

# Migrant's across Borders: An Envisage to Entail the Contour in the Novel Namesake Penned by Jhumpa Lahiri

M. Kavipriya<sup>1</sup>, DR. M. Rajalakshmi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Research Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor and Research Supervisor  
Department Of English  
Vels Institute of Science Technology and Advanced Studies, Chennai

## Abstract

This paper investigates the themes of dual identity, cultural dislocation, and generational conflict in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, an influential piece in the realm of diasporic literature. Through the perspective of the main character, Gogol Ganguli, along with his immigrant family, the narrative powerfully portrays the challenges of maneuvering through two distinct cultural realms, struggling with the feelings of being trapped between heritage and contemporary life. Lahiri explores the intricacies of naming as a symbol for identity, assessing its impact on self-identity and cultural ties. By revealing the nuances of assimilation and resistance within a diverse world, the novel underscores the difficulties faced by second-generation immigrants striving to harmonize inherited cultural traditions with current societal norms. This paper will analyze how Lahiri's storytelling reveals the formation of hybrid identities, the importance of nostalgia, and the dynamics between cultural conservation and change. Ultimately, this assessment emphasizes *The Namesake* as a moving depiction of the diasporic journey, shining a light on transnational enquiries.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Identity, Cultural Displacement, Hybridity, Immigrant Experience, Cultural Preservation

*Namesake* gives us an important insight about the immigrants who live in America/US comprehending how (dis) connecting works with apparent justification of globalization. The acute senses for any migration are the activation of global sources. Economic, social and political blends, offer them flummoxes to transcend borders. Dissuading binaries, the mass ascends to migrate from one to another admitting to adapt to the senses as immigrant. But once they are socially, culturally and politically placing, their willingness is a threshold that abrupt them from adapting to the multivalent culture and roots. Characters progressively mark their forthcoming traumas and cultural suffocations where they responsively react to the renumeration of an ardent inducive culture. Ideally no culture accepts amalgamation but naturally globalization causes them to pledge and blur binaries betwixt all social and cultural norms. Migration acts upon two distinct principles:

1. Empowerment
2. Marginalization

Empowerment acts as a tool to explore and advances into the gender injustices and an attempt to delve into the pack of integration. Empowerment necessitates basic opportunities for the marginalized people either directly or through indirect means of processing opportunities. It tries to give the sword away from the intenders to the disempowered.

On the other hand, Marginalization causes a threat to the culture in which they have tried to socially and culturally associate themselves, where they end up being an intruder in the society (to a land) where they would never fit into it as a native. Here than making a gender association as to women empowerment or a male empowerment, it is very important to understand the nuances of marginalization in general causing all disempowered to suffer beneath the clutches of the society.

Either of these is manifested by the scenario itself. Characters in the novel explicitly portrays perplexed hybridity that illuminates the radiance of the diasporic literature. Hybridity is a seminal concept where it is a creation of transcultural forms, that gradually throws light on the act intersectionality, indeed a pivotal paramount of diasporic literature. Another key concept, epitomizes this novel is the “concept of liminality” – Victor Turner, the proposer of liminality, proclaimed the transnational state between cultures and social structures. This paper attempts to explore the transnational ideologies and transcending ideologies of social, cultural, political and economic aptures of immigrants.

Namesake penned by a transnational writer, Jhumpa Lahiri’s apparent lines showcase the intense of her sensibility as an immigrant by herself. It is an autobiographical novel that reflects on her ideal truth of being an immigrant at US from India. The lines of the novel intend to intensify outrightly at the outspoken lines of disruptions. Globalisation has demonstratively dismissed her from the doors of home culture, succumbing to the temptations of reality, whereas her host culture invited her but rationally the treatment and the invite proceedings were inevitably sceptical. The lines of separation paves way ardently analysing the fissures that demarcates the diffident toils that existed during the earlier centuries. The characters in the novel highlights about the relationship between parents and children which is prominent throughout the novel. The centrifugal character Gogol, Ashoke and Ashima were impregnated with glossy binaries of differences with culture and identity.

Gogol, along with his parents feels alienated at a stature where he remarks that “no one he knows in the world, in Russia or India or America or anywhere, shares his name, not ever the source of his namesake. The are the lines that draw senses of assimilation to the entire research paper, that examines the cordiality between national literature and globalising culture works with modernity. Transnationalism is an utmost ideology of fostering movements of ideas and cultural practices across globe, globally transforming them, through with it challenges the traditional and conventional norms of culture, ethnicity, identity and its possible vicinity. The modern age has accelerated the pace of transnationalism and transnational theory bound to comprehend it better that contributes to the broader conversion’s authentic issues of culture, migration and human rights. Transnationalism is meant to be understood and analysed better as a component of loss of individuals power and autonomy in the global zones and rather attempts to wave off from the centre to the margin. Now, this poses a pivotal question of “Is Integration genuinely feasible”? to answer to the most hypothetical question, this diverse research is an apparent answer. These are easily defined by the cultural conflicts and crisis that are faced by their children and by their parents. It is not jus one generation, rather two generation suffocates this cultural tension. Vividly the first generation suffers and aptly the second generation comprehends the conflict between

home culture and host culture. This understanding makes them believe more to the senses of host culture, because of their terra firma (a land that is distinct from air or sea). Likewise, these characters completely are away from Indian origin (specially from Bengal) who migrated to US, fighting to inherit the attractions of American way of living. The American dream is always something that haunts these characters. Trying to analyse the scenic of diaspora, it's pivotal to plunge into the traumas and the aspirations of the two generations of expatriate. To intensely understand, diaspora affects the mental stability that eventually tries evoking a discrete trauma of human displacement. The inner real meaning of diaspora is "scattered community". The autobiographical insights of Jhumpa Lahiri apparently demonstrates the character of the Gogol in the novel. His character admits that, immigrant human experiences are completely complicated and reacts sensitively as immigrant finds him or her perpetually at a transit station fraught with the memories of original, home which are struggling with the realities of a new world. The novel narrates about the anecdotes of Ganguli family who has settled in vivid regions (India and America) Ganguli's family is true aspirant of European literature as they love to read Russian and English literature. So, their tradition, heritage and culture are naturally diasporic as their grandfather have served during the pre- independence era. Gogol, the protagonist has similar lines of subjugation, as both of them maintain the same ethnic identity, and their self-identification as their home culture identity fades. Struggling between the two identities, with rapidly increasing multifaceted identities which defines people in diaspora. The immigrants face loneliness and exile in the new land and there always ends to be pressurised to be loyal to the old world ethically associating to the senses of conventional roots and traditions. This disillusionment occurs truly because of one's inability to equate oneself with the western counterparts.

In the novel *The Namesake*, names act as significant symbols of identity, cultural heritage, and the challenges faced in diasporic life. The main character, Gogol Ganguli, a Bengali-American, exemplifies this symbolism. His name is derived from his father Ashoke's harrowing experience during a train accident in India, where Nikolai Gogol's *The Overcoat* becomes a representation of survival and hope. As a child, Gogol embraces his distinctive name, but as he grows older, it evolves into a source of unease, reflecting his parents' cultural expectations and his feeling of otherness within American society. During his college years, he legally alters his name to "Nikhil" as a means to distance himself from his Bengali heritage and integrate into American culture. Nevertheless, following Ashoke's passing, Gogol uncovers the profound significance of his name, prompting a journey of self-discovery and reconciliation with his origins. His acceptance of his name signifies his recognition of his heritage and his journey towards self-acceptance. Lahiri employs names as a pivotal motif to delve into themes of cultural displacement, intergenerational conflict, and the negotiation of identity. For the Ganguli family, naming embodies both the preservation of Bengali identity and the transformation inherent in their immigrant experience. The process of renaming in the novel underscores the characters' journeys of transformation, self-discovery, and their quest for belonging, displacement and the expatriate experience in multicultural societies.

The novel examines the intricate experience of an Indian individual residing abroad, struggling with cultural duality. It describes the "sandwiched world" where expatriates strive to balance their Indian heritage with a yearning for assimilation in their host country. This duality fosters a distinctive sense of belonging and alienation. Even as they settle in new environments, these individuals frequently maintain connections to their homeland, reflecting a synthesis of acculturation and rootedness.

Given the multicultural character of contemporary societies, the situation for diasporic writers becomes increasingly complex. These individuals, shaped by both their native and adopted cultures, find themselves in a state of constant change, profoundly impacted by issues of identity and the dynamics of relationships. Their work reflects this dual influence, acting as both a critique and an analysis of the world they occupy. They often grapple with the absence of a collective cultural memory. Consequently, they face crises of identity, alienation, or frustration, particularly as minority voices. These difficulties can be even more pronounced for second-generation expatriates who navigate the intricacies of inherited and adopted cultural identities. *The Namesake* delves into the psychological and emotional ramifications of cultural displacement through themes of alienation and belonging. The narrative follows first-generation immigrants, Ashoke and Ashima, who endure isolation and a longing for Calcutta, alongside their second-generation children, Gogol and Sonia. Ashima's sense of alienation arises from cultural disparities and a lack of support, while Gogol's identity crisis is rooted in his dual identity, caught between his Bengali heritage and his aspiration to integrate into American society. A sense of belonging is cultivated through the Bengali community in America, where festivals, gatherings, and cultural practices offer a feeling of home. Gogol's sense of belonging matures following his father's death, resulting in a more profound connection to his heritage. The family's endeavours to preserve their cultural identity continue to shape their experiences. Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* is a pivotal work within diasporic literature, delving into the immigrant experience and the complexities of identity development. Through the challenges faced by Gogol Ganguli and his family, Lahiri illustrates the deep effects of cultural displacement, the dynamic between tradition and modernity, and the sensitive balancing act of finding belonging in a diverse world. The story goes beyond its plot to represent the universal search for self-identity amid the influences of family connections and societal demands. The theme of naming serves as a potent metaphor for identity, emphasizing the conflicts between individual choices and familial heritage. By interweaving elements of generational tension and cultural hybridization, Lahiri crafts a rich and compassionate depiction of existence at the intersection of different cultures. In essence, *The Namesake* stands as an enduring narrative, revealing the intricacies and allure of life.

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