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**A GLIMPSE INTO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DIASPORIC PEOPLE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Latest in the term 'dispora is the idea or event of 'displacement' which brings about an encounter with alien people and their culture. There may be 'displacement' of an individual or the migration of a population or a section of a social group. The historical event of migration does not end with physical 'displacement'; it includes the struggle for survival in the host country. Of all the problems that such dislocation brings forth, it is the problem of cultural identity without which an honourable survival cannot be imagined. Even those who are engaged in the evaluation of the diasporic saga of survival have to answer the questions related to socio-cultural dislocations. Such people have a characteristic psychology since they are tossed between hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, peace and restlessness, love and hatred, tolerance and anger and between worldliness and spirituality.

"Diaspora", used to describe expatriate or immigrant people, is derived from Greek dia 'through' and sperein 'to scatter', signifying 'dispersion'.

Primarily, it refers to dispersion, used collectively for the displaced Jews after the Babylonian captivity and also in the apostolic age for the Jews living outside of Palestine.

The term was originally applied to a nation or part of a nation separated from its own state or territory and dispersed among other nations but preserving its national culture. It is said that Magna Graecia constituted a Greek diaspora in the ancient Roman Empire. A typical case of the dispora is presented by the Armenians many of whom have voluntarily lived outside their small national territory for centuries. 'Diaspora' was, however used "to describe the sections of Jews scattered in the ancient Greco-Roman world and later to designate Jewish dispersion throughout the world in the 2500 years of the Babylonian captivity. Diaspora has its equivalents in the Hebrew words galuth (exile) and golah (the exiled) (Dunnaw 126-27).

Diaspora ' as a metaphor in literary criticism has generated a good deal of speculation which covers at the surface level experiences of the Immigrated people and "ethnic communities" (Pandey 20). For some critics, it embodies "dispersal, collective memory, a sense of alienation, sanctity of the ancient homeland and a belief in its restoration, definition of the self in terms of identification with the homeland ... (Safran 83). It is clear from this remark that this term is extremely complex having many connotations.

In literary criticism the term involves "the experiences of migration, expatriate workers, refugees, exiles, immigrants and ethnic communities" (Pandey 20).

With the fundamental problem of cultural identity, the immigrant is gripped With nostalgia, alienation and cynicism. By and large, 'diaspora ' signifies voluntary movement from one country to another. Irrespective o t the purpose of expatriation or immigration, there IS a longing, lingering look behind. Not to speak of all the educated immigrants, even the working class men and women are invariably nostalgic. Much of home-sickness and longing for the past times, are the early stages of the mind but with the passage of time and with success in the new found land, these thoughts evaporate. Nostalgia becomes strength and in the transformation of the individual, it plays a vital role. Finding himself in a melting pot, the individual attains a level of maturity that could have never materialized without immigration. He/she knows well that a movement from one society to another forces him/her "to locate himself/herself in relation to the centre" (Jain 16) and nostalgia cannot be allowed to prevail over his/her consciousness for long. In order to be a part of the rational humanity, the immigrants change it into a power to strengthen their will to struggle, to find and never to yield.

Alienation and Cynicism are the facets of the immigrant's consciousness. In recent postcolonial studies-especially of

diasporic writing "with its implications of marginality and otherness" (Bhattacharya 141) emphasize expatriate consciousness at the centre. Alienation produces the pain of marginality and otherness. Marginality and its psychosis rests on the idea of "dislocatedness inherent in the diasporic adventure. Alienation emanates from the feeling of marginality and otherness. It is generally believed that no one today is "purely one thing" (Said 407) because imperialism brought about a mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale and this classical belief denies both marginality and otherness. These are inventions of shallow minded intellectuals and politicians. When labels like Indian or British or American are followed into actual experience, they are quickly left behind, No doubt the diaspora forms the "other echoes" without which the music of the white garden is incomplete today. The following observation is suggestive of what the future course of action and thought should be when individuals keep on moving from one cultural entity to another:

It is more rewarding and more difficult-to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about 'us'. But this also means not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies above all, not constantly reiterating how 'our' culture or country is number one .... (Said 408).

Edward W. Said, an intellectual representative of the diaspora community, thinks that the otherness and marginality epitomize the anguish of the displaced people. Obliquely, such thoughts reaffirm their faith progress and prosperity in an alien land. 'Violence', 'fear' and 'terror' seem to define and in some cases they are coiled in diasporic experience. Out of these emotions, the diasporas self-preservation instinct is born. To preserve themselves, the diaspora look back homeward to get sustenance from their history and culture. Placed between two cultures, the dislocated individual suffers all kinds of violence - material and spiritual and in utter despair considers himself to be unreal and his life-long achievements seem fictional. A description of the diaspora appears in these words:

Exiles or emigrants or expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we look back, we must also do so in the knowledge-which gives rise to profound uncertainties-that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost: that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, India of the mind (Rushdie 12).

A recreation of 'violence' of "terror" draws on imaginary details but such details contain a shared of reality because it is inescapable. Fear, caused by violence and terror is an abiding emotion of immigrants, for they hardly know when and how they will be victimized. For example the Indo-Fijian diaspora, dispossessed and dislocated "lived in hellish hovels and lines and survived the trauma of their indentured existence" (Kumar 85).

Most of the foregoing facets of the diasporic existence are negative but the brighter side of the coin requires a brief reference. Religious, political or racial persecutions drove immigrants to the different parts of the world where they could have freedom from oppression. The earlier immigrants to America for instance, believed that they could breathe in free air and could achieve prosperity and happiness. For them Ellis Island was a Symbol of fulfilment. Initially, the diaspora yearned for freedom and prosperity but with the passage of time the purpose of immigration changed as educational and economic motives became dominant. Once they reach the land of their dreams, they develop the attitude of assimilation, adaptation and integration with the new society.

Hope for better life appears to be the key word of the diaspora. Even in the face of indignities, immigrants have endeavoured to live in an alien land with peace and dignity and have been able to fulfil not only their economic aspirations but also their political ambitions. The former president of the United State of America, Mr. Barak Obama is an illustrious example.

Almost all immigrants are gifted with the spirit of adventure, without which no movement to the foreign shores can be imagined. Jyoti Jasmine, above everything else, is an emblem of adventure: "Adventure, risk, transformation: the frontier is pushing indoors through uncaulked windows Watch me re-positioning the 'stars ... " (Mukherjee 240), Adventure enables the immigrants to translate their dreams into reality. With its vitality, they reposition their stars and leave their imprint on every situation of life they come in contact with.

Compromise and tolerance are apparent virtues of the immigrants in every alien society. Living in the multicultural society may turn out to be hazardous they fail to revive these virtues in them. Emergence of unpleasant situations in the alien land is due to aggressiveness of the natives, which can be silenced only by compromise and tolerance. "Tolerance of diversity" (Benjamin 173) is a message that Immigrants have given to the world.

No human endeavour is complete without love in all its variations. It is true of all the immigrants that the most dominant emotion in their bosom is love-love for their homeland; love for their new country and love for washing away hatred. They also fall in love, marry and beget offspring in the new country.

Considering both sides of the diasporic the negative and the positive a diligent reader may conclude that the term in literary criticism implies forced or voluntary movement of the people of a nation to another nation with a view to be the architect of their destiny as well as the destiny of the host country. Such people have a characteristic psychology since they are tossed between hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, peace and restlessness, love and hatred, tolerance and anger and between worldliness and spirituality.

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