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IN-DIA-SPORA: CONTEXT AND CRITIQUE

Introduction

This paper uses Adorno's dialectic criticism as its framework for literature review on Indian diaspora with a focus with those in North America. The author's empirical research either supports or refutes main current in the literature on Indian diaspora. What it means, and how it implicates, education, identity, and youth become important and, therefore, merits considerable attention. The attempt is not to provide any concrete answers but to problematize research questions that draw from India diaspora discourse. Precisely because of the open ended nature of this paper, the title is kept open. It is also the nature of diaspora with hyphens in everyday experiences that informs the title and the labyrinth of this paper.

In an essay entitled, *Cultural Criticism and Society* (O'Connor, 2000), Adorno has explored the need to reconcile what he calls immanent and transcendence dimension of critique. According to him, immanent critique finds its home in culture particulars while transcendental critique gazes from outside the culture and usually has ideology as its tool. It is important, as Adorno notes, to first understand the nature of criticism in which we locate our pedagogy. He marks that neither imminent nor transcendental critique is sufficient, and he positions himself within what he calls dialectic criticism. Adorno argues that dialectical criticism does not engage in the way of overemphasizing, emancipating criticism, nor take a stand outside cultural context by comparing it with a made-up absolute. Based on Adorno's directionality, in this paper, I review select literature on the Indian diaspora. My focus, nevertheless, is on the Indian diaspora in North America, especially those in Canada. I situate the discussion within increasing global configuration of contemporary society, escalating transnationalism, and diaspora as a post-colonial episteme- where I envisage Indian diasporic youth as shaping their educational experience and identity negotiation.

Although this paper is primarily based on earlier research, I illustrate from my empirical understanding to either substantiate or critique the earlier research. The empirical curve may be deemed essentially fictitious, while

essentialized literature may be empirically false. At the same time, both may be forms of ideology which are used either to unmask dominant thought or serve as instruments of another form of domination or propaganda. My aim is to stand against structured currents in the Indian diaspora discourse. As the title of this paper suggests, I visualize the Indian diaspora ameliorated as “In-Dia-Spora”- open to different contexts and critiques, but suggesting both scattered Indians around the globe as well as Indian culture in the diaspora. This attempt, in line with Adorno, allows me to seek advantage from both immanent and transcendental critique. The pivotal contention is to engage in a dialogue, which, according to Bakhtin (2002), should be post-formal, post-structural, and open ended. I do not assume to conclude the dialogue either with literature from previous research, or through my empirical indulgence but rather to enrich each by using the other. Since ideological evaluation is inherent in any act of understanding, therefore, I must make clear that my ideological stance is geared towards radical context specific elucidation of the Indian diaspora that I have teased out, distilled, and explicated using various themes and perspectives.

GLOBAL INDIAN DIASPORA

The “Indian diaspora” is used to refer to international migrants who originate in areas falling in the territorial boundaries of independent India (Parekh, 1993). It evokes cultural as well as political and economic conditions (Nadarajah, 1994), and seeks to forge a unified identity and a common myth of origin (Parekh, 1993). The Indian diaspora throughout the world dates back to the third decade of the nineteenth century when the forced migration of indentured laborers under British imperialism began (Jain, 1989). The Indian diaspora is the third largest and most spread out in the world after the British and the Chinese (Government of India, 2001) and is drawn from different regions of India, professes varied religions, lays claim to dozens of castes, and is involved in a wide-range of occupations. Their mode of adaptation in the adopted society is marked more by economic than cultural integration (Sharma, 1989).

The Indian diaspora is reported to have suffered aggravation in the new milieu. Their expulsion from Uganda under Adi Amin is an example in point. Jain (1989) argues that experience of harassment has forced Indians in the diaspora to balance by spreading out their investments and members of their families in different countries around the globe as well as creating of networks and ties. The twenty million (*and growing*) Indian diaspora is spread over many countries (Seth, 2001) and has a significant economic and political presence in a number of them. In percentage terms, the Indian diaspora constitute 70 per cent in Mauritius, 50 per cent in Guyana, 48 per cent in Fiji, 35 per cent in Surinam, and 23 per cent in Nepal (Parekh, 1993:8). Scholars infuse a sense of pride in the global spread of the Indian diaspora without unmasking the nature of engagement between India and her diaspora. My

understanding of the politics of engagement between India and her global diaspora allows me to state that, while people in the diaspora in their nostalgia expect cultural bonding, India's policy has been to encourage those who have been successful in their adopted country to invest economically in India. Because migration is a self-selective process and operates as an industry, economic investment by those who have been successful in the diaspora is in select sectors of the economy and does not reach the masses in India. Moreover, the government of India has come up with offers like dual citizenship for the Indian diaspora in developed countries, and not countries like Fiji where the Indians, though more numerous, are not as successful as their North American counterparts.

Patterns of emigration from India as identified by Jain (1989) are based on the nature of the contract in which immigrants find themselves. After the formal abolition of slavery in 1833, a substitute labor force was found in the Indian and Chinese emigrant workers. This system was nominally a voluntary contract but many of the conditions of slavery were carried over in the terms of the indenture contract. The push and the pull factors were both direct offshoots of the British rule in India. Singh (2005) submits that small peasants were put in a highly vulnerable position due to the changes the British made in the land tenure and food production in India. Hereditary rights over land were abolished and peasants were converted into tenants under changed land revenue systems. Land revenue was increased manifold and was supposed to be paid even when the crops failed.

Singh brings to light important historical facts in her book *Overseas Indians: The Global Family*, in which she contends that migration reached a new high after 1857 when the first war of India's Independence was waged. Indebtedness increased under the unsettled condition; peasants were even chased from their land, and failure of the crops added to the misery. While these conditions generated the push, the pull came from need for labor in Colonial plantations far from "home." Besides, the recruiters and their agents painted a rosy picture in distant lands. Information provided on the Emigration Passes reveals that the Indian emigrants covered a wide section of rural communities, middle agricultural, and comprised all castes, including the Brahmins. Life was difficult in the plantation, and during the spare time, nostalgic accounts of the homeland represented life and provided leisure activities.

Without going any further into the details of colonial migration from India, I must point out that substantial number of people from India in North America are post-colonial migrants, although subsequent generations of those emigrated during colonial era are also present. Jayaram (2004) identifies three patterns of post-colonial migration from India, namely, (1) the emigration of Anglo-Indians to Australia and England, (2) the emigration of professionals and semi-professionals to industrially advanced countries like the U.S., Canada

and England and (3) the emigration of skilled and unskilled laborers to West Asia. The second category of emigration, which some scholars including Khadria (1999) describe as “brain drain” from India, is central to my research. The survey of literature that I have conducted suggests that the study of the Indian diaspora has varied with consideration of socio-cultural and politico-economic perspective (Sharma, 1989), comparative study of the Indian diaspora within two or more “host” milieu (Jain, 1993), study of caste system among them (Jain, 1989), issues of language (Jayaram, 2000), gender (Handa, 2002), and religion (Rukmani, 1999). There are some overarching features common to people of Indian origin including their cuisine and love for cricket as well as Indian cinema. Beyond the taste buds, Indian cuisine remains a cultural element and is often part of the Indian consciousness. It is easy to find a restaurant with Indian names attached to it in most cities of the world, although interestingly several of them are operated by people from neighboring Bangladesh.

Indian cricket can be explained, as in Appadurai’s (1991) work, within the post-colonial and global culture framework. Appadurai argues that cricket in India has colonial roots and has grown along the post-colonial trajectory. Originally a socialization process for the urban elite, cricket has broken several social barriers in post-colonial India. Now it is, at times, a national fervor, and at others, as a curse, depending on whether India wins or loses international games. Cricket, with its own etiquette, language, conduct, and other cultural traits, has taken over the consciousness of Indians in India and in the diaspora. It is hard to imagine the life experience of a first generation male in the Indian diaspora whose life is not marked by interest in Indian cricket.

To the second generation, Indian cinema is more appealing. Indian movies act as lenses through which young Indian emigrants see the India that their parents have left behind. As a consequence, I believe, the second generation associate with the dance and song sequences in the Indian cinema, and consider them to be integral parts of Indian cultural artifacts. In the last decade, the movies made in India have increasing diasporic landscapes and social context. These include blockbusters like *Dilwale Dulhania Le Gayage*, *Salam Namaste*, and *Kal Ho Na Ho*. While the cinema produced in India is popular among the youth of Indian origin in the diaspora, there have been increasing numbers of movies based on the diasporic life experience. This includes movies by Deepa Mehta, Gurinder Chadda and Mira Nair like *Bollywood-Hollywood*, *Bend it like Beckham*, and *Mississippi Masala*.

Like cinema, Indian religions have spread throughout the world and have assumed their own transnational character. Indian temples and places of worship can be found in most cities around the globe serving as sites for group cohesion (see Rayaprol, 1997). With increasing number, people of Indian origin in different countries tend to form their own associations. The axes of these associations vary but they develop structures to administer Indian culture in

the diaspora. It is my contention that such associations create bureaucratic structure and select cultural practices to suit the needs of their members. My understanding also allows me to suggest that the first generation usually immerses itself and its resources in initiatives that spotlight on activities such as building community networks in the new locale, as well as fundraising for places of worship, seniors' community centres, and their like. Subsequent steps by the first generation deal with socio-economic problems in India, often with a focus on sub-regional issues, depending on their geographic origin in India.

Gandhi (2002) admits that Indian diasporic advocacy has historically been weighted towards political struggles and that progressive activism concerned with development and other related issues has come to the forefront only recently. Increasing involvement of the Indian diaspora for causes in India during recent times can be understood through Gandhi (2002), who asserts that there was a high level of aid in response to the Gujarat earthquake in early 2001 that was missing when the south-eastern state of Orissa was hit by a cyclone in late 1999. The Indian diaspora has also managed to build effective transnational business networks that stretch from the place of origin to the place of settlement. Basu and Altiney (2002), who examines the transition of ethnic Indian entrepreneurs from immigrants, local market operators, to global market layers, points out that the Indian diaspora has changed the pattern of business behaviors in India. They believe that more the successful entrepreneurs among the Indian diaspora have gained competitive advantage by developing international business links. Basu and Altiney also states that most fast growing businesses in the information technology sector have established outsourcing arrangements with Indian firms.

In my opinion, the economic networks such as those highlighted by Basu and Altiney are to take advantage of contemporary forms of capital enterprise and augment profit in the globalized era. This has been pivotal to the success of several Indians in the diaspora who have carved out a dominant space in the knowledge-based technologies and economies. Gururaj Deshpande, Sabeer Bhatia, and Kanwal Rekhi have continually been listed among the world's richest in *Fortune 100* and *Forbes Magazine*. On the non-economic front, Indian born Amartya Sen and Jagadish Bhagwati have established coveted status in the world. As Sheth (2003) points out, literary writers like Jumphah Lahiri and Shauna Singh Baldwin have won accolades and have successfully presented a mosaic of Indian culture to their readers. Indians abroad, like U.K.-based Gurinder Chadha, U.S.-based Mira Nair, and the famous M.N. Shyamalan, have made their mark on the celluloid screen and are globally acknowledged. Based on the above arguments, I concur with a quotation from Tinker (1977:19), who affirms-

The banyan tree has thrust down roots in soil which is stony, sandy, and marshy- and somehow drawn sustenance from diverse unpromising conditions. Yet the banyan tree itself has changed; its similarity to the original growth is still there, but it has changed in response to its different environment.

Nevertheless, only those sections of the metaphorical banyan tree that have followed the prescription of modernism have flourished. Indian cuisine, cinema, cricket, or religion has become part of the modern culture industry with bureaucratic administration. While it is easy to find a restaurant with an Indian name in most cities of the world, it must be noted that their popularity is gained through standardized food of Punjab and that they do not represent cuisines from most parts of India. Likewise, Indian cinema, which is the biggest cultural industry in India, has consumed several local traditions of India and has replaced them with an urban lifestyle catalog. Similarly, the board in India that administrates cricket operates as a big bureaucratic corporation. In the same vein, the only variant of Indian religion that are known to the world are those that have administrative units through established networks and associations.

INDIAN DIASPORA IN CANADA

A trickle of Indians, mostly from Punjabi farming areas started settling on the West coast of North America from 1880 onwards. This was considered alarming as they were often referred to as a “tide of turbans” and a “distinct menace” (Lal, 2002). Due to persistent hostility also manifested through legislation both in the U.S. and Canada, Indian immigrants declined after 1910 (Johnston, 1984). This continued with some changes until 1965, after which variants of what is known as the “point system” were adopted for the deserving immigrant. Those “deserving” often found promising jobs in private facilities, prospered economically, and many became permanent citizens (Pavri, 2000). More recently, there has been an influx of large numbers of professionals trained at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and other premier institutes in India. The ‘point-system’ introduced in 1967 disregards race, ethnicity, and nationality in the selection of immigrants at the surface level.

In Canada, people of Indian origin began to move in significant numbers largely to build the Canadian Pacific railways and to work in the lumber industry (Parekh 1993). They settled in British Columbia, traveled as directly as possible from their villages, and, although some of them had served in the British Army in Asia, they barely spoke English. Women were largely absent, and social life was organized around the place of worship (*Gurudwara*) and its community kitchen. The transnational context in the historical pattern of adjustment of the Indian diaspora in Canada can be understood through the following example. By the 1920s, Indian immigrants had bought some land and a few lumber mills in Canada and even replicated the name of their locality “Paldi” in British Colombia- the same name in the Hoshiarpur district in Punjab from where several of them migrated. In their new Canadian home, people of Indian origin inherited race relations similar to other minority groups, thus marking what Du Bois calls their “double consciousness”- an attempt to

define themselves according to the perception of their ethnic community and the way in which they were regarded by the members of the Canadian society (see Varma and Seshan, 2003).

The “point system” that reflected the “will” of Canada and was a legislative schema to attract immigrants to build Canada led to 20 times increase in people of Indian origin between 1961 and 1976 (Johnston, 1984). Thereafter, migration of Indians to Canada was not only from Punjab but also from other parts of India as well as Indian diasporic posts such as Fiji, Mauritius, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Buchignani, 1989). The increase after 1973- when the right of visitors to apply for immigrant status was revoked- was also due to an amnesty granted by the Canadian government to persons who were already in Canada but who had not yet appealed for immigrant status (D’Costa, 1992). The Indian diaspora is one of the fastest growing ethno-cultural groups in Canada after the Chinese. The Government of India (2001) reports attest this, pointing out that the Indian diaspora is more than two per cent of the total Canadian population.

I do not want to dwell on the progress made by the Indian diaspora in Canada since then, either through professional success or the coming of age of individuals like Ujjal Dosanji. Success and harmony give enticement to assess progress in an attractive scholarly fashion, but they do not grapple with the complexity of the skewed development paradigm and withdraw our attention from inherent contradictions and diversity common to Indian diaspora. In Canada, for example, discrimination has not been totally eliminated although multiculturalism was adopted as the government policy during the 1970s (Raj, 2002). Buchignani (1980) highlights that people of Indian origin are perceived by Canadians to have curried food usually associated with smell, and use saris, turbans, and different footwear, different color sense, beards, and long hair. This defines the rhetoric of popular Indian cuisine and culture in the Canadian mosaic. Buchignani also asserts that, in linguistic etiquette, Asian Indians are categorized differently due to their distinct home language, and a different accent.

The success graph of the Indian diaspora in Canada portrayed in journalistic and academic discourse alike keeps the lived experiences under the veil. The complex and discriminatory attitude towards other minority communities such as Blacks or towards its own diverse community is a case in point. Does this mean that with success come discriminatory attitudes towards other minorities? Buchignani (1989) reasons the same in his essay entitled “Contemporary Research on People of Indian Origin in Canada.” Also, the drive to define oneself as successful stems from two basic and co-related factors- an ontology branching from an inferiority complex and a gaze based on individual success.

INDIA DIASPORA: EDUCATION, IDENTITY, AND YOUTH

The basic objective of my analysis of the educational experience of Indian diasporic youth involves locating the ensuing conversation within the gambit of critical multicultural education and understanding the power dynamics that operate through class elitism, white supremacy, and the hold of patriarchy (see Steinberg and Kincheloe, 2001). Such location is born, as McLaren (2001) maintains, when imperialism, colonialism, and transnational circulation of capitalism influences the logic with which Western Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) discourse shapes everyday reality.

Gibson (1988) has analyzed the schooling of one important diasporic group from India, namely the Sikhs in American high schools. She focuses on both barriers to opportunity, and the resources of the community in negotiating the difficulties for the education of those born in the diasporic milieu. Her arguments are focused on adaptation through education which she labels as “accommodation and acculturation without assimilation.” By assimilation, she implies a process whereby individuals and groups of one ethnic group are incorporated or absorbed into another which results in loss of identification of the parent group. Acculturation, to Gibson, is the process of change and adaptation that results when the groups with different backgrounds come together. Nevertheless, she prefers to use the term accommodation and by that she means a process of mutual adaptation between persons or groups for the purpose of reducing conflict and allowing separate group identities and cultures to be maintained.

The cultural logic of “accommodation and acculturation with assimilation” defies the foundation of intercultural education and highlights structural violence and invasion allowed through educational attainment. Diasporic learning difficulties, according to Ogbu (1982), may also be due to the difference between cultures at home and at school. Gibson (1988) notes the differences in values and behaviors learned at home and at school in her study. Learning difficulties of those in the diaspora can also be due to structural inequality and school functioning to maintain the societal status quo. Ogbu (1982) argues that if the ethnic minority students believe that the system of education is unjust to them and that they will be unfairly rewarded, will they reduce their effort to gain education and this may lead to poor performance. This takes the argument beyond cultural and structural difference to the dynamics of majority-minority relations and their perceptions of each other.

Gibson (1988) stretches the argument further and links education to the role of the community. The experience of being minority in the country of their adoption brings Indian people together and creates a sense of communal solidarity that proves to be a source of strength. They draw upon their collective resources including knowledge, skills, community institutions and values that promote success in the new environment and place high importance on

education for economic success in diasporic context. Based on this background, I approach my research with the premise that the community resources play an important role for the education of the diaspora. The retention of ethnic culture and values (Rosen 1959), achievement motivation (Montero and Tsukashima 1977), survival instinct (Wirth 1943), or fighting racism (Kibria 2003) - require community effort (Portes and MacLeond 1996; Portes and Rambaut 1990).

Buchignani (1989) summaries the literature on the education of the Indian diaspora in Canada and confirms the priority that parents place on their children's education. Buchignani looks at various studies, such as that of Akoodie (1980) and Subramaniam (1977b), which focuses on self-realization and identity shift; Minde and Minde (1976), which highlights the psychological adjustment; and Ijaz's (1980) analysis of attitudes towards Indians in schools. Samani (1992) indicates that ethnic groups go through the educational system of Canada without adopting all Canadian values. Ethnic students use that part of the educational system that suits their needs and ignore the parts that contradict or do not fit in with their beliefs. Handa's (2003) research focuses on girls and shows them negotiating their educational and identity experience through various domains of the Indian diasporic community as well as through the community at large.

Indian diasporic youth seem to have considerable freedom when negotiating their educational experience. My observation suggests that Indian parents even encourage their daughters to obtain professional degrees and take up careers. According to Wakil et al (1980), most families seem to evaluate the behavior of their children in the light of their conception of a middle class Canadian family. The school forms, constrains, and influences the self-identity and cultural-identity of the student but the influence of the family and ethnic identity cannot be denied. According to Patel (2000), there are twice as many South Asians graduates in Canada when compared to the national average.

Nevertheless, no reported research has analyzed the class dynamics vis-à-vis educational experience in the Indian diaspora. Also, the role of the community is often seen in affirmative gaze pointing to the positive role of social capital. Another vexing concern, and related to identity as well, is language. For example, it is hard for Indian diasporic youth in Montreal, who are expected to learn English and French, to learn and achieve a level of proficiency in another (one or two) languages in the name of the "cultural of the community" (Sen, 2006). Another issue is mate selection. A Gujarati girl would be expected to choose a Gujarati boy; second in choice would come any Indian but anything else would be despised. Cyberspace has opened new dimensions to choose mates of the same in-group from across the globe. Community pressure comes through the parents. Deflection from an obligation is a form of imposing a negative externality.

Education and identity are closely related and schooling plays an important role in the identification of the youth. People of Indian origin in Canada transcend many “locations of culture” (Bhava, 1999) and their negotiations in the transnational sphere with their place of origin, co-ethnics in other parts of the world, and their experiences in Canada allow them to negotiate their identity. Although earlier literature on identity focuses on individuals, the research of the last two decades has shifted the concern to the level of the collective (Cerulo, 1997). The first among these factors is the role of group agency. Through their collective action, people from the Indian sub-continent in the diaspora not only reenergize the identification process but also create, maintain and sustain ethnic boundaries. New information technology (NCT) provides the latest dimension to the identification process by changing the generalized others to “generalized elsewhere” (Meyrowitz 1989). NCT makes it easy to be connected with the “roots” with their ever improving services.

To understand identity, one has to take into cognizance various levels, boundaries and contexts of identification. According to Sackman et al (2003), identity depends on “self-localizations” that engross patterns of orientations, self-conceptualization, feelings of belonging and perceptions of symbolic boundaries. For the Indian diaspora, measure of self-identification through a sense of belonging, pride and sense of satisfaction in one’s own culture is as vital as participation in ethnic group activities (Woollett et al, 1994). Despite all scholarly definitions, I am compelled to perceive identity as a luxury because sometime Indian diasporic youth are “not being able to define him/her self” and are “invisible” to the social mirror (see Kincheloe, 2002). The social mirror reflects those of its own “choosing” and considers it safe to refract few more, while keeping many as “too small to see.”

In the case of Indian diaspora, with its multiple diversities and apparent plethora of identification repertoires, Indian cinema seems a way out of the difficulties of everyday life. As mentioned earlier, Indian cinema connects with homeland culture as well as allows the living of a desire through the cinematic screen. The social organization of the diasporic community and the individual’s positioning in regard to it lay out the process of constructing identifications. This process shows identities as produced rather than fixed, personal attributes (Burman and Parkar, 1993). The membership in organizations and the composition of circles of friends and acquaintances can exert an influence on the social identities of individuals as well as collective social identity. Diasporic associations are sites of communication about collective identities whereby identity models are reproduced or changed according to the perception of the group. Nevertheless, collective identity of some kind will exist without much group organization or actual community formation.

It is my intention to illustrate that identity negotiation lies in the social relationship and therefore unraveling the complexities of the relationship

between structure and agency is important. Bhavnani (1994) states that it is the construction of identity, where structure and agency collide *and thereby gives shape to the individual as well as the collectivity* (emphasis added). The role of agency in the case of Indian diasporic community can be further examined in the way imagination and consciousnesses are revoked. Ghuman (2003) perceives identity crisis in diasporic milieu. His perception is based upon his consideration of cultural conflict between homeland and host society norms and values. Handa (1997 & 2003) employs the cultural conflict model and argues that this model of examining the diasporic youth experience is rooted in the colonial discourse of dominance, difference, and assimilation's agenda. Handa rightly calls diasporic culture as the traveling culture and based on this I assume Indian diasporic identity as "traveling identity."

The spotlight on Indian diasporic youth can be initiated with Saran (1985), who contends that the main anxiety of people in the Indian diaspora is their children. Besides maintaining a favorable atmosphere for the retention of ethnic distinctiveness at home, parents also engage in a variety of activities such as going to the temple, organizing *puja* (religious prayer) at home, watching Indian movies, participating in Indian associations, and visiting other Indian families. These can be seen as strategies to cultivate Indian tastes and values among the young. As Saran argues, most parents feel that the young ones are under strong peer pressure and therefore activities outside the four walls of the house must be organized. My observation allows me to add that doing and sharing things, maintaining contact through ethnic Indian networks and associational activities, result in development of youth's networks and friendship groups and these immensely help in the desired activities.

Mukhi in her book *Doing The Desi Thing* (2000) delineates how by doing things in New York city the way they are done in India, the community is able to maintain ties with the roots and retain a distinct cultural identity. "Desi" is a Hindi/Urdu word and hence comes into the vocabulary from India. It means "from the nation" and is used to convey cultural connection with the country of origin. I assume that the concept of "Indianness" comes from a self-acknowledgement of the distinctiveness and recognition by "others" in the mainstream. In either case, it depicts the "other" in the mainstream milieu. Another study on Indian diasporic youth in North America is that of Khandelwal (2002), who argues that the experience of the young generation has varied significantly from that of their predecessors. Khandelwal shows that the Indian youth not only make sense of their individual identities but also redefine the Asian Indian community. In Montreal, most ethnic Indian associations have their respective youth wings. The youth in these associations relate among themselves based on the kind of school they attend, and their shared experiences provide the base of the second-generation networks. Their shared experiences also demarcate them from their parents' generation.

Maira (2002) presents the results of an ethnographic study documenting the experiences of second-generation Indian American youth in New York City. She asks the following questions: "What are the meanings of this youth culture in the lives of Indian American youth? How do Indian American youth negotiate simultaneously the collective nostalgia for India (re) created by their parents and the coming-of-age rituals of American youth culture?" (ibid: 15-16). In her study, she focuses on popular culture as a tool that enables Indian American youth to negotiate and manage this tension between "nostalgia" and "cool" in their attempts to shape and assert their evolving identities. She identifies the role of popular culture like "*bhangra*," which blends traditional Indian music with more modern elements from hip-hop. Maira shows how in this subculture, the youth actively create the popular culture that they simultaneously consume and develop understandings of their gendered racial identities.

Many of these youth that Maira interviewed mentioned the different norms operating for men and women in this subculture. For example, men consider it important to flaunt their material power through brand-name clothing such as Nike. Maira uses the term "cultural nostalgia" to describe the range of activities in which the youth engage to explore the Indian side of their hybrid identity and feel more ethnically authentic. She writes,

For many of the youth I spoke to, the notion of being 'truly' or 'really' Indian involved possession of certain knowledge or participation in certain activities. . . . The ideology of nostalgia . . . is the ethnicized flip side to a notion of subcultural 'cool' based on American youth culture (pp. 87-88).

Under "nostalgia" comes the values and cultural repertoire of India, while "coolness" is an improvisation which the Indian youth generate in their creative engagement with other cultures. I have observed that most Indian parents as well as the community at large despise what these youth assume as "cool." Needless to say, the experiences of the second or subsequent generations are different from the first generation. The second generations construct the homeland, and its cultures and values, in fragments from their parents and from their *desi* friends that serve as a backdrop, but their sphere of social interaction is the social milieu of the "adopted" country.

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It is hard to conclude a paper like this, especially when there is an ever-increasing number of scholarly works on the subject matter as well as diverse perspectives to look at various emerging issues in the Indian diaspora. I, also, do not want to repeat myself. Nevertheless, I must delineate, that people in diaspora experience rupture of various kinds and they "seek security in an insecure world" (Bauman, 2002) through community networks and ties. Another important position that I want to make is against the current approach

on youth studies literature in sociology that sees young people's lives and experiences as problematized. There is a tendency to focus on problem behavior and on social construction of youth along vectors of race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, use and abuse of life chances. It is important to understand the macro issues shaping the life experiences of diasporic youth. For example, the contemporary world is shaped by the pinnacle of capitalism. Youth in such times, therefore, cannot be seen without taking into consideration how their lives are affected by larger processes of globalization and transnationalism. At the same time, it is equally important to take into consideration the specific contexts.

I purpose of this paper is to initiate discussion, debate, and research with diaspora dimension in cultural studies of education while at the same time helping to understand Indian diaspora in general and those in Canada in particular. With increasing international migration, the numbers of diasporic youth are increasing in North America. Therefore, it is important to understand the context in which diasporic youth make meaning of their everyday experience(s). This should be done with post-formal dialogue and dialectic criticism.

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