



# Diaspora Literature

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## **Introduction**

The term “Diaspora” comes from the Greek word which means “Scattering”. In literature this term refers to the dispersion of a people from their homeland. A simple definition of Diaspora literature, then would be works that are written by authors who live outside their native land. Diaspora literature means the literature written by the authors who have left their native countries and faced several challenges- social, economical, cultural and they express their thoughts and feelings living in a foreign land. Meena Alexander defines it as “writing in search of homeland.”

## **Types of Diasporas**

There are basically two kinds of Diaspora: Forced and Voluntary. Forced Diaspora often arises from traumatic events such as wars, imperialistic conquest or enslavement or from natural disasters like famine, or extended drought. As a result, the people of a forced Diaspora usually express feelings of persecution, loss and desire to return to their homeland.

Voluntary Diaspora literature is the literature written by a community of people, who have left their homelands in search of economic opportunity. Such authors voluntarily leave their homeland and express their thoughts on how they cope up with the new society, new culture and new regions.

## **Features of Diaspora Literature**

1. Sense of alienation
2. Sense of loss of language, culture, religion etc.
3. Conflict between cultures.
4. Conflict between religions.
5. Search of identity.
6. Nostalgia

## **Major Indian Diaspora Writers**

V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, M.G. Vassanji, Shani Mootoo, Bharati Mukherjee, David Dabydeen, Rohinton Mistry, Hanif Kureishi, Jhumpa Lahiri etc.

## **Importance of Indian Diaspora – Challenges in front of India regarding Indian Diaspora.**

The Indian migration began in large number during the British rule as Indentured labourers to former colonies like Fiji, Kenya and Malaysia.

It continued in the post- independence period with Indians from different social strata moving to countries like the U.K, the U.S and Gulf countries.

According to Global Migration Report 2020, India continues to be the largest country of origin of international migrants with a 17.5 million strong diaspora across the world, and it received the highest remittance of \$78.6 billion (this Amounts to a whopping 3.4 % of India's GDP) from Indians living abroad.

Today, the Indian Diaspora is more prosperous than before and its involvement in India's development is increasing. It contributes by way of remittances, investment, lobbying for India, promoting Indian culture abroad and for building a good image of India by their intelligence and industry.

In India diaspora is commonly understood to include Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), persons of Indian origin (PIOs) and Overseas citizens of India (OCI), of which PIO and OCI card holders were merged under one category- OCI in 2015.

### **Importance of Indian Diaspora**

National representation across the globe: Diaspora are symbol of a nation's pride and represent their country internationally. They help in building country's value internationally through their huge success stories.

Economic contribution: Many emigrants make huge investments into their home countries in domestic financial, real estates, services and technological sectors helping in huge inflow of capitals that boost local economy and create huge jobs.

Remittances: One of the greatest economic contributions of Indian diaspora has been in terms of remittances. Remittances make an invaluable contribution by aiding in Socio- economic developments, poverty reduction and changes in consumption behaviour in rural areas.

Help in technology transfer: Diaspora are mostly based in foreign countries which are developed and hence are technologically advance and rich in innovations. They help in bringing these technology and innovations to their country of origin through investment and collaborations.

Diplomacy: An important advantage in having a large emigrant group is furthering of nation's diplomacy through people to people contact. Indo-US civil nuclear deal is a case in point, as ethnic Indians in United States successfully lobbied for clinching of the N- deal.

Spread of indigenous culture and traditions: cultural spread helps in export of domestic cuisines and merchandise which open the room for investment in the host countries to feed the local tastes of people for those cuisines.

Political influence: Diaspora play an important role in influencing policies and politics if its host country in favour of its country of origin and also, development of good ties and relations between both countries. It helps in lobbying their nation's interest across the globe.

Help in boosting bilateral ties: Diaspora increasingly becoming prominent with getting prominent places in the high offices of their residing nation's like UK, USA which further helps in building their economic linkages.

## **Role of Diaspora in Indian Democracy**

Indian Diaspora is a non- homogenous group and it has different demands from the Indian Government. This also leads to negative campaigning and foreign funding.

Its is due to this, these demands are in conflict with the policies of the Indian government. This can be seen in the recent demonstration in support of farmers protests.

In the past, many groups of the Indian diaspora demanded justification of Article 370 in Kashmir, the citizenship (Amendment) Act, the National Register of citizens. (NRC).

The Diaspora from the Gulf, for example look to India for support on welfare issues. While those from wealthier nations such as the US look to India for investment opportunities.

The Indian communities such as Fiji and Mauritius, meanwhile, desire to reconnect with the country on cultural grounds.

There was a great impact on the time of covid 19. Covid 19 has triggered an anti- globalization wave, whereby many migrant workers had to return to India and now facing restrictions regarding emigration.

This has led to economic hardship for both the Indian diaspora and the Indian economy.

Turmoil in West Asia, despites the hype surrounding the peace deal with Israel and the four Gulf countries, the situation in West Asia remains fluid due to prevailing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The event of many wars will lead to a massive return of Indian nationals, curtailing remittances, and making demands on the job market.

There are many inadequacies of the Indian system for the diaspora to collaborate with India or to invest in the country.

For example, grievances like red tape, multiple clearances, distrust of Govt. are acting as hindrances in fulfilling opportunities presented by the Indian Diaspora.