DIASPORIC ELEMENTS IN THE SELECT WORKS OF JHUMPA LAHIRI AND KIRAN DESAI - A STUDY OF COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

A Synopsis submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

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MADURAI – 625021

TAMIL NADU

MARCH - 2019

SYNOPSIS

Title : ***Diasporic Elements in the Select Works of Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai - A Study of Comparison and Contrast***

1.0 Introduction

Indian Writing in English has come a long way after the two world wars and after India attained freedom from the British in 1947. With a few countable writers on the horizon of Indo-Anglian Literature (that was called so earlier) before the name changed to Indian Writing in English especially to those corpus of writings, which were written in English language by Indian writers, was not much.

Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri, per se, are the new women writers, who have enriched the genre of Indian English fiction but their imagination goes beyond the boundaries of their gender. They address themselves to an Indian culture in which there is a social pain and cultural displacement within the country as well as outside the country because of globalization and immigration. They voice the agony of the Indian immigrants settled in alien land with full of feelings and emotions of loneliness and displacement with no choices for alternative freedom on many fronts. The reasons for choosing these two critically acclaimed and award winning writers are many as these two writers contemporary and have so many similarities and dissimilarities. They have so many commonalities and also inherent differences which is both overt and covert. But the literary oeuvre they offer to the readers are outstandingly overwhelming and they lend their voices to the voiceless immigrants from across the globe. They portray stories which are real but pathetic. For Example the character, Biju, one of the characters created by Kiran Desai in *the Inheritance of Loss,* has poignant tales to tell us including his illegal immigrant status and how he disappears from the restaurant and hides underneath the hotel's mouse hole to escape American Immigrant police officers. There are now hundreds and thousands of Bijus in the United States of America, Germany, France, Canada, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain etc., Lahiri's portrayal of immigrants' characters is also poignant and emotional and in the Lowland, she contrasts the two lives of two brothers travelling in two different directions. A young man's life is lost because of the state terrorism as the poor people remain poorer and the rich ones grow richer and richer every day. Sensitive to the societies' stark reality and the way the state exploits the rural and uneducated mass for

political gains are portrayed graphically in *the Lowland* which was shortlisted for the coveted Man Booker Prize in 2013. The treatment of women characters in the immigrant stories also demand a close look at the fictional works of Lahiri and Desai. Therefore, the scholar decided to choose these two Indian Immigrant women writers for the dissertation.

1.1 Diaspora Writings

The 1980s brought forth the sudden spirit of creative writing and the sense of awareness of the plurality of the nation. The fine work of art, the fictions, the other forms of creative works brought out the east - west conflict and portrays the new Post-Colonial India with its evolving outlook, which is essentially a blend of tradition and modernism. It reveals the cosmopolitan outlook of the new generation who strives to strike a balance between the inherited traditional values and imbibed foreign culture. Trans-national and Trans – continental in nature, the modern authors were successful in every aspect. Writers such as Salman Rushdie, the Man Booker Prize winner, Amitav Ghosh and Upamanya Chatterjee are the writers who published books of international repute. The three authors deftly explore the hurdles faced by newly independence nation, which at times a harsh depiction of reality. These writers have made bold attempts to recapture the altered perceptions of Post - colonial India and the use of revolutionary narrative technique has elevated their position among the writers of Indian Fiction in English.

1.2 Role of Indian Women Writers in Diaspora Writing

Women writers in India are moving forward with their strong and sure strides, matching the pace of the world. We see them bursting out in full bloom spreading their own individual fragrances. They are recognized for their originality, versatility and the indigenous flavor of the soil that they bring to their work. Indian women writers like, Bharathi Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Nayantara Saghal and many more played a pioneering role in conveying the readers a wild range of indigenous Indian issues, punctuated by a strong feministic outlook.

1.3 Definition and Themes of Diaspora

Sociologists use the term ‘Diaspora’ to refer simply to the process of learning and absorbing culture, making it synonymous with socialization. The themes include

discrimination and cultural shock, reverse cultural shock and problems in adjustment and assimilation, orientalism and identity crisis, alienation and displacement, dilemma, hybridity and generational gap. In these categories, the diaspora and Transnationalism and Globalization, Universalism, Imperialism and Capitalism also occur in the literary outputs. According to Cohen, the Types of Diaspora are *Victim diaspora, Imperial diaspora, Labour diaspora, Trade diaspora and Cultural diaspora.*

1.4 Characteristics of Diaspora

John McLeod in *Beginning: Post-Colonialism* (2012, Viva)), Pramod K.Nayar in *Post-Colonial Literature – An Introduction (2008,* Pearson), Elleke Boehmer in *Colonial and Post- Colonial Literature – Migrant Metaphors* (2005, Oxford) and few other preeminent scholars in post-Colonial literature have come out with different definitions and about the features of post-Colonial literature especially diaspora writings. Among the features gleaned from the above mentioned classic literature are given in detail and the characteristic features of diaspora are explained it is interesting to note that they or their ancestors, have also been dispersed from a specific original "center" to one or more peripheral, or foreign, regions. The diaspora population retains a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland-its physical location, history, and achievements and, often enough, sufferings. The scattered group believes that they are not, and perhaps cannot be, fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it. These groups also regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would eventually. The immigrants strongly believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity. In addition to these features, they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined in terms of the existence of such a relationship. Further, the absence of such a relationship makes it difficult to speak of transnationalism which is one essential features of immigrant's life. Because this group share a common notion of "peoplehood" not only with the homeland but with ethnic kin in other countries. And this 'roots to routes' groups are willing to survive as a minority by maintaining and transmitting a cultural and/or religious heritage derived from their ancestral home.

2.0 Review of Literature

In **Chapter Two,** the scholar discusses the review of literature which are already existing in this field of study. The scholar, after collecting primary and secondary sources, surveyed the literature to do with Indian Writing in English, its journey through different decades upto the beginning of the 21st century. In the survey of literature, the research intents to explore the available literature dealing with Indian diaspora literature, in particular the available criticism on the works of Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri, which would help to evolve opinions on their preeminent works.

John McLeod in *Beginning: Post-Colonialism* (2012, Viva)) gives a detailed and comprehensive picture about diaspora and its elements in the context of the post-colonial studies. In India, there are a number of University scholars and professors who have done seminal studies in diaspora studies and among them, Pramod K.Nayar is one preeminent scholar. He, in *Post-Colonial Literature – An Introduction (2008,* Pearson) has given an incisive investigation on the features of diaspora in the context of colonial and post-colonial literature. In one of the world acclaimed critical works, Elleke Boehmer has analyzed the nuances, features and such important ingredients of diaspora writings across the world literature. In *Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature – Migrant Metaphors* (2005, Oxford), Elleke Boehmer has comprehensively discussed threadbare about the diaspora literature, the immigrants' life and the 'roots to routes' people scattered across the length and breadth of the world. A slew of other preeminent scholars in post-Colonial literature have come out with different definitions and about the features of post-Colonial literature especially diaspora writings. Among the features gleaned from the above mentioned classic literature are given in detail and the characteristic features of diaspora are explained it is interesting to note that they or their ancestors, have also been dispersed from a specific original "center" to one or more peripheral, or foreign, regions. The diaspora population retains a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland - its physical location, history, and achievements and, often enough, sufferings. The scattered group believes that they are not, and perhaps cannot be, fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it.

According to Reis, the Eurocentric analyses have proven inimical to portraying diaspora in their significant role as transnational actors Third World Diasporas are not being accurately represented and Western Europe is to a large

extent not associated with being a diaspora. According to the critics, the first charge amounts to beating a dead horse, and the second is unproven. Floya Anthias and Julie Brown have done extensive studies whose contribution have been in discussed in detail in the second chapter.

2.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the various aspects of Diaspora.
2. To trace the comprehensive history of Diaspora Studies.
3. To study the Diaspora elements among Indian and Indian Origin Women Writers.
4. To study the diaspora themes, characterization and plot employed Kiran Desai in her literary oeuvre.
5. To study the themes, characterization, style and strategies employed by Jhumpa Lahiri in her work of fiction.
6. To compare and contrast the diaspora themes, characterization, plot, style and strategies and overall diaspora features in the works of Kiran Desai and Juhmpha Lahiri.

2.2 Significance of the Study

Diaspora Studies in the works of fictions are not new but this new phenomena has gained distinct importance in the recent past especially after the World War II and the fall of British Empire in the third world countries. Therefore, even though this genre has been in existence for centuries, given the globalization, post-modernism and the advent of digital era, the diaspora studies have grown in leaps and bounds. In this literary genre, there are great writers across the English literature and in the Indian context with numerous Titans in Diaspora writing including V.S Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghose etc.,, This study gains significance as it focuses on the two towering women Diaspora writers within the Indian turf and spanning across the length and breadth of the globe. It is, in purely literary sense and otherwise, travel astonishingly and unbelievably in their own path but converge now and then in their literary journey touching upon the common concerns of diaspora features such as displacement, isolation, cultural clash, hybridity, a sense of loss etc., These two women writers of Indian descent, who unconsciously compete with each other in their

own realms. Of course, there are scholars who, across the globe, have had attempted to explore various aspects of diaspora writers especially Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai and this attempt to critically investigate the oeuvre of the pre-eminent women authors having different backgrounds and journeying in different directions but having crucial similarities while dealing with the elements of diaspora demand the attention of the readers and require a significant critical approach to their works of art.

2.3 Need for the Study

Critical and scholarly study of English literature have spawned various schools of philosophies, approaches, methods and principles including modernism, post-Postmodernism, structuralism, post-structuralism, feminism, eco-critical, LGBTQ, diaspora studies etc., Among the principles of the schools, diaspora studies does demand more attention as the number of immigrants are growing exponentially and a few countries have more number of immigrants than the native populations. The problems are becoming more and more complex ever. How had these problems been dealt with earlier and how the aspiring immigrants are going to face the looming and frightening obstacles in the near future are really big questions. And how these issues arising out of diaspora are dealt by these outstanding diaspora writers in their works of art is the big question in front of every one of us to be solved.

2.4 Statement of the Problem

One must not forget that as far as diaspora studies are concerned, there are voluminous critical outputs. among the approaches and principles such as feminism, eco criticism, LGBTQ, post- modernism, psychological approach, this particular principle Diaspora Studies do demand more attention as this approach directly affects the larger population spread across the Oceans but with no panacea. They look for help from somewhere and their problems are so much complex and intricate. A number of critics have come out voluminous critical outputs about almost all the diaspora writers across the world. In this context, one must note that these two writers - Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri - have not been compared and contrasted in terms of diaspora features. The scholar attempts to approach the authors in terms of diaspora features in their works of art and also take them for discussion employing various strategies including how they differ and compare themselves. The scholar specifically attempts to study the text to drive home the point instead of just pointing out the features in their works of art.

2.5 Research Methodology

The original text books T*he Inheritance of Loss* and, *Huallabale in the Guava Orchard by* Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Interpreter of Maladies*, a short story collections, *the Namesake, the Lowland* and *the Unaccustomed Earth*. To achieve above objectives, the following methodology of research has been followed. *The Namesake, the Interpreter of Maladies,* a short story selections, *Unaccustomed Earth* and *the Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri and *Hullabale in a Guava Orchard* and *the Inheritance of Loss* have been taken up for investigation. The diaspora features in the works of these writers themes, plots, cross cultural aspects, clash of cultures, transnational culture , characters, style of narration and most importantly, language which is said to be the most illustrative tool of diasporic experience. Some of the noteworthy works and research done on these writers would be studied and cited to reinforce the arguments. The arguments are to be bolstered with the support of the authentic critical works. A comprehensive review of literature was done on diaspora writers and writings. In addition, the review of literature particularly focused on Indian Diaspora writings. Furthermore, to delimit the area of literature, the review of existing literature on Indian women's diaspora was done by the scholar so that attention could be paid bearing in mind about the objectives of the study and nuances of the study area. The first chapter has been made to trace a brief of history of Indian English literature. Then the focus is changed to the Indian English Diaspora writings. Next, the Indian women diaspora writings was done. The review of literature shows that a few studies have been done on the women diaspora writers focusing on cross cultural issues, transnationalism etc.

2.6 Aims and objectives

1. The present research attempts to evaluate the features of diasporic female writers Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri after a comprehensive evaluation of their works.
2. The scholar aims to compare Kiran Desai with Jhumpa Lahiri.
3. How these two women diasporic writers have explored their sense of displacement.
4. How they have given more poignancy to the exploration by dealing not only with a geographical dislocation but also a socio-cultural sense of displacement.

5. Do the characters of the diasporic writers reflect a sense of dislocation and yearning for their home-land?
6. To identify the similarities of themes and characters between these two most representative Indian Diaspora writers. And to know how near is Kundanika in her treatment to lady characters.
7. What are the similarities and dissimilarities in the writing styles, themes and plots and women characters of the three selected writers?
8. How some of the Diasporic theories find true representation in plot, themes, characterization and style of these writers.

2.7 Hypotheses

There are four hypotheses of this research assignment as following:

1. There are many similarities in the themes and characterization of women in the works of the Diasporic women writers and non-Diasporic female writers.
2. Even with the emigrated status, the role of women does not change much in patriarchal society. Even a woman in her own country can feel diasporic and alienated.
3. Could this study identify the diaspora features in the literary works of Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri taking the original works of the authors.
4. Portrayal of isolation, loneliness, cross cultural clashes, native and internal unrest in the context of disenchantment with the establishment by the disgruntled youth is treated realistically.
5. The two unrests, the Naxalite movement in the Bengali context and the Gorkha‘s unrest North –Eastern area, are though not directly related, are resurrected by the two women writers through sensitive portrayal in their works of art.

2.8 Social Significance of this Research Study

This research on Indian Diaspora women writers would throw some lights on the diaspora characteristics such as a sense of loneliness, isolation, clash of cultures, transnationalism, internal strife and hybridity. And the themes, plots, point of view, characters, narrative style and other aspects. As far as approaches and principles are concerned, there are many methods such as eco-criticism, feminism, post-modernism, LGBTQ, psychological approach, sociological approach and historical approach. Apart from these principles to investigate literature, diaspora studies attempts to

explore the human tragedy and fate of human beings. This research work would be a platform for a novice reader of what exactly Diaspora writing is all about. The research would also make an earnest attempt to list down some characteristics commonly shared by women writers throughout the globe. The research would try to diminish the thin and vanishing line between the diaspora and regional literature by noting down common attributes between the two writers- Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri.

2.9 Frame Work of the Thesis

In **Chapter One** is Introduction which gives a comprehensive survey of Indian writing in English from the early 20th century. Then, the Diaspora writings are being taken up for discussion from the earliest period. In the **Chapter Two**, the scholar deals with Review of Literature about Indo-Anglian Literature, Indian Writing in English, various definitions about diaspora, Indian Immigrant writings, Indian immigrant women writers etc., Then, the literature about the works of Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri are reviewed in the chapter. This chapter also reveals the relevant research literature, primary and secondary sources, research themes, observations and findings available on the concerned field. In the next phase of the chapter, other important components of research which would guide the research process such as the objective of the study, statement of the problem, hypothesis, methodology, subject for the study and definition of the terms are given. **Chapter Three** talks about Jhumpa Lahiri, her distinct writings. Her short story collection *The Interpreter of Maladies* is taken for discussion in terms of diaspora characteristics. Lahiri's narrative style and plot are also being taken up for discussion. Next her *The Namesake* is explored with incisive precision. The **Chapter Four** analyzes about Kiran Desai and her literary oeuvre and also her distinct writings writing style including comic irony about the lives of the characters. Her first novel Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is taken for discussion in terms of comic irony and zappy natures of the characters including Sampath and his mother Kulfi etc. The **Chapter Five** compares and contrast Kiran Desai's literary oeuvre and also her distinct writings writing style including comic irony about the lives of the characters and Jhumpa Lahiri's narrative style and plot, the characters and her treatment of diaspora themes. The **Chapter Six** is the concluding chapter which brings all the essence of the dissertation, the problems faced by the scholar, the limitation of the thesis and the future possibilities for further research in these two women writers.

3.0 Analysis of Jumpa Lahiri

In the Chapter Three, the scholar takes up literary works of Jhumpa Lahiri in terms of diaspora studies. In this context, the chapter starts with an interesting anecdote to note that since 2005, Lahiri has been a vice president of the PEN American Center, an organization designed to promote friendship and intellectual cooperation among writers, which is again a rare distinction for a young author.

3.1 A Critique of *Interpreter of Maladies*

In the first literary work which is a collection of short stories, the writer, Jhumpa Lahiri brings out the entire elements of diaspora by describing the immigrants' life in various angles. The stories of Jhumpa Lahiri's first book whisper and scream traces of India through the details of the characters who become fictional testaments to the "complex and conflicted world of Indian immigrants in the United States".

3.2 A Critique of *The Namesake*

In the second literary work which a full length novel, *The Namesake*, she paints the story of two generations of Bengali families in the United States. In this novel, Lahiri introduces Bengali upper-caste people and their specific culture and rituals. Her novel brings out the bewildering and complicated voyage that emigrant families make in order to have a better life in a land that promises abundant openings. Bengalis in this novel are apparently a close-knit ethnic group, but still far from being assimilated into the general current of life around them.

3.3 A Critique of *Unaccustomed Earth*

The literary work of Lahiri is again a critically world acclaimed short story collections called *Unaccustomed Earth.* Among Lahiri's work of fictions, *Unaccustomed Earth* departs from this earlier original ethos, as Lahiri's characters embark on new stages of development. These stories scrutinize the fate of the second and third generations. As succeeding generations become increasingly assimilated into American culture and are comfortable in constructing perspectives outside of their country of origin, Lahiri's fiction shifts to the needs of the individual. She shows how later generations depart from the constraints of their immigrant parents, who are often devoted to their community and their responsibility to other immigrants.

3.4 A Critique of *The Lowland*

In the fourth novel, Lahiri yet brings out another critically acclaimed full length novel called *The Lowland.* Lahiri develops an insatiable interest in Italian language. Of course, it completely entranced her, long before she could understand it. Over the years that followed she took Italian lessons and immersed herself ever deeper in the language, then in 2012 moved with her husband and children to live in Rome. She gave up reading any books in English, gave up writing and even speaking in English. This new book is about her struggles with learning Italian, and it is written in Italian; the translation into English, by Ann Goldstein, is given on a facing page.

3.5 Select Diasporic Themes in Jhumpa Lahiri

The themes discussed, in the works of Lahiri, are most importantly clash of cultures, a sense of alienation, sense of loneliness, an exploration of violence, cultural heritage and homeland, motif and symbols. Next, violence in modern society has become a norm especially the state violence which normally invisible to the naked eyes but pervasive everywhere. As, in the modern and digital era, market – driven commercialization is the norm which normally help boost the wealthy people and affect only the downtrodden, morally conscious people gang together to oppose this move and start a movement to save themselves and save the poorer people from the iron clutches of the state. Lahiri prudently brings out this invisible force and the power of state and the inability of individual souls. In this story, while on a honeymoon to Ireland, Subhash and Elise visit a circle of stones in the countryside, and seeing the flooding all around them, Subhash is reminded of the lowland. In general, there is always no dearth of mentioning of heritage and homeland in the fictional works of Lahiri. Every story - be it a short story or full length novel – Lahiri never fails to remind the readers especially Indian readers about the Immigrant features as being felt by the Indian immigrants who live in two worlds.

4.0 An Analysis of Kiran Desai' literary of Oeuvre

The sense of alienation is a pervading theme in any immigrant writings as this emotion is inherent and innate to every human being the moment he starts his journey to the unknown lands and settles there leaving his siblings and relatives back at home. In the writings of Kiran Desai too, this is being reflected. The theme of alienation has

been recurrent in the Indian English fiction. It has become a major concern for post-modern writers and Kiran Desai, daughter of Anita Desai is no exception. She has explored this contemporary issue in her second novel The Inheritance of Loss for which she took eight long years to complete. The various themes which are intertwined in the novel The Inheritance of Loss are globalization, multiculturalism, insurgency, poverty, isolation and issues related to loss of identity.

4.1 Select Themes in Kiran Desai's Works

The themes in the fictional works of Kiran Desai are vaired and in consonant with the Diasporic characteriscs, she takes up almost all nuances of immigrant life, its obstacles and the hope for the future. The major themes are sense of loss, contemporary global issues of multiculturalism, economic inequality, fundamentalism, terrorism, postcolonial chaos, challenge of assimilation, comic joy, nationhood, conflicting desires, modernity, increasingly interconnected world, realism, identity-crisis, love and hate, past and present, and dislocation. Furthermore, she deals with the tragedies of the freed third world countries, exile, American dream, power hierarchy, homecoming, loneliness, truth and untruth, cultural identity, class-system, ethnicity, racism. cultural clash, loneliness, and the way of life of westernized Indians. Particularly, the predominant themes in *Inheritance of Loss* are cultural clash, loneliness, westernized Indians, immigrants.

4.2 A Critique of *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*

Kiran Desai's debut novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998), made the author an instant success at the age of twenty-seven. She is the voice of a younger generation of Indian writers who write in English, many of whom live in self-exile. Indeed, many expatriate Indian novelists have gained international attention, including Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Anita Desai, Kiran Desai's mother. India is home to many religious groups, including Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims. It also has a history of political strife among those groups, exacerbated by the interference of British colonialism and modern globalization. Desai, like other Indian writers in English, combines these elements of India's traditions and history with a secular emphasis on storytelling. Her work explores the toll that these cultural divides have taken on India's population. The arrival of monkeys takes its twists and gives the

readers tinkling feeling once the monkeys arrive. .The Cinema Monkey follows Pinky to the orchard and brings his friends. Sampath is delighted with the monkeys that are a nuisance to everyone else. He plays with them, acting like a monkey himself. They become his bodyguard, sleeping and eating with him in the tree. Now all food has to be locked up, for they are thieves.

4.3 Characterization

The proof of the pudding is in the tasting of the cake is an adage used to test the veracity and nuances of something when it comes to important things in life. This adage would aptly apply to the characterization in the novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.*

4.4 Shakespeare's Funny Characters

The author, Kiran Desai, has, of course, been influenced by many writers including Shakespeare. And one of the forerunners in creating funny characters with various strange and eccentric characterists is Shakespeare. We can look at various characters including Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night. Dogberry in Much Ado About Nothing, Bottom in Midsummer's Night Dream, Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Twelfth Night.

4.5 Select themes in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*

Many of themes employed by Kiran Desai her two novels are quite interesting and appealing to the readers with her zappy characters whose actions bring laughter and expose the human folly and foolishness. The joys and sorrows of the imagination are immense that noth Kulfi and Sampath suffer because they have too much imagination for the ordinary world. They find that, to get along, they have to suppress their extraordinary sensibilities, for they are aware in ways that others are asleep. Sampath has the perception of a poet or artist. He gets lost in his studies, distracted by the sound of words, or the shapes of maps.

4.6 A Critique of *Inheritance of Loss*

In her second novel which is a milestone in the history of Indian immigrant writings, Desai paints a wide picture of Indian nationalism, the hangover of colonialism, the sense of loneliness, the ubiquitous Diaspora elements found in any

immigrant writing including cross-cultural clashes, the dilemma of roots to routes population. The second novel by Desai, after a successful run of her first novel *Hullabale In a Guava Orchard (HIUO)*, was first published in 2006 winning a number of awards including the man Booker prize for the year and the national book critic circle fiction award in 2007. In the second novel, the main themes are migration, living between two worlds and between pass and present. The story is central two characters Biju and Sai, Biju, as any other aspiring immigrant to achieve the Great American Dream, is an illegal Indian immigrant living in the United States. Sai is a living in Darjeeling. Desai switehes the narration between both point of view. Indianness is an evocation of Indian culture and manifests itself in its multifold aspects which is echoed in *Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai.

5.0 A Comparative and Contrastive Study of the works of Desai and Lahiri

Chapter Five deals with the various diaspora elements in the literary works of Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai for a comparative and contrastive study in terms of diaspora features, themes and how they deal with them. It must be noted that the word 'diaspora' has already become almost a trendy concept and a genre throughout the academic world, is not losing its luster because of the incessant movement of peoples from one country, region, or continent to another for a variety of reasons: economic, political, social, and cultural. The convergence of nation and state has brought to a new phenomena such as people belonging to no nations as immigrants are mingling with interracial and intercultural. Now the situation is evolving and converging to a place where the societies of most countries are becoming multiethnic, multicultural, multiracial, and pluralistic.

5.1 Similarities in the novels of Lahiri and Desai

In a work of research especially in a literary analysis and critical review, it is somewhat weird to put two writers in a comparison and contrast table. It is cumbersome to bring their literary genius into a tabular column .However, the research scholar has attempted to consolidate the similarities in the following tabular columns and the details must be quite interesting and revealing and easy to grasp the nuances of their crafts when we look at them through the prism of various components which also play a vital role in the creative process of the writers:

	KIRAN DESAI	***JHUMPA LAHIRI***
Age / ***date of birth***	Age 48 3 September 1971	Age 51 11 July 1967
Origin	Indian descent	Indian descent
Parents	Teacher/writer	Librarian /Teacher
Man Booker Prize	2005, The Inheritance of Loss	2013, Short listed The Lowland
Schooling	America	America
Lived	In London	In London
Formal degrees in creative writing	Creative writing course Masters' in Creative Writing	Creative writing course Multiple Post Graduate, Ph.D
Style	Autobiographical in nature	Autobiographical in nature
Themes	A sense of loneliness Indian Ghorka Agitation	A sense of loneliness Naxalite Movement
Current position	-----	Currently working Professor
Active period	1998 – present	1999 – present
Influence	Old time writers	Old time writers (Jane Austen)

Table -1 Similarities in Desai and Lahiri

The above tabular columns show where the two women writers had their schooling in India or the UK or America or in all these places which were, of course, the formative years for their cultural backgrounds. Kiran Desai, born in India, had her schooling in India and continued her studies in the US as an immigrant. On the other hand, Lahiri was born in London to Indian immigrant parants and had her schooling in America as her parents settled in the US where her father worked as librarian which inspired Lahiri to write a short story in the *Interpreter of Maladies.* It is also quiete interesting to note that the two women writers were of the same age except a few years and their writing career started almost in the same period. Both of them had lived in London for a short period is another important information which connect them in many ways. That they had done their creative course in the US Universities is not coincidental but they had travelled in their own ways.

5.2 More Similarities between Lahiri and Desai

Further more, one could find the following similarities in their works of art:

1. As for the generational gap is concerned, both Lahiri and Desai belong to the 21st century representing the Immigrants as they themselves are Immigrants.
2. Both the women writers are outstandingly master storytellers.
3. Winners of various critically acclaimed prizies across the globe, Lahiri has been receiving many world renowned awards including Pulizer prize given to fictional works written exclusively by American writers. Lahiri was also short listed for the Man Booker Prize for the novel The *Lowland.*
4. Kiran Desai also started her career by winning the coveted.

   Betty award and continued to win the coveted prize the Man.

   Booker Prize for *Inheritance of Loss.*
5. Lahiri and Desai share common concerns in their writings by virtue of them both being contemporary female Diaspora writers.
6. One of the important connecting features of these two women writers is sharing of post-colonial links through India. While Lahiri was born in London and

relocated to the United States, Desai was born in America but both of them close connection with their native country India.

7. Both the writers share a persisting empathy for their fictional creations.
8. Make the readers connect with the story.
9. Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai themselves are both Diasporas who Have had to balance their identity between two countries.
10. In their fictional works, the two writers have humanist themes and concerns such as dialogises of cultural encounters, diaspora, minority discourse, race and other issues.
11. A psychoanalytic introspection into the tormented psyche in their characters.
12. Both of them explores the cross-cultural experiences of dislocated women and the possible condition of belonging simultaneously- psychologically and experientially in the maze of cultural plurality.
13. The two women writers deal with the issues of identity and cultural clashes have already been vastly explored in her novels which are crux of the fictional works.
14. Lahiri and Desai explore the issue of cultural encounter specifically.
15. From the perspective of women's identity and her approach to this issue is via feminist literary theory but it is natural.

5.3 Contrasts in the works of Lahiri and Desai

In the following tabular columns, the dissimilarities are taken up for discussion. The contrasts are not highly compartmentalized and indivisible and in seperable. They are here given as an indication towards more and comprehensive analysis and understanding. The contrastive points are not given here to assess them in literary values but they are being used as a mere touchstone to assess how they might have influenced their writing style and narrative skill and their thought process.

	KIRAN DESAI	JHUMPA LAHIRI
Genre	Novelist	Novelist and Short story writer
Characterization	Diasporic elements Serious and perky	Diasporic elements Serious
Style	Snappy Narrative	Plain language Long and tight prose Descriptive
Origin	Indian but transnationalist (her grandmother being German)	Indian /Bengali origin
Language/s	English	English / Italian

Table -2 Contrasts in Desai and Lahiri

5.4 Characterization

Characterization – characters of Lahiri and Desai have similarities as far as the immigrant characters are concerned. Both of them think in line with the obstacles faced by the Indian immigrants in America and the Western Europe. But Desai starts to travel her own journey and plough her furrow in an entirely different way. If one takes the characters of *Hullabaloo in the Guvava Orchard,* there are much differences. The characters such as Sampath, Kulfi and others are perky and zappy. This type of characterization can not be found in the novels of Lahiri whose characters are somewhat serious in nature in contrast. Desai's characterization is inventive and this style reminds the readers of many writers including Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night,* R.K Narayan's *The Guide,* Jerome K Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat,* Miguel de Cervantes's *The Ingenious Gentleman Sir Quixote of La Mancha* (1605 & 1615 in Two Parts).

Sir Andrew Auguecheek is one of the characters in the celebrated drama *Twelfth Night* created by Shakespeare and whose foolishness gives the play more

strength to enthrall the audience. In the novel *The Guide* by R K Narayan creates the Raju, who resembles Sampath in the novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.* Sampath is believed to be a holy man having clairvoyance just like Raju who is believed to be a saint by the people and he permits himself to be considered so. In another celebrated Spanish novel, Jerome K Jerome, in *Three Men in Boat*, creates characters with hypochondriac characteristics. Miguel de Cervantes in his world famous and defining novel. in the 16th century and it was a trendsetter for modern Spanish novel, *The Ingenious Gentleman Sir Quixote of La Mancha* (1605 & 1615 in Two Parts), successfully invented Don Quixote along with Sancho Pancho, his deputy. In the novel, the whole narrative is such chirpy and funny that the readers are treated sumptuously every page of the novel. Of course, the character Don Quixote is highly inventive and imaginative and living in his own world created by himself oblivious to the reality. Sampth too chooses to live atop the tree like monkeys and persist to go on his quirky way of life in spite some sane voice and advice. His mother Kulfi, the D.C (District Collector), the Chief Medical Officer and the nurse – all are zappy in their nature and support Sampath.

5.5 Narrative style

While Lahiri‘s style is lucid and long and plain language, descriptive, Desai’s is cryptic and snappy and narrative:

In Temporary Matter, Lahiri starts the story:

The Notice informed them that it was a temporary matter: for five days their electricity would be cut off for one hour, beginning at eight P.M. A line had gone down in the last snowstorm, and the repairmen were going to take advantage of the milder evenings to set it right. The work would affect only the houses on the quiet tree-lined street, within walking distance of a row of brick-faced stores and a trolley stop, where Shoba and Shukumar had lived for three years.

And this is how Desai ends her novel *Inheritance of Loss* :

The judge walked over. "Get down."

"Why?"

"It’s making Mutt nervous to see you up there."

Mutt looked up at Sai, wagged, not a shadow crossed her eyes. "Really?" said Sai.

"I hope that tutor of yours doesn't get any funny ideas," said the judge, then. "What

funny ideas?"

"Get down at once."

Sai got down and went indoors and shut herself up in her room. One day she would leave this place.

"Time should move," Noni had told her. "Don't go in for a life where time doesn't pass, the way I did. That is the single biggest bit of advice I can give you."

6.0 Conclusion

Considered as one of the eminent voices in the present times articulating the maladies of the people situated in the unaccustomed earth of the Diaspora communities, Lahiri's narratives focus mainly on the itineraries of her subjects, especially, her female characters, facilitating them to explore their ethnicities, identities and femininities. Diasporic identities, multiple migrations, shift in locations and mobility make the female characters more free and liberate than their home country. Lahiri's latest novel, *The Lowland* epitomizes the flight and plight of her female subjects who in the international space experience loneliness, marginalization, alienation and psychological stress. As a result, they cut loose themselves from the traditional norms of man-woman relationship to find comfort in a sub-culture of their own. In the homeland the ethnic, social, political and conjugal rigidities restrict their femininities. The same characters, for instance, breathe freely in the international space.

The scholar, in Chapter Five, has attempted to draw the dissimilarities and contrastive features of the two women immigrant writers viz., Lahiri and Desai in their literary oeuvre. As pointed out earlier, the aim of the attempt to compare and contrast these two writers was to throw more lights on their literary works. Chapter Six concludes with remarks about the nuances of the writings of Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri and how both of the writers belonging to the same generation but having travelled in two different directions in the literary journey which is critically acclaimed, have brought accolades and literary awards to the corpus of Indian Immigrant Women writings. The comparative and contrastive study in the chapter

five throws interesting facts given the truth that both of them belong to the same generation. It is but coincidental that both the women writers with diverse backgrounds which have nothing to do with each other, have a common thread as far as their work fiction is concerned. For, the two writers bring out fictionalized stories with themes almost identical such as the internal strife which happened in different times and in different theatres but the cause is the same. Of course, the protagonists in both novels *The Lowland and Inheritance of Loss*, are portrayed in different colours and their fate is not comparable. Biju's fate is pathetic in the sense that he could not achieve the proverbial American Dream an returns to the same 'roots' and the routes he takes does not take him to the ultimate goal and that is settling in America to avoid poverty in India like his father who has been slogging under the dictatorship of the retired judge who still retains the vestige of the British colonial hangovers. In the case of The Lowland, Lahiri creates another type of character who is pathetic and dies a tragic death. There are numerous similarities and dissimilarities in both the writers. In this regard, the scholar has recommendations for prospective future research scholars who can choose the discourse style which has more dissimilarities than similarities. The textual analysis in terms of componential analysis could be done which would throw more lights in the literary oeuvre of the preeminent women writers.