

Chapter I: Introduction

Immigrants' Fluctuation in Lahiri's Fiction

Immigrants are the people who come to a country from a different country for temporary or permanent settlement. When they come to a different country from their birthplace, they vary their attitude, culture and customs in the new place. They sometimes assimilate the new culture mixed with their own and sometimes they take new customs in their own. They have fluctuation in their behavior. They shift from one idea to another, repeatedly. *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines the word 'fluctuation' as an action of shifting (shift back and forth uncertainly). That is, immigrants' behaviors are not fixed but changed as they are uncertain with the new one.

The novel describes the struggles and hardships of a Bengali couple who immigrate to the United States to form a life outside of everything they are accustomed to. The story begins as Ashoke and Ashima leave Calcutta, India and settle in Central Square, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, America. Through a series of errors, their son's nickname, Gogol, becomes his official birth name, an event that will shape many aspects of his life in the years to come. Ashima Ganguli, for instance, is in America with her husband Ashoke. It is a pleasure in a sense that they are all together in the transferred land but she is neither satisfied with American language and culture nor with the environment.

Similarly, Ashima enjoys everything in Calcutta. However, she lacks amenities in the early time in her arrival in America which is one of the causes of her fluctuation she feels. Ashoke works hard to maintain his family's expenses. Ashima also works for money to assist Ashoke for maintaining their economic state. They, after long time, start to collect money for their living. They buy a car, a house. But,

soon after, Ashoke dies. The car, a house and a settled condition shows Ashima's family is like an American family but after the demise of Ashoke, Ashima feels everything is lost. She feels alone and thinks to return to Calcutta, India. The unaccustomed environment in America and thinking of returning permanently to Calcutta is the main fluctuating situation in Ashima. Because it is said that nobody thinks of returning to homeland after settlement in America. However, Ashima doesn't feel to stay over in America. Gogol gets his name not in an easy way. He has fluctuation from getting his name to his life tenure in America. He gets his name 'Gogol' but after meeting a girl, he wants to change his name 'Nikhil'. However he wants to tell not his exact name. Gogol gets fluctuation in his love and life. He meets a girl in a party. He changes his mind to involve in an American culture. He has obstruction due to family prestige and economic condition. He links with many girls one after another. He loves a girl named 'Maxine' but she leaves him. Likewise, he gets married with Moushumi, an Indian –root girl. His married life cannot be successful. At last, he becomes alone. He feels fluctuation in his study, getting name, love and marriage and a whole life.

Sonu, a daughter of Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli seems happy up to her youth. However, she has looking situation of her mother and brother in her family. She loves with Mr. Ben. Her life seems happy life. But after the death of her father Ashoke and her mother's alienated feeling; Sonu thinks fluctuated that her love and marriage seem uncertain. In this way, the whole family seems fluctuated in the novel. In this sense, Lahiri is a great novelist to show real picture of immigrants' fluctuating situation in her novel, *The Namesake*.

Diasporic Feature of Lahiri in Her Works

Since Jhumpa Lahiri has much diasporic experiences, she expresses these

feelings and experiences in the novel. Lahiri amalgamates this feature into her works. Marriage is the richest domain in Lahiri's fictional works. Most of the stories in her first book: "A Temporary Matter", "When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine", "Interpreter of Maladies", "A Real Durwan", "Sexy", "Mrs. Sen's", "This Blessed House", "The Treatment of Bibi Haldar", and "The Third and Final Continent" portray marital problems in the immigrants' land. The collection spans in three continents, moving from Boston to London to Calcutta and even Dhaka. What to assimilate and what not to assimilate frequently haunts their minds, therefore they are under the shadow of confusion. The result is marital discord. The same house can be blessed one for Twinkle but not for Sanjeev in "This Blessed House".

We can find out fluctuation in her another novel, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), Jhumpa Lahiri's the first book of collection of short stories, which won a Pulitzer prize for fiction in 2002, a PEN/Hemingway Award, and The American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, also represents the predicament of Indian immigrants who are conscious of being in a different culture, and at the same time flashback for their own cultural roots. Since culture is the most important point in self-defining process, the immigrant characters are emotionally attached to the lost culture. The present prosperity cannot define them, and it cannot satisfy their thirst. In this situation, mere confusion waters their emotions and later on, the same thing becomes the cause of disagreement in their marital life. The important point is that marriage is the unifying theme for the fictional works of Lahiri, and marriage is indeed a key element of most of the stories in her book *Interpreter of Maladies* as well as her first novel *The Namesake*. Even "A Real Durwan" has subplot of Mr. and Mrs. Dalal's bickering and reconciliation. Mrs. Sen's marriage to Mr. Sen in the story "Mrs. Sen" may not be the focus of her story, but it does create important backdrop

for cultural befuddlement. The one story that breaks with the theme of marriage or marital problems is "When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine" but it, too depicts a married couple and their relationship with a married man. The married couples in America have problems especially about their own situation caused by the multi-cultural scenario.

There is the powerful element of discord between the husband and the wife. Both are Hindus but Twinkle is infatuated to the surroundings where the Christian symbols are common. Then they are severely confused for instant action. The cultural awareness is crucial here. The problem of acculturation is increasing in the marital life of the newly married couple. Though there was a compromise of setting them in a recess at the side of the house, so that they are obvious to passersby, there is still misunderstanding. Lahiri writes:

My husband did hate it. He hated its immensity, and its flawless, polished surface, and undeniable value. He hated that it was in his house, and that he owned it. Unlike the other thing they'd found, this contained dignity, solemnity, beauty even. But to his surprise these qualities made him hate it all the more. (156-157)

The Namesake is Jhumpa Lahiri's the most anticipated, and first sprawling novel that continues the same issue of marital problem. It is a novel about a family's imperfect assimilation into America. It is the story of Ganguli family; Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli and Gogol Ganguli, a son of immigrant Indian family in America. The couple's hardships in the region of other's culture with the problem of the marriage of the children are the main issue in this novel. Ashima and Ashoke, the already married couples are puzzled in the new land. Marriage creates reciprocal bonds of duty and obligation between husband and wife. Ashoke goes far away for

his professional responsibility, and continuous staying at home for Ashima cannot bridge their common understanding and discordance is common. She frequently requests him for returning to India whereas Ashoke wants to adjust with the immense opportunities in the foreign land. The novel opens in 1968 in the time when the immigrant couple Ashima and Ashoke were expecting their first child in Massachussets. Ashima is nervous about having her baby in a foreign country, away from her family, and while she waited in the hospital before her delivery, she reflected on how different America was from India, with each woman separated from the others in the room by a privacy curtain. At that time, she was perplexed. What to do and what not do that is the question for her. Later on, after the birth of the baby-boy, the time of discharge of the mother and son, came to reality and the compiler of birth certificate, unlike in India asked for the name of the baby. It was really a bad news for them. Lahiri portrays it in this way:

The bad news is that they are told by Mr. Wilcox, compiler of birth certificates, that they must choose a name for their son. For they learn that in America, a baby cannot be released from the hospital without a birth certificate. And that birth certificate needs a name. "But, sir" Ashima protests, "we cannot possibly name him ourselves". (27)

This shows the confusion of Ashima in a broader term. In Bengali culture, Ashima's grandmother is an authentic person for naming of the baby. On the other hand, they are compelled to choose a name, and a pet name Gogol is chosen, as they wait for a suitable name. It is neither an American nor an Indian name that is the product of confusion.

In addition, Gogol Ganguli has faced many difficulties and problems during his thirty-two years life tenure in the case of his marital process. Wherever he goes

and whatever he does, his Indianness is dominant factor. Adult adjustment and problems during this period are highly depicted in the novel. Slowly and gradually, Gogol becomes young and he feels odd on his own name. The good and pet dichotomy of his name confuses him very much. Gogol is ashamed of his name and heritage because of his affiliation with the American girls. Different American girls come on his life, love him but anyone does not marry him. The profound process of assimilation with them (Americans) is an illusion for him. At last, the American girls leave him alone.

Jhumpa Lahiri has interpreted and examined her fictional works from different perspectives. The present study will explore the role of cultural trauma in the life of the immigrants; Ganguli family, the lack of comprehending the environment and the crisis in marriage of the immigrant children, so its perspective will be of cultural studies. The primary focus of the research will be on culture, cultural trauma as well as on the immigration to acculturation. The author herself is the second generation of immigrants, and she knows about the hardships of immigrants in the new land, therefore the research will also draw relevant ideas from the author's life. In doing so, the study will give special attention to the first generation of immigrant characters in *The Namesake*. The uneasiness in living life and behaving with other people, the marital discord of the married characters and the process of marriage and its hardships of the second generation in alien land will be studied in a significant way. How do they sort out their Indianness in constant interaction with different cultures will be also the focus of the study. Speaking at a press conference in Calcutta Jhumpa Lahiri portrays her nowhere-ness of her own life: "no country is my motherland, I always find myself in exile in whichever country I travel to, that's why I was tempted to write something about those living their lives in exile." (*The Times of India* 14). As

the characters of her fictional works are confused she herself is in dilemma about the belongingness and cultural settlement.

Since her novel, *The Namesake*, is, to some extent, based on her personal experiences, thus, relevant to pay attention towards her life and experiences. It does not mean that there is one to one correspondence between her and her characters. There is less connection with the behaviors of the second-generation immigrant characters and the author herself. Like Gogol in *The Namesake*, Lahiri had a pet name, Jhumpa Neelangana Lahiri born in London to Indian immigrant parents who brought her to the United States when she was five, that changed into good name. In the similar way, like Gogol, throughout her childhood Lahiri spent months at a time in Calcutta to visit her large extended family. In India, though she was not a tourist, she did not like her parents not coming to her home. This unusual perspective, she says, gives her a "necessary combination of distance and intimacy with a place" (51) that have informed her writing. She admits that it is hard to consider herself an American, having inherited a sense of exile from parents who identified only with their Indian heritage and clung to that Identity throughout their lives, "the challenge of exile, the loneliness, the constant sense of alienation, the knowledge of the longing for the first world" (are more explicit and distressing than for their children). Yet the children of immigrants, too, share the sense of befuddlement in cultural artifacts.

Talking about the confused state of Lahiri, Mahmud Rahman explains:

When she is asked where she is from Lahiri knows that 'Rhode Island' is not the answer her questions are looking for. Nor does it tell the whole truth about her. Yet she doesn't feel the pull of her Indian roots, and as she grew up, often resented her parents' insistence on preserving their ties to Indian rituals and traditions, traditions that

threatened to separate her from the American culture to which she was undeniably attracted. "As a young child", she says "I felt that the Indian part of me was unacknowledged, and therefore somehow negated, by my American environment, and vice versa I felt that I led two very separate lives. (1)

Lahiri herself is in that confused state as her fictional characters are confused on whereabouts. She cannot openly tell her exact position and therefore, as Ashima in the last part of the novel is nowhere, and everywhere, she is in that position.

Jhumpa Lahiri's writings represent her Indianness and the common problem of Indian immigrants in the U.S.A. She falls on the category of American born Asians. The Asian American writers, together with the recent emphasis on multiculturalism, have been inspiring Americans of Asian descent to explore their composite heritage. Cultural criticism is undergoing with corresponding changes, and the terms of what constitutes "America" are being re-visioned in the light of its multicolored citizenry. In Elaine Kim's words; "The lines between Asian and Asian American, so important to identity formation in earlier times, are increasingly being blurred (qtd. in Cheung 7). Elaine's words are less applicable in the case of Lahiri.

In the case of Jhumpa Lahiri, it is not applicable though the writers in the position of her lack honesty and authenticity in representation. C. J. Gillen, for instance, emphasizes her authenticity and honesty in the representation of Indian characters. He says: "Jhumpa Lahiri is honest and authentic to her experiences. Jhumpa Lahiri writes about the Indians who have settled either in the U.S.A. or England and does not comment on everything that she is not well-versed in" (108 - 09). Mrs. Lahiri's fictional characters are from Bengal, India which she visited various times in her early childhood with her parents.

As for other Asian American writers such as Meena Alexander, Peter Bacho, Marilyn Chin, Younghill Kang, Fae Ng, Amy Tan, Bharati Mukharjee, Michael Ondaatjee, V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri tries to represent the issues of Asian immigrants in the place of historically, culturally and linguistically diverse environment. The above mentioned writers fall on the category which simultaneously claim and disclaim of both Asia and America. Therefore, most of the Asian American writers represent the marginalized voices that migrate from Asian countries in America, and Jhumpa Lahiri cannot be an exception for this matter. In the same ground, Jhumpa Lahiri has focused cultural trauma is one of the most important tool not to shape the fix model of life of immigrants in new land, America by writing through the novel *The Namesake*.

Moreover, Jhumpa Lahiri's characters tend to be immigrants from India and their American-reared children, exiles who straddle two countries, two cultures, and belong to neither: too used to freedom to accept the rituals and conventions of home, and yet too steeped in tradition to embrace American mores fully. Ms. Lahiri writes about these people in *Unaccustomed Earth* with an intimate knowledge of their conflicted hearts, using her lapidary eye for detail to conjure their daily lives with extraordinary precision. A Chekhovian sense of loss blows through these new stories: a reminder of Ms. Lahiri's appreciation of the wages of time and mortality and her understanding too of the missed connections that plague her husbands and wives, parents and children, lovers and friends. Michiko Kakutani in *The New York Times* writes about Lahiri:

Lahiri deftly explicates the emotional arithmetic of her characters' families . . . showing how some of the children learn to sidestep, even defy, their parents' wishes. But she also shows how haunted they

remain by the burden of their families' dreams and their awareness of their role in the generational process of Americanization. . . The last three overlapping tales tell a single story about a Bengali-American girl and a Bengali-American boy, whose crisscrossing lives make up a poignant ballad of love and loss and death. (1)

In this way, Jhumpa Lahiri, her parents from India to London and shift again to America, having the mix culture in her own life between London in her early childhood and American in her adulthood has mastered over the subject matter very nicely. Her characters have problem of fluctuation due to the mix culture.

Chapter II: Post-colonialism and Diaspora

The Idea of Post-colonialism and Post-colonial Nation

The idea about nation was not something that had come abruptly into existence; it is the result of intellectual and political consequences, which were being developed on the course of history. In fifth century BC, when Plato, one of the systematic philosophers of the western tradition, had relegated the idea of ideal- state, there was not systematic idea about nation-state. According to his idea of city-state, there would be three classes: rulers, soldiers and workers. They would have been in hierarchical order. Plato had claimed that virtue would be found in the proper functioning of these classes. Plato's above mentioned idea refers that it is his condition of mind, his subjectivity and his spirituality which would have enforced him to create a utopia. It is his argument, his love or his nationality to create better society.

Aristotle could not see any essence beyond this world (unlike Plato), points out that there are good and bad forms of government. According to him, if a government is constitutional that is good. For the best, he recommends a constitution favoring the middle class. To sum up, the entire Greek history had been passed through such different ideas related to nation. They took nation as an objective entity.

In the fourth quarter of the twentieth century with the relegation of Benedict Anderson's idea of nation, one terrible question mark fell upon the established ideas of nation. Anderson views: "The new nations are made imaginable due to the interactions among the system of production and productive relation, technology of communication, and controlled human linguistic diversity" (52). Mainly, it is the result of interaction between capitalism and print-capitalism. Print-capitalism, he claims, creates "unified field and exchange" or communication, which makes people aware of how 'power of language', is created to dominate dialects (Ashcroft et. al. 82).

The native speakers were forced to create a distinct linguistic community. So that an alternative thought could be emerged in every conscious man's mind. Intellectuals began to question upon the monolithic claim of a national language in particular and culture, religion etc. in general. Partha Chatterjee points out:

Ten years ago, it was such area specialist who managed to raise once more the question of the origin and spread of nationalism in the framework of a universal history. Benedict Anderson demonstrated with much subtlety and originality that nations were not the determinate products of given sociological conditions such as language, or religion; they had been, in Europe and everywhere else in the world, imagined in to existence. He also described some of the major institutional forms through which this imagined community come to acquire concrete shape especially the institutions of . . . 'print capitalism'. (4)

With the help of "print capitalism", it became easy to spread the common experience of people, their condition and interests. Chatterjee further talks about Anderson's three models of Western Europe, America and Russia. People out of their imagination have to choose the best model, which can accommodate their interests. The question comes if three kinds of models were already available, how could one imagine the same?

Whatever he argued regarding the idea of nation, the arguments paved the way for the idea of postcolonial nation.

One of the significant ideas for resistance to imperial control in colonial society has been the idea of nation. It is the concept of shared community "which has enabled post-colonial societies to invent a self-image through which they could act to liberate themselves from imperialist oppression" (Ashcroft 75). Nation, in this sense, is self-construction. People themselves have created it out of their collective thought

to describe, justify, and praise their actions. This kind of collective efforts of people make them feel dignified, and at the time redeem them from the state of lack of nationhood. The postcolonial people who are entangled into the condition of lack of national identity can practice this idea to escape from this situation. The imperialist nations always exploit these postcolonial people. Their national machineries are activated to preserve the ideologies of people who are related to so-called superior culture. Therefore, these imperial nations are no longer the nations for minority group of people like migrants, blacks etc. Rushdie claims:

This is not the England of fair play, tolerance, decency and equality- may be that place never existed anyway, except in fairy-tales. In the streets of the new empire, black women are abused and black children are beaten up on their way home from school. In the run down housing estates of the new empire, black families have their windows broken, they are afraid to go out after dark, and human and animal excrement arrives through their letterboxes. (*Imaginary*, 134)

The condition of emigrants is also not different from that of blacks. Rushdie in the same book postulates, the British persuades immigrants and emigrants to come there by attractive advertisements, later expel them after completion of their project. These British opportunist activities torture the people who are culturally uprooted. So, these post-colonial people, to escape from their painful situation, go beyond the present form of fundamentalist tradition of nation and imagine the nation of their own that is a performative nation which can do just for all types of cultural people. It is ideal and disseminated in nature and it imposes a great threat to the European model of grand cultures.

However, the rise of postcolonial theory and criticism about nations has led to

a certain problem of the concept nation. This is because the term nation is sometimes approximated to state, at other times other terms and concepts like people or even culture. In the discipline of political science the terms, nation and state are differentiated, nation is related to subjectivity and state with objectivity. A single individual is likely to be a member of one state, but membership of nation or culture may in each case be disputable or multiple, since the idea of nation goes beyond its concrete form. Chatterjee views: "there is spiritual nation that is inner domain of people bearing the essential marks of cultural identity"(68). This domain had fundamental features of anti-colonial nationalisms in Asian and African people during the colonial period. This spirituality was the precondition to achieve the political victory upon the monolithic colonial power.

Many European powerful nations are defined in terms of their superior race. In England white people are regarded as the superior and England as nation is defined in terms of that race. Ernest Renan says that every country has mixed blood race. No pure race is in existence throughout the world therefore European ethnographic principle, which is substituted for a national one is great error. Renan writes: "Ethnographic considerations have played no part in the constitution of modern nations. France is (at once) Celtic, Iberic and Germanic. German is Germanic, Celtic and Slav. Italy is the country where the ethnographic argument is most confounded" (14). In this sense, race cannot be a national identity. Such practice is selfish and disincentive.

Race is something which is made and unmade in the long run of history. The politics based on racial hatred and ethnographic sentiment is in no way a stable thing. The point of national origin "conceived ethnically, linguistically or geographically was of small significance" while there is not a single nation in this world with only

one culture (Ashcroft 83). This pattern of holistic tradition brings half concealed transformation of "the colonial state into the national state" (83). In this scenario, the nation's claim to modernity, as an autonomous form of political rationality, is particularly questionable from the point of view of postcolonial perspective of nation:

Nationalism . . . seeks to represent itself in the image of enlightenment and fails to do so. For enlightenment itself to assert its sovereignty as the universal ideas, needs its other; it could ever actualize itself in the real world as the truly universal. It would in fact destroy itself.

(Ashcroft 85)

The ideological ambivalence of European modernity itself supports the idea of nation as contingent one. The nation takes its concrete shape out of cultural practices practiced by nationalism. These cultural practices are often arbitrary. They are historical inventions.

History is constructed out of the different perspectives. It can be concerned with who has written it with what intention. The intention leads the history ahead excluding others' ideology. How long does it remain in the centre, the nationality it bears, functions? The history writing therefore becomes a tool to charge opposite groups. Chatterjee says: "The national past had been constructed by the early generation of the Bengali intelligentsia as a Hindu past" (73). It excluded Islam and aligns. It could accommodate Islam only as foreign elements. But "there is not a single English book which contains the true history of Bengal" (76) because English people did not support the Hinduism as it is. In the colonial society the colonized were expelled from its "Decisive Zones by a rule of colonial differences" (75).

Now, it becomes clear that the history is the product of power for its own sake. The reason of power-centered history is the outcome of European rationalist

movement. This rationalist movement, later on, became able to legitimate the European imperialism. In this respect, the movement of postcolonial nationalism is to resist the ways of "Modern institutions" of European imperialism, Chatarjee further says:

The new subjectivity that was constructed here was premised not on a conception of universal humanity, but rather on particularity and difference: the identity of the 'National' community as against other communities. In this aspect of the political domain, then, the hegemonic movement of nationalism was not to promote but rather, in a quite fundamental sense, to resist the sways of modern institutions of disciplinary power. (75)

The Bengali national community of particularity and difference is akin to our concern of postcolonial nation. The idea of postcolonial nation is subjective, imaginary and contradicts with the European idea of modernity. European imperial nations are sustained due to the modernist idea of rationality.

Nations are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role. By using national allegories national narratives were and are written to provide legitimacy to the idea of nations as an essence. Many of the novels often attempt to assemble the fragments of national life and give them a final shape. They become documents designed to prove national consciousness with extremely large number of components that display an active communal life. Fundamentalist nations define nationality in terms of their national narratives. In such narratives, stories of national origin, myths of founding fathers are reposed necessarily. In contrast to this tendency, writers like Salman Rushdie cross the boundary of the nationality and expose their

transnational attitude prescribing a postcolonial nation that allows multicultural narratives equally.

The nations were and are profoundly unstable formation, always likely to collapse back into sub divisions of clan, tribe, language or religious group. Nations are not natural entities. The instability of the nation is the inevitable consequence of its nature as a social construction. Regarding the issue writer like Timothy Brennan argues, "Modern nation state is entirely artificial" (45). The process of globalization requires that the individual be free to act in an economic realm that crosses and nullifies there national boundaries and identities. Since the practice of globalization has been already projected in economic realm, people's economic concern comes first and the question of nationality within the geography of certain boundaries comes later.

Homi K. Bhabha, one of the significant postcolonial critics and remarkable writer in his idea of postcolonial nation, argues that the nations are unstable entities. He says: "Nations like narratives, lose their origin in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye"(5). In this sense, myths have their multiple meanings at different times in the writing of modern political culture. They are made suitable to sustain the grand narratives of the nation. This myths preserving and rationalizing tendency cannot catch the state of people who are in the frontier of culture. So, their nationality is realized "in the mind's eye". The rationalization of the culture within the crowd of many cultures in the name of national interest comes into being due to European enlightenment idea developed after the mid nineteenth century. This antagonistic perspective of nation, invents new cultural boundaries of the nation. So, the meaning of the exclusive nation is erased itself in the process of cultural production.

Every culture has its own narratives. The national culture "is neither unified nor unitary with its relation to other" (Bhabha 4). When someone says something as national culture, there is always hidden assumption of the "Other". Those minorities or the others demand for their freedom of narratives. The freedom of narratives is not simply the freedom of expression; it is also the demand of freedom of individual, of minority cultural groups and of their cultural practices to be a part of the nation with which they are affiliated. It is also their appeal not to be excluded from a nation simply because they do not agree with a unified nationalist ideal. The idea, High Culture is a national identity, is something like what Derrida calls "irreducible excess of syntactic over semantic" (Bhabha, 4) because the limitations of High Culture are unclear and meaningless. This meaningless idea of superior and inferior culture is the product of latest European mind which extremely obsessed with the idea of Marxist internationalism. On the contrary, the postcolonial intellectuals like Bhabha see the international dimension within the margins of the nation space. There is no single nation with absolute culture; it has a crowd of people with different identities. The fundamentalist claim of totality is akin to effort of an individual to make shadow upon entire earth by expanding the hands.

According to Bhabha: "The emergence of later phase of modern nation from the mid-nineteenth century onward became the cause of mass migration within the west and colonial expansion in east"(98). The situation of migration brought a cause of cultural uprootedness among these migrants. They had not their nationality where they were migrated. Therefore, they felt a kind of loss. To fill that void, these migrants "loss in to the language of metaphor" (Bhabha 291). He further stresses:

The nation fills the void left in the uprooting of communities, and turns that loss in to the language of metaphor. Metaphor, as the etymology of

the work suggest and transfers the meaning of home and belonging across the middle passage or the central European steppes, across those distances and cultural differences, that span the imagined community of the nation people. (291)

They find the difficulty of belonging. They even seek the relation to the source culture and thereby try to establish their identity. This does not apply only in the case of diasporic writers; it is equally applied to diaspora characters. If the writers concretize the model of their ideal concept of nationhood in their texts, they are documents for this concept.

Each new narrative, or each new fresh formulation of an old narrative, is not a simple addition to the body of narratives that already exist; it also antagonizes the narratives. Therefore there are not certain numbers of model narratives. The narratives are infinite in numbers and they are meaningless in relation to others. They have meanings in itself. Bhabha has called, "The insurmountable extremes of storytelling (where) we encounter the question of cultural difference as the perplexity of living and writing the nation" (*The Culture* 161). The question of cultural difference with the distribution of practice, exist beside each other in a form of juxtaposition to resist the teleology of testing truth by logic. In erasing the harmonious totalities of culture, cultural difference articulates the difference between representations of social life and judgments that are produced within the process of transnational cultural negotiation. The analytic of cultural differences disturb the rationale of discriminations. Thus the aim of cultural differences is to rearticulate the sum of knowledge from the perspective "signifying singularity" of the "other" that resists totalization.

The nations which praise their totalized ideologies are to interrupt the individual's selfhood, freedom of expression. They try to maintain this act of

interruption in the name of religions, myths, race etc. However, their hidden purpose is political; therefore framework of its reasoning is entirely secular. Chatterjee regarding the case brings Indian context and says:

The idea that "Indian nationalism" is synonymous with "Hindu nationalism" is not the vestige of some pre modern religious conception. It is entirely modern rationalist and historicist idea. Like other modern ideologies, it allows for a central role of the state in the modernization of society and strongly defends the state's unity and sovereignty. (110)

The state lords take religious and racial practices as absolute to create "order" in the society. They take these practices in to grant, claiming them as the only reality. But these things have been originated only after the mid-nineteenth century when the modernity came into existence. Therefore, the mythic proportion of any practices is not anything more than the mere object that serves the interest of some selected people. In addition, the idea, which brings religion in to the level of national identity, is a political idea. It throws society on to the maze of exclusive European modernity, to which the postcolonial intellectuals categorize fundamentalist.

Post-colonial Idea of Nation: A Thematic Discussion

After the publication of Edward Said's highly celebrated text, *Orientalism* in 1978, post colonialism formally has occupied its place among other theories such as feminism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism etc. This school of thought critically analyses the history, culture, literature and other such discourses that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France and other European imperial power. As it is indicated in Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, post-colonialism tries, on the one hand, to reveal European colonial dominance upon the colonized people that has not

been seemingly underwritten in the major canon of the western intellectual disciplines, and on the other hand, it resists upon that dominance. This kind of reading on the European texts, in Edward Said's terms, is "contrapuntal reading" (*Culture*, 66).

Postcolonial school of thought lacks its original moment or coherent methodology as it seems in Marxism and deconstruction. It is the outcome of Marxism and Deconstruction. Therefore, it is methodologically and conceptually indebted to these schools of thought. Leela Gandhi views: "intellectual history of postcolonial theory is marked by a dialectic between Marxism, on the one hand, and post-structuralism/ postmodernism on the other" (preface). Unlike Marxism, post colonialism accounts for the consequences of colonial encounter, and unlike postmodernism, it rejects the emphasis on the textual criticism.

Marxism has become unable to accommodate the specific political needs of the colonized world. Therefore, it has failed to exert potential appeal to post-colonial thought. Marxism's blindness to the violence of colonialism is still reflected in Marx's own words. Quoting Marx Said writes: "whatever way have been the crimes of England . . . She was the unconscious tool of history, which raised India in this instance from its semi-barbaric state into the improved condition of modernity" (153) in his book, *Orientalism*. Thus, Marx justifies British colonialism ignoring colonial crime against colonized people.

Post-structuralism, too, isolates the issue of colonialism. It seems silence against political domination of colonialism. In *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, Aschroft says: "post-modernism- the deconstruction of the centralized, logo centric master narratives of European culture, is very similar to the post-colonial project of dismantling the Culture/ Margin binarism of imperial discourse" (61). Post-structuralism and post colonialism, as we have in above quoted lines, are similar in

their insistence on rupturing the center/margin hierarchy but the latter's emphasis goes on to resist European imperialistic tendency and subverts the European construction of "we" and "other" to bring minority voice in to center. It rejects the whole European Platonic tradition of theories, Edward Said says:

The main thing is that the written text of the sort we care about is generally the result of some immediate contact between author and medium. Thereafter it can be reproduced for the benefits of the world; however much the author demurs at the publicity he or she receives, once the text goes more than one copy the author's work is in the world and beyond authorial control. (The World 1211)

The above insistence, worldliness of text, postulates that post colonialism is related to social, cultural, and economic surrounding of writing. However these aspects are analyzed in the text for the revelation of colonialism as an exploitative relationship between the west and the rest.

To analyze colonial exploitation of west, Edward Said takes significant assistance of Foucauldian idea of 'knowledge' and 'power'. As he argues in *Orientalism*, westerners unknowingly impose "authority over the orient" by means of their different discourses. At this point, all the major canons of European literature are 'discourses' out of which, 'knowledge' is imparted to create 'power'. As the resistance against monolithic western system, post colonialism itself can be taken as a discourse. Thus, Post colonialism is highly practical school and evolved within a distinctly post-modernist climate dominated by Derrida and Foucault. Rightist Derridian view- a text is linguistic game, has been made revolutionary going beyond text to politics for the sake of all indigenous group of people who are culturally categorized as subaltern.

Post colonialism articulates emergence of newly formulated idea of national and individual identities rejecting the western essential tradition. Although it studies the ideological and cultural impact of western colonialism and in particular its aftermath and accommodates itself to hybridity, syncretism, diaspora, migracy etc. to bring the minority voice into the center, many people claim of the continuation of western colonization in different forms. For example, Leela Gandhi claims:

Post colonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath. It is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and, crucially interrogating the colonial past. The process of returning to the colonial scene discloses a relationship of reciprocal antagonism and desire between colonizers and colonized. (4)

The political experiences and practices of the colonial past are theorized from the enlightened perspective of the present. It helps to know "cultural and political identities of colonized subjects" (Gandhi 5). This awareness leads postcolonial people to create their individual as well as national identity as it is done by Salman Rushdie, Michel Ondaatje and other such writers.

To conclude, post colonialism has post structuralist and Marxist parentage to "diagnose the material effect and implication of colonialism" (Gandhi 26). As post-structuralism, it insists to break the hierarchy of 'center' and 'margin' of European construction and it is to bring 'subaltern' voice into centre as Marxism does for proletariat.

Migration and Diaspora

The movement of moving from the familiar place to the unfamiliar place or known location to the unknown location is the process of migration. People migrate

mainly for the purpose of prospects of better future. Migration is not the new phenomena. It traces the history back to the prime stage of human civilization. In simple term migration is the shift from the position of one's native place to the alien land.

The problems and hardships in adjustment, the difference in the customs and traditions, the feelings of isolation come under the study of migration. Individuals not only willingly migrate to the unknown location but also are forced to move to the new territory. The slave trade, indenture labor, etc. may also be the cause for the migration. The frequently waves of voluntary and forced migrations challenge the cultural and demographic stability.

The term 'diaspora' takes account of being unfit in the newly settled land and society. Diaspora makes study of an expatriated people in the expatriated land who is socially and culturally fragmented. Individuals experience a kind of uneasy, being unable to adjust with the new situation. Individual neither can join and encounter living in what Waymart coins a term "no- man's land" not belonging to nowhere. Diaspora studies presuppose the existence of expatriated groups of people who can retain a collective sense of identity.

Due to laissez faire economy and the fascination with the Western world people started to migrate to the so-called civilized world. Globalization made easy to migrate to the foreign land. With fervent thought of life, people migrated to the unknown land but experience not more than frustration. Diaspora studies the state of being unable to assimilate with the new society and culture and not being able to return to the root culture. Diaspora involves the situation of being in between of both the root culture and target culture. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* say that diaspora is a central historical fact of travelling and border

crossing. The racial and cultural identity blurred with the culture of new region but one is not accepted as the pure candidate of the new region. The expatriated people's behaviors, attitudes and values do not match with the new people. Regarding diaspora, Ashcroft et. al. write:

Diasporas, the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions, is a central, a historical fact of colonization. Colonialism itself was radically diasporic movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions (68).

The process of moving from the native place and culture to the unknown place and culture give birth to the diasporic situation. Individuals in the foreign land do not meet the target what they had pre-supposed. Instead, they are both outside from their native place and culture and from the target culture and place. Diaspora is synonymous to dislocation and displacement; one is very timely displayed and displaced, and other, dislocated from the society and culture in the new region. Individual being unfit in the new environment and social milieu comes to realize the sense of rootlessness. The voluntary or involuntary migration brought different groups and races into the same circle, which gave birth, to the binary class among the races. It is the so-called inferior people that have to suffer from the trauma of diaspora. Ashcroft et. al. further try to clarify regarding diaspora through slave trade. They write:

After the slave trade, and when slavery was outlawed by the European power in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the demand for cheap agricultural labour in colonial plantation economy was met by the development of a system of indentured labour. This involved transporting, under indenture agreements, large population of poor

agricultural labour from population of rich areas, such as India and China, to areas where they were needed to service plantation. The practices of slavery and indenture thus resulted in worldwide colonial diasporas. (69)

Thus, diaspora is the process of travelling from known location to the unknown location to feel lonely in the crowd of multi-cultures and multi-races. Diaspora evokes the specific trauma of not belonging to no place and no culture. It is concerned with the predicaments of human dislocation and with the idea of cultural displacement. The process of cultural change and fusion of the cultures produce a diasporic society. The condition of hanging in between the native culture and the culture of the newly migrated land makes the individual a diasporic character. To be specific diaspora is a condition of homelessness.

The waning of nations and nationalism by the impact of globalization promote for the migration. People start to cross the territory. Gradually and eventually, the migration procedure gave birth to the diasporic society and diasporic people. To settle comfortably in the cross border did not become easy. The fantasy before migrating to the new region turned out to be the terrible nightmare of not having dignified life. It causes many class and people to be uprooted and forces to leave a half made life, dividing own self between the cultures.

Chapter III: Post-Colonialism and Diaspora in Lahiri's *The Namesake*

An Overview of Post-Colonialism and Diaspora in the Novel

Jhumpa Lahiri expresses the feelings diaspora of her own, via different characters, especially, Ashima in Ganguli family of India, in the novel, *The Namesake* with great emphasis on habitual activities, affection of Indian-culture and the impact of it, in the immigrants' lives in America. Here, her characters, Indians and Americans, lead unremarkable lives grappling with everyday challenges, coping with in adequacy or failure, seeking to survive the visitation of tragedy. Their way of life is that of the educated middle class professional for whom income is assured, cultural challenge lies in the essential unpredictability of the new cultural environment, and the whole business of living. Her book *TheNamesake* portrays the immigrants' problem in marital life and its cause cultural befuddlement. How Mrs. Lahiri unravels this situation in her books, is observed here in detail. How does befuddlement work in the immigrants can be understood in the following lines:

My eleven years old son asks me, "Am I Indian or American?" The question excites me . . . I tell him he is both . . . he follows me closely and says, "Yeah, Dad or he might have said Appa, I am both . . . My son comes back to me and asks, "But you and Amma (or did he say Mom?) are not U.S. citizens?" I tell him that we are Indian citizens who live here as resident alien. (Radhakrishnan 203)

Radhakrishnan, here genuinely captures the state of incomprehension of the immigrants in the new world in his book *Diasporic Mediation: Between Home and Location*. This sort of bewilderment is common whenever we discuss on the works of Salman Rushdie, Amy Tan, Jhumpa Lahiri, Amitav Ghos, Jamaica

Kincaid, Bessie Head, Maxine Hery Kingston and many other diasporas who write about the issues and problem of immigrants. Radhakrishnan is unable to satisfy his small son about his identity but confusion is intricately carved within his mental framework. The multi-cultural parameters are responsible for the astonishment of their own Identities. Jhumpa Lahiri brilliantly portrays the same state in her work *The Namesake*.

Lahiri's quietly dazzling novel, *The Namesake* is that rare thing: an intimate, closely observed family portrait that effortlessly and discreetly unfolds to disclose a capacious social vision. It is a novel about two generations of the Ganguli family, and at the same time it a novel about exile and its discontents, a novel that is as affecting in its Chekhovian exploration of fathers and sons, parents and children, and of what is required and lost by immigrants and their children. Moreover, the situation of cultural befuddlement and its impact on the life of immigrants is highly advocated throughout the novel. Most of the characters in *The Namesake* are the members of the expatriate Bengali intelligentsia-scientists, economists and academics in New England, Boston, Cambridge, and other university towns. Over the years, they somehow come to terms with their frequently perplexing new lives, while yearning for the world they have left behind, and they watch, with a mixture of sadness and bemusement, as their American children abandon the old ways, turning their backs on arranged marriages and close-knit expatriate circles of their parents. The new culture tempts them but the spectre of the original and lost one is always vibrating in their hearts.

The novel begins in Massachussets in 1968, as Ashima Ganguli awaits the birth of her first child. Her Indian consciousness is still dominant, which can be observed through her behaviors such as, preparing Indian meal, wearing sari,

reading Bengali books, keeping a watch of Indian time and her relation with Ashoke, her husband, a doctoral candidate in electrical engineering at MIT. She cannot decide what to do and what not to do. The bicultural collision in her life becomes the source of undecidability. Indian culture forces in one way, and the culture of the new land answers in opposite way. She cannot call her husband by her name because it is not the culture of Bengali wives, unlike Americans, and it can be analyzed from the following para:

When she calls out to Ashoke, she doesn't say his name. Ashima never thinks of her husband's name when she thinks of her husband, even though she knows perfectly well what it is. She has adopted his surname but refuses, for propriety's sake, to utter his first. It is not type of Bengali wives do. Like a kiss or caress in a Hindi movie, a husband's name is something intimate, and therefore unspoken, clearly patched over. And So, instead of saying Ashoke's name, she utters the interrogatives that has come to replace it, which transpates roughly as "Are you listening to me?" (Namesake 2)

Ashima can utter neither good name nor pet name of Ashoke but the American wives can easily call their husbands by their names. Therefore, Ashima is befuddled and, used interrogative. Indian culture does not allow her for calling her husband by his name but she is living in the world of strangers where everything is common.

The birth of her first child in the new world creates problem even from the naming process. It is the beginning of the family's perplexing journey. Bearing a child in the country where nobody belongs to them is only half true: "Without a single grand-parent or uncle or aunt at her side, the baby's birth like most

everything else in America feels somehow haphazard, only half true" (24-25).

Therefore, the birth of the new baby is not totally true in the sense that there is the absence of her relatives, well-wishers and in-laws. The term confusion is always hovering inside her mind and she cannot decide in convenient way.

Before, the time of their discharge from the hospital, American culture needs the name of the boy. In Bengali culture, the grandmother of Ashima is the eligible person to name the baby but she is far in Bangal. In this complex situation, Ashima and Ashok request for the postponement of giving name to the body. The compiler of birth certificate warns them to choose a name and the couple is befuddled. Gogol comes his name through a series of random accidents and misunderstanding that will come to represent for him to the unexpected trajectory of his family's life. Radhakrishna's remarks: "The program of naming and renaming or unaming takes the historically determinants steps (Radhakrishnan 69). Radhakrishna has also emphasised upon the role of culture in the naming process. When a letter from Ashima's grandmother, suggesting a formal Indian name for him, fails to arrive from India, Ashoke impulsively settles on the name of Gogol, after the famous Russian writer, Nikloai Gogol whose book of short stories helped save his life many years ago in India. He had been reading the book when the travelling train derailed; rescuers spotted him only because they saw a page of the book flutter from his hands in the dark. Gogol is the only pet name of the boy. To every single person, two names are necessary in Bengali culture; that is pet and good name:

In Bengali the word for pet name is 'darknam' meaning literally, the name by which one is called, by friends, family and other intimate, at home and in other private, unguarded moments . . . every pet

name is paired with good name, a 'bhalonam', for identification in the outside the world . . . appear in envelopes, on diplomas . . . (25-26)

They are waiting for the good name of Gogol. The above quoted lines show that pet names are a persistent remnant of childhood, a reminder that life is not always serious, so formal, so complicated. They are reminders too, that one is not all things to all people. In Bengal, all have pet names; Ashima's pet name is Monu, and Ashoke's is Mithu, and even as adults, there are the names by which they are known in their respective families, the names by which they are adored, scolded, missed, and loved. The tradition does not allow for Bengalis, naming a son after father or grandfather, a daughter after mother or grandmother within Bengali milieu; individual names are sacred, inviolable. They are meant to be inherited or shared.

Rearing the children in the new land is another problem for the married couple. Even between culturally similar countries as the USA and England, differences in child rearing practices were found. Research conducted in England by Dewereux, Bronfenrenner, and Rodgers (HCPP, V. 6, 1969) showed more role differentiation between mothers and fathers that was found in America. In addition, differences between boys and girls were somewhat marked in England than in the United States. More generally, it appears that parent child relationships in America are "richer", "stronger", "more salient" and "more binding" than in England, where they seem somewhat attenuated and strained (143). The difference in the process of socialization of British and American children, as it affects the development of pathological behavior, was confirmed by a study of the morbidity of the children of British and American military families.

For the Ganguli couple, rearing the child in America becomes a problem. Ashima is terrified at the prospect of raising a child, "In a country where she is related to no one, where she knows little, where life seems so little, where life seems tentative and spare" (6). The sense of complete loneliness in the mass of new culture holders is frequently haunting Ashima. Ashima does not like to stay in America furthermore and insists: "I am saying hurry up and finish your degree". Then, impulsively admitting it for the first time. "I'm saying I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It is not right I want to go back" (33).

Ashima feels isolated and disoriented. Homesickness intensifies day by day and she is persistently requesting Ashoke for returning to India which is the lost homeland. With the experience of rapid and discontinuous social change in the new world, she cannot assimilate it with her original-culture and this cultural collision becomes the source of discord between the spouses. Cultural elements create tension between individuals or generate anxieties within them. Student-hood even after marriage, unlike Japanese-culture is hardly digestible in Indian culture. That is why Ashima is insisting to finish his study. Whenever there is vacation to Ashoke, the Ganguli family visits India that is the deep loyalty to one's own cultural heritage.

Ashima suffers most: when Ashoke takes a teaching job at a college in Boston Suburb, the Gangulis move from Cambridge, a migration, Ashima feels, that is more drastic, more distressing than the move from Calcutta to Cambridge had been. Now in a community without sidewalks, she has no streets to walk around, no buses or subways, no stores. Being a foreigner, she thinks:

. . . a sort of lifelong pregnancy a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a

parenthesis in what had been ordinary life, only to discover that previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding. (49-50)

The experience of new environment and the sense of dislocation from an historical "homeland" are highly affecting an Ashima's life. As she was quite alone in the time of her pregnancy in the new land in the absence of her husband, she still feels that sorts of suffocation and loneliness. She is struggling with hardships in new 'place' and sometimes discord develops between the spouse. As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin talk: "place is thus the concomitant of difference, the continual reminder of separation, and yet of the hybrid interpretation of the colonizer and colonized" (Ashcroft et.al. 123). We can tell that the place of immigrants, exiles or expatriates in new place, is the hybrid interpretation of the immigrants and the natives.

Yet slowly, cautiously, the Gangulis' make their way in America. Ashoke becomes professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ashima has second children Sonia, and now live in their own home at Pemberton Road. Gogol's formal school life begins but he does not like good name 'Nikhil' in school and from this point Gogol's discord with his parents starts. His parents try to persuade him. "Don't worry", his father says. "To me and your mother you will never be anyone but Gogol" (57). The Bengali culture stops them to make the pet name the public. Mrs. Lapidus, the kindergarten teacher gets surprised from this double name tendency. His parents are strong enough to familiarize him from the name. Nikhil, and contrary to this, Gogol rejects and conflict between two generations emerge. By considering the condition of the boy and easiness in name, he is registered as Gogol in the school. Since the novel captures the issues of two

generations of immigrant family, Lev Grossman calls the novel "a multi-generational saga of the immigrant experience (Time 52).

It is only after years of Gogol's enduring shame about his name, which he finds ridiculous, that his father one day tells him the truth and shares with him the story about how reading a book by Nikolai Gogol saved his life and changed its course irrevocably. When he knows the historical background of his namesake, his heart palpitates more than ever. He thinks about his namesake's name and his pathetic ending. Not only does Gogol have a pet name turned good name but also last name turned first name. "And so it occurs to him that no one he knows in the world in Russia, or India or America or anywhere shares his name, not even the source of his namesake" (78).

In this way, he feels a lost one. He is extremely puzzled and tries to escape from the loaded name; therefore, it becomes the source of discord in the family. For getting relief from Gogol's persistent urge, Ashoke advises him; "In America anything is possible. Do as you wish" (100). Then he starts legal American way of renaming as most of the Americans do. Nikhil becomes his name, which was once discarded by himself. Now Gogol evaporates and Nikhil emerges in the American environment. Gogol is ashamed of his name (before renaming), of his heritage nothing seems to suit well on his Indian-American shoulders, he avoids then (Indian American Students), for they remind him too much of the way, his parents' choice to live, befriending people no so much not because they like them, but because of the past they happen to share.

Gogol's parents speak nostalgically of Bengal implying a certain affinity and identity. They probably think of themselves as awkward. How do they feel can be observed in these lines:

Though they have home they are disconnected by the space, by the uncompromising silence that surrounds them. They still feel somehow in transit, still disconnected from their lives, bound up in an alternate schedule, an intimacy only the four of them share. (87)

The above quoted lines show that they are baffled in the alluring scenario of new culture, though they are economically prosperous and sound. The first generation of immigrants is in more crises in the sense that, especially the immigrant women are complicated on the boundaries of four walls, the television becomes undemanding and the "others" are quite indifferent in their cultural points. On the other hand, the men go far way for their better career and can enjoy with the new aura. The result is the marital discord among the immigrant's couple in the present world of economic affluence.

The teenager's point of view that sees parents as ungainly and unfashionable is universal. Most children are intensely ashamed of their parents at some point in time or other. All teenagers go through that, and grow out of it too. Mrs. Lahiri detailly sketches the activities of immigrants parent children relationship in the world of strangers. Gogol discards Indian company and develops clandestine love relationship with American girls but his Indian identity does not allow him follow Americanness. We call clandestine love because love is hardly applied before marriage in Bengali culture. Nevertheless, Gogol try to escape from the narrow but total emancipation is a chimera.

American girls come and leave in Gogol's life. Kim, Ruth, and Maxine are American girls who develop good relationship with Gogol in American style but they are under suspension about Gogol's cultural identity. In every society, there are always certain rules and regulations in the form of taboos, etiquette or laws

that governs certain dimensions of its people. Some societies have few rules and are lenient, while others have many strict rules. When there is excessive confinement or strictness of rules, great stress is created for those who have to behave and respond in a very limited behavioral range. In many conservative societies, such as in traditional China, India, and Nepal many rules of etiquette regulated to behaviors of men and women. At one time in China, girls were supposed to bind their feet starting the age of four or five so that they would remain small and look attractive to men. Young girls were not allowed to appear in public to visit the visitors if home. Marriages were arranged, in India too by parents (Ashima and Ashoke's arrange marriage) or match makers, so that young people seldom saw their spouses until the wedding night. If the husband died, the wife was expected to live the rest of her life as a widow even if she was still very young. The American girls in the life of Gogol are aware of the Hindu fundamentalism in India and its impact on life. Moreover, Ganguli family too cannot easily accept the manner of American girls. Maxine, the girlfriend of Gogol visits his house and tells: "It is nice to meet you, Ashima. Learning over and giving his mother a kiss as well" (146). An Indian culture, they would be daughter-in-law cannot speak the name of her mother-in-law. This is unusual way for Ashima. Repeatedly, she thinks about it and cannot speak because she is befuddled.

When Gogol goes to dine with Maxine and her parents at their house, he is surprised by the care of the family and feels "a pleasant ache in his temple, and a sudden gratitude for the day and where it has brought him" (133). He tries to compare the convenient environment of Maxine's house to his own family, and find that "what they are his family is not and vice-versa". It is the outcome of

upbringing in the different cultures. Gogol feels astonishment in this "in-betweenness" of two cultures, and the seed of conflict within his family emerges.

Most love comes out of an arbitrary mood that one person or may be two have cherished without seeing that they ever made a choice. Ruth is contemporary, someone besides whom Gogol learns of the world. His love for Maxine goes deeper because both are older, but also because it is a dream and mostly a happy dream. It is not only Maxine that he cares for but her parents and their way of lives in New York: familiar, generous, both private and outgoing. He is enchanted by their summer place in New Hampshire. These happy days could not live long.

The death of Gogol's father is a permanent loss in his life. He returns back as Sonia comes back from California. In the mourning period of his father, the Bengali friends come and help them in this period because of the cultural closeness in the foreign country. The interrelationship between Gogol and Maxine gets stopped for short period. He cannot leave his widow mother and Sonia alone in the house but Maxine cannot tolerate this absence of Gogol and tells him, "You guy cannot stay with your mother forever" (182). Her culture, unlike Gogol's cannot stop their relationship only because of the death of his father. The conflict between two levels; one Indian, and another American is answered by the permanent absence of Maxine from his life.

Since Gogol is already in marriageable age, it is Ashima's duty to search for his bride in the absence of his father in India culture. From time to time, therefore, his mother asks him if he has a new girlfriend. An Indian woman cannot expect a mature son without a daughter-in-law and she is looking for a new bride for him. For her, Indian background is must, and that is why she prefers Moushami, the daughter of Bengali immigrants. His parents and

Monhami's parents were familiar to each other because of the common Bengali heritage. Moushami who becomes the grown-up love of Gogol, is the strongest character in *The Namesake*. She is rendered keenly, absorbingly, from the outside in, within intimacy that stirs and unsettles. She is a doctoral candidate in French literature. She has the experience of Asia, Europe and America because she is an Indian girl living in America from British accent. From the onset of adolescence, she had been subjected to a series of unsuccessful schemes. "From the earliest girlhood, she says, she had been determined not allow her parents to have a hand in her marriage" (212-213). She is quite different from the Indian girls in manners and in her frankness. Her frankness and rebellious nature to Indian culture can be observed through the help of the following lines:

With no hesitation, she had allowed men to seduce her in cafes, in parks, while she gazed at painting in museums. She gave herself openly, completely, not caring about the consequences. . . . She allowed the men to buy her drinks, dinners, later to take her in taxis to their apartments, in her neighborhoods she had not discovered on her own. (215)

The above mentioned para obviously signifies that Moushami is an extraordinary girl in terms of developing relationship with men. She is more frank than the American girls. These behavioral aspects of Moushami are precisely indigestible for Indian culture. She can be treated easily as a prostitute whose youth is nothing more than for others' gratification. Here over frankness loses her own identity within Bengali community in America. If Gogol is quite familiar with these aspects, he cannot extend his hands to embark her. And for Gogol's mother, Moushami's affiliation with men is really a challenging. But the situation

is more dangerous in the sense of their marriage. Gogol is already left by the American girls in the similar way American boys come and leave Moshami, too. There is really the great problem in the marriage process; whom to marry and when. This is the crucial question for the children of immigrants.

The previous process of marriage of Moushami fails, not because of her over frankness but because of her Indian heritage. Graham, an investment banker from New York, living in Paris is her ex-boyfriend. One night, she has impulsively asked him to marry her. Graham has accepted and gives her his grandmother's diamond. He is agreed to fly with her and her parents to Calcutta, to meet her extended family and ask for grandparents' blessing. He agrees to a Hindu wedding and it is planned for summer, an engagement party thrown, and distribute invitation cards.

A few weeks before the wedding, they were out to dinner with friends, getting happily drunk, and she heard Graham taking about their time in Calcutta. To her surprise, he was complaining about it, commenting that he found repressive culture. How does he feel in Calcutta tour can be seen in the following lines:

All they did was visit her relatives, he said, though he thought the city was fascinating, the society, in his opinion was somewhat provincial. People tended to stay at home most of the time. There was nothing to drink "Imagine dealing with fifty in-laws without alcohol. I could not even hold her hand on the street without attracting stares". (217)

The American boy does not get enjoyment in Calcutta as he was expecting from the America cultural point of view. During with relatives, kissing and embracing in the open road are strictly forbidden in Indian-culture. Then

allurement of Calcutta city is less significant to Graham. The cultural diversity and its impact on them is crucial here. He cannot assimilate the India cultural parameters what he found in the journey to Calcutta. When Moushmi hears Graham's remarks about Calcutta, she is horrified. She realizes that he has fooled everyone, including herself. From upward, they have begun to argue, a chasm opening up between them, and suddenly, in a rage, she has removed his grandmother's ring from her finger and tosses it into oncoming traffic, and then Graham had struck her on the face as pedestrians watched. She swallows half a bottle of pills in her utter frustration.

The wedding is cancelled. The long-established relationship is broken away and two ex-lovers do not talk with each other. The Indian family background of the Moushami, which is quite different from the American culture becomes the root cause of failure in marriage. Therefore, for the children of immigrant family, like Moushami, there is complexity in marriage. Even after the engagement, and absolute preparation for marriage, the cultural legacy is treated as the source of contention in the possible marriage of Moushami. Then one day, her mother calls, asking if she remembers a boy named Gogol, as Gogol's mother reminds him about Moushami. The parents are the negotiator for their children's marriage in Indian culture, and same thing is going to happen in the life of Gogol and Moushami. It is possible only because of the same cultural trends.

Gogol weds Moushami. It is not the type of wedding either of them really wants. It is not the byproduct of their love but an outcome of their parents' same cultural upbringing. Jhumpa Lahiri writes about the marriage ceremony of Gogol and Moushami; "There is an hour-long watered-down Hindu ceremony on a platform covered with sheets. Gogol and Moushami sit cross-legged each other,

than side by side" (222). Their marriage is celebrated in accordance with Hindu tradition; with the chanting of Sanskrit verses. Both are dressed in Indian way.

The marriage could not change the behavior of Moushami though she is a married wife now. Unlike Hindu culture, she has kept her last name, not even with a hyphenated Ganguli. Her sexual indulgence with new American faces runs smoothly as in previous years that are most bitter counterpoint to the Indian culture, where extra-marital relation is a taboo. In the time of wedding ceremony, there is a common oath before God as advised by the Brahmins. Here, too Moushami has a private promise; "along with the Sanskrit vows she'd repeated at her wedding, she'd privately vowed that she'd never grow fully dependent on her husband as her mother has" (247). Instead of the single vow, her own vow is more important and it is quite challenging to Indian cultural heritage concerned with marriage. The nuptial ties for her is no more important so far as her individual life is concerned. The presence of Gogol in her life cannot stop her adulterous affairs with the American men, and the result is that the couple could not live happily with the lack of discord. Finally, divorce welcomes both.

After sometimes, the Indian consciousness in Moushami emerges. She assimilates herself with the other Indian women from the Indian cultural perspective. Now, "She wonders if she is the only woman in her family ever to have betrayed her husband, to have been unfaithful" (266). Whatever the Indian immigrants' children do, the Indian specter haunts them eventually and in the similar way Moushami feels here. Since she is the Indian child living in abroad, she cannot totally ban her Indian conscience from her life. The isolated condition of Gogol and Moushami is pathetic. The cultural differentiation befuddles them and problem arises in the process of marriage. Now, they are adrift. Gogol is an

oblivious cuckold and nothing more than this. This marital dissolution is the result of the cultural befuddlement in the second generations of the immigrants. Thus, this befuddled state covers the immigrants and their children too.

The novel ends with the journey of Ashima back to India. The house in which she has lived for the past twenty-seven years, which she has occupied longer than any other in her life, has recently been sold. She has decided to spend six months of her life in India with relatives, and six months in America with her son and daughter respectively. It is a solitary, premature version of the future she and her husband had planned when he was alive. Ashima feels lonely suddenly, horribly, permanently alone and briefly turned away from the mirrors, she sobs for her husband. Like her name, she is everywhere and nowhere. Gogol, now thirty-two already married and divorced. From upward now the beginning of self-recognition in the protagonist's life develops, and starts reading Nikolai Gogol's "Overcoat". What his father advised him in earlier time.

Diasporic Impact on Ashima Ganguli

The experience of new environment and sense of dislocation from historical homeland are highly affecting Ashima's life a representative character of immigrants in America. In the beginning of the novel, *The Namesake*, Ashima Ganguli is a young bride who is about to deliver her first child in a hospital in Massachusetts. Her husband, Ashoke, is an engineering student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In the first glimpse of the beginning of the novel, when Ashima is in the desire of getting something in her pregnancy, it is estimated that she is lacking which leads her trauma throughout her stay in the foreign land. As the novel opens:

Ashima has been consuming this concoction throughout her pregnancy, a humble approximation of the snack sold for pennies on

Calcutta sidewalks and on railway platforms throughout India, spilling from newspaper cones. Even now that there is barely space inside her, it is the one thing she craves. (1)

Here, she has been followed by her Indian mind rooted into the depth. Therefore, it can be said that her traumatic situation begins from Indian experience and still has been working.

As she prepares to give birth, she realizes herself isolated. If she was still in Calcutta, she would have her baby at home, surrounded by all the women in her family who would administer all the proper Bengali ceremonies and would tell her what to expect. In the United States, Ashima struggles through language and cultural barriers as well as her own fears as she delivers her first child:

But nothing feels normal to Ashima. For the past eighteen months, ever since she's arrived in Cambridge, nothing has felt normal at all. It's not so much the pain, which she knows, somehow, she will survive. It's the consequence: motherhood in a foreign land. For it was one 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. (5-6)

Ashima gets scarcity of familiar culture in America. This makes her feel alienated in the foreign land. Not only that but also she feels dislocated and unfamiliarity in new land. It is implied that when she feels uneasy with her pregnant state in the new place, she seems, as if, to go back her original place to feel easy and to be helped by kith and kin.

A boy baby is born and is healthy and the new parents are prepared to take their son home. But Ashima and Ashoke are stunned to learn that they cannot leave

hospital before they give their son a legal name for birth certificate, to be given by hospital. The traditional naming process in their families is to have an elder give the new baby a name. They have chosen Ashima's grandmother for this honor as Bengalis have tradition to name a new born baby by the elder one in the family. They have written the grandmother to ask her to give the baby a name. But the letter never arrives and soon after, the grandmother dies.

In the meantime, as they must provide the name for their baby to discharge from hospital, Ashoke suggests 'Gogol' a name for his son. He chooses this name for two reasons. First, it is the name of his favorite author (Nikolai Gogol), the famous Russian author. The second reason is that Ashoke, before he was married, had been in a very serious accident. The train he was riding in had derailed. Many people died. Ashoke had broken his back and could not move. He had been reading *The Overcoat* the book of Nikolai Gogol just before the accident. He had a page of that book clutched in his fist. The page of paper caught the attention of the medics who had come to rescue the wounded people in the accident and he also had been rescued. If it had not been that page caught in his fist, acting as a flag in the darkness, Ashoke could have died. He got his new life then. He wants the name 'Gogol' to remember for long time in his life. Ashima also adds her consent for her husband. So, the name was relevant.

When they arrive at home from Hospital, there is lack of amenities. Ashima accepts this the American way. However, now with a baby in her arms, her breasts are swollen with milk, her body coated with sweat, she groins still so sore she scarcely sits, it is all suddenly unbearable. She says she cannot do this all. . . . What are you saying Ashima? Ashoke asks. "I'm saying hurry up and finish our degree. And then, I'm saying I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It's not right. I want to go

back" (33).

As Ashima comes to home after hospital, she feels alone in the pregnant state which is taken a difficult state for women. She also feels lacking which is not possible to manage alone in unfamiliar environment. In this way, the psychological impact on Ashima brings the feeling of uneasiness, alienation and hatred towards America.

Ashoke dies when they are in the United States. The feeling of loneliness on her increases when she is alone after her husband's demise. Her traumatic experience gears up in an alien land, aftermath of Ashoke's death due to stomach bothering.

Ashima feels lonely suddenly, horribly, permanently alone, and briefly, turned away from the mirror, she sobs for her husband. She feels overwhelmed by the thought of the move she is about to make, to the city that was once home and now in its own way foreign. She feels both impatience and indifference for all the days she still must live, for something tells her she will not go quickly as her husband did. (278-79)

She is panic-stricken and suffering due to Ashoke's death to digest the situation easily and she realizes that she is very alone after the demise of her husband, Ashoke. She mourns for her husband. She thinks to leave the place but later on, she takes it that she has to bear more responsibilities toward children, friends and other relatives in the absence of her husband. This has changed her into full-framed maturity in her stay in America. However, the lack of husband is always palpitating to her.

Gogol Ganguli Affected by Diasporas: Failure of Life

Gogol Ganguli, during the tenure of his youth in America, neither gets advancement in academic, economic and social life nor his life is prosper in term of marriage. Rather he fails in his married life due to the hullabaloo. This is clear as

detailed onward. As he grows older and becomes more eager to fit with his peers, he finds Alexander Shortened to Alex, Andrew to Andy, likewise, William Billy and Elizabeth Lizzy, and he would have greatly preferred to have something like this of his name as well. Unfortunately, as the narrator remarks, “but Gogol sounds ludicrous to his ears lacking dignity or gravity” (76). Furthermore, “not only does Gogol Ganguli have a pet name turned good name, but a last name turned the first name. And so it occurs to him that no one he knows in Russia or India or America or anywhere shares his name. Not even the source of his namesake” (78). It turns him finally to a sheer skeptic as the narrator depicts his attitude:

But he does not want to tell Kim (his American girlfriend) his name. He doesn't want to endure her reaction to watch her lovely blue eyes grow wide. He wishes there were another name he could use, just this once to get him through the evening. It wouldn't be terrible . . . I'm Nikhil he says for the first time in his life. (95-6)

Gogol, who finds himself basically a loner even when he is in a group making him feel like a lapper in the crowd, starts resenting everything from his over-cautious rather Indian parents to their heritage and culture because, he thinks, of which he has never been actually accepted in the circle he is. Upon discovering that “his namesake was a severe depressive . . . a queer, and sickly creature, (as the writer Ivan Turgeneve once made a complement upon the writer of *The Overcoat*) . . . who slowly starved himself to death, Gogol feels freshly betrayed by his parents” (91). Even his father had a point: “the only person who didn't take Gogol seriously, the only person who tormented him, the only person chronically aware of and afflicted by the embarrassment of name, the only person who constantly questioned it and wished it were otherwise, was Gogol” (100). Gogol's hatred towards his name lands him to the

disgust, which creates a tension in the Ganguli family which is clear from the father-son conversation:

Gogol says: How could you guys name me after someone so strange? No one takes me seriously.

Ashok replies: Then Change it. In America anything is possible. Do as you wish. (100)

So, Gogol had obtained a common wealth of Massachusetts change-of-name form He'd filled out the rest of the form. In spite of his parent's sanction he feels that he is overstepping them, correcting a mistake they've made. (100-01)

During his college life in Yale, he re-invents himself by a legal name as 'Nikhil', the official name for him given by his elders at home. The new name sounds far more sophisticated and most importantly, could pass as a western name. Gogol finds his new name as if it were an alter ego when he uses the name Nikhil. This name sets him free from all the ethical constraints of his parents. It is as Nikhil that he embarks on his adult life that he begins to have relationships with White American Women who take him by the lapels, shake him awake to life's charms, and injects chronology of his life with some Zest. But all these take place at Gogol's private life as Nikhil, secret especially from his parents. The narrator projects Gogol's secrecy, "Gogol's successful affair with Ruth (the first white girlfriend of Gogol) and his happy relationship with her becomes his such an accomplishment in his life about which his parents are not in the least but proud or pleased" (116). Thus, as Nikhil, he becomes part of the mainstream culture, not just a hyphenated American.

Stepping the threshold of adulthood, Gogol is openly exposed to the dominant high culture. Gogol craves to leave behind the inherited Bengali values of his parents.

So, he takes his own path through life as Nikhil Ganguli.

While he insists on being called Gogol in elementary school, by the time he turns 14 he starts to hate the name. His father tries once to explain the significance of it, but he senses that Gogol is not old enough to understand. His parents decide to give him a more public name, which is part of the Bengali tradition—having a private name that only family and friends use and a public name for everything else. They chose Nikhil. Shortly before leaving for college, he travels to the courthouse and has his name legally changed to Nikhil Gogol Ganguli. When Gogol goes off to college, he uses his public name.

This change in name and Gogol's going to Yale, rather than following his father's footsteps to MIT, set up the barriers between Gogol and his family. The distance, both geographically and emotionally, between Gogol and his parents continues to increase. He wants to be an American, not a Bengali. He goes home less frequently, dates American girls, and becomes angry when anyone calls him Gogol. During his college years, he smokes cigarettes and marijuana, goes to many parties, and loses his virginity to a girl he cannot remember.

When he goes home for the summer, Gogol's train is suddenly stopped and temporarily loses electricity. A man had jumped in front of the train and committed suicide, and the wait for the authorities causes a long delay to him for his home. Ashoke, who is waiting at the train station for Gogol, becomes very concerned when he calls the train company and hears of the incident. When they pull into the Ganguli's driveway, Ashoke turns off the car and he finally explains the true significance of Gogol's name. Gogol is deeply troubled by this news, asking his father why he did not tell him this earlier. He starts to regret changing his name and his identity. He lives in a very small apartment in New York City, where he has landed on a job in an

established architectural office after graduating from Columbia. He is rather stiff personality-wise, perpetually angry or else always on the lookout for someone to make a stereotypical comment about his background. In this way, the narrator says:

He is shocked and discomfited by the news, feeling bad about his irritation and impatience, wondering if the victim had been a man or a woman, young or old. He imagines the person consulting the same schedule that's in his backpack, determining exactly when the train would be passing through. (121)

That is why, we can find the fear of loss of identity of Gogol on Ashoke by retrospectively his train accident with the delay of Gogol's train.

At a party, Gogol meets a very attractive and rather socially aggressive Barnard girl named Maxine. Gogol becomes completely wrapped up in her and her family. Maxine's parents are financially well off and live in a four-story house in New York City. Maxine has one floor to her and invites Gogol to move in. Gogol becomes a member of the family, helping with the cooking and shopping. Maxine's parents appear to have accepted him as a son. When Maxine's parents leave the city for the summer, they invite Maxine and Gogol to join them for a couple of weeks. They are staying in the mountains in New Hampshire, where Maxine's grandparents live. For a while, Gogol is fixed in this very American family.

Gogol introduces Maxine to his parents. Ashima dismisses Maxine as something that Gogol will eventually get over. Shortly after this meeting, Gogol's father dies of a stomach bothering while he is working on a temporary project in Ohio. Gogol travels to Ohio to gather his father's belongings and his father's ashes. Something inside of Gogol changes. He slowly withdraws from Maxine as he tries to sort out his emotions. Maxine tries to pressure him to open up to her. Gogol breaks off

the relationship and begins to spend more time with his mother and sister, Sonia. Ashima, after some time has gone by, suggests that Gogol contact the daughter of one of her friends. Gogol knows of the woman from his own childhood. Her name is Moushumi, and she has had the unfortunate experience of having planned a wedding only to have her intended groom change his mind at the last minute. Gogol is reluctant to meet with Moushumi for two reasons. She is Bengali, and she is recovering from having been shamed. But he meets her anyway, to please his mother.

Moushumi and Gogol are attracted to one another and eventually are married. However, by the end of their first year of marriage, Moushumi becomes restless. She feels tied down by marriage and begins to regret what she has done. Gogol suspects something is wrong and often feels like a poor substitute for Moushumi's ex-fiancé, Graham, who abandoned her. One day, Moushumi comes across the name of a man she knew when she was a senior in high school. She contacts him, and they begin an affair. Gogol finds out. Moushumi and Gogol divorce.

Gogol has the sense of failure in his married life since Moushumi and he gets divorced. As the narrator states: "And then he returned to New York, to the apartment they'd inhabited together that was now all his. A year later, the shock . . . but a sense of failure and shame persists, deep and abiding "(283). He realizes his mistake and forgets her action due to trauma of unsuccessful life.

In this way, Lahiri in the novel, *The Namesake*, pours her conceptual notion of post-colonial and diasporic experience through different characters in a vivid way.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

Fluctuation on Immigrants due to Diaspora

Post-colonialism and diaspora are inter-related terms which refer to the reaction or awareness that one gets in the different culture or same culture influenced by others. Born in London and brought up in America, Lahiri cannot find the new place as of her own and she has reflected her experiences in the novel through different characters. This thesis, especially, seeks to study post-colonial experience and diaspora of the characters in the novel as Ashima and Gogol Ganguli, when the Ganguli family goes to America. The novel has shown plenty of diasporic experiences in the life period of the characters and glorious situation of all immigrants in America in general.

This novel focuses on the idea that post-colonial and diasporic ideas have become the tool for bringing uneasy and imbalance in life living process of the immigrants in their life in America. Lahiri has done this by bringing characters like Ashima and Gogol Ganguli as the real characters who are embroiled in the turmoil of vague, uncertain and free life due to bounded mind of culture in new land, America.

Lahiri brings feelings of diaspora through the cultural divergence and how the cultural divergence affects the life of people in stay time in new land to show difficulty to adjust in a vast environment, and how the comprised cultural mind should struggle for the danger of finishing its original Indian culture in America.

Here, Lahiri has tried to show the minds of American and Indian cultures. She has shown the bounded mind always struggles for smooth and prosperous life and it has a danger of losing its tied bond of rituals and system amidst an open culture like American culture. In this sense, until the bounded mind loses its tied bond; progress,

development and success is impossible in a real ground.

In the same way, Ashima is not able to adjust in new culture in America where as Gogol has the feeling of confusion, either to follow his native culture or the new American –culture. They have been struggling for their own ways. These two minds at a time either in the life of an individual or in the life of individuals play the vital role to stay the same state of life without any advancement due to the Post-colonial and diasporic hiddenness.

Lahiri, herself as a postcolonial writer and an experienced immigrant individual in America, exposes her own individual experiences how the immigrants in America feel unadjusted and unfamiliarity and how their original culture hampers and stops advancement of new comers in new environment. The same seems in Ganguli family migrated to America from India. Ashima Ganguli stays within Indian culture in new place, America which was impossible in total. The fear of loss of native Bengali culture in the name of adjusting in English culture in America in Ashima Ganguli is vividly explained and Gogol the protagonist in the novel, *The Namesake*, becomes failure in his life and he does not have fix aim for his future due to the diasporic hiddenness. He is in between dual culture, his own original culture and the new culture in U. S. A.

The focus of Lahiri to write this novel *The Namesake* is to show the sense of alienation and dislocation due to diaspora on Ashima Ganguli in particular and on Indian immigrants in general. However, failure of proper individual identity of Gogol, unfamiliar environment: the cause of unsettled life of Ganguli family in a distinct world is equally seen in the novel.

Lahiri in the novel, by single Ganguli family, lights on the whole immigrants'

problems in America. New cultural environment is the problem of adjustment for new comers in America. Cultural obstinate and trauma of Indian culture of Ashima Ganguli is the main cause of her repatriation and hullabaloo and carelessness of the future life of Gogol are the pivotal issues in the novel, *The Namesake*.

Lahiri mixes her strong ties to her ancestral land, India, and pours her own diasporic experiences to justify how difficult and problematic situation the immigrants have to face in America and how cultural trauma becomes the obstacle to light on their future life.

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