Unit 21
Popular Perception

Contents

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to know:

- The model minority of Indians in America;
- The Indian diasporic situations in the UK;
- The inter-racial divide of Indians in Caribbean and Africa; and
- The Indian State's view of Overseas Indians;

21.1 Introduction

The last two units of this block discussed the imagery of the Indian diaspora that is found in film and literature. In this unit we are going to talk about popular perception about the Indian diaspora. In a sense this unit is continuation and extension of the previous two units, which discuss the imagery exclusively in terms of literature and film. This unit takes you to a wider level where we try and put together images and perceptions of the diaspora, both in terms of the host country as well as the country of origin. In putting together we draw from various social spaces to get a sense of what Indians are thought of abroad and what immigrants are perceived back home.

As we know popular perception which border on stereotypes that type-cast a community or ethnic groups in certain terms draw their fodder for such imagery from many sources- word-of-mouth, every-day encounters, media which include print, film and television, as well as travel etc. In trying to talk about the way Indians are perceived we will try to draw from some of these sources.

21.2 Model Minority: Indians in America

Recently (October, 2006) the NASDAQ-a stock exchange - building in New York, towering over many stories, was draped in Indian tricolours, in celebration of the festival of *diwali*. Many Indians hope that the Empire State Building would be lit up for the festival of lights. The White House is slated to celebrate the Diwali festival, indicating that India has arrived in the US. "In the US, we are living in the 'India' moment. Everywhere you turn, there's another article about either successful Indian immigrants who have found the American dream, Bollywood film festivals, or the rise of

high-tech economic India, and the loss of American jobs to outsourcing. India - and South Asia - has never before made such an impression on the American psyche" (Budhos:2004).

The Indian images and people are now part of every-day life. Not just the convenient store owner and the gas station owner or the Patels who own most of the motel industry. Incidentally, Gujaratis, mainly Patels, now own 21, 000 of the 53, 000 hotels and motels in US, worth $40 billion. Apart from this, Indians are seen on television not just as caricatures of Indianness but as part of mainstream America, whether it is the political analyst and journalist Farred Zakharia or the medical correspondent and war reporter Sanjay Gupta.Writers such as Salman Rushdie, V.S.Naipaul, Rohantan Mistry among others had put the Indian diaspora on the map of literature. Jumpha Lahari won the Pulitzer , the most coveted literary prize in America, for 'distinguished fiction by an American author, preferably dealing with American life.' The recent Booker Prize was won by America based Indian writer Kiran Desai, yet again bringing to the fore the achievements of the Indian diaspora. Film makers like Night Shyamalan of Sixth Sense fame, and Shekhar Kapoor who made the movie Elizebeth and scores of other successful Indians are making Indian Diaspora ever so much more visible. As New York magazine reported in one of its articles India has now acquired "cool quotient". "Indeed, America has become so South Asianized that *Newsweek* recently ran a cluster of articles under the rubric 'American Masala', declaring in the subtitle of the influence of the Subcontinent on the superpower: 'They've changed the way we eat, dress, work and play.' Most Americans take the presence of *chai* on the menu at Starbucks for granted (if in versions as alien to the Indian original as a vanilla-flavoured and iced). Many are becoming comfortable with Indian music, whether of the 'Asian dub' variety, remixed with hip-hop or listened to straight. 'Basement Bhangra' at SOB's in New York, presided over by disc-jockey queen DJ Rekha, just named the 'best DJ in New York' by *Time Out New York* magazine, has been dubbed 'the best party in NYC' by *New York* magazine. The latest fitness craze in California is the 'Masala Bhangra Workout'. Hindi film songs have begun to appear in the most unlikely venues, from the popular television series *The Sopranos* to Lata Mangeshkar singing on the soundtrack of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind,* starring Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet" (ibid).

"Real-life films such as *Monsoon Wedding* and *Bend it Like Beckham* have been extraordinarily successful not only because each was, in its own right, simply a great film, but also because the Indians portrayed in these films are so much like, well, everyone else. These movies, both made by Indian diaspora women directors, depict Indians at home in the globalized world, whether it's the trials and tribulations of a young woman negotiating conflicting expectations between her Indian immigrant home and her British teen environment in *Bend it Like Beckham* or a young woman juggling the conflicting expectations of patriarchal family values under siege, an American *desi* husband-to-be and her own desires in *Monsoon Wedding*"(Ibid).

Indians in the USA are one of the largest among the groups of Indian diaspora, numbering about 2.5 million, and probably the one of the most well off - their median income is 1.5 times that of the host country. They are well represented in all walks of life, but particularly so in academia, information technology and medicine. There were over 4,000 PIO professors and 33,000 Indian-born students in American universities in 1997-98. The American Association of the Physicians of Indian Origin boasts a membership of 35,000. In 2000, Fortune magazine estimated the wealth generated by Indian Silicon Valley entrepreneurs at around $250 billion

(www.wikipedia.org). "Addressing the Indian American Forum of Political Education in September 1997, Jesse Helms, the senator from North Carolina, acclaimed: "Indian Americans represent the best and the brightest the United States has to offer." Over the last decade, such lavish praise has become commonplace as Indians shot to prominence in the U.S. If in India newspapers prominently featured Bill Clinton's visits, The New York Times carried a long story about Neera Tanden, a second generation Indian who managed Hillary Clinton's Senate campaign. Jhumpa Lahiri figured on the covers of literary magazines. And so on. All this cannot be explained merely by the 106 per cent growth in the Indian population since 1990. Much more important is the status afforded to Indians as a "model minority"(Ramana, 2001).

This presence of India in America's popular consciousness in a positive sense as successful immigrants and model minority is of recent origin. In early 1900s when Sikhs immigrated into US, they were thought to sully the white Anglo-Saxon culture. There was fear that they would steal their jobs. They could not buy any land and were virtually forced to leave; many left for Canada. Since this early migration things have changed. The working class population was replaced by educated professionals in the 1960s.The US immigration policy, Vijay Prasad argues, was deliberate in its choice with respect to immigrants from India. In his book *The Karma of Brown Folk*, Prashad points out "that the cross-section of Indians in the U.S. is not some random mixture of typical inhabitants of the sub-continent, nor chosen by a process of natural or cultural selection, but a sample carefully selected by immigration laws"(ibid). The educated upwardly mobile Indian emigrants Prashad says were apolitical and passive: "absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure and success without a developed social consciousness" (quoted in Ramna, 2001).

The successful Indian professional who is a bit of nerd and who is so brainy that he has to hold cup of coffee to his forehead to heat it up, is epitomized by characters such as Ashok in the cartoon strip *Dilbert*. The nerdy professional, who is sexless and is incapable of fun is partly demolished by the character Kumar in *Harold and Kumar Go To White Castle*. The movie has as its main leads a Chinese American and Indian American, Harold and Kumar respectively. Harold is bored with his job as investment banker while Kumar has little heart in pursuing a career in medicine, unlike his father who is a surgeon. While Kumar is not exactly your nerdy Indian geek he still fits in the streotype that is played over and over again both in the imaginations of Indians and Americans at large where second generation Indians struggle between individual aspirations and family pressure. There are other images, and not so complimentary that dot the landscape of American popular consciousness. Apu, the character from the very popular animated series, *Simpsons*, fits the convenience store owner end of the spectrum. There appear to be class differences within the Indian American community, with earlier professional immigrants looking down upon working-class communities who are later first generation immigrants. Gujarati shopkeepers and Punjabi cab drivers are common stereotypes of the latter community.

Things *may* have changed a bit from the highly orientalistic perspective of India-of snake charmers, Maharajas, and of spirituality and Yoga. The spiritual element has contemporary twist, in this new age fondness for all things alternative and traditional, which can be seen in the success of modern gurus like Deepak Chopra and to some extent to previous ones like Rajneesh-the *Osho*. However, the general ignorance which stems from a largely

insular America, is still real and palatable. This can be seen in attacks on Indians in New Jersey (the dot busters) to the more recent post 9/11 attacks on turbaned Sikhs, who were apparently mistaken for Afghans. The fears that 'foreigners' will take away the American jobs has reentered the popular consciousness once again with the issue of outsourcing which has become much debated topic for the forthcoming elections. Commenting on how America is beginning to notice India, Mira Kamdar writes: "How could I have foreseen that the T-Shirts that said 'My parents went to Disneyland and all I got was this lousy T-Shirt' would be replaced some day by ones lamenting 'My job went to India and all I got was this lousy T-Shirt?' Suddenly, the tide of the Yellow Peril was reversed: instead of Asian workers pouring into the United States to work for slave wages (in their own country they had it even worse and they were used to sleeping ten to a bed anyway), now it looked like that 'giant sucking sound' that used to come from down Mexico way had been amplified about a thousand times and was coming from, of all places, India" (Kamdar, 2004: 65).

Reflection and Action 21.1

What are the varied images of Indians in America?

Indian diaspora is making a beginning to enter political arena too. The American Indians are organizing themselves into strong political lobbies. One of the most powerful one of these lobbies is USINPAC (Unites States India Political Action Committee).

21.3 The Curry Tide: Indians in UK

The Indian diaspora falls into the lose term of "British Asian", a term employed for immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India . Many Indians feel that there distinct differences between some of these south Asian communities in terms of religion, language, culture etc. There is debate whether the Indians should adopt a nomenclature or term for themselves based on nationality or religion such as British Indian or British Hindus.

The Indians are the largest in number among the British Asians. According to the 2001 UK Census there are 2.33 million British Asians, making up 4% of the population of the United Kingdom. This further subdivides to 1.05 million of Indian origin (1.8% of the population), 747,000 of Pakistani origin (1.3%), 283,000 of Bangladeshi origin (0.5%), and 247,000 from other Asian origins (0.4%) (largely of Sri Lankan origin). British Asians make up 50.2% of the UK's non-white population. British Indians tend to be religiously diverse, with 45% Hindu, 29% Sikh, and 13% per cent Muslim, while their counterparts of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin are much more religiously homogeneous, with Muslims accounting for 92% of each group. British Indians tend to originate mainly from two Indian States, Sikhs are largely from the Punjab region whilst Hindus tend to originate from the Gujarat, Punjab and West Bengal regions.

Indian settlement in UK has a long history dating back, according to historians to some early migration during the East India Company contacts with India. People from South Asia have settled in Great Britain since the East India Company (EIC) recruited lascars to replace vacancies in their crews on East Indiamen whilst on voyages in India. Many were then refused passage back, and were marooned in London. There were also some Ahyas, domestic servants of wealthy British families, who accompanied their employers back to "Blighty" when their stay in Asia came to an end.

The Navigation Act of 1660 restricted the employment of non-English sailors to a quarter of the crew on returning East India Company ships. Baptism records in East Greenwich suggest that young Indians from the Malabar Coast were being recruited as servants at the end of the seventeenth century, and records of the EIC also suggest that Indo-Portugese cooks from Goa were retained by Captains from voyage to voyage. In 1797, 13 were buried in the parish of St Nicholas at Deptford.

These immigrations were few and far between; a major wave of migration from India took place in post World War II period, when there was labour shortage. Thus a bulk of immigrants from India, especially Punjabis, formed the working class immigrants. Additionally there was demand for doctors and health professions for the expanding health care system of post World War II Britain. Indian doctors were recruited as they conformed to British standards of medicine. In 1970s there was another wave of immigration of Indians, who were settled in Africa but were forced to leave due to socio-political tensions and negative reaction towards Indians by the native Africans.

As we mentioned the migration to UK was spread over several decades and the profile of the migrants changed with times depending on circumstances and requirements in British society along with the push factors back home. The perceptions about these migrants too changed along the way. The image about the Indians and the Asian British, like in America, is a complex one; while there is large scale discrimination, along side is an orientalist fascination for all things Indian.

India was after all the Jewel in the imperial crown and there was a romantic fascination which basically essentialised India as a mystic, spiritual, mysterious magical land from whom the disenchanted West had much to learn or draw from. These images are seen not only in colonial literature such as E. M. Foster and Rudyard Kipling but continued to inform the way the West looked at the sepia tinted India. This spirituality and magic continued to inform the hippies' quest for the land of dharma and karma (a book that captures this fascination with India is captured by Anita Desai in *Karma Cola).* To this day, this spirituality that is associated with India continues to dominate many new age perceptions of India.

The majority of immigration has happened after 1950s but there is evidence of Indians going to Britain as early as 1688. The immigrant population was very scattered and small; it consisted of mostly lascars-sailors from Bengal and Goa -ayahs and nannies or *ayahs.* East India Company (EIC) recruited lascars to replace vacancies in their crews on East Indiamen whilst on voyages in India. Many were then refused passage back, and were marooned in London. There were also some Ayahs, domestic servants of wealthy British families, who accompanied their employers back to UK."Indian lascars settled near the London docks from the eighteenth century onwards and many became a part of the multi-racial dock communities, cohabiting with and marrying local English women. In 1858 the Strangers Home was opened in London's West India Dock Road to provide accommodation for lascars and assist them to find employment on ships returning to India. In the 19th century individual cases of destitute South Asians requesting repatriation back to India appear sporadically in the records of the British Library. Nannies or ayahs lived with the British families that brought them to England. An institution known as the Ayahs' Home was established in 1897 in Aldgate to accommodate ayahs who were waiting for a return passage to India. It has been estimated that by 1932 approximately 7,000 South Asians lived in Britain" (source: www.movinghere.co.uk).

In the 19th century Indians were free to enter Britain as British subjects, though persons known to have political affiliations working towards India's freedom and who were considered anti-British were restricted entry into Britain. There was also restriction placed on those with "limited means" from early 1930s. "The control of passports was directed primarily at Indian peddlers from the Punjab who sought to bring family members to Britain to assist them with their businesses, selling goods door-to-door.

After the introduction of the 1948 British Nationality Act, guaranteeing free right of entry to British subjects and Commonwealth citizens, the numbers of South Asians arriving in Britain increased" (ibid).

Many of the immigrants stories talk about racial discrimination that was meted out to them. A majority of the immigrants in mid 1900s were from working class rural backgrounds from India who were not very conversant with English or Western ways unlike some of the professionals who went to UK around the same time. Those from working class backgrounds ended up doing menial and non-professional jobs. South Asian immigrants settling in post-war Britain established themselves, mainly in London, the Midlands and industrial areas in the north, taking up employment in factories and foundries. The stereotype of Indians was of workers, bus-conductors, waiters, and small shopkeepers. They faced lot of problems being accepted in to British society.

Many immigrants recount how difficult it was to rent apartments and find accommodation. Early post-war South Asian migrants faced prejudice in finding private rented accommodation and council housing. "A survey by Willesden Council of press advertisements for accommodation in the local press showed that 90 per cent of advertisements specifically discriminated against non-European. As early as 1957, a Home Office document provided evidence of white flight and future segregation, which would come to characterise some northern towns and cities: 'The Nottingham, Wolverhampton and Warwickshire police say that white house-holders in better class districts resent coloured people buying houses in these districts and when this happens, those who can, move.'

This was supported by a 1964 article in the *Daily Telegraph* in which an Estate Agent in Southall, London had agreed to sell houses owned by Southall Residents Association exclusively to white buyers. Many Indians sought to overcome these housing problems by buying old houses often in slum areas and letting them out to newcomers" (ibid). There were negative representations in media that black and coloured immigrants from the commonwealth were drain on public funds.

Since these early migrations things have changed considerably Indians in Britain are now the third generation. Despite some ethnic racial conflicts few of the stereotypes have changed to Indians being perceived as a successful immigrant community. They are considerable number of professionals and successful business men, media person, writers, actors, doctors and politicians who are now part of mainstream life of Britain, who have changed the way English think about the Indians.

Indian culture and Indianess has now after many years have now captured the imagination of the British. Indian cuisine now has become a part of the English landscape. The biggest influence of British Asians on popular culture has probably been the Indian restaurant, though the majority of these are run by people of Bangladeshi origin. A recent poll found that chicken tikka

masala has surpassed fish and chips in terms of popularity as the national dish. Chicken tikka masala, like the popular balti, is itself a British Asian invention. These dishes were unknown in the Indian sub-continent until requests from British holiday-makers led to their introduction

Since the 1970s, British Asian performers and writers have achieved significant mainstream cultural success. The first British Asian to gain wide popularity in the UK for being a mainstream celebrity in their own right and worldwide fame was the late Freddie Mercury, who led the rock band Queen. However, there had been others earlier such as Sabu Dastagir who had been famous for playing non-descript foreigners in British and Hollywood films. The comedians Sanjeev Bhaskar, Meera Syal and Shazia Mirza are all well-recognised figures in British popular culture. The actress Parminder Nagra has a prominent role in the US TV series ER, and played the lead role in the successful British film Bend It Like Beckham. The actor Naveen Andrews plays the role of Sayid Jarrah in the popular US TV series Lost, and also had a prominent role in the award-winning film The English Patient. The broadcaster Krishnan Guru-Murthy and Sameera Ahmed, meanwhile, present the respected Channel 4 News.

Box 21.1 Growing up in Britain

Gurinder Chadha could well be an example of a British-Asian woman who has bent rules to achieve her own success. Her family came to settle in Britain from East Africa in the seventies. Daughter of a small-time Indian grocery shop-keeper, she experienced, at first hand, the trauma and humiliation which Asians go through in Britain, when they don't have money or status. During her growing years, Chadha also observed the inhumanly trivial lives of women of the Punjabi community settled in Britain – especially in cities like Leicester where one-third of the population is Asian. Through the older generation – like Gurinder Chadha's father – which opened grocery shops or stationery corners and joined the huge lower middle class of the British population, she noticed how the racist Whites treated them. "My father was made to wait for hours for service in a bank because his depositing capacity was small. The early Asian settlers in Britain, like my parents, had little education and a huge complex about living in an alien society. The Punjabis especially stood together in their isolation and developed their own lifestyle of *bhangra* and family gatherings over tea and *bhajias*. They joined their compatriots in Southall for nostalgia meals or shopping and still felt lost between their Indo-African heritage and the strident call of the vibrant British culture they came to experience. I felt a part of this confusion; yet my generation thought differently and we were rebellious and unwilling to accept our second class status."

21.4 Inter-Racial Divide: Indians in Caribbean and Africa

In this section we will discuss how race was one of the main issues that was the basis of tension between Indian migrants and other communities. Many times it was Blacks versus Indians, whether they were natives or settlers. This situation of racial tension or a situation where natives were pitted against the Indian settlers was true of Fiji, Malaysia and even Mauritius, though the Indian community there was a minority. However, we are going to keep our discussion to Caribbean countries and Africa. We hope that these two cases will give you sense of a general scenario of how PIOs in general are perceived in their adopted countries.

Indians In the Caribbean

People of Indian origin are variously known as indo Caribbean or East Indians, though the term East Indian is used less and less to denote people of Indian origin. Indo-Caribbean people or Indo-Caribbeans (the colonial term "East Indian" is fading) are people with roots in India who live in the Caribbean region or are the descendants of such people. From 1838 to 1917, over half a million Indians from the former British Raj or British India, were brought to the Caribbean as indentured servants to address the demand for labour following the abolition of slavery. The first two shiploads arrived in British Guiana (now Guyana) on May 5, 1838 (see the unit 6 in Book 1).

The majority of the Indians living in the English-speaking Caribbean came from eastern Uttar Pradesh and western Bihar, while those brought to Guadeloupe and Martinique were mostly from, but not only, from Tamil Nadu. A minority emigrated from other parts of the Indian sub-continent, including present-day Pakistan and Bangladesh. Other Indo-Caribbean people descend from later migrants, including Indian doctors, Gujarati businessmen and migrants from Kenya and Uganda. A vague community of modern-day immigrants from India is to be found on Saint-Martin/Sint Maarten island or other islands with duty-free commercial capabilities, where they are active in business.

Today, Indo-Caribbeans are the largest ethnic group in Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad They are the second largest in Jamaica. Other Indo-Caribbeans live elsewhere in various Caribbean countries where they often form the second largest ethnic group. There are small Indian populations in Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Martinique and Guadeloupe (source: http://en.wikipedia.org).

The Indo-Caribbeans, unlike the recent Indian migrants to western countries, have moved out of home a few centuries ago. They have no contact with their homeland India and for all practical purposes derive their identity from the nations they inhabit. These Indians, having gone through history of adversity, clung to their culture and memories of their home to sustain themselves. Much of that culture was reinvented, sometimes duplicated and very often hybridized over long periods, drawing from other groups, which came to inhabit the Caribbean, mainly the African groups.

Box 21.2 Indian Elements in Caribbean Culture

In food and patterns of eating, as well, Indians were to show their capacity for adaptation. Those caste distinctions that made impossible commensality in India were, in the conditions of migration, broken down, and vegetarianism was to have little appeal among Indo-Trinidadians. Tandoori cooking remains unknown among Indians in Trinidad and the Caribbean, and curry is made with a curry powder, rather than by mixing a curry paste. But it is the prevalence of "curry" in Trinidadian food that impresses, and in most respects Indo-Trinidadian food bears an astonishing similarity to certain varieties of Indian food. As one author of a cookbook on Caribbean food was to note in 1974, "the Indians have had a deep effect upon the Caribbean Cuisine primarily through their enthusiasm for curry, which is becoming as much a part of Caribbean as of Indian cooking." Trinidadian fast food, usually eaten with chutney, is mainly of Indian origin: their *saheena* is like *pakoras*, "doubles" is a variation on the *channa* batura, though more in the form of a chick-peas sandwich, and their *kachowrie* has a marked similarity to its namesake in India. Though many Afro-Trinidadians will not admit it, even their own main meals are now predominantly Indian in origin, for alongside *callooloo* there is curried goat, and roti is easily the most popular food in

> Trinidad. Indeed, to understood just how far roti has come to be a marker of 'Indianness', and the resentment felt by some Afro-Trinidadians, consider that in the 1961 election, the black party took up the slogan: "We don't want no roti government." Roti shops proliferate, and though in India the middle-classes have adopted a Western-style breakfast, complete with poor white bread and corn flakes, in Trinidad roti with *dhal* and *subzi* or *tarkari* constitutes the bread and butter of most people at breakfast and dinner and often at lunch as well. The prevalence of Indian food is reflected in calypso, and many songs sing, often with mockery, scorn, and disturbing caricature, of 'roti' and 'chutney'.(Vinay Lal in http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Diaspora)

Indian presence is not only numerically strong in these countries of the Caribbean but the Indian culture as well. The early migrant indentured labour or coolies, as they were referred to sometimes by the colonizers, lived in conditions of abject poverty but over the years through hard work, thrift, determination and seeking refuge in the culture, at the cost of insulating themselves from other native groups, have managed to capture trade and commerce of their new homelands.

Though a minuscule white populations controls some of the resources and finance and trade in Caribbean it is the Indians who are pretty much the upwardly mobile middle and upper crust of the society. This relative success as compared to the Africans who were brought to the Caribbean as early as 17th century does not seem to sit very well with the African populations. The Indians are seen as avaricious and greedy and very clannish. The Indians think the Africans are lazy among other things.

"Racial stereotypes developed early in the two colonies. British planters characterized Africans as physically strong but lazy and irresponsible. East Indians were stereotyped as industrious but clannish and greedy. Views that are still present today. To feel sleepy after eating is referred to in and around the Caribbean as having "niggeritis", a direct allusion to the laziness of Africans. To some extent, these stereotypes were accepted by the immigrant groups themselves, each giving truths to positive stereotypes of itself and negative stereotypes of other groups. They believed what was said of the other group but none of what was said of them. The stereotypes provided a useable explanation of behavior and justified competition among groups. Africans were described as indolent when they refused to work for low wages or make long-term contracts with the plantations as the Indians had. East Indians were considered selfish when they minimized their expenses to acquire wealth" (Seenarine,2000). The fact that there is hardly any intermingling among these two groups cements the perceptions they have of each other. Almost all neighbourhoods are segregated on racial lines. There was hardly any interracial marriages, as the Indians considered themselves not quite black but Caucasian and preferred that their off springs not have a "nappy hair"(curly hair) of the Africans. These stereotypes are perppetuated early on with continued socialization where perceptions of each other are woven in to everydaylife like this song that school children have for the Indians: "Black man is falling. When the Black Man used to wear feathers in his cap, the coolie was eating water-rice. Black man used to say, "Go way, you water-rice coolie!" Today the coolie think they are big people. After one time will be a next. Today is time for coolie. I don't mind cause the Lord say, "In the last days, race will rise against race, and nation will rise against nation, and there will be wars and rumors of wars" (Horowitz 1971).

Though at the time of struggle that sought independence from the colonial rule, blacks and Indians have formed some solidarity, however it was short-lived. The racial divide has been a continuing undercurrent to not only the political scenario but in social and cultural life.

A situation very similar to the Caribbean is that of ethnic and racial tensions that exist in Africa between the blacks and Indians. In our next section we take a brief look at how interracial perceptions are between Indians and Africans.

Indians in Africa

There are 2.5 million Indians in Africa. The People of Indian Origin (PIO) form a majority in Mauritius at 68% numbering around 715,000. There are 1 Million Indians in South Africa, 100,000 in Kenya, 81,000 in Seychelles, 28,000 in Madagascar, 90,000 in Tanzania, 16,000 in Zimbabwe, 9,000 in Botswana, and around 20,000 in Mozambique. The majority of Indians are concentrated in East Africa and South Africa. The Indians in Francophone countries are a small percentage except in Mauritius.

Indians went to Africa as indentured labour. The white colonist had got them to Africa to build the Uganda Kenya railways in the late 1800s. Of the original 32,000 contract laborers, about 6,700 stayed on to work as "*dukawallas,*" the artisans, traders, clerks, and, finally, small administrators. Excluded from colonial government and farming, they straddled the middle economic ground above the native blacks. Some even became doctors and lawyers.

It was this entrepreneurial *dukawallas* who were willing to move to inlands to explore more business opportunities. In fact the potential for trader had attracted many free-passengers to Africa around this time and even before that. Indian traders had followed the Arab trading routes inland on the coast of modern-day Kenya and Tanzania. Indians had a virtual lock on Zanzibar's lucrative spice trade in the 19th century, working as the Sultan's exclusive agents.

"Between the building of the railways and the end of World War II, the number of Indians in East Africa swelled to 320,000. By the 1940s, some colonial areas had already passed laws restricting the flow of immigrants, as did white-ruled Rhodesia in 1924. But by then, the Indians had firmly established control of commercial trade – some 80 to 90 percent in Kenya and Uganda – plus sections of industrial development. In 1948, all but 12 of Uganda's 195 cotton ginneries were Indian run" (Brueggemann, 2000).

The success of Indians was resented by the native population of East Africa, be it in Uganda, Tanzania or Kenya. The insularity and lack of social interaction didn't help in reducing the perceptions of mutual distrust between the black population and the Indians. Despite the fact that a good number of Indians fought along side the blacks in their struggle for freedom; these newly emergent nations sought to build nations that sought to Africanize their countries. In Kenya new laws were introduced which said that "'Foreigners' could only hold jobs until a Kenyan national could be found to replace them: and more and more cities, including Nairobi, were demanding that the government ban non-Kenyans from owning a shop or trading in municipal markets"(source: http://www.wairua.co.nz/ruth/culture/africa.) In Uganda the resentment had finally led to the expulsion of Indians. In 1972, Idi Amin gave the country's 75,000 Asians 90 days to leave. In Tanzania, the people of Indian Origin constituted only one percent

of the total population, however their place in Tanganyikan political economy was bolstered by colonial policies that favored Indians over Africans in trade, commerce and property ownership; and encouraged segregation among races in all spheres. The backlash against Indians were felt strongest when Tanzania , under the leadership of President Nyerere issued the Arusha Declaration in 1967, which essentially called for indigenisation of economy and where People of Indian Origin were not considered outsiders depite them being in the scene for many decades or rather centuries. In the decade of the 1970s over 50,000 Asians left Tanzania, mainly for the UK and Canada.

The family seems to have been the fortress and haven that Indian families retreated in to, they also served as economic networks and a source of social capital. This aspect of Indian family is best captured in V.S.Naipauls' book *A Bend in the River*. The West Indies author's 1979 book remains the best-known literary work in English addressing the *Mhindi* (Swahili for Indian) experience in East and Central Africa. Mira Nair who spent much of her growing up years in Uganda brings out the racial tension between blacks and Indians in small town Southern America in her movie *Mississippi Masala*. The story of this movie concerns a Ugandan Indian family living in Mississippi whose adult daughter (Sarita Choudhury) becomes romantically involved with a Southern black man (Denzel Washington). The relationship potentially threatens to undo the family's ethnic solidarity and its economic vitality. The affair also ignites old racial fears of the woman's father, who experiences flashbacks to his Uganda youth and his family's sudden and violent exile in August 1972.

As in East Africa the Indians who are now settled in South Africa were brought as indentured labour or coolie labour as they were called. As else where native black population was pitted against relatively successful Indians, the reaction from the natives and other ethnicities have been negative. Very often the Indians, who are entrepreneurial and insular in their cultural practices and social interactions, have been dubbed as being Jewish or called Indian Jews. They were assumed by native populations and by nationalists to be akin to Jews, and were smeared with the purported Jewish tendencies of being "crafty, mendacious, and money-minded" (as an anti-Indian tract published in Johannesburg circa 1950 claimed). All over Africa the general impression was that the Indians gained as community at the expense of the native population. This perception was strongest in South Africa and to that extent Vinay Lal feels that the South African situation is very distinct. He writes: "it is here that the ideology of racial segregation received full-blown expression. Racism was no longer to be predicated on mere sentiment; on the contrary, racial discrimination was institutionalized. The African National Congress (ANC), the main organ of resistance to apartheid, had at one time been inspired by both the Natal Indian Congress and the Indian National Congress. In the apartheid era, Indians not only fought alongside black people, but came to occupy significant leadership positions in the ANC."

The end of apartheid should have been a signal to Indians that the disabilities under which they had suffered would be removed. As elsewhere around the world, the white race in South Africa had set itself up as a transcendent entity, representing itself as a people whose presence alone kept the country from disintegrating into racial and ethnic hostilities. The racialized hierarchies white South Africa brought into existence have prevailed. Thus, discrimination is no longer sanctioned by state policy, but black animosity has increasingly turned towards Indians. Matters came to the fore in mid-2002, when the

Kwa-Zulu writer and musician, Mbongeni Ngema, released a song entitled 'AmaNdiya', the Zulu word for 'Indians'. 'Oh brothers,/Oh, my fellow brothers,' begins the song:

We need strong and brave men

To face the Indians.

This situation is very difficult,

Indians do not want to change

Whites were far better than Indians

Even Mandela has failed to convince them to change,

Whites were far better than Indians.

Ngema then suggests that politicians, bribed by Indians, remain indifferent to the plight of Zulus. He invokes great figures from the Zulu past - just why he does so becomes clear from these lines:

Indians have conquered Durban.

We are poor because all things have been taken by Indians.

They are oppressing us.

Mkhize wants to open a business in West Street,

Indians say there is no place to open a business

Our people are busy buying from Indian shops...

They [the Indians] don't want to support a single black shop

(Vinay LaL, 2004:15)

Almost everywhere where Indians and blacks form part of the population, there is the perception that Indians are discriminatory towards the blacks, they have been found to be racist and insular shutting themselves away from any meaningful interactions with the black populations. An Indian marrying a black person would be much more of a taboo than if she/he were to marry a white person, for instance.

Vinay Lal while accounting for racist policies against the Indians in Africa, also points out to the insularity of Indians and the discriminatory attitude they have towards blacks. He writes; "the retreat into the family home, the concerted refusal to engage with a wider notion of the 'public', the general segregation from other communities, and the often mindless replication of 'timeless' Indian traditions have been among the more distressing characteristics of Indian existence abroad, particularly in the affluent West. We cannot but fail to recognize, when we keep vividly before our mind, the story of Indian indentured labour, that in the marginalization and auperization of blacks and Hispanics there is also, however unwilling most ndians in the US may be to recognize it as such, their own humiliation. Or, o take another example, if Indians are all too often heard describing black eople as 'lazy', they might be reminded that, for 200 years, the British ere wont to use the same language for them" (ibid).

21.5 The Indian and State's Perception of Overseas Indians

The Indian diaspora is estimated to be over 20 million spread over different countries and regions of the globe. They constitute in official parlance NRIs

(Non Resident Indians, Indian residing in other countries) and PIOs (People of Indian Origin, basically citizens of other countries with Indian origins).

Box 21.3 NRI and PIO

A **non-resident Indian (NRI)** is an Indian citizen who has migrated to another country. Other terms with the same meaning are overseas Indian and expatriate Indian. For tax and other official purpose the government of India considers any Indian national away from India for more than 183 days in a year an NRI. In common usage, this often includes Indian born individuals (and also people of other nations with Indian blood) who have taken the citizenship of other countries.

A **Person of Indian Origin (PIO)** is literally, simply a person of Indian origin who is not a citizen of India. For the purposes of issuing a PIO Card, the Indian government considers anyone of Indian origins up to four generations removed, to be a PIO.

(**source**:http://en.wikipedia.org)

It was only in 2000 the Government of India had taken concrete steps to look into the affairs of overseas Indians, by settling up High Level Committee and separate ministry-Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. Prior to that the state response to Indians who left home many years ago or the one who left recently was very lukewarm, especially with relation to PIOs. As our unit 15 describes in detail, the Indian State response, to various situations which involved the diaspora, can be generalised as being constrained by diplomacy and an unclear stand as to exactly how to deal with PIOs. This ambivalence soon gave way to realization that the people who have migrated to overseas are a valuable asset, especially those who have been successful and who have made mark in their host country. Soon the general perception that the flight of professionals to greener pastures of Western countries meant a brain drain gave way to realization that it is not at all a loss. This realization in part was largely due to the fact that the remittances made by many NRIs were recognized for their economic value. The Indian diaspora, who went to the Gulf region as semi-skilled and skilled labour increased substantially post oil boom of 1973. The remittances sent by these workers increased the foreign exchange reserves. The remittances from North America also added to the foreign exchange reserve (see unit 13 and unit 15 for more details on migration to these regions of the globe). "According to one estimate, whereas India's forex receipts totaled less than $ 300 million in 1974-75, by 1984-85 this figures has increased to $ 2, 500 million. In 2005, it has reached more than $16 billion." (Jain, 2006).

Further when liberalisation started in early 1990s, government of India tried to rope in first NRIs and then Indian settlers abroad to attract foreign direct investment. It organised meetings for NRIs and promised many incentives to attract their investment. PIOs were an equally relevant overseas segment to rope them in India's new drive for globalisation.

Vijay Prashad feels that the Indian sate was interested in the rich overseas Indians and that its interest in the Indian diaspora is mostly or mainly economic. He says: "What is important here is that the diaspora is being imagined now not so much as unfortunates who have to be championed (as in the 19th century), as the brain drain (in the 1960s and 1970s), or as cultural ambassadors (as in the 1980s). We now have the diaspora represented almost entirely by the very wealthy who reside mainly in the advanced industrial states and whose image is summoned by the term NRI. By 'NRI' we certainly don't mean the taxi drivers in New York City, the sugarcane

workers in Guyana or the domestic servants in the Gulf. 'NRI' now means the Hinduja clan, Sanjay Kumar and Kanwal Rekhi"(Prasad, 2004).

The ambit of this perception that Indians are not just citizens of the country but include the diaspora has now further expanded to include PIOs, especially by the Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) government, who wanted to reach the global Hindu community through its offshore activities. Though People of Indian Origin have been recognized as members of larger community, the general perception among the PIOs is that they are the poor cousins in relation to the wealthy NRIs.

The recent Parvasi Bharatiya Diwas though espousing to embrace all the global Indian family, including what are known as the older diasporas, namely the PIOs, have conferred only politically correct platitudes and very little actual incentives. "But dishonesty cannot always dissimulate successfully: thus the stated intention of the Government of India to confer the privilege of dual citizenship upon the members of the newer, affluent diasporic communities of the north, while leaving Indian communities in the Caribbean, Fiji, South Africa, Malaysia and else-where out in the cold, and this on the pretence that the older diasporic communities have not maintained much of a living connection with the mother-land, comes as no surprise"(Lal, 2004).

Reflection and Action 21.2

Highlight the perception of the Indian State on the Overseas Indians.

The discussion above has been mainly on the official position and perception about the Indian diaspora. Let us see what the everyday popular perceptions about the Indian diaspora are in the following section.

21.6 What India Thinks of the Indians Abroad

"The desire of the Indian diaspora for India is mirrored by the desire of India for its diaspora population" (Kamdar, 2004). This fascination with the diaspora can be seen in the amount of news-space that the diaspora occupies, especially the NRI. Any news or event that relates to Indian abroad is highlighted and brought to notice to the ones back in India whether it is Kiran Desai winning the Booker Prize, or Lakshmi Mittal's daughter's lavish wedding or Bobby Jindal running for the elections in America. We are quick to bring this far away events in to the India where the NRI or PIOs identity as an Indian is reiterated. While India lauds the diaspora for their success it also has expectations and perceptions about them that are not always complimentary.

Ankur Bhal, a 22 year old, Fullbright student, in an interview on rediff.com says : Everyone has misconceptions about people they don't live with. People in India think Non-Resident Indians are promiscuous, parent-hating mongrels (http://www.rediff.com/news/2005/jan). If not parent hating, the general representation which comes out very strongly in movies, whether they are made by Indians or Indians who live abroad, is that there is constant struggle between the first generation Indians and their second generation children. Movies such as *Bend it like Beckham*, or even the earlier film *Bhaji on the Beach* are evocations of this theme. The tension in some sense represents so-called Indian values versus Western values. The Western value of individuality over community or family is what is supposed to guide the Indian abroad, particularly the second generation. If not for this outright westernization, than they are at best very confused, caught

between the West and India; and hence acronym such as ABCD, which stands for American Born Confused Desi.

Another perception about those who left India for greener pastures and to more affluent Western countries is that they have betrayed India and have not given back anything to India, Often the accusation is that those who have left never return back to India. An NRI therefore sometimes has been called a Nonreturning Indian. And that these NRIs then are out of tune with India and in their occasional trips in India they are seen as complaining, insulating, mineral-water-drinking-accented non resident, who has lost his/her Indianess. Writing about this stereotype a Non Resdient Indian says; "Many desis, who are NRIs, suddenly find themselves having to defend their Indianness. Becoming an NRI, or being labelled as an NRI is somehow thought to be an overnight transformation and you are expected to have a different take, perception on everything, and your comments on India are no longer correct or valid. It is like some kind of switch is flipped and a whole version of software is downloaded into your OS when you move to another country"(http://kamlabhatt.wordpress.com/2006/02/07).

This caricature of the NRI as not Indian enough and therefore lacking in morals or of values of the right kind is stereotypically portrayed in many films made in India especially the Bollywood. In fact anyone who went abroad- *vilayat* (the word vilyat or bilayat is itself a corruption of Blighty which is England) came back to India corrupted. Some of the early films had these portrayal of bilayati returned Indian or foreign returned. Manoj Kumar's was famous for championing the Indian values as against the corrupt Western values, so much so that he is nicknamed Mr. Bharat, has the *vilayati* returned Indian who wears mini skirts , smokes and drinks regains her Indianess thanks to the hero of the movie and then seen sporting, *saree* and *binidi* and generally behaving like a *bharathiya nari* - a good Indian women- in his film - *Poorab aur Paschim.*

Many contemporary films too are mirroring a similar image of the NRI, starting from '*Pardes*', to '*Mujhse Dosti Karoge*', to '*Ramji Londonwaley*', have depicted most NRIs as not so good compared to Indians. Invariably, they are shown as people who get cleansed when they return to their roots and once here they never leave. New Yorker Anitha Venkataramani put it aptly in her observation that in Bollywood the Indian-American guy is always one of two types. Either the boy is a rich, amoral and a womaniser whose parents are looking for a girl from India to fix him - for instance Apurva Agnihotri's character in '*Pardes*', or a rich MBA who only wants a girl from India - like Hrithik Roshan's character in '*Mujhse Dosti Karoge*' or Abhishek Bachchan in '*Kuch Naa Kaho*'.

The Indian-American girl also comes in two types - rich and amoral with a serious alcohol problem - for instance Suman Ranganathan's character in '*Aa Ab Laut Chalen*' and skimpily-dressed Kareena Kapoor in 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham' and Rani Mukerji in 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' - or rich and beautiful with a wardrobe comprising entirely of salwar-kameezes and an affinity towards India - like Kajol's character in '*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*'.

Additionally, more often than not, it takes a hardcore character from India to teach 'these Americans' what the true values of life are and how only Indians understand them. In '*Pardes,*' the goody two-shoes character of Arjun, played by Shah Rukh Khan, is characterised as the 'pure desi' at heart who is so moral he does not smoke or drink like the other immoral

Indian-Americans around him. In *'Kal Ho Naa Ho,'* we witness Aman Mathur (Shah Rukh again) coming from India and teaching Naina Kapur how to 'have fun' in her life. Which consists of drinking shot after shot of hard liquor, stripping her clothes off and dancing provocatively with several men at once (http://www.mahiram.com).

Reflection and Action 21.3

Write an essay on what the Indians think of the Indians abroad.

With more NRIs returning back to India and with greater interactions between home and abroad , it is possible that some of these perceptions may get more nuanced, as with most stereotypes which are based on partial truths.

Box 21.4 Returning NRIs

More and more medical professionals are giving up lucrative jobs in the USA and other adopted countries to return to India and join research institutes and hospitals, reveals the study by the Charities Aid Foundation of India (CAF). The statistics are revealing. Of some 250 research scientists working at Dr Reddy's Laboratories, 20 have returned from foreign shores. They are involved in new drug research. At Lupin Laboratories, four scientists came from the USA to join research in natural product chemistry. Ten of the 80 researchers in Nicholas Piramal have come from abroad and Wockhardt has weaned away 10 scientists for biotechnology, new drug research, chemistry and pharmacology.

According to CAF, a UK-based public trust that associates with corporate donors for social causes, this is proof of the "intensity of the reverse brain drain".The largest number of professionals is coming from the USA, where Indian doctors are the largest foreign health professional group. This inflow is aided by the powerful Association of American Physicians of Indian origin (AAPI) comprising 35,000 physicians that interacts regularly with the Medical Council of India.Non-resident Indian (NRI) doctors support various health facilities and drives in India, including Apollo Hospitals, L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Etc..Salaries offered to such NRI doctors in India have shot up, facilitating their return. Some large Indian corporate groups are hiring expatriates with packages ranging from $250,000 to $400,000 a year.

The study observes: "In India, they can afford luxuries they could not in the USA. The basic living conditions here are improving, research opportunities are opening up and drug companies are investing more in research."(http://www.tribuneindia.com/2003/)

21.7 Conclusion

In this unit we have talked about the perceptions and stereotypes about Indians in their host countries as well as what Indians who live abroad or thought of back in their home countries. We have not discussed every Indian settlement or community in detail as , it would be too voluminous and beyond the scope of this unit, however we tried to give you a comprehensive picture of some of the main images which seems to be created and perpetuated through film, literature and media, which incidentally is the theme of this block.

In trying to capture the images of Indians abroad a greater coverage has been given, not all inadvertently, to Indians settled in Western countries with its preponderance of media and hence great image producers. However we also wanted to bring to you the typical situations and problems and perceptions faced by Indians who went to Caribbean, Africa and Fiji and Malaysia to name a few. We encourage you to try and

take this unit further by exploring similar or different perceptions of Indians in other parts of the globe.

21.8 Further Reading

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Unit 22
Identity, Nation-State and Diaspora

Contents

Learning Objectives

This unit will help you understand:

- The Concepts and Interrelationship of Identity, Globalisation and Diaspora;
- Indian Diasporic Identity in the New Global World; and
- Cross-Border Identities.

22.1 Introduction

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

22.2 Conceptual Clarification

Different concepts such as 'globalisation' 'diaspora', 'transnationalism' and 'identity formation' are used to construct the discussion here. All these terms have no one particular meaning, rather they are defined by taking help of some other concepts that are interlinked and interdependent to bring out the myriad meanings that each of them possess. Albrow defines globalisation as "all those processes by which peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society". Most of these processes have a plural nature. Globalisation in the economic arena means the internationalisation of capital along with expansion of capitalist market relations. It is the economic processes that ushered in the globalisation process. Flow of capital across cultural regions and political borders laid the

base for creation of fluid boundaries; this process is essentially grounded in the patterns of capitalistic trade. The economic patterns of unequal growth across the world fashioned the capital flows wherein different companies were able to have major financial operations as well as considerable organisational presence in several countries simultaneously.

This process in turn created a moving population following the requirements of skills in the passage of capital creating networks of work relations, activities and socio cultural life designs that include their place of origin and several destinations simultaneously. Transnationalism is defined as "the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated 'transmigrants'. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social fold". Therefore, development of transnational migration is intricately linked to the changing conditions of global capitalism and must be analysed within the world context" Today, they form an important component of any diasporic community.

Herein, the manner in which a Diaspora is defined is of utmost importance, since this also has an impact on how the diasporic community perceives and later on strengthens its identity. The word diaspora relates to the ideas of a community longing for its homeland. In the beginning, this was applied to the Jewish community as they conceptualized their homeland as an imagined locality without any real territoriality. In the present times, this word denotes any community that has migrates, regardless of its causes for migration, and 'its attendant anxieties of displacement, homelessness and a wish to return, then the case for considering overseas communities of Indian origin as a diaspora appears far stronger'. They are also characterized by the essentialising ideals of boundedness and the unity of locality and culture. Culture becomes one of the most important factors around which the Indian diaspora builds up its identities.

Cohen (1997) argues that a diaspora can emerge from a growing sense of group ethnic consciousness in different countries, a consciousness that is sustained by, amongst other things, a sense of distinctiveness, common history and a belief in common fate.

Identity formation processes and the actors that determine these processes within the diaspora can be located in the 'theoretical space shared by constructivism and liberalism'. Even in their unique position of being spatially located outside the home state, their identity perception remains constant, as the 'inside people' give enormous emphasis to the kinship identity. Moreover, the host country population, and their home country population also share this perception; their identity perception does not just change just because their locality of residence and occupation has changed. Barth's (1969) argument that identities in the form of ethnicities is essentially the construction and maintenance of boundaries; thereafter identity formation has been often interpreted as the essences of identity and are viewed by many 'as the content of an ongoing process of boundary construction, being constantly reinvented and shifted according to the requirements of the situation'.

22.3 Globalisation: Transnational Networks and Identities

The Indian diaspora is by no means a new phenomenon, it has existed since the first trading routes in the world were established. The Indian

diasporic communities were traders in Africa, South East Asia and the Mediterranean shores as well as religious preachers in South East Asia maintaining extensive kinship and economic networks. Large scale migration of Indians in the nineteenth and twentieth century is a phenomenon of the colonial demand for labour in the distant colonies. This forms the old diaspora. The old diaspora of India consists of the Indian population of the earlier indentured labour in the sugar colonies of Caribbean, Africa and Oceania, free or passenger emigrants in Oceania and East Africa and Kangani /maistry labour to Burma, Malaysia and Ceylon.

Since Indian emigration to the West European countries also took place in response to demand for various categories of labour, and professionals after the Second World War. The difference between the PIO and the NRI though is not much in these countries, yet, the second generation of the settlers have shown a different picture of the various processes that help govern identity formation.

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

The old diasporic Indian community's essential character remained undeniably Indian, as is witnessed in the grocery stores that abound across the world, the enormous growth in the population going to the theaters and cinemas screening bollywood films and the increasing number of the various types of places of worship, be it gurudwaras, temples or mosques, The Indian diaspora as a group clings on to its identity as INDIANS. "If we listen to the steady but vigorous dialogue within its confines, best embodied in the views of young writers and publications within the community, these concerns are about being an Indian. It is about maintaining one's own culture, traditions and values, starting from family values and celebrating all things Indian".

The Indian diasporic community is not one ethnic whole, as is used in the description of ethnicity used to describe diasporas as one coherent ethnicity. This view is not exactly corroborated in the case of the Indian diaspora since it is not a one cohesive or ethnic identity, delineated sharply in religion, language, caste, locality and territorial bias. Many scholars such as Parekh (1993) and Vertovec (2000) and Baallard, (2004) consider religion to be the one of the primary elements that defines/classifies the Indian diasporic community, the one thread that provides the commonality, distinctiveness and shared history. In this context, religion as well as culture provide an ascriptive measure of social differentiation and offer a symbolic resource for belongingness. Yet, Hinduism is considered to be the 'ethnic religion' that is defined by a strong sense of 'rootedness in India' as is argued by Parekh (1993). About 85% of the people of Indian origin and the non-resident Indians are Hindus, for whom the idea of 'Mother India' holds deep spiritual symbolic and sentimental reverence that is renewed through regular visits and pilgrimages. This common identity that has been forged is so strong that it has also become a resource for political mobilization conducted by the Hindu right and the Hindutva forces in the diaspora. This

is not an all-inclusive religious or cultural category as it excludes some of the minority faiths that have substantial followers within the diasporic community. The Indian diasporic community in Europe is divided in terms of religion, as faiths other than Hinduism such as Islam, Zoaroshtrianism, Sikhism and Jainism also have their own gatherings, yet, ultimately they also brand themselves as Indians and thus emerges the sub group of Indian muslims to cite an example.

Indian society is particularly charcaterised by the presence of caste groups; this is second category that is used as a symbol of identity that is used within the Indian diaspora denoting diversity, locality and difference. This is the site of narratives, struggles and territoriality deeply rooted in the sense of locality amongst the thinly segmented caste communities. 'This is at times reproduced through new networks and technologies' (Patel (2000) quoted in Singh). Though in some cases caste as a factor in identity construction has become weakened, in Europe, amongst the older generation settlers this was a major point of self-identification. Tied to this are the stocks of social and the cultural capital that were shared amongst the various communities that helped them gain prosperity and reach the present levels of development. The change in the attitude towards caste is seen clearly in the younger generation who grew up in the host nations and to whom the host nations became the homeland.

Thirdly, language or region of origin is used as a marker of identity amongst the Indian disapora in Europe as the regional identities became more powerful where common language formed an important link. The importance of the intertwine of language and region is seen in the various cultural communities of Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, Bengali and Gujarati associations, where communities comprise of different religions and caste but speak the same language and form the same region. This is more clearly brought out in the networks that exist within the community and encompasses people from various segments in its fold. Moreover, this is the site of passing on the oral traditions that are inculcated on an individual family basis. So linguistic affiliation brings into its fold the manifolds of culture that plays a significant role in the construction of identity.

Taking all the above factors and processes into consideration, perhaps the core feature that defines the Indian diaspora is its collective imagining of India - of emotions, links, traditions, feelings and attachments that together continue to nourish a psychological and sociological appeal among the successive generations of emigrants for the mother country.

To comprehend this reality in the changing nature of the identity formation amongst the Indian diasporic community, one has to look into the elements that will focus on the contradictions, the processes of exclusion, the fissures in the memories of successes and selective silences on the happenings that no one wants to acknowledge.

Reflection and Action 22.1

What do you understand by transnational communities?

22.4 Indian Diasporic Identity in the New Global World

The last forty odd years that saw the emergence of the Indian diaspora as a major force within the world community is the saga of its progress and

achievements. Though there were several hiccups (in the form of racial hatred that they encountered from the host nations) that at times led to race riots, the Indian diasporic community strove towards development that paid off so well that today they are a force to be reckoned with in their own particular spheres. The impact of the globalisation process is seen in the diasporic Indian community's qualities of resilience and continuity wherein all the fragments manage to coexist together. Without this feature, they might not have reached the present levels of achievement and development that has marked their rise. This was accompanied by an increasing visibility in the host nation's public life as well as the cultural sphere. The picture of harmony and equality that they projected is the one that is concurrent in the imagining of the majority of the world today. So, 'curry' has become almost the national food of Britain and Indian soul music the most in thing of the music world, making them a glorious picture of accomplishment. Yet, 'the image of the Indian community situated on a road to perfect harmony defined by the mainstream may equally be seen in a different light ... the temptations of measuring any historical phenomenon in terms of progress are attractive but they do not grasp the complexity of uneven development and even more importantly, they miss the elements of contradiction, a rich and veritable presence of forces that shape diasporic identity'.

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

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

Moreover, the new generation also has a problem with the 'Indian' identity with that of the primarily linguistic or community based identity that is built by the older generation. The adoption of the multiple identities as Tamils or Gujaratis first and then Indians also confuses them. They also find it difficult to differentiate between the two afore mentioned identities. The adoption of multiple identities and the ease with which the Indians slip in and out of and into the other is also bewildering, and then comes the posit: which one is better and which one to adopt? Added to this is their own identity as British Indians or French Indians/Asians etc. The small segments based on regional and linguistic delineation also creates a locale

where the value judgment is made as to what should be passed on to new generation and what should not be, leaving the younger generation with the biases that linger on amongst the older generation.

The rise of an underclass among immigrant Indians has grown sizeably over the past two decades. Yet their concerns, struggles and issues have not yet registered with conscience in the media or the public life of Indians. Mostly survival is the only thought in their minds and they identify with the poor, identification processes then become even more difficult as they have to deal with dual resistance from the immigrant well settled population and the native populations.

The new generation also faces a problem in that though they adhere to the imagined India of their parents' memories, they do not have any desire to come back to India as very simply they do not fit in. They have thus sought different methods to assert their identities. Whereas the earlier generation was content to remain as passive actors in the international arena, now they choose to assert themselves. The interest groups of the Indian diaspora in the western world now have a visibility that was lacking before. Here the point to mention is that 'identity does not always determine interests, ... some times identity is the interest. Since identities and interests are determined by social interaction, there is space here for domestic actor participation. This domestic actor has now gained enough credibility on the world stage to stake its own claim on its diaspora as has been the case with India. Now is the time when the Indian diaspora wants to know India and India also wants to know them. The result is the policy initiative in the form of dual citizenship. 'Consequently the process of identity construction becomes purely political and pits conflicting actors against each other ... it is a conflict over power to determine national identity'. Thus the diasporas become dynamic.

In the context of the Indian diasporas this dynamism is further accelerated by the infusion of young blood in the form of the new recruited members of the software and information technology who then become an intrinsic part of the per-existing diasporic community. They project their identity as a pan Indian identity, undoing the shackles of the earlier forces of language, region, religion etc. This is the identity that then is put in front of the new generation of the diasporic community, who are in turn baffled by its complexity

The problems of integration that are faced by the new generation amongst the Indian diaspora is not easy, they do not at times fit in with their imagined home land as well as the host land where they have grown up. The discrimination thus faced makes them frustrated and they adopt different methods of assimilation. The xenophobia and racial discrimination that the Indian diaspora faces in the European Union has also been acknowledged by Dr. Willem van der Geest, Director, European Institute for Asian Studies, Brussels in his inaugural speech on the occasion of the GOPIO conference held in Brussels in November 2004.

Moreover, the segmented societies that exist within the Indian diasporic community at times pose threats to the relations between the host land and homeland. Here, the identity formation is on extremely narrow fanatical ideals and this becomes an embarrassment for both the nations in the international arena. These contribute to the changing nature of the identity formation processes within the Indian diasporic community. None doubt the emergence of the Indian diasporic community as a force to be reckoned

with in the host nation and also its impact on the homeland as well as the increasing complex relations it has with the economy and society it is located in.

Since processes of identity formation never occur outside the socio-political and cultural contexts, with the changes in these situations the processes of identity formation will also change. This event will not manifest itself in an event one day but will slowly happen as a series of small and perhaps irrelevant events that escape notice.

22.5 Nation States: Cross Border Identities

Transnational capital and labour flows that have fuelled changes in the identity formation have had minimal impact on the idea of the nation states. Nation state in itself presents a double image, state, that is the political category with a territorial boundedness and sovereign powers of governance and the nation a constructed cultural category. Together, the term denotes the nation that has existed prior to the state. The nation states of the world are unequal in terms of both political and economic power and occupy different niches in the globalisation process. Thus, globalisation is in itself a binding factor in the world showing that economic flows that control international migration also shape "the migrant's responses to these forces and strategies of their survival, cultural practices and identities within the world wide historical context of differential power and inequality".

It was assumed that the progress of globalisation would loosen the bonds of nation states, yet, this has not happened. The pre-eminence in the existence of nation states can be correlated with the identity formation of the immigrant communities and the relationship between their social and political affiliations and ethnic loyalties. It is observed, "the transnational context of migrants' lives develops from the interplay of multiplex phenomena - historical experience, structural conditions and ideologies of their home and host societies". Economic dislocations cause vulnerability amongst the migrants resulting in transmigration in search of security. Thus during the first Gulf War in 1991 thousands of Indian immigrant workers who had to leave from the Persian Gulf nations moved on to African, Australian and American shores, the pre-existing socio-economic networks that opened up to absorb the stress helped them. These networks had been maintained by recurrent communications to and with their home societies whose patterns of culture is a part of the daily lives of the immigrants. This also highlights the importance of remittances sent by them to their homeland and that in provide them with security in times of stress. The transmigrants are therefore rooted in two cultures: both their home and host societies creating several identities that they use simultaneously depending on the context. This multiple identity formation of the transmigrants' also is their articulation of resistance to political and economic upheavals experienced by them even as they construct their survival mechanism. The Fijian Indian population who fled Fiji following the various coups to Australia and New Zealand have slowly and steadily relocated to other parts of the world. The sense of insecurity also prompts them to maintain these multiple identities, as they do not know which path/identity will sustain them in crisis.

The class relation within the transmigrant society is well defined and dominated by the interests and ideologies of both the host and home countries. These dominations are stable arenas of creation and renewal of class/caste continuum within the Indian diasporic community. This in turn

is related to the experiences of nation-building of the transmigrants', pointing to the continued importance of the category of the nation states. Together they create a multicultural society that acknowledges the existence of pluralsocia groups/ethnicities/races.

The multicultural contexts created by contemporary large-scale skilled labour migration, often willingly, create complex international bonds that are difficult to explain in commonly accepted understanding. This is accentuated in the case of the receiving nations as they are "awash with the fear that they are inundated with refugees, though dealing with but a fraction of the world's total, has contributed to a sense of siege, one in which anti-immigration platforms have well been served". Multiculturalism is usually understood as the 'inclusion of cultural differences within the formal institutions of representative government and civil society, it is best understood specifically to describe one possible political response by a host government to various forms of migrancy'. What this translates into, is the civility of nationalism wherein enfranchisement of migrated people whether current or residing for a longer period is granted.

Though many of the Western nation states endorse the concept, yet, their political processes exhibits a diametrically opposite tendency as is witnessed in the New Constitution for Europe that seeks to define the kind of belonging that could be best enumerated as the "OLD Idea of Europe". This brings out the real differences in the conceptualizations and the implementations of the policy of multiculturalism. This has been exacerbated in the wake of the destruction 9 / 11/2001, when the entire world has been refashioned into camps of they, and us, the eurocentred world against the barbaric tribalisms that exist in certain states. Paradoxically, it is within these years that the Indian diaspora has received a fillip in the concretization of their identification process as an "Indian" beginning with the large-scale celebrations of the 'Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas'. Simultaneously, it is also true that "Europe is as much the site of longings rooted in tradition- regional, national and European - as is a site of transnational and trans European attachments ... Slowly, Europe is becoming Chinese, Indian, Romany, Alabnian ... drawing on the varied geographies of cultural formation". Yet, accompanying the cosmopolitan consumption comes ethnic loyalty as a source of identity building process along with communal security and cultural nourishment. This is actually the cause for the increased calls and maintenance for ethnicity and cultural based schools, cultural and religious autonomy and an attempt to travel to the 'homeland' or re-enactment and revitalization of the histories and narratives of the diaspora. This reactivated interest in the homeland is exactly what is now being witnessed in the case of the Indian Diaspora, a diaspora that is concerned with "the interaction of space, identity and power, particularly at the geopolitical scale". Thus, there is resurgence in the interest of the second generation Indian diaspora towards the political scenario in the 'homeland' meaning India.

This could also be constructed as a change in the identity formation processes, wherein, a diaspora could be reconstructed as minimalising the impact of the experience of loss of the concerned cultural location and reaffirming the processes of culture, territoriality and identity construction. The second generation thus continues to forge its identity with the perceived homeland.

Refelection and Action 22.2

What are the ways in which Indians articulate their sense of identity? How is the nation-state implicated in the globalisation process?

22.6 Conclusion

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

22.7 Further Reading

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Unit 23
Sub-National Identities and Diaspora

Contents

Learning Objectives

This Unit will help you understand:

- The concept of diaspora and its relevance to social sciences and humanities;
- The factors for the emergence of Indian diaspora;
- The nature of emigration of Indians;
- The significance of transnational and transnationalism in diaspora studies; and
- The role of socio-cultural factors in diaspora studies.

23.1 Introduction

Migration is a phenomenon that has been taking place for millions of years and continues even today all over the world. When individuals can no longer acquire the necessary resources to sustain themselves at their location they migrate to the places where these resources are available. In the earlier period people moved either because of the poor working environment and economic conditions of the home country or the attraction by the images of destination promising greater socio-economic opportunities. The processes of globalization and advancement in communication technology have provided further impetus for individuals to migrate. Economic reasons alone no longer hold strong. Linkages between sending and receiving countries are established through sharing the news and information of both home and host countries. The people who are now on the move are labour migrants (both documented & undocumented), highly qualified specialists, entrepreneurs, refugees and asylum seekers or the household members of the earlier migrants.

What do we mean by the term "migration"? Generally, the term has been associated with some notion of 'movement' through a spatial/territorial shift resulting in a temporary or permanent settlement in the new location. Migration is generally viewed as a process that begins at the 'place of origin' and ends at the 'destination'. Consequences of migration - socio-cultural, economic and political - are experienced at both the locations. Migrations often take place under a multitude of conditions and circumstances, for different - economic, political, personal - reasons in vastly varied contexts and consequences. Diaspora is one of the consequences of 'international migration'.

In 1990, the International Organization for Migration estimated that there were over 80 million migrants who have moved out of the country of their origin. Among them 30 million were said to be irregular migrants and another 15 million were refugees or asylum seekers. By 1992, the number of migrants increased to 100 million, of which 20 million were refugees and asylum seekers. The United Nations Population Division in July 2002 estimated that there were 185 million people living for 12 months or more outside their country of birth or citizenship (http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm). A majority of them are international migrants who are potential immigrants in countries of their destination.

Drawing from the works of Safran (1991), Sheffer (1993), Bruneau (1994) and Cohen (1999), a group or community may be called a "diaspora" if four conditions are met: firstly, if the group or community has immigrates and settles beyond the borders of their nation-state and maintains their ethnic identity and consciousness; secondly, an active associative life; thirdly, contacts with the land of origin in various forms, real or imaginary; fourthly, there should be relations with other groups of the same ethnic origin spread over the world.

23.2 Factors for the Growth of Diasporic Community

Tambiah (2000) saw the origin of diasporic communities from two different sources:

- Voluntary migrations of groups of peoples, mostly with useful occupational skills in search of better economic opportunities and standard of life elsewhere.
- Involuntary displacement of people running away from political turmoil and wars, or refuge from natural disaster in their country. They are mostly known as refugees and asylum seekers who, although with exception, are considered more of a burden to the host nation.

Box 23.1: Typology of Diaspora

Robin Cohen (1999: 178) included under his definition of diaspora such categories as Jewish, Armenians, Greek, Indian, Lebanese, and Chinese and then branches out to deal a number of minorities across the globe. He also attempts to arrange the diasporas under different analytical subtypes:

Type	Example
Victim/refugee diaspora	Jews, African, Armenian Others: Irish, Palestinians
Imperial/colonial diaspora	Ancient Greek, British Russian Others: Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch
Labour/service diaspora	Indentured Indians, Chinese & Japanese, Sikhs, Turks, Italians
Trade/business/professional	Venetian, Lebanese, Chinese Others: Today's Indians, Japanese
Contract/hybrid/post-modern	Caribbean people Others: today's Chinese, Indians

Source: Robin Cohen (1999:178)

23.3 Factors for the Growth of Transnational Community

Peggy Levitt (1999:4) has examined the significance of several factors that lead to the emergence of the transnational networks. These include a) easy travel and communication, b) the increasing role immigrants play in the countries of their origin to legitimise themselves by providing service to migrants and their children, c) the increased importance of the receiving country states in the economic and political futures of sending countries, d) the society and political marginalisation of migrants in their host countries, and e) migration takes place within an ideological climate that favours pluralism over the melting pot.

Robin Cohen (cited in Schnapper, 1999) has examined some of the preconditions for the emergence of transnational communities. These include 1) the number and activity of non-governmental organisations, 2) the action of international associations such as Amnesty International and Green Peace, and 3) membership in supra national organisations and the number of populations they are directly involved with.

23.4 The Indian Diaspora

Indians have migrated to different parts of the world at different periods of time. In terms of sheer numbers, they make the third largest group, next only to the British and the Chinese. The people of Indian origin with nearly 20 million populations settled in 70 countries constitute more than 40 per cent of the population in Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam. They are smaller minorities in Malaysia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, UK, USA and Canada.

Historically, Indian emigration to distant lands may be categorised into broadly four patterns: They are:

a) Pre-colonial migration;

b) Colonial migration that began in the 1830s to the British, French and Dutch colonies;

c) Post-colonial migration to the industrially developed countries; and

d) Recent migration to West Asia.

Pre-colonial Migration

In the Indian context, emigration has been a continuous process since pre-colonial times when it was for the purposes of trade and the propagation of religion. As far as historical and archival data is concerned, Indian emigration goes back to the first century AD when Indian princes, priests, poets and artisans migrated to Southeast Asian countries. Among the distinguished names of this period Angkor Wat, Lara Djonggrang and Borobudur stands testimony (Suryanarayan, 2003). The early emigration from India owed its origins to the Buddhist missionaries, when the Hindu kingdoms of medieval Southeast Asia attract labour and craftsmen from India during the 16th century CE. The trade contacts slowly developed and thereby small colonies established themselves in East Africa and Southeast Asia. It is observed that merchants from Gujarat, Bengal and Tamilnadu settled down in the great port cities of Southeast Asia like Malacca, Acheh, Ternate and Tidor during this period. They gradually got assimilated with the local people (ibid.).

Colonial Migration

It was only in the wake of European imperialist expansion during the 19th and 20th century that conditions for emigration of large numbers of Indians to different parts of the world were created. New plantations, industrial and commercial ventures in European colonies needed large supplies of labour and, with the abolition of slavery in the British, French and Dutch colonies respectively in 1834, 1846 and 1873, there were severe shortages of labour to work in the sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa and rubber plantations. Looking for alternative sources of labour, aside from the African ex-slaves and European immigrants, the colonial government imported Indians under the ingenious scheme of "indentured labour."

Indentured labour is a system in which individual labourers were required to sign an agreement or contract (*girmit*) to work on a plantation for a specified number of years, usually three to five years. The emigration of indentured labour started during the late 18th century and continued up to the early 20th century. Thousands of Indians emigrated to South and East Africa, Mauritius, Fiji and the Caribbean under this system. Calcutta and Madras were the main ports of embarkment and the major districts for recruiting labour included parts of Madras Presidency with Tamil and Telugu populations and the districts of Bhojpuri region of Eastern U.P. and Northern Bihar. Approximately 1.3 million Indians crossed the oceans under contracts of indenture.

There are several factors that pushed Indian migrants into seeking employment under indenture. The first was the poor condition that prevailed at that time in India because of the social oppression, shrinking of cottage industry, periodic famine resulting in extreme poverty and unemployment. The West, on the other hand, was getting affluent because of industrial development. Second, all colonial masters found Indians skillful, hard working and useful, as a result of which the British, the French, the Dutch, and the Portuguese all took Indian skilled labour for development of plantations and agricultural economies of their territories. Upon their arrival in the colonies, the immigrants were assigned to plantations to which they were "bound" for five or more years. They lived there in isolated and insulated conditions. Although they were promised fair wages and a return voyage to India in exchange for a predetermined number of years spent working in the colonies, poverty and the desire to build a new life ensured that very few of these indentured labourers ever returned to India. Many chose to settle down permanently in those countries as they neither had the financial resources to return back nor hope for better life at back home.

Emigration to Sri Lanka, Burma and Malaya presents a marked difference in contrast to the African and Caribbean countries. All the emigrants to Sri Lanka and Malaya were from the Southern parts of India and the immigrants were recruited by the headman known as the 'Kangani'. The Indians worked on the tea, coffee and rubber plantations. During the period 1852 and 1937, 1.5 million Indians went to Ceylon, 2 million to Malaya, and 2.5 million to Burma. After 1920 the Kangani emigration (totalling around 6 million) gradually gave way to individual or un-recruited, free migration due to fall in demand for Indian labour.

Box 23.2 Distinction between Old and New Indian Diaspora

Any analysis of Indian diaspora cannot ignore the distinction between the emigrants during the colonial period and the post-colonial emigrants, who may be termed respectively as the *Old Diaspora* and the *New Diaspora*. Not

only they vary in the contexts of their emigration and destinations but also in terms of their socio-economic background and the degree of interaction with the motherland. While the New Diaspora has retained vibrant relationship with their family and community in India, majority of the Old Diaspora has lost their contact with the motherland. In the course of their long journey by ship to distant destinations, the unknown co-passengers became 'jahaji bhai' (literally meaning 'ship brother', a brotherly affinity owing to travelling together). The Indian diaspora communities formed during the colonial era were totally denied access even to their own folk attached to different plantations under a new system of slavery called 'indenture labour' invented by the British colonialists, leave alone any access to the then existing means of transportation and communication to engage with the motherland. The post-colonial emigrants on the other hand not only enjoyed the advantage of being professionally trained, middle class, Anglophone Indians but also earned adequate income that could facilitate visits and frequent communication with the place of their origin. The recent advancement in technologies of travel, transport, communication, information and Internet has contributed immensely to the growth of transnational networks and virtual communities. There is revival of the local at the global context, with the shrinking of space and time.

Post-colonial Migration

The post WW-II scenario has changed the whole international migration process by affecting each and every migrant country, and India was not far behind in this process. During this period migration was directed towards developed countries, and the migrants were mostly constituted talented professionals, skilled labourers, entrepreneurs from the peripheral, colonial and under-developed countries besides *Anglo-Indians*. This post-war migration was totally different from the earlier migration of indentured, kangani and other forms of labour migration. Large-scale migration of Indians took place during this period to the developed countries like the U.K., the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Apart from India, Indians from other parts of the world especially from the former colonies (diasporas) also started coming to these countries. They are best referred to as Twice Migrants. There are two instances: a) Africanization policies; and b) Ethnic violence in which Indians from former colonies express their interest to immigrate to these new lands.

a) In 1972, Uganda's dictator Idi Amin ordered 75,000 Ugandan Asians out of the nation. Most of these people were of Indian origin and were successful traders, bankers and administrators or labourers. Around 27,000 emigrated to the United Kingdom, while another 61,00 went to Canada. Some even emigrated to India despite never having lived there previously.

b) A second example is the case of Fiji. By the 1970s, native Fijians had lost their majority to people of Indian origin - mostly descendants of farm workers brought in by the British as indentured labour. In 1987 the first Indian-backed coalition was elected to government, raising tension between the ethnic Indian and ethnic Fijian populations. Subsequent events have ensured ethnic Fijian political dominance. Many Indo-Fijians have left the country of their birth; some came to India, others to New Zealand and Australia.

Recent Migration to West Asia

Recent migration of Indians to the West Asian countries is basically oriented toward labour and servicing occupations on a contract basis. The year 1973 experienced the beginning of the rapidly increasing demand for expatriate

labour in oil exporting countries of the Gulf and North Africa such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Libya. These countries adopted a development strategy centering on the building up of infrastructure and, in turn, created demand for labour in unskilled manual work, especially in the construction sector. At the termination of the first phase of infrastructural projects and with the new emphasis on industrialization in the Middle East, there has been a significant change in the structure of labour demand. Between 1975 and 1980 more than a million skilled workers from India were employed to manage and operate this new infrastructure. By the year 2005 this figure had gone up to over 3.5 millian.

Reflection and Action 23.1

Describe the nature of Indian emigration.

23.5 Indian Diaspora: The Regional Dimension

India is culturally diverse in terms of regional, religious, linguistic and caste composition. Indian diaspora is no exception to these diversities wherever they are found in sizeable numbers to pursue the distinctive cultural features akin to those found at their place of origin. The following section will briefly discuss some of the significant diasporic communities from a regional perspective and their emerging transnational networks. Along with the history of migration and their transnational presence, this section focuses specifically on three diasporic communities, namely Punjabis, Gujaratis and Telugus. These communities are chosen here for detailed discussion in view of their visible presence and extensive networking among the Indian diaspora communities. They endeavour to retain traditional practices, language, religion, marriage patterns and, above all, extensive interaction between the members of the regional/linguistic diaspora community scattered across several countries besides their homeland-the region of their origin.

Punjabi Diaspora

The Punjabis settled abroad have migrated from the state of Punjab, situated in the northwest of India. It is bounded by Jammu and Kashmir on the north, on the east by Himachal Pradesh and the Union territory of Chandigarh, on the south by Haryana and Rajasthan and on the west by Pakistan. The very word "Punjab" is an amalgam of two Persian words, *Panj* (five) and *ab* (water), signifying historically the land of five rivers. The principal spoken language in the present day Punjab is *Punjabi*, which is also the official language of Punjab, written in the Gurmukhi Script. The majority population of Punjab (nearly 60%) follows Sikhism, a faith originated from the teachings of Guru Nanak. The Hindus form the largest minority, followed by Muslims, Buddhists, Christian and Jains. Today Punjabis are dispersed worldwide, especially to countries like Canada, the USA, the UK and other European countries.

Although migration of Punjabis began during the early part of the nineteenth century, it was only after 1840s that a fairly large number of people began migrating to the US and UK. During the next half-century, the benefits of economic development were exhausted due to rapid demographic growth, recurrent famines and the uneconomic subdivision of land. Further, the severity of land revenue along with rising rural indebtedness, increasing population pressure and the consequent land hunger contributed to the mass migration of Punjabis to the outer world (Sood, 1995: 28). Some of the Punjabi peasants were compelled to out-migrate under the influence of

new economic and social forces, which were unleashed by the British administration.

During the 1860s Punjab entered the orbit of colonial labour migration, where some Punjabis were entitled by colonial agents (Tatla, 1999: 46). When the British recruited labour for Ugandan railway project, Punjabis were given the preference. The migration of Punjabis to East African countries gained momentum during the end of the nineteenth century, when several thousand craftsmen, primarily Ramgarhia Sikhs from Julandhar region, were recruited to work on the railway construction under indentured system. After the construction work was over only a few workers returned home while the majority stayed there to further work for the railway. However, not many Punjabis continued to work under the indentured system since they found themselves temperamentally unsuitable to be "slaves." Describing the conditions of Punjabi workers in the plantations, Darshan Singh Tatla (1999: 46-47) mentions "...the first few hundred Punjabis so recruited were found 'unsuitable' by the planters in the West Indies, who protested that these Punjabi migrants are very objectionable as field labour. Many absconded to the Spanish Main, refused to work in the fields, and nearly all have been unruly and troublesome."

Now in the threshold of 21st century Punjabis could be found in every corner of the world and they have entered into every sphere of work. In comparison to the pre-independence period where the emigration was directed towards Canada, US, Australia, East Africa and UK, the post-independence emigration also includes destinations to various countries of Europe and South East Asia. Punjabis have established extensive transnational networks through religious and cultural associations to pursue their social, cultural and economic interests both in the countries of their residence and the motherland.

Transnational Networks of Punjabis

The Punjabis uphold their social network through family ties and kinship obligations, marriage ceremonies and other ritual activities. Overseas Punjabis retain their kinship relations through contact with the families back home in Punjab and also with kith and kin around the world. These kinship ties are kept alive through frequent visits to homeland on various occasions. As pointed out by Angelo (1997: 118) that, "...the frequency of social contacts exchanged through home visitations, some times more than twice a month and occasional home visits". Marriage is an important institution among Punjabis in sustaining the ethnic bond. One of its important roles is to create positive self-image through arranged marriages in which region, religion and caste identities are maintained and perpetuated. The Punjabis choose their marriage partners not only in their respective place of residence but from the homeland and other countries. Now marriage partners are increasingly chosen across the continent (Angelo, 1997: 66). The matrimonial advertisements, which are available in the newspapers and in the Internet, offer increasing opportunities for searching and locating the marriage partners. Social linkages have also been improved through the advent of public telephone stations (STD's), cell phone linkages and Internet email services.

The culture of Punjab is best reflected in the folklore, ballads of love and war, fairs and festivals, dance, music and literature. The rich cultural heritage, common language and a strong sense of being 'Punjabi' bind the Punjabis together. The 'Bhangra' dance, which is synonymous with Punjabi culture is now finds its prominent place in the Punjabi diasporic identity. During the last two decades there were several Bhangra troupes that crossed

the Atlantic to provide entertainment to the Punjabis in the Canada and the US. The Punjabi diaspora experiences a sense of nostalgia while such groups perform the familiar dance, as they (Bhangra dancers) depict the conditions of Punjabis abroad and their struggles in new lands for honour and livelihood. Punjabi media consisting of weekly newspapers, monthly and quarterly magazines also play a significant role in informing overseas Sikhs about their homeland. The transnational television and radio channels also provide information and entertainment to the Punjabis around the globe. There are several transnational TV and Radio channels such as *Punjabi Radio, Netguruindia, TV India, Live 365.com, Punjabi+many, AM1320 Vancouver, Multicultural Radio Punjabi Saturday, Montreal Canada, Radio Sikh-info Daily Kukamnama* etc., provide information to Punjabis in the diaspora. These satellite channels take images of Punjab and Punjabis to Punjabi diaspora spread over different parts of the world. Punjabi films, videos and magazines are now available in most of the Asian shops abroad which further supplement the cultural environment of Punjabis (Tatla 1999: 68-71).

From economic point of view, the Punjabi immigrants today remitted a high proportion of their earnings to support their families back home so also to improve the economy of the home state (Thandi, 1996). They invested their remittances in the form of "...establishing industries, factories, and buying land and transport companies in most of the major towns in Punjab such as Julandhar, Ludhiana, Chandigarh and other towns" (Tatla, 1999: 63). They also contribute most part of their remittances for the development of charities, hospitals and educational centres in Punjab. For instance, contribution of overseas Sikhs in the field of agriculture has led to the "the green revolution" during the 1960s. One of the examples of this type of transnational philanthropy is the development of "model village."

The Sikhs are one of the most identifiable religious groups in the world. The Sikh temple is called Gurdwaras which is one of the fundamental institutions in Sikhism. The Gurdwaras play an important role in social, cultural and linguistic life of Sikhs everywhere, besides the promotion of the religious beliefs and rituals. Through the Gurdwaras the Sikhs maintain their socio-religious identity. The Gurdwaras help them to keep the cohesiveness of the community. The religiousness of Sikhs and their ability to organise themselves have made possible to build Gurdwaras wherever Sikhs have migrated. There are thousands of Gurdwaras around the world, which promote both religious and cultural life of Sikhs by organising functions and festivals. They also mobilise people for political activity besides maintaining both the religious and social identity.

Gujarati Diaspora

Gujaratis settled abroad have migrated originally from the state of Gujarat, which is situated on the west coast of India. It is bounded by the Arabian Sea in the west, the State of Rajasthan in the north and north-east, Madhya Pradesh in the east and Maharashtra on the south and south east. The State at present comprises of 25 districts, covering a geographical area of 1.96 lakh sq. kms. According to the population census of 2001, the population of Gujarat stood at 5.06 crores (Census of India 2001).

Although the merchants from Gujarat have been involved in overseas trade for almost a millennia in spices, ivory and textiles especially in East Africa, significant migration of Gujaratis occurred during the end of the 19th and the early part of 20th centuries to the Middle East besides East Africa. The pressure to emigrate was fuelled by the conditions in Gujarat itself, such

as plague epidemic during 1899-1902 and again in 1916-18, an influenza epidemic raged in 1918-19 and there was also famine in 1899-1900. There were also the perennial problems of land shortage and employment exacerbated by the decline of local textile industry (Ballard 1996: 179-80). Coincidentally around the same time a lot of economic and commercial opportunities opened up in East African countries, new cities built up along with the railway in the areas such as Nairobi, Nakuru and Kisumu in Kenya, and Kampala, Jinja and Tororo in Uganda. As a result, many Gujaratis migrated to Uganda, Fiji, Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, and Zanzibar.

With the opening up of global economies, Gujaratis have made remarkable presence in the USA, UK, UAE, Canada and other countries. Many Gujaratis moved to the United States at the turn of the 20th century. Today, Patidars form the largest group among the Gujaratis in the diaspora. They are identified by the popular surname Patel followed by the Lohanas of Saurastra origin, who are commonly referred to as Banias. In many countries such as the U.S.A, U.K., Canada and the Caribbean, where the Gujaratis have made a name, they are generally regarded as the most affluent and successful South Asian settlers. They are not only in business, which is their first love, but also in professional fields such as technology, science, medicine, and business management. Today, Gujaratis constitute one of the prominent Indian diasporic communities in the world. Although their numbers vary from one country to another, they have significant in number in most of the African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and South Africa. They have also settled in most parts of the Europe, North America, UK, Canada, and New Zealand. The transnational network among Gujaratis is being examined below from social, cultural and economic point of view.

Transnational Networks of Gujaratis

The relation that the Gujaratis maintain with the country of their origin is not only a matter of memories but also an ongoing vibrant linkage. These transnational relations can be broadly divided into two categories, i.e., micro and macro linkages. The micro level transnational linkages among the Gujaratis can be analysed from two perspectives. First, the ties between the Gujaratis in India with their relatives in other parts of the world, and secondly, the mutual contacts between the Gujaratis living all over the world. The macro level linkages are manifested in institutional, organisational and associational basis between diaspora and the mother country as well as among the diaspora community members from different countries.

Gujaratis world over are distinctly known for preserving their language, culture and distinctive food habits, including vegetarianism. Gujarat has a rich tradition of performing arts and customs. *'Dhandhya'*, a folk dance with *sticks* and *Garba* are popular among the Gujarati youth in India and abroad. Originally *Dhandhya* was performed by rural folk, but today it is brought to urban locale by remixing the pulse of disco, hip-hop, reggae, funk, Hindi film music, and other African, American and Caribbean popular music. These fused styles are exported from London, U.S., and West Indies to India, and are captured in Hindi films, played at wedding receptions, dance parties, and community celebrations. There are some special occasions on which these cultural programmes are performed. For instance, during 'Navratri' - a nine night religious ceremony to worship Goddess Durga - *Dhandhya* dance is a major attraction and people from all backgrounds dance together. The fondness of these dances and music is apparently a transnational phenomenon.

Television plays an important role in sustaining transnational linkages among the ethnic groups. The world-wide networks of online media allow much easier access, relatively at less cost, offering interactive opportunity to the dispersed people around the world. For example, the diasporic Gujarati web sites are creating global directories of individuals, community associations, and business organisations owned by members of the diaspora. The online media help the users to reconstitute pre-migration relationships, at least in cyberspace, as well as *create 'virtual communities'* with distinct identities.

The role of international Gujarati associations and organisations is very significant in the promotion of transnational networks by bringing all the Gujaratis together; work for Gujarat and to preserve the Gujarati culture, tradition and folklore. There are considerable number of Gujaratis living in the countries like USA, U.K., Canada and East Africa. They have formed their institutions and associations in order to look after their fellow Gujaratis in the local context and to pursue interactions with other Gujaratis all over the world.

Telugu Diaspora

Telugus have the distinction of being the largest among the South Indian communities to have immigrated to different parts of the world since the early 19th century. They originally hailed from the state of Andhra Pradesh, which is the third largest and most densely populated state of India. The official language of Andhra Pradesh "Telugu," is spoken in India by 65 million constituting around 7.8% of the total population of the country (Census of India 1991).Telugu is the first language of at least 68 million people including the diasporic population.. The language has made inroads into Mauritius, Singapore, Fiji, South Africa, the USA, Canada, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and UAE where Telugu immigrants are present in considerable numbers.

Being a coastal state bound by the Bay of Bengal on the east, Andhra Pradesh occupies a unique place in the Indian sub-continent and the Telugus have a long tradition of overseas trade with Burma, Sumatra and other countries of Far and Middle East. Large-scale migration of Telugus to other parts of the world occurred during the 19th and early 20th century for employment under the 'indentured' system of plantation labour in the British and French colonies.

There are several factors - both push and pull - which are responsible for the migration of Telugus. While on the one hand, natural calamities like famine and flood, shrinking of the cottage industry, increase in population and lack of employment has *forced* many Telugus to migrate to other countries, on the other, there were opportunities of plantation labour in the British plantation colonies that *lured* many Telugus to migrate to the countries such as Fiji, Malaysia, South Africa and Mauritius in order to escape from starvation and death.

Telugus migrated to South Africa, Fiji and Mauritius as part of indentured labour to work in the plantations during 19th century. Telugus *especially* from the coastal regions migrated to work in the tea and coffee plantations of Ceylon and rubber plantations of Malaysia, chiefly as *kangani* and *maistry* form of labour. By the year 1921, it was observed that, there were as many as 39,986 Andhras from the Vishakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh in Malaya (Naidu 1981: 2). Among the immigrants recruited as plantation labour by European enterprises, 80 percent were unskilled labourers from

the untouchable castes of Telugu and Tamil origin. The post-war migration was totally different from the earlier migration of indentured, kangani and other labour migrations, in the sense that, many of the young Telugu professionals migrated to developed countries such as the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and France in search of better opportunities. The transnational networks among Telugus can be examined from social, cultural and economic point of view.

Transnational Networks of Telugus

The Telugus settled in various parts of the world have close contact with their families back home in Andhra Pradesh. In the past, their kinship networks were maintained through sending letters and through occasional home visits. In comparison to the past, when any letter took months to reach home and get a reply, it has now become possible to keep in touch with the family and kin instantly on a global level. It is made possible by the improvements in communication technology such as telephone, telegraph and Internet. These technological developments have now reached a stage that has enabled the dispersed people to create a 'virtual community' in a cyberspace. The basis of family among Telugus is marriage. Traditionally marriages were performed among close relatives in accordance with the customs followed by the community within a local or regional context. At present marriages among Telugus may be found binding two families transnationally. Telugu communities world over has now managed to keep the cultural continuity through their marriage practices. They generally prefer to arrange the marriage of their son/daughter with the Telugus in India. The matrimonials, which are now available on the Internet, facilitate searching the brides/grooms based on caste and regional preferences through out the globe.

Culturally Andhra Pradesh has a distinctive tradition, which is easily identifiable from other major Indian cultural strands. Some of the cultural symbols of Andhra Pradesh include "Kuchipudi dance", "Pochampally handlooms" and "Kalamkari" paintings etc., which are still maintained and sustained by the Telugus. The Kuchipudi dance, known for its grace and charm, is performed in almost all gatherings and festivities in the Telugus diaspora. Similarly, *Perini Thandavam*, an aesthetically performed male dance, is often performed by Telugus in the diaspora. Celebration of festival is another cultural premise, which is the basis of transnational networks. Among the Telugu festivals, the major one includes *Ugadi* (Telugu New Year's day), *Makar Sankranti*, *Dasara*, *Diwali*, *Siva-Ratri* and *Ganesh Chaturthi*. These are celebrated not only in Andhra Pradesh but also among all the Telugus in the diaspora. These festivals are celebrated both in individual homes and outside collectively, bringing all Telugus together.

Development of transnational, satellite aided TV channels and VCR technology has brought together Telugus from distant lands, creating an imaginary Telugu world. Channels like GEMINI TV and ETV, which are based in Hyderabad, reach out to the world of Telugus beyond the national boundaries. These satellite channels are dedicated to the Telugu population of the world to cater to their needs of information and entertainment. The programmes telecast in these channels suit tastes of all ages, genders and classes. There are several channels of two-way economic transactions between the homeland and diaspora. Firstly, there exists a "non-entrepreneurial channel" of economic linkage, in the sense that Telugus visit their places of origin with baggage full of novelties and valuable items not easily available in the Indian market, to be given as gifts to relatives and friends or sold for a small profit. This flow peaks during festival and

holiday seasons such as the Ugadi, Navaratri, Dasahra, Diwali and New Year's Day. Secondly, the "entrepreneurial channel" of linkage brings homeland and the diaspora in a formal manner. Several Telugus abroad send a significant part of their savings back home in the form of remittances in order to invest on real estate, industrial establishment, small business, and educational institutions and to contribute towards welfare activities such as charities, old age home, famine/flood victims etc. Corporate hospitals like Apollo Hospitals, Medwin Hospitals, C.D.R. Hospitals and LV Prasad Eye Institute in Andhra Pradesh are mentioned few, which are contributed to the healthcare sector by the NRI Telugus.

One of the important channels of articulation of common interest among the migrants is their ethnic association. The Telugus have formed their associations to maintain their cultural identity and to promote their socio-economic and political interest in the host country. They also maintain close network with the members of their community in the place of their origin. Through their active participation in the activities of the association, Telugus in the diaspora strive to preserve their cultural heritage. These associations sometimes organize conferences and observe festivals essentially to cater to the Telugu community settled in a locality, region or country. They also invite Telugu persons of distinction from Andhra Pradesh or from the diasporas for participation. Such associations are formed on the basis of caste, religious, regional and pan-Telugu identities.

Reflection and Action 23.2

What are the important factors that led to the international migration of Punjabis, Gujaratis and Telugus during the colonial and post-colonial period?

23.6 Conclusion

In this lesson we have discussed the importance of the concept of diaspora and transnational community, the history of migration of Indians during colonial and post colonial period and the formation of diasporas in the new world. The lesson has also discussed the three most important regional Indian diasporic communities who have made remarkable presence in the transnational sphere today. The lesson has discussed the transnational networks of these communities and their implication for the development of homeland from socio-cultural and economic standpoints.

23.7 Further Reading

Basch Linda, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Blanc Szanton. 1994. *Nation Unbound: Transnational Projects Post-colonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Gordon & Breach:Langhorne, PA

Sheffer, G. 1993. 'Ethnic Diasporas: A Threat to their Host?' In M. Weiner (ed.), *International Migration and Security*. Westview Press:Boulder

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Unit 24
Globalisation, Nationalism and Transnational Communities

Contents

Learning Objectives

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the concepts and nuances of globalisation, nationalism and transnationalism; and
- The interconnectedness and implications of the concepts- nationalism, globalisation and transnationalism.

24.1 Introduction

In their mutual relationships, globalisation, nationalism and transnationalism (GNT) are three processes/phenomena which are at different stages of growth and of varying dimensions and scope. Nationalism is the oldest, Globalisation in its recurring manifestation is a quarter century old and transnationalism has passed under a theoretical scanner for construction of a comprehensive framework of analysis. All the three phenomena have an inter -relationship which is problematic. The gap between popular notion and the real working of these processes, is wide and conceptually not immediately evident. As we delineate these levels, the centre of analysis focuses on an individual or a group of individuals form between the homeland and the host country and this historical engagement at the same time gets mediated by globalisation process and what Arjun Appdurai calls 'ethnoscapes' i.e. a world of imagined identities manufactured by media and one's own fancy. These diaspora or transnationals experience in their host countries 'a grinding of gears between unfolding lives and their imagined counterparts' in which "a variety of 'imagined communities' is formed, communities that generate new kinds of politics, new kinds of collective expression, and new needs for social discipline and surveillance on the part of the elites." Like Capitalism or Socialism, ethnoscape emerges in these contemporary set-ups as a competing 'master narrative' which can offer explanations for the links that hold these three mega-phenomena together. It is only a question of opening out and broadening of the compass of our enquiry in order to adjust to the new global realities which are 'hyperreal' from a perspective of global cultural economy.

If an one-shot answer to this problematic inter-relationship is sought, it would run as follows: with the loosening of nationalism, cross-border movements became easy in an era of globalization giving rise to dispersion

of immigrants chasing jobs. But this is a mechanical explanation, not without deficiencies. For instance, 'nationalism' seems to be hardening, witness Israel's assaults on Lebanon, jobs are getting outsourced to offshore countries and most of the developed countries (USA & EU especially) have resisted the advent of globalisation since they can not bring down tariffs and reduce subsidies to their farmers so as to have a free flow of trade in the world, witness failure in July 2006 of the Doha Development Round.

How does one explain Indo-Pak cross-border terrorism while India and Pakistan are unitedly taking positions against cricket umpire Haire's decision on the ball tampering (by Pakistan) issue? How is it that while major powers are crying hoarse against each other, the global trade is growing at 4 to 5 per cent per annum? There is no dearth of evidence of Prime Ministers and Presidents calling upon their non-resident nationals abroad to liberally donate to their country's development. World Conferences and organisations of ethnic groups across national borders are common place. But these features of the new global socio-cultural reality appear endless. As a strategy in analysis, it sounds reasonable to refer to a day's news to understand some contours of this reality which we get to read daily about ourselves.

Let me invite you to some excerpts cited in *The Hindu* (Sunday 10 Sept 2006) in order to familiarize you with some salient features of this emergent reality happening in the culture space activated by GNT. For reasons of space constraint, we select some news analyses and a few passages to quote.

Dominating the pages of the newspaper was the iconic news of/ 9/11 which has completed 5 years of 'war on terror'. As we know, the 'war on terror' has clearly exposed the Bush administration on whom the latest slap is the news: Saddam Hussein not only was not involved in the Al Qaeda, he actually had "rebuffed overtures" and "had even tried to capture its Iraq chief", a report by the US Senate Intelligence Committee said. As everybody knows, there were no weapons of mass destruction found before USA invaded two sovereign countries (first Afghanistan, then Iraq) *without* Security Council's endorsement. Such an act is as bad as the Al Qaeda attack on 9/ 11 but what really overwhelmed the global culture space is the way it was flashed (and is continuing to do so) by Fox television and others, and heavily powered policies unilaterally imposed to the effect of alienating the Muslims as a religious group. The title of the open page article says it all: *Targeting a Community for Ethnic Scrutiny*. The writer (who is a medical doctor facing uncalled for discriminations) complains (which is the subtitle): *My being a Muslim Overshadowed My Identity as an Indian*. This culture space is hotting up when one reads his complaints against 'race/ethnic profiling' which is becoming common all over the world.

"I would like to draw attention to this fact that Indian Muslims are in more than a single way much different from their brethren in other Islamic nations. Indian Muslims are probably the only ones who lived in and cherished a democratic set up..... The taste of democracy and its addiction has evolved a race of young Indian Muslims who think, believe and practice nationalism with a fervour.... The communal agenda of the so-called Indian Muslim leadership, either it be the defiance to sing Vande Matram or support Pakistan in a cricket match, can only be defeated by a purposeful *nationalist* attitude, which I am sure is evolving among the middle class educated Indian Muslims."

The positive attitude of the writer clearly contrasts against a towering negative attitude of the USA President Mr. Bush who recently set afloat a

dangerous expression 'Islamic fascists'. This only means that, as Newt Gingrich (The former Speaker of the House of Representatives, a Republican like Mr. Bush) followed him up saying, "we are in the early stages of what I would describe as the Third World War." It will not be an exaggeration to say that so much of globalisation of Islam across national borders powered by so much of publicity - through electronic and print media-has generated a huge transnational cultural field for a political endgame. As opinion polls world over show, millions of Muslims now think that America's real aim in Iraq was "to grab its oil, help Israel, or just as Mr. Bin Laden said all along, wage war on Islam."

But a fracture in the American conservative think tank has surfaced showing that it is not Muslims of Asia who are to blame; rather the Muslims who have grown up on European and American soil are showing disaffection, as citizens did in an earlier period against fascism. Led by Prof Francis Fukuyama, this conservative think tank forcefully argues that Mr. Bush has been ill-advised to push the war-on-terror to all the followers of Islam; the national fervour in UK, Spain and other countries are on decline and distraction for some Muslim terrorists who owe their loyalty to Islam over the state of which they are citizens. Writing in the magazine section Page 2, Tabish Khair who by his own admission, is neither an 'Islamic fundamentalist' nor even 'a deeply religious Muslim' offers an important explanation on the disaffection spreading among ordinary Muslims. He gives reference to Israel's mindless shelling of South Lebanon recently which has destroyed all infrastructure and livelihood systems to say that in these circumstances, an ordinary Muslim is more likely to listen to and admire Islamic fundamentalists than someone like me." Thus either way, the global cultural space gets charged up by transnational loyalties and the nationalism becomes either imperial or circumscribed depending on the nodal centre of attraction. Both the phenomena premised on transnationalism have been cocooned inside the trajectory of global capitalism which is often described as globalisation.

The last piece from today's (10 September) newspaper before we take up for discussion in details about G, N & T. This is again about icon 9/11 which has been etched in memories of people across board in the world. Two points we would make about this ? icon status: First, why and how, destruction of New York's twin towers has occupied almost all the collective memory in total forgetfulness of three all-time-great incidents on Sept. 11 in other calendar years? Bapu's Satyagraha was launched on that day against colonial South Africa's racial legislation in 1906 against the Indian community. Swami Vivekananda delivered his famous Chicago address drawing attention to disastrous consequences of sectarianism, bigotry and fanaticism". That was in 1893. The democratic government of Chile led by Allende was dislodged through CIA's machinations again on Sept11, 1973. If these great events of history have been relegated and only 9/11 of 2001 is remembered today, it is due to powerful publicity and policy effects of the world's sole hegemon i.e. USA which now considers that sovereignty is a luxury (and hence can be dispensed with) for those developing countries which are promoting ill-defined cultural areas like Asian values, Arab nationalism and Latino culture. Such nations do not deserve to continue to the extent they suffer from 'freedom deficits' and serve as breeding grounds of terrorism. The second point relates to a claim by *ethnoscape* studies that fancy becomes a social fact in such situations of transnational turmoil. True indeed! How does an Indian explain 9/11? If you ask a school child or an illiterate, it is ninth November. But how has it come to mean Eleventh September which is how Americans write as. Fact is, nobody has ever questioned what these really

mean to us in our own context. This precisely is the publicity effect through which fancies, imagined communities and effects take shape and enter collective memory. Sudhir Kakkar calls popular family dramas which aim at re-inventing traditions (Films like *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gam and Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* are a few exaples) targeting the NRIs for profit as 'collective daydream' which most, withheld from their motherland, would like to indulge in giving the threads of their imagination a free float. This phenomenon needs to be conceptualized in India but it is a 'reality' with NRIs settled abroad. In its shifting complexities, it is a hyperreality.

24.2 Globalisation

Quintessentially, globalisation refers to a process of inter-connectedness on a global scale. But it involves more than growing connections or interdependence of nation-states. It has been defined as "a historical process invoking a fundamental shift or transformation in the spatial reach of human organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across regions and continents." The distinguished Professor of Diplomacy and a close observer of the global scene, Henry Kissinger was straight and apt when he chose to title his address to the Trinity College on 12 October 1999 as: "The basic challenge is that what is called globalization is really another name for the dominant role of the US." Amid a complex mosaic of its features, we should focus discussion of globalisation on understanding of what happened to nationalism and the emergence of several transnational phenomena which constitute our scope here.

What Kissinger was saying at the turn of the century was brilliantly pointed out by Marx and Engels one hundred and fifty years ago. Writing in the *Communist Manifesto*, they had observed:

"In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations..... The bourgeoisie by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization.

It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production..... i.e. to become bourgeois themselves, in one word, it creates a world after its own image."

Box 24.1: Global Interconnectedness

Between 1950 and 1998, the world export of goods increased seventeen fold - from $311billion to $ 5.4 trillion - while the global economy expanded only six-fold. Exports of services which have surged during this period represents one-fifth of the total world trade. The main driver of this trade expansion are the Transnational Corporations whose number has risen from 7,000 in 1970 to 53,600 in 1998 with some 4,49,000 foreign subsidiaries. The sales of TNCs outside their home countries are growing 20-30 percent faster than their exports; and sales of goods and services by foreign subsidiaries - valued at $ 9.5 trillion in 1997 - surpass total world exports by nearly 50 percent. More than 80 percent of these TNCs are homed in USA only. (See Hilary French: *Vanishing Borders-Protecting the Planet in an Age of Globalization*, World watch Institute, 2000, P. 6.

But Kissinger's version is important in the sense globalisation is what US makes of it. The failure of trade talks (Doha Development Round) in July 2006 bears it out. It was a promise given to the developing countries that

"globalisation will be more inclusive and help the world's poor, particularly by slashing of barriers and subsides in farming" by the US and EU countries. This was a promise given in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 2001 but while the war-on-terror campaign is continuing on top gear, the assurance of trade justice to the world's poor has been allowed to lag behind. Therefore, the survey result of the World Bank Report of 2001 to the effect that global inequality has widened is correct but the World Bank's inference that globalization holds "the key to social justice" is only politically correct, and not universally so. The rise in economic growth (due to globalisation) has come not, as Larry Elliot's survey shows, with social justice but with "costs in terms of internal democracy, human rights and equality."

The 'jobless growth' which resulted out of globalization was not of much help to the world's poor whose number and rank swelled aggravating the crisis of migration. In those dire circumstances, you move instinctively to places where you have people of your own community. Under globalisation, borders became porous and national economies became open. Whereas 80 per cent of the world's population lived in closed, non-market economies in 1950s, 87 percent of the world population moved into open economies by 1995. Fear and anxiety, insecurity and unemployment have goaded people to leave their homelands. Add to this, changes in job profiles and relaxed entry facilities for people from the labor - intensive economies and outsourcing of jobs (IT, BPO and now, engineering services) by the developed countries. The flow of capital, labour and job architectures has vastly increased in speed and configuration. The underside of this process of globalisaiton is full with filth: arms, drugs and human trafficking has carved out (in that order) large chunks of economic activities entailing heavy flow of persons and workers.

Globalisation is different from *internationalization* which is but an expression of growing interdependence among discrete but bounded nation-states. Under globalisation, the world is increasingly emerging as a shared social space. There is a significant shift in the scale of social organisation in every sphere from the economic to the security, transcending the world's major regions and continents. Central to this structural change are twin features of unavoidable consequences: the revolution of Information and Communication Technologies which have triggered changes beyond anticipation and recognition. The second feature as Anthony Giddens has brilliantly highlighted lay in the abandonment of the welfare state and discontinuation of social security packages which were part of a social compact between the society and the state ever since the World War II. What has taken its place is popularly known as the Washington Consensus articulated by another British (developmental economist) John Williamson who had listed ten reforms for the Latin American economies so that they could attract private capital back to the region after the crippling debt crisis of 1980s. This 'neo-liberal agenda' for developing countries mostly in Africa and Latin America came to be known as "economic reforms' which mostly consisted of liberalization, privatization and globalisation (LPG). But economic reforms are not sufficient in themselves and therefore, second-generation reforms were introduced under the rubric of 'good governance'. Currently, 'good governance' is being used as a conditionality by the IMF and the World Bank for loans to the developing countries.

The performance records of most countries from these two continents were disappointing whereas China and the East Asian Tigers managed to collect benefits of globalisation with innovative re-moulding of this neo-liberal

package. India, Brazil and Russia are also counted as cases of successful globalizing. An important lesson out of these experiments lay in a challenge to the national leaders not to blindly kowtow but to design and evolve institutional and policy packages sensitive to local opportunities and constraints. Another major call of restraint on unfettered globalisation came from Francis Fukuyama who had predicted in 1989 (roughly the same time when the Washington Consensus was articulated) that history has ended, the liberal democracy has triumphed world-wide and the world is ready for democratization across political boundaries and popular resistance. "Democracy and free markets will continue to expand as the dominant organising principles for much of the world", he wrote in 2001 after the September attack. But Fukuyama changed his opinion, circa 2004 and asked for restoration of the nation states to the centre stage of world politics. In other words, nation state was never dead and globalisation waves which swept them under, found their importance sooner than later.

However, nation-states and nationalism as a political force have been deeply impacted giving rise to a new phenomenon called *deterritorialisation*. This meant that boundaries became porous and open for moving of goods, capital and labour. In its concrete form, deterritorialisation meant "bringing laboring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes vesting exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics in the home state." Deterritorialisation is now at the core of a variety of global fundamentalisms. As Arjun Appadurai has perceptively observed, "in The Hindu case, for example, it is clear that the overseas movement of Indians has been exploited by a variety of interests both within and outside India to create a complicated network of finances and religions identifications by which the problem of cultural reproduction for Hindus abroad has become tied to the politics of Hindu fundamentalism at home"(Appadurai, 1999).

24.3 Ten Theses on Globalisation

1. Anti-globalisation protests are not about globalisation since these protests are among the most globalised events in the world.
2. Globalisation is not new; nor is it just westernization.
3. Globalisation is not in itself a folly, it has already enriched the world. What is needed is fairer distribution of the fruits of globalisation.
4. The central issue, directly or indirectly, is inequality.
5. The primary concern is the level of inequality, not its marginal change for the better. Appalling poverty and staggering inequalities demand urgent attention.
6. The question is not just whether there exists some gain for all parties, but whether the distribution of gains is fair.
7. Market economy is consistent with many different institutional conditions and, in conjunction with the latter, can produce different outcomes. Aside from the need for pro-poor public policies, the distribution of benefits depends on a host ofglobal arrangements (e.g. trade agreements, patent laws, environmental protection etc).
8. The world has changed since the Bretton Woods agreement. Decolonisation, human rights, NGOs and movements for gender and environmental equity and justice have come up anew.
9. Both policy and institutional changes are needed. Global governance is changing under open leadership of the World Bank and the UNO but

the Third World governments have been found to be indulging in violence and waste.

10. Finally, we have reason enough to support globalisation in the best sense of that idea since some institutional and policy issues deserve to be addressed more.

Amartya Sen in *The Los Angeles Times*

The political melieu of the Westphalian Treaty-based modern state has also changed with other structural changes accompanying globalisation. It was a myth to say that state lost sovereignty (how much of it USA state lost? for example) but political authority came to be distended by economic onslaughts released by globalisation. If the social space turned out to be a shared one, continuous fragmentation of political space, (disintegration of Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia etc.) spawned ethno-nationalisms previously held in subordination by the state administrative authorities. Participation- deficit models of national integration run the dangers of secessionism in these days of transnational turmoil.

24.4 Nationalism

Modern idea of nationalism emerged from the early 19th century Western Europe out of a combination of three strands which composed it:

1. Enlightenment as a liberal conception of political self-determination (Rousseau, J., S Mill and others)
2. The French revolutionary idea of the community of equal citizens; and
3. The German conceptions of a people formed by history tradition, and culture.

As a final process-product, nationalism thus was found tied to principles of freedom, equality and collective sharing of a history and culture. One of those who most vigorously espoused the cause of nationalism was the Italian Giuseppe Mazzini for whom three requisites are non-negotiable in nationalism: independent territory, a moral obligation for all to the nation one belongs to, and the notion that world is but 'a family of nations'. For the French romantic revolutionary, Ernest Renan, nationalism represents 'a daily plebiscite', a historical process of renewal on a daily basis.

Despite all that it stands to promote an identity of uniqueness, nationalism has never emerged as an alternative to globalization. It has been a part of it, though the relationship between nationalism and globalisation has never been free from tensions. These interactions however are variously perceived. For instance, one school of thinking holds Mazzini and Woodrow Wilson an 'old hat' and they are not for having more number of states which will only add 'disorder' to the international comity of nations. Another school thinks that the major developed countries of the OECD cannot afford another war which is always feared, and is the worst consequence of nationalisms. Eric Hobsbawm has argued that the old belief of a self-contained 'national' economy has been substantially eroded and its place has been taken by another nationalist idea, namely that "separate statehood can provide the best means of negotiating a favourable position in the international marketplace."

Box 24.2: The Core Themes Of Nationalist Ideology

1. Humanity is naturally divided into nations.
2. Each nation has its peculiar character.
3. The source of all political power is the nation, the whole collectivity.
4. For freedom and self-realization, men must identify with a nation.
5. Nations can only be fulfilled in their own states.
6. Loyalty to the nation-state overrides other loyalties.
7. The primary condition of global freedom and harmony is the strengthening of the nation-state.

Adam Smith

All these were arguments from a political economy perspective. Arjun Appadurai has however ventured an explanation of this problematic interrelationship between globalisation and nationalism from the perspective of global cultural economy.

As Scott Lash and John Urry have pointed out, globalisation represents 'a disorganized capitalism' which at present is outside the compass of enquiry available today. The new global cultural economy is 'a complex, overlapping disjunctive order which as distinguished from its previous *avatars*, is so striking by its 'sheer speed, scale and volume' that the disjuncture (between economies, cultures, polities etc) have become central to the politics of global culture. "The world we live in now seems rhizomic, even schizophrenic, calling for theories of rootlessness, alienation, and psychological distance between individuals and groups on the one hand, and fantasies (or nightmares) of electronic propinquity, on the other." In this world of the hyperreal, we enter a 'new condition of neighborliness' or what Marshall MacLuhan famously called 'a global village'. The media however keep creating at the same time, communities with "no sense of place". It is also called Communities caught in the media scape giving these new perceptions a further globalizing twist, Fredric Jameson points out a "nostalgia for the present" which refuses to die despite change in the living context and conditions. One important new feature of this global cultural politics marked by disjunctive relationships is that "state and nation are at each other's throats, and the hyphen that links them is now less an icon of conjuncture than an index of disjuncture." Appadurai insightfully explains this phenomenon: "This disjunctive relationship between nations and state has two levels: at the level of any given nation-state, it means that there is a battle of the imagination, with state and nation seeking to cannibalize one another. Here is the seedbed of brutal separatisms - majoritarianisms that seem to have appeared from nowhere and microidentities that have become political projects within the nation-state. At another level, this disjunctive relationship is deeply entangled with various global disjunctures: ideas of nationhood appear to be steadily increasing in scale and regularly crossing existing state boundaries, sometimes, as with the Kurds, because previous identities stretched across vast national spaces or, as with the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the dormant threads of a transnational diaspora have been activated to ignite the micropolitics of a nation-state."

Unyoking of 'imagination' from the 'place' constitutes the critical differential feature of living in such a world. The space released for imagination in this process is neither small nor large, micro or macro since it is not a 'problem of representation'. But day-to-day routine living cannot escape but face this space. The challenge thus becomes one of embedding large-scale realities

of the transnational world in the concrete life worlds of immediate experience. This is so because their lives cut across national boundaries while bringing two societies into a single constituted social field.

Box 24.3: Nationalism and Globalisation

- Nationalism was only fully recognized as relevant by International Relations in the past two decades.
- Nationalism is both opposed to globalization and a product of it.
- The spread of nationalism is a result of the transformation of the international system over the past two centuries.
- Nationalism is now the moral basis of states and of the international system.

Fred Halliday

24.5 Transnationalism

Transnationalism (TN) refers to a process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin with their country of settlement. These immigrants who maintain simultaneous presence in two or more varieties can also be described as transmigrants. The transnational social field thus constituted comprises, in part, family ties sustained through economic disbursements and gifts and in part, by a system of legalized exchanges, structured and officially endorsed by the home state. Till recently, migrant experiences in different areas of the world were studied as discrete and separate phenomena unrelated to fast emerging hyperreality which has overwhelmed the world in the process of globalisation. The growing demand is to study these migrant population dynamic and fluid social relatives with in combination an analysis of the global context and dimensionality. As discussed before, global restructuring of capital has deeply affected economies of the developed countries (e.g. swelling un - and under - employment of the labour force). In order to comprehensively grasp these problems besetting migrant populations ever on rise, a transnational framework of analysis has become necessary. While developing such a framework of analysis, Nina Glick Schiller Linda Basch and Cristina Blanc - Szanton (SBB) have identified six premises which are central to conceptualization of Transnationalism:

1) bounded social science concepts such as tribe, ethnic group, nation, society, or culture can limit the ability of researchers to first perceive, and then analyze, the phenomenon of transnationalism;

2) the development of the transnational migrant experience is inextricably linked to the changing conditions of global capitalism, and must be analyzed within that world context;

3) transnationalism is grounded in the daily lives, activities, and social relationships of migrants;

4) transnational migrants, although predominantly workers, live a complex existence that forces them to confront, draw upon, and rework different identity constructs - national, ethnic and racial;

5) the fluid and complex existence of transnational migrants compels us to reconceptualize the categories of nationalism, ethnicity, and race, theoretical work that can contribute to reformulating our understanding of culture, class, and society; and

6) transmigrants deal with and confront a number of hegemonic contexts, both global and national. These hegemonic contexts have an impact

on the transmigrant's consciousness, but at the same time transmigrants reshape these contexts by their interactions and resistance.

To the extent that transnationalism is a product feature of world capitalism, the identity of the transmigrants has remained a contested terrain. The global flow is determinative of the class profile of these migrants who normally crowd the lower echelons of the dominant society they migrate into. The Chinese transmigrants may have a small component of the Hong Kong capitalist class but the Indian, Caribbean and Filipino populations have important petit bourgeois and professional strata. But all the strata of these migrant populations live and grow in a transnational world constantly created, reenacted and reconstituted by hegemonic constructions and practices in their daily routine existence.

In such a contingency, the transmigrants find their options usually *subordinate* to the dominant ideology of the host country, and *open* vis-à-vis the homeland so that they can "continuously translate the economic and social position gained in one political setting into political, social and economic capital in another." Internal class differentiations of the hegemonic states often play a crucial role in the constitution of the transnational social field. The American multinationals, for instance, prefer transnationalism over the American poor and middle class who prefer nationalist protection. *The Economic Times* of 26 September 2006 carries this news: 449 Indian have been given a 10 year multi-entry visa to Malaysia on payment of just 75,000 US dollars with all other conditions waived. Though sufficient research is warranted to confirm, an important hypothesis can be formulated in this context that the gifts and activities which flow across the borders carry with them social relations embedded in them. As SBB argue, these social relations take on meaning within the flow and fabric of daily life, as linkages between different societies are maintained, renewed, and reconstituted in the context of families, of institutions, of economic investments, business, and finance and of political organizations and structures including nation-states.

In the absence of deep-going researches, we can only conclude at this stage with a formulation that a true understanding of Transnationalism is not possible without a global perspective. The latter comes, as we have seen above, in a basket of nationalisms disjointed from their states and activated through a larger-than-life imaginative mode fashioned and facilitated by the revolutions in media technology and loosening/widening of the national features of a sovereign state. Understood in this sense, Transnationalism and Globalisation have created a new world of reality which is awaiting rigorous conceptualization.

24.6 Conclusion

The contours of future research of this area remains ill-defined but three broad approaches merit consideration since they are doing rounds lately. The first such approach is **cosmopolitalism** which seeks to promote the idea that all human beings are equal and the international community should defend the victims of war crimes and punish the perpetrators regardless of the places of their origin. Many cosmopolitans therefore welcomed the UK House of Lord's ruling that the leaders guilty of human rights violations can not claim immunity from prosecution by appealing to the member of sovereign immunity. That is how General Pinochet, the Chilean dictator was brought to book by the UK Courts. The other approach is **post-modernism** which emphasizes a peculiar point that knowledge

designed to progress contains the danger of domination. The diversity, according to this approach, should be respected against homogenization which usually leads to new forms of power and exclusion. In other words, appropriation of reality for creation of knowledge doesn't have to follow a given dominant model. The third salient approach is **communitarianism.** Michael Walzer has criticized cosmopolitalism on the ground that individuals acquire their most fundamental rights and responsibilities as members of particular communities inhabiting across the national borders (i.e. group rights and not as members of the human race). This point received sharpened focus from W. Kymlicka who with the help of a path-breaking analysis to establish a respect point of view that the rights of indigenous people depend effectively on curtailment of some individual rights which lie at the heart of the liberal democratic polities of the West.

As you can see from the above, a new vista is opening out privileging theorizations in the new context of globalisation, nationalism and transnationalism in their active authentication and signatures. The world appears to be fast growing into a different place now.

24.7 Further Reading

Appadurai, Arjun. 1999. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." In Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (eds.), *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Schiller, N.G., Linda Basch and Cristina Blane-szanton. 1999. "Transnationalism: A New Analytical Framework for Understanding Migration." In Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (eds.), *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.