Invigorating the Dislodged Roots in an Unwonted Land: Immigrant Narratives in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *Unaccustomed Earth*

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explain the challenges faced by immigrants by analysing the short stories written by Jhumpa Lahiri. The organisation of this research study is intended to enable a thorough investigation of immigrant tales in *Unaccustomed Earth*. Through the framework of Homi K. Bhabha's theory of hybridity, this paper conducts a literary analysis of the stories, investigating themes, characters, and stylistic elements. This study employs the notion of hybridity and its diverse manifestations to investigate how immigrants establish their roots in new territory after relocating and relinquishing their own cultural identity in order to assimilate into a foreign culture. Occasionally, individuals integrate their cultural values with the cultural norms of people from different backgrounds, while maintaining their own ethnicity and cultural identity. At times, people transition from one culture to another and mimic the colonisers or those in positions of power. Consequently, immigrants face several obstacles in their lives. An individual who refuses to adopt or accept the lifestyle, language, religious values, ethnicity, norms, and culture of the host society will have a feeling of alienation from that society. These consequences lead to an individual feeling nostalgia since they are unable to maintain their own cultural identity. The research presented here asserts that individuals must achieve a harmonic balance between their own cultural values and the foreign culture in order to alleviate concerns and challenges such as identity crises, and to flourish in a new setting. The aim is to dissect the themes, characters, and literary devices employed by Lahiri to depict the immigrant experience in the light of the theory of Hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Hybridity, Identity Crisis, Immigrant Narrative, South Asian Literature

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**Introduction**

Diasporic writers, such as Jhumpa Lahiri, skillfully situate their fictional characters in foreign settings. On one side, they exemplify the concept of hybridity; on the other hand, they
demonstrate how emigrating from one's native country, abandoning one's cultural norms, and relinquishing one's ethnicity simultaneously destroys an individual's life. *Unaccustomed Earth* is a remarkable compilation of short stories that chronicles the journeys of immigrants who relocate to a foreign land in pursuit of improved prospects, only to discover the need to adjust to an entirely unfamiliar culture and lifestyle. The immigrant experience has been a central theme in contemporary literature, offering a window into the complexities of cultural identity, belonging, and adaptation to a new environment. Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth* stands as a poignant exploration of these themes, delving into the lives of Indian immigrants and their descendants as they navigate the intersections of heritage and modernity in the United States of America. Through a collection of interconnected short stories, Lahiri crafts narratives that resonate with the challenges, conflicts, and triumphs of immigrant communities, providing readers with a profound understanding of the experience of aforementioned.

This research paper embarks on a journey to unravel the immigrant narratives woven throughout *Unaccustomed Earth*. The aim is to dissect the themes, characters, and literary devices employed by Lahiri to depict the immigrant experience in the light of the theory of Hybridity. By delving into the depths of stories, this paper seeks to uncover the intricacies of cultural identity, the impact of generational differences, the dynamics of family relationships, the emotions of loneliness and isolation, the pursuit of autonomy within cultural contexts, and the poignant threads of nostalgia and longing that permeate Lahiri's narratives.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the broader discourse on immigration literature and cultural representation. Through a critical analysis of Lahiri's work, this research sheds light on the complexities of immigrant experiences, highlighting the resilience, challenges, and evolving
identities of individuals and families as they straddle multiple worlds. The paper will address various challenges encountered by immigrants, particularly those belonging to the second generation. Undoubtedly, immigrants have a sense of alienation in the host country and its surroundings, due to this factor, immigrants experience an immediate sense of connection when they encounter someone who shares their culture and heritage. This is particularly true for the first generation of immigrants who relocate to an entirely unfamiliar territory. They constantly seek commonalities and aspects that are connected to their cultural heritage and ethnicity. Lahiri explores the concept of cultural identification and the feeling of fitting in when living in a different country. The characters frequently struggle with the conflict between their Indian heritage and the aspiration to integrate into American society. The perennial theme of reconciling the preservation of one's cultural history with the assimilation into a new cultural milieu is a constant battle.

**Theoretical Framework**

Hybridity refers to the process by which a novel cultural entity arises from the fusion of preexisting cultures. Homi K. Bhabha posits that culture is not solely confined to its historical or past associations, but rather is intimately connected to the present. This notion necessitates a shift in one's perspective on cultures and their interrelations. Lahiri introduces characters that experience a new and emerging culture when they encounter a different set of ideals upon immigrating to a new place. Lahiri predominantly depicts characters who are dynamic and industrious, broad-minded, unbound by traditional ideas, and who strive to enhance their lives.

*Unaccustomed Earth* explores the concept of hybridity as the text delves into various topics such as dispersal, change, shift, transformation, love, life, death, and loss, all of which are closely connected to the concept of hybridity. Lahiri portrays the amalgamation of Eastern and Western cultures through the characters in her books, as they
eventually scatter from India to European and American countries. Hybridity describes the emergence of a new cultural form from the already existing cultures. Homi K. Bhabha describes the concept of hybridity as the “creation of transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (Mambrol, 2005). Bhabha believes that culture is not only bound to be related to the history or past, rather it is something closer to the present and this idea demands that one must change his point of view about cultures and cultural relations. Lahiri also presents characters with emerging culture, when they are exposed to a new set of values after immigration. Lahiri mostly portrays such characters who are active and productive, open-minded, do not stick to old beliefs and attempt to improve the status of their life. This paper will analyse the characters in the light of hybridity and its types mainly focusing on, racial hybridity, linguistics hybridity, literary hybridity, cultural hybridity and religious hybridity along with the emotional, psychological and behavioural conditions in an unaccustomed land.

**Research Aims and Objectives**

This paper aims to:

- Examine the characters in relation to hybridity and its various forms, with a specific emphasis on racial, linguistic, literary, cultural, and religious hybridity.
- Analyse the emotional, psychological and behavioural conditions of the second generation of immigrants in an unaccustomed land.

**Literature Review**

Homi K. Bhabha developed the theory of hybridity, and the current study focuses on this concept, its various forms, and the issues that immigrants encounter. As one of the finest post-colonial writers illustrating the impacts of immigration on immigrant life, Jhumpa Lahiri's works have been the subject of inquiry by others.

In the short story “Year’s End” Kaushik’s family follows Indian tradition even in America, Kaushik’s
stepsisters used to call him ‘Kaushik Dada’ which is an Indian word to call one’s elder brother (Lahiri, 2008). Kaushik’s stepmother Chitra used to cook Indian food at home, which shows that the family wanted to keep their own original Indian culture alive. People are most likely to fill their appetite with the food of their own homeland but simultaneously they also adopt some Western values because change is sometimes inevitable to get one’s self adjusted to a new place. Kaushik and his father brought a Christmas tree at home to celebrate the year’s end, which is mostly done in European countries and is a part of Western cultural values (Lahiri, 2008).

Gholipour and Sanahmadi (2013) employed post-colonialism and Homi K Bhabha’s theory of hybridity in their research paper titled “A Post-colonial Perspective on the Short Stories of Jhumpa Lahiri”. This study examines the behaviour and responses of Bengali individuals to a different culture, as well as the impact on the individual’s well-being when they relocate and encounter a new set of values. It is mentioned that “Lahiri inhabits a sort of “in-between-ness”, an ambivalence that makes one belong somewhere and nowhere, a feeling of ambivalence that leaves one without an attachment to any space that can be considered home. Thus such figures stand between two cultures experiencing and embodying hybridity” (Gholipour & Sanahmadi, 2013). The researchers of this study found that the gap between the two distinct sets of values lead to a sense of unease and lack of belonging. An individual experiences a sense of alienation and homelessness, which manifests as intricate emotional difficulties and disorders. In their research, it is stated that Lois Tyson provides an explanation of unhomeliness using the following words: “Being ‘un-homed’ is not the same as being homeless. To be unhomed is not to feel at home even when you are in your own home because you are not at home in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee so to speak” (Gholipour & Sanahmadi, 2013). The issues encountered by immigrants undeniably impact their emotional and
psychological well-being. It signifies that an individual experiences a sense of homelessness and psychological distress when attempting to adapt to the host society as he is unable to accomplish this and ends up feeling disconnected from his surroundings. For immigrants, to thrive and adapt to their new lives, it is crucial for them to strike a harmonious equilibrium between their own culture and the culture of the host society. The culture and values that shape our background are the foundation of our identity. A thriving and nourished society cannot exist without them. In order to truly survive, it is imperative for an individual to adhere to their deeply ingrained cultural beliefs.

According to Jhumpa Lahiri, it is necessary for a person to exhibit loyalty to the traditional world while also being proficient in the modern world. The research paper *A Postcolonial Perspective on the Short Stories of Jhumpa Lahiri* by Mojtaba Gholipour and Mina Sanahmadi demonstrates that immigrants undergo a state of hybridity as they endeavour to assimilate into the culture and society of the host community. They blend their native language with the language of the host society and integrate their own lifestyle with that of the host community. Essentially, the blending of many elements results in a muddled sense of self and cultural identity. They experience a state of being unable to fully disengage from or fully embrace either the culture of the host country or their own original cultural values. Immigrants often experience conditions of instability, identity crisis, and confusion, which greatly disrupt their lives.

In another research named “Cultural Hybridity in Kamila Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows*” Sarvat (2014) utilises Bhabha's notion of hybridity in her research to examine the impact of cultural hybridity on identity. This study emphasises the hybrid identity, specifically examining the many cultures of India, Pakistan, England, and America. Sarvat (2014) argues that colonialism facilitated cultural exchange and brought diverse cultures closer.
together, resulting in the emergence of hybridity. However, it acknowledges that cultural differences persist throughout the process of culturization. (Sarvat, 2014). In her research, it is mentioned that Bhabha majorly focuses on hybridization, which means that the concept of cultural hybridity is wider and applicable to many other works. Sarvat (2014) says that:

*Burnt Shadows* presents a world of cultural hybridity, Hiroko Tanaka travels from India to Turkey, from Turkey to Pakistan and from Pakistan to America in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. She shifts into many identities. She has come to India as a Japanese subject. She leaves Pakistan for America, as a Pakistani. In a way, the readers come across different cultures of the world. In this way, the tour de world of Burnt Shadows gives an example and a true picture of cultural hybridity. (Sarvat, 2014)

It shows that the immigrants shift their identity when they migrate from one geographical area to another. They try to wear an overcoat of foreign values to hide their real being because Asian people are not truly honoured in Western states but at the same time, there are also some people who are unable to forget their own ethnicity and values. Jhumpa Lahiri portrays the first generation of immigrants who have a strong inclination to yearn for a homeland that they have left behind. They construct fictional native regions, constantly shifting between being displaced and being situated in multiple locations.

The concept of diasporic "self-fashioning" more accurately describes Lahiri's second-generation immigrants who are primarily concerned with defining their identity in connection to a tangible, cohesive, and unified environment. (Rogobete, 2016). In the research paper, “In Search of the Invisible Roots: Immigrant Experiences in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *Unaccustomed Earth*”, Rogobete(2016) says that Lahiri portrays first-generation immigrants as individuals who are anxiously trapped in a perpetual cycle of metaphorical translations between their place of origin and their destination. It signifies
that they are in a state of being trapped or stuck between two locations: the area they originated from and the place they have reached. The second generation of immigrants is primarily characterised by rhetorical methods that emphasise the processes of fragmentation and hybridization. (Rogobete, 2016). Rogobete (2016) says that Lahiri projects a world of feelings, personal traumas and life-changing conflicts. She puts her emphasis on small details and apparently insignificant objects that have symbolic functions. She presents the people who stand between their lost dreams and their new expectations, between their invisible roots and their newly developed buds. The plant of their identity takes a lot of time to nourish in a foreign land. She majorly focuses on the themes of displacement and alienation. Rogobete (2016) mentions that the ‘haunting ghosts’ arise from within the hybrid state. These spectres and ghosts arise due to the gaps and silences created after a failed attempt to perfectly adjust to the new land. Sometimes these silences and gaps are screaming because the individual fails to translate cultural and linguistic identities. These ghosts can be referred to as the fear of immigrants, the fear of losing identity, the fear of becoming a misfit in a foreign culture and the fear of being called an outsider. This frightening situation leads the immigrants toward a dangerous emotional disorder, anxiety, hyper tension, nostalgia, alienation and drug addiction.

Another research paper “The Notion of Hybridity in Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul Novels: A Reading of Mystic Masseur, A House for Mr Biswas and The Mimic Men” by Sitesh Kumer Saha, mentions the concept of hybridity and ambivalence in the aforementioned texts. These three novels by Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul. In this context, Naipaul’s novels are examined in the following research paper to exhibit how the new comer or the outsider upholds the wrinkle of hybridity and ambivalence posited by Bhabha (Saha, 2014).
Saha observes that the characters in various stories display unique features and traits. However, despite these differences, they also share certain similarities. He asserts that in the current global economy, capitalism and communication technology are revolutionising the entire planet into an extensive commercial community. Consequently, ancient rituals and beliefs are experiencing unforeseeable transformations in the quest for progress and improvement. Specifically, the second generation of immigrants abandons their customs and traditions in their quest for modernization. Naipaul portrays the illusion of change and transformation through characters who are mentally disoriented and desperately seeking an identity, regardless of their geographical location. These characters experience a sense of decline, struggle to form their identities and become disillusioned with oppressive systems, both, at the personal and national level, as depicted in Naipaul's novels (Saha, 2014).

All of the aforementioned researches provide concrete evidence that immigrants willingly suppress their own cultural identity to assimilate into the values and conventions of the host communities, in various ways. When an individual migrates from one region to another and encounters a different set of cultural values, they tend to blend their own culture with the new one to adapt to the unfamiliar surroundings. In order to achieve this objective, one must exert maximum effort to adapt to the prevailing circumstances. This results in a sense of longing for the past, a condition of disorder, and a state of conflict, particularly as the second generation of immigrants gets caught in this contentious predicament.

**Discussion and Analysis**

Mambrol (2005) defines Hybridity as the mixing of two cultures resulting in the formation of new identities and new cultures, after migration. Hybridity takes place in cultural, political and linguistic forms and refers to any mixing of Eastern and Western culture, but in a broader sense hybridity refers to any kind of cultural mixing or mingling between East and West.
Amardeep Singh defines the term “hybridity” as a biological concept that refers to the merging of two genetic streams. Therefore, it is reasonable to discuss hybridity in relation to race. In the Indian context, there exists a well-established community known as “Eurasians”. This community was officially recognised as a distinct group by the British during a time when interracial marriage was prohibited. Even after India gained independence, the Eurasians continued to identify themselves as a separate and clearly defined society (Singh, 2017). Racial hybridity occurs when individuals from two distinct cultures form a partnership and their new generation possesses a hybrid identity due to their parents' belonging to diverse racial backgrounds at a fundamental level. The personality of two distinct cultures partially embodies their essence.

Unaccustomed Earth contains several instances of racial hybridity i.e., the story titled “Hell-Heaven” focuses on Parnab Chakraborty, an Indian man who married an American woman named Deborah. Shortly after their marriage, they had twin daughters named Srabani and Sabitri, although they were commonly referred to as Bonny and Sara. Despite their Bengali heritage, their physical appearance made them appear more American. Additionally, they spoke English as their primary language (Lahiri, 2008). The girls possessed two names, indicating a dualism and division inside their personalities. The statement elucidates that the second generation of immigrants experiences a state of perplexity when it comes to their sense of self, individuality, and way of life. They are disconnected from their cultural origins and enjoy adopting foreign lifestyles.

Lahiri explores the concept of racial hybridity in various other parts of her book Unaccustomed Earth. In the short novella "Only Goodness," Roger married a woman that he met at Cambridge University (Lahiri, 2008). Shortly after a span of two years, she ended their relationship. This demonstrates that the unions between
individuals of two distinct racial backgrounds are predominantly ineffective. They are unable to sustain their relationships and as a result, their relationships quickly deteriorate. These examples represent the blending of two races through the act of marrying individuals from different racial backgrounds.

Linguistic hybridity is the incorporation of foreign linguistic features into a particular language. Occasionally, English terms are incorporated into Asian or African languages through adoption. The concepts of slang, patois, and dialect fall within this group. Currently, terms such as "pyjamas" and "bungalow" have their origins in the Indian language and have been incorporated into the English language (Singh, 2017). Linguistic hybridity refers to the act of blending one's native language with the language and linguistic structures of the nation in which one resides. Linguistic hybridity is apparent in Jhumpa Lahiri's short works, as migrants utilise a combination of Hindi or Bengali language and American English in their households. As a result, they occupy a unique space that does not fully align with either the foreign culture or their own original culture. Lahiri explores the notion of "in-betweenness" in her short stories, which refers to a state of uncertainty where an individual feels a sense of belonging to both somewhere and nowhere. This feeling of detachment from both cultures places the individual in a position between two cultures, resulting in the experience of hybridity in some form. (Gholipour & Sanahmadi, 2013).

In the story, “Unaccustomed Earth”, Akash calls his grandfather, “Dadu” (Lahiri, 2008) which is an Indian word for grandfather, this is an example of linguistic hybridity because immigrants mix both languages, i.e., their own language and the foreign language, sometimes consciously and sometimes unintentionally. In the story “Once in a Lifetime” Lahiri depicts the combination of the Indian language and English language “I was dressed that evening in an outfit that my grandmother had sent from Calcutta: white pyjamas with tapered legs and a
waist wide enough to grid two of me side by side, a turquoise kurta, and a black velvet vest embroidered with plastic pearls.” (Lahiri, 2008).

This exemplifies linguistic hybridity and cultural hybridity, as the person's language and attire reflect their cultural background. Furthermore, an additional instance of linguistic hybridity can be observed in the narrative titled “Year's End”. Kaushik's stepsisters conversed in English, however, their pronunciation and tone resembled that of other Indians who recently migrated to America and began speaking English (Lahiri, 2008). The accent of newcomers invariably differs from that of native speakers. Initially, they attempt to communicate in English, combining it with their original language. However, their tone and accent plainly indicate that they are not natural English speakers and originate from a different geographical region.

Literary hybridity is closely connected to the literature and the various literary structures found within a community. Literary hybridity It is frequently associated with post-colonial literature that employs innovative narrative techniques like "magic realism". Salman Rushdie, an Indian writer, and African writers like Ben Okri, have explored innovative approaches to storytelling that combine indigenous customs and folklore with new concepts. (Singh, 2017). Amardeep Singh is of the opinion that Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children mingles traditional Indian texts with European post-modernism.

Jhumpa Lahiri also mixes different literary forms in her short stories within her book Unaccustomed Earth to present the reader with something new, something unique and to bring innovation in her expression. For example, Paul calls Sang by the name “Penelope” in the story “Nobody’s Business” (Lahiri, 2008). This shows the adaptation of Greek words in the English language and the mixing of the elements of the two languages as Penelope is the Greek word, name of Odysseus’s wife in Homer’s Odyssey. This also depicts an example of literary hybridity as Lahiri, very beautifully presents the mixture of Indian and other
literatures, i.e., like Greek literature and American literature.

Culture is the most important aspect of the society. Every society has its own unique culture, norms and set of values. A society is basically known for its cultural values. Cultural hybridity is also extremely widespread today, in the form of fusion cuisine and music. For example, “Shang Shang Typhoon” (a music group) mixes Western rock, jazz and reggae with Japanese Enka ballads, folks and Okinawan melodies. The concept of cultural hybridity is very close to the concept of mimicry (Singh, 2017).

Likewise, the stories of Unaccustomed Earth are an exemplification of the mixture of two cultures, sometimes it is the paragon of the mixture of Indian and American culture, while sometimes it illustrates the mixture of Canadian and Indian norms. When Chitra speaks to her husband and stepson Kaushik she constantly shifts from English to the Bengali language, and cooks Indian food for the family in the story “Year’s End”, further Usha’s mother in the story “Hell-Heaven” goes to the party given by Parnab and Deborah, she wears Bengali dress typical to Indian women and Indian culture and lifestyle, she and also forced Usha to wear Shalwar Kameez. On the other hand, when they reached the get-together everyone was wearing Western clothes, from which Usha got inspired and Deborah gave her jeans to wear (Lahiri, 2008). This symbolizes the conglomeration of two different cultures and their rituals and shows that the immigrants mix their own cultural values with the host’s culture to get adjusted to the host society.

This final category of hybridity, is also very important because religion, is a very common and prevalent theme in colonial and Post-colonial literature. Amardeep Singh, in his article, says that religious hybridity refers to the colonized individual’s adaptation of the religious beliefs of colonizers or the dominant authoritative masses. For example, when an Indian migrates to a European state he adopts the Christian religious beliefs of Europeans and mixes the concepts of their own religion and the concepts given in the Bible by
taking common ideas and references from both religions i.e. usually, Hindus consider Jesus Christ as a very crowded Hindu pantheon (Singh, 2017).

Additionally, Religious Hybridity is a phenomenon more closely related to the concept of immigration, this concept is also very close to that of cultural hybridity. Transfusion of two religions is seen when Parnab married Deborah, their marriage was held at a Church in Ipswich, with a reception at a country club and the wedding took place following the Christian religious norms, Usha’s parents were the only Bengalis invited to the proceedings. The food was also American and when the dance started, Usha’s parents remained at the table, this is an exposition of inter mixture of two cultures and the bond of marriage between the people of two totally contrasting races following the religious values of the authoritative ones.

Thus, all these examples prove that *Unaccustomed Earth* depicts the notion of hybridity and Lahiri exemplifies all the types of hybridity in the collection of her short stories in an outstanding manner, having a deep influence on the readers.

In all the stories of *Unaccustomed Earth*, characters migrate from their own homeland to an unfamiliar land for different reasons and purposes i.e., some migrate for business reasons and some of them move to up bring the status of their life. There are several problems faced by immigrants, especially the second generation of immigrants, some of these problems will be discussed in this section of the paper.

It is an inevitable fact that the migrants feel alienated in the host country and its environment, just because of this reason, immigrants feel immediately connected when they find someone belonging to their own culture and background. This is especially the case with the first generation of immigrants who go to a completely new land. They are always in search of common elements and something which belongs to their cultural background and ethnicity. In the story “Only Goodness”, one finds a Bengali family consisting of
Sudha, her brother Rahul and their parents. In Sudha’s marriage to a British man, the guests were “almost all friends of Sudha’s parents, almost all Bengali” (Lahiri, 2008). Likewise, Usha’s mother brings Parnab to her home in the story “Hell Heaven” just because he belongs to a Bengali family. She cooks different food items for him and feels a lot of attraction towards him. This shows that immigrants are always searching for those who share a common culture, common background, and common feelings and conflicts.

Another problem that prevails in the life of immigrants is the communication gap between the generations, which leads to more complex situations. In the beginning story of Lahiri’s book Unaccustomed Earth, it is seen that Ruma marries an American and has a son named Aakash. There is a lack of communication between Ruma and her father although he sends her postcards yet this communication seems to be very short and formal. Lahiri describes every small event in detail but leaves many things unsaid. This is a technique used by Lahiri to emphasize a lack of communication between the generations.

Another problem and the major element that causes isolation in the lives of immigrants is the loss of a sense of belongingness. In the story, “Only Goodness”, Sudha and Rahul both seem to struggle for their identity in America by adapting Western rituals and ways of living. They were “aware that they faced a life sentence of being foreign” (Lahiri, 2008) because the Native Americans will always consider them outsiders and different. The first generation of immigrants face this situation, but they also can relate and connect with their motherland, however, it becomes more difficult for the second generation of immigrants, who never lived in their home country.

In the first short story of the book Unaccustomed Earth, Ruma left India and settled in Seattle, a city situated on an isthmus between Puget Sound and Lake Washington, located at the south of Canada – United States border. This city is a significant gateway for the purpose of trade with Asian countries. This is very clear that this land was
unfamiliar for Ruma when she arrived there, as well as a new place for her father. Ruma struggled a lot to adjust to this state alone after her mother’s death. She came here after her marriage, and her son Akash was also born in India but his habits were different from those of Indian children because he grew up in Canada. He disliked Indian food and didn’t know the Bengali language, which his grandfather and mother used to speak when his grandfather arrived to see them in Seattle. The following conversation between Ruma, his father, and Akash is an apt example of this:

“It doesn’t matter. Try it,” he told Akash, who for the last four months refused to eat anything other than macaroni and cheese for dinner. To Ruma, he added, pointing to Akash’s plate, “Why do you buy those things? They are filled with chemicals.” When Akash was younger, she had followed her mother’s advice to get him used to the taste of Indian food and made the effort to poach chicken and vegetables with cinnamon and cardamom and clove. Now he ate from boxes. “I hate that food,” Akash retorted, frowning at her father’s plate. (Lahiri, 2008)

Ruma feels compelled to embrace her father upon his arrival at home and extend a kind welcome, as he is now a widower. However, Ruma's husband Adam holds a contrasting viewpoint and does not believe he has any responsibility towards Ruma's father. The reason for this is attributed to their disparate backgrounds and upbringings, that is why Ruma says that Adam is unable to feel her anxieties because there is “a wall between them, simply because he had not experienced what she had” (Lahiri, 2008). The fact that Adam's parents are still alive and occupy the home where he was raised is a strong indication of the diverse perspectives that people with varied upbringings and cultural backgrounds have on life.

Another major problem of the immigrant community is the upbringing of the younger ones; immigrant parents have to strive hard to make their
children aware of their indigenous culture. In such circumstances, identity conflict arises, and psychological and behavioural problems are exhibited as the second generation of immigrants adopt the habits and lifestyle of foreigners turning back to their indigenous cultural norms and values of their parents and their homeland. They prefer the food of this foreign land, Western dressing, and lifestyle. They choose to speak a foreign language putting aside their mother tongue, and this shows that the second generation of immigrants consciously or unconsciously impersonates the foreigners more easily. This imitation and simulation is an inevitable phenomenon. Sudha and Rahul in the short story “Only Goodness” adopted the lifestyle of Americans; they consumed alcohol, stayed outside the home at night, disobeyed their parents, kept secrets from them, and lacked their ethnic norms and values as well (Lahiri, 2008). Lahiri exemplifies this, in a short conversation between Sudha and her brother Rahul “You want a six-pack?” She asked when they got to the liquor store. “I’d prefer a case”. In the past, she had paid for things without a second thought, but she was aware, now, that he did not reach for his wallet.“ And a bottle of vodka, too,” he added.“Vodka?” He drew another cigarette out of its pack “It’s a long vacation”. (Lahiri, 2008)

This depicts that the second generation of immigrants spoil their lives by adopting the lifestyle and bad habits of Western people. They wear Western clothes and speak with each other in the English language which eventually results in a communication gap between parents and children. The same is the case with Rahul, who consumed alcohol, failed in high school, used to drive while he was drunk and was caught by the police many times (Lahiri, 2008). He always remained in a bad mood, kept himself apart from his sister and parents, and eventually started dating an American lady Elena and started living with her without his parents' approval. The indifference to one’s own ethics, values, norms and cultural purity is the root cause of the
predicaments that the immigrants have to face.

In the story “Hell-Heaven”, Usha wants freedom, and despite her mother’s advice, she wears a Western dress at the party given by Deborah and Parnab Kaku. She was used to hanging out at night and making relationships with boys; she indulged herself in all the bad habits of Americans and disliked the values and restrictions of Indian culture, which her mother followed all her life (Lahiri, 2008). Ushna herself admitted her acts: “I began keeping other secrets from her, evading her with the aid of my friends. I told her I was sleeping over at a friend’s when really I went to parties, drinking beer – I began to pity my mother, the older I got, the more I saw what a desolate life she led” (Lahiri, 2008).

Conclusions

This study concludes that individuals who relocate to another country for work or personal reasons take up the customs, language, clothing, and way of life of the foreign culture. Occasionally, individuals blend their native cultural values with those of a foreign culture in order to adapt to a new environment. However, this blending of cultures can result in a range of difficulties and challenges. The second generation of immigrants adopts the lifestyle, language, and culture of the outsiders, disregarding their own cultural norms. They develop apathy towards their own principles, which ultimately leads to their collapse. In order to be accepted by the host country, individuals adopt the customs, language, attire, and other cultural aspects. However, in reality, they find themselves caught between the two cultures without fully assimilating into either. These factors contribute to the development of emotional disorders, feelings of nostalgia, dysfunctional relationships, a crisis of identity, and ultimately, a compromised future. Therefore, it is crucial for immigrants to embrace a well-rounded way of life while still preserving their own cultural heritage, taking into consideration both the advantages and disadvantages of Western culture and lifestyle. When immigrants surpass their boundaries and
disregard their own cultural norms, migration becomes a predicament for them, particularly for the second generation of immigrants.

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