



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONCEPTS ON DIASPORA: REFLECTIONS ON TIME AND SPACE.

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Abstract

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Introduction:-

The word 'diaspora' is debatable among the scholars from the second half of the twentieth century. Really it is a Greek originated word to refer Greek colonial society outside Greece. The Oxford dictionary gives the meaning that "movement of the Jewish people away from their own country to live and work in other countries".ⁱ This was the most accepted definition till the 1950s as the word used only for the migration of the Jewish community.ⁱⁱ Later it was used commonly for the migration of the people from one place to another. The elaboration of the meaning of 'diaspora' paved the way for the hot discussion on it.

During the course of the 1990s, the concept has been bone of contention and research-oriented in the various fields of inquiry, which are concentrated in the study of movements of people and goods, and processes of globalization. Robin Cohen defines the word diaspora as "different communities of people living together in a new country by often thinking of their old country".ⁱⁱⁱ This definition also envisaged many criticisms from different scholars like Sudheesh Mishra and others. Every scholar tried to give an appropriate definition, but the later scholars to them, wrote criticism on it. So it can be understood that with the development of technology, media, and communication network, the word diaspora has no longer a unified meaning but it should continue with the different meaning in different occasions. Hence, Robin Cohen categories the modern diaspora into five categories.

Various Concepts on Diaspora:-

'Diaspora' as a term done different things in tandem with historical contexts. One of the most conspicuous points of critical argument is the consideration of the validity of specific models of the diaspora. Engseng Ho mentions two types of diaspora as Jewish model and British model. The former model representing the traditional perspective of diaspora ("the notion of a people who were originally homogenous, then moved").^{iv} The latter, in a contradict to the former concept that requires a direct reversal of terms, is constituted by "peoples who moved, and as they did so became homogenized politically".^v The scholars like Gabriel Sheffer mentioned the similarities between the classical diaspora and modern diaspora that "motivation of migrating out of homeland, the determination in maintaining identities as well as developing solidarity, and organizing local and international network".^{vi}

Majority of diasporic people try to maintain their cultural, religious and other identities in the host society. In some case, they retain strong desire to return their homeland. Against this background, Robin Cohen and Safran put forward some notions of displacement to consider as 'diaspora'. Robin Cohen described following conditions to diaspora:-

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1. "Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions.
2. Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of the trade or to further colonial ambitions.
3. A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, and achievements.
4. An idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety, and prosperity, even to its creation.
5. The development of a return movement which gains collective approbation.
6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate.
7. A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group.
8. A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement.
9. The possibility of a distinctive yet creative and enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism".^{vii}

Cohen mentions nine conditions to consider as diaspora but he did not argue that it is necessary to attain all the nine conditions to an individual, but some of these conditions are applicable to consider as the diaspora. While the Safran agree first six conditions of Cohen and he opined that the "diaspora is associated with the issue of deracination, legal disabilities, oppression as well as difficult life styles in the settled land".^{viii} As a result, they live in constant anguish and with strong desire to return to the homeland. Moreover, Sudesh Mishra points out that the diasporic groups fears to practice their traditional and cultural norms in the settled country for fear of repression.

Scholars explain the difference between the words like transnationalism, exile, and diaspora. All these words have more or less equal meanings but differ in the views of scholars. Braziel and AntiaMannur write "diaspora refers to a movement: either forced or voluntary movement of people from one place to another. Transnationalism talks more about impersonal forces such as globalization and global capitalism as a result of the migrant movements".^{ix} In the same manner, both scholars referred a minor difference between 'exile' and 'diaspora'. They defined the exile as the migration due to force from the home land where as the diaspora can be with the voluntary attempt or by force.

Types of Diaspora:-

There are different types of categorization of the diaspora. Some diaspora is voluntary where as others are forceful exiles. On this ground, some scholars consider only forceful exile as diaspora and others are not to be considered as the diaspora. In contrast, Sheffer portrays that diaspora need not be only for economic and political problems but, many occasion migration could be voluntary.^x At the same time, Safran argues just opposite of the Sheffer views.

Robin Cohen tries to categories the diaspora into five. Namely victim, labour, trade, imperial and de-territorialized.^{xi} He explains the victim diaspora as the people who expelled from the home the land as the victims of atrocities and tortures and put forward the example for the victim diaspora as Jews Africans and Armenians. When defined the diaspora, Cohen claimed the homogeneity is necessary to consider diaspora. But in his example of victim diaspora, only Jews has the homogeneity whereas the Chinese and Armenians had not homogeneity.

Secondly, he defines the labour diaspora as the labours who were taken from Indian subcontinent and from other parts to the plantation fields of Africa. He exemplifies this category with the indentured labours. The selection of labours was through the systematic manner but all condition and suggestion were in English language which was unfamiliar to the labours. They were forced to sign the condition without knowing the meaning and finally they were put in trauma in the host society.

Imperial diaspora is the colonial migration of the developed countries towards the colonized country to exploit them. He put the example, British colonization of India. But this categorization opposed from the different corners because the colonial migration is not for a personal or traumatized migration but for the exploitation. "Most scholars in African Diaspora studies completely disagree with Cohen's category of 'imperial diasporas'. Indeed, in their work, the notion of not being fully integrated into definitions of citizenship in their country of residence or birth is a fundamental condition for Diasporas to exist".^{xii}

Trade diaspora is the migration of community for the purpose of the trade like the Chinese traders and others and de-territorialized diaspora is the migration is the migration of the people who lost the identity of the home land like the

Careebians. They are not original to this land but reached there during the colonial period or before and settled there with family and they are not keeping any relation or memory about the home land.

However, this categorization of Robin Cohen has many shortcomings. He included all the people who left their homeland as the diaspora community, but he avoided people who migrated different parts of the world seeking the job as teachers officers and etc. Moreover, many students are migrating to European countries for the educational purposes. This category also avoided by the Robin Cohen.

Can Hadhramies a Diaspora Community?

Hadhramies are the people who migrated across the Indian Ocean region during the course of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the different purposes. Noel Brehony writes that “people of the Hadhrami diaspora, who traveled as religious scholars, traders, labourers, and soldiers, to understand their enduring influence and identity”^{xiii} according to the condition mentioned by the Robin Cohen and Safran can Hadhrami a diaspora community?. It should bring under analyse. In the case of Hadhrami community in Malabar, they left their home land for various reasons. However, they did not keep any contact with the home land and did not keep any desire to return to home land as mentioned by Safran and Cohen. Moreover they did not face any marginalization from the host society, instead, they got very common acceptance from the people.

On this ground, Hadhrami migrated people cannot be considered as the diaspora community. But majority of the scholars consider them as the diaspora community across the Indian Ocean as they left their homeland for environmental issues and demographical pressure and they keep minor contacts with homeland in the case of Southeast Asian Hadhrami migrants as Engseng Ho writes about them as Muwallid^{xiv} and their status, attitudes towards them in the Hadhramaut.^{xv} S.F. Alattas writes “The study of Hadhrami history in terms of the nature, functions, and impact of emigration with respect to both the home and host countries cannot be separated from the notion of Hadhrami emigration as a diaspora. But it is partly because Hadhrami emigration has not generally been seen as a diaspora that it has received relatively little attention as an object of study, especially as far as history and the social sciences are concerned”^{xvi}.

Hadhrami communities in Malabar mainly engage in the religious and cultural aspects of Mappila Muslims. Majority of these communities were the Sayyids who accompanied with the traders across the Indian Ocean and settled across these regions and engaged in religious activities. Nowadays they are not keeping any relation with the homeland and live mingling with the Mappila culture and very difficult to consider as the diaspora.

Conclusion:-

The concept of diaspora is very debatable and the scholars give different definition and condition to the diaspora. However, each definition of the diaspora would be opposed by other scholars. This paper mainly looked at the concepts of the Safran and Robin Cohen. They mentioned many conditions to consider as the diaspora. Is it maintain these condition by the diaspora community or not. Based on these concepts this paper analyzed the case of Hadhrami diaspora. Can Hadhrami diaspora consider as the diaspora or not. If it is based on the concept of SfranHadhrami cannot be considered as the diaspora. But Robin Cohen opined that the only some of the nine condition which he mentioned for diaspora is inevitable for considering diaspora not all together. Therefore Hadhrami can be considered as the diaspora.

1. ⁱ Sally Wehmeier, Colinn McIntosh et al. (eds.) ,*Oxford Dictionary*, Seventh edition, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 421.
2. ⁱⁱ It was used for the Jewish migration in the fifth century B.C. when the Babylonian king Nebuzkdar Suppressed the Jews in their promised land and forced to disperse to different parts of the world. After this event the word ‘diaspora’ was used to denote Jewish migration. commonly used for the Jews migration.
3. ⁱⁱⁱ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, Rutledge, New York, 1997, p. 9.
4. ^{iv}Engseng Ho, ‘Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boats, Society for Comparative study of Society and History’, 46 (2): 210-246, 2004, p. 214.
5. ^vIbid., p. 214.
6. ^{vi} Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 35
7. ^{vii} Robin Cohen, Ibid., p. 515

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8. ^{viii} William Safran, 'diaspora in Modern Societies: Myth of Home Land and Return', *Diaspora Journal*, 1:(1), 83-99, 1991, p. 85
 9. ^{ix} Braziel and Anita Mannur, *Theorizing Diaspora*, Wiley Blackwell, Melbourne, 2003, p. 8.
 10. ^x Gabriel Sheffer, op.cit., p. 56
 11. ^{xi} Robin Cohen, op.cit., p. 18
 12. ^{xii} Paromitha Chakrabarti, *Diasporic Belongings- Interrogating Nations Ethnicities Cultures in South Asian American Migration Narratives*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, S.N.D.T. University, 2012, p. 16
 13. ^{xiii} Noel Brehony, *Hadhramaut and its Diaspora: Yemeni Politics, Identity and Migration*, I.B.Tauris 2017, p. 65
 14. ^{xiv} those are the people who born to the Hadhrami father and non Hadhrami mother at out of Hadhramaut. Later when they return to Hadhramaut they are known as *Muwallidin*
 15. ^{xv} Engseng Ho, *Hadhramies Abroad in Hadhramaut: The Muwallidin*, in Ulrike Freitag and W.C. Smith (eds.) *Hadhrami Traders Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean 1750s- 1960*, Brill, Leiden, 1997, p. 132
 16. ^{xvi} Syed Farid Alatas, *Hadhramaut and the Hadhrami Diaspora: Problems in Theoretical History*, in W.C. Smith and Ulrike Freitag (eds.), op.cit., p. 126