

Block 3

**Diasporic Literature, Cinema,
Performing Arts and Media**

UNIT 63 WRITINGS IN AND ON DIASPORA

Structure

- 63.0 Learning Objectives
- 63.1 Introduction
- 63.2 Defining Diaspora Writing and Literature
- 63.3 Diaspora Writing and Literature: Nature and Narratives
- 63.4 The Early Writing: Colonial Phase
- 63.5 Post- Colonial Diaspora Literature
- 63.6 Displacement, Dislocation and Otherness
- 63.7 Generational Treatment to Narratives
- 63.8 Conclusion

63.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This Unit will attempt to explain various forms of Diaspora Literature, the popular subjects, narratives, authors and their works. It will also give insight into some of the narratives and look into their subjective treatment. Homeland remains a perpetual theme among the diaspora authors, but they also delve into their differential treatment in the receiving countries and narrate the tales of discrimination, racial prejudices and also the equalitarian and multicultural ethos of the host countries. After you have gone through this Unit, you will be able to understand

1. Diaspora Literature and its various forms, nature of narratives and the main themes
2. The prominent diaspora writers and their works
3. Their subjectivity and their personal lived-in-experiences
4. The themes of homeland loss and their struggle in host countries
5. The theme of migration, trauma and reconciliation

63.1 INTRODUCTION

Freedom of speech and expressions are the inalienable rights of every human being and more so for the migrants and the diaspora. The writings on diasporic journeys are safety valves for the diaspora to vent out their emotions of struggle, pain, joy, deprivation, prosperity and achievements. It also becomes a space for creative expression through tales of individual lived-in experiences. The themes most commonly found in these narratives relate to cultural identity, ethnicity, nostalgia, alienation, racism, discrimination, displacement, dislocation and varied cultural values which, at times are contrasted with homeland. In fact, the narrative revolves around the nostalgia of the homeland and the lived-in experience in the host country. The objective of identity formation is yet another theme which finds a wider expression in most of these writings. Some of these diaspora writers not only reflect but also create and perform the function of diasporic experiences. These literary outputs have achieved national and international prominence because of the prestigious awards bestowed upon them. For example, Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter*

of Maladies won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction that brought her and her work to prominence.

Diaspora Literature has its own cultural production values which differentiate it from other mainstream literature because of the subject, treatment, the aesthetic and the theme which it deals with. Unlike most other literature, the Diaspora Literature offers a unique insight into cross-cultural experience of multiculturalism and pluralism. Sometimes it acquires greater representation as it transcends the self-proclaimed borders of restriction and enters into the realm of mainstream. In fact, the earlier preoccupation with localized cultural artifacts and national tradition and exotic cultural transmission that formed the main narrative of the world literature, had slowly and gradually moved unto larger trans-border, transnationalism and social and religious issues of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and post-colonial lives.

63.2 DEFINING DIASPORA WRITING AND LITERATURE

Any work, written or oral creative expression, on the subject of the diaspora, and most often but not always by a diasporic person, falls under the ambit of Diaspora Literature. It is to be noted that the word 'Literature' in the phrasing is with the upper case 'L' and not lower case as in literature which means any form of printed or written material. Diaspora Literature is a specific subject which has divested itself from other literary disciplines, much like the Post-colonial and Gender Literature. It is written by people who form part of a diaspora or migrant community mostly, but not always, and relates to the diaspora lives. It may include a wide ranging subject including their experiences and observations during their journey and about their lives in the host country and their relation and occasional visits to the country of origin.

Another distinction of Diaspora Literature is that it is mostly, if not always, in the form of fiction or travelogue. Its fictional characters do not fall under the realm of academic writing on the phenomenon of migration and diaspora, which is more scientific and factual in character. It is a cultural production, much like cinema, music, theatre and fine arts on the diasporic issues and by the people of the diaspora. It is also an artistic expression, which disrupts the traditional storytelling as found in the language literature, for example English Literature, French or Spanish Literature. Also, it is quite subjective in nature as the protagonist tells his/her story or of another person who is mostly a diasporic subject. Their storytelling often brings the subject in contrast to native people and the narrative most often draws parallels between different cultures and varied experiences. The major narratives in such writing are generally related to loss of homeland, nostalgia, alienation and dilemmas of cultural identity and the feelings of 'otherness.'

The Indian Diaspora Literature reflects the journeys and narratives of the Indian diaspora based on the period of their migration and the place of settlement. Unlike the Jews diaspora which was formed because of exodus and exile, the Indian diaspora was in real sense a scattering of its people based on voluntary dispersal. For example, the indentured migration from 1830 to 1917 to countries like Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius, South Africa, Malaysia, Surinam, Guyana and Reunion Island, to migration to metropolitan cities of the UK, the US, Canada Australia and New Zealand from 1960s to 1980s and of the IT technocrats' immigration in the 21st centuries. Each of

these periods of migration produced its own generational writers who voiced the angst, dilemma and achievements of the generational migrants. Within these periods, some of them were first generation diaspora writers while others were second generation writers.

63.3 DIASPORA WRITING AND LITERATURE: NATURE AND NARRATIVES

We may ask - how is Diaspora Literature different from any other literature? The answer lies in the narratives which predominantly relates to cross-cultural and cross-national experiences which are poignant with feelings of differential exposure and experiences to multiculturalism, pluralism, hybridity and the aesthetics of varied geographical and cultural settings. It also has the ability of representation which, while being local, transcends the national boundaries. These tales are non-cohesive, inorganic human narratives and in sync with diasporic experiences and often have universal appeal cutting across various diasporas.

There are two distinct phases of Indian diaspora writing, the colonial and the post-colonial. Many writers contest this division as they feel that the Diaspora Literature is mainstream English literature. However, for the sake of clarity and brevity, it is better to explore this division as one finds different treatment to storytelling and the narratives. The colonial writers included Nirad C Chaudhury, Raja Rao and some others who wrote occasionally on the subject. While the post-colonial and post modern writers include G. V. Desani, Kamala Markandaya, V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Meena Alexander, Rohinton Mistry, Bharati Mukherjee, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Amit Chaudhury, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shani Muthoo, Hari Kunzru, Aravind Adiga, Aatish Taseer, Pankaj Mishra, Abraham Verghese, Sarnath Banerjee, Meera Syal, Ulka Anjaria, Sharmila Sen, Sujatha Gidla and others.

In addition to division of Indian diaspora writers into colonial and post-colonial, there seems to be another classification based on generational statures which categorize them into first generation and second generation diaspora writers. This categorization differentiates them based on their differential treatment and narratives. There seems to be a wide difference between the way they perceive their homeland, the receiving countries and the way their characters mature and narrate a varied tale of their diasporic experiences.

The first generation diaspora writers, who migrated on their own, went through the pangs and sufferings of displacement and dislocation, whether their choice for migration were voluntary or involuntary. The second generation writers, on the other hand, were born and brought up in the adopted countries or migrated later in improved social and economic conditions. The second generation diaspora as well as the writers were hemmed between two cultural constructs and encountered the challenges of rootlessness and identity crisis. These sensibilities are often reflected in the fictional and non-fictional characters of some of these writers. The sense of dislocation and displacement are common narratives in their writings.

The first and second generation Indian diaspora writers also differed in some other significant ways. While for the former, India was a memory and nostalgia; the latter writers looked at their homeland for inspiration as a source of inexhaustible raw material which they could exploit in their literary works. It has also been argued that for a large

number of first generation migrants, the subject of their writings revolved around India, the site of their belonging. The separation from homeland was so overwhelming that they could not register their new-found experience in their host countries. So much so, some of them discovered their *Indianness* only after they had left their country of origin. They began to see India through a new prism of detachment, distance and objectivity. Each of these writers had their own perception and tried to reimagine India in their own way. Not surprisingly, as their literary outputs became popular, the world began looking at India through a different perspective. Some of the writers who belonged to this generation included Nirad Chaudhuri, Ved Mehta, Raja Rao, G. V. Desani, Santha Rama Rau and Balachandra Rajan. It was also the time, especially 1930s, when writers like Mulk Raj Anand rose to prominence through his social realism by focusing on subaltern Indian lives.

As in some other areas of life, Diaspora Literature was the pioneer in English writing. As Indians were exposed to global experiences whether they were indentured labourers of 19th century or IT professionals of 21st century, they preferred to narrate their experience in English language to reach out to wider readers. It has often been questioned by some of the Indian writers as who do the diaspora writers write for, if not for the Indian readers. But it must be pointed out that Indian Diaspora Literature is not only meant for Indians, diasporic or native, but also for other diaspora who undergo similar experience of uprooting and exile. But let's not digress, as mentioned earlier, Diaspora Literature was pioneer in English writing. Even much before the first English writing by an Indian was published in India; Indian Diaspora Literature had already made its way.

63.4 THE EARLY WRITING: COLONIAL PHASE

Dean Mahomed who had worked with East India Company and migrated to England published his *Travels of Dean Mahomet* in 1794. It was much before the first English text, an 'imaginary history', by an Indian which was published in 1835 by Kylas Chunder Dutt titled "*A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours of the Year 1945*" came into existence. Later, Bankimchandra Chatterjee published *Rajmohan's Wife* - the first English novel by an Indian in 1864.

In his book, Dean Mahomed who was a surgeon, entrepreneur and traveller recounts his experience in India to his European friends in a series of letters which forms the part of the travelogue. He was one of the early Indian immigrants to Great Britain and his writing was autobiographical travel narrative. The use of English as the main language of Diaspora Literature was also observed among the *girmityas* writers, the descendants of indentured labourers and included prominent names like V. S. Naipaul, Shani Muthoo, Marina Budhos, Cyril Dabydeen, David Dabydeen, Sam Selvon, M. G. Vassanji among others.

Among writers of Indian-origin, Nirad C Chaudhury (1897-1999) was an eminent author who lived in England and wrote some of the famous books like *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* and *A Passage to England*. In fact, he cannot be called a diasporic writer in true sense because his experiences do not directly relate to a migrant or a diasporic person. His writing are more descriptive ethnology where he talks about British India and his views on culture and politics. Raja Rao (1908-2006), was another Indian writer who went to live in France and the US. He wrote novels and stories with deep spiritual quests. His *The Serpent and the Rope* is among his most famous works that focuses on Indian and western culture and their

influence on each other. Metaphysical in nature, the novel relates the allegory of reality and illusion, mistaking a rope for the serpent, in the real worldly existence. Rao's another novel *Kanthapura* has a protagonist Moorthy who fights against social injustice and becomes a Gandhian and works for India's struggle for independence. It should be noted that Nirad C Chaudhury and Raja Rao, the Anglo-Indian fiction writers, were not diaspora writers although they lived a considerable part of their lives as diaspora. They were the precursors of diaspora writers who had begun to develop sensitivity towards the oppressed class and lower caste people. They wrote in English-language and the readers of their works were mostly English-speaking overseas people.

G. V. Desani was another British-Indian novelist who could be considered an example of transition to multi-cultural writing. He was born in Kenya and lived in India, England and the US. His novel *All About H. Hatterr*, for which he is well-known, is about the eternal quest for wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment of a man, whether from the East or the West, it forms the permanent tapestry of narrative.

Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) was another Indian writer who migrated to Britain but continued to identify herself with India calling herself an Indian expatriate. Her works, as most of the writers of the period, focuses on India's society. Her most famous novel *Nectar in a Sieve* is the story of Rukmani and Nathan and their lives, which is full of hardship. It should be noted that the subject of poverty and destitution forms the main subject of most of the earlier Anglo-Indian writers. It could be possible that foreigners viewed India from the same prism on which these Anglo-Indian writers wrote about.

In a true sense, it was Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* which helped her become a true diaspora writer. The novel deals with the first and second Indian immigrants to London who is exposed to racism and differential treatment. The protagonist Srinivas is not able to cope with the cultural trauma and becomes depressive. His son, Laxman's response to racism, on the other hand, is quite different from his father's. The novel takes a turn when Srinivas finds in an English woman who gives him hope and salvation from the rampant racial hatred prevalent in the 1960s.

It was Bharati Mukherjee, who along with Kamala Markandaya, laid the foundation of feminist diaspora writers in the early 1950s, on which subsequent authors were able to build an edifice. Known for local and global perspective, Mukherjee's novels depicts the story of interracial love, immigration, assimilation and the challenges of cultural pluralism. For example, in *The Tiger's Daughter*, an Indian woman Tara marries an American man and attempts to work out the relationship. Similarly in *Jasmine*, the female protagonist attempts to make herself at home in the United States and attempts to anchor her existence in an alien country. Mukherjee critically looks at the institution of marriage along with womanhood, motherhood and marital abuse, both within and outside the diaspora. She attempts to look through her characters in their roles in society which intersects with other existential roles like gender, race and sexuality. Some of Mukherjee's novels, apart from *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Jasmine*, include *Wife, Desirable Daughters* and *Miss New India*.

The issues of gender inequality and cultural accommodation have however continued to haunt other women diaspora writers in which the characters find themselves at odd with their earlier experiences at home and with their worldview. For example in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel, *The Mistress of Spices*, the character Tilos struggles with

her different role and people’s prejudices. In *Arranged Marriage*, she looks at the institution of marriage from traditional as well as in liberal perspectives. Meena Alexander’s *Manhattan Music*, which tells the story of Sandhya Rosenblum delves into fundamental question of what it means to be a woman. Her marriage to an American citizen and the subsequent turmoil in her relationship becomes the metaphor of outside and inside forces of the characters.

Check your progress 1

- Note :** a) Write your answer in about 50 words.
b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1. What are the main themes and narratives of Diaspora Literature?
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2. Write a short note on colonial diaspora writings and some of its prominent writers.
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63.5 POST-COLONIAL DIASPORA LITERATURE

V. S. Naipaul is considered to be one of the most prominent post-colonial Indian Diaspora writers. A second-generation immigrant to Trinidad and Tobago, Naipaul’s grandparents had come to the country in the 1880s as indentured labourers. Although Naipaul was well settled in the adopted country of his parents, he journeyed his way to a promising literary career. His sense of fluidity is visible in his characters and his own life as evident in the novel *The Enigma of Arrival*. It has been said that most diaspora writers and their characters are not characterized by actual dislocation but by the inherited memory of dislocation. The psychological wound continues to bother them in one form or the other and becomes a continual search for a place of settlement, characterized by safety, comfort and creativity, an allegorical expression of home. The two main characters Mohun Biswas and Ganesh Ramsumair in his novels *A House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Mystic Masseur* try to live the heritage of the past with collective memory of dislocation. These characters are in perennial search for a home which they could call their own—a home their grandparents had left behind and which remains only in memory and in the realm of imagination.

Naipaul’s visit to India which he records in his travelogue *An Area of Darkness* is an observation and contrast between the imagined and the real homeland which a diasporic person sees through the memory of the past. His critical observation about the ancestral homeland is evident in the three of his works namely *An Area of Darkness*, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, and *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, which Naipaul wrote on India. For Naipaul, home exists only in a child’s imagination as an idea. Allegorically, there is no permanent home in the real world. Incidentally, the Swedish Academy while awarding the Nobel Prize for Literature to him in 2001 described him as “a literary

circumnavigator, only ever really at home in himself, in his inimitable voice.” Naipaul is also credited with having looked at the cultural expansionism of British colonialism from close quarters. Often compared with Conrad, Dickens and Tolstoy, Naipaul made pithy remarks on belief systems and often refuted belonging to any ethnicity or religious system.

Among the Trinidad Indian diaspora writer, Samuel Selvon was another prominent figure in the literary circle. His parents were first generation immigrants to the Caribbean island. He moved to England and worked with BBC where he wrote scripts for programmes like *Home Sweet India*. His famous novel, *The Lonely Londoners*, describes the migration of West Indians to the metropolitan city. The time frame of his novel exists between 1950s and 1960s, which tells the story of double displacement and talks about urban set up, and the racial and societal setting which a migrant faces during his diasporic journey.

Salman Rushdie is another eminent first generation diaspora writer who migrated to Britain and then to the US. Best known for his novels *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie deals with specificity of plot treating them with magic realism. His two novels *Shame* and *Satanic Verses* look at the issue of migration and translocation of his character through allegorical approach. For example, he narrates the physical dislocation of his characters Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha through symbolic means of transformation in the adopted country. Likewise, in *Shalimar the Clown*, the character travels through different cultural zones of Kashmir and Los Angeles and deals with the feelings of love and betrayal by focusing on disruptions and migratory relationship between the two worlds of the East and the West.

In fact what is of greater relevance in Rushdie's work is the idea of *Imagined homeland*, which he has dealt with in detail. While giving centrality to the concept of home, he feels that for a diaspora, their presence in an adopted country is foreign and their past is the real home which is now lost to them. According to him, whether it is exile, emigrants or expatriates they are continuously haunted by a sense of loss which they try to reclaim by one means or the other. In the process, they create an imaginary homeland. Rushdie is of the opinion that Indian “writers in England have access to a second tradition, quite apart from their own racial history. It is the culture and political history of the phenomenon of migration, displacement, and life in a minority group.”

63.6 DISPLACEMENT, DISLOCATION AND OTHERNESS

The sense of displacement and the ensuing loneliness of immigrants find full expression in Anita Desai's literary works. Her novel, for example, *Fasting, Feasting* trespasses the cultural boundaries between India and the US and tells the story of Uma and Arun who go through different sets of experiences in the two countries. The ever present Western culture seems to be oppressive to her character and she wants to escape from it and in the process lives a life of self-created aloofness. While being a migrant has its own advantage in terms of dual perspective, better cultural immunity and larger world-view, it is also beset with contradictions which a second generation migrant encounters in terms of dual identity in a free floating world. The more these characters try to root themselves in territorial boundaries, the more restless they get.

Anita's *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is another powerful novel of exiled Indians who try to live in urban centers and balance the values of their home and overseas experiences—the

two cultural constructs they are forced to live in. Her characters live a life full of anxieties and are torn in two different directions, each paralleled by rootlessness in the adopted country and with psychological hankering to the imagined homeland which they had left behind. The question of identity and belonging becomes a permanent feature of defining the sense of ease with two leading characters Adit and Dev who are left with no choice but to compromise with the existing reality of marginalization and spiritual deprivation.

Suketu Mehta is yet India-born writer who migrated to the US in 1977 along with his parents. He is known for his book *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* which talks about the city and its various facets. His online novella titled *What is Remembered* is known for an immigrant's experience in an alien country and the loss of the self and its eventual recovery. His latest book *This Land is Our Land: An Immigrant's Manifesto* discusses the apology of the immigrants towards the adopted country and their sense of gratitude. The author feels that the world is one place belonging to everyone and the way immigrants are made to feel a sense of gratitude towards the host country is uncalled for. There is no sense of indebtedness that immigrants should feel for having migrated to richer countries; rather they make significant contributions to the receiving countries' economy. In fact, America is a country of immigrants and if they leave, the country, its economy would collapse. He feels that all immigrants, coming from poorer countries, should stake a claim to America, as they have been victims of colonialism, capitalism and climate change, which has been the handiwork of the West.

Mehta lays special emphasis on storytelling and the message of success, achievement and prosperity, the remittances immigrants send back to their home country. According to him, the first thing that a migrant sends to his home country is not money but stories of their having finally made it to the destination, the dreamland. In fact, their having reached the destination is the beginning of new experience in which racism, discrimination and other unpleasant experiences become more demanding on the immigrants. It is this social injustice and the feeling of loneliness that Mehta portrays through his characters.

63.7 GENERATIONAL TREATMENT TO NARRATIVES

Jhumpa Lahiri is a prominent diaspora writer known for her novels like *The Namesake*, *Interpreter of Maladies*, *Unaccustomed Earth*, *The Lowland* and *Whereabouts*. Her first two books namely *The Namesake* and *the Interpreter of Maladies*, throw light on the lives of first and second generation Indian migrants to the US. It depicts their day-to-day experiences in an alien geographical setting.

The characters in Jhumpa's novels are in continuous search for belonging, identity and fluidity of movement. Ashima of *The Namesake* moves from Calcutta to Boston and experiences the dynamics of movement and alienation. A similar feeling is echoed by her character in the *Whereabouts*, when she says 'I've never stayed still. I've always been moving, that's all I've ever been doing. Always either to get somewhere or to come back.' Most of her characters echo the feeling of alienation, otherness and that of Outsider. This sense of self-discovery of her characters, whether they are in motion or fixated, is crucial to their growth and maturation. Most of her characters go through the existential crisis of 'Aren't we all passing through?' and touches upon the concept of nationhood which territorialized the character and consequently their identity, leaving

less space for self discovery. A feeling of belonging, exile and otherness pervades through most of her characters and so are the concept of homes, which remains fluid and moving along with the protagonists.

Jhumap's protagonists often reflect and observe day-to-day movements which are capable of producing a deeper, more existential reflection. This is something to think about vis-à-vis questions of nationhood and the disease of nationhood. It is very problematic for our world to cling to ideas of nationhood and not to see beyond that. To have a defining definition of who we are. She says 'I am exiled even from the definition of exile', thus emphasizing a continuous sense of alienation. Lahiri sees diasporic women in a different light and comes out with a composite diasporic feminism which includes various aspects of womanhood including as an immigrant, as mothers and as spouse. During their course of journey, they are exposed to gender inequality and discrimination in patriarchal society which is rampant with power relation, sexuality, sexism and ideological dominance. And in the process these women are double marginalized, first as a woman and second as an immigrant, each trying to make a place.

In Lahiri as well as majority of second generation diaspora writers one can discern a fine but bold divergence in treatment of narratives. As the second generation immigrants are born and brought up in the host countries, they easily get assimilated and their experiences are different from the earlier generation who faced racism, intolerance and religious discrimination. The second generation writers look at the grooves of the discrimination and the finer racial messages which they absorb from compatriot. They look at cultural differences as a form of segregation. The assimilation and integration policies of the host country fail to make them part of the adopted culture as they remain an outsider, an artificial appendices to the mainstream culture. Psychological self-segregation also plays a critical role in creating this differentiation.

Rohinton Mistry, another Indian diaspora writer, who was born in Mumbai and migrated to Canada achieved greater prominence through his literary works such as *Such a Long Journey*, *A Fine Balance* and *Family Matters*. The plot of most of his fictional writings are set in India and faithfully depicts the social and political events of the time and their impacts on his characters. As most of the writers in exile, his writings while being nostalgic are realistic which reinvent the past through the unfailing memory of history of the country.

Hari Kunzru, a second-generation immigrant to the UK, was born to an Indian Kashmiri diasporic person in Britain, and has written a number of novels and stories including *The Impressionist*, *Transmission*, *My Revolutions*, *Gods Without Men*, *White Tears* and *Red Pill*. His writing focuses on the contemporary world of politics and mechanization and offers a different perspective on religion, liberal democracy and the changing society. In some of his political writings, he focuses on the right-wing shift in global politics and the rising cases of anti-immigrant feelings in the native population.

Kunzru has been critical of the Trump era for targeting the immigrants and using them as a stooge to enhance his political standing. Kunzru's earlier novel delved deeply on the question of identity and belonging of the immigrants. His novel *Transmission*, makes his protagonists traverse through different geography and time zones - from India to the US to the UK. The three characters namely Leela Zahir, Arjun Mehta and Guy Swift go through different experiences and come out much matured during their transnational journeys.

Although Amit Chaudhuri is an Indian writer, he and his parents lived a considerable part of their lives overseas and have experienced first-hand what it means to be an outsider in a different country. In his novel, *Afternoon Raag*, Chaudhuri depicts an Indian student's experience during his course of association in Oxford. In one of his essays, *The Eternity of Return*, Chaudhuri realises the fact that the occasional visit of Indian expatriates to their home countries are symbolically an act of "rehearsing return." He talks about the idea of *biletpherot* or foreign return or London Returned of Indian students who went to Britain to pursue law and medicine and came back to India to continue their profession during the late 19th and early 20th century. Talking about Indians migration to the US, he says, all migration to America had been historically opportunistic. The romance of migration to the US during 1970s was "the coming into being of the 'diaspora', its success, and its literature and preferred genres."

Amitav Ghosh is another English writer of Indian origin who merits attention in diaspora writing. Ghosh has based his work on historical events. His fictional works revolve in and around Indian sub-continent and the South East Asia. He is the author of *The Circle of Reason*, *The Shadow Lines*, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide*, *Sea of Poppies* and others. Among all his works *The Shadow Lines* need special mention as it deals with characters that are perpetually moving and are in search of their identity in the incidental narratives. The novels narrate the story of Ila, a daughter of a diplomat, who was brought up abroad and had no understanding of the country her parents belonged to. When she comes to India, the land is equally alien to her as to any outsider. She is neither able to identify with people nor the place. She finds herself a complete stranger in the country.

Likewise, Ghosh's another historical novel the *Gun Island*, deals with the issue of human migration along with the contemporary challenges of climate changes and introduces the readers to Bangladesh migrants including Lubnain Venice who fights with missionary zeal to safeguard the interest of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. Ghosh says in "*The Diaspora in Indian Culture*" (The Imam and the Indian) : "The modern Indian diaspora ... is not merely one of the most important forces in world culture ... the diaspora also counts among its members some of the world's finest writers"

Known for his prolific writing in diverse genre, Vikram Seth who divides his time between Indian and the UK, is best known for his novels such as *A Suitable Boy*, *The Golden Gate*, *An Equal Music* among others. One of the distinctive features of Seth's work is his plots and character settings which ranges from India to China to UK and transcontinental. Cultural hybridity and cross-cultural connections of the characters are some of the common themes in his novels. For example in *The Golden Gate*, the subjects are Americans while in *An Equal Music*, the characters are European. His *Two Lives* tells the story of Shanti and Henny who have migrated to England and try to settle down and come to terms with their past experiences. It narrates the story of displacement, dislocation through events and characters, as common with other Indian writers.

63.8 CONCLUSION

The Diaspora Literature has resulted into a rich tapestry of storytelling, which has further enriched the world literature and continues to add new dimension to it by adding new perspectives. While being a part of language literature, it has carved a different niche for itself based on differential narratives on cultural hybridity, multiculturalism,

pluralism and liberal take on social norms. It should be noted that prejudices, racism and discrimination formed the main narrative of the earlier diaspora writers along with the concept of identity, belonging and finding a root and home. The new storytellers like Aravind Adiga, Aatish Taseer, Pankaj Mishra, Sarnath Banerjee, Ulka Anjaria, Sharmila Sen and Sujatha Gidla have based their narratives on individualism and specificity which were earlier unnoticed, not observed and was not narrated. The Diaspora Literature has not only enriched the literary world but have added new dimension to diasporic lives.

Check your progress 2

Note : a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1. Explain post-colonial diaspora writing with example of one author and his/her work

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2. What are the main themes of postcolonial literature?

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SUGGESTED READING

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress 1

1. Diaspora Literature predominantly relates to cross-cultural and cross-national experiences, which are poignant with feelings of differential exposure and experiences and with multiculturalism, pluralism, hybridity and the aesthetics of varied geographical and cultural settings. It also has the ability of representation, which, while being local, transcends the national boundaries. These tales are non-cohesive, inorganic human narratives and in sync with diasporic experiences and may have a universal appeal cutting across various genre.
2. There are two distinct phases of Indian diaspora writing, the colonial and the post-colonial literature. Although many writers contest this division as they feel that the Diaspora Literature is mainstream English Literature. For the sake of clarity and brevity one finds different treatment to storytelling and the narratives. The colonial writers included Nirad C Chaudhury, Raja Rao and some others who wrote on India. The subject of the colonial writer revolved around India, the site of their belonging. The separation from homeland was so overwhelming to them that they could not register their newfound experience in the host countries. So much so that they are said to have discovered their *Indianness* only after they had left their country of origin.

These writers began to see India through a new prism of detachment, distancing and objectivity and each writer had his/her own perception and tried to reimagine India in their own way. Not surprisingly, as these literary outputs became popular, the rest of the world began looking at India through a different tangent. Some of the writers who belonged to this generation included Nirad Chaudhuri, Ved Mehta, Raja Rao, G. V. Desani, Santha Rama Rau and Balachandra Rajan. It was also the time, especially 1930s, when writers like Mulk Raj Anand rose to prominence through his social realism narrative by focussing on subaltern Indian lives.

Check your progress 2

1. While some of the post-colonial, second generation writers were born and brought up in the adopted countries, there were others who either migrated later or remained in India. This generation of writers, hemmed between two cultural constructs, faced the challenges of rootlessness and the crisis of identity, which forms the main narratives of their writings. These sensibilities are often reflected in their fictional and non-fictional characters.

The sense of dislocation and displacement is universal among other diaspora writers belonging to different generations. For example, Bharati Mukherjee, who along with Kamala Markandaya, laid the foundation of feminist diaspora writers in the early 1950s, reflect these sentiments in her characters., Mukherjee's novels depicts the story of interracial love, immigration, assimilation and the challenges of new cultural pluralism.

2. The sense of displacement and the ensuing loneliness of immigrants find full expression in most of the Indian diaspora writers. For example, Anita Desai in *her Fasting, Feasting*, looks at the cultural boundaries between India and the US

and tells the story of Uma and Arun who go through different sets of experiences in the two countries. The ever-present Western culture seems to be oppressive and she wants an escape from it and lives in her self-created aloofness. While being a migrant has its own advantage in terms of dual perspective, better cultural immunity and larger world-view, it is also beset with contradictions which a post-colonial migrant encounters in terms of dilemma of dual identity in a free floating world. The more these characters try to root themselves in territorial boundaries, the more restless they get.

UNIT 64 INDIAN CINEMA AND DIASPORA

Structure

- 64.0 Learning Objectives
- 64.1 Introduction
- 64.2 Brief History of Indian Cinema in Diaspora
- 64.3 Phenomenon of film tourism
- 64.4 Imagining India through Bollywood
- 64.5 Impact of Bollywood on Indian Diaspora
- 64.6 Diasporic Films
- 64.6 Let's Sum up
- 64.7 Key Words
- 64.8 References and Selected Readings
- 64.9 Check your progress – possible answers

64.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you can:

1. Understand the brief history of Indian Diaspora cinema
2. Understand the impact of Bollywood on Indian Diaspora
3. Know about the contributions of Indian Cinema to Indian Diaspora culture.

64.1 INTRODUCTION

Presently, India has one of the most thriving film industries in the world. In 1896, the Lumiere brothers introduced the art of cinema to an eager audience in Bombay by screening Cinematography, a collection of six short films. Dada Saheb Phalke, who made the first feature-length silent film in India in 1913, and Ardeshir Irani, who made the first talking film in India in 1931, are considered the founders of Indian cinema. With the end of the silent era and the introduction of sound films, mythological texts became the primary source of inspiration for film. The Indian film industry is renowned for its glitz, vibrancy, and suspense, as it is one of the largest film industries in the world. The significance of Mumbai in this context is heightened by the fact that it is the birthplace and namesake of Bollywood in India. Regional languages such as Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Bhojpuri, and Bengali, to name a few, distinguish numerous other film hubs from the multibillion-rupee Hindi film industry in terms of net worth.

India's cinema is made up of films made all over the world. Cinema as a medium has grown in popularity in the region, with as many as 1,600 movies produced each year in various Indian languages. Indian films have also gained popularity in South Asia, the Greater Middle East, Southeast Asia, and other regions. The four-film cultures of South India are described as a single entity by the South Indian film industry. There are four of them: Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada. The film industry became commercialised in the twentieth century. There are numerous Regional Film Industries

within the Indian Film Industry. The Hindi Film Industry, based in Mumbai, is the most influential and famous among them. Marathi, Punjabi, Urdu, Bhojpuri, Telugu, Bengali, Oriya, Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil are among the other industries. In their respective countries, these sectors have monopolies. Regional expectations have a significant effect on the marketing campaign for advertising a movie or a product. The cultural diversity offered by the Indian Film Industry distinguishes it from any other film industry in the world.

In terms of the number of feature films produced and released in a year, India has been steadily upward, making it one of the world's largest film industries. Indian moviegoers flock to cinema halls, whether they be modernised multiplexes or old-school single-screen theatres. The growth of streaming services has made this consumption more available. Even though the number of single-screen theatres has been declining over the years, the country still has many of them. This also makes the Indian moviegoer a prime choice for advertisers. In the early twentieth century, cinema became widely popular throughout the world. Unlike theatrical performances, cinema has traditionally been and continues to be open to the general public. Cinema, like theatre, allowed films to narrate social problems and depict everyday life in the city for a wide range of audiences. Following its independence, India had numerous stories to share and a newfound voice to tell them. Many consider the 1940s to the 1960s to be India's own "Golden Age" of cinema, with countless commercially popular films made. For several, the cinema was the only source of inexpensive entertainment, and the industry replied by creating films that mirrored popular culture. During this period, an independent film revolution arose, demonstrating this political platform's cultural relevance to this young democratic country.

Bollywood's globalisation and popularity as a worldwide media outlet, as well as the western monetization of the Indian exotic, have coincided with the local political landscape's valorisation of 'diversity.' Bollywood caters to its diasporic audience with idealised portrayals of a "traditional and contemporary India." Bollywood portrayals of the thriving diasporic Indian community and engagement in the globalised Bollywood industry through concerts and international award ceremonies have allowed young diasporic Indians to re-examine their local Indian identities and feel invited to re-identify with India's global diasporas.

64.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIAN CINEMA IN DIASPORA

The Indian film industry can be traced back to the nineteenth century. In 1896, the Lumiere Brothers filmed their first film, which was exhibited in Mumbai (then Bombay). Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar, also known as Save Dada, ordered a camera from England after being so inspired by the Lumiere Brothers' work. His first short film, titled *The Wrestlers*, was shot in the Hanging Gardens of Mumbai. It was a straightforward filming of a boxing match that was exhibited in 1899 and is considered the first film produced by the Indian Film Industry. In 1913, Dadasaheb Phalke, the Father of Indian Cinema, debuted the first feature-length film, "*Raja Harishchandra*." Financially, the silent film was a success. Dadasaheb was, among other things, a producer, director, journalist, cameraman, photographer, make-up artist, and art director. In 1914, *Raja Harishchandra* was the first Indian film shown in London. Though Indian Cinema's first mogul, Dadasaheb Phalke, oversaw and directed the production of twenty-three films between 1913 and 1918, the Indian Film Industry developed more slowly than

Hollywood. In the early 1920s, numerous new manufacturing companies emerged. The 1920s were dominated by films based on mythological and historical facts and episodes from the Mahabharata and Ramayana, but Indian audiences were also receptive to Hollywood films, particularly action films.

Gradually, the industry expanded tremendously, especially from 1917 to 1932, but film production decreased during World War II. In 1947, the western film industry began to emerge. During this era, the films that were released chiefly concentrated on the plight of the ordinary person. They focused on bringing to light issues such as slavery, adultery, and polygamy, among others. This time in cinema history was unprecedented, with an exceptional transformation in the films, stars, and scripts' consistency. The 1950s and 1960s are regarded as the golden era of Indian cinema. Exceptionally brilliant actors such as Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, Meena Kumari, and many others came to fame during this period. Along with the improvisation and refinement of the market's acting segment, the music industry started to achieve dominance by playing an essential role in the filmmaking process. Similarly, as Bollywood began to dominate the industry as a whole, many more regional initiatives sprouted up throughout the world. Essentially, the modern Indian film industry began around 1947. The film industry underwent a phenomenal and excellent transition during this time frame. Notable filmmakers such as Satyajit Ray and Bimal Roy made films about the lower class's survival and everyday miseries. Historical and mythological themes were pushed to the sidelines, and movies with social agendas started to dominate the market. These films dealt with issues such as prostitution, dowry, polygamy, and other social ills that were common in our culture.

Indian filmmakers have often produced films featuring Indian migrants. *Sir Wrangler Mr R. P. Paranjpye* (1902), about a Maharashtra man who studied mathematics at Cambridge, was the first documentary film made in India. *Bilet Pherat* (England Returned), a successful fiction film in 1921, also starred about an Indian man returning from Britain's extended stay. This returnee had odd habits and strange ideas about romantic love, and he became the subject of sarcasm and satire in the film. *Purab aur Pachhim* (East and West), a 1970 nationalist film, depicted Indians in London dancing and feasting under the influence of alcohol and cigarettes. The children in the film had been extensively westernised and had utterly ignored, if not hated, their history. Fortunately, an honest and noble young Indian man emerged and taught the female celebrity to love her country once more. When the entertainment industry became involved in the diaspora as a target demographic, the imagery shifted. The consequence was a modern 'transnational optic' in Indian newspapers (Moorti 2002). *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* was the first film to attempt to cater to the diaspora rather than mock it (1995). The film predicted the supposed urge of the Indian diaspora to rediscover their homeland and took their feelings of nostalgia and longing very seriously.

Songs are an essential aspect of Indian cinema. The use of songs has given Indian films a distinct look as compared to foreign films. Many young lyricists, music directors, and musicians have originated from the Indian film industry. The year 2008 was significant for the Indian film industry since A.R. Rahman won two Academy Awards for *Slumdog Millionaire's* best soundtrack. The 1990s saw the emergence of a new generation of actors such as Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Aamir Khan, Juhi Chawla, Chiranjivi, among many others. This new generation of actors used new methods to develop their performances, further elevating and upgrading the Indian Film Industry. Indian cinema is no longer exclusive to India, and it is now well received by foreign viewers. The overseas market makes a significant contribution to Bollywood box office

receipts. In 2013, approximately 30 film production companies were listed on the National Stock Exchange of India. Theatres have also grown in popularity in India as a result of tax breaks. Whether it is a regional or a Bollywood film, Indian cinema has become an integral part of our everyday lives. It plays an essential role in our culture. Though entertainment is the primary focus of Indian cinema, it bears much more responsibility because it influences its viewers' minds.

Check my progress 1

Note : a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1. Explain how Cinema played an Important role in the Indian Diaspora.

.....

2. Why the year 1950s was the golden age of Indian cinema?

.....

64.3 PHENOMENON OF FILM TOURISM

The travel and tourism sector went through a period of transformation around the turn of the century. This change was motivated by the vast processes of globalisation that were taking place at the time. The traditional types of tourism have been complemented and expanded upon by the development of new postmodern forms of tourism, which have also been introduced. These novel types of tourism have also resulted in the introduction of novel and diverse tourist goods and services onto the market. One of these new types of tourism is referred to as “film tourism,” and it is a key new trend that is rapidly increasing in the tourism business. The selection of a tourist destination in this subset of tourism is directly influenced and driven by cinematic productions. Film tourism establishes a connection between the characters, settings, and stories of a movie and the film-tourists who are encouraged to immerse themselves in the experience and relive the feelings that were generated and driven by the movie when they are at the location where the movie was filmed. Film tourism creates a connection between the movie characters, places, and stories and the film-tourists.

The need to escape the monotony of day-to-day life, to shake up patterns that have become second nature, to halt the passage of time, and to find something new and different that will help to legitimise our own existence is directly related to the desire to travel. Being in a new setting, with a new climate and environment, and surrounded by other people is what it means to be a part of a different story and to have a new experience. This is because being in a new setting forces one to interact with new people. Filmmaking and tourism are two industries that, at their foundation, provide customers with the opportunity to relive or experience, observe, and learn about new things via the lens of entertainment and enjoyment. This ability lies at the heart of both

industries.”Film tourist” and “tourist film places” need to be defined because they are elements that are included in “film tourism. The concept of film tourism is not limited to the act of tourism itself. Still, it is profoundly rooted in the preceding cycles of viewing of media representations, fantasising about the places involved, and finally reflecting on the completed journey (Larsen and Urry, 2011; Reijnders, 2016). This creative process is activated when faced with visual or auditory cues; Bollywood, as a mixture of powerful images and music, readily fuels the creative process.

In addition to an increase in tourism activities, film tourism makes it possible for new investments, as well as the extension of distinctive locations and their rehabilitation. The film tourism industry will receive an additional boost to the market as well as an enticing profile for local business owners. Film maps are an excellent tool for promoting other locations, such as motels, whether by means of illustration, discount coupons, and so on. It is possible to sway independent travellers to visit locations without resorting to overbearing or intrusive advertising, and these travellers can turn a possible interest in visiting such locations into a firm commitment. These days, people flock to the locations in the hopes of seeing any of the sets, and they are left feeling dissatisfied when the only thing that can be discovered there is a mountain and nothing that is relevant to the movie itself. This exemplifies a typical problem in the cinema tourism sector, which is that studios either are unaware of the touristic significance of their works or are unable to offer access to their brand or resources for use in tourism-related endeavours. (SPI Olsberg 2007, 40.) Other unfavourable consequences like excessive publicity and, in some instances, a spike in housing values because of filming productions and their contribution to an area’s rising appeal have also been uncovered as a result of the research that has been conducted (Beeton 2005, 13). Some movies may also present an inaccurate or unfavourable image of a location. This occurred in the East End of London when visitors observed that the television show *Eastenders* had given them a highly unfavourable opinion of the residents of the area and the city itself (Olsberg SPI 2007). The rapid increase in the number of tourists has the additional unintended consequence of disrupting the normal way of life in the area where the films were shot.

64.4 IMAGINING INDIA THROUGH BOLLYWOOD

The global popularity of Indian movies can be said to transcend national appeal. Bollywood’s compelling aesthetics and narratives often vary significantly from Hollywood’s supposed “universal” strategies and reports. In recent years, films such as ‘*Dil Se*,’ ‘*Kal Ho Naa Ho*,’ and ‘*Guru*’ have exported an impression of Indianness that negotiates tensions between homeland and diaspora and emphasises India’s cultural authority for its imagined audience of audiences. Bollywood illustrates Appadurai’s argument that there is something “important and fresh in global cultural systems” by questioning Hollywood norms, fostering a sense of unity among diverse ethnic Indians, and portraying Indians as exemplary and superior to nationals from other developed countries. By imagining a global India, Bollywood speaks to its transnational viewers’ imaginations and invites us to reconsider our attitudes to cinema and the culture that international media is continuously reinventing.

The Anglo-American film industry was taken aback by the success of the low-budget film *Slumdog Millionaire*, which was released in 2008 and told the story of a teenager from Mumbai who appears on the Indian version of “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” The film went on to win every award at the Academy Awards in the United States. The

novel written by Vikas Swarup served as the inspiration for the British movie, which was principally directed by Danny Boyle and was the result of a partnership between Indian and British authors and filmmakers. The film seems to draw inspiration from both Indian and Western commercial cinema in its use of action and melodrama, its use of on-location scenes taken in Mumbai, and its fast-paced storyline that hops back and forth across time to attain its happy conclusion. Although it was acclaimed as a “crossover” picture, the portrayal of children’s life in the slums of Mumbai as impoverished and precarious infuriated a number of Indian viewers. Film researcher Brian Larkin drew parallels between the Indian response to *Slumdog Millionaire* and the aftermath of the success of Satyajit Ray’s *Pather Panchali* on the international film festival circuit (1955). He sees that the incorporation of Western aesthetics in Ray’s film made it acceptable to academics in India as well as in Europe; nonetheless, this alarmed nationalists who wanted India to be viewed as a contemporary nation.

Though Bollywood has been an area of research for film scholars in recent years, it has been viewed more frequently than not as a national cinema of the subcontinent and its diasporic communities worldwide. Given the millions, if not billions, of people who may be engaged and influenced by Bollywood films, particularly now that satellite TV and other means of accessing Bollywood productions are possible, it seems essential to rethink Bollywood as a global platform. Its modes of address exert at least as much ideological and cultural impact as Hollywood’s. It appears especially crucial that film scholars not confine their discussion of Bollywood to that of a national cinema, either in the local context of where its films are made or in the sense of an ethnic or Third World cinema that functions as an oppositional cinema to transnational media conglomerates. Instead, as a hybrid of national and international cinema, Bollywood sheds light on a now-international imaginary by reflecting and theoretically shaping its audience’s perceptions, ideas, and opinions. What distinguishes Indian cinema, in general, is its rejection of certain psychoanalytical paradigms in favour of mixing the social form with the personality to seek a broader horizon of possibilities for linking the plot of the characters to the colonial narrative. Bollywood films, through cultural empathy, became a tool for connecting with or consuming India’s cultural authority. This indicates that the symbolic and aesthetic facets of Bollywood productions provide several elements in the *mise-en-scene* that elicit meaningful visual and emotional associations between local references and the need for national unity. If Bollywood romanticizes India for diaspora viewers, it also glorifies NRIs for domestic audiences. According to Chabra, commercial Indian cinema depicts NRIs as affluent and prosperous Indians in the United Kingdom and the United States, whom Indians in India hope will spend their foreign-earned riches in India. ‘In fact, we are part of the Indian Diaspora, building our own Indian identity outside of India,’ he writes. We are taxi drivers, restaurant staff, students, Silicon Valley billionaires, authors, actors, physicians, attorneys, environmental leaders, gays and lesbians, and battered women living their own lives in adopted countries.

Many films appeal to second-generation audiences, who are depicted as “model minority people,” some who adopt and capitalise on their country of residence while retaining specific ties to their homeland nation-state. In relatively straightforward ways, as in the scene, the dynamic is not merely that of longing for the homeland and a wish for citizenship and modernity. To demonstrate its cosmopolitanism and India’s cultural authority globally, the Indian Diaspora distinguishes itself from other immigrant

communities. By comparing the Indian nationalist reception of *Slumdog Millionaire* with the global appeal of Bollywood films, the issue of cinematic representation and national identity in the age of globalisation was created. Both *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Guru* rely on the cross-cultural popularity of the rags to riches myth. Within the framework of transnational companies and international media markets, both films aptly represent the facts of today's material society, modernity, and technology, as well as the disappearance or redefinition of conventional familial or cultural ties. The discrepancies between the films, on the other hand, point to the ways in which multinational media construct contrasting collections of imaginary environments for different viewers. The traditional Euro-American film relies entirely on the individual subject, and so until his or her wants or wishes are met, the film is essentially finished. Thus, the Bollywood-style song and dance at the end, which may have been used in a Bollywood film to signify the reconciliation of the past and present and reinforce a sense of cultural identity, is disconnected from the plot. Instead, it is used in conjunction with the credit sequence to create a feel-good tune for moviegoers as they leave the theatre.

64.5 IMPACT OF BOLLYWOOD ON INDIAN DIASPORA

Bollywood films play an essential role in Indian culture as the largest film industry in India and the world. Bollywood has portrayed Indian society through its films for generations, particularly for South Asians in the diaspora who wish to reconnect with their "Indianness." However, Bollywood's portrayal of this diaspora frequently imposes socially regressive views on women (both in the diaspora and in India) by establishing a stark contrast between the "traditional" values of India and the "liberal" values of the West.

The rapidly growing popularity of Bollywood films among Indian women in the diaspora places these films in a crucial position to shape the identities of this demographic. We are able to develop a "sense of Indianness" through these films, allowing us to relate to and identify with them. These films are used by diasporic Indians, including second-generation India-American women, to establish a sense of commonality that unites them as strangers in a foreign land. This is achieved in part by providing the diaspora with a glimpse of their homeland, which aids them in coping with the sense of loss caused by separation from their culture and traditions. Rahul, Anjali, Rohan, and Pooja celebrate Karva Chauth away from home during the song "Bole Chudiyen" in "Kabhi Kushi Kabhie Gham" (K3G), allowing us to indulge in our nostalgia for our timeless Indian traditions.

Bollywood has increased its representations of the West and diasporic Indians, creating another way to navigate hyphenated identities through film. Many Indian films are now set in the West, outside India. The idea of India as a land of pure tradition versus America as a land of progressive (and, in some views, morally inferior) values isn't new and has been perpetuated in the postcolonial era in various forms. When Bollywood films portray India as traditional, it creates a false image in the diaspora – a nostalgic fantasy of purity and tradition in a sexualized and decadent land, while the real India continues to grow as a culture beyond imagined traditional and colonial paradigms. Bollywood's glimpse of the diaspora's lost Indian homeland is largely imagined.

64.6 DIASPORIC FILMS

The cinema has become an important platform for diasporic cultures to express and convey their identities, as well as to reach a wider audience. It may convey a feeling of the displacement, intolerance, and stigmatisation that migrants encounter, as well as the tensions that emerge among geographically dispersed families or those striving to establish themselves in new nations. The subject matter of displacement, diasporas, and cultures is used by filmmakers of a variety of cinema genres, including Hollywood, Bollywood, independent, and art film. Diverse scholars have examined diasporic and exilic films as a foreign genre or contemporary phenomena. Currently, the Indian film business is likewise a “nostalgia factory.” Looking at the distinct views presented in popular films from the 1990s, one of the major topics is nostalgia. The increasing accessibility of Indian film in the diaspora is indicative of a larger trend in international popular culture. Trend watchers saw the breakthrough of Asian architects, Asian artists, and Asian musicians in the 1990s. By 2001, India had already been ‘cool’ on MTV. Superstars such as Madonna and Janet Jackson used oriental styles in their videos, famous DJs created club remixes of Bollywood soundtracks, and scenes from vibrant urban India have appeared in television advertisements (Hulsman 2001, Moorman 2001).



All pictures are taken from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

Source: <https://blogs.fu-berlin.de/>

The research of diasporic media identities has been beneficial in assessing the culture-place nexus. Previously, the majority of diaspora and media research have concentrated on either literary interpretation (e.g., on Indian cinema, see Uberoi, 1998) or the cultural politics of television and the internet. Several studies have also shown that films can play an important role in a diaspora’s interaction with its homeland and in providing a sense of mutual cultural memory (again much is published on Indian cinema, e.g. Cunningham & Sinclair, 2001; Dudrah, 2006; Punathambekar, 2005; Ram, 2003). Diasporic film culture has been developed and continues to be shaped by initiatives from within communities. In the 1990s, Indian diamond merchants began private screenings for their own group and established small companies to carry homeland

films to Antwerp, capitalising on the opportunities created by homeland film industries. The feature film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* is just one example of a private screening. Profits were often donated to humanitarian programmes in India, which resonated with the diaspora, which often wants to support the economies of their homeland. For example, the Antwerp World Diamond Center hosted a screening of *Gandhi My Father* (Feroz Abbas Khan, 2007) for the benefit of children in 2007. As these measures proved to be cost-effective, Belgian exhibitors (whose theatres were often used for private screenings) started to exploit the niche market. When a couple of international distributors approached Kinopolis, both of which were managed similarly by representatives of the Indian diaspora in London and the Netherlands, deals were struck, and Indian films were finally included in the daily schedule of the Antwerp multiplex (in 2006). This resulted in the commercialization of the diasporic film industry, as well as a power transfer as a community practise was appropriated by larger corporations. The local multiplex has evolved from a simple site to an involved participant selling films to the diaspora, while the culture itself has evolved from initiator to target audience in a niche market.

To contextualise how people interact with “homeland” films, it is important to analyse current theatrical flows’ structural properties when discussing these blind spots. This type of contextual research is influenced by both critical audience studies (which emphasise systemic audience confinement) and vital political economy (arguing for incorporating micro-processes and attention to audiences). On the one side, scholars like Ien Ang (1991) have suggested a contextualised audience analysis. Myria Georgiou (2006), a diasporic media theorist, sees reception as being structured by power frames around media access, use, and perception. Audience researchers have become profoundly conscious that audience practises, such as film industries, are limited by the global political economy (Bird, 2003). At the other end of the continuum, insightful re-thinkers in the political-economic tradition have pushed toward an interpretation of media flows that includes more than just an economic study of power structures and moves beyond the general large-scale processes analysed in political economy. While macro-level dynamics play an essential role in determining the broad context in which communication occurs, Murdock and Golding show that they do not fully describe the structure of communication processes (2005).

Mira Nair’s films tell a number of stories about identity shifts while also exposing “the complexities of South Asian Diasporic cultural development.” Despite the fact that her films portray various settings, there is a recurring thread in her work that revolves around issues of “authenticity, heritage, nostalgia, and home” (Chakraborty 2014, 610). These problems, as seen through the eyes of various characters and the ramifications of each element, will be discussed in the following sections through the respective journeys of various characters. The theme of Nair’s films is on diasporic displaced people who end up in a marginal situation after being forced to flee, either for greater opportunities to improve their lives or for political reasons. In Nair’s films, where Indian and Western cultures are combined, the result is “multiculturalism,” which is more than just a “rhetorical initiative” since it “both creates and naturalises a market for both internal and external facets” (Athique 2013, 111). Nair’s efforts to break down racial boundaries are carried out by shifting the vantage point of her films to highlight the significant effect on how racism is increasingly being burst into the forefront.

Apart from the government’s efforts, the Bollywood film industry started making films targeted at the Diaspora in the 1990s. Following the liberalisation of the Indian economy,

films such as Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (The Large-Hearted Will Take Away the Bride, 1995), Pardes (Foreign Nation, 1997), Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (Something Happens [in the Heart], 1998), Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham (2009) were made more focused on Indian Diaspora. These films feature a (group of) NRI/PIO. They discover(s) India for the first time and establish India as a place of longing centred on culture, heritage, and national identity. As a result, stereotypical depictions of poverty and pollution are avoided, and the new Bollywood film appears. The fusion of consumerism and so-called desi ideals is one reason for its popularity in the diaspora. Bollywood films directed at NRIs/PIOs often portray a western youth community with links to branded goods from the United States and Europe. The characters in the film are young, beautiful, rich, and deeply ingrained in consumerism. Nonetheless, notwithstanding this western touch, traditions called desi or traditionally Indian are highly valued, such as upholding women’s modesty and chastity, honouring parents, or compromising individual interests for the more significant benefit of the family. The popularity of Bollywood in the diaspora is mirrored in increased consumption of Indian items such as DVDs, apparel, travel agency bookings, and so on, which fuels and contributes to the industry’s success. Nonetheless, voices of disapproval are lifted, for example, by an Indian audience for whom the depicted lives in the West are not available or attractive. The depicted ‘Indianness’ mainly describes well-off middle-class or upper-class families who do not have to suffer financially to get by regularly. However, the ‘Indianness’ that unites various age groups of the diaspora will remain a figment of the imagination, as India is a diverse region.

Check my progress 2

Note : a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

3. What role does India’s diaspora play in making India a soft power? Examine.

.....

4. Describe how Bollywood films, through cultural empathy, became a tool for connecting Indian diaspora?

.....

64.6 LETS SUM UP

The Indian film industry, especially Bollywood, has made considerable strides in the last two decades. The storey started nine decades ago when precarious film making was transformed into a multifaceted and massive economic empire. In terms of film production scale, it is also the most prominent worldwide film industry. So far, nearly 27.000 films (more than 1000 each year) and thousands of short movies have been

made. After establishing itself as a highly qualified industry, the popular Indian cinema has made significant progress in almost all areas, including infrastructure, banking, marketing, and distribution. Bollywood films are becoming more popular in the foreign market as a result of the Indian Diaspora and the expansion of “Brand India.” It is true that in recent years, exterior sales have outpaced interior sales. Bollywood films are included in the top ten charts in both the United Kingdom and the United States. The industry has advanced in every field of globalisation, including technologies, products, services, money, and individuals (Pillania, R. k., 2008).

Bollywood is not only one of India’s most remarkable growth trends, but it is also one of the two major film industries that has risen the fastest. Nowadays, almost 1,000 films are produced per year, while in 1912, only 150 films were produced. Globalisation, in conjunction with Indians of the Diaspora, was the primary driver of its growth. Via these influences, new technology and techniques entered India, making development more straightforward. Besides, a modern way of life became sensible, which was integrated into the film’s content. In the modern sense, Bollywood is the biggest and most popular cultural product of the twenty-first century. It is undeniable that globalisation has bolstered Bollywood. big-budget melodramas, Bollywood aimed at the middle class and diasporic Indian audiences. Various Bollywood films have portrayed NRIs, emigration, and diaspora from multiple viewpoints and events over the years. Bollywood attempts to show diasporic topics that deal with middle-class hegemony. Middle-class problems are somewhat different and essential, as are the daily cultural traditions, caste-system, patriarchal system, preferences and lifestyles, and expectations for better livelihoods. They have social and cultural connections that motivate their desire to be linked to their individuals, community, and social classes back home. The major constituents of cultural capital are routine rituals, religious faith, eating preferences, festivals and family functions, cultural association, songs-music-films. Any Diaspora community’s main priority is the maintenance of tradition, self-identity, and nationalism. The actual state of society, in which the dynamics of gender relations, the transformation of the economy into cultural marketisation, and the voices of the oppressed for rights are being portrayed.

Bollywood has been cashing in on the Diaspora audience for a long time. It also had its traditional markets in the Arab World and in the countries that formed the erstwhile Soviet Union. However, the spread of the Indian Diaspora and its changing constitution from Labour to entrepreneurial, professional, academic, and transnational also meant an exponential increase in Hindi Cinema’s audience. Bollywood has also garnered new audiences in France and Germany. These new audiences are drawn to these Bollywood films by the transnational nature of these cinematic texts. Commercial Hindi cinema plays a central role in the negotiation of national identity. For decades, the expatriate Indian served as a counter-example for acceptable behaviour, a living testimony of inappropriateness. In the mid-1990s, following the liberalization of the Indian economy, the rise of Hindu nationalism and the advent of a multiplex-going urban middle-class, the stereotype was turned around. The Non-Resident Indian (NRI) became the epitome of Indianness and embodied in capitalist and consumerist modernity and patriarchal, Northern and Hindu traditionalism. This change was meant to cater to a lucrative niche market and reflected an uneasy transition period. Besides, the on-screen NRI role models were seen as an instrument of Western modernity in India and of India’s recognition as a global power in the West.

64.7 KEY WORDS

- Globalism** : An ideology based on the belief that people, goods and information ought to be able to cross national borders unfettered.
- Nationalism** : Identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations.
- NRI** : Overseas Indians, officially known as non-resident Indians (NRIs) or persons of Indian origin (PIOs), are people of Indian birth, descent or origin who live outside the Republic of India.

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64.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

1. The cinema has become an important platform for diasporic cultures to express and convey their identities, as well as to reach a wider audience. It may convey a

feeling of the displacement, intolerance, and stigmatisation that migrants encounter, as well as the tensions that emerge among geographically dispersed families or those striving to establish themselves in new nations. The subject matter of displacement, diasporas, and cultures is used by filmmakers of a variety of cinema genres, including Hollywood, Bollywood, independent, and art film. Diverse scholars have examined diasporic and exilic films as a foreign genre or contemporary phenomena. Currently, the Indian film business is likewise a “nostalgia factory.” Looking at the distinct views presented in popular films from the 1990s, one of the major topics is nostalgia. The increasing accessibility of Indian film in the diaspora is indicative of a larger trend in international popular culture.

2. The 1950s and 1960s are regarded as the golden era of Indian cinema. Exceptionally brilliant actors such as Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, Meena Kumari, and many others came to fame during this period. Along with the improvisation and refinement of the market’s acting segment, the music industry started to achieve dominance by playing an essential role in the filmmaking process. Similarly, as Bollywood began to dominate the industry as a whole, many more regional initiatives sprouted up throughout the world. Essentially, the modern Indian film industry began around 1947. The film industry underwent a phenomenal and excellent transition during this time frame. Notable filmmakers such as Satyajit Ray and Bimal Roy made films about the lower class’s survival and everyday miseries. Historical and mythological themes were pushed to the sidelines, and movies with social agendas started to dominate the market. These films dealt with issues such as prostitution, dowry, polygamy, and other social ills that were common in our culture.
3. Diaspora is a powerful actor who can effectively use soft power to influence foreign policy results. Certainly, India’s policy toward its diaspora has been extremely progressive, with the acknowledgement of diaspora as a partner in India’s prosperity, and diaspora may play a highly proactive role in influencing many matters pertaining to the home country’s interests. Joseph Nye invented the phrase soft power in the late 1980s to describe a country’s capacity to convince others to do its bidding without using force or coercion. As nations attempt to make sense of the quickly shifting global backdrop and alter their tactics appropriately, the soft power resources at their disposal will be a crucial component of the foreign policy instruments required in the future. India has always been one of the few countries with a strong hand in the area of soft power.
4. This indicates that the symbolic and aesthetic facets of Bollywood productions provide several elements in the mise-en-scene that elicit meaningful visual and emotional associations between local references and the need for national unity. If Bollywood romanticizes India for diaspora viewers, it also glorifies NRIs for domestic audiences. According to Chabra, commercial Indian cinema depicts NRIs as affluent and prosperous Indians in the United Kingdom and the United States, whom Indians in India hope will spend their foreign-earned riches in India. ‘In fact, we are part of the Indian Diaspora, building our own Indian identity outside of India,’ he writes. We are taxi drivers, restaurant staff, students, Silicon Valley billionaires, authors, actors, physicians, attorneys, environmental leaders, gays and lesbians, and battered women living their own lives in adopted countries.

UNIT 65 PERFORMING ARTS AND CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

Structure

- 65.0 Learning Objectives
- 65.1 Introduction
- 65.2 The Heritage of Classical Performing Arts
- 65.3 Safeguarding the Cultural Heritage
- 65.4 Performing arts in Indian Diaspora
- 65.5 Fusion of Performing Arts
- 65.6 Shifting of Cultural Identity - Hybridized Performing Art
- 65.7 What it means to be “Indian” in the performing arts
- 65.8 Positioning Indian classical music and fusion music
- 65.9 Authenticity of Musical Genre
- 65.10 Change and transformations through cultural organizations
- 65.11 Generational Impact on Music
- 65.12 Indian Musical tradition and Instruments
- 65.13 Conclusion
- 65.14 References and Selected Readings

65.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

1. What is performing arts
2. How performing arts in Indian diaspora have undergone change while interacting with host country’s cultures
3. The forces responsible for the emergence of fusion music.
4. The role of cultural organisations in perpetuating homeland cultural practices.

65.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in earlier units, human mobility is not a stand-alone process. It is accompanied with multiple transmissions of ideas, art and artefacts. One of such aspects is the performing arts which include vocal and instrumental music to dance and theatre and pantomime, sung verse, and more. They contain a wide range of cultural expressions representing human imagination and can be found in several other intangible cultural heritage domains. Music is perhaps the most universal of the performing arts. It can be used in any culture, most commonly as an intrinsic part of other performing arts and intangible cultural heritage realms such as ceremonies, seasonal occasions, or oral traditions. It is used in various settings, whether sacred or profane, classical or popular, closely linked to work or entertainment. Music can also have a political or economic dimension: it may recount a community’s past, sing an influential person’s praises, and

play an important role in economic transactions. Marriages, funerals, ceremonies and initiations, festivities, various forms of entertainment, and various other social activities are all occasions when music is played.

65.2 THE HERITAGE OF CLASSICAL PERFORMING ARTS

The materials for the history of Indian music of the ancient period can be collected from the Vedas and especially from the Samaveda, the womb of music, the *Siksastaka* and the *Pratishakhyas*, the *Natyasastra* and its commentaries, the classical Sanskrit dramas and literature, the Buddhist literature and the *Jatakas*, the *Brihaddeshi* and the *Sangitasamayasastra*, the *Silappadikaram* and the *Tevaram* and other ancient Tamil literature, as well as from the rock-cut inscriptions and sculptures, chiselled on the railings, facades and walls of different Buddhist, Hindu and Jain Stupas, Viharas and temples. Similarly, the materials of the history of Indian music of the mediaeval and modern periods can also be collected from the records of political and social happenings of those two periods.

The epochs of Baijubaora, Nayaka Gopala, Raja Man Singh Tomar, Baku, Macchu, and others, together with that of Swami Krishnadasa, Swami Haridasa, Mian Tanasena and others, must be considered to be important landmarks in the history of North Indian music of the mediaeval period. In the South, we had Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar, Shyama-Shastri, Svati Tirunal and others, who put a mark upon the mediaeval history of Carnatic music. Again, the music works like the *Gitaprasanggi* of Swami Krishnadasa, the *Rajatarangini* of Lochana-Kavi as well as some of the Persian books like *Manakutuhala* of Fakir-Ulla, the *Tohfat-ul-Hind* of Mirza Khan, the *Ma'danulmoosiqi* of Hakim Mohammed Karam Imam of the court of Wajid Ali Shah of Lucknow and the *Nagmat-e-Asaph* of Md. Rezza Khan are the landmarks of the history of Indian music of the mediaeval period of North India.

Traditional theatre productions often involve acting, singing, dancing, music, dialogue, narration, or recitation but can also include puppetry or pantomime. These arts, however, are more than just 'performances' for an audience; they can also play significant roles in culture and community, such as songs sung while doing farm work or music used in ceremonies. Lullabies are often sung to make a baby sleep in a more intimate environment. The conventional concept of intangible cultural heritage includes tools, items, artefacts, and spaces associated with artistic expressions and activities. This covers musical instruments, masks, dresses, and other body accessories used in dance and scenery and props used in theatre. Performing arts are often presented in particular locations; as these locations are inextricably connected to the show, they are designated as cultural spaces by the Convention.

Music, dance, and theatre are often the main aspects of cultural promotion aimed at attracting visitors, and they appear on tour operators' itineraries regularly. While this can attract more tourists and income to a country or city while still having a glimpse into its history, it can also introduce new methods of showing the performing arts that have been altered for the tourism industry. While tourism may help revitalise traditional performing arts and offer intangible cultural heritage a "business value," it may also have a distorting impact when events are often reduced to show modified highlights to

satisfy tourist demands. Traditional art forms are often transformed into objects in the name of entertainment, resulting in the disappearance of basic forms of community communication. In other cases, greater societal or cultural causes may have a significant effect on performing arts practises.

Many music styles have been changed to match western types of notation for them to be documented or for educational purposes, but this method may be harmful. Many kinds of music employ scales of tones and intervals that may not adhere to traditional western styles and tonal nuances, which are overlooked during the recording process. Changes to conventional instruments to make them more familiar or easier to play for students, such as adding frets to stringed instruments, radically modify the devices themselves.

65.3 SAFEGUARDING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Traditional performing arts safeguarding initiatives should specifically concentrate on disseminating skills and techniques, the playing and making of instruments, and the reinforcement of the relationship between master and apprentice. Subtlety in a tune, rhythm in a dance, and dramatic representations can all be emphasised. Besides, performances can be studied, captured, registered, inventoried, and preserved. There are numerous sound records in libraries worldwide, many of which date back more than a century. These older recordings are in danger of decay and will be lost forever unless they are digitised. The digitisation process enables records to be correctly classified and inventoried. Cultural media, organisations, and businesses may also play an essential part in maintaining alternative performance arts modes by building audiences and raising public consciousness. Audiences may be educated about the different facets of a medium of expression, encouraging it to gain more tremendous and wider popularity and fostering connoisseurship, which promotes interest in local adaptations of an art form and can result in active involvement in the performance itself.

The two primary schools of classical music, Hindustani and Carnatic, continue to exist through oral practice passed down from teachers to students. As a result, family practises such as gharanas and sampradayas have emerged. Dance has a 2,000-year-old unbroken tradition in India. Its subjects are taken from myths, folklore, and classical literature and classified into classical and folk. Classical dance styles are based on ancient dance discipline and obey stringent presentation laws. Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Manipuri, Kuchipudi, and Odissi are among the most significant. Though it has its origins in Tamil Nadu, Bharata Natyam has evolved into an all-India genre. Kathakali is a Kerala dance style. Kathak is a resurrected classical dance style as a result of Mughal influence on Indian society. Manipur has contributed to a delicate, lyrical dance style known as Manipuri, while Kuchipudi is an Andhra Pradesh-based dance genre. Odissi, a temple dance from Odisha, is now commonly performed by artists around the world. Folk and ethnic dances follow a variety of styles.

Institutions such as the Sangeet Natak Akademi and other training institutes and cultural associations have led to classical and folk dances' current success. The Akademi provides financial support to cultural institutions and fellowships to researchers, artists, and teachers to encourage advanced study and training in various types of dance and music, especially those that are unusual.

Check Your Progress 1

1. What constitute performing arts?

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2. What are the classical dances practices within India and in Indian diaspora?

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65.4 PERFORMING ARTS IN INDIAN DIASPORA

There was a time when the words “Indian” and “performing arts” conjured up images of conventional - mostly “classical” - styles of music and dance, with theatre falling under the latter. The highest-rated performers were Indians and lived in India. Going to India to study was almost mandatory for anyone living abroad. The number of people exposed to these performers was limited, and their effect on the general public was marginal. Indian films and music were hugely successful in many countries other than India, including Russia, Egypt, and Ecuador. Even today, when children see an Indian in, say, Fez’s mediaeval quarter, they start singing “Awaaragoon” and inquire about Amitabh Bachchan, but these countries have few Indian settlers.

With the liberalisation of the Indian economy, the world of the Indian performing artist expanded. An artist may now appeal to business houses as well as the general public for patronage, in addition to the legislature. The ‘general population’ included not just the growing indigenous urban middle class, but also Indians living abroad and those returning home to work. This public, having been introduced to non-Indian art forms that expressed a modern world, sought - even “demanded” the same relevance to modern life from their own art forms. As India and Indians gained international attention, foreign artists turned to India to extend their own horizons. Different types of percussion, spoken drum syllables, and high tempo vocalisation of *swara* passages joined the already prevalent use of sitar and tabla in flamenco, pop, and western film scores. Indian musicians who used to have to perform for pennies in Indian restaurants were now in demand to record with “mainstream” musicians. Indian dancers were asked to star in music videos, and Indian-origin actors started to be featured in TV shows and theatre productions of Indian themes.

65.5 FUSION OF PERFORMING ARTS

The word “fusion” became common in both India and the West. In India, it usually referred to Indian music that had been given a ‘rock’ or western ‘pop-music’ sound, such as when Asha Bhonsle re-released her old hit songs to a disco beat. ‘Fusion’ was used to refer to any artistic partnership between various cultures, such as when flamenco dance met Kathak, or Zakir Hussein played a duet with a Japanese shakuhachi flautist, in dance, and outside India (despite discomfort with the term). When more musicians from Africa, South America, Asia, Europe, and the United States continued to collaborate in performance, the word “world music,” which had traditionally applied to music from non-western cultures in general, came to apply to cultural amalgams.

The World Music Institute, located in New York, was gradually promoting cross-cultural exchanges, with Indian musicians often serving as the mainstay. As it became more economically feasible to present western music groups and their records in India, Indians gained greater access to forms such as Acid Bhangra and Disco Garba that had emerged from immigrant communities abroad. The largest exchanges, however, were between the United States and the United Kingdom. Several attractive musical styles, such as Caribbean ‘Chutney’ music and the pop-folk music of Malagasy and Mauritius’ Indic communities (which fuse inherited Vaishnav songs - often in archaic Bhojpuri with local rhythms) were sidetracked. They had little popularity either in India or among promoters of “world culture” in Paris, New York, and London because the cultures from which they arose had little interaction with groups in India or other Diaspora areas.

The most critical shift in the arts, especially among the younger generation, was the abolition of the distinction between “classical” and “common,” “traditional” and “new.” A classically trained percussionist could accompany bansuri player Hari Prasad Chaurasia one evening and be part of an ensemble led by cellist Yo Yo Ma the next. On the third, he may record with a pop group in the hopes of winning a Grammy. Similarly, a dancer who performed a charming Bharatanatyamvarnam one night could deliver an ambitious dance-theatre piece the next night that discussed violence in contemporary society. The regional borders of Indian performing arts have also extended. Artists spend longer periods overseas, producing pieces that influenced performing arts in the United States.

Many of these works were visible to other musicians, either at international festivals or touring India. When more and more performance artists lived on two continents, they founded schools in other countries. A new wave of performers emerged who had received training outside India and were taken seriously at home. The blurring of distinctions between “Indian-born” and “foreign-born,” or “Indian-trained” and “foreign-trained,” reflects a shared experience among performing artists in India and the Diaspora. Even if the particular social imperatives that affect them are distinct – which they are – they feed into a popular reservoir that influences practice both in India and elsewhere.

65.6 SHIFTING OF CULTURAL IDENTITY - HYBRIDIZED PERFORMING ART

Mira Nair’s films tell a number of stories about identity shifts while also highlighting “the complexities of South Asian Diasporic cultural development.” Despite the fact

that her films portray various settings, there is a recurring thread in her work that revolves around issues of “authenticity, heritage, nostalgia, and home” (Chakraborty 2014, 610). These topics, as seen through the eyes of various characters and the ramifications of each feature, will be explored in the following sections through the respective journeys of various characters. The theme of Nair’s films is on diasporic displaced people who end up in a marginal situation after being forced to flee, either for greater opportunities to improve their lives or for political reasons.

The Namesake (2006) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2012) are two examples of such films, and the *Mississippi Masala* (1991). *Salaam Bombay!* (1989), which is significant in Nair’s oeuvre not only for the critical acclaim it earned but also because it was her first feature-length film, signalling her departure from documentaries. The analysis of cinematic and storytelling elements used in her films about so-called ‘Other’ cultures—cultures that are not necessarily familiar to the majority of the Western part of the world—shows a certain “Western lack of sets of values and understanding, and yet are so unique and local” that they become universal because “the message is plain regardless of where the individual is from” (Walters, 2006).

In the juxtaposition of Indian and Western theatrical styles and the “clash of modernity and tradition,” Nair’s works provide a novel approach to portraying the displaced personalities of the “Other” (Sharpe 2005, 59). Nair’s diasporic cinema, by its portrayal of hybridized and multiple displaced characters and the use of sometimes teeming metaphors, offers to provide a point of view of people who are seldom allowed a voice in conventional depictions. All of this is depicted on film in such a manner that people all around the world can see the individual storylines from the perspectives of the characters. This is what Nair refers to as the universal factor in her films.

Chutney music is a vivacious mix of Bhojpuri percussion and Afro-Caribbean sounds. *Chutney* song, like its edible equivalent, is flavoured, distinct, and radiant. *Chutney* music, which dates back to the early 1970s, is a cultural landmark with its vibrant fanbase and rich heritage. Its influence can now be felt in the palette of pop music. Born in the temples, wedding rooms, and cane fields of Indo-Caribbean, this genre owes much of its legacy to the British empire’s indentured servants. After being taken from their Indian homeland, these labourers were shipped to Trinidad’s farm plantations to work alongside their African counterparts. *Chutney music* is distinguished by its upbeat tempo and straightforward subject matter. To the sounds of dholak, harmonium, dhantal, tassa, and other instruments, stories of life and love in the Indo-Caribbean were sung. The songs were often sung in Hindustani Caribbean or English, with a distinct Creole accent. The genre has developed from its early origins and religious origins to have a distinct indo-dancehall feel.

When anyone of Indian descent attained popularity in the performing arts, their “Indianness” was seen as incidental to their artistry and was only emphasised by other Indians who were proud of such widespread success. Zubin Mehta was a leading conductor first and foremost; he was only secondarily affiliated with - or represented - India or things Indian. Also now, musicians like the brilliant counter-tenor Bejun Mehta, who was raised and educated in North Carolina, are rarely referred to as “Indian.” While this is aligned with a general movement in the western performing arts toward “color blindness,” which allows directors and producers to assign Indian artists non-specifically Indian positions - such as doctors or physicists, or even “Romeo” - it also ensures that representations of “the Indian” benefit no contours from such casting.

65.7 WHAT IT MEANS TO BE “INDIAN” IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

When Indians, on the other hand, are among those who create and make creative decisions, they will begin to influence the general public’s view of themselves. India and Indians were portrayed by people acquainted with the nuances of the Indian background in a recent New York production of Tom Stoppard’s *Indian Ink* by a South Asian firm. After being brought to life by an Indian director who understood the multi-layered Indian culture, the play became textured. Minor characters were also three-dimensional. As a result, the viewer might interact with them and their interests, even though all of them were culturally unique. With the rise of the Indian Diaspora and the convergence of South Asian immigrant communities, many companies are owned by people of Indian descent whose activities are changing the image of what it means to be “Indian” in the performing arts particularly when their work becomes mainstream.

In line with our times’ socioeconomic tenor, the Diaspora’s performing arts are not strictly focused on government patronage. For a long time, musicians have been funded by recording contracts and concert fees. When members of the Diaspora become more wealthy, they support non-profit groups that encourage Indian performing arts. Indian artists’ tours are often arranged by Indian entrepreneurs who focus on ticket sales within the Indian community. Recitals by south Indian singers hit plays from Bombay, and blockbuster shows starring Indian film stars are among them.

When Indians penetrate the fields of manufacturing, display, and patronage, they have a say in what facets of Indian culture are disseminated and continue to influence the broader society’s perception of what it means to be “Indian.” For several years, India and Indian culture has been portrayed in the mainstream of western performing arts by non-Indian choreographers, composers, playwrights, and even artists. An American wrote the music for a play set in India, such as *Phaedra Britannica*, and the costumes for the *Mahabharata*, while influenced by Indian dress, were modelled by an Anglo-Frenchwoman of Greek ancestry. There were few professionals of Indian descent in theatre, music, or dance, just as there were a limited number of Indians in society as a whole. Even as the UK’s immigrant community increased, they rarely attended concerts, and their children were rarely allowed to pursue careers in the arts.

65.8 POSITIONING INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC AND FUSION MUSIC

The classical music of the Indian subcontinent is known as Indian classical music. Hindustani has two major traditions: The North Indian classical music tradition and Carnatic is the South Indian expression. Until the 16th century, these customs were not distinct. Traditions split and developed into different forms during the Mughal rule of the Indian subcontinent. Carnatic performances tend to be short composition-based, whereas Hindustani music emphasizes improvisation and exploration of all aspects of a raga. However, there are more similarities than differences between the two schemes. The origins of Indian classical music can be found in Hinduism’s Vedic literature and Bharata Muni’s classic Sanskrit text on performing arts, the *Natyashastra*. Both the Hindustani and Carnatic music traditions consider the 13th century Sanskrit text *Sangita-Ratnakara* of Sarangadeva as the authoritative text.

The ancient and medieval Indian subcontinent's classical music traditions (modern Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan) were a generally integrated structure until the 14th century, when the Delhi Sultanate's socio-political instability separated the north from the south. North and South India's music traditions were not considered independent until the 16th century, after which they formed distinct styles. Hindustani is the name given to the classical music of North India, while Carnatic is the name given to the music of South India (sometimes spelt as Karnatic). Many regional styles, such as the Bengali classical tradition, have been adopted and developed over time in Indian classical music. As a result of this openness to new ideas, regional folk developments and influences from outside the subcontinent were assimilated.

When a person chooses to be a music student in the past; he also decided to make music his livelihood. To achieve his goal of becoming a skilled musician, he studied and practised under the watchful eye of his Guru. The Hindustani system's complexities and intricacies made it a challenging and demanding area of analysis. A disciple had to surrender to the song. The disciple made music his life, and his life became music as a result. With the advent of industrialization and modern popular music forms, classical musicians are finding it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to practice and perform only classical Hindustani music. Classical Hindustani music is no longer the preferred alternative for many young people in a world where pop music, R&B, hip hop, and rap predominate. Classical musicians face an uphill challenge in dealing with contemporary urban music's infectious rhythms and lyrics. Classical Hindustani music is less appealing to the younger generation due to the Hindustani method's sophistication and the depth of understanding expected of the Raag and Taal. As a result, there is a widening divide between the older generation of classical music fans and the younger generation.

For nearly half a century, Indian classical music has been combined with traditional Western music genres. White American or European artists, such as the Beatles and John Mayer, were among the first to do so in the 1960s when they studied with highly respected North and South Indian classical musicians. Many of these artists studied in India, where Indian musicians, especially in the Bollywood film industry, explored Western musical ideas with an Indian aesthetic. The advent of Indian American musicians who integrate elements of Carnatic and Hindustani music into Western music, on the other hand, is a much more recent phenomenon linked to late-century immigration. In Indian music, fusion is not a new trend. Ali Akbar Khan's success in the United States in 1955 is said to have started the fusion movement. In the 1960s and 1970s, rock and roll fusions with Indian music gave rise to Indian fusion music.

However, it was limited to Europe and North America. Pandit Ravi Shankar, the Sitar maestro, took the stage of Indian fusion music for a bit. Indian classical music is predominantly homophonic, meaning that it focuses on melodies composed from a series of notes. The magic of Indian classical music is primarily experienced through numerous melodies constructed within the ragas' structure, while the magic of Western classical music is experienced mainly through polyphonic composition, where counterpoint, harmony, and the texture produced using multiple voices are essential. Melody can be found in Western classical music as well, but it is not the singular or defining subject of most Western classical works.

65.9 AUTHENTICITY OF MUSICAL GENRE

Many purists claim that when the classical music style is combined with others, the traditions and "authenticity" of the music are lost. Many purists have rejected the concept

of fusion music, arguing that it is not “pure” and that the music’s original characteristics are lost. Purists express the same disappointment with Indian music. When ‘Raags are integrated into a fusion composition, there is always the concern that they will lose their original characteristics.’ (Orme, July 10, 2005). Fusion artists, on the other hand, claim that musical evolution isn’t a bad thing. However, since one cannot advance without a history, reverence and understanding of traditional styles and forms must be maintained. According to Dass, in fusion music, a certain amount of compromise is needed between all of the various musical elements and forms that are being fused: ‘No one instrument or musical element can shine in the performance because each instrumentalist in the ensemble’s job is to support the other.’ (Dass, July 12, 2006).

Hindustani music is linear in motion, and the melody is always monophonic—while in Western classical music, in contrast, importance is given to harmony, chord progression and modulations. Aside from the basic twelve tones of the scale, Hindustani music has an additional ten shrutis (microtones) that are not present in the Western classical musical system’s harmonies and chord progressions. Many *Raags* are distinguished by these ten additional shrutis. The careful use of these shrutis within the performance identifies those *Raags*. The inclusion of the Hindustani scale’s twenty-two shrutis makes it almost impossible for all of the shrutis to come under the Western classical chord structure, which is based on the Western musical scale’s twelve semitones. These chords would sound unappealing when combined with microtonal variations since harmony is better achieved when notes have a natural harmonic relationship in the Western equal temperament tuning system.

The Beatles were an all-boys English rock band formed by Paul McCartney, George Harrison, John Lennon, and Ringo Starr. They were one of the most influential bands of the twentieth century. They rose to prominence in the 1960s due to a phenomenon known as ‘Beatlemania,’ which mirrored the mood of the Western counter-culture movement at the time. Throughout the 1960s, Harrison and the band were chastised for misinterpreting or appropriating Indian culture by associating Indian spiritual philosophy with heavy psychedelic drugs. These appropriations resulted in a sub-genre known as raga rock, a form of psychedelic rock that is a western interpretation of an Eastern musical style. Despite the ‘appropriation’ of Indian culture, there have been a few instances where sincere attempts have been made to reflect authentic North Indian Classical music in their songs.

This mingling of cultures has resulted in a richer perception of Indian music in the West. At this degree of artistic union, the Beatles and Indian music’s intricate polyphonies have resulted in a collage of styles and cultures being connected through creative tourism. As trendsetters of their day, the Beatles effectively introduced elements of Indian music to their Western audience. As long as economic interests are not the only subject of such a synthesis, future generations will be able to speculate, read, and appreciate a balanced, well-rounded education. It can also be theorized that Harrison (and the other band members) looked at India and its culture because he could find something that was missing from its own culture, perhaps a philosophical and spiritual relationship to life as such. This synchronizes the theory of anthropology as a cultural critique by George Marcus and Michael Fischer. This theory suggests that an anthropologist looks at a foreign culture to criticize his own in his research.

65.10 CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATIONS THROUGH CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Music permeates all facets of Indian cultural life: song and dance can be seen in the home, on the streets, at temples, at social gatherings, and during festive festivities. India's religious and ethnic compositions are incredibly complex, and since these two streams run through nearly all of Indian society, traditional music in India comprises a vast and nuanced tapestry of classical and folk music. To discuss the nuances of form, cultural purpose, social significance, and spiritual ideals in all traditional Indian music will take more than a lifetime's work; its richness avoids generalisation, and its deep 'difference' from 'Western' musical aesthetics resists superficial comparisons. As a result, Hindustani Classical music, though exploring some commonalities in musical and religious/cultural aesthetics and tracing the threads of a handful of other relevant classical and folk traditions provides a modest starting point for appreciating India's vast patchwork of music.

Raga and tala are the foundations of Indian classical music. It's essential to think of these as systemic structures articulated through all textures of the composition/performance, not only as textual words like "melody" and "rhythm." Melody, rhythm, and shruti (drone) are the basic textures of Indian classical music performances, usually supported by a lead melodic instrument, a percussion instrument, and a drone instrument. Simultaneously, secondary pitched accompaniment instruments are often used, and musical and percussion instruments switch positions. The influence of Indian music on jazz is widespread and long-standing. Its simplicity, elegance, and distinct melodic phrasing have influenced musicians for decades, and its thrilling rhythmic vocabulary has supplied percussionists, instrumentalists, and even vocalists with new opportunities.

Few jazz musicians have such a profound influence that it is readily evident in every aspect of their music. South Indian musicians have recognised the links between jazz improvisation and India's classical music traditions since the 1970s. The genre known as "fusion" was born from this knowledge, and this, in turn, begins an interface between East and West that continues to excite a new generation of musicians and listeners. Today, classical music is being incorporated into a variety of genres from around the world. The mixing of music from European, African, and Asian countries with Indian is a famous face of today's world fusion. Jazz and pop fused with Indian music, known as Indo-Jazz and Indi-Pop, are very popular. Various bands and groups have arisen that are dealing with a wide range of world music.

While the British presence in India encouraged musicians to experiment with mixing various music, violinist and conductor Yehudi Menuhin's encounters with Indian music masters sowed the seeds for the significant exchanges that would follow in the United States and Europe. Menuhin met the young sitar master Ravi Shankar in Paris, and for the first time in 1951, he travelled to India to learn composition. In 1955, his recording of sarod master Ustad Ali Akbar Khan (*Music of India: Morning and Evening Ragas*) became the first widely known strictly Hindustani recording (Lavezzolli 2006, 1-3).

A decade later, Western artists such as John Mayer, the Beatles, and John Coltrane popularised Indian musical concepts into mainstream music styles. Though British colonists admired some aspects of Indian culture (such as architecture), they were largely dismissive of Indian music. Despite this, the British administration in India did nothing to force their own culture or religion on India's people (contrary to earlier

colonial conquests in other parts of the world). As a result, the British Raj did not influence the forms and genres of Indian musical culture (in contrast to the drastic syncretism of the Mughal period).

Nonetheless, major socio-cultural reforms, most notably the withdrawal of solid court patronage for the arts, the expansion of the caste system of Victorian puritanical morality, and the fostering of distinctions between Hindus and Muslims, had a considerable effect on musical traditions and purposes. This was disastrous for Hindustani classical and light classical music, which had been entirely dependent on court patronage. With its social mobility and cosmopolitanism, it did not sit well with widened caste and religious divisions. On the other hand, despite being derided and not encouraged by the British government, desi music continued to survive during the British Raj because caste systems and religious traditions protected them. The dissolution of the tawaif (courtesan) tradition is a perfect example of the harm these reforms did to classical styles.

The collapse of Mughal social structures eliminated their social locale and direct cultural purposes and resulted in rapacious persecution and repression due to puritanical misinterpretations of their performances as sexual (rather than sensual) and their work as prostitutes (rather than artisans). The most powerful women in Indian society became the most marginalised. The female courtesan profession was inevitably outlawed entirely, destroying the social mobility that music had historically provided and leading to a steep decline in khyal song and Kathak dance. Thus, during the British Raj, higher castes, especially members of the Brahmin caste, came to dominate Hindustani classical music.

65.11 GENERATIONAL IMPACT ON MUSIC

Pioneers like Pandit Ravishankar and Ustad Alla Rakha joined Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. They migrated to the West in the late 1960s to play in big festivals and teach by establishing schools in various parts of the United States and Europe, raising consciousness for Indian art, music and philosophy. With the Beatles' involvement, Indian music took centre stage, and a new audience was born, made up of children from the postwar materially prosperous West looking for redemption, a way forward for a more stable and happier world in Eastern thought and culture. As a result, Indian philosophy and music became accepted in the West as part of the exotica.

The Indian diaspora's first and subsequent generations (including migrants from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and East Africa) and the mainstream audience make up the audience. The dynamics are shifting as public consciousness grows and the second generation of Indian diaspora replaces the first, resulting in a shift in audience expectations in terms of quality. During the 1970s, a wave of new migrations aided in achieving critical mass. This audience was fed through a variety of school and university-based programs, lecture demonstrations, and seminars, as well as recitals and festivals featuring visiting Indian musicians. The establishment of local organizations and recording labels, which worked hard to present full-length performances and recordings, enabling the artists to bring out the true essence of Indian music and give an experience that was native to the tradition, ushered in the next stage of recognition and comprehension. These concerts became a source of artistic pleasure for an increasingly large, appreciative, and discerning foreign audience, appealing to both the sensitive connoisseur and the inexperienced concert-goer.

Cultures do not remain static, and each generation interprets tradition differently. In the case of the performing arts, the cultural consensus is reached in various ways and at different times. The audiences play an essential role in the 'reinterpretation' method. The audiences of Indian art music have shifted, as they have in any society, and the transition is still ongoing. These questions can't be answered with any certainty because the situation is still in flux. However, it is comforting to note that Indian art music has been around for at least two millennia. It has shown resilience as well as a willingness to assimilate different external socio-cultural forces during its life. It has had a small audience with specialist experience, although to varying degrees, both in real and virtual situations. It has never been the realm of the masses or lay people in the traditional sense. Finding a new home outside of Indian soil provides additional certainty for its survival on a larger scale in specific ways. Indeed, outside attention has aided in the enhancement of its domestic reputation to some degree. Artists who perform abroad now have an advantage over those who serve in front of domestic audiences.

65.12 INDIAN MUSICAL TRADITION AND INSTRUMENTS

The performing arts in the Indian diaspora are outlets for self-expression and creative talent and forums for remembering the past through the transmission of customs and remembrance (Smith 2004). Since the dawn of Indian civilization, the arts have become an essential part of Indian society. Dance theatre and music are given special attention in the ancient Indian treatise *NatyaShastra*, written by the sage writer Bharata Muni, who devotes six chapters to music (Ganapati 1992). Along with the *Ramayana* (Hindu epic), this work laid the vital groundwork for Indian music and other art styles (Rangacharya 2003; Satpathy 2013). The Vedas are the most detailed sacred literature of ancient Indian civilization, written in Vedic Sanskrit. In each of their sections, hymns and chants are used, such as in the *Sama Veda*, 52, the third of the four Vedas of separate chapters (Sadasivan 2011; Witzel 1997). These hymns were written mainly to provide divine guidance to Hindus (Radhakrishnan and Moore 1957; Ghose 2011). According to Purushottama Bilimoria (1994), the Vedas' evocative rites and hymns, which were initially restricted to Brahmin priests in temples, inspired themes for dramatic performances among Hindu devotees. According to Bilimoria (1994, 108), 'if priests were not treated as dramatic actors, then the gods to whom the sacrifices were addressed undoubtedly were.' Examples include Shiva, the Lord of Dance and a cosmic dancer, and Saraswati, the goddess of sound and song.

Musical instruments are included in ancient texts because they are an essential part of the music. The notes, rhythm, and tempo of a classical raga are maintained by using instruments and the singer's voice. Stringed instruments such as the sitar, sarod, santoor, and sarangi are often used. Percussion instruments, such as the pakhawaj, tabla, and mridangam, are usually rhythmic accompaniments. The flute, shehnai, and nadaswaram are common wind instruments in Hindustani music, and the veena and ghatam are additional instruments found in Carnatic music. Both Hindustani traditions share the aspect of oral tradition, in which memory and improvisation skills are embedded as musicianship. Hindustani musicians adhere to the *gharana* tradition, which allows for the guru-discipleship teaching of a particular musical style within a hereditary traditional region. Carnatic music adheres to the *gurukul* tradition, in which educational and learning practices are based on service and the student's *bhakti* (devotion) to the guru, also known as *guru-shishya* (Reddy 2006; Vijayakrishnan 2007). According to research,

while Hindustani hereditary practice was heavily reliant on patronage, the continuation of Carnatic music relied not just on the oral tradition but also on the bhajan tradition from the South Indian Bhakti movement (13th century), which instilled working knowledge of music through a community under the guidance of the Hindu temple rather than solely through the family (Vijayakrishnan 2007, 3).

An Indo-Islamic civilisation developed a distinct Hindustani music tradition in the north and a Carnatic music tradition in the south. In the modern diasporic community, Indian music is further influenced by an Indo-Western civilisation in which cross-cultural borrowing and Indo-Western interactions arise regularly. Music from ancient times used for religious purposes in temples or entertainment in royal courts has been revived and used for diasporic needs in a modern world, similar to dance. The pedagogy of Indian music education encompasses both modern and conventional forms. Approaches to these types that represent a continuum rather than a series of binary options, on the other hand, have both push and pull variables. There are clear pull forces in popular music that inspire artists' cultural behavior toward music. Artists want to keep the rich Indian legacy of oral instruction practices alive as far as possible in order to improve their aural senses of music. Clayton (2014) asserted that Indian musicians are preoccupied with music (resources, technique, marketing) and status (quality of musicianship, performance opportunities, acknowledgement of experience).

The establishment of gharanas under the patronage of princely states, which nurtured and promoted them, was a significant milestone in Hindustani classical music's growth. The Moghul rulers influenced classical music, and each of the gharanas formed distinct facets and modes of presentation and performance. The captivating percussion and rhythm of the Agra gharana and the sensual softness of Swaras in the Kiranagharana have become synonymous with their respective styles and schools. The gharanas were fiercely competitive, and every attempt was made to portray each other as propagating a superior form of music. The compositions were often carefully guarded secrets, regarded as heirlooms, and reluctantly handed on to the younger generation. Extensive conspiracies were hatched in Banaras to procure musical creations from family heirlooms! With the apparent benefits of digital audio and streaming services such as Spotify, Amazon, and a plethora of others, music has become an integral part of daily life. Add a media sensation like the TV Reality Show to this heady, osmotic cocktail, and music is unexpectedly exposed to a plethora of new influences, experiments, and changing tastes.

65.13 CONCLUSION

Many eminent Indian musicians, especially instrumentalists such as L. Subramaniam, Vishwamohan Bhatt, and Zakir Hussain, are taking part in crossover events with musicians from other traditions. This has widened the appeal of Indian music. The reaction of the Indian and international audiences has been mixed. Though purists dismiss such efforts, the younger generation sees it as a potent strategy for attracting and ultimately "cultivating" new audiences for Indian art music. Several Western composers, including Claude Debussy, Olivier Messiaen, John Cage, and John Coltrane, have drawn influence from elements of Indian music, such as raga, rhythmic, and improvisational aspects, which are clearly mirrored in their works. Most Indian art music is now made, shared, and received outside of India because of globalisation. Several influences have aided this progression. The willingness of the Asian community to uphold conventional traditions and the quest for fresh sounds in the Jazz and Pop

worlds are major factors. The shifting speed of life and the difficulties, especially in urban settings, of being physically present at a specific location at a particular time have impacted the audience for ‘live’ music. Lack of time, workforce, money, and security issues have all contributed to reducing leisurely all-night conferences to well-presented and packaged recitals lasting no longer than two or three hours. With a plethora of music to choose from, the younger generation seems to prefer current and ‘trendy’ content.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Write a note on fusion music.

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2. The role of ccultural organizations in promoting performing arts.

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65.14 KEY WORDS

VEDAS	:	The Vedas are a large body of religious texts originating in ancient India. Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism.
Bansuri	:	A bansuri is a side blown flute originating from the Indian subcontinent. It is an aerophone produced from bamboo, used in Hindustani classical music.
Gharana	:	In Hindustani music, a gharānā is a system of social organisation in the Indian subcontinent, linking musicians or dancers by lineage or apprenticeship, and more importantly by adherence to a particular musical style.
Indo Islamic Civilization	:	The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the beginning of the 13 th century facilitated the beginning of a new phase of cultural development in India. The interaction of the Turks with the Indians, who had definite religious beliefs and well-established ideas on art, architecture and literature, led to the development

of a new composite culture. This culture is known as the Indo-Islamic culture. It is said to be a fusion of the best elements of both Persian (Muslim influence) and Indian (predominantly Hindu influence) cultures.

- Lay People** : A lay person is a person who is not trained, qualified, or experienced in a particular subject or activity
- Natya Shastra** : Natyashastra, in full Bharata Natyashastra, also called Natyasastra, detailed treatise and handbook on dramatic art that deals with all aspects of classical Sanskrit theatre. It is believed to have been written by the mythic Brahman sage and priest Bharata.
- Jazz** : Jazz is a music genre that originated in the African-American communities of New Orleans, Louisiana, United States, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with its roots in blues and ragtime.

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Check your Answers 1

1. The performing arts include everything from vocal and instrumental music to dance and theatre and pantomime, sung verse, and more. They contain a wide range of cultural expressions representing human imagination and can be found in several other intangible cultural heritage domains.
2. BharataNatyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Manipuri, Kuchipudi, and Odissi are among the most significant dance forms practiced in Indian diaspora. Though it has its origins in Tamil Nadu, BharataNatyam has evolved into an all-India genre. Kathakali is a Kerala dance style. Kathak is a resurrected classical dance style as a result of Mughal influence on Indian society. Manipur has contributed to a delicate, lyrical dance style known as Manipuri, while Kuchipudi is an Andhra Pradesh-based dance genre. Odissi, a temple dance from Odisha, is now commonly performed by artists around the world. Folk and ethnic dances follow a variety of styles.

Check your Answers 2

1. Fusion music describes what happens when musical styles are combined together to make something new. Fusion music usually combines two different styles. In the Indian diaspora the performing arts are in contact with African and European music. The word “fusion” became common in both India and the West. In India, it usually referred to Indian music that had been given a ‘rock’ or western ‘pop-music’ sound, such as when Asha Bhonsle re-released her old hit songs to a disco beat. ‘Fusion’ was used to refer to any artistic partnership between various cultures, such as when flamenco dance met Kathak, or Zakir Hussein played a duet with a Japanese shakuhachi flautist, in dance, and outside India (despite discomfort with the term). When more musicians from Africa, South America, Asia, Europe, and the United States continued to collaborate in performance, the word “world music,” which had traditionally applied to music from non-western cultures in general, came to apply to cultural amalgams. Several attractive musical styles, such as Caribbean ‘Chutney’ music and the pop-folk music of Malagasy and Mauritius’ Indic communities (which fuse inherited Vaishnav songs - often in archaic Bhojपुरi - with local rhythms) were sidetracked. They had little popularity - either in India or among promoters of “world culture” in Paris, New York, and London - because the cultures from which they arose had little interaction with groups in India or other Diaspora areas.
2. Cultural organisations of the diaspora organise various performances to celebrate the various festivals and activities within the diaspora. The audiences often go beyond the diaspora population when it comes to fusion art forms. Institutions such as the SangeetNatakAkademi and other training institutes and cultural associations have led to classical and folk dances’ current success. The Akademi provides financial support to cultural institutions and fellowships to researchers, artists, and teachers to encourage advanced study and training in various types of dance and music, especially those that are unusual.

UNIT 66 MEDIA

Structure

- 66.0 Learning Objectives
- 66.1 Introduction
- 66.2 Diasporic Media: To Inform and Educate
- 66.3 A Diasporic Communication Network
- 66.4 Diasporic Print, Audio-Visual and New Media
- 66.5 Relevance of Home Country Diasporic Media
- 66.6 Host Country Diasporic Media: Negotiating the Identity
- 66.7 The Role of Media in Diasporic Times
- 66.8 The Global and Hyper Local Diasporic Media
- 66.9 Let's Sum Up
- 66.10 Key Words
- 66.11 References and Further Reading
- 66.12 Check your progress – possible answers

66.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In the earlier units, we learnt that when people migrate from one place to another, they carry with them not only their physical selves but also their way of life, communication network, world-views, socio-cultural and religious practices. And when a large number of people migrate over a long period of time, their social behavior further gets strengthened and acquires unique characteristics through information dissemination which is made possible through individual networks and diasporic media. To understand the role, function and effect of diasporic mass media, the Unit focuses on how they communicate with each other, with their relatives in home countries and people and authorities in the host countries. Diasporic media plays an important role in socialization, information and in shaping of Diasporic identities and in keeping the diasporic groups intact. After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Understand the history and characteristics of Indian Diasporic Media
2. Able to understand the Diaspora's need of communication network
3. The Indian diaspora narrative in print, audio-visual and new media
4. The role of Indian diasporic media and identity negotiation
5. Host and home country's diasporic media
6. Hyperlocalization of diasporic media

66.1 INTRODUCTION

The role of diaspora media in identity construction and cultural reproduction has been so fundamental that it has been one of the major forces in the process of transnationalism. It is through the personal and diasporic media that the migrants forge and sustain their

relationship, cutting across the national boundaries. So much so that the use of a particular media technology has been responsible for creating a distinct group of people called 'digital diaspora.' They are a group of diasporic people who forge, maintain and sustain their relationship through digital media within and outside their network and also with their home and host countries.

It can be said that Diasporic media has been a liberating force for people who live away from their home and for whom social cohesion is of utmost importance. It is through such spaces that they communicate, form associations and mobilize their identities to sustain their social and cultural connections. It is through these communication platforms that they develop collective identities and become 'We' from 'I' and 'Me'.

66.2 DIASPORIC MEDIA: TO INFORM AND EDUCATE

You must have learnt that the role of mass media is to "Inform, educate, entertain and persuade" people so as to create social, political, economic and environmental awareness. Mass media fulfills the need of information dissemination amongst a heterogeneous group of masses. When we talk about diasporic media, it plays a much larger role as it caters to a specific group of people whose needs are diverse but well-defined. Apart from informing, educating, entertaining and persuading the diaspora, the diasporic media is also concerned with their safety and security in an alien host country. It is here that diasporic media plays a vital role in their welfare. It informs them of the political development in the host country and at times also in fighting prejudices and injustice.

You must be aware of the role Mahatma Gandhi played in South Africa to safeguard the interests of Indian immigrants. He fought against unjust laws of the British colonial rule by launching '*Indian Opinion*' an English newspaper, to educate the European community of the plight of the Indian indentured labour. As a result, some of the discriminatory laws were amended in favor of indentured Indians living there.

In fact, the first newspaper of India, '*Bengal Gazette*' launched by James Augustus Hickey on January 29, 1780 was a diasporic media as it catered to the needs of the British settlers (imperial diaspora) in India. It fulfilled their information needs and acted as an information bridge between India and Britain. The weekly newspaper carried more social, political and business development of Britain than about the events in India, thus giving precedence to their attachment to the home country.

There are numerous examples of colonial diasporic media in other countries as well. Thus, it goes to prove that whenever people migrate from one place to another, they attempt to develop a communication network with their home countries to meet their information needs. With the advancement in technology and the coming up of newer media like Satellite TV and Internet, various Diasporas are now making use of it to strengthen their communication network within the host as well as with the home country.

So, if we wish to define diaspora media, a workable definition could be "A set of networks which fulfills the information needs of diaspora and helps them retain vital links with the host and home countries. It is a medium of information; socialization, acculturation and entertainment and helps newer groups to participate and become part of the larger global community. It facilitates the diaspora in "assimilation, syncretism and negotiating their identities, especially in the wake of globalization and reterritorialization."

There are some 244 million international migrants globally, forming 3.3% of the world's population. But not all migrants are diasporas. A large number of them are forced migrants and are yet to coalesce to form a diasporic group which possesses some specific identities. Historically, some of the prominent diasporas like Jews, Greeks, Irish, Indians, Chinese, Armenians, Mexicans and others have been able to establish their identities and have their own media to communicate within and outside their groups.

The evolution of diasporic media, it must be noted, does not follow a specific linear movement and vastly differ with each other. Each diasporic media has its own unique features and sometimes specified goals. While some diasporas are active in creating public opinion in favor of their home country, there are others who have political motives as with the Jews, the Tibetan, the Irish and the Sri Lankan diasporas, which will be explained in the later part of this Unit.

66.3 A DIASPORIC COMMUNICATION NETWORK

Communication is the basic need of human beings. The desire to communicate with friends and relatives gets much stronger when people migrate to places far away from their homeland. The psychological and emotional need to communicate is stronger among the diaspora because of their strong sense of belonging and identity affirmation with their home country. Although human migration has been an ongoing process since the millenniums, it was the imperial diaspora, who shared the direct link with the diasporic media. The British, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Finnish colonial rulers who went around colonizing territories in Asia, Africa, Australia and America, starting from the 15th till 19th century, ensured that they retained their connectivity with their home country.

The imperial diaspora developed a communication network using written, printed and subsequently through telegram and telephone to remain in constant touch with their home country, from where they draw sustenance and imperial orders to run the colonies. The invention of movable printing press by Johannes Gutenberg, a German inventor and printer, in the middle of 15th century popularized the printed words and played an important role in European Renaissance. The *Bible* was the first book to be printed and the invention of printing press was subsequently made use of for printing bulletins, journals, newspapers and magazines.

The printing press was a major revolution and a turning point in developing mass communication and in reaching out to large numbers of heterogeneous people spread over larger geographical areas. Like their colonial rulers, the diaspora also made use of the new invention in developing their own communication. You must have learnt about Indian indentured laborers who went to work as plantation workers in Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago and Caribbean Island after the abolition of slavery in 1834. Once they had moved out of India, they had no means to communicate with their families. Writing letters and sending it through the British postal system was the only means they could communicate with their families. Also, a large number of indentured laborers were not literate and could not write letters, which used to take months to reach. In the course of time, as technology developed and reached these colonies, the diaspora groups started their own newspapers, magazines, TV channels and Radio communities' centers to communicate with each other.

Books are another form of Diasporic mass media which migrants used to narrate their experiences and communicate with their fellow immigrants. Some of these books have

been very popular and in fact, have been guiding spirit in the consolidation of diaspora formation. Theodor Herzl, a Jewish Austro-Hungarian journalist's book *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), became the driving force behind the Zionist movement and in the formation of Israel as the home for the Jews people. Likewise, there have been number of books on Black Diaspora, which narrate the plight and suffering of Black people during British colonial rule and which were instrumental in strengthening the movement for the abolition of slavery.

66.4 DIASPORIC PRINT, AUDIO-VISUAL AND NEW MEDIA

The various forms of diasporic media which includes newspapers, magazines, news bulletins, journals and audio-visual mediums like Television, Radio and now new media of Internet and social media follow the same evolutionary trajectory as the mainstream medium. The difference being on the reach, scale and scope of these mediums as it targets a definite segment of population. "Diasporic media are perceived 'as the media that are produced by and for migrants and deal with issues that are of specific interest for the members of diasporic communities.'" The diasporic media draws its motivation from the other mainstream medium, of which they are part, but are hardly heard and find space. Moreover, the mainstream media does not cover all the issues related to the diaspora. To meet the information needs of the community, the diasporic groups started their own newspapers and magazines, which are generally subscribed by the members of the community. Earlier, the community members wrote letters to the editor in the local mainstream media to highlight their grievances. Depending on its social and political relevance, those issues found place in the local newspapers.

It is a known fact that stronger the diaspora in a country, greater are the business opportunities for the entrepreneurs to start a newspaper, magazines and TV channels. But it has been seen that the majority of the diaspora media owe its birth for a social cause of the community and in addressing those grievances. The Indian indentured labourers, which formed a sizable number in Fiji, started their own newspaper called *Fiji Samachar* in 1924 to address the problems faced by them. It was a bi-lingual monthly newspaper, which was made a weekly subsequently.

CASE STUDY 1: The Indian Sociologist

THE INDIAN SOCIOLOGIST
An Organ of Freedom, and of Political, Social, and Religious Reform.

"EVERY MAN IS FREE TO DO THAT WHICH HE WILLS, PROVIDED HE INFRINGES NOT THE EQUAL FREEDOM OF ANY OTHER MAN.—HERBERT SPENCER, *Principles of Biology*, Section 272.

"RESISTANCE TO AGGRESSION IS NOT SIMPLY JUSTIFIABLE BUT IMPERATIVE. NON-RESISTANCE HURTS BOTH ALTRUISM AND EGOISM.—*The Study of Sociology*, Chap. 8.

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Heading of the presented August, 1909 issue of the "Indian Sociologist."

The role of diaspora media is not only about the welfare of its members but also about the country of origin. This was evident amongst the early Indian nationalist

who went abroad and tried to create awareness and public opinion about India's independence. One of such prominent Indian nationalists was Shyamji Krishnavarma who began publishing *The Indian Sociologist* in London to enlighten the British public about the plight of India under British rule. Highly influenced by the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, the journal began publishing in 1905 and continued till 1922, espousing India's cause for freedom. In course of time, the journal took a radical and revolutionary approach and was slapped with sedition charges. One of its printers, Arthur Fletcher Horsle, was arrested and jailed for printing the journal. The journal was soon taken over by Guy Aldred, a British Communist anarchist who was also sentenced to jail for defending Indian nationalist Madan Lal Dhingra who had assassinated Sir William Hutt Curzon Wylie.

Another newspaper, which was popular among the Indian community, was *Shanti Dut*, which was a weekly Hindi newspaper that was started in 1935. Both these newspapers, while reporting the national social and political development, also laid special emphasis to news related to Indians living there. They brought to light the plight and sufferings of the Indians and attempted to address these problems through peaceful means. It has also been observed that diasporic media generally do not go against local government for fear of losing their license and governmental support.

The growth of Indian diaspora media in Mauritius has a similar story to tell where a large number of Indian indentured labourers migrated to work in the plantation industry. It was Mahatma Gandhi, who while returning from South Africa to India in 1902, made a sojourn at the island nation and saw the sufferings of Indians there. After reaching India, he made a request to Manilal Doctor, a practicing lawyer in Baroda to visit Mauritius and work for the cause of the Indians. After reaching Mauritius, Manilal Doctor started a newspaper called *The Hindustani* in 1909 to create a awareness among the Indians for their rights.

CASE STUDY 2: Bande Mataram and Talwar

BANDE MATARAM
AUGUST 17th 1909

TO
THE SACRED AND INSPIRING MEMORY OF THE PATRIOT
MADAN LAL DHINGRA
WHO DIED FOR HIS COUNTRY
ON
AUGUST 17th 1900

"I AM WROTH TO
TO LAY DOWN MY



HAVE THE HONOR
RISK MY LIFE FOR

MY COUNTRY"

I admit that the other day I attempted to shed English blood as a humble revenge for the inhuman hangings and deportations of patriotic Indian youths.
In this attempt I have consulted none but my own conscience, I have conspired with none but my own duty.
I believe that a nation held down by foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war. Since open battle is rendered impossible to a disarmed race I attacked by surprise, since guns were

Madam Bhikaji Cama was another revolutionary who while living in London and Paris tried to espouse India's cause of independence. A close associate of Shyamji Krishnavarma and Dadabhai Naoroji, Madam Bhikaji was credited with unfurling the first flag of India's independence at Stuttgart, Germany on 21 August 1907. When the British government in India banned Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's poem *Bande Mataram*, in response and retaliation to which she launched a paper with a similar title in Paris in 1909. Through the paper she tried to arouse nationalist feelings among the Indians serving in the British Army. Later, she also launched another paper titled *Talwar* in response to the execution of Indian revolutionary Madan Lal Dhingra. Both the papers were published from the Netherlands and Switzerland and were revolutionary in nature. They were smuggled to India secretly through the French colony in Pondicherry.

The Hindustani was published in English and Gujarati initially and later a Hindi edition of the newspaper was also launched. It was a paper, which had set out its aim to work for the *Liberty of Individuals; Fraternity of Men, and Equality of Races* and was credited for cultivating a love of Hindi language and culture among the Indians. According to one estimate, there were 23 Indian publications between 1773 and 1954, of which 17 were in Hindi alone. *Mauritius Arya Patrika* was another fortnightly newspaper in English and Hindi, which began publishing in 1911 and was popular among the Arya Samajis.

The Indians living in America, who are now popularly called Indian Americans, are a very prominent and powerful group and demographically form one per cent of the US population. To cater to the needs of the Indian diaspora living in the US, a number of newspapers and magazines were launched which included *India Abroad, Little India, Valley India Times, Lok News, Quami Ekta*, etc. A large number of these media houses, started by Indians, carry news, information, opinion, feature articles about the Indian community in the US as well as political, legal, social development in the home country.

Among the various Diasporas, it was the Jews Diaspora, which was quick in seizing the print media opportunity long back in 1886 when *Hayom*, a daily newspaper in Hebrew language, was launched in Russia. It was the earliest example of diaspora media and included its tagline - "to lay bare the facts, indications and events before the reader, and let him judge them as he sees fit" by its founding editor Judah Leib Kantor. The newspaper was launched in response to growing sense of nationalism among the Jews in a czarist Russia as anti-Semitic violence was growing and Jews were persecuted.

The growth of diasporic media was equally strong among the Chinese, Greeks, Armenians and Black Diasporas, who had migrated to different parts of the world because of various reasons including slavery, political persecution, and as economic and climate migrants. The growth of such media was relatively slow as these diasporas were a weak coalition of communities within the receiving countries. The diaspora being economically deprived lacked the required capital to start media enterprises.

CASE STUDY 3: The Ghadar Newspaper



The Ghadar was another important diaspora nationalist newspaper published from San Francisco from November 1913 onwards. It was the ideological publication of the Ghadar movement, which espoused India's cause of freedom and to drive the British imperialist forces out of India. It was a radical and revolutionary publication with the declared mission as the enemy of British rule. The weekly paper was edited, printed and published by the members of the Ghadar movement that included Sohan Singh Bhakna, Lala Hard Dayal. The paper soon assumed an international circulation reaching to countries like India, China, Japan, Mexico, Philippines and Malay. The organisation was run by donations from Indians and indirect support from Germany and Turkey. Some of the members of the Ghadar Party came back to India and were active in inciting anti-British revolution, which led to the execution of 42 Indian mutineers under the Lahore Conspiracy Trial case. The paper was published in many languages including Punjabi, Urdu and English among others.

The sense of economic stress was further intensified with the coming of electronic media like Television and Radio in the early part of the 20th century, which needed huge investment. However, as the time passed and diasporas grew financially powerful, they not only started their print publication but also began investing in local community radio, which covered a specified geographical area. Although only a few rich and powerful diaspora could invest in TV Channels, they began wielding enough influence, because of their economic and political power, that the issues concerning them were covered in the mainstream media in their host countries.

A powerful shift in the media space began taking place in the early 1990s when broadcasting technology was revolutionized from terrestrial Television to satellite TV broadcasting. Earlier, the TV broadcast had limited geographical reach depending on the range of the relay towers, which were territorially installed. However, with the coming of satellite TV as a result of liberalization, private players like CNN, Star TV, Zee TV and Sun TV made inroads and began their satellite broadcast.

Cable TV has evolved to its next genre of “over-the-air”, “free-to-air”, Direct-to-Home (DTH) and IPTV. As a result of these technological changes in broadcasting, the reach of TV Channels became global. As a result, an Indian based in New York or a Chinese based in Washington could view the TV channels of their home country. This was true of all diasporas as they began establishing cultural links with the country of their origin. Now, the popularity of Diaspora soap operas, sitcoms, Bollywood shows could be watched from anywhere, irrespective of the geographical location and it soon became a cultural link between the disparate groups of people originating from a common place.

CASE STUDY 4: The New Digital Diasporic Media



The age of networked society in the 21st century with the origin of Internet, web-based application and social media like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, achieved instant popularity amongst the diaspora as it provided easy, real-time, cost-effective means of communication between friends and relatives in different parts of the world. These are the personal medium of communication, which was soon integrated with the mass media of newspapers, magazines and the TV news channels. The New media opened new possibilities for group formation based on interest, profession and social ties providing new opportunities. It did not require capital investment in developing mass media of the diasporas. Among the global diasporic communities, Chinese students studying abroad made massive use of new media technologies to reach out to its community members and home country.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1. Write a short note on communication network established by the imperial diaspora.

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2. Describe briefly the early attempts of global ethnic groups in starting diasporic media.

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66.5 RELEVANCE OF HOME COUNTRY DIASPORIC MEDIA

The diasporic media in immigrants’ host countries has found a strong foothold. Countries like the US, which have diverse ethnic immigrants have multiple Diasporic media to cater to the respective communities. While this phenomenon has been common to most countries, there have also been parallel developments of the diasporic media in the home countries of the diasporas. Earlier, the diasporas were marginalized communities in their home country, rarely finding narratives in the mainstream media. But as they started playing a crucial role in the economy of their home country through remittances, their role came to be increasingly recognized and it began finding a place in the local media.

Although the home countries of some of the prominent diasporas like the Indian, Chinese and Mexican do not have dedicated diaspora media publications, the diaspora issues find prominent mention in their mainstream media. Some Indian states like Kerala, Punjab and Gujarat have a large number of overseas citizens who also contribute to the state’s economy through remittances and have therefore become important constituents of the social and political life of these states. Therefore, the mainstream media promptly and prominently covers their news.

In fact, there is a direct relationship between remittances and diaspora media in the home country. The more the remittances and larger its role in the economy of the country, greater is the coverage of the diaspora news in the mainstream media. A fluctuation in the fate of its diaspora may adversely affect the remittances to the home country, a fact that was made evident during the Gulf crisis. The main TV channels and newspapers were flushed with such reports of returning NRIs, which found daily coverage in the mainstream media. In recent times, the issue of H1B1 visa, which directly impinges the Indian IT sector and Indian knowledge workers in the US, found daily coverage and continues to do so. The above incidences show how diaspora events are part of diasporic media both in the home and host countries. This has been equally true of Chinese and Mexican migrants living in the US and other countries.

The government’s perception towards its diaspora is another indicator of how it finds narrative in its home country media. The launch of Pravasi Bharati Diwas in India in 2001 and special emphasis in recognizing the successes of its IT industry led to greater media coverage. A special mention must be made to the contribution of diaspora in the

development of their home countries. As people migrate from developing countries to the developed countries, they become the ambassadors of new economic trends, market and technical knowledge. China and India particularly have been in the vanguard of utilizing their expertise directly or indirectly. China during the 1980s launched special programmes to rope in its diaspora in its development. Similarly, India during its economic crisis in early 1990s, urged the NRIs to contribute towards its economic development. These successes of the diasporas continue to be a staple diet of mainstream homeland media.

66.6 HOST COUNTRY DIASPORIC MEDIA: NEGOTIATING THE IDENTITY

One of the most challenging issues faced by both the diaspora and its media is establishing a positive and progressive identity of the ethnic group. Any negative perception about the community or its people may mar its prospects in an alien country, where resources are limited. As diasporic communities are largely marginalized, their voices are seldom heard in the mainstream media. This was one reason why most diasporic communities started their own media publications, which have been responsible in highlighting their grievances, bringing the community members together and sounding an alert during the time of crisis such as prejudicial legislation and racism, etc. The diasporic media also provides a bargaining and negotiating platform for the community to pitch for their concern, both in the host and home countries.

The role of diasporic media goes a step further when it attempts to bridge cultural gaps between its diaspora's two different worlds. It advises its members and in-turn follows the path of assimilation and integration within the host countries. There are two different cultures and identities, and sometimes multiple identities that a diaspora has to negotiate its way towards progression. It was probably for this reason and also to avoid the conflict of interest that India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru advised Indians living abroad to be loyal to their host country. Understandably, for the diasporic media, the priority lies with the host country, as new identities of its members are 'embedded' in a new surrounding and cultural milieu.

With the onset of new age of information and communication, especially computer and telecommunication, the process of identity embedding has become much easier as a single individual can form different identities in different diaspora media. This has further blurred the earlier distinction of linear identity, as most diasporas seem to carry with them. Now, an immigrant can successfully negotiate his/her identity as an individual of a professional group, a religious and cultural group and as transnational individuals, which gets its due coverage in the diasporic media.

While the new digital media has provided a new space to diaspora in the media space, it has also attracted the attention of mainstream media as new political affiliations are formed and negotiated. The new immigration policies and laws have now become the lead stories of diaspora media. As most host countries try to control activities of its foreign nationals within its territorial limits, it also attempts to discourage their links with their home country as their loyalties are questioned and security issues are raised. It is under these circumstances, the role of diasporic media has assumed greater significance.

66.7 THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN DIASPORIC TIMES

Human migration and diaspora formation is an on-going phenomenon and needs its own media to address the issues, which has a direct bearing on the diaspora community. According to the UN International Migration report 2017, there were some 258 million people living in countries other than the country of their origin. This number is expected to go up in times to come as the process of globalization and transmigration accelerate. In such a situation, one of the biggest challenges of diasporic media is its fragmented and hierarchical nature. As each diaspora has its own unique characteristic and needs, integrating them into a common thread is a challenging task. There are also challenges of cultures, as each diaspora has its own culture and finding a common ground may not serve its needs. However, the more the diasporic media is representative of its people, greater are the chances of it being effective in resolving its challenges.

The other challenge is the content of the diasporic media, which unfortunately seems to follow the trends of transnational media, whereby hegemonic news flows from the North to South continue to dominate the media landscape. The diasporic media instead of carving a niche for itself largely portray the worldview of the western nations, thus doing little justice to its own cause. The fragmentation of diasporic media nonetheless has its advantage as it covers smaller diasporic news and makes the voices of such communities heard, which often get marginalized in the larger mediaspace. The conglomeration of global media houses may not serve its need because of its diversity and individual characteristics. It is in the light of these observations that local, hyper-local diasporic media is preferred in place of multinational diasporic media.

Diasporic media also assumes a greater significance in the host countries as it plays the dual role of informing and educating the diaspora, fighting the prejudices and racism. It generally negotiates a middle path to ensure that its news coverage does not antagonize the majorities. To achieve this, diasporic media often attempts to educate the natives of the problems of the immigrants. There have been instances, as noticed earlier in this unit, where immigrants used diaspora media to fight injustices meted out to them as in the case of South Africa and Mauritius.

66.8 THE GLOBAL AND HYPER LOCAL DIASPORIC MEDIA

Although there is virtually no global diasporic media that exist today but academicians and experts have voiced its need, who feel that such a media could look at the challenges of the diasporas in totality. The problems of the most diasporas are similar - the opportunity of livelihood, immigration policies, discrimination and racism and at times the persecution of the diasporic minorities during the time of economic and political crisis. It is hoped that such a media, similar to multinational media corporations, could look into and address these issues with the respective governments. The possibility of such a media has not been ruled out, but there has been emphasis on local and hyper-local media, which are better suited to meet these challenges given their spatio-temporal *locus standi*.

Hamid Naficy in his study titled “*Narrowcasting in diaspora*” has brought the salience of such media content when he says: “Ethnic television largely produce local shows focusing on minorities within a country of settlement; transnational media import materials

produced in home countries; and Diaspora programs are made usually by local, independent, minority entrepreneurs for consumption by a small, cohesive population which, because of its diaspora status, is cosmopolitan, multicultural, and multilingual.” Hyper local media further narrows down the scope and reach of its content by focusing on a particular group of people living in a specified geographical location. The very limitation of hyper local diasporic media also happens to be its strength as it provides depth of coverage and sustained reporting on such issues.

The growth of diasporic media is however not without its pitfalls as diaspora host countries governments have either opposed or discouraged it, especially if it relates to an ethnic group. Citing security as the main reason, governments have often acted high-handed against some of the ethnic media. The other native rationalization of such an act is that it hampers the integration of immigrants with the host country. They are often accused of having their loyalties for the home country and preferences for the home culture. In one such incident, the US government in 2001 had forced one of the Internet Service Providers to Somali diaspora to shut down its operation on the ground of suspected terrorist links. There are other such incidents, which show that the diasporic media is left with no choice but to follow the diktats of the host countries. But despite these hurdles notwithstanding, diasporic media has been slowly growing globally and serving its purpose in modest ways, thus providing ethnic diaspora with the last mile connectivity.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Explain briefly the concept of fragmented diasporic media content.

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2. How does a diaspora negotiate multiple identities on digital media platforms?

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66.9 LET'S SUM UP

In this Unit, we tried to understand the growth and development of communication networks in the home and host country of the various ethnic diasporas, with particular reference to the Indian diaspora. We also learnt that the content of various diasporic media like newspapers, television and ICT is determined by the need of the diaspora, who has to negotiate between various identities in the host and home countries. The unit also tried to outline the new age media, which has removed the geographical barriers, and need for massive capital investment and its impact on remittances and development. At the end, we also tried to initiate a debate on the future of diasporic media in the time of globalized forces and dominance of the North over the South and imposition of western world-view on the ethnic media.

66.10 KEY WORDS

- Communication network** : A network of people connected with each other either through socially organized groups or through means of communication. In Digital age, the Internet and social media are the latest means of establishing communication networks based on identities, nationality, shared interest or professional interest groups.
- Narrowcasting** : The term narrowcasting is generally used for television but could equally be applicable for radio where programmes are broadcast for localized and specialized audiences. In the case of Diaspora, the programmes are prepared keeping their interest and needs in mind and broadcast to geographically defined audiences living in a particular area.
- Hyper-local media** : As opposed to global news media, diasporic hyper-local media covers and provides news and information related to specific geographical areas and for the consumption of a particular community, which are useful for them.

66.11 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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66.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS- POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Although human migration has been an ongoing process, it was the imperial diaspora, who shared the direct link with the diasporic media. The British, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Finnish colonial rulers who went around colonizing territories in Asia, Africa, Australia and America, starting from the 15th till 19th century, ensured that they retained their connectivity with their home country. The imperial diaspora developed a communication network using written, printed and subsequently through telegram and telephone to remain in constant touch with their home country, from where they drew sustenance and received imperial orders to run the colonies. The invention of movable printing press by Johannes Gutenberg, a German inventor and printer, in the middle of 15th century popularized the printed words and played an important role in European Renaissance. The Bible was the first book to be printed and the invention of printing press was subsequently made use of for printing bulletins, journals, newspapers and magazines.
2. Among the various Diasporas, it was the Jews Diaspora, which was quick in seizing the print media opportunity long back in 1886 when Hayom, a daily newspaper in Hebrew language, was launched in Russia. It was the earliest example of diaspora media and included its tagline - "to lay bare the facts, indications and events before the reader, and let him judge them as he sees fit" by its founding editor Judah Leib Kantor. The newspaper was launched in response to growing sense of nationalism among the Jews in a czarist Russia as anti-Semitic violence was growing and Jews were persecuted. The growth of diasporic media was equally strong among the Chinese, Greeks, Armenians and Black Diasporas, who

had migrated to different parts of the world because of various reasons including slavery, political persecution, and as economic and climate migrants. The growth of such media was relatively slow as these diasporas were a weak coalition of communities within the receiving countries. The diaspora being economically deprived lacked the required capital to start media enterprises.

Check Your Progress 2

1. As each diaspora has its own unique characteristic and needs, integrating them into a common thread is a challenging task. There are also challenges of cultures, as each diaspora has its own culture and finding a common ground may not serve its needs. However, the more the diasporic media is representative of its people, greater are the chances of it being effective in resolving its challenges. The other challenge is the content of the diasporic media, which unfortunately seems to follow the trends of transnational media, whereby hegemonic news flows from the North to South and continues to dominate the media landscape. The diasporic media instead of carving a niche for itself largely portray the worldview of the western nations, thus doing little justice to its own cause. The fragmentation of diasporic media nonetheless has its advantage as it covers smaller diasporic news and makes the voices of such communities heard, which often get marginalized in the larger mediaspace. The conglomeration of global media houses may not serve its need because of its diversity and individual characteristics. It is in the light of this observation that local, hyper-local diasporic media is preferred in place of multinational diasporic media. Hamid Naficy in his study titled “Narrowcasting in diaspora” has brought the salience of such media content when he says: “Ethnic television largely produce local shows focusing on minorities within a country of settlement; transnational media import materials produced in home countries; and Diaspora programs are made usually by local, independent, minority entrepreneurs for consumption by a small, cohesive population which, because of its diaspora status, is cosmopolitan, multicultural, and multilingual.”
2. The role of diasporic media goes a step further when it attempts to bridge cultural gaps between its diaspora’s two different worlds. It advises its members and in turn follows the path of assimilation and integration within the host countries. There are two different cultures and identities, and sometimes multiple identities that a diaspora has to negotiate its way towards progression. With the onset of a new age of information and communication, especially computer and telecommunication, the process of identity embedding has become much easier as a single individual can form different identities in different diaspora media. This has further blurred the earlier distinction of linear identity, as most diasporas seem to carry with them. Now, an immigrant can successfully negotiate his/her identity as an individual of a professional group, a religious and cultural group and as transnational individuals, which gets its due coverage in the diasporic media. While the new digital media has provided a new space to diaspora in the media space, it has also attracted the attention of mainstream media as new political affiliations are formed and negotiated. The new immigration policies and laws have now become the lead stories of diaspora media. As most host countries try to control activities of its foreign nationals within its territorial limits, it also attempts to discourage their links with their home country as their loyalties are questioned and security issues are raised. It is under these circumstances, the role of diasporic media has assumed greater significance.