



A study on Unpleasant Condition of Women in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

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Abstract

*Diasporic writing holds a prominent position between nations and cultures. The authors reside on the periphery of two nations. The search for identity, uprooting and rerouting, nostalgia, a sense of estrangement from society, a sense of discrimination, a sense of loneliness, etc. are the main characteristics of diasporic works. They make an effort to adapt and integrate into the new society, but they have trouble doing so entirely and wholeheartedly. The diasporic group may, at last, experience discrimination. Indian English authors like Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharathi Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, and Anita Desai have all found a home in diasporic literature. One of the preeminent female writers in Indian English literature is Jhumpa Lahiri, an American by immigration, British by birth, and Indian by descent. Lahiri is intrigued by a sizable segment of the Indian new generation because she is an immigrant. Americans are known for their customs, morals, and interpersonal interactions. They also respect family and how it binds a person to his country. As a detached spectator of the daily activities in the lives of her characters, Lahiri, a dispassionate recorder of the lives in a global society, continues to write. Her immigrant characters exhibit dual vision and self-aggrandize in a bicultural setting. Her writings depict the various difficulties that Indians who have immigrated to America confront. In her book *The Namesake*, she contrasts the experiences of two generations of expatriates: Ashoke and Ashima, who are resistant to Americanization, and Gogol and Sonia, who feel a need to fit in.*

Keywords: *The Namesake, cultures, Diasporic writing, Unpleasant Condition.*

INTRODUCTION:

Historically, the term "Diaspora" has been used in a Jewish context, when persecution and deportation led to the dispersion of Jews away from their home land while still harbouring the hope that they would one day be able to return. The notion of Diaspora is useful in the research of migration and settlement outside national borders, despite its lack of precision in some respects. One crucial aspect of the concept of diaspora is the preservation of cultural traditions in the host country. Nowadays, studies on Indians living abroad are conducted under the umbrella of Diaspora Studies. The vast majority of books and articles about the Indian diaspora focus on topics like Indian immigration, Indian economic and cultural experiences, and Indian adaptation and assimilation into their new homes.

Humans can draw strength from their hope for a better tomorrow and a happily ever after, despite the fact that they know full well that such an ideal is impossible to achieve. Migrating is a difficult task for those who are trying to improve their standard of living by forcing themselves to abandon familiar surroundings and embrace unfamiliar ones. As they try to settle down and adjust, they feel a cultural and emotional void along with pangs of nostalgia, loss, and the ache of obligation.

The literature of the diaspora is an important bridge between different nations and cultures. The authors' home is on the border between two nations. The main aspects of diasporic works include the search for identity, uprooting and rerouting, nostalgia, alienation, discrimination, loneliness, and so on.

Whether driven by politics, economics, or a simple desire to raise a family, people move to new areas for a variety of reasons. The upheaval caused by these changes caused widespread distress. The next challenge is cultural, since the settlers will need to adjust to a new way of life in their adopted community. They make some attempts at assimilation, but they have a hard time really embracing the new culture. At long last, the diaspora has an opportunity to experience discrimination for themselves.

Anita Desai, Amitav Ghosh, Bharathi Mukherjee, and Jhumpa Lahiri, all of whom write in English, have found a home in the literature of the Indian diaspora. Their work has garnered international attention. They've found their place in the world.



They feel homesick for the comforts and cosines of their original country, despite the fact that they are in an intellectually challenging environment on foreign terrain. The breadth and depth of the issue of diaspora are reflected in even a cursory examination of the works of Indian diasporic writers. They don't detach themselves from their original land, and they don't adjust to life on the other one. As a result of their deeply embedded local society, they find themselves at odds with the alien one. The struggles of outsiders like refugees, asylum seekers, and emigrants are reflected in their works. Loss, social isolation, loneliness, and a yearning for home are all major themes in works of Diasporic literature.

One of the preeminent women writers in Indian English Literature is Jhumpa Lahiri, who is of Indian descent but was born in the United Kingdom and immigrated to the United States. Lahiri, herself an immigrant, has a special affinity with the vast majority of India's millennial age. Americans their customs, values, and connections, as well as the importance of family and how it binds a man to his hometown. Lahiri, as a dispassionate historian of life in a global society, maintains the perspective of a neutral spectator of the mundane happenings in her characters' lives. Her immigrant characters see the world in two perspectives at once and confidently claim their place in both. Her writing addresses the myriad problems that American Indians living overseas encounter.

Ashoke and Ashima, the novel's parents, are not interested in being Americanized, but their children, Gogol and Sonia, struggle with the desire to fit in. The novel, the saga of the Ganguli family in Calcutta and Boston, depicts the hardships endured by the family, the psychological disturbance and uprooting they experience, and the revealing of the experiences, perceptions, hopes, and aspirations that traumatise the psyche, the maturation process, and the development of an individual's sense of self. An homage to the Indian ladies who gave up their prime to care for their families at home. This essay focuses on Ashima and the other female characters in the novel who face difficult circumstances.

The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri is a cross-cultural, multi-generational tale that explores the struggles, hopes, and problems of Indian immigrants caught between their home country and the United States. Ashima Bhaduri, a degree student, gets betrothed to Ashoke Ganguli of Alipre and changes her name to Ashima Ganguli in the novel Namesake. They uproot to Boston following their nuptials. Ashima Ganguli, distraught and homesick and physically and emotionally removed from her ancestral home, opens the novel by attempting to recreate the flavour of her favourite Indian snack and, via this act, to piece together her own history. To relax, she reads Bengali poetry, short tales, and essays, which often make her reflect on happier times in her life.

The major themes of The Namesake revolve around Ashima's experience as an immigrant, issues of identity, the conflict between India and the United States, and between family tradition and individual freedom, the generational gap, the relationship between parents and children, and the precariousness of the immigrants' status. When it comes to social, cultural, religious, and ideological difficulties, Ashima is a stand-in for the majority of female expats who are hesitant to modify or adapt to the host country's culture.

Ashima and others of the first generation have a particularly hard time adapting to their new home. In this strange nation, she had no one to comfort her during her pregnancy. Having children is a wonderful accomplishment for any woman, but being a mother as a refugee in a foreign place can be incredibly challenging. Although there were three other American ladies in the next room, she was the only person of her race there. Because "she is related to no one, where she knows so little, and where life appears so fragile and sparse," Ashima "is scared to raise a child in a nation where she knows so little." She misses her Indian relatives terribly. Immediately following the birth of her son Gogol, she tells Ashoke, "I am saying I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country. That's just not fair. I'd like to return." Ashoke regrets having brought her to this strange new world. But for the sake of her kid, she is willing to endure the discomfort of giving birth in a foreign country. She expresses her disappointment at not being able to fulfil the naming rituals of her culture by asking her grandma in India to choose a name for her newborn. She goes to the grocery alone with her infant, where everyone is a stranger, and suffers from sleep deprivation. Remembers her paraplegic grandmother often and can't seem to let go of her affection for Indian traditions. She teaches them about her own culture but never makes them adopt its norms or practises, and she encourages them to go out into the world and experience as much as they can.

Ashima and her spouse have the most beautiful balance. After the death of her spouse, Ashima is "shattered into bits and she feels lonely, abruptly, terribly, forever alone." As a result, she'll spend a total of twelve months abroad: six in the United States and six in India. This change reflects her adapted behaviour toward the host culture. Her concern about her son's future marriage only grew when her husband passed away. Problems arise in Gogol's marriage to Moushmi because of her involvement with Dimitri. After her divorce, Moushmi moves in with Dimitri and has plans to go to Paris, highlighting the global and multiethnic



identities of Indian immigrants' children. Even though Ashima and Moushmi have the same heritage, they couldn't be more dissimilar. While Ashima places a high value on anything associated with her husband, Gogol is just another commodity to Moushmi. When compared to the other characters, Ashima's dedication to her marriage stands out.

The advice her parents and grandparents gave her—"not to eat beef or wear skirts or cut off her hair or forget her family"—remains ingrained in Ashima's consciousness at all times. The second generation, however, breaks free from these constraints and strikes off on its own. The story allegorically depicts the difficulties of acculturation and integration experienced by both first-generation and second-generation immigrants. Moushmi is a member of the Bengali diaspora who was raised in the United States and whose identity is a strange mashup of Indian, American, and French influences. Her exposure to other cultures throughout her time at New York University and during her travels to France and England broadened her horizons and altered her understanding of her own. While she admires her husband's western sensibilities, she has little love for India and Indians. "I never wanted to become totally dependant on my husband," she said privately. Their marriage, which began amid America's diverse society, has now come to an end.

Sonia, a second-generation immigrant, didn't feel at home in Calcutta. However, Sonia experiences less alienation and nostalgia as a result of her displacement and marginalisation. Unlike Moushmi, who has a sense of duty and doesn't marry her half-Chinese partner Ben, she slowly adopts bits and pieces of the new culture. Since her father has passed away, she has decided to take care of her mother.

In Indian English literature, women take on the dual role of mute victim and steadfast upholder of family and societal norms. Ashima was raised in India, thus she continues to honour Indian customs and beliefs even though she now resides in the United States. While first-generation immigrants take pride in their heritage and avoid having it trampled on, members of the second generation are more likely to openly flaunt cultural norms rather than uphold them. By definition, Ashima "...shall be without borders, without a home of her, a resident everywhere and nowhere," as her name suggests. The advice given by their elders before they left India is a constant reminder for the older immigrants.

Ashima, like many other immigrant Bengali women, places a high value on family and connections, and she is not culturally immune to the melting pot that is America. She tries her hardest to be a good housewife and to defend traditional values against the more modern, consumerist norms of the United States. Her inner turmoil stems from her worry that her children may forget their Bengali heritage.

Jhumpa Lahiri shows the pain a woman feels when she is alone in a foreign land through Ashima's existential angst. Not being in Calcutta or the United States brings in a triple whammy of zero homesickness. For others of the diaspora who have experienced similar trauma in secret, she is a true embodiment of their experience. She looks and thinks like a traditional Indian wife, dedicating her life to her husband and children at the expense of her own happiness. She succeeds because she follows the rules she was given as a daughter, granddaughter, wife, and mother.

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