

**INDIAN DIASPORIC LITERATURE AND IMMIGRANT
EXPERIENCES IN THE WORKS OF KAVITA DASWANI**

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Abstract:

Indian immigrants are widely dispersed and represent a significant portion of the worldwide diaspora. Reactions in English-language Indian writing from the diaspora. It is generally agreed upon that the human being—their deeds, thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and faiths—is the central focus of all writing. There are many societal ideas and aesthetic structures that literature explores. A new generation of wealthy, worldly, and frequently diasporic Indian women authors have emerged in English-language publishing. Their primary concern is the upheaval, dissolution, and marginalization their offspring would inevitably face. The emergence of a feminist or woman-cantered perspective is the most significant change in contemporary literature. Kavita Daswani's parents were Indian immigrants who settled in Hong Kong; therefore, she was born there. This study examines character and society in the context of cultural differences, focusing specifically on Indian immigrants to the United States. The main problems include alienation, changing one's appearance, fitting in, and forming a new sense of one's own identity. Daswani argues that marriage is possible at any age, but that it is very necessary for each individual to carefully choose their life spouse. In a few of her books, the main character desperately wants to avoid getting married. This motivates her to pursue an advanced degree in the United States.

Key Words: Kavita Daswani, Diaspora, writer, immigrant, women

Introduction

Emigrant experience is explored in works of diaspora literature. The migration of Indians to the Middle East and Western nations, especially the United States, was mostly the result of deliberate decisions

made by select people in search of better educational opportunities or economic prospects. The deportee did experience a cultural shock, a sense of isolation, and the subsequent efforts to adapt, adopt, accept, and ultimately develop a disconnected identity as a racial group to be assimilated

and, by extension, uncultured. Everything falls under the category of deportee writing, often known as Diasporic literature. Transnationals, diasporas, expatriates, migrants, etc. are all prevalent occurrences in today's globalized world, and the lines between them are sometimes blurred. Diasporic literature is a subgenre of post-colonial literature, and in recent years, new generations of south Asian women authors have started to create their own distinct stamp within this field. The diaspora community is torn between two cultures, none of which fully accepts or values them. In a nutshell, immigrants and other persons who exist in a kind of limbo are often described using the Trishanku metaphor. The Greek term "Diasperio," meaning "to distribute" or "to fling," is the source of the English word "Diaspora." The term's initial connotation was with the Jewish historical experience; nowadays, it also alludes to shared experiences of migration (whether voluntary or forced) and a feeling of being an outsider wherever one currently resides. Many fields, including sociology, cultural studies, politics, etc., make use of this phrase. In the context of modern-day globalization, the concept of "Diaspora" prompts inquiries into issues such as acculturation, assimilation, identity loss, etc.

Indian immigrants are widely dispersed and represent a significant portion of the worldwide diaspora. The opportunities presented by the more open labour market brought about by globalization have

helped Indians realize their full potential. Social and cultural interactions have also taken place. This is why works written by individuals who have been forced to relocate are so important. Written by authors who claim both Indian ancestry and citizenship in another country, the literature of the Indian diaspora is a distinct body of work. The impact of the diaspora is particularly seen in Indian writing written in English. Literature written by members of the Indian diaspora serves as a surrogate for the motherland across time and space. It digs into the common experiences of migrants such as homesickness, marginalization, and acculturation, and investigates issues of representation. It simultaneously explores what it means to be at home and to belong somewhere. It examines topics including gender, politics, generational conflict, racism, class, and transnational encounters from a wide range of literary and digital cultures' points of view. The writers of these works engage in an intricate web of intersectional inquiry, probing their own cultural identities down to their very foundations.

Kavita Daswani

Kavita Daswani is a worldwide writer that writes on the latest trends in the fashion, beauty, travel, design, and celebrity worlds for newspapers all over the world. She has written for the likes of the Los Angeles Times, Cosmetic News Weekly, JustLuxe.com, Crave, and the international editions of Vogue, Conde Nast Traveler, and Grazia

Italia, and she was formerly the fashion editor for the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong and the Asian correspondent for Women's Wear Daily. She was born and raised in Hong Kong, and at the age of 17, she began working as a writer for the South China Morning Post. In 2000, she uprooted to the Los Angeles area. Her works are emblematic of the evolution of diasporic Indian societies, particularly as it pertains to traditional gender roles and family structures. Her writings are great escapes because of Daswani's ability to combine comedy with cultural conflict. Once she was set up with a guy in Nashik, India, who, upon further investigation, was a strip club owner who had served a two-day sentence. She has worked as the fashion editor for the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong, as well as a fashion reporter for CNN, CNBC Asia, and Women's Wear Daily, and has contributed to the Los Angeles Times and the International Herald Tribune, among many others.

Kavita's first book "*For Matrimonial Purposes*" was out in 2003. Then came "*The Village Bride of Beverly Hills*" and "*Salaam, Paris*," both published by Penguin. '*Indie Girl*' (Simon Pulse), her debut novel for young adults, was released in 2007. The adolescent novel "*Lovetorn*," published by Harper Collins in 2012, is another popular choice. Published by Harper Collins India in July 2012, '*Bombay Girl*' is Kavita's first novel for the Indian market; it is a high-society romance revolving around the control of a family

dynasty and is set in one of India's most cosmopolitan cities. The book agreement that includes "Bombay Girl" is for three books. Released in 2015, '*Betrayed*' is the sequel. The last instalment in this series is scheduled for release in 2018. Her newest novel, titled "*Kingpin*," was released in May 2016 by Speaking Tiger. Her works have been translated into 17 other tongues.

Everything Happens For A Reason

Her book, *Everything Happens for a Reason*, is a masterpiece about an Indian woman's internal conflict between her yearning for Western materialism and her adherence to traditional Indian values. 'Cross-cultural conflict' refers to the difficulties that arise when one society expects its members to adopt practices and beliefs that are fundamentally different from those of another. Cultures all across the world are becoming more open-minded and accepting of one another as a result of the rise of globalization. Early on, they had to deal with several challenges stemming from their vast cultural differences in things like customs, language, clothing, diet, and more. When members of the family come from various cultural backgrounds, these transitions might cause friction. Conflicts across cultures emerged as a result of the stark differences in people's worldviews. Daswani examines these disagreements within the perspective of the Indian American diaspora. Priya, a lady, is the protagonist. A Delhi native and youngest of four sisters, she was raised in a strict household. But finally, a proposal from

Sanjay, an American, came first, and the two of them tied the knot. She was immediately immersed in a multiethnic environment upon her arrival in America. Priya, an Indian girl, attempted to make a new life there. In the opening of the story, she says, “No woman in my family has ever had a job” (Daswani, 1). However, her mother-in-law in America compelled her to have a job, which is in stark contrast to her Indian upbringing, culture, clothing, and customs. Cross-cultural perspectives on Indian and American life are reflected in Daswani. While American families are essentially pushed to work, in India women are illegally prevented from doing so. Priya’s mother-in-law told her, “This is not India,” based on her point of view. Every adult in this nation has a job” (Daswani, 1). It makes no difference if she was a recent bride. Priya was the first woman in her family to go overseas, so she had assumed that her life in the United States would be similar to that in India. When she heard this, she was taken aback since she knew so little about American society. Priya’s wedding brought her to the United States, specifically to the city of Los Angeles, home of the famous film and television industry.

Priya’s first encounter with a diverse group of Americans was at the Tom Bradley International Terminal at Los Angeles International Airport. She had no idea that America was home to such a diverse population. Even on Indian television, she never displays such diversity. This was portrayed by Daswani as:

The people I saw at the airport in India were so different from what I was used to seeing on Indian television. The black woman who checked my immigration papers had tight pants and inch-long purple nails, while the waiflike Chinese man with small serious spectacles waited in line for his grey-haired mother to pass through customs. Three (Daswani)

Multiculturalism in the United States is portrayed. Priya’s entrance in the United States marks the beginning of her struggle, as the stark differences between American and Indian cuisine, clothing, customs, and beliefs become major roadblocks. She was homesick and had difficulty adjusting to life in her host country. She is expected to help out in the kitchen and do other traditional Indian daughter-in-law responsibilities by her in-laws’ mothers. But Priya objects to this, telling Sanjay, “Why would I clean up when my wife is here for this?” after he requested her to clear tables. She said that she was not a servant but a maid. She goes back to being the submissive Hindu wife she mocked for a week. The fact that she defended herself by saying, “Don’t think that I am some kind of a village bride because I from India and you are living in America” (Daswani 5) shows that she is willing to break with convention. This bold declaration of hers is crucial in shaping her new identity in the city of Los Angeles. Priya wants to follow her goal and become a journalist, but her future in-laws aren’t supportive. She is now working

as Hollywood Insider's receptionist. However, she was compelled by an internal drive to grant her request. Daswani symbolizes cosmopolitan America and its many cultures, Priya's efforts to assimilate within those groups, and the challenges she encountered as a result. Being surrounded by so many different cultures made her feel uncomfortable and down. The article argues that members of the Indian diaspora experience feelings of alienation when confronted with a multiethnic environment. According to Stuart Hall, the American people faced a cultural identity crisis because:

Consisting of several, sometimes competing, discourses, practices, and views, an individual's sense of self is never static. (Hall)

Daswani, investigate how Priya's identity shifted as she adapted to life in the United States, how she moved away from her Indian heritage and toward more Western values, and why she ultimately came to dislike her in-laws. She is never permitted to don the trendy western attire. They place a premium on Indian tradition and want her sons-in-law to uphold it in modern, multiethnic America. Priya's in-laws were astonished to see the clothing she wore to work when they paid a visit. Her family would never have approved of her outfit of Chinese-style shirt and black denim trousers with high hills. Her husband, Sanjay, also questioned her about her lack of *sindoor*. She gave up everything conventional to become a journalist. Her in-laws changed from

kind people to vicious enemies, further complicating her life. Priya's mother-in-law lied to her son and daughter-in-law by calling them and saying that Priya had stolen from them and was too indolent to work. According to Daswani, groups that include members who have emigrated do not discard their own culture's ideals. Their staunch conservatism has stoked intergenerational tensions in today's multiethnic society. Sanjay learns more about Priya's predicament now that she has returned to India. He realized his mistake and made his way back to her through Indian culture. Daswani stands for the significance of Indian traditions and customs. The issue was resolved when Sanjay visited India and met Kaki. Kaki is portrayed by Daswani, who has the wisdom of an Indian lady. Through her efforts, Sanjay and Priya were able to reconcile with one another. She told Sanjay the following:

I can see why, in the United States, some couples choose to live together before being married. Think about the year that just passed. It's official as of today, she remarked. If you never think negatively of another person, good fortune will follow you wherever you go. As Daswani (303)

It examines Indian culture and the disparities between Indian and Western ideals through the lens of age-old rituals. Marriage in India is a joyous occasion that cements two people for life, while in the United States it is seen more as a bold new beginning. While divorce

is very widespread in Western society, Indian culture pushes couples to stick together through the tough times. At the novel's conclusion, Daswani reconciles Sanjay and Priya, forgiving Sanjay for his error and granting Priya the freedom to pursue a career in journalism of her own choosing.

Kavita Daswani's Quest For Marriage And Traditions

Displacement in both societies is reflected in the diasporic literature that exists between them. Jasbir Jain observes, "Authors who have moved from one community to another are caged between two societies and sometimes participate in a cycle of self-recovery by resorting to past and recollection or in an act of change in a process of self-preservation" (180). Anju, a middle-class Bombay native with marriage arrangements in mind, is the protagonist of *For Matrimonial Purposes* by Daswani. For the duration of the story, she keeps looking for her lover. In her forties, Anju still looks like a teenager. The tale opens with her grandma, a child bride. Her mother tied the knot when she was just twenty. At the earliest, Anju's wedding should take place when she is thirty. However, she is still single at the age of 33. Anju's mother takes her birth chart to see astrologer Udhay two days after her daughter turns twenty-one. The seventh house is Rahu's home, according to him. He paused before continuing, "Your daughter has Rahu in her seventh

house, so this is not the good time for her marriage. She is not ready for marriage at this time. That woman has to wait" (FMP 75). Her mom wants to know how long she should keep them waiting for the wedding. Udhay advises that we put off our plans for the foreseeable future. Her mother was taken aback when she revealed her age. He then elaborates that everything is OK if she could have given birth twenty minutes earlier. That she was born too late, in Anju's opinion, is not her fault.

Udhay claims that the alignment of the planets at the time of her birth was unfavorable. Maybe she doesn't like the guy because she thinks something bad will happen to him if she gets married. He suggests that Anju get married when she's twenty-six. In a fit of anger, Anju's mother expresses her dismay, asking who would marry her daughter at the age of 26. It's not the astrologer's remarks that make Anju weep; it's the disappointment she causes in her mother. He tells her mom to be patient and keep praying for the miracle to occur. Anju is eager to be married, therefore she is willing to adhere to some of the mantras and beliefs. After a while, her mother brings her to see Swami Upananda since she has not received a suitable marriage proposal. He claims that a curse has been placed on Anju. Her father married Anju's mother over the wishes of his cousin who wanted to marry her. So, she vows that their firstborn will never find love or settle down. He recommends that Anju chant some simple mantras on Monday, the day of Lord Shiva, to break

the curse. She would travel through an extended rosary eleven times while reciting mantras. Some distant cousin of your spouse,” Swami Upananda says. You see, she was interested in marrying him. And, dammit, she became much angrier when he married you. She died as virgin, and was buried that way. And she cursed you such that your firstborn son or daughter would never find a spouse” (FMP 92).

Astrologers, family priests, and paid matchmakers are all consulted by Anju’s parents and relatives. They recommend that she devote her time to prayer and fasting. Anju’s mother encourages her daughter to be more religious and to observe the fast without fail. She recalls that most girls of marriageable age used to fast every Monday in honour of Lord Shiva, as Shiva is seen as the giver of all good things in life. Her aunt often praised her cousins Lata, Gita, Nina, and Nita, saying that since they fast for Lord Shiva, they are excellent ladies. They hope that because of their fasting and prayers, He would reward them with a healthy son. To make her mother happy and speed up her own wedding plans, she decides to take up fasting. These silly superstitious practices are, however, deeply rooted in Indian culture. While statements like “Marriage, suggest numerous writers, does not guarantee the safety of the home or a clear identity for the women” may seem humorous and foolish, they were regrettably part of the practice in the past. Marriage, according to several Indian

female authors, may be damaging to a woman’s sense of self. Her sense of self is absorbed by her family’s” (Nayar13).

Anju’s parents take her to four different Indian pilgrimages in the span of a month. They go to several psychics, astrologers, healers, and sages. She worships at the feet of the statues of God and of every person she meets. She wears a multi-coloured stone ring and a lot of thread around each of her fingers. Anju’s mother often attended the local temple for worship and ceremonies. She bathes the idols of Ganesh, Shiva, and Lakshmi in milk and rose water every day, then dresses them in new saris. Anju would accompany her mother on these occasions as well. She hopes that by fasting and praying, she might diminish the negative influences of her horoscope and attract a decent spouse. Anju is now terrified of attending family events due of the hurtful comments made about her by a relative. She’s flying here from New York to celebrate her cousin Nina’s wedding in Bombay. Anju is a lot older than Nina. Her aunt inquires as to how much longer they would have to wait for Anju’s wedding. Anju musters up a fake grin for her aunts. But she has a lot of regret on the inside for not finding the right life partner.

Women in today’s highly educated and politically active society are demanding equal rights for themselves in a variety of spheres. It has also helped put an end to patriarchal abuse and domestic violence against women. The protagonist’s traumatic psychological experience is

reflective of the authors' own. Kavita Daswani's work *For Matrimonial Purposes* vividly portrays Anju's distress over her search for a suitable spouse. Anju fights for independence while doing the usual things required to find a partner. Her mother relies entirely on Anju. People, including her own family, condemn her decision to locate a companion. Daswani uses Anju to symbolize the plight of women in preparation for her own marriage. She ultimately meets someone who can fulfil her needs as a companion. According to Daswani, her works focus on the experiences of women in romantic relationships and the challenges they face. She hopes that her readers will be able to identify with the happiness and sadness her characters experience. She also encourages her readers to demand equality from men, to utilize their freedom responsibly, and to help men empathize with their partners so that they may live together in harmony regardless of external factors.

Conclusion

Diaspora is a journey that balances emotional connection to home with physical separation from it. Emigrant experience is explored in works of diaspora literature. It explores the internal and external struggles faced by immigrants while living in a foreign country. Women have been a part of almost every migration from India, and they have unique perspectives on life in a patriarchal nation. Women have shown capable of making significant

changes to their own and their families' lives while still honoring and upholding cultural norms. our study seeks to shed light on the social pressures placed on young females in our culture by not being married by the time they reach a certain age. Daswani argues here that marriage is possible at any age, but that choosing the right life partner is crucial. The author reflects on her struggles to establish her own identity within her host culture and her successes as a magazine editor. Her book, *Everything Happens for a Reason*, is a masterpiece about an Indian woman's internal conflict between her yearning for Western materialism and her adherence to traditional Indian values.

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