

Conceptual Understanding of Indian Diaspora and Transnational Studies

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Learning Objectives

This unit will help you in:

- understanding the concepts in the study of the Indian diaspora;
- analyse the various perspectives; and
- relate the diasporic situation of Indians to these concepts and analyses.

1.1 Introduction

This unit will introduce you to the several concepts that you will come across in the course of reading the elective course on diaspora. We will introduce you to the topic of Indian diaspora by situating it in the context of the globalisation process. The phenomenon of transnationalism is an offshoot of the global process, which has made connections, real and virtual, more pertinent and speedy. All these have brought old diasporas who were previously somewhat disconnected from their homeland in constant touch with things back home. These connections are real and virtual, such as travelling back and forth, communications through the net, telephone, through interactions of media and other things.

We will start the unit with unravelling of concepts such as transnationalism, globalisation and diaspora. We will then proceed to the main context of this transnational situation by looking at the globalisation process, and then analyse how diaspora as a concept fits in to all these. Following this we will examine some of the theories and perspectives that scholars have used to study the Indian diaspora. Lastly, we will look at the diasporic situation of Indians who see-saw between belonging and longing, of being there and, not there and how this situation and the technological and media mediations add to the diasporic social space.

1.2 Transnationalism, Globalisation and Diaspora

Transnational migration is described as “a pattern of migration in which persons, although they move across international borders and settle and establish social relations in a new state, maintain social connections with the polity from which they originated. They live across international borders in transnational social fields.” (Glick Schiller, 1999). As we mentioned earlier, though the communities move out of their homes or polity, the diasporas still maintain connections, and these ongoing connections make them truly

transnational for they cut across boundaries. The transnational character of the diasporas is an outcome of the globalisation process.

Globalization entails global markets, global communications and global networks (see Unit 21 in MSO-03). Globalization, as the term implies, covers societies at all phases of development in a way that the world is far more interconnected than ever, events happening in one part of the globe having repercussions in other parts of the world.

The process of globalization is driven by three major imperatives - the market, the new technology, and transnational networks-that are themselves interconnected. Market forces are in theory based on free and fair competition but protectionist policies in trade, volatility and negative effects of short-term capital flows and biases in international investment agreements permeate and vitiate the field to widen the difference between developed and developing countries.

Let us look at the technological revolution that constitutes the second major dimension of the socio-cultural impact of globalization in India and the diaspora. In both its real (locomotionary) and virtual (telecommunication) senses the diaspora is about travel (Clifford 1997). And it is travel in the various forms - the capacity to physically travel very fast and repeatedly and the capacity to travel virtually which has brought the diaspora as a compelling theme in our day and age. However, technology has played a catalytic role in all this. Especially, information technology (IT) which is leading to a new form of capital accumulation as is clearly evident in the IT industry. Regardless of its origin and amount, capital can be circulated and accumulated on a global scale at an unprecedented speed and therefore with extreme volatility. An urgent task of the study of globalization and migration is to understand the international labour system of the 'new economy.' In this context, unlike in the colonial past, it is capital chasing labour rather than the other way round.

Let us introduce the third major imperative of globalization, namely, transnational networks. According to Tambiah (2000:140) two broad sets of networks may be differentiated for purposes of analysis. 'Vertical' networks are formed within 'host' societies when 'communities' come together, either voluntarily or forcefully, in order to devise conscious strategies to fight discrimination as well as to succeed economically. The second set of networks, i.e., 'lateral' may be subdivided further: (a) between host society and society of origin/homeland, and (b) transnational global networks where diasporas across the world communicate with each other and maintain transnational links especially through media and travel. What is lacking in Tambiah's concept of networks, however, is the dimension of social stratification, which we may analyze in terms of class, culture and mobility in both the old and new diasporas (Jain 2004). To generalize, then, vertical networks are those which are seen across classes—these are inter-class asymmetrical networks— while horizontal and symmetrical networks rest on the intra-class solidarity. These networks happen not in any fixed place, which is geographical. The networks happen both across geographic spaces and in virtual space. In concrete terms a space that is unique to itself.

We have seen that in defining both these processes (transnationalism and globalization) 'diaspora', which has been conceptualized variously, plays a critical role.

Box 1.1: The Concept of Diaspora

Until its 1993 edition, the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defined the term 'diaspora' as "the dispersion of the Jews among the Gentile nations" and as "all those Jews who live outside the biblical land of Israel". Yet for the first time in its long history, in that edition the dictionary added that the term also refers to "the situation of people living outside their traditional homeland". The term has a Greek origin and refers, allegorically, to the scattering of seeds as they are sowed over a wide area; hence *speiro*= to sow, *dia*= over. It is widely believed that the term first appeared in the Greek translation of the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, with reference to the situation of the Jewish people—"Thou shalt be a diaspora in all the kingdoms of the earth." (Deut. 28, 25). Yet the term had also been used by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Sheffer (2003:9) is right in noting that, already at a very early period, the term had been applied to two of the oldest ethno-national diasporas—the Jewish and the Greek—that had been established outside of their homelands as a result of both voluntary and forced migrations.

There has been frequent criticism of the usages 'diaspora', 'diasporic', 'diasporism', etc., on the grounds that the generalization and universalization of culturally specific, viz., Jewish or Greek, processes is illegitimate. More particularly it has been argued that the persecution of diasporas either in the home or in host societies which is a recurrent feature of Jewish diaspora is absent or even reversed in cases of ruling Anglo-Saxon minority settler societies, viz., in Australia or South Africa. Safran's (Safran 1991:83-4) six-point model that lays down the features of the diaspora include:

- dispersal from the original homeland
- retention of collective memory,
- vision or myth of the original homeland;
- partial (never complete) assimilation in host society;
- idealized wish to return to original homeland;
- desirable commitment to restoration of homeland;
- and continuous renewal of linkages with homeland.

The debate on qualifying criterion for diaspora continues with some scholars offering wide, inclusivist definitions that contain "immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community and ethnic community in the semantic domain of diaspora" (Tololian 1991: 4-5)

Others have proposed a minimized working definition for diaspora that includes "dispersal from original homeland to two or more places; movement between the homeland and the new host; and social, cultural or economic exchange between or among the diaspora community" (Van Hear 1998:6).

This last definition covers the criterion of 'circulation' suggested by Markovits(2000), although he would further argue that 'diaspora' in the Indian instance is something of a misnomer, given the extensive, ongoing circulation and exchange that has historically characterized the trajectories of many overseas Indians. Interestingly enough, authors like Hansen (2002) claim the unsuitability of the notion 'diaspora' for South African Indians for precisely the opposite reason. According to him, the nostalgia for Indian roots and any

engagement for what is authentically Indian is belied by the experience of present-day third, fourth generation South African Indians amongst whom the propaganda of being patriotically 'Indian' is being drummed in (rather unsuccessfully) by the erstwhile, BJP-led Indian Government and organizations like the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) and GOPIO (Global Organization of the People of Indian Origin). This may well be the experience of many other PIOs (People of Indian Origin) as contrasted with the commodified nostalgia of the kind that is visible among the first and second generation non-resident Indians (NRIs) in Europe or North America who belong to more recent waves of migration.

Reflection and Action 1.1

1. Do you have any members of your family living abroad or do you know people who have moved abroad? If you do know of such people, find out from them how the Internet and telecommunication technologies have brought them closer home?
2. How can one explain the popularity of Bollywood cinema among the Indian migrants? In what way is this connected with globalisation?

1.3 Perspectives on Studying Indian Diaspora

It is obvious from the foregoing account that the study of overseas Indian communities is a newly emergent field, which has so far yielded only a few detailed monographs and comparative essays. There has been a search for a theoretical framework to integrate this area of study. And in the following discussion we shall point out some of the important perspectives for the theoretical study of this topic.

The Retentionist Perspective: The first of these frameworks is the one which deals with cultural persistence. This is the *retentionist* view of Indian culture overseas and the studies falling under this category have recorded the ability of the Indians to retain, reconstitute and revitalize many aspects of their culture in an overseas setting. It is believed that the common bond of race, language and fellowship coupled with racial prejudice segregated the Indians first in barracks where they were lodged as indentured labourers and since the late nineteenth century in villages where they settled. Rural isolation, ethnic identity and the sheer tenacity of Indian institutions have been considered as major mechanisms for preserving Indian culture.

One of the best examples of this perspective is Morton Klass's study of East Indians in Trinidad published in 1961. Klass provides an extensive account of the social organization of the villages of Indians in Amity and reports that they were faithfully modeled after a kind of generalized north Indian culture. Villagers had rebuilt a community resembling the socio-cultural system of village India. In this perspective East Indians have successfully transplanted the institution of family in its basic form which they brought from their homeland. The East Indian family in Trinidad is still characterized by the inferior or unequal status of women, parental selection of mates, rarity of divorce, sharing of property and inter-relationships within the caste system.

Studies of cultural persistence fall under the general rubric of acculturation processes. In this view there is a bias which over-emphasizes the retention of cultural customs and traditions and only a superficial treatment of the disappearance of conventional patterns and the reasons for their demise.

There is also a problem about the approach to history and social change in this framework. Society and culture both in India and in the overseas setting have moved from one point to another during the period that the initial emigration of Indians took place. This dimension is not taken care of in the perspective on cultural persistence. In other words, it is a static rather than a dynamic perspective on the acculturation of overseas Indian communities.

The Adaptationist Perspective: The second perspective is purely and simply an *adaptationist* one. Studies falling under this category are chiefly concerned with the question of the adaptation of the social group or an immigrant society in the social environment of the host society. R.K. Jain's (1970) work on South Indian migrants, in a typical Malaysian setting, is a study of the process of adaptation of a people of Indian origin to conditions of life and work in a particular Malayan environment, namely, rubber plantations. The study highlights the interaction between norms of a traditional rural people from southern India and the ideology and procedures of an industrial bureaucracy. Burton Benedict (1961) also subscribes to the adaptationist perspective in his study of the Indians settled in Mauritius. His book begins with a general appreciation of the Mauritian situation, describing the physical, demographic, economic and political setting in which the Indians live. Then it narrows down to the Indian situation, examining the households, land tenure, domestic economy, kinship and marriage, Indian religious beliefs and the village political structure. Benedict tries to show that there is communication and mobility between sections of Mauritian society, tending to unify it and where there are bars to communication, tending to drive the sections apart. Adrian Mayer's (1973) study of the rural Indian society in Fiji is another example of the adaptationist model. He reports on the Indian pattern of settlement, their ritual activities, caste, culture and kinship keeping in view the aspect of adaptation. The adaptationist perspective has been criticized on account of its failure to incorporate the comparative aspect. It is also criticized for not being able to relate in a systematic fashion the microcosm to the macrocosm. As a result these studies tend to be self-contained.

Plural Society Perspective: The next perspective is that of the *plural society*, first advocated by Furnivall (1948) in the context of colonial society of South East Asia. According to him this kind of society possessed three characteristics – cultural, economic and political. Culturally, a plural society consists of incongruous and incompatible cultural sections between which communication is hampered. Economically, the relationships between the cultural sections are those of the market place. Politically, this kind of plural society is held together only by the fact of being dominated by an external colonial power. R.K. Jain has argued (1986) that the concept of plural society in the sense used by Furnivall is applicable only to "settlement societies" and not to civilizations. In fact, M.G. Smith (1965, 1969), who developed this theory in its application to the Caribbean society, restricted it to modern colonial situations and to the era of European industrial expansion and laissez-faire capitalism. Further, it was confined to the study of multi-racial communities. Pluralism was defined in terms of both structure and culture, as connoting simultaneously "a social structure characterized by fundamental discontinuities and cleavages and a cultural complex based on systematic institutional diversity" (Smith, 1969:27). The stability and unity in a society with structural pluralism and differential incorporation was maintained by the dominant group which was a cultural minority.

The theory of plural society generated a number of criticisms in the late fifties and sixties. R.T. Smith (1970) and Leo Kuper (1969) argued against plural societies, as defined in the Furnivall tradition and by M.G. Smith against their definition as societies at all. How does one determine whether one is dealing with a "society" and not simply a mechanical aggregate of social groups? Mere incorporation of individuals and sections of individuals into a single political unit had to be distinguished from the society because the former lacked social relationships. In its simplest form, as R.T. Smith (1970:44) puts it, "The problem can be stated by asking whether the members of the society share any common basis for social worth or whether the society is merely with each other for the power to dominate others." With regard to the Caribbean also, the plural society framework has its limitations. According to R.T. Smith (1970:71), "The Caribbean societies are among the worst examples of plural societies in spite of their diversities of race and consumption levels and of culture." This was mainly because the colonial rule created conditions which knit together the various sections of the society. Regional sub-cultural differences were not very clearly marked and each segment was separated only in the market place and in the sphere of economic competition. Fiji, on the other hand, is relatively closer to the plural society model.

The Ethnicity Approach: Jayawardena (1980:430-50) has tackled the question of diverse forms of culture in Guyana and Fiji through the parameters of ethnicity. This approach accords explanatory primacy to relations of class, status and power and ethnicity is seen as emerging from these factors. Ethnicity was bracketed as 'ethnicity' and its existence was incidental and depended upon a particular combination of political and historical forces. In Guyana the Indian population had lost or abandoned all but the basic principles of traditional Indian culture and were thus forced to fabricate a mythical identity. The Indo-Guyanese thus possessed both an ethnic identity and 'ethnicity'. However, the Indian population in Fiji possessed an ethnic identity but not an 'ethnicity' because its members maintained regular contact with their homeland and regarded their Indian identity as a routine feature of their lives. 'Ethnicity' had manifested itself in Guyana and not Fiji because of historically determined and crucial differences in the fields of class, status and power.

Drummond (1981:694) has criticized Jayawardena's approach mainly on the ground that 'ethnicity' has been accorded a secondary status in the domain of explanatory concepts. He argues that class and ethnicity are aspects of many social settings and therefore on what basis could the former assume priority over the latter? Besides, another limitation of this framework is that it tends to be descriptive rather than analytical.

Drummond (1980:352-74) offers another approach to the study of the transformation of cultures in the context of poly-ethnic emigrant societies. He applies the linguistic/cultural model in an ethnographic study of symbolic processes associated with ethnic categories in Guyana. He presents his case by arguing that just as the coexistence of several languages created Creole languages, so the coexistence of different cultures created Creole cultures. This resulted in a society based on inter-systems or a cultural continuum in which any element from a particular culture shaded into one from another. The continuum enabled actors to combine and recombine the elements into a coherent whole because they knew the entire continuum. They understood the elements and the significance of their variations and transformation.

However, Drummond's cultural continuum model has its own limitations. His suggestion that, "if variation and change are fundamental aspects of cultural systems, then we must consider the possibility that ethnographic studies of small, post-colonial ethnically fragmented societies such as Guyana illustrate the Creole process found in societies everywhere" (1980:370), was not tenable. For one, the Creole language/Creole culture metaphor did not hold in the case of Fiji. The Hindi spoken by the Fiji Indians was not creolised and there was no creole language resorted to by all ethnic groups. If culture was self-explanatory then how did one explain the aspect of creolization in the Caribbean and its virtual absence in Fiji? This could be explained in terms of the precedence of historical interpretations over cultural interpretations. That is, creolization of culture in the Caribbean was the result of a specific form of economic and political domination and not only an assortment of historically different cultures. This pattern of subjection of ethnic groups under the domination of one was absent in Fiji. It is Jayawardena's (1980:449) contention that if Fijian history was characterized by the domination of one group over all the other ethnic groups then a "Creole" language and a "Creole" culture would appear in its society.

The Political Economy Perspective: Approaches based on cultural pluralism and cultural intersystems such as the ones discussed above already alert us to the macro framework in which particular Indian communities overseas have to be seen in a theoretical perspective. We have already mentioned that there are a few among sociologists like John Rex (1982) who suggests that there is a continuity between the nineteenth century emigration of Indians and the twentieth century migrations to the industrially developed countries. Barriers of a racist kind control the movements of labour from underdeveloped countries to metropolitan countries at the present time. In other words, the migrants from underdeveloped countries are not given the same status—though they belong to the same economic class—as the labour force belonging to a different race into the metropolitan countries themselves. Normally, this is a process dictated by the worldwide phenomena of imperialism and colonialism going back in time to the seventeenth century, of which the repercussions are felt even to this day. Arguing along the same lines are the theorists of the development of underdevelopment thesis who take a global view of the phenomena of the migration, settlement, and formation of Indian communities abroad. Foremost among such theorists has been Beckford (1984) who pointed out the determining influence of the economic structure of plantations in the colonial territories of tropical areas in Asia and Latin America. Beckford's thesis of "persistent poverty" in the plantation areas of the world applies with special force to the Indian diaspora of the nineteenth century when indentured labourers were initially recruited to man the labour force on plantations. Hence, there is a continuity of socio-economic and cultural systems in plantations and other areas of Indian immigration in the nineteenth century.

On a still wider scale and arguing in global terms are the theories of Gunder Frank (1967), Wallerstein (1974) and Amin (1976) who argue in terms of a core-periphery model of the global development of capitalism. In these terms, it would seem that certain geo-political constraints of the nineteenth century and even earlier have shaped the unequal regional economic development all over the globe. In this perspective, the Indian diaspora would seem to belong to an especially underdeveloped and deprived section of global population. There have been criticisms of this approach (for example Brenner, 1977) as regards the neo-Smithian Marxism which this framework represents. In fact,

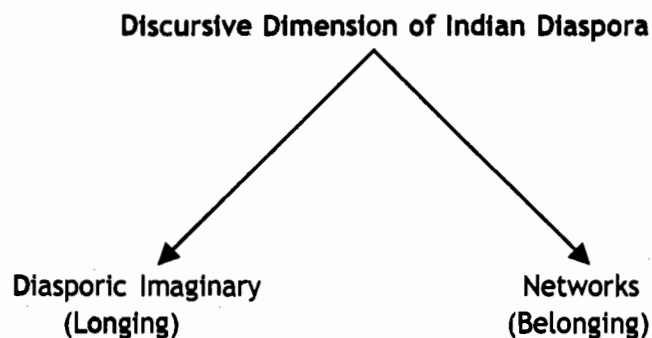
with the globalization of ethnicity as the post-modernist phenomenon of our times, one feels that the opportunity to study overseas Indian communities in a framework which articulates macro - and micro -structures and further takes into account not only the past but the possible future of these communities would pay rich dividends to social science scholarship.

Reflection and Action 1.2

1. The fact that many Indian diaspora look to India when it comes to selecting a bride can be viewed from which perspective?
2. In what way is migration of Indian labour to colonial plantations similar to workers seeking work and migrating out in recent times, and in what way is it different?

1.4 Longing and Belonging: 'The In-between' Space of Diaspora

With increasing migration in this globalised world people everywhere belong to many places, they are everywhere and nowhere in some sense. They may be citizens of their host country but identify with their country of origin. They may live away from the roots and traditions of their home country but connect to it consciously as an ethnic community in the country to where they migrated. Thus they can easily be between belonging and longing and in an 'in between' state. Globalization and transnationalism alert us to issues of deterritorialization and reterritorialization which is related to international migration. The problematique of 'in between' identities of persons imbricated in these processes is crucial: hence people between nation states, between homelands and new societies, between longing and belonging, between 'non-modern' civilizations and post enlightenment 'settlement societies', between dual or multiple citizenship – people are caught in-between these heuristic binaries.



The distinction was first explicitly stated and explained by Vijay Mishra (1995). It is also implicit in McKeown. (1999). It has been elaborated upon in relation to African, Chinese, Indian & Jewish diasporas. (Jain 2003)

As seen in the Indian case, there is a strong interactive relationship between the diasporic imaginary and global networks. Scholars have chosen to emphasize one or the other though they have all been fully cognizant of the interactive relationship. The question of identity as subjectification in the imaginings of the diasporics is prominent in works such as those of Axel (2001) on the Sikhs and of Sandhya Shukla (2003) and Pnina Werbner (2002) for the U.K. and the U.S.A. in the former and Manchester-based Pakistani Muslims in the latter. The question of identity in relation to the socio-legal aspects of citizenship has been implicit in the works of those interested in networks,

e.g., Tambs-Lyche (1980) on Gujaratis, Markovits (2000) on Sindhis, Xiang Biao (2001) and Voigt-Graf (2004) on Indian I.T. specialists in Australia and the various articles in the newly launched (2001) journal *Global Networks*. Writers of both persuasion have been interested in the transnational dimension of the diaspora, the former in their efforts to delineate a unique 'diaspora space', (see also Avtar Brah 1996) talking of 'deterritorialisation' but also of 'reterritorialisation' and the latter being more centrally concerned with the interface of nation-states with ethnicity. (see, for instance, Sheffer 2003, Baumann 1996, Munasinghe 2001, Vertovec 1992, et.al.)

Box 1.2: Deterritorialisation and Reterritorialisation

The concept of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation were terms that were used by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in a book called *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) but it got adopted by other disciplines, especially anthropology. Deterritorialization may mean to take the control and order away from a land or place (territory) that is already established. It is to undo what has been done. For example, when the Spanish conquered the Aztecs, they eliminated many symbols of Aztec beliefs and rituals. Reterritorialization usually follows, as in the example when the Spanish replaced the traditional structures with their own beliefs and rituals. When referring to culture, anthropologists use the term deterritorialized to refer to a weakening of ties between culture and place. This means the removal of cultural subjects and objects from a certain location in space and time. It implies that certain cultural aspects tend to transcend specific territorial boundaries in a world that consists of things fundamentally in motion. Although this refers to culture changing, it does not mean that culture is looked at as an evolving process with no anchors. Also, oftentimes when one culture is changing, it is because another is being reinserted into a different culture. This relates to the idea of a globalization of culture. In this process, culture is simultaneously deterritorialized and reterritorialized in different parts of the world as it moves. As cultures are uprooted from certain territories, they gain a special meaning in the new territory which they are taken into. (source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deterritorialization>)

Scholars dealing with the latter set of questions either take a ground reality view of ethnic mobilization (the trend initiated by Barth 1969) or move frontally to the 'nationalism' and 'nation-state' framework to examine marginalization of ethnic minority (both numerical and political) in relation to the monopoly of power and 'patrimony' by the nation-state. The latter tendency is theorized in the works of Brackette Williams (1989) and Verdery (1994), for example, and analytically deployed by Baumann, for instance (but cf. Baumann's critique by Werbner 2002). Both these kind of studies are part of what has been designated variously as cultural politics, or simply politics of identity. When the analyst's perspective shows a mix of subjectification, transactionalism and the socio-legal status of diasporics (e.g. citizenship issues), the next logical step is to recast one's questions in the 'grand narratives' of multiculturalism and multiracialism with all the overtones of ideology and public policy.

1.5 Conclusions

In this unit, we have tried to unravel the many interpretations that are associated with some of the concepts such as diaspora and transnationalism. We tried to examine these concepts, situations and phenomena against the

backdrop of globalisation. Globalisation, as we explained in our unit, is not only about market forces being global, so much so that global markets are not located in one place. A production centre of any Transnational Corporation for instance can be located in one place and its service centers can be in a different place. You must have noticed the mushrooming of BPOs everywhere, which is nothing but part of global market operations. Apart from this, what characterises the globalization process is the connections and networks that are an outcome of technological revolutions such as IT (information technologies) and speedy travel. These have propelled denser and speedier connections between home and abroad. Added to this is the simultaneity of media which makes it possible for people to consume and use their imaginations in space, which is not location specific. In a way these very characteristics of globalization are what inform the transnationalism of diasporas. They are now not just people who left home and who are disconnected with their roots but are constantly engaged with home both in an imaginative nostalgic sense but also in real terms, as in actual connections. This perhaps is the significant difference between erstwhile diasporas and the present day transnational communities.

We have tried to present a few perspectives that we think will help in analyzing the diasporic situation of Indians living abroad. As you can see not one of these perspectives can be easily applied to explain the Indian diaspora, for they all have differing contexts and histories. In our subsequent units we will try and look at the Indian diasporas in different parts of the globe, to get a sense of these differing situations by examining some of the studies and the approaches therein.

1.6 Further Reading

- Benedict, Burton. 1961. *Indians in a Plural Society*. London: HMS Stationary.
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Unit 2

Approaches to the Study of Indian Diaspora

Contents

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 The Study of Indian Diaspora
- 2.3 Studying Indian Diasporic Communities: Some Perspectives
- 2.4 Indian Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Civilizational and Settlement Societies
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Learning Objectives

This unit will help you to:

- understand the various ways in which Indian diaspora has been studied;
- analyse specific studies and the perspectives on Indian diaspora;
- look at Indian diaspora in the context of multiculturalism; and
- get an overall framework in which to place some of the studies on Indian diaspora.

2.1 Introduction

In this second unit of our course on Diaspora and Transnational Communities, we will try and see various ways in which scholars have attempted to look at Indian diaspora. Indians have been migrating out of India for centuries but the settlement of Indians abroad started taking place rather concretely only during the colonial period. Thus, migration out of India can be seen in three phases: ancient, colonial time, and contemporary period. Scholars have looked at the Indian diaspora from various points of view— literary, demographic, from the perspectives point of geo-politics and from an anthropological point of view. We will try and analyse very briefly some of the perspectives and approaches through studies undertaken by various scholars.

These studies range from early migration of East Indians who have settled in Trinidad and how they have continued to keep up with their traditions to one where the diaspora is seen in terms of the adaptative strategies they have used. We will also be looking at some of the interactive and situational analysis in our study of urban ethnicities in a place like London. This we hope should give you a fair idea of the range of studies and the various perspectives adapted by scholars to study the Indian diaspora. Following these sections we will be looking at Indian diaspora in the context of multiculturalism, both in relation to their country of origin and the country of destination or their host countries. In this regard we will be examining the ideas of civilisational and settlement societies. In our final section we will attempt to give you a general framework in which you can place some of these perspectives.

2.2 The Study of Indian Diaspora

Indian diaspora can be seen in three sequential phases in global historical terms. Firstly, the ancient and mediaeval Indian monarchs and traders, from the east and west coast of India, who tried to reach out and established contacts with the Middle East, eastern and northern Africa and with Southeast Asia. The expansion during the ancient period has given rise to the historical imaginary entity called 'Greater India' which was a staple of our post-independence history books, something we hastily revised after encounter with the new nationalistic countries of Southeast Asia. The mediaeval period of Indian diaspora was mainly connected with trade; this phase has been very well documented historically but the anthropologist would find more meat and sensitive delineation in novels like *In an Antique Land* by Amitav Ghosh and Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*. In these fictional works the magic of hybridisation that cast a spell over mediaeval Indian diaspora is brilliantly evoked.

The second period belongs to the nineteenth century emigration of the labouring population to plantation territories of the colonial world. This emigration from India also included traders and white-collar workers to the British, Dutch and French colonies. The scholarly depiction of this phase of the Indian diaspora argues that colonialism is strongly implicated in the process of migration. In fact, some scholars extend the colonial implication to the third phase of Indian diaspora, the emigration from India in the present century to industrially developed countries of the West and to the oil-rich countries. This forms an organic linkage with the colonial diaspora. It seems reasonable to point out this connection now, because in what follows we shall be concerned mainly with putting the contemporary Indian diaspora in a post-colonial context.

Box 2.1: Post-colonialism

Post-colonialism (also known as post-colonial theory) refers to a set of theories in philosophy and literature that grapple with the legacy of colonial rule. As a literary theory or critical approach it deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are now, colonies of other countries. It may also deal with literature written in or by citizens of colonizing countries that takes colonies or their peoples as its subject matter. Post-colonial theory became part of the critical toolbox in the 1970s, and many practitioners take Edward Said's book *Orientalism* to be the theory's founding work.

Post-colonialism deals with many issues for societies that have undergone colonialism: the dilemmas of developing a national identity in the wake of colonial rule; the ways in which writers from colonized countries attempt to articulate and even celebrate their cultural identities and reclaim them from the colonizers; the ways knowledge of colonized people has served the interests of colonizers, and how knowledge of subordinate people is produced and used; and the ways in which the literature of the colonial powers is used to justify colonialism through the perpetuation of images of the colonized as inferior. The creation of binary oppositions structure the way we view others. In the case of colonialism, distinctions were made between the oriental and the westerner (one being emotional, the other rational). This opposition was used to justify a destiny to rule on behalf of the colonizer, or 'white man's burden'. (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-colonialism>)

There are many diverse angles of viewing the Indian diaspora. The one angle which attracts the general public in India itself is concerned with the investment capacity of the NRIs (Non-Resident Indians). In the wake of liberalization and structural changes in the Indian economy ushered in since 1991, it has been pointed out that the overseas Indians compared to the overseas Chinese investments in mainland China are five times behind in their investments in India. Observations such as these have led to the economists' interest in migration, remittances and capital flows (Nayyar, 1994). Also, in the same perspective of viewing NRIs, viz., Indians emigrating and settling in the USA as entrepreneurs, the ethnic identity and feeling of the Indian diasporics have been compared with the similar entrepreneurial gifts of the Chinese, the Japanese and the Jews in the United States. (Kotkin, 1993). In the transnational framework, the economists are viewing the Indian exodus to the affluent countries of the West not as 'brain-drain' but as 'brain-banks'.

The Literary Point of View: An academically influential and forcefully articulated point of view on the Indian diaspora emanates from the writings of literary critics and creative writers, e. g., Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul, belonging to the Indian diaspora. We will cite the views of Tejaswini Niranjana who teaches English literature in the University of Hyderabad, India, because her statement is as representative as any of this genre:

At a time when both in India and in many overseas communities the stakes in defining oneself as 'Indian' are being re-examined, at a time when the terrain of identity has become a crucial location for engaging in cultural politics, it seems increasingly important to analyse the many complex ways in which different groups of people claim 'Indianness' and the different kinds of significance attached to this claim. For this kind of analysis, I would argue, the construction of 'Indian' identities in Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Fiji, Mauritius, Tanzania or South Africa (or even, to mention a different kind of context, in the Gulf countries, for example) is as relevant as the NRI identities being shaped in the metropolitan, post-colonial diaspora. An interesting problem that remains by and large untheorised is the one about what slippages occur, and what their significance is, when a notion like 'Indian culture', shaped within the social imaginary in India, is deployed in a context where 'Indians' are not culturally hegemonic (Niranjana, 1994:3-4)

A couple of comments on this kind of angle on the Indian diaspora may be made here. Firstly, though the question of identity is inescapable and recurs in many contexts, it is the discipline of social psychology which can adequately deal with it, and that point of view remains largely outside our present area of discussion. Secondly, not only the Indian diasporics in metropolitan countries but even those of the nineteenth century vintage were part of a larger politico-economic framework that shows a great deal of continuity from the colonial to the post-colonial period. The kind of distinction which Niranjana makes between the NRIs and what have sometimes been called the People of Indian Origin (PIOs) is very thin, since both these diasporic streams are caught up in the same contemporary currents of post-coloniality, globalization and transnationality.

The Demographic Perspective: Demographers have shed light on some of the basic parameters of the Indian diaspora: the numbers involved, fertility rates (Muthiah & Jones, 1983), the role of linguistic and religious variables in the immigrant population, marital trends, etc. There has been considerable

difference of opinion on the quantum of the Indian diaspora globally. An extremely conservative estimate (Clarke et. al. 1991) for the year 1987 puts the figure at about 8.6 million South Asians living outside Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. On the other hand, the Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora (2001) estimated that there were some 19 million people of Indian origin (both PIOs or non Indian passport holders, and NRIs or non-resident Indians with Indian passport). It is noteworthy that the latter estimate, though more than double of the former, did not include other South Asians. Of course one reason for the discrepancy between the earlier and later figures is the considerable emigration, especially in the last decades of the twentieth century, to the U. S. A. and to West Asia. However, it is still very difficult to give an accurate estimate, more so in view of the fact that most estimates do not divulge their sources. The largest population of overseas Indians is in the UK, followed by the USA, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa. In countries like Guyana, Surinam, Trinidad & Tobago, Mauritius and Fiji, Indians constitute nearly half of the total population.

Some of the demographic data on migrants in Australia suggest sociologically interesting issues for Asian, as also South Asian, immigration. In 1991 nearly 7 million Australians or 42% of the population was born overseas or had one or both parents born overseas. The Asia-born constituted 4.6% of the total population (British and Irish 7%; European born 6.5%; Middle East born 1.2%). The percentage of Asians in the population as a whole (including local born) had increased to 7.4% by mid-1995. Up to two-thirds of all second-generation migrants were marrying outside their ethnic group so that by the year 2000, 40% of the Australian population are ethnically mixed. These projections certainly include South Asians, though the exact quantum of South Asian ethnics in this melting pot cannot be easily ascertained. However, the general point of interest here is that the so-called 'untranslatability' of Indian culture abroad is a very relative matter, subject to the history and socio-economic background of the migrants and the policies of the host society. Again, building on the demographic profile of the South Asian population, it is interesting to note that Hindi-speakers and Hindus predominate among Fiji Indian migrants to Australia (the so-called 'twice migrants') than among immigrants from India. Another issue that merits investigation is the manner in which the Hindu religious category cuts across the nationality of birth (Malaysian, Sri Lankan, Fijian, Indian). A sub-set of the above: what is the interaction and complex of attitudes among and between Tamilian Hindus from Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India and Fiji? This comes as close as one would wish to being an experimental situation for a comparative study of Tamil nationalism. Similarly, it would be sociologically rewarding to study the implications and consequences of the fact that Anglo-Indians from India and Ceylon Burghers from Sri Lanka were permitted to enter Australia earlier than the bulk of other South Asians. How are they placed – status-wise and in terms of ethnic distance – relative to other Indians and Sri Lankans is a question worth asking.

The Geographical Aspect: From the geographers' viewpoint the distribution of the Indian diaspora can be divided into six zones. : Africa and Mauritius, West and Southeast Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. One of the earliest comparative surveys by an anthropologist of Indian communities abroad was an article published by the late Chandra Jayawardena in the *Geographical Review* (Jayawardena, 1968:426-449). It is

natural for the international relations specialist and geographers to be getting interested in diasporas and ethnic movements and communities across the globe as they influence politics both within nations and across nations as these ethnicities move across territories. The fact that the ethnic enclaves engage among themselves across the territories makes some question the role of nation-states. We will talk about some of these substantive issues in our Book 2.

Anthropological Understanding: Anthropological concerns today typically cut across and challenge the disciplinary boundaries like the ones presented above. The process of ethnicity emerging from nation-building finds its extreme in the present 'transnational' world in which people having national identities, such as Indian, Chinese, etc., migrate elsewhere and 'become' ethnic groups whose home nations remain durably in their self conception and political behaviour. Benedict Anderson calls this the 'ethnicization of existing nationalities' practicing 'long distance nationalism'. Some 'purist' politicians have advocated the applying of what they call the 'cricket test'. The cricket test doesn't hold in many situations as people might start out by waving their national flag but when it comes to being pitted against another ethnicity or race they might feel one with their regional affiliations. So Indians will be waving a Pakistani flag, when the Pakistanis are pitted against a non-Asian team such as the English or the West Indian.

Reflections and Action 2.1

1. Would you say that Indian diaspora is more adaptive than preservationist in their host country. If you do so, explain with substantive reasons.
2. How is the new Indian diaspora which has been migrating out of India since independence different from the earlier migrants who went as plantation workers?

2.3 Studying Indian Diasporic Communities: Some Perspectives

Besides the anthropological interventions in a variety of studies dealing with the Indian diaspora, there now exists a fairly coherent tradition of primarily anthropological studies in this field (Jain, 1993:52-57) We will take up three studies, each for the decades of the 60s, 70s and 80s, to get a sense of different perspectives that have been used to study the Indian diaspora.

Cultural persistence: Study of East Indians in Trinidad

The first study we have in mind is Morton Klass's monograph, 'East Indians in Trinidad: A Study in Cultural Persistence'. This is a community study, emphasising the continuities which existed in the cultural patterns and institutional structure of second-and-third generation population of East Indians in the village Felicite of central Trinidad, with the culture and social structure of eastern India (eastern Uttar Pradesh and western Bihar) from where their ancestors came. The macro-framework for this study (Klass, 1961) is provided not by a detailed look at the formation of the particular community in historical terms but through a sketch of the history of East Indian migration to Trinidad. Institutional areas of East Indian life, such as family and kinship, caste and religion are viewed in terms of cultural persistence. As has been observed in later studies of the Indian diaspora, the approach of the sixties fails to make the nexus between the Indian

community in adaptation with the wider socio-economic and political dynamics of the host society.

Socio-Cultural Adaptation; Tamils in Malaya Rubber Plantations

An approach of the 1970s period may be illustrated with reference to the monograph on the Tamilian rubber estate workers on a plantation we will call 'Pal Melayu' on the west coast of Malaysia—then the Federation of Malaya (Jain, 1970). This is a study of socio-cultural adaptation. The theoretical framework adopted here is of structural-functional paradigm, along with the situational approach, which is used to analyse the ongoing social processes. The book sought to study the adaptational social processes on Pal Melayu in terms of an interaction over time between 'work' and 'community' as sub-systems of social relationships in a 'total institution'. The macro-structure was delineated both in terms of the historical formation of the community in question and a notion of the changing plural society of Malaya.

Transnational Analysis: Study of Urban Ethnicity

A good example of the study of the 1980s where a structural-functional closure of the sort attempted in the community studies mentioned above was not possible because of the different range, magnitude and variations in the diasporic population in the monograph, 'London Patidars: A Case Study in Urban Ethnicity' (Tambs-Lyche, 1980). Set firmly in the empirical tradition of Fredrik Barth's transactional analysis, this monograph chooses to adopt a theoretical rather than historical framework. The emphasis throughout is on the choices which London Patidars make within the homogeneous value-set which they, as a caste, adopt in their adaptations to life and opportunities in London. Tambs-Lyche uses the game theory to analyse and delineate the opportunities and choices available and adapted by the enterprising community of Gujarati origin. Though they are encompassed in a homogenous circle of caste values and expectations, he feels they find a niche in the larger British society. The macro-structure too is handled within the framework of a transactional theory; Tambs-Lyche makes the important point that, seen from a local perspective, immigrants form an 'encompassed society' within the wider British society. Seen, however, in terms of their international kin and friendship networks, Britain is the encompassed society. Their assessment of it as an environment to be 'exploited' depends on the range of economic opportunities available to them in different countries. From this point of view the London Patidar study should also be treated as a forerunner of studies of 'twice' or 'thrice' migrants in the Indian diaspora.

A comment may here be added on the approach to ethnicity in Tambs-Lyche's work and beyond. Ethnicity, following the lead of Barth and associates, is very much defined as the social organization of culture difference. Barth has recently written (Barth, 1994) that his concept of culture right from the time of the publication of 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries' would appear to have been a post-modernist one. In substantiating this claim, it is pointed out that culture has been characterized by him as continuous rather than discontinuous; it is wrought by variation and flux; it is contested rather than being assumed to be homogeneous; and, finally, though culture was seen mainly as a boundary-making mechanism, its content was not altogether unimportant. Such a statement of the relationship between ethnicity and culture would be a subject of our synthesis in what follows.

2.4 Indian Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Civilizational and Settlement Societies

In this section we will examine the nature of plural or multicultural society, both in the host countries where the Indian diaspora has settled and in terms of the pluralism of Indian society, from where they have migrated; understand the difference and similarity between home and abroad, we will examine the idea of civilizations and settlement societies.

The question we pose is a comparative one: In what way are plural Indian societies similar or different in the countries where Indian immigrants have settled? We shall speak of civilizations a little later, with India as our focussed example (cf. Cohn, 1971), but the starting-points in our notion of the settlement societies come from J. S. Furnivall's celebrated discussion of the plural society in Burma and the Dutch East Indies (Furnivall, 1948). In his terms, a plural society exists when a country under colonial rule shows the following broad cultural, economic and political characteristics. Culturally it comprises groups which are institutionally disparate and do not share the same basic values and way of life. Economically, these separate social entities, have interaction mainly in the market-place, in buying-and-selling type of relationships. Politically, these disparate but economically interacting segments are held together by a superordinate authority – the colonial rulers. To paraphrase Furnivall broadly, these plural societies do not have a common social 'will'. The segments may mix (as in the market place) but they do not blend.

We build the concept of settlement societies basically after Furnivall's characterization, but also augmented by the theorists of plantations in the New World who spoke of plantation societies in contrast to rural societies as "settlement institutions" (Thompson, E. T., 1959). Settlement society is a polythetic category in the sense that not all instances of such societies have every characteristic which can be conceived of as belonging to this type. In other words, in actual instances of such societies, there may be some characteristics present in one case but not in another. Among the characteristics of settlement societies are: (1) a short history (basically post-1492) marked by recent massive immigration, (2) presence of native populations, which is variable in number, (3) colonialism or dependent status of one kind or another, (4) a correlation between economic and ethnic relations in such a way that if the economy is buoyant inter-ethnic relations are better and vice versa, (5) the settlement society is also a geo-political entity in the sense that in the New World Mexico and Latin America can be contrasted with the Caribbean, the USA and Canada. The former provide examples of civilizations, and the latter of settlement societies. In the Old World, India, China, much of Europe and parts of Africa can be contrasted with island societies, the former being seats of civilization while the latter are settlement societies.

With regard to our notion of civilizations, we should like to make a clarification at the outset. Since our take-off point in a civilizational theory of Indian diaspora (Jain, forthcoming) is the Indian or Indic civilization, the generalizations attempted here apply, in the first instance, to what Louis Dumont has called the "non-modern civilizations" (Dumont 1975). European civilizations in much of their pre-Renaissance history are part of that conceptualization. For us the proposed dialogue or dialectic between settlement societies and civilizations has primarily a heuristic value.

Empirically, the history of civilizations would be marked by a settlement society configuration and the future of settlement societies would lend itself to a civilizational design. Furthermore as in the case of European and North American or so-called 'western' nations, there is the development of a technologically advanced civilization. The present analysis focuses on the symbolic rather than political or technological frontiers of civilizations.

In relation to civilizations which, as we shall presently suggest, may be conceptualized as sustained by an interaction between a great tradition and several little traditions, the settlement societies form a dialectical relationship. According to Professor R. Thornton of the University of Witwatersrand, multi-culturalism in South Africa lends itself historically to a civilizational conceptualisation around a model of three city-states and their hinterland. This is in contrast to the modern European and North American conceptualisations of a network of urban-industrial centres and rural-agricultural areas. From our point of view, Thornton's position is a valid and useful point of departure for examining conquest states such as the collection of three city-states in South Africa. The point of arrival, on the other hand, especially throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (and more particularly in the present day Republic of South Africa) is a conceptualisation of multi-culturalism as a consequence of settlement societies dynamics. The crucial population element in this dynamics is the Indian South African community. Unlike both the Whites and the Blacks who contest indigenous versus settler statuses in South Africa, the Indians have regarded themselves as belonging to South Africa in the sense of citizenship and political status in general and yet not based their claims on any other than the 'settler' status (the small numbers of Indians in the population is, of course, a crucial variable but not the dominating one). The example of multi-culturalism in the U.K. suggests a complex relationship between a civilization (in this instance a long-established centralized state and a cohesive nation-state) and settlement society (the large numbers of Asian and African diasporic elements). Here, firstly, the settlement society is not coterminous with the nation state but is a part thereof. Secondly, the notion of diaspora itself may refer either to a place or a people, depending on the context of the discourse.

The dialectical rather than oppositional relationship between civilizations and settlement societies has a definite historical effect. As the example of late capitalism at the end of the 20th century and the ushering in of the 21st century clearly shows, a feedback such that the dynamics of settlement societies can energize/refurbish civilizations has high probability. The civilizational teleology of development and cultural evolution throughout the twentieth century thought seems to us as having been a mirror-image of the nineteenth century social evolutionism. The dialectical relationship such as advocated here between civilizations and settlement societies has the potential of reversing the hallowed centre-periphery relationship paradigm, in cultural terms, of the world-system theorists.

In this discussion it is not possible to detail the theoretical parameters of settlement societies, but it may be useful to bear in mind that one can postulate a distinction between the elementary structure of such societies and their complex forms. Most of the island societies of nineteenth century Indian diaspora, viz., Mauritius, Fiji, Trinidad & Tobago, etc., belong to the elementary type while societies like the USA., Canada, South Africa and Australia, the kind of societies that have been written about as "New Societies" (Hartz 1964), represent the complex structures.

The point of origin for the Indian diaspora has been the Indian civilization. The civilizational side of the dialectic has so far, in this paper, been assumed and not spelt out. It would seem valid to say that during a process of interaction between the great tradition and several little traditions over the millennia, a civilization like India cannot be said to lack a common will. The self-same religious, architectural, anthropomorphic and social structural patterns and symbols recur in India as a palimpsest, in the sense that an original text is written over several times by a variety of interpretations, (Lannoy, 1971). These may be predominantly 'Hindu' in origin but which effectively cut across religious, communal, ethnic and caste groups. As such, what Cohn (op. cit.) characterises as the study of cultural communication in understanding the Indian civilizations has been much helped by the concepts of Great Tradition and little traditions and of universalization and parochialization (cf. Marriott, 1955; Singer, 1972). The long history of civilization distinguishes it from the short time-span of the settlement societies. Besides the former having a sort of common cultural will, it also enables a synthesis of various disparate cultural elements which is a 'blend' rather than a mere 'mixture'. The symbiosis between Muslim and non-Muslim cultures in India is an evidence of this process. Nevertheless, there are two main criticisms of the particular way in which the process of cultural communication in Indian civilization has been conceptualized by the anthropologists of the Chicago School. Firstly, though lip service is paid to the mutual interaction between the Great Tradition and little traditions, in fact, the former are treated as hegemonic over the latter. The difficulty seems to be that in this civilizational teleology, acculturation which is an asymmetrical and hegemonic process has been emphasised over and above "interculturalization" which is perhaps a much more prevalent and powerful process over time (Jain, 1986). A critique of the 'sanskritization' process of cultural change in India reveals that a number of protest movements were simultaneously active, perhaps more active during the last one hundred years of Indian history than the movements of change imitating cultural practices of the higher castes. The second big gap in the culturally asymmetric paradigm of cultural change in India is that the politico-economic factors of change, viz., those involved in building the Indian nation (in the last two hundred years) and the Indian state (in the last fifty years), are completely marginalised. In sum, the prevailing anthropological models of the process of Indian civilization would revert to the paradigm of a cultural persistence type of analysis if employed in the context of diaspora. We believe that the dialectic between civilisation and settlement society, the one complementing the other, and the one feeding back into the other as a process in real time, provides a dynamic frame in the study of Indian diaspora.

Before concluding this section of our presentation, let us note that one salient contrast between studies and frameworks for the studies of settlement societies and for civilizations has been the accent on political economy in the former and culture in the latter. As our earlier remarks would imply, there is need for each perspective to be augmented by the other. In the settlement societies framework, researches by anthropologists like M. G. Smith on pluralism and plural society ideas have sought to blend the Furnivallian politico-economic framework with reflecting pluralism refers to universalistic, uniform, incorporation, the kind of situation which should ideally exist in a country like the USA.

Conversely, sociologists like John Rex (Rex, 1982) assimilate a politico-economic viewpoint in their analyses of race relations in plural societies. Relevant to

the study of the Indian diaspora is Rex's postulation of a continuum between the 19th century and 20th century emigration and settlement of people from India in territories overseas. This follows from Rex's argument that in the modern world migratory movements take place according to the need of different economies for labour and a major movement of this kind is the migration of men and women from post-colonial to metropolitan societies. Where this happens, metropolitan labour movements and metropolitan political parties seek to establish barriers to such movements of a racist kind. In so far as these are effective, what one sees is racial discrimination on a world-wide scale, designed to ensure that the hard-won freedoms of the metropolitan workers shall not be shared, even if this means a permanent division of the world into rich and poor nations. As post-colonial societies get control of their own destinies, and either eliminate racism or direct it against new targets, this division between rich white and poor coloured and black nations may come to be the most important form of racism in the modern world. What is true of the working classes is true also, if to a lesser degree, of white collar workers and professionals of the post-colonial countries migrating to metropolitan nations. The general point, of course, is that there is an organic linkage between immigration and settlement of Indians abroad in the 19th century and those who have migrated to the industrially advanced countries in the present century. And furthermore, this bears the marks of colonialism and racism.

2.5 The Universe of Discourse: A Framework

We have already spelled out, briefly, the distinction between civilizations and settlement societies. We now locate the above distinction in a wider field of forces which is comprised not only of empirical cases that contextualize the Indian diaspora but also the intellectual/analytical currents which flow in this field. This combination of descriptive and analytical perspectives is suggested by the fact that there now exist, in the study of the Indian diaspora, not only anthropologists and sociologists of metropolitan (western) countries, and not even the 'Indianists' so-called of Indian and western vintage, but diasporic scholars themselves who bring to bear- in the changed circumstances of the admissibility of a subjective or agent-oriented viewpoint in the social sciences- an experiential and creatively articulated dimension. Let me present this field of forces, with its magnetic polarities, in the following schematic table:

FIELD OF FORCES		
	A	B
Societal Correlate	Settlement Societies	Civilizations
Historical Conjuncture	Late Capitalism	Early Capitalism
Evolutionary Thrust	Models of Development	Models for Development
Intellectual Current	Post-modernism	Modernism
	Reverse Orientalism	Valorization of Tradition
	Fragmentation	Holism (Gandhian and Marxist Approaches)
	Deconstruction	
	Deterritorialisation	Multiple Territorialisation
Subliminal Currents	New Age Religions	Economic Liberalization and 'Consumption of Modernity'

To explain this table briefly, the polarity between civilizations and settlement societies has already been discussed. That between Late and Early Capitalism is largely self-evident. The distinction between models of and for development can be explained by the fact that while in A there has been satiation with high-tech and there is concern for sustainable development and environmental preservation, in B there is still a shortfall, not only real and material but also perceived and felt, between the technological progress attained and sought to be attained. In that sense, even where a question-mark is raised over the adoption and import of western technology, there is continuing and deep concern with models for development rather than a distant and somewhat dispassionate interest in what kinds of developmental models are available and need to be implemented. In other words, in A the interest in developmental models may not be for urgent implementation but as knowledge-packages. In coming down to the third set of polarities, viz., those referring to intellectual currents, the distinction between the post-modernism of A and continuing modernism of B is noteworthy. It means in effect that while the duo traditional-modern, or the modernity of tradition or the modernization of tradition theses still define the terms of discourse in B, in A on the other hand the idioms of collage and surrealism are adopted at an even flatter and more popular levels than was the case in late modernism (Jameson, 1984). In post-modernity the dead-hand of globalization has replaced the affect-prone particularities. As such, the holistic notion of 'tradition' in either the unconsciously imperialistic redaction continues to haunt B. In A, on the other hand, the critique of Orientalism has not only managed to throw the baby of tradition out with the bathwater of colonialism and imperialism but a kind of 'reverse-Orientalism' has taken its place. In the context of studies of diaspora, let me give one example. In the description and analysis of the formation of settlement societies, there is virtual absence of considering what in the older literature, would be called the pioneering spirit, adventure and entrepreneurial skills of the founding fathers. The besetting sin of these founding fathers was the fact that they happen to have been largely of the Nordic races. Thus, in the literature on plural societies, multiculturalism, and diaspora generally the inadmissibility of notions such as that of "New Societies" (cf. Hartz, 1964) has become patent; it has become a postmodernist blasphemy to dilate on the contribution of the Whites.

Another element of the post-modernist ambience in A is reflected in the carryover from the discourse of deconstruction and fragmentation in the social sciences to diasporic studies. The crisis of representation in ethnography has been projected on to the studies of migration and settlement. These currents stand in contrast to the holisms of B, prominent among these being the Marxist notion of totality (cf. Jay, 1984) and, in the context of Indian civilization, Gandhian views of swaraj (self-government) and self-sufficiency. The deterritorialization thesis enunciated and elaborated by diasporic Indian intellectuals in the USA (Appadurai, 1990, 1991, 1993; Gupta 1992 and Gupta and Ferguson 1992) and in Australia (Mishra 1995), is a particularly acute manifestation of the pains and dilemmas of the diasporic intellectual/academic in settlement societies. They emphasise transnationality, hyphenated identities and diasporic deterritorialization of immigrant populations. The argument is sustained by the examples of displaced peoples and refugees all over the world, and the provenance of global and transnational organizations, such as the Red Cross, Amnesty International, etc., is cited as proof that identities and loyalties of diasporics, including the Indians in the "complex" settlement societies (read USA or even Australia) have become fragmented

and deterritorialized. When anthropologists like the ones cited above take up the theme of identity and begin theorizing on a global scale it becomes necessary to take note and state what the situation appears to be like from the Indian angle. Stated somewhat bluntly, the deterritorialization thesis seems to have unmistakably psychological roots, and the many personal interludes in the writing at least of Arjun Appadurai cited above would seem to bear this out. In this genre of anthropological or literary writing there are symptoms of an intellectual or academic disease where a splintered rather than a split identity of the intellectual/academic is projected on to the nation-state or 'country' of adoption, viz., the USA or Australia. In his article, 'Patriotism and its Future', (1993) Appadurai draws a contrast between 'belonging to' or 'loyalty for' on the one hand, United States of America, and on the other, America. The former (USA) is portrayed as the persecutor (preserver of whiteness and of the contrast between the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant and the others). It has the 'land of the immigrants' ideology and it consciously or unconsciously panders to the image of the 'tribalism' of the non-white groups. The latter (America) is the 'ethnoscape' of real freedom; it is just a node in diaspora and the epitome of deterritorialization without the fetters. In this scenario the former is all bad and the latter good to utopian perfection.

We do not here wish to contest the subjective preferences of the author/authors concerned, but let us say that depending on the vantage point of the 'intellectual' concerned, if the USA or Australia based (our Pole A), the glass looks half-empty, and if India or counter-diaspora based (our Pole B), the glass looks half-full. For instance, from the vantage point of an Indian academic, an equally plausible case can be made for multiple territorialization (m. t. for short) rather than d. t. The advantage of an m. t. perspective would be: (a) the economic dimension of immigration and settlement, e. g., the class background and investments in India of the diasporics would be studied, (b) the policies of the host society and the nation-state dimensions of the statuses of the diasporics would become clearer. Thus, for example, in Australia, multiculturalism, immigration quotas, English versus non-English speaking backgrounds and steps being taken to remedy the latter would be in the ken of one's study, and (c) the distinctive politics of the settlement society diasporics, e. g., their ethnic politics, perception of the 'niche' of opportunity, etc., would become clearer.

In my Field of Forces Table, the last set of contrasts between A & B is in terms of subliminal currents. This is an especially useful index because it shows how the elements of each sub-field are present in the other. Thus while tradition and holism are largely unrepresented in A, yet the existence of New Age religions, e. g., the marginalised but necessarily complementary (to economism in general) current of movements like the Hare Krishna play a role in settlement societies. On the other hand, if one took a realistic view of the currents of globalization and economic liberalization which are moving civilizational sites like India, China and Mexico the burgeoning middle classes and consumption of modernity by them (Breckenridge, 1995) belong to the twilight zone between early and late capitalism. Any particular instance of Indian diaspora will then be placed at different points in relation to this field of forces but with an area where the interpenetration between the sub-fields would be present.

2.6 Conclusion

It seems clear that there are dialectical, dialogical and reformist implications of the paradigm for the study of the spread and settlement of India minorities in the post-colonial context. It is apparent that analyses in terms of imperialism and colonialism which created a lot of heat in the 1960s through the 1980s are in dire need of being framed in the context of transnationality and globalisation which equally affects Indian populations in the former colonies and the metropolitan centres.

There is no doubt that in our analyses the historical and spatial aspects of particular diasporas should be taken into account but it is doubtful if a broad distinction between the POIs and NRIs is a useful tool in the cultural analysis of the horizontal or lateral dimensions of the Indian diaspora in a post-colonial context. In a certain sense, the *longue duree* perspective inherent in our heuristic distinction between civilizations and settlement societies subsumes, at an analytical plane, the distinctions between the past, present & the future of Indian diasporas. And yet another kind of relativity gets built into this theoretical perspective resulting from the locationality of the analyst. We have already had occasion to refer to this in respect of deterritorialisation and multiple territorialisation theses. However, this duality should be transcended in terms of the multi positionality view of the Indian diaspora. In writing about diaspora in general, one of the six characteristics mentioned by Safran is that “(the diasporics) continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to the homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship” (Safran, 1991:84). This ‘homing instinct’ is viewed by different, though complementary, perspectives of the ‘imaginary’ and the ‘imagined’ by the diasporic Indians and the Indians respectively. The empiricism of the latter and the emotional/mythic attitude of the former are both grist to the mill of the Indian politics of globalisation. If the Indian Indians try and take a ‘realistic view’ of the economic opportunities and networks of the diaspora, the diasporic Indians display a dogged attachment to the religious, linguistic, culinary and performative aspects of Indianness. Although there are resistance movements against racist and gender discrimination by the Indian diasporics (of. Brah, 1996 for U.K. : and Niranjana 1994 potentially in Trinidad & Tobago), there is overwhelming evidence of a largely pacifist orientation of ‘settler citizenship’ among the diasporic Indians the world over.

2.7 Further Reading

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Unit 3

Diasporic Communities of the World

Contents

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Understanding Diaspora
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Learning Objectives

The main objectives of this unit is to give:

- a comparative scenario of the different diasporas of the world;
- present a scenario whereby some generalities can be drawn about diasporas;
- understand specific situations and histories which make up individual diasporas; and
- be able to use some of the concept of diaspora studies to the understanding of different diasporas.

3.1 Introduction

People and communities have been migrating from place to place throughout history. The reasons for migration and movement have been many, from forced exile to seeking a better life through voluntary migration. While the immigrants adapt to the new place, to new circumstances, they also carry with them their culture, their way of life and memories and nostalgia for the old.

As mentioned in earlier, units the term Diaspora with the capital D was reserved for such movement of people especially the Jewish Diaspora. The Jewish community was forced to disperse throughout history for a variety of reasons. This initial reference to the Jewish Diaspora, is now extended to the Jewish community living outside the present state of Israel. The initial association of the term diaspora has now extended to all communities that are scattered through the globe. The term diaspora, without capitalization, thus, refers to the scattering of people, their language and culture from its original locale.

In this unit we will discuss the various diasporic communities and their context to give you an idea of the form and experience of diaspora defined as it is by specific experience and history. While there are many communities that have migrated over the past, some diasporas are known for their geographical spread, number, presence and influence. We are going to present a sampling of three diasporic communities, briefly discussing their specific situations. Since we are going to discuss the experience of Indian diasporas extensively we will not cover it in this unit.

We will start with the Jewish community, then take up the Chinese diaspora, and finally the African diaspora. We will briefly analyse the specific situations of these diasporas that will yield some broad generalizations. The choice of these three diasporas is in no way a comprehensive coverage, for there are numerous diasporas that are well worth an analyses but in order we to get a comprehensive, comparative picture we have chosen these three diasporas as broadly representing certain types of diasporas, to fully grasp the comparative situations of these communities. Let us first understand some basic features of diasporas and some categories through which we would like to analyse in the following section.

3.2 Understanding Diaspora

The reasons for migration of people from their settlement of origin-homeland are many. Sometimes it is forced, sometimes voluntary. Though we can make broad references to the possible reasons for people to migrate, the situations of migration are often very complicated. What may seem voluntary may actually be force of circumstances, like poverty, bad economy at home, in combination with certain pull factors which work to motivate migrants to look for greener pastures. While it is difficult to categorise migrants easily, in *Global Diasporas*, Cohen adopts a historical approach and identifies five different categories of diasporas, based on the forces underlying the original population dispersion: as victim (for example African-American, Jewish and Armenian), imperial (British), labor (Indian), trade (Chinese) and cultural (Caribbean). In some of these cases, such as that of the Chinese or we might take the example of the Senegalese vendors in the streets of Paris, Milan or New York City, there have been considerable population movements on a voluntary basis, not as the result of a defining traumatic event.

You will probably realize that the reasons are far more complicated when we talk about some of the diasporas in this unit. What is evident in our contemporary situation is that whatever be the reasons for migration, the level of mobility among people has increased tremendously. This increase in migration and consequent diasporic community presence in their host country has been attributed to globalisation and the increasing connectivity in the present world, whether through transportation, global communication network and globalisation of economy or media.

While there is increasing migration it is important to note that not all people who migrate can be classified as diasporic communities. Gabriel Sheffer in his book *Diaspora Politics* argues that a crucial point in trying to separate the transient migrant such as tourist asylum seekers, migrant guest worker, who live for a substantial time, from those who are part of a diasporic community. He, therefore, says that the question that needs to be posed is “why their (diasporas) members decide not only to maintain and nurture their ethno-national identities but also to be identified as such and to organize and act within the framework of diaspora organizations and to preserve contacts with their homeland and other communities of their homeland” (Sheffer, 2003:17). It is obvious that many multiple-cultural, social and economic-factors explain why, how and to what extent communities with a perceived sense of identity become significant collective forces, both with reference to their homeland and to host countries.

Steven Vertovec (1999) identifies three broad meanings of the term ‘diaspora’ as it has been increasingly used by many disciplines and by many scholars.

These meanings include: 'diasporas as social forms', 'diaspora as types of consciousness', and 'diaspora as modes of cultural production'. These aspects that Vertovec points out help is in locating the meaning of diaspora and how these communities express these aspects as we can see from some of the examples we have in the following box which have been brought out very succinctly in the magazine *The Economist*.

Box 3.1: The Influencing Diaspora

Why does Macedonia have no embassy in Australia? Why might a mountain in northern Greece soon be disfigured by an image of Alexander the Great 73 metres (nearly 240 feet) high? Who paid for the bloody war between Ethiopia and Eritrea? How did Croatia succeed in winning early international recognition as an independent country?

The short answer to each of these questions is a diaspora—a community of people living outside their country of origin. Macedonia has no embassy in Australia because Greeks think the former Yugoslav republic that calls itself Macedonia has purloined the name from them, and the Greek vote counts for a lot in Australia. So, as a sop to local Greeks outraged by its decision to recognise the upstart Macedonia, the Australian government has not yet allowed Macedonia to open an embassy in Canberra. The case of the missing embassy is an extreme, but typical, example of how diasporas have long exerted their influence: they have lobbied in their adopted countries for policies favourable to the homeland.

But now something new is taking place: diasporas are increasingly exerting influence on the politics of the countries they have physically, but not emotionally, abandoned. An example of this trend is the case of the monumental Alexander. The Greek diaspora is so proud of Alexander the Great, whose Macedonian kingdom encompassed what are now parts of northern Greece, and so keen to establish him as Greek, that it wants to carve his effigy on a cliff face on Mount Kerdyllion. The Greek authorities in Athens are horrified, but the Alexander the Great Foundation, based in Chicago, is eager to get chipping, and says its members will cover the \$45m cost. Grotesque as it may consider the scheme—the monument would be four times the size of the American presidents carved on Mount Rushmore—the Greek government may yield. It is to rich Greek-Americans that it turns when it wants to promote its interests in America.

Similarly, it was to its citizens abroad that Eritrea looked when it decided to wage a pointless border war between 1998 and 2000. Small, poor and just six years old, the country was in no position to fight its much bigger neighbour, Ethiopia. But of Eritrea's 3.8m people, about 333,000 were émigrés and, astonishingly, the government was able to tax their personal income at 2% a year. This helped to finance, and thus to perpetuate, a terrible war.

Croats abroad also did their bit for their country, both before and after independence in 1991. In the early 1990s, not long after European communism had collapsed but before the Yugoslav federation had begun to disintegrate, the cry went up in Croatia for Croats of the diaspora to come home. Some did, returning to fight in the war that broke out in 1991. Other Croats abroad raised money: as much as \$30m had been mustered by 1991. Meanwhile, Croat exiles were lobbying hard in Germany, which in turn bounced the European Union into early recognition of the new state. *Fiercely nationalist exiles forked out at least \$4m for the 1990 election campaign of Franjo Tudjman, Croatia's arch-nationalist president, and in return were awarded*

representation in parliament in 1992, by which time the country had won its independence. Twelve out of the 120 seats were allotted to diaspora Croats, who cast their votes in consulates abroad, or in community centres, clubs and churches designated by the authorities in Zagreb. By contrast, only seven seats were set aside for Croatia's ethnic minorities. (Source: *The Economist*, Jan 2nd 2003)

Scholars have pointed out that an important diasporic element is the affinity and nostalgia and longing for home, expressed both literally, culturally and metaphorically. Often enough this need for home and connection to it is considered an important ingredient for considering a community a diaspora. But not all communities are homogenous enough to have a very strong sense of consciousness as *a community* to begin with and yet still have a sense of affiliation, however tenuous to a sense of belonging to geographical space that need not necessarily be a nation. Thus we have the Africans who are too diverse and have differing experiences but who are still treated as diaspora that is worthy of analyses.

Let us now look at some of the diasporic experience to see how we can better understand the various concepts that we have discussed in our unit one, and the various theories and approaches that have been employed by scholars to understand diasporas of the world. As we narrate and analyse some of these diasporas, we strongly encourage you to relate the discussions and concepts from our previous two units to these situations.

3.3 Diasporas of the World

In recent times there has been large movement of people, more than ever in history. Increasing connectivity in the globe has facilitated the movement. The speedy transportation and revolutions in communication technology have made it possible for people to form networks and alliances with kin groups and friends who then help facilitate the migration of people. The socio-economic conditions and oppressive political systems, genocide and war have also added to the increase in migration of people who are looking for a better life outside their homelands.

While this century and the previous ones have witnessed massive migratory trends, it is not however that migration of people is new. People have always moved from one place to another throughout history. Some have painstakingly preserved the culture they carried with them in their host countries, while others have got assimilated to some extent or totally. Thus, for instance, the Jewish diaspora, the Greek diaspora and the Armenian diaspora go back to antiquity, and are the archetypical diaspora who have preserved their distinct identity. There were many other diasporas from ancient times like the Phoenicians, Assyrians, Akkadians, Amorites, Phrygians, to name a few. Many of these established elaborate networks that persisted for long and which helped preserve their diasporic identities. But they gradually got assimilated into their host countries in totality or peripherally and they are not heard of in the contemporary world except for an occasional expression from the Assyrians.

Classifying Diasporas

As diasporas are on the increase there has been a need to understand some of these diasporas. Some, like Cohen, have tried to categorise them in terms

of the forces underlying the original dispersion (see previous section). Gabriel Shaffer in his book *Diaspora Politics* identifies diasporas in terms of their basic identity or linkage or non-linkage with the nation state. He further makes a distinction between large groups of people who are united in terms of their religion or affiliation against those who are united in terms of primordial affiliation such as ethnicity and also nation: he calls then ethno-national diasporas. Let see what Shaffer means by these distinctions.

According to him the state linked diasporas are those “that are in host countries but are connected to societies of their own ethnic origin that constitute a majority in their own in established states.” By stateless diasporas he means those groups of dispersed people “who have been unable to establish their own independent state” He includes in these categories groups such as the Palestenians, the Kurds, the Basques, the Sikhs, the Tibetans and many other such groups. He also includes such groups that are complex for they did not ever have distinct connection to a specific geographical place; these groups are the Gypsies, the black diaspora in Europe, South America and Latin America and in a sense also the African Americans. Shaffer adds: “These are borderline cases, because it is difficult for the majority of each of these diasporas to unequivocally define where their homeland is. Similarly under the current circumstances, these entities have neither the wish nor the power or resources to achieve the goal of establishing a nation state (Shaffer, 2003:74).

Shaffer makes another distinction in terms of the relative age of these diasporas. “Here distinction must be made among historical (or classical) diasporas, modern (or recent) diasporas and incipient diasporas(i.e., diasporas in the making, groups of migrants who are in the initial stages of forming organized diasporas)

According to Shaffer historical diasporas such as Jews, Greeks, Armenians and Chinese “emerged in antiquity or during the middle ages and now they have become linked to nation-states that were created in much later periods. In the following table Shaffer gives some estimated numbers of various diasporas whose dispersal can be traced back to many centuries ago. Following this table (Table 2.1) we have another table (2.2), which indicates the figures for what Shaffer calls modern diasporas: those diasporas which were established in the 17th century and who have fully fledged state linked, diasporas such as the Italian Polish, Irish etc. The third table (2.3) shows figures and host countries for emerging diasporas or the incipient diasporas, who are diasporas which have been dormant but have revived. They have become organized in their host countries and in their old homelands. Examples include notable segments of Polish, Croatian, Slovenian, Ukrainian and some Scandinavian groups in the U.S.A. and Australia.

It should however be noted that these are estimates only and not actual figures of diasporas. There are many difficulties in profiling different diasporas of the world and in gathering exact figures. To mention a few: the confusion between settlers and sojourners, migrants and diasporans and those who decided to join diasporic organizations by choice. Many times the confusion arises as each nation state has its own criteria for listing a group as such and such. Some have religious criteria, some ethnic and some others linguist. We do want you to get a broad picture of the different diasporas. So we present the following tables and categories that Gabriel Shaffer has come up with.

Diaspora	Number	Main host countries and areas
Armenian	5,500,000	Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Germany, France, US, Canada, Australia, Georgia, Russia, Ukraine and central Asian States
Chinese	35,000,000	Burma, Vietnam, Malaysia, Korea, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, US, Canada, Australia, Peru, South America, and Europe
German	2,500,000	US, Australia, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe
Greek	4,000,000	Albania, Cyprus, Turkey, US, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Ethiopia, Germany, Western Europe, Middle East
Indian	9,000,000	Fiji, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Burma, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, South Africa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Trinidad, Tobago, US, UK, Yemen, United Arab Emirates.
Jewish	8,000,000	US, Canada, South Africa, UK, France, Australia, Former Soviet Union, Latin America, eastern Europe

Table 3.1: Modern Diasporas (Estimated Numbers in Main Host Countries)

Diaspora	Numbers	Main Host Countries and Areas
African-American	25,000,000	U.S.
Black Atlantic	1,500,000	U.S., Canada, U.K
Hungarian	4,500,000	Czechoslovakia, Romania, U.S., Canada, former Yugoslavia, former Yugoslavia, former Soviet republics
Iranian	3,500,000	Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, U.K., Germany, U.S., Canada, Australia, Central America, South America, western Europe
Irish	10,000,000	U.S., U.K.
Italian	8,000,000	Britain, Argentina, Brazil, Germany, U.S., France, Australia, western Europe
Japanese	3,000,000	U.S., Hawaii, Brazil, Peru, Canada
Kurdish	14,000,000	Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Germany, France, other western European Countries

Lebanese	2,500,000	Egypt, Syria, Persian Gulf States, (Christian) Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, U.S., Australia, Canada, France, western Africa
Polish	4,500,000	U.S., Canada, western Europe former Soviet republics
Turkish	3,500,000	Germany, Bulgaria, Holland, Cyprus, Greece, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, U.S., Austria

Table 3.2: Incipient Diasporas
(Estimated Numbers and Main Host Countries)

Diaspora	Numbers	Main Host Countries and Areas
Albanian	1,000,000	Greece, Germany, Denmark, Swen, Norway, Hollan, Italy, U.S., former Yougoslavia
Algerian	1,500,000	France, Germany, Tunisia, Morocco
Bulgarian	500,000	U.S., various states in western Europe, Former Soviet republics
Colombian	250,000	U.S. Israel
Croatian	350,000	U.S, Canada, Australia
Cuban	750,000	U.S
Czech	2,500,000	U.S, various western European states Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, U.S., Canada Persian Gulf states, western European states
Egyptian	1,000,000	Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, U.S., Canada, Persian Gulf states
Filipino	2,000,000	U.S. Canada, Persian Gulf states, western European states
Israeli	750,000	U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia
Haitian	750,000	U.S. Canada, Bahamas
Jamaican	300,000	U.S.
Korean	3,500,000	China, Japan, U.S, Australia, former Soviet republics
Latvian	120,000	U.S., Canada, Australia
Lithuanian	850,000	U.S, Canada, Australia
Malayan	5,000,000	India, Thailand, Singapore
Mexican	20,000,000	U.S., Canada
Moroccan	1,500,000	France, Germany, Holland, Spain, Belgium, Denmark
Pakistani	750,000	United Kingdom, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Persian Gulf states
Portuguese	2,000,000	France Canada, U.S. U.K.
Puerto Rican	600,000	U.S.
Russian	25,000,000	US., Australia, western Europe, former Soviet Republics

Serbian	130,000	U.S., Canada, Australia
Slovak	1,500,000	Hungary, U.S, Canada, former Yugoslavia
Slovenian	200,000	U.S., Canada
Spanish	1,000,000	France, Germany, Switzerland, U.S., U.K., Canada
Syrian	750,000	Argentina, Brazil, U.S.
Tamil	3,200,000	Sri Lanka, U.S., Canada, Australia, western Europe
Ukrainian	1,800,000	Poland, Estonia, U.S., Canada, Australia
Vietnamese	1,000,000	Kampuchea, Japan, U.S., Canada

Reflection and Action 3.1

Do you think the Indian diaspora is highly influential in securing a foothold for themselves in their host country and also in influencing politics back home in India? Write your answer with substantive examples.

3.4 The Jewish Diaspora

The word Diaspora with the capital 'D' was associated with the Jewish community, as we mentioned earlier. "As late as 1975, *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defined the term diaspora as 'the settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile', as the 'area outside Palestine settled by Jews' and as 'the Jews living outside Palestine or modern Israel' until its 1993 edition. The term 'diaspora' being equated with the Jewish community is not very surprising because they are one of the oldest communities to have dispersed, endured and throughout their turbulent history they have held on to the notion of homeland. We will give here a brief survey of Jewish dispersal through history to understand why they are the archetypical diasporic community.

Jewish Dispersal in Ancient Times

Following Shaffer, we will not discuss whether there is historical validity to stories of Jewish diaspora but instead look for a narrative that fits the sociopsychological anchoring, whether through parables or myths, for a Jewish identity and the situation of the diaspora. Shaffer writes that despite the tribal origins of the Jewish population, the Jewish population set about a nation-building process which brought in a solidarity and coalescence of Jewish identity. He writes: In their emerging myth which became significant elements in the collective national memory and later were included in the Bible, the initial conquest and settlement in Eretz Israel were kept closely linked to the nation's founding fathers; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The strong attachment to the new homeland was extremely important because that was the locus of both the earliest process of nation building and gradual development of the Jewish monotheistic creed and formal religion. Eventually the national and religious elements became inextricably intertwined and suffused.

Let us keep this as our background and quickly go through a succession of Jewish exiles which make up the diaspora. In pure historical terms one of the earliest exiles is set at the time of the Assyrian invasion of northern

Israel, in 720 BCE. After the Assyrian conquest of the kingdom the elites of the Jewish community were expelled to the peripheries of the kingdom. The Babylonian conquest in 586 BCE led to further dispersal and scattering of Jews. Partly because of the need for skilled labour and artisans in the Babylonian empire and partly because of the moderate religious, social and political view of Babylonia, the Jews managed to prosper reasonably. As more and more Jews diversified in terms of occupation and even through settlements they established networks among themselves and networks back home. As result of these, Babylon became the center of Jewish prosperity as well as cultural-religious activity (Cohen, 1997:4).

Around 330 BCE, all of Asia Minor and Major part of the Middle East came under Hellenic rule with Alexander conquering territories. Scholars feel that the Greek occupation brought the dispersed Jews together through stronger networks that were established in the Hellenic empire. The Roman Empire conquered Judea and completely destroyed the temples of Jerusalem. And especially after the Jewish revolt between 66-70 BCE, they came down very hard on Judea. When Judea became a Roman province, "the settlement of several Grecian and Roman colonies in Judea indicated the express intention of the Roman government to prevent the political regeneration of the Jewish nation." Nevertheless, forty years later, the Jews put forth efforts to recover their former freedom but failed. With this the Jews no longer had a reason to cling to a soil where the recollection of their past grandeur only helped to render more bitter the spectacle of their present humiliation.

Jewish Diaspora in Medieval and Contemporary Times

The destruction of Judea had a decisive influence on the dispersal of the Jewish community. They soon moved away from the traditional areas into Europe. They were spread far and wide in the entire Roman Empire, into Spain and in France. With the coming of Christianity, Jews faced further persecution that again prompted further dispersal into Northern and Eastern Europe.

In the 9th century A.D. the Roman Empire had managed to draw all its provinces under a common canonical law. Restrictions were imposed on interactions with Jews. The Church ordained rules for believers and for their treatment of non-believers. Intercourse with Jews was almost entirely forbidden to believers, and thereby a chasm was created between the adherents of the two religions, which could not be bridged. This chasm turned the Jews into organizing in ghettos. The Crusades in the middle ages added to the insecurity of the Jews.

In the First Crusade (1096), flourishing communities on the Rhine and the Danube were utterly destroyed; see German Crusade, 1096. In the Second Crusade (1147), the Jews in France suffered especially. Philip Augustus treated them with exceptional severity. In his days the Third Crusade took place (1188); and the preparations for it proved to be momentous for the English Jews. After unspeakable trials, Jews were banished from England in 1290; and 365 years passed before they were allowed to settle again in the British isles. The Jews were also subjected to attacks by the Shepherd Crusades of 1251 and 1320 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews_in_the_Middle_Ages). Everywhere in the Christian Occident Jews were persecuted. The Jews, who were driven out of England in 1290, out of France in 1394, and out of numerous districts of Germany, Italy, and the Balkan peninsula between 1350

and 1450, were scattered in all directions, and fled preferably to the new Slavic kingdoms, where for the time being other religions were still tolerated. Here they found a sure refuge under benevolent rulers and acquired a certain prosperity, in the enjoyment of which the study of the Talmud was followed with renewed vigor. Together with their faith, they took with them the German language and customs, which they have cultivated in a Slavic environment with unexampled faithfulness up to the present time.

During the Renaissance and Enlightenment period there was more opening up of the Jewish community and greater participation in secular life. There was movement to come out of the ghettos, both literally and metaphorically. The movement is called Haskalah.

Box 3.2: Jewish Enlightenment

Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, was a movement among European Jews in the late 18th century that advocated adopting enlightenment values, pressing for better integration into European society, and increasing education in secular studies, Hebrew, and Jewish history. Haskalah in this sense marked the beginning of the wider engagement of:

European Jews with the secular world, resulting, ultimately, in the first Jewish political movements and the struggle for Jewish emancipation. Haskalah also resulted in a revival of Jewish secular identity, with an emphasis on Jewish history and Jewish identity. The result was engagement of the Jews in a variety of ways with the countries in which they lived, including the struggle for Jewish emancipation and the birth of new Jewish political movements, and ultimately the development of Zionism in the face of the persecutions of the late 1800s. (source: [http : //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haskalah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haskalah))

The changes caused by the Haskalah movement coincided with rising revolutionary movements throughout Europe. Despite these movements, only France, Britain, and the Netherlands had granted the Jews in their countries equal rights with gentiles after the French Revolution in 1796. Elsewhere in Europe, especially where Jews were most concentrated in Central and Eastern Europe, Jews were not granted equal rights. It was in the revolutionary atmosphere of the mid-19th century that many movements would take place. While at one level Jews were trying to come out of their Ghetto existence, they were forced to go back to Ghettos during the Nazi occupation of 1939–45. Nazi Germany was one of the worst in the history of persecution of Jews. The genocide of Jews was state sponsored pogrom. It is estimated that about 12 million Jews were exterminated during this time. The ones who survived somehow managed to escape to the U.S.A. or South America, and many to their land of hope, Zion. By 1944 there was a huge Jewish population in Palestine, which was administered as a British province. After the holocaust the Zionist movement was the movement among the diaspora which was responsible for creation of the state of Israel. The Jewish diaspora and those who stayed continued to see the land as their spiritual home and as the Promised Land; there is no evidence of any interruption of the Jewish presence there for the last three millennia. For generations, the universal theme carried mostly religious overtones due to the belief that the Jewish people would return to Zion. The Zionist movement is noteworthy for its pan-Jewish integrating element. The aim of the Zionist movement was: the unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of their ancestral and Biblical

homeland in Israel. The movement believed in the ingathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland, the Land of Israel, and in the preservation of the identity of the Jewish people through the fostering of Jewish and Hebrew studies and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values. It fought for the protection of Jewish rights everywhere. Zionism, or the idea of a restored national homeland and common identity for the Jews, had already started to take shape by the mid-1800s.

Following World War II, the British announced their intention to withdraw from the British mandate of Palestine. The United Nations General Assembly proposed the partition of Palestine into two states, an Arab state and a Jewish state, with Jerusalem to be under United Nations administration. Most Jews in Palestine accepted the proposal, while most of the Arabs in Palestine rejected it. The Arabs totally rejected the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine (however, they were not under any legal obligation to accept the plan as General Assembly resolutions are not binding).

Violence between Arab and Jewish communities erupted almost immediately. Towards the end of the British mandate, the Jews planned to declare a separate state, a development the Arabs were determined to prevent. On May 14, 1948, the last British forces withdrew from Palestine, and the Jews, led by David Ben-Gurion, declared the creation of the State of Israel, in accordance with the 1947 UN Partition Plan.

The Arab-Israel conflict is an ongoing conflict today. We strongly encourage you to follow up this conflict in detail. We would not like to go into the details at this stage. We would stop here and look at another major diaspora of the world, namely the Chinese diaspora.

Reflection and Action 3.2

In what way does the present Arab-Israeli conflict reflect the long history of Jewish diaspora and their exiled state?

3.5 The Chinese Diaspora

The Chinese diaspora is one of the largest diasporas in the world. In sheer numbers and spread they surpass all other communities who have migrated from their original locale or homeland. There are an estimated 33 million Chinese who have migrated from mainland China, which now includes Hong Kong and Macau, and from Taiwan. Like the Greeks, Jews and Armenians, the Chinese too can be considered diaspora with historical roots going back to the medieval times. Many diasporas as we mentioned have a very strong connection to their homeland and aid in the strengthening of the nation-state. Though the Chinese diaspora is connected to the nation-state of the People's Republic of China their connection to the nation and state is far more indirect than of the Jews with Israel. Let us examine the case of Chinese diaspora in the sections below.

Chinese Diaspora through the Past

The Chinese people have a long history of migration overseas. The most noticeable migration happened during the Ming dynasty. Most of the Overseas Chinese (OC) were Han Chinese.

Box 3.3: Han Chinese

The term “Han Chinese” is used to distinguish the majority from the various minorities in and around China. The name comes from the Han Dynasty which succeeded the short-lived Qin Dynasty that reunited China. It was during the Qin Dynasty and the Han Dynasty that the various tribes of China began to feel that they belonged to the same ethnic group, compared with “barbarians” around them. In addition, the Han Dynasty is considered a high point in Chinese civilization, able to project its power far into Central and Northeast Asia. There are many subgroups within this overarching notion of Han identity however. The Han Chinese are the largest ethnic group in mainland China, 92% of Chinese are Hans. They are also the single largest ethnic group in the world—about 19% of the entire human population of the globe.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Han_Chinese

During the Ming Dynasty, Heng He, an envoy sent the Chinese to trade overseas through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. Many of them never returned. The next wave of migration seems to have happened during the Yuan Dynasty, where the rulers were interested in setting up trade colonies. By the 14th century, there were Chinese settlements in Cambodia, Java, Sumatra, and Singapore. In the 15th century, the Chinese established colonies in Thailand and nearly hundred years after that in the Philippines.

Chinese Dispersion during 17th century was far more widespread than in the previous period. The colonial period saw a demand for labour in the Western world which took Chinese to these countries. The consolidation of colonies in Asia by the French and English saw increase in migration. “Some 6.3 million Chinese were estimated to have left Hong Kong alone between 1868 and 1939, and large numbers also left Xiamen (Amoy) and Shantou (Swatow). It was a movement dominated by men going overseas to work as indentured laborers, the infamous coolie trade, although others traveled more independently to seek their fortunes in the gold fields of Australia and the west coasts of North America and New Zealand. Some five million of the 6.3 million who left through Hong Kong were men. The majority moved to the economies in Southeast Asia that were being opened up by British and French colonial interests”(Skeldon, 2004)

(Source: www.migrationinformation.org).

Many who went abroad went as sojourners-people who went in the hope of making it rich, returning, marrying and settling down. Though many could not return for whatever reason, the fact that these émigrés went as sojourners, helped maintain some contact with the homeland and kindle the longing and nostalgia for home and added to the circular nature of the migration pattern, unlike people who migrated for reasons of settling as did the Europeans to the New World and to Australia. The fact that many could not get assimilated into their host country and the discrimination they faced racially and culturally further honed their sense of diasporic identity. Except for Thailand and the Philippines, where they are fairly integrated, most societies including South Asian countries did not want the Chinese to be part of them. They feared their business acumen; you find those fears even now in countries like Malaysia for instance.

“The marginalization of most Chinese extended to their virtual exclusion from entry into the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand from

the 1880s, because of racist legislation that was not rescinded until after World War II. Migration from China from the late 19th century until the late 1940s was therefore, with some notable periods of interruption, directed primarily towards the then European colonies of Southeast Asia. Male dominance, sojourner mentality, exclusion, and marginality gave this early Chinese migration an “exceptional” character, one that was important for the migrations that were to come later”(ibid).

Migration after World War II

After the formation of the Republic of China, migration was strictly restricted except as students to the Soviet Union or as specialist workers to developing countries in Africa. Most of the migration was internal. A million people migrated to the then British colony of Hong Kong (almost half a million entered Hong Kong between 1977 and 1982, for example). And another million fled to Taiwan.

Most of the migration came from the peripheral Chinese world from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Indonesia. Most of these early migrants were unskilled workers heading to Western Europe especially to Britain. But with America, Australia and New Zealand opening up in the 1960s and 70s there was a different kind of migration, of skilled, educated professionals and their families. The policies in host countries, which went past their earlier racist notion, was one of the chief reasons for the spurt in migration. Also, the Chinese nation, especially after the reforms of 1979, stopped its inward looking policies of earlier decades and made efforts to avail of every opportunity that came its way. Apart from the more permanent settlers they are guest workers and students who travel abroad. Chinese students are among the leading student population in Western countries especially in Canada, the U.S.A. and Japan. “From 215 foreign students from China in Canada in 1980, the number increased to 11,138 in 2001. In the United States in 2002-2003, there were some 64,757 students from China in degree-granting institutions. Students from China have also been going to Japan for a considerable time, accounting for about half of the 64,000 foreign students in that country in 2000”.

These diasporic communities were varied in their context and their sense of identity was similarly varied.

Identity: Assimilation and Relationship with Home

Overseas Chinese vary widely as to their degree of assimilation, their interactions with the surrounding communities (see Chinatown), and their relationship with China. In Thailand, overseas Chinese have largely intermarried and assimilated with the native community. In Myanmar, the Chinese rarely intermarry (even amongst different Chinese linguistic groups), but have largely adopted the Burmese culture whilst maintaining Chinese culture affinities. Indonesia, Thailand, and Myanmar are among the countries that do not allow birth names to be registered in Chinese. In Vietnam, ethnic Chinese are required to have Vietnamized spellings of their names. For example, Hu Jintao would become “Ho Cam Đào”.

Very often, there is no distinct number of the Chinese population in these countries. On the other hand, in Malaysia and Singapore, overseas Chinese have maintained a distinct communal identity, though the rate and state of being assimilated to the local, in this case a multicultural society, is currently

en par with that of other Chinese communities (see Peranakan). In the Philippines, many younger Overseas Chinese are well assimilated, whereas the older ones tend to be considered as “foreigners”. More recent overseas Chinese immigrants have been despised by many Filipinos due to incidents of some selling illegal drugs, as well as being high profile smugglers. Chinese have also brought a cultural influence to some other countries such as Vietnam, where many customs have been adopted by native Vietnamese.

The relationship of the home with the émigrés in mainland China and in Taiwan has been evolving and it is very complex. Earlier part of communist nation building expected Chinese to have one singular loyalty, that is to China. The émigrés were looked at with suspicion as being capitalist infiltrators. After Deng Xiaoping’s reforms the Chinese diaspora is courted by the state to help in the economic development process of China. Thus a lot of facilities and special provisions are provided for them.

While the above two varieties of diasporas are linked to the idea of home which was both a promise (for a long time for the Jewish community) and reality, as empires and nation state existed for the Chinese, the African experience is different. Let us briefly look in the African diaspora in our next section.

Reflection and Action 3.3

Do you think the Chinese diaspora is similar to the Indian diaspora and if so, in what way?

3.6 The African Diaspora

The African diaspora or Afro diaspora is the diaspora created by the movements and culture of Africans and their descendants throughout the world, to places such as the Americas (including the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America), Europe and Asia. The majority of the African diaspora is descended from people taken into slavery, with the largest population living in the United States. In recent years they include a rising number of voluntary emigrants and asylum-seekers as well.

More broadly, the African diaspora comprises the indigenous peoples of Africa and their descendants, wherever they are in the world. Pan-Africanists often also consider other Negroid (or “Africoid”) peoples as diasporic “African peoples.” These groups include Negritos of the Andamanese islands, Philippines and the Malay Peninsula (Orang Ash), New Guinea, certain peoples of the Indian subcontinent, and the aboriginal peoples of Melanesia and Micronesia.

The African Union has defined the African diaspora as “of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.” Its constitutive act declares that it shall “invite and encourage the full participation of the African diaspora as an important part of our Continent, in the building of the African Union.” St Claire Drake (1996) feels that this feeling of Pan Africanism is an important criterion for recognizing it as diaspora. However pertinent questions need to be asked pertaining to identifying the major characteristics of the African diaspora. Do people of the diaspora share an emotional bond? Are they aware of the alienation that may accompany the voluntary or involuntary

leaving of one's homeland? How prevalent is the sense of return to the homeland? Once again, why do some return and others do not? Then there is always the important issue of identity. Moving from one's traditional society and culture to that of a host area conjure up all types of issues related to identity. For example, a West African taken from his home and enslaved in Jamaica for several years is then transported to a household in Britain. Who is this person? Is he African, Jamaican, or English? One cannot properly understand the status, condition, or mindset of this individual without recognizing the origins and journeys around the triangle. To be sure, this person's varied experiences shaped his or her sense of self and worldview. Africa is not a homogenous continent. Therefore, the experiences of peoples of the diaspora should not be homogenized. Linkages and connections within the diaspora may be identified but human experiences are usually different.

3.7 Conclusion

We have tried to look at some of the diasporas of the world in this unit. We have tried to introduce to you the tumultuous history of the Jewish Diaspora, one of the oldest diasporas in the world. We have seen how the Jewish Diaspora and the identity stemming from a nation state are so intrinsically tied up. Whereas the Chinese diaspora is a little different, ethnicity ties them together besides the identity of belonging to a nation. In the case of the African diaspora there are many nuanced aspects that hold a very disparate and varied sections of people who have ancestry and perhaps a similar history holding together. In our previous two units we have tried to grapple with some of the concepts and perspectives. These perspectives and the concepts, as you may be aware, are equally applicable to some of the diasporas we have talked about in this unit.

3.8 Further Reading

Brah, Avtar 1996. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, London & New York: Routledge

Cohen, R 1997. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, Washington University Press: Washington