

Diaspora: Meaning And Types

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Introduction

The term Diaspora is derived from the Greek word *diasperio*, which means dispersion. The original meaning has been extended to the current meaning based on the Old Testament wherein the word Diaspora was used to refer specifically to the populations of Jews exiled from Judea, in 586 B.C by the Babylonians, and Jerusalem in 136 A.D by the Roman Empire. The term also refers to the historical movements of the dispersed ethnic population of Israel and their cultural development. The present meaning of Diaspora is a minority living in exile. The development of Diaspora in the academic field is established in the late twentieth century. It looks upon the dispersed ethnic population all over the world and thus becomes a part and parcel of Global Cultural Studies

Vijay Mishra says, Diaspora means, “People who want to explore the meaning of hyphen.” “Sometimes the thoughts on hyphen create an unknown fear and thereby lead to a communal schizophrenia. They are lodged with the thoughts of real or imagined displacements, self imposed sense of exile and they are haunted by the ghosts of separatist movements.” (...) Mishra called them “unhappy Diaspora”. Also he explains the celebratory argument on Diaspora in which Diasporic communities are said to occupy “a border zone, wherein all interactions take place and all the feelings of ethnicity and nationhood are kept separate.”(...). Anh Hua in the essay *Diaspora and Cultural Memory* says: “Diaspora is a historical term used to refer to communities that have been dispersed reluctantly, dislocated by slavery, pogroms, genocide, coercion and expulsion, war in conflict zones, indentured labour, economic migration, political exile or refugee exodus. To avoid total assimilation to the host country, Diasporic people attempt to revive, recreate and invent their artistic, linguistic, economic, religious, cultural and political practices and production.”(193).

Diaspora literatures always have the idea of homeland, since the authors would be settled in different countries like the U.S.A or the U.K. It need not always be a forceful expulsion from the homeland. After independence there has been a nationwide migration of people from the homeland for various purposes such as education and job. Corporate Diaspora and Science Diaspora are the good examples for the same. Diasporic studies have developed into a branch of literature that opens a plot for various researches in its various aspects. The South Asian Diaspora arose as a result of Colonialism. According to the United Nations Classification of geographical regions Southern Asia includes the countries: India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal Iran, Maldives and Srilanka

The two recent concepts in Diaspora are Diaspora Marketing and Diaspora Social Networking. Diaspora Marketing is a new trend in marketing wherein the business groups identify the number of expatriates in a particular area and their common likes and dislikes and understand the culture of them and launch their products targeting the ethnic group or Diaspora. This is a finding by Harvard Business Review. In the words of Nirmalya Kumar et al, "Diasporas are groups living away from their birth countries such as first-generation immigrants. The idea is to market your brand to a group that is familiar with and has an affinity for offerings that come from their home country. When that group provides a sales base, it gradually expands to people connected to the Diaspora and finally to a broader market. This strategy avoids the often unfeasible attempt to build a brand on foreign shores from zero."¹

Diaspora social networking for the expatriates has become a strong bond between the members. According to Wikipedia, "It is a non profit user owned distributed social network based on the free Diaspora Software. It consists of a group of independently owned nodes which interoperate from the network. It is launched in November 2010. Diaspora software development is managed by the Diaspora Foundation, which is part of the Free Software Support Network (FSSN). The FSSN is in turn run by Eben Moglen and the Software Freedom Law Centre. The FSSN acts as an umbrella organization to Diaspora development and manages Diaspora's branding, finances and legal assets."²

References

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2. Dr. Mubina's article in Journal of Research (Faculty of Languages and Islamic Studies) 2004 vol 5.

¹ Diaspora Marketing- A Market Entry Route, article published in *Harvard Business Review* by Nirmalya Kumar, Jan Benedict and E.M SteenKamp. (<http://www.prophet.com/blog/aakeronbrands/158-diaspora-marketinga-market-entry-route>).

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