



Crisis Of Cultural Identity As A Motif In Diasporic Literature

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Abstract:

The word '**diasporic**' means a dispersed mass of people who originally belong to different topographical origins. In ancient times the term diaspora had been associated with the dispersal of a large number of population from their original homelands particularly with reference to the displacement of the '**Jewish**' community. Migration has been in practice since the dawn of civilization. In past times also people used to migrate from one place to another for trade, job opportunities and in search of fodder for their livestock. With faster means of transportation, the process of dispersion has accelerated. The concept of **seasonal migration** has been practiced in various parts of the world since times immemorial. Migration leads to many terse changes in the lives of migrants. At times migration creates multiple problems and can be the result of civil, political and religious tensions. Migration has resulted in the highest casualties like mass killings, loot, arson and homelessness. Different causes and circumstances of migration have been discussed in the paper.

Keywords-: Diaspora, Identity, Migration, Culture, Hybridity.

Introduction:

Many other concepts can be amalgamated/coalesced with the word '**Diasporas**'. To have healthier means of bread and butter/subsistence is considered as the prime motive of migration. Various professionals migrate to foreign lands for healthier ways of life. Eventually, in the case of '**Diasporas**' in foreign land, identity become a compelling issue. The major notions that are referred to in the case of **diasporas** are '**self**' and '**identity**'. The notion of the '**self**' has been carried out both inwards and outwards. The concept of self is related to the thinking capacity, feelings and language whereas identity is constituted by the outer factors and indicators of caste, different variations of identity and position. The **diasporas** cope up with obstacles of multifarious aspects. They are confused about the concept of their real identity.

The Indian diasporic society comprises eighteen million people of this globe. Well-to-do countries like the USA, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are the leading hosts of Indian **diasporas**. **Diasporas** are not only present in various parts of the globe but are present in various regions of a country

also. These **diasporas** are called seasonal diasporas. These people migrate from one place to another following various season cycles to get fodder for their livestock. Some people reluctantly get migrated to various parts of the world due to natural disasters or the threat of persecution. The major reasons of migration are:-

- **Economic Migration:** Movement to find a job or to follow a specific career stream.
- **Social Migration :** Movement for living along with friends and family for a better prospects.
- **Political Migration:** Due to war or political persecution.
- **Environmental Migration:** Natural hazards and disasters result in this kind of migration.
- **Seasonal Migration:** For a particular season to get food for the animals or to find food for themselves.

The other leading factors causing migration are the ‘**pull**’ and ‘**push**’ factors. The ‘**pushing**’ factors that enhance a mass of people for migrating to another area are scarcity of services or facilities, lack of public security, crop failure and natural calamities.

The ‘**pulling**’ factors that attract people to a particular area are:-

1. **Higher or more employment opportunities.**
2. **Better avenues.**
3. **Public safety**
4. **Political stability and very low rate of natural hazards.**

The push and pull factors fuse to enhance migration.

‘**Brain-drain**’ in under developed and developing countries leads to migration to developed countries providing better employment opportunities and higher standards of living. Many talented Indian doctors, engineers and technocrats move to USA as they get a better working environment and a hefty compensation package there. The migration of Dr. Haragovind Khorana is a classic case in point.

The routine of **hybridity** is the pursuit of an international and multilingual society. The subjects belonging to African and Asian parts of the globe present/manifests the same patrimony of imperialistic power, that comprises the upshot of white and black pursuits. The imperialistic European power got mingled with African and Asian psychology which incorporated the intermixing of an imperialistic standard of living, education and culture with the colonial countries.

The diasporic study relates the phenomenon of identity with different aspects related to the study of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, race and class. The concept of instability is referred to in the context of ‘**identity**’ as ‘**identity**’ recreates itself; hence it is not a stable element. **Identity** is linked with human desires in the case of place, time, security and cooperation. On the contrary, identity is taken as an issue of uncertainty.

Stuart Hall has highlighted two ways related to cultural identity. In the first way, allocated culture is the word used for cultural identity which is a kind of collective notion, which is correct to ‘**self**’- i.e. familiar to people with identical history and heredity. Stuart Hall says, “...**our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide, as one people with stable, unchanging and continuous forms of reference and meaning beneath the shifting division and vicissitudes of our actual history.**”(Hall,1994:393)

There is identity alteration when one culture is overpowered by another one. The dilemma of cultural change is faced by the diasporic people. The identity status of administration concerning foreign

lands as well as homeland, the motherland leaves an impression on the tactics in which **diasporas** adjust in the new foreign lands as it marks the chord of connection between the native land and diasporic people.

The change has more impact on the host country. The culture of fresh identity is generated by the dominance which means identity generated by the transformation of the past identity. The idea of third space reveals the concept of conciliation of two different identities of culture. The blending of two introverted cultures without affecting another occurs in the process of conciliation. The culture called **hybrid** culture is the result of the comingling of different cultures. Attainment of greener pastures appears to be the major factor in the process of migration. Embracing another culture after an attempt to cut oneself off from one's roots which is an uphill task gives a psychological shakeup to the **diasporas**. It is therefore called an identity crisis.

The conception of the **Kaleidoscope**, **Salad Bowl** and **Melting Pot** is mooted for the occupancy of numerous varieties of cultures in the same place. It is a fact to be considered that these cultures retain their flavors and features and don't fuse easily. A new hybrid culture which is known as the hybrid one is the result of this mingling. Just like a beautiful different colored flowers bouquet, a hybrid culture comes out of the same place but never gets homogenized. Like a rainbow, the presence of variation in the same place can also be compared to the hybrid culture of various shades. Different shades of socioeconomic backgrounds are presented by the **diasporas**. These **diasporas** have different social, emotional and economic resources to adapt themselves according to the new changes caused by migration. The **diasporas** are of the following types:-

1.) Voluntary diasporas:-

- a.) **Labour diasporas.**
- b.) **Entrepreneurial diasporas.**
- c.) **Professional diasporas.**
- d.) **Seasonal diasporas.**

2.) Involuntary or Refugee diasporas.

1.) Voluntary Diasporas:-

A) Labour Diasporas:-

This division of the population departs from their homelands to scrape their financial backgrounds. The diasporas that are linked to Mexico have become an integral part of the society of the USA. This division of diasporas possesses less knowledge and skills. The working culture of the food industry adopted by them is not handsomely paid. They are being paid poorly. These diasporic people play a major role in the progress of the economic conditions of their households with whom either they live or stay away from them in diasporic lands.

B.) Entrepreneurial Diasporas:-

The entrepreneurial diasporic section of the society are the people with masterly knowledge and these people migrate to foreign lands from their root land. They have proper access to the capitalistic resources in the land of their basic origin. They have an integral function in the development of a nation. These people possess a high reliability for the mobility of the capitalistic resources to both the diasporic land as well as their motherland. The political chords of these **diasporas** are very sound, that is why, they find a way to more opportunities and resources even in their diasporic lands.

C.) **Professional Diasporas:-**

The professional diaspora is a part of society bracketed under the culture of the “brain drain” strategy. This part of diasporic society comprises the educated and trained professional diasporic society which has been polished under the lofty values of versatility punched under the tracks of technologies, medicine and engineering. The most reasonable probability of their movement to diasporic lands is to bloom up their career which has gloomed due to the scarcity of technological resources in their native land. Blue-collar jobs are not accepted by them. These **diasporas** have merit-based progress. These are the experts who provide a high standard of living to their loved ones who live along with them.

D.) **Seasonal Diasporas:**

Seasonal **diasporas** include the local tribes and communities who migrate from one region to another in search of food either for themselves or for their livestock. These people are mainly the hunters and gatherers or cattle grazers. The example of these types of migrants are:-

* **Nishi Tribe:-** This tribe is the native of Southwestern Subansiri district and bordering areas of district Kameng in the state of Assam. Another name used in Assam for this tribe is ‘Daflas’. This tribe is known to have the same ancestors who are popularly known as the ‘**Takr**’. There are three divisions of this tribe called ‘**Dol**’, ‘**Dopum**’ and ‘**Dodam**’. The culture of several families within a longhouse is still in vogue. The male members of each longhouse are considered supreme who have to support each other during the disputes as the community lacks a law and order mechanism. The males are categorized as the dependents. Slash and burn farming is done by them for cultivating the different kinds of pulses, millet and rice in present times. They also rear the ‘**Mithan**’ breed of cattle. The tribe also practice hunting and gathering food.

* **Gonds Tribe:-** Gonds are historically important tribes who are the hunters and gatherers. This tribe uses the Gondi, Aryan and Hindi languages. Gonds are the residents of the Handla district of Nanipur in the Satpuraplateau of Chattisgarh. The Gondian society is divided into various sections with farming as their profession also. The Raja system was followed in past times in this tribe. They are divided into Exogamous valor units and with different clans. ‘**Parsen pen**’ is the deity worshipped by each clan. Rules of marriage and relationship are properly followed by them. The religious worship of local Gods is done by the Bards, Chroniclers and Pradhans of this society. With the advancement of technology in the present times, many changes have taken place in this society. But the old culture is still in practice.

* **Ban Gujjars:-** It is one of the migratory tribes which is popular among as ‘**buffalo grazers**’ community residing in the foothills of Himachal Pradesh and the Utrakhnad state of India. They have adopted dairy production and milk production as their major means of livelihood. New genetically mutated buffaloes are said to be the gifts of the Gujjar community. The tribe is known to be very traditional. The search for fodder for their mulching animals is the main purpose behind the seasonal migration. Gujjars have homes made up of thatch, mud and sticks which are situated in the base camps. ‘**Gujari**’ dialect which is the combination of Punjabi, Dogri and Shivalike languages is used by them as their mother tongue. In present times also they follow the seasonal migration.

* **Gaddi Tribe:-** The Gaddi tribe is the resident tribe of Himalayan terrains of tribal parts of Himachal Pradesh called the ‘**sheep raisers**’ or the ‘**local shepherds**’. The Gaddi community follows the caste

system of **Rajputs, Thakurs, Khatris** and **Brahmins**. During the summer season when the mountainous region is devoid of the green vegetation, they move on to the meadowlands located in plain areas for getting grass for their livestock. This tribe is mainly found in the Bharmour subdivision of Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh who migrate to Kangra, Mandi, Bilaspur and some parts of Punjab from their area. The Gaddi tribe is well known as the original devotees of Lord Shiva. The old customs like folk songs, folk dress and joint family system are still practiced by them.

2.) **Refugee or Involuntary Diasporas:-**

Refugee **diasporas** have different reflections as compared to voluntary diasporas. They are victims of excruciating, vexed and sudden migration. A section of society that is more prone to the threat of persecution is taken in this type of **diasporas**. They become people of 'nowhere'. Wars and natural hazards are also responsible for these types of **diasporas**. The **examples of Involuntary migration** are as under:-

* **2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami:**

Over 1.7 million people were compelled to migrate from India, Indonesia and Sri-Lanka due to the earthquake and oceanic Tsunami rising from the Indian Ocean and coast of Northern Sumatra.

* **2015 Migration of Rohingya Community:**

The sectarian violence as a result of religious segregation has caused the forcible migration of the Rohingyas community from Myanmar. Rohingyas have taken shelter in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and even India after this dreadful event of genocide took place in Myanmar. They have reached these countries by means of sea routes through the Bay of Bengal, Andaman Sea and Strait of Malacca.

* **Ukraine and Russian war:**

The current war of 2022 between Ukraine & Russia has resulted in the forcible displacement of citizens of Ukraine as well as the other Diasporas of different countries residing in Ukraine for their various purposes. Millions of people have been displaced. War is the result of Ukraine's insistence on joining NATO treaty. This has destroyed life, property and led to the displacement of people on a large scale.

The current era has marked new beginnings in the way of the foreign lands' position of accepting the **diasporas**. The **diasporas** are welcomed in the host diasporic lands. Migration has been fully supported if it meets all the social, political and economic goals promoting all the immigration assets. Immigration strategies that include temporary residence, as well as permanent, are followed by the various developed host countries on this globe. One can refer here to the example of Indian paramedical experts and doctors who are practicing their skills in the diasporic lands. These experts are being offered handsome salaries as well as residence in foreign lands. Indian **diasporas** with marvelous achievements in foreign lands are Dr. Haragovind Khorana, Mr. Naveen Bains and many more. Many Indians now head Global I.T giants.

Conclusion:

The terms '**self**', heredity and identity can be easily linked with the concept of **diasporas**. The examples of types of migration and types of **diasporas** have been illustrated in different ways. The inner feelings and psychological aspects of **diasporas** have been revealed. Some of them feel bewildered and alienated in a foreign society. In some cases, they became people of nowhere (neither motherland nor diasporic

land). The whole section of diasporic society has become an integral part of foreign society in the present era. Diasporas share different varieties of caste, culture and ethnicity. People migrate to different parts of the world to attain better means of livelihood or to save themselves from unfavorable circumstances like political or natural calamities.

In diasporic lands, a specimen of intermixing of various cultures can be observed. The intermixing paves the way for the formation of new culture called the ‘**hybrid**’ one. The new culture has been termed the ‘**hybrid**’ one which is the blend of different cultures in the same land at the same time which never gets mingled. The examples of different colored flowers bouquet and rainbows illustrate this variance.

The contribution of **diasporas** is well acknowledged, appreciated and well-revered in the foreign lands in present times.

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