

**ENCHANTING INDIANNESS IN FOREIGN LAND : A STUDY OF
FEMALE DIASPORIC SENSIBILITY IN ‘THE NAMESAKE’**

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Abstract

Women are viewed as carriers of their heritage and they stick to their customs irrespective of the vicinity where they are. In an Indian household too its continually our moms and grandmothers who preserve educating us our values and maintain our ethnicity. They are considered as the extension between the two cultures when they shift to a new nation. Jhumpa Lahiri's debut novel *The Namesake* negotiates the interstitial house between two locations, cultures and two generations. The novel tries to perceive the cultural conflicts amongst immigrants, their identity crisis, their conflict to preserve their ethics. In this admire the existing paper tries to address complicated scenario the place the lady lead tries to observe her tradition in an alien land. Her problems, her attempts to inherit her Indian values in her youngsters who are influenced by American way of residing is highlighted in the novel along with different issues. This paper successfully painting the role of girls as saviors of their values they received from their motherland and their adherence to it. Infact historic evidences proves that it's continually a female who is prepared to regulate and alter her life-style in order to observe their personal way of living. The female protagonist too invents her personal methods to lift her personal Indian way of living adjusting with the American standards of living. Through focusing on identification and naming issues Lahiri's novel alternatively powerfully highlights the trials, tensions, hybridity and the gradual accommodation main to fluid identities that outline diasporic dilemma and transnationalism.

Keywords- Diaspora, globalization, transnationalism, ethnicity

The Indian Diaspora is the biggest diaspora on the planet with its worldwide nearness and a history that goes back to the Indian development. The Indians have been vagrants for a large number of years. In medieval times, the British colonialism brought about development of the contracted workers. In advanced times, skilled, educated and intelligent Indians moved to the USA and other European nations for monetary and expert reasons. This 'new diaspora' is made of specialists in various fields like IT, Medicine, Space Technology, Building, and Management etc. There are prominent intelligent people, essayists, speakers, market analysts and monetary specialists and so forth. The Indian diaspora has pulled in consideration of the media and the general population when all is said in done everywhere throughout the world. Amid the nineteenth century, different variables impacted the development of individuals from India world over and the present era of the Indian Diaspora has saved fluctuated parts of Indian social legacy that their progenitors had brought with them. Today, this legacy is a piece of living society in numerous nations over the globe. In the previous settlements, the Indian people group needed to battle for the maintenance of its social legacy, and frequently confronted various types of surges. But then, they enviously monitored their heritage which is currently saved and honed with pride by the present era. The pace of outskirts intersection has ascended to another measurement, with transients trying to transfigure social limits and re-make new representations of their pasts, their selves, and their new milieus. Thus, personalities and societies get delocalized - however rarely confined from recollections of the past. These diasporic individuals summon the past in very specific modes and fabricate a present that is a half and half of different societies and encounters. Arun Mukherjee in 'Her Mother's Ashes' expresses: *"people do not leave their histories and cultures behind when they migrate. They build on their histories and cultures, taking and leaving, borrowing and adding on them"*. McLeod, author of 'Beginning Postcolonialism' expressed his view as: *"Migrants tend to arrive in new places with baggage; both in the physical sense of possessions or belongings, but also the less tangible matter of beliefs, traditions, customs, behaviors and values"*

In any case, one particular element of Indians is that regardless of where they are, which nationality they have adapted, they have a tendency to take after their own social values. The ceremonies and customs instructed to them since adolescence turns into a piece of their lifestyle. This is clear from the way that celebrations like Holi, Diwali are commended in the west. One can locate various Indian restaurants and temples, gurudwaras in abroad. Thus its Indianess running in our blood because of which one always remember to touch the feet of seniors or light incense sticks each morning in the wake of bath. Migrating from a spot never opposes an Indian to hold his/her ethics. Indian diaspora never loses its immovability and firmness. They form their own 'Little India' in the foreign land. Dr. M. K. Gautam aptly defined this in his thesis as:

"Indianness is often defined in term of the socio-religious and cultural practices and observations of their parents which was brought into Europe as their cultural baggage from India. The idea of an Indian Diaspora as a transnational social community/group is based on psychological innate feeling of being Indian and possessing the social values of Indian heritage is the basic requirement."

As women are thought to be the transporters and transmitters of culture and customs, satisfying the social values and adjusting in an outsider society is an overwhelming undertaking for them. Women are effective in acclimatizing into the new outsider society and also

characterizing a self-identity. They are considered as the extension between the two cultures. The adventure of the women of Indian Diaspora as bearers of society and preservers of personality was no simple one due to the conditions in which they made the voyage and the patriarchal way of Indian culture. The voice of the noiseless majority, i.e. women, has been once in a while heard in the authentic archives which record the announcements of the educated and musings of the powerful. Indian women have had a tendency to be depicted as wards and life partners, reluctant to migrate, and of irrelevant work esteem, or as solitary females of questionable uprightness. Kalra, Kalthon, and Hutynuk described the role of women in their book 'Diaspora and Hybridity' as: "*women become both the creators of the ties that bind as well as the carriers of culture.....One aspect of formation in diaspora is on gender division when women act as the vessels of culture*"

Many Indian Diasporic writers have rightly discussed the cultural conflicts in the minds of migrants in their work. They mix their India of memory with their present as the nation of their birth and its ties don't permit them psychologically to culturally assimilate and absorb in immigrated nation. They turn aching to go home, destitute, estranged, nostalgic, and rootless and consequently go on getting sustenance from the nation of their habitation. The diverse encounters, thought of country, brutal voyages taken by them, their unhousement also, rehousment, disengagement, migration, racial segregation, dialect issue, also, culture stunned by them are the issues of the diaspora talk. Jhumpa Lahiri is one of the popular Indian American authors who are greatly appreciated recorder of the Bengali outsider experience. Her works depict the transient's encounters and their connection to the country alongside their desire to have a place in the settled area for the improvement of the financial and social life. Lahiri's works show the idea of being evacuated from country furthermore put underscore on the mission for mixing in the host nation. In her introduction novel *The Namesake*, her female character attempt to wind up "another self" without truly relinquishing the "old – self" and in this way makes story that presents all inclusive requests.

The protagonists of Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake*, Ashima and Ashoke are original vagrants. Ashoke had moved to America for higher studies and better prospects. Ashoke and Ashima had an arranged marriage. After their marriage Ashima had moved to Boston to go along with her better half. Ashima can't absorb into the American culture and yearns to be home, in Calcutta. As Amarnath Prasad says in his book 'New Lights on Indian Women Novelists in English': "*Home is not simply where one lives. It is one's identity national, cultural, and spiritual. Home is security, exile, the loss of home, is uprooting. The immigrant faces the dilemma of being unable to return home and yet not finding a home in the adopted land, they must hope that they will be able to merge into the culture of the new land*". She is a model of an Indian woman. To see diagonally, Ashima falls prey to her oriental childhood, where she must be voiceless at each moment. Compromise is the lesson she had been educated to take after since her youth. When she was about to give birth to a child, her Indian ethnicity reminds her of the conventional social codes and customs of the Indian Bengali culture. Her main concern during pregnancy was regarding raising her child in an alien atmosphere devoid of the values and culture which were part of her life: "*that it was happening so far from home, unmonitored and unobserved by those she loved . . . 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*" (TN 6). They adhered to Indian culture following all rites. Even when it came to naming their son they

waited for the letter of grandmother as a part of custom where a baby is named by elders. This is depicted in moment subtle elements like for example; Ashima does not call her better half by his name as a part of Indian culture. All the original female migrants wear saris and other social markers like bindi on their forehead and vermilion powder in the separating of their hair, which displays their wedded status. Even in the film version of *'The Namesake'* one can see the female lead wearing saree and following all her Bengali tradition even after being a part of American city. The change in place doesn't affect their Indian lifestyle. Pramod K. Nayar in his book *'Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction'* explained this as: *"Exiles tend to hold on to their traditions in an almost desperate effort to retain/reclaim their 'original' culture . . . caught up in a 'national' culture in whose cultural life the migrant community may have little or no role to play . . . the community clings to its own customs and cultural codes."*

She organized 'Annaprashan' ceremony of Gogol and Sonia, her kids doing all rituals as per Bengali traditions. One of their companions is asked for to assume the part of Ashima's brother, who might hold the six-month-old Gogol on his lap and sustain him rice. Gogol is dressed customarily like a Bengali prince. The function begins with a modest bunch of ladies ululating. Child Gogol is enchanted by the custom and readily acknowledges all the nourishment he is offered, which makes Ashima dismal and nostalgic. *"He takes his payesh three times. Ashima's eyes fill with tears as Gogol's mouth eagerly invites the spoon. She can't help wishing her own brother were here to feed him, her own parents to bless him with their hands on his head"* (TN 40). As a mother too Ashima tries her best to inculcate Indian values in her kids. She tries to introduce Indian values in her kids. As Gogol grows, Ashima shows him 'four-line youngsters ballads' by Tagore, the names of the considerable number of Gods like the 'ten-headed Durga', 'God Kartik' on his peacock, 'Lord Ganesh' on his mouse, etc. Amid Durga Puja, Gogol and his sister Sonia are 'dragged off' for the conventional love and festivities. Ashima and Ashoke make it a point to take Gogol and Sonia to the Aputriology plays, or a Kathakali move execution or a sitar presentation to familiarize them to the Indian society. *"Ashima teaches Gogol 'to memorize a four line children poem by Tagore, names of deities at the same time when she goes to sleep in the same time when she goes to sleep in the afternoon she switches the television to channel -2 and tells Gogol to watch 'sesame street' and the electronic company "in order to keep up with the English he uses at nursery school"* (TN 54). At the point when Gogol is in the third grade he is sent to 'Bengali dialect and society lessons' directed at the home of one of their Bengali companions. Even Lahiri's parents left no stone unturned to keep her linked with Indian culture. She admitted this in an interview quoted in *'Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives'* : *"My parents were fearful and suspicious of America and American culture when I was growing up. Maintaining ties to India, and preserving Indian traditions in America meant a lot to them. They're more at home now, but it's always an issue, and they will always feel like and be treated as, foreigners here . . . when I was a child it was harder for me to understand their views. At times I felt that their expectations from me were in direct opposition to the reality of the world we lived in."*

Ashoke and Ashima celebrated occasions like, relational unions, death, childbirth, celebrations and so on together with other Bengali families. They commended these according to Bengali traditions, wearing their best customary clothing, in this way attempting to jam their way of life in another land. They follow the custom of shaving head on the passing of a parent alongside marriage rituals. Ashima talked in Bengali inside the house and with individuals of the

local land. Thus she created her own ‘mini India’ in a land far away from her motherland. Ashima as an Indian parent disliked Gogol’s relationship with his girlfriend Maxine. As per Indian culture its always parents who choose the partner for their kids. She hated when Maxine called her and Ashoke by their names. As a wife Ashima never called Ashoke by his name as in India women never take name of their husbands. Even when Gogol becomes close to Maxine’s family he learns that he has never seen his parents hugging or getting intimate with each other : “Gogol is reminded that in all his life he has never witnessed a single moment of physical affection between his parents. Whatever love exists between them is an utterly private, uncelebrated thing”.(TN 138). But this is due to the Indianness where couples are taught to restrict their love within the walls of bedrooms. Open expression of love is not part of our Indian upbringing.

Thus women characters specifically get torn between the old and new world qualities, changing part of men, adventure of individuals into the inward domain to comprehend the external world and many-sided quality of human relations with regards to universalization, globalization and the changing situation of the world where fear based oppression, realism, prejudice are still the hallmarks. The female characters have their offer of alterations and bargains however these conformities are made to live all alone terms. They attempt to oppose the standards and taboos however they additionally set their own limits suited to their decision. This study has demonstrated that the custom and convictions are important in the contemporary world as it gives the general population a chance to live with an idol and it helps them battle the weights of the world yet on occasion it likewise upsets the development. The way the characters see the moralistic and the moral benchmarks generally relies on upon the way they have been culturally adjusted. Be it Ashima of *The Namesake* or any other Indian women they stand firm with their culture. They take after their qualities and traditions and if conditions don’t allow, then they themselves locate another Indian approach to satisfy their assignment. They really assume the part of light conveyor demonstrating right way to kindred Indians and conferring their rich heritage. Never did Ashima felt low or embarrassed about doing their things in an Indian way. They are Indian females who are strong both outside and inside who don’t escape alongside new environment. They do make a few adjustments in accordance with converge with the new nation yet not at the stake of their social qualities. As A. Roland rightly mentioned in his work ‘ In Search of Self in India and in Japan: Toward a Cross-Cultural Psychology’: “—Indian hierarchical relationships are oriented toward firmly internalized expectations in both superior and subordinate for reciprocity for mutual obligations in a more closely emotionally connected relationship.”

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