



Multicultural Perspectives in Jhumpa Lahiri's Major Characterists

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ABSTRACT

Multiculturalism is the key to achieve a high degree of cultural diversity. We can find diversity in the form of different races, nationalities, religions, ethnicities, and philosophies. A truly diverse society is one that recognizes and values the cultural major characters differences in its people. The purpose of this paper is to understand how a Diaspora framework influences multicultural identity with reference to Jhumpa Lahiri's major characters in Interpreter of Maladies. A diaspora identity provides a greater confidence to an exile writer who is standing outside the national boundaries. Their Diasporas locations in the U.S. or Britain and other countries which have well established broad looking communities provide them with a greater freedom. Writing in English has a worldwide application. Literature is the creative age and the increased sensitivity, the depiction of life, the pattern of thinking and the social norms, the prevailing reality in the society. Late English writing is progressively combining its multicultural establishment in light of the fact that the scholars over the world are expounding on their culture. This paper deals with multicultural perspective in Jhumpa Lahiri's major characters Interpreter of Maladies.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, major characters, Diasporas locations cross- cultural relationship, expatriate writer, immigrant experiences.

1. Introduction

Multiculturalism is a term used to describe the presence of multiple cultures in a single society. It is a concept that has been embraced by many countries around the world, and it is often seen as a way to promote diversity and tolerance. This paper will explore the concept of multiculturalism, its history, its benefits, and its challenges. It will also discuss the role of governments in promoting multiculturalism and the importance of education in fostering a multicultural society.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri is well known for her depiction of immigrant and Indian-American life, yet her poignant stories also capture universal themes of longing, loneliness and barriers of communication. migration, cultural displacement, the experience and exploration of diaspora events represent the work of an expatriate writer. Lahiri has originality and excellence of expression. her personal life and contemporary influence in her writings. The contemporary culture of writing and that newness has brought her lots of fame. Jhumpa Lahiri's stories narrating some of her own experiences create a new meaning in literary production. She represents the difficulties of the migratory way of life.

Jhumpa Lahiri, by name of Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri, born July 11, 1967, London, England, English-born American novelist and short-story writer whose works illuminate the immigrant experience, in particular that of East Indians. This future author was raised in an educationally rich environment. Her mother is a teacher and her father is a librarian. Her parents are both immigrants hailing from Calcutta (now Kolkata) in the state of West Bengal, India. Lahiri grew up connected to her Bengali heritage, as the Lahiri family frequently traveled to Kolkata for family vacations.

The immigrant experience, especially in the United States, is one of constantly reconciling two or more different and often conflicting identities. How does that experience present itself in everyday life? Jhumpa Lahiri seeks to answer this question in her critically acclaimed and award-winning short stories and novels. Her writing illuminates the hopes, dreams, and longings of Indian immigrants living in America and gives clarity to the unique struggle of bridging cultural differences within a family. Lahiri's beloved stories and novels have helped spread awareness of South Asian achievement, as well as shared the unique Bengali culture with a widespread audience.

Jhumpa Lahiri began publishing her writing during her graduate school years. Her stories were featured in publications like *The New Yorker*, *Harvard Review*, and *Story Quarterly*, some of them later appearing in her short story collections. In 1999, Lahiri published her first collection of short stories *Interpreter of Maladies*. She went on to write her first novel "The Namesake" in 2003, which was adapted as a critically acclaimed film in 2006. In 2008, Lahiri returned to short fiction and published her second collection of short stories, titled "Unaccustomed Earth". Her second novel, "The Lowland", was published in 2013. In 2015, Lahiri began to branch out in her authorship by writing in Italian. She won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature in 2015. Lahiri was also presented with the National Humanities Medal by Barack Obama in 2015. With her many accolades, Jhumpa Lahiri has brought considerable recognition to South Asian achievement. She published a collection of short essays "In Altre Parole" (In Other Words) In 2018, she wrote her third novel, "Dove Mi Trovo" (Whereabouts).

Jhumpa Lahiri has received and been nominated for several prestigious awards. Her debut collection *Interpreter of Maladies* was given a Pulitzer Prize and PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Fiction in 2000. Fairly portrays expatriate culture. Jhumpa's less use of pictures and simple language are the main qualities of her functionalism. Attractive stories attract the attention of the reader.

Multicultural Perspective in Major Characters in her work *Interpreter of Maladies* deal with inability to judge personality, the difficulties of communication of ideas, relationships between communities, the danger of romanticism, identity, loss etc and spread light on Major Characters Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das.

1.1 History of Multiculturalism

The concept of multiculturalism has its roots in the 19th century, when the idea of a "melting pot" of cultures was first proposed. This idea was popularized in the United States, where immigrants from different countries were encouraged to assimilate into the dominant culture. However, this idea was challenged in the 1960s and 1970s, when civil rights activists argued that cultural diversity should be celebrated and respected. This led to the emergence of the concept of multiculturalism, which was embraced by many countries around the world.

1.2 Benefits of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has many benefits, including increased economic growth, improved social cohesion, and greater cultural understanding. It can also help to reduce prejudice and discrimination, as well as promote tolerance and respect for different cultures. Additionally, there can be tension between different cultural groups, which can lead to conflict and violence.

1.3 Role of Governments in Promoting Multiculturalism

Governments have an important role to play in promoting multiculturalism. They can do this by creating policies that promote cultural diversity and respect for different cultures. They can also provide resources to help immigrants and minority groups integrate into society. Additionally, governments can create educational programs that teach people about different cultures and promote tolerance and understanding.

1.4 Importance of Education in Fostering a Multicultural Society

Education is essential for fostering a multicultural society. It can help to promote understanding and respect for different cultures, as well as provide people with the skills and knowledge they need to participate in a multicultural society.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* is a collection of short stories in which we get to know the stories of first and second generation Indian immigrants, how Indian communities deal with the difficulties of communication of ideas, relationships between communities, identity, loss etc. These stories always vary between gender, sexuality, social status within Indians.

1.5 Major characters and their characteristics

Writers mostly rely on key points in their stories to fully develop particular characters. The readers get a vivid picture of the characters' true nature by describing their interactions, discussions and actions with others. Writers use this method to bring their characters to life in their stories. Mr. Kapasi, who also plays the role of a tour guide for Das family, is told more about his relationship with Mrs. Das than any other personality in Jhumpa Lahiri's short novel *Interpreter of Maladies*.

Mr. Kapasi, a brilliant Indian man in his late forties who has lost the romantic values in his marriage, is the protagonist of this short story. Mr. Kapasi is precise in his physique and has many qualities like discipline, hard work, humility, dependability and intelligence. He is well educated, works two jobs that require him to use his linguistic skills, and lives without the affection of his wife. He is quick to point out the similarities and contrasts between the tourists and himself. As a result, the paper looks at how Lahiri portrays Mr. Kapasi through his relationship with Mrs. Das and indirect portrayal of Mrs. Das in the story.

It is revealed how Mr. Kapasi views himself and his love life through their relationship and communication. For example, he views his marriage as unsuccessful and aspires to a more romantic life. His wife has estranged him and disapproves of his second job as a doctor's interpreter, as their conversations reveal. Mr. Kapasi initially fantasises about the possible similarities between himself and Mrs. Das, but as he learns more about Mrs. Das's personality, he is dismayed.

He chooses the closeness between them as a token of gratitude towards Mrs. Das' kind sentiment in describing his work as 'romantic', it is the only way to escape his loneliness. When he learns that the woman is not who he imagines in his delusion, his attitude does not change, this conversation displays his grateful and sympathetic character.

Mr. Kapasi believes that his life is unsuccessful. He wanted to achieve a lot in his life but could not. He wanted to free from his hectic life so he extended the hand of friendship towards Mrs. Das. It is clear that he was unsuccessful in his married life and felt lonely. His wife is not able to come out of that grief due to loss of her son or she is not able to forgive the doctor who could not save her son due to which their married life is full of struggle. Mr. Kapasi had high expectations for his career but got less than he expected. He begins to think of Mrs. Das as unhappy as himself because she too is trapped in a loveless marriage. They think that both of us have the same sorrow but the reality was something else. He finds his friend in this American woman but alas hope turns to despair. When he learns about Mrs. Das, he is disappointed. They didn't know that the one whom they trusted so much would be so wrong. He revolts when he comes to know about the nature of Mrs. Das. Mr. Kapasi is a cultural broker in both of his jobs as a tour guide and interpreter for a doctor. Being a tour

guide he mostly shows Europeans and Americans to philosophical sites and as an interpreter he helps sick people from other regions communicate with their healers but both of these jobs are less than he expected.

Mrs. Das is a selfish and self-absorbed woman. She looks up to someone else to fulfill her needs and desires. Her romantic view of Mr. Kapasi's daily job attracts her to Mr. Kapasi but she is unaware that Whether he likes her morals or not, when she puts her thoughts to Mr. Kapasi, she come to know that Mr. Kapasi has no advice left to give her. She is a selfish lady who doesn't even treat her children properly and always makes fun of her husband of his enthusiasm for tourism. Mrs. Das is unfaithful and feels that her marriage is just trouble. She takes care of her sorrows. Instead of confronting, she is separated from her family and that's why her trust with Mr. Kapasi fails. Mrs. Das is the epitome of American flaws, the stereotypical American who always disrespects other countries and cultures. She always blames others. She is a failed to be a good mother. She doesn't care about the environment and dumps her rice snacks on the ground, disturbing the local wildlife.

1.6 Unable to Recognize Each Other

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*, Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das are unable to recognize each other and have a correct perception of each other. He tried to get out of his troubles, due to which he befriended Mrs. Das. He started thinking deeply about friendship so that he could stay away from his troubles but his attempt was unsuccessful. When he come to know the reality of Mrs. Das he was deeply shocked. Mrs. Das also felt that if she told her problems to Mr. Kapasi, then Mr. Kapasi would be able to understand her as he was an interpreter, but whatever Mrs. Das told about her past to Mr. Kapasi caused a difference in their friendship.

Mr. Kapasi, after hearing Mrs. Das's confession, realized that the greatly aggravated case could make her worse off than she is now if he came to her. Mr. Kapasi appears to have no real experience in understanding people, whatever their abilities, to clarify the health and related concerns of many individuals. Without Mrs. Das in the short story *Interpreter of Maladies*, Kapasi's character would not have come forth clearly. Mr. Das is not worried about Mr. Kapasi as they have never met. As a result, it is possible to conclude that the character of Mrs. Das is important as she helps in revealing and showcasing the true personality of Mr. Kapasi.

Today we see such types of examples in the society. Through this story, the society learns that without examining anyone, we should not trust anyone blindly. Through these story, Jhumpa Lahiri has kept the matter of social utility and education to the society.

1.7 The difficulty of Communication

In *Interpreter of Maladies* there is a communication gap which causes sadness in the Life. Mr. Kapasi is an *Interpreter of Maladies* but he could not communicate with his wife properly. As a result worries forcing him to drink his tea in silence at night and leading to a loveless marriage. He lost the ability of different languages what he learnt in his youth days and only one language remaining with him is English itself. On the other side Mr. Das and Mrs. Das could not communicate properly not because of their language barrier but because of their behavior. Mrs. Das hides behind her sunglasses most of the time and Mr. Das has his nose buried in a guidebook. As a result children suffers a lot, they never listen to their parents. It's a drawback of their relationship with their children too. This discommunication effect the the emotional and their personal Marriage life where everyone is separate at their own place.

1.8 The Danger of Romanticism

Mrs. Das represents an unknown land to Mr. Kapasi. As the novel unfolds, Mr. Kapasi's love for Mrs. Das develops, and he finds himself staring at her, admiring her feet, and longing to be with her. The cultural difference between Mrs. Das and Mr. Kapasi sets this fling apart from the others the story progresses. On the one hand, Mr. Kapasi is a poor, unfortunate Indian who works as a translator and tour guide. On the other hand, Mrs. Das lives in style. She does not live in reality: she is unhappy because she lives a life of irresponsibility, shallowness, superficiality, and an unhealthy sense of peace.

Mrs. Das also embodies traditional American characteristics such as self-centeredness, racism, carelessness, and disregard for the outside world. This is shown by her portrayal as she did not hold the hand of the little girl when they were walking towards the toilet, "we get the first impression about Mrs. Das. Mr. Kapasi has a solid basis for evaluating the many siblings in the family because Mrs. Das is not concerned about the safety of her children. Mrs. Das's self-absorbed personality reveals her indifference to Mr. Kapasi, his family, and the trip; Therefore, Mrs. Das's enthusiasm for Mr. Kapasi's employment as a language interpreter is surprising.

In "Interpreter of Maladies" a character fails to see the truth about another person every time, the results are also in some way harmful. The main conflict of the story centers on two people who romanticize each other, although in different ways. Mr. Kapasi sees Mrs. Das as a lonely housewife who could be a perfect companion to him in his own loneliness. He ignores that she may not be interested in him for his own sake because, at some level, he wants her to be his companion. He sees many details about her, such as her bare legs and Americanized shirt and bag, but he passes over others, such as the way she dismisses her children's desires and her selfishness with her snack. Such unflattering details do not fit with his conception of her. Likewise, Mrs. Das wants Mr. Kapasi to become a confidant to her and solve her personal and marital difficulties. She views him as a father figure and helper and ignores indications that he may not fit those roles. For example, she doesn't notice that he is uncomfortable with her personal revelations and presses him for help even when he explicitly tells her that he cannot give it to her.

The stories of Interpreter of Maladies are built upon the specific thematic structure of communication and interpretation. The characters communicate to express their feelings to others in order to escape from the traumas of their inner turmoil. They are in dilemma and need diagnostic interpretation. But, the interpretation is not easy. There are two possible reasons for that: one is an error in preferring an appropriate person who is supposed to have the interpretation of the malady. Secondly what they aim is different for which they are expecting interpretation. It means that they are unable to exactly identify what the malady is. So the interpretation is ineffective. Defective communication leads to the defective diagnosis. The Interpreter of Maladies is a collection of nine short stories with the themes of identity, immigrant experiences, cultural differences, love and family. The characters are largely Indian or Indian American and their stories together paint an evocative picture of Indian's Diaspora. Her art in the collection of stories is unique in its scope and is babbling simple. There are varied engagements between pain and memory; for the cause of pain that memory recalls behind each painful experience is subjective and is different in each story of Interpreter of Maladies. Pain in Interpreter of Maladies might well be seen as a way expressing the inexpressible. Like truth, it transcends the narration one way or the other and stays beyond definite meanings. Each individual in this book has his/her way of looking things and the probable truth, and thus senses different kinds of implications in similar incidents. One's search for relief amidst the prevailing pain is frequently occurring feather of almost all the stories.

Interpreter of Maladies also relates to loss of love between husband and wife who earlier thought of being in love and continued to stay with each other. The pain that emerges at a later stage and engulfs the entire relationship becomes the cause of a major reach.

2. Review of Literatures

Robert Connors (1984) in Essays on Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse, "The traditional function of rhetoric in western culture has been to provide a theory of composition and communication for oral and written discourse" (p. 89). Contemporary rhetoric is influenced not only by ancient rhetorical theory, but also by the behavioral sciences and theories of literary criticism. This broadening of the field of rhetoric has allowed theorists to understand more fully the phenomenon of human communication and allowed predictive analyses of human behavior. Since human behavior and communication is strongly influenced by culture and environment, many contemporary theorists situate a rhetoric within the particular culture it is practiced, making comparisons among rhetorics to deepen our understanding of human communication across time. Or as George Kennedy (1998) states, "Comparative rhetoric is the cross-cultural study of rhetorical traditions as they exist or have existed in different societies around the world" (p. 1). These comparisons are important because they not only illustrate how communication varies within cultural settings, but they also reveal the nature of the conjectures that underlie the communication. This will illustrate how Lahiri utilizes her cultural underpinning to creatively juxtapose various elements within her short story collection, Interpreter of Maladies, in order to offer

a balanced representation of her modern social group, the Indian diaspora within America. Interpreter of Maladies is used as an example of how cultural knowledge may be transmitted through literature-as-rhetoric whether or not an author is conscious of cultural influence.

"Dark Side of the Dream" offers an assessment of Australian literature from a postcolonial perspective. Taking a post-bicentenary look at Australian culture and society through its literature, the authors argue that the shape of Australian society and literature has been profoundly affected by the processes that began when a colonizing society from Britain invaded Aboriginal Australia and dispossessed its people. "Australia" is not simply an autonomous White society; it also includes Aboriginal people and cultures and the problems of their relationship to the cultural practices of the colonizers. Nearly half of the book deals with Aboriginal texts, issues and themes, in recognition that this dimension of Australian literature is usually neglected. It also refers to recent work from Marxist, feminist and multicultural perspectives in order to analyze the "traditional" canon of Australian literature.

3. Scope Of The Study

The study carries a study of multicultural perspectives in the major characters Jhumpa Lahiri in the Interpreter Of Maladies. The writer depicts about cultural and social changes, struggle for preserving distinctions of being Indian, faith in cultural and religious practices, rituals and traditions, conflict between past and present immigrant's experiences faith in spirituality and disregard of materialism, conflict between tradition and modernity belief in the theory of Karma, mysticism, cross-cultural relationship and a sense of humanity. The existence of multiculturalism in her works present themes in different ways, she used these themes very creatively.

4. Objectives Of The Study

- The key objectives of this paper are as follows.
- To study the multiculturalism in the Interpreter Of Maldives by Jhumpa Lahiri.
- To examine depiction about cultural and social changes.
- To study how a diasporic framework influences multicultural identity.
- To study to know national, racial and sexual boundaries.

5. Research Methodology

The Qualitative Research Methodology has been adopted to critically analyze multicultural perspective in Major characters of Jhumpa Lahiri in the Interpreter Of Maldives and also examine depiction about cultural and social changes. The work portray analyze how futile attempts are made to redefine national, racial and sexual boundaries.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, multiculturalism has been embraced by many countries around the world. It has many benefits, including increased economic growth, improved social cohesion, and greater cultural understanding. However, it can also present some challenges, such as tension between different cultural groups. Governments have an important role to play in promoting multiculturalism, and education is essential for fostering a multicultural society.

The description of the character's personality enables the character to be understood. In addition, the author shows how the characters view certain topics through their reactions to various events. The theme of love and marriage is reflected in the characterization of the story. Their personalities, such as the self-centeredness of Mrs. Das and the development of Mr. Kapasi as a sympathetic character, are well developed. Through both the characters, under marriage has become an issue that needs to be taken into account. It also enabled the development of a story.

Jhumpa Lahiri's works are the portrayal of Indian culture and society. In this specific context, it is says that Lahiri is here chronicling a general society during the change in time. As it had occurred in Indian scenario that Indians who were presented the culture that were outsider to them embraced and affected the new culture, a similar case occurs for Indians in different nations (Khilnani Sunil 1997).

One can observe that the characters in Lahiri's works are always conscious about their history. Their disorder, disintegration and violation cause in them a sort of neurosis. To attain order they turn to different things. Some go to fantasy; some escape physically, some face reality. Indianness in characters forms one of the crucial part of her works. It is through the Indianness of characters that she succeeds in her desired themes. Is it what forms Indianness in characters is their sensibility, love for humanity, pride for culture, faith in traditions and rituals, longing for order, and unmistakable faith in testing? Indians always preserve their trust in God. In what ever dilemma they are, they remember God for inspiration and guidance. Her works deal with internal strife and changing human predicament among identities and cultures. One of the themes Lahiri deals is the search for identity, as defined by the self, by others, by location, and by circumstances. In Lahiri stories, everything including gender, homeland, geography, occupation and self within the community can act in determining and qualifying identity. Lahiri brings up interesting questions as to what can and what cannot act as agents in the discrimination of identity and many of her characters struggle against or conform to outside definition.

In Jhumpa Lahiri's magnum opus the Interpreter of Maladies, Mrs. Das is both a catalyst for story development and a vehicle for social commentary. Mrs. Das is in direct cultural contrast to Mr. Kapasi through her indirect portrayal, which drives the plot forward while providing sad social commentary. The Das family meets Mr. Kapasi while preparing for their trip to India. There is a cultural divide between the Kapasi and Das families.

The collection of short stories, Interpreter of Maladies brings to light many of the issues with identity faced by the Diaspora community. The book contains the stories of first and second-generation Indian immigrants, as well as a few stories involving ideas of otherness among communities in India. The stories revolve around the difficulties of relationships, communication and a loss of identity for those in Diaspora. The work gives direction by point a canvas in describing psychological, domestic, social, and problems of life.

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