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Reverberation of Globalisation on Indian Diasporic Literature

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Abstract

The image of the Indian community situated on a road to perfect harmony defined by the mainstream may equally be seen in a different light. The temptations of measuring any historical phenomenon in terms of progress are attractive but they do not grasp the complexity of uneven development and even more importantly, they miss the elements of contradiction, a rich and veritable presence of forces that shape diasporic identity'. The second and third generational issues are of main concern to the internal mechanics of how the Indian community functions and how it treads the waters of an aggressively and rapidly changing culture' and these concerns surface as a major issue of representation in cultural gatherings, writings and even films and television shows' in the European Union. Though there were several hiccups (in the form of racial hatred that they encountered from the host nations) that at times led to race riots, the Indian diasporic community strove towards development I

that paid off so well that today they are a force to be reckoned with in their own particular spheres. The last forty odd years that saw the emergence of the Indian diaspora as a major force within the world community is the saga of its progress and achievements. The impact of the globalisation process is seen in the diasporic Indian community's qualities of resilience and continuity wherein all the fragments manage to coexist together.

Keywords

Globalisation; Diasporic; Transnational; and Literary Identity



Introduction

Globalisation is a process that has a reach in every corner of the globe is a reality of today's world. Migration of people, services and capital is an integral part of globalisation. Trends in migration are also different as compared to earlier migratory trends across the world. This leads to the rise of the concept of trans-nationalism that involves flows of culture, capital and human beings across borders. Political boundedness in the form of nations and national territorial units have somewhere been enmeshed within the globalisation process and have at times become fluid. Identity formation of the different groups within this particular process is therefore diverse and different. The diasporic communities, such as the Indian Diaspora are one of the populations that straddle the globalisation process. In this unit we will discuss some of the issues which are a result of far reaching effects of globalisation, namely the new emerging identities of communities who locate themselves in more than one place.

Different concepts such as 'globalisation' 'diaspora', 'transnationalism' and 'identity formation' are used to construct the discussion here. All these terms have no one particular meaning, rather they are defined by taking help of some other concepts that are interlinked and interdependent to bring out

the myriad meanings that each of them possess. Albrow defines globalisation as "all those processes by which peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society". Most of these processes have a plural nature. Globalisation in the economic arena means the internationalisation of capital along with expansion of capitalist market relations. It is the economic processes that ushered in the globalisation process. Flow of capital across cultural regions and political borders laid the base for creation of fluid boundaries; this process is essentially grounded in the patterns of capitalistic trade. The economic patterns of unequal growth across the world fashioned the capital flows wherein different companies were able to have major financial operations as well as considerable organisational presence in several countries simultaneously.

Globalisation: Transnational Networks and Identities

The Indian diaspora is by no means a new phenomenon; it has existed since the first trading routes in the world were established. The Indian diasporic communities were traders in Africa, South East Asia and the Mediterranean shores as well as religious preachers in South East Asia and Diaspora maintaining extensive kinship and economic networks. Large scale migration of Indians in the nineteenth and twentieth century is a phenomenon of the colonial demand for labour in the distant colonies. This forms the old diaspora. The old diaspora of India consists of the Indian population of the earlier indentured labour in the sugar colonies of Caribbean, Africa and Oceania, free or passenger emigrants in Oceania and East Africa and Kangani labour to Burma, Malaysia and Ceylon.

Since Indian emigration to the West European countries also took place in response to demand for various categories of labour, and professionals after the Second World War. The difference between the PIO and the NRI though is not much in these countries; yet, the second generation of the settlers has

shown a different picture of the various processes that help govern identity formation.

The uniqueness of the presence of Indian diaspora in the western world lies in the fact that it is primarily a post-World War II phenomenon; also, it is essentially a skill-based emigration. This has in turn shaped the identity formation processes and the nature of the identity thus formed within the diasporic Indian community in habiting the Western nations. In the classification of waves of movements of the Indian Diaspora, this emigration is said to be the second wave of migration. Thus diaspora studies offer a critical perspective on the very visible thematic of cultural migrancy and on debates about transnationalism and post colonialism that find a resonance in the resurgent multicultural debates.

Indian Diasporic Identity in the New Global World

The last forty odd years that saw the emergence of the Indian diaspora as a major force within the world community is the saga of its progress and achievements. Though there were several hiccups (in the form of racial hatred that they encountered from the host nations) that at times led to race riots, the Indian diasporic community strove towards development that paid off so well that today they are a force to be reckoned with in their own particular spheres. The impact of the globalisation process is seen in the diasporic Indian community's qualities of resilience and continuity wherein all the fragments manage to coexist together. Without this feature, they might not have reached the present levels of achievement and development that has marked their rise. This was accompanied by an increasing visibility in the host nation's public life as well as the cultural sphere. The picture of harmony and equality that they projected is the one that is concurrent in the imagining of the majority of the world today. So, 'curry' has become almost the national food of Britain and Indian soul music the most in thing of the music world, making them a glorious picture of accomplishment. Yet, 'the image of the Indian community

situated on a road to perfect harmony defined by the mainstream may equally be seen in a different light ... the temptations of measuring any historical phenomenon in terms of progress are attractive but they do not grasp the complexity of uneven development and even more importantly, they miss the elements of contradiction, a rich and veritable presence of forces that shape diasporic identity'.

The problems at first exist on the generational levels. 'The second and third generational issues are of main concern to the internal mechanics of how the Indian community functions and how it treads the waters of an aggressively and rapidly changing culture' and these concerns surface as a major issue of representation in cultural gatherings, writings and even films and television shows' in the European Union. The tendency to define themselves as Indians is predisposed by the wish to ascertain themselves as non-resident Indians. The inherent dualism is what creates the question mark; a wish to cling on to the mythical homeland that exists only in their memories. As the new generation does not possess any such memory, therefore, their identifications with this becomes problematic.

Their conception of themselves is not one of a life in exile, forced by the extenuating circumstances but that of a natural acceptance of the place where they grow up as their homeland. They do not require the anchor of the homeland so as to construct their own identity. The older generation who have though adjusted to the new configuration of their host lands would yet like to adhere to the India that lives on in their memories and at times who refuse to face up to the reality of today's India. So they are enthralled by the constructed identities set in their own frames of reference. What happens is, that they then begin to believe the surreal image as projected by the filmmakers and this carries forward the culture of the homeland. The nostalgia embedded in the older generation's memories that they present to their children makes it difficult for the present generation to compute with the present day India.

Conclusion

Identity formation at any time is the positioning of several actors, and intrinsically has an 'us' and 'they' context. The projection of the 'self' is always in response to the 'other' and as these change, the projection of the self's identity also changes. This is what is happening within the diasporic Indian community. 'The identity formation processes if counted as an end product becomes difficult to compute as they are in a fluid state of changing identities and moving on to multiple identities that a person can project at the same time. Moreover, 'it cannot be one homogenous model of identity that equally serves all members of a group ... we must be ready to ask for different and shifting levels of identity as for conflicting and contesting designs.

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