

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

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Abstract: *This study aimed to explain the challenges faced by immigrants by analysing the short stories written by Jhumpa Lahiri. Through the framework of Homi K. Bhabha's Theory of Hybridity. The paper investigated immigrants' experiences of establishing their roots in new territory after relocating and relinquishing their cultural identity to assimilate into a foreign culture. The study used qualitative methods and textual analysis in order to dissect the themes, characters, and literary devices employed by Lahiri to depict the immigrant experience. The findings of the study revealed that occasionally, individuals integrated their cultural values with the cultural norms of people from different backgrounds while maintaining their own ethnicity and cultural identity and mimicked the colonisers or those in positions of power. An individual who refused to adopt the lifestyle, language, religious values, ethnicity, norms, and culture of the host society would feel alienated from that society. These consequences led to an individual feeling nostalgia since they were unable to maintain their own cultural identity. The study concluded that individuals must achieve a harmonic balance between their own cultural values and the foreign culture to alleviate concerns and challenges, such as identity crises, and flourish in a new setting.*

Keywords: *Bhabha's Theory of Hybridity diaspora, identity crisis, immigrant narrative, south Asian literature*

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Introduction

Diasporic writers, such as Jhumpa Lahiri, skilfully 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.

Aruna and Sagayasophia (2022) affirm that 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* is 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 those mentioned earlier.

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

immigrants encounter, particularly those of 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 first-generation immigrants who relocate to an entirely unfamiliar territory. They constantly seek commonalities and aspects connected to their cultural heritage and ethnicity. 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 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 different ideals upon immigrating to a new place. Lahiri predominantly depicts dynamic and industrious characters who are broad-minded, unbound by traditional ideas, and striving 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 colonisation” (Mambrol, 2005). Bhabha believes that culture is not only bound to be related to the history or past; instead, it is something closer to the present. This idea demands that one change his point of view about cultures and cultural relations. Lahiri also presents characters with emerging cultures when they are exposed to a new set of values after immigration. Lahiri mainly portrays such characters who are active, productive, open-minded, do not stick to old beliefs and attempt to improve their life status. 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 Objectives

This paper aims to:

1. Examine the characters in relation to Hybridity and its various forms,

explicitly emphasising racial, linguistic, literary, cultural, and religious Hybridity.

2. Analyse the emotional, psychological and behavioural conditions of the second-generation 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, showing that the family wanted to keep their original

Indian culture alive. Yulistiyaniti (2022) agrees that people are most likely to fill their appetite with the food of their homeland. They simultaneously adopt some Western values because change is sometimes inevitable when adjusting to a new place. Kaushik and his father brought a Christmas tree at home to celebrate the year's end, primarily 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 and the impact on their 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 leads 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 explains unhomeliness. "Being 'un-homed' is not the same as being homeless. To be un-homed 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, an individual must adhere to their deeply ingrained cultural beliefs.

According to Jhumpa Lahiri, a person must 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. Sheela and Geethanjali (2022) asserted that they blend their native language with the language of the host society and integrate their own lifestyle with that of the host community. 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 significantly disrupt their lives.

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

hybridity is more comprehensive 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 an accurate picture of cultural Hybridity.

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 genuinely honoured in Western states, but at the same time, some people are unable to forget their own ethnicity and values. Jhumpa Lahiri portrays the first generation of immigrants who are strongly inclined to

yearn for a homeland 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 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 hybridisation.

(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 insignificant objects that have symbolic functions. She presents the people who stand between their lost dreams and new expectations, between their invisible roots and 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 specters and ghosts arise due to the gaps and silences created after a failed attempt to adjust perfectly to the new land. Sometimes, these silences and gaps scream 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 towards a dangerous emotional disorder, anxiety,

hypertension, 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. In this context, Naipaul's novels are examined in the following research paper to exhibit how the newcomer 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 capitalism and communication technology are revolutionising the entire planet into an extensive commercial community in the current global economy.

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 modernisation. 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 researchers 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 caught in this contentious predicament.

Findings

Mambrol (2005) defines Hybridity as the mixing of two cultures resulting in the formation of new identities and 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, it 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 merging two genetic streams. Therefore, it is reasonable to discuss Hybridity in relation to race. In the Indian context, a well-established community known as "Eurasians" exists. 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 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. Bhandari

(2021) 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 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 by 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 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 had 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.

Discussion

Literary Hybridity is closely connected to the literature and the various literary structures found within a community. It is frequently associated with post-colonial literature that employs innovative narrative techniques like “magic realism”. Salman Rushdie and 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 postmodernism. Jhumpa Lahiri also mixes different literary forms in her short

stories within her book *Unaccustomed Earth* to present the reader with something new and unique and to bring innovation to 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 and the name of Odysseus’s wife in Homer’s *Odyssey*. This also depicts an example of literary hybridity as Lahiri beautifully presents a mixture of Indian and other literature, i.e., Greek and American literature.

Every society has its own unique culture, norms, and set of values, and it is basically known for its cultural values. Cultural Hybridity is widespread today in the form of fusion cuisine and music. For example, “Shang Shang” Typhoon 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, they are the paragon of the mixture of Indian and American culture, while sometimes, they illustrate 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, 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 symbolises 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.

In the final category of Hybridity, religion is a prevalent theme in colonial and post-colonial literature. Amardeep Singh, in his article, says that religious hybridity refers to the colonised individual’s adaptation of the religious beliefs of colonisers 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 closely related to the concept of immigration, which is close to 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 the inter-mixing 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 homeland to an unfamiliar land for different reasons and purposes i.e., some migrate for business reasons and some move up to bring the status of their life. It is inevitable that the migrants feel alienated in the host country and its environment, and because of this, 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 an entirely new land. They are always in search of common elements that belong 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 *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, and 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 emphasise a lack of communication between the generations. Another significant 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 faces this situation, but they also can relate and connect with their motherland; however, it becomes more difficult for the second generation of immigrants, who have 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 on an isthmus

between Puget Sound and Lake Washington, located at the south of Canada – United States border. It is apparent that this land was unfamiliar to 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 strongly indicates 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; immigrants 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 by putting aside their mother tongue, and this shows that the second generation of immigrants consciously or unconsciously impersonates 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 from its pack “It’s a long vacation” (Lahiri, 2008).

This depicts that the second generation of immigrants spoils 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 ethics, values, norms and cultural purity is the root

cause of the predicaments that the immigrants 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 used to hang out at night to make 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).

Conclusion

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 principles, ultimately leading 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 their second generation.

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