

**Diaspora and Ethnic Identity: Issues of Religion and Culture
among Indians in the United States**

*A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Hyderabad in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Award of Degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In

Indian Diaspora

By

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DECLARATION

**Center for the Study of Indian Diaspora
University of Hyderabad**

I, **Kamble Ankush Manik**, hereby declare that the research embodied in the present dissertation entitled “**Diaspora and Ethnic Identity: Issues of Religion and Culture among Indians in the United States**” is carried out under the supervision of **Dr. Ajaya Kumar Sahoo, Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora**, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Indian Diaspora, is an original work of mine and to the best of my knowledge, no part of this dissertation has been submitted for the award of any research degree or diploma at any University. I also declare that this is a bonafide research work which is free from plagiarism. I hereby agree that my thesis can be uploaded in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis “**Diaspora and Ethnic Identity: Issues of Religion and Culture among Indians in the United States**” submitted by **Kamble Ankush Manik**, bearing registration number **14SIPD02** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of Doctor of Philosophy in the **Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora, School of Social Sciences** is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

This thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or Institution for award of any degree or diploma. Additional academic activities of this thesis have been mentioned below:

A. Research Papers published in the following publications.

1. “**Diaspora, Belongingness and Nostalgia in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *Interpreter of Maladies***” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research* Vol. 6, no. 3, May 2020, ISSN: 2455-2070, pp.15-17.
2. “**Jag Badal Ghaluni Ghav (The Struck that Changed the World) by EknathAawad**” *SANGHARSH/STRUGGLE: E-Journal OF Dalit literary Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp.50-53.

B. Presented Papers in the following conferences.

1. “**The Formation of Transnational Indian Diaspora ethnic Identity in the United States**” in the three day International Conference on ‘Transnationalism, Culture and Diaspora in Era of Globalization’ organized by Centre for Study of Diaspora, at the Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar on 21-23 February 2018.

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Further, the student has passed the following courses towards fulfillment of coursework requirement for Ph.D./was exempted from doing coursework (recommended by Doctoral Committee) on the basis of the following courses passed during his M.Phil. program and the M.Phil. Degree was awarded.

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I dedicate my writing to my beloved parents

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Abbreviations

ABCD	American Born Confused Desi
AD	Anno Domini
AHEF	American Hindu Education Foundation
BAGC	Bengali Association of Greater Chicago
BAPS	Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha
BC	Before Christ
CBSE	California State Board of Education
COA	California Oriya Association
DCF	Dharma Civilization Foundation
GCA	Gujarat Cultural Association
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HAF	Hindu American Foundation
HEF	Hindu Education Foundation
HSS	Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Services
ISKCON	International Society for Krishna Consciousness
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MMBA	Maharashtra Mandal Bay Area
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NRI	Non Resident Indian
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSA	Orissa Society of the America
PEN	Pulitzer Prize for Fiction
PIO	Person of Indian Origin
SFGA	San Fernando Valley Gujarati Association
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and math
TM	Transcendental Meditation
UN	United Nations
US	United States
UP	Uttar Pradesh
VDF	Vedic Dharma Foundation

VF	Vedic Foundation
VHP	Vishva Hindu Parishad
VHPA	Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America

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Chapter I

Introduction

The present study titled, “Diaspora and Ethnic Identity: Issues of Religion and Culture among Indians in the United States” makes a humble scholastic venture to study and examine the processes of the formation of Indian immigrant’s ethnic identity in the United States. Through an interdisciplinary framework, it looks at various dimensions and elements of the Hinduism and the role played by Hindu religious organizations in constructing Hindu ethnic identity, and the representation of Indian culture with a special reference to the Jhumpa Lahiri’s *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and *The Namesake* (2003). The study focuses on the Indian diaspora base on both geological and virtual - looking at their effort over identities, structured by social and spiritual dissimilarity, national affections, history, and cultural elements. It is argued that religious, social and cultural organizations play an important role in reconstructing the Hindu religious identity in the United States. Deliberate attempts have been made by various Hindu religious sects, organizations, and movements to introduce unitarian Hinduism in the United States, for instance, where people are participating in it from different social strata and backgrounds. It has been represented in the United States as an ecumenical Hinduism,¹ the term coined by Milton Singer (1966) put forward with adapting modern inclusive norms in certain things and moderating in its dogma because traditional Hinduism has a collection of polytheistic faiths, beliefs, and hierarchical social and ritual practices which exist in Indian Hindu society in which caste notion has substantial value. In fact, the caste system is an integral notion of Hinduism. Nevertheless, the holders and propagators of Hinduism are claiming that caste is not important in Hinduism in the United States. It is interesting to know how these organizations have presented a monolithic Hinduism while dropping the reference of caste identity that has been analyzed in this study.

Apart from this, it examines the process of reconstruction of a collective Indian ethnic identity looking at the cultural aspects with special Jhumpa Lahiri’s literary texts *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*. Not only these literary texts are

¹ Ecumenical Hinduism is a sort of Hinduism that overlooking internal differences and caste system and promulgating moderated unitarian Hinduism

exceptionally dealing with the issues of identity, loneliness, alienation, cultural clash between Indian immigrants and Americans. Apart from this, it deals with the inconvenience between the first and second generation. The second generation includes the American born Indian people and grew up in America that are called Indo-Americans. This generation is tempted to carry an American identity rather than Indian which is against their parents aspirations and expectations. The first generation is physically far off from homeland, but they are strongly connected to Indian sentiment. Therefore, the first generation worries about the second generation who is getting away from Indian sentiment and moving toward American. Indo-Americans are trapped between these two worlds. So, it was a challenge for the first generation to inculcate the Indian culture, social norms and religious practices to the second generation.

Further, it analyses how these organizations and movements have contributed their effort in spreading and popularizing Hinduism not only among Indians but also among Americans. One needs to understand the intention of these various organizations by representing a collective Hindu ethnic identity and an ecumenical Hinduism rather than polytheistic in the US. Basically, this study focuses on two prepositions, the first is to assess the role played by Hindu religious and cultural organizations in the reconstruction of inclusive Hinduism and second, the quest for a collective Indian ethnic identity with a special reference to the texts of Lahiri's "*Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*". She portrays Bengali immigrants in her stories, so I have considered them broadly as Indian diaspora in the United States. In these stories, Lahiri represents the cultural clash between Indian immigrants and American society. Aside from this, she also represents the dichotomy between the first and second generations into synthesizing the ethnic, cultural identity of Indian diaspora in the United States.

The ethnic identity formation has become a critical and important issue in the present contexts in multicultural societies; therefore, it looks at the problem of ethnic identity of Indian immigrants in the US. America is a multicultural society since it has people of different races, nationalities, and languages; therefore, a fixed identity of any ethnic group or any person has become a critical as well as an important issue. Identity itself defines a distinct in relation to others and it is always in a floating state positioning

according to time and space. It observes the various reflective aspects and causes which have forced Indian diaspora to consolidate its collective identity to preserve their ancestral roots, pervasive culture, social norms and ritual practices in the alienated land. All these mentioned dimensions of Indian culture and society are important to make distinction between the identity of Indians and multicultural Americans as self and other respectively. Therefore, these aspects have significant values in reconstructing the concept of self, other and we as a collective plural of both by meeting each other as Indian-American. The ethnic identity of these immigrants of the United States is in ambivalence neither fully American nor Indian. It is a meeting result of these communities.

Ethnicity is a concept used for defining the phenomena of the shared culture of people who came from a specific geographical region along with their language, religion, customs, dress, food, heritage and nationality. In other words, ethnicity is a term used to denote the culture of people who have belonged to a particular native region and carried a common culture and social norms. Ethnicity is not a racial or biological facet; it is an anthropological concept since it is based on cultural practice or behavior of people. These features are important in forming the ethnic identity of Indian immigrants and that has been portrayed in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*. She has sketched male and female characters who stand for denoting Indian culture through their dress, food, languages, cultural practices, social behavior and nationality. She also outlined the Indian and Indian American female characters who show the ethnic identity of Indian culture. These women have been wearing saris, putting henna on hands, pasting red vermillion on the forehead, hanging ornaments around the neck and wearing embroidered clothes. In the stories, she has presented many characters who came from different backgrounds such as the Indian, American born Indian, and Americans who share more than one ethnic norm.

Ethnicity connotes the phenomenon of identity, it means the search for self. It is a reflection of a common social and cultural phenomenon of a particular group of people who expanded a tactic of obtaining the substantial tools that one needs to live in the given social milieu. Deliberation of forming the identity became a forceful power of ethnicity among an assembled people who share a familiar social behavior, social norms and customs.

As Homi Bhabha (1994, p. 51) states that, “[I]dentity is never a priori, nor a finished product; it is only ever the problematic process of access to an image of identity”. So, it carries different ramifications and denotes various forms of belongings. Identity not only carries individual or communal significance but also it always remains as (Hall 1990) says, in a state of being and becoming. Identity constitutes a significant strand in diaspora studies, particularly in reference to the Indian immigrants in the United States, the formation of identity was quite central to the existence of the Indian community. As well as, the formation of identity in America provides a very broader canvass to the scholars of diaspora, culture, literature, and social sciences to study and explore the varied corollaries of cultural clash, social diversity and transnational relations.

America is a composition of different races and societies of people. It is a multicultural society since it has people including Europeans, South Africans, South Americans, Australians, the Caribbeans, Africans, Asians, Arabians, etc. Like other ethnic groups, Indians in America have carried their own distinct religious practice, language, culture and social behavior which added more diversity in America, truly a multicultural society. However, despite being a multicultural society, the issue of identity became complicated and significant. As Stuart Hall rightly points out, “cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as being” (1990, p. 225). The formation of cultural identity comes from the process of various un-static beliefs, values, norms, and social practices that have sprouted from the history of its roots. The present position of identity has led to forming hybrid identity. Since globalization deterritorialized the territorial boundaries, the cultural distinction becomes blurred, undetermined, contested, floating, and consistently recast. Chiang argues that, “on the one hand, the mobility and replacement of our bodies destabilize our traditional sense of identity that was usually deeply rooted in a sense of nation-state” (Chiang 2010: 1). Globalization has changed the whole movements of human beings since a large number of people have been transported from one country to another that fractured the established identity of nation-state and formed the diasporic imaginary nationalism which reflects nation-states identity more than a singular since diasporic community has been carrying the multiple identities of nation-state.

Therefore, the formation of ethnic identity of any given group of society of people in the globalized world is not something that happens immediately rather it is a result of both past as well as the present. Identity itself gives a sense of difference from the other-self that is always in a state of instability based on individual position, place, and relationships having different meanings and ramifications. Therefore, identity is a complicated term that stands to be transparent. Identity is always in the floating sphere in which the identity changes its shape according to the time and space, so it is not already accomplished a perpetual fact but it is in the process of being and becoming.

In this regard, when we define the identity of a particular group of people we have to see the similarity among them about their social behavior, culture and other norms that reflect a connection among these people. In the same way, the collective identity denotes the identity either of a group of people or groups of things that implies symmetry among them from the point of the same race, dress, culture, traits, set of values and behavior. Moreover, decision making and taking actions within a particular ethnic group seem to be carried out in a patterned way. The similarity among them in terms of social behavior, cultural practice gives a sense of collective identity of that social group. However, as Shoemaker (2006: 40) states, in addition, to “express ‘numerical’ identity, the relation that here concerns us are also used to express ‘qualitative’ identity”. That qualitative similarity provides a sense of collective identity of a given group. The similarity of the given group is dissimilar to another group. Here, identity is identified under consideration of social, cultural and behavior of its people. The identity of Indian diaspora in America has undergone constant modification by the irresistible flow of global marketing, upward mobility, and massive use of information technology, availability of transportation and being influenced by mosaic America.

The identity denotes a sense of self-conscious personality. Identity formation is a process in which a person finds his/her location in society, “it is a process in which social differentiation is internalized through categories of personality types most prevalent in society at a given time and expressed through images” (Mongia, Sunanda; 2006:207). Differentiation is a part of Indian society and it has created its own distinct identities to others expressed through various cultural norms, social

systems, and ritual practices. The identity of Indians is collectively identified as the whole being belonging to India. The differentiation within it has been preserved by Indian diaspora wherever they have gone. But that differentiation of Indian diaspora has been attempted to mold into the whole since they have come into contact with other social and geographical milieu. To be protected from other societies domination and suppression Indians have been tried to be united by undermining internal complexities in a similar way, to some extent Indian society has adapted American society norms, culture and lifestyle in order to move into American society. This move leads them to form their hybridized identity.

Hybridity, according to Easthope (1998: 145) “it can have at least three meanings - in terms of biology, ethnicity and culture”. The formation of identity itself has always been in the form of transition, it’s switching from one identity to another according to the life conditions such as biology, cultural background, and ethnicity. Thus, it is difficult to denote the absolute or solid constructive identity of any individual personality and collective identity of any given community. The study of ethnic identity of Indian diaspora is based on socio-cultural relations, religious values and practices, the practice of its society, and the way they are living. Thus, ethnic Indian identity and socio-cultural practices got syncretized being participated in the larger American society. Indians became the part of American society that has adapted traits of modern American society while they have maintained the relations to their home country that lead to forming what is called Indo-American identity.

Since the formation of identity is in the process and unstable, one has to look for the special role played by religious organizations in making an effort to define the Hindu identity by accumulating the norms of modern America. So, the identity of Indian diaspora has resulted in a different version. Apart from this, there are countable socio-cultural and religious events that have been considered the formal indications of understanding Hinduism. These phenomena are taken into account to define how they contribute toward the formation of Indian diaspora’s ethnic identity in the US. The foremost important factor of Indian society is the caste system structured in a hierarchical pattern. There is not only one caste but it has many castes and each one has a distinct spiritual value, social position and set of duties according to the Hindu

scriptures. The present status of Hindu person is a result of an act *karma* committed in the previous life.

Notwithstanding, the literal significance of caste has been diminished but it can be rushed if we say that there is no caste in Indian society as well as in the Indian diaspora, it may not be manifested as what we saw in the 19th and 20th centuries. Caste aspects have been imprinted in Indian minds. According to the caste system, Brahman should perform spiritual duties assigned by its religious dogma. In the United States, approximately the Indian diaspora has built more than four hundred Hindu temples and almost all appointed priests in the temples are from the Brahmin castes. They have developed their own traditional hegemony in performing ritual duties. It is an indication of the existence of caste significance.

The role of women is an integral part of Indian society and it has been said that women are the best sources to maintain the socio-cultural norms and ideas. Indeed they have been trained by Indian social traditions and religion as well. There is a pattern of socialization of Indian women in some parts of Indian society in which women are considered as subordinate, inferior to male. According to religious norms women should perform domestic, social, religious work, look after their husbands and kids. Being women, she should be submissive, imperative and she should obey what her man wants her to be. In this regard, the woman has to perform multiple duties such as protect social, cultural norms and perform ritual duties. In *Ramayana*², Sita the wife of Lord Rama is portrayed as submissive to him and there are many women characters who are portrayed in religious texts as docile, submissive and inferior. In this context, the study looks at how Indian women's diaspora have played a role in forming an Indian identity in the United States. Jhumpa Lahiri in her text *The Namesake* has portrayed the characters of Indian women, for instance, Mrs. Sen, Mala, Lilia's mother, Laxmi's cousin and Ashima have played a role of traditional Indian women who are imperative in practice and similarly, Lahiri portrayed modern American born Indian women such as Sobha, Twinkel, Moushima and Sonia who revolt against suppression, rigid social norms, religious impositions and look for an individual space in the United States.

² *Ramayana*: it is a Hindu religious scripture narrates the story of Lord Rama, the legendary prince of the Kosala Kingdom

Themes and Backgrounds

Indian emigration is not a new phenomena. It has a great history of it that has broadly been divided into three phases such as ancient, colonial and postcolonial in which Indians have migrated to various parts of the world for different purposes. Hugh Tinker (1979) said about the spreading of Indian diaspora like a banyan tree over a period of more than 2000 years from South Asia to the various parts of the world. Indians during ancient times have migrated for the prosperity in trade and also to spread religion, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism and these religions have been propagated phenomenally in the suburban countries in South Asia. But later many Indians migrated for trade and work. Indians in the colonial period had moved in large numbers to various colonies due to political anarchy, unemployment, the burden of revenue on farmers, collapse of small industries in which millions of Indian were working and arrival of new gigantic industries in few big cities which failed to offer enough work to a number of workers.

In succession, the post-colonial era witnessed that Indians have migrated to the developed countries like Canada, the US, UK, New Zealand, and Australia mostly under the professional and skilled category. It has been known as voluntary migration looking for jobs, to earn money and get higher education. According to Ashok Sharma (2017), during various phases of modern history, diverse groups of Indian came to the America in many different guises: they were students, scholars, political activists, diplomats, religious leaders, visitors, merchants, sojourners, immigrants and refugees. Particularly, the Indians have immigrated to the United States by the opportunity offered by the Naturalization and Immigration Act in 1965.

India is one of the most benefited countries of the 1965's Immigration Act. For instance, "in 1965, 582 Indians came to America as formal immigrants. The number gradually increased in the early 1970s. Since 1976, it has leveled off to an average of 20,000 per year" (Immigration and Naturalization Service 1965-1977, 1978-1989; Statistical Yearbook, 1990). The growth rate has increased so high from 2009 to 2013 that it touched 2.6 million. Their social, cultural and religious practices have started to surface. During the 1970s to 80s, Indian immigrants had started to establish different religious, cultural and social organizations to preserve their culture, to resist against

racial discrimination, to spread their culture among Indians as well as American and asserting Hinduism as a great ancient religion in the world.

Discrimination against Indians in North America in the early 20th century was reflected in the federal policy on immigration and citizenship act, and as well as state legislative restrictions on marriage, landholding, and voting, particularly in California, where most Indians lived at that time. As Jensen (1988) points out, “the British in India and their representatives in this country, in cooperation with American and Canadian authorities, formulated racist policies and practices against the early East Indian immigrants”. Indian diaspora in the US has suffered prejudice and racial discrimination by white American based on their skin color, accent, and body posture. For instance, “despite their fluency in English and good academic qualifications, many young Indian Americans have been rejected by select universities, partly due to racial bias” (D’Souza 1991; Hsia 1998). It has been happening since the history of their migration to America and because of that Indian diaspora has been tried to be united among them and fight back against this racial discrimination. Further it is also observed by several scholars that shows “historical, ethnographic, and statistical evidence attest to the fact that Asian Indians have suffered prejudice, discrimination, and barriers to equal opportunity on various levels” (Chandrashekhar, 1982b; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1992). Unification among Indians was necessary since it was a marginal community so they began to be united in religion, ethnicity, forming social relations, cultural norms, and national affiliation that force stood up against discrimination. This collective force has been used by the Indian diaspora to fight back against such as racial attacks, discriminations by Americans. Thus, Indians have developed uniformity among Indians and then improved relations with Americans so that they could move on with them.

The Indian diaspora, along with several other global diasporas, celebrates American social and cultural norms of coexistence which made America the most advanced and liberal nation. The Hindu religious and cultural organizations have been influenced by Christian culture and its events of Christmas, Easter, and other cultural things. Jhumpa Lahiri has sketched many American born Indian characters who have been attached and influenced by American life, while the first generation of Indian immigrants have formed a distinct Indian identity following Indian social and spiritual

norms. They neither lose their distinct identity nor show any interest in dissolving its distinction into American life. They were disillusioned since they were away from their families and relatives. This Indian diaspora has maintained the connection to the homeland and with their families and relatives by visiting various social, religious and family events. To be connected with the homeland now-a-days became quite easy since they have been accessing modern and advanced tools such as information technology, social media, and faster and cheaper transportation. The advancement in technology has been helping Indian diaspora to be connected with their kith and kin around the world.

There are several organizations of Indian diaspora founded in America on the bases of religion, linguistics, cultural and regional identities. Some of them are very active in their work, these are the Hindu Education Foundation, Vedant Society and Hindu American Foundation which are founded on the model of RSS, Bajrang Dal, and Vishva Hindu Parishad in India known as militant Hindutva organizations. In America, there are approximately 450 Hindu religious organizations (including active and non-active), working towards spreading Hinduism, solving inter-religious cultural clashes, educating the people about Hinduism, protecting and promoting the Hindutva ideology, and talking about issues regarding Hindus worldwide. These organizations are known as pro-Hindutva organizations. Apart from these, there are few distinct organizations of Indian diaspora such as Sant Ravidas Association and International Ambedkar Mission which are known as Dalit organizations. All these are working on behalf of the Indian diaspora and they keep in touch with the homeland and have reciprocal connections between homeland and host country. Because of the social and spiritual hierarchical system, a large number of lower castes Hindus have accepted other religions such as Christian and Buddhism in the United States.

Jhumpa Lahiri's Texts

Lahiri started her career as a writer by writing a debut literary piece *Interpreter of Maladies* which is a collection of stories written in different styles by portraying the various different characters and different locations that are structured distinctly from the set norms of writing the short stories. However, she has compiled and interconnected all the stories by representing recurring themes and motifs. She has

used various literary devices and styles in narrating the stories such as the first, second and third person. It is the norm of classical short story writing that says that the collection of short stories should be cyclic in series, confined by a single location, portraying the similar characters and united by a common theme that binds together as a whole. But Lahiri did not follow the classic norms of story writing, such as the unity of action, time and place. However, Lahiri unified all stories by representing recurring themes and motifs such as alienation, cultural clash, loneliness, identity crisis, trauma and struggle for settlement in a strange land. According to Bahri, “many of Lahiri’s stories experiment with the boundaries of the family, the threshold of the known and unknown, the familiar and strange” (2013: 38). Each story has dealt with issues in which its title reflects its meaning. She has beautifully interlinked all stories together and gives the compiled picture of Indians in America.

The Namesake, 2003, Lahiri published after four years of her collection of stories *Interpreter of Maladies*. It is the most read fiction and created a motion picture with the same name by Mira Nair in 2006. It is an important literary piece that tells the story of Indian immigrants settled in Boston in the United States. This novel achieved exceptional attention from readers and academicians and received a wide range of critical remarks. It has been in deliberation in the discourse by intellectuals and the research scholars. *The Namesake* appreciates the multicultural taste and diverse fabric of American ethos and its pertaining issues of the diasporic community. This story is all about a young boy named Gogol and his parents who immigrated from Calcutta and settled in Pemberton road Boston in America. A young boy Gogol is named after his father’s favourite Russian author Nikholia Gogol who wrote the famous short story *The Overcoat*. Gogol tries to replace his name with Nikhil since Gogol is neither implicate Indian nor American sentiment. This is a story of immigrants who have been trapped in between the third space. The text represents Indian immigrants the issues of identity, alienation, loneliness, struggle for settlement and transformation of their social and cultural conservative mindset into more modern following the norms of the multicultural society that led them to be called the Indo-American. Nevertheless, they continue to carry their social and cultural belongingness of root culture, social and religious practices that have been reflected in their ethnic identity formation. Both the *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake* represent and pictures

Indian diaspora and their affecting issues such as race discrimination, cultural clash, trauma, alienation, loneliness and identity in America.

Research Gap

The study of the Indian diaspora has recently emerged as an important discipline in the academic discourse that had not been given much attention in the early phase of its immigration. Extensive studies have been done on the Indian Indentured and Kanganis labor migration, since a large amount of labor was carried to the Caribbean Islands, Fiji, Malaysia, and South Africa during the colonial period. Indian migration to the United States is a new chapter started during the postcolonial period due to the exceptional development in industries, natural sciences, and information technology which required huge manpower forces. So it has not a long history. The settled Indian community struggled for civil rights, settlement, against race discrimination and exploitation by white Americans. Looking at their struggle and achievement, Indian and American academicians have started to study the pertaining issues of Indian diaspora such as religious insecurity, cultural clash, identity, and inconsistency (Hess 1976; Nandi 1980). This study tries to examine the ethnic diversities, representation of Hinduism in the United States, cultural clash, alienation, and struggle for settlement in the diaspora. In addition, it will focus on the disappearance aspects of caste in the representation of ecumenical Hinduism. Keeping these views in mind, the study attempts to critically analyze the factors of religion, culture and caste in the formation of the Hindu community and its ethnic identity in the USA.

Hypothesis

- Hindu religious organizations play a crucial role in representing Hinduism and construction of ethnic identity of Indians in the United States.
- Indian religiosity, social norms and culture are significant elements in forming the ethnic identity of Indian diaspora.
- Jhumpa Lahiri represents the quest for ethnic identity of Indian immigrants in her texts.

Research Questions

- How does Hinduism being represented in the United States by various organizations and religious sects?
- How are Indians constructing their Hindu ethnic identity in the United States?
- How does Jhumpa Lahiri represent the struggle of Indian diaspora for ethnic identity in her texts?

Objectives

The thesis has two major objectives which are as follows:

- To examine the role played by Hindu religious organizations in representing ecumenical Hinduism in the United States.
- To understand the process of formation of Hindu ethnic identity by Indians in the United States.
- To understand how second generation Indian immigrants coexisted with Indian and American culture highlighted in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*?
- To examine the quest for ethnic identity of Indian diaspora in the selected texts of Jhumpa Lahiri.

Research Methodology

The study applied both the qualitative and quantitative methods and relies on primary and secondary sources of data collection as well. It is an interdisciplinary study that has applied various methods and critical approaches to carry out the scientific and logical conclusions that should be acceptable by others on the ground of valid explanation. For this, I had to collect first hand information from the concerned respondents in the United States but I couldn't do this due to lack of sufficient financial support and far off distance. However, I could collect the first-hand information from the respondents in the United States by sending online google questionnaires. I could find out the email addresses of various socio-cultural and religious organizations of Indian diaspora from their concerned websites. As my

research topic discusses some of the sensitive issues like religion and caste. Owing to, many of the respondents hesitated to provide information and did not respond to my questionnaires. So I couldn't get any information from social, cultural and religious organizations in the United States. However, I could get some information from the Indian diaspora in the United States. My friend has introduced me to a Whatsapp group of Indian immigrants in the United States and I wrote a note on this group regarding my research questionnaire and shared a google questionnaire link on it and requested them to respond. I received responses from them in the least number. Around 18 responses I could get from them. Most importantly, the study is interpreting the literary texts of Jhumpa Lahiri which are the major primary sources. Taking into account the representation of Indian immigrants in texts, the study analyses the quest for ethnic identity of the Indian diaspora in the US.

The secondary data has been collected from sources such as books, articles, journals, reports, newspapers, internet and blogs regarding Indian diaspora. Besides, I have derived ideas from other sources such as reading online Indian newspapers, News India Times, Desitalkchicago.com, Indiaabroad.com and the international magazine, Hinduism Today (published from Hawaii USA). These sources have helped me to develop my understanding regarding the Indian diaspora and their daily lives in the United States.

The thesis is looking primarily at two aspects: 1) To examine the role played by Hindu religious organizations in representing ecumenical Hinduism and the process of formation of Hindu ethnic identity by Indian diaspora in the US. 2) To examine the quest for ethnic identity of Indian diaspora in Jhumpa Lahiri's texts. Moreover, it is an interdisciplinary study and applied various critical approaches to analyze and explain the raised issues in study. I have applied various theoretical approaches to carry out this study such as Postcolonial, Interdisciplinary, Feminist, Modern and Marxist approaches.

I have focused, in this study, on the role played by various religious, cultural and social organizations in re-constructing the ethnic identity of Indian diaspora in America. There are few major Hindu organizations such as the "Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), modeled after the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and

Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), modeled after the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Hindu American Foundation, Hindu Educational Foundation and Vedic Foundation also were founded” (Lucia 2017: 11). Apart from this, there are other Hindu organizations that are directly or indirectly associated with these major Hindu religious organizations in the United States such as Dharma Civilization Foundation. These organizations are representing Hinduism in a new form in which stigmatized issues of Hinduism such as caste, gender discrimination, spiritual hierarchical system have been overlooked and presented as inclusive, ecumenical, humanitarian Hinduism. Second, it examines Jhumpa Lahiri’s *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake* in which she represented the issues of Indian diaspora such as cultural clash, alienation, loneliness, belongingness, trauma, and ethnicity, and clash for adjusting Indian American culture between generations and American born Indian diaspora which are called as ABCD (American Born Confused Desi). If they want to be in India they must accept the culture of Hinduism as their national identity or leave the holy land of India. In contrast, Hindu organizations in America founded on the tenets of Hindu organizations in India which represent ecumenical, monotheistic rather than polytheistic Hinduism. So it is interesting to study the contribution of these organizations in presenting inclusive Hinduism. Arjun Appadurai and Anderson criticize the reactionary and incendiary approach of Hindu organizations in America while upholders of Hinduism refuse such allegations by saying that Hindu organizations have come into existence to make America a more vibrant and pluralistic society and work for human cause across the world. Organizations claim that they represent ecumenical Hinduism in America. This contrast has to be discussed in the study.

Conclusion

The thesis has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction that gives the synoptic idea about the study including its importance, hypothesis, objectives, and chapterization. The second chapter based on the various literature deals with an overview of Indians in the US from a historical point of view. The third chapter discusses the representation of Hinduism and the formation of Indian identity in the US. It deals with the role played by various Hindu religious and cultural organizations in representing Hinduism as well as forming the ethnic identity of

Indian immigrants in the United States. It is based on primary as well as secondary data; the primary source is google questionnaires which have been addressed to Indian immigrants and I have received sixteen responses out of more than one hundred questionnaires from respective respondents. The questionnaire raised questions about religion, caste, social and cultural things among Indian immigrants. Going through this, I could get the information and knowledge about the Indian immigrants' situation, socio-cultural practices and the approach looking at their lives. It also provides information about their immigration to the United States which immigration policy has helped and the role of linkages in their immigration.

The fourth chapter focuses on the representation of Indian diaspora, the struggle for settlement, cultural clash, and ethnic identity with special reference to Jhumpa Lahiri's text. The last one, fifth chapter is the conclusion that discusses the findings and summary.

Chapter II

History of Indian Emigration and Diaspora formation with Special Reference to the United States

International migration is a composite phenomenon that includes a large number of consequences, causes, activities, and elements such as social, economic, political and cultural aspects reflecting in our daily lives in the growingly globalized world. Migration is connected with varied movements such as geopolitics, trade and cultural exchange having a connection with the people of a different race from the different territory, and that makes it possible to have the opportunities for States, traders, and its communities to benefit in great amount. It has been shown that migration helped in improving people's living standards in both origin and destination countries. The migration movement has varied factors such as positive and negative as well. However, the flow of migration and displacement notably has been increased in the recent era that has been occurring by various developments in different areas such as establishing industry, multinational companies, science and information technology, and transportation. Migration is a result of various causes such as conflict, persecution, natural disaster and change, and more importantly to find economic prosperity.

Migration is as old as human civilization itself. And India has been a spectacle to the different forms of migration of its population at different phases in history. Indian emigration had its origin in the Indus valley civilization, whose merchants frequently visited other lands. Historically Indian had migrated to various places in the world, particularly to South Asian and South Africa. Emigration to African countries dates back to the second century AD. Indians then maintain trade contacts with Africa leaving wives and families behind and visiting home periodically. The remaining Indians in Africa had been recognized as temporary settlers not permanent residents of Africa. The Indian diaspora has spread out across the globe with a presence in one hundred and eighty-nine countries. There are more than 25 million living across the world including people of Indian origin (PIO) and Non-Resident Indian (NRI) constituting the second largest immigrant community in the world followed by China.

It was a process of labor, semi-skilled and skilled labor from the various states of India over the last two centuries.

The process of migration has a long history of its people migrating to various countries of the world at different points. During the 3rd and 4th centuries BC, which is considered as the classical age in Indian history, the Maurya Empire conquered most parts of the Indian subcontinent. In the 4th century BC most of the parts of northern and central India were united under the Gupta Empire and this unity was maintained for the next two centuries. This is widely regarded as the golden age in the Indian history. Hindu religion was resurgent and Hinduism was greatly revered during this period. It was also a fertile period for the growth and spread of Buddhism.

By the end of this period, the philosophy of Hinduism and Buddhism had already spread in the South Asian countries. Migration in the ancient era was identified by the propagation of culture and Indian religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. “Saints and seers moved into different directions with deep knowledge of philosophy and the rich Indian cultural heritage and spread religious messages, particularly that of Buddhism” (Sharma 2017). Buddhist priests (*bhikkhus*) were also sent by the kings to the South East Asian countries to propagate Buddhism. After the Gupta Age under the patronage of other Indian kings many numbers of religious preachers. The famous Maurya King Ashoka sent his son and daughter to Sinhala (present-day Sri Lanka) to preach Buddhism there. There are also so many other kings during the ancient period in Indian history who patronized Buddhism and spread to rest of the world.

Apart from the revival and spread of Hinduism and Buddhism, this period was also known for its superb trading activities. During this period India had a glorious history of its trading activities. Indian traders crossed Indian Ocean to East coast of Africa and then overlanded to central and West Asia for the development and promotion of trade with these countries. Indian items were of great demand. During the ancient period, this migration was obviously for the purpose of propagating religion and maintaining a trade relationship but it was not for the purpose of permanent settlement. In the process of trading activities and religious preaching, it is speculation that some traders and preachers might have settled in the countries which they visited. Though it is very difficult to provide the exact or approximate number of Indian

religious preachers or traders settled in some of these countries, yet some scholars have viewed the linkages of the Indian traders with different countries. This trading activity during the ancient period led to the settlement of a significant number of Indian traders in some of those countries with India having trade relationships. McNeill has observed “there is some reason to think that a colony of Indian merchants lived permanently in Memphis, Egypt from about 500 BC” (cited in Jayaram 2004: 19). These observations and facts are supplemented by some more evidence.

Time and again, Indians migration to different countries of the world has undertaken lots of changes in its forms since this early phase of migration. Though there are many phases of emigration of Indians, yet most scholars of diaspora studies analyze this emigration under broadly three categories such as Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-colonial. During the pre-colonial phase apart from the ancient Indian emigration, many numbers of Romani people or Gypsies mostly from Rajasthan, significant numbers from Maharashtra and some of the southern parts of India had traveled to different parts of Europe and Africa. They were nomadic with their cultural traits and practices; especially their music has undergone considerable changes. They have also greatly impacted the local culture where they have come in contact with. In the present day, Gypsies are undergoing terrible sufferings in different countries of Europe and other parts of the world mostly due to their statelessness. A stateless person has no claim to have right over nationality. When one reads about the Romani people one needs to remember that these people had once traveled from India.

During the Colonial phase immigration of Indians had occurred in three categories, namely, Indentured, Kangani or Maistry, and passage migration, which had transported a large number of Indian to different colonies of European imperialists that had been developed across various places of the world. Under the Kangani and Maistry system, many laborers from southern parts of India were transported to Burma, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, etc. Under the Indentured system, the laborers were carried from present-day Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, etc. to work in the colonial plantations in the Caribbean, Fiji, and Africa, etc.

As has been mentioned above, most of the Indians were brought to the Caribbean through the ‘new system of slavery’ (Tinker 1974) called to indentureship. After the

abolition of slavery in 1832 from the colonies, the free Africans laborers had refused to work to minimize wages in the empirical colonies in the West Indies. This situation had led colonial masters to find an alternative labor force who could work to minimize wages. Therefore, they had recruited laborers, giving false assurance, from European and Asian countries, particularly from China to their plantation colonies to run the estates. But this attempt failed. The European and Chinese laborers could not work under the sunny weather in the Caribbean Islands. These laborers moved away from the colonies and tried their luck in other works. Apart from this, they were not accustomed to agricultural work. Therefore, they moved from plantation estates to the cities and tried their hands in some other professions and some became retail shopkeepers and some became businessmen.

To run the plantation estates it was an essential need of the toil labor force those who could adjust the existing tropical weather of the Caribbean Islands and work hard on the plantation estates. The labor force was in great demand and imperialists were worried where from the labor force can be recruited. On the other hand, the Indians were unemployed and they were eagerly looking for work. Both sides were required to adjust to each other according to their respective meet. Subtle owners of the plantation estates were enabled and got this opportunity in fulfilling their super argent demand of laborers. And then they set up their eyes on India and for many reasons it appeared as the logical source. India had millions of destitute populations that had been crushed under poverty, unemployment, socio-cultural drudgeries, etc. Apart from this, it should be noted that the country was being ruled by the British Empire. Most people were trapped under the diabolic social value system. Indian society is a distinct society since it has varied discriminative social, cultural and spiritual values that have created inconvenience among its people. On board the ship the identity of religion, caste and regions of India had been diminished. Being togetherness irrespective of their traditional identities of caste and regions had been replaced by forming the new bonding among them, the bonding of brotherhood/sisterhood as *Jahaji bhai/bahin* which began at the depots and considerably consolidated on the ship. Thus the migration movement had started during the colonial era with hope for a better life.

So, Indian indentured labor migration had been started during the 1830s after slavery was abolished from the colonies of the European imperialists' plantation estates which were built up in various places of the third world and developing countries such as the South Africa, Asia, Fiji, Malaysia, and Caribbean. The Indian indentured laborers and their subsequent generations constitute most significant segments of Indian diaspora in the received countries and it has established the important terminologies in the history of immigration.

History of the Indian Indentured Labor

The history of Indian indentured labor migration begins in the 1830s and finishes in 1920. The significant causes of the Indian indentured labor migration can be discussed under two prime headings – Push and Pull factors. Apart from the colonial structure, the complex social system and watertight hierarchical structure of Indian society and overflow of population, acute poverty, huge unemployment and great famine which made millions of people starved, etc. forced many numbers of people to migrate as indentured laborers. These were the push factors. On the other end of the spectrum, indentureship provided these destitute the hope of a better life in the destination countries. And India was under British colonial rule and it became easier for the British government and planters to negotiate. These were the pull factors. So, this indentured labor migration was a two-way process; on the one hand, the planters had urgent needs of large, viable, physically strong and experienced labor force to cater to harsher work on the plantation estates, and on the other hand, by indenturing themselves and found an escape route from the social and economic drudgeries.

Urgent need for labor, imperialists had recruited a huge labor force by giving false assurance through appointing agents. Indian Indentured laborers were taken to the British colonies such as Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad, Fiji, Mauritius, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Africa and also to the nearest country, Sri Lanka and Burma. The bulk of these migrants went as the indentured labor (Hoerder 2002, 366). However, a significant number of free migration continued, particularly Indian workers who migrated to the East Africa and Persian Gulf.

The following table shows the years of the arrival of Indian immigrants in various Caribbean countries.

Name of country	Arrival years
Guyana	1838
Trinidad and Tobago	1845
Suriname	1873
Jamaica	1873
Grenada	Dispersed from other Islands

(Source: Singh 1987: 03)

These labor forces were recruited mostly from the United Provinces like Bengal, Chotnagpur, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Orissa, etc. and a lesser number from southern parts of India. There was also emigration to the different Caribbean countries. This population proportion shows the rapid transportation during the indentured period. Similarly, Indians were brought to the Dutch colony in Surinam. A large number of laborers had been carried from India, Indonesia and West Indian colonies to these various imperialist colonies.

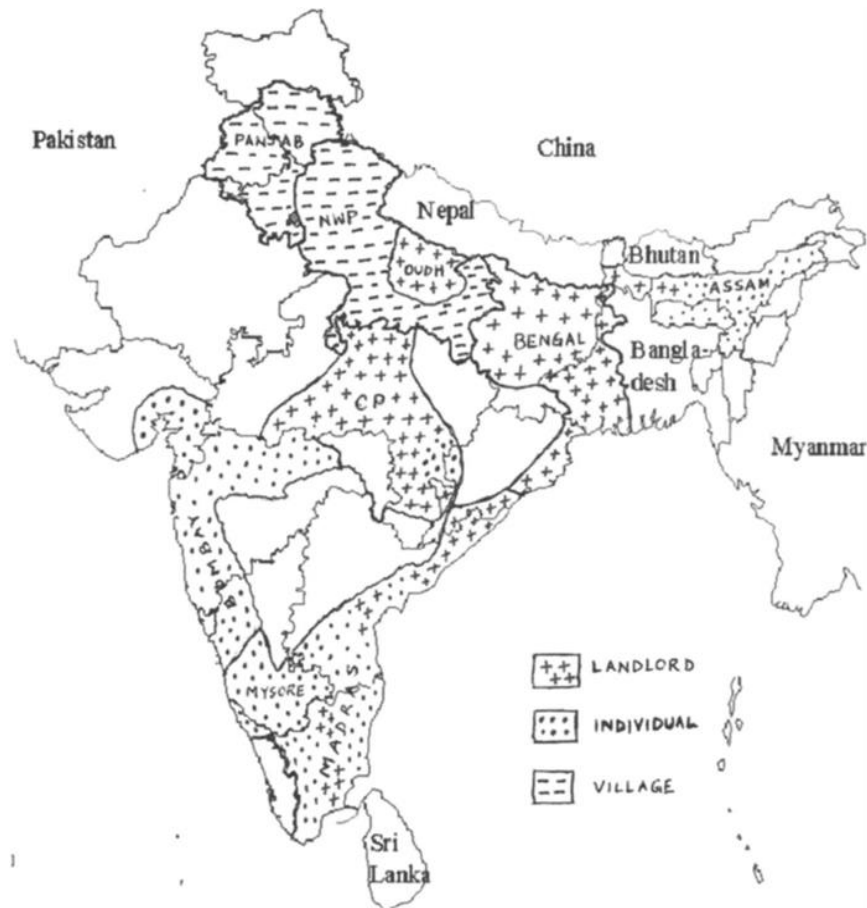
For a very long period in India, farming has been the major occupation of Indian people. Therefore, every emperor and subsequently the British government had introduced their policy of land revenue, which was a major source of economy for them. Land revenue was a system to collect revenue from the peasants which varied from one place to another. Previously the revenue generated from the land was mostly the prime source of income for the kings in India. Though there were various systems of land revenue before the arrival of British. British rule had brought the new land revenue system which was quite exploitative to the previous.

By this policy, peasants had to provide some portion of their production (as determined by the British government) as revenue. It was not uniform everywhere. So, it is quite difficult to state the exact status of land revenue but it was tyrannical. It was mandatory for every farmer to supply the fixed amount of land revenue irrespective of their annual production either low or high and either they get or not.

The land revenue system of the British government greatly suppressed the peasants. Many peasants committed suicides due to unable to pay imposed revenue. Thus they were subjugated by the tyrannical and exploitative land revenue policy of its government. Therefore, farmers, poor people and unemployed had been forced to immigrate.

As has been mentioned above, there was a simple land revenue system in India before the arrival of British; the peasants had to pay some portion of their yearly production to the local landlords who were considered as representative of the local nobility. The land revenue system in the British rule formulated which has been divided into three categories such as *Zamindari*, *Raiyatwari*, and *Mahalwari*. The landlord was appointed by the British administration that had the authority to set the terms and conditions for collecting the land revenue value from the peasants. The peasant had to give a major portion of the annual production as land revenue to the landlord. It was really very difficult to satisfy the greedy landlords because he was demanding more than needed. So the farmers wanted to get out of such a tyrannical system of British rule.

The Rayatwari land revenue system was introduced in most parts of Madras and Bombay Province. It was the collective responsibility of the whole villagers to offer some portion of production from the annual production to the landlord.



(Source: Banerjee and Iyer, 2005:1194).

FIGURE 1. MAP OF INDIA

The above map shows that the landlord system had been extended to some states of India such as Bengal, Oudh, central parts (Madhya Pradesh), West Bengal, Orissa and some parts of Assam and Madras. Raiyatwari (individual) system was largely being extended over southern parts of the country such as Madras, Mysore, and Bombay in which land revenue was collected directly from the peasants by the British government. Mahalwari system was introduced in the northern parts of the country such as Haryana, Uttaranchal, and Punjab out of which some were based on villages and some on the family. It varied from village to village and place to place. In short, this map shows the portion of land that was pervaded by the land revenue system. By these mechanical channels, the British government exploited the Indian peasants throughout India except for some parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir and Maharashtra.

Farmers were asked forcefully to pay a fixed amount of money in cash as land revenue, irrespective of the amount of production annually. So, to pay the revenue peasants had to borrow money from money lenders which were provided with high-interest rates on keeping mortgages from the peasants. And it was very difficult for the peasants to pay back the money. So, in this land revenue system, both the landlords and moneylenders dragged the flesh out of the peasant's bones. Thus, the drudging condition of the peasants made an appropriate situation for emigration. In the system of indentureship, the farmers found a little star of hope. However, these people were unknown that it was going to be another misadventure for them.

Apart from this, the British colonial government through its colonial economic policy disturbed the traditional economic system of Indian society by establishing industries and introducing its products in the Indian market. However, as Lai (2007: 3) rightly pointed out, "it was the 19th-century global economy, powered to a large extent by the industrial revolutions in both Britain and the USA, and the active and unchallenged territorial expansion of the British Empire". The industrial revolution and the global economy have changed the whole scenario of the traditional economy and small industry which brought new dimensions in the society. Before British colonization, the Indian traditional society was interdependent itself and completed by its internal needs. The necessary things were produced through traditional skills, for example, handicraft. "Subsequently, East Indians in India were displaced from their material base becoming available for emigration" (Roopnarine 2003:97). Due to their supremacy, the British controlled and monopolized the Indian market. Indian natural resources were used as raw materials and Indian human resources were used as laborers. The British policy of industrialization gave a blow to the traditional handicraft. The handicraft industry which had employed millions of people was replaced by the western machinery which led to the unemployment of millions of Indians. The industrial production generated by the British was attractive and cheap to traditionally produced commodities. Apart from this, the British government bans the exportation of Indian cotton products which was in great demand in European markets. Subsequently, the traditional Indian economy collapsed. So, the Indian traditional manufacturing system collapsed and people became jobless.

These unemployed workers were moved towards cities like Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, etc. where modern industries had been developed by the British but those industries were not enough to provide jobs to jobless workers. However, the British government didn't make any effort to set up industries in other parts of the country to supply jobs. In contrast, they focused on a few cities to develop them so that they could easily transport and import their products from there. If the British government would have put some effort to set up industries in various parts of India, it would have sorted out the issue of unemployment, poverty and economic crisis and labor wouldn't have immigrated to the British imperial colonies. But the ruling contemporary British government had not put any effort to set up new industries across the nation. Thus, the Indians have easily become available for emigration under the system of indentured labor migration.

The European colonial power had expanded across the whole world, wherever they had traveled they developed their colony dwelling upon their social, political and economic culture and stating European culture is superior to others. Not only Indian laborers had been brought to the Caribbean Islands during the colonial regime but also to the Ceylon (presently called it as Sri Lanka) South Africa, South East, East Africa, countries and Mauritius, Fiji. For centuries, Ceylon Tamils have been domiciled in Ceylon; Indian Tamils arrived from many parts of India to be laborers in different crop production processes such as tea, rubber, and so on and so forth. The Ceylon Labor Commission recruits only for estates and therefore practically all who immigrate to the island through its agency are agriculturalists.

The arkati, the infamous recruiter casts a long shadow (Seecharan 2017). This recruiter used to move from village to village, locality to locality in order to pursue destitute laborers to get themselves into indentureship. The arkati used tricks to trap people by assuring about the various basic benefits if they were indentured in the policy. They painted a very rosy picture of their destination countries, handsome wage, comfortable life, etc. The trickery and words of the Arkatias were so enchanting that even educated and intelligent people were trapped by them. Munsiri Rahman Khan, a school teacher from UP who had gone to his relative's place to watch Ram Leela fell into the trap of the Arkati and landed in Suriname. So, a variety

of people from India for a variety of reasons indentured themselves to work in the plantation estates in the Caribbean as well as in some other colonies.

In addition to this, the social system was another push factor that made them to escape from this hierarchy based system. Women were thus subjugated. The influence of this social factor forced many people to take the difficult decision of crossing the sea. In Indian society, treatment given to women was the worst. A lot of atrocities were committed against women during that time. There were evil practices like Sati, child marriages, etc. and these practices led to the many numbers of young widows. These widows had to undergo terrible suffering as they were not accepted by society and there was no place for them to go. Caste practice was rampant in Indian society. The lower caste people among the Hindus of the Indian society were considered less than cattle. They were subjected to many forms of caste oppression. So, these destitute found an escape route in indentureship. Many soldiers were haunted by the British for participating in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. To escape hanging by the British these soldiers found indentureship as a continuance of their life.

Post-colonial Approach

As has been mentioned above, British colonialism has been the root cause of indentured labor migration. So, here one can make a postcolonial approach to critically study the impact of colonialism on indentureship. Postcolonialism is a critical approach that emerged in the 1960s and got intensified in the 1980s and 90s to study the impact of colonialism on the ex-colonies. Its prime focus has been studying how colonialism through establishing its hegemony affected and shaped the socio-cultural, economic and political structure, and art and literature, etc. of the ex-colonies. It challenges the institutional monopoly of western ideas and puts it in the sphere of critical discourse. It makes a significant pathway look critically at constructive ideas and views to form a new identity different from the original one or constructed in binary opposition. This is a major concern of the postcolonial approach to dismantling the hegemony of western supremacy. However, the long colonial regime has indeed set up its legacy in the colonized world, and it is quite difficult for postcolonial thinkers, theorists and critics to keep themselves apart from it, and erase it.

Edward Said one of the most influential theorists on postcolonial criticism in his seminal book, *Orientalism* (1978) critically analyses Eurocentric norms, and challenges the Eurocentric norms as universality. Said explores the knowledge about the eastern world that has been produced through Eurocentric eyes, which is established in binary opposition of the west to the east such as west as superior over the east; identifies eastern as the other, inferior, ignorant and uncivilized while the west as civilized and superior. Frantz Fanon (1986) in his *Black Skins, White Masks* provides psychoanalysis of western people about black people; how they conceptualize the image of black people in a derogatory way. He criticized the irrationality of Eurocentric ideas about black people as inferior and uncivilized. So, he followed the radical way to demolish the norms of Europeans as white superiority that preoccupied the minds of the black people.

Some significant postcolonial writers have made a critical analysis of Eurocentric norms of universality or superiority over others by giving detailed explanations of how it became fractured, i.e. became hybrid and ambivalent. For Chapman (2006: 4), there is no monopolized construction which has been constructed by someone, but again, he considers the existence of superior and inferior, dominant and marginal communities as claimed by the rulers. But there is a concern to erase confined metaphors and focus through a different perspective and develop an identity that has its roots in narratives of the nation. The nation's literature reveals the nation's identity that is absorbed in hybridity.

After independence, the nation's phenomenal history of commerce, polity, bureaucracy, socio-cultural norms, and ethnicity, etc. is brought in its nation-building by dispelling the prevailing western norms of superiority. The indigenous people comprehensively understand the importance of their nations' history and how it has been represented from the westernized and Eurocentric perspective. It has provided a propounded background to revise constructing identity. Having got a strong plea from the postcolonial view to set up the native identity by connecting with the global phenomenon, the theory has forced all communities to live in a way of their wish, where it is too difficult to point out a pure identity. It gives a deep insight into the critical approach to looking at the institutional and disciplined theories or ideas of Eurocentric authenticity. And it attempts to bring an alternative form of identity out of

the in-between of west and east, black and white, black and brown, etc. Cosmopolitan writer Salman Rushdie celebrates the fact that English is no longer an English language. It has been involved in various roots of others so it has become a world's language; it is not the unique English language.

Postcolonialism is an essential approach to look critically at the affected colonies. India has suffered from so many obstacles and problems under British rule. Indian territory was ruled by British for a hundred and fifty years and they exploited its economic and natural resources, disturbed traditional economic system and their tyrannical rule affected Indian society very deeply. During their colonial regime, they imposed their cultural hegemony of white superiority upon the colonized people of India. Consequently, Indian society suffered from poverty, starvation, anarchy in society, politics and economy, etc. People were haunted by apprehension about their lives under British rule. Therefore, the people were looking for an opportunity to move from this complicated situation and indentureship provided them some hope.

Trends in International Migration from India

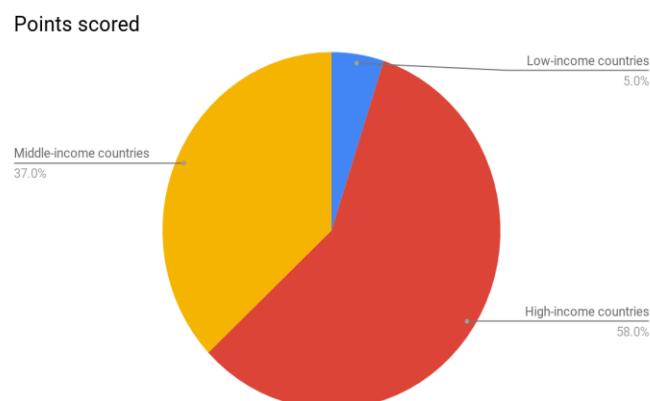
Since India's independence, the "pattern and dimension of international labor flow... have been characterized by significant transformations" (Nayyar, 1994; Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003). These changes in the migration from India have become more visible since the 1990s both in directions and the destination country of the migrants. All these changes have happened in the migration due to the advent of various government policies, development in IT, Industry and available transportation and immigrants' strong linkages with their family in the homeland. Trends in migration in the post-colonial period are influenced also by globalization. It is mostly voluntary in nature; therefore, it is different from colonial migration in many ways. The colonial migration in some sort was called forced migration. This move became more effective in the later part of the 20th century.

The 1980s became an important decade in which immigration has been increased to the OECD countries. The flow of migration was not steady; it was in a wavering manner, ups and downs. This migration was met with the unsteady process due to the uneven demands from the different developed and developing countries. However, the

migration flow growth rate increased toward developed countries by getting opportunities to get jobs and they earned money and standard social life. Even though this increased migration flow couldn't be continued since the host countries had imposed some restrictions on increasing the flow of migration by introducing measurable immigration policy.

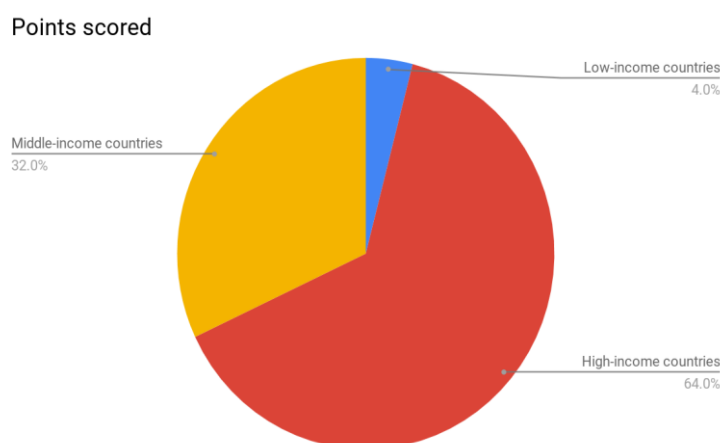
The following diagrams illustrate the country-wise international migration rate which shows that high-income countries have received large scale immigrants. Low-income countries have received a very small scale of immigrants compared to middle and high-income countries.

FIGURE- 2
“Percentage of international migrants by income group, 2000”



Source: United Nations (2017a) Note: For both charts, the classification of countries and areas by income level is based on 2016 gross national income (GNI) per capita, in U.S. dollars, calculated by the World Bank.

FIGURE-3
“Percentage of international migrants by income group, 2017”



Source: United Nations (2017a)

Note: For both charts, the classification of countries and areas by income level is based on 2016 gross national income (GNI) per capita, in U.S. dollars, calculated by the World Bank.

Two-thirds of all immigrants have been received by high-income countries. In 2000, 58 and 2017, 64 percent of the entire international migrant’s rate across the globe has increased by 6 percent. So, it shows that high-income countries share almost two-thirds of all worldwide migration in 2000 and 2017 (IMR, UN 2017).

The United States of America before Arrival of Indians

The history of the United States is a history of varied phases of migration. America is a nation of different races of people who have settled and represent their distinct social, cultural and religious identity. So, it was the first and second wave of immigration to the US which was started after two decades in 1880 and 1890. “This wave brought 10 million Western Europeans-English, Dutch, Swedes, and Norwegians to America shores between 1880 and 1890” (Sharma 2017). The third wave was bigger than the previous two waves. 16 million migrated between 1890 and 1914. Therefore, the US became the mosaic multicultural society and it has continued to be seen as a primary destination for immigrants. Phenomenally, the European immigrants migrated to the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been replaced by Asian immigrants in the 20th century.

Indian emigration to the US

It is a fact that there may not be any country in the world in which the presence of people of Indian origin (PIO) and non-resident Indians (NRI) do not exist. The people of Indian comprised around 30 million staying in the various parts of the world such as West Indies, Fiji, Mauritius, Gulf countries, Africa, Europe, South Africa, and Southeast Asia, Singapore, North America, and Australia. The migration of Indian diaspora to the USA is a result of different phases over centuries. The various phases such as “before 1820-1913, 1914-39, during the Second World War, (1946), 1947-65, 1965-90 and the latest figures of Census 1980, 1990 and 2000” (Pradhan 1996). The first wave was started in the last quarter 19th and early 20th centuries, the second wave started during the First World War to 1939, then the third wave began in 1939 to 1965, during this phase immigrants have migrated in small numbers as in the previous phase. The fourth and foremost phase started after introducing the Naturalization and Immigration Act in 1965. By this act, a large number of Indian immigrants had migrated to the United States. Then 1965 to 1990, in which huge Indian immigrants got the opportunities to move to America. Since the 1980s to the present Indians have migrated dominantly to the United States.

In the first phase immigrants were small in numbers mostly they were religious preachers, unskilled labor and Punjabi peasant workers. It is remarkable to note here that the propagation of the Hindu religion in the United States had been started by Swami Vivekananda's address at the World Congress Religions that was held in Chicago in September 1893. However, Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833) was the first Hindu immigrant who had come to the United States and he expressed his aspirations of ending his days in America. "But for his death two years later he might have become not only the first preacher of Vedanta in America almost sixty years before Vivekananda but also probably the first Hindu immigrant to the United States" (Varma, 1995:8-9). In the beginning, the Indian migration to the United States was for religious purposes, probably not for any other cause. This initiative has created the Indian cultural background in the US that opened the space for Indians to reside in this country with their faith and beliefs. Further, it shows how the migration started from India to the US. The "number of Indian students in American universities was small during this time" (Shridharan 1941: 72).

Indians in the US has evolved over a period. Initially, Punjabis had started to migrate there, primarily they were farmers and ex-soldiers. They had gone through various odd situations and conditions to get settled down, to have natural citizenship and form their own community. According to Jasbir Singh Kang (n.d) "there were over 6,000 Punjabis in California by the end of 1910...Punjabis, which were by and large Sikhs established the Khalsa Diwan Society in 1909 and by 1912 the first United Gurdwara was built in Stockton". At this point, Gurdwara became the major center where Indian people could come together to exchange views, ideas and to resolve the issues of religion, social and political crisis which they were being faced. The Gurdwara became a meeting point among the people from different religions and communities such as Hindus, Sikhs, Catholics, Muslims and Mexicans used to worship and socialize together. Today, the Punjabi Indian diaspora is highly organized in the United States.

During the period of, approximately 80 years from 1820 to 1900, the growth rate of Indian immigration to the United States was steady. These immigrants were mainly constituted of unskilled laborers, peasants who mostly came from the state of Punjab. It has been said by the Hindu religious tradition that crossing the black water to the

west is extremely inauspicious. The hard experiences the Indian people faced while entering and they were discriminated against in America. After the civil war, American consuls in India had been advising Indian merchants and others not to migrate to the US. A group of Parsee merchants wishing to migrate to the west was told by the Consul in Bombay that the US would not be a good place for them. In the first phase, the Indians' migration to the US was prominently from the state of Punjab. "Between 1907 and 1917, thousands of Sikh landowners and peasants left Punjab in northern India to search the western shores of North America for employment and higher wages" (Vrajlal 2015). Extensively it was the migration of males; not females due to prohibition from the law. The Sikh immigrant community, though were very small but showed faithfulness to their religion and culture by establishing and building temple for other Asian Indian travelers.

The recruiters had given priority in the recruitment to the young men: not women due to hard work in the construction of the railroad, and in the industry. It was the interest of recruiters to prefer the male immigrants and not their wives and families. The disproportion in sex ratio had created a problem among Indian immigrants which led to the Indian male to have a connection with Mexican women and sometimes this connection was turned into the marriage bond. This is how started the pro-Indian identity which led to fractured identity later such as the Mexican Shik family. Over time, the Sikh community built temples to practice their spiritual faiths.

The Immigration Act of 1924 brought into force to preserve the homogeneity of American people. Therefore, this act had barred the Asians from entering the United States. It imposed various forced restrictions upon entering of the Asian people in the USA. The act enacted a literacy test, imposed a high tax upon newly arrived immigrants and permitted the immigrant's office to exercise the arbitrary rule in selecting whom to exclude. Thus, the immigrant's office had started the exploitation of Asian immigrants by imposing arbitrary and adverse rules. In addition, the American had banned South Asian immigrants from entering the USA due to distinct ethnic, geography and linguistics. They considered South Asians were not associated with Caucasian families. Caucasians are a descendent of the white race that makes the gulf between European and non-European. Therefore, South Asians were not eligible to be settled down and have citizenship in the United States.

“The passing of the India bill in 1946” permitted Indian immigrants to enter America while it was not opened for other Asian immigrants (Kadekar, 2012: 101). After 1946 the Indian immigrants included professionals, skilled, unskilled agricultural laborers who went to the United States under the quota immigration policy. However, it couldn’t carry immigrants from South Asia on a larger scale due to forced restrictions and a fixed quota policy imposed on immigrant’s intake that led to decreased immigration growth. “Overall, the number of Indians arriving between 1948 and 1965 was 7,000” (Lal 2007:316). But dramatically the immigration growth rate was hiked after 1965, the earlier fixed quota policy removed and encouraged immigrants to migrate to the United States. After 1965, all kinds of immigrants including non-skilled, skilled professionals, educators and laborers have migrated in large numbers.

However, the imposed restriction law of 1923 and quota immigration policy 1946 had been withdrawn in order to recruit in the large numbers of manpower who are skilled, educated, engineers and medical professionals were in demand. This breakthrough can be called the second phase started by the introduction of the significant act called the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 which became the turning point in its migration. “The Immigration and Nationality Act 1965, signed by President Lyndon Johnson, strongly supported by Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Edward M. Kennedy, repealed the national origins quota system and gave priority to family reunification” (Singh, Har Swarup, and Trishna Dey 2003:36-39). It was a phenomenon of the post-second World War. Recruiters had preferred to recruit skilled manpower such as doctors, engineers, educated and businessmen that have constituted large Indian immigrants in the United States. India was one of the major beneficiaries of the 1965 Immigration Act. “In 1965, 582 Indians came to the United States as formal immigrants. The number gradually increased in the early 1970s. Since 1976, it has leveled off to an average of 20,000 per year” (Immigration and Naturalization Service 1965-1977, 1978-1989; Statistical Yearbook, 1990). Not only Indians were beneficiaries of 1965 but also the eastern hemisphere countries were benefited.

Moreover, the 1965 act had extended the hands toward South Asian immigrants in order to recruit huge skilled manpower. It was a dramatic change in the flux of immigration. After 1965, the preference had been offered to the highly literate and

professional degree holders and Indians had fulfilled the required criteria of the immigration policy. So, the speculation forced me to think that Europeans were not educated or they were not interested in the migration to the United States that has to be discussed. In 1976, America had received Indian immigrants, approximately 1,15,000. These facts and figures show that the Indian diaspora has constituted a considerable population size in the US by using the opportunity that had been offered by the act of 1965.

After the act of 1965, Indian students in large numbers have immigrated to the US. So, the trend of immigration has changed. This new trend can be called the third phase of Indian migration to the USA. The third wave occurred in the end of the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st century, approximately the 1990s and 2000 where the migration of Indians reached the monumental stage in which students were added who migrated to pursue higher studies in the United States since it was the most advanced in science and technology. Certainly, since Indians were highly educated and professional degree holders have got high paid jobs and their living standards have been enhanced. The consequence of this policy has resulted in growing the women's immigration to the United States to accompany their family and their life partner. It has reduced the psychological, social and cultural burden of Indian male immigrants being united with their family members. Thereby, the Indian immigrant populations have been dramatically increased. Now, the Indians have started looking for opportunities in business, self-employment venture restaurants, travel agencies, and motels. It was the result of the reunification of immigration policy and immigration and naturalization act which imported a huge Indian population to the United States and that led to settling in it, and finding good luck in the new ventures of business.

The result of this policy, the women immigrants were increased during the period of 1972 to 1976. In "1978, the National Science Foundation reported that Asia accounted for slightly more than half of immigrant scientists and engineers of that year" (National Foundation 1978: 15-16). These professionals and highly skilled immigrants emerged as an elite class. They were privileged immigrants of high caste, educated and well social background. It was the time of the 1960s and 70s, in which the literacy rate of India was low and the learning rate of lower caste population was so small compared to the high caste population. Therefore, one can say that highly

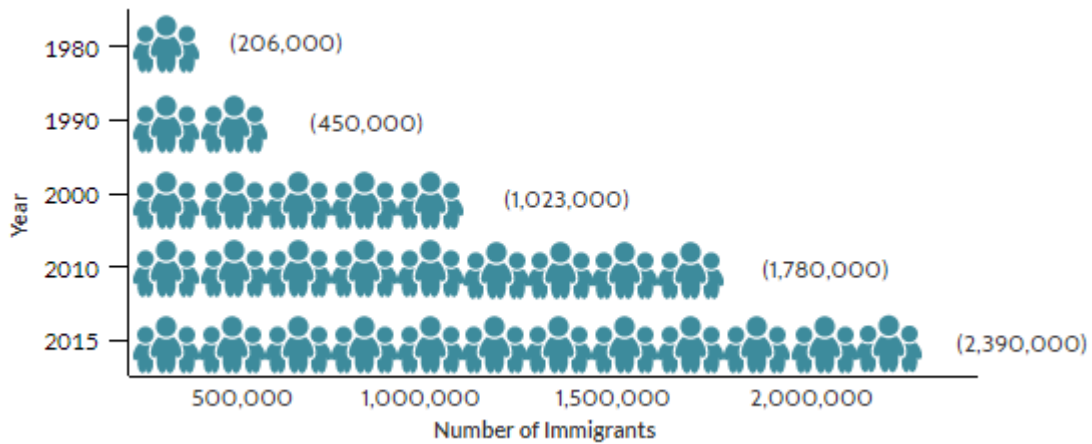
professionals and degree holders in science and technology Indian immigrants were from elite class.

According to Zong (2017) “in 1960, just 12,000 Indian immigrants lived in the United States, representing less than 0.5 percent of the 9.7 million overall immigrant”. It was the beginning of Indians entry into the US where Indians were not in big numbers but later it was increased. In 1965 and 1990, the US government introduced a series of different laws which removed restricted national origin quotas, brought temporary skilled worker programs and offered permanent visas based on the employment. The remarkable changes in the policy of immigration process in order to fill up the shortage of manpower in the IT sectors, multinational companies and in the various institutions. This immigration had been taken place by the pull factors. There was a demand for manpower in American IT sectors. “In addition to the ‘*Pull*’ of abundant opportunities in America, there were ‘*push*’ factors in India where opportunities were lacking for highly qualified professionals, precipitating the brain drain” (Singh, Har Swarup, Trishna Dey 2003:39). India had been always a source of providing manpower, particularly unskilled labor But in the 1960s and 1970s the dimensions of emigration has changed according to demand of the manpower in the advanced countries and the lack of opportunities for highly educated persons in the home country. India was the best source in this regard.

“This naturally contained a large number of highly qualified professional Indian immigrants, identified with India's brain drain (Khadria 1999:84). Indian immigrants constituted a large number. Mostly, “urban, educated and English speaking, a mass of Indian population in the US became clearly visible as the bearer of a large share of India's human capital to that country, which came to be termed 'brain drain’” (Khadria 1999: 81). Indians emerged as predominant in IT, medical and multinational companies. “The latest flow data on the quantitative dimensions of India's share amongst the Asian and the world immigrants in the US show their predominance in the knowledge occupations” (Khadria 1999: 83). The *push* and *pull* factors played a significant role in the process of Indian migration. These highly qualified Indian immigrants are “prompting an American newspaper editorial on the eve of American Independence Day to comment: "We do not take just 'huddled masses'. We take the best the world can offer” (Khadaria 1999: 82). Due to this categorical emigration is

called the brain drain migration. Post-independence India had faced very affecting issues such as destitution, famine, lack of educational institutes, unemployment, and lack of opportunities for highly qualified people so they participated in brain drain migration flow to the developed countries.

Figure 4. Indian Immigrants population in the United States, 1980-2015



Sources: Data from U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2015 American Community Surveys (ACS), and 1980, 1990, and 2000 Decennial Census. (Zong, Jie and Jeanne Batalova; 2017).

The above figure shows the growth rate of Indian immigrants to the US which has never declined throughout these years. In the current scenario, the American government has introduced temporary skilled worker programs and created employment-based permanent visas. In 1980, the Indian immigrants were 206,000 and in a decade it has grown up to almost doubled and in this stream of flow, the growth rate of immigration to the United States has been swollen double in each decade.

In 2015, Indian immigrants reached up to 2,390,000 which was only 206,000 in the 1980s. This is an unprecedented growth rate of Indian immigrants flowing to the United States and that has continued and in addition, Indian students have preferred to move to the United States for pursuing higher studies. It shows that in the span of thirty-five years the Indian populations' strength is turned into millions. So anyone could guess the importance of migration which changed the scenario of both countries of providing and receiving. "In 2016, Indians were the top recipients of high-skilled H-1B temporary visas and were the second-largest group of international students in

the United States” (Zong *et al*, 2017). During the period of 1980 to 2010, the growth rate of Indian immigrants roughly doubled every decade. “They constituted 0.6 percent of the country’s population...considering the four US census regions, the Asian Indians are remarkably evenly distributed as compared to other Asian groups” (Kadekar, 2012:102). The Asians have mostly dwelled in urban cities such as California, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Michigan where the industries are set up in large numbers. “The top four destination counties were Santa Clara County in California, Middlesex County in New Jersey, Cook County in Illinois, and Alameda County in California” (Zong *et al*, 2017). Indians in these five cities jointly figured, approximately (15%).

The influx of student immigration has grown up after the 1990s because the US government has provided H-1B and temporary employment-based visas to the students and skilled workers. The Indian students constituted the second largest group after Chinese. According to the 2000 US Census, 63.9 percent of Indians have received at least a graduate degree while 24.4 of Americans have earned the same degree. “In 2003, nearly 4,00,000 Indians were holders of H-1B visas, which are granted for a period of six years to highly-skilled foreigners seeking employment in the USA” (Kadekar, Laxmi 2010:102) Approximately, 20,000 graduates from the Indian Institute of Technology have adopted the USA as their home. “In 2015, 45 percent of the 2.4 million Indian immigrants in the United States were naturalized U.S. citizens, compared to 48 percent of the overall foreign-born population” (Zong *et al*, 2017). Indian diaspora has become the second-largest immigrant community in America.

The Participation of Indian Diaspora

Not only the Indian community profoundly contributed but also represented their share in each and every field whether it is a science, technology, education, business, politics and economy and literature. Indian diaspora’s growth rate of receiving higher education degrees is higher than other immigrant communities including the Americans. It is one of the richest ethnic diaspora communities in the United States by having high paying jobs in various recognized fields. “The per capita annual income of Indian Americans is the highest among all ethnic groups in the US”

(Gottschlich, 2008:157). Indian immigrants become teachers in various universities, writers in literature and entrepreneurs running varied businesses and leaders in politics. “Fifty-eight percent of all Indian Americans 25 or older have earned a college or university degree” (Gottschlich 2008:159). Thus, the Indian diaspora has accomplished the recognized position in the society of the United States in a short span of time by showing its presence in each field. To get such a position, other ethnic immigrant communities have spent generations in America. Since the commencement of their arrival in America, Indians have started to visualize their cultural, social and spiritual identities by celebrating those occasions.

Indian diaspora has many groups performing multiple activities on behalf of its community causes the social, cultural, religious and politics, education and economy. These groups always come forward to extend support and help to solve the pertaining issues of its society. These groups have contributed to paving the path toward the development of politics to solve the cultural, social issues whenever these have been raised. The racial problem, for instance, is a burning issue in the United States since there are prejudices among Caucasian white people against other colors of community people. “A Caucasian man shot and killed five people, including a Jewish woman, an African American, a Chinese American, a Vietnamese American and an Indian American” (Gottschlich 2008:159). All these people came together and formed solidarity to fight back to this racial discrimination and unitedly forced to bring changes in the law. Indian entrepreneurs, engineers, and physicians have formed many groups such as the Indus Entrepreneurs, the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin and the Asian-American Hotel Owners Association that have been extending their support for good causes for their community. These groups have played an important role in solving the problems of the Indian diaspora community.

Apart from this, the Indian diaspora has established many IT companies which gave employment to a large number of Indians. In 1999, Indian Americans had started many dot com businesses in Silicon Valley in the state of California. “There were around 650 to 700 Indian-owned companies in Silicon Valley. About 3, 00,000 Indians were working in information technology firms in Silicon Valley” (Kadekar, Laxmi 2012, 102). The above data shows its proportion along with its economic

condition which is so high being working in a high paid job in the IT companies.. Thus, they became entrepreneurs in various areas such as, “Vinod Dham, investor of Pentium chip; Sabeer Bhatia, founder of Hotmail, a net-based e-mail; Vinod Khosla, Kanwal Rekhi and K. B. Chandrasekhar” (Kadekar, Laxmi 2012:103). Besides, there are several Indian diasporas who became faculty working in several American Universities in various disciplines. A large number of Indian engineers and scientists are working in Boeing, NASA and nuclear laboratories. Thus, Indian Americans have achieved admirable positions and they are representing their presence in a broader American spectrum.

Educational Attainment

Indian diaspora is listed as the top community in receiving higher education in the United States and equally, they represent their presence in all important offices either in politics, economy, information technology, commerce, medical science, and the arts. Indians’ representation in the attainment of higher education is much better than the other immigrant communities and also the overall American born population. “In 2015, 77 percent of Indian adults (ages 25 and over) had a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 29 percent of all immigrants and 31 percent of native-born adults” (Zong *et al* 2017). Apart from this, Educated Indian immigrants more than half have earned an advanced degree. “Nearly 166,000 Indian immigrants were enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions in the 2015-16 school year, comprising 16 percent of the 1 million international students overall” (Zong *et al* 2017). The rate of higher education among the Indian diaspora is because of the requirement of highly skilled manpower demanded by IT companies in the United States.

Moreover, the Indian diaspora shows less representation in politics to compare with other fields of IT, Entrepreneur, Medicine in which Indian diaspora has achieved considerable recognition. “The last known figure was a Congressman, Justice Dalip Singh Saund, elected in the mid-fifties from California. Since then there has been no Federal legislator of Indian origin; nor have any governors or cabinet members” (Singh, Har Swarup and Trishna Dey 2003:39). However, now these days more Indians have participated in American politics. “In 2004, Bobby Jindal, an Indian-born conservative Republican was elected to the US House of Representatives. He

was the second person of Indian descent to get elected to the US House of Representatives” (Kadekar, Laxmi; 2012:103). There are many people of Indian origin politicians who have participated in politics and achieved a recognized position. Among them are Kamala Harris Democratic party senator; Nikki Haley, Governor of South Carolina. Indians have displayed their engagement and activities in the politics of the United States.

However, the Indian Americans have participated in a large number in politics and formed many dominant forces in it. In 2016, five Indian American candidates have been elected in the United States Congress. Elected candidates such as Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna, Pramila Jayapal, Kamala Harris and Ami Bera have noted their name in the history of the United States Congress. The Indian Americans have noted their presence in the US politics who represent their community along with other diaspora communities in the US congress, therefore, after winning such numbers, Donald Trump has recognized Indian American’s participation in politics.

Literary Representation of Indian Diaspora

In this section, I describe the short history of Indian diasporic literary writings and the backgrounds of literary writers before moving to the next chapter on Jhumpa Lahiri’s texts such as *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*. There are many prominent Indian diasporic writers who have produced abundant literary works reflecting Indian migration, construction of the transnational network, the struggle for settlement, dislocation, the cultural clash between Indian and American, social and ethnic identity of Indian and South Asian diaspora in America. They have achieved widely acclaimed and international recognition. Their writings became popular not only among Indian readers but also among Americans since it has dealt with the experiences of Indian immigrants as well as Americans in the United States. Indian transnational diasporic communities have served as a source of inspiration, of knowledge and mediator in transporting the traditional socio-cultural values to the second generation. The Asian Indian writers have established themselves as well-known writers in the US. In their writings they have illustrated the experiences of immigrants being alien, Indian American, transnational diaspora and their pertaining and challenging issues to establish new ethnic, cultural and social identities in mosaic

America. The writing covers the major themes such as identity, ethnicity, culture, loneliness, alienation, trauma, assimilation, struggle for settlement and diasporic memory.

Born on 27th July 1940 in Calcutta, India, Bharati Mukherjee was given ample academic opportunity along with her sisters. In 1947, her father got a job in England and he moved to live there along with his family until 1951, during this period she developed her English language skills. After coming back to India, she received a BA in 1961 from Calcutta and Masters in English Literature and Ancient Indian Culture. Mukherjee has written a remarkable literary work as her first two novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971) and *Wife* (1975). Later she wrote a collection of short stories *Darkness* (1985), reflecting her mood of culture in many sections during her stay in Canada. Her well-known writing is *Desirable Daughters* (2002). *The Holder of the World* (1993). *Jasmine* (1989) is a successful piece of literary writing which has received critic's attention. *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988) is a collection of short stories from which she has taken a plot in her book *Jasmine*. She has traveled through various continents of Asia, Europe and North America where she received permanent US citizenship in 1980. She was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts grant in 1986 for her writings. She has regarded her literary work as a celebration of her experiences and emotions and considered herself as a writer of Indian immigrants who cherishes the "melting pot" of America. Her writing deals with the issues and challenges of Asian immigrants in North America, in which she has prominently paid attention to discuss the issues of South Asian women and their changes in an adopted new world.

Anita Desai was born on June 24, 1937, and spent much of her life in New Delhi where she received a BA degree from Delhi University and where she had started her literary writing. She is well known for her wide understanding of issues pertaining to international and Indian diaspora. She has a literary gift to sketch her country in blending Eastern and Western cultures. She won the National Academy of Letters Award for *Fire on the Mountain* in 1978. The story is of a grandmother and granddaughter set in a remote, alienated world. They are unsociably forced to be together in a hill surrounded by violence. *The Village*, a story of the children, won the Guardian Prize for Children's Fiction in 1983. It is an adventurous tale of a young boy

from a village in India. She also won the Literary Lion Award in 1993. Her well-known story is *Cry the Peacock* (1963).

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born in 1957 in Calcutta, India and did receive her masters in English Literature from Wright State University Dayton, the USA, and Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. She began her writing as a poet and wrote her first *The Reason for Nasturtiums* (1990). After she wrote a collection of short stories, *Arranged Marriage* (1995) which brought her the American Book Award, PEN Josephine Miles Award and Bay Area Book Reviewers Award. *The Mistress of Spices* (1995), is one of the best read novels. Her remarkable works including *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *The Vine of Desire* (2002), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), *One Amazing Thing* (2010), *Oleander Girl* (2013), *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2016) and *The Mirror of Fire and Dreaming* (2005), *Shadowland* (2009). *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives* (2001) and *The Lives of Strangers* (2005). She is a prolific writer in English literary writing. Her work is reflecting on her experiences being in a new world and the issues of Indian immigrants in America.

Kiran Desai, born in 1971, is a popular and influential Indian English writer who traveled across the continents and the daughter of well-known English writer Anita Desai. Kiran Desai is a writer who has grown up in a diverse social background and academic education. It has been reflected throughout her writings. She has spent her childhood in Delhi before taking off to England and then moved to the U.S. where she has received her school education in Massachusetts. She studied creative writing at Bennington College, Hollins University and then Columbia University. Her debut writing is *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998). This writing has won praise and recognition by the writer of cosmopolitan literature Salman Rushdie. It brought her the Betty Trask Award. Then, she produced an exceptional piece of literary writing, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) awarded by the Man Booker Prize and National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award in the same year 2006. It is widely recognized by critics in Asia, Europe, and America. *The Inheritance of Loss* is a book about Sai and Biju. Biju was an illegal immigrant staying in the United States. Biju is the son of a caretaker for Sai's grandfather in India. It deals with the colonial and post-colonial

influence in Indian tradition which has lost its roots and developed the new hybrid identity.

Bharti Mukharjee, Anita Desai, Chitra Divakaruni Banarjee, Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri in the US have made a significant impact on the contemporary Indian American literary work and have profoundly influenced in the contemporary literary writing deals with the issues reflecting in the globalized worlds such as the challenge of new ethnic identities, culture and immigrants transformation. Most of their works give us an interwoven picture of Indians with multicultural American society and they also cover diverse issues including the various problems faced by Indian immigrants. The majority of their literary works are focusing on Indian diasporas' nostalgia, ethnic identity, cross-cultural conflict, racism, discrimination, and negotiation with different cultures.

Conclusion

This chapter gives a synoptic view of the history of Indian migration since the ancient, colonial period, and explores in detail the history of Indian immigrants to the United States since its beginning to the recent time. It tries to explain the factors of Indian migration during ancient times in which they were migrated to propagate the religion, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism among the South Asian countries. Apart from this, the migration had been mostly to expand the trade relation that led to setup bilateral relations between India and the South Asian countries. Then, this chapter focuses on the system of indentured labor migration from 1830 to 1920 that had carried a large number of unskilled labor to the empire colonies that had been built in the various parts of the world, particularly in third world countries. This migration has formed a trajectory of Indian diaspora in its history. In this regard, the colonial migration has been studied in detail of its push and pulls factors for the migration.

Later on, this chapter has shifted its attention on Indian immigrants to the United States of America that had been started from the 19th century and are still continuing. It focused on Indian immigrants to the US in detail by analyzing various pull and push factors and their presence in the broader American spectrum such as in economy,

education, business, IT companies, politics, and the arts. Indian Americans have established their presence in various fields. Indeed, Indian immigrants emerged as the richest communities among other immigrant communities in the United States.

Chapter III

Hindu Diaspora with Special Reference to the United States

Introduction

This chapter explains the process of representation of inclusive, ecumenical Hinduism by various Hindu religious organizations established in the United States on the tenets of Hinduism. It also analyzes the process of reconstructing ethnic identity of Indian immigrants in the United States. The Hindus in the United States have immigrated not only from India but also from different countries and have formed the largest Indian diaspora in the United States. Hinduism has been a major issue since the arrival of Swami Vivekananda in 1893 in the United States to address the world religious conference. From that point of time, Hindu religious organizations and various Hindu religious sects have started to disseminate the philosophy of Hinduism not only among Indians but also among other immigrants that includes the Americans. The chapter deals with questions such as how the Hindus have formed their identity in the United States, and what role does the Hindu religious organizations play in reconstructing Hindu diasporic identity in the United States.

There are numerous Hindu organizations and many of them have been working effectively to protect the Hindu religion and its culture in the United States. Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Hindu American Foundation (HAF) and Vedic Foundation are formulated on the models of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad(VHP) which are exist in India. Apart from these, there are several other Hindu religious sects, and socio-cultural organizations based on regional, linguistic, and cultural identities, which have played the significant role in reconstructing the ethnic identity of Indians in the United States. All these organizations regularly organise religious and cultural events which reflect their particular regional identities and in general reflect the ethnic identity of the Indian diaspora. These organizations have carried forward and maintained their inherited cultural, religious identities, and social cultural practices in the United States. These organizations have two major objectives: to reconstruct

collective Hindu identity in the United States and to inculcate lessons from religion and its culture, language and social norms to the American born Indian people (popularly termed as American Born Confused Desi (ABCD)).

Indian diaspora emerged as the second-largest Indian ethnic immigrant community after the Mexican and have been scattered across the metropolitan cities in the United States. The Indian immigrants have dwelled in large numbers in the metropolitan cities such as New York, New Jersey, California, and Texas. As Bose (2018: 14) rightly pointed out, “most Indian immigrants are geographically concentrated among the perimeter states, with significant populations in California (314,819), New York (251,724), and New Jersey (169,180) and Texas (123,365) (US India)”. The Hindu diaspora in the United States comprises the diverse social and ritual background that has been reflected in their daily lives.

In the early phases of Indian diaspora, the issue of Hindu religious identity was not taken into serious consideration but later it became an important issue in the multicultural society of the United States, Canada, Australia, and the UK. The debate especially became more significant during the globalization era due to the large scale international migration that spanned across the globe. So, the construction of Hindu identity emerged as an important issue in the United States where Indians constitute a significant minority. It was only after the introduction of Immigration and Naturalisation Act in 1965 that Indians in large numbers selectively entered into the American soil permanently. Most of the Indian immigrants have emigrated looking for better opportunities, better lifestyle, economic prosperity, higher education and also to flourish personal business investments. The Indian diaspora indeed achieved many of their objectives in the course of time.

Immigration and Naturalisation Act of 1965 has brought a breakthrough in the flow of Indian immigration to the United States, “which abolished country of origin quotas, awarding instead visas on the basis of familial relationships or occupational skills” (Bose 2008:13). The earlier immigration policy was so restricted regarding immigration intake of the South Asian countries to the United States. However, it drastically changed its nature and condition in 1965. The strength of its diasporic community by size started visualizing the ethnic and religious identities in terms of

dress, food, culture, and their social practices. These activities have been organized by forming the organizations mostly based on the identities of regional, language and religion that had been carried along with them from India.

The religious, social norms, skin color, and social behavior became the significant elements for forming the identity of the Indian diaspora. Religion and ethnicity have an important place in its construction because both terms have been intertwined with each other that have been seen in the lives of the Indian Hindu diaspora. This mobilized and vibrant Indian community has settled down in the United States that has a high literacy rate, high earning manpower, people who have been running software companies, have become physicians, bankers and leaders in politics. Thus they have been playing a significant role in broader spectrums of the United States. All the ethnic identity dimensions have been reflected in their social, spiritual and cultural life-world which are surfacing among Indian diaspora by exercising the space and freedom guaranteed by the United States. However, the representation of Hinduism has gone through considerable alteration and reshaped in a new version in which conservative norms of social and cultural practices became fragile and infirm. Forming the monotheistic Hinduism has been endorsed by the neo-Vedanta religious movement; it can be called as a new form of Hinduism. Lucia pointed out that, “Rammohan Roy, who would become the father of the Brahmo Samaj in 1828, became the first Hindu immigrant (2017:03). On the other hand, the Indian diaspora itself has adapted the acceptable norms of the United States, brought changes in their social, religious and cultural practices in order to fit into this society.

Now the issue of Hindu religious identity became pivotal for the Hindu Indian diaspora in the United States and it is developed through its social, ritual, cultural and geopolitical history. All these dimensions of Indian society are different in many ways from other societies across the globe. The society itself is distinguished from having peculiar social and religious diverse norms, and cultural and ritual practices; these are the special characteristics of Indian Hindu society. The ethnic practices have come into fore by the ideology of religion, social norms and cultural phenomena of a group of people exercising in a common way that sprouted out of its roots. The traditional identity of the Indian diaspora becomes complicated to operate in their day to day

lives. It was a challenge for Indians to assimilate themselves in the United States along with their traditional social and ritual norms.

Thus, the social, cultural, ecological and ritual history of the Indian immigrants has an important place in the forging of its religious identity. The Hindu diaspora identity construction is seen collectively based on common religious faith, beliefs, myths, national affection, cultural patterns, and social behavior that had been carried along with them from India. These various aspects of Indian diaspora have reflected in the journey of its people's lives in the United States. These people have emigrated from various states of India and belong to different religions, castes and socio-cultural backgrounds that reflect all these distinctions in their composition and that are playing a significant role in getting recognition as the distinct ritual and social group. If we see the traditional system and characteristics of Hinduism we can understand it is structured in a vertical manner; not horizontal. This pattern of Indian society has created a social and religious hierarchy among Indian diaspora or overseas Indian communities. By this pattern, the high castes Hindus are privileged by having rights on ritual activities, considered socially superior to lower castes Hindus. In addition, the ethnic Hindu identity of the Indian diaspora got different shapes being influenced by flora and fauna of the United States which leads to having syncretized Hindu identity as Indo-American.

This immigration influx reached the top by the arrival of globalization which brought drastic changes in the scenario of the social, economic and political life of the people across the world. The arrival of globalization is a key factor to start up the worldwide movement of migration where India became a major source of immigration that supplied the huge labor force including un-skilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly educated to the developed countries. Globalization entails the labor migration movement, communications, exchange of ideas, economic, transportation and transnational networks. It also covers social and political at all forms of transformation including nations and states and their connection to the other nations. "The process of globalization is driven by three major imperatives - the market, the new technology, and transnational networks - that are themselves interconnected" (Jain 2010:07).

In this regard, the present study deals with the issues of Hindu identity, displacement, racial discrimination, the struggle for settlement, citizenship, and the role played by Hindu religious organizations in the United States and their affiliation with Hindu religious organizations in India such as RSS, VHP, and Bajrang Dal. Since the formation of the transnational community, the issue of identity became critical and challenging in the intellectual discourse being crossed the nation-state boundaries and at the same time maintaining relations of more than a single national identity. The issues of identity formation, social situation, the cultural and national assertion of the Indian diaspora have captured the attention of the Indian government, found a space in academic discourse and address in various platforms such as conference, symposium, and workshop.

It examines the way of presenting Hinduism to the American people by Hindu disseminators, various religious organizations and different religious Hindu movements. Substantially, neo-Vedanta religious movement, American Hindu Education Foundation (AHEF), Hindu American Foundation (HAF), Vedic Foundation (VF) and different Hindu religious sects. In addition, it looks how does pro-Indian identity has got mixed shape that is neither complete Indian nor American; it is mixed composition what Homi Bhabha says “[I]dentity is never a priori, nor a finished product; it is only ever the problematic process of access to an image of identity” (Bhabha 1994:51). So the identity of any given diasporic community would be manifested as ‘hybrid’ being adopted the dimensions of and settled in a multicultural community. These elements will be critically studied and how the religious and social norms have contributed to reopened its ethnic identity by adopting the norms of modern American society which got a different look. Thus, the Indian diaspora ethnic identity has questioned the pro-American identity by putting it into the domain of interrogation. These immigrants called into question the conventional racial categories of ‘black’ and ‘white’ in dominant (mostly US-based) discourse, and the label of ‘transnational’ provided them with an alternative category (Dominguez, 1998). Thus the particular ethnic identity became a challenging issue among multicultural counties.

Understanding Diaspora and Ethnic Identity: A Theoretical Framework

“The term diaspora’, long used only to describe the dispersion of Jewish people throughout the world, has in the last 30 years elicited unprecedented interest, attracting the attention not only of the academic world but also of the media” (Bruneau, Michel; 2012:123). A diaspora is referred to as involuntary dispersed mass from its origin land to others, remarkably the banishment of Jews from the land of Israel and the exile of Greeks after the collapse of Constantinople. Diaspora is not a new phenomenon it has an old history but its connotations have been changed over the centuries and it has become a domain in which included a different form of immigrated mass who have moved from the original land to somewhere else in the world to find a bit of good luck in term of finance, living standard, business, and education, etc. Diaspora means to scatter in Greek, but today we use the term to describe a community of people who live outside their shared country of origin or ancestry but maintain active connections with it. This term has included both immigrants and their successors. However, some people have lost their connection to their original land, others could maintain a good attachment to the land which their predecessors have left long ago. William Safran has said six-point model to understand diaspora such as dispersal from the original land, holding of collective memory, myth, biased assimilation which will never be completed, in the host community, hope to return to original land, a recreation of homeland and endlessly reopen linkages with original land. Thus the debate has started to qualify the criteria of diaspora and some scholars have widened up its criteria to incorporate its various connotations. “Some scholars offering wide, inclusivity definitions that contain ‘immigrant, expatriate, refugee, sojourn, guest worker, exile community, overseas community and ethnic community in the semantic domain of transmigration” (Tololian 1991, 4 5, cited in Jain 2010, 05).

About Indian immigrants, we may say that the Romania people from India have been deported to various parts of the world which probably disconnected from their ancestral land. But it is the history that says that these people have migrated from the various states, particularly from central India and its suburban states to the different parts of the world. Perhaps, they have been disconnected from Indian ancestry because of the lack of communication, transportation, and absence of technology. So,

they could not be in touch with the original land otherwise they would have been in touch with their ancestors. On the other hand, the Indian indentured labor immigration happened during the colonial era which has transported a large number of Indian mass, unskilled labor to the various colonial colonies that were established by imperialists in third world countries. The successor of the Indian indentured diaspora has maintained a strong relationship with their homeland through communication, exchanging socio-cultural elements and bilateral political relations and it has become quite easy to maintain due to the availability of the most advanced information technology, tools of transportation and navigation knowledge about the world. So, the diaspora concept is being emerged as a significant discipline in an academic sphere and an important issue among intellectual discourse in a globalized world. It has included all forms of migration and its reflections. “A community diaspora first comes into being and then lives on owing to whatsoever in a given place forges a bond between those who want to group together and maintain, from afar, relations and other groups which, although settled elsewhere, invoke a common identity” (Bruneau, Machel; 2012:124). Similarly, in the commencement, the Indian immigrants were scattered and living in a frightening situation in the United States but later they have organized themselves as the segregated ethnic community which has its own civilization, culture, and religious legacy. These spiritual, cultural and social norms became forceful elements that help to gather Asian Indian people. Thus, they started to develop their relations by digging up their ancestral linkages.

In this regard, the study made an attempt to illustrate the different notions of identity, home, and homeland, dislocation, alienation, struggles of a settlement of the Indians in those distant lands and religion, the presence of various ethnic groups contributing to the social stratification and syncretism of plural American society. “Identity is a concept that neither imprisons (as does much in sociology) nor detaches (as does much in philosophy and psychology) persons from their social and symbolic universes, [so] it has over the years retained a generic force that few concepts in our field have” (Qtd in Howard 2000: 367). Identity itself is arising from its social and psychological phenomena where a group of people formed their identity and preserved those forces that facilitate ethnic identity among them. This formed identity gives a sense of difference from the other-self that always is in a state of instability based on an individual position having different meanings and ramifications.

Transnational Indian Diaspora

The concept of transnational diaspora has been developed according to time and space based on varied causes to apply scattered people from their origin land to some other land but they are in touch with the homeland, they have maintained the connection with their roots and its culture. Globalization is a new phenomenon that has brought drastic changes in every walk of human life that significantly impacted the diaspora community and its tie with the host and home country. Therefore, scholars have made different categories of diaspora based on the varied terms namely the trade migration, religious migration, imperialist, and social coherence within the diaspora community which ties to the homeland.

The migration of Indians to the United States is voluntary since they have taken such an adventurous decision to leave their birth country to others. It has happened for various good causes such as to bring financial prosperity, to improve living standards, to get higher studies, to get high paid jobs and to run the business. Thus, the Indian diaspora itself has grown to become the second most important source of providing immigrants to the United States, next to Mexico. “Indian emigration to the US has typically been high-skilled in nature, with student migration as the first step towards job placement and eventual naturalization” (Tumbe 2019). The transnational diaspora has varied characteristics which are important to be noted here to understand well, it has connections with more than two communities, countries and it is always in the floating form, one place to another. It has strong relations, affiliations with the homeland while having linkages with different countries’ community people and they are occasionally visiting the homeland. It happens due to being unable to assimilate into a multicultural community.

These causes have pushed to emerge a different form of diaspora. In the current social and political sphere, the transnational diaspora category has emerged since this diaspora has been maintaining strong ties with more than two countries; therefore, it is called transnational diaspora. This diaspora has been involved in exchanging views, ideas and transporting things between the received and homeland country. Apart from this, this diaspora is frequently visiting his/her homeland on social, cultural, religious and familial events to keep strong connection with their origin land. In this

connection, the diaspora in the global era has been playing a pivotal role in formulating the immigration policies of both countries of resident and origin. These immigrants have benefited since they have exploited the advanced information technology for communicating and exchanging ideas, things with their relatives that stayed back in their home country. It has to be noted that this diaspora has the most advanced transportation tools for travelling beyond the national boundaries and reaching out to the expected destination in a short time period.

The transnational diaspora is an important phenomenon that covers the varied aspects of diaspora community and relationship with their homeland. "People originating in one region or nation are scattered among a variety of nation-states and form a coherent transnational community" (Band, 2003:324). Many anthropologists' scholars defined the term transnational immigration as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. "They wrote: by living their lives across borders, transmigrants find themselves confronted with and engaged in the nation-building processes of two or more nation-states."(Shukla, Sandhy:2003,12). Indeed, the Indian diaspora in the current scenario is visiting homeland, for attending social, cultural, spiritual and familial events and they continue in connection with their family, society, and people in India. Indian diasporic groups and their transnational networks are best reflected in their participation in transnational associations and organizations and their involvement in the homeland through investments and personal visits for various" (Sahoo 2013:24). Thus, the Indian diaspora as a group of the large population has challenged the constructed identities of black and white and disturbed this binary race issue by entering between them.

Religion in the Indian diaspora

Religion is very close to Indians' hearts and deeply rooted in mind since primordial time whether they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist and it can be seen in the study of the religious history of India. However, the present study is an attempt to evaluate the role of Hindu religiosity in the forming Indian diaspora identity among the Indian diaspora in the United States of America. It does not mean that other Indian diaspora identities belonging to Buddhism, Jainism, and Shikh are not Indian; of

course, their identity is also Indian as called Indian diaspora. “Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are religions that originated in India, whereas Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism were introduced in India” (Mandelbaum, 1972; Williams, 1988, 04). The present study is about the formation of an ethnic Indian Hindu diaspora identity looking at their religious practice, the contribution of a religious organization, temple construction in spreading Hinduism among its diaspora. The United States of America is a country of diverse people in which Indian itself is diverse that made an addition in American multicultural society.

Nonetheless, the United States itself has never declared itself as a multicultural society such as Canada and Australia has formally declared as multicultural societies. The United States “that this country comprises citizens from diverse backgrounds, whose identities and cultures need to be publicly acknowledged and respected, has been “a policy rubric” in a variety of areas for over a decade” (Newfield and Gordon 1996:76–7). Even though the US did not declare itself as a multicultural society but it is a sensitive country each community has its own space to promote their cultures and customs and it always encouraged all societies to move on with coexistence along with others. Being in the multicultural American community, the Indian diaspora has formed its own religious, cultural, social relations and created religious places throughout American cities. The Indian diaspora in America is the composition of the different social groups on which the relationship of Indians has been constructed. With this idea, I would like to explain the role of the Hindu religious movements in reconstructing ethnic Indians rather than American Indians in which caste and stigmatize customs and social practices have been overlooked. This study attempts to clarify why the identity of religion has become a more important issue in the formation of its identity. There are so many religious and cultural associations of Indian diaspora throughout the American cities, mostly founded on the idea of religion, regional identity; language and culture which are playing a pivotal role in the construction of its identity. Moreover, it also tries to explain the Indian diasporas’ causes of partial assimilation in American society and its way of life which leads toward forming the hybrid, hyphenated identity which is neither fully Eastern nor European; they are being called as Indo-American or South Asian-American.

Profile of Hindus in the United States

According to Sahay (2009), “immigration into the United States from India in 2005, as recorded by the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Services), was approximately 2.3 million, in contrast to only 815,000 in 1990” (Sahay 2009: 159). It is a result of various immigration policies that incited Indians to go to America that gives opportunities and scope for economic prosperity. Most of them are H-1B holders. Most of the Indian immigrants came to the US from the Hindu religion and it is certain since India contained a larger Hindu population than the other religious people. Aside from this, the upper caste Hindus were getting an education and they were privileged by the social, cultural and economical. The developed countries demanded skilled and highly qualified people to work in IT, science, engineering and multinational companies. “At present, there are about 1.5 million Indian immigrants in the U. S. A majority of them arrived in the U. S. during the late sixties or early seventies 85 percent of them are Hindus” (Saran 1988, Rangasamy 1998 and Rajeshwari 2009).

However, most of them are concentrated in American cities such as New York, Chicago, New Jersey, Texas, Boston, Los Angeles, and California, and also they live in various cities in the United States of America. This composition of Hindus in America is the inclusion of various castes, sects, and social backgrounds, even though the majority of them have come from the upper strata of the Hindu community. “The 1970 census reported 51,000 Indians in the U.S.; by 2006 that number has grown over a million and a half. Of this group, the number of Hindus is estimated at a million or more” (Calico, 2010:03). These Hindu have gone to the US from India. Apart from this, there are Hindus who have come from different parts of the world. These immigrants had immigrated during the colonial period to the various colonial colonies from British India. They have come from different parts of the world (e.g., the U.K., Uganda, Kenya, West Indies, India, and South Africa). “What they commonly share is a religion (Hinduism), which they choose as the major marker of their diasporic identity, and Hindu rituals, which have become the expression of that religious identity (Pandharipande 2009). This is what makes them to feel attached among themselves, the religious connection is a metaphor of force to be united, affiliated and of sharing collective common beliefs and faiths among them, and be united to fight

back against all forms of discrimination and suppression under the dominant white American society.

For Indians to be united is quite normal since they are in a sizable strength of population and the favorable situation has been created by American law and human rights. Therefore, the Indian community emerged in a short time as one of the largest ethnic communities in the United States in which Hindu religious preachers and priests have performed a recognizable role. "The Indian community has become an ethnic group, sharing cultural values, communication (language), territorial contiguity and is distinguishable from other groups' (Gautam 2013;08). Indian diaspora in the United States has been known with their regional identities such as Panjabi, Gujarati, Tamil, Orisa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala and Andra diaspora and in a collective form, they have been recognized as Indian diaspora since they have ancestrally belonged to India. The diverse social, cultural and religious identities are the salient features of the Indian diaspora. In this formation of collective ethnic Indian identity as Asian Indians in the United States, the language in the way they are talking, skin color, appearance, food habits became the major elements to identify them as American Indians. All these elements are distinct in appearance, choice of food, body posture and overall socio-cultural behaviour from Indians in India. Here, I would like to look at Indian culture that sprouted out of its customs, religion, pervaded social norms, regional and national identities. These whole social norms, religious faith and national affiliation operated in bringing all Indians together in the United States.

Hinduism

The term 'Hindu' has a longer history than the term 'Hinduism'. "The question of what it means to be Hindu is a monstrously large and multifaceted one...At times, the only thing that seems to be agreed upon is that the term is a highly contested gloss for diverse ways of being in the world" (Palmer 2006:99). The term Hinduism was coined relatively recently, in the 19th century, as the term 'Hindu' began to be invested with religious significance. The term used to denote a diversity of socio-religious practices and beliefs. The Hindu religion is not looking like other religions; it has peculiar characteristics that stand distinctly from other existing religions. It has not a particular founder, a canonical scripture, an authoritative clergy, in contrast to it, it has many

deities, varied spiritual practices, polytheistic beliefs and constructed social hierarchical system is underpinned in Hinduism. “Hinduism” refers to “the religion of the Indus valley” or, more generally, the religion of the Indian subcontinent. There is no term like it for Chinese religion; nor for Japanese religion; nor any of the Western religious traditions” (Nadeau 2014:103). Due to this distinction, the nature and characteristics of Hinduism have varied greatly by region, caste, and historical period. Hinduism is a religious stress over theological beliefs. “For all these reasons, the average Hindu immigrant is often unable to explain the “meaning” of Hinduism and its “central tenets,” something that they are repeatedly asked to do in the American context” (Kurien 2004:370). This is a religion the Indian diaspora has carried along with them to the United States, not only that but also they have propagated it among American people.

Propagation of Hinduism in the United States

Hinduism has reached out to the United States by arriving Hindu Indian immigrants and that was started in the 19th century. “The initial features of Hinduism that captivated North American audiences were those that were lauded for their compatibility with Protestant Christianity and those that were derided for their incompatibility with the same” (Lucia 2017:01). It was the beginning of spreading Hinduism which had not been propagated by the specific or trained religious emissaries from India. Early in the immigration Indians were not religiously trained or well-read Hinduism because a large number of Hindus were not reading texts, it is a fact that it has not a particular text so that one can read and understand fully. Only Brahmins had the privilege and authority to read religious texts and so they could put the tenets of its religion to the American people. Nevertheless, Hindus were staunch believers and have strong faith in Hinduism so they acquired the knowledge of Hinduism through practicing religious activities in day to day life. Hindus have been stressing on its theology in their daily lives. Thus Hindus have developed their faith, beliefs and divinity in Hinduism which has been composed on polytheistic beliefs since it has a series of gods and goddesses. All these elements have made Hinduism as a distinct religion from other religions.

However, it has been made an attempt to represent Hinduism in the United States with a fresh look as the monotheist rather than polytheistic Hinduism. “The Hinduism that flourished in the North American context drew heavily from the neo-Vedantic theology of monism, which was propagated by Hindu reform movements in the 19th century” (Lucia 2017). It was started by the arrival of Swami Vivekanand in 1893, he was invited for the world parliament of religions in Chicago and he successfully presented his views on Hinduism in America. In his view, Hinduism freed humanity from superstition and elevated the human mind towards its spiritual potential. “When Vivekananda took the stage, newspapers reported how he was “dashing with the superb carriage of the Hindustanis” and how the audience was filled with “ladies everywhere” (Seager,1993). Hindu religion is a polytheistic religion since it has many gods and goddesses, faiths, beliefs and vertical spiritual systems. But here Swami Vivekananda has reinterpreted Hinduism in a new way in which he discarded polytheistic faiths, beliefs and presented ecumenical Hinduism. “Introducing Hinduism, Vivekananda explained the singular omnipotent, formless God who resided at the heart of the most ancient Vedic tradition. He declared that there was no polytheism in India, only the misunderstandings of uneducated people” (Lucia 2017:05). This representation of Hinduism has no place in the layer of spiritual hierarchy and social differences and, thus he started to present universal Hinduism in America.

“He established the Vedanta Society and the Ramakrishna Mission to promulgate his Advaita Vedanta form of Hinduism and to do humanitarian work” (Calico, 2010:02). Advaita Vedanta is a school of Hindu ideology and a system of spiritual realization in Hinduism and it denotes the idea of true self Atma. The representative of Brahmo Samajists at the world’s parliament of religions, B. B. Nagarkar said, the fundamental, spiritual ideal of the Brahmo Samaj is a belief in the existence of one true God that's a metaphysical reality, Brahman. “He represented the theism of the Brahmo Samaj as the religion of eclecticism, wholly inclusive and not exclusive” (Lucia 2017:05). Brahmo Samaj is a new sect of Hindu religion whose roots are laid in one of the oldest and revered Hindu religious sacred texts Upnishada. Brahmo Samaj has focused on the inclusiveness of all people irrespective of caste and social identities. This Hindu religious sect has contributed its contribution to spreading and representing Hinduism in a new form in which social, cultural and spiritual

stigmatized practices have been overlooked. “According to Arvind Rajagopal (1995), a further reason that Hinduism becomes important in the United States is that identifying as Hindus allow the predominantly upper-caste immigrants to side-step their problematic racial location” (Kurien 2004:370). Because of this the religious sects and movements led by the upper strata of the Hindu people have refused the issue of caste and its implication from the representation of Hinduism. This transformation in the spreading of Hinduism became a pivotal shift in the history of the reformation of Hinduism in America. There are many Hindu religious disseminators who have come with different views and ideas in order to spread Hinduism. They have followed many ways and terms.

In the 1920s, Swami Yogananda established a Self-Realization Fellowship in the United States which taught a form of meditation known as Kriya yoga. He has brought significant shifts in representing Hinduism which prefers to propagate Hindu religion by blending it with other religious practices, particularly of Christian’s to get more attention from Americans toward Hinduism. “He also presented the religion as universal, scientific, and individually oriented, and recast Jesus as an avatar who taught yogic meditation to his disciples” (Calico, 2010:02). Now, he has tried to give a different shape to the Hindu religion which is inclusive, universal and giving space for individual freedom. He claims that Jesus is an incarnation who taught meditation. It shows the influence of Christianity on Indian immigrants. It is an attempt of reinterpretation of Hinduism along with new modern philosophy which is critical to be fit into traditional Hinduism. Because Hinduism is exclusively constructed on the basis of hierarchical spiritual beliefs and social system that has not constructed in binary opposition but it has constructed in different hierarchical classes arranged one above another. Hindus are not inclusive wholly as Hindu but they are represented distinct categories within Hinduism. This Hinduism does not provide space for individuals because the identity of any Hindu person is not identified with his/her knowledge or virtue but with his/her social category which is imposed on him/ her by his/her birth. Thus, the Hindu religious propagators have made an attempt to reinterpret Hinduism with adapting new modern values and that is an appreciable step toward forming universal Hinduism with universal values. It may have two intentions, the first is to pursue the attention of strangers toward Hinduism and the second is to show religious universality, broadness toward the people irrespective of

their religion, nationality, creed, and race and assured everyone can be absorbed or participated in it.

By successfully representing the fresh reinterpretation of Hinduism in the world's parliament of religions in the U.S Swami Vivekananda himself established the most revered person in the United States. After this, he went on a three years long lecture tour to the United Kingdom to advocate Hinduism in a new version. He has developed a technique of practical methods with his disciples who were interested in his philosophical teaching. "In 1896, he published his paraphrasing of Patanjali's *yoga sutras* in a short book entitled *Raj Yoga* or the "yogi of Kings". "He wrote, "Each soul is potentially divine". The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal" (Lucia 2017:06). It can be achieved through these following different paths such as worship, controlling over external and internal intrigues, and following divine philosophy. He said this is the whole religion. Thus, Vivekananda had popularised his teaching of the Hindu religion with a new form that is deferred from traditional Hinduism in India. Therefore, his new form of Hinduism teaching in the United States has become a subject of criticism and controversy. His teaching has been influenced by liberal Protestant theological ideas and American social phenomenon which has stood different from the practice of traditional Hinduism in India which staunchly is following devotional worship in the village, Brahmanical fire sacrifice (*homos*) and temple worship. Religion in his imagination is different from what religion is in India. In his teaching religion has no space for caste and social and spiritual hierarchy by denouncing the hegemony of Brahmins who have been assigned the ritual duties by Hindu ethics or scriptures. Even though he has lauded with great enthusiasm in the United States itself and home country India as well while he had returned from his championship on to defend Hinduism and rejecting colonial supremacy in representing Hinduism.

As it has been mentioned above that Vivekananda has started the propagation of Hinduism in the United States, and his legacy is found in a Vedanta society that he had established and that continues to flourish across the United States in the present day. "The structure in San Francisco that is frequently identified as the first Hindu temple in the United States established in 1906, in fact, the first permanent home of Vedanta society" (Lucia 2017:06). The Vedanta societies have gone through the ups

and downs situation even though it has flourished throughout America which has supported the theology resembling the Vivekananda philosophy that has emerged as neo-Vedanta teaching extracted from Upanishad during the last quarter of the 19th and early 20th centuries. “They adhered to the teaching that the *Brahman*, the essence of the universe, or in their view, the supreme consciousness, is formless and indescribable, save for the *sach-ta-ananda*- absolute existence, consciousness and bliss” (Lucia 2017:06). Brahman, the essence of the universe could be achieved by following multiple paths and different names. However, the neo-Vedanta society theology has focused on three paths underlined in the *Bhagwat Gita*: *janana yoga*, the path of knowledge; *Karma yoga*: the path of action; and *bhakti yoga*, the path of devotion, and *raja yoga*, the path of concentration.

The propagation of Hinduism was going on in the United States among those who were following the neo-Vedanta teaching which was significantly focused on the practice of *yoga*. In the 20th century, there was sensational anger that became popular in the United States, particularly that responding to the huge immigration happened from East and Central Europe to the U. S. The U. S. government in 1917 expanded the law of Chinese Exclusion Act to the Asian Exclusion Act which has restricted the Asian immigrants to enter the United States. The result of this step has decreased the immigration flow from the Asian continent which was major in sending its residents to the U. S. The Asians were rejected due to their color, but the restriction act was not for the European immigrants that they were accepted because they belonged to white lineage, Caucasian family. It shows that anti-Asian sentiment due to race differences and espoused to retain the European, white and Christians in the United States and Canada as well.

Therefore, Hinduism couldn't be propagated during 1920s to 1960s at large scales because of the small proportion of Indian people in the United States due to a restrictive immigration policy which prevented an increase in the numbers of Indian immigrants. “Until 1965, immigrants from India were relatively few and saw themselves as residing in America only temporarily, believing that they would eventually return “home” to India” (Palmer 2006:99). Racial quotas severely distorted the flow of Indian immigration and those who arrived were ineligible for citizenship and had difficulty in owning property. Consequently, Indian immigrants were not

positive to reside in America because of these issues. Certainly, until 1965, they were thinking not to remain in America after spending a few years. Fortunately, it had not happened because they met with prosperity in America in the later period. Since the 1960s, religious and spiritual movements had started to develop in America which was influenced by the Hindu tradition. During this period, one of the most influential spiritual movements was the Transcendental Meditation (TM) which stemmed from the Hindu philosophy. “The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), better known as the Hare Krishnas, was established in 1965. Many other groups, such as the Sathya Sai Baba movement, took root in American culture in the 1960s and ’70s” (Calico, 2010:04). It was the beginning where Hinduism was flourishing not only among the Indian immigrants but also among the American people.

The issues of Hinduism and Indianness had become very important for the first and the second generation of Indian American Hindus. The first generation was worrying about localizing the identity of Indianness and Hindu culture in America. These immigrants were somehow acquainted with Hindu religion and its culture and practices since they came from India but they hadn’t had proper knowledge of Hinduism, they were unable to explain what Hinduism means to other people. In this context, they became aware of it and started to ponder and introspect about their knowledge about Hinduism. The need for outreach has multiplied, but the basic challenge for Hindus in the US remains: we are often not able to articulate our faith in a way that dispels stereotypes and reduces child bullying (Kuppa 2017). It was important for them because religion was the marker of their identity. Kurien said that Indians became more conscious to get the meaning of religion and its importance in marking identity after coming to the United States. In India, they could take it easy without bothering about its meaning. “Others, who claimed they were not especially religious, nevertheless participated in Hindu organizations for social and cultural reasons, and “for the sake of the children”(Kurien 2004:370). The Indian diaspora has become more conscious about his religion and its importance being in America which is a diverse racial community. Within these multicultural American communities, Indians wanted to form their ethnic identity and in which religion became the foremost force in forming an identity. It shows that religion has become a tool to organize all Indians in a community.

At the same time, this Indian diaspora is in the gulf of the multicultural domain, therefore, they have been forced by the surrounding atmosphere to assert their own identity and protect their own culture, roots history in which religion played a vital role to form affiliation among Indian diaspora in the United States. On the other hand, there is anxiety, perhaps that they couldn't be accepted fully in American society since they have carried distinct religious, social and cultural norms which are reflecting Indian nationality. It leads to the Indian diaspora in the alienated situation to define their identity as we are different from the other as self. Therefore, Indians have followed the identity of religion, social norms and its cultural things which became the linking forces of unification among Indian diaspora. The feeling of insecurity forced the Indian diaspora to be united to consolidate them into collective Hindu Indian identity.

“Geertz argued that civic bonds in plural societies originate from primordial loyalties regarding the region, caste, race, tribe, family, language, and religion. These communal attachments originate from socialization in the ethnic community” (Ruben 2018:02). Similarly, Hindus have followed their communal attachment originated from their socialization that had happened in India and then in the United States that helped them to be united. They have followed the Hindu spiritual dogma, social norms, language and family pattern. To have a collective Indian Hindu identity, religion and its hierarchical social, spiritual practice and categorized cultural events have to be modified with radical changes. It will have happened only after eradication of all these hierarchies of social, spiritual and cultural from religious texts. It needs one granted scripture that must be accepted without any hesitation, fear of inequality by all Hindus in which has not space for all forms of discrimination. The hegemonic authority of a particular Hindu social group over spiritual performance ought to be ended and it should be opened for all Hindus. Anybody can become Hindu priest. The hegemony of Brahman people over spiritual performance has to be removed if they want Hinduism should be the universal religion. The caste stigma and its associated spiritual values must be eliminated from the mindset of Hindus. Then there is a possibility to form a united Hindu identity.

Indian Diaspora Religious, Social and Cultural Associations

The association has become an important institution for the Indian diaspora to protect their identities of culture, social, religious norms and nationality which have been shared in common by them in the host country. All these shared ideas and memories by individuals when manifested collectively among them that lead to form the social relations and affiliations. To protect shared social, cultural and religious things Indian diaspora has established many associations such as Hindu American Foundation (HAF), Hindu Education Foundation (HEF) and Vedic Dharma Foundation (VDF) that gives an idea of that particular group of people belonging to Hindu Americans. Thus associations come into being with their root identities. “Besides the adjustment problems and the difficulties in finding jobs and housing, Indians also miss their friends, family members and home (Indian) atmosphere” (Gautam 2013;04). Indians have faced many hardships adjusting in a strange world because they have gone through trauma, loneliness, alienation and dislocation since they are disconnected from their dears’ family, loving things, culture and society. Nonetheless, Indian diaspora has been trying from the very beginning to form a social, cultural and religious atmosphere in the United States to retain their distinct identity from the others. The issues of social, cultural and religious uncertainty of Indian diaspora in America are being discussed among Indian friends who have been living in these cities for a long time.

During the 1980s to 1990s Hinduism was started to be institutionalized in which Indian Americans had focused on the development of Hindu resources such as student networks and educational materials including social, cultural, religious to defend Hinduism along with its spiritual, social and cultural values from criticism of its opponents in American society. These people have founded many associations on the ground of regional, religious and cultural identities which helped to get release from psychic burden of alienation, trauma and sickness being far away from the homeland and also these associations emerged as a tool in protecting, retaining and disseminating the socio-cultural heritage that had been carried along with them from their ancestral land, India. In the early 20th-century, Indian immigrants established many organizations in the United States to fight for Indian freedom from the British regime, to claim civil rights and citizenship in the United States. After Independence,

the issues have been shifted and Indians in America started to organize themselves by coming together.

The important Hindu associations include the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, Arya Samaj, and Lord Krishna Movement. These are uplifting values of Hindu tradition and tempted to create a homogenous identity of its people in the USA. “The first and the most important feature of the Hindutva project remains the transformation of Hinduism into a regimented, codified, monochromatic order” (Chaturvedi: Sanjay; 2005:161). In this context, the organizations of Hindu diaspora in the United States are concentrated on the propagation of the monotheistic Hindu spirituality rather than polytheistic. The upper strata of Hindu religion is privileged and considered superior to other Hindu fellows. The religious sacred texts of Hindu religion have assigned superior work to elite Hindus, particularly Brahmins who are entitled to become priests in the temple. There is a faith that we are as Hindu; it is the result of the *karma* act committed in a previous life. So the individual talent has not value. Therefore, all Hindus are victims of Hindu graded system which has divided all Hindus into a hierarchical system. “The Hindu nation is to be founded and united based on racial and doctrinal purity understandings related to the inclusion of insiders and exclusion of outsiders to this unity, however, varied” (Chaturvedi: Sanjay; 2005:161). It is very critical and hard to include others and vice versa to exclude its devotee from Hinduism. To include others is a problematic issue because the identity of any Hindu is formed on the ground of his/ her birth caste; not based on his/her individual competency. If a stranger wants to become Hindu, immediately a question will be raised which caste identity he/she would like to have and how he/she will get that. If we follow the order of Hinduism we cannot include strangers into Hinduism. But one can denounce it because the social identity of any Hindu is ascribed by his/her birth, not by his/her virtue. Although, regarding the overseas Indian community all these shortcomings, perhaps do not apply at a certain level because they have adapted modern norms of the host country to adjust themselves in it. So, the Hindus are retained as Hindu by following and maintaining its social, cultural and religious norms while adapting to modern values.

After comprising a considerable population of Indians in America, they started to establish associations with the aim to unite Hindus in North America and to create a

network between American and Indian Hindus in India. For this purpose, Indian Americans have established some religious organizations which have been effectively working on behalf of Indian diaspora and dealing with their issues of race discrimination and identity. These organizations have modeled and developed a connection with the dominant Hindu religious organizations in India. “They established umbrella Hindu nationalist organizations mirroring their Indian counterparts: Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), modeled after the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), modeled after the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)” (Lucia 2017:11). Organizations such as RSS and VHP are very dominant and active organizations in upholding the Hindutva nationalist ideology in India which implicated the American Hindu organizations for uplifting Hinduism in America. These mentioned organizations have played a vital role in the construction of Hinduism in America since they are dominantly involved in creating knowledge production of Hinduism. These are working to supervise the Hindu followers and make available for them the scholastic writing materials so that American Hindus would learn about it. These organizations are also interested in representing the spiritual values of Hinduism in the educational institutions in which Indian American students have been introduced to it.

Taking up the issues of Hinduism across America, Hindu organizations have tried to sort out the issue of representation of Hinduism in elementary school syllabus in California. Hindu people were not happy regarding the representation of Indian history, language, food habits, and Lord Hanuman as the monkey god in secondary school syllabus in the United States. These organizations have alleged that the California State Board of Education (CSBE) has misrepresented the history of Hinduism and presented the images of gods and goddesses in caricature, ironic and sarcastic manner. Concerned about this, Hindus have expressed their anger and opposed that presentation of Hindus Gods and Goddesses in school syllabus. That objectionable roar has come out from the Hindu people, particularly by the parents of the school children who demanded to review and edit the section on the Hindu religion. The California State Board of Education (CSBE) has been reviewing every six years for its major subjects such as history, mathematics, social science, and art and literature to update it and asking the public for scrutiny and comments on proposed textbooks. In the course of public scrutiny, the Jewish, Islam and Hindu

organizations testified the represented aspects of their respected religion and history in the elementary school syllabus. Hindus, including organizations, particularly the American Hindu Foundation as an advocacy group founded in 2003, have expressed their anger upon the misrepresentation of Hinduism. It was about the Indian language, food and supreme Hanuman. “Where is the beef?. Hanuman, a simian character from the Ramayana as a ‘monkey king’ who “loved Ram so much that it is said that he is present every time the Ramayana is told...This book instructed students to “look around-see any monkeys?” (Bose 2008:15). It shows the representation of Hindu cultural practices of food and reverence God Hanuman is sarcastically and ironically. So, the Indian American urged the education board to review and edit it.

The multiplicity of Hindu deities has been presented as polytheism and the worship of Hanuman derided as animism” (Lucia 2017). In response, the Hindu Educational Foundation (HEF), American Hindu Foundation (AHF) and Vedic Foundation (VF) has opposed to inaccurate representation and farfetched comparison of Hinduism with other religion, misrepresentation of Indian social structure and deride descriptions of core concepts and religious scripture of Hinduism. Such representation of Hinduism in the California school texts has shocked Hindus faiths and beliefs. So they have proposed over 200 corrections that explained the Indian history and a spiritual significance of Hinduism which enabled them to understand the whole scenario and the fabric of India diversity that has been historically developed by pluralism. “The majority of their edits gloss over unsavory aspects of the religion and attempt to make Hinduism more palatable for American sensibility” (Bose 2008:15). This is the way Hindu organizations and Hindu people have opposed the problematic concepts, ironic descriptions of Hanuman as deriding animism and forced the California Board of Education to edit them. “There is no evidence, and in fact, the evidence is to the contrary, that birth based rigid caste system was present during early Vedic times. From ancient times up to today, there has been fluidity and movement within the system on the individual as well on the group level (etl Online).It shows an attempt of Hindu people to rewrite the history of Indian social structure”.

“Some Hindu groups, such as the Dharma Civilization Foundation (DCF) (connected with the RSS and VHP) aim to reclaim scholarship in the field of Hinduism for scholar-practitioners and to reframe the study of Hinduism within indigenous

epistemologies” (Lucia 2017:12). The Hindu organizations’ edited proposed representations of Hindu religion without mentioning the reference of caste, polytheism and the Aryan invasion theory, submitted with the support of the Vedic Foundation and the American Hindu Education Foundation to the California State Board of Education. These organizations AHEF’s and VF’s have presented the history of Indians according to their point of view such as the speakers of the Indo-European language (Aryans) have to be represented as Indigenous to Indians instead they have migrated from elsewhere. The caste issue should not be given more importance and that has to be considered as a system formed on the division of labor. Apart from this, AHEF and VF have urged to remove the word “Dalits” (the name for groups formerly known as “Untouchables”) from designed curriculum textbooks: “Hinduism should be described as a monotheistic faith, and references to women’s oppression should be omitted (Bose 2008:15-16). To propagate Hinduism, these Hindus organizations have tried to reframe the ideas and references which are causing inconvenience in its propagation. Thereby, they are deliberately avoiding critical issues such as caste and women’s oppression from its dissemination and discourse. Thus, they have overlooked them. They are establishing Hinduism based on ecumenical philosophy and monotheistic faith and belief. “When the edits were submitted for scholarly review, a mixed group of American scholars (including Indian and non-Indian members) was concerned that the VF and the HEF were attempting to rewrite history and the extant hierarchies and ritual practices of Hinduism as it exists in India” (Lucia 2017:12).

Thus, it should be noted here that how these Hindu organizations have been representing Hinduism in the United States in a subtle way that is avoiding the internal intrigued social and religious practices which have been structured in a vertical order. These organizations have attempted to put aside that underlying internal conflict of Hinduism to reformulate it. This discourse has deliberated over the representation of Hinduism without including social and spiritual differences which exist in Indian society. However, they represent monotheistic Hinduism to the Americans. At a certain level, this issue has been raised by Hindu marginalized representatives such as Adivasis (tribes) and Dalits. “Combined these changes equate the history of ancient India with the history of Hinduism, and reduce a diverse set of religious practices and beliefs to those associated with the patriarchal, Brahmanical

perspective” (Bose 2008:16). The privileged Hindus have represented Hinduism in the United States from their point of view to secure their superior position in society.

I collect data by sending the questionnaire to the Indian American people to get the first-hand information. The question was asked to the respondent who can become a Hindu priest. A respondent said he must be Brahman by birth and another lady said I am a woman so I cannot become a Hindu priest. I also asked randomly Indian American people who were on a visit to Indian. Is it necessary to be Brahman to become a Hindu priest? The respondent said. Yes. So, it means hierarchical notion still pertains in the Indian immigrant community in the United States. Thus the monopoly of Brahmans over ritual performance still is in the hands of Brahmans. They took the credit of spreading Hinduism in America. On the other hand, they are not considering the vital contribution of religious minorities, deprived communities, and Adivasis (tribes), women, and Dalits to Indian history. It seems like the VF and HEF have some problems while they are representing Hinduism in terms of Hindu culture and its ritual hierarchy. There is a lack of consistency in the argument because they are not rejecting the evil social practices, caste hierarchy, and women’s deprivation while they are partially accepting the modernity that believed equal accessibility in social, religious, economic and political domains. These foundations are aligned with militant Hindu religious organizations in India such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which are known for violation of civil liberties and human rights against women, Dalits, Adivasis and minorities in India. These militant Hindu organizations (RSS and VHP) known as Sangh Parivar championed the transformation to democratic secular India into a Hindu nation.

Bose (2008: 16) argues that “at the ideological level, militant Hindu nationalism, or Hindutva, has evolved as a distinct form of fascism that creates an opposition between “outsider” and “insider” seeking to assert Hindu religious identity in terms of nationalist and culturalists”. However, the Hindu organizations in America have a different stand that they are not claiming or creating the issue of outsider and insider because America is a country of immigrants not belonging to a particularly religious people where people represent distinct races and religions. Indians itself are an outsider in America since they cannot claim America is a Hindu holy land. They

claim that India is the holy land of Hindus. But the disseminators of Hinduism say that they are contributing to America becoming a more vibrant and multi-diverse nation. America is a multicultural society. So there is no issue of insider and outside that India has based on religious origin. Savarkar has included the Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists in his definition of Hindu because they originated in the Indian soil. “However, Christians and Muslims could not qualify as Hindus since they had potentially extraterritorial loyalties, and their holy lands were outside the territory of India (Chaturvedi: Sanjay; 2005:161). Similarly, the Hindu religion does not originate in America; therefore, propagators of Hinduism in America cannot claim that America should become a Hindu nation. They could not follow the blueprint and ideas of the Hindu nation of Savarkar in America.

Apart from this, the above mentioned Hindu religious organizations have played a pivotal role in forming Hindu identity and propagating Hinduism in America by spreading it across the education institutes, political sphere, society and created religious spaces. In the 1980s, the VHPA had been taken charge of two major projects that was knowledge production: the formation of a Hindu University in Florida and the *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. These named Hindu organizations encourage Hindu people to establish resources in educational institutes on Hinduism by forming different youth organizations such as the Hindu Student Council that was established in 1990. Thus, the Indian Hindus have vigorously demanded that religion and culture have to be represented by eliminating the caste reference which is profoundly rooted in the psychology of Indian people whether they are in India or not. This fact has been distorted from the discourse of Hinduism by upper-caste Hindus in America. However, the deprived section of the Hindu community people expressed their anger over excluding the reference of caste. “The scholarly voices were joined by Indian Dalit groups, such as the Dalit Freedom Network, the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, Dalit Shakti Kendra, and the Dalit Solidarity Forum” (Lucia 2017:12). Apart from this, other Dalit groups from within the Buddhist community also testified and objected to the corrections that removed references to caste in Hinduism. The lower strata of Hindu society have historically been deprived by social, cultural, religious, economic and political, and now the upper strata of Hindu society in America who are privileged having a high position in society emerged as the dominant elite class. Thereby, they are dismissing the historical references of lower

strata and creating a new discourse about Hinduism as a monotheistic religion in which lower strata of its religion do not have an equal place, opportunity, and accessibility.

For this study, I had to collect empirical data from the Indian diaspora in the United States and examine Indian diaspora and their social and religious relations among them. But unfortunately, I couldn't go to America for this. But I sent nearly two hundred plus questionnaires to Indian diaspora to get first-hand information. But I received only 20 responses. Out of these responses, the maximum said that a Brahmin can only become a Hindu priest. According to Hindu religious doctrine and its scriptures, Brahmin has the right to claim spiritual performance and teach religious texts. This has been attributed to them by its religious texts. The religious and social privilege still existed in the Hindu Indian American society in America.

However, HAF, VF, HEF, HSS, and VHPA as Hindu organizations are looking to reform Hinduism with a fresh look which does not hold the internal evil practices and the reference of caste notion. These are the issues on that ground Hinduism has been targeted so far. Therefore, Hindu upholders and propagators with high intensity have been trying to remove such issues from Hinduism to formulate universal, acceptable Hinduism in the United States. Thus they have been giving the shape to Hinduism as monolithic Hinduism. But these organizations neither deliberate on women's inequality nor caste hierarchy to annihilate it from Hinduism. So the problem of lower caste Hindu people as Dalit, Adivasi, and women still are not solved. However, the representatives of these organizations claim that all Hindus have equal rights and status in Hindu religion so the lower strata Hindus should not move from its religion. "In so doing, they create unity among Hindus by using scare tactics and scapegoats—often to the point of the propagation of untruths and the rewriting of history (Lucia 2017). Following subtle tactics, they have spread out Hinduism to a large extent in the United States. Convincingly, Prema Kurien argues that militant Hindu centrism and nationalism, which are steadily gaining deep down among diaspora populations. Perhaps, it is a result of American multicultural society. She quotes Ajah Shah, the convener of American Hindus against Defamation, as saying, "In seeking the honor of Hindus and demanding they not be ridiculed... we are being good Americans. In our fight for Hindu dignity, we are championing American pluralism" (Kurien 2007:376).

Thus, the VF and HEF have been formulating Hindu ethnic identity in America. They have defended the ideology of Hinduism by saying that plurality is the beauty of Hinduism and that contributed in making America a more pluralistic society. Along with its social, cultural and historical contexts, Indian American Hindus have disseminated Hindu philosophy in America.

Associations Based on Regional and Language Identity

Apart from this, there are numbers of other organizations of Indian diaspora mostly based on religion, language, culture, and society which are functioning at the ground level among its community people. I would think it is important to mention the names of these organizations that are active in working. Indian American Chamber of Commerce Greater Houston (IACCGH) was founded in 1999 by a group of local Indo-American businessmen and professionals who came together and worked very closely with the support and guidance of the Consul General of India in Houston. It has since then evolved into a vehicle of economic empowerment for the local businesses, educating and enabling them to make small business. “It also provides access to doing business with the local Indo-American community and to the largest emerging middle-class market in the world- India”. (n.d.). Indian Association of Western Washington is organizing events on specific social and religious occasions. Provide a platform to explore health, wellness, conversations, mentoring, enrichment and a place for all programs every Thursday at North Bellevue Community Centre. Forums for senior’s interaction and mutual support are organized to facilitate civic, recreational services and opportunities for cultural integration among Indian diaspora. “The Youth Program aims to foster greater cultural understanding and support social interaction within Indian American youth and provide them with leadership skills” (n.d)”. Indian Association of Tallahassee was formed in 1997, is a Florida non-profit committed to supporting and encouraging the activities of education, culture and social events of Indian American people. Mainly this institution has focused to unite all Indian diaspora and arrange social, religious and cultural events on specific occasions. Through these activities, the organization propagates the diverse and rich Indian customs and art forms among Indians.

There are so many organizations based on regional identity which are profoundly promoting the ethnic social, religious and cultural activities to make awareness about the beauty of Indian diverse and district culture among Indian diaspora such as Bengali, Gujarati, Telangana, Tamil, Panjabi, and Maharashtrian etc. Bengali Association of Greater Chicago (BAGC) is established as the non-profit organization devoted to protecting, promoting and celebrating literature, art, music and spreading them among American people. It also has been celebrating the prosperous religious events and developing the cultural heritage of the Indian diaspora community. In the last four decades, it has worked to pursue the social and philanthropic activities for development of its community people and enrichment of Bengali heritage. It has built its own Banga Bhavan located at the center of Chicago which became the foremost place for all activities and the city people have connected with it. Kallol of New Jersey is a non-profit socio-cultural organization founded in 1975 dedicated to fostering Bengali and Indian culture and heritage in the USA.

San Fernando Valley Gujarati Association (SFGA), California, is a Gujarati organization that was formed for preserving and celebrating their social, religious and cultural events and doing this, they are feeling proud of being Gujarati people growing in such an organization. Organizations are devoted to protecting the value of its culture, society, and religion along with these they are also encouraging youth to receive higher education, venture into new things, business and celebrate Gujarati heritage. The organizations have been celebrating cultural and religious events, particularly Diwali, Navratri (Garbha, the celebration of nine nights), and frequently organizing get-together, arranging trips to the beach, on sports day, camping boat trips, kiteflying and hiking. In which they organize cultural events, Indian music and drama which form social attachment among them. Aside from this, the Indian diaspora also celebrates Valentine Day and Mother's Day, making friends, and facilitating their children and parents to become lifelong friends. Gujarat Cultural Association (GCA) of Bay Area is working for charitable activities, GCA is one of the largest cultural organizations having thousands of members.

Maharashtra Mandal Bay Area (MMBA) was established in 1980 with the idea of promoting and preserving Maharashtrian art and culture and its heritage. It organizes the Ganapati Utsav, Shiv Jayati and all Hindu religious events such as Vari Pandharich,

and dance competitions. Burhan Maharashtra Mandal of North Washington Marathi Kala Mandal are promoting Marathi language, Art and culture. It has been organizing social, cultural and religious events such as Ganpati Utsav, Diwali and providing opportunities to participants to explore themselves by performing various arts such as singing songs, dance, and presenting Marathi drama. With the same intention, there is another Marathi Vishwa, New Jersey established to promote and protect Marathi art, culture, and language.

California Oriya Association (COA) represents a community of people from Orissa, India. Orissa is rich in its arts, culture, dance and unique temples and beautiful sculptures. The Oriya language is imitative of Sanskrit and is very rich in its literary works spanning over thousands of years. The Orissa Society of the America (OSA), started to hold an annual convention in California, the first time, was held in 1987, at the Stanford University area and in the second in 1989 at Monterey. In which the association has discussed the culture, arts, religious events and the annual Rath Yatra (Cae festival) which is the most celebrated event. Hundreds of guests were invited. Religiously the Rat Yatra is an important event that becomes a forced tool to bring together Indian Hindu people.

OSA was founded in 1969 by Oriya people and after a decade OSA has been dissolved and incorporated into Tennessee in 1981 working for Oriya culture for a better understanding and exchanging knowledge among the people of Orissa, America, and Canada. The organization in Tennessee works to connect transnational Oriya diaspora by bringing them together at social and religious occasions. These events work as a powerful force in forming the Indian diaspora ethnic identity. It has organized a convention where people of Oriya come together from the different places of the United States, Canada, and India who share a common culture and form their ethnic living. The organization held its 50th Annual Convention in Harrah's Atlantic City, New Jersey, 2019. According (n.d), to Uma Ballav Mishra, Convener, OSA, said: "We delivered a memorable experience to our attendees at the 50th convention. This event provided an opportunity of a lifetime to unite Odias across the world. We achieved our objective of inclusiveness. We delivered on our theme *Bindu Bindu Misi Hue Sindhu* (Many drops make ocean)"

Tamil Cultural Association had been launched to meet the social, religious and cultural needs of the Tamil community. Several names were suggested but accepted Bharathi Kala Manaram. It was a nonprofit organization located in Houston; it provides a formal convention for cultural exchange with special emphasis on fine arts, literature etc. Since the launch, the organization has hosted many cultural events such as music, dance, literacy events, and Tamil theatre, etc. There are many associations across American cities such as Austin Tamil Sangam, Chicago Tamil Sangam, Houston Tamil Sangam, New England Tamil Sangam, and Washington Tamil Sangam. These social and cultural associations have been working for promoting the Indian culture, heritage, language and religion. The scenario of Indian diasporas' social and cultural phenomena led to form the Indian Hindu ethnic identity with adapting American cultural and social phenomena.

Regarding this, the Hindu associations have been expanding the Hindu religion worldwide by having a transnational network. Swami Dayanand Saraswati had founded the Arya Samaj which met with a drastic modification in religious practices, partially overlooked the problematic issue of caste identity. However, Indian diaspora came from lower section of its society has formed associations with intentions of protecting their own identity, to fight back against discrimination of caste, race and cultural conflict, and upholding an egalitarian ideas have been adopted by them from their religious saints and iconic leaders such as Lord Budhha, Sant Ravidas, and many reformers. These organizations named by their saints and leaders names such as Sant Ravidas Association and International Ambedkar Mission, these known as Dalit organizations. These are working for the development of people from the weaker section of its society and creating a pathetic idea of brotherhood among its people scattered across the globe. These all organizations have maintained linkages with the original land and projecting a broad range of facing issues to solve and to improve the condition of health and education of its society people in Indian. On the other hand, they are creating their own ethnic identity in segregation from the dominant group of people of the Indian diaspora. It becomes quite easy in a globalized world in which Indian diaspora has been accessing the most advanced technology in helping the Indian people.

The Building of Religious Temple

Temple has significant value among Hindu people; it is a sacred place for Hindu devotees who usually like to go for worshipping their almighty. They worship God to stay blessed, happy, satisfied, healthy life and prosperity in the profession. The Hindus in India and abroad are so devoted to God; daily the majority of Hindus at Home are praying to Gods with singing Bhajanas, devotional *bhakti* songs. It is a common thing among Hindus of all castes. Indian immigrants to the United States are well educated. Consequently, they have got well-paying jobs in IT companies, medical science, institutes, and universities and started varied business; therefore, they have improved their financial condition, lifestyle standard and social status in the United States. Thereby, these immigrants were skilled and financially settled people even though they were not satisfied, happy since they didn't have a spiritual place as a temple where they could worship Gods and Goddesses.

India became one of the most beneficial countries of the 1965 Act. Indeed, huge Indian immigrants have migrated to the United States which had never received large immigrants over a short period of time. It should be noted that most of them were Hindus. Being well educated and working in multinational companies their financial condition is well. Despite this fact, they are not ritually happy due to a lack of religious resources in a receiving country that makes them alienated and mentally unstable. They were caught away from the familiar things of social and ritual practices. The Hindus are very much closer to religion. It should be noted here that Gurudwara was built in 1912 in Stockton, California; it is notable for being the first Sikh house of worship in the United States. The Gurudwara became a place of meeting points for religious worship, political space, and social gathering. In a similar fashion, Hindus have built temples in the United States. It is the best way for the physical representation of Hinduism.

Therefore, building a temple became one of the major duties of Indians and it is a spiritual, social, cultural and physical manifestation of Hinduism in American landscape that emerged as a significant force to express spirituality in the Indian diaspora. "Temple spaces serve not only as places to replicate imported cultural patterns but also as arenas in which resistance and assimilation to the new host culture

may both be measured and moderated” (Palmer 2006:96). It is the process of restoring the hidden culture and religious values in public space and means they began to assert their presence. It has helped to inculcate ritual values to the second generation people who are considered as American born confused desi (ABCD). After getting settled in the United States they had a dream to build temples. “One of the first communal dreams was often the establishment of a temple wherein Hindus could worship but also where they might connect and teach their children about Hinduism” (Lucia 2017:09). Indeed, the temple is a sacred place where Hindus worship the Gods and Goddesses and where they can come together to have dialogue about their lives, culture and social status; therefore, it became a meeting point for them. This practice has helped in passing the values of culture and heritage to the next generation. It is said that physical presentation of something is more impressive than abstract knowledge. Adorable construction of temples got the attention not only of Indian diaspora but also Americans in the United States. Indians have installed the different deities in the constructed temples. Hindus found that there is a need for religion to be united to assert Indian religious and cultural identity.

Norris W. Palmer (2006) has mentioned in his writing that how the idea of temple construction had evolved in the United States during the mid-1970s, interested Hindu persons came together to have public places to flourish the Indian culture, music, arts, and to have dance activities in the Bay Area. In which eight Indian families met and came together and firmly resolved to protect the Hindu tradition in the United States. Meanwhile, many Hindu communities joined them and they purchased four acres of land in rectangular size, which is an ideal size for building a Hindu temple in the City of Livermore. Significantly, it was sprawled clearly East-West and it has been said that East-West land is ideal land for the construction of the temple. “The land was consecrated...a small interim temple was constructed...By July 1986 the *vighraha* (images) of deities were properly installed in their permanent shrines and the *kumbha bhishekam* (ritual of consecration) was performed” (Palmer 2006:100). It is an important matter when we are building a temple according to Hindu religious myths or its norms. We have to design properly the structure of temple construction before its beginning.

The deities have been installed in a created sacred place inside the temple by following ritual performance. The temple's inauguration function was so big and magnificent where around three thousand plus guests were invited including twelve officiating priests, and Leo McCarthy, California's lieutenant governor. The Hindu community had organized a ceremony to recognize the contributions made for the construction of the temple as Donor Recognition Day; a founding member of this temple came from among eight families who had taken an initiative for it. "In approving and blessing our plans for our temple, Swami Chinmayananda said: "A civilization exists and culture evolves... In building this temple, you are helping the Hindu Culture evolve in the American Civilization" (Palmer 2006:100). Swami Chinmayananda's speech is very rhetorical, emotional and recognized the contribution of its people. Such speech evokes the sentiment of Hindu people, thereby, the propagators encouraging Indian immigrants to be united for spreading our Hindu civilization and culture in the United States. So the Hindus have come forward to donate their contribution for building temples in the United States. This delineates the scenario of how temple construction has evolved and helped in forming the Indian Hindu ethnic identity in the United States.

India has diversity in terms of religion, culture, and social norms and its people have been worshipping different images of God and Goddess. But it is hard to replicate them in similar fashion in the United States. Hindus in the United States had hosted the diverse Hindu deities together in temples to represent unitarian Hinduism. These deities in India have their own temples representing diverse sects, faiths, beliefs, and worships that had been established by its sect's traditions. Hindus have many Gods and goddesses representing their distinct social, religious and cultural identities. Indian diaspora has made an attempt to unite all Hindus by installing the images of God and Goddess in the same temple representing oneness in diversity where all Hindus could come for praying. "The Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago hosts Shivaite, Vaishnavite, and Devi images and figurines, as does the Hindu Temple of Oklahoma and the Hindu Temple of Central Indiana" (Lucia 2017:09). It is good to know such an attempt has been made to eradicate the difference from Indian society and form Hindu society along with modern values of equality, individual freedom and brotherhood. In which all Hindu people and their Gods and Goddesses would be recognized equally in order to construct united Hinduism in the United States.

Gods and Goddess in Hindu religion have been arranged in descending order like caste structure. God's images are also arranged in a graded system; privileged god's images are reflecting superiority to other God and Goddesses images which are denoting the connection with lower strata Hindus. This system of hierarchy makes obstruction in building Hindu society based on equality that does not hold any hierarchy. But Hindus in America who are propagating Hinduism are not talking about annihilating the hierarchy system from Hinduism; they just are finding an escape route from it by neither saying that we neither have faith in it nor observing it in daily life. Therefore, they are presenting the various deities images together in a temple to form monotheistic Hinduism so that anybody can adapt it. "The ecumenical temples include many gods, and while one or two may be central, no god or tradition receives greater emphasis. This brings the diverse religious ethnic and linguistic communities of Hinduism together under one roof" (Calico 2010:08). It has developed the concept of ecumenical temple to defend Hinduism by saying there are many gods and goddess even though all these images are the reflection of oneness, there are many paths which are leading toward ultimate almighty that is Brahma, the creator of the universe. The arguments had been in their representation of Hinduism. Different Gods and Goddess are reflecting various paths to reach out to the ultimate creator of this universe Brahma. Thus Hinduism has been introduced in America. Hindus have created many temples and cultural centers in the United States. Hindus built Shiva Vishnu Temple in the Bay Area to fulfill people's spiritual needs and maintain their Hindu identity by creating such a magnificent temple. The temple has been playing a significant role in spreading Hindu culture and to introduce physical representation of Hinduism to the second generation of Indian diaspora in the United States. The installation of the various deities in a temple has been grown up by getting support from the people of the different layers of its society.

There are numbers of Hindu temples constructed in magnitude in the name of different deities representing diverse cultures of Hinduism. These beautiful constructed temples became more attractive not only among Indians but also among Americans. The temples are: Sri Sri Radha Krishna Temple in Spanish Fork of Utah is part of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Malibu Hindu Temple dedicated to Hindu God Venkateswara is one of the largest temples located in the Calabasas city. Vraj Hindu Temple is a large temple in Pennsylvania; it has been

built on the land of 300 acres which has been visited by a large number of Hindu devotees. Sri Siva Vishnu Temple in Lanham Maryland is a well-known temple constructed in the United States. Lord Venkateswara has been built in the city of Riverdale near Atlanta. It has divided into two complexes, one for Lord Venkateswara and another for Lord Shiva. The Hindu Atlanta temple is the largest Hindu temple outside of India that replicates temples in London but it is small. The Hindu temple of greater Chicago in Lemont of Illinois has two separate temples that are Rama Temple and Ganesha Temple. All these temples host seasonal Indian festivals of Holi, Krishna Janmashtami, Dahi Handi along with free yoga and meditation classes. Sri Sri Radha Krishna Temple in Spanish Fork of Utah is part of ISKCON and one of the most beautiful temples in the United States.

There is a separate Spiritual Center named after Swami Vivekananda. Sankat Mochan Hanuman Temple at Watsonville is built on the beautiful green hills of Mt Madonna. Delaware Mahalakshmi Hindu Temple is located on Yorklyn Road, Hockessin. The main deity is Goddess Mahalakshmi and one of the most visited Hindu temples in the United States. Shiva Vishnu Temple of South Florida is a beautiful temple, built in traditional Dravidian South Indian style. All these mentioned temples are visual manifestations of Hinduism signifying the value of spirituality, culture, diversity and the legacy of the Hindu religion that has been carried by Indians over the United States. The Vedanta Society temple was built in 1906 in San Francisco which is the oldest Hindu temple in the United States. Shiva Murugan Temple was built in 1957 in Concord, California. “The second, the Maha Vallabha Ganapathi Devasthanam in Flushing, New York, was established in 1977 and is owned by the Hindu Temple Society of North the United States” (Lucia 2017:09).

Hindus have created a number of sacred spiritual places with building deities temples in various cities, mostly in metropolitan cities across the United States. Radha Madhav Dham in Austin, Texas, which was constructed in two hundred acres of land signified with valleys, rivers, and hills. The landscape of these temples reflects the characteristics of the locations of Vrindavan which is a holy town in Uttar Pradesh in India. It said that Lord Krishna has spent his childhood in Vrindavan. “There, the ornate Shree Raseshwari Radha Rani Temple is one of the largest Hindu temples in the United States. Today, there are approximately 450 Hindu temples in the United

States” (Lucia 2017:09). Thus, the temples of Hindu religion are representing the culture, spiritual myth and emerged as an important tool to protect and promote Hinduism. The construction of temples in marvellous signifies the great tradition of Indian civilization, society, art of sculpture, cultural diversity and spiritual highness. All these stories reflect the achievement of Indian diaspora in terms of social, religious and economic conditions in the United States. The physical appearance of Hindu temples has formed the religious ethnic identity of the Indian diaspora in the United States.

Building temples has an important intention to introduce Hinduism to the second generation of Indian diaspora because the previous generation could maintain an affiliated connection with domestic holy land India because the first generation of Indian immigrants in the United States had been born and brought up in India so they were introduced to Hinduism during their childhood. But in the case of the second generation it has not happened since they have been born and grown up in the United States. Indeed, it is difficult to introduce Hinduism to the second generation. Therefore, the devotees and upholder of Hinduism paid much attention to building temples in the urban cities which have contributed a lot in its intention in the U. S. Temples provide the scenario of Hindu ritual practices, performing worship (*puja*), reading the Holy Scriptures, celebrating occasional religious events and devotional songs. It serves to attract Indian American Hindu youth. Thus temples serve as a primary source for the second generation in understanding Hinduism.

Temples serve as a source of representing Hinduism and became the center for multiple activities including social, cultural and religious and Hinduism has been propagated among the Indian American communities. It is being used for connecting community people and brings transformation in social, political development. If we go back a little in the history of temple construction which has been built by Indian Punjabi in the US where people used to gather to have dialogue regarding Indian freedom fighting and praying to their almighty. It is also used for teaching lessons from Hindu scriptures, cultural heritage, languages to the Indian Hindu youth that these activities are playing a significant role in spreading religion, culture and teaching. Partially, the construction of temples has been developed on the grounds of Church construction and the pattern of activities which are mostly associated with

American protestant norms which are hosting a religious gathering on Sundays that includes a religious sermon and God hymns. Thus, Hindu temples imitate the activities taking place in protestant churches; frequently, these temples' authority invites religious expertise priests, Brahman (*pujari*) from Indian for religious sermons to Indian American Hindus and the visiting priest is being asked to stay in the temple premises. The very act leads to the development of the transnational network and relationships between American and Indian Hindu.

However, the construction of various temples, infrastructure and influx of Hindu people in the United States are associated with different social identities that have represented the diversity of Hindu diaspora along with their deities. This move takes us back to re-examine the neo-Vedantic movement that has underlined the monolithic faith and belief. This rhetoric has impressed a large Hindu people even though they were carrying various deities and their ritual significance. “While the majority of Hindus were willing to ascribe to the neo-Vedantic monistic mantra of all gods are one still they brought with them their favored deities (*iṣṭadev*) and family deities (*kuladev*), and these deities needed to be revered” (Lucia 2017). Neo-Vedantic Hinduism had focused on perpetuating monotheistic Hinduism. The rhetoric of neo-Vedanta was that all deities are one; they might be featured in different looks but they are representing monistic faith, the ultimate God, the creator of the universe.

Swaminarayan Movement

Swaminarayan is a religious movement disseminated by Swaminarayan (1781-1830) who was born in Gujarat and he emerged as the modern Hindu spiritual guru for Gujarati's. He has succeeded to his religious teacher, Guru Ramanand Swami who offered him the leadership of this movement to spread the teachings and its dogma of Vishishtadvaita, which originates from the religious philosophy of Sri Sampradaya. The Swaminarayan Hindu religious movement emerged in the state of Gujarat, India early in the 19th century as a new religious sect whose religious views were extracted from Krishna oriented Hinduism. This new Hindu based religious movement became popular in a short period of time in Gujarat under the leadership of the Swaminarayan and it had eighteen lack of devotees during his life. The organization is based on Vedic and *puritic* Hinduism. Apart from traditional religious Hindu books, the

members of the sect have written more than three thousand books. The more influential writings of the sect are the *Shikshapatri*, *Swamini Vato* and the *Vachanamrut*.

The movement has attracted large numbers of Gujarati devotees, both in India and abroad, and it is often said that it has a connection with Hindu nationalists and their political backers. Gujarat is a major state who has transported a large population; particularly Hindus to the United States. Therefore, the Swaminarayan movement has a large following population in the United States. However, this movement has been split into many organizations since they had different approaches in their philosophy. This movement had several organizations more than seventy-three such as Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) was formed by Swaminarayan Sampraday, however, he had left the main branch due to difference in Vachanamrut philosophy.

Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha that is abbreviated as Swaminarayan Sanstha or simply (BAPS), firmly based on Vedic scriptures and worshiping Lord Krishna. This movement has built many elegant temples in India and abroad in the United States, United Kingdom etc and installed a Swaminarayan statue in the center of the temple. Initially, Swaminarayan Hinduism was known as a guru devotional movement, but later over the years, it emerged as a branch of conventional Hinduism. It became a popular religious devotional movement in spreading Hinduism in India and abroad as well.

Swaminarayan Sanstha organizes religious, social and cultural events and also it has many projects as part of its various activities such as disseminate Hinduism as it has been taught by its guru tradition among the Indian diaspora in the United States. It has been organizing many activities such as organizing festivals on important occasions, promoting egalitarian projects, and constructing complexes within the temples. “While many temples are neither elaborate nor large, BAPS has attracted much attention for constructing traditional carved stone temples in London and North America” (Kim 2010:209).’ The temples have been constructed with elaborate and ornate in the United States in major urban cities by taking note of its importance to propagate the Hindu religious dogma. The beautifully constructed temples have

emerged as visiting the place which shows the physical representations of Hinduism in the United States. Most temples are constructed in metropolitan cities such as Houston, Atlanta, Chicago, and Los Angeles. “They have become epicentres for the Hindu community and cultural and religious ambassadors of Hinduism for the general public” (Lucia 2010:10).

BAPS has focused on the glorification of Vedic Hinduism by spreading its culture, conservative values, carrying discriminative socially constructed gender roles which have been reflected in spreading Hinduism in the United States. “Traditional gender roles and conservative (and sometimes political) Hinduism has also influenced Hindu thought in the United States considerably” (Lucia 2010:10). Servants of this Sanstha are bound to follow the strict discipline listed by its Sanstha. There is a clear demarcation between women and male roles in both private and public life that has been taught by their religion and most of them respectively have accepted the given role without any argument. So, this movement has not escaped from the subject of criticism due to incompatibility to fit in the modern idea of equality and individual freedom. “The movement is criticized by some academics for essentializing Hinduism, promoting anti-progressive and anti-feminist teachings, and for playing an active role in the politics of Hindu nationalism” (McKean 1996; Mukta 2000; Shukla 1997; Kim 2010).

Hare Krishna Movement

The Hare Krishna Movement or International Society for Krishna Consciousness abbreviated as (ISKCON) was established in 1966 in New York City by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada the spiritual Guru and master of this movement which became popular, particularly among American young population those who were disillusioned with other spiritual philosophy so they were looking for religious philosophy. To these people, Hari Krishna Hindu religious movement became an alternative source to express spirituality. The beliefs of this movement are based on the Hindu religious texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam, and the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, Gaudiya refers to the Gauda region in Bengal. The Hindus' devotees adhered to the Vaishnava tradition since the 15th century and later it spread out to European countries since the 19th century. The movement's religious

philosophy was interpreted by Sanātana Gosvāmin and others. It was basically formed to spread Bhakti yoga, the path of the devotion of supreme God, Lord Krishna and Radha in which its devotees dedicated their thoughts, faiths, and actions to their lord.

A group of people entered a converted school in Salt Lake City for weekly prayer. They had been dressed in traditional and modern style dresses like jeans and leggings. Usually, Hindus do leave their shoes and chappals outside of the temple whenever they enter it as the sacred place in which people are coming for God worship. “A group of musicians on a small stage began serenading the worshippers with a familiar, hypnotic chant: *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna/ Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama / Rama Rama, Hare Hare*” (n.d). This chant they made more popular among Hindu devotees in America.

This movement impressed the people of American and got their attention for a short span of time but later some of them have been left out. However, this movement has worked cleverly in teaching the philosophy of Hinduism to American people who were fatigued by political upheavals, social chaos, and cultural disturbance. Hare Krishna movement emerged as one of the most active Hindu religious movements which has been focused on practical activities and took out the religious message to the people of Indian as well as American. It urged devotees to adopt the Hindu way of life in their daily lives. An important thing that should be mentioned here is that the movement not only focused on Indian diaspora but also made attention toward strangers in order to promote Hinduism. Hindu religious people have developed the worship toward Prabhupada and God Krishna. These Hindus had been prompted to show their devotion by reading Gaudiya Vaishnava religious scriptures and mantras from the texts. The recitation mantras such as “the *māhāmantra (Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare*” (Lucia 2017:15). It follows the Gaudiya Vaishnava scriptures, Gaudia refers to region and Vaishnavism denotes the worship of god Radha-Krishna and Vishnu. The devotees have the reverence toward Prabhupada who introduced this movement in America. In addition to this, it had urged devotees to follow Hindu culture along with the food (vegetarians) and dress. It was advised that devotees should wear saffron, white and put a mark on the forehead while they are praying to gods and chanting the maha-mantra.

Disseminators have represented Vaishnava Hinduism with modifications to accommodate married people in the movement. It strengthened the movement and became popular among American people. It seems like Presbyterian Christian religious missionary that was keenly interested in proselytizing the people of other religions by educating, supporting and serving food to needy people. It was started by the distribution of its movement's religious literature and scriptures among strangers and it was a major interest and encouraged by its founder Prabhupada. Thus, the Hare Krishna movement has captured the attention of different diverse people in its pursuit.

Other Religious Movements

The Immigration and Naturalization Act 1965 is a breakthrough in Indian immigration to the United States. It opened the United States border to a wide range in which miscellaneous Indian immigrants including religious gurus have migrated to proselytize the people involved within American countercultural movement. In 1965, the Hindu religious guru A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who had started Hare Krishna Movement arrived in New York, succeeded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Swami Muktananda, Swami Sachidananda, and Osho/Bhagwan Rajneesh. After a couple of decades, there were Mata Amritanandamayi, Swami Nithyananda, Karunamayi Ma, Mother Meera, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and many others entered the United States. Each of these gurus brought particular theologies and methods to bear on Hindu traditions (Lucia 2017, 14). The charismatic personalities of these Gurus not only attracted Indian Hindus but also foreigners. Many gurus never have visited the United States such as Sathya Sai Baba, Shirdi Sai Baba, and Anandamayi Ma, however, their religious theology stemmed from Hinduism carried to the United States. Not only their religious theology had been carried to the United States but also their religious centers had been established. These movements have huge followers in the United States (Lucia 2017, 14).

The Gurus lead movements have changed the phenomena of propagation of Hinduism and induced the participants within the counterculture movement toward Hinduism in the US. Guru's movement has adapted the path of their parent's tradition of Hinduism which was begun by Shri Vivekananda in the World's Religious Parliament held in

Chicago in 1893. Vivekananda had popularised the neo-Vedanta philosophy for spreading Hinduism in the United States which coexisted with American phenomena. Consequently, it has worked well for promoting Hinduism that's impression has been inscribed in the mind of Americans. The Guru movements also are stressed on proselytizing strangers into Hinduism as the parental neo-Vedantic tradition has been done.

Conclusion

The present chapter has examined the process of reconstruction identity of the Hindu diaspora and the contribution made by the various Hindu religious, social and cultural organizations in its reconstructing identity in the United States. Particularly, the chapter has focused on some active religious, social and cultural organizations and various religious movements that have worked at different levels in representing Hinduism among American Indians and non-Indians as well. The representation of Hinduism is influenced by American milieu and it was compelled for Indians to adapt the American way of life, culture, social norms, and psychic approach to fit into American society. Hindu religious movements and cultural organizations have adopted modern ideas, the American way of life and tried to reframe conservative Hinduism into modified Hinduism which has adapted an approach of inclusive instead of exclusive. The new Hinduism has been developed by asserting ecumenical philosophy, monotheistic beliefs, and faiths by arguing that all Gods are eternal one truth, it may have different devotional paths but they are leading toward ultimate truth, Brahma, the creator of this universe. All these religious movements and organizations have defended Hinduism and they do not accept the criticism of Hinduism and proposed it as a transcendental, ecumenical and monotheistic religion. This is the way that Hindus have reconstructed their identity in the United States.

Chapter IV

Quest for Ethnic Identity: A Study of Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*

Introduction

The chapter examines the quest for ethnic identity of Indian diaspora looking at varied social, cultural and religious dimensions in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), and *the Namesake* (2003). *The Namesake* represents the Indian immigrants' sense of belongingness to dislocation, a dilemma to assimilate, entangled social position, hardships in interaction and inconsistency between the first and second generation in the United States. These texts portray the displacement, identity crisis, cultural clash, loneliness, a sense of exile and racial discrimination in the lives of characters, particularly in Gogol, the protagonist in the story, who keeps striving to know his identity belonging to nowhere because Gogol, the name is not reflecting the sense of Indianness nor Americanness where he is staying. In addition, inconsistency has been represented between the first and second generation of the Indian immigrant's understanding of the value of Indian culture and adapting the American way of life or the ethos of American society. Jhumpa Lahiri represents in her texts the quest for identity of Indian diaspora in a social and cultural context.

Regarding this, the chapter tries to respond to questions such as what are the social and cultural things that have become significant factors for forming the ethnic identity of Indian immigrants in America. How does Jhumpa Lahiri represent the cultural, social and religious practices in these texts which lead to forming the collective ethnic identity of Indian immigrants? How does Jhumpa Lahiri portray the picture of reconciliation in two Indian generations in the United States? It analyzes how the culture becomes a powerful source to form a unity, social relations among them and constructs the collective ethnic identity of the Indian immigrants in the host land. In addition, it makes a critical analysis of the transformation of the pro-Indian diaspora identity to hybridize or hyphenated identity of the Indian diaspora as American born confused desi ABCD. Lahiri has portrayed the picture of Indian immigrants' lives

along with the social, ritual and cultural narratives of American Indian society, and their linkages to the homeland while they are the residents of mosaic America.

Identity is always constructed through memories, fantasies, narratives, and myths. It critically examines how the culture has become an instrumental tool in the reconstruction of Indian diaspora identity that has been, in the process, reshaped by intermingling itself by adapting the mosaic culture of America that formed as hyphenated or hybrid identity. Indian diaspora has a strong attachment to the Indian social, cultural, regional identities and the culture of dress and food habits that have been carried along with them from the homeland. These social and cultural significance have been vividly delineated in Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*.

Apart from this, the chapter also attempts to examine the struggle of Indian diaspora to settle down in the alien, unknown world and how they managed to move on in multicultural America. To understand their struggle of settlement and forming identity, it examines the dilemma between generations of Indian immigrants in which the former try to inculcate its culture, social and ritual norms, daily habits and language to the second generation who is dislocated in the gulf of Indian and American world. To accomplish their intention, the first generation was tempted to move on with the aspirations of their kids and American life. For this, they have adjusted themselves with their conservative norms and the American world. This step has led to forming the Indian diaspora identity. There are many shortcomings in the struggle of Indian immigrants to settle but they are determined to settle in the United States. Lahiri has represented the struggle of Indian immigrants' survival in the story of 'The Third and Final Continent' in which the unnamed narrator narrates his experience to his son. He says that I survived on three continents, so why not conquer since you are born in this world. Thereby, the Indian diaspora has formed its dual identities as Indo-American, American born Indian Hindu who has been grown up as the citizens of America but their social, cultural and political identity formed as Indian American people. Lahiri's stories narrate the striving of Indian diaspora for protecting the root identity, culture, and connection to the homeland. Thus, relationships, language, spiritual practices among Indian immigrants have supplied the required things to sustain the inherited sense of belongingness, culture, social norms and roots

which have helped in constructing the identities of Indians along with American milieu.

Jhumpa Lahiri was born on July 11, 1967, known for her literary writings which have brought her worldwide fame. Remarkably she is known for her literary writings, the *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) is the first collection of short stories, has won the various literary awards such as the Pen Hemingway and Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2000. *The Namesake* (2003), which is her first novel famed as a wonderful literary piece of writing. Mira Nair produced a motion movie of the same name. *Unaccustomed Earth* in (2008) is her second short story collection that has been awarded the Frank O'Connor International short story award. This story is about the family relationships of three generations belonging to the Bengali Indians dwelled in America which reveals the complex relations among father, son and daughter. It was a conservative Bengali family by following its social, religious and cultural norms in their daily lives but it had been fractured since they all were influenced by American culture. His daughter has given up her career to raise her children despite her father insisting on her to continue her legal career. Ruma's mother died as her father has been in relationships with a lady of a different ethnic identity. Both were regretting being gone away from Bengali customs. His son, Akash was intensively influenced by American culture and thus he immersed himself in that. Indeed, they all have been trapped in the gulf of the third world which is neither Indian Bengali nor American but it has been sprouted out of it. *The Lowland* (2013) is the second novel that has been proposed for both the National Book Award for Fiction and the Man Booker Prize.

Jhumpa Lahiri: A Short Note on Biography and Literary Works

Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri³ is her original name, born in the year of 1967 in England to Indian Bengali parents; mother Tapati and father Amar, who were the first-generation immigrants to the UK from Calcutta, India. Before settling in America they had stayed in London for two years when Jhumpa was a kid. Lahiri's father, a university librarian, moved to the United States and settled in the city of South

³ Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri is the original name but her teacher decided to call her as Jhumpa because it was easy to pronounce. Lahiri continues her name as Jhumpa

Kingstown, Rhode Island when Jhumpa was only two years old. During her mother, Tapati was a school teacher who taught the Indian cultural and social norms to her kids. Jhumpa is an elder daughter and her younger sister did her Ph.D. in History. It seems that her family was large enough and vibrant in pursuing different good things in their lives. This has been sketched in her writing, *The Namesake*, a major character Ashoke the father of Gogol and Sonia had spent his early life in London and later, after a few years, had got a job at MIT, Massachusetts, America. It shows how a wonderful life Lahiri had that she has represented in her fiction which shows her own experience being a child of an Indian immigrant. Very clearly she has portrayed varied ethnic characters and relationships among them. The story gives a reflecting picture of her life that may not be exactly similar. She got married to Alberto who was working as an editor for Latin American edition of *Time*. They are blessed by two kids: daughter, Noor, and son, Octavio. The names of their daughter and son are reflecting that they do not belong to the sense of India but they are carrying different connotations. Jhumpa Lahiri has expressed her experience being a child of immigrants in the strange world. She was interviewed. A notable feature of her writing is that she has represented different characters who come from different social, religious, and national backgrounds. This diverse lifestyle has a major place in her writings and plays an important role which delineates the belongingness, loneliness, and alienation of immigrants trapped in multicultural worlds.

Jhumpa was her family name which later came to be used by her school teachers, afterward, she had gone to Barnard College in New York and received three masters in English, Creative Writings and Comparative Literature and Arts. Later, she joined Boston University and got awarded a doctorate in Renaissance studies entitled 'Accursed Palace: The Italian Palazzo on the Jacobean Stage (1603-1625)'. Receiving three masters shows that she is a passionate student of literature. It helps her to develop her ambition to become an author rather than engaged in pursuing scholastic scholar. She had started to publish her stories in periodicals known as *The New Yorker*, *Harvard Revue* and *Story Quarterly*. All these published works of art were compiled, modified and then published in her debut writings as short stories under the title of *Interpreter of Maladies* in 1999. This collection of short stories got famed immensely after its publication and emerged as favorite literary writing among readers. The collection also received critics' attention and their valuable remarks.

Interpreter of Maladies's stories has its own characters and distinct narrative styles. The writing of a collection of short stories has its distinct features that have been developed. The collection of short stories should be cyclic in series and confined by a plot, action and time and portraying similar characters and united by presenting the recurring theme in all stories that bind together the varied components into the whole body. But Lahiri's collection of short stories features various narrative styles, each story has its own characters and uncommon locality which transcends territorial boundaries setting in three countries such as India, England and the United States. However, Lahiri very skilfully binds the story together with intricate styles and patterns by representing recurring themes and motifs including alienation, loneliness, belongingness, longingness, human communication, cultural diversity, and care and carelessness. Each story has its own protagonist of varying ages and gender and the sentiments also differ from each other. The protagonists are always shifting from childhood to adults, moving from Indian, England and settled in America. The represented characters are reflecting the picture of Indians and American born Indians living in America.

Interpreter of Maladies represents the recurring themes and motifs of alienation, loneliness, communication, unfaithful relations between wife and husband, the struggle for settlement and cultural dilemma in all stories. Each story has dealt with issues and each has appropriate titles that implicate the motif of stories. Critics have praised Lahiri's talent for naming each story which is carrying a series of description and recurring theme. The opening story of the collection is the story of a married couple set in the suburban areas of Boston. They were told that electrical power will be cut off for an hour every evening starting from eight pm. So the couple must adjust with this power outage for an hour. This short interruption in their daily lives has led them to spend some time together under the candlelight where they revealed their secret and their suffering over their stillborn baby. The story sketches the issues of alienation, grief, and lack of dialogue which caused them to suffer and misinterpret each other over the last six months. However, they reunited by revealing hidden information to each other.

In another story, *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*, Lilia, a daughter of an Indian immigrant and her father was a professor at university who checked the Indian

students' names who have secured their admission for PhD programmes in the university in the United States. He finds Mr. Pirzada's name from Dacca, Bangladesh neighboring to India and he was very fondly invited by a professor to visit his home. Mr. Pirzada began to visit Lilia's home and joined the Hindu Indian family from Calcutta. During his stay with Lilia's parents, she observed the daily routine behavior of Pirzada and the hospitality offered by her parents. It reveals how the Indian immigrants have occupied or attached to the homeland and very curiously they are watching the Indian news on TV to be in touch with the India and Pakistan war. Lilia has observed Pirzada and his whole activity so she can gather information about the culture, behavior, in a way he was talking with her parents. Those characteristics denote the belongingness, attachment of the first generation of Indian immigrants toward homeland India. But Lilia's approach is different from her parents and Mr. Pirzada. She loves America, enjoys having a good school and even her mother also enjoys being in America, a country has everything whatever they need.

Interpreter of Maladies is a story of an Indian American family who came to India on tour to visit Sun temple located in northeast India. It is narrated from the point of view of Mr. Kapasi, a tour guide and driver who has been hired by the Das family. The family is composed of five people as Mr. Raj. and Mrs. Mira Das, two boys Ronny and Bobby and a girl Tina. The story keeps continuing the framed issues that have been represented throughout this collection such as lack of communication, cultural distinction, isolation, and trauma. Mrs. Das was not happy as the wife of an unenergetic person Mr. Das. She is indifferent to her own kids and always immersed in her own imagined fantasy. So this family is not unified, all are indulged in their own world. The narrator of this story Mr. Kapasi was passing an unhappy married life and he liked Mrs. Das. This shown interest has been built on a misinterpretation of Mrs. Das's remark when he had said that he is working as an interpreter in the physician's office. Mrs. Das has said it is romantic just because she appreciated his job. On the other side, she was expected that Kapasi will guide her as an interpreter, the path to escape from imagined fantasy and infidelity with a person staying in London. Thus, the story is filled with an atmosphere of trauma, melancholy, and isolation.

Another story of this collection of *Interpreter of Maladies*, Mrs. Sen is a story of Mrs. Sen, the wife of Indian immigrant professor Mr. Sen at university and a non-Indian a young American boy named Eliot, who comes to stay with Mrs. Sen, a babysitter. The story reveals the difference between Indian and American social, cultural and psychic norms which have formed to form distinct identities. The distinction has been explained through the dialogue and approach between Mrs. Sen and Eliot where Eliot is very keenly observing the life of this Sen couple who has newly arrived in America. Eliot has gathered strange experiences with Mrs. Sen because in a way she is living, talking, working at home and things were arranged to give a vivid picture of Indian taste and smell. Mrs. Sen is not happy in America. She is accustomed to Indian things, way of thinking, consuming, preparing food and wearing a sari. There is rare communication between her husband and herself and all the time she is talking with Eliot while she is preparing food, cutting vegetables and chicken and fish into pieces. However, she is not satisfied with the American fish. She wanted Indian fish, which she is accustomed to. It makes her a true sense of estrangement.

Sexy is a story that deals with social customs, culinary things, and female issues in which Dev, Mirinda, and Laxmi have played an important role in settling down in their lives. Simultaneously, the story precisely illustrates both the immoral and realization of morality as Mirinda got engaged in an affair with married man Dev to fulfill the physical desire. Laxmi's cousin is suffering owing to her husband having been involved in an extramarital affair with a companion lady traveler. They set off from Delhi to London where she was staying. Laxmi now and then was telling how her cousin is victimized by her husband, which makes sense to Mirinda and she realizes she is guilty of illegal relations. Thus it is a story of loneliness, women's suffering, and diverse intricate cultural chaos.

This Blessed House is another story of love, marriage, culture and religious inconsistency between first and second generation Indian immigrants in America. This narrates the story of Sanjeev and Twinkle who got married in a few months after knowing each other. Sanjeev was the first-generation Indian immigrant who got the job and earned enough money, purchased a home on his own before leaving for India for marriage. This marriage is fraught with intricate relationships and loneliness due to being incapable of understanding each other's emotions and aspirations. However,

they stayed together for their entire life. Sanjeev decides to throw a house-warming party for which he has invited the guests from his company friend circle and Indian young couples from the city. Both Sanjeev and Twinkle dressed well, Twinkle wore a beautiful embroidered dress reflecting Indian look and that dress had been brought from Jaipur. He arranged the required things for the party including Indian food as well as American along with champagne. Sanjeev felt alienated throughout the party as he barely knew the guests. Twinkle has been absorbed with American taste and people since she was born and brought up in America, while Sanjeev is struggling to fit in this world. He wanted to banish paraphernalia of Christian stored in a house, particularly the Virgin Mary statue in their house yard and long enough photos of Jesus in a home but his wife does not allow him. It was the cause of the quarrel between them. He thought if we installed the Virgin Mary statue and Jesus' image in a house they will be subjected to discussion among other Indian people because he is not Christian. But he has compromised and settled the issue. So this story deals with the issues of communication, marriage, love, loneliness, and adjustment.

The Third and Final Continent provides the concluding remark for this collection. It is a story of anxiety, struggle for settlement and challenge to the situation and find a way to live long. America has offered great opportunities to immigrants who have adapted its phenomenon and flourish their lives. The narrator and his wife Mala, and Lilia, her mother from *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* do not regret being in America, like Mrs. Sen and Lilia's father who were always murmuring about their past lives in India, being moved from India to America. Mala's son is going to complete his graduation at Harvard and he will move on because he has his parents who firmly stand to encourage him to challenge the adverse situation and enjoy the beautiful moments and find a way to prove yourself to be capable enough to settle down anywhere in the world. The writer perhaps suggests to the immigrants that life is not predictable. It is filled with ups and downs, love and grief, even though immigrants have to stand firm and move on in the global world.

The *Interpreter of Maladies* followed *The Namesake* is a fiction not a collection of short stories. After writing a collection of short stories, she wrote the fiction *The Namesake*, 2003. It is an important literary piece that tells the story of Indian immigrants settled in the United States. This novel achieved exceptional attention

from readers and academicians and received a wide range of remarks. It has been discussed in the discourse of intellectuals and the research scholar's domain. It is deliberating the issues of identity, alienation, loneliness, struggle for settlement and transformation of their social and cultural conservative mindset into more modern followed the norms of the multicultural society that led them to be called the Indian-American people. Nevertheless, they continue their social and cultural belongingness that had been reflecting the identity, roots, history, and tendency of the Indian diaspora.

The Namesake deals with the Bengali family Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli emigrated from India and settled in Massachusetts, America. It represents chronicles incidents in Ganguli's lives. Thus the story begins in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1968 and spans a lifetime, started from Ashoke's adolescence, the arrival of Ashima to America and their adult son, Gogol. Bengali family included Ashoke and his wife Ashima who had newly arrived immediately after her marriage in a strange world surrounded by unknown people having different colors, races, language, and social-cultural phenomenon. In a few years, she gave birth to a baby boy, Ashoke named him Gogol. It was given to him for time being to get discharged from hospital and later the name can be changed by the suggestions of Ashima's grandmother. At this point, the story of the name of the baby boy had been started and it was an honor that the elder in the family should name a newborn baby. It was the culture of Bengali. So that Ashim's grandmother had to name and she wrote a letter containing name but unfortunately this letter never reached out to Ashima. It has a symbolic significance that the posted letter did not reach Ashima that hung in between India and America. Thus Indian immigrants have engulfed in between the Indian and American worlds. Ashoke named his son Gogol after his favorite literary Russian author Nikolai Gogol. In the hospital, Ashima got an experience of isolation, loneliness in a crowded world that has not belonged to her. It gives a sense of distinct identity from others. Later, after a few years, she was born another girl child Sonia; both Gogol and Sonia have substantially been accustomed with and overwhelmed in American mosaic culture.

Thereby, the novel has pictured both elements of Indian immigrants staying in the most advanced America where Ashoke becomes a professor at one of the renowned American universities who now and then says, its America anything can be done; it is

a land of opportunity and liberty as Lilia and her mother appreciate and feel lucky being in America and at the same time it picturized nostalgic feelings, trauma, alienation, loneliness, struggle for settlement and isolation in an unfamiliar world in which they always have been murmuring in mind about their past, familiar things. Ashima suffered a lot from being alone at home and unexpectedly the death of her husband, Ashoke. However, these immigrants and their offspring have settled in America by overcoming all sorts of shortcomings. This community emerged as a distinct ethnic community in America.

Besides, the death of Ashoke was an unexpected shock for his entire family and this incident gave a very different move and mood, the hopes, and aspirations of his family are nearly shattered; Ashima's life is very painful without her husband, she is now alienated, feeling loneliness and nostalgia. Gogol has seen many adverse incidents and he finally divorced from Moushumi Muzumdar who had been involved in extramarital relationships with a person belonging to American races. Gogol set off for staying alone where his sister had planned to be married to an American boy that had been declared by Ashima. Thus, both Gogol and Sonia have immersed themselves in their own lives, not bothered about the mother. She has decided to go to India and stay for six months along with different relatives and will be returned to the United States to stay with her kids and relatives. Thus, her identity has been trapped in between, in the state of moving.

The story is narrated from the perspective of a third person and describes the story of American born Indian boy Gogol, the protagonist of this book, the story centered around him who moves from chapter to chapter and represents the different characters of Indian and American residents. Thematically, it is wrapped with cultural identity, belongingness, and isolation of Indian immigrants in which the second-generation immigrants occupied the intermediate position between their parents' aspirations and American dream in which they have grown up. Ashima finds a difficult life in America. Her emotions were shattered being alone in the strange land and among unknown people, particularly in critical time when Ashima bore a baby boy in hospital where she had spent time with the unknown American servant, a nurse. Being lonely she recalled her memories of her family in Bengali which was close to her heart. Ashima did not face any difficulty in India following Bengali norms since she

grew up in it but it was tough for her child Gogol to find life in it. He struggled a lot to get settled into it where his parents could easily find their path.

Diaspora, Identity and Cultural Memories

Diaspora is a concept that denotes the dispersed mass population from their original land and scattered to various places that do not belong to them. It is a journey from familiar to strange, known to the unknown in which they are struggling to settle that leads them into alienation, suppression, insecure, otherness, etc. In the evolution of this concept, the diaspora comes to denote the involuntary mass dispersion of a population from its local territories to alienated land. We have a classic instance, the expulsion of Jews from the Land of Israel and recently, the 20th century has seen the mass population expulsion from Palestine in 1948 on the account of the creation of the State of Israel. This is called a diaspora, however, it has gone through a lot of modifications by adapting and applying to the various modes of global immigrant movements. It has ascribed the various connotations to define international immigrants' movements. In classic, it used to define the scattered populations but today we use it to describe a community of people who live far away from its shared country who has been actively maintaining relations with the origin land. Diaspora has been applying for both emigrants and their descendants who might have left the country centuries back. Therefore, some of them might have disconnected and most of them have a strong connection with the land of origin. Indian indentured immigrants have set up the terminology of Indian diaspora in the regime of British rule and it is known as the involuntary emigration of Indians. The postcolonial era has seen different scenarios of Indian immigrants in which immigrants have flooded to the developed countries, particularly the US, UK, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, South Africa, and Southeast Asian countries. Here I argue that the Indian diaspora has immigrated to the US in which immigrants are staying in the largest number.

The diasporic theme is a central motif in the immigrants' writing of literature. It has covered the various dimensions and perspectives of the diaspora and the issue of identity, trauma, alienation, dislocation, and struggle for settlement in the foreign lands. In which immigrants are unable to disconnect from their root history in the reconstruction of their identity. The dispersed immigrants have been formulating their

identity which is sprouting from their historical roots of culture, material, social and traditional relation along with the aspects and norms of the accepted country. Identity is not a simple term so one can define it easily. Identity comes out of history along with social, cultural norms. Identity itself gives a sense of difference from the other-self that always is in a state of instability based on individual position having different meanings and ramifications. Therefore, identity is a complicated term that stands to be transparent. It is always in the floating sphere in which it changes its shape according to time, space and geography, so it is not already accomplished as a perpetual fact.

Similarly, the shared distinctiveness denotes the identity either of a group of people or a group of things that implies symmetry among them from the point of the same race, ethnicity, culture, traits, set of values and behavior. This thesis examines the process of reconstruction of Indian diaspora identity looking at Lahiri's works of short stories mentioned above and a fiction in which she presents the issues of immigrants and their culture, social relations and struggle for settlement. Lahiri has represented characters that imply the characteristics of Indian identity which are sprouted out of their history, root such as national, social and cultural norms. These characters, Lahiri portrays such as Mr. Pirzada, Sanjeev, Mrs. Laxmi and her cousin, Dev, Mrs. Sen, Mala and her unnamed husband from the collection of short stories and Ashima and her husband Ashoke Ganguli from a novel all are reflecting the symmetric image of psychic, behavior, and their social life. In this relation, the identity of the Indian diaspora is being seen as a collective identity.

Identity becomes an important issue in the study of diaspora and transnational communities in the present global world. It is difficult to trace out a particular identity of any given community in a multicultural society such as Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other developed countries. It is difficult owing to worldwide migration happening in large numbers. To make it clear, it should be mentioned how the identity of a particular person or a group is in a state of floating. For instance, before moving to America, Ashima and Ashoke's identity was Bengali Indian citizens but when they settled in America their identity formed as Indian American and when the same people came back to India after a long time they became strangers for their community. The children of this couple Gogol and Sonia were shocked by viewing the scenario of Indian society, culture and family relatives

and its structure. Thus identity is in a state of floating; not in a static form. Lahiri has cleverly explained the complicated lives of Indian immigrants which were filled with nostalgia, trauma and haunted with more expectations. She presents all these things in her characters' lives, particularly in Ahoke, Ashima, Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi. Gogol and Sonia faced many unexpected things when they were on a visit to India they received a shocking experience. In India they became strangers to their parents' relatives in Calcutta and for them to spend a few days like a horror dream.

“Once back on Pemberton Road, in the modest house that is suddenly mammoth, there is nothing to remind them; in spite of the hundred or so relatives they’ve just seen, they feel as if they are the only Ganguli's in the world” (Lahiri 2003:64).

Identity is not a permanent position of any personality in the globalized world; it is always in process of forming which has not an end. When Mr. Pizarda Come to Dine in which Mr. Pirzada is Bengali, but he is a Muslim... my father informed me. Therefore he lives in East Pakistan, not India (Lahiri 1999, 25). Mr. Pirzada has come in contact with Lilia's father because he was from South Asia, from Bangladesh, the neighboring country of India. The connection had been built between Lilia's family and Mr. Pirzada on idea of imagined nationhood. Religion and social status became a substitute. Mrs. Sen has told Eliot the people of Indian society are different from American that can be identified by their behavior, social relation and living style. It gives a contrasting scene between Indian and American society. American people do what they want on their own but Indian people share with the whole society people what they want to do. Indian people are more dependent while Americans are independent. Mrs. Sen narrates the characteristics of Indian society and its people. “All you have to do at home. Not everybody has a telephone...but just raise your voice a bit, or express grief or joy of any kind, and one whole neighborhood and half another has come to share the news, to help with arrangements (Lahiri 1999). She was narrating the whole picture of Indian society which gives a synoptic view about Indian people and its society so he could guess what Mrs. Sen says. Looking at her, Eliot understood what means home for her. She meant India, not the apartment where she sat chopping vegetables (Lahiri 1999:117). But it is an entire society.

Generally, the relation is articulated by connection and similarity. But in addition to being used to express ‘numerical’ identity, the relation that here concerns us, these

terms are also used to express ‘qualitative’ identity, i.e., exact similarity (Shoemaker 2006, 40). Here, Lahiri portrays the characters which stood for forming their identity on the background of their social, cultural and lifestyle. Mrs. Das expressed her anger when she got upset. I told you to get a car with air-conditioning... why do you do this, Raj, just save a few stupid rupees (Lahiri 1999, 49). Mr. Kapasi compared their accent which he heard on American television series however that was not reflecting like that on *Dallar*. Here Mrs. Das was born to Indian parents and grew up in American culture and acquired American English. She speaks exactly like an American person even though she was a person of Indian descent. Her style of talking English reflects the identity of qualitative similarity, as pointed out by Shoemaker (2006), like American English. It has undergone constant irresistible modification by the irresistible flow of capital, upward mobility, massive use of information technology, etc.

According to Raymond (1989: 96) culture has a “common meaning, the product of whole people, and offered individual meanings, the product of a man’s whole committed personal and social experience”. Culture is a collection of common customs, social behavior, ideas and beliefs of a particular social group, and it has been produced by its whole people. Further as Raymond argues (1989: 93) “we use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life -the common meanings; to mean arts and learning; -the special process of discovery and creative effort”. Indian diaspora has its own cultural values and is channeled in a particular way. India has a common form of dress, social behavior, psychic process, belief and faith which is generally recognized as Indian which is distinct from the other. However, it has been challenged for its unusualness of a particular social group in the globalized world in which transformation, migration, communication, and interaction became quite easy, accessible and fast that hit the norm of objectivity. The culture of a particular social group is fractured since this group of people came in contact with diverse ethnic people and that leads to fracturing that particular culture. It is a continuous forming process blending with other diverse cultural elements and practices. So it is in the process of becoming an absolute form of culture. In spite of this, culture carries its historical roots and its meaning in modifying elements. According to Hall (1990) cultural identity is a matter of becoming as well as of being. In forming cultural identities historical elements and components are the significant factors. However, histories have constantly transformed in centuries.

Formation of cultural identity comes from the synthetic process of various un-static beliefs, values, norms and practices that come somewhere from history. For example, in *This Blessed House*, Sanjeev said to his wife about their status of religion. “We’re not Christian, Sanjeev said... lately, he had begun noticing the need to state the obvious to Twinkle...She shrugged... no, we’re not Christian... we’re good little Hindus” (Lahiri 1999: 137). Sanjeev was overwhelmed by Hindu belief, faith and custom since he was grown up in India in the Hindu Bengali family while Twinkle was grown up in America and it was a fact that she was by birth Hindu since her parents were Indian immigrants Hindu in the United States. That reflection has surfaced in their way of thinking which leads to forming their identity. “After lunch they made love, sheets covered with crumbs, and then Dev took a nap for twelve minutes, Miranda had never known an adult took naps” (Lahiri 1999, 94). Miranda was an American lady; she didn’t know the adults took short sleep at noon. It was a strange experience for her but not for Dev. For Dev, it was a common thing since he had grown up doing in India. It was a cultural difference that had been come from histories. In Indian people usually, do not move after having food at noon. They usually take a short sleep, maybe for fifteen to twenty minutes. Miranda’s observation of Dev’s nap after making love was a strange experience for her. The communication between American and Indian people, and Indian and American Indians leads to exchanging the customs that play the role in forming the new hyphenated or hybrid identity.

In *The Namesake*, Lahiri has tried to represent her own experiences as a child of first-generation immigrants that has been reflected in her characterization of Gogol Ganguli. The book reveals the narratives of the Indian diaspora, particularly from Calcutta, Bengali that has been struggling to form its identity, cultural affinities, social relations and negotiation with existing American society. Lahiri once said about her memories and affections with her family relatives in India she used to visit India to accompany her mother to her grandfather, grandfather’s brother and her uncle who was interested in drawing paintings that legacy has been seen in the character of Ashima who tries to sketch the pictures. That’s what she was aware knowingly or unknowingly about her family background, relation, attachment and characteristics of Bengali people and their culture.

These narratives she has represented through portraying the characters in the story *The Namesake*, it is a story of a name given to central figure Gogol after the Russian writer, which has carried artistic decorum, literary taste, and twist which holds the curiosity of readers. The name leads Gogol in the world of isolation and sometimes he becomes a subject of fun. It neither reflects a sense of Indianness nor Americanness and that's what Indian diaspora is trapped somewhere in between. The name has an important value in personal and social as well to identify and explore herself/himself. It carries a symbolic rather than literal significance. The name carries the identity of the sect, social position in the Indian context, race, religion, and nationhood so it is important in the life of a person. A good name carries good sense and gives a trick to identify in Indian perception and that may have a similar kind of culture overall. The title suggests it is a story of the name given to a newborn baby boy of an Indian couple who emigrated from Bengal in India to Boston in America. The couple who emigrated to the United States during the 1960s are representing the first and their children are representing the second-generation American born confused desi. It gives a picture the life of Indian Bengali couples and their children and the issues they have faced such as loneliness, alienation, dislocation, cultural clash, ethnic discrimination, and the crisis of identity. The book moves on smoothly touching the various issues, difficulties of immigrants in public, private and social life as well, cultural diversity from the beginning to the end. To form their ethnic identity became a crucial issue among Indian immigrants that has been dealt with in the story.

Certainly, Ashima and Ashoke are modern Hindus in all manners so at the beginning it was hard for them to coexist with an American rather diverse religious sympathy but gradually it has developed a sympathetic approach to see toward the different cultural practices. In the beginning, they objected to celebrating Christmas at home but later they celebrated Christmas at home due to children's forces. The celebration of Christmas became a part of the culture for Ashima. Since globalization, deterritorialization, the borders of territories' quite distinct identities, originality and the cultural supremacy all are blurred, challenged, unrestricted, wobbly, and constantly customizing. As rightly pointed out by Chiang (2010, 01) on the one hand, the mobility and replacement of our bodies destabilize our traditional sense of identity that was usually deeply rooted in a sense of nation-state. Lahiri has portrayed this constant struggle by representing Ashoke and Ashima's desire was that their kids

should grow in a modest way like in India. In which children have to follow the family norms and instructions from their parents. But it was not so easy to keep children away from the ambiance of Americans because their children have been born and received an education in America. Gogol and Sonia are tempted to follow an American lifestyle and to become an American person. Gogol's parents make arrangements to send Gogol for Bengali language and culture classes at the home of one of their Bengali friends (Lahiri 2003, 66). However, the children were not so happy to learn the Bengali language and they wanted to be on the ground to play games with their friends. They felt it was an additional burden to learn the Bengali language.

Belongingness

Belongingness is a substantial component and dimension in the study of any diaspora which reflects an innate and penetrated meaning of diaspora. As Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary (1995) points out, “all human beings need a certain minimum quantity of regular, satisfying social interactions... the inability to meet this need results in loneliness, mental distress, and a strong desire to form new relationships”. Indian diaspora community is struggling to get settled in the United States with carrying their social, cultural and ritual values which were very close to their hearts and minds which signified the belongingness to their roots. Being far off from the homeland in a strange land they are frightened due to loneliness, mental distress and socially excluded. Ashima was completely excluded from social interaction and relations since she was a newly arrived Indian immigrant in the United States. She was not satisfied with the things that she had at her home. They leave behind the known and enter the unknown imagined world so that they are alienated which has led them in melancholy, trauma and obsessed with the memories of a home country.

Lahiri has revealed how the Indian diaspora belongs to their country by representing characters in her stories and a text. Lilia says, “I imagined Mr. Pirzada’s daughters rising from sleep, tying ribbons in their hair, anticipating breakfast, preparing for school... our meals, our actions, were a shadow of what has already happened there, a lagging ghost of where Mr. Pirzada really belonged” (Lahiri 1999, 30-31). Lilia who is a narrator of this story, a daughter of Indian immigrant who grew in America she

once had visited India and speculates about Indian cultures and customs as daily routine activities looking at the behavior Mr. Pirzada about the manner in which his daughter's daily routine and that ghost, the shadow of belongingness is replicating here, in our lives. The question is that why this shadow is reflecting in the lives of diaspora because they are not fully assimilated in American life and they cannot be fully assimilated because American will not accept them as American and also this diaspora itself will not be willing to be assimilated in it because they are attached with the homeland. The similarity of speaking language, jokes, color and look between her father and Mr. Pirzada shows the belongingness coming from the same continent. Her parents knew about these cities where they have grown so that they have affection to it. So they could point out the cities. "I had been there only once and had no memory of the trip...as you see, Lilia, it is a different country, a different color, my father said" (Lahiri 1999, 26). The first generation immigrants are so attached to Indian culture and norms.

In the story of Mrs. Sen, Mrs. Sen was too excited after receiving a letter from her family in India and it shows how she was emotionally attached to her relatives and how they were very close to her. It shows the psychology of Indian people and cultural and social behavior. One can speculate how she was adjusting herself in an alien land without her relatives. Furiously she was happy when she opened up the letter. She "took off her slippers this way and that, drew a wire pin from her hair, and slit the top and sides of the aerogram in three strokes...As soon as she was finished, she cast aside the embroidery that covered the telephone, dialed, and asked, yes, is Mr. Sen there, please?" (Lahiri 1999, 121). She received a letter posted by her family from India and in her imagination, she was not in America but in India with her whole family. This picture indicates the attachment of Indian immigrants' toward the homeland and also it shows the pain of loneliness, deprivation, and trauma being away from their connected people, place, and society. Subsequently, after reading a letter she called her husband because she was alone, not only at home but also in society except her husband there was nobody with whom she could speak Bengali. In hilarious she did speak in Bengali, so fast and rebellious to Eliot's ears; that was very precisely that she was dictating the message of the aerograph. It was narrated word to word. Eliot felt that Mrs. Sen was not present in America but in India. It was a moment she could share her happiness otherwise she had to stay all day at home. Mrs.

Sen used to spend all day in her apartment. There is no dialogue, no relation and no exchange of anything with the neighbor. It is a completely different scenario from Indian society. Her life was compounded in a room in which she can talk only to Eliot, an American boy who was excited looking at the behavior of Mrs. Sen because in a way she works, talks and prepares food was unknown from his knowledge of belongingness.

Married women have to put a red dot on their forehead. It is important to specify the status of a woman whether she is married or not. It has been said putting a red dot on the forehead is an ornament for women. For foreigners, it may not be significant but it is precious for Indian women. The behavior of Eliot and Mrs. Sen not only denotes the distinction of two cultures but also psychology, in a way they were looking to the same thing. When Eliot saw vermilion on Mrs. Sen's forehead he wondered and speculated about various things such as she might be hit over there. But he saw her while she was applying the red vermilion on her forehead by standing before the bathroom mirror. It was fresh scarlet powder that had been stored in a tiny box. "I must wear the powder every day, she explained when Eliot asked her what it was for, for the rest of the day that I am married... like a wedding ring, you mean?" (Lahiri 1999, 117). Lahiri has the skill to explain precisely the cultural dilemma between American and Indian, she compares how these two cultural practices are equally important respectively. It is quite easy to understand the cultural significance. Aside from this, it may be a matter of shocking and wondering for others but for Indians is a matter of pride, trust, faith and the emblem of the pure relationship between husband and wife which has been solemnly formed by taking an oath in the marriage and that has substantial value and considered sacred in terms of social, cultural and religious life. Indian immigrants have followed their belonging to Indian culture.

In the story of *This Blessed House*, Sanjeev is the first-generation Indian immigrant who has a good salary and got married to a second-generation Indian American lady, Twinkle. She is happy to have a statue of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ's image while Sanjeev has an objection to having these. For this, he reminds her we belong to Hindu; not to Christian. She acknowledged we are Hindu but she said not to take away the Virgin Mary statue and Jesus' image from home. The tone of her expression seems ironic. Lahiri softly tried to define the states of Indian American diaspora that

have belonged to diverse cultural phenomena. This is what Lahiri has been trying to interpret the maladies of Indian immigrants' who are facing unexpected happenings that provoke their emotions, feelings and ideas being away from their belongingness.

The story of *Sexy Lahiri* has shown Indian diaspora belongs to India and can be traced in their daily activities, behavior, and exchange views and ideas. There is a talk between Mirinda who does not belong to India and Laxmi belongs to India. It was quite clear that Mirinda was able to hear her voice while she was talking in her tone and language. Laxmi is working for raising funds for charity. Indeed, she is always talking on the phone in which she is habitually using Indian words that are reflecting the sense of Indianness. "What's the Taj Mahal like? Mirinda asked Laxmi... the most romantic spot on earth... Laxmi's face brightened at the memory... an everlasting monument to love" (Lahiri 1999, 92). This expression is similar to the expression of Mrs. Sen when she received an aerogram from her relatives in India. The expressions metaphorically signify the attachment toward their roots while they are settled in a far off land and these expressions have been sprouted from the feeling of otherness.

Ashoke and Ashima, a newly-married couple, arrived in Pemberstone road Boston in 1968, staying in the rented apartment of Alan and Jude. It was a very shocking experience of Ashima when she saw the things in the apartment were scattered. It was something very different from the Indian house and arrangement of things. Ashima remembers their apartment with abiding horror... instead of cereal and tea bags, there were whiskey and wine bottles on top of the refrigerator...there had made Ashima feel drunk (Lahiri 2003, 32). It gave a striking shock to Ashima and immediately she was thinking about how her children could learn, grow up in such a country where children are not cared for by their parents. To raise children in this country that was beyond her imagination. She had to be alone in the apartment since there was nobody to have a dialogue. Alan and Jude hardly used to talk to Ashima. This shock forced Ashima to think that we should not live in such a country which is not good for our children to be raised. Usually, in the Indian house, we could easily find normal things for daily use. But seeing bottles of the beer is not common for Indians that should not keep in the home. "Apart from his father, the baby has three visitors, all Bengali-Maya and Dilip, a young married couple in Cambridge whom Ashima and Ashok met

a few months ago in the Purity Supreme and Dr. Gupta, a mathematics postdoc from Dehradun” (Lahiri 2003, 25). When Ashima had given birth to a boy where Indians had visited the hospital to meet Ashima and Ashoke. All these people were from India acquainted with Ashima and Ashoke. The belongingness among them had been formed on their cultural, social and national identities. To spend the time she used to read Bengali stories and magazines which had been brought from India. Ashima looks up from a tattered copy of *Desh* magazine that she’d brought to read on her plane ride to Boston and still cannot bring herself to throw away... She read each of the short stories and poems and articles a dozen times (Lahiri 2003:06). The attachment of language, literature, stories of her homeland and the culture does not allow her to get away from the copy of *Desh* magazine. The magazine gives her a perpetual sense of belongingness. Lahiri tries to explore the psychic pain of immigrants who do not have their own community, people, no relatives, and social relations. She was bored being alone at home for all the day so she decided to join a public library where she can spend time reading books. ...in a cracked leather armchair, writing letters to her mother, or reading magazines or one of her Bengali books from home (Lahiri 2003, 50). It shows the love and affection of Ashima toward her own culture, language, and belongingness to Bangal.

Ashoke was granted sabbatical from his university. He told Gogol and Sonia that we all are going to Calcutta on a long vacation of eight months. It was shocking news for Gogol and he thought his parents were joking. But his parents said that his tickets have been booked and the plan has been confirmed. Gogol wondered about staying in India for eight months without having a private room, without having his personal things like records, stereo, and without his friends in Calcutta. “So, he points out about his sophomore, about his school. His parents rushed to the guidance counselor to sort out the issue and get escape from it” (Lahiri 2003:79). Gogol was not happy to visit India so he tried to make an issue of college and was looking to stay back in America. For him, America is his home country but not India. There was nothing wrong that Gogol felt that Indian was a strange country he visited India along with his parents. He was raised in America and therefore he was associated with American culture, friends but it was hard for him to stay in the world in which he does not have his friends and belongings.

Representation of God and Goddesses

Hindu religion has diverse social, cultural and religious practices along with different Gods and Goddess images and each one has its own distinct mythical significance. It is a fact that wherever the Indians have been settled they have carried not only these religious and mythical God and Goddess images but also symbolic and ritual significance along with them. Indian diaspora has been following and having faith in various deities and their spiritual significance which made a distinct Indian community from the other in the diaspora. These distinctions have played a remarkable role in forming the identity of the Indian diaspora. It was a painting of a naked woman... she had enormous white eyes that tilted toward her temples... on one hand, she banished a dagger... with one foot she crushed a struggling man on the ground... it is the goddess Kali, Mrs. Dixit explained brightly (Lahiri 1999, 96). The Goddess Kali Maa is a great deity, especially in Bengal and South India and this deity has been worshiped by these people. It has created a distinct identity that belongs to these people. Because of this, the Bengali Indian diaspora wants to teach Bengali culture to their children.

In the *Namesake*, not only Ashima was teaching Gogol to learn by heart the children's poem of Tagore but she also teaching to memorize names of god and goddesses. She introduces the ten-handed goddess Durga during *puja*: Saraswati with her swan and Kartik with his peacock to her left, Lakshmi with her owl and Ganesh with his mouse to her right (Lahiri 2003, 54). The deities and their ritual significance have an important place among the Indian diaspora. Aside from this, Hindu society has its conventional norms that have to be executed whenever they are necessary. Ashoke died suddenly in the middle of his life and Gogol had to perform the required religious duties after his father's death. Having gone a year of passing away of Ashoke, Ahima planed to visit to Calcutta to scatter ashes in holy Ganga river. It is a faith the ashes of a dead Hindu person should leave in the holy river Ganga so that the soul of a dead person will get salvation and dwell in heaven. This culture itself stands to define its identity belonging to Hinduism and its religious myth.

Lahiri has represented these Hindu rituals and images of God and Goddess in her stories to explain how the Indians are belonging to religious myths. *This Blessed*

House has described the issue of cultural clash between Sanjeev and Twinkle, a married couple. Twinkle does not want to remove the Virgin Mary statue and Jesus's image from the house because she had faith in Christianity and its belief; while her husband had opposed her obstinacy. He says to her that we are Indian Hindu so we have to pray Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Sanjeev had no other option except to adjust himself with Twinkle. Sanjeev became helpless and he had to consent with her concern. Sanjeev had organized a party and a number of his friends and Indian couples were invited. One friend among them, Douglas, had asked Sanjeev about his religion since he saw the picture of Virgin Mary on his lawn. I hope you don't mind my asking, Douglas said, but I noticed the statue outside, and are you guys Christian? I thought you were Indian (Lahiri 1999, 151). The presence of the Virgin Mary statue and Jesus' image confused Sanjeev's friend Douglas; he thought that Indian people are all Hindus or in reverse Hindus mean Indian. Sanjeev replied to him, we have Christian in Indian. This conception has been created among the people of non-Hindu in host countries. So, Douglas might have thought that why these Hindus keep the image of Jesus and the Virgin Mary statue. The images of God and Goddesses denote the religious identity of their devotees. But here American Indian Hindus are not like Hindus in India, Hindus in America are the American Hindus. The presence of Jesus' image and the Virgin Mary's statue may not define the identity of its prayers. It can be misunderstood or misinterpreted in a multicultural society. Because the citizens of a multicultural society are influenced by diverse faiths, myths, beliefs, and culture so one cannot be identified by a particular thing, idea, faith and color. In this context, the formation of ethnic identity of the Indian diaspora has become an important issue. Aside from this, this incident explains the situation of Indian immigrants under the influence of American culture and other religions in which marginal people may be the subject of subjugation and oppression.

Alienation and Melancholy

Jhumpa Lahiri exceptionally delineates the issue of alienation, isolation, trauma, and melancholy throughout her writing the stories of *Interpreter of Maladies* and the novel *the Namesake*. Here Lahiri picturized these issues through the representing characters how they are suffering from loneliness, discrimination, cultural clash and disconnection from the homeland and having new challenges being settled in a

strange land. The pain of melancholy and isolation of Indian persons is affecting in social and political lives those who have voluntarily or involuntarily moved away from home and settled in far off land. To explain emotional and psychic pain; one should understand melancholy. Freud theorized the complex concept which is related to the human psyche. He tries to explain the concept of melancholy how individuals confronted with their loss which was something very close to heart such as loving things, person, idea, place, death of loved one and forced to accept against the will. In melancholy, the “object has not actually died but has been lost as an object of love... it is all the more reasonable to suppose that the patient cannot consciously perceive what he has lost either” (Freud 1914-1916: 245). Here, father of Lilia and Mr. Pizarda both have been disturbed and emotionally suffering from being far away from loving things and places. Mr. Pizarda is staying with a Hindu Indian family in America who has come over here for research purposes for which he was awarded a smart fellowship. Mr. Pizarda was psychically disturbed due to the feeling of insecurity of his family since there was internal disturbance going on and Pakistan wanted to have political power, supremacy in Bangladesh in which teachers were murdered, women were raped and thousands of people were killed. This situation has led to Mr. Pizarda to fall in melancholia and alienate being far away from home and located in an unknown world of unknown people.

Mrs. Sen is a character representing the situation of isolated women who have immigrated with their husbands as housewives. They do not have any other work except domestic. These women have to look after their husbands, children and prepare food. Here Jhumpa Lahiri has created a character Mrs. Sen who has become an important figure in literary writing which is representing the traumatic, melancholic and stereotype situation of typical Indian women immigrants in terms of familial, relational, social, cultural and domestic life. A similar character, Lahiri portrays Mala who was the wife of an unnamed Indian immigrant and the narrator of the final story from the same collection. Being married to a person who is living in America, she has departed to America to accompany her husband. This couple had carried along with them the social and cultural norms of Indian society in the foreign land where she becomes alienated and does not have any relatives except the husband, no other social work except domestic. So she has lost the social familiar ambiance, relations, and relatives who were close to her heart. Lost in the sense they do not die but she has lost

them that cannot be regained which gives rise to her melancholia. She always presents herself as a typical Indian shy housewife who always worries about her child and husband. Earlier in her arrival in America, she used to cry for her parents, brothers and relatives left in India but over the time she has adjusted herself with the situation in which she was living. Now she is crying for her child who went to the American university to gain graduation. But the reason behind her crying is the same, earlier she was crying for her parents because they were far away from her, she was frightened being alone in the American mosaic society, there was no communication and no frequent visit to India. So she has lost the things which were close to her heart; she cannot visit India frequently due to far off distance.

In *The Namesake* Ashima is the wife of Ashoke, who is working as a professor at an American University, living in Boston, Pemberton road. Now she is living with her husband as a housewife, she does not have any other work besides to look after her husband and later their kids. It was a pitiful situation in which she wanted to be accompanied by the family members and relatives when she gave birth to a child in the alienated world where nobody was known to her. It was horrible for her to give birth to a child where nobody knew her. Without “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... she has never known of a person entering the world so alone, so deprived” (Lahiri 2003, 23-24). In India, it is a culture that all close relatives are present around a lady at the time of her baby delivery to support and encourage her. Ashima was hospitalized to deliver where she was alone. No parents, no grandparents and no uncles without kith and kin she feels her existence is just like nothingness. She was trapped in the world of the unknown she never knew about such a haphazard situation that she was going to face. She was completely alienated, melancholic and haunted with the memories of time spent with caring, loving and emotionally attached people in India.

Ashima was looking for her husband’s face while he was back behind the curtain and he said I will be back in a moment when he saw her in Bengali. Then the nurse replied to him: “Don’t worry, Mr. Ganguli, she’s got a long way to go... we can take care over from here” (Lahiri 2003, 03). It is a fantasy that one would like to fly to America, such a most advanced place on the earth, the land of liberty and a country

has everything. Indeed, America has everything that humans need. Ashima has everything she needs in the hospital, she was under observation of the hospital's nurse and doctors who frequently visit her. All patients are equally treated. However, it was something strange, uncommon for her to birth a child while there is nobody from her family. A person wants to be accompanied when he or she is in either a happy or unhappy situation where one can share feelings, emotions, or pain which helps to solace the pain and to enrich the happiness. Aside from this, it is a common culture in Indian society that pregnant women usually go to her parents' home for delivery. But she is in America and her parents are in India. It is the melancholia of the diaspora. The caring people are alive but they couldn't come to support Ashima. Indeed, she was unpleasant, alienated and horrified since she was far away from her parents.

It was a panic picture of Indian immigrants' spouses who were not well educated, lack of information about residing in places that are unfamiliar and haunted by a past life in India. Here, these women have been representing the suffocating, isolation and alienation situation of Indian women in the United States. Mrs. Sen used to spend time with American young boy Eliot who required a caretaker since his mother was working in an office she could not spend time for him. Mrs. Sen tells him about Indian society and its people's behavior, approach and psychic and a way of looking toward any incident happening in society. This is how she is remembering the things which were close to her heart have been lost and stayed in a strange land. It was the situation of immigrated women because their husbands were enabled to move on with the American people and culture.

Sanjeev in the story of *This Blessed House* was a first-generation immigrant from Calcutta to America and had a well-paid job over there. He had got married to an Indian lady who was born and raised in America to Indian parents from Calcutta. She has developed a different approach, attitude, and way of thinking which makes a difference between Sanjeev and Twinkle. Indeed, she seems like half American and half Indian. Sometimes Sanjeev feels isolated, regretted and rethinking about his marriage and he feels he had to marry an Indian lady from the upper caste and well educated which had been brought forward by his grandmother. Lahiri has dealt with such a humble and complicated situation of Indian immigrants who were trapped amid two worlds where he or she could not escape from that. Therefore, Sanjeev has

accepted this challenge and moved on with his accepted wife, Twinkle. Once he had thrown a party and invited his friends along with Indian young couples to make this event successful. He had arranged the maximum things for the party with great care of guest's demands whether it's about food and wine. With such attentiveness he had never arranged things but on his marriage day. However, it was different, he hardly knew people that had come from his company, and nobody was from his family. In which he identified himself as an unknown and unacquainted person among the gathered crowd with whom he could not adjust. Similarly, it happened to Sanjeev. Therefore, he was feeling alienated and contemplating over the whole scenario which led him in deprivation and isolation. But his wife was enjoying having such a wonderful party and people, either Americans or Indians. One side his wife was enjoying with the guests who arrived while he was alienated, feeling loneliness in such gathering people.

Whenever a person has migrated from his place to another place he or she tries to understand the unknown things in comparison with known things. Here the unnamed narrator of the story of *The Third and Final Continent* tries to understand the unfamiliar things with his familiar things such as currencies, cost of things, different behavior patterns and it has been done to adjust and get to know the things and norms of American society. Narrator and his wife Mala used to stay in the rented house of an American old woman. Mrs. Croft was so excited and felt proud that Americans have landed on the moon and she always asks the narrator to say 'Splendid' because they hoisted flags on the moon. However, it makes the narrator irritated and confused which reminds him that his master used to ask him to repeat multiplication tables. Besides, it reminds him of Sanskrit verses that have been dictated at his marriage where he had to repeat these verses after the Hindu priest which he rarely understood. Mrs. Croft wondered about Americans having landed on the moon but he thinks that nobody has considered the struggle made by Indian immigrants who have traveled through the various continents and settled in the alienated world despite the adverse situations. The narrator has never resisted Mrs. Croft's insisting to say splendid it shows that he was subjugated to follow being deprived in the alien world.

Ashima is a newly married woman who arrived in Cambridge and it was the first time she has crossed national boundaries and flies for the new continent. Everything is new

for her in Cambridge, it is a journey from the known world to the unknown which gives her exciting experience of geography, flora and fauna, language and people. She feels alienated since she did not find anything familiar to her. Everything is looking perfectly normal... but nothing feels normal to Ashima... for the past eighteen months, ever since she's arrived in Cambridge... it's a consequence: motherhood in a foreign land (Lahiri 2003, 5-6). It was expected that everything would be normal since they had everything, all required things but Ashima was haunted with the memories that have been lost. She is not feeling comfortable since she is alone in a home when her husband goes to university where he was teaching mathematics. Ashima before arriving in Cambridge she used to teach English to the secondary and higher secondary students, playing music and painting which was taught by her grandfather. So her life in India was so happy, normal and she was enjoying it but in Cambridge, her life was miserable since she was alone at home where nobody shared emotions, feelings and ideas except her husband who spent much time in university.

For Ashima, it was the thing to be pregnant, to suffer the queasy mornings in bed, the sleepless nights, the dull throbbing in her back, the countless visits to the bathroom (Lahiri 2003, 5-6). Therefore, she feels her life is a consequence of motherhood because she has to be spent all day alone at home. Fixed things she has to do as routine domestic work. She was suffocating in a home being alone and she wanted to get away from such a painful and psychologically disturbed life. She might have questioned herself that in America we have everything but she has lost social life. She was socially alienated. Therefore, she wants to escape from such a suffocating life. "What are you saying Ashima? I'm saying hurry up and finish your degree... I'm saying I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country... it's not right... I want to go back" (Lahiri 2003: 33). In many ways, America is a different country from India in terms of its culture, social relations and behavior in the way they behave. America is the most advanced and developed country whereas India is a developing country that has both privileges as well as endless intrinsic issues. However, Indian people do not want to move from their land since they are habituated with its culture, social norms and formed a mythical relation with it since they are born in it and they love their nation and its identity. Ashima became so worried about raising her children in America since she does not like American culture, social life and behavior. Similarly, in *Interpreter of Maladies* Mr. Kapasi does not like Mr. and Mrs. Das in the way they

are parenting to their children. The children do not obey what their parents are saying and parents are not carefully paying attention to them. Ashima also comes across such incidents when she entered the rented house where she saw things sprawled across all the corners of the house such as piles of books, clothes, empty beer bottles and unfolded bed sheets that disturbed her. So, in a moment she imagined and wondered about the lives of her children in the country that are not safe and healthy. She feels it is too hard for her to raise her children in America in which she feels many things are distorted. She was haunted by the memories of her family relatives, social norms, and culture in which she was born and raised.

Ashoke had been granted sabbatical leave from his university for the whole eight months and he decided to visit India to his and Ashima's relatives along with the entire family including his wife and children. He told Gogol and Sonia and both of them wondered how we will stay for the whole eight months in Indian where we do not have any friends and without private rooms. Aside from this, Gogol says that I would not accompany you due to school going on and I could not stop myself away from school. So it is an important thing that should be mentioned here that Gogol and Sonia became alienated and worried about living in an unknown country since they were born and raised in America. However, they are not accepted as fully American rather they are being called as Indian American got a hyphenated identity. However, to sort out the issue of his schooling his parents met the counselor. The adviser gave them two options: either he can join you later or he can be enrolled in an international school located in Delhi, eight hundred miles away from Calcutta. For this duration, he can stay with his relatives. "We have no relatives in this country, Ashima informs the guidance counselor... that is why we are going to India in the first place" (Lahiri 2003: 79). This intricate situation has explored the status of Indian immigrants who have fallen in an unstable world. They are trapped in an alien world where they are unable to carry a stable identity.

Within a decade abroad, they are both orphaned; Ashoke's parents both died from cancer, Ashim's mother from kidney disease (Lahiri 2003, 63). It was a catastrophe for both Ashoke and Ashima to have lost their parents in a decade staying in America. It has been said that the children should be accompanied to their parents when they are in trouble being aged. Here it is a different story about the Indian diaspora. Not

only Ashima and Ashoke have accompanied their parents in the old ages but also they could not attain the final rites of their parents due to staying in far off strange land. They did not know that their parents had died. It is a very pathetic situation that Indian immigrants have faced due to the lack of sources of communication, transportation and information.

There is a well-said proverb that misfortune never comes alone. Ashima has faced such mishaps in a series. After the death of her parents, she just came out of that pain. The sudden death of Ashoke has changed the entire scenario of Ashima's life and her children's lives. It was an unbearable shock for Ashima who has traveled to America because of her husband. She was a well-educated woman but she was more likely to be called a typical Indian housewife. Usually, she used to make a call to Ashoke since he had been gone to Cleveland for a few months and she came to know that he has stomach ache so he is in hospital but after some time she got a call and a young trainee said that Ashoke Ganguli has expired. Ashima says it must be a mistake. He was not there for an emergency he had just a stomach ache and a lady replied that he had a severe heart attack. According to Freud, melancholia is a pathological illness because of the lack of recovery from the grief (Freud 1914-1916, 243). To survive in an alien land, it was a big challenge for her where she does not have relatives except community relations. She suffered a lot from her husband's unexpected death. "Now, sitting together at the kitchen table at six-thirty every evening, the hour feeling more like midnight through the window, his father's chair empty, this meatless meal is the only thing that seems to make sense" (Lahiri 2003, 180).

Ashima is always contemplating about her husband's sudden death with whom she could share everything. Except for him, she is feeling lonely and longing for the memories of her husband and she might be thinking about what life would be like if we were in India. Now, she has become a kind of melancholic, sick patient and it is hard to recover from that. Gogol has moved to his work after spending some days after his father's death. She became a handicapped person without her husband. She was always contemplating memories of her husband and life being grown up with him in America. Her life without her husband looks like life in death; there is nothing left for her, but her children who were indulged in their own interest. Both wanted to be independent and enjoy their lives.

One weekend Gogol had decided to visit the beaches that his father used to visit frequently where his father did like to walk. For a while she was so excited and happy to go the beaches but in a moment she refused to go there. She was spending her life in nostalgia since the demise of her beloved husband; she was haunted by his memories. If she visits her husband's liked places it would hurt her, she would not be able to bear the pain of watching that place. So she might have avoided visiting the beaches which her husband liked. Ashima was a typical Indian lady, attached to her husband. It was a difficult time to live alone after passing away her husband. It was quite normal for Gogol and Sonia to stay alone. They advised Ashima to move on; one has to live on his own at some point. Ashima hates returning in the evenings to a dark, empty house, going to sleep on one side of the bed and waking up on another side (Lahiri 2003, 161). Lahiri has poignantly portrayed pinpoint details of Indian diaspora lives in America in which they have met unexpected incidents and events. Ashima does not want to go back in the evening to a dark and empty house where she lives alone. It was very gloomy that she was sleeping on one side to bed and getting up on the other which means she couldn't sleep all night. Empty house signifies nothing in her life that is obsessed with gloom, anxiety, hopelessness and depression. This whole scenario reflects the melancholia and alienation of Indian immigrants in America.

Struggle for Settlement

Jhumpa Lahiri has represented the Indian immigrant's struggle for settlement in America. She was a daughter of Indian immigrant who spent her childhood in America along with her parents. The movement of migration of immigrants from place to place has been reflected throughout her writings of her stories and *the Namesake*. Drawing the picture of Indian immigrants in her *the Namesake* is partially the representation of characters from her family moving from the Asian continent to Europe and America where they have faced, in their settlement, many obstacles such as cultural clash, language barriers, identity issues, protecting their roots and survival and finally receiving permanent citizenship.

She has shared her sweet and bitter experiences through the representation of characters in stories that have been trapped in the state of indeterminate, unstable, and moving. Indian immigrants are looking to form their ethnic identity by gathering social, cultural and ritual values in segregation. Lahiri tries to represent how this process has been worked among Indian immigrants. It has been difficult for Indians to fit into American postures, customs and to adopt the whole feature of it since they were more conservative people. Even though Indian Immigrants have adapted modern values and norms by modifying their socio-cultural values to fit into American society, they couldn't become complete American. Indians have been following their own culture, social norms and they have different skin colors from others. Therefore, their social and political identity remained as Indian American people. For instance, in the second story of the collection, Lilia, who was the daughter Indian immigrants, cheering as an American student in her school, she became aware of these two geographic entities of India and America and fell into a dilemma. She had been taught at her school the American history, geography, and culture, and at home, she had to learn about Indian culture, social norms and ritual values. Now and then, her father asked her what exactly you are learning at school and you do not know about our home country. Then, she started reading Indian history in her school library instead of reading the American Revolution that had been assigned to do. On the other hand, her father was so connected to the home country he always used to watch Indian news on TV and keep in touch with India's internal chaos. It is a picture of immigrants struggling to get down in a strange land.

In the story, *Sexy*, Dev has shared his experience with Miranda how he struggled for years to accomplish the American way of life. He had received school and university education from American institutes even though he was unable to speak like an American. So he had spent years working on movies in America. "It took him years to be able to follow American accents in movies, in spite of the fact that he'd had an English medium education" (Lahiri 1999: 94). It is a contrast between Lahiri and Bharati Mukharjee's way of looking at the issues of identity and the struggle of immigrants to settle in a foreign land. Lahiri says in her interview that she is neither accepted fully as American or Indian. In reference to this, Bharati Mukharjee made a statement that one should leave his past and become fully immersed in the American world to become American. It is hard to agree with Mukharjee because immigrants

neither fully erase their historic roots nor fully assimilate into the adopted country. The identity and existence of immigrants are a result of composite culture. So, immigrants' identity is fractured, a hybrid that has been endorsed by many diasporic thinkers.

There are so many characters Lahiri has portrayed in her stories such as the father of Lilia, Mrs. Sen, Sanjeev and Mala, a wife of the unnamed narrator in a concluding story. These characters struggled to move on with the American way of life. Lilia's father is too much connected with memories of his past life in India which makes him painful to be fit into America while his wife and daughter enjoy being in one of the most advanced and developed countries in which they have an equal opportunity and freedom. Mrs. Sen, Mala are the women who came to America to accompany their husbands and it was not their wish. These women are raised in Hindu conservative families who have been trained by Indian culture. Mrs. Sen is always seen in contemplating her memories and her life in India where she had a close connection with the neighbors and the people from her society. But here in America, she does not have such an affiliation with a neighbor, she felt she had been derived from an unknown world where she has to talk with only her husband in Bengali that makes her adverse and hazardous. So her life in America is not happy. In *This Blessed House*, Sanjeev was born and brought up in India who received higher education and got a good-paying job in America, and got married to a lady. She spent her childhood in the United States. In spite of this, Sanjeev and Twinkle are belonging to Indian descendants but both have different approaches to see their lives since they have been brought up in a different cultural, social and national atmosphere. This difference between Sanjeev and Twinkle makes it inconvenient to move on. She seems an American rather than Indian and Sanjeev seems Indian than American. So Sanjeev faced emotional agony and regretted being married to a lady who was raised in America. So he faces difficulties in getting settled in America since he has been facing problems in understanding the American way of life and adjusting in it.

Lahiri writes, "we are American citizens now so that we can collect social security when it is time. Though we visit Calcutta every few years and bring back more drawstring pajamas and Darjeeling tea, we have decided to grow old here" (Lahiri, 1999, 197). When Indians had come to America they were struggling to find a house

on rent, even though they did not give up or went back to India. Now they became American citizens and found their way of life. Lilia's father, Sanjeev and Mala's husband all have purchased home, received permanent citizenship, their children have been receiving an American education, accessing available opportunities and moving on in American life. All of them have been living in suburban areas of Boston, Massachusetts, and Cleveland. The narrator and his wife Mala used to live in a town which was twenty miles away from Boston. They have a son who has gone to Harvard University and Mala rarely weeps not for her parents but for her child who stays away from her at Harvard. Mala was a shy Indian woman who did not drape the end of her sari over her forehead when the first time Mala did come in America. Now somehow, she is accustomed to American life. They have hope that their child will graduate and move on alone in this world. His father reminds him of his struggle with how he came across the whole three continents and found a place. So there is no need to be frightened we are living, we help you whenever you need our support. He encouraged him by telling how he has traveled across three continents. I tell him that if I can survive on three continents, then there is no obstacle not to conquer (Lahiri 1999, 197). Lahiri says that to survive one has to struggle and he should not give up. He compares the American people who spend hours on the moon then why we do not survive on the planet. Americans landed on the moon for an hour and remained heroes forever, whereas we as immigrants are traveling across the globe and successfully lived in the various continents over thirty years. He says, it is not something that I have done innovatively and something extraordinary but it is not an exaggeration to say that it is a big achievement for those who were unable to think to go beyond the boundaries of their country.

The Namesake, the narratives of this story represent the struggle for the quest of Indian diaspora identity in the United States. The title itself stands to narrate the struggle of settlement, to secure their culture, to protect social norms and to form an identity. Ashima was a newly married woman and so far she had not stayed away from her parents' home. Now she is with her husband in Cambridge and her life in America is different in many ways. There was nobody to guide her in domestic life that was quite strange for Indian typical woman. 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 2003, 06). She was anxious about life without her

relatives, elders and their support and much worried about raising children in such a country where neither known people nor relatives could support when there is a need. She was thinking and worrying much about their lives in the world in which nothing is permanent; everything is temporary and fragile. It was a very exciting and horrible experience she has gone through. Ashoke has rented a home from the American couple where they also live. Ashima became so excited and anxious by viewing around the home stuffed with unfolded clothes, piles of books, unclean utensils in the kitchen, empty beer bottles and the children sprawled in bed. In which Ashoke and Ashima have to stay and their struggle has been kicked off to survive in the alienated world. Ashima's reaction to this rented home seems like Mala's husband's experience with Mrs. Clout. He said that he never lived in a home of a person who was not Indian. But he rented the home of an old American lady. So for Indians, it was a challenge to move on with this American walk of life.

Ashima bore a baby boy, he was named Gogol, after the name of Russian author favorite of his father, for the time being, because Ashima and her husband wanted the name to be suggested by elders from their family, particularly by Ashima's grandmother, and it was the custom of Bengali. At this point, the struggle of Indian immigrants' identity has started. Ashima and Ashoke informed their family in India and asked her grandmother to suggest two names as good and nick at home. Ashima's grandmother wrote a letter in which she suggested names secretly but unfortunately, the posted letter never reached out to Ashima, it was hung in between America and India. It is the symbolic sign which denotes the position of Indian immigrants in which they are struggling to identify themselves.

Lahiri has explained the contradiction between the first and second generation, it is a deliberate attempt that has been made by the first generation to pass on the social, cultural regional language and religious values to the next generation. On the other hand, the second-generation children were worried and feeling insecure, shamed since their parents were not fit into the American world. The result of this anxious situation has pushed the children of Indian immigrants into a world of confusion. They have been recognized with an abbreviation as ABCD; American Born Confused Desi. Lahiri has sketched the picture of confusion of ABCD by portraying Gogol as an Indian American student when he has participated in the discussion of Indian English

novels which had been written by Indians. Deliberation on marginality was something unfamiliar to Gogol. ABCDs are unable to answer the question 'where are you from?' the sociologist on the panel declares (Lahiri 2003, 118). Now Gogol understood he belonged to ABCDs. At this point, he realized the significance of identity because he himself was considered American. Then he begins to think about centrality, marginality, and otherness. Lahiri has tried to notify how Indian diaspora has been marginalized in terms of social, cultural and behavioral patterns. Gogol, Sonia, and Moushumi are the natural citizens of America even though they had not been guaranteed their identity as fully American owing to their parents belonging to India.

The quest for identity for Indian in the United States is a critical issue since they are located in nowhere, in between. They have to move on their lives according to space and time, if they stay at home they have to follow the norms of the Indian community and its culture and in public they have been bound to follow the American modern norms and code of conduct. This combination of duality confuses the children of Indian immigrants. Gogol had been in a relationship with American girls who were so liberal, not conservative and tempted to enjoy what they like without any fear. But it is not a common or bearable move of young children in Indian society. For a long time, Gogol had been in a relationship with Maxine, a bold American lady staying with her parents. Gogol was anxious about taking Maxine to his home since she was an open-minded, individualistic and she may not like things at his home. However, once Gogol took her to his home to introduce his parents. Maxine has greeted Ashima and Ashoke by uttering their names and that makes Ashima odd and strange. This is a cultural clash between the Indian and American people.

Gogol was so confused having such an unfamiliar name that neither hints a sense of Indianness nor American. Gogol is named after his father's favorite Russian author Nikolai Gogol who wrote a short story *The Overcoat* which rescued his father when he was near to die in a train accident while he was traveling from Calcutta to Jamshedpur to meet his grandfather. In this accident, Ashoke was almost about to die but somehow his life was rescued by a rescued team who saw *The Overcoat's* crushed patch in his hand. It is a twist in the story that has held the interest of readers. So it is a story revealed around the name of Gogol. Name is not a simple name but it carries literal significance. The significance of the diasporic expression is in instability,

tangled somewhere in between, uncertainty identity and carrying duality. It is a metaphor to explain the complex relations between immigrants and inhabitants of the receiving country and looking for the identity of Indian immigrants in America. Gogol has officially changed his name to Nikhil but the shadow of the previous name could not leave him and he was unable to escape from the habit of his earlier name; the impression of the name has been rooted in memory. Gogol meets Ruth and introduces himself as Nikhil, “he feels at once guilty and exhilarated (Lahiri 2003, 96). Similarly, Gogol and Moushumi have struggled to become complete American citizens by accepting the whole scenario, culture, life pattern, living manners and customs of America but they could not. The ancestry history never allowed them to move away from it, the shadow of roots has always followed them that define their social, cultural and national identities.

Gogol has followed the American way of life, even his parents accepted many American things and events. Gogol is habituated with smoking, drinking and interested in relationships with American girls. To save his relations he left his parents' home and went to New York to stay with Maxine. It was a conscious move to become American and not to remain simply a Bengali guy. Similarly, Moushumi Mazoomdar is another important character she had rebelled against her parents' expectations. Her parents wanted her to marry Bengali boy but she refused. She had a desire to marry an American boy and she had been in a relationship with that boy and she had convinced her parents to agree for her marriage. Moushumi and American boy Graham were engaged. But finally, she met disaster because her fiancé refused to marry her. The engagement has been broken due to the cultural clash. Later she married Gogol which was not long-lasting and they divorced because she was in love with her college friend Dimitri Desjardins.

In the epilogue of the story, Ashima decided to sell the house at Pemberton Road and go back to Calcutta which was once a loving place, close to heart but now she does not have similar affection toward this city as *desh*. She feels overwhelmed by the thought of the move she is about to make, to the city that was once home and is now in its own way foreign (Lahiri 2003, 278). She is entangled somewhere and wandering in the diasporic imagined land belonging to different territories. After spending enough time in America she has developed the affiliation with it where her

husband took his last breath and she remembers what he told when he had gone to Cleveland. He was teaching me how to live alone (Lahiri 2003, 183). Thus she is carrying many memories of her life living in a strange land and now it becomes close to her heart. She missed when she had arrived in America, her thirty-three years of life in India with her parents and grandparents, her grandfather used to teach her how to draw a picture. Now she is missing her relationship, love and care of her husband with whom she grows old, raised her children in a city and memories of her colleague workers in the library with whom she used to share her personal feelings and ideas.

Now Gogol realized the literal significance of his name after the demise of his father and recalled the memories and struggle of his father who came to this country by overcoming all the shortcomings. He understood his ancestral roots, culture and social norms which have been protected by his parents while celebrating the American way of life. Maxine says to Gogol, move on and leave all this. But he refused her to get away from this. Gogol realized the value of their ancestral root, history, culture and ritual. These are the substantial elements for constructing distinct identity from others. Thus he finds his own path to prospect once his life in the modern world. 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 (Lahiri 2003, 179). So he came to conclude that each culture has its own history, roots, and belongingness so one cannot categorize them into superior and inferior. Both historical roots, cultures and social norms are equally important in forming its dwellers' identity. They are neither neglected nor adopted completely but one can put them together to form their own flavor, taste, and identity. Thus, Lahiri has tried to represent a comprehensive picture of the Indian family along with its roots, culture, and belongingness throughout the stories.

Language

A language is an important tool to express thoughts, values, customs, beliefs, and ideas and to convey information between people who are communicating and it can be used for multiple purposes besides passing information. Language is inherent to the expression of customs, social norms, political ideas, and feelings. It has the social importance of preserving its traditional values, social and cultural norms. Indeed, it plays an important role in the immigrant community in protecting their socio-cultural

and religious values. Indian immigrants have carried their language along with them wherever they have gone in the world. Similarly, Indian immigrants, particularly Bengali have carried their Bengali language along with them and how they have preserved among them that has been represented in Jhumpa Lahiri's texts of short stories and *the Namesake*.

The first-generation Indian immigrants have preserved regional language identity and its cultural significance. Language is the most valid tool to protect its distinct social and cultural values because each language has carried its distinguishing characteristics and values. The Bengali's have carried along with them the Bengali language to America which is the best medium to protect their distinct ethnic identity and social norms. Notably, these immigrants are educated; they have received an education with highly professional degrees in engineering, medical, and IT's. Indians have immigrated in a greatest number after bringing H-1B visa. However, their family members and relatives have language issues that have accompanied them. Particularly, the spouses have language issues of Indian immigrants who have got well-paying jobs in universities, multinational companies, in the health department as physicians and engineers.

Jhumpa Lahiri has portrayed such female characters such as Mrs. Sen, Mala, Mrs. Mira Das in short stories and Ashima in the *Namesake*. All these immigrants have the issue of the English language. They have problems with utterance and other minor lacunas. Everyone, these people, too much in their world (Lahiri 1999, 121). Eliot, a young boy, observes Mrs. Sen, the wife of a professor teaching mathematics in an American university. Mrs. Sen was most of the time engaged in domestic and cooking work. Thus, she was the subject of fun for Eliot. But she does not have any issue while talking Bengali with her husband who is the only person with whom she can speak Bengali. Similarly, Mala speaks Bengali with her husband when she comes at the airport she speaks Bengali to her husband and he realizes he speaks first time Bengali in America.

In the story, *Sexy*, Dev did receive English medium education from American institutions and spent enough time there and worked for a long time in movies yet he was unable to speak like American people. He has contributed many years to follow

American accents in movies. It is a situation of well-educated Indian immigrants who have to struggle to be a part of mainstream American society. Besides Mrs. Das was raised in America and her talk seems like American accent but not exactly like American as Mr. Kapasi says. Ashima in *The Namesake* had been asked what are you expecting a boy or a girl. Hoping for a boy or a girl? Patty asks... as long as there are ten fingers and ten toe, Ashima replies... Patty smiles, a little too widely, and suddenly Ashima realizes her error, knows she almost as much as her last contraction... English had been her subject (Lahiri 2003, 07). Before coming to America she used to teach English to the neighbors' children, in the open place in front of her home. She had taught Tennyson and Wordsworth to school boys. But in Bengali, a finger can also mean fingers, a toe toes (Lahiri 2003:07). It shows the influence of culture upon language. Indians overlook minor mistakes, usually, it happens in day to day speaking, they try to focus on sense. But Americans cannot overlook mistakes in their daily communication. If Indians failed to talk accurately they would be subject to fun for others. So Patty too widely laughed over Ashima's mistake of speaking. So it is a tough challenge for Indians to speak English accurately with confidence.

Language is an important tool to preserve and propagate its culture and social values. With this hope, Ashima tries to teach Bengali culture and language to her children Gogol and Sonia and they have joined a weekly Bengali class to learn Bengali language teaching by Bengali person at his home. But Sonia and Gogol do not show any interest in learning Bengali but they were missing their friends who were playing games. Besides, the Bengalis always talk in Bengali whenever they come together. They usually go on weekly trips altogether to spend time, share experience and to have fun among them. The elders speak Bengali but their children do not speak Bengali. This is a generation gap widening between them.

Family relation

Sabatelli and Bartle defined the family features such as “a complex structure consisting of an interdependent group of individuals who (a) have a shared sense of history, (b) experience some degree of emotional bonding, and (c) devise strategies for meeting the needs of individual family members and the group as a whole”

(Sabatelli & Bartle 1995, p. 1027). The definition of family according to both Sabatelli and Bartle is substantially meaningful, it covers family history, interaction, structure, interdependent, emotional bonding, and sense of unity, and these described features are significant for forming family unification. However, these features are not followed strictly when we look at the family structure of immigrants which got the shape of more independent, away from the whole responsibilities, consisting of a few members including parents and their children, called the nuclear family. It is a common feature of immigrant families. This form of family structure has been seen throughout the representation in Lahiri's short stories as well as in her novel *The Namesake*. There is not a single example of a joint family in her writing. The family is indeed unstable; however, it carries institutionalized duties that have to be performed by its members.

Lahiri has keenly represented the vivid picture of immigrant's family structure and it is shown how this structure has been formed with throwing insights on its relation and bonding among father, mother, and children. The family has an important place in Indian society and usually, the Indian family is known for its peculiar feature is a large family. However, traditional Indian society has been influenced by the arrival of modernity in which the importance has given to individual freedom. If we see the families in Lahiri's short stories all are nuclear families. The opening story of the collection is the story of Shukmar and Shobha, second story of Lilia and her parents, the third story of Das family who came in Indian to visit their parents and the Sun temple, then rest stories in anthology are followed the same characteristic is concerned to family construction. All are present in the nuclear family and also Ashoke and Ashima too in *The Namesake*. The heads of all represented families are well educated. The member of the nuclear family wants to be alone, independent, therefore, they are not much emotionally connected among them.

There are endless names Gogol and Sonia must remember to say, not aunt this and that but terms for more specific: *mashi* and *mama* and *mami*, *kaku* and *jethu* (Lahiri 1999, 81). The clear idea about relatives denotes whether they are related to mother or father side. It was a wonder for Sonia and Gogol who rose in America they didn't see a family that has many relatives in America. It was said to them to keep in memory the names of their relatives with a specific relation but it was hard for them. In the

story of the *Interpreter of Maladies* Mr. and Mrs. Das behaved like strangers; not like wife and husband and parents for their kids. It seemed that they were in charge of looking after their children. It was hard to believe they were regularly responsible for anything other than themselves (Lahiri 1999, 49). Mr. Raj and Mrs. Mira Das had on tour to India to visit the sun temple located in Konark Northeast on the coastline of Odisha, India and the narrator Mr. Kapasi had been assigned to take them to the sun temple. He wondered by observing the relations between Mr. and Mrs. Das were born, raised and got married in America, the second generation of Indian descendants whose parents were good friends and now staying in India and they had lived in the same town. Mr. and Mrs. Das were a married couple but relations between them were so exciting and uncommon. They were behaving like irresponsible, independent friends, careless about their children and indulged in their interests. It gives a shock to Mr. Kapasi and he thinks about his relations with his wife. It is an interrogation that Das's family is to be called family or not. Because of the lack of integrity, carelessness and Mrs. Das's infidelity with a person staying in London and she bore a child from him.

The Third and Final Continent, after the marriage Mala had to stay at the house of a brother in law for five nights before departure to Boston. Mala and the narrator shared a bed in the same house. "Although I would be leaving the country in a few days, custom dictated that she was now a part of my household" (Lahiri 1999: 181). This home "would be her home until she left to join the narrator. "For the next six weeks, we learn, 'she was to live with my brother and his wife, cooking, cleaning, serving tea and sweets to guests" (Lahiri 1999, 181). Lahiri gives a comparative picture that beautifully explains so the reader can easily understand the difference between Indian conservative and diaspora family structure. Indeed, it is a result of migration because the whole family including grandparents and parents has not immigrated. Apart from this, American people would prefer to have a nuclear family than a large one. It may not be a conscious act but it is influenced by it.

Indian immigrants have good numbers in America. They have settled across the United States in various cities. They have created bonding based on religion, region and linguistic identities. Lahiri has represented in her stories the Bengali families which are in good numbers staying in various cities. These families have built

relations among them and frequently meet at good and bad times, meeting on weekends to share culture, food, exchange views and form solid bonding. Bengalis used to meet on the weekend on Saturday. Thus Indian immigrants have formed their cultural distinct identities among the various races in American communities.

Food

Food culture has an important place in Indian society which can be seen in various contexts because Indian society is structured on hierarchy arranged one above another and according to this structure, each section of society has its own food cultural habit. Broadly upper and lower strata of this society having veg and non-veg respectively. However, this distinction has not been observed strictly these days because the people of the upper strata have started to consume non-veg, chicken, mutton and also to drink liquor. It helps to make a distinction among Indian people. Aside from this, India does not have a particular form of food practice; it has distinct food practices in terms of the preparation method, the mixture of ingredients items in cooking to have a particular food. India is known for its abundant distinct social, religious and cultural things and various states of it have their own form of food habits. About Indian diaspora food implies the importance of culture and carries a symbolic meaning which stands for resistance to the imposition of others, protects its own culture and maintains identity because it has been inscribed the values of belongingness.

According to Williams (2007: 70), in “Asian American literature, food as metaphor frequently constructs and reflects relationships to racialized subjectivity and also addresses issues of authenticity, assimilation, and desire”. Lahiri has described excessively about food culture, habits and their choice in Indian diaspora which serves to form its identity in the alien land. The food habits of Indian diaspora represented and provided culinary knowledge in the collection have excessively been described in *A Temporary Matter*, *Mrs. Sen*, *The Blessed House* and also in *The Namesake*.

Indian immigrants in the post-colonial period are well educated who have earned degrees from prestigious institutes such as IIT, AIIMS medical science institute and universities. The first-generation immigrants mostly did arrange a marriage to Indian

women from respective social categories following the advice of older members from their families. Women have been assigned domestic work including nurturing children, cooking food and looking after the whole family while male-dominated over women by having social privileges and earning money. These women have been called typical Indian women. Thus the female characters have carried the sense of Indian identity through preparing Indian food by following its preparation methods. The characters Shobha from first story, Lilia's mother from second story and Mrs. Sen from *Mrs. Sen* and Twinkle from *The Blessed House* and Ashima from *The Namesake* are the wives of professors and engineers and have been working at home as housewives. According to Williams (2007: 70), "these stories highlight the elided female diasporic subject and invest food practices the things characters eat and the ways they eat them, as well as how characters relate to the preparation of food-with significance that speaks to conditions of migration and diaspora".

Sukumar wondered looking at his wife, Sobha, who is capable of thinking ahead. "There were endless boxes of pasta in all shapes and colors, zippered sacks of basmati rice, whole sides of lambs and goats from the Muslim butchers at Haymarket, chopped up and frozen in endless plastic bags" (Lahiri 1999, 06). These are the varieties of food items Indians like to have and it indicates how Indians love to prepare food at home because they do not prefer to have food from hotels. Shobha likes to take mutton from Muslim butchers because usually Muslims run the business of selling mutton in India and they are experts in cutting mutton into pieces. Shukumar notes not only that they both invariably marveled at how much food they'd bought, but also that It never went to waste (Lahiri 1999, 07). Indians are so cautious regarding food that should not be wasted so they are fond of food. It is similar to Mrs. Sen who used to bring the varied types of vegetable slicing by a blade which was brought from India and says this tool could easily be found in all houses of Indian society. Lilia says that my parents and Mr. Pirzada used to have the same food. Indian diaspora prefers to have Indian food as vegetarian food. Lilia and her parents would like to have food such as ate rice for dinner with their hand, no spoon, mango pickled with meals. Her parents along with Mr. Pirzad used to chew fennel seeds after having meals for digest and they shouldn't drink alcol

Mrs. Sen introduces herself as the wife of a professor who is teaching mathematics at university. This self-defined identity by taking advantage of her husband's identity, she takes advantage of when she had a difficult time. But as Indian typical wife she had created her personal distinct identity. She had a good knowledge of culinary. She took the whole vegetables between her hands and hacked them apart: cauliflower, cabbage, butternut squash... she could peel a potato in seconds (Lahiri 1999, 114). She narrates a story, the role of Indian women in important events to eleven-year young boy Eliot. It is a usual cultural practice in Indian society that whenever there is an important event where people outside the family are invited to perform duties. Her mother invites the neighboring women and they come with blades. Then they sit in an enormous circle on the roof of our building, laughing and gossiping and slicing fifty kilos of vegetables through the night (Lahiri 1999, 115). It is a culture of the Indian community in which neighbors and relatives voluntarily participate in the program. Women have been assigned specifically domestic work that is culturally significant to refuse the other's cultural dominance and uphold their own culture, identity. Thus it has been playing a crucial role in carrying its norms.

In addition to this, she narrated about the popular food of fish in the Bengali family. She added that in Calcutta people ate the fish first thing in the morning, the last thing before bed, as a snack after school if they were lucky... they ate the tail, the eggs, even the head (Lahiri 1999, 123-24). This shows us how these Indian immigrants are attached to Indian food. Lilia says my mother brought forth the succession of dishes: lentils with fried onions, green beans with coconut, fish cooked with raisins in a yogurt sauce (Lahiri 1999, 30). The above vegetables are very common and popular among Indian diaspora that has been reflecting the affiliation of Indian people to these food habits. Fish is the most liked food among Indians, particularly Bengalis. In *Sexy*, Lahiri has described the picture of Indian American relations in which consumption of food has been exchanged. In the morning Mirinda went to a deli and brought a baguette and little containers of things Dev liked to eat, like pickled herring, and potato salad, and tortes of pesto and mascarpone cheese (Lahiri 1999:93). In this way, Lahiri describes the food habits, most liked vegetables, style of preparing, eating with no spoon but hands. She gives a detailed explanation of Indian immigrants' food choice and the style of having it that become a special feature of Indian diaspora identity.

This Blessed House is a story discovered around a newly married couple Sanjeev and Twinkle who is not a traditional woman like Mrs. Sen, Sobha, Laxmi, and Mala. Twinkle was a daughter of Indian immigrants born and raised in America and she was so fond of American culture and attracted toward modernity and now and then Sanjeev said we are not Christian; we are good Hindu. She was neither accustomed nor had any fondness toward Indian food. It has been narrated by a third person, in Sanjeev's perspective. His character has been designed through his references to his food affinities and his relations with it in his early life. He remembers loving things, when he would walk each evening across the Mass Avenue Bridge to order Mughlai chicken with spinach from his favorite Indian restaurant on the other side of the Charles, and return to his dorm to write out clean copies of his problem sets (Lahiri 1999, 138).

Sanjeev had organized a party and he invited many friends, most of them from his working place and specially invited Indian young couples and many of them attended the party. Sanjeev had prepared a menu which was simple and included Indian food also. There would be a case of champagne, and samosas from an Indian restaurant in Hartford, and big trays of rice with chicken and almonds and orange peels, which Sanjeev had spent the greater part of the morning and afternoon preparing (Lahiri 1999, 150). He likes to have Indian food with his hands. It was a common thing in India where he grew up doing such things in India. So he couldn't quit his Indian food habits after immigrating to the United States. He is contrary to the choice of food of his wife who does not like Indian food. After Twinkle describes her meal plainly as a stew to which she added the malt vinegar, he reflects on her impulsive qualities (Lahiri 1999, 142). Twinkle tempted to fuse the various ingredients to produce unusual taste so she appeared to blend different food items into preparation. She detested chopping garlic, and peeling ginger, and could not operate a blender, and so it was Sanjeev who, on weekends, seasoned mustard oil with cinnamon sticks and cloves in order to produce a proper curry (Lahiri 1999, 144). Sanjeev and Twinkle have developed transformative and constructive relationships between them. Both have understood each other and moved on with the existing situation.

Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* is a story of Ashima and Ashoke, a newly married couple in America. The story opens with the entry of Ashima Ganguli who is standing in the kitchen, coming into view to combine a version of hot mix and puffed rice. She is combining rice Krispies and planters peanuts and chopped red onions in a bowl... she adds salt, lemon juice, thin slices of green chili pepper, wishing there was mustard oil to pour into the mix (Lahiri 1999:01). This was the common food for Ashima because she had consumed such food throughout her pregnancy. She said that this food could easily be found anywhere in India. She was very fond of Indian snacks which can be found anywhere in India by the side of the footpath. Ashoke along with his family had visited Lexington Avenue where they had food from Indian restaurant and purchased Indian groceries and clothes including polyester saris to offer to relatives in Calcutta.

It is a culture of Indian society that they have to observe what to have food after the demise of a family member. Gogol, Sonia and Ashima have all observed the mourning diet for ten days after Ashoke's death. During the ten day they didn't have fish, meat and any delicious food. They had only simple Indian common food including rice, dal vegetables prepared in simple manner. These cultural practices and things distinguish the Indian identity from the other immigrants and American people as well. In these stories, food is the means for characters to assert agency and subjectivity in ways that function as an alternative to the dominant (Williams 2007: 70). Thus the food is not only a thing to have for a living but it is a metaphor signifying the cultural, spiritual, social value and human relations. Ashoke along with his whole family embarked to Calcutta on his sabbatical leave for eight months. Four in the family, his father says when it is their turn, producing two U.S. passports and two Indian ones... two Hindus meals, please (Lahiri 2003, 80). Food served to formulate Indian immigrant ethnic identity however, second generation prefers different styles of food; they are not adhered to only Indian food.

Indian Women in the Diaspora

Women migration has played a significant role in preserving Indian culture, social norms, ritual practices and identity. In the colonial period male labor was in major demand for toiled work in plantations, factories and construction of railroads while

women were given secondary status, the recruiters thought that women were unable to do hard work. But later women were recruited because of the demand made by Indian male laborers. Postcolonial women's migration has a different space by sharing equal rights with men. The post-colonial migrants are highly qualified to have migrated to developed countries where they got high paying jobs even though they have preferred to marry to the Indian women. Thus, women have migrated to developed countries to accompany their male partners. Women had been given an opportunity to join their family during the 1980s by the United States of America. As a result of this opportunity, a large number of women have immigrated as spouses to the United States. Lahiri has expressed her views about women immigration to the United States in her interview. She said that women like her who were basically living in the United States because of their husbands and didn't have an identity or a purpose of their own here (cited in Williams 2007, 74). Throughout stories she delineated the picture of Indian women who have been immigrated to the United States. Lahiri represents many women characters who have immigrated to simply accompany their family and partners in the United States.

Interpreter of Maladies and *the Namesake* have exceptionally delineated the picture of the first generation Indian women who have voluntarily submitted their own existence to men. These women were not highly educated, they just might have secondary, higher secondary and graduate. They had been immigrated not because of their own wish or for job purposes. They have immigrated as married women with their husbands. So women were submissive actors in the whole process of immigration and men were at the center. Thus, this process of immigration created a possible space for the patriarchal system. I would like to note the women characters who have immigrated to join their husbands such as Lilia's mother, the wife of an Indian professor, Mrs. Sen's husband was also a teacher of mathematics in the university. Mala was the wife of an Indian immigrant who was working at MIT. Ashima was the wife of an Indian engineering professor in the university in *The Namesake*. All these women have immigrated not because they had a desire to go there but just they had migrated to join their male partners.

It should be discussed that highly educated and skilled labor immigrants did prefer the endogamy system. The question is why did they follow an endogamy system? They

did marry women who belonged to the same social category and regional identity. “My wife’s name was Mala... the marriage had been arranged by my older brother and his wife... I regarded the proposition with neither objection nor enthusiasm... it was a duty expected of me, as it was expected of every man” (Lahiri 1999, 179). Indeed, it is clear that they wanted to protect their social, cultural and regional identity which should not be wiped out under the influence of other social and cultural dominance. It is said that a woman is a key person to protect the social, cultural and racial identity in Indian society in which these things have been given more importance.

Moushumi was a daughter of Indian immigrants who wanted to marry an American boy and it was her wish. When she was asked to marry Bengali guy? She refused to marry Bengalis, she did not care about her parents’ wishes. To find a proper American boy who has passed more than enough time she looks so old, the charm of youth has been paled. Finally, she could find an American boy with whom she wanted to marry. Moushumi did bring her American friend Graham home to New Jersey without any fear of her parents who wanted her to marry an Indian boy. The choice of partners, according to the first-generation should come from the same social and national ethnic background that gives the assurance of the sanctity of social status. In this case, it was not a matter for her parents that he was an American because their daughter was old enough and there was a risk either she could find another guy or not. This gives the example of endogamy how it is an important system in Indian society. Therefore, Indian immigrants have married Indian women who come from the same social background and it was the belief that Indian women could perform the duties at home and also protect cultural, social, and spiritual norms. Women have been entitled to perform duties at home such as taking care of kids and keeping their husbands happy. Mala was an ideal Indian housewife. She followed the socialized norms, particularly Bengali from where she came. Finding that the basin in the bathroom was always wiped clean... In the mornings she was always awake before I was (Lahiri 1999, 192). So the women were assigned works that have to be done by them. Mala was a typical Indian woman who always wanted to be happy with work at home and take care of her husband and her child. Mrs. Sen is another Indian typical woman who always wanted to be happy doing work at home such as preparing food, caring for her husband, and trying to fulfill her husband's wish. The traditional woman usually

would not rebel against her husband or not claim for equal rights because she had been taught to be submissive to her husband.

In the story of *Sexy*, Lahiri has portrayed a woman character that was submissive to her husband. Laxmi said about her cousin's husband who had not been living with her. "He had returned to Montreal, argued bitterly with his wife for two weeks... flown back to London... the next day the cousin said she and her son were going to her parents' house in California, to try to recuperate" (Lahiri 1999, 100). These women were dependent on their husbands. *The Namesake* portrays a picture of a traditional Indian woman who has spent her entire time at home where she always kept herself engaged to take care of children and teach them about the Bengali culture, language and family life in India. Ashima throughout her life in the United States tried to be a complete Bengali woman. She has never uttered the name of her husband, even after his death. Ashima was spending time at home alone after Ashoke's death. On the eve of Gogol's marriage, she did wear a sari with care. It shows a traditional mark that a widow woman should not wear jewelry and shining clothes that have been considered as inauspicious and will bring shame to her family. Because of that, she was worried about what other community people would think. This shows the picture of Indian traditional woman.

Whereas Ashoke had rented a house from an American resident of Alan and Jude where Ashima saw the distorted and scattered things across every corner of the house which made her feel drunk, and that impression had remained in her mind for a long time. This picture made her ponder about American society and the residents of this house. She worried about raising her children in such a country. But she used to keep clean and neat things in her home. "As the food reheats, his father tells Gogol to shut the bedroom door because his mother cannot tolerate the smell. It is odd to his father presiding in the kitchen, standing in his mother's place at the stove" (Lahiri 2003: 54). It shows how much she was a typical traditional Bengali woman. Women should not stand in front of men, she should not stare at men and she must be submissive to men, these are the norms of Indian society. These norms in America had started to diminish because Indian men were changing their mindset, not bothering about these set of social norms that had been imposed on women. For example, Mala's husband said to

her, not to worry, there is no need to take care of all these when she was trying to be modest in front of him. It is America, a land of liberty and freedom.

However, the modern American born Indian women have been transformed themselves. The women have refused to remain submissive and subject to patriarchal society. They do not remain as the subject to follow the stereotypes. This modern woman does not bother about tradition, settled norms of Indian society and the wishes of her parents, and instead that they are more inclined to be independent, free from all stigmatized social stereotypes and looking for an equal opportunity since they are educated and living in the liberal American society. Thus, they have adopted the American way of life, culture, social norms, behavior and way of thinking. The phenomenal shift is seen among the American born Indian women that have been represented by Lahiri in her stories of *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*.

Lilia, Twinkle, Sonia and Moushumi have been representing the life of modern American born Indian women who have received an American education, inclined to be independent, attached toward American social and cultural life, and developed a lack of interest in Indian social and cultural norms. Lilia is so young receiving higher secondary education from an American school. But Twinkle, Sonia and Moushumi are enough older women who have got married. These women are reflecting a picture of American born Indian women who have disposed of themselves as the modern American women, educated and independent. This transformation has started forming a distinct Indian diaspora identity in the United States. Twinkle who is an American born Indian lady has got married to Sanjeev who has immigrated from India as a first-generation immigrant. The difference between them is to understand each other since they are born and grown up in a distinct ambiance and they have been trained by their social system, culture and education. Both Twinkle and Sanjeev were Hindus but she was humbly attached to Christianity that made hurdles to adjust to each other. She was not a submissive woman like other traditional first-generation Indian women.

Do you sweep the attic? Not yet... I will. I promise... she was not terribly ambitious in the kitchen... she bought pre-roasted chicken from the supermarket and served them with potato salad prepared (Lahiri 1999, 143-144). It was the beginning of transformation among Indian women. This is the contrast picture between the first and

second-generation women. Shobha, Mala, Mrs. Sen, and Ashima were interested in cleaning and keeping things neat at the home. Shobha does not like restaurant food she likes to prepare at home. They all were preparing food at home. There was no need to ask them to work at home. Sanjeev politely asked her to sweep the attic and her reply was not yet I will. Therefore, he is regretting being married to her; feeling he had to marry an Indian woman that was proposed by his grandmother who belonged to the same caste

Moushumi is the most advanced young Indian immigrant's daughter who received higher education from various universities in the United States, Paris and France. She had been in a relationship with her college friend Dimitri and later with an American man Graham who refused to marry her at the last moment of marriage. However, she got married to Gogol but unfortunately, it ends by divorce. So it gives a sense of a modern and independent woman who does not care about the wishes of her parents and society. Moushumi "would sit at a restaurant alone, at the bar, ordering sushi or a sandwich and a glass of wine, simply to remind herself that she was capable of being on her own" (Lahiri 2003, 247). She does not want to be a dependent person. It is uncommon for an Indian woman to sit alone at the bar and have wine. It does not mean that Indian women should not take wine. The lifestyle of Indians has changed and India is a developing country so people are adapting the modern norms. Indeed, the change should happen in every possible way. It is the first time Gogol has seen Moushumi in a sari, apart from all those *pujas* years ago, which she had suffered silently (Lahiri 2003:222). Before getting married, they used to meet frequently to spend time together; she always dresses in various styles but not in a sari. If we see Mala, Ashima, Lilia's mother and Moushumi's mother were always dressed in sari. It is a difference between the first and second-generation Indian women immigrants.

Assimilation

Assimilation is a process of adapting to the norms of the dominant society by the marginal community in terms of culture, social behavior, psychic attitude, and national characteristics. Many social thinkers and scholars have endorsed that the identity of the diasporic community has been fractured or distorted and became a hybrid being assimilated into host country culture and social norms. So this process

has led to forming a multicultural society. Lahiri's major characters recurrently praised America as the land of opportunity, equality, and liberty where anything is possible. When Gogol asked his father about his name he wanted to change it as Nikhil then his father replied to him as then change it, his father said simply, quietly, after a while... really?" In America anything is possible... do as you wish (Lahiri 2003:100). Lilia and her mother enjoyed the equal opportunity, schooling facility, open-minded approach, no strikes, no turmoil in America, they were not regretting being far away from homeland but they were celebrating their lives being in the land of liberty. Lilia once was asked by her father, what your teacher teaches you at school? Her mother replied to him that she has much more to learn at school.

Lilia's mother said life in America is a safe, easy and good education (Lahiri 1999, 26). While Lilia's father was so attached and connected to the homeland like Mrs. Sen. She is too much engaged in narrating her memory about Indian society and its characteristics to Eliot who is the narrator and observer of the story. He said Mrs. Sen is physically in America but she is mentally much more engaged in India. Ashima is in *The Namesake* was in trauma being far away from her loving relatives and a familiar atmosphere where she was born and brought up but she had accompanied her husband and became a resident of America. Mira Nair interviewed Lahiri in which she said that "I wanted to please my parents and meet their expectations... I also wanted to meet the expectations of my American peers, and the expectations I put on myself to fit into American society. It's a classic case of divided identity" (Bhatt 2007: 40). Indian immigrants have been trying to fit into an American way of life, so they have brought changes in their daily lives. It is quite difficult for Indian immigrants to be disconnected from the American way of life while they are part of its society.

Jhumpa Lahiri has explained very sharply the complex picture of Indian and American born Indians experiences and their participation along with their social and cultural dogma in the United States. In the process of assimilation and adaptation, Lahiri's characters have confronted the alien land and its experiences. But these characters wanted to fit into the atmosphere of the United States, so they have made gentle attempts to negotiate themselves with adapting and accepting the various aspects of American life. They needed to fit into society. They have brought

modifications in their social, cultural and daily life that has got the look of Indian American life. It has created a different space in which it becomes hard to identify them with specific national identity or aspects such as Asian or American but they can be called Indian Americans looking at their religion, culture, social behavior, dress code, and language accent. Their identity becomes a transnational Indian diaspora that formed the connection between India and America. It must be recognized that we have to deliberate over the American born Indians who have immersed intensively into American walk of life in terms of their choice of food, dressing, language, individualistic attitude, approach and not care about Indian conservative norms that had been carried by their forefathers. Even though they are not fully assimilated into American society. But they have emerged as Indian American people.

In the story of *This Blessed House* Sanjeev first Indian immigrants and adhered to his social and spiritual life as Hindu so time and again he reminds his wife that they are not Christian but are Hindus. He got married to an American born Indian lady, therefore, he faced a lot of difficulties to move on with her. However, he could understand her since he also has spent enough time in America so he compromises himself with his wife. Usually, Sanjeev did not like to have American style prepared food but he liked it when his wife cooked and served him. “She had cooked today, it was unusually tasty, attractive even... How did you do it?... I just put some things into the pot and added the malt vinegar at the end” (Lahiri 1999:144). Meanwhile, he asked her to note down in a way you prepared so you can prepare it on some other day or at the party.

In *The Namesake*, Moushumi was born to first-generation Indian immigrants and brought up in America, so she was familiar and attached to American desire. She always wanted to be alone and gave priority to her wish, and not caring about her parents’ wishes and desires. She was habituated to smoking, drinking and liked to have different kinds of food. Her parents wanted her to marry to Indian Bengali boy but she refused and she expressed hope to marry an American boy. She could find an American boy Graham and they were engaged to be married and according to that everything was settled, invitation cards were sent, the hotel was booked and special guests were invited. But at a final moment, Graham refused to marry her on the grounds that she did not belong to the American race. However, she got married to

Gogol, Bengali boy, the protagonist of the story. Before they got married they were frequently meeting each other. She has ordered herself a martini with olives... she reaches for the book of matches that lies in an ashtray on the bar and lights a cigarette for herself (Lahiri 2003, 193-195). It shows the offspring of Indian immigrants have adopted the American lifestyle, social and cultural norms. Moushumi had allowed men to seduce her in cafes, in parks, while she gazed at paintings in museums (Lahiri 2003, 215). She is educated and received a high degree in various subjects; she knew the idea of individual freedom, equal space and right. She does not consider her social status as inferior to male. She always shares equal space. She is an American born Indian rebellious young lady.

Religion and religiosity are the foremost aspects of an overseas Indian diaspora community, wherever they have settled in the world they have carried their religious identity and following in their daily lives. Nonetheless, Lahiri has not paid much attention to Hindu religion and its religiosity of Indian immigrants which had been carried along with them to the United States. But she has narrated Christianity among Indian immigrant families. *Interpreter of Maladies* is the third story of this collection in which an American born Indian couple had been on their visit to the historical place, the sun temple in east India. Despite this, the couple never talked about their parents' religion and didn't show any religious reverence to the sun temple but they were worried about the coming Christian event. Mr. Das had asked her wife to have a group photo that would be sent to relatives. They did not bother about the Hindu religion. They enjoyed viewing the architecture of the sun temple, the images of gods and goddesses but they did not feel any reverence to them.

In *This Blessed House*, Sanjeev and Twinkle have married, Sanjeev was the first Indian generation immigrant while Twinkle was a daughter born in America to the Indian immigrants. Indeed, she is accustomed to the American culture and is influenced by the dominant Christian religion. Time and again, when Sanjeev said that they are not Christian, she replied to him. No, we're not Christian. We're good little Hindus. She planted a kiss on top of Christ's head (Lahiri 1999, 137). Certainly, the dialogue between Sanjeev and Twinkle shows the conflict of identity issues. Twinkle agreed with what her husband said but at the same time, she adored Christ's image and planted a fond kiss on top of Christ's head. It perhaps provoked his

emotion and idea of his own religion. But at the same time, it may be the symbol of connoting that they are not complete Hindu rather both are Hindu and Christian.

The Namesake the major characters in the story are Indian immigrants, Gogol, protagonist, sister Sonia and his parents Ashoke and Ashima. Gogol and Sonia were born and brought up in America, both are naturally affiliated to the social and cultural atmosphere of America. Lahiri did not pay attention to their religious practices as they are Hindus. But she has mentioned the influence of Christianity on them. For the sake of Gogol and Sonia, they celebrate, with progressively increasing fanfare, the birth of Christ, an event the children look forward to far more than the worship of Durga and Saraswati (Lahiri 2003:64). Durga and Saraswati Goddesses are devotionally worshiped in Calcutta and they are major religious festivals of Bengalis. Indeed, the immigrants from Bengal, Ashoke and Ashima were attached to the Goddesses, though they did not celebrate them in America. Instead, they celebrated the events of Christianity such as Christmas, Easter and following other religious significance. Gogol and Sonia got an education in American schools where they have been taught the lessons from the Bible. So they force their parents to celebrate Christmas at home. Apart from this, Ashima has set herself to celebrate Christmas at home so she did purchase greeting cards and wrote the names of relatives and her husband and her children who were not staying with her. It is the result of Christianity's presence around them and the absence of Hindu but they introduced themselves as Indian Hindu immigrants. At important incidents and events, they have practiced Hindu spirituality.

The man was glancing in a mirror. Miranda wondered where he was from. She thought he might be Spanish, or Lebanese (Lahiri 1999, 87). American born Indians are more American in a sense, especially their look, behavior, psychic perception, the language they speak and the way they think and live. Naturally, they should be more like American since they are born in a country in which they have received an education, familiar to social and cultural norms, therefore, their existence is more complicated since they are neither so strongly affiliated to Indian culture nor assimilated as fully to American culture. Lahiri has drawn a vivid picture of the second-generation throughout her stories. *Interpreter of Maladies* in which a young couple Mr. Raj and Mrs. Mira Das came to India to visit the sun temple located at

Konark in the state of Orissa, India. The family looked Indian but dressed as foreigners did, the children in stiff, brightly colored clothing and caps with translucent visors (Lahiri 1999, 44). They are Indian descendants but they have been following American culture and norms. It wonders to Mr. Kapasi and starts to ponder about his own life. This is the transformation that has taken place among the second generation of Indians in America. The particular behavior also denotes its identity of belongingness and that is known as a common practice in that area. Mr. Das squeezed Mr. Kapasi's hand gave him a sense of Americanism.

When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine, Lahiri represents how Indian immigrants, particularly the second generation, born into it, are moving toward an American culture and norms. Lilia has to study in school the prescribed syllabus in which there is nothing about India's history and culture. Her father once asked her what you are learning at your school, she replied. We continued to study the American Revolution and learned about the injustices of taxation without representation, and memorized passages from the Declaration of Independence (Lahiri 1999, 32-33). Her father wanted her to study Indian history, gather information about current incidents taking place in India. But for her, it was not so easy to learn about India. She has to learn prescribed books in her school. Thus, Lilia grew old as an American born Indian child. Lilia once had gone to her friend's house to visit her. She learned the contrast picture by comparing Indian with American people. Dora is a friend of Lilia who has visited to her home and she saw her father who was lying on couch, having wine, reading newspaper and playing music. He does not care anything. Lilia imagined her father who usually used to sit in front of the TV watching Indian news and serials. In this atmosphere, the children of Indian immigrants were growing old by observing the culture of India and America. The first generation is connected to the homeland's social and political things while the second generation is seen in a confusing situation because they are more Indian at home and American in the public sphere. These children are more inclined to be called American rather than Indian even though they are neither called pan-Indian nor pan-American. But they are called as Indian-American or sometimes Asian American.

Ashoke and Ashima have kids, Gogol and Sonia. Ashima wanted to teach her children about her relatives and what to call them according to the relationship. Ashima's

brother Rana asked her about Gogol speaking English. She replied to him. He doesn't speak much of anything, at the moment. She begins to tell Rana that she is teaching Gogol to say "Dada" and "Dadu" and "Mamu" to recognize his grandparents and his uncle from photographs (Lahiri 2003, 45). But Gogol could not keep in his memory. After coming to India Ashima instructed Gogol and Sonia what our family call relatives. But they were getting difficult to pronounce correctly. This situation leads to their identity as a hybrid because they belong to two or sometimes more worlds. So it is a difficult task to identify them on the account of a particular idea, thing, faith and national identity.

Sonia, seven months old, refused to taste food prepared on behalf of her. She plays with the dirt they've dug up from the yard and threatens to put the dollar bill into her mouth... this one, one of the guests remarks, this one so the true American (Lahiri 2003:63). The guest called her the true American because of her boldness, refusing to have food prepared in her honor. This boldness, individualistic, freedom, follows their own desires without caring what the expectations of his/her family. All these characteristics we saw in the characters of Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi Muzoomdar are similar to Gogol. Moushumi once had been asked would you like to marry Bengali, immediately she refused and said she would marry an American boy. She fell in love with an American boy Graham but unfortunately, he rejected her to marry on account of her race because she was not American. Thus, Indian immigrants want to be assimilated in American culture but they have been deprived.

"Sonia lives with her friends in San Francisco... Gogol had spent the holiday with Maxine's family in New York... having been deprived of the company of her own parents upon moving to America" (Lahiri 2003, 166). Both Gogol and Sonia grew up with American friends and people who were influenced by American culture. They were old enough to think on their own and gone away from their parents to stay with their friends. They did not care about their parents and their wishes. Sonia and Gogol had given much significance to their interests rather than to their parents. They have assimilated into American life. Not only, the individualistic life has been adopted by Gogol and Sonia but also Ashima has adopted an individualistic life after her husband's death. Her relatives and friends were insisting on her to go to India and spend time with your relatives but, it was the first time, she refused to escape to

Calcutta. She does not want to go far away from the place where her husband made his life along with her and the country in which he died. Now I know why he went to Cleveland... he was teaching me how to live alone (Lahiri 2003:183). She accepted this country as her own country for her whole life.

The Namesake explains the position of American born Indians as second-generation falls in between America and India in which they neither solemnly belonged to America nor to India. A middle aged woman asked Gogol. At what age he moved to America from India. "I'm from Boston, he says... but you are Indian, Pamela says, frowning. I would think the climate wouldn't affect you, given your heritage (Lahiri 2003, 157). Therefore, they are called as American Born Confused Desi as we see these confused desi characters in Lahiri's writings *Interpreter of Maladies*, are Sukumar, Lilia, Mr. and Mrs. Das, Mr. Dev, Sanjeev, Twinkle and Gogol, Sonia, Moushumi are from *the Namesake*. All these characters are representing American born confused desi in America. However, Lahiri says that she has 'often felt' that she is 'somehow illegitimate in both cultures. A true Indian doesn't accept me as an Indian and a true American doesn't accept me as an American (Bahri 2013, 39-40). Probably, it is true because we saw when Ashoke along with his whole family came to India to meet relatives where Sonia and Gogol had become the subject of strange, the relatives were looking at them as unfamiliar people. Thus, to identify them, in particular, becomes confusion and they stand for duality. They are neither American nor Indian fully but they are both Indian American being following the aspects and the roots of both cultural significance. Therefore, the root, as well as the present position of any society, plays an important role in forming identities of that society.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the quest of Indian diaspora identity in America with special reference to Jhumpa Lahiri's texts *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake* in which she addressed the issues of Indian diaspora such as displacement, struggle for settlement, trauma and cultural clash, for retention the cultural, social and ritual identity and assimilation into American multicultural society. Lahiri has presented these issues through representing characters such as Gogol who has been struggling to get away from the name Gogol and wanted to replace it with Nikhil but he could not

do so. Similarly, Indian immigrants of the first generation have always tried to be connected to their past roots, culture, social norms and national identity while the second generation is inclined to take off their past root identity and assimilate in American society. But it is hard to go away from the root history where they have come from and also it is equally hard for them to be assimilated fully into American society since they have carried distinct skin color and culture. The first-generation Indian immigrants could not be kept away from the culture and a way of life of American society and they became a part of this society while they could connect with the homeland. This process has led to forming their identity as a hybrid such as Indian-American which is neither complete Indian nor American but it is a product of both.

Chapter V

Conclusion and Findings

The ethnic identity of Indians in the diaspora has reconstructed in the moderated form in which conservative beliefs and social hierarchies have been overlooked in order to establish inclusive Hinduism and move on with American life. The study has analyzed the role played by various Hindu religious, cultural organizations and religious movements in representing Hinduism as moderated in the United States. It examined the process of the formation of ethnic identity of Indian immigrants which has been represented in literary texts of Jumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies* and *the Namesake*. The study shows Hindu religious organizations have conveniently dropped unacceptable and interrogated spiritual unequal distribution and caste conflict from the representation of Hinduism. It has been presented in America with a fresh look by reinterpreting it according to time, space and demand to defend it from criticism. Hinduism is considered by its propagators as well as others as a distinct religion from other existing religions. Hinduism has polytheistic faiths and beliefs since it has been representing many gods and goddesses which are associated with the different social groups arranged in descending order which caused them to form collective ethnic identity and equal social and religious status in society. As rightly pointed out by Gottschlich, “this heterogeneity of the Indian American population has meant that there is no single common political agenda around which they can or should unify” (2008:158). The splits happened when the privileged Hindus were demanding the editing in the represented Hinduism along with its conservative social and religious norms in school syllabus by California State Board of Education. However, the weaker section of Hindu society has raised their concerns and questions regarding the edited representation of Hinduism which omitted the reference of caste and women deprivation.

The various Hindu organizations such as the Hindu American Foundation, American Hindu Education Foundation and Vedic Foundation represented Hinduism as a monotheistic religion rather than polytheistic. It has developed the belief that all Gods are one and true, Brahma who is the creator of this universe. It was endorsed by Swami Vivekananda from the very beginning of the propagation of Hinduism in the

US. Therefore, it can be called neo Hinduism which has dropped the reference of the caste-based social hierarchy and relations by saying that each Hindu in Hinduism is equal. But at the same time, the granted privileges and spiritual rights to the Brahmin has not been dismantled. In this regard, it is critical to call it modern Hinduism while upholding the spiritual hierarchy. The study has analyzed Jhumpa Lahiri's texts *Interpreter of Maladies* and *the Namesake* that represent Indian immigrants' cultural clash, the identity crisis, the struggle for settlement, racial discrimination and contradiction among Indian immigrants generations in understanding Indian and American culture. American born confused desi is assimilated into American society but their identity didn't form without their root history, belongingness and culture. The study shows their ethnic identity is in ambivalence they are neither defined as neither fully Indian nor fully American.

Further, it is said that they can be represented in different images and different ways. Thus it paved the path to forming monotheist Hinduism in America. However, the Hindu organizations does not have cleared stand. There is dichotomy in representation of monistic Hinduism. It is a paradox that Hindus avail the right of a global minority in America. As Kurien noted has pointed out, American Hindutva-vadis (supporters of Hindutva) demand a Hindu state in India which would deny Indian minority groups many of the basic rights that Hindu Indians enjoy in the United States, and which makes their activism possible (2007, 160). Therefore, it is hard to form an ethnic collective identity of Hindu or simply Indian diaspora in the United States. Besides, it has difficulties in representing it theoretically as an inclusive Hinduism. Therefore, the issue has to be addressed in various discourses. The present study examines the way of reconstruction of ethnic identity of the Hindu diaspora in the United States.

The various Hindu religious organizations, particularly American Hindu Educational Foundation (AHEF), Hindu American Foundation (HAF) and Vedic Foundation (VF), have played the major role in reconstructing Hinduism in a new form in both ways: first, they have deviated many questionable religious values and social norms and second, they have adopted modern thoughts to put forward palatable Hinduism to the American people. It has happened to pursue the attention of Americans toward Hinduism. This stand has been seen in public when they denied the sarcastic representation of Hanuman, the monkey God and caste problem in the school syllabus

by the California State Board of Education (CSBE). In this regard, the Hindu organizations and the parents of Hindu students have severally opposed the representation of Hinduism and its Hanuman God and the reference of the caste system. The scholars from these organizations edited the designed syllabus and presented it in a palatable manner. These organizations have been inspired by Hindu organizations in India such as RSS, VHP, and Bajrang Dal but all these American based Hindu organizations have been working by following multicultural American norms. Thus, the Hindus have reconstructed its identity which is in many ways differs from the identity of Hindus in India. Besides, many Hindu religious movements came to America with distinct creeds and ideas which have been extracted from the Hindu religion and its philosophy. Brahmo Samaj, Swaminarayan sect, Mata Amritanandamayi, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Hare Krishna movements and so on are some of the examples of such movements which have played a significant role in representing Hinduism and reconstructing Indian diaspora identity.

Swami Yogananda propagator of Hinduism who had established a Self-Realization Fellowship in America for teaching meditation technique is known as Kriya yoga. He said that religion should be universal and individual orientated. In which he claimed that Jesus is an incarnation who taught yogic meditation. It shows how a new form of Hinduism had started spreading in America. It is the sign of adapting the influence of other religious icons, views and paths which shaped the hybrid identity of Indian Hindu diaspora which is neither complete Indian nor American but it is a result of the combination of Indian and American mosaic phenomena. Thus, their identity emerged as an Indian-American Hindus. Reframing Hinduism in America has been taken forward by many Hindu religious, cultural and social organizations

Even though it is probably hard to reinterpret Hinduism and its history by discarding the reference of caste, unequal distribution of spiritual rights-based on caste position among its people and suppression of women. It has stated somewhere that America has more than four hundred Hindu temples which represent magnificently the physical appearance of Hinduism. The temples became breathtaking sights in the United States. It is a belief that to become a Hindu priest in the temple he must be born as Brahmin. So, this spiritual hierarchy makes trouble to construct the moderated, improved Hinduism which represents universal ethos, teaching human

elevation has been propagated by disseminators. It is the responsibility of its upholders and representatives to remove the monopoly of Brahmins from spiritual rights which have been sanctioned by its religious scriptures that must be revised. Hinduism had been critiqued since it has the varna and the caste system that should be annihilated from the domain of its philosophy. To do this, they have to bring drastic modifications in scriptures of its religion from which the unequal distributed spiritual rights and hierarchical caste system have been sprouted. However, it is quite notable and appreciable that this Hindu Indian diaspora has started to form homogeneous, collective, or united Hindu Indian identity by discarding the evil and outdated religious, cultural and social norms from the reconstructing Indian identity. But it is not enough to reframe Hinduism. It needs to bring radical changes to it.

The study has analyzed Jhumpa Lahiri's mentioned literary texts that represent Indian immigrants' cultural clash, identity crisis, social, cultural and religious transformation, the struggle for settlement, color dissimilarity and generational gap among Indian immigrant in understanding Indian and American culture as well. Jhumpa Lahiri has portrayed a very clear picture of forming the ethnic identity of Indian immigrants in the United States. She portrayed the characters from the first generation of Indian immigrants who are separated from the homeland by distance but their sentiments are connected to homeland. So they have protected the cultural, social and religious values that had been carried along with them from the homeland from the American domination. She also has represented characters of the second generation of Indian immigrants who have been drifted and involved in the American lifestyle and tried to go away from Indian culture. It was the anxiety among the first generation to pass on the Indian culture to the American born Indians. The second generation being born in America they have spent their childhood in America, therefore, their sentiment has been attached to the American phenomena. Therefore, it was the challenge for the first generation to teach them Indian culture and norms to their kids. Time and again, the second generation has introduced Indian culture by following Indian praxis at home in terms of food, day to day activities, religious things and social norms. They have been sent to Sunday classes for learning Indian languages. Gogol and Sonia had been sent to Sunday classes to learn Bengali teaching by Bengali teacher. But Gogol and Sonia did not show any interest in learning Bengali. Instead of this, they were thinking of enjoying themselves with American

boys on the ground. In this way, they were introduced to Indian culture. Consequently, their identity has been reconstructed as Indian American people.

The Indian diaspora has reconstructed its identity which differs from Indian people in India. Lahiri has beautifully delineated Indian culture by representing the first and the second generations which are representing the characteristics of Indian American phenomena. *Interpreter of Maladies* is an anthology and a fiction *the Namesake* in which she has extremely portrayed the picture of both generations. Notably, some characters such as Lilia's father, Mrs. Sen and Mr. Sen and Mala and her husband in the concluding story of anthology and Ashoke and his wife Ashima in *the Namesake* are visualizing the situation of the first generation. Sukumar and Shobha, Lilia, Mr. Das and Mrs. Das and their kids, Sanjeev and Twinkle, Dev, Laxmi and her cousin and Mala's son are all representing the second generation Indian immigrants. Gogol, Moushumi, Sonia in *The Namesake* are all represent the second generation of Indian immigrants who have been trapped in between formed the third space. They are neither fully recognized as Indian nor American but they are recognized as Indian-American people. Rigorously, what Homi Bhabha called it, the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood singular or communal that initiate new signs of identity (Bhabha 1994). The second-generation Indian people are celebrating their lives being in liberal America. They do not regret being settled in a faraway land. These people are called American born confused desi (ABCD).

The study has covered in five chapters: the first chapter introduction which gives a synoptic view on its major issue that had been studied in this thesis. This chapter introduced the objective of the study, research questions, and hypothesis and research methodology. The study aims to analyze the process of forming the ethnic identity of Indian diaspora and the role played by various religious and cultural organizations in the United States. It is a study of ethnic identity formation of the Indian diaspora, therefore, it has discussed the theoretical perspectives of ethnicity and identity which has captured the central motif in it. Research methods that are applied to carry out the study and reach out at logical conclusions have been discussed. The study has selected literary texts of Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* and *the Namesake* in which she has portrayed the picture of Indian diaspora and their concerned issues such as the identity crisis, cultural clash, nostalgia, racial discrimination, loneliness, the struggle

for settlement, assimilation and transformation in the Indian diaspora, particularly in the second generation.

The second chapter, in brief, has discussed the history of Indian migration from ancient to the postcolonial era through different phases. It has happened according to time, space, demands and for different purposes. This chapter has given a complete picture of Indian migration with its push and pulls factors, demands, and destinations that have been classified into three phases: ancient, colonial and post-colonial. The ancient migration has happened for the propagation of religious dogma, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism in South Asian countries. Migration in the colonial period has happened through indentured labor policy and recruiter *Arkati* to fulfill the most urgent demand of laborers, after the abolition of slavery, in various British colonies that had been established in third world countries. In the manner, they were transported that can be called involuntary migration. The post-colonial migration from India has exceptionally sought the different phases in terms of its push and pulls factors, demands, purposes of migration, and destination. In this regard, it has provided facts and figures of international migration to understand the whole scenario of migration and its factors. During the post-colonial period, the migration happened from third world countries to developed countries in which India has excessively provided immigrants to the developed countries. Indian immigration to the United States was started in 19th century and flooded during the 20th century including laborers, semi-skilled and skilled laborers, and students, sojourns, and refugees. Indians have faced many shortcomings in entering the United States. However, they have overcome the difficulties and the imposition of various restrictive laws of the US. Now Indians are staying in the United States more than two million immigrants including non-resident Indians (NRI) and people of Indian origin (PIO). Indians have achieved a distinguished position in the various fields of business, IT companies, economy, education, health, politics and literary world. Thus, the present chapter has covered the whole scenario of Indian migration to the United States along with facts and figures.

The third chapter has analyzed the major issues of this study, i.e., the process of reconstructing the ethnic identity of Indians in America and examined the role played by various Hindu religious and cultural organizations in constructing its identity.

Indeed, a few Hindu religious organizations such as Hindu American Foundation (HAF), Hindu Educational Foundation (HEF), Vedic Foundation (VF), and Hindu Dharma Foundation have (HDF) contributed a lot in the construction of the ethnic identity of Indian diaspora and preservation of Hindu religion, social and cultural heritage of India in the United States. The representation of Hinduism is influenced by American milieu and it was compelled for Indians to adapt the American way of life, culture, social norms, and psychic approach to fit into American society. Hindu religious movements and cultural organizations have adapted modern ideas, the American way of life and tried to reframe conservative Hinduism into modified Hinduism which has adopted an approach of inclusive instead of exclusion. The new Hinduism has been developed by asserting ecumenical philosophy, monotheistic beliefs and faiths by arguing that all Gods are eternal one truth, it may have different devotional paths but they are leading toward ultimate truth, Brahma, the creator of this universe. All these religious movements and organizations have defended Hinduism and they do not accept the criticism of Hinduism and proposed it as a transcendental, ecumenical and monotheistic religious philosophy. However, the lower strata Hindus have refused the arguments made by upper strata led Hindu religious organizations who have represented Hinduism with a new lens in which caste issues, gender discrimination has been dismissed. The lower strata Hindus have argued that they are discarded from the whole discourse of American Hinduism because Hindu American Foundation (HAF) and Vedic Foundation (VF) has compelled to the California Secondary Board of Education to retrieve the represented Hinduism and the image of God, especially Hanuman as the monkey and accept Hinduism revised and edited by these Hindu organizations and scholars from Hinduism.

Apart from this, other Hindu religious movements have contributed to establishing Hindu identity through building religious temples, meditation centers, and holy places as *Ashram* and frequently organizing religious, social and cultural events which helped a lot to create affiliation among American Hindu people. Partha Chatterjee said the nations of the diaspora are heterogeneous, composed of many and often contradictory fragments (cited in Shukla 2003, 13). Being in America, the Indian diaspora has brought a considerable shift in their religious practices, socio-cultural things, dressing code, body posture, color, talking accents, food habits and overall

lifestyle. These things led to the syncretic or mimic identity which is contradictory to some extent to the conservative Indian fragments and that constructed identity of Indians in America has been called Indian -American Hindu or simply Indian-American people. Exclusively that has been seen in the overall picture of the second generation of Indian descendants. The second generation is free from Indian traditional enforcement, their mind and heart are different from the old generation. This shift in the second generation has earned an impressive transformation in the formation of the Indian Hindu ethnic identity that ultimately leads toward forming a hybrid identity. Thus, Hindu religious various sects and organizations have played an exceptional role in representing Hinduism with incorporating modernity in it and the new generation and non-Indian should accept it as ecumenical religion or religious philosophy.

The fourth chapter has discussed the quest of Indian diaspora identity in America by taking the special reference to the Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* and *the Namesake* in which she addressed the issues of Indian diaspora such as displacement, struggle for settlement, loneliness, nostalgia, cultural clash, social and ritual identity crisis and difficulties of assimilation into American multicultural society. Lahiri has represented the story of Indian immigrant's struggle for their identity through portraying characters such as Gogol who has been struggling to get away from the name Gogol and wanted to replace it with Nikhil but he could not do so. Similarly, Indian immigrants of the first generation have always tried to be connected to their past roots, culture, social norms and national identity while the second generation inclined to discard their past root identity and assimilate in the present American society. But it is hard to go away from the past, root history from where they have come and also it is equally hard for them to be assimilated fully into American society since they are the people of distinct skin color, culture, and historical roots. The first generation of Indian immigrants could not be kept away from the culture and a way of life of American society. Thus the first generation of Indian immigrants became an integral part of American society while they could connect themselves with the homeland. Similarly, the second generation couldn't discard the legacy of historical roots, culture, religion and social norms from their construction of identity which is exclusively implicating an American fragrance and taste. This process has led to forming their identity as a hybrid such as Indian American which is neither complete

Indian nor American but it is a product of both. According to Bharti Mukherjee, well known South Asian English prolific writer in America, one has to murder one's earlier self or cultural identity for the remaking of the new self...so we can rebirth ourselves in the image of dreams (cited in Pandharipande 2009, 234). She wants a complete transformation to become a new one.

To conclude, this study shows that history cannot be removed from their present existence that will be surfaced in one way or the other. Immigrants have carried their historical roots to their destination and adopted the pattern of the resided country which has led to forming a hyphenated identity.

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Questionnaire

Confidential for academic purpose only

Namaste Sir/Madam, I am Ankush Kamble research scholar of University of Hyderabad, Telangana India. I seek this information from you as I am pursuing PhD in Indian Diaspora. My Project is on "Diaspora and Ethnic Identity: Issues of Religion and Culture among Indians in the United States" under the guidance of Dr. Ajaya Kumar Sahoo. I would hereby like to request you to cooperate me as these information are sought strictly confidential and use only for the academic purpose. I shall be obliged if you will provide these information.

*** Required**

1. Your name *

2. Your age group *

Mark only one oval.

☐ 18 to 30

☐ 30 to 40

☐ 40 to 50

☐ Above 50 years old

3. Name of your place / city *

4. Family type *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Joint

☐ Nuclear

☐ Single

☐ Extended

5. What is your educational background? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Graduation
- ☐ Post graduation
- ☐ High Study
- ☐ Any other specify

6. Which of the following religion do you belong to? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Hinduism
- ☐ Shikha
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Jain
- ☐ Any other specify

7. Which of the following caste group do you belong to? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ General
- ☐ Other backward class
- ☐ Schedule Caste
- ☐ Schedule tribe
- ☐ Any other specify

8. Which sub-caste of the above mentioned castes do you belong to? Please specify *

9. What channels did you use to migrate to the USA? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Help of immigration agency
- ☐ Social network
- ☐ Family relation
- ☐ Any other specify

10. What is the reason of your migration? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Job
- ☐ Any other specify

11. Why did you choose the USA is your migration destination? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Relative linkage
- ☐ Lots of opportunities for the progression
- ☐ H1-B visa
- ☐ High living standard
- ☐ Network with association of community you belong to
- ☐ Other
- ☐ All of above

12. How long you have been in USA? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 0 to 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 2 years
- ☐ 2 to 4 years
- ☐ 4 to 5 years
- ☐ 5 to 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

13. At what point of time you would like to visit India? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Family function
- ☐ Religious and social events
- ☐ Business
- ☐ At all of above

14. Would you like to settle permanently in the USA? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

15. What do you think being in America moved from India? Please note down *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Enjoying better than India
- ☐ Suffocating being in alien land

16. Did you get american citizenship? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

17. If no, are you planning for american citizenship? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

18. Why did you choose this particular city where you stay now? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Community linkage
- ☐ Friend circle
- ☐ Convenient to Business
- ☐ Regional relation
- ☐ All of above
- ☐ Any other

19. Do you think Indians in America formed Indian community based on given identities below? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Regional identity
- ☐ Religious identity
- ☐ Caste identity
- ☐ National identity
- ☐ All of above
- ☐ Any other

20. How do you maintain your Indian identity in America? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Language
- ☐ Dress
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Music and movie
- ☐ All of above

21. Did you ever face race discrimination being in American multicultural society? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

22. Do you have friends from different community as American?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

23. If yes, do they invite you on their family or social events?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

24. Do you belong to any Indian ethnic organizations? If yes, please note down its name *

25. What motivate you to be a part of this organization? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Discrimination

☐ Insecurity

☐ To be continued your own cultural identity

☐ Trauma

☐ All of above

☐ Any other

26. How did you come to know about this organization? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ By friend
- ☐ By relatives
- ☐ By community people
- ☐ By any other

27. Do you think caste is important notion for you to have social relation with Indian diaspora? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Little matter

28. Do you think an endogamy is an important for you?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

29. What are the social, cultural and religious activities being done by the organization you belonged to? Please explain *

30. Are you aware of any association based on caste or sect ? If yes, please specify *

31. Do you belong to any caste based organization? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

32. How do you keep in touch with your organization activities? *

Check all that apply.

☐ Through social media

☐ Telephone

☐ Regular meeting

☐ All of above

33. Do you celebrate religious festivals in US? If yes, please mention what are the events *

34. Would you like to visit temple/ Gurudwar/ Church/ Masque for worship? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

35. Would you like to attend religious sermon in temple?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

36. Which are the following religious events more popular in America?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Dipawali

☐ Holi

☐ Both

37. Are you celebrating the birth anniversary of a person who has played vital role in bringing upward mobility in your society in India? If yes, please specify his name....

38. Are food and dress an important signs to be confined yourself as a different ethnic community from other?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

39. Which food would you prefer to have?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Indian

☐ American

40. What things are significant to identify yourself as Indian diaspora?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Dress

☐ Food

☐ Religion

☐ Language

☐ Skin color

☐ Look

☐ Caste Identity

☐ All above

41. What is the frequency of your visiting to the religious places for worshipping? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Regular
- ☐ Irregular
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ At festival time
- ☐ Any other occasion

42. Are you reading religious books? if yes, please note their name

43. What is an important criteria to become Hindu spiritual priest in temples in the America?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Brahman
- ☐ Non-Brahman

44. Are your social identity formulating along with the identity of Indian social system which is structured in four varna system?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

45. Suppose, if you want to become Hindu religious priest since you are Indian, can you become a Hindu religious priest? If yes, explain how can you become. If not, explain why not. *
-

Its my humble request you all that in case if you are getting difficulties in understanding any of asked questions in this question sheet, please let me know so I would try at my best to explain it. Thank you so much for your cooperation and spending such valuable time.

Google

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