life. (Chuen-Shin 66)

The desire to assimilate and the quest to find new-self needs some extraordinary surviving skills, which Bharati Mukherjee has created in the novel. The protagonist is the anti-centric and does not follow any structural path in her past and present life, for her survival matters more than sticking to past legacy. Mukherjee's character has a unique craving for new life and deterrent to every traditional ways to redefine and reinvent herself with new identity. Jasmine sticks to her art of surviving skills to adopt every change that can take her closer to new life without bothering her formal identities. In the journey Jasmine felt stuck, marginalised, a thread of post-colonial subjugation from her native home to adopted home. However, she never let these hindrances halt her mission to reinvent her-self in an independent manner. As Sushma Tandon has defined, "Jasmine has to reinvent herself, even if it means relinquishing her past completely. There is no sense for her in holding on to the past that doesn't qualify one's reality with meaning" (Tandon 140). Mukherjee believes in eradication of past among immigrant population so that they can assimilate with new life with mainstream social milieu. The protagonist keeps her eyes on future rather holding past and present, she believes that "the reinvention of self" is more important among the diaspora population rather than sticking to 'nostalgia' of past which only brings chaos and confusion:

The enunciation of cultural difference problematises the binary division of past and present, tradition and modernity, at the level of cultural representation and its authoritative address. It is the problem of how, in signifying the present, something comes to be repeated, relocated and translated in the name of tradition, in the guise of a pastness that is not necessarily a faithful sign of historical memory but a strategy of representing authority in terms of the artifice of the archaic. (Bhabha 52)

Bharati Mukherjee has openly defined herself as an American in her interviews and in this novel she is elevating the sense of being an immigrant and the struggle to define self-identity as an independent individual without owning past. The enthusiasm of defying Indian-ness and the acquisition of new mainstream culture is not an easy way to celebrate success. It demands compromise with present, divorced self from the past and then to overcome from the clutches of the expatriation and immigration in chosen lands. Novel depicts the psychological pictography of an immigrant who defied all odds to assimilate and identify new self with and independent mentality. Jasmine has to go through many experiences to reinvent her Americanness and sever her traditions in order to achieve what she logged for. However, severing traditional roots and moving with unidentified notion of expatriation to reinvent one's self is not easy, it demands traditional sacrifices, strong will power to redefine self as per the situation and hold the nerves during cross-cultural trauma. Brinda Bose has defined that adaptability to survival is the key to assimilate in new culture: "The picaresque, surrealistic, no holds- barred ethos obviously has a message beneath the action: that change and adaptability are the key to survival and that the successful immigrant has the instincts" (Bose 47-65). Mukherjee's protagonist has a spirit of true immigrant who has a quest and is ready to break up with traditions to embrace changes to assimilate in new life.

The journey of Jasmine defines the adversities of the immigrant population from the roots to routes. They have to go through the process of fragmentation, adaptation and assimilation in the new world order. Although, adaptation and assimilation with new society influences the personality of expatriates, which leads towards the hybridity, dislocated self and alienation. Jasmine redefines all the odds to reinvent herself. The journey from roots to routes was not easy for Jasmine; there was ideological clash between the protagonist and the host society. For Jasmine adopting a 'non-genetic child' is a 'monstrous idea' at first when she was living with Taylor but with Bud their adopted son, a Vietnamese refugee who does not even belong to that place and she considers him as her own son that shows her commitment to adapt new life from the gross root level. Transformation and adaptation is the key to survival in adopted societies. She learns from Wylie that there is nothing permanent in America but does not agree completely with Wylie's

decision to leave Taylor for her new boyfriend when she was living with them. However, with more time and space in America, Jasmine is growing more confident and self-conscious in choosing her life. “Her decision to leave crippled Bud (whose child she is expecting), walking out with Taylor, shows her asserting herself, not merely choosing between Bud and Taylor; instead she is trying to reposition her stars” (Tandon 143). Jasmine makes a way for future self instead of being nostalgic and living in the dilemma of past legacy. Although, at the end of the novel Jasmine understands the situation of mainstream America where nothing is permanent and she does not feel shy to leave crippled Bud Ripplemeyer for her American love, Taylor and Duff. She decides to invent and reinvent her roles, which defines her personality more American rather than an illegal immigrant.

Denying the myth of exilic consciousness in the novel, Mukherjee has embraced the new world order to create a new transmigrated identity. Bharati Mukherjee has created character who urges to follow her dream of new world. However, the promised new world with inventive selfhood which demands battles against marginalisation, selfhood and self-assertion to find new meaning in new life. Jasmine manages to pass through several personality mutations, illicit love affairs, day mom and a courageous dreamer. Jasmine chose to standstill on her decisions to change her fate and challenge her stars to find new meaning in existing life. Her participation in the hegemonic society to create a new kind of new selfhood to challenge the existing colonial mental setup. Suchismita Banerjee has noticed in her analysis of the novel, Jasmine that Bharati Mukherjee has rejected the idea of hyphenated identities. Jasmine is the portrayal of the Bharati Mukherjee’s inner-conscious in which cultural assimilation with adopted home is more important than holding ancestral traits. “ What Mukherjee suggests in her works and interviews is that cultural assimilation and rejection of hyphenated identities are the only ways for Asian Indians, or for that matter any immigrant, to wipe off their invisibility in America”( Banerjee 11). Although, the route to adopt and establish new ‘visible identity involves a thoughtful rejection of the past cultural roots to adopt and assimilate in new society. However, rejection of ancestral roots completely for the sake current mainstream establishment is very difficult for most of the immigrants. To ‘refashion’ one’s selfhood Mukherjee has supported the idea of rejecting the past

to avoid being an invisible and hyphenated identities that does not exist anywhere. Jasmine consciously tries to eradicate her roots to reshape her identity to reshuffle her stars in her own way. Jasmine accepted the radical changes and negotiated with dominant culture in order to reframe her identity in mainstream America.

Bharati Mukherjee's heroine is facing challenges in her way to new life, every challenge in her routes encourages her to gain more confidence for reshaping her selfhood. However, in the journey Jasmine interacted with so many people, some people helped her to understand the local milieu with most compassionate way to step in new mainstream life. "I became an American in an apartment on Claremont Avenue across the street from a Bernard College dormitory...Duff was my child; Taylor and Wylie were my parents, my teachers, my family" (Mukherjee 165). Moreover, some gave her lesson to stand against the odds with more confident and courage. "No one to call to, no one to disturb us. Just me and the man who had raped me, the man I had murdered" (Mukherjee 119). Her transformation from an Indian village girl to American Jane and from an illegal immigrant to confident Jane, who can decide her future identity. Jasmine rejected the past to assimilate with the present to refashion her selfhood. Suchismita Banerjee:

The process of acculturation is violent and traumatic for Mukherjee. It is violent because it involves a deliberate rejection of one's roots, past traditions and heritage to adopt and assimilate the dominant culture. The conscious annihilation of one's selfhood thus takes place through psychological and physical violence, which, in turn, enables individuals to refashion their identities. (Banerjee 11)

The study of Jasmine shows the clear intentions of Bharati Mukherjee's ideology that how immigrants are treated and transported legally or illegally and how dreaming to settle in other parts of the world. Migration and immigration is one of the most discussed topic in current era. Thousands of people wants to migrate because of insecurity or war like situations in their countries like Syria, Afghanistan, and Palestine etc. are migrating to Europe and America in search of secure life. Thousands of people from third world countries are moving to first world to find more comfortable life economically and socially. Mukherjee's masterpiece has



shown the glimpse of the struggle, negotiation and rhetoric of hope to assimilate in new societies to start new life in free world and reshape the identities as per the wishes and aspiration.

Mukherjee has displayed the inner-consciousness of the immigrants dilemma, duality, alienation, hybridity and finally assimilation with new life and negotiation with past. Jasmine's journey is full of violence, compromises and negotiations to reach its zenith when Jasmine left Bud Ripplemeyer to become Taylors Jase again, her decision to choose men of her (Taylor) choice over the responsibility (crippled Bud) shows her commitment to her free life in free world. She does not feel shy anymore to take decisions for transformed self in which she can feel more comfortable and rooted. "The lists, the choices made, the implied discriminations, their respective negotiations with the idea of migrancy, all indicate the complex ways in which two-diaspora discourses (the absolutist and the fluid) work". (Mishra 226). Mukherjee's heroine is experiencing the collision between traditions and modern American dream, however she decides to discard her traditions to complicit with dominant culture of America.

Negotiation and transformation remains the core part of the Jasmine's Journey to assimilate in west. She has different names with different roles and to every name she has a man to rely on who can help her to transform into the modern America from the feudal India. The protagonist understands that in order to fulfil her desires she must negotiate for her survival and assimilation in popular culture of the country. Transformation from one identity to another, every new identity (name) brings death to the older one, which proves that protagonist has no interest in protecting her past legacy. "I changed because I wanted to. To bunker oneself inside nostalgia, to sheathe the heart in a bulletproof vest, was to be coward" (Mukherjee 185). Mukherjee does not show any interest in preservation of past in the novel, she claimed in many of her interviews that she should be read as an American writer not as an Indian. The conflict between past and present does not end with the acceptance or denial of the protagonist but the struggle to be rooted in new land with new identity is continue until end of the novel. Jasmine has derailed herself from the ancestral culture but it does not provide any guarantee of new localisation in future. The changes and Adaptations to assimilate in new culture Jasmine is confusing

readers with constant changes and transformation to adopt new life on the other hand she is not sure about her future. “Then there is nothing I can do. Time will tell if I am a tornado, rubble-maker, arising from nowhere and disappearing into cloud. I am out of the door and in the potholed and rutted driveway, scrambling ahead of the Taylor, greedy with wants and reckless from hope” (Mukherjee 241).

Mukherjee’s heroine is not sure about her whereabouts in near future but the struggle and self-determination for assimilation is a continue process. She is in existential crisis, dislocated and broken who feels “Nothing was rooted anywhere. Everything was in motion” (Mukherjee 152). Jasmine’s transnational identity comes with unconditional negotiations with past and “the escape from the old identity, the old debts, the old wife to the new name, to the new life and from the farmland of Punjab to the frontier of California” (Tandon 145). Mukherjee’s mostly characters are legal or illegal immigrants, living as exiles, expatriates who are ready to shed their past to assimilate with uncertain future in alien lands.

Bharati Mukherjee portrayed the character of Jasmine who is willing to discard her past legacy and shows that the displacement and negotiation is the part of immigrant life with some sort of violence and confrontation in order to achieve constructive nature of transnational identity and assimilation with new world order. To achieve infinite freedom and assimilation with new world, immigrant must pay price for their invention and reinvention of selfhood. Fakrul Alam defines Jasmine, “The character of Jasmine, it will now be clear, has been created to depict Mukherjee’s belief in the necessity of inventing and re-inventing one’s self by going beyond what is given and by transcending one’s origins” (Alam 109). Jasmine is the projection of the post-colonial mind setup of the diasporic population who acknowledged the new paths and divorced the traditions to restructure new life in new world order. Mukherjee has highlighted the multiple negotiations and endless transnational identity of immigrant population.

Mukherjee has tried to reshape the destiny of the immigrant population with indomitable will power and firm determination to reshuffle the stars to reconstruct destiny in the journey of identity and assimilation. Jasmine creates her destiny with courage, love, negotiations and the quest to redefine herself in new environment.

Bharati Mukherjee's protagonist acknowledges, "There are no harmless, compassionate ways to remake oneself. We murder who we are so we can rebirth ourselves in the image of dreams"( Mukherjee 241). The fluidity of the protagonist proposed that Jasmine is a dynamic character of Bharati Mukherjee who will never achieve her permanent identity but "Watch me re-position the stars, I whispered to the astrologer who floats cross-legged above my kitchen stove". Her journey for identity is literary on even after scarifying her traditions, past existence for the sake of imaginary homeland: "I cried into Taylor's shoulder, cry through all the lives I have given birth to, cry for all my dead. Time will tell if I am a tornado, rubble-maker arising from nowhere and disappearing in to a cloud" (Jasmine 241). The novel concludes with the note of uncertainty of future homeland and the hunt for survival will go on.

## Chapter 4

### **The Complexities of Assimilation and Adaptation in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland***

Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools (Salman Rushdie).

Jhumpa Lahiri, an Indian-American writer has projected the complexity of Indian diaspora population in her works to understand their daily life hecks in foreign shores, complex relationships among inter and intra generations. Jhumpa Lahiri, born with family name Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri (1967) in London to Indian origin parents. However, she is known as Jhumpa Lahiri, her pet name in the world of literature, pet names are common in Bengali culture so her parents kept that legacy alive in adopted world as well. Like Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri has achieved significant landmark in the world of storytelling and the art of presenting the lives of people who are stuck in the old world traditional values and new western ethics. Her works illuminates the psyche of the readers with her immense knowledge and wit about the immigrant population by her master class art of storytelling through the marvellous characterisation; opens up with daily-unnoticed hardships faced by the people who are divided in past and present, old and new socio-cultural values in their adopted homes. Jhumpa Lahiri got tremendous fame and appreciations from readers and critics for her fiction and received implausible responses from the contemporary diaspora writers within a short period of time. Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1967 to Calcutta origin parents. Her father, Amar Lahiri was a librarian at the University of Rhode Island and her mother Tapati Lahiri was a teacher. At the age of two Lahiri's parents decided to move to the United States of America in search of better job opportunity and ultimately decided to settle down in South Kingstown, Rhode Island.

Multiple dislocations and interaction with different socio-cultural milieus of Jhumpa Lahiri gives her edge to talk about the location and dislocation of immigrant population in detailed manner and mix her personal emotions with the lives of her characters in the novels as she has personal experience of immigrant life. Being an

immigrant child, Jhumpa Lahiri has to go through the multi-lingual and multi-cultural process to accommodate herself in both the worlds. Jhumpa Lahiri has acknowledged her uncertainty about her different cultural identities and cultural backgrounds in her interviews Lahiri, the importance of nicknames in her ancestral culture:

All the Bengalis I know personally, especially those living in India, have two names, one public, one private. It's always fascinated me. My parents are called by different names depending on what country they happen to be in; in India they're known by their pet names, but in America they're known by their good names...I'm like Gogol in that my pet name inadvertently became my good name.(Lahiri)

However, her parents were never strictly sticking to their Indianness but the glimpses of unconscious Indian cultural legacy can be observed from the nickname, which they gave to their daughter. The schoolteachers decided her name 'Jhumpa Lahiri' because it was easy to pronounce as compared to her other two names, Nilanjana Sudeshna. Many of her relatives from Bengali community felt it inappropriate to make her pet name as an official one because nicknames are supposed to be only for family and friends. The critical evaluation of her life and works reveals that the influence of immigrant sensibility has heavily affected her works. The upbringing in an immigrant family has influenced her writing career as well, which readers can observe from her works which are mostly inspired from the immigrant lives and her mostly themes are based on immigrant struggle to redefine self-identity in their adopted homes.

Jhumpa Lahiri has first-hand immigrant experience, being a second-generation immigrant, she has to struggle to find a way between traditional family expectations and new life demands to find new identity in new world. Most of her works focus on immigrant sensibility, diasporic experience, identity crisis, conflict of generations and the conflict of traditions and the modern ethics. The immigrant experience and the expatriate sensibility continues to furnish her works, especially about the Indian diaspora population who felt trapped in the old and new world saga. Jhumpa Lahiri's mostly works focus on diaspora population who are dispersed and dislocated not only physically but psychologically as well:

Jhumpa Lahiri largely writes about the human condition of Indian diaspora in the USA...Lahiri therefore prefers to steer clear of this neat but facile categorization, and maintains that she creates not mere 'diasporic characters' but 'distinctly individualized characters' and writes not about 'a specific cultural experience' but about human beings and the difficulties of existence. (Das 15)

Diasporic literature is the mirror of immigrant society to assess their daily life struggle in the adopted lands and ancestral homes as well. Lahiri's works have 'double vision' of immigrant sensibility that picturizes the 'yearning backward' and 'looking forward' to adopt and adjust between two different worlds (Das 15). Jhumpa Lahiri's fiction reflects the past events in the form of memories in the adopted worlds that creates chaos among immigrant lives and encourages them to question their existence in connections with here and there. The concept of yearning past and attachment with traditions, growing sense of displacement and nostalgia in the adopted homes replicates her sense of diasporic sensibility in her personal life. Lahiri's first generation characters cherish their past as an inseparable part of their lives and the second-generation feels both proximity and alienation from the adopted lands and the land of origin as well because of their different perspectives towards the traditional and modern social values.

The Interpreter of Maladies, an anthology is the first publication of Jhumpa Lahiri that is collection of nine short stories. The first collection of short stories, the *Interpreter of maladies* was published in 1999 won her many awards and honours including PEN/ Hemingway Award and the Pulitzer Prize in 2000. The anthology takes readers on ride from Bengal to Boston with a master class art of storytelling with crafty touch of trauma and alienation of immigrant generations in the United States of America. *The Namesake*, Lahiri's first novel published in 2003 is the exploration of distressed immigrant family who are hovering between the conflict of generations and East/West clash in the adopted world. There is a clash between generations, first generation, who wants to preserve their ancestral socio-cultural values by transforming those values to their newly born children who are least interested in old world values, instead of that second generation seems more inclined towards the new world order where they have been bred and born. There is a strange

skirmish in the lives of immigrant generations, one wants to preserve old values and another desires to assimilate with new world, the longing of generations to their respective birth places shows their quest to prove their loyalties towards their respective homes. Mira Nair had adapted the novel, *the Namesake* in 2007 with same name in her movie. *The Namesake* dwells on the conflict of different ideologies among the immigrant population and the cultural conflict, identity crisis and the suffering of new coming immigrant population. *Unaccustomed Earth* is the second collection of eight short stories published in 2008. Most of her works focus on the Indian diaspora and the translation and migration of Indian immigrant population. In 2013 Lahiri's second novel, *the Lowland* was published and it was shortlisted for the Man Booker prize and was also listed for National Book Critics Award for fiction. The novel is the blend of political chaos of Bengal during early 1960's and the diasporic sensibility of Indian immigrant couple in The USA. Other than her master class fictional works, Lahiri has tried her skill in non-fictional works as well, *In Altre Parole* in Italian (2015) was translated into English in 2016 as *In Other Words*.

*The Lowland* is the second novel of Jhumpa Lahiri, which is inspired from the 1960's Naxalbari movement in Bengal region. Novel explores the life of an Indian couple who became the victim of Naxalbari movement in their hometown and decided to resettle their new life in new environment as an immigrant in the United States of America. However, the planned new life of Subhash, with his widow, sister-in-law did not go well as per the plans. They failed to understand the new socio-cultural milieu to bring peace in their lives. Jhumpa Lahiri has marvellously blended two important issues of Bengal during 1960 in her master class piece of work. The political upheaval of Bengal and breathless struggle of diaspora population to find stability in the new world order. The novel recounts the diasporic sensibility, alienation, identity crisis, cultural shock and dislocation of newly married couple who have escaped from the shackles of traditions to start their new life. Jhumpa Lahiri's female lead character in the novel is bolder and stronger as compare to her male counterpart in the process of assimilation with new socio-culture of mainstream society. She manages her routes in order to claim her process of acculturation with mainstream America with ease. Although, she has successfully

adapted her new personal life in adopted society but failed to accumulate her familial front. Her successful journey from a Bengali widow to a philosophy scholar in America, projects her callous approach towards her family and traditions. The diasporic sensibility in the novel is clearly visible from the Gauri's alienations and identity crisis, at the end of the novel Gauri's existential crisis are so extreme, to handle these crisis she is invoking suicidal option to end her guilt of being selfish and callous towards her family. Subhash is carrying his past burden, which makes him restless and alienated even after living decades in his new home. He is dangling between his familial responsibility and his personal life. He visits his mother every years but missing his emotional part with Calcutta, "he sat beside her, reading newspapers, drinking tea with her, feeling as cut off as Bela must have felt, from Gauri"( Lahiri 268).

The novel takes readers on ride to understand the political, social and cultural turmoil of Bengal during early 1960's. The main crux of the novel revolves around two brothers, Subhash and Udayan and a lead female character, Gauri, a widow of Udayan. The novel begins with two brothers; Udayan, a younger brother who is more interested in Naxalbari movement and is drawn more and more towards the radicalised movement to find justice through the violence for his people. On the other side Subhash, an elder brother looks more concerned about his career and study decides to pursue his doctorate degree in America. Meanwhile, Udayan was killed in an encounter with government forces in lowland near his house in Tollygunge, Calcutta. He left his newly wedded pregnant wife, Gauri, who is supposed to follow her widowhood now in her whole life as per the traditional Bengali culture. Subhash returns his hometown following the news of his brother, looking at the adversity of his sister-in-law, he decides to marry Gauri, his widow sister-in-law in order to give her new life in new world. However, Subhash's parents did not approve the marriage, as this relationship is unconventional and a mismatch as per the Bijoli, mother of Subhash who warned him that she would never love you. "she'd said it because a girl she did not like to bring with, did not want in her family, was going to become her daughter in law twice over" ( Lahiri 224). Subhash became a father of Bela, who is actually a daughter of his brother. However, he never treat her as his stepdaughter and decides to hide the truth from Bela about her



biological father, he will disclose his real identity only on right time. Bela, an American citizen by birth adapts herself in American society and had multiple sexual encounters without any serious relationship with anyone that led her to become an unwed mother to her daughter, Meghna. The novel contrasts the two different sides of the world, a miserable life of Subhash's parents in Calcutta and conflicted and comfortable life of Subhash in America.

*The Lowland* has been highly praised by the leading literary giants for its deep-rooted socio-cultural conflicts. This literary work of Jhumpa Lahiri depicts her master class art of writing skills, which has made the novel one of the best-praised novel among world critics. "A classic story of family and ideology at odds, love and risk closely twined...an author, at the height of her artistry, spins the globe and comes full circle" (The Vogue). The masterly contrast between characters, past and present and here and there needs extra ordinary skills to open different layers without losing its plot. "Expansive and intimate....Lahiri's writing is precise and restrained....Loyalty and betrayal, lies and forgiveness, filial responsibility and abandonment, the choice and sacrifices we make to find our way in the world are beautifully wrought in this novel" (The Oregonian). The novel projects life of every human being who are facing daily challenges and shows readers how to respond every challenge in her classy way of writing. "Lahiri returns confidently to the themes that have earned her critical praise, an eager audience and a Pulitzer Prize.... [Here] she adds a historical dimension that creates a vital, intriguing backdrop.... [The] story is unique, but it's also universal, a reminder of the past's pull on us all" (The Miami Herald).

The themes of the novel are almost similar to other fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri about the diaspora sensibility and identity crisis in foreign lands. Jhumpa Lahiri has beautifully presented the life account of an immigrant family who are lost in new world order and failed to make peace with past and present. "In this exquisite novel, Jhumpa Lahiri revisits some of her major themes—dislocation, assimilation, family connection, and the difficulties of love—but in this instance she develops her characters and circumstances in greater depth than ever before" (Jacobs 59). Gauri, the lead female character of the novel lost herself in new world in search of new identity and new meaning in life. Although, Gauri never felt comfortable with her

family before and after marriage, her family members were always worried about her marriage, they wanted to find a match as soon as possible without any close intimacy with Gauri. In Bengal, Manash, her brother was the only person before Udayan with whom she can open her heart as compared to rest of her relatives and loved ones. However, *the Lowland* has no relationship with Jhumpa Lahiri's personal life but readers can relate the story with her immigrant life in Rhode Island and the Naxalbari movement from her ancestral hometown to dive deeper into the psyche of the writer while going through the novel. Expressing the views over different characters and their traits Jhumpa Lahiri:

I thought it would be much more interesting for the story to set up a contrast between these two brothers, to have one involved politically and one to be aloof, because I think it creates an inherent tension between the brothers,...And I wanted to show how the movement could seduce one while leave another indifferent. (Neary)

The controversial marriage of Gauri and Udayan was a shock to Bijoli, mother of Udayan and Subhash. However, she accepted the marriage only with the hope that it will keep Udayan away from the political activities in the region. Although, it never happens Gauri's presence gave him more confidence to follow his passion as she begins to spy on the police for her husband. Pursuing study away from home in the USA was equally disrespect to parents as Udayan's interest in politics was defying the advice of his parents and going far from the home country was again defying the norms of Mitra family. Although both had defied their parents but in Udayan's case Bijoli "tried to be accepting. She'd hoped having a wife would settle him, that it would distract him from his politics" (*Lahiri* 226). Udayan's marriage was not less than a shock to his parents but still they have to accept her and feed her with a ray of hope that he will take more family responsibility rather than to focus on his Naxalbari movement. Both brother were taught to follow their traditions and respect their parent's wishes, Subhash was more respectful and dutiful towards his parents from his childhood unlike Udayan who was always defying the wishes of his elders and love to do more fearless acts in his life whether it is following Naxalbari movement or marrying without the consent of his parents.

Jhumpa Lahiri explores the life of an individual who is bound to perform his obligations of traditions and to fulfil requirement of his new life in new world order. Subhash sacrifices his personal happiness to give new life to Gauri, young widow of his brother and her step-daughter, Bela. Novel is the blend of love, betrayal, family and individual responsibility, cultural clash, location to dislocation and pull of the past:

Lahiri takes us into Indian life and custom just enough to have us viscerally feel the clash of cultures that Subhash encounters when he relocates to America. She also deftly limns the gradual assumption of American values that makes him, in the end, very much an American. Juggling ideas and details, abstracts and concretes, from Hindu philosophy to Descartes, Lahiri's wide ranging reference points enrich this novel and underscore the university ambience in which much of it is set. (Jacobs 59)

The portrait of Calcutta propels readers to dive deep to feel the glorious, mystifying and at the same time ugly face of the city during 1960's. Lahiri's projection of pictographic sceneries, hardships and affection of two brothers in the miniature of daily life, encourages audience to go deep down to understand the values of roots from the past. There is a visible ideological difference between two brothers but both wanted to do something good for their society and family, Udayan chose violence to solve his problems meanwhile, Subhash dreamt for PhD. In America on Oceanography, but life in Rhode Island was entirely different from the rough and harsh life of Tollygunge, Calcutta. In Rhode Island Subhash begins to observe his new life through the different prisms, which provides more freedom to breath unlike Tollygunge, life begins to cease, obstructions due to increasing violence and poverty. The spirit of free and independent life begins to influence his attitude towards his past. "He had stepped out of it as he had stepped out of dream, its reality and its particular logic rendered meaningless in the light of the day" (Lahiri 41).

Jhumpa Lahiri's characters of the novel are so eager to assimilate that they are ready to discard their traditional bonds, cultural root and familial relations to build the castles in the new world. Life in Rhode Island begins to influence

Subhash's way of thinking and encouraging him to enjoy his independent life in the newly adopted world. He learns to live quietly in his own world of imagination where he does not need anybody to guide him and tell him how to live a free life in a country without protests and demonstrations. His comparison and preferences are changing its core from homeland to adopted land; the increasing admiration for new life shows his intent to transform his life as per the new environment. "The difference was so extreme that he could not accommodate the two places together in his mind. In this enormous new country, there seemed to be nowhere to link them; he was the sole link" (Lahiri 41). His acknowledgement of the worth of his scholarship displays the state of his unconscious mind that he no longer admires life of Tollygunge. He does not want to go back where life ceased to live and violence has become new norm, he knew the opportunity that he has got, could be vanished because of his trivial mistakes so he decided to stay away from any kind of political rallies in America that interprets his determination of assimilation with new world. The growing sense of alienation between here and there in Subhash helps him to handle the situation more maturely to assimilate with mainstream American culture. "Here life ceased to obstruct or assault him. Here was a place where humanity was not always pushing, rushing, running as if with a fire at its back" (Lahiri 41). However, the pull of past is always there through different sources, in the form of letters from Udayan and childhood memories. The activities of his roommate, Richard Grifalconi, reminds him of Udayan. Richard, a PhD student of sociology plays a very active role in social and political causes. His participations in demonstrations and raising slogans against the wrong doings in society reminds Subhash of his brother but the demonstrations were all well organised and non-violent here unlike violent organisation in Calcutta. Subhash does not like violence unlike his brother who was more active and love to disobey his parents directions, Subhash no longer felt a part of Calcutta city the way it was portrayed during the rally of CPIM party formation.

In a physical sense, it is possible for diaspora population to claim their part in the mainstream cultures of adopted world. However, the pull of homeland, as William Safran has explained it as the "mythification of the past (88)," in his essay, *Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return*, to define Corsican

villagers who have preserved certain images of their past native places in their subconscious mind. Although, they were enjoying all the social and economic benefits of life in the French mainland but still longing for their past homes. The consciousness of the mythical past always holds some space in the minds of immigrant population, no matter how comfortable life they have in adopted homes. Subhash Mitra learns to live his new life without listening the voices from his parents and family from India. He adapts new situation and embraced the alienation and loneliness in the USA, having sense of proud in perceiving PhD. in Oceanography in America but at the same time, he failed to erase all the memories of the past. He begins to connect things from past to find resemblance of those memories in the present. "For some reason the church reminded him of the small masque that stood at the corner of his family's neighbourhood in Tollygunge. Another place of worship designated for others, which had served as a landmark in his life" (Lahiri 47).

The idea that history repeats itself, commonly taken as a statement about historical determinism, emerges frequently within liberal discourses when consensus fails, and when the consequences of cultural incommensurability make the world a difficult place. At such moments, the past is seen as returning, with uncanny punctuality, to render the 'event' time less, and the narrative of its emergence transparent. (Bhabha 59)

Although, Subhash was proud of his new life away from his homeland but the letters and telegrams from home invokes his loyalty towards his ancestral homeland. The bond of love and affection of two brothers were losing its grip between two different worlds but suddenly after getting letters from his brother all the childhood memories begins to revisit in his conscious mind. The reminiscence of events with his brother provokes him to think about his decision of leaving his family and question his new life in new world order. "You will come back to an altered country, a more just society, I am confused of this. A changed home, too (Lahiri 51). The loyalty that was shambling between two brothers stretches across the globe with a simple letter from a brother who is determined on his brother's return but in a different set of society. The differences between two brothers seems in melting point but at the

same time, they both refused to melt down and focus on their altered set of worlds. “He felt their loyalty to one another, their affection, stretched half-way across the world. Stretched to the breaking point by all that now stood between them, but at the same time refusing to break” (Lahiri 52). The pull of past in the form of letters, memories and unconscious comparison between past and present is always notching Subhash in his dream world. Mostly, letters are full of love, affection and at the same time with sweet complaints of loneliness without his brother in Tollygunge provokes him to think about the decision of leaving behind his family with full of memories. The love Udayan was showing in those letters was actually direct provocation to revisit again in the past world. “The days are dull without you. And though I refuse to forgive you for not supporting a movement that will only improve the lives of millions of the people, I hope you can forgive me for giving you a hard time” (52). Udayan begins to understand that Subhash’s existence is in question mark to relate him with Calcutta.

The concept of hostland and the homeland among immigrant population is different; hostland is holding their physical existence while homeland retains their emotional state of mind. They preserve their alliance with their homeland emotionally and psychologically no matter how comfortable life they are living in the adopted homes. Subhash was happy in his new American life. However, his love and affection for his ancestral culture does not fade completely. He is shocked to know about the marriage of Udayan without the consent of his parents. Udayan and Gauri love each other they got married, although in Subhash’s new world it is totally legal and acceptable but still he cannot agree with this marriage as he believes that fixing marriage between two adults should be done by their parents that is our culture. Subhash is annoyed, angry and at the same time he is jealous of losing his spot to Udayan. In Tollygunge, Subhash must be the one to get married before Udayan as he is elder and their parents must fix marriage. “Not only had Udayan married before Subhash, but he’d married a woman of his choosing. On his own, he he’d taken a step that Subhash believed was their parents place to decide” (Lahiri 57).

In short, the members of a diaspora may or may not have adjusted to life in the hostland, but they have a spiritual, emotional, and/or

cultural home that is outside the hostland. Whether that home is necessarily, the 'original' homeland is a matter of controversy. It may, in fact, not be the ancestral homeland at all but rather the place where one was born and raised but that was originally a hostland, that is, a diaspora. (Safran 13)

Likewise, Subhash learns to live and assimilate with mainstream America. He is living without Richard, his ex-roommate and maintained a relationship with a 36 years old married American woman, Holy, living with her son namely Joshua. However, during his second year of PhD he did not received letters from his family as usual, instead he got a telegram which has a short message on it about the death of Udayan, killed by government forces in an encounter in front of his house. The message on the telegram was enough to force Subhash to return his roots. He was shocked to know the political situation of his home town, his expectations of getting warm welcome on the arrival in his homeland was vanished when he found that his parents' did not come to receive him. He begins to realise that the place, which he has kept in his heart whole life, is treating him as a stranger. He lost his bond with his own people when he protested against the cruel rituals for a widow, Gauri. Subhash found that so many things have changed in his hometown; new laws had been implemented to ensure security from the Naxalites.

The expectations of the immigrant population are always so high with their homelands but the moment they arrive in their native places their dreams and expectation vanishes when they face off with reality. Subhash returns to his native place only because of Udayan's death and was hoping for grand reception by family and friends. He was shocked the way he was treated in his place of birth by his own people. "The moment he returned to them after Udayan's death, the moment he stood before them, she'd felt only rage" (Lahiri 224). However, change was not in the behaviour of family members only but also in Subhash who has come with a different western mental setup. He is looking things through the lenses of western world like equality and human rights, which is risking him everything what he has got in the heredity. He denies his socio-cultural rituals that occupies very important place in the traditional Indian societies. Proposing Gauri means betrayal of his religious, social and cultural norms, in order to change the fate of Gauri, Subhash

went against the wishes of his parents, he is doing same what Udayan has done before. Earlier, in Udayan's case Subhash believes that fixing marriage is the duty of parents but now he changes his moral ethics and decides to marry with Gauri without the consent of parents. "She'd told him, when he announced that he was going to marry Gauri, that the decision was not his to make. He insisted, she told him that he was risking everything, and that they were never to enter the house as husband and wife (Lahiri 224).

Jhumpa Lahiri has projected two powerful women characters in the novel. Bijoli, mother of Subhash and Udayan, who has challenged the patriarchal society during 1960's India and Gauri, who has accepted the challenge to assimilate with new culture more quickly and confidently than her husband, Subhash. Bijoli never bowed down in front of her sons even after they defied her doctrine. She remains firm on her moral ethics and opposed the marriage between Subhash and Gauri, she refused to accept anything from her American family even after years, "her grandmother gave away the American soaps and lotions Bela's mother had packed out, the flowered pillowcase and sheets" (Lahiri 233). On the other hand Gauri has the courage to lead her life without the support of any male in her life. She rejected Subhash, as she was not feeling what she has felt with Udayan. Gauri is the representation of courage and empowerment who has embraced the new socio-cultural dimensions open heartedly than her husband. She prefers free and independent life over culturally bound and economically dependent on her second husband. "Gauri is portrayed as rational, analytical and determined to be independent. Not only financially, but also emotionally. Defying the static position of wife and mother in the house did the emancipated women during the mid-twentieth century" (Halder 235).

Jhumpa Lahiri has explored the powerful women characters in the novel who had courage to take their own decisions. Bijoli, Holly and Gauri, all female characters had shown courage to decide their fate and fight against the odds in their lives. Bijoli did not care to lose her second son, Subhash, who dare to challenge her decisions against the marital bond with Gauri. Holly left Subhash, when her ex-husband wanted her to return and Gauri defied and challenged all odds, which she detest in her life and decided to run in free world without bothering about the



traditions and cultural values. Gauri was born and raised in a joint family with no privacy and had no experience of parental love as they were dead in her early age, Gauri chose Udayan as her husband that was the parents' audacity to decide husband for her. Although, the act of eloping with Udayan was against the traditions but it can be read as an act of defiance against the restrictions created by socio-cultural milieus. Gauri defied the traditions to become a typical housewife:

Gauri feels the deadweight of traditional expectations bogging her down when she is expected to put her books away and help in household chores. "Turned into housewife," she's asked to discontinue her studies after marriage and expected to fall in line with the stereotypical role to meant for a typical Bengali housewife. (Wadhawan 201)

Gauri resists against the traditional convictions, her marriage with Subhash was again her defiance against the wishes of her in-laws. Her in-laws had hoped her to respect and honour Udayan in her memories. She never wanted to be limited to household things and live in the memories of a dead man. Instead of living as an ideal traditional Indian housewife in Rhode Island, She endures her studies, continues her legacy to define her wishes and desires, which costs her family, identity and belongingness. "I've failed her. In a way, I wish she were young enough simply to forget me. Now she will come to hate me....I hope you will tell the truth. That I have not died or disappeared but that I have moved to California, because a college has hired me to teach" (Lahiri 257). Marriage with Subhash was against the wishes of her in-laws. However, to free herself from the shackles of traditions and customs it was a crucial step to redefine her fate. Wadhawan justifies acts of Gauri in defiance to protect her freedom: "Socially isolated and lonely, she is forbidden to eat meat and fish and forced to be at the mercy of the customs she never had faith in" (201). She never believes in customs who are restricting someone to eat particular food and force to use select colours of dresses as a symbol of mourning and sacrificing desires for someone who is already dead. She has no choice but to break the shackles and barriers of customs to secure her release to flee America with her second husband. She felt her decisions that she took to start her new life are "calculated and impulsive" (Lahiri 152) to find new meaning in new world.

The movement from a particular community, state or class is primarily being considered as the shift from its base to another subjective position that categorically reorganise the institutional location of geopolitical locale of an individual and debunks the claims of belongingness from any particular location. Homi Bhabha states in his work, *The Location of Culture*, “What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences” (Bhabha 2). Gauri moved from his ancestral locale to America with her second husband, she was fully aware that the society would never accept her second marriage, which deemed her second marriage unchaste. Moving to America and accepting marriage proposal of Subhash was the only choice to escape from the past. To form new identity Gauri has to negotiate her chastity, traditions and her cultural identity to assimilate with mainstream America. “These ‘inbetween’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (2). Although Subhash and Gauri took every possible steps to negotiate and assimilate with hostland but yet the pull of roots, a mythical homeland was always there. The experience of past kept haunting them, Gauri’s guilt of going against the traditions is still haunting her even after years in her new life, “Even in Rhode Island, even on the campus where no one knew her, she was prepared for someone to question her, to condemn her for what she’d done” (Lahiri 160).

She tried to unburden the past to reinvent her new self in new world with loads of responsibility of becoming a wife of Subhash, her dead husband’s brother and a loving mother for Bela. However, that never happens until she has to take a call and left everything behind which attaches her with past. “The identification of a place of residence as a homeland or a diaspora does not necessarily depend on whether the movement from one place to another was voluntary or involuntary” (Safran 14). The ghost of past memories was not only in Subhash but also in Gauri. Although, she agreed to marry with Subhash and had been thankful to him for saving her life from the cruel traditions and customs. “She was thankful for his independence, and at the same time she was bewildered (Lahiri 151). The delusion

and hallucination of main characters kept them away from the real life, which lead them towards the existential crisis. Gauri never thought of herself that she is Subhash's wife even after spending years with him and nobody was aware about the past in Rhodes Island; she was on denial mode even after the birth of Bela that Subhash is her husband who is taking care of them. Gauri failed to adjust with her new status possibly because of her inability to forget Udayan in the new life.

Assimilation with host societies comes with a cost that delineates the traditions and ancestral culture of the immigrant population. Diasporic population tend to redefine their existence in new lands but have to junk their past. Gauri scraps her Indianness by refurbishing her appearance in new American way. In an alien land where mostly women from immigrant background tend to preserve their traditional values by using local clothes like saris and endorsing limited roles of housewives to serve their husbands in a traditional ways. However, Gauri's adaptation with new society and the way of shredding her past that surprises even Subhash, "He drew his eyes away from her, thought already a vision had entered, of her breasts, exposed" (Lahiri 168). Her new look surprised Subhash because he was looking at her through the lenses of traditional Indianness. Although, new haircut and new short clothes where the part of assimilation in Gauri's point of view but astonishment for Subhash, "Where were you? I took a bus from the union, into town. I bought a few things. Why did you cut off your hair? I was tired of it. And your clothes? I was tired of those too (Lahiri 169). She was tired of past burden and decided to stand out from the rest of women in America by replacing her traditional sari with western Jeans, wears short haircut and signs up for philosophy classes at the time when they were expecting their first baby:

As diasporic people settle and start their lives in foreign countries, their 'home' culture tends to get changed. The host is hegemonic and dominated one. Therefore, diasporic people normally start discarding their ethnic culture and assimilate with the host society's hegemonic culture "in-between" spaces. (Das 278)

The host culture is tightening its grip on Gauri who is ready to sacrifice everything to assimilate with new society. She sheds her past, adapts new life style

to change herself as per the new socio-cultural milieus. However, the feelings of Gauri towards Subhash are bewildered and riddled as she is feeling more guilty than gratitude by accepting the marriage proposal of Subhash. She failed to find her husband in Subhash even after years of the marriage in America. Gauri realises that the promises, which Subhash has made with her at the time of marriage proposal, looks vanishing now. She begins to realise that Indian customs are providing her less space to seek her own identity and freedom that she was seeking from her early days of marriage. Gauri abandoned her daughter, Bela to fulfil her academic potential rather than become mother to rear her daughter.

The process of assimilation is a complex way of adopting new life style among majoritarian society. It is the way of accepting new customs and rejecting old cultural traits. The process of assimilation shows that an individual is less interested in upholding his/her past. Gauri is the strongest women character who is fighting for her existence and identity in homeland and adopted land as well. The dilemma of Gauri brought her to the verge of existential crisis in America because of her ambivalent decisions about her past and present. On the one hand she wants to pursue her life goals at the same time she failed to overcome her past experience with Udayan and failed to manage a bond of love with Subhash, who gave her wings to fly, she failed as a mother of Bela, "I don't like you, Bela cried out, shaking herself free. I'll never like you, for the rest of my life" (Lahiri 204). Although, Gauri never respond verbally to Bela but the brimming quest for freedom and the desire to achieve free and independent life was always taking driving seat in her conscious mind:

By desiring freedom for herself, Gauri is written off as neglectful. In wanting to reach her potential she is seen as irresponsibly wilful, reminded of the way in which she is not self-effacing as other members are, and made guilty of being selfish in desiring a destiny of her own. (Wadhawan 203)

Gauri wanted to assimilate with American culture at any cost. She had to sacrifice her roots, family and socio-cultural identity to achieve her freedom for self. The heightened tension between Gauri and her past resulted in a diasporic dilemma,

dilemma of identity and existence. She neglected her motherhood and preferred dissertation in a situation where she must have to think about family, marital status, daughter and speak about her infant, however she remained focused on her academic career more than anything in her life that resulted in her alienation, displaced, identity crisis and the guilt. Rejecting traditional role of women in Indian societies, Gauri challenged her past by leaving her infant, Bela at home alone and focused on her process of assimilation with new order. "She was aware of the perfect silence in the apartment, replete with the isolation she and Bela shared... bound fast by a dependence that restricted her mentally, physically. At times it terrified her that she felt so entwined and also alone" (Lahiri 195). The growing alienation in Gauri brought her to the verge of collapse psychologically and physically because of her quest to redefine self-identity and find new meaning in her life without restraints from the past.

The master class characterisation of Jhumpa Lahiri in the novel is projecting the diasporic dilemma of immigrant population. Mostly, leading characters are struggling to deal with the familial relationships, interconnectedness with past and dilemma in present, search for identity and belongingness. The dislocation of characters in the novel comes with an emotional twist proves depth of writing skills of Lahiri. All the characters are emotionally interlinked with each other to resolve their conflicts and mutual problems. The Lahiri has depicted the life of an immigrant family and their struggle to adjust with each other in the new environment where everyone is looking to fulfil their own emotional and physical demands. The sudden twist of characters, changing roles in their lives makes novel more interesting to examine the influence of foreign environment in the lives of immigrant population. Subhash and Gauri, both were from joint family background searching their new identity in a society where people prefer individual responsibility over familial one. Gauri's past tragedy haunts her in America, while Subhash is also bound in many responsibilities towards his parents, Gauri and Bela. Both have failed their traditional ethics where son has to take care of his parents and wife has to devote her life to serve husband and become a good mother for coming generations. However, Gauri rejected the traditional ethics of being ideal wife; instead, she attempted to search her new identity and new choices of life without any justification to

legitimise her denial of traditions in new homeland. Gauri chose solitude from her familial responsibilities to find her own space for her scholastic work. “Seeking space and solitude for her scholastic work, she locks herself up-an act speaking of her latent desire to have a space of her own, sans the cultural baggage” (Wadhawan 204).

The fond memories of past in the lives of immigrant population are inevitable part of their new world. They cannot deny their past completely or cannot own it as well. Some people chose to make equilibrium in their past and present to justify their new life. The main characters of the novel are torn between the old world values and the new world responsibilities. Subhash is wavering between familial duty of new life and the hopes and expectations of the parental duty. His choices and actions as a brother, a son, a husband and a father are different to play. He is hovering between duties and ethical ideologies. Subhash tried to maintain his obedient son image by visiting Calcutta and sending some financial help to his parents but disregarded their hopes of his marriage, “we hope when the time comes, you will trust us to settle your future, to choose your wife and to be present at your wedding. We hope you will not disregard our wishes as your brother did” (Lahiri 76). Subhash failed his parent’s hopes when he wished to marry with Gauri to take new responsibility as a husband and a father. Gauri failed his husband, Subhash and her daughter, Bela by following her own choices but failed to shun her fond memories of Udayan:

How long can diasporic identity last? For many expatriates, homeland nostalgia is based on fond memories of extended families, ethno-religiously centred customs, rituals, and festivals celebrated within a cohesive community. For some ‘diasporans’, these memories continue to have personal meaning; their ‘diasporism’ is instrumental, insofar as they attempt to replicate aspects of homeland culture in their hostlands, as the Yoruba do. (Safran 14)

Although, the fond memories of past haunts Subhash of his early days in America and showcased his hesitancy towards new society. He is reluctant to accept new cultural traits and denying his assimilation with new society. Initially he is shocked

to know that his fellow Indian, an economics professor, Narasimhan from Madras is married with an American women, he is showing his mental resistance to assimilate with host society. He is clueless and astonished about their marital bond, which is against the ethics of Indian culture. He begins to question their legitimacy in Indian society and starts to think about the reactions of his parents. “Subhash wonders how his family had reacted to her. He wondered if she’d ever been to India. If she had, he wondered whether she’d liked it or hated it” (Lahiri 45). The major characters of the novel are isolated and alienated not only because of the situations but the loneliness comes from their own choices and actions based on the situation they have created. Subhash felt alienated because of his research work, Gauri chose isolation from the family to perceive her own dreams to find new meaning and freedom in her life.

Jhumpa Lahiri explores how the question of cultural identity arises in foreign lands when the immigrant population shows their eagerness to assimilate with host societies. Gauri, the leading female character of the novel is the projection of those immigrants who are eager to adapt and assimilate with new society. Gauri absorbs the mainstream American culture and shunned the ancestral emotionalism speaks the volume of difference between two cultures, her over enthusiastic nature towards the American culture brought her to the culture shock and alienation, which mostly immigrants are facing during their adaptation with hostlands. Cultural shock is a psychological perplexity faced by the immigrant population during the process of assimilation with new cultures, which are different with their traditional cultural traits. The common sign of the culture shock is losing the grip over the familial or public intercourse. Gauri lost her grip over her family, love and traditional cultural traits. After the death of Udayan, Subhash proposed Gauri out of responsibility as a brother of Udayan. However, Subhash and Gauri were living under the same roof and taking care of Bela together but they never felt emotionally attached with each other:

While continuing to live in together in the same house he turned away from her, just as she had turned away from him. The wide berth for herself that she had been seeking in their marriage, he now willingly gave. He no longer wanted to touch her in bed, no longer brought up the possibility of a second child. (Lahiri 211)

Moreover, they were able to relate each other but never felt an emotional bond with each other even after Bela. Gauri failed to replace Udayan with Subhash even after years of togetherness under the same roof. She failed to develop any kind of emotional bond even with other sexual partners. Gauri became emotional bankrupt as she used to spend her time mostly on teaching or sexual fantasy, ignoring her motherhood and wifeness. “Seeking out Subhash in bed, she pretended she was with this man, in a hotel room, or in his home. Feeling his mouth, his sex against her own” (Lahiri 207).

Jhumpa Lahiri has highlighted the transnational outlook in the novel, which is one of the most important aspect of diaspora study to understand the cross-geographical and cross cultural engagements of the immigrant population. Transnational or transcultural migration is a process, where an individual is connected with more than one nations or cultures. Initially Subhash, the male protagonist of the novel is reluctant and resistant towards the new socio-cultural space but at the same time, he is proud and excited over discovering new places, which is different from Tollygunge. Subhash was shocked on his brother’s decision of choosing a girl for marriage without the consent of his parents but after certain period of time in Rhode Island, “each day, in spite of its growing routine, felt uncertain, improvisational. Here, in this place surrounded by sea, he was drifting far from his point of origin. Here, detached from Udayan, he was ignorant of so many things” (Lahiri 49).

He began to assimilate with new culture, rejecting and resisting his past unconsciously. Subhash gradually resisting his nostalgic outlook about his past and begins to show his interest in the formation of new American life by spending time with Holly. Under the guidance of Richard, his roommate, Subhash learns to derive, obtains a driving license, and begins to explore his surroundings and meeting Holly, an American woman confirms his drift from his origin to hostland. Adriana Elena Stoican has defined the transcultural spheres of an immigrant individual as:

As individuals realize that their familiar cultural spheres do not cover the whole set of human aspirations, they are more inclined to accept the validity of other cultural worlds. In this way, the need to



transcend the boundaries of their own cultures shapes a transcultural perspective that frees them from a limited range of options. The idea of cultures as self-transcendent entities is an important principle of transculturality that accounts for the necessity to acknowledge the relevance of other cultural worlds. (Elena 34)

The growing space between Indianness and American self, Subhash encourage himself to follow new transcultural life style. After spending sometime in America Subhash learns to resist odds and enjoy his isolation. He felt alone with other students, “sailing even slightly east reminded Subhash how far away he was from his family (Lahiri 76). He felt doubly isolated with the scientists, other students, and crewmembers, “he felt doubly alone, unable to fathom his future, severed from his past” (76). He cannot imagine of living without following his parental ethics and traditional cultural traits. However, situation is changed in the second year of Ph.D. in America, Subhash begins to shun his past and looking for a broader space for his new American life. He begins to nurture relationship with Holly, abandoned mother of Joshua. He develops premarital sexual relationship with Holly. It was not only against the culture but was against his religious and his Indianness. He broke his parent’s expectations by sleeping with a lady, who he does not have any intention of getting married, he risked his relationship with his parents to stand by the helpless widow of his brother as a protector and it was again the rejection of religious and social values of his past.

The relationship with Holly ventures that Subhash is fantasizes his new American life and demonstrates his increasing inclination towards the assimilation with mainstream host society. He rejected familial expectations and kept maintaining an illegal relationship with a white woman, meanwhile he tried to preserve his relationship with parents through rare visits and letters, which shows his developing nature of duality and hybridity. Subhash wanted to uphold his Indianness in his new space at the same time he wished to enjoy his new life in American flair, which lead him towards the dislocated self. His letters and financial support to his parents was an attempt to convey the strategy of his duality and creating new transmigrant or transnational citizenship for his new life. In this context of an immigrant process of transmigration, Subhash’s efforts are to create a new home

away from home. It seems that Lahiri has created a deliberate notion of artificiality among her characters to project the fragmented self-identity with past and present, location and dislocation, here and there and acculturation:

The trajectory of a migrant follows the pattern of location, dislocation and relocation, each one of these phases being liminal rather than sharply defined ones. The process of acculturation is a slow one-sided (the minority seeking integration with the majority) process and is not without a sense of loss and exile. It is also not a clear transformation; it gives rise to hybridity marking different stages of acculturation. (Malik 156)

The quest of assimilation among immigrant population can push them to any extent but at the same time, their impulse to preserve traditional norms makes it more complicated to decide which part of the world they actually admire. Subhash enjoys his time with Holly, thoughts of Holly soothed him, takes him beyond reality where he desires to transgress all the traditional boundaries to please his own ego. The cosiness, which Subhash feels with Holly, has never felt before but at the same time his acknowledgement of the relationship in a negation mode is a part of his redefinition, which contrasts his traditional values. "He was aware of the great chasms that separated them" (Lahiri 83). Subhash knows that there is a kind of ideological difference between here and there; he does not think only that Holly is 10 years older than he was but also she has a son and a single mother. He understands her situation and glancing at her through the eyes of his parents, technically she is wife of someone else and his parents would never accept her.

Subhash enjoys every moment of his American life with Holly, an American white woman but the shadows of past are always hovering inside his conscious mind. Technically, Subhash is ready to redefine his life and challenge his traditions to transgress all hopes and bounds of his Indian familial part of life. He is ready to forget everything about his past inside the room with Holly. "Inside this room he was able to forget about what his parents would think, and the consequences of what he was about to do" (Lahiri 88). Subhash's act of self-assessment to his current situation is the act of an opportunity for transformation and assimilation. However,

he lacks the courage to trespass the traditional limitations completely to give the new definition to his life. Although, he tossed the guilt, “in her cramped bedroom, setting aside his guilt, he cultivated an ongoing defiance of his parents’ expectations” (Lahiri 92) but lacks the confidence to surpass his traditions fully, failed to halt his past, which reminds him cultural roots and parental hopes. He lacks the firm determination and courage to face the reality of his new life. Subhash’s indecisiveness brought him to the verge of alienation and loneliness again. “A woman whose company he was growing used to, but whom, perhaps due to his own ambivalence, he didn’t love” (93). Although, relationship ends with Holly due to uncertainty of Subhash and his evaluation of Holly through the lenses of his parents’ ‘grid’. “The affair remained concealed, inaccessible. His parents’ disapproval threatened to undermine what he was doing” (93). Moreover, Subhash failed to transgress his traditions but scripts new chapter of his clandestine life, which argued his tiny steps towards the construction of transnational life style:

Sometimes he imagined what it would be like to lead a similar life with Holly. To live the rest of his life in America, to disregard his parents, to make his own family with her...her situation, her child, her age, the fact that she was technically another man’s wife, all of it would be unthinkable to his parents, unacceptable. They would judge her for those things. (Lahiri 92)

Things are changing for Subhash with every day and every moment in foreign shores. In his first year of Ph.D. in America, he was resistant to foreign culture but with time, his instinct of survival begins to develop and to question his existence in new land. Subhash felt lonely after he witnesses the marriage of an old couple and questions his own matrimonial event. “For the first time, he thought of his own marriage...he desired a companion (Lahiri 48). He wondered about his marriage because as per Indian traditions, parents must arrange the matrimonial bond of their wards. Subhash never questioned his existence or his relationship with Indian traditions but “he wondered what women his parents would chose for him. He wondered when it would be” (48). In his early days of American life he does not show his keenness about his matrimonial bond because he knew that “getting married would mean returning to Calcutta. In that sense he was in no hurry” (48).

Subhash do not want to get married soon but he begins to question of his way of choosing partner. He wonders what kind of women parents would chose for him that exposes his intentions of assimilation with new life and betrayal of past.

Jhumpa Lahiri's use of historical events, political records, past incidents from the world and the powerful characterisation in the novel is to create multinational dimensions to understand the immigrant world. After the death of Udayan, Subhash's return to his roots sums up his transnational mind setup, challenged old beliefs and social norms by proposing Gauri even after knowing the complexity of religious and social values in the traditional Hindu societies. His marriage with Gauri was a kind of emotional act to take responsibility of his dead brother's family. The choice of becoming father of his brother's daughter was a challenge for him, he would have never thought of it in India to marry with a widow of his brother. The way he chose to raise Bela in a foreign land with different background represents his transcultural mind setup:

Ironically, Subhash breaks social mores and boundaries first by marrying Gauri, his late brother Udayan's pregnant wife, out of compassion, and then years later, in his seventies, by ending up in another marriage with Elise Silva, a white American woman who was his daughter Bela's teacher. Subhash's marriage to Elise, a move very unusual in South Asian characters, connects these two people born and raised in two different countries, redefining the idea of national identity and belonging. (Paudyal 25)

The death of traditional values in Subhash is the beginning of assimilation with new world. On Subhash's return to the homeland was like visiting a place where he knows mostly people but the allegiance has been lost in last few years of his stay in foreign country. Subhash failed to recognise his belongingness with his own people. He no longer feels his Indianness, "though he looked like any other Bengali he felt an allegiance with the foreigners now. He shared with them a knowledge of elsewhere. Another life to go back to. The ability to leave" (Lahiri 134). His inbetweenness is visible to readers through his actions and comparison of his Indian life with his new American life. He is more comfortable with foreigners

with whom he is sharing his knowledge about the new life, which shows his ability to deny his own roots for the sake of alien land. He no longer bother about the opinions of his parents about his relationship with Holly, “unexpectedly he thought of Holly, and the dinner at her kitchen table” (Lahiri 117). However, Jhumpa Lahiri never clarifies Subhash’s permanent citizenship but the way he tried to assimilate with hostland and maintained his relationship with by frequent visits and monetary support his parents portrays his nature of transnational citizen. The uneven marriage between Subhash and Gauri ended up with separation and gave Subhash more responsibility to take care of Bela as a single parent. William Safran states that the concept of holding images of homeland in the hostland is one of the inseparable part of the immigrant life, which they can never disown completely: “The homeland focus that is an aspect of diaspora identity is signaled by certain psychological and/or cultural manifestations, among the language. The use of the homeland alphabet is often a major expression of the homeland culture of a diaspora that has adopted the hostland language” (Safran 16).

*The Lowland* is the anecdote of Jhumpa Lahiri’s immigrant family experience in hostland. Lahiri has explored the broken relationships, inbetweenness, hybridity, dislocation, trauma, alienation and rootlessness among the immigrant family members who are in search of their identities. Novel is the exploration of many complicated relationships, father and daughter, difficulty in marital relationships, intergenerational conflict and the questions of belongingness. The death of Udayan in Mitra family changed the destiny of several generations of Mitra house. Udayan’s death gave opportunity to Subhash, who was liberal in his thoughts from his early age; decides to marry his brother’s widow to give her new lease of life. As per the traditions of the Bengali family, Gauri has to lead an ascetic life after the death of her husband. The open mindedness of Subhash saved Gauri from the shackles of Bengali traditional widowhood. His marriage with Gauri opens new chapter of freedom in Gauri’s life who is already pregnant of Udayan’s child. Gauri gave birth to Bela, whose biological father is Udayan, the secret of her life remains under the carpet for many years for Bela. Gauri gave birth to Bela but never enjoyed the real motherhood because of her over ambitious nature and freedom in her new world. Gauri’s over zealousness towards academic career cost her motherhood that

is why Bela never felt the motherly love and affection from her. The callous nature of Gauri pushes Bela towards the alienation and loneliness, which forces her to do odd jobs and lead a life of nomad:

Where Bela lived now. Nowhere. She's a nomad. Let me guess she carries her life around in a backpack, doing things to make the world a better place?" ... some kids from early. They are focused. Bela was one. He had a sip of wine. She had no choice, he said. Elise looked at him, nodding. Indicating that she knew the circumstances, that Gauri had left. (Lahiri 301)

Jhumpa Lahiri, the second-generation immigrant writer has personal experience of being different from both the home societies. Her characterisation in the novel has projected the idea of generation gap and ideological conflict among the immigrant generations particularly through Bela. Bela's character is contrary to the orthodox representation of Asian-American children who are devoted to their old world beliefs, ancestral cultural traits and traditional roots; she has uncovered the widely accepted spectrum that limits the choices of living among foreign-born immigrant children. Although, Asian-American children are being projected as hard working, intelligent, 'confused desis' and keen to follow the footprints of their parents in adopted homes. However, the character of Bela has exposed the contemporary generalisation of second-generation immigrant children. Bela rejected parent's footsteps and choose to live on her own terms. Lahiri has contrasted the idea that the second-generation immigrant children do not have freedom to make their own choices and decisions in their birthplaces. Bela challenged the spectrum of old world values and decided to live on her own terms. Subhash never imposed his personal views on her; she has a complete freedom to take decisions of her life unlike other Bengali children who are bound to follow their parents:

Lahiri's depiction of Bela's character challenges common (mis)understandings of South Asian-American children as typical exhibits of the model minority myth. Asian American children are assumed to be typically smart in math and science, and attend top-notch schools. Nevertheless, Bela chooses a small liberal arts college

in the Midwest, and later does not show any interest in pursuing graduate studies. After college, she does not work in a company, but in the field. (Paudyal 26)

The familial conflict and past wounds in Subhash and Gauri affected Bela's way of perceiving things in life. She chose a nomadic life only because of her parents' continuous skirmish and failed attempt to create harmony in their marital life. The hardships, difficulties and the cultural clash in Bela was not only because of different socio-cultural backgrounds but also because of failed marital relationship of her parents and over enthusiastic nature of Gauri towards her academic career which pushes Bela deep into the chasm of alienation and displacement. Unlike, Ashima Ganguli in the *Namesake*, Gauri's assimilation process was different. Ashima decided to maintain her ties with old world and perceived her new life in the new world with harmony; however, Gauri discarded her home culture to assimilate with American society. Gauri's way of adaptation to achieve freedom in new society was surprised and harsh as she decided to leave her eleven years old child, her second husband, who gave her new life, freed her from the curse of widowhood in Calcutta. Unlike Gauri, Subhash who became angelic figure for Gauri remains persistent for Bela. Although, he knew that Bela is not his biological child. His love for Bela remains unconditional but failed to replace motherly image of Gauri from Bela's mind, "when she was younger she'd been angry at her father, more angry than she'd been at her mother. She had blamed for driving her mother away, and for not figuring out a way to bring her back" (Lahiri 314). She goes through hard times not because of Subhash but because of unfaithfulness of Gauri, who overlooked everything, the sacrifices of her second husband who assured her freedom in new world order, left her eleven years old Bela, who deserved parental love. Gauri's desire to fascinate her new culture and new home, California. Her unfaithful acts of discarding past harshly affected Bela's mentality and Subhash lost his confidence of being a father:

She was establishing her existence apart from him. This was the real shock. He thought he would be the one to protect her, to reassure her. But he felt cast aside, indicted along with Gauri. He was afraid to exert his authority, his confidence as a father shaken now that he was alone. (Lahiri 261)

Bela's alienation begins with increasing interest of Gauri in her Academic career. At first Bela failed to understand what dissertation means, she seems to be unhappy over the explanation about the research work of her mother. Gauri was keen to take care of her manuscript more than her lonely child, Bela. "She worried about the pages being blown out an open window, or being destroyed by a fire. She said it worried her, sometimes, to leave them unattended in the house" (Lahiri 244). The increasing uncertainty in Bela was due to her mother who is more interested in academic work than her daughter is. Although, American culture provided immense opportunity, freedom and desires Gauri to live her dreams in new world order. However, the freedom and new opportunities came with its own costs. Novel end up with the alienation of Bela, loneliness of Subhash and her own estrangement.

Jhumpa Lahiri has exposed the behaviour of immigrant population in new unfamiliar socio-cultures in adopted lands. The cultural shock is not limited to the first generation immigrant population only but also among second-generations too. Subhash and Gauri felt cultural shock in their early days of American life. Subhash's comparison of church bell with mosque that stood in his family's neighbourhood, Holly's description through Indian perspective, shows his early dilemma in new world. Gauri shocked to see how Subhash cooked his breakfast; she lost her family due to the culture shock in America. To compete with new trends in new culture Gauri abandoned her child, husband and traditional roots to become a part of new socio-cultural world, she failed to realise that what she has lost until the end of novel. "She had married Subhash, she had abandoned Bela. She had generated alternative versions of herself, she had insisted at brutal cost on these conversions. Layered her life only to strip it bare, only to be alone in the end" (Lahiri 291). No doubt, American culture provided Gauri new hopes and desired detachment from the past, to delineate her alienation, isolation and rootlessness; she went a step ahead to fulfil her sexual fantasy by committing lesbian sexual relationship with Lorna, sexual orientation with strangers, her acts of unconventional self-caressing. "She was alone, there was no one in the neighbouring stalls...she pushed her hands up her shirt, to her breasts, caressing it" (Lahiri 208). Instead of all the acts of assimilation, cutting hair short, using jeans, and discarding her Indianness to adopt new western look Gauri knew that she stands out of the other women in the university. "But in



spite of her jeans and boots and belted cardigan, or perhaps because of them, Gauri knew that she stood out” (206).

Gauri is not a typical Indian immigrant character who joins her husband in the United States and remains a dutiful housewife, suffering from homesickness, preparing Indian food, and sticking to Indian cultural practices in an attempt to alleviate the loneliness and displacement of being in a new country. Instead, she is an immigrant who goes through a number of transformations and conversion. (Paudyal 27).

*The Lowland* has explored the issues of immigrant generations, the social and cultural conflict of first and second-generation immigrant population in adopted lands. Bela is second-generation immigrant who is suffering not only because of her hybrid look or her natural appearance but also because of physical dislocation and up-rootedness. She was born and raised in America with typical Americanness. Bela begins to realise from her tender age that she is different from both the worlds. Her alienation, displacement and uprooted self is not only because of her different roots but also because of the chaos and confusion among her parents who were unable to fix their marital problems even after years of living together. The traumatic experience from her early age forced her to live like a nomad who does not have any particular home or identity. Although, her both parents were well settled in American but they failed to give her parental affection that lead her to do odd jobs for survival in her early age. Bela is unaware about her cultural roots and about her biological father. Her first visit to India with Subhash without Gauri exposed her with the ancestral roots. She was shocked the way they were welcomed. She was traumatised by looking at the behaviour of local residents as if she was an alien in her own land. “Bela had been eager to go out of the house that day, to accompany Deepa to the market, to explore the places she’d travelled so far to see. But now she wanted to return inside. Not liking, as they retraced their steps, the way some of the neighbours were pulling back their curtains to look at her” (Lahiri 236).

The expectations of immigrant population are always high on the arrivals to their ancestral homelands. However, the anticipations and imagination about homes,

which they have left years before, failed to welcome them as part of their own society, because of different cultural traits and social behaviour they have unconsciously adopted from foreign lands. Bela and Subhash got cold welcome from his parents as, “grandmother had not been at the airport to welcome them” (Lahiri 233). They treated Bela as a foreigner, “give her the boiled water. She’s not made to survive here” (235). Calling her “Bela Memsahib” and cutting her nails without warning. She is shocked looking at the shaved head of her father and following strange rituals in her ancestral home. Her alienation, loneliness and cultural shock increases if Subhash leaves her alone at home. She has observed the social and cultural variedness between India and America, and noticed that they are treating her as a guest not as a part of the society. The increased estrangement of Bela in Tollygunge instigates her memories to think about her American life, which prompts her to miss her mother who is in America. However, in an utter shock for Bela on her arrival to Rhode Island, her mother has already abandoned her and Subhash to follow her dreams. Gauri’s act of perceiving her life brought more miseries to Bela; literally, she lost her ‘home’ with the loss of mother. She failed to maintain her fatherly relationship with Subhash, begins to live in her own world. “Since her seventh grade, she been learning Spanish language. With her coming of teenage, she makes her own world, even Subhash, her mother like figure for her upbringing hesitates to intrude in her private space” (Das 279).

Bela, who was American born second-generation immigrant character, adopted her Americanness in her early age. Her American dress code, tattooed body, hoop in her nose and her quest for freedom alienated her from Indian traditional roots. At the age of twenty-one she was enough mature to handle her life by joining Peace Corps. To fulfil her daily needs she did not hesitate to do odd jobs with meagre money. She would meet Subhash only on her own terms during her nomadic life. Bela, like her mother who chose to live her life American way, enjoys sexual freedom without any kind of affection and became unwed mother. Subhash learns to understand and accept her free American life. He never tries to interfere in her life by convincing her for marriage, he was always worried about her unconventional way of life but chose to remain silent and accepted her demands. “How could he expect Bela to be interested in marriage, given the example he and Gauri had given?

They were a family of solitaires. They had collided and dispersed. This was her legacy. if nothing else, she had inherited that impulse from them” (Lahiri 320).

The sexual fantasies of all the characters in the novel became the part of their assimilation with new world. Subhash’s multiple sexual encounters in new world shows his willingness to discard his past, ready to betray his parental trust and integrate with new society. Gauri’s involvement of same sex acts with Lorna was part of her free life in new world. Bela followed the familial legacy and became unwed mother of a baby whose father was not part of her life. She did not want to inform father to be as he is not like Subhash, “he is not the kind of father I want for my child... he is nothing like you (Lahiri 321). Finally, she decides to take care of her child with Drew, a farmer for whom she falls and decided to give him fatherly responsibility of her unwed child.

*The Lowland* is a masterpiece of Jhumpa Lahiri, which hold a distinct place in her literary works. Unlike, previous novel, which has mainly focused on diaspora lives, *the Lowland* has explored the lives from Tollygunge to Rhode Island and highlighted the issues of political turmoil, growing influence of Naxalbari movement in Bengal during 1960’s, the novel holds a unique position in Lahiri’s career because of its unique themes. Unlike, earlier works of Lahiri *the Lowland* presents a different perspective of diasporic life. Lahiri’s previous works deals with the conflicting nature of past and present, hybridity and clash of cultures, the characterisation of the novel presents new pictography of immigrant lives who are willing to abandon their past to assimilate with mainstream America. They no longer resists with new societies to hold on their past. All the characters in the novel are keen to assimilate or incorporate with new world rather than showing reluctance to discard their traditional world:

The individualism embodied in their ethical choices is in contrast to the traditional Bengali culture of familial attachment and communal interdependence. They do nothing to preserve their own tradition while leaving no effort untried in embracing Western ideas and practices. The immigrants in this novel never experience the anguished divisions between the integration and inherited mores of the native. (Chen 122)

All the major characters of the novel were ready to discard their traditions to mingle with new world; they did not try to establish or maintain their ethnic or ancestral identity. They reject their Indianness to establish themselves more American. Unlike, *The Namesake's* Ashima and Ashoke, who always struggled to maintain their Indianness and transform Bengali cultural traits to their second-generation American born children. However, Subhash and Gauri have different perspective about the transformation of native cultural traits to Bela, Subhash gave her complete freedom to lead an unconventional nomadic life, the outcome of freedom Bela became unwed mother that is not only unethical but also a shame in typical Bengali culture. The individualism embolden them to take harsh unethical decisions in foreign shores to claim new identity with redefined world. Even after Bela's pregnancy, Subhash failed to convince her for marriage, which is the cordial duty of parents in Bengali culture. He is afraid, worried and anxious about Bela's individual life but decided to refrain from any kind of involvement in her personal life as she was born and bred in different part of the world. "If he'd raised her in Calcutta it would have been reasonable for him to bring up the subject of her marriage. Here it was considered meddlesome, out of bounds. He had raised her in a place free from such stigma" (Lahiri 320). There was a kind of pain, love and worrisome in Subhash's heart about Bela's condition but he cannot claim his fatherly rights in this part of the world, he cannot impose his views on Bela in newly adopted culture. Subhash's expectation were low and unconvincing about the marriage of Bela because of his grim and traumatic marital relationships with Gauri. His anticipation about Bela's marriage was low, as she has never experienced parental love like her friends does, she never witnessed the love between her parents as husband and wife, she had encountered only with broken and poisonous relationships in her life that encouraged her to stay away from marital bonds until end of the novel. Subhash and Gauri has portrayed bad picture of marital relationship in front of her. They were in a marital relationship for years but failed to create that bond and affection which they had expected at the time of marriage. Bela's views are harsh but truth about the cordial relationship between her parents. Bela refers her tragic life to Drew "that though she'd been created by two people who'd loved one another, she'd been raised by two who never did (Lahiri 367).

Although, the hero and heroine of the novel positioned themselves in such a way that they are ready to shed every part of their traditional life to blend in new world, yet unconsciously they failed to discard their past completely. Gauri's eagerness to embrace and adapt every aspect of American life brought her to the verge of mental trauma that provokes her for suicide to end her guilt. She promised herself that California is her permanent home, but at the end of the novel, she visited their roots, the Lowland in Tollygunge. Gauri's callous acts of un-motherly and selfishness in chasing her dreams to blend in new world failed her as a mother and a faithful wife. Instead of taking care of her second husband and Bela she decided to live her own terms. However, Lahiri tries to present her image as the victim of situations to create some sympathy among readers for her callous and selfish acts. "Her acts of forsaking Bela becomes her retribution against her own past with Udayan. Disoriented in her angst, Gauri becomes culpable of committing the same crime towards Bela that Udayan had committed towards her-that of the abandonment" (Wadhawan 207).

Gauri realises the pain of abandonment at the end of the novel, her guilt of betraying Subhash, Bela and her traditional ethics proves her Indian heart. The guilt and embarrassment for what she has done to her family is visibly on her face, she wanted to know about Bela, Subhash and her past but she understands that her acts of past life are unforgivable but still her Indianness overpowers her to know about Bela. However, Gauri's transformation from Indian housewife to modern American Philosophy scholar, the journey was never easy but her valour and fearlessness to take firm decisions of life must be appreciated. Her transformation and the way of absorbing every opportunity, which comes her way needs courage to claim her assimilation with new world. The physical transformation from sari to jeans, long hair to short hair and faithful Udayan's wife to callous mother were the acts to fit in new society but failed to change her Indian heart, which feels guilty for what she has done to Bela, Subhash and her Indian ethics. "Though she did not expect him to forgive her, she wanted to thank him for being a father to Bela. For bringing Gauri to America, for letting her go. The shame that had flooded her veins was permanent. She would never be free from that (Lahiri 375). The cold welcome shakes Gauri's conscience in front of Bela who has put a question mark on Gauri's existence in her

life. She denied her existence to Meghna, “This lady was a friend of your grandmother’s. Bela Said to Meghna (380). To summing up her life, it was Gauri who has accused her conscious for her acts of betrayal, “remembered Bela’s sarcastic assessment of her existence; for her Gauri did not exist” (Batra 210).

Jhumpa Lahiri’s art of narration unveils the complex nature of diasporic lives in terms of familial relationships, generational conflict and contradictions with the new adopted world. Lahiri uses linear movement of description with third person narrative methods with occasional use of past memories. The novel does not portray any kind of forced expulsion or dislocation of characters, which is common theme of many diasporic works. Although, all leading characters suffered from alienation, dislocation, question of belongingness and traumatic situation in their lives was not only because of their longing for past lives but also due to the ambivalent decisions about their belongingness. They celebrate their new lives with great zeal and embraced every change whatever new life offers to them. They enjoyed freedom of new environment and politically serene surroundings, praised their newly individual and independent lives in America. Although, they never entertain the idea of returning India permanently but as a responsible son Subhash’s occasional, or frequent visits to his hometown unveils the ancestral cultural loyalty in him.

In spite of the fact that all leading characters preferred to adopt more American ways of living without any guilt of discarding their traditions but still they failed to eradicate the native cultural habits, which they used to follow unconsciously in their newly adopted world. They uphold little India in their hearts. Gauri, who proudly oversteps her traditions, cuts her hair, discarded her sari, engaged with extramarital sexual fantasies, abandoned her daughter and develops same sexual relationship with Lorna. Instead of that, she has embraced all those changes that defines her freedom in new world but she never changed her citizenship, she could have discarded her Indian passport but she chose to remain Indian citizen until end of the novel. “The Indian passport she continued to carry, the citizenship she’d never renounced” (Lahiri 387), enables her to travel her roots. Gauri’s Indianness is still in her consciousness; she prefers drinking tea in the night instead of wine that is very common in American society, and travelling with Indian shawl to keep her body warm. On the other side Subhash, who has breached the trust

of his parents, chose his brother's widow as his wife has completely assimilated with adopted home. He refutes traditional rituals in which women have to follow their widowhood after the death of their husbands, he gave unconventional freedom and decision taking authority to Bela, which resulted disastrous nomad life for her, and he also maintained numerous sexual relationships with American women to claim his freedom and individuality in new American life. However, as a responsible son of an Indian father he has to perform his father's last rites by shaving face and head. "Before the ceremony a barber came to the house and shaved her father's head and face in the courtyard, turning his face strange and small" (Lahiri 234). His food habits like dhal and rice exhibits his Indianness in new world. Bela, who was born and bred in America has adopted all those American cultural traits in her tender age, she has tattoos in her body, living independent life but still understands some Bengali words, wears long hair braids that shows her quest to adopt some ancestral cultural traits:

The second generation exists in a liminal space of cultural borderlands between the United States and their family's country of origin. The second generation is constantly negotiating their understanding of themselves, striving to balance, if not also integrate, their cultural roots and their American lifestyles. Yet as often as this group may celebrate having "two homelands". (Field 166)

*The Lowland* is a masterpiece of Jhumpa Lahiri, which provides new vision to peek through different angles in the lives of immigrant population. Novel is a perfect blend of neo-cosmopolitan fiction, which describes the complex state of inter and intra relationships between immigrant generations. Being second-generation immigrant writer Lahiri has projected the undeniable bond between traditional and newly adopted lives. It also provides us glimpses of transnational and transcultural nature of south Asian immigrants who desires to enjoy their new life with great zeal but at the same time wants to retain some of the traditional cultural bonds to claim their relationships with both the worlds. Novel exhibits the tremendous imagery of diasporic population who are trying to forge their obligations to enjoy individual lives in new world order. Novel epitomise the family and personal obligations of characters who are dwindling between individual and familial responsibility.

Subhash marries Gauri, widow of his brother out of obligations to raise a child whose biological father is Udayan. Gauri never felt her obligations towards her second marriage. Reader's hearts felt overwhelmed by Subhash's love for his family and responsibility towards her Indianness.

Eventually, *the Lowland* appeals its readers for its terse and smooth prose style. Jhumpa Lahiri has amazingly infused historical and emotional events with immigrant sensibility and displayed the intricate bonds between traditional and new values. The title of the novel also justified its themes. Gauri's travel to trace her roots, the Lowland in Tollygunge cannot be found because of new constructions over there, which has eradicated the signs of the place where one of the most dreaded incident happened that changed the lives of all Mitra members. Although, the scene of the killing of Udayan is still fresh in Gauri's head because he was killed in front of her eyes. *The Lowland* was altered or disappeared just as Udayan has been disappeared from the Tollygunge. Gauri's existence also has disappeared in Tollygunge as Udayan. "People were glancing at her now that she was out of the car. Taking in her sunglasses, her American clothing and shoes. Unaware that once she too, had lived here" (Lahiri 391). Gauri unconsciously questions her existence as she remembers what Bela had said; her reappearance in Tollygunge meant nothing, "that she was as dead as Udayan" (Lahiri 393). On the other side, Subhash has decided to live with Elisa Silva, former teacher of Bela. Their relationship disturbs Bela's concise secretly but she chose to remain silent on this emotional note of his foster father. In the end of the novel Subhash settled his life with Elisa Silva. His yearly visits to Calcutta to meet his parents' shows his unfinished mission of assimilation; he had walked away from Calcutta just as Gauri had walked away from Bela.



## Chapter 5

### **The Cultural Clash: A Collision of Generations in Jhumpa Lahiri's**

#### *The Namesake*

Today, as we turn to face the long march back, I ache for the cool of welcoming streets and rooftops. But the memory of this place is forever burnt into my children's eyes and its cinders ignite my fear  
(Debjani Chatterjee).

The current era of post modernity has paved the way for masses to explore and expedite new places to live without any fixed boundary or limitations. Modernity and advanced technology has changed the vision of the people who wished to move or migrate to other developed countries of the world in search of better life style and better security. Innovations and high-tech communication system has bridged the gap between different parts of the world and makes it possible for every individual of the planet to move or live in anywhere around the world. The transnational migration has brought the expected creolization of languages, heterogeneity of cultures and expected hybridity of identities in the post- modern world order due to increased trend of migration or expatriation. Migration and transnational expatriation have altered the concept of fixity and territoriality in the era of globalisation and innovations. The process of de-territorialisation in the modern era has created the 'third space' and 'liminality', (Bhabha) which paves the way for new integrations and identifications based on assimilation and negotiations with existing notion of the state. Although, the concept of home and homeland identities have broken and negotiated with new adopted identities but the shedding of past completely is still a complex process among the immigrant population.

Post-colonial literary world has produced enormous literature about the diaspora population to understand the complications of being different from the majoritarian societies. The immigration and migration is one of the most discussed topics in the current era to provide new eyes to understand the complexity of the diaspora population in perspective of the adopted and ancestral homes. Diaspora literature has opened new ways to discuss and understand the notions attached to the

life of the immigrant and expatriate experiences throughout the journey from roots to routes and the intrigued relationships of the complex first and second generations who are reluctant to negotiate or compromise with respective life style in the adopted lands and vice versa. Indian origin diaspora writers have rooted so deeply in the world of mainstream English literature; one cannot imagine diving into the diasporic English literary world without encountering the works of Indian born English writers. VS Naipaul, Salam Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohinton Mistry and Jhumpa Lahiri are some of the prominent icons of the world of diasporic literature. The diasporic literature is mostly dealing with plight of the people who have migrated from the ancestral roots to settle in the foreign shores. The perpetual themes of the writers mostly revolves around the displacement, exile, dislocation and socio-cultural alienation, complex relationships between generations, rootlessness and divided self-integration.

Migration and expatriation has two main perspectives to understand the root cause of the movement from one world to another. The originally diaspora population can be divided into two types, one who are self-exiled, chose to migrate from one place to other for betterment of their future and economic gains and the second type of immigrants, who were exiled or forced expulsion from their native countries. Although, forced, or self-exile, voluntarily or displaced, the longing for homeland remains same among most of the immigrants. The writers of Indian origin have excelled the themes of displacement and dislocated self in their works; although they deny the facts that in real life they are exiled or alienated, which they have frequently projected in their works. The works of diaspora writers have major focus on nostalgia, rootlessness and social and cultural displacement. The readers can vividly understand the inner consciousness of the writers with their current places and their cultural attachment with the past. The pictographic writing skills of the Indian origin writers proposes imminent visualisation of the immigrant life and journey from the roots to routes and vice versa. Jhumpa Lahiri's characters have the courage to confront new challenges in alien world and overcome those challenges with triumph gives new dimension to readers to understand the life struggle among immigrants after they decide to assimilate with new world order. Diaspora literature provides new ways to peek into the lives of the immigrant population, the loss of

ancestral roots in the process of assimilation with adopted world, the negotiation with past to create new future with new beginning and the resistance to the odds to redefine their identity and belongingness.

Jhumpa Lahiri (1967) is one the prominent icon in the world of diaspora literature, has added the Pulitzer Prize in her tally of literary awards for her spectacular fictional work, the *'Interpreter of Maladies'* in 1999. Jhumpa Lahiri is the daughter of Indian origin expatriate family. Born in London to Bengali parents on July 11, 1967 currently living in New York, the USA. Her influence is massive on the literary world of Indo-American writers who have produced enormously literary genius of our times. She represents second-generation diaspora Indo-American writers, who can understand the pain and agony of the second-generation immigrants in their adopted homes. Her good name is Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri but had to reverse it to her nickname 'Jhumpa' because her good name was difficult for her schoolteachers to pronounce, so they decided to call her Jhumpa, a nickname. After three years in London, her parents decided to move to the USA where her father worked as a Librarian at the University of Rhode Island. She completed her B.A in English literature from Bernard College in 1989 and received her M.A (English, Creative writing and comparative literature) and Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies from the Boston University. She has won the Pulitzer Prize for her collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies* in 1999 and PEN/ Hemingway in 1999. Her extra ordinary writing skills in her debut novel *The Namesake* (2003) was adopted in a popular movie with same title by Mira Nair in 2006. Her second novel is *The Lowland* published in 2013.

Jhumpa Lahiri is the herald of the current diaspora Indian literature who has shown her skills in her works. *The Namesake* and *The Lowland* have focused on the complications of the domestic and public life of diaspora population in their adopted lands. The major focus of her fictional works are broadly relying on the diaspora struggle to maintain the equilibrium between the old and new world values. The exile, rootlessness, alienation and the complicated relationships between generations have been projected in her works to understand the process of assimilation and integration with new world order through the different perspectives of the first and second generations. *The Namesake* is a master piece of Jhumpa

Lahiri in which she has highlighted the clash of the past and present, traditional values and modern ethics and the clash of civilisations among the immigrant population who are trying to impose old values on second generations to safeguard the traditions and old socio-cultural beliefs. Being a second-generation immigrant writer, Jhumpa Lahiri has first-hand experience to investigate the struggle and skirmish between family expectations and the desires of self-consciousness that lead to the alienation and estrangement and widens the gap between first and second-generation immigrant population in their adopted homes. Jhumpa Lahiri has projected the clash of first and second-generation values and ethics of daily life, to create a balance between old and new beliefs in the adopted world. Although if the generations came to the negotiations to assimilate with new life but the host societies has its own perception to follow the immigrant population that forced them to question their existence in the adopted homes. The question of existence and belongingness arises among second-generation immigrants in foreign shores where parents desires to dictate their children to follow things, which are alien to their birthplaces. The ethics from the traditional world are alien to the second generation, who are unaware about the values from their ancestors and eagerly wants to mingle with the socio-cultural life of the places they were born and raised instead of following outlandish set of cultural beliefs, which literally does not exist in their present life.

Jhumpa Lahiri has highlighted some of the most significant issues related immigrant population who are living in their adopted countries for decades but still their hearts are longing for their traditional social values and hopes to convey those values to their coming generations who are partially or fully unaware about the ancestral beliefs. The complications of the old and new world values are so deeply rooted among the immigrants that they wish to make balance between the old and new values which brings them to the verge of hybrid identity, inbetweenness and rootlessness. The hybrid or hyphenated identity comes with certain hitches in real life situations where it is very complicated to show loyalty towards any particular notion of the state. However, if the hybrid immigrant population successfully prove their loyalty towards any particular world, it is very difficult to convince the host societies about the love and patriotism towards the particular country. As Bhabha

believes, that hybridity creates ‘third space’, which paves the way for the concept of ‘Other’. “The intervention of the ‘Third Space’ of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code”(Bhabha 54). The suggested identity referenced by Bhabha is impure and dynamic rather than static or fixed.

The *Namesake* is the first novel of Jhumpa Lahiri that was published in 2003 and was adopted in a movie with same title directed by Mira Nair in 2006. The novel explores the life of an Indian origin immigrant family who are facing the complications in their adopted home. The well-crafted artwork of Jhumpa Lahiri is the post mortem of the immigrant family who are reluctant to shed their past and assimilate with new social milieu. There is a conflict of East/west ideologies between the first and second-generation immigrant family. It projects the alienation of the first generation in the adopted home and the loneliness of the second generation in their ancestral homes. Novel is the exploration of the first and second-generation immigrant psyche who wants to impose their social and cultural values on each other and trying to justify from their respective point of views. Some important books reviews:

Fantastically readable, warm and profound...this is a novel that explores the concept of cultural identity, of rootlessness, of traditional and familial expectation but never succumb to the clinches those themes so often entail. Instead, Lahiri turns it into something both larger and simpler: the story of a man and his family, of his life and hopes, love and sorrows. She has a talent—magical, sly, cumulative—that most writers would kill for. (Julie Myerson, Guardian review)

Jhumpa Lahiri’s characterisation in the novel proposed a clever look into the life of an immigrant family who are stuck between the old world Indianness of first generation (Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli) and the unnerving budding Americanness in the second generation (Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi). The novel reveals Jhumpa Lahiri’s art of projecting the nature of duality, biculturalism and the authoritative

nature of first generation immigrants and the impacts of traditional cultural values in the foreign lands on the second generations who are unaware about their parental socio-cultural roots. Jhumpa Lahiri has introduced us with the warm and complex family relationships who are trying to preserve their traditional Indianness and also wants to live their American dream with American born children whom they expect will follow their set of beliefs from the alien land. To establish new world in alien land, Jhumpa Lahiri has presented us to the people who have left everything to begin new life in foreign shores but at the same time they are reluctant to cut off all the ties with past. Although, keeping traditions in their subconscious mind and wishing to transfer those traditional values to their coming generations brought them to the alienation, displacement, and duality of their nature.

*The Namesake* is the extended work of Jhumpa Lahiri's collection of short stories, *The Interpreter of Maladies*; the themes are finely crafted to present the family drama, which illuminates immigrant experience in the day today lives. "A finely wrought, deeply moving family drama, *The Namesake* illuminates Lahiri's signature themes: the immigrant experience, the clash of cultures and the tangled ties between generations" (Sinha 191). The novel revolves around the male protagonist, an American born Indian origin Gogol Ganguli and his family who are striving to find the middle path of their love for past and desires to assimilate with present. The novel begins with a typical Indian wife in America who is preparing to give birth her first child in the alien world where nobody knows her; everything is strange and finds herself in the middle of no-man's-land with dislocated and displaced self. Jhumpa Lahiri has introduced readers to a family who are struggling to start their new ambitions life in America with old set of values from the past life. However, giving birth to their first baby in the foreign country with new rules and new culture is a first challenge for Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli to face in the hospital where they have to compromise on their past values or choose to remain in the chasm of old and new world orders. The struggle of an Indian family who are unaware of new rules and regulations of the adopted country. The first challenge to overcome from the ways of traditional baptising or naming is to either accept doctors proposal to name their baby on the lineage of his grandparents, which is common in west and Europe but would be ridiculed in India or push themselves

more into the chaos and confusion by waiting a letter from India which may or may not come soon. Ashoke Ganguli is a doctoral candidate in MIT and Ashima is a homemaker, both are struggling to baptise their baby in adopted world, in their native culture baptising is something very sacred usually done by respected elders. Although, being in foreign country they have to rely on a letter from their grandmother to naming the baby officially or else use of a nickname until they will receive a letter, which contains a name for baby. Jhumpa Lahiri demonstrates the familial struggle between old cultural preservation and the new socio-cultural assimilation, the bondage with past of first generation and the love of second generation for the present American culture makes it easy for readers to understand the skirmish of immigrant generations. There is a constant struggle between new future life and yearning for the traditional values of Indian born parents and American born children.

The novel opens with the traditional Indian family scene where two families are negotiating matrimonial alliance of their off springs. Ashima's mother tries to show best side of the bride to be, so that they can fix the match as soon as possible. After matrimonial ceremony in India, couple left for America where Ashoke is a doctorate candidate of MIT. Ashima, a typical Indian Bengali woman who has never visited any place out of her home state without her parents now moving to another country where she is facing enormous challenges to assimilate in new society. Ashima is suffering worst from the beginning of her new American life. She is feeling alienated, lonely and displaced because there is no one to support her from the family side and the rules of the new country makes it worse for her to adapt with new society, which challenges her past socio-cultural beliefs. Eating chicken and other non-veg foods are normal for American people but for her it is an unusual thing even to touch, no matter what the condition prevails. Ashima's physical pain is visible to her doctor in the hospital, that is normal procedure in this prevailing condition but nobody knows the agony, loneliness and psychological discomfort of Ashima that is invisible to outside world. "But nothing feels normal to Ashima. For the past eighteen months, ever since she's arrived in Cambridge, nothing has felt normal at all" (Lahiri 6). It is not the physical pain, which hurts Ashima more, but it is a pain being an alienated in her crucial moments. There is no one to console her,

no one to make her realise that they care, her loneliness begins to haunt her at crucial moment of life where she is ready to give birth to her baby. Ashima Ganguli delivers a baby boy in a place where she does not feel comfortable, already nervous and perplexed in the hospital. The naming a baby before getting the letter from India in which her family has suggested name for her new-born is adding more miseries to her thoughts in the hospital to follow new rules. “It’s not so much pain, which she knows, somehow, she will survive. It’s the consequence: motherhood in a foreign land” (Lahiri 7). There is a visible East-West clash of ideology, in Bengali customs, almost every individual is known by two names- a pet name, specifically for family and friends. This name has nothing to do with official documents and social interactions, another is ‘good name’, and it is used for official purposes. In a haste Ganguli’s have to give some name before leaving hospital. The skirmish between old and new worlds visibly coming out, the struggle begins in their life with unconditional love for traditional values and the demands of modern life in America. Although, to complete the formality of the hospital procedure they decided to register a baby with a pet name, ‘Gogol’, inspired from the favourite Russian writer, Nicholai Gogol whose works saved life of Ashoke during the train accident. The tradition of giving pet name is very unconventional method in their adopted home and by mistake, it became ‘good name’ for their son. Salman Rushdie in the *Imaginary Homeland* has defines the chaos and confusion of being an immigrant who love to save his traditions but also want to prove his loyalty to the adopted homes:

We are Hindus who have crossed the black water; we are Muslims who eat pork. And as a result—as my use of the Christian notion of the Fall indicates—we are now partly of the West. Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. (Rushdie 22)

Jhumpa Lahiri has projected the conflict of generations, loneliness, alienation, nostalgia, assimilation and acculturation among the immigrant population in their new life. Being a second-generation immigrant, she has first-hand experience of being different and unique from the host and the ancestral societies. Inherited multicultural roots, Lahiri struggled to maintain her ancestral Bengali



legacy intact and simultaneously to establish her own American identity with new social and cultural context. Her mostly characters are from Bengali lineage shows her attachment towards her ancestral homeland where she used to visit frequently to have ample knowledge to understand the facts to present in her works to portray the dilemma of first and second generations regarding their existence in foreign shores. “After a crossing the known shore becomes the opposite side: here becomes there. Charged, I cross the lake again. I am elated ( Lahiri 4). Her vivid depiction of Bengali culture and traditional landscape in the works highlights the multicultural upbringing. Jhumpa Lahiri opens up her yearning for the ancestral place, Bengal in an interview:

When I began writing fiction seriously, my first attempts were, for some reason, always set in Calcutta, which is a city I know quite well as a result of repeated visits with my family, sometimes for several months at a time. These trips, to a vast, unruly, fascinating city so different from the small New England town where I was raised, shaped my perceptions of the world and of people from a very early age. I went to Calcutta neither as a tourist nor as a former resident — a valuable position, I think, for a writer. (Lahiri)

Jhumpa Lahiri has highlighted the crux of the transnational world where people are not feeling obligatory to open up with intentional nationality and belongingness towards a particular nation or country. Ashoke Ganguli desires to give every comfort of the life to his family but showing sense of discomfort to assimilate with new culture. He struggles to transform his Indianness in new prevailed Americanness and then to his next generation. Gogol and Sonia, they are American by birth not by any compulsion and wants to prove their loyalty towards the nation where they have born and raised up. The exchange and the adaptation with new socio-culture for immigrant population is a challenge to make peace with past and present. It does not end with the coming of second generation but the challenge becomes more complicated because of increasing ideological differences between first and second generation of the immigrant population. The novel has vividly explored the concept of home and the homeland which creates the proximity of identity and belongingness. The sense of uncertainty about home and homeland

has brought Ashoke and his family to the verge of displacement, dispossession, dislocated self, hyphenated identity and increased sense of un-belongingness. Their half-hearted loyalty towards here and there brought them a sense of inbetweenness and divided souls between the old and new socio-cultural values.

Jhumpa Lahiri further states in her interview about the American setting in the novel that the struggle of an immigrant in America is very much like her own. Gogol Ganguli, the protagonist of the novel is an Indian born American immigrant who feels the heat of being different from the host and the ancestral homeland. Although, mostly characters of the novel are dangling with multiple socially and culturally bound identities and blending factors from past and present in order to form a new identity in new world. Jhumpa Lahiri explores the dual nature of immigrant family who are stranded in old and new values, and the struggle of second-generation who are dealing with their hyphenated existence:

The Namesake is, essentially, a story about life in the United States, so the American setting was always a given. The terrain is very much the terrain of my own life -- New England and New York, with Calcutta always hovering in the background. Now that the writing is done I've realized that America is a real presence in the book; the characters must struggle and come to terms with what it means to live here, to be brought up here, to belong and not belong here. (Lahiri)

*The Namesake* is the autopsy of an immigrant life who constantly relate themselves with their past and try to maintain the equilibrium between old and new values. The novel pinpoints the diasporic consciousness of the immigrant populations who deny the existing situation and craving for old ethno-socio domestic consciousness that denotes the sense of attachment with old ethnicity and hoping to get back that sense of belongingness with traditions in foreign homes. However, the sensibility of second-generation of immigrant population differs from the first generation. The sense of alienation and dislocation is less effective on them because of their different perspectives about the motherland as they were born and raised in the new home. They lack the love and attachment for their parental roots, Gogol and Sonia are unaware about the Bengali culture, they criticise the way their parents got married, arranged marriage, "To him the terms of his parents' marriage

are something at once unthinkable and unremarkable” (Lahiri 138). There is an ideological difference between Gogol and his parents, for them Bengal is their real home but for Gogol and Sonia America is their real home. Visiting India for Gogol and Sonia was just a vacation, they shows their reluctance to visit their Indian family but for Ashima and Ashoke it was like a festival to visit their birthplace to fulfil their obligations which they are feeling towards their ancestral home. Lahiri states in her interview that the heart of the novel is the family’s strained relationships and the search for real home:

It's about the process of becoming American, understanding the ways in which that's possible. The heart of the book is about a family's relationship to America and to the change that inevitably happens when a person leaves one's place of origin and arrives in a new world, which is very much an American story( Reed, interview).

The sense of loneliness, alienation and the feeling of displacement among the immigrant community is mostly visible among those who are longing for their old values in new places. It is clearly visible in the novel, as Nabanita Chakraborty has defined that the immigrants living with diasporic sensibility will ally with those only who share their ethnic ideology and cultural traits. Ashima and Ashoke are apparently aligned with mostly people who have diasporic sensibility with Bengali background. “As the baby grows, so, too, does their circle of Bengali acquaintances” (Lahiri 38). It is very rare that they invite anyone who does not have Bengali lineage. They form a community bond with those coming from same background to feel more engaged with past in new world. They teach their children that all the Bengali community members are their uncles and aunties to show their love for particular community:

It is to be noted that the cultural and political affiliations of these individuals are also based upon their shared collective memory of the lost homeland. While the men have willingly migrated in search of better prospects, the wives have been offered limited choice. They are able to recreate an imaginary homeland through the rhetorical process of persuasion, argument and identification. (Chakraborty 30)

The alignment of displaced or immigrant population with same ethnic groups in foreign homes provides a temporary relief from alienation and nostalgia. However, the pain of being different from the majoritarian society remains there. Alienation and loneliness makes a way for psychological imbalance among immigrants, which pushes them towards the visible helplessness, displaced and uncomfortable situations. Ashima kept herself limited to Bengali community only, scared and lonely, she does not feel America as her home and afraid of raising her first child in a country where nobody loves them. “but she is terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare” (Lahiri 6). Due to the lack of surviving skills among immigrant population in their adopted homes, the feelings of isolation, nostalgia and displacement are inevitable. Ashima Ganguli lacks the adaptation skills in the new home, she is fond of Indian food, wished for Bengali origin daughter-in-law, sending her kids for traditional language classes which they are unenthusiastic to attend. To transform Bengali legacy and legendary to their coming generation, Ashoke and Ashima decided to send Gogol and Sonia to join Bengali resistance classes. Although, they attend those classes but without any interest and enthusiasm. They detest these traditional classes because these classes are keeping them away from the other American activities. “The children in the class study without interest, wishing they could be at ballet or softball practice instead. Gogol hates it because it keeps him from attending every other session of a Saturday-morning drawing class he's enrolled in, at the suggestion of his art teacher”( Lahiri 66). Second-generation of immigrant population are more eager to assimilate with life in their current homes as they are born there rather than craving for old values, which they do not feel as their part of life.

Loneliness and the constant sense of alienation can be found in Ashima more than Ashoke and their children. The Bengali immigrant couple faces the problem of alienation and loneliness varied from one another. It is Ashima Ganguli who is most affected by the immigration from the beginning of her life in new world. She is facing language barriers and cannot converse fluently with locals. Ashoke has his own friend circle in his office but Ashima's activities are limited to the kitchen and bedroom in her early days in America. She is scared and alienated in hospital

because of the strange environment around, which was new to her traditional Indian mind setup. She is alone in the hospital, without any known person around her, had it been in India, army of relatives and family members would have surrounded her but here she is scared about the future of her children in a country where nobody knows them and loves them. The cultural dilemma of Ashima makes her feel more alienated and exiled:

Now she is alone, cut off by the curtains from the three other women in the room...And then a man's voice: "I love you, sweetheart." Words Ashima has neither heard nor expects to hear from her own husband; this is not how they are. It is the first time in her life she has slept alone, surrounded by strangers; all her life she has slept either in a room with her parents, or with Ashoke at her side. (Lahiri 3)

The sense of alienation and loneliness of Ashima is because of her constant longing for her old world order that makes her more alienated and estranged. The cultural dilemma and the identity crisis is not limited to Ashima or Ashoke only but also in their American born children. Gogol and Sonia are stranded between old and new world order, they struggle to settle their family identity with new place and new world. The New York Times reviews about the novel: "This is a novel as affecting in its Chekhovian exploration of fathers and sons, parents and children as it is resonant in its exploration of what is acquired and lost by immigrants and their children in pursuit of the American dream" (The New York Times). The sense of alienation and increased loneliness in Ashima is a matter of concern for Ashoke but unfortunately, he failed to realise the inner-consciousness of his wife in foreign land. Ashima is depressed and flustered because of new location, new people and new cultural norms. Although, coming of newborn baby, Gogol provides her sigh of relief but not for so long. The busy schedule of her children and her husband makes her feel more alienated and lonely. Moreover, the death of Ashoke brought her to the point where she is not feeling related to adopted land anymore. Salman Rushdie pointed out in, *The Imaginary Homeland* that 'a full migrant' we can relate it here with first generation of migrants like Ashima are suffering more as compared to second generation (Gogol and Sonia) immigrants. For first generation immigrants, migrating from one place to another is like uproot one's self and re-root in other part

of the world. They are not feeling home even after living for years in the adopted homes in foreign shores. Ashima decides to go back to India, her roots even after spending around thirty years in America but never felt America as her home, and death of Ashoke becomes catalyst of her nostalgic manner to choose her ancestral roots for mental solace:

A full migrant suffers traditionally a triple disruption. He loses his place. He enters into an alien language, and he finds himself surrounded by beings whose social behaviour and codes are very unlike, and sometimes even offensive to, his own. And this is what makes migrants such important figures: because roots, language and social norms have been three of the most important parts of the definition of what it is to be a human being. The migrant, denied all three, is obliged to find new ways of describing himself, new ways of being human. (Rushdie 272)

The complexity of home and identity is very sensitive matter among immigrant population. The sensitivity is not limited to their physical attire but an emotional bondage with ancestral roots are always visible. The dynamic nature of home and fluidity of identity have challenged the fixed nature of identity to some extent in the ultra-modern world. However, the notion of emotional attachment of a person remains with ancestral roots. The idea of ancestral home evokes a special sense of attachment, intimacy and self-recognition. Therefore, the self-recognition and emotional attachment is missing in Ashima's life in new American independent self. She decides to return her first home but the home she has left is not the same as it used to be. She is going India but as an American with American passport, "She will return to a world where she will not single-handedly throw parties for dozens of people. She will not have to go to the trouble of making yogurt from half-and-half and sandesh from ricotta cheese. She will not have to make her own croquettes" (Lahiri 276).

Jhumpa Lahiri's art of projecting the immigrant family life in her master class way to redefine the general perspective of masses towards the expatriate family relations in their foreign homes. Almost, all main characters of the novel are in sense

of alienation and loneliness in new social milieu. Ashoke is all time busy and absorbed in his work, but no particular and close aid outside home with whom he can share his heart. He was alone in hospital when he needs desperately someone to take care of. "Who drove you there? "No one. I'm here on my own. Really, it's not that bad." (Lahiri 164). Ashima, who tries to keep herself engaged in her daily household chorus to avoid alienation and loneliness, she also does not have any particular aid in the adopted land and decides to return her roots after the death of her husband. "To avoid being alone at home she sits in the reading room of the public library, in a cracked leather armchair, writing letters to her mother, or reading magazines or one of her Bengali books from home" (Lahiri 49). At the end of the novel Ashima, tend to travel alone which she has never done before. Gogol, the protagonist of the novel begins to live alone without any female partner. For Ashima, Gogol is one of the unluckiest boy in the world because of his loneliness. Gogol is lonely because he is born without any close family member in the country like where he does not have any uncle, Aunt or any other family member except parents. The status of grandparents are very high in Indian societies which Gogol don't have and it irks Ashima and felt said for his American born son:

Without a single grandparent or parent or uncle or aunt at her side, the baby's birth, like most everything else in America, feels somehow haphazard, only half true. As she strokes and suckles and studies her son, she can't help but pity him. She has never known of a person entering the world so alone, so deprived. (Lahiri 24)

The protagonist, Gogol Ganguli is the center of the novel. Gogol is the portrayal of how it looks to be a second-generation immigrant. Frustration, alienation, duality, inbetweenness, hybridity and hyphenated identity are the some of the aftershocks of being a second-generation immigrant and living with parents who are reluctant to assimilate fully with new socio-cultural environment. The exploration of identity crisis, crucial cultural adaptation and the effects of multi-cultural identity are the main issues of the novel. There is a chaos and confusion in Bengali immigrant family; moreover, it all begins with a letter, which contains a name, lost in the transit from Calcutta to Cambridge. The naming a baby in Bengali culture is very sacred custom where elders of the family can name new-born babies

as an honour to them. "As for a name, they have decided to let Ashima's grandmother, who is past eighty now, who has named each of her other six great-grandchildren in the world, do the honors" (Lahiri 25). The loss of letter from the Indian parent that contains a name for Baby in America does not lost with only hereditary nomenclature but also lost with the identity and existence of a baby in foreign shores. Original name of baby Ganguli lost in the transit from Calcutta to Cambridge that indicates the chances of the letter is still alive. They decides to give him name 'Gogol' temporarily based until original name will arrive in near future. Gogol is a pet name until original name will arrive that nobody knows and remains a mystery for future identity and belongingness. Ganguli family decides to wait for a name which is uncertain whether it will ever come or not shows their unconscious mind which still seeks identity from the ancestral land. However, they were advised to name baby on his grandfather or someone respectable from a family as a sign of respect to that person but they rejected on the basis of that it is against their Indian traditions and decided to wait for letter. The letter lost in the transit, which indicates the journey from roots to routes. Many immigrant lose their identity, nationality and roots in the way towards the new homes. Gogol's lost name in transit signifies his lost Indianness, roots and cultural attachment with it but his parents still hoping shows the commitment to their roots:

Gogol's Indian name is therefore at least twice removed and so remains part of the realm of the imaginary, with an imaginary connection to the homeland due to its origin and an imaginary connection to its destiny due to its constantly deferred arrival. At this heart of the fantasy about a true and original name, therefore, is difference: an absence and a constantly deferred presence. (Heinze 194)

The Indianness for second-generation immigrant population in America is an imaginary view of something that they never felt as part of their life. However, parents wish to transfer their legacy from one generation to other but failed to transform the feeling and love which they are feeling for the roots. Reading Russian writers was a kind of legacy, which comes from Ashoke's father "Read all the Russians, and then reread them," his grandfather had said". They will never fail you"



(Lahiri 13). In addition, Ashoke wanted to transfer his family legacy to his son in the form of name his pet name Gogol, which becomes his permanent name latter in the novel. There is a difference between Ashoke and Gogol, Ashoke wanted to follow his grandfather's advice to read Russian writers as part of his family legacy but Gogol is reluctant to read it.

The cultural differences and the process of assimilation is always painful for the majority of immigrant population. The sense of preservation and transformation of native culture remains always high in foreign shores among immigrants because of existing dominant alien culture. Ashima, the housewife of an immigrant family tried her best to preserve her Indianness in America. Ashima and her husband sending their children to Indian art classes but American born children are reluctant to be part of any such activities that does not belong to their country where they have born and raised. After missing the letter from India, which contains a real name of Gogol, Ashoke and Ashima, decides to give a pet name to an American born baby boy. Although, giving pet names are common among Indian Bengali culture but it is very strange to American ears. Many critics claims that the writer has her own shadow in the life of Gogol. Jhumpa Lahiri was born in England to an Indian origin parents with official name Nilanjana Sudeshna, and Jhumpa Lahiri was a pet name. Jhumpa Lahiri faced confusion because of her two names and her school insists her to retain Jhumpa instead of other names, as other names were lengthy and difficult to articulate. "I think the pet name is very much connected to one's formative years and childhood and affection. And one's mother and father would never, ever, ever, ever use anything but a pet name for one's child" (Reed interview).

Adaptation and assimilation with existing culture is always a challenge and it becomes more difficult with coming of second generation in adopted lands. As Gijsbert Oonk has stated in his work that the immigrants wish their next- generation live successful life in adopted homes but they must follow their native culture also. Gogol and Sonia, both are American born and loved to their American free life. They decide to live separate from their parents in different places. However, in American culture it is a norm that adult must find his place and earn money for their personal expenditure but for Ashima, an Indian origin American woman thinks, "she has given birth to vagabonds" (Lahiri 167). Furthermore, Ashima do not like to meet

Maxine, an American girlfriend of Gogol Ganguli, she prefers someone from her own part of the world who has same roots, no matter what. Oonk further states:

They may want their children to prosper in their adopted countries, but at the same time they may prefer them to adopt Indian family values, marry other Indians, and share their common culture. In other words, many South Asians living overseas tend to reproduce their Indian culture, values, language, and religion as much as possible.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, many South Asian migrants are currently trying to re-connect with their homeland, either through modern mass media, the Internet, or personal visits. These re-connections are often seen as romantic rendezvous with the historical past and their 'original roots'. (Gijsbert Oonk 10)

Cultural heritage signifies the identity and belongingness of a particular individual in foreign lands. The protagonist in the novel got a name which does not belong to any part of his world. Ashima and Ashoke decides to give their son a pet name, a common trend in Bengal. Although, they wanted to change his name at the time of admission but unaware Gogol prefers to be as Gogol Ganguli instead of "Nikhil". Unlike Indian culture, parents are not so free in America, they have to accept Gogol as his permanent name in the school registration because awkwardly, name 'Nikhil' seems strange to Gogol's ears. Gogol is unaware about the further complication in near future because of his name; a last name becomes first name without any social and cultural importance or existence. "He is afraid to be Nikhil, someone he doesn't know. Who doesn't know him" (Lahiri 57). Although, he does not like his name later in the school when he got to know his name does not belong to any part of his world. Gogol, a distressed Russian genius writer, who has spent his life in great misery and distress. The name alienates him further from his unknown hereditary. He realises that "Gogol" does not belong to his American life for the first time when they were given a task to find names on graves in the cemetery. He did not find his name on any of the grave and realises that his name does not have any hereditary or history in this country and does not have any connection with his family or any other related world. Gogol wants to change his name to find his own identity in his own world. He begins to realise that he does not exist in the world

where he is born and neither he belong to his ancestral roots. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* states that there is no way of escaping the past:

The 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past. . . . Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the *fin de siècle*, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-delà* – here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth. (Bhabha 2)

Alienation and the rootlessness among the diaspora population in newly established localities are common due to their attachment and alliance with past. Natalie Melas has defined the notion of displaced or immigrant people as, "this notion of diaspora relies for its unity on an unchanging, stable, ancestral cultural identity, fundamentally resistant to the vicissitudes of secular history. It construes the lost land of origin as a fixed site of" (Melas 103). Ashima and Ashoke, they are reluctant to leave their past and imposing that native-ness on their children of American born. However, Gogol and Sonia, the second-generation immigrant does not have any notion or thoughts about their ancestral social and cultural scenario. Furthermore, the quest of self-identity and to be identified in the birthplace, Gogol is struggling to reshape his past to claim his share from new and ancestral worlds by changing his name. Nikhil, a new name of Gogol can help him to make friends but lacks a confidence, seems he is calling someone else. This new name brings him new identity but lacks the confidence of being Nikhil. "I'm Nikhil," he says for the first time in his life. He says it tentatively, his voice sounding strained to his ears, the statement turning without his meaning it to into a question" (Lahiri 96). The emptiness and the estranged self of Gogol found some solace after switching to other name of his choice.

Jhumpa Lahiri revealed the cultural differences among first and second-generations of immigrant population in their adopted homes. First generation are fully aware about the variedness of the second-generation because of their upbringing in an alien land, which literally does not belong to them if we see things through the prism of ancestral roots. The mechanism of family relationships becomes apparently challenging for both generations, for parents, preserving the traditions and transforming their ancestral cultural traits to next generation is a kind of sacred mission to keep alive their native identity in foreign shores. Although, it is contrary to the second-generation, American born children, they lack sentiments for their parental cultural roots because of the lack of emotional and physical attachment with a world they hardly know. Lahiri is portrayal of a family, which exposes the chaos and confusion due to differences in socio-cultural roots and inborn cultural tendency. Ganguli family became a symbol of battleground where first-generation clashes with second-generation, traditions clashes with modernity, Indianness clashes with Americanness. The conflict of preservation of old values in alien lands of first-generation immigrant population and the struggle to redefine self-identity and fully assimilation with new values. Natalie Friedman has defined the concept of home and abroad among immigrant population is different, for “older generation of immigrants beginning to see America not as a newly adopted homeland, but as an option” (Friedman 113). They do not feel nostalgic all the time but they also do not think of staying permanently in their adopted homes. They ‘seek to divide their time between two worlds to feel attached’.

The conflict of belongingness, due to the upbringing of second generation in different manner as compared to the environment, which they are facing or trying to assimilate in schools, markets and workplaces, shows the different picture of the society. The difference between host and home cultural setup brings second generation to the conflict of belongingness, they unconsciously begins to question their identity and belongingness in their birthplaces. During school field trip to graveyard, Gogol is unconsciously questioning his identity and belongingness; he is confused that which part of the world he belongs to. He begins to realise that his roots are different from the rest of the colleagues in the school, Gogol is enough old and mature to understand the complication of being different from the rest of the

students in the school. “Gogol is old enough to know that there is no Ganguli here. He is old enough to know that he himself will be burned, not buried, that his body will occupy no plot of earth, that no stone in this country will bear his name beyond life” (Lahiri 69).

Although, the realisation of being different and alienated in the birthplace is not only because of the different roots of Gogol but the reluctance of his parents to shed their past. First-generation always have a quest to be rooted with their past and transform old values to the next generation, which latter don't like to follow. Gogol is stuck between unusual expectations of his parents and their desires to preserve Indian roots; meanwhile, he is struggling to assimilate in his own world where he feels alienated. Homi Bhabha states the complication of the cultural identities in the polarised world: “the sense that the translation of cultures, whether assimilative or agonistic, is a complex act that generates borderline affects and identifications, 'peculiar types of culture-sympathy and culture-clash” (Bhabha 54). Gogol is facing tough situation to accommodate his self-identity in his own world. Ashima and Ashoke have friends who are mostly from their own Bengali roots and they do not realise that their roots must belong to India but their children are American born, they will find solace in their own world. Second generation of immigrant population in the novel is projecting the different conflicting ideologies and the set of mythical expectations of first- generation expectation and the socio-cultural realities of second-generation in the host lands.

Study of the novel and its characters opens up new ways to understand the ideological differences between first and second generation of the immigrant population in foreign lands. Jhumpa Lahiri takes readers on ride to go deeper into the psyche of the second-generation, who are born and raised in different set of socio-cultural values as compared to their other counterparts in the society. Gogol Ganguli is consciously or subconsciously comparing his girlfriend's (Maxine) parents with his own, how they behave with children. He admires their frankness with daughter, openness of ideas and the shared manners. Although, he was also born and raised in same country as Maxine but the difference is clearly visible in their upbringing. He admires her candidness with parents and appreciates her openness about the past relationships. “There is none of the exasperation he feels

with his own parents. No sense of obligation. Unlike his parents, they pressure her to do nothing and yet she lives faithfully, happily, at their side” (Lahiri 138). There was a kind of awkward situation for Gogol, when he opens up with some of his family secrets. Maxine and her family astonished, when they know that all family friends are from Bengali community. Maxine’s reaction to his family life surprises him, “They had an arranged marriage, that his mother cooks food every day that wears saris and bindi” (Lahiri 138). Although, for every American born, who is following mainstream American culture, all these ‘Desi’ life style in America is ‘depressing’ just like as Maxine felt, but surprisingly, Gogol does not expect the reaction from Maxine. He desires that his parents live a life like other Americans are living, he wishes their relationship could be open and loving like Maxine’s parents. Gogol’s Americanness, which was suppressed by the Indianness in his home, is taking front seat with Ratcliff family, his frequent visits to Maxine and staying with her parents house, who does not object their open relationship, this American gesture encourages him to admire them more.

The exasperation of being alien in the birthplace and the feeling of rootlessness among second-generation immigrant population pushes them to create new identity with new world order. Aparajita De has evoked the idea of ‘cultural dislocation’ to define Gogol’s quest to assimilate with new culture. Second-generation diaspora population “suffer with in the dominant culture”. Gogol feels displaced and alienated from the American dominant culture, although, with Maxine and her family he prepares to switch himself from Indian community life to an individual American life. He begins to display his eagerness to assimilate with popular culture of America by living with Maxine in her parents’ home, cooking and using American way of dining manners. Gogol begins to adopt new life from Maxine, and compares their parents from different cultural point of view and decides to tilt towards the American life and wishes to enjoy all those things, which he can never enjoy, living within the boundary of Indianness. The comparison of Americanness with his Indianness encourage Gogol to admire new life more profoundly, he cannot imagine his parents would behave, the way Maxine’s parents are unobjectionable towards their daughter’s personal life. Their openness towards the intimate relationship of Gogol and Maxine in their house was something, which

would be unacceptable to Ashima and Ashoke, and their Indianness that compels Gogol to play different roles in different situations. Gogol compares his shallow multiple personality and impersonated life with family and friends that makes him vulnerable to question his identity and belongingness. He admires the openness of Maxine while he has to play many roles to fit in the expectation of his family and friends:

He comes to know her, he realizes that she has never wished she were anyone other than herself, raised in any other place, in any other way. This, in his opinion, is the biggest difference between them, a thing far more foreign to him than the beautiful house she'd grown up in, her education at private schools. (Lahiri 138)

The study of diasporic literature and the hyphenated existence of immigrants evokes the concept of cultural dislocation and social alienation not only in first-generation of immigrant population but also among the second-generations who are born to multiple socio-cultural domain. First generation of diaspora population suffers alienation and dislocation in the adopted socio-cultural territories and it is visible in their daily life hecks. However, Aparajita De has exposes the psyche of the second-generation diaspora population suffered with in themselves, there is a kind of “inner conflict and uncertainty about belonging to any one space of cultural identity” (Aparajita De 185). Gogol’s resistance to his old name given by parents shows his eagerness to assimilate with current socio-cultural milieu and rejection of old values. He feels alienated and dislocated, belongs to nowhere as his name does not have any resemblance either of his worlds. Bhabha:

The condition is all too familiar, and it is not my purpose here to make those important distinctions between different national situations and the disparate political causes and collective histories of cultural exile. I want to take my stand on the shifting margins of cultural displacement – that confounds any profound or ‘authentic’ sense of a ‘national’ culture or an ‘organic’ intellectual – and ask what the function of a committed theoretical perspective might be, once the cultural and historical hybridity of the postcolonial world is taken as the paradigmatic place of departure. (Bhabha 31)

The children of immigrant origin does not feel dislocated and alienated because of their adopted homes or the culture they have been born and raised but the unconditional love and affection of their parents towards a world which never exists in their life as a home. For immigrant generations, there are two different kind of homes, with emotional and physical existence . Gogol is comparing his parental trips to Calcutta with Gerald and Lydia's visit to Lake House in New Hampshire. However, there is a difference between Maxine's parent's visits to Lake House, that is totally based on joy and limited to spend a quality time together, "It's sort of like being at camp" (Lahiri 152). However, travelling to Calcutta of Gogol's parents are mostly duty based. They visit duty bound Calcutta on funerals, vacations and other family occasions to prove their presence in the ancestral home. Ashoke and Ashima, have never accepted America as their permanent home while they never forgot their Ancestral home as well. Ashima and Ashoke has kept their Indianness in their house through, using Sari, bindi, and other Indian stuffs to feel their belongingness with a world which is strange and alien for their children.

The conflict of belongingness among immigrant generations can be perceived from the different mind setup about the concept of home. Furthermore, First generation immigrants are mostly loyal to their ancestral homes, which they can not replace it with the adopted homes. Ashima and Ashoke enjoys more privilege and confidence in Calcutta than being in America even after spending decades there. However, for second generation, Gogol and Sonia, Calcutta is a place where they used to spend their vacation without any emotional attachments like their parents are feeling in America. There is a chaos, alienation and loneliness in Gogol and Sonia, who are strangers among their own people. Although, Ashima and Ashoke feels more confident and rooted. The chaos and confusion of belongingness remains same in immigrant generations, one feels in their adopted home and other feels in their ancestral home:

Gogol and Sonia know these people, but they don't feel close to them as their parents do. Within minutes, before their eyes Ashoke and Ashima slip into bolder, less complicated versions of themselves, their voices louder, their smiles wider, revealing a confidence Gogol and Sonia never see on Pamberton road. Goggles. (Lahiri 81)



Furthermore, the question of identity and belongingness is very crucial for expatriate generations. Second generation of immigrants are reluctant to adhere the identity and belongingness from their parental land, they are more comfortable and confident in their new homes, meanwhile, first generations and their identity is emotionally attached with their past homes and new homes are just politically and physically motivated, which they deny when it comes to claim share their socio-cultural identity.

Jhumpa Lahiri has critically demonstrated the concept of home and its proximity with identity in the novel. The concept of home is different for first and second generations of the immigrant population. For many critics home is a sense of belongingness to a particular place; it is not fixed or permanent, however it convey the idea of belongingness and identity. For first generation, Ashima and Ashoke, their 'home' is India where they feels more confident and free. "It reminds me that it's my present that is foreign, and that the past is home" (Rushdie 16). Conversely, for second-generation, Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi, their home is American, the birthplace. Although, the first –generations mostly deny the culture of new homes but failed to convey their Indianness to their wards fully to keep their Indianness alive. Ganguli family tries to maintain their Indianness by relating to or living their life with a particular community, inviting Bengali friends, cooking Indian food and advising Gogol to marry with and Bengali bride only. All these attempts were made to preserve their Indian legacy. "Each step, each acquisition no matter how small, involves deliberation, consultation with Bengali friends" (Lahiri 64). McCarthy states the importance of the cultural belongingness towards the majority community brings more confidence and legitimacy of identity:

A triumphant and dominant culture presents a form of hegemony...cultural legitimacy results in a sense of centrality, confidence, the sense of majority, community, belonging, and home in cultural production. To lie outside this legitimate culture is to be homeless, irrational, anarchic, beyond representation. (McCarthy 140)

The cross-cultural activity of second-generation immigrant population brings chaos and confusion in their lives. There is a growing rift among generations in their foreign homes. The ideological differences and the way of living life is different which paves the way for living a life with multiple personality or hybridity. Gogol does not want to change his name in school records; he does not want to live with multiple identities among his family and friends. Gogol rejects the proposal of duality in the beginning of his school days and latter in his life he has to struggle to change his name and felt more confident with a new name, which he was scared in his childhood. He failed to understand why someone needs different names for family and friends even his parents try to convey him about the legacy of nicknames in Bengali culture:

But Gogol doesn't want a new name. He can't understand why he has to answer to anything else. "Why do I have to have a new name?" he asks his parents, tears springing to his eyes. It would be one thing if his parents were to call him Nikhil, too. But they tell him that the new name will be used only by the teachers and children at school. He is afraid to be Nikhil, someone he doesn't know. (Lahiri 57)

The rejection of traditions and cultural values by second-generation is due to the lack of communication with their roots. They do not feel devoted to their ancestral homes as their own, to visiting the roots is a normal vacation trips for second generations but for first generation immigrants it is a place where they actually belongs emotionally and spiritually. The novel portrays the clear images of East and West cultural clash between generations. Ashoke and Ashima are projecting the Indianness or nurturing the Eastern ideology in the novel. Ashima does not give up her cultural legacy in foreign shores. She is still using 'Sari and sandals from Bata, meanwhile, Ashoke is transforming from his typical Indianness to modern American professor by using 'Tailor made pants and shirts' learns to adorn new American style readymade clothes. However, there was nothing like past cultural legacy for Gogol and Sonia in their American home. Ashima does not like American culture, food and way of life but still she is preparing 'American' style dinner for her children. Gogol and Sonia exhibits the second-generation immigrant who are more inclined towards the west/ American life style, they are more

fascinated by the American way of life, Gogol questions his parents about his pet name and good name which is common among Bengali community. “For when Ashima and Ashoke close their eyes it never fails to unsettle them, that their children sound just like Americans, expertly conversing in a language that still at times confounds them, in accents they are accustomed not to trust”( Lahiri 65). They are fascinated and charmed by American way of life like, they prefer English conversations, American food and shows less interest towards the Bengali language, which Ashoke and Ashima wanted them to learn. Gogol’s relationship with Maxine, American white girl, which Ashima never wished to happen, as she prefers Bengali origin girl as her daughter-in-law. Gogol rejects the Indianness (Indian food and Bengali language) and prefers Americanness:

Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature; the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the –social production of wealth, at their entire. Relationship to nature and to other beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world. (Ngugi 16)

Language is one of the most important tool to communicate human culture. Ngugi has stated “the aspect of language as culture is as an image-forming agent in the mind of a child” (15). Second-generation immigrant children are reluctant to accept the language which belongs to their roots. The denial of the ancestral language is the denial of accepting anything, which belongs to their ancestors. Ngugi further defines the importance of the language in formation of any culture. Gogol is reluctant to communicate in Bengali language even with his parents. He taught to learn native language, “his ancestral alphabet, which begins at the back of his throat with an unaspirated ‘K’ and marches steadily across the roof of his mouth, ending with elusive vowels that hover outside his lips (Lahiri 65). His reluctance and denial of his mother tongue makes it sure that he was born American who has no interest in his roots. Ngugi further explains the importance of the language in transforming

cultural and social legacy from generation to generation, “Language as culture is thus mediating between me and my own self; between my own self and other selves; between me and nature. Language is mediating in my very being” (15). Second-generation immigrant born with bilingual, which affects their adaptation in new social milieu. Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi all are fluent in English and feeling proud of that, their conversation and accent is better than their parents have. The upbringing in west makes them more confident and open towards the acceptance of changes to adopt new ways of life apart from the ancestral roots and adopted places. Moushumi, unlike Gogol, she denies to hold her parental legacy of following ‘chemistry’, which her parents insist. She chose to go with her own choice, which is apart from the ancestral roots and adopted roots as well. Moushumi’s parents are hopeful that she will follow their footsteps. However, she rejects both the worlds and decides to go with her own choice by choosing French language instead of Bengali or English. The resistance of Moushumi to her adopted and ancestral cultural legacy shows her determination to be free from the past and go with the free flow of the new life of her own choice. Second generations of immigrant population, born and raised in separate countries from their parents does not feel shy to reject things, which they don’t like, she is proud of her French language and other traits from the French culture instead of feeling guilty of betraying her both ancestral and birth places. She is trying to escape from the past which stops her from pursuing her dream of free life:

Without telling them, she'd pursued a double major in French. Immersing herself in a third language, a third culture, had been her refuge—she approached French, unlike things American or Indian, without guilt, or misgiving, or expectation of any kind. It was easier to turn her back on the two countries that could claim her in favor of one that had no claim whatsoever. (Lahiri 214)

Apart from the crisis of identity and socio-cultural belongingness among the immigrant generations in their adopted lands, there is a visible shock in both generations. Although, first generation migrates from one location to another geographical locations exposes them to the physical shock. Ashima is nostalgic and scared of giving birth in a place where nobody knows her. She begins to realise the

loss of family and community support in the hospital where no one knows her. Freaking cold of and the leafless trees gave first impression to Ashima of being in different locations. “It wasn't until morning, stepping briefly outside wearing a pair of Ashoke's socks under her thin-soled slippers, the frigid New England chill piercing her inner ears and jaw, that she'd had her first real glimpse of America: Leafless trees with ice-covered branches” (Lahiri 30). Although, first generation is expecting solace from the coming of second generations in the foreign shores. However, the loneliness, which Ashima is experiencing last Eighteen months could not be detached by the coming of next generations. Coming of second generation, signals the entry of a hybrid family member who is reluctant to accept his/her roots as per the wishes of parents. Gogol, who tries to continue the legacy of his parents but failed to do so in his personal life among his friends because of his American identity, There is a challenge for both, first and second generations of immigrant population to adapt and absorb new ways of life in new their chosen world to redefine their new life to assimilate. Natalie Friedman states that Jhumpa Lahiri has explored the “awkwardness of the contact with America” (114), in terms of culture, language and social norms, which are new or awkward for the first generation immigrant population. Lahiri is also trying to explore the differences between old and new worlds, first generation (old world), who are still rooted with their past and perceiving things their own way to feel connected with old world order. However, things are different for second-generations, they are eager to assimilate fully with the current mainstream society to make their existence visible and acceptable.

Assimilation with new world order is the first challenge to the immigrant population in their adopted worlds. It needs to open up new ways to accept new peculiarities of a mainstream society to claim the share of belongingness. To assimilate in new lands, immigrant must be ready to sacrifice old values to accept new social and cultural values of new life. It is very common among immigrant population to feel awkward and disillusioned on their arrival in the new lands, as Natalie Friedman states the condition of the immigrants arrival in adopted lands as “the disillusionment that immigrants experienced once they landed on American soil: that America was not a land ready to accept them” (114). Ashima, the first generation immigrant feels the awkwardness of American in many occasions. In

hospital, she is alone, not ready to give birth her first child in an alien land among the alien people. "She is terrified" of her motherhood in foreign land and believes that this is the consequence of being an immigrant in a land which literally does not belong to her. Ashima does not like Maxine, an American girlfriend of Gogol because she wished her daughter-in-law must be from Bengali origin. Ashima questions Maxine's upbringing, "Though she'd been polite enough the one time Gogol had brought Maxine to the house, Ashima doesn't want her for a daughter-in-law. She'd been startled that Maxine had addressed her as Ashima, and her husband as Ashoke" (Lahiri 166). There is a vivid cultural difference between first and second-generation immigrants in the novel portrayed by the Jhumpa Lahiri. Ashima's struggle to assimilate with American culture never ends. She begins to work in library, which was an unusual think for most of Bengali house wives lives in America, she lives alone in an apartment and finally decided to move the old world where believes to be rooted and can claim her part of cultural share.

Jhumpa Lahiri has highlighted the one of the most important issue regarding the immigrant generation is the existential crisis or confusion, in other words the question of belongingness. It is very complicated to say which part of the world they (second-generation) belongs to. Gogol and Sonia does not think India as their homeland because they lack the emotional attachment with their ancestral homes and considers America as their home, meanwhile, Ashima and Ashoke proudly follow their Indianness in the American homes. Second-generation immigrant proudly and intentionally creates a space between their private and public life to make balance between two worlds. To examine the psyche of the generations in their respective homes Jhumpa Lahiri has vividly explores the psychological and physical behaviour of generations. Gogol and Sonia's behaviours while on trips to India is akin to as a tourists or visitors, "Gogol and Sonia know these people, but they do not feel close to them as their parents do..." "I'm scared, Goggles," Sonia whispers to her brother in English, seeking his hand and refusing to let go (81). They do not have any kind of nationalistic impulse among their Indian relatives and do not feel India as their home as the parents are feeling. Meanwhile, for Ashoke and Ashima, trip is to nourish their roots, visit their actual homes, meeting their kinfolds proudly and affectionately. The nationalistic impulse, which is missing among

second generation immigrants is plainly visible among first generations in their ancestral homes. The self-confidence and the sense of belongingness which is missing in Ashoke and Ashima in America, suddenly the “bolder, less complicated versions of themselves” shows the uneasiness and uncertainty of belongingness with their adopted homes. “Their voices louder” (81), the fascination and charm on their faces reveals the inner conscious level of comfort which they never felt in Pamberton road. The different behaviour of Parents and children of immigrant population in the novel provide a vision to the readers to understand the psyche of the immigrants in their different set of homes. Gogol and Sonia do not carry same amount of emotional, cultural and social loads as compared to the parents, which allows them a kind of space to project their differences from the Indianness and behave naturally as an American:

Lahiri’s novel examines this existential confusion, but it also complicates it: children of immigrants do not always feel closely tied to their country of origin, but rather, they feel American. They move fluidly between the private sphere of their Indian home life and the public sphere of their American experience. (Friedman 115)

The conflict of immigrant generations in the novel is visibly present in every sphere of life. Second- generation diaspora population not only redefine the way of living but also challenge the tribalism, community based and particularism of life. Jhumpa Lahiri widens the space of immigrant study in the novel. Cosmopolitanism, historically defines a migrant population from the elite section of a particular society, who have the ability and sources to travel around the world (Paudyal 17). However, in the current era of globalisation this definition is irrelevant to some extent as many as diaspora populations, who are part of the cosmopolitanism, have different reasons to migrate and settle down in different parts of the world. Travelling is no more sign of elitism in contemporary world as many travellers are travelling to secure their bread and butter in suitable countries. However, Jhumpa Lahiri’s main characters of first generation, Ashoke and Ashima are not part of any underscore or underprivileged class of Bengali society who are running from the poverty or any other misfortune from the ancestral lands. Their journey was purely based on to find more comfort in the shores of American society. Novel approaches

the cosmopolitanism of the second-generation immigrant population. Robin Cohen has defined the cosmopolitanism as:

Everyday cosmopolitanism might be regarded as a newly recognized form of behaviour. However, in more commonly described settings, cosmopolites have been seen as deviant – refusing to define themselves by location, ancestry, citizenship or language. ‘Cosmopolite or cosmopolitan in mid-nineteenth century America’, for example, meant ‘a well-travelled character probably lacking in substance. (Cohen 190)

Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi, the second-generation characters of the novel are challenging the tribalism or any other community based life. They challenge their existence in new environment to redefine their identity and belongingness as per the current social milieu. Gogol refused to be a part of an Indian community based organisation. He was invited by his cousin to be a part of community organisation. "I just don't have the time," Gogol says, not telling his well-meaning cousin that he can think of no greater hypocrisy than joining an organization that willingly celebrates occasions his parents forced him, throughout his childhood and adolescence, to attend (Lahiri 118). For Gogol, celebrating Indianness is a hypocrisy and he is no longer interested in an organisation, which does not represent his emotions. Moushumi, challenges the family and cultural traditions to develop her intimacy with an American even after her marriage with Gogol. Sonia also redefines her future by selecting an American bridegroom of her own choice even after the objection from Ashima that she just wanted her children to marry with those who have the roots from Bengali community.

The cultural conflict and the concept of marital relationship is different of immigrant generations. Pre-marital sexual relationships could be part of American culture but in eastern part of the world particularly in India, it is a sin and the punishment is hell. Gogol's multiple relationships with American born girls shows his commitment to keep his way of life as an American. His sexual engagement with Ruth and Maxine was a kind of trophy. He acknowledges his first kiss to his friends and does not feel shy for having causal sex. "...I can't believe you kissed her,



Gogol," his friends exclaim as they drive home from the party. He shakes his head in a daze" (96). Second generations have more fascination towards the adopted home cultures than first generation immigrant. Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi all are tilting towards the American culture. Gogol is sleeping with Maxine, which is normal for Maxine's parents but for Ashima it is something she cannot admit in front of her Bengali community friends "Ashima knows that Gogol spends his nights with Maxine, sleeping under the same roof as her parents, a thing Ashima refuses to admit to her Bengali friends" (Lahiri 165). Jhumpa Lahiri is displaying the conflict of East/west, social and cultural values in the form marital relationships. In America, premarital sexual relationships are common while in Indian culture mostly marriage are arranged marriage based. Ashima and Ashoke know each other only after the marriage fixed by the parents, which sounds strange to American ears. "They are now free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous inter-textual temporality of cultural difference" (Bhabha 55).

The marriage of Gogol and Ashima is the marriage of the roots, which they deny to claim their shares since they were born and raised in different cultures as compared to their parental roots. Moushumi "rebuffed the Indian men" (213) and was avoiding any sort of relationship with them. Her fascination with American origin men during her school day shows her willingness to assimilate with American culture so desperately. After the death of the Ashoke and break up with Maxine, Gogol is feeling alienated, he needs someone to understand his world and Moushumi was the perfect who shares the same roots and hyphenated world. They decides to come together as they were sharing the same past and present, inbetweenness and the sense of hybridity.

The hyphenated second-generation immigrants are unable to maintain the balance between two different worlds. Gogol and Moushumi's marriage was a sign of compromise between two worlds and the separations of Moushumi from Gogol shows her dissatisfaction with old life and commitment towards the new life which she always dreamed of. The marriage was a kind of compromise between two hyphenated souls to mend their roots as per the wishes of parents. "He is aware that together he and Moushumi are fulfilling a collective, deep-seated desire—because they're both Bengali, everyone can let his hair down a bit" (Lahiri 224). It shows the

second-generation immigrant gave a chance to reconnect with ancestral roots but failed to display the commitment, which their parents want to show them towards each other. Moushumi failed to identify herself with any of the world that claims her belongingness; she moved to Paris and rejected both the worlds. She was committed to escape from the conventional and hereditary factors even after marriage. She rejected to change her 'surname' as per the Bengali traditions changing surnames are common practice but her Americanness refuses to indulge in the activity, which takes her closer to her ancestral roots. She maintains extramarital sexual relationship with her ex-boyfriend and follows blindly other white friends, Astrid and Donald. Moushumi does not want to follow her traditions, which halts her freedom and makes her dependent on Gogol so she decides to move on with her new life that assures her freedom from the conventions and the traditions from the past world. At the end of the novel, she failed Indian wifehood, betrayed her husband, traditions, ancestral roots and run away from the responsibility which was supposed to take after commitment with her husband and her parents. However, Gogol successfully maintains the balance between old Indianness and the present Americanness.

Gogol, who never thought of himself anything rather than an American and maintains his Americanness by eating American food, multiple relationships with different origins of American girls, traveling many parts of the Europe and Asia and retains his Americanness. Although, no matter how American Gogol is, for some people the second-generation of immigrant population always will be characterised by their different roots or origins. However, Gogol never questions his belongingness with America and its mainstream culture but still he has to face persistent questions about his identity and belongingness. "Gogol, despite his life-long residency in the States and rejection of many of his cultural roots, is invariably identified with India. For the second generation of South Asian Americans, forming an identity always requires the negotiation of the cultural borderlands of the United States and South Asia" (Field 171).

Furthermore, Pamela indirectly questions the Gogol's existence in the adopted world. Although, Maxine's mother came to rescue him but at the end of the conversation she was not sure about his birthplace too. He has to argue to prove his belongingness with America. Pamela's argument and the way she was treating him

shows a kind stereotype which host society keeps for second-generation immigrants and the struggle of second generation to face crisis of identity inside home and outside mainstream locality. "Pamela, Nick's American," Lydia says, leaning across the table, rescuing Gogol from the conversation. "He was born here." She turns to him, and he sees from Lydia's expression that after all these months, she herself isn't sure. "Weren't you?" (Lahiri 157). However, after the death of Ashoke, his father Gogol desires to return his Indianness, living with his mother, marriage with an Indian origin girl and understands the Indian rituals to reconnect with his roots. Jhumpa Lahiri hints that there is direct relationship between second-generation and their ancestral homes and the concept of living a community life and maintains a connections with those who are ethnically or religiously bound with them.

Although, immigrant generations and cross-cultural individuals are sure about the existence but still the chaos, confusion, identity crisis and unintentional confusion when interacted with different cultures of ancestral and adopted societies. The cultural confusion among the second generation is not only because of the treatment they are getting in their parental homes but also in the outer environment who does not consider them as part of their own. Gogol, who is American by birth, never consider his roots as his own but still he has to face questions related his identity. Second-generation immigrant identity is very much a kind of polygenesis, who is different from host and homeland as well. Second-generation is a self-refashioning category among diaspora populations who are being questioned by both, adopted and ancestral homes, it is because of their multi-socio-cultural upbringing that makes them unique. Ashima considers her children "vagabonds" because of their Americanness and desires to have only Bengali origin in-laws that contrasts the wishes of her children. "She has given birth to vagabonds. She is the keeper of all these names and numbers now, numbers she once knew by heart, numbers and addresses her children no longer remember"( Lahiri167), and on other hand Pamela is questioning Gogol's loyalty towards the Americanness.

The novel ends up with projecting the impacts of hyphenated existence among immigrant population. Ashima maintains the balance between Indian and American life style as at the end of the novel her identity is Indian-American who holds American passport and wearing typical Indian dress. She is no more the same

Ashima who came to America as an Indian housewife, she has adopted American life style, learnt to live alone but maintains her Indian culture like wearing saris, adhering bindi on her forehead. She is returning Indian with American passport and American driving licence that shows her commitment that she can live in both places of its own whether in Boston or Calcutta:

She has learned to do things on her own, and though she still wears saris, still puts her long hair in a bun, she is not the same Ashima who had once lived in Calcutta. She will return to India with an American passport. In her wallet will remain her Massachusetts driver's license, her social security card. (Lahiri 276)

Moreover, she learnt to accept the cultural values of adopted world. She realises that happiness is not choosing a life partner from a particular community rather than finding a solace with a person irrespective of community and origin. She accepts the marriage of Sonia with an American, although, that never happened in Gogol's case. The anger, guilt and eagerness about the decisions she made in the past by using community card is faded now, she is open to accept American man as her son-in-law and feeling guilty of choosing Moushumi as her daughter-in-law on the basis of her roots. "He has brought happiness to her daughter, in a way Moushumi had never brought it to her son. That it was she who had encouraged Gogol to meet Moushumi will be something for which Ashima will always feel guilty" (Lahiri 276). Ashima maintains the bridge between two worlds, however, Moushumi failed to fill the gap with her hyphenated identity and field to identify herself with any of the world. She failed to find solace in her divided self and moved further step ahead by getting divorce and move to a place that is different from her both origin and adopted homes.

Gogol, the protagonist of the novel was literally brought up in two different socio-cultural milieus. He learnt and interacted with two different socio-cultural aspects at the same time, Indianness at home and Americanness outside parental care. He is grown up as bi-cultural and bi-lingual, "Gogol is one, grabbing, walking a little, repeating words in two languages. He calls his mother "Ma," his father "Baba" (40). The struggle of being and becoming begins from the early in the life of

Gogol. He is stuck in the parental expectations, who are expecting him to follow Bengali social and cultural beliefs; meanwhile his inner conscious is craving for American life so that he can enjoy his personal life same as his other friends are living. The parental expectation and the personal desires of Gogol brought him to the sense of hybridity and emotionally dislocated. Gogol, the symbolic second-generation immigrant icon is torn between two culture, traditional Indian and the modern Americanness. Jhumpa Lahiri is presenting the life of second-generation who are emotionally tormented due to their alienation in both lands, which deny their existence fully. They are homeless and landless in the places where they are born, and literally, they never belongs to their birthplaces due to their different parental roots. "This side of the psychosis of patriotic fervour, I like to think, there is overwhelming evidence of a more transnational and translational sense of the hybridity of imagined communities" (Bhabha 7).

Jhumpa Lahiri highlighted the widened gap of immigrant generations in the novel. The feeling of alienation, displacement and estrangement among generations become visible among generations, they cannot share their pain, happiness, grief and socio-cultural beliefs even living under the same roof. First immigrant generation, who left their places to settle in other parts of the world are bound to some social and cultural beliefs, they cannot shed off their past completely to assimilate in new socio-cultural surroundings. They are unable to share the grief on the death of their close relatives who are living other part of the world. Gogol never understands the cause of pain which his parents going through when their close relatives died in India, he never shared their pain and unable to understand the why his father shaved his head until he lost his father to know the duty of being a son of Bengali father:

His father had shut the door, and locked it, and emerged shrunken and bald. Years later Gogol had learned the significance, that it was a Bengali son's duty to shave his head in the wake of a parent's death. But at the time Gogol was too young to understand; when the bathroom door opened he had laughed at the sight of his hairless, grief-stricken father, and Sonia, just a baby, had cried. (Lahiri 179)

Jhumpa Lahiri lures the readers to understand the dilemma of immigrant generations in their adopted lands with contrasting ideologies and the effects of those differences on second generations in the adopted homes. Ashoke and Ashima rejected the idea of naming their son after the parents or grandparents. They rejected the idea by claiming that this might be the sign of respect in America and Europe but in Indian this lineage “would be ridiculed” in Bengali families. Although, they consider that names cannot be inherited or shared. However, giving name to his son that inspires from Russian writer shows their hypocrisy and lack of assimilation with new culture. They rejected the thought that their son is an American born for whom naming from his parents would be normal rather than giving him a name which does not belong to any of the two world that will claim him in future:

An idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force. This is not to deny the attempt by nationalist discourses persistently to produce the idea of the nation as a continuous narrative of national progress, the narcissism of self-generation, the primeval present of the *Volk*. (Bhabha 12)

Jhumpa Lahiri precisely explores the complications of being second-generation immigrant with inherited cultural identity in adopted lands. Her vision of portraying the uniqueness of second-generations from their ancestral and adopted home’s point of view to allow readers to dive deep into the psyche to understand the dilemma of belongingness and identity. Lahiri reveals the sense of belongingness towards the adopted homes and deep impacts of ancestral influence that makes it difficult for second generations to decide which part of the world they belongs to “Well, it's just funny to think that all our lives our parents raised us according to the illusion” (Lahiri 204).

## Chapter 6

### **Hyphenated Existence in the Select Short Stories of Bharati**

#### **Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri**

Once any group of people enter a geographical territory and over generations adopt its culture, language and way of living, they should cease to be foreigners (Vandana).

Indian diaspora writers have revolutionize the concept of diasporic writing with thought provoking imagery of immigrant plight and pleasure in their fictional art works. One cannot think of diaspora literature without going through the works of V.S Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri etc. Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri did not only earn grandeur status among the great novelists of the world but also achieved great feat among the best short story writers of the literary world. Short story genre has been highly admired by Indian origin American women writers; among them, Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri are two pioneers who have revolutionize the concept of short story writing to display their art of storytelling through their marvellous works. Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri have highlighted the crucial and highly sensitive matters of immigrant life in their fiction. This chapter will highlight the struggle and the process of assimilation of immigrant population in the select short stories of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri to understand the broader perspective of immigrant life who are facing hyphenated existential crisis not only in the adopted homes but also in their ancestral homes as well.

Bharati Mukherjee, a well-reputed Indian American novelist, short story writer and a social activist has achieved a great feat in the world of short story writing. Her fiction has changed the contemporary views about the diaspora literature that has focused only on the plight of immigrant population in their adopted lands. She celebrates success stories of the immigrant life after great deal of struggle in foreign shores and believes that there are no ways to go back to the ancestral roots. Her fiction narrates the odour of alienation and displacement of immigrant population not only in their adopted lands but also in their ancestral

homes as well. Bharati Mukherjee was born in India to an elite Brahmin family in Calcutta. She earned her M.F.A in 1963 from the University of Iowa. During writer's workshop she met her husband, Clark Blaise, a Canadian citizen that paves her way towards the Canadian citizenship. Marriage with a Canadian citizen, Clark Blaise made it easy for her to decide Canada her home as a neutralised citizen. She wrote in the introduction of the *Darkness* that accepting Canadian citizenship was her worst decision she had ever made, it was a worst phase of her life in Canada where she has to face racial abuse and often considered as shoplifter and a second-class citizen, "I was frequently taken for a prostitute or shoplifter" (*Darkness* xiv). They lived in Toronto and Montreal until 1980, where she had faced racial abuse and often considered as a second-class citizen of Asian origin. In 1981, Bharati Mukherjee decided to migrate to America, many critics considered it as an act of defiance from the racial discrimination from the radical ideology of white supremacy of Canada. However, Mukherjee believes the migration from Canada to America was a leap step towards her self-identity that was lost in Canada. Despite of that she was working as an assistant professor at McGill University, failed to mark her existence and felt like a resident alien in her own country: "In Canada, I feel isolated, separated in the vastness of this under populated country. I cannot bring myself to snowshoe or ski. Unspoilt nature terrified me. I have not yet learned the words of the national anthem" (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 644).

Bharati Mukherjee has dubbed her life in Canada from 1966-1980 a worst phase of her immigrant life where she was often taken as a prostitute, shoplifter and a Paki, the slang terms for brown people in white dominant Canada. "In Canada I am both too visible and too invisible. I am brown, I cannot disappear in a rush hours, Montreal crowd. The media has made me self-conscious about racism. (*Days and Nights* 644). *Darkness* is the first collection of short stories published in 1985 after five years of her migration from Canada to the United States of America, which she has hailed as act of liberation from the racial abuses and lost identity. The anthology emphasises the question of expatriate identity that rallies around the plight of immigrant life and the problems of displacement, racism, despair, pain and agony. Bharati Mukherjee's proclamation about her new identity in which she is no longer interested in keeping her Indianness and embraced her new identity as an American



citizen. In the introduction to *Darkness*, Mukherjee professes that she is no longer interested in expatriate life and ready to exuberate her new immigrant life in new world, “I have joined imaginative forces with an anonymous, driven, underclass of semi-assimilated Indians with sentimental attachments to a distant homeland but no longer real desire for permanent return. (*Darkness* xv). The acknowledgement of not being interested in permanent return to her ancestral homeland, Mukherjee is seeing her Indianness as “a set of fluid identities” which must be celebrated instead of looking her ‘Indianness as a fragility.

The title of Bharati Mukherjee’s anthology is the reference towards the racial abuse and the discrimination faced by her in Canada. *Darkness* is the collection of twelve short stories, which portrays the immigrant life from the moist Asia with dark skin in dominant white societies of west. “*Darkness* is a reference to racial prejudice which is, after all, a *darkness* in the mind toward the *darkness* of another person’s skin” (Chua 51). The Anthology comprehends anxious expatriation of foreigners who are struggling between their past and present, old and new values and evoking their irretrievable past that they will never find again in their ancestral lands. The voices in Mukherjee’s diasporic works are not from a particular community or gender but belongs to all men and women who are suffering from unending social and psychological confinement.

*The Lady from Lucknow* is a short story in Bharati Mukherjee’s *Darkness*, an anthology in which writer has introduced the characters who are stuck in an unending process of the old world values and the new world expectations. The false expectation from new world and pseudo narratives from the old world of immigrant population makes it more difficult for them to assimilate with any of the worlds. Nafeesa Hafeez, ‘Lady from Lucknow is an immigrant lady who has abandoned hopes and expectation with her new adopted world that it will bring happiness to her life which she has failed to find in her old world, “ we expect to pass on this good decent life to our children. Our children are ashamed of the dingy cities where we got our start” (Mukherjee 17). Bharati Mukherjee has projected the cultural clash in the form of free life of western world and moral bankruptcy in Eastern part of the world. Nafeesa has her own standard of perfect love to resist or to break the taboos

like Husseina, who had the courage to love a Hindu boy. She is proudly boasting her extra marital affair with an immunologist that is against her traditions. “It isn’t trouble that I want, though I do have a lover” (18). Although, Nafeesa visited and lived in so many countries of the world but her past cultural values are still sticking with her. She is enjoying company of James, but feels shy in public walking like an American, “I may have seen the world but I haven’t gone the American teenage rites...so I walked briskly out his embarrass”( 22). Having extra- marital affair with a white man who is relatively much older, gives her sense of freedom and entering into the American standard of life. “This is not only an attempt to express her independence and individuality, but also gives her the illusion that by carrying on an illicit affair she is somehow identifying with America and living its standards” (Tandon 72).

Although, Nafeesa did not care about her past cultural values to fulfil her ego in western world. Her dreams shattered and felt ludicrous when caught by James’s wife in the bedroom. Nafeesa was proud of breaking her socio-cultural taboos by maintaining her illicit relationship with a white man is now in shambles because of something sordid and clumsy response of Kate, her lover’s wife. “I might have stabbed you if I could take you serious. But you are quite ludicrous lounging like a Goya nude on my bed” (Mukherjee 26).

Bharati Mukherjee raised the questions of being and becoming in the story, the lady from Lucknow, Nafeesa, the protagonist of the story was ready to sacrifice everything to claim her assimilation with new western world however, shambles on the realisation that she is just “another involvement of white men in a pokey little out post” (27). Bharati Mukherjee’s characters are often more open to accept new world order and sacrifice their past socio-cultural values to assimilate with new societies but the trauma of being different and the hostile attitude of host societies provoke them to question their existence in new world order. “Such cultures of a postcolonial *contra-modernity* may be contingent to modernity, discontinuous or in contention with it, resistant to its oppressive, assimilationist technologies; but they also deploy the cultural hybridity of their borderline conditions to ‘translate’, and therefore reinscribe, the social imaginary of both metropolis and modernity” ( Bhabha 9).

*The World According to Hsu* is another short story of Bharati Mukherjee's anthology displays the struggle and discrimination of immigrant population in the adopted homes. This story is all about the racial abuses, hyphenated existence and the crisis of belongingness. Ratna, a Eurasian immigrant woman of Indian origin with dark skin is facing a racial decimation in her adopted home. Although, Ratna is married to a white Canadian professor but that was not enough for her to escape from the psychological trauma and existential crisis. There is a sharp contrast between Ratna, an immigrant and her native husband to understand the trauma of immigrant population because Ratna's husband will never understand the pain and disparity of being an alien in mainstream society like her.

The Title of the story has been taken from an article, which Graeme is reading during his holidays with Ratna. The couple is on holidays on an unknown island nation in Indian Ocean. To improve their standard of life, couple is discussing to move from French dominant Montreal to English dominant Toronto where Graeme is getting offer of a well-paid job. Ratna, heroine of the story is reluctant to move from her house because of her past experience of racial abuses in Toronto. "In Toronto, she was not Canadian, not even Indian. She was something called, after the imported idiom of London, a Paki. And for Paki, Toronto was hell" (*Darkness* 33).

Bharati Mukherjee implies the bitterness of the host societies towards the immigrant population is an inevitable process. Ratna failed to escape her hyphenated identity even on the island where people like Justin, an agent considers her an Indian because of her appearance and skin colour, "do you want me to drive me to the Hilton? ... Justin begged, now flushed from his coyness, all the Indians, they stay at the Hilton. In times like these, it's the safest place" (Mukherjee 35). The homelessness and inbetweenness of the protagonist is visible the way she was treated by the host societies on the basis of her origin, pushed her further to question her existence. Ratna has to prove her identity and belongingness everywhere, "I am Canadian," Ratna, said arrogantly. I am a Canadian tourist and I want to stay at the Papillion in the market place okay?" (Mukherjee 36). The fact was that her hyphenated identity always brings her chaos and confusion in her adopted world. She is stuck, here and there, past, present, home, and abroad. Sushma Tandon has rightly explained her situation:

The inescapable fact remains that Ratna is shunned as a “white rat” (The off spring of a Czech mother and an Indian father) in India and scorned as a Paki in Canada. Furthermore, she is clearly an alien on that Island surrounded by tourists derogatorily describing as that collection who are without homes. (Tandon 74)

Ratna, the protagonist of the story is in strange tussle between her inner and outer appearances. She is living as a lost soul who is stuck between the worlds which are divided by her imaginary hyphenated existence. The fact is that even her husband failed to realise her mental chaos and trauma of living as a different origin in white dominant society. Although, the island is full of chaos and anarchy but Ratna is not worried about the current situation where they could stuck in violence but she is worried about Toronto’s racial abuse. “I am worrying Toronto,” A week before their flight, a Bengali women was beaten and nearly blinded on the street. And the week before that an eight years old Punjabi boy was stuck by a car announcing on its bumper: KEEP CANADA GREEN. PAINT A PAKI (Mukherjee 39). Graeme failed to realise her trauma because of the increased racial attacks on foreigners and its effects on Ratna, he tried to convince her that “It won’t happen to you” (39) and further explained that Toronto is the safest place. For Graeme, as a native, Toronto is a safest place but for Ratna the picture is different as a hyphenated individual.

Bharati Mukherjee explores the question of identity among the people who are living under the burden of imaginary hyphen in their identities on the basis of their race and origin that pushes them to an extent that they would never feel adopted homes as their home even after living there for years. Graeme hardly understands the depth of the chaos and dilemma of his wife about Toronto; however, he is sympathetic to her but failed to understand the magnitude of the mental trauma of Ratna due to the frequent racial attacks on dark skinned immigrants. Sudha Pandya in her article: “The realisation dawns on her that she cannot escape the consequences of being half, the dominant half-Indian and that her Canadian husband of unhyphenated identity can never feel like she does, never have the fears that she has” (Pandya 68-73).

'*A Father*' is another story from Bharati Mukherjee's anthology, *Darkness* that portrays the socio-cultural dislocation and cultural clash among immigrant population, although, exile, dislocation and migration are the physical norms in its literal meaning however, the psychological impacts of these situations could be more lethal than physically existed once. The sense of exile and expatriation is not limited to its manifestation of physical dislocation only but the loss of culture and social norms are affecting more than loss of geographical setting. The migration from one place to another place is not the end of the struggle but real skirmish begins with the coming of second generation who are reluctant to admire ancestral norms in their birthplaces. '*A Father*' is a story about the clash of cultures, east west clash and the conflict of existence in newly adopted places.

The short story, '*A Father*' is a well-crafted fictional work that is dealing with the problems of reconciliation with traditional values and the hopes of new life in adopted world, the clash of Indianness and the growing influence of Americanisation among immigrant families. The story revolves around an Indian origin Mr Bhowmick, who is originally from Ranchi India and now well settled in Detroit with his family. He has established his life in America but his Indianness is still intact in him. Prayers in Sanskrit to Goddess kali, symbol of wrath and vengeance. There is an ideological difference between Mr Bhowmick and his family, his wife who is more American than her husband, she does not believe in prayers only, "she was an agonistic, a believer in ambition not in grace" (Mukherjee 50). Moving to America was wife's idea who wanted to settle in American even Mr Bhowmick had a good government job in India.

Increasing influence of Americanness in wife and daughter, Babli brought shame to Mr Bhowmick, who is staunch Indian and devotee of a kali. Mr Bhowmick was a devoted Hindu and has bundles of beliefs in his religion, on the other hand Babli and her mother does not follow their religious seriously, for them Mr Bhowmick's religious beliefs are just 'superstition and paranoia'. Sushma Tandon elaborates the chaos of Indianness of father and Americanness of wife and daughter who are more inclined towards American life style: "He is brought to shame, violence, even madness in America when he contents with his bright unmarried engineer daughter's artificially inseminated pregnancy" (Tandon 76).

Bharati Mukherjee portrays the conflict of the east and the west among Indian immigrant population. Bhowmick's was always supportive to her daughter to assimilate with her new American life until she discovers the daughter's pregnancy that too through artificial way. Pregnancy before marriage is social shame and against the Hindu socio-cultural values. "Babli would abort, of course. He knew his Babli. It was the only possible option if she did not want to bring shame to the family" (Mukherjee 57). Mukherjee reveals the drawbacks of the too much freedom among immigrant generation who failed to control their emotions with past and protect their socio-cultural values. Mr Bhowmick has no one to blame of his daughter's acts except his wife whose idea was to move America. Bharati Mukherjee dives deep into the inner consciousness of the well-educated Indian immigrants who lost in the glamour and the freedom of the American life style. They collapse in their inadequate comprehension of ancestral codes and new paradigm of American life. Mr Bhowmick and his wife's violent actions proves that they love American life style but deep down they are still holding in their traditional codes which they are reluctant to let go off. "They were too smart, too impulsive for a backward place like Ranchi, but not tough nor smart enough for sex-crazy places like Detroit" (Mukherjee 62). Sudha Pandya further observes that:

This is the subtle depiction of the interaction, adjustment, and sometimes conflict between two cultures and often between two generations of immigrants. The crisis out of these develops swiftly. And finally, there is equally sudden and startling denouncement to the story. (Pandya 71)

'*Nostalgia*' is another immigrant story from the anthology of Bharati Mukherjee's *Darkness*, ventures the struggle and compromises of immigrant population in order to become part of the newly adopted world. Bharati Mukherjee is not an emotional writer who would always discuss about the past socio-cultural codes but displays the daily hecks and exploitations of among immigrants in order to gain socio-political gains in adopted homes. Story revolves around Dr. Manny, the protagonist of the story. Manny Patel, an Indian origin psychiatric at a state hospital in New York. He chose to settle in America, married a white woman, Camille. Dr. Manny Patel has a luxurious life, which one can only imagine but seems unhappy

with his life and resented of being called “a Paki scum” by a schizophrenic patient, Mr Horowitz. Mukherjee tries to open up a deep conscious level of immigrants who are successful in their lives by socio-economically but lacks the emotional satisfaction in the adopted homes. “He had chosen to settle in the USA. He was one for nostalgia; he was no an expatriate but a patriot” (Mukherjee 83). He made a choice to choose American life style without any guilt but lacked the emotional satisfaction, which lead him to fall in trap.

Bharati Mukherjee has envisaged that no matter how rich and well-settled immigrants are in adopted homes but the longing for the past remains inevitable part of their life in one form or another. Dr. Patel has made enough money to return India anytime. He misses his parents who have worked hard for him so that he can have good future. Mukherjee’s protagonist is sceptical about that his wife can understand his emotional feeling regarding his parents. There is lack of emotional bondage between host and immigrant population. “He missed his parents, especially his father, but couldn’t explain this loss to Camille” (Mukherjee 84). There was a fear in him that he will lose his parents before he could free himself from the glamour of The USA. Manny’s marriage with a white American lady is a symbolic of compromise with his past Indianness. “When he had married, he burned his India society membership card... but he knew he would forever shuttle between the old world and the new” (*Darkness* 90). However, his drive to Manhattan, in busy afternoon he is smitten by a charming Indian origin girl, Padma. He felt suddenly nostalgic for Indian sub-continent sexual fantasies of his youthful days. He feels that Padma, An Indian origin girl has just leaped into his life by the grace of Goddess in a fancied manner.

The *Nostalgia* is exposing the immigrant woes in their adopted homes. Manny Patel knows that he is breaking the cultural codes of both the worlds by dating a girl who is much younger than him, and married to another woman. During the dinner date “the maitre d’ hung around Manny’s table almost to the point of neglecting other early dinners” (*Darkness* 93). The maitre d has his own issues to solve, need help from Dr. Manny to bring an illegal immigrant in America. After spicy Indian dinner with Indian girl Manny Patel felt nostalgic of his old life and wished he was married with an Indian women instead of an American:

The Indian food, an Indian woman in bed, made him nostalgic. He wished he were in his kitchen, and that his parents were visiting him and that his mother was making him a mug hot Horlicks and that his son was not so far removed from him, in a boarding school. (Mukherjee 96)

However, Dr. Manny Patel's daydream crumbles on the note that an uncle and niece duped him. His Goddess was a pimp who has conned him for 700\$ and a note for immigration officer to allow an illegal immigrant that he denied first. Bharati Mukherjee has embellished that the nostalgia of past life is an inevitable part of immigrant population. However, she never points out that her characters are victims of cultural clash or ancestral codes which they want to follow, even after living successful life in their adopted countries. Sushma Tandon elaborates the character: "Dr. Manny Patel longs for the lost land and the old ways and this nostalgia leads him to an ethnic neighbourhood inside the city. He finds there a well experienced team of hustlers who sexually entice him, and then blackmail him" (Tandon 84).

'*Visitors*' is another immigrant story that exhibits the charm of an Indian woman, Vinita, who has accepted arranged marriage fixed by her parents with an American based accountant. Her parents wanted her to marry a doctor or an engineer, most preferably, he must settle in America. After marriage, Vinita flies within six days, "an Air India flight to citizenship in the new world" (Mukherjee 136). Vinita, who has been trained to bear children and cook good food for husband in future home. However, in her new world shame comes her in the form of Khanna boy who frantically announced his attraction for her. Vinita was an imported bride of Sailen Kumar, living in an exquisite apartment in New York. Although, the life in new world seems her busy and distraught but she begins to learn to maintain peace between the old world and new world. "Everyone looks busy, distraught from overwork" (Mukherjee 139).

Bharati Mukherjee demonstrates in her works that the characters are in dilemma of the old world cultural codes and the expectations of the new world. Vinita's life is confined around four walls of the New York apartment, unaware about the new world order, she allowed Khanna to enter into the apartment out of



her Indian traditions. Instead of looking at it as a courtesy of Vinita, Khanna sees it as a temptress because in Indian culture a wife will never ever allow a stranger into a house without her husband unless she has some personal interest. “You should have thrown me out minutes ago. You could have refused to let me in. I know you Indian girls. You could have taken the poster and slammed the door in my face. But you didn’t” (Mukherjee 148).

Mukherjee’s characters are not craving for the past but they are reluctant to assimilate fully with their new lives. They like “authentic Indian tea”, they can earn and have no intention of returning back to their ancestral homes but cannot admire new cultural codes fully. “We may have minted a bit of money in this country, but that doesn’t mean we’ve let ourselves become American” (Mukherjee 144). The writer has created an amazing characterisation who are eager to know much about the newly Indian bride, every visitor hopes for different qualities from their ancestral cultural point of view. Sushma Tandon analyses Mukherjee’s *Darkness* as:

Darkness raises questions about human dignity, about the true values of diversity, about the tension between assimilation and preservation of cultures, about the sanctity of citizenship and about the idea of true arrival at this moment in global history. We all seem to be on the move; we all seem to be travelling between worlds. (Tandon 93)

‘*Middleman and Other Stories*’ is the second collection of eleven (11) short stories, published in 1988, three years after the publication of her first anthology, *Darkness*. *The Middleman and Other Stories*, the masterpiece elevated her to the elite class of diaspora writers in the literary world. The anthology won the ‘National Book Critic Circle Award’ for the best fiction of the year in 1988. It “is sometimes savage but largely celebratory view of immigrant life” (Tandon 101). Bharati Mukherjee’s first anthology, the *Darkness* highlights the dark side of the immigrant world, the racial abuse in white dominant societies of the West, which she has faced particularly during her stay in Canada. *Darkness* highlighted the gloomy side of the immigrant life in foreign shores, racial discrimination, hostile attitude of the host societies and the socio-cultural conflict among immigrants living in the new world order. However, *the Middleman and Other Stories*, an anthology depicts the

successful stories of assimilation and adaptation with new world. Mukherjee confesses that her voice was lost in Canada because of the hostile attitude of host society towards her as she was frequently taken as 'Paki scum', maid, prostitute and a shoplifter. Moving America was finding new identity and considers New York her "ideal home":

Being in the U.S. was a tremendous relief after Canada. I suddenly felt freed to write the thousands of stories inside my head. In the U.S. I wasn't continuously forced to deal with my physical appearance. I could wear Western clothes and blend in with people on a New York City street. America, with its melting pot theory of immigration, has a healthier attitude toward Indian immigrants than Canada. Although this country has its share of racial problems there are human rights laws and ways to obtain legal redress in the courts. (Alison)

The stories of an anthology displays the broader perspective of American society for immigrants. Mukherjee opens up the fascination of immigrants towards the American dream, to realise American dream they broke their socio-cultural codes of old-world to become part of new adopted world. Mukherjee's characters are celebrating their assimilation with new world as a freedom from the traditional socio-cultural bounds.

"*A Wife's Story*" is one of the masterpiece of the writer, which illustrates the writing skills of Bharati Mukherjee who has expertly revises the theme of successful assimilation with adopted world. Story explores the life of a third world women protagonist, Panna who has successfully adapted herself in new world order but failed to shed her past socio-cultural codes fully. Panna, the protagonist of the story has revised and refashioned herself into a transformed woman who has successfully adopted new world survival traits. She has developed a friendly relationship with a man namely Imre, going theatres, wishing she had a love marriage were she can chose her life partner, "I am not the person to ask about love. Charity knows that mine was a traditional Hindu marriage. My parents with the help of a marriage broker, who was my mother's cousin, picked out a groom. All I had to do was get to know his taste in the food" (Mukherjee 31). Mukherjee's heroine is struggling to

maintain a middle path in her life were she can adapt new life codes and preserve her old life values. The Indian origin wife, Mrs Panna Bhatt is pursuing her PhD in America without her husband. She knows how to survive in new environment without her relatives and family members. She is playing a role of an intermediary for the writers.

The story revolves around the Indian origin protagonist who is the projection of a middleman who tries to bridge a gap between the worlds. Protagonist of the story is a married woman who desires to maintain good relationship between the two worlds. She has befriended with Imre, an immigrant from Hungary who is married. Mukherjee's heroine is the middleman of the story who has the ability to assimilate with the new world and at the same time preserving her past culture. Her friendship with a person who is married, is something unusual for a typical Indian Hindu wife and even thoughts of someone else rather than her husband is considered infidelity in her past culture but in America it is part of her freedom and the process of assimilation:

So I hug Imre. The hug takes him by surprise. He wants me to let go, but he doesn't really expect me to let go. He staggers, though I weigh no more than 104 pounds, and with him, I pitch forward slightly then he catches me, and walk arm in arm to the bus stop. My husband would never dance or hug a woman on the Broadway. Nor would my brothers. (Mukherjee 28)

Protagonist understands that hugging and flirting with someone is against her ancestral socio-cultural mosaic. She knows her adaptation in new world will confront her old world cultural codes but in new socio-cultural milieu, she is feeling more confident and free. Mukherjee's heroine is a fighter and a survivor in new world, she understands that to become a part of the new world she has to break the taboos of her old world. "I have made it. I am making something of my life. I have left home, my husband, to get PhD in special education I have multiple entry visa and a small scholarship for two years. After that, we will see" (29). Bhabha:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective

tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (Bhabha 5)

Although, the heroine has subjugated her fears of past and successfully assimilated with the new world but the ghosts of traditional world still haunts her. Outwardly, she has typically adopted Americanness in her life but deep down in her psyche she failed to erase past memories fully. She felt irritated and angry during watching a play. She felt insulted when actors made fun of “Patels”, an Indian caste, “I didn’t pay eighteen dollars to be insulted” (26). She is using Indian dress to receive her husband at the airport. Her Indianness is intact deep down in her subconscious mind. She realises that her American dream will cost her traditional codes:

It’s the tyranny of the American dream that scares me. First you don’t exist. Then you are invisible. Then you are funny. Then you are disgusting. Insult, my American friends will tell me, is a kind of acceptance. No instant dignity here. A play like this, back home, would cause riots. (26)

Bharati Mukherjee’s heroine is feeling burden of maintaining her biculturalism and the hardships of trying to balance her traditional and new free world. She is feeling stuck and suffocated to hold her traditions and to enjoy her free life. To display her Indianness in front of her Indian husband to “pretend with him (The husband) that nothing has changed” (33). Panna is struggling to stretch herself to hold both the worlds. However, she failed to impress her husband even after using, “the jewellery; the marriage necklace of mangalsutra, gold drop earrings, heavy gold bangles” (33). She forgot to use her mother’s ring. “...Panna has to face up to the questions of which way she would have to finally lean when her husband comes to New York to spend his holiday with her” ( Fakrul 84).

The immigrants sometimes reject and revolt against the old world to pretend their alliance with new life but deep down in their hearts they realise that they don't have that privilege to erase their past with new world cultural codes. Sushma Tandon states: "Panna has walked out of the traditional system...yet with transformation Panna cannot forget her Indianness" (Tandon 112).

'*Orbiting*' is one of the most admired story of the anthology of Bharati Mukherjee that takes readers on ride to understand the complications of being different from the host societies. The story explores the interaction of immigrant families from different countries. Roshan, an Afghan refugee, who is in love with an Italian-American girl, Renata. Renata used the occasion of Thanksgiving party as an opportunity to invite her Afghan lover, an elite class refugee from Kabul looking for NIIT classes to become an electrical engineer, so that he can meet her parents. Bharati Mukherjee's well-crafted artwork shows the vested conflict of cultures among immigrant families from different parts of the world. Renata, the protagonist of the story was formerly in a relationship with an American man, Vic who left her without giving proper reasons, "I'm leaving babe. New Jersey doesn't do it for me anymore" (Mukherjee 62) and then she found her love of life in Roshan, an Afghan refugee.

Bharati Mukherjee is displaying cultural clash, and stereotype of Rindy's parents towards the third world countries. Although, Renata claimed that Roshan is following "cosmopolitan" culture in his nature but failed to convince her parents at first when he opens the door with his own keys. "I am just smoothing on my pantyhose when mom screams for the cops. Das shouts too. At Mom for her to shut up. It's my fault, I should have warned Ro not to use his key this afternoon" (68). It was a grave mistake from the American point of view when 'Roshan entered in the house without following American culture. Roshan is showing respect in his words by calling 'sir' and 'ma'am' instead of calling them by names. This act of respect from Roshan did not got well with Renata who called it Kabuli school manners. "Poor 'Ro' resorts to his Kabuli pre-school manners" (68). Bharati Mukherjee shows the cultural difference in Roshan, his way of walking, body posture all is making him look different from the American people. However, all the differences in Roshan did not affect Renats's love for him but she wants to teach him how to look

more American. “I shall teach him how to walk like an American, how to dress like Brent but better, how to fill up a room as Dad does instead of melting and blending but sticking out in the Afghan way” (74).

Roshan is born and brought up in the war-torn Afghanistan, who has his own dreaded past in jail and other horrifies stories. Roshan narrates how he was tortured before he made it to America astonished Renata’s family. His body marks is the sign of his terrified past. Renata loves him for his marked body, she is thinking of giving him citizenship and looking it as a chance to heal his tattered soul. Bharati Mukherjee portrays the American society as openhearted one, which provides space to the immigrant population, and embrace their flaws contrary to Canada where she was mentally tortured and embarrassed. Bharati Mukherjee states in her interview with Alison B. Carb:

I write about well-known American establishments, such as the family, in unique ways. In my stories, the families are not the American families which we are accustomed to reading about in fiction. The American family has become very different, not just because of social influences and new sexual standards, but because of the interaction between mainstream Americans and new immigrants. (Carb 648)

The story is the projection of diversify America where immigrants can show their past flaws and embrace those flaws proudly. Mukherjee has selected the Thanksgiving occasion, which is an American festival where they get together and eat turkey in dinner. Instead of difference in the culture and nationalities all are happy with eachother with their new American identities. The names like Renata and Clara are originally from Italy and Roshan from Afghanistan with Muslim origin, however all the names are being called as in American way where Roshan becomes ‘Ro’ and Renata becomes ‘Rindy’ to show the assimilation with new world. Sushma Tandon states that- “Bharati Mukherjee brings out the pain of the frivolity of the man-woman relationship in American society” (115-16). Alam says that the story, “Mukherjee appears to have deliberately written as her Thanks giving offering for the melting pot process of American culture that was allowing

immigrants from Asia to successfully root themselves in the New World to transform it as well as themselves” (97).

*‘Fighting for the Rebound’*, another immigrant story is first person narration, narrated by the native American, Griff about the South Asian immigrant who is suffering from alienation and identity crisis. Blanquita is an immigrant from Philippine who is struggling to assimilate with her new life in American. She is expert in six languages including Spanish and American English. To become more American she took a crash course to assimilate with America, “back in Manila, she took a crash course in making nice to Americans” (Mukherjee 79). Bharati Mukherjee speaks about the mentality of the immigrant population who struggles to maintain the status of being part of their newly adopted homes because of the inevitable past memories. Blanquita knows the struggle and trauma of transforming herself into a new world and laments about her transmigration, “I should never have left Manila... the East is East and the West is West and never the twain shall meet” (80). She is fully aware about the differences in the East and West culture and tries to rise above the line of culture to assimilate and adopt herself in new society. “the less I know about growing up in Manila, rich or any other way, the less foreign she feels, dear old redneck Atlanta is a thing of the past, no need to feel foreign here” (81).

The urge to invent new self-identity in adopted homes among immigrant population makes it more complicated and difficult for them to liberate themselves from the past and claim their assimilation in new adopted homes. Bharati Mukherjee has mostly denied the past yearning in its narrow explanation of writing about the ancestral homes. C. Neelima has discussed the concept of nostalgia in the writings of Bharati Mukherjee as: “Nostalgia in terms of romanticized sentimentality about the past is viewed as an indulgence that impedes an experience of the present, an experience that is necessary in order to ‘succeed’ as a migrant” (Neelima 34). Blanquita, the protagonist of the story is affirmative about her new identity and is fully conscious about her roots which she does not want indulge in her present to thwart her way towards the new world. “Mukherjee’s migrants assume and discard addresses and identities. They appear to have no attachments to hold on to, no tangible symbols of home, material possessions, food or neighbourhoods” (34).

Bharati Mukherjee is talking about the growing discontent about the institution of marriage in America, which makes Blanquita worried, their relationship keeps roller coaster because of the different perception of American young generation about the marriage. Young generation prefers live-in relationships where they can enjoy the sexual life without any commitment. She is madly in love with him but Griff's American attitude did not allow him to stay in the relationship with a Philippine immigrant. Griff tried to save his relationship with Blanquita but failed to convince her, "you don't love me, Griff" (82). He recalls his brief relationships of past with Wendi and sums up his relationships as, "Love frees, but we are stuck with love's debris" (82). Blanquita does not trust him that he loves her the way she is in love with him, "you are all emotional cripples. All you American. You just worry about your own measly little relationships" (85). Sushma Tandon says: "There is constant breaking away from each other which puts American social fabric under stress. Young immigrants like Blanquita are caught in the web of sexual freedom in the name of liberation in desperate attempts to succeed in the United States" (Tandon 115).

Blanquita desires for permanent relationship with Griff for her transformation and assimilation with new world but he was not interested in any kind of serious relationship. Blanquita went to test her luck with Chief who mistreated her that compels Blanquita to call for help from Griff who is with his new sexual partner, Maura to rescue her from the Chief. Bharati Mukherjee does not show only the course of assimilation in immigrants but also shows the struggle and the hardships which they have to face during the process of Adoption and assimilation with new world. story ends in a crippled manner where both the characters became victim of their own decisions, Griff is the victim of obsessive freedom where he does not want to limit his emotional freedom on the other hand Blanquita was also desperate about her commitment in relationship, she failed to transform and fulfil the demands of the new world to assimilate. Regardless of being different from each other by roots, they failed to each other by wishing different things from the relationship. Blanquita wanted commitment in her relationship while Griff desires for freedom from any serious commitment that lead them to the separation.



*'The Tenant'* another short story from the collection of *The Middleman and Other Stories* depicts chaos and confusion of an immigrant life in the adopted homes. Story moves around an elite, tenant, Maya Sanyal who is hovering between the old values and the new world lifestyle. The heroine is a college lecturer living in Cedar, Iowa. Although she has assimilated with American culture but remains deep rooted with her Indianness. She is truly an expatriate who has lived in so many places, "New Jersey. Before that, she was in North Carolina. Before that, Calcutta, India every place has something to give" (Mukherjee 97). Although, she has completely adopted new American culture but her name, Maya Sanyal, an Indian origin indicates her ancestral roots. Maya Sanyal, the protagonist of the story is an upper caste Hindu Indian origin woman who was divorced by her ex-American Husband, Vern and she has earned her PhD in comparative study. Mukherjee's female characters are survivors and fighters who knows how to survive in the odds of the new world chaos. The heroine of the story believes in taking risks and breaking barriers to fly in free sky. She refers her divorce as a sexual thing, although it is a tragic movement in her ancestral culture, "I don't feel abandoned... anyways, it was a sex thing totally" (Mukherjee 98) and believes in freedom and risk to achieve her goals, "a person has to leave home. Try out his wings" (98). Mukherjee's heroine has indicated that she is free soul and loves to break her traditional codes to free from the shackles of socio-cultural bonds. The title of the story indicates that her residence in America is temporary; she does not have any permanent address as she is living in rented house, although she has been living there for years, "she is an American citizen. But" (100).

The protagonist is confused and alienated who does not want to share her feelings with anyone. Her interaction with her colleague, Fran who wishes to be her friend and shares her romantic stories with Maya to make close proximity with her. Maya seems to be normal outwardly but she is reluctant to show Fran her wild side of her life. "Maya's taken some big risks, made a break with her parents' way. She's done things a women from Ballygunge Park Road doesn't do, even in fantasies. She is not yet shared stories with Fran, apart from the divorce" (100). *The Tenant* is the exploration of a female character who has completely assimilated with new world but remains deep rooted with her past. Maya has broken her traditional cultural

codes, married with an outsider, a white man, lived her sexual fantasies, divorced, and aiming to remarry with an Indian origin man. All the acts of protagonist shows the will power to assimilate without any guilt about her past. “Maya has slept with married men, with nameless men, with men little more than boys, but never with an Indian man. Never (Mukherjee 103).

Bharati Mukherjee has explored the immigrant frivolity in the story where immigrants want to earn and live in their adopted homes but desire to maintain the relationship with their past by longing for Indian music, Indian food, Indian spouses and Indian dresses. Maya, the protagonist felt uncomfortable with a Brahman Chatterjee family who are against the inter caste marriage of their nephew, Poltoo, who wants to marry a Negro Muslim. Maya’s Americanness prompt her to think about the hypocrisy of the Chatterjee family. “He is pompous; he is reactionary; he wants to live and work in America but give back nothing except taxes. The confused world of the immigrant- the lostness that Maya and Poltoo feel-that is what Dr. Chatterjee wants to avoid, she hates him. But” (Mukherjee 106). Although, Maya is fully American and she has accepted the codes of the new world but still she is longing for her past, she tried to seduce Ashok Mehta, using Indian dress to impress him, she confesses that she has slept with many American men to fulfil her sexual fantasy but never slept with an Indian men. Bharati Mukherjee’s characters are enjoying their sexual fantasies in their adopted world is the symbol of freedom and the process of assimilation with mainstream societies. Fakrul Alam states, “Maya Sanyal’s casual attitude towards sex is symptomatic of the moral license America seems to give to its immigrants” (Fakrul 86).

Unlike other characters, Tara Banerjee Cartwright and Dimple of Bharati Mukherjee, Maya is at ease with both the worlds. She does not feel stuck or dangling between two poles. She is enjoying her duality and expatriate life. She dressed up in Indian style, she rejects new identity of her name in American style ‘May’ instead of Mya she prefers to be called by her original name, Maya, she reads Indian newspapers to read gossips about the far off home, “she thinks periodicals room as an asylum for homesick aliens” (108). Her Americanness is visible when she decides to live with Fred, a married man without arms; she is excited to sleep with a man without arms, as she has never done it before. Her sexuality is seen as

assimilation with America and breaking with past by Sushma Tandon: “A women’s sexual involvement often is measured of her detachment from native traditions and correspondingly of her assimilation and Americanisation” (Tandon 90). However, she remains the best choice for Mr Mehta because of her Indian-Americanness. After meeting with Mr Mehta, her life is no longer as excited as before, “she has changed her citizenship but she hasn’t broken through into the light, the vigour, the bustle of the new world. She is stuck in dead space” (110). The way Bharati Mukherjee has presented her heroine shows her art of writing which presents her truly as a middlewoman, who is working to bind two different worlds together, “You are the one I am looking for. You are the new emancipated indo-American women. You have a zest for life. You are at ease in USA and yet your ethics are rooted in Indian tradition” (Mukherjee 109).

The heroine of the story is typical immigrant women who loves her new life but cherishes her Indianness. Liew states that the heroine of the story is “seemingly compulsive and casual sexual liaison are metaphors for her rootlessness, and loneliness and loss of bearing, but the rationale provided by Bharati Mukherjee does not provide a sufficient explanation for them” (Liew 497). At the end of the story Maya knows her strangeness in adopted world she accepted that “dead space need not to suffocate” in this part of the world. she was shocked when her crippled lover refers them as, “Two wounded people...she knows she is strange, and lonely but being Indian is not the same, she would have thought, as being freak” (112). Story ended with a positive note when her man of dreams called for meeting. Michael Connell has defined Maya as an immigrant, who is always longing for her past life even after living years in adopted world, “In spite of having adjusted to American ways, has that desire for a wholeness, nostalgia that India and Indian traditions promised” (Michael 7). Some critics sees her excitement over the meeting with Mr Mehta as a failed process of assimilation with new world as she cherished her Indianness by choosing Indian partner and displayed her emptiness of her free life in new world.

‘*Jasmine*’, another short story from the anthology, which pronounces the process of assimilation and adaptation in the newly adopted mainstream culture of the embraced world. After the success of the short story, to proceed the plot, themes

and the journey of her heroine, Jasmine, Bharati Mukherjee wrote sequel of the short story in the form of novel in 1989 with same title and themes. Jasmine is the epitome of a success story of an immigrant who has gracefully enjoyed her new life in adopted world. Although, Bharati Mukherjee's heroine is an illegal immigrant who crossed the multiple borders to enter her dreamland illegally. "She crossed the border at Windsor in the back of a grey van loaded with mattress and box springs" (Mukherjee 127). Jasmine shows the fascination of the world immigrants to adopt and adjust in first world countries of the world. Sushma Tandon says that Bharati Mukherjee "is still concerned with what happens when the third world meets the first, but her focus has shifted from what she perceives as Canada's hard edged-mosaic to the exuberant possibilities of the American melting pot" (Tandon 102).

Although, the protagonist of the short story is illegal immigrant, who entered in American through illegal channels with the help of agents who brought them in loaded trucks to escape from the immigration officers. Bharati Mukherjee's characters are survivors; they risk their lives to fulfil their American dream. "The driver let her off at a scary intersection on Woodward avenue and gave her instructions on how to get the plantation Motel in Southfield. The trick was to keep changing vehicles, he said" (Mukherjee 127). Jasmine is an immigrant who does not have any authenticate document to enter her dreamland but she is enthusiastic and optimistic about her new world. Sushma Tandon: "The point is to emphasize is that these immigrants suffer and endanger their lives to secure fake visas, passports, passage from a network of black marketers to the middleman. They are determined to reach America and fulfil their American dream" (Tandon 109).

Jasmine, the protagonist knew that she has struggled enough to achieve her American dream, she knows that "she'd outsmarted the guys at the border. Now it was up to her to use her wits to do something with her life" (Mukherjee 128). She knows that her wit and resourcefulness to adapt new world is the key to assimilate and to become a part of mainstream America. She knows the importance of her new life so she did not mind of working anywhere because of her keenness to learn everything about her adopted world. She work on Sundays, upload crates of Caribbean spices to claim her dreams. Bharati Mukherjee's heroine is open to accept any challenge to prove her metal in new world order, Jasmine is ready to work with

Black man as part of her assimilation process, “ so what if the boss was a black? This was a new life and she wanted to learn everything” (Mukherjee 129), but for Viola and Loretta working with black man was against their fancy American life.

The glamour of the American life always fascinated immigrants to adopt and accept new codes of life. Jasmine secure a job as an au pair in Moffitt family where she has to take care of Mr Bill and Lara’s daughter. Her enthrallment with new life did not allow her say anything about her demands only thing she was worried about her illegal entry. She was not a student or a legal immigrant but an intruder who has intruded through a loaded truck with multiple entries. Although, Mukherjee’s characters are fascinated to American lifestyle but the uneasiness of being and becoming, rootlessness, alienation and identity crisis are always there. “There was a scary movement after they’d discussed what she could expect as salary, which was three times more than anything Mr Daboo was supposed to pay her but hadn’t”(132). She was perplexed about her past and worried Mr Bill may ask her legal documents but he did not. Lara wanted to know things about the past life of Jasmine, “There was nothing to tell about her hometown that .... the place was shabby, the people were grasping and cheating and lying and life was full of despair and drink and wanting” (132). She felt insulted about her past wretched life.

The pull of the past is always in the immigrant psyche. Jasmine felt nostalgic, homesick and missing her family but quick to recover from the nostalgia. She love parents but has managed to cut herself from the past and absorb in new life where she is learning how to be more American from Lara. She wants to become a person of her own. She ventured in future American life without her past burden, believes in crossing all cultural codes, disclaim her roots and jump into the new world. Jasmine allows Bill, her employer to seduce her when Lara was out of the Town. She did not bother what is happening; she just focused on her complete assimilation with American culture. She feels good at her sexual encounter with Bill, she is confident about her future and knows that she can control her destiny in this part of the world. She was happy they made love on the Turkish rug in a well-maintained place. She is confident to shape her destiny without her legal documents. “She was a bright, pretty girl with no visa, no papers, and no birth certificate” (138). She is satisfied with her life, “No nothing other than what she wanted to invent and

tell. She was a girl rushing into to the future” (138) and became a person of her own. Bharati Mukherjee opens up in an interview with Bart Healy about her characterisation:

The eagerness, the enthusiasm, and the confidence with which the new immigrants chase the American dream. But sometimes they get the American codes wrong, by being too aggressive e.g. in my earlier novels I left my characters in the trip of nostalgia, much too timid. Now they are involved in the process of conquest over themselves. (Healy)

Bharati Mukherjee’s characters are mostly conquerors who successfully overcome their past barriers and traditional bounds. Her display of immigrant life in her fiction is like that American life affects the attitude of her characters by one way or other to maintain or assimilate with both worlds. The survival commitment of immigrants in adopted world, Mukherjee has used sexual tool to display the completion of the process of assimilation with new world. Jasmine’s sexual encounter with Bill is the symbolic to her assimilation and accepting the new codes of her new life. S.K Tikoo has rightly explained the stories as:

The breaking down of age old racial prejudices or modes of belief and living are permanently reflected in some of these stories. Consequently, new relationship between characters of the opposite sex from different countries are forged which will help the emergence of a friendly and harmonious atmosphere. (Tikoo 219)

Jhumpa Lahiri, an Indian-American writer has cherished the condition of diaspora population in her fiction to highlight and understand their predicament not only in their adopted homes but also in their ancestral homes. Her writing mainly focus on the plight of the Indian diaspora population who are living under the shadow of hyphen in their national identities. Lahiri has unfolded the complexity of hyphenated existence in her fiction to comprehend the broader perspective of immigrant lives and their dilemma. *The Interpreter of Maladies* is an anthology of Jhumpa Lahiri, which consists upon nine (9) short stories. The Anthology was published in 1999 and won the *Pulitzer Prize* in 2000. The anthology has been

highly appreciated for its unique accounts related diaspora population who are suffering from the emotional and physical alienation in their adopted lands. Jhumpa Lahiri attempts to analyse and interpret the maladies of diaspora population through the collection of short stories. Mostly, stories of the anthology are depicting emotional and physical dislocation. Nigamananda Das explained the anthology, “speaks not only of travel but also of gradual process of laying roots in new” (Das 47) world order. This chapter will highlight the diasporic sensibility in the select short stories of Jhumpa Lahiri’s collection of two short stories, *the Interpreter of Maladies* and *Unaccustomed Earth*.

The anthology got great appreciation from the world critics, “MS Lahiri expertly captures the out of context lives of immigrants. Expatriates and first-generation Americans of Indian descent. And she astutely shows the leaps of faith that required to keep their marriages glued together... she is a writer of uncommon sensitivity and restraint” (Wall Street Journal). Jhumpa Lahiri’s anthology is not limited to Indian American stories only but stretched from Boston to London to Dacca to Calcutta and beyond, it could be easy to say Lahiri is a universal writer who represents the sentiments of diasporic world rather than limiting to any particular country or state. Stories narrates the anecdotes of immigrant population and their struggle to find new identity in adopted world. Lahiri “discuss the experience and resultant effects when people belonging to different worlds meet, interact and live together” (Padmanabhan 52).

“*When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*” is the second story of the anthology that explores the concerns of an Indian American family and a research scholar from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh about their old world in North America. Jhumpa Lahiri examines the nature of immigrant lives in foreign shores. The nostalgia and homesickness of Mr. Pirzada about his old world, where his family is stuck in war torn East- Pakistan, and the diasporic sensibility of self-exiled Indian-American family who are keen to find solace in their adopted world. they desire to connect with their ancestral roots by inviting people who shared the same socio-cultural codes with them to feel more connected with old world order.

The story is narrated by ten (10) years old Indian-American girl, explores the pull of past homeland, nostalgia and anxiety about the land of origin. Lilia, the narrator takes readers deep down into the psyche of the first generation immigrants who are stuck in the past and present socio-cultural dilemma. To find solace in their newly adopted world, to feel more connected with ancestral roots, immigrant population try to form a community with those people who share same cultural traits. Mr. Pirzada is a Muslim from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, though, his country is different but Lilia's parents did not shy away to empathise with his family who are struggling in the war torn Bangladesh. They are empathise with Mr. Pirzada because of their similar cultural codes, which they shared from old world. Lilia was not interested in her country of origin until she met with Mr. Pirzada, an Indian man who is struggling to connect with his wife and daughters from Bangladesh. Lilia considered Mr. Pirzada as an Indian because of his socio-cultural behaviour. "At first I knew nothing of the reason for his visits. I was ten years old, and was not surprised that my parents, who were from India, and had a number of Indian acquaintances at the university, should as Mr. Pirzada to share our meals" (Lahiri 24).

Jhumpa Lahiri highlighted the generation gap among immigrant population in their adopted world. Lilia is a second generation immigrant who was born and raised in North America is following her American history and geography unlike her parents who are still stuck in old world structure. "We learn American history, of course, and American geography. That year, and every year, it seemed, we began by studying the revolutionary wars" (Lahiri 27). They were taught history of George Washington instead of Mahatma Gandhi, celebrating Halloween and other Christian festivals which defines Lilia's identity and belongingness with new world. It was Mr. Pirzada and his family in Bangladesh who instigate her to know about the Indian continent.

Jhumpa Lahiri's first generation immigrant characters are apostles of typical diasporic sensibility. Lilia's parents are happy about their decision to leave India were they felt hijacked by the communal riots, curfews and poverty and at the same time they complained about, "supermarket did not carry mustard oil, doctors did



not make house calls, neighbours never dropped by without an invitation, and of these things, every so often, my parents complained” (Lahiri 24). The demonstration of nostalgia about the old world and at the same time satisfaction and admiration of their daughter’s life, which is free from curfews and riots of old world. The nostalgia of old world and appreciation of new world displays their duality and hyphenated existence. “East and West are juxtaposed here as in most of her stories. We get the Indian flavour in the description of braids tied with ribbons and eating on banana leaves in a photograph of Mr. Pirzada’s daughters” (Mitra 97). Jhumpa Lahiri’s description of the East and the West is so vivid in the story that the changed nationality or boundaries did not affect Lilia’s thinking about the Mr. Pirzada. Despite the fact that Mr. Pirzada does not belong to the country of Lilia’s origin yet she continues to pray for his family:

It made no sense to me. Mr. Pirzada and my parents spoke the same language, laughed at the same jokes, looked more or less the same. They ate pickled mangos with their meals, ate rice every night for supper with hands. Like my parents, Pirzada took off his shoes before entering a room, chewed fennel seeds after meals as a digestive, drink no alcohol, for dessert dipped austere biscuits into successive tea cups of tea. (Lahiri 25)

Jhumpa Lahiri has depicted the picture of a family who are stuck in the old world rituals and the new world expectations. They are reluctant to give up their past and at the same time they have no intention to return their old world permanently, to maintain their old world rituals they use hands to eat, meet people with same cultural background and share same feelings with acquaintances who belong to their ancestral world shows their sense of nostalgia and duality. Lilia remembers that how her parents and Mr. Pirzada followed the news at the time of creations of Bangladesh, how they were mourning death of thousands of people in civil war in Dhaka, while as Dora’s father was unaffected, he was enjoying his wine and music in his home. Lahiri has subjected that Lilia’s parents were nostalgic about the old world, to overcome that nostalgia they were inviting other immigrants to form a community based on same socio-cultural background.

*“Interpreter of Maladies”* is one of the most admired short story from the anthology, which interprets the saga of pain, emotional instability, physical and psychological dislocation and the crisis of identity and alienation. Story revolves around the Indian-American family who are visiting their roots as tourists to see Indian heritage, Sun temple. To ease their trip in India, couple hired a tourist guide, Mr Kapasi, a half Gujarati; besides it, he is an Interpreter, who translates the problems of Gujarati speaking patients to a local doctor who is unable to understand Gujarati language. Mrs Das finds Kapasi’s job, Interpreter of maladies as “romantic” and hopes he will help her to overcome from the pain and agony of her secret relationship and her illegitimate child, which she is hiding from her husband for years. Mr Kapasi, a typical Indian with traditional patriarchy mind set up fantasises the relationship with Mrs Das whose marital relationship is in rocks like him.

Jhumpa Lahiri focuses on the ideological difference between the East and the West in the short story and the complexity of communication. Mrs Das looking for a solution to her problem as she thinks Kapasi is right choice to share her secrets, which she has never disclosed with anyone else. Writer displays the complex understanding of marital relationships in home and abroad. Although, Das family’s roots are from Indian but the complex adaptation in new world order makes Kapasi confused by observing their behaviour and dressing sense, “ the family looks Indian but dressed as foreigners did, the children in stiff, brightly coloured clothing and caps with translucent visors” ( Lahiri 44). Mina Das shared her life secret with Kapasi about her extramarital relationship and the shallowness of her relationships in western world, which indicates the complex rhetoric of characters who are suffering from the socio-cultural maladies in their respective manners. Kapasi is not happy with his married life, as his wife does not appreciate his profession as an interpreter of maladies after the death of his son and Mrs Das is not satisfied with his her married life also because of heavy work schedule of Mr Das.

The story depicts the shallowness of human relationships and psychological alienation of immigrant life. The lack of communication in Indian-American couple brings alienation and loneliness in Mina Das, the second-generation immigrant who are proud of their new identities, “oh, Mina and I were both born in America, Mr Das announced with an air of sudden confidence”( 45). Although, the family has

Indian roots but now completely assimilates with American culture. They are unsatisfied with Indian roads, and have contrary opinions about monkeys, Hanuman, Hindu deity. Lahiri opens up with the ideological conflict in the short story with two different perspectives of same problems. Mina Das opens her life secret with Kapasi about her illegitimate son and her dangling relationship with Raj, her Husband who thinks she is still in love with him. Kapasi failed to understand the psychological pain and agony of Mina Das when she explains her alienation and loneliness in her glamorous American life. It is very difficult to understand the situation of an immigrant with typical Indian patriarchy mind setup like Kapasi. Mina is reluctant to accept that she is guilty of what she has done but for Kapasi it was an act of infidelity and considers their marriage as “a bad match” (53). Kapasi failed to empathise with Mina Das and her loneliness in adopted home without realising her condition among family and friends:

The writer highlights the themes of the complexity of communication in which the characters are and are not Indian: and explains how Indian Americans are caught in the mesh of two contrasting cultures. ...this is well depicted at the thought provoking end of the story where Mrs. Das who is seeking absolution and relief in Mr. Kapasi is returned with question and reflections showing how extreme are their cultural and individual thoughts. (Padmanabhan 52)

The story depicts the contrast between two cultures, where Mr Kapasi, an Indian Patriarch clandestinely admires Mina's beauty and desires to maintain close connections with her until she disclosed her secret about her extramarital relationship, Mr Kapasi felt “depressed and parched” by listening her whole story but failed to give her any remedy. Jhumpa Lahiri's story ventures the alienations of families, communication gap, cultural differences, loneliness and isolation of immigrant lives. Mina Das presents the cluster of immigrant population who failed to find peace in their lives in adopted homes and failed to convince people to understand their trauma. Writer has nicely portrayed the cultural differences in the story where two individuals are facing same issues, unable to create mutual understanding. “This breakdown in communication is heart wrenching because

despite common shared issues that bind the two, they are unable to reach out and understand each other” (Padmanabhan 52).

“*Mrs. Sen’s*” is the sixth short story of the anthology, which portrays the struggle and process of assimilation in adopted world of an immigrant lady. The story emphasises on the rough road towards the journey of assimilation with new world order of an Indian Immigrant women who refused to bend down in front of new socio-cultural codes. Mrs. Sen is the perfect example of the immigrant population who are suffering from nostalgia and cultural shock in their adopted world because of the hyphenated existence. Mrs. Sen, an Indian origin woman who had migrated to America with her husband soon after the arranged marriage. Mr. Sen is a university professor who is teaching mathematics, brought his wife to North America for better life style and to live their American dream. The character of Mrs Sen projected the people who are literally reluctant to assimilate with new mainstream cultures, which lead them to nostalgia, alienation and loneliness. Jhumpa Lahiri illustrates the struggle and the process of adaptation in new world order to understand the psyche behind the sufferings of immigrant population. Mrs. Sen is the most affected character in the story who is facing the crisis of hyphenated existence in the alien world because of her own reluctance to accept new socio-cultural codes. To erase her boredom and alienation she decided to become a babysitter of an eleven years boy, Eliot whose mother is a working woman unlike Mrs. Sen. Mrs. Sen tried to create a small world of her own with full of memories and things from the old world to feel home in her new apartment. Although, Eliot do not know much about the Mrs. Sen’s past life but her actions were enough to make him realise that she is suffering from alienation and loneliness. Reetamoni Narzary states that, “Eliot quickly becomes aware of Mrs. Sen’s loneliness, her bewilderment in a strange new culture” (Narzary 63).

Jhumpa Lahiri exemplifies that the process of assimilation is not an easy task for all immigrants, it not easy to cut off old roots to establish new identity in new world. Mrs. Sen created her new world with old world memories and artefacts to find her solace. She is using Indian techniques to cook food, Indian blades to cut her vegetables and using Indian sari to feel more Indian rather than trying to assimilate with her current world. Eliot observes that how she is trying to create India in North

American apartment by preferring Indian products rather than American. To maintain her cultural values the first thing, she taught Eliot was to remove his shoes outside of her house. Removing shoes could be common practice among most Asian societies but for many American's it is a thing of Asia, "Eliot learned to remove his sneakers first thing in Mrs. Sen's doorway" (Lahiri 114). She has the stories for everything related to past and was very curious to find an excuse to share those stories with Eliot and felt extremely happy. She has a story related with Indian community based life and her knife, which she is using to chop her vegetables, "she had bought the blade from India, where apparently there was at least one in every household" (115). She is resisting her new life and sticks to her old world by using Indian food, Indian dress, books and even the kitchen items she is using from India to recall her old world etiquettes proudly.

Although, there are lots of differences between Eliot and Mrs. Sen, if we observe their socio-cultural backgrounds but one thing is common that is both are feeling lonely and alienated. Eliot missed his mother who is a working lady and Mrs. Sen missed her past community life which develops a kind of mutual understanding and sympathy for each other. Jhumpa Lahiri narrates the story from the Eliot's point of view who shares that only two things can make Mrs. Sen happy, one is letters from the Indian family and fresh fish, both things are rooted with her past; she narrates that how important place fish has in her Bengal community, "she had grown up eating fish twice a day. She added that in Calcutta people ate fish first thing in the morning, last thing before bed", she compares the taste of fish with Indian fish. She finds Indian fish tastier than American one, "she added that while the fish there tasted nothing like the fish in India" (123).

Jhumpa Lahiri's heroine is homesick and nostalgic of her old community life. She is longing to her old world and trying to create a kind of affinity through repeating old recordings, reading letters, listening music and revising her traditional life. She does not consider her American apartment as 'home', for her it was a place to live but not a home, "at home that is all you have to do. Not everybody has a telephone. But just raise your voice a bit, or express grief or joy...Eliot understood that when Mrs. Sen said home, she meant India, not the apartment where she sat chopping vegetables" (Lahiri126). She is reluctant to accept her new apartment as

home because of her nostalgia for old community life of Calcutta, she was unable to discard her past cultural codes and acknowledge her present in order to assimilate with new world. “Repeated references to home that she had left behind at Calcutta heightens her sense of loneliness” (Narzary 64).

The driving lessons of Mrs. Sen shows her interest towards assimilation process with new world but failed, at the end of the Story when she smashes her car into a telephone booth and refused to drive after that incident was an attempt to accept new world order where she has to live free and independent life. “Although very fervent about her own cultural background and homeland values, she too is found to finally succumb to the practice of acclimatizing to the other culture, understanding the need of adaptation for survival in the new world” (Padmanabhan 54). Her refusal to blend and accept new cultural traits, Mrs. Sen remains dependent woman on her husband, unlike Eliot’s mother who is independent and knows how to handle her personal life. Mrs. Sen’s reluctance to accept new world order brought her to the verge of alienation. Unlike Mrs Das, who had accepted the new codes of life Mrs. Sen failed to assimilate with new world order.

“*This Blessed House*” is another short story from the anthology in which Jhumpa Lahiri has portrayed the Indian-American newly married couple whose ideology did not match with each other. The depiction of newly married couple in the short story is the broader perspective of immigrant population in their adopted homes. Twinkle and Sanjeev has totally different perceptions of looking at things in their house. Twinkle is the symbolic representation of happy assimilation with multi-cultural American society and Sanjeev is the representation of restricted assimilation of an immigrant who desires to work and live in American multicultural societies but looking to maintain their past Indianness in their lives. Twinkle has accepted the codes of new culture and has blended with host socio-culture; meanwhile Sanjeev has shown some reluctance to assimilate with multi-cultural host society by detesting Christian things and Twinkle’s open mindedness towards new ideas. the marriage of Twinkle and Sanjeev was an arranged marriage fixed by their parents in a typical Indian manner:

In Lahiri's fiction there is a tendency of young Eastern couples meeting for the first time due to their parent's right judgment and effort. Jhumpa Lahiri's narrative style is deceptively forward. It is not complex or flowery, yet it is characterized by a simple beauty. She accepts herself that revising is a powerful technique she uses in her writings. She tells us what we need to know about immigrants and their agony, mirth but she does not bother with superfluous words. (Kumar 218)

The story deals with the crisis of marital relationship and the communication gap among immigrant couple. After marriage couple moved into a newly bought house in Connecticut, in that house the previous owner had left the statue of Marry. Twinkle shows the broader perspective of American society by keeping that statue in the blessed house but for Sanjeev being a Hindu it was a question mark on his religious faith, "we are not Christian, Sanjeev said. Lately he had begun noticing the need to state the obvious to twinkle" (Lahiri 137). Jhumpa Lahiri shows the typical contrast between the two worlds, how the institution of marriage is being followed in the west and the eastern part of the world. The marriage of Twinkle and Sanjeev is an arranged marriage that not common in western societies and after roughly four months, the ideological differences begins to surface that forced Sanjeev to question himself whether he loves his wife or not, " he did not know if he loved her"( Lahiri 147).

Twinkle's openness irks Sanjeev as she begins to admire flashy Christian things in the house and calling these things will bring good luck to their newly bought "blessed house". they start arguing on the pity issues because of their different mentality, Sanjeev was expecting a wife with an Indian attitude who would like to follow him and do house hold chorus but Twinkle was an independent woman born and raised in America, she did not like to live inside the four walls of their house. She was not good in cooking and likes to smoke and drink s which shows that she has discarded her traditional Indian codes and has adopted codes from new world with more freedom and independence. "She was not terribly ambitious in the kitchen...Indian food, she complained, was a bother, she detested chopping garlic, and peeling ginger" (144).

Jhumpa Lahiri's heroine is the representation of second generation immigrant population who have completely submerged in the host culture rather than picking pieces from the old world which brings them more alienations and loneliness. On the other side Sanjeev is still holding the old world bits and pieces by going Indian restaurants, resisting to decorate statue of Mother Mary in multi-cultural society of America, he would prefer "Muglia chicken with spinach from his favourite Indian restaurant" (138). Christian artefacts which previous owner has left means something for Twinkle but for him it was just a trash, "but they mean nothing to him. They irritated him. We should call the realtor. Tell him to take it away" (138). Twinkle preferred multi-cultural milieu so she finds those artefacts cute and lovely while Sanjeev still had not open his mind to accept the multiplicity of his neighbourhood, which makes him feel unhomeliness even in his own home and regrets his decision of marrying Twinkle:

He was getting nowhere with her, with this woman whom he had known for only four months and with whom he shared his life. He thought with flicker of regret of the snapshots his mother used to send him from Calcutta, a prospective of brides who could sing, sew, and season lentils without consulting a cookbook. (Lahiri 146)

The story ends with a positive note that Sanjeev seems to incline towards his wife's ideology allows her to keep those statue in his house. Jhumpa Lahiri concludes that the couple were suffering because of their different mind setup and the communication gap. Lahiri clearly indicates that there was no chance of Twinkle's conversion to Christianity but her admiration for Christian things shows her intentions that she is more comfortable with the nature of hybridity or hyphenated existence.

*"The Third and Final Continent"* is last story of the anthology in which Jhumpa Lahiri has highlighted the process of successful assimilation and adaptation. Narrator is an Indian origin immigrant who begins his journey as a student to a successful survivor in an adopted world. The story is not exploring the traditional immigrant sagas but Jhumpa Lahiri opts to present universal phenomena of successful assimilation among immigrant population. Narrator is open to face new



challenges to find his new identity in new world order without showing any kind of resistance in the process of adaption and assimilation. "I lived in north London, in Finsbury Park, in a house occupied entirely by penniless Bengali bachelors like myself, at least a dozen and sometimes a more, all struggling to educate and establish ourselves abroad" (Lahiri 173).

Jhumpa Lahiri's narrator is open to adopt new traits for adjustment in new life. Unlike Mrs. Sen who longed to her past life suffers in new world, narrator is open to accept changes what so ever brought him closer to his dream of establishing in new world. Himadri Lahiri states that the secret behind his successful assimilation with new society is that narrator chose to focus on his goal rather than sticking his past roots. "The narrator in Lahiri's story doesn't mention his community on which an immigrant usually falls back in time of personal or cultural crisis" (Himadri 47). Lahiri's hero did not discard his past values completely, he understands the situation and acts like a universal citizen who does not cling to any particular things that can hinder his way, his marriage was an arranged one fixed by his Calcutta family, without knowing his wife he agreed to marry a girl with whom has never met. "I was thirty six years old, my own marriage was arranged around the same time I was offered a full time job in American" (174).

The protagonist was nostalgic about his home and past life but felt satisfied at the end of the story where he confesses that he desires his cultural legacy will be continue by his son. They are American now and Mala, his wife no longer feeling upset for his Indian family but missing her son. They are hoping that their cultural legacy will continue in the future as they taught their son Bengali language, eating rice with hands, shows their nostalgia for old life. However, at the same time they overcome all this and decides to become citizens of America. "So we drive to Cambridge to visit him, or bring him home, speak in Bengali, things we sometimes worry he will no longer do after we die" ( 197). They are happy and successful in their lives because of their open-mindedness from the beginning of the journey. His interaction with Mrs Croft who forced him to repeat that landing on moon was a 'splendid'. At first, he seems reluctant to shout that it was a splendid in a louder voice. However, he accepted the codes of new life to adapt quickly in new social milieu. "But each evening when I returned the same thing happened: she slapped the

bench, ordered me to sit down, declared that there was a flag on the moon, and that it was splendid. I said it was splendid, too, and then we sat in silence” (183).

There was a fear of losing the cultural legacy which they are desirably following to pass on to their next generation, eating Indian food with hands, buying pajams from India, using Bengali language at home and comparing his past life with present world displays an immigrant trauma. However, at the same time they seem to be proud of what they have achieved so far. After thirty years of living in new world shows the commitment of an assimilation and Adoption with adopted world. “We are American citizen now, so that we can collect social security when it is time. Though we visit Calcutta every few years, and bring back more drawstring pajams and Darjeeling tea, we have decided to grow old here” (197).

After the success of *Interpreter of Maladies*, the first anthology, which brought Jhumpa Lahiri, an Indian-American writer the Pulitzer Prize in 2000. Jhumpa Lahiri continues to showcase her literary skills in her second collection of short stories, the “*Unaccustomed Earth*” which became the New York Times bestseller fiction of the year in 2008, and earned the prestigious Frank O’ Connor Award, the highest price of thirty five thousand dollars given to any collection of short stories till the date. Jhumpa Lahiri had continued her themes of immigrant lives who are stuck in the old world traditional values and the new world demands. In her first anthology the main focus was on first generation immigrant lives and the chaos, confusion and the pull of traditional values that they are facing in the adopted lands, though in her second anthology, she has focused on same immigrant themes but with little twist. In the *Unaccustomed Earth*, Lahiri explores the lives of second-generation Immigrant population who are struggling to decide their belongingness under the burden of hyphenated identity. They are stuck in the traditional values and the mainstream American expectations. Kanthi explains the works of Jhumpa Lahiri, “All her works deal with the themes of cultural identities and the nostalgia of characters for homeland and the problems they faced while living in America” (Kanthi 126). Jhumpa Lahiri is second- generation immigrant writer who understands the pain, agony, displacement and loneliness of immigrant children who are trapped between two lives and the two worlds. Lahiri confesses in her Article “My Two Lives” published in Newsweek that there is a psychological displacement

among second generation immigrants and the emotional bond with ancestral world that they have inherited from their parents. This emotional bond will be over once the connection with parents will be over for longer period of time:

Everything will change once they die. They will take certain things with them-conversation in another language, and perception about the difficulties of being foreign. Without them, the back and the forth life my family leads, both literally and figuratively will at last approach stillness. An anchor will drop, and a line of connection will be served.” (Lahiri)

Jhumpa Lahiri has divided the anthology into two parts, five stories in first part and three short stories in the second one. The title of first story of anthology believed to be that Jhumpa Lahiri has got inspiration from “the Custom House” of Nathaniel Hawthorne:

Human nature will not flourish, any more than a potato, if it plant and replanted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn-out soil. My children have had other birthplace, and, so far as their fortunes may be within my control, shall strike their roots into unaccustomed earth. (Hawthorne 11)

The above lines from the Scarlet Letters of Hawthorne are giving vivid idea of the main themes of the story. Jhumpa Lahiri has nicely explored the conflict and chaos of immigrant lives in their adopted homes. The conflict of generations and the unfathomed sense of alienation, guilt and old world responsibility are the central themes of the story. The story revolves around father-daughter relationship, old world responsibility of daughter and the westernised mind set up of father who wants to lead his life freely after the retirement. Ruma, the heroine of the story has been caught between the old world responsibilities and the new world demands, at first, she is in dilemma to offer her father to stay with her family or not in the newly adopted house in Seattle. Ruma was caught between cultures of two different worlds. The dilemma and alienation she is suffering because of her duality, her hidden Indianness and the western upbringing. Gediya states: “The second generation children of the immigrants have come of ages in two cultures and have

often married non-Indian. They have left home and have started families of their own, as they struggle both with strained filial relationships and the burden of parenthood” (Gediya 136).

Jhumpa Lahiri has projected the chaos and confusion of hyphenated identity among second-generation immigrant population. Ruma is the symbolic character of those immigrants who do not intend to return to their ancestral homelands but are unwilling to abandon their old world responsibilities for their families in other part of the world. Ruma did not want to destabilise her westernised nuclear family, she did not want to take responsibility of his old father but out of traditional cultural bounds, she could not express that feeling to her father. Adam expressed his happiness that Ruma will get company of her father, “he will be able to help you out while I am gone. But Ruma disagreed...I can’t imagine my father living here” (Lahiri 6). And claimed that it was her mother who always used to help her not father. It was her mother, who taught her son to speak Bengali language, help her in cooking Indian food. She is in dilemma to maintain her western nuclear family status in which elders are being kept separate or follow Indian cultural codes, in which, it is the responsibility of young generation to take care of their elder once. Although, soon Ruma realised that her father proved to be great support for her family rather than thinking his stay as a burden. Gediya writes that the story:

Deals with cultural issues like the conflict between the central characters’ Indian heritage and cultural identity and their struggle to assimilate into the new culture. This struggle gets reflected in Ruma’s dilemma whether she should invite her widowed father to come to stay with her permanently with her recent family or not. (Gediya 137)

Ruma, the protagonist of the story is the second-generation immigrant, married with a white American, Adam and has a son namely Akash, the hybrid third generation of mixed race. Lahiri has insightfully displayed the relationship of three generations. The relationship of first and second generations are somehow associated with each other in which second generation can claim their part of share in the ancestral world. However third generation of immigrants felt totally cut off and discarded from the ancestral roots of other part of the world. Akash, the third

generation denied of any kind of relationship with grandparents, even though Ruma's mother used to sing for him, teaching him Bengali language. His coldness to Ruma's father shows lack of communication between the generations. On the arrival of Ruma's father, Akash did not feel thrilled, "Akash did not respond, behaving as if her father did not exist" (Lahiri 12). Akash is the presentation of typical third generation immigrant who has less proximity with first generation and their world. Instead of the fact that Ruma's mother took care of Akash at the time of his birth, she was the one who was holding Akash for hours but now "Akash had no memory of her mother" (Lahiri 17). Ruma wanted her son to have some cultural traits from her old world to continue legacy but he has grown up a "a sort of American child she was always careful not to be" (23). He likes packed food instead of home cooked, "I hate that food, Akash retorted, frowning at her father's plate" (23).

The pull of old world values and the responsibility of filial activities made it difficult for immigrant population to decide their existence and belongingness towards a particular world. Ruma was always attracted towards her mother than her father because of her helping nature. Mother had always been helping hand to Ruma but died of an unexpected death during her surgery. She is torn between inherited Bengali cultural and the willingness of mainstream American free society. She failed to assimilate fully with American culture and failed to abandon her inheritance from Bengali culture, which led her to the bewilderment and chaos in her life. She admires American dress over Indian sari, she does not remember any Bengali words or cannot read Bengali but wished that her father to teach Akash Bengali language. She appreciates her Americanness over her Indianness, but proved that her Indianness still exists in her by leaving the full time job to serve her husband and son, which is very uncommon among western societies.

The alienation and displacement among second-generation immigrant population is inevitable process as they are born and raised in two different worlds. Ruma discarded her community, married with an American without her parents' consent, her mother died unexpected death during the surgery; father is hiding his secret affair with an Indian woman, Mrs. Bagchi and her husband is busy with his work. She desired to have her father in her family to counter her alienation and loneliness but failed to convince him who desires to explore the world with another

woman. Awasthi explains that, “the final revelations of her father’s affair with Mrs. Bagchi aggravated her feeling of loneliness” (Awasthi 150).

“*Hell-Heaven*” is second short story of the anthology that revolves around an Indian-American family. Teenage girl, Usha, narrates the story, which explores the process of assimilation, discarding old cultural values, generational conflict and alienation due to lack of flexibility towards new mainstream culture. Jhumpa Lahiri has crafted the magnificent story about the loss of traditional cultural codes, changing human behaviour and the diasporic condition of Indian American family who wants to hold their old values in new world order. Aparna, mother of the narrator is an Indian born American housewife, married to Shyamal, a workaholic person who avoids his wife’s desires and needs in the new world to focus on his job. The marriage of Aparna and Shymal was a typical Indian arranged marriage that Shymal approved only because of his parents’ wish. He did not say no because it was against the socio-cultural codes of his ancestral world. Aparna has hoped that moving to America would bring her happiness and freedom from old world bounds and would enable her to cash new opportunity in new adopted shores, but because of Shyamal’s busy schedule she began to feel lonely and nostalgic of her old world. “My father was a lover of silence and solitude. He had married my mother to placate his parents; they willing to accept his desertion as long as he had a wife. He was wedded to his work, his research, and he existed in a shell that neither my mother nor I could penetrate” (Lahiri 65).

The pangs of loneliness in Aparna began to fade away with the arrival of Pranab Chakraborty, student of M.I.T. The narrator sees a ray of hope in her mother’s life who looks more confident and free with Pranab who became a part of their family in a short period of time. Jhumpa Lahiri’s observation about the immigrant population who are bewildering in new lands try to form a community with same roots to find a solace in the newly adopted lives. Aparna was feeling alienated and nostalgic in her American life, Pranab brought her smile back that she had lost, and Aparna helped him to assimilate with new world when he was hopeless and thinking of leaving his study and returning his home back in Calcutta. They found support in eachother in the lonely world, to fight Aparna’s loneliness she needs him and to disengage Pranab’s homesickness and nostalgia, though only

possible because of their same roots and cultural codes. Pranab became Pranab kaka for Usha and he starts to call Aparna 'baudi' and her husband Shyamalda to give respect according to their traditions. Pranab's regular visits to Aparna's house who felt more excited, brought new hopes not only in Aparna's uneventful life but also proved helpful for Pranab to assimilate with new world. They understand each other better than anyone else does in this part of the world as they share same roots, codes and cultural background. "They were from the same neighbourhood in north Calcutta, their family homes within walking distance, the facades familiar to them once the exact location were described. They knew the same shops, the same bus tram routes..." (64).

Jhumpa Lahiri's master class art of storytelling enchants readers the way she has presented the conflict of generations and the process of assimilation in the story. Aparna's love for Pranab turns jealousy because not only she was in love with him but also because of Deborah's American identity. Pranab chose an American girl to marry which was unacceptable for whole Bengali community and his parents. Wedlock of Pranab with an American girl was a sign of assimilation with new society and discarding old codes to absorb new values of life. "Pranab Kaku's parents were horrified by the thought of their only son marrying an American woman" (71). They cannot imagine that their son has discarded the cultural legacy by not following his parents' advice. "It was Mr. Chakraborty telling my father that they could not possibly such a marriage, that it was out of the question, that if Pranab Kaku dared to marry Deborah he would no longer acknowledge him as a son" (71).

Jhumpa Lahiri's female characters are showing deep attachment with their old world even after living decades in the adopted homes. Aparna, mother of the narrator is staunch follower of her Bengali culture; her intimacy with Pranab was because of same cultural and social roots. Usha, the narrator is second-generation immigrant who was born and bred in American society but her mother was hoping she would follow her ancestral cultural traits rather becoming an American. Although, it was obvious for her to adopt American cultural traits but her mother did not allow her to assimilate with adopted society by restricting her choice of clothes and friends. Immigrant population struggles to pass the cultural legacy to their next

generations by hook or crook to feel more homely in their adopted homes. Aparna was imposing Bengali and other traits of Bengali culture on the narrator who was not interested in the old world, “ I spoke freely in English, a language in which, by the age, I express myself more easily than Bengali, which I was required to speak at home” ( 69). There is a clear cultural clash among two generations, she was not allowed to attend dance classes, she was not allowed to date an American but deep down in her heart she admires American life more than her restricted Bengali:

The pain of displacement continues to pinch not just the immigrants but will also their children who are rendered incapable of belonging to the country of their birth. The tragedy of alienation is felt as much by the immigrants as the next generation due to the reason that the sense of estrangement is significantly more intense in proportion to the sense of affinity along with roots. (Singh 763)

The narrator’s fondness towards her Americanness is vivid in her actions. She can smoke, kiss boys, go parties and use short clothes like her other American friends do but hiding from her mother to avoid any conflict at home. The duality of second generation is because they want to follow their parent’s footsteps at home and admire their Americanness outside. Aparna turns more isolated at home as her husband remains always busy in his job, Pranab left her to marry to an American woman, Deborah first and then desires to marry an Indian married woman, Usha is also busy in her American life and maintains distance from her mother to hide her American life style that turns Aparna more desolated and isolated. The note of isolation and desolation in first generation woman characters of Jhumpa Lahiri are more visible as compare to men. Pranab is the symbolic character who assimilated with American society by marrying Deborah. Pranab left his American wife for an Indian married woman contrary to the prediction of Aparna, who believed that Deborah would deceive him for another American man, with this Lahiri debunks the stereotype of non-seriousness of American relationships.

Aparna was hoping her daughter would not adopt American living traits. Instead of her, all attempts to stop Usha to mix up with culture of her birthplace she has to agree at the end of the story. Story ends up with a positive note that Aparna



had accepted her daughter's Americanness and made peace with her. she had accept her boyfriends and her American dress code in which she was feeling more confident than Bengali Salwar kamiz, she accepted that her daughter had slept with many American men and maintained many relationships, "She had accepted that I was not only her daughter but a child of America as well" (82). Lahiri has skilfully holds the grip of immigrant sensibility in the story. "The child belonging to the second generation of immigrant is in a better position to bridge gap between the cultural differences of the two worlds-Indian and American. It is through Usha that we see the competition of the process of Aparna's assimilation in the American culture" (Awasthi 153).

"*Only Goodness*", is another short story of the anthology revolves around the brother and sister relationships. Jhumpa Lahiri has marvellously displayed her writing skills to dive deep into the psyche of the immigrant family lives in their adopted countries. Sudha, an Indian American, born in London and raised in American is guiding her brother to enjoy his American life, which unfortunately she had to wait until her college. She introduced her brother, Rahul to alcoholism and other activities during his school days so that he could enjoy his free American life unlike her, without the consent of their parents. "It was as if Sudha were in high school again, doing things she once had not the wits or guts for" (Lahiri 129).

Jhumpa Lahiri explores the minutest detail of the conflict of immigrant generations in their adopted homes. Sudha and Rahul, both were supervised by Indian, Bengali parents as per their old world traditions. Although, Sudha managed to overcome the pressure from old world values and the new world demands, however Rahul failed to grip his life to maintain equilibrium between his personal and private life. The frequent pressure from parents, to make them proud, and comparison with other Bengali kids broke Rahul psychologically and pushed him deep down into the world of alcoholism. Santwana Haldar says that it seems absurd on behalf of first generation immigrant population that their kids who are born and raised in America will not get affected from the American life style. Their comparison with other Bengali kids is ludicrous as Sudha and Rahul were the part of larger mainstream America that their parents were ignoring. "They never felt it absurd that the children of Indian parents who had to compete with the American

children in every part walk of life would remain totally unaffected by American life style” (Halder 167).

The ideological clash between first and the second generation is overtly visible in the story. Sudha and Rahul have to live a dual life, one for their parents where they have to follow traditional codes and to compete with other Bengali immigrant kids to make their parents proud by sacrificing their personal desires, on the other hand to compete with American life style they have to hide their activities from parents. Their parents were more inclined to the old world cultural codes were as children were looking for a new space to free themselves from the clutches of the unknown world. They chose to live their lives freely by smoking, drinking alcohol and developing personal relationships with Americans, all these acts could be seen as an act of rebellion to the old world values which they were hiding from their parents. “Sudha had waited until college to disobey her parents. Before then she has lived according to their expectations, her persona scholarly, her social life limited to other demure girls in her class, if only to ensure that one day she would be set free” (Lahiri 129).

The second-generation immigrant children has to go through immense pressure from both the worlds, parental expectations and the new world assimilation. Sudha and Rahul were simmering under the colossal pressure of their parents to make them and their community proud, somehow, Sudha musters the courage and zeal to live her American dream and as per the parents expectations as well. She had to wait until her college to cross the parental bounds but Rahul could not justify his existence as per the community hopes and failed to make his parents feel proud instead brought shame to the whole family by his alcoholism. Their parents failed to realise the real happiness of their children who are suffering under the shadows of duality and hyphenated identity. After the completion of Rahul’s Graduation his father proudly claimed, “our job is done” and hoping his only child to compete with other Bengali children who had achieved miles in their new world. “For years, they had been compared to other Bengali children, told about gold medals brought back from science fairs, colleges that offered full scholarships. Sometimes Sudha’s father would clip newspaper articles about unusually gifted adolescents” (129).

Jhumpa Lahiri has highlighted the communication gap between the first and second generations in their adopted homes. Parents of immigrant children often underestimate the psychological scenario of their kids that pushing them more towards the alienation and estrangement. Their parent failed to realise the situation of Sudha and Rahul in the outside world. They failed to fathom the effects of being an immigrant with dark skin in white country. “ Her parents had always been blind to the things that plagued their children: being teased at school for colour of their skin or for the funny things mother occasionally put into their lunch boxes, potatoes curry sandwiches that tinted wonder bread green” (143). To avoid their failures in order to provide balanced life to their kids they begins to blame the law of country and too much freedom in America.

There is guilt and growing sense of inferiority complex among Immigrant children if their parents fail to provide proper environment to their kids. Sudha is feeling guilty of introducing her brother to alcoholism during his school days to make him more like other Americans to save him from the humiliation and inferiority complex, which she has felt among her mates. “Sudha pitied her mother, pitied her refusal to accommodate such an unpleasant and alien fact, her need to blame America and its laws instead of her son” (143). Due to lack of parental control and Rahul’s own observation of life in new world failed him from becoming a good son and a good member of his Bengal community.

Jhumpa Lahiri conveys the message through the short story about the immigrant world, the lack of understanding and obsession with Americanism could be dangerous for the survival in foreign shores. Sudha’s too much love and obsession for American life style ruins Rahul’s life, although her intentions were positive to make him more American so that he can enjoy his free life, which Sudha had failed to do. On the other hand, lack of parental care and growing communication between Rahul and his parents push him more towards the Alcoholic life. They lacked the vision to understand the cultural shock of their son, instead they, particularly mother blamed freedom and culture of the country rather than introspecting their behaviour, which was pushing him deep into the alienation and isolation.

“*Once in a Lifetime*” is a first story of the second part of the anthology, the second part consists of three short stories. The trilogy narrates the tragic love story of an Indian American couple, Hema and Kaushik. The first story of trilogy narrates the story about two Indian American Immigrant families during 1970’s, when Kaushik’s parents left America to settle in India. However, they later returned to their adopted land, America to treat her mother, away from her ancestral roots. Kaushik’s mother has suffered from the deadly breast cancer and wishes to die in isolated America. Jhumpa Lahiri portrays the immigrant lives who are unable to find solace in their ancestral lands once they return to their roots, the pull of newly adopted homes remains there which leads towards the inbetweenness and raised the question of belongingness. The second point that Lahiri has highlighted in the story is the globalisation and alienation among the immigrants in their adopted lands, Kaushik and his mother still missing their Indian life in Bombay and at the same time desires to find a suitable house in America.

The story, “*Once in a Lifetime*” is a first person narration, narrated by Hema, the heroine of the story as a monologue addressed to Kaushik. Her reminiscences of childhood memories related to Kaushik’s family after their return back to America. The eternal bond between two Indian immigrant families and their love for each other despite the difference in their socio-economic status back in Calcutta and in American as well shows the commitment of same socio-cultural roots, which binds them together in spite of differences. Lahiri invokes one of the most important point in the story to understand the psyche of the immigrant lives in their adopted world. There was a huge socio-economic difference between two families but the pull of the past and the roots from the same land brought them together to feel more comfortable:

They became instant friends, spending their days together while our fathers were at work. They talked about the lives they had left behind in Calcutta: your mother’s beautiful home in Jodhpur Park...my mother’s modest flat in Maniktala, above a grimy Punjabi restaurant, where seven people existed in three small rooms. (Lahiri 225)

In Calcutta, they have very less chances to meet and befriend unlike in America. The nostalgia for traditional roots encourage them to take shelter under the influence of each other to feel more homely and comfortable in the foreign shores. Although, the return of Kaushik's family opens new ways for readers to understand the deep psyche of the immigrant population who are living under the shadow of hyphenated identity. In America they felt delighted on meeting someone from their ancestral lands while living in their home lands they crave for return again to their life of solitude in adopted world, like Kaushik's mother wishes to die in solitary in America. She wants to enjoy her last days in America; that could be the way of claiming her part of share in adopted world. Her way of living was criticised by Hema's mother, as they were unaware about the secret diseases, which she was battling alone.

The isolation and alienation among immigrant female characters in Lahiri's works are inevitable to analyse for readers to understand the text deeply in different point of views. Jhumpa Lahiri's female characters are more alienated and isolated in their adopted homes as compare to men. Mothers of Hema and Kaushik find solace with each other's company because of their same-shared backgrounds and same feelings of loneliness in their American houses. Although, there was a huge social gap between two ladies in Calcutta, but those differences were irrelevant in America where they both were suffering from the same trauma of alienation and isolation. "My mother's father was clerk in the General Post Office, she had neither eaten at a table nor sit on a commode before coming to America. Those differences were irrelevant in Cambridge, where they were both equally alone" (Lahiri 225). They need each other to heal the wounds from the old world, rest of the things are inapt to notice except their past.

There is always a kind of dilemma of belongingness among immigrant population. They show reluctance to adopt new world cultural traits at the same time they are reluctant to return their roots permanently. It seems literally impossible for Hema's parents to return their old world but at the same time, they are hesitant to adopt mainstream American culture fully. They are criticising Kaushik's parents for their indecisiveness and inability to adopt any part of the world. "I gathered from my parents' talk that it was regarded as a wavering, a weakness. They should have

known it is impossible to go back. They said to their friends, condemning your parents for failed at both ends. We had stuck it out as immigrants while you had fled..." (228). they criticised them to give too much freedom to Kaushik, and their extravagant life style.

The cultural clash and the process of assimilation is vividly evident in Hema's mother who does not like that her daughter sleeps in separate room like Americans do. She had criticised Kaushik's mother for her extravagance, short hair, her slacks, following American life style and giving too much freedom to her son Kaushik. "Bombay had made them more American than Cambridge had,...there were remarks concerning your mother's short hair, her slacks, the johnnie Walker she and your father continued to drink after the meal was finished, taking it with them from the dining room to the living room" ( 235). On the other hand, Hema's mother is more inclined towards her Bengali traditional values. Her determination to preserve old world cultural values, she disapproves American life style, avoids drinking alcohol and objects the idea of kids sleeping alone in separate rooms. "My mother considers the idea of a child sleeping alone a cruel American practice and therefore did not encourage it, even when we had the space" (229). Jhumpa Lahiri did not miss a chance to display the inner conscious of the second-generation immigrant population. The inability of Hema to recognise Indian map and her nasty projection of Indian homes shows the mind setup of immigrant children and their unwillingness to follow their ancestral world. There is a sharp contrast between the views of Hema and Kaushik about India, Hema's India is dull and void where giant cockroaches are everywhere. " I did not betray my opinion, that I found trip to India dull, that I didn't like the geckos that clung to the walls in the evenings, poking in and out of the fluorescent light fixtures, or the giant cockroaches that sometimes watched me as I bathed" (341).

Jhumpa Lahiri has sharply opens the psyche of the second-generation immigrant population, who are unwilling to acknowledge their relations between past ancestral homes. They do not have any confusion or dilemma about their existence unlike the first generation who remains clinging to the old world values which brings alienation to their lives. Hema's father has kept old Indian music collection that he would like to listen before sleeping, her mother has a quest to pass

her Indian values to Hema, Kaushik's mother, who pretends to be more American still borrows sari from Hema's mother to keep her Indianness alive.

*"Going Ashore"*, is the last story of the anthology that concludes the pathetic and heartbroken love story of Hema and Kaushik, two immigrants who were dangling between past and present lives in foreign shores. The narration of story is mostly from the author's point of view; however, Hema narrates last part of the story when she had heard about the news of Kaushik's death. Both leading characters of the story have crossed all the boundaries of national identities and became the citizens of world. Hema, professor of Latin visiting Rome to study artefacts and old remains, meanwhile, Kaushik is working as a war photographer and has visited many countries and claimed that "I have never belonged to any place that way" (Lahiri 320).

The story highlighted the intense emotional drama and identity crisis of two immigrant lovers. Hema surrenders, under pressure from emotional and psychological alienation in her immigrant life decided to marry an Indian American, without any kind of emotional attachment and love. Meanwhile, story ends with news of tragic death of Kaushik, which Hema is mourning because she laments that the baby she had is not from Kaushik, her childhood lover. Jhumpa Lahiri's heroine projects portrays the sense of alienation, loneliness, identity crisis and unbelongingness in the immigrant lives. In the story she rejected Kaushik's proposal and went back India to marry Navin indicates her escapist nature who tried to escape from the past relationships with Kaushik and Julian, her married lover.

Jhumpa Lahiri has beautifully crafted her heroine in the story who presents the blend of Indian-Americanness in her acts. She has an affair with Julian and was very confident of his divorce so that they can marry at the same time she was conscious about her image, she realised that her image would be diminished as a concubine if she marries a married man, Julian. Hema does not have any kind of feelings for her fiancé, Navin, except that her parents like him and he is the source to escape her alienation and identity crisis. She lacks the enthusiasm for her fiancé because she knows that she do not love him the way she is feeling for Julian and Kaushik but to find her identity she has to marry Navin to continue to her life. "She

communicated with Navin by e-mails and spoke to him a few times on the phone, conversations heavy with the weight of things to come but lacking the foundation of any lived history between them”( Lahiri 297). She spoke to him but never give her true information about her location. “She did not miss him but looked forward to Calcutta, to marrying him and returning with him on the plane in time to resume teaching at Wellesley” (297).

Hema’s visit to Rome where she meet Kaushik, her childhood lover shows her true American free character. her engagement with Navin did not stop her to maintain sexual relationship with first Julian and second with Kaushik, even after knowing that she cannot marry any of them. Although, Kaushik proposed her but she rejected that proposal because she wanted to have her own identity and free life on her own not dependent life on Kaushik who offers her to, “Come with me,” Kaushik said. “Where?” “To Hong Kong.” And then he said, “Don’t marry him, Hema.” She stopped walking” (Lahiri 321). Although, Kaushik was her childhood crush but still her American free soul encourage her to choose her own destiny. She rejected the typical Indian patriarchal social taboo where wife has to follow her husband without caring her career. Hema knows that Kaushik does not have a plan to settle anywhere soon and so wanted to belong somewhere and define her own identity. “What if you hate Hong Kong? Where will you go?” “I don’t know.” “Will you come back to Italy?” “No.” “Why not?” (321).

The isolation and the existential crisis can be seen in both the characters of the story. They are escaping their past in search of their new and permanent identities in an alien world. The isolation of Hema and Kaushik brought them together again as their parents were in the past. “She was alone with her work, alone abroad for the first time in her life, aware that her solitary existence was about to end. In Rome she savored her isolation, immersed without effort in the silent routine of her days” (Lahiri 299). Meeting Kaushik was revisiting her past and to dose her loneliness in foreign shores. Kaushik’s minutest observation of her appearance shows his interest in her, he didn’t judge her on the basis of her decision of doing arranged marriage with a man whom she does not love. For Hema, Marriage was a tool to counter her alienation and rootlessness in the alien shores and Kaushik’s death in Tsunami, his existence ended with his death, as he left no traces of his life.



The well-crafted anthologies of Jhumpa Lahiri has explored the diasporic dilemma of the immigrant population. All the select stories are projecting the dilemma of existence and the conflict of generation not only in their adopted lands but also in ancestral homelands as well. Jhumpa Lahiri has elegantly narrates the facts from different angles and directions of immigrant lives, more specifically she has opened the ways to observe and understand the generation gap among immigrant population. In the select stories Lahiri has unveils the struggle of first generation immigrant population who are unwilling to divulge in the mainstream socio-cultures of adopted homes. The reluctance of first generation immigrant to give up their past creates havoc in the lives of the second generation immigrant children who are keen to adopt the life style of their birth places but ends up in the duality and alienation in both the worlds. Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri has magnificently explored the lives of immigrant population not only in the foreign shores but also in the adopted homes as well. Bharati Mukherjee's first collection of short stories, the *Darkness* defines the immigrant lives under the shadows of racial discrimination, which she had faced in Canada. It was a book about the old wounds of racial abuses during her early days of immigrant life. Her second collection of short stories, the *Middleman and Other Stories* is about the immigrant myths, but mostly with success stories. The second anthology was written in a celebrity manner to celebrate the warm welcome of American societies and their whole hearted well come to the newly arrived people from different cultures.

## Conclusion

Wandering between two worlds  
one dead, the other powerless to be born,  
With nowhere to rest my head (Mathew Arnold).

Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri, two gems of diaspora writing have explored the multiple facets of immigrant life in the select fictional works to understand the crisis of hyphenated existence. Their works are valuable assets to understand the immigrant trauma of migration, dislocation, alienation and the crisis of hyphenated existence at multiple levels, not only in the adopted world but also in their ancestral homes as well. Hyphen, a linguistic symbol that conjoins two terms or words to form a new blended or compound word where each parts of the term receives same stress. The 'hyphen' is very significant to join two words to form a particular term with significant meaning, without hyphen, term might transmit, alter or insignificant meaning. The hyphenated identity in context of diaspora refers those immigrants who are embracing or nurturing multiple identity regarding the old and the new world. "The hyphenated or diasporic identities where an individual might either nurture a hybrid and multicultural identity or retain the unique cultural values and heritage of both the homeland and the host land" (Chakraborty27). Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri's select works have traced the hyphenated immigrant lives who are stuck between the past and present.

Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri's works are apostle of living examples of immigrant sensibility, in which characters, mostly female characters are struggling against the odds of new world. Bharati Mukherjee, who is more open to embrace new socio-cultural values to redefine and reroot in newly adopted homes has explored the lives of those people who are survivors and ended up in a positive note of assimilation with new world order. However, Jhumpa Lahiri's characters of the select fictional works are bit hesitant to decide that which part of the world they belong to. Both the writers have tried to justify the immigrant struggle in the respective manners, the trauma, chaos and confusion of the first generation and the sense of unbelongingness, hybridity and existential crisis among second-generation

immigrants are vividly visible in their works. There is a strange bewilderment in their characters. The quest of old world identity and the compulsion of the new world assimilation that leads them to the verge of identity collapse. To assimilate with new world and keeping hold of the past socio-cultural values pushes them towards the hyphenated identity where they want to maintain equilibrium between both the worlds but ended up in the existential crisis. Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri, two Indian American writers did not write only about the foreignness of the characters but the expatriate sensibility where leading characters are hovering between the East and the West cultures.

The diaspora population in their adopted homes often recognised in great chaos, confusion and loneliness. The uncertainty of new world exposes them to the loss of identity and rootlessness. Immigrants, who identify themselves as aliens in adopted homes try to form a group or community with people who share same dilemma of the past. Bharati Mukherjee's complicated art of writing reflects her multiple dislocation from India to Canada to America. The select works of Mukherjee revealed her struggle to find a suitable place after multiple dislocation as an expatriate and immigrant. Mukherjee's fascination for new lives and determination to discard old world emotional paralysis, which hinders her progress to assimilate fully in new world, can be notice in her select works. "Her remarkable success in forging a coherent vision out of the chaos of her multiple displacements; and her ability to articulate that vision in a voice that is as subtle as it is insistent, as graceful as it is provocative" ( Nelson X). She has deliberately avoided to glorify immigrant old world values and evaded to demean her adopted world, though she has criticised the duality and biculturalism among immigrant population.

Hybridity, alienation and sense of unbelongingness are the immediate consequences of migrancy, whether forced or voluntarily to the adopted homes. The fascination of old world values and the urge of assimilation with adopted world, often ended up in duality or hyphenated identity which raises the question of national identity. Mukherjee's characters are mostly sensitive and knows how to survive in harsh conditions in hostile society. Her first novel, *The Tiger's Daughter* largely reflects her own multiple dislocation, where she found herself hovering between two worlds. According to Sushma Tandon, "Bharati Mukherjee's writings

largely reflect her personal experiences as a woman caught between two cultures” (27). Tara, the protagonist of *the Tiger’s Daughter* is longing her Indian life during her stay in American, like Bharati Mukherjee, she decided to return her ancestral roots to find the peace of mind which she was always dreaming in America. After spending seven long years of early life in the United States of America, Tara Banerjee Cartwright returned her ancestral home but did not connect herself with the socio-cultural milieu of Calcutta, everything seems strange to her eyes. She realised that the country has quite changed unlike the one of which she was dreaming of. Her inbetweenness is visible from her actions and feelings, the way she compared railway stations with hospital and detested those places, which she used to admire in her childhood days. “She becomes painfully aware that while she has not yet eased herself into American culture, she no longer derives substance from values and mores of her native land” (Tandon 27).

The leading characters of Bharati Mukherjee tossed in ambiguous milieus regarding their belongingness, nationality and identity rather than in an oppressive socio-cultural environment. They try to negotiate with old and new world values to justify their acts of assimilation with new culture and break up with old values. Tara, the protagonist of the novel felt rootless not only in adopted home but also in her ancestral place as well among those people with whom she had spent her childhood. She suffered mental trauma and social abandonment, where nobody loves her, her alienation and emotional breakdown brought her to the point, she feels lonely and desires to go back her adopted home. There is a quest in Tara to claim her belongingness with both the worlds, though found herself nowhere. Her marriage with David Cartwright, an American is the proof that she no longer considers herself a Brahman, an upper caste Hindu. In America, she was praying Hindu goddess in the time of need but in Indian, she left prayer room as she was not feeling comfortable. She is apostle of hyphenated identity but failed to decide which part of the world she belonged to. According to Tandon:

She finds that she is admired neither by her family nor by her friends. While the Indian condemns her marriage to a ‘mleccha’ as having stooped too low, being a Brahmin in an upper caste, David, her husband, does not give her much credit for clearing bathrooms which she considers a wifely duty.(29)

The sabbatical time in Calcutta and unexpected behaviour of close once incites her to think about her belongingness, the more she thinks about her existence in Calcutta the more she realises that she is misfit in the old world and though she is unable to reconcile with the new world.

The complexity of multicultural nature of Mukherjee's characters in the select novels are the epitome of cultural bankruptcy. Tara is the symbolic character who is at her emotional transit from one world to other. Mukherjee has attempted to define the duality and biculturalism among immigrant population who are always in the way of negotiations with the past and present faces the diasporic dilemma in which they were caught between the memories of India and the promises of America. They confront immense psychological pressure to redefine their identity and belongingness. Tara suffered psychosomatic disorder because of her acknowledgement of past and giving soft corner to the present world. Tara Banerjee Cartwright is the perfect example of those immigrants who are suffering because of their indecisiveness and inapt to claim their loyalty towards a particular nationality. According to Chakraborty, the hyphenated identity refers an identity when a person gives equal stress to both the worlds: "The political connotation of the hyphen in relation to an ethnic sociocultural identity underlines the divided loyalties towards the nation of origin and the nation of adoption where both cultures have imprinted indelible marks upon the self" (Chakraborty 27).

Bharati Mukherjee's characters are hovering between cultures, which gives rise to split personality disorder and unbalance the hopes of negotiation and association with any particular world. Tara feels lonely and alienated in both the worlds. In America, she used her silk scarves to make her apartment look more Indian, she failed to assess her association with American culture and hopes returning Indian, ancestral homeland will cure her loneliness and sense of alienation, though she failed to recognise her roots with her westernised mind setup. Her return to India showed her commitment to old Indianness but again failed to relate her childhood dreams with current Calcutta not only because of changing environment but because of the western influence which has adopted unconsciously and felt double dislocated. "Hovering between two cultures gives rise to split characters, tend to unbalance personalities. Having no choice, the individual takes a decision. It can be

totally extreme case of following the emancipated attitude of American culture, or delve into the past and keep hanging on the former culture” (Singh 76). Mukherjee’s heroine seems to be afraid of new culture and feels hostile in newly adopted home, she tried to maintain her connection with here and there vice versa but failed to accommodate herself in any of the places.

Bharati Mukherjee appears to present the trauma and tribulation among newly moved immigrants in their adopted homes, they struggle and strive to focus on adjustment and assimilation with culturally uprooted self from the ancestral homes in hopes to reroot in new world. However, some immigrants are easy to discard past and move on with new life some refuse to give up the past and stuck forever hovering between the hyphenated worlds. Tara is hovering between two worlds, where ever she goes finds herself splitted, fragmented and unable to find rooted any part of the world. The quest of self-identity forced Tara first to travel back from America to India in a failed attempt to go back to her roots with western lenses, which makes it more difficult to decide that which part of the world she belongs to. The novel presents unique immigrant themes unlike other conventional novels, which explores the journey from ancestral homes to adopted homes; *the Tiger’s Daughter* projects the life of an immigrant from adopted land to hostland in a sense of finding her lost roots. The novel ventures accustomed pattern of lost expectations of an immigrant who becomes a victim of unrecognition and alienation in both the worlds and ended up in hovering between old world dreams and new world expectations.

Bharati Mukherjee’s first novel, *the Tiger’s Daughter* has explored the failed attempt of an immigrant to maintain her equilibrium between the old and new world and ended up in hovering between two worlds. *Jasmine* is another immigrant novel of Mukherjee, which exhibits the success story of an Indian village girl in a multi-cultural American society. Jasmine, the protagonist of novel is a dreamer and a fighter who fights for her existence until she got what she has longed for. Jasmine’s struggle and strive for transformation and assimilation is the focal point of the novel. Her journey begins from a downtrodden family from a village of Punjab to America. Unlike Tara, Jasmine transformed and transmigrated herself every possible manner to redefine her destiny during her journey to create a new self in new world.

Mukherjee's protagonist refurbished herself, her determination to discard traditional values and adopt new world norms needs courage to optimise her success in new world order. Mukherjee states in her interview that unlike other female characters, Jasmine is most courageous who never hesitates to adopt new identity to reshuffle her stars as per her wish. "I think of Jasmine and many of my characters, as being people who are pulling themselves out of the traditional world in which their fate is predetermined, their destiny resigned to the stars. But Jasmine says: I am going to reposition the stars' (Amina).

Bharati Mukherjee does not believe in fragmented or divided self-identities like Tara, who was divided in two worlds. However, Jasmine's firm notion of adaptation and assimilation made her fighter, who fought her destiny from her early childhood to her final destination. Jasmine shows the obsession of Bharati Mukherjee's American dream. The quest of identity leads Jasmine to play multiple roles as Jyoti/ Jasmine/Jazz. Every identity comes with different role to play which moulds her personality to redefine her stars. Her first instinct is the instinct of survival; she fought with Hall-face in incarnation of Goddess Kali, plays a role of faithful wife in Indian patriarch society as Jasmine, Jazzy, non-immigrant, Jase, an au pair and a Jane, a live-in partner of an American crippled man. Every change marked a legit transformation in her personality to encourage her to redesign her destiny. "In Jasmine, the immigrants are willy participants in the dominant culture, understanding that their code is crucial to appreciating the novel" (Tandon 137).

The immigrant population have to face enormous challenges to forge or recreate oneself, according to the demands of the new world. Jasmine is in move, everything is in motion. She changes her roles to fit in new world and discarding every old personality with newly changing one. Bharati Mukherjee's central themes revolves around the refashioning and redefining of self-identity with the process of location and relocation. In Jasmine, there is no way to go back unlike Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter* who felt homesick, returned her parental home to find herself more alienated and isolated. Brinda Boss defines:

Certainly, more and more is left out as Mukherjee's women evolve from the homesick Tara who returns home to find herself peculiarly

alienated, through Dimple whose confusion turns violent, to the liberated Jyoti-Jasmine- Jase-Jane who makes a lifetime-for-every-name look like a possibility for any exuberant immigrant. (Brinda 49)

Migration and immigration has its own effects on the lives of immigrant population. They have to forge, relocate and redefine themselves with every defined identity in new culture of host society. They have to face different adversities like cultural shock and hostile attitude of mainstream societies, which force them to refashion or adopt mutative personalities. Jasmine is rooted nowhere she is in constant move in search of new identity and discard her old-self. “Jasmine as we see, undergoes a series of metamorphosis, as she struggles to leave her old self behind and find a new, an American identity... she identifies herself as an American and no longer an immigrant.” (Tandon 138). She is no longer ready to accept that she is a “destructive Tornado” but a “greedy with wants and reckless with desires and hopes. There is a constant struggle and skirmish in the new world, which promises new selfhood with new battles against the marginalisation and new destination. At the end of the novel Jasmine left her crippled live in partner for her old lover, Taylor displays her will for self-actualisation, she understands that there is nothing permanent in this part of the world not even identity and roles. Mukherjee’s protagonist is a free soul who has a quest to revise and redefine her roles for successful survival. *The Tiger’s Daughter* replicates sense of diasporic conscious and Jasmine reflects the sense of assimilation with new world. Jasmine’s firm determination to shuffle her stars and create her own destiny at any cost. She believes that “there are no harmless, compassionate ways to remake one self. We murder who we are so we can rebirth ourselves in the image of dreams” (Mukherjee).

The “*Darkness*”, the collection of short stories is the first book after her migration from Canada to America, in which she has highlighted the racial abuse and hostile behaviour of Canadian society. The title of an anthology justifies the themes that refers the racial discrimination, prejudice and hostile attitude of Canadian society towards other, especially dark skinned immigrants. The introduction of the anthology angered many Canadian as Bharati Mukherjee expresses the bitter experience in Canada during her stay there. She has dubbed her



stay in Canada as a worst time of expatriation, where she was often taken as shoplifter, prostitute and house maker. The book is all about the old wounds and old sufferings, which Mukherjee has faced because of her race. The select short stories of the anthology shows the state of displacement, separation, cultural clash and diasporic sensibility. “Bharati Mukherjee’s Canadian immigrant stories examine the double edged sword of identity, as the will to acculturate cuts against the will to preserve ethnic heritage” (Tandon 62).

Bharati Mukherjee anthology explores the typical themes of expatriate life experience in their adopted homes. The estrangement, trauma and conflict of the past and present. The select stories of anthology are exploring the lives of those immigrants who are hovering between old world values and the new world glamour. The collection is all about old world experience and the new world demands that makes it more difficult for immigrant population to shed their past and claim new world values. Mukherjee has bitter experience of expatriation in early days during her stay in Canada and expressed anger and anguish over the treatment, which people from moist nations with dark skin were facing in white dominant nations:

All the immigrants in the stories are displaced, but the displacement manifests itself in varying ways and degrees. Some are accustomed to lapsing into nostalgia and regret. Others are continuously haunted by the past and are unable to strike a balance between the two cultures, but apparently continue to live according to normal social expectancy.” (Tandon 67)

The characters in anthology are marginalised, different from the mainstream societies. They failed to assimilate with new world and discard old world values. They suffer not only because of the hostile attitude of host societies but also because of their lack of commitment with adopted world and reluctance of discarding old world values.

“*The Middleman and Other Stories*” is the second collection of Bharati Mukherjee written in a manner of positivity in connection of immigration. The anthology deals with diasporic themes, which reflects the positive attitude of third world immigrants towards their American dream. Mukherjee won ‘the National

Book Critic Circle Award' for the best fiction of the years in 1988 and gave the new status to Mukherjee in the literary world. First anthology of Bharati Mukherjee depicts gloomy side of the immigration while second anthology illustrates success stories of immigrants who open to adopt new world and its cultural traits. *The Middleman and Other Stories* depicts writers own mental satisfaction in her new adopted. She felt welcomed by American multicultural societies unlike Canada where she was often called as Paki scum, a slang for Asian immigrants. she found her voice in America which she has lost in white dominant Canada. Almost all the select stories ended up with positive note shows writers commitment and mental satisfaction with her new home. Bharati Mukherjee says in one of her interview with Celia that "I realized I was an American long before I came here. Its a quality of mind and desire. It means that you can be yourself, not fated to be..." (Mukherjee).

Mukherjee's works are mostly inspired by her own life experience. *Darkness* shows her hard times in Canada and *The Middleman and Other Stories* explores stories from the third world immigrant lives in American melting pot. The quest for survival and the moral strength to hold and adopt new world is predominantly shown in the collection. Characters are willing to choose their own world by changing their attitude of how they perceiving things to claim their shares in new world order. Sex and violence in Mukherjee's works are common to present the real picture of western world, sexual interaction of immigrant women with white Americans depicts the embracing new codes to seek happiness and socio-cultural assimilation. "The stories on this volume presents a rich vision of the American society" (108) and the fascination of third world immigrants to achieve their American dream at any cost.

The select works of Bharati Mukherjee have proven the master class skills of her writing to conceptualise immigrant lives from the different perspectives to have a broader look about immigrant struggle. Her characters are assertive to claim their new identity without any hesitation. They struggle strive again and again to reshuffle the pre designed destiny not only in foreign shores but also in the ancestral world as well. Her claims of expatriate or diasporic writing is not only to share her experience but also to become a voice of those who have lost their voices under the burden of hyphenated identity. Mukherjee's first novel, *The Tiger's Daughter* presents lives of

those immigrants who are hovering between two worlds because of the indecisiveness and lack of assimilation skills. On the other hand Jasmine, presents the will of assimilation and Adoption among immigrant population who desires to become part of their adopted world and redefine their destiny as per their own choice.

Jhumpa Lahiri, like Bharati Mukherjee is one of the most versatile diaspora writer, who has won numerous prestigious awards for her spectacular fictional works. Critical observation of her works reveals her quest for becoming voice of voiceless immigrants who are stuck between the old world expectations and the new world responsibilities. Her works are known for portraying the intricacies of human relationships among immigrant population in their adopted world. Jhumpa Lahiri, who is second-generation immigrant writer, has explored one of the most important subjects regarding immigrant generations, the influence of two different worlds on second-generation children of immigrant population.

Jhumpa Lahiri's first novel, *Namesake* was published in 2003, gave her new platform in the literary world. *Namesake* deals with the complications of newly arrived immigrants and their struggle to assimilate with new world order and maintaining emotional bond with traditional roots. For the first generation immigrant population, it is very difficult to assimilate with new culture and discard old socio-cultural values in the process of assimilation and association. They hope that coming of second-generation immigrant children will help them to remove their alienation in the alien world. However, situation turns more complicated because second generation does not share same roots as their parents do, they are born and raised in different worlds with or less empathy with ancestral roots, which creates a kind of abyss between the first and second-generation immigrants.

The novel begins with wistfulness of Ashima, first generation immigrant who is mourning of her alienation and loneliness in hospital bed while preparing to give birth her first baby without anyone from her family. Jhumpa Lahiri depicts clear pictography of immigrant nostalgia and the quest of maintaining the bond with old roots. Ashoke, who was well settled in America but still preferred to marry with an Indian origin lady, Ashima, shows his clear intent to preserve his ancestral

identity. Jhumpa Lahiri has explored the conflict of generations in the novel. According to Bhagabat Nayak:

The first generation immigrants are being caught in a cultural limbo due to the contamination with multicultural beliefs and over-valorisation of home culture, the second generation as American Born Confused Desis (ABCD) are emotionally dislocated from their mainstream culture due to their hyphenated existence between desh and pardesh. (Nayak 134)

The first generation of immigrant population are culturally disrupted because of their double conscious self. They want to maintain ties with old cultural world but also want to claim their part in the new world.

The duality of second-generation immigrant children is due to their half-hearted acknowledgement of their origin. Lahiri's characters are conscious about their existence, playing double roles to become necessary to maintain desi look, full of moral respect at home and American self with friends outside home to assimilate with their own world. Gogol and Sonia, they are living two lives one for traditional world and another shows their quest for assimilation with their homeland. "Gogol and Sonia's identity and problem are rather different, for they have a sense of pride and affinity to India but it is America that is perceived as home" (Aggarwal 106).

The novel has some biographical element in it about the Jhumpa Lahiri's life who also belongs to second-generation immigrant population. In one of her interview, she says that she also lived two lives like Gogol to please her parents and to live her free American life. Lahiri's first generation immigrant characters have quest to transfer their Bengali cultural codes to their next generation but Gogol and Sonia, they are more attracted towards their peers rather than what their parents desired for. Ashoke married Ashima to preserve his cultural values while Gogol is more interested in American girls, like Maxine. Ashoke and Ashima, tried their level best to transfer Bengali culture to Gogol and Sonia at home, they are sending them to attend classes specially to learn Indian culture, at home speaking native language and cooking Indian food. "it is Bengali food that Ashima and Ashoke relished and preferred but Gogol and Sonia she conceded and made an American dinner once a week as a treat" (Agarwal 107).

First generation immigrant cherishes and enjoys the past memories; they relish those memories in the form of food, dress code and letters from old world. They are eagerly waiting for the movements to get a chance to visit their roots to refresh old world memories. Ashoke and Ashima feels more comfortable and confident in Calcutta than in America while Gogol and Sonia felt alienated and wished for American life back. The novel displays the rebellious nature of second-generation immigrants against the roots. Gogol maintains his relationship with Maxine, even his parents did not like her, Moushumi marries Gogol against her own promise that she will not marry with an Indian origin. However, she left him at the end shows again her rebellious nature. Gogol changed his name as he found that his name does not belong to any of his worlds and decided to change it as Nikhil. After the death of Ashoke, Ashima decides to live in India and America as well shows her trauma and unbelongingness. "Second generation immigrants who are not inclined to be linked with India anyway. They are neither immigrants per se nor fully Americans. The novel deals with the eternal quest for one's true identity in the back drop of the cross-cultural transactions" (Bala 14).

*The Lowland* is another novel of Jhumpa Lahiri, exploring immigrant lives with political twist of Bengal during 1960s when the Naxalite movement were on the peak. The novel maps out the lives of immigrant generations and their response to changing socio-cultural milieu in home and abroad. Plot revolves around two brothers, Subhash and Udayan. There is a sharp contrast between two brothers, Subhash, a good elder brother decides to follow his academic career in America and Udayan, who is more excited and loves to do heroic acts inclined towards the Naxalite movement to fight for his people. The entry of Udayan's wife, Gauri brings a twist in the story. After Udayan's death, Subhash decides to marry Gauri to give her new lease of life. His decision to marry Gauri, widow of Udayan was objected by his parents as it was against their laws and traditional values. Marring Gauri was a first act of defiance of Subhash to over run his traditional values, which he was following diligently before choosing his PhD in America.

The marriage of Gauri with Subhash is an act of defiance of those socio-cultural values, which Gauri has to follow after the death of her husband, Udayan. The influence of western world and the quest of new identity encourage Gauri to

live her free life according to her own terms. Gauri, junks her Indian identity to begin her new life without any kind of bounds from past. She rubbishes her sari with western dress code, cut her hair short and joins herself to perceive her PhD in an act of assimilation with new world. “This change of appearance signals Gauri’s interrogation of her older cultural life with respect to the new cultural norms that makes for her rebirth –her ethnic bildungsroman” (Wadhawan 202). Lahiri’s heroine has to go through many changes and adaptations to mingle with new culture and become a part of her free world.

Gauri, the heroine of the novel defied all the odds in her new life, she left her daughter, husband, culture and traditions to redefine her destiny. Jhumpa Lahiri advocates the process of free and independent life in American. Gauri and Bela, choose to live on their own terms in America unlike traditional Indian women whose lives are limited to house hold only. Gauri’s pursuance of her dreams and discarding Indian roots was an act of defiance against the old world. However, Bela’s free life like her mother was a part of her culture as she was born and raised in America. “If Gauri had to drift apart to claim her independence, for Bela, it follows naturally. As a second generation Indian-American, Bela learns to live life on her own terms” (Wadhawan 206). Unlike previous novel, *Namesake* Jhumpa Lahiri has come out with different philosophy in the current work about women empowerment and acculturation of characters in new homes.

Jhumpa Lahiri has rejected the hybridity in the novel. Her heroine is more confident and comfortable to assimilate with mainstream America unlike Ashima, who remained connected even after death of her husband with both the worlds. According to Jayalaxmi Gauri and Bela acculturate more confidently without any dejection or feeling of loss. “ They acculturate to the new culture rather very fast without any dejection and frustration and the collision of cultures are hardly to be seen”(256), they embrace Americanness to create their own identity at the cost of their past, family, roots and old world traditions.

Jhumpa Lahiri has two more collections of short stories in her tally, which brought her many prestigious awards for her excellent writing skills. The Interpreter of Maladies, an anthology consists upon nine short stories. Jhumpa Lahiri has

explored the diasporic lives in their adopted homes. The collection displays the trauma, sense of exile and the displacement among immigrant population who failed to recognise themselves with any of the worlds. The select short stories are taking readers on deep ride to unlock the immigrant psyche with hyphenated identity. The anthology focused on complex relations with the old world culture and the lack of interest in assimilation with adopted culture. Lahiri's select short stories displays the experience and interaction of those immigrants who are reluctant to leave old world traditions with no intent to return in those places in near future. Stories explains common thread of exile, alienation, loneliness and identity crisis.

The select short stories from the *Interpreter of Maladies* has explored the sense of alienation and assimilation among immigrant population. Lahiri's first generation immigrants are reluctant to give up on their old world traditions which results in alienation and loneliness among them in their newly adopted homes. The lack of flexibility among first generation immigrant creates hurdles in the process of acculturation and association with mainstream societies which results in hyphenated identity.

The second collection of Short stories, *The Unaccustomed earth*, the New York Times bestseller fiction of the year, 2008 with the prestigious Frank O' Connor Award. Jhumpa Lahiri has explored the lives of second-generation immigrant population who are living under the burden of hyphen in their nationalities in the select short stories of the collection. The select short stories depicts Lahiri's art of storytelling about the second-generation immigrant population who are dangling between traditional world and new world values. The themes of the select short stories are all about the conflict of generations. In Jhumpa Lahiri's fiction, there is a chaos and confusion among generations, first generation desires to hold on old world values and wants to transfer those values to their coming generations. However, second generations are reluctant to adopt fully old world codes and longs for quick assimilation with their birthplaces. To maintain balance between the old world values and new world demands they try to find middle path or begins to live double lives, one inside homes and other outside among their peers.

Jhumpa Lahiri's select short stories from *The Unaccustomed Earth* portrays the life of Indian diaspora population in America who are living with duality, hybridity and hyphenated identity because of the sense of unbelongingness with any of the world. First generation try to offer their own cultural values to their second-generation children, which provoke them to question their belongingness and identity. Most of the leading characters of the select short stories are from second-generation immigrants who have to continuously negotiate and interrogate between two worlds. The negotiation with old and new world brings them to the verge of middle path, which leads them towards the unbelongingness and hyphenated identity.

Jhumpa Lahiri has maintained her chivalry status of being one of the most versatile diasporic Indian-American writer. All the literary works, Lahiri has convinced readers and critics about her master class skills of writing about the immigrant population, there nostalgia, old world memories and the conflict of generations are the leading themes of her fictional works. Her works highlight the struggle of first generation immigrants to adapt new changes in their adopted world, while second generation immigrants are facing challenges in both the worlds because of their shared belongingness and stuck under the hyphen between the two worlds. According to Kanthi, Jhumpa Lahiri displays the pictures of immigrant psyche in her works, "with a remarkable insight, she delves deep into the psychological depths of her characters and reveals their inner world. We realise that in their emotional displacement, the borders between home and world becomes confused" (126).

Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri have explored the multiple facets of immigrant struggle, alienation, assimilation and the ambivalent identity and belongingness in their works. The select fiction of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri have provided new lenses to the readers to understand the process of assimilation and the crisis of hyphenated identity. Although, there is a difference between Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri's response to the immigrant experience in their adopted and ancestral worlds. Bharati Mukherjee was a first generation diaspora writer whose writing mainly focused on the process of assimilation in the new world and the pull of old world memories. Her first Novel,



*the Tiger's Daughter* is the depiction of a failed attempt by an immigrant lady to assimilate with new world order and returning to her ancestral roots to find unwarranted peace, but failed to relate herself any of the worlds. Another select novel of Bharati Mukherjee is *Jasmine* that displays the will and courage to discard old-world cultural codes to redefine her new identity. Her select short stores from the *Darkness* and the *Interpreter of Maladies*, talks about the racial discrimination, which she had faced during her immigrant days in Canada and the process of acculturations and assimilation with new world. However, Jhumpa Lahiri is a second-generation immigrant writer who has mainly focused on the generational conflict and the complexities of human relationships among immigrant population in their adopted world. Lahiri's select works are prone to highlight the generation conflict and the difficulties faced by the second-generation immigrant children in the process of assimilation and association in their adopted homes, which leads them towards the hyphenated identity and the sense of unbelongingness.

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