

2 Globalisation: Socio-Cultural Phenomenon

2.1 Social Structures and Axial Shifts

In the previous chapter, we looked at the contemporary form of economic globalization, not just as a current scenario, but by taking a historic perspective. This was done in order to create a premise to build the study on. With the defined economic platform, the need is now to move beyond the pure economic phenomenon and to trace the social and cultural implications of these changes. These changes range from those affecting the masses – like those of popular consumer culture, the desire for an upbeat lifestyle – with the ‘have it all’ attitude, availability of international products, got about due to the changing income patters, again an outcome of the changing employment opportunities; and those of conscious individual decisions of participating and being engulfed by the global culture. These transitions influenced various aspects of the day-to-day lived experiences of individuals. As mentioned earlier globalisation was characterised by the deep penetrating presence and also of the sheer magnitude of the same; even as theories mention and state the disparity in the reach of the globalisation, its pervasive presence cannot be denied. There has evidently been a difference in the character or features of the experience and also in the magnitude of reach. For instance, individuals from the urban spaces had a much more immersive experience over those of the semi-urban or rural ones, or those out of the global networking circuit.

Just as a backdrop was given to understand the developments in the economic aspect, the same shall be done in explaining the socio-cultural transitions. It is evident that in understanding and in validating the economic phenomenon of globalisation there seems to be no matter of ambiguity, as it can be done by tracing the transitions that came about in what can be called as definable and / or near quantifiable parameters, like, trade, finance, migrations, technological transfers, employment opportunities, etcetera. The distinct data for which can be found or calculated majorly through credible sources. At the same time these parameters possess an extreme sense of clarity, which

contribute to the empirical analysis dealing with developmental figures of nations (like the GDP, GNP and BoP), of interactions between governmental and non-governmental bodies, primarily through defined numerical data and resultant interpretation of the global interactions between countries and independent entities, further the details of the magnitude of exchanges too; basically providing an accurate and quantifiable image of the entire processes that have played a vital role in the transformation of the economies through the neo-liberal approach. Just as we traced various influences in the post-World War period which got various nations together from their earlier fragmented rather isolated positions to form an environment of coexistence, till that of the neoliberal approach.

At every juncture of addressing this economic phenomenon, there has been an evident risk of slipping either into economic-capitalist or technological determinism; which has been evaded here. Both these entities in a combined form, Douglas Kellner, in *Theorizing Globalization* states it to be *technocapitalism*, the two entities which form an inseparable part of the globalised world (Kellner, 2002, pp. 285-305). The technological advancements and the global flow of capital, that form the primary vein of globalisation, have found presence not just in the quantified empirical analysis dealing with economic globalisation but also dealing with the softer, undefinable, and qualitative aspects of the lived experience of globalisation.

These interdependencies and the interconnectedness that has webbed across the globe can be understood and traced through their characteristics, magnitudes and movements, such that it can further provide a clear framework for analysing the resultant impacts at the socio-cultural level. We shall begin with tracing the initial developments and transitions from the decade of 1940s not as step by step happenings but as a generalised understanding of the same. David Lyon, in his book titled, *Postmodernity*, while explaining the same, begins by tracing the transition from the industrial time, backed with the notions of reason, rationality and progress. He goes further to mention about the lack or discontents towards modernity, which to him were seen in the political scenario through wars. He also states that the transition from modernity towards

postmodernity was primarily due to the advent of the postindustrial social structure. We shall use this norm in the current chapter to understand how the notions of globalisation and postmodernism are intertwined. Therefore, in this chapter we shall look at the birth of a new social structure of a postindustrial framework, primarily an outcome of the advent of the information technology. We shall see how various scholars read this new social structure, which was eventually called as the ‘information society’. The birth of the information society was to bring about colossal transition in not just the economic structure but also affecting social and cultural patterns.

The patterns of employment changed drastically. What was noticed was an axial shift from the physical, industrial, mechanical world towards the soft, information and knowledge oriented society. The earlier revered model of the Fordist assembly line was to see dilution. Now the focus shifted from that of the industrial labourer to that of professional elite. Further this technological growth was to be seen as an outcome of the globalised world; which brought in different modes of businesses like the – TNCs and the MNCs, across various lands. The notion of geography was losing its rigid boundaries. Along with tracing these transitions, the chapter looks at the repercussions of these changes on creative expressions – like literature, poetry, architecture, dance, music and visual arts. This shall help in not just understanding the chronological progression of events but also of their wider impact. For example, the works of the modernist period were characterised by the autotelic expressions, which claimed for a sense of ‘autonomy’ and desire for formal exploration over the contextual. The reading of the modernist works has been done here, in two parts, as those prior and post the World Wars, as this marks a stark difference in the belief systems and creative expressions.

On giving an understanding of the modern industrial period, we shall see how the ICT, catalysed the formation of new social structures, based on low affiliations to geographic restrictions. This shall be looked upon in the section on Migrations, Movements and New Meanings. The notions of rootedness, de-territorialisation, internationalism, world citizens, shall be discussed and analysed, while focusing on the concept of the diaspora and transnationalism.

Further an understanding of these two concepts shall be done considering an historic perspective and the transitions that have come about in them due to globalisation. Here we shall look at notions of identity, home, destination, connecting ties, networked connections, their identity in the home-host lands, their assertions and re-creations of cultural emblems, their ethnicity, traditions and the palpable presence of these shall be considered while analysing as a part of their cultural and social experiences. These shall be concretised through a methodological understanding of the same.

Even as we discuss the diaspora and transnationalism through the globalised lens, there is a constant need to ask, as to, has globalisation really created a single pedestal for all; and can we flatly, unanimously assume this. The final section shall give an understanding as to how the global and the postmodern are deeply intertwined. Further questioning as to does the univocal character of modernism transform into a multi-vocal postmodern one? This shall be done by exploring the concepts of a 'global village', the sites of power, the urban spaces and nodal networks, the impact of media and the ICT, of capitalism and the consumerism, of fetishism, progress and performativity. Globalisation has always raised contradictory feeling of homogenisation and heterogenisation, taking place simultaneously. The same shall be explored in the final section to give an understanding of what has come forth as the postmodern global plurality. Here it is necessary to understand that this chapter aims at raising issues which are of relevance not just in terms of the socio-cultural experience of globalisation and the postmodernity but as issues which have been addressed by various artists through their works. Evidently there are constant references to India. Therefore, this chapter should be considered as a ground on which the later chapters.

2.2 Globalisation and the beginning of a change

In the previous chapter, we looked at the time period around the late 1940s, roughly after the ending of the World War period as a point of entry to understand the economic phenomenon of globalisation. Globalisation actually found a strong and widespread presence only by the late 1980s. The backdrop

intended to give a holistic image – from its inception till the full-fledged contemporary manifestation, stating the step by step happenings. While studying the same one has to understand that economic or political transitions usually exhibit outcomes in a relatively sudden or immediate manner, over those of socio-cultural changes. Though not as a rigid fact, but this is a generally observed phenomenon. For example, implementation of taxes, liberalisation of trade barriers, changes in interest rates, political ties, usually tend to have immediate outcomes. But the repercussions of the same in terms of social or cultural transitions, are a part of a much more gradual process, for example, when people gradually start changing their spending, or started relooking for options for investments, based on the changed economic policies. This could also be due to the fact that changes at social and cultural levels have direct involvement of large number of individuals. The presence of earlier existing social structures and cultural practices seem much more difficult to negotiate with or modify, let apart radically transform in a limited time span. One example is that of Indians protecting their gold possessions very emotionally. Even in times of a financial crisis, selling gold passed as heirlooms is the last option, indicating a dire situation. Therefore, it can be said that these socio-cultural changes involve not just linear and unidimensional processes, but a spectrum of ideologies, belief systems and an inherent inertia towards absorbing the changes, all of which needs to be dealt with, before the changes actually start finding visibility. The reason to mention this difference in the character of the economic and political and, the social and cultural, is that while studying the latter with respect to globalisation, cognisance has to be taken of these characteristics of the changes and the processes involved. These contribute largely while building a methodological structure, while analysing the impact of globalisation at the socio-cultural level. Further they play a dominant role in identifying parameters and issues which as key elements portray a holistic image of the given time. Thereby, just as the way we looked at the 1940s as the starting point to study economic globalisation, we shall take a look at the then existing social and cultural phenomenon, through a broader temporal understanding, to trace the changes over the later decades. To mention again, unlike the tracing of the economic phenomenon as a step by step mentioning of the historic happenings, pinpointed in an episodic manner, the socio-cultural

changes are dealt with through broader and more generalised happenings, as these capture the core and the essence of the then lived experience, given which a one by one exemplification doesn't seem as relevant and necessary. Further the sheer volume and large variety can lead to confusion. Therefore, we shall focus on the prominent transitions that are relevant to the study.

2.2.1 Modernity and beyond

As we go back to the earlier stated relevant time period of the World Wars, it is evident that, the then given time was characterised by the notion of modernity. The same being reflected through – mechanisation, industrialisation, progress in terms of rational knowledge and establishment of secular educational institutions, of military might, trade, colonisation, yet, the dominance of the notions of nations, nationalities and territorial strengths, and various such features found manifestations, both in positive and negative ways. Here we shall not make an attempt to relook or define modernity, but just capture the essence of the period which was about to change. In this period, even as the need for reason and rationality in individual and in associative acts was expected, and thoughts on democratic political structures were being conceptualised on one hand; aiming at equality and respect towards every individual. On the other the need for competitive colonisation, the desperation for territorial expansion, standing as a reflection of political might remained undampened. The rift, exploitation and the suppression of the colonised territories spoke against the progressive thoughts, which now seemed mere concepts. The military might, attained through the technological advancements in artillery and war weapons, which once standing as a symbol of safety and defence found a face as destructive forces, obliterating the trace of human existence from the war afflicted zones regardless of their political views. The discrimination against humans, communities and individuals, through dictatorship and the Holocaust repeatedly put forward the proven and much presumed with pride, 'sapient nature' of humans under question. Even as the field of science especially with respect to medicines saw various discoveries aiding longevity, on the other hand, death due to war, atrocities and similar factors seemed inevitable. Further industrialisation brought about huge transitions in not just

employment patterns, but also widened the rift between various economic strata. Even as it provided stable income to various individuals and led to wealth generation for a few and increased the exports of countries, the chimney lined landscape of the Western metropolises, were now posing a threat of the environmental destruction. The time as seen previously witnessed both the pride of achievements through progress and faith in the human capabilities, intellect and rationality. At the same time, it was fraught by the gory version of the same. As seen earlier, in the previous chapter, the outcome of which forced various nations to come together and coexist, at the same time aiming for a positive, constructive interdependence without any discriminatory holdings.

At this juncture, the need is not to trace the historical social happenings which stood parallel to those in the 1940's and the decades around, as stated in the previous chapter, which gave a picture of the economic and political changes. As in doing so there would be an evident repetition of the content and the loss of focus in defining how some salient features of these periods, evidently expressed the formation of newer experiential time. Therefore, the need is to look, identify and define the changing social structures which eventually contributed and were invariably fed by the process of globalisation. These social structures are of primary importance as they also contributed to the cultural experience which through its parameters, tendencies and symbols, reflects the *zeitgeist*, of the globalised world.

2.2.2 From agriculture to industry and towards information

If the industrial, progressive and the rational characterised the modern time, then what were the implications of the direction which it took further; did it spell the end or death of the modern, its extension, exhaustion, rejection or just a continuity? David Lyon in *Postmodernity*, raises and also attempts to answer these questions, by tracing the changes that came about at a socio-cultural level in the framing of the new postmodern era (Postmodernity, 1999). Without taking any radical stand Lyon proposes to view the society from multiple perspectives, facilitating their individual analysis. Here we shall take Lyon's analysis as the basis to understand the links, connectivity and

disconnects in the notions of modernity, postmodernity and globality. This shall be done by tracing the changes not on a historic timeline, but as pointers visible in the social structures and cultural signs. The time of 1940s as stated earlier corresponded to that of the long standing modern era; a time marked by industrial and scientific progress. Here Lyon borrows from Daniel Bell to state that this given social framework was about to change. Lyon states that the first serious hint that a 'new kind of society' was in the making came from Bell (Lyon, 1999, pp. 46-47). Bell signalled the arrival of the 'postindustrial' society.¹ With this a transition can be traced from the earlier existing agrarian communities to that of the industrialised and now the postindustrialised societies. To Bell this was an entry into the 'information society /economy' (Bell, 1973).

The earlier image of the farmer, rooted to his land seemed a fading out image after the era of industrialisation. The large-scale migrations to the urban spaces, for steady employment were a huge step; and a palpable manifestation of the modernity. The urban centres could now be considered as the seats of productivity and lucrative benefits. The rooted farmers now turned into mobile urbanites. The implications of these shifts like those of economic fragmentation of the society, stratification of the social structure, the topographical segregation of the urban terrains based on industrial growth, have a close linkage to the cultural transitions.

To Peter Berger the questions of culture and religion were crucial to the understanding of modernity and what would precede it. Berger looks at how modernity erodes the traditional understanding. For example, notions of a village, community, the elders, leaders, social hierarchies, and related laws were now rapidly getting replaced, by the notions of bureaucratic hierarchies, factory order, routines and discipline, punctuality (Lyon, 1999, pp. 76-77). Even as this seemed scarily uniform, the positive side was that for the first-time individuals were given the power to scale up the social order based on their capabilities and merits. There was a movement away from the natural order of the seasons, and agricultural cycles to that of the factory based order and man-made repetitiveness. The concept of an 'assembly line' work force introduced by the

automobile giant Henry Ford, stood emblematic of the economic and manufacturing order, its standardisation and systematisation of the production line, streamlining of labour and payment pattern, managerial hierarchy and technical control was all to cater to the efficiency maximisation, production and consumption patterns of the society. The standardised individual, in efforts and identities, regimented forms of work and mass production was the norm of this new structure (Robert & Bonanno, pp. 34-35). The strict standardisation brought about the notion of behaviour, control, discipline and the fear of surveillance. This brings us to Michel Foucault's *Panopticon*, with the individuals becoming 'bearers of their own surveillance' (Foucault, 1979).² Etiquettes had to be followed to form what would be the 'gentleman' in the modern society. This brought the need for a sense of behavioural decorum, structuring, or 'standardising' public behaviour too, an act which Norbert Elias calls as the 'civilising process'.³ To this, critical theorists as Theodor Adorno would call as the 'administered society', or Herbert Marcuse defining the modern man as the 'one-dimensional man'. Max Weber described the same through the process leading to this change, which was that of 'rationalisation' as the key. Further to the sociologist Jacques Ellul this meant that the world was reduced to 'technique' alone (Lyon, 1999, p. 38). Even as the process of standardisation of human behaviour played a dominant role there was an evident polarity between that of – the ladies and women, the gentlemen and men living in the society.⁴ This difference was primarily born of earlier mentioned economic stratification of the society.

This brings us to one of the strongest thinker, economist, philosopher and social critic, Karl Marx. The reference to modernity is incomplete without a reference to Marx's analysis of it. What places Marx different from most of the thinkers is his capacity of providing a holistic view towards social and economic changes. The earlier mentioned polarities are explained by him through a similar polarity of the bourgeois and the proletariat, between the capital and the labour, as means of production. To him this world of commodities was governed by the relentless pursuit of profit. In this process, it not just created a gap between the bourgeois and the proletariat but also amongst the proletariat as they competed with each other for the jobs; thereby building

an isolation amongst them. Even as Marx was in favour of technological progress, his views on capitalism were never so positive, as he was rightly able to predict its corrosive effect on the economy and the society. In an attempt to draw a parallel between the possible results of the regularly changing technology and the desire for profit garnering, Marx saw nothing lasting with a stable presence. Borrowing Prospero's words from *The Tempest* by Shakespeare, 'All that is solid melts into air'⁵, Marx and Engel well predicted the postmodern condition (Lyon, 1999, p. 12). This was printed in *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx, Engels, Moore, & McLellan, 1992). These lines seem to be absolutely accurate when we read the postmodern condition, holding validity both at a macro and micro level. The same shall be dealt later while discussing the postmodern and global condition.

As we look at the larger picture there seem to be evident transformations at the micro levels too. With the urban migrations now the close-knit circles of family, community and kin, forming warm, protective and ever-present entities were finding replacement by the cold and formal associations, acquaintances with strangers; all of whom had come together in the urban space with the primary aim of a stable continuous income based on the efforts for specific hours of effort. There was a prescribed manner of dealing with these. The informality and approachability were now considered as an intrusive presence. Emile Durkheim, approaches this issue like that of a social scientist, observing that at the domestic level the role of the church too was getting contracted. The rules of morality and ethicality once taught by the family or the Church were now being given by the schools, various educational institutions or some welfare departments.⁶

The urban space could then be considered as the centre of such activities. The cities were marked with the skyline dotted with the industrial and factory chimneys. These were the pointers of progress that spread across the city and made its presence starkly evident. The city saw the stratification in terms of localities chalked out for specific classes. The elite in the plush spacious areas, with wide promenades, lined with symbols of cultural and artistic interests like the operas, art galleries, etcetera; where Charles Baudelaire's *flâneur*, would

stroll around absorbing the urban culture, as a perfect example of a vigilant, informed elite individual (Baudelaire: *Select Writings on Art and Artists*, 1981). At the same time the localities of the proletariat were the lack-lustre spaces with cluttered and crowded habitations. Usually these were located near the factories and industries as to ensure the presence of the labour on time at work. This, hinting at the notion of control, now, not just within the premise of the factories and industries but also in their private or domestic spaces. The dominant hand of the capitalist tendency had made its presence not just at the economic level but at a much deeper one; and was to take a new form or one could say, that it was to manifest in a newer, contemporary version over the times to come.

The shift from the agrarian to that of the industrial gave way to a more non-traditional, conventional and dynamic society governed and run on its industrial and mechanical power. The capital being the core fuel to these technological achievements. It got into picture a set pattern of production / manufacturing, distribution and consumption (PDC / MDC). The same was to remain steady till the advent of globalisation pushing the economies and the established models of PDC / MDC, into a totally different dimension. The notions of local labour, migration, production, consumption, of boundaries, nation, all entered into a vortex of transformations.

Even as these emblems of progress made their presence, to give a sense of pride, the scepticism towards the same was also swelling. This ambivalence can be traced through the creative expressions of the period. Therefore, before going ahead and analysing the changes that took place in the society due to the postindustrial framework we shall see the repercussions of the modern mechanised and progressive world on the artistic output. Since the time carried a sense of manmade (achieved) progressive attempts grounded in rationality, assuring the faith in man's sapience; at the same time, it was fraught with political upheavals, unrests, wars, and destruction, all hinting at the inexplicable and the irrational. The creative expressions therefore can be looked upon as references to the same. After which we shall return to understand the new social structure based on the postindustrial framework.

2.2.3 *Creative expressions*

The creative expressions of the modern period exhibited an extremely rich understanding of the time. Since the period itself was characterised by opposing traits, the same finds a reflection in the works of art too. These are usually divided into two time periods, one prior to the World Wars and the other after.⁷ There seems to be a sense of positivism in the pre-war works, where the notion of progress and an alienation from the conventional and traditional ways, methods and subjects to work with; there was an evident departure from the Victorian morality, the mimetic notions of beauty and of the building up of specific contexts to works of art.

The early, pre-war, literary works of Henry James, Joseph Conrad, look at the then newly urban spaces and the industrialised spaces as attestations of human intellect and the departure from the notions of God given nature to human capacity for creating things. Though it is the works of the latter, war and post-war periods, which assumed to hold the true modernist character (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, 2016). Two of the post-war works which quintessentially mark the disillusionment and near rejection of the notion of progressive modernism is T. S. Eliot's, *The Waste Land*, 1922 and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, 1922. These are examples of not just portraying a sense of disillusionment, and the negative vision of the loss of culture but it also exhibits a departure from the taken for granted formal aspects of writing. In *Ulysses*, the protagonists are no longer heroic characters but individuals, citizens of Dublin. Since the novel moves by focusing on the subconscious mind of these protagonists, there is a break from the regular rules of writing and sentence constructions.⁸ To these writers, departure from the earlier set styles was undertaken by lowering the exploration of the subject matter and the content-context relation of the work, over that of the very form of the work. Just as there was an understanding that modernism gave a new experience to individuals of that time, the aim of the writers was to make the form of the literature itself as a new experience. Joyce and Eliot,⁹ stand as the most appropriate examples to this. With abrupt alternations, different perspectives and voices emerge, as they are not constructed, but bring a sense of occurrence. Time frames, connectivity,

different perspectives, give a sense of an evident fracture into diverse linguistic registers. This was not an attempt to intentionally create a convulsive image but of exploring the subconscious or opening possibilities of the participation of the reader to construct the work in one's own mind (Stevenson, 1998). The work then intended to move from the superficial aspect of an experience to that of the inner working of the human mind. Evidently the influence of Sigmund Freud comes forth through these works.¹⁰ The World Wars formed a significant part of the literature, as much as the life of the workers and the mundanity of life, but there was an underlying need of shedding the older methods of structured and temporally lined works over that of providing imaginative alternatives. These imaginative alternatives came forth not as new subject matters but as new forms and manners of expression, narration now took at totally different turn. It could be said that this in a way marked the rejection of the rational and standardised manner of expression. At the same time the notions of ideal too were undergoing transitions, many works which while exploring the subconscious, heeded to the psychological undercurrents, like the notions of sexuality, which faced heavy opposition through censorships.¹¹ Further the reader was as much a part of the narration as the writer, having the capability to construct the mental image of the multiple registers and complex subconscious connections.

The works of art were now moving from the realms of contextual references to that of an independent existence, that is, heading towards 'autonomy'. As the Russian Formalists would state, that the goal of art lies in itself; poetry, art, are autotelic. Now an increasing focus was towards the very form of the works, over the content and context in which it would take full shape. The centrality of autonomy of a work gave importance to the notions of pleasure, delight, aesthetic interest and its formal aspects over those of didactic content, morality, political pertinence, primarily the cognitive understanding of it. In music, artists like Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, and Anton Webern, explored the 'untried'. These were attempts to understand tonality (Jowitt, 1998). Stravinsky was known for his technical innovations – built on rhythm and harmony, with an idiosyncratic character. Modern dance to found a different way of rejecting the traditional – organised, rule bound, and extremely

well-structured performances like those of the ballet. Now the need was to look at an impulsive performance which with a sense of spontaneity would express the human emotions. Works of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Rudolf Laban, and Loie Fuller, can be discussed in this context. The need for dynamic theatricality, attained through spontaneous and at times vigorous movements and expressions, unlike those of the reserved ones in a ballet, could be traced (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, 2016).

Architecture on the other hand took a different form with respect to the style, material and the utilitarian aspects. The two dominant names were of Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius.¹² Backed with the design strategy the aim was of grounding the entire ideology on the notions of rationality and functional analysis. Further modern architecture marked a strong restriction of ornamentation and historical references. Even as the characteristics of modernism can be traced in the built-forms, yet one has to keep in mind, that since architecture is a process involving multiple entities from conceptualising to the construction; and is also a time-consuming process, the immediate repercussions of the modern tenets do not reflect in architecture in the same rate. In architecture too as mentioned, the desire was towards a withdrawal from the referential connotations of history, and a move towards the pure formal aspects (Klob, 1998).

In terms of visual arts too the segregation between the pre-war, war and post-war, works is possible. The engagement with the formal concerns remained central to visual artists too. This is usually traced with the Impressionists' departing from the earlier existing styles, epitomised with their notions of ideal beauty, representation and of the creation of a comment, expression of reality, or a striking relevance to the actuality of life with a didactic tone. The bold strokes, the visible strokes of these artists, exhibit a departure from the perspective, modelling, replication, lifelike images and also from those with the works carrying a specific message.

Further it would be interesting to discuss the various aesthetic issues over those of positions or concepts. As mentioned earlier the concept of

autonomy served as a distinctive element in the discussion of modern art. This evidently brings Immanuel Kant's, *Critique of Judgement*, and the notion of aesthetic judgement, and concept of beauty into the centre. Kant while discussing the concept of beauty residing in the purposive form itself, breaks all possible linkages of the beauty to those of processes, contexts, etcetera. Given which, the self-sufficient perfection and the self-reflexive attention to a medium were taken up as features of the twentieth-century modernism (Drucker, 1998). The works of the Post-Impressionists, Cubists, Futurists, Expressionists, Constructivists, de Stijl artists and Abstract Expressionists, exhibit a sense of self-defined rules of creating works, most of these had chalked-out identities, stands, agenda, manifestos, which gave an understanding of their works beyond that of retinality.

At this juncture, we shall not discuss the works of the prominent artists in detail as the current chapter focuses on the socio-cultural impact of globalisation, and not with pure visual art. At the same time, due cognisance to the then existing concepts shall be given to understand the repercussions of the same in terms of the visual practice. Of the war and the post-war art movement Dadaism and Surrealism, mark the departure from analysing the visual reality to that of the vehement rejection of the present. This was done not just by creating physical work but through performances. The Dadaist and Surrealist movement with their disbelief in rationality and prominence of the psychic automation and chance, aimed at 'liberating art'. The simultaneity in the stance of the Dadaists based on the notions of art and anti-art, were devices to question the very notion of reality. Reality needed to be relooked at. The very difference of the 'High Art', presumed to have an exquisite existence and that of elite connotations were being questioned through the use of mass produced products. The artists put forward very basic questions as to, who is an artist. Is that identity an outcome of the schooled education or due to a creative prowess? These proved their loss of belief in the very notion of reality, and departure from the understanding of time, progress, history, rationality, etcetera, as all seemed to be a construct.

What these movements gave way to was an understanding that the notion reality was under constant questioning, and repeatedly looked upon with a sense of doubt. Now the very notion of an artist, and what can be qualified as art, was constantly been under doubt and examination / evaluation. Since reality itself was under doubt, the very notion of the physical form of art also came under the shadow of doubt. Such that now, the physicality of the work of art underwent dilution, and the very 'idea' to make a work of art itself could qualify as art. Thereby moving art from the 'physicality' of the work, towards the intangible 'concept' of the work, as a complete work in itself. Given which anyone could be an artist, and any material, technique could be used to the realisation of it. This marked a major transition from the modern towards the postmodern works of art. This brings us back to the comparison done in the previous section. We stated that the works of art reflected the transitions that came about in the modern society. That of the movement of the modern industrial economy empowered by the machine and the physical power to now, that of information economy, an intangible entity.

2.2.4 New Social Structures

Going back to Bell's prediction of a new kind of society, we see an axial shift in the social framework, with the advent of the information and communication technology revolution. This was to transform the world in an irreversible manner; with the speed, percolation and magnitude with no previous parallel to draw. We looked at the polarities of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and that of the physical mechanising industrialisation and the rigid taskforces and processes, the pride of Fordist structure, of the standardised mass-produced products. One could say that these were to melt into air. Long after Marx, the analysis of the capitalist economy and its outcomes still strongly held ground. Information, knowledge and its management became the new tenets of the world governed by the ICT. The physical mechanical, muscular strength which formed the core of the modern era saw a shift towards the intellectual soft skills. Now was the time of the educated 'professional elite' over that of the industrial labourer. The physicality of the mechanical processes was undergoing dilution itself. The need was to move from the physical

standardisation of machinery, products and processes to the virtual agility. The rigid assembly line was now being transformed into the flexible hours of input. The need for local labour was being substituted by the notion of offshoring and outsourcing. The industrial machinery which was the central focus now saw it shifting towards a new machine, the computer. The telecommunications now connected not just the locals but individuals across the globe. This was not just restricted to the professional level but also to a personal one. Therefore, technology played a heavy role in cultural integration.

This is no attempt to prove that the industries suddenly lost importance or vanished, as doing so would be a gross misjudgement and misunderstanding, but the intension is to state that what once was, the dominant character of the modern economic framework was losing the centre stage and was getting replaced by a new framework. The society was moving from that of being an industrial society to that of the information society. The physical effort and the grind of the muscular and mechanical power were now being substituted by that of mental power. The world was evidently reframing itself on the 'postindustrial' structure. A cursory view gives clear understanding of the transitions, that is, from that of the agrarian society, with the farmer rooted to the soil, his home, family, community and the identity which was given to him or inherited by him as a tradition. The modern industrial society on the other hand gave a chance for individuals to move away from the tradition and to construct ones' own identity. The need is now to see how the postindustrial world contributed to the reframing of the same.

The postindustrial structure was evidently an outcome of the core pillars of globalisation, which is the ICT. At this juncture, it is necessary to see if the movement from the modern industrial lead to a continuation of modernity or spelt something else. Since the current chapter focuses on the socio-cultural changes, we shall first analyse the impact it had on the very basic unit of a society, the individuals. We discussed in the first chapter about the economic changes brought about by globalisation, and how it established a new capitalist neo-liberal economic order, and provided as Friedman said a 'flat world' for participation. This marked the movement of individuals from different

professions, be the traditional, conventional or the ones running through heredity; movements across borders and geographies, etcetera. At the same time, due cognisance has to be given the multiple reasons behind these migrations, as now the very notion of ‘migration’ was undergoing change. Since the new postindustrial framework benefitted from the same, the very character of these migrations need to be understood – be it through a historic perspective, to that of its contemporary form. Globalisation itself aimed at breaking the notions of borders, but migrations have been taking place over the ages, therefore it is crucial to analyse and differentiate between the historic migrations and the contemporary manifestation of the same. This shall serve a dual purpose – one of tracing the impact of the ICT as a part of the globalised world, and the other of providing a direction which the modern world was to take.

2.3 Migrations, Movements and new Meanings: Diaspora and Transnationalism

The change from the ‘rooted to a place’ form of employment to that of what could be called as a quasi-nomadic tendency characterised the movement away from the modern, influenced by the global developments, which for once held simultaneity at a truly global level. Not considering the disparity in magnitude but nevertheless there was a certain force that was making its presence palpable throughout. The lowering of the notions of locational rigidities, restrictive movements both in-terms of employment opportunities and in geographic displacement, generational associations and loyalties, inheritance of professions, coupled with the benefits of the ICT and capitalist attitude of profit maximisation saw the birth of a new form of ‘professional culture’. This new form of culture with respect to jobs, businesses and similar ties bore an extremely practical approach. The businesses were aiming at amassing wealth as a primary and at times being the sole aim. Thereby they had to be and were always on a watch for profitable opportunities. With this the emerging markets started taking a prominent space in terms of money making options. Further skilled, educated and talented individuals from these countries too started acting as competitors to the western counterparts. In a true sense the locational barriers were getting lower importance.

In the incessant need of profitmaking, both by businesses and individuals there was rarely an overbearing or hurdling thought over what were labelled as - emotional quotients like national pride, professional-social ethicality and humanitarian outlook, security and protection of the employees, etcetera. This is not an attempt to prove that all has been going through an ethical downslide, but this nearly came up as the accepted attitude of the businesses. At the same time, difference in attitude was noted on the side of the employees too. Having understood one's worth in the global scenario, these individuals started becoming far more comfortable with contractual short-term relations with the employers, structured under specific criteria, near inviolable and rigid bonds. The period and the rigidity of the bonds would vary with the nature of the jobs, location and the duration. This further reduced the need of the companies to care for the employees in their retired ages. The employees too looked at amassing financial benefits in huge volumes in a quick span, over the assurance of the post-retirement benefits. Interestingly these short contractual relations were preferred over those of long term, at times hereditary ties. At the same time, it is important to note, that such job opportunities were provided majorly by the private or semi-private enterprises and seldom by the governments. As most of the government jobs, as existed earlier still demanded a long-term relation, loyalties and assured income as a pension after the termination of job due to retirement or death.

Given which it could be said that the longstanding models of jobs as a secure source of income and that of single dependable source of support found a new version of 'switches' in jobs. These switches marked the movement not under pressurising conditions but as a willing choice made for monetary benefits. Earlier this would be looked upon as a risky proposition and a hint towards an unstable attitude towards work. But now the same is interpreted as a non-stagnating attitude, which marks the need for constant 'updatation / updating'.¹³ These individuals were looked upon as assets, having knowledge of not just one company or field but a wide range of the same and also of the working cultures and ethics of different locations. The globalised world with the dominance of the field of Information Technology and Finance as job

creating industries brought about this massive change. With an appetite for constant expansion and remoulding of businesses and capability of creating core and peripheral jobs, the entire scene took an unexpectedly fast leap towards this new model of employment.

This shift in attitude came about through the advent of TNCs and partially through the MNCs. It marked not just the switches in jobs but also in terms of locations. The companies themselves, having no specific roots in any particular country, function on the shifting focus with respect to profit making options have no time bound commitment too. These businesses usually hold ties and involvement with the host countries till there was an assurance of profit. With the first signal of doubt, these businesses have been privileged with the option of withdrawing and moving out of mostly the emerging markets, barely being answerable to anyone and showing minimum responsibility towards the employees, especially locals. Since their capital is of utmost importance to the hosts, the TNCs have usually received large scale liberties. Further having their presence in multiple countries and owing allegiance to none, the locational parameter was of less importance, the employment pattern is also based on outsourcing. Such that the best possible and the most economical option is employed; this meant that there is a maximum possibility of migrant population entering the scenario. The globalised world thereby marked rise of new migratory trends. It is interesting to analyse these trends as they brought into picture various important parameters and nodal points which characterised the ethos of the connected, interdependent and frequently traversed globalised world. At the same time, it is necessary to understand the migratory trends, just like those of the earlier existing ancient trade ties, and through the changing character of these trends and also of the processes. As globalisation marks both the process and the lived experience; we discussed the process previously, in this section we shall look at the lived experience. Here we shall frame the social structure within which the transitions have been taking place, specifically focusing on the migratory trends and movements and also of the resultant cultural experience.

2.3.1 *Reading the Movements and Migration*

Any study focusing on international migrations and their socio-cultural repercussions is bound to include the notion of diaspora through a historic dimension and that of transnationalism as a relatively recent phenomenon. The concept of migrations has been read through various faculties and fields of study from time frames beginning from the ancient and evolutionary past to those of the contemporary period. Just as we discussed the globalisation of relevance with respect to the current study, the relevant notions of migrations have to be now looked at. The rise and penetrative presence of the *technocapitalism* with the incessant connective and collaborative need of globalisation gave rise to different options of employments. As discussed earlier these were characterised by the loss of locational rootedness. Here with respect to the 1980s and the 1990s the movements marked a character different from the earlier ones, now being that of an individual choice born from the desire of profitability. The flow of skilled individuals from majorly the Asian countries to the stronger First World ones characterised the exchange.

This exchange also led to a larger transference of the intellectual capital and also of the service sector. This was the time when India emerged as the largest offshoring outsourcing hub and China as the manufacturing centre (Dickens, 2001, pp. 3-4). The Asian Tigers were looked upon as huge potentials.¹⁴ At a social level there was a drastic change: now the rigid locational-rootedness, which was earlier restricted to countries, states, regions, cities, sites, etcetera was slowly seeing dissolution. The dissolution – hinting that there was no longer a need for an individual to belong to one place, but formed multiple terrains of reference for individuals. Implying that individuals were now not just working as migrants, relocating and settling, but as people having their presence in more than one country at a given time. These transformations brought forward the question of nationality. The shifting notions of identification and relation from a single nodal aspect to multiplicity of presence or existences now hinted at a movement from that of a crystallised identity to that of changing processes that would take prominence. This created a scenario of what can be called as a close and first-hand experiential

understanding of ‘internationalism’. Further this large-scale migration led to the creation of the ‘transnationals’ – as ‘de-territorialised individuals’.¹⁵ These were individuals who despite having a single national origin had their working presence in multiple countries simultaneously, creating ‘world citizens’. Citizens not in a conventional sense of a country or nation but that of the world, granting a strong sense of equality in status regardless of the actual nation of birth, further race, sex, etc. thereby defining an identity by stripping it off the standard norms, classifications and methods (Nelson, 2006, pp. 296-314). This can be called as an ‘identity-less identity’, evidently an extremely unrealistic and an unachievable goal and yet it seems pertinent considering the manner and magnitudes of movements. The above-mentioned term ‘transnationals’ has often been used interchangeably with that of the diaspora; as individuals in a state of constant flux (Safran, Sahoo, & Lal, 2008). The need is therefore to trace the differences between these terms.

2.3.2 Diaspora and Transnationalism: similarities and differences

Both the terms diaspora and transnationalism are based on the migration and movements of individuals across the globe. Even as these terms certainly have distinct meaning, there somehow seems to be an overlapping area, one could call it a blur; such that both these terms seem to hold similar characters. Therefore, one has to take a closer look to create a differentiating position. Various scholars have put forward different methodological approaches in understanding and differentiating the two. These range from those related to – temporal contexts dealing with the time periods of migration, of political scenarios ranging from the circumstances of migration to the current political character, some with respect to natural history and geographical concerns and some take into consideration the economic setup and employment patterns. Though this list is not exhaustive, recent methodologies look at ideological associations and also at the non-migrant aspects. Therefore, we shall first take a look at how various methodologies have contributed in reading, analysing and at times constructing the notion of the diaspora, and later shall understand the same with respect to transnationalism.

The term diaspora is associated with particularly the expulsion of Jewish people from their homeland, mainly current day Palestine, to the hands of the Babylonian Empire, in the early sixth century BCE. This is also associated with the fall and destruction of Jerusalem and the religious hold. The word diaspora comes from the ancient Greek *dia speiro*, meaning ‘to sow over’ (Meyer, 2014). For the Jews, there was an intense loss of identity due to the loss of territory, their homeland and also of the religious connections. Evidently this was characterised by forced displacement over that of a choice. The notion of expulsion induced the force and inevitability of the migration to an unknown land. Further the diasporas have often been defined as formations reaching across generations, if not a generational *longue durée* (Faist, 2010, pp. 9-34). Given which the notion of memory of the homeland, of its traditions and cultural practices remained strong. Considering the circumstances – ‘nostalgia’ is another such feature which made its presence in defining the character of this diaspora. This understanding of the diaspora is based on factual historic happenings, with specific details. Over the years, the term diaspora has been witnessing dilution and modification in its definition and interpretation. It has often been used interchangeably with the concept of transnationalism.

Transnationalism on the other hand, is considered as an outcome of the global tendencies of individuals to be in a constant state of flux, crossing over borders, having affiliations with various global entities and yet not being rooted to one. Unlike internationalism which deals with the two distinct entities of – one being the home and the other(s) as foreign nations; with respect to transnationalism the significance of the borders is largely reduced. Unlike the diaspora which originally had a primary cause of forceful ‘expulsion’, the transnationals move into different places though their personal ‘choice’.¹⁶ This attitude was largely a contribution of the globalised world where the intellectual capital and the skilled labour, achieved the liberty in a near democratic manner to make the deserved choices for one’s livelihood. Therefore, the transnationals could be said are empowered with the right to make a choice, usually uninfluenced by external parameters like politics, community, culture, etcetera. Here the primary concerns are financial achievements and a desire to have a global experience; all of which are facilitated by the ease of cross-border

mobility. Evidently there are multiple manner and methods of comparing the diaspora and transnationalism; therefore, we shall take a look at the various important parameters which contribute to the construction of these concepts and also at distinguishing them, thereby granting them a distinct status.

2.3.3 Identity: common, shared and independent

The notion of identity is of extreme importance with respect to the diaspora as it attains its character through the same. At the same time the methods employed for the formation of the identity, the perspectives of looking and the context of reading the identities has to be given attention. These identities could be based on some collective experience(s) from the past, or those associated through birth. The collective experiences could be those of a catastrophe, natural calamity, trauma, war and displacement, etcetera, basically those in which any particular happening or experience creates a collective category which had to face the same circumstances. The identities associated with birth could be those of belonging to a same religion, communal group, sharing ethnicity, nationality or social practices. Most of the times, especially in the original understanding of the diaspora, these associations are an outcome of a traumatic experience from the past. The concept of the diaspora has undergone changes over the time. Now they have moved from that of a forced dispersion, and have included individuals from a loose cultural association, to those in which individuals do not even undergo migration and dispersion. For those who might not undergo migration, the connecting thread is of an ideological adherence, these could be individuals / groups fighting for a racial cause, feminists, LGBT activists, environmental activists or farmers groups, etcetera. These form the virtual diaspora, where the connection and common identity is based on ideological following, or concerns to a cause. These usually have a campaign like character. Many of such virtual diasporas dissolve after the issues addressed are catered to; thereby gaining only a temporary diasporic status unlike that of the conventional one of long term generational presence.¹⁷

Nevertheless, both these categories of diaspora and transnationalism exhibit some cohesive or connecting social and symbolic ties associated with

either different time or land hinting at some constructed connection to those of a shared past. The diaspora usually functions between what can be called as the three nodal points and processes; first the 'homeland', second the 'host' now home and third the 'networks' connecting them. The home contributes to the construction of their identity in the host-land, further the connections decide their level of assimilation within the host over the period of time. Frequent references to terms like the 'family tree', 'roots', 'replanting' and 'ancestral soil' are common. Such taxonomies often use agrarian and gardening tropes with respect to the diaspora, based on the notions of organic social developments (Cohen, 1997, pp. 177-178). The agrarian tropes with their nurturing and proliferating character could be symbolic of the emotionality and the experience of loss and constant play of memory and nostalgia. The cultural distinctiveness and a relatively homogenous identity characterises the diaspora, without a loss of reference of the home. Further the diaspora aims at re-creating such experiences of the homeland and culture in their spaces of settlement. These could be attained through ritualistic practices, festivals, food and spreading importance of particular cuisines, relational and marital ties, any many such manners.¹⁸

Re-creation of these practices in the land of settlement marks a need to retain a distinct identity. The act of re-creation also includes reconstruction of the symbols of faith, synagogues, temples, churches, etcetera. At times care is taken to make the structures resemble the ones from the homeland, as places perpetuate memory, memory takes a physical form through these (Gottmann, 1952). The need for the re-creation of the ethnic identity is so strong that along with the consumption patterns there is also an underlying need to maintain the religious identity. This as mentioned is not just through the re-creation of the religious structure and places of worship, but also through the employment of the priests from the major religious centres back home. One of the examples is that of the Swaminarayan temples which have presence in numerous countries (Figure 2-1 & Figure 2-2). These might or might not have distinct architectural patterns, but the priests are strictly taken from Indian; and at times these priests move around different branches across the globe. The primary aim, in this case, is to capture the religious ethos and experience. It is interesting to see that it is

not just the IT or Finance professional but also these individuals who contribute as de-territorialised individuals. Since the home cannot be visited it is re-created. With the irrepressible home-bound attraction, yet the presence and importance associated with the host-land; the diaspora, at times, simultaneously faces a similar challenge of not being fully assimilated in the homeland, as they hold affiliations to another country too. For example, being an Indian in Britain or in the USA, gives them a status of a migrant community in these host countries; at the same time on returning home the Indo-American or Brit, status is never totally erased. The ‘hyphenated’ status never really lets the two entities blend together fully. Therefore, it could be said that the diaspora always runs the risk of not being ‘purely’ or ‘adequately’ associated with one entity.



Figure 2-1: Swaminarayan Temple, San Jose, USA



Figure 2-2: Swaminarayan Temple, London, UK

In terms of creative disciplines, one field which has constantly heeded to and given due cognisance to the distinct presence of the diaspora, is that of diaspora literature. Explained within various timeframes, these are usually fictions or true stories built on the individual experiences of the protagonists. Majority of the times the authors too are a part of the diaspora and therefore have an empathising feel towards the characters; yet the authors enjoy the privilege of having the liberty to be vocal about the same. The diaspora literature has opened a spectrum of possibilities for reading and has largely contributed towards academic scholarship. Writers like V. S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Agha Shahid Ali, Rohinton Mistry, Salman Rushdie, and many more, who are of Indian descent, have been able to portray a hybrid ground between their homeland and that of the other foreign place.¹⁹ These works range from sweet memories to the agonising shocks; at the same time reflect the changing character of the diaspora over the generations. These writings also form an important part of the postcolonial sensibility as most of these writers refer directly or insinuate towards the earlier colonised countries and their mind-set towards the colonisers, and of crafting one's identity while staying with them in their land. The visual artists too have looked at the notion of diaspora. These range from tracing migrant trails to those of cultural pluralities; from those of material cultures to the intangible notions of taste; of the lived experience of belonging to that of always being segregated or marginalised. The list of issues depends on the contexts, the interest, and experiences of the artists. The works aim at critically analysing the reading of the diaspora as the 'other'. At one point, it looks at artists who have been strongly rooted in the traditions, culture and the memory of the homeland, as an actuality of being a part of the diaspora, an honest lived experience. On the other hand, there seems to be an unnecessary need to construct the same in the works of diaspora artists. Somewhere there is an incessant need to trace the manner in which the legitimised entities have an upper hand in defining the characteristics, peculiarities and what is repetitively addressed as derisions of the diaspora. In recent times, in the field of contemporary art, with respect to large scale shows, the role of the curators has been facing sharp criticism in the reading and projection of the same. Such that the notion of identity is constructed by curators to make works eligible for the shows based on similar themes. The same shall

be discussed in the final chapter which shall explain the difference between the honest expressions of the same to that of a fabricated version of the diasporic experience.

2.3.4 *Homeland and Networked ties*

Getting back to the organic developments of the diaspora in terms of their connections to the homeland, conceptualising them seems relatively direct and clear as there is a near one-to-one correspondence between the home-host relations. An uprooting to re-rooting or settlement is a onetime process. Therefore, this forms what is called the triangular pattern, joining the individual-home-host. The picture turns a complicated one with respect to the transnational movements. Unlike the diaspora with the tri-nodal understanding, transnationalism contrastingly provides a multimodal structure with multiple destinations and movement patterns; it is therefore more rooted in geographic and sociological images such as ‘spaces’ and ‘fields’ (Khagram & Levitt, 2008, pp. 1-22). Here I suggest that the pattern of triangular structure, with the home, host and destination, is more of a *linear* one. With respect the transnationals the individual is not as much of a fixed nodal entity, but a dynamic connecting channel or a contributor to the system of network. This becomes clear as we attempt to draw these patterns. In the triangular pattern the three points seems to connect easily. It is with respect to the multi-angular structure that the ambiguity surfaces. With multiplicity of nodes, the passage through the individual and, between the host and destinations seems an impossibility. Therefore, I consider the individuals not as nodal points but as connecting links. The same has been explained through the diagrams (Figure 2-3). At no point do transnationals speak nostalgically of the roots or memory. These spaces and fields could be visualised as abstract unbound fluid, amoeboid-ic spaces which change forms and structures whenever required; without any fixed points to peg the presence at. The notion of destination, now takes a plural connotation.



Figure 2-3: Linear model of diasporic movement

The destinations are now more like nodal points of interactions, majority of which are urban centres. This is further coupled with that of cross movements. There is no fixed sense of presence in any of these spaces. Individuals sitting in a destination could have a working presence in the homeland and any other destinations simultaneously. Migrations are most often followed by, or at times a continuous chain of onward migrations. At the same time, not being bothered about returning home is common place, as the notion of return is no longer associated with a rare opportunity, but that of circular movement. The transnationals could be defined as the – globetrotters. Therefore, the evident sense of loss and memory, are not even remotely related parameters. On the contrary, what contributes to characterise their existence is the notion of ‘borderless and timeless simultaneity’. It is purely the professional adherence that contributes to their identity. Further the professional adherence is also not fixed to one company or a particular business house, as these globetrotters switch jobs whenever required. Given which their identity is constructed primarily on the basis of their skillsets, which have to be acquired, developed and improvised over the years.

Considering the loss and lack of territorial limitations the transnationals form the quintessential globalised individuals. Connected to the homeland and could also live a life with shifting homelands. What has facilitated this type of professionally peripatetic lifestyle is the core technological motor of globalisation, that is, the ICT and borderless businesses. Rootedness could be a deterrent as it portrays a lack of availability over different geographies and time zones. The information technology and the internet marked what is called as the ‘new mobility paradigm’. It has played an immense role in re-conceptualising the notions of memory, homeward-ties and primarily of giving rise to the TNCs. We discussed the concepts of the employment opportunities for individuals in

the previous section, and how they changed the notion of rootedness to that of constant movement. At the same time notice has to be taken that there isn't homogeneity in the manner of using the internet technology. The activities vary from casual conversations with family members to those of large-scale professional functions and transactions. At a casual level the presence on social media now contributes to the construction of one identity. The affiliations and the politics of projection play a crucial role in the same.



Figure 2-4: Baisakhi Celebrations in Surrey, Canada

For the transnationals, the internet technology marks the ways of working and networking at a professional level; and of maintaining connections with family members and friends at a personal level. With respect to the diaspora it contributes to the rebuilding of the community structures. This aids in not just connecting to the people in the homeland, but also to various other individuals dispersed under similar circumstances globally; this takes the diaspora into a larger public sphere, looking beyond their own forms of dispersion towards different forms that have taken place over time periods across various geographies. M. Georgiou states that the diaspora has always relied on networks, which have expanded from the immediate local to the transnational global, therefore this new form of connectivity has become the central framework of such networks (Kissau & Hunger, 2010; Georgiou, 2002). These activities could range from communication within the diasporic communities, gaining community visibility, preservation of cultural, religious and traditional practices through creation of informative websites (Figure 2-4).

Since language plays a large role, some sites provide information or instructive tutorials on the ‘mother tongue’, at the same time provide a trail as to how the new regional influences have played giving rise to various contemporary versions. Online marriage portals too have increased in number. Culinary information dealing with regional specialities and recipes handed over as family traditions help in identifying the uniqueness of regional versions of broader cuisines. Further service providers for these have also started making online presence. There are publications which provide information of the homeland and of diaspora in different countries. With respect to the Indian diaspora, the *India West*²⁰ and the *Indian Abroad*²¹, to name just two weekly publications, provide similar information of the Indians across the globe. Ethnic ware, objects of home-decore, symbolic sculptures and bric-à-brac, holding diasporic connotations and similar small entrepreneurial setups connect to their diaspora specific audience through the same network. Many such restaurants become important social centres, at times organising specific events, where the guests would come dressed ethnically, and enjoy the traditional ways of celebration (Lessinger, 1995, pp. 35-37).

As we look into the assimilation of the cultural ethos of the homeland by the diaspora, the contemporary works of art from the homeland also formed a category of what can be called the – contemporary memory. Certainly, an oxymoron, but for the diaspora this marked the most updated versions of the contemporary cultures of their respective homelands. In collecting works of artists from the homeland there has always been notion of status associated with it. Unlike the decorative crafts works, these have an inbuilt uniqueness therefore assuring an elite status, unlike the similar and largely available craft items. With respect to the transnationals, it is not the cultural ethos that plays a dominant role but that of catering to a global taste. In the final chapter, we shall address this issue and in the third chapter shall see, how the transnationals have had a contribution to the art market. Further, we witness that with the rise of the capitalist tendency these cultural emblems too move towards commodification; and the connoisseurs, collectors, and patrons now take a different form.

Moving beyond the day-to-day activities and looking at a larger and broader scale, these networks aim at addressing more serious issues. These issues range from those of creating a near archive of the migrants' history inviting members of the diaspora to contribute memoirs. These on a serious level also lead to the addressing of issues and voicing concerns of the diaspora with respect to protectionist policies, migration and employment policies, democratic rights and of maintenance of cultural uniqueness. The diaspora as seen aims at cultural distinctiveness and protectionist stance, whereas the concerns with transnationalism deal with those of a need for global consciousness. These include the need to break barriers for financial activities, providing of the necessary infrastructure throughout, to avoid any form for functional hurdles. Further at a personal level their demands tilt towards the Human Resources, like gender equality at work, specialised relocation policies, democratic participation, non-racial stands, work time flexibility, etcetera. Evidently the demands of the diaspora are specific to a defined circle, based on the community, regional, national commonality; whereas those of transnationalism range purely on professional engagements. Apart from these stark pointers hinting at the segregating and overlapping factors, an understanding of the methodological approaches usually undertaken have to be given attention to. Since most of these approaches have had a defined framework, it would be interesting to see how are the ambiguous areas, in which the diaspora and transnationalism seem similar would be dealt with. Further analysing if different approaches need to be considered.

2.3.5 Methodological approaches: Re-reading and re-constructing the diaspora and transnationalism

While analysing the concept of the diaspora and transnationalism through multiple vantage points of physical, spatial and temporal processes it is interesting to see how an attempt to define and differentiate the two entities leads to a blur space. Even as the two entities hold a distinct character, they certainly are not mutually exclusive entities. Sharing similar pointers like migration, nations, home, destination, movements, connective networks, etcetera; an overlap with respect to some aspects seems inevitable. This blur

then could be looked upon as a penumbra-ic space. These ambiguous spaces are born not of the limitations in defining the two entities; but as an evident overlap or some similarities, which are an outcome of the changing characteristics of the diaspora and transnationalism. The fact that in the current times they are coexisting in the same time period, thereby the factors influencing or contributing them are the same. Another, and one of the most important aspect which has contributed to this ambiguity is the shortcoming of the standard methodological approaches in reading them.

The two methodological approaches usually employed in their reading are those of ‘methodological nationalism’ and ‘groupism’ (Schiller, 2010). The methodological nationalism looks at the construction of the diaspora based on its nation of origin. In this approach, the ‘home’ and ‘destination’ are the only two entities that hold prominence. The migrants coming from a particular nation are presumed to constitute a single diaspora. Given which it is taken for granted that all the migrants from a particular nation who have undergone migration to a specific destination share the same backgrounds, history, time period, the reasons and manners of migration. It could be said, that this approach largely believes in the homogenous character of any given diaspora, and the nation is nearly given as a condition of naturalisation, culminating as ‘national communities’. The cause is assumed to be singularly applicable to all and the manner of re-settlement too, to be uniform. Further with the resettlement, the absorption of all the entities in the destination, too, is presumed to hold a similar pattern and so are their contemporary issues and concerns. This approach is usually employed, though not totally beneficial, when policies have to be drafted at the governmental level for transnationals and especially the diaspora. As considering the intricacies can hurdle the entire process with no conclusive results. On the other hand, the approach of groupism doesn’t consider the nations as a demarcation of the diaspora, but those of the current connections and causes which have got the individuals together. These could include the most recent category of the virtual diaspora. The limiting factor is the belief that these groups are held together on a singularly crystallised ideology or cause. It overlooks the multiplicity or plurality, and the different version which can characterise these groups.

It is evident that the approach of methodological nationalism seems an oversimplified one. It largely overlooks the fact that the diaspora is certainly not a uniform entity but is informed by plurality and diverse experiences, situations and concurrences. To cite an example, as stated earlier the advent of ICT helped the diaspora and transnationals establish connections with the homeland. Yet it would be erroneous to believe in availability of these facilities for all alike. Not all members of the diaspora are on the internet; which in the case of the transnationals could also be a possibility. Further there is a high possibility of a digital divide, such that there would be a lack of infrastructure back home to take advantage of the same. Further presuming that all the individuals are literate, and especially capable of understanding English, which is the dominant language of the internet, is certainly farfetched (Georgiou, 2002). A parallel would be drawn with this aspect of the entities of the art world connected by the internet and those who do not have that privilege. The digital divide has contributed in terms of visibility of the artist. Their lack of exposure to the global world, at times the lack of fluency in English and the new ways of working; is erroneously taken as redundancy and non-contemporaneity when it comes to the artists' and their works. It also marks the lack of opportunities with respect to the prospects of sale and also of visibility in international shows. Though this is a generalised statement, the same cannot be rejected.

Further the belief in economic parity within the diaspora, too poses a similar hurdle. It is a known fact that migrations do lead to changes in fortunes of individuals and families in extremely unpredictable ways. Therefore, there is bound to be an upper hand of the wealthy members of the diaspora; such that there could be an evident rift in the economic and social status, contributing to a near alienation of each other, even as this methodological approach tends to hold them as a single unit. One example is that of the Indian diaspora, which provides a spread across the lucrative and coveted jobs, presence as entrepreneurs, and at the same time there are Indian migrant individuals involved in doing menial, lack-lustre tasks and with low incomes. A rough example would be - the number of high paying IT professionals going to the Silicon Valley, are countered by the number of drivers, chauffeurs, domestic

helps, nurses, etcetera going to the Middle East. To put all these under one category simply based on the nationality is jarringly wrong. Apart from professions there are ideological divides too. For example, the Federation of Indian Associations in America (FIAA) and the Association of Indians in America (AIA), are two bodies that represent the political interest of the Indian diaspora, yet are still two different entities functioning at different levels. These groups conduct events of national and religious importance, and yet have a taken a stand of distancing themselves from various progressive, activists groups like the feminist South Asian women's group Sakhi, or the lesbian-gay group South Asian Lesbian and Gay Alliance (SALGA) (Lessinger, 2003, pp. 165-182).²² It is a known fact that, often using the nation as a yardstick, falls short over that of religion, economic equality or a community feeling that holds people together. Further in the case of transnationalism, where the notion of the nation has an extremely diluted or at time no relevance the use of methodological nationalism seems redundant. Groupism on the other hand seems relatively relevant if the categories or groups are identified with clarity. In case of the mentioned, less prosperous jobs like cab drivers or janitors by migrants from India, or from other countries from Asia, Russia or the Middle East, form a relatively homogenous entity due to the professional concerns, such that the nationality in this case holds least validity. Since not all businesses and trade ties hold the same character; again, the need for creating an appropriate niche for all is not an easy task.

Moving to the contemporary period, we get to see another shortcoming of these methodologies. Methodological nationalism and groupism presume the uniformity of the diaspora not just at their formative stage but also over time. Globalisation, catalysed by the neoliberal achievement and the technological proficiency of the ICT, marked a transition within the diaspora and transnationalism itself. The ICT marked a transformation of the networked connections as a primary outcome. The attempt of providing a single platform for participation to all gave space to the diaspora to be a part of the global arena. This helped them move out of their conventional and historically granted confines. Even as the first generation and some subsequent ones, till the advent of globalisation, were holding the diasporic character; the later ones in the

global world have moved beyond their territories. It is erroneous to presume that the diaspora remains within its prescribed confines and is unwilling to move beyond it, over the generation. The resent generations of the diaspora now find themselves not as a part of the dispersed group, but as those willing to constantly venture new territories as professionals, in short as the de-territorialised transnational. Thereby bringing us back to the blur between the two entities. Therefore, what we get to see is that the diaspora constantly restructures itself. In the early stages, it attempts to absorb the culture, habituated and traits of the host to strike a peaceful relation, over the period there is an evident cultural osmosis, even as cultural individuality is maintained, and with the impact of globalisation, the younger generations become active participants in the same. Given which, as is the character of the globalised world, their identity is now re-constructed on the basis of their globally required skillsets and professional performances over those of traditional identities, moving towards becoming transnationals. Based on the same, it can be concluded that not all transnational entities are a part of the diaspora, but a large part of the contemporary diaspora are now transnationals. This in a way attests the fact that the diaspora are moving from their strict historic definitions to those of fluid identities of the globalised world.²³

This brings forward one of the major transformational character to the forth. The diaspora which has been characterised by its *longue durée* (Faist, 2010, pp. 9-32), relation to the host and the agrarian and gardening trope, like that of the 'roots' now losses that relevance to those of 'routes' and 'rhizome-ic structures'. The locational rigidity once again witnesses dispersal and re-dispersal, but now through choices and constantly between centres of power. Where over a period the homeland loses its essence and nostalgic importance; as the earlier destination substitutes it, and the earlier migrant now enters the new category of a transnational who can shuttle spaces and destination unhurdled by time, space and overall accessibility. The triangular model over the generations takes a branched, multi-angular structure (Figure 2-5). Though this might not be true for all the diasporas and also to individuals, but there is a high possibility of this transformation in the current globalised world. As mentioned earlier this blur is not some anomalous behaviour or an exceptional case, but is

an evident change, which seems inevitable. Therefore, the need is not to see what constitutes the diaspora or transnationalism but that of deciding and devising newer methodologies. At this juncture, it is important to note that the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the UN migration agency, itself finds it difficult to determine who ‘their’ diaspora is, in the process of successful policy formations (Weinar, 2010, pp. 73-90). The UN has made great attempts in understanding, segregating and defining the two with respect to their policy applications. At the same time, it is not that the UN has been totally successful in doing so.

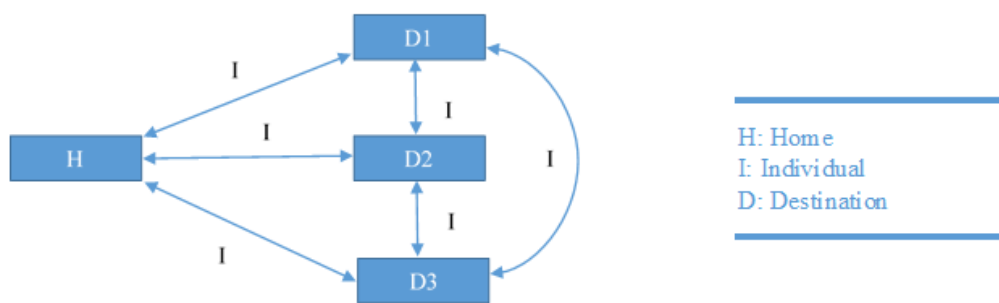


Figure 2-5: Multi-angular structure of diasporic movement

The earlier understanding of the diaspora which was based on that of territoriality and power, has lost essence in the globalised times. Now it is the capital power which functions through various nodal points across territories, individuals and businesses, and those of the processes which support them. This brings forth new norms for deciding migrations and movements. Therefore, the focus should be on how these institutions or points of power come into existence and the *technocapitalist* ‘power driven processes’ that feed them over those of nationalism and groupism; as both are losing meaning in the de-territorialised world. The methodological understanding should now turn from that of analysing whether diaspora or transnationalism is good or bad, or those identifying the material and palpable phenomenon of these entities. Since globalisation with the sheer magnitude of interconnectivity, networked living and its terrains or institutions of power, leads to the re-diasporisation,²⁴ it is this process which should gain the centre-stage. These processes and power structures or connectivity have been dominant in deciding the flow of individuals.²⁵ The art world too has been exhibiting such power processes, with

monetary benefits as its spine. Be it in terms of venues of exhibiting, trading or even participating. The financial power plays a heavy role in determining the process it would be following. Apart from the physical, locational relevance, the power structures also function with those of global associations with institutions, organisations and independent bodies which play a dominant role in determining the visibility of the artists and also of legitimising their presence. Further an analysis of the categorisation of the artists based on their nationalities as one unit, in the international scenario, that is drawing the notion of methodological nationalism, as the principal, shall be done. Similarly, groupism shall be employed to see how artists within a country are and can be 'grouped together' based on their backgrounds. These could range from the urban associations, technological proficiency, regional affiliations, material or medium used for their works or simple collaborations with hegemonic market bodies. Given which similar methodologies as discussed with that of the diaspora and transnationalism shall be employed in reading of the dynamics of the contemporary art scenario; certainly, with differing parameters.

2.4 Is the Globalised World 'Flatly' Flat?

In order to summarise this chapter, we shall begin with the very question we aimed to answer. The question was - since when and how have social structures and cultural concepts changed with the globalisation as the driving force. By choosing a relevant time period we began with the modern industrial period – first by tracing its economic transitions, then the changes in the social-cultural structure and artistic expressions; in this section, we shall see how various scholars have contributed in the critical analysis of the same. Thereby we shall trace the actuality, the positive side and the ironies of the contemporary globalised world. Beginning from the modern industrial social structure, followed by the advent of globalisation, thereby impelling towards the postmodern society; we shall trace the prominent issues which not just help analyse the same, but shall act as important issues to be addressed with respect to contemporary art too. The discussion of these issues with respect to contemporary art shall be done in the fourth chapter. Therefore, the current

chapter should be looked upon as an attempt to create a framework for the final analysis of the works of art.

Beginning from the industrial modern period, we saw that it was marked by a need for order and standardization. It exhibited faith in strict mechanised processes and the need for singularly concrete form of knowledge, concepts and rationality. The faith in human power, economic benefits and a non-agile approach, marked what could be roughly called as the modern monolith. Recalling Bell as the first to signal the coming of a new form of structure through the postindustrial, knowledge and information society, the so far valid modernist model seemed to give away its rigid set-up to a much more fluid and plural structure. This plurality claimed a democratic approach in terms of providing opportunities and scope for participation for all. At this juncture, with reference to the title of the section, *Is the Globalised World 'Flatly' Flat?* we shall raise two issues to address. One through which we shall recall Friedman's claim of the 'flat world' (Friedman, 2005); thereby questioning the very notion of democratic participation, and the loss of relevance of geographies, identities, historic pasts, or any such parameters. Questioning whether has globalisation with its capitalist spine, really provided an unbiased and uniform playground for individuals and institutions from all parts of the world to attain the same status; or do geographies still matter, if not evidently but in a subtle or hidden way. The other issue to be raised is that of the notion of 'flatly' presuming this aspect of democratisation. Here 'flatly' characterises a singular uniform assumption; quintessential to the modernist order, which should ideally not be valid in the contemporary times of postmodern plurality. These two questions aim at a dual addressing; the first one, questioning the belief system and aims of globalisation – for a single pedestal, and the second one of the departure from the univocal modernity towards plural postmodernity. We shall see how scholars have attempted to read the notion of plurality of the postindustrial world by relating it to that of the plurality of the postmodern condition; which itself is closely interwoven with globalisation. Given which the need is to analyse how the notions of relativity start taking centre stage over that of the univocal presumptions. Thereby departing from the modernist rigidity and a need for a uniform voice, towards the multi-vocal, plural, varied voices of

postmodernity; at the same time, it shall give due cognisance of the actuality of this lived experience in the globalised postmodern world.

In order to understand these two issues we shall first trace the movement towards postmodernity and its inextricable connection with globalisation, as this shall facilitate in the understanding of the transitional process from modernity to postmodernity.²⁶ Beginning with modernity, with its universalist stand and an inherent need to function through notions of unity / uniformity, saw a drastic barrier in the continuation of the same through the rise of the earlier mentioned information society. The coming of this postindustrial society, with the focus on information and knowledge, and fuelled by the capitalist economy, spelled plurality, through various aspects. It could be seen in the field of employment, assimilation of the earlier marginalised or suppressed entities, in the right of procuring knowledge, of building one's capabilities to climb up the social order, etcetera. Thereby diluting the very core of modernity, which was its cohesive unity, and moving towards what could now be considered as - pluralistic postmodernity. To give an example, since the information and knowledge society drew its roots from the close network of connectivity, an outcome of the ICT revolution, which was characterised by the globalised world, the postmodernity and globalisation are thickly interlinked.

2.4.1 The 'Global Village', the Postmodern and new dialogues

The interconnectivity has been viewed by scholars from different perspectives. Some have tried to analyse the same through processes of functioning, some as the networks of power struggle, some through the outcomes of the new social structure through symbolic connotations and notions of the real and projected or 'hyperreal'. We shall begin from the very basic understanding of it through that of a movement from the physical to the virtual, intangible knowledge and information. To Jean-François Lyotard the departure from the locational rootedness with respect to employment and the absorption of the persons from different geographies was an opportunity for forging of dialogues between different persons, such that no one would be considered indignant. In its basic form the inclusion of individuals globally provided space

for a multicultural voice, over that of the dominance of the hegemonic one, and the suppression of many smaller or marginalised cultures. This partially could be looked at as the attempt and achievement of democratised participation, though not as a generalised assumption as the one made by Friedman. To Gianni Vattimo this was the move towards a 'transparent society'; and for Marshall McLuhan it marked the establishment of the 'global village' (Lyon, 1999, pp. 59-62). Since the primary aim to allow such participation was that of economic benefit it had to be taken into consideration, as these transitions were certainly not attempts of generosity of the economically stronger West to help the rest. David Harvey employs economics and geography to analyse the postindustrial, post Fordist capitalism that had been replaced by the late or 'flexible' capitalism of the postmodern world. Claiming, that then it was not just the economic life, and modes of production and manufacturing, but also the cultural life had been altered, specifically had been commodified as the information process started acting, through global markets telecommunication (Herwitz, 1998). What we see here is the conception of equality, moving from that of a general understanding of parity towards that of a one created for economic benefits. With capitalism growing stronger and the consumerist tendency penetrating deep, looking at culture through an economic lens seems inevitable; and commodification of cultural symbols an obvious outcome. Harvey's claim could also be considered as a direct derivative of Frederic Jameson, to whom postmodernism was unmasked as the cultural logic of late capitalism. As culture, earlier was restricted to that of production of what could be called physical emblems, now with the capitalist whip playing with not just the production of man-made products but also of taste and counter cultures (Jameson, 1991). The commodification of culture was a phenomenon which led to a drastic shift in the framing of an identity of any individual.

2.4.2 Between the pastiche, parody and fetishism

Two works which draw a relation between culture, postmodernism and capitalism, need to be read at this juncture, as they analyse the impact of the latter two on culture in a near dialectic manner, especially as they discuss the emergent form of postmodern art and culture. One being, Fredric Jameson's

work titled, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, and the other of Terry Eagleton²⁷ titled, *Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism*. In Jameson's view, with respect to postmodernity's plurality or what he calls as merging of all discourse into an undifferentiated whole was the result of the colonization of the cultural sphere, through the economic stronghold of a newly organized corporate capitalism; which had retained at least partial autonomy during the prior modernist era. Given which the postmodern culture, can appropriately be understood as that of the 'pastiche' rather than the 'parody'. The pastiche of the capitalist economy, visible through cultural symbols. Further stating the in cultural transition that High Modernism was born at a stroke with mass commodity culture; and it escaped from one form of commodification to only fall prey to another, which was - fetishism. Through the same notion of commodification and the pastiche, High Art too was removed from the realm of aesthetic autonomy to dissolve its boundaries and become coextensive with ordinary commodified life. Unlike Jameson, to whom pastiche held more weight, Eagleton explains what was 'parodied' by postmodernist culture. To him, postmodernism, mimes the formal resolution of art and social life attempted by the avant-garde, at the same time, as notions of relativity render various perspectives valid, it remorselessly empties it of its political content. To him postmodernism takes something from both modernism and avant-garde. From modernism, it inherits the fragmentary self, but eradicates all critical distances from it. From *avant-garde*, postmodernism takes the dissolution of art into social life. Now what we see is a valid visual, with a lack or dilution of a satirical impulse to exemplify. As stated by Jameson, as the aesthetic autonomy vanishes, with the insistence of the interbreeding of art and life, coupled with the irony of an ambiguous notion of 'truth and reality', the aesthetics of postmodernism is a dark parody of anti-representationalism. The question which arises here is, that what does art represent? as representation is not backed by truth, therefore no longer can truth or reality be considered as a goal. The answer is that the goal now shifts from, truth to that of 'performativity', and no longer is it 'reason' but 'power' which give identity to the work (Eagleton, 1986; Jameson, 1991). As postmodernity rejected the notions of singular truth and reason; autonomy and authority, both seem to be shaken, now the notion of performativity and power also casts a spell with the

notion of progress, and what comes into existence as legitimising bodies or entities.

2.4.3 Progress, Power and Performativity

Bell believed that the transition towards the postindustrial society would bring about progress, just as was experienced with the advent of the industrial society; and yet had not overlooked certain 'cultural contradictions of capitalism'. These were to bring rationality under question, as new legitimising bodies were to eventually take shape. Contradicting Bell, Lyotard saw the flexible production and media-centeredness, leading to no specific growth. With respect to the notions of legitimisation, Lyotard, connects the notions of 'knowledge statements', 'commodification' and 'performativity'. To him the adoption and employment of the technology, especially the computer technology, now marks the ways of self-legitimation, without the requirement of an external, authorised body. The individual capability to have access to the same technology, the skill of managing it and of projection of the information and knowledge through it, has become a way of legitimising information or knowledge itself. This could be considered as an act of power control, or the way in which the management of the information or knowledge, has started taking precedence over that of the actual validity of knowledge (Lyon, 1999, pp. 54-56). Therefore, the information society, is not contributing to the information and knowledge, but is functioning on the notions of nodal power and commodification. In the same way performativity is marked by the skill with which such management of knowledge or information is undertaken. This brings us to a point discussed earlier, that in the contemporary society, computer generated or presented data and information hold more validity than that done by humans. This brings out the irony of the validity of the information, and also of democratic participation back in focus.

Even as Marshall McLuhan's 'global village', based on the hype of a world perfectly connected by the electronic media and technologies, such that the dense and thorough interconnectedness with the mentioned democratic participation marks the current times, in reality there is an evident gap. This can

be analysed on the basis of what we discussed earlier as the 'digital divide', and explained it with respect to the networks of the diaspora, and the non-necessity of a provision of similar communication facilities in the host and homeland. No doubt the concept of the global village partially holds good as happenings, news and reactions from across the world are transmitted at a speed never imagined before. Even as these are attempts of connecting the world, there still remains a major gap between what has been projected and the ground level actuality. At the same time, it brings back the issue raised, by Lyotard of the validity, rather relativity of such information in the world driven by capital in which the tight grip of commodification has barely left anything un-clawed. Now with the computer and the television as the sources of information and knowledge dissemination, and with the lack of singular legitimising body, what comes to the people seems to be a volume of images all holding validity, through the notion of relativity. One of the prominent examples of the same is the notion of presenting news through various channels. With the print media taking a backseat, the television has become the dominant mode, and further has been supplemented with the internet and social networking websites, mobile based news applications, etcetera, where the plurality of perspectives and manners of presentation, can be a gyrating experience for the listener or the viewer.²⁸ Over the earlier existing concept of presenting information and valid details, news now have a sense of 'performativity'. They have to sound and have to be presented to convince, the need is to create a 'spectacle', long lost is the purpose of simple telling. The most recent concept of 'breaking news' seems to have built an animus competition between various channels, which have increased in number at an exponential rate, over the – temporality, to be the first to capture, and the worst example is of creation of such news. This brings us back to Marx, and the statement of - all that is solid melting into air. With constant updating, what once held centre-stage, within no time slips into the background. It wouldn't be erroneous to say that what assures the presence of the news for a longer duration is more to do with the spectacle of the news over its gravity. Validation and the truth of the content have been overshadowed, the impact is what matters. These features of relativity and fragmentation, validity, spectacle, etcetera bring out the core concern of the very notion of 'reality'. These

concerns have been discussed by Baudrillard, Anthony Giddens, Ronald Robertson, etcetera.

2.4.4 *From Reality to Hyperreality and the Collage*

Baudrillard's concern revolves around that of the images generated by the media, the notion of simulacra and that of the 'real'. To him these distinctions are or have already eroded and the images are now accepted as a reality. These images since originated in the consumer capitalist society are bound to bring about a disparity or fragmentation, leading to patterns of consumption, which become the prime parameters contributing to the formation of one's identity in the globalised world. Further the TV, becomes the motor to dissolve the difference between the hyperreal and the 'real' life. One of the most controversial discussions put forward by Baudrillard was through his book titled *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*. The original French version was published in 1991, and the English translation in 1995. To him the telecast of the Gulf war seemed a perfect simulacrum, a constructed hyperreal scenario. He believed that backed with the experience of documenting the previous wars like the Vietnam War, and equipped with the knowledge or logic of simulation, the news channels were able to provide the 'live coverage from the battlefield'. To Baudrillard this was what could be called as the 'TV Gulf War', questioning the very reality of the actual happening. In the introduction itself, there is a clear understanding of this divide between the reality and the hyperreal simulacrum; making it clear that the book attempts to look into the question of not being for or against the Gulf War itself but about being for or against the 'reality' of the war (Baudrillard, 1995). This work was bound to raise criticism. Lyon too attempts to understand it by questioning as to whether, everything including the unreality of the war, the negotiations, victory and defeat were simulated. Was it all about computer and mass-media simulation? Or was it a new stage in the history of warfare. Lyon goes ahead to ask whether the Gulf War could then be considered the first postmodern war; or was Baudrillard himself overpowered by the TV (1999, pp. 67-68). Evidently Baudrillard had overlooked the capacity of the viewers in discerning the images and of validating the facts. If all was

simulated in the war, the question which comes forth is that, were the deaths too simulated. This came about as the strongest criticism of the work.

As seen the bombardment of images to Baudrillard marked not just to the creation of a hyperreal scenario but also to the collapse of the narrative capacities of the image. Giddens on the other hand does not undermine the knowledge of the viewer of these images, as not all images are taken to be real. The juxtaposition of the logical, simulated, or those with no meaningful content, are not absorbed by the viewers as an actuality. These could be considered as a mere 'collage'. Further there isn't a lack or collapse of the narrative content as these images do providing a reference to the context under which these images took form (Giddens, 1991). Another aspect of these images is explored by Arjun Appadurai. Considering the possibility for movement across boundaries for people from varied backgrounds, to him the notion of the imagined life in the new land is of importance. Here Appadurai gives an example of Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined societies' (Anderson, 1983). These imaginations are constructed on the basis of the images circulated by the media, again bringing in the notion of reality, and also Jameson's 'nostalgia of the present'. Such that the present itself helps construct memories of a space yet unknown. This is largely explained through the concept of 'farsickness'; such that the home is a known entity and the destination a mental construct based on the referential images coupled with a strong desire to be there. What we see in this case is the reactionary quotient to these images. The question which comes forth is, whether these images could be validated for their true value or could be falsified? These could well be an outcome of someone's imagination. This gets us back to Giddens, such that what surfaces is more of a justification of the plurality of images, in this case over any possible concern of reality.

2.4.5 Multiple cultures, ethnicity and contemporaneity

Ronald Robertson analyses the ties between the notion of plurality and reality with that of globalisation, contributing in the building of one's identity. As stated earlier in the globalised world the notion of singularity or standardisation has largely been replaced by that of multiplicity. This can be

traced in various fields, especially with respect to culture. For the globetrotting individuals as for many others, this multiplicity brings forward many reference points – be it ethnicity, religion, etcetera, such that there is no fixed sense of defining an individual. With intensification of cultural osmosis, at some point the earlier existing, old and rigid ways and traditions start coming under the purview of doubt. The inundation of media generated images, especially with the consumerist capitalist background, are bound to question the notion of tradition and reality. In this sense, the images provide interconnection and dependence, between the global and the postmodern conditions. Further Robertson makes a way to understand this negotiating space born as a ground for negotiation between the global and the local, which still holds its identity. He exemplifies this, through the Japanese marketing concept of *dochakuka*, which works on the belief that the local and the global always work together. Through this concept a global outlook is adopted simultaneously with the local conditions. This creates a new form of consumption, such that the global and the local are linked in a sort of an ongoing dialectic – which is that of ‘glocalisation’ (Lyon, 1999, pp. 61-64). McDonald’s to him stands as a perfect example to this concept. Such that even as the brand, the setup and the entire functioning is not compromised, the content or the product, that is, the food menu is decided based on the regional specificities, yet there is no trace of dilution of the brand in terms of the final product. This not just allows capturing a larger market over boundaries but also helps building local loyalties. The notions of culture now can be visualised as an outcome of the dual processes of preservation and exchange; the dichotomous relation of homogenisation and heterogenisation start playing together, giving space for a multicultural setup. This assures democratisation in terms of the collapse of the structure of the opposition between the hegemonic cultures and the suppressed one, now replaced with that of acknowledgment and assimilation of the multiple cultures.

This space for multiplicity of culture in the globalised world is echoed by Arjun Appadurai too. According to Appadurai, the central problem of contemporary global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenisation and heterogenisation (1996, p. 32); especially considering the migratory trends, through the diaspora and transnationalism, that is, given the

condition of globality and the postmodern plurality. These forces on one hand, which speak of homogenisation, invariably lead to a debate over Americanisation, commoditisation or McDonaldisation of the world. This could be considered as what is largely presumed to be the globalisation from above; such that the big fishes take over the smaller ones, wiping out their identity. On the other hand, the negotiation and the need for preservation and assimilation of the local and other varied cultures; by maintenance of their distinct character and yet marking an adoption into the global scenario hints at the heterogeneous approach of globalisation from below.²⁹ This heterogeneous approach insists on the presence of a 'multicultural' dimension of a society. Globalisation backed by its need for economic benefits, though at times accused of being a different form of economic colonisation, with an exploiting stance, has provided a different scenario when it comes to social structures and cultural identities. Considering the, fleeting or, not so *longue durée* presence of businesses, or what is popularly called as the run-away capital, the global forces, especially the TNCs, have had very less a desire to transform the local characters, especially with respect to that of culture. On the contrary it could be said, that globalisation uses these to build newer forms of financial possibilities. For example, the establishment of ethic food centres, clothing, festivities, organic products, exotic items, etcetera, as entities to be treated as financial options. It is necessary to understand this is no outreach program of the stronger economies, but an attempt at benefitting from the commodification of such products. These traditional, local products find presence in the global markets only as their presentation is marked through global standards.

Appadurai, in his work titled, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, states-

The globalization of culture is not the same as its homogenization, but globalization involves the use of a variety of instruments of homogenization (armaments, advertising techniques, language hegemonies, and clothing styles) that are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty,

free enterprise, and fundamentalism in which the state plays an increasingly delicate role. (1996, p. 42)

Here the role of the state depends on that of letting the overseas bodies to enter in the local markets, especially when they aim at producing the local products. In a way through rising international demand for such local products, it immediately poses a stiff competition to the local players. Appadurai proposed the five dimensions of the global cultural flows of which the *financescapes* and the *ethnoscapes* are of direct relevance in this section.³⁰ Without overlooking the presence of stable communities, ethnoscapes were to represent the combination of the mobile, moving population and the framework of existence and exchange with the stable communities (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 33-34). These ethnoscapes provide a platform for understanding the notion of multiculturalism, as this 'scape' provided a non-rigid and fluid understand, appropriate to comprehend the dynamic multicultural scenario. The financescapes trace the character of the moving, capital, which in a way exhibit the patterns of economic benefits and profit maximisation tendencies. These also provide an understanding of the power structure built on the basis of the financial opportunities.

Unlike the earlier studied notion of cultural uniqueness aimed by the older forms of diaspora, multiculturalism aptly marks the all-accommodative attitude of the transnational globalised world. With no specific or excessive sentimentality or sense of pride associated to any specific culture, there is no need to form a hierarchy, and a certain need for a balance. Once the persistently unnerving fear of homogenisation, Americanisation, or that of the obliteration of smaller cultures, in size and monetary power, now finds a different version. The financial perspective still holds grounds and the culture now becomes a part of one's 'experience'. Not necessarily as a part of one's life, upbringing, and what is singularly inherited tradition, but as an aspect of gaining knowledge and of being an active 'participant', not just in one's own, but as multiple-cultural experiences. These notions bring us to what needs to be understood as contemporary form of culture and life.

As cultural contacts have undergone a drastic increase and intensification, there has been an openness towards the same. Robertson's glocalisation, proves the validity of this scenario. One form of glocalisation can be seen in the host country, where the hosts are welcoming towards other cultures. There is an assimilation of the cultural practices thereby leading to an evident presence of the cultural emblems in the host-land. The other is where the culture of the homeland itself seems to be relooked at, as a rare yet necessary to be experienced phenomenon, in the homeland itself. These could be considered as attempts of promoting the domestic culture not only locally but globally. Given which, it has to be presented in a manner that meets some particular, what could be called, global standards. These could range from tiny examples of cultural tourism, like having small counters of Indian tattoo makers – *mehendi* art, using organic material in malls and ethnic restaurants; to the bigger version, such that large malls and food courts, find it mandatory to have restaurants with different global cuisines, where the sushi bars have a space adjacent to Burger King or McDonalds, or a restaurant serving authentic Gujarati Thali; further this structure could be seen in any location across different countries. Tradition and culture now find a new version; once a domestic matter, the same is commodified and re-presented to provide a different yet ironically a pure cultural experience, matching global standards. Not in a derogatory way, but this form of commodification, is seen as an outcome of approving to the legitimising nodes, which decide the global standards, thereby wanting to qualify in the global league. Ironically this brings us back to the fear of standardisation, not in terms of absolute uniformity, but as a necessary benchmark. The question of moving towards a flat world resurfaces, where there are some unsaid rules – which are certainly not standardised yet do exist allowing qualification towards the global character. Yet what is necessary to be understood as a positive aspect, is the dilution of the hierarchy in terms of acceptance of cultures. The fact that as much as McDonald's epitomises the trend of standardisation, and has presence in various countries, local cuisines of countries or communities, too have started finding audiences in lands apart from theirs. This welcoming of the new marks what characterises the heterogeneity and homogeneity of the contemporary

culture. Though at times there has been critical voices which say that, the very fact that there is an ‘acceptance’ of the other cultures, by the stronger economies, still hints at the superiority or the possession of the legitimising power in the hands of the economically superior entities.

2.4.6 Sites of Power and Notions of Parity

This brings us to one of the most important aspect, which is of, where does one experience such a cultural mix. Even as we spoke about the surfacing of such a multiplicity of cultures, this phenomenon barely crosses the urban limits, or those which mark the constant presence of international traffic, like tourist centres. The representation takes place where the consumers, backed with the financial capacities to ‘experience’ it all are present. This brings us back to the very notion of nodal points of – interest, profitability, power, and connectivity. At no point do we see such a multicultural setup in the places which cannot be located on the global network map. Countries which still haven’t ventured into the neo-liberal world, somehow seem to be out of the multi-cultural global circuit, as their markets seem to be still closed with a low probability of turning into a potential market. Similarly, at a more local level, the spaces not connected through either businesses or tourism, and do not fall under these circuits, have remained largely untouched by the global culture. The same answers the second part of the question, that is, the world is certainly not flat. As seen earlier, just as the ‘digital divide’ highlights this difference in terms of technological advancements, the uneven power structures still hold good. The global playground is certainly not flat and has obvious undulation, and still provides an upper pedestal for the spaces and entities which have been caught by the capitalist interest.

On one end the urban spaces, cities and the metropolises, are becoming centres of power. With the quintessential capital magnetism of the neoliberal globalised world. They mark not just the spaces legitimised by the global entities, but the inculcation of their characteristics. The need ‘to have it all’ in terms of consumption patterns is evident. There is an incessant need to have an internationalising global experience as one lives in a metropolis. This is a

mandatory norm to be a part of the global culture; such that consumer culture fuels the need for variety, especially international variety. The consumer culture now is understood not just in terms of production of products and commodities, but also of the production of needs. Given which, in the contemporary consumerist society, it is this consumption pattern that defines the identity of a contemporary individual.



Figure 2-6: Pheonix Mills, Mumbai, India

The consumption is not restricted to those involving individuals. The city itself is consumed. The postindustrial society witnessed the redundancy of a lot of industrial spaces, for example the mills, which over a period turned defunct and were later declared sick, as seen in Mumbai (Figure 2-6). These were soon replaced by transnational structures – either as business parks, or entertainment areas as malls, plush residential spaces now emblematic of the urban or metropolitan globality. These glass façade buildings of business houses seem like the identical counterparts or duplicates from the First World,³¹ in spaces where they stand, most of the times as absurdly incongruent; absurd as these are usually surrounded by the earlier olden structures. Translating the same at a personal level; the business processes, employees, and even professional mannerism seem to take a standardised stand; a derision from which finds immediate notice.³²

These are now emblematic of being in a league, therefore hold a metaphorical value. Therefore, just as we analyse the consumption pattern of individuals and that of culture, the city too finds itself in the same state. Gentrification is precisely the phenomenon which has engulfed such spaces.³³ One such jarring example is that Bangalore, once known as the Garden City has now turned into a posh IT City, perfectly exhibiting the difficult choices between the desire for economic progress and of overlooking ecological hazards. Further this city also exhibits the extreme disparities of the globalised world. Where apart from the promise of participation, reaping the benefits of the globalised world barely spill over the urban spaces. This has best been stated by Joseph Stiglitz in the chapter titled The Promise of Development, in his book *Making Globalization Work*. He gives a description of his journey through the outskirts of Bangalore where,

Women labour on the roads breaking stones by hand. The landscape is dotted with lone men ploughing the dusty fields with oxen. At roadside stalls, shopkeepers sell biscuits and tea. It's a typical scene in India, where much of the population is still illiterate and the median income is just \$ 2.70 a day.

Just a few miles away, in the city of Bangalore, a revolution is taking place. The gleaming global headquarters of the giant Indian high-tech and consulting firm Infosys Technologies has become a symbol of a controversial outsourcing movement, in which American companies hire Indian workers to do work that was previously done in the United States and Europe. Although companies have been sending manufacturing work to low-wage countries for decades, India's success at attracting high-skilled jobs such as computer programming and customer service has caused a lot of worry in the United States.

Infosys which generates some \$ 1.5 billion a year in revenues, has been a boon to the local economy. Its employees

spent money on cars, housing, and clothes, and at the new restaurant and bars that have sprung up in Bangalore. Any visitor to Bangalore can feel the rising prosperity. But the enthusiasm for this new world is not universally shared...but just ten miles outside Bangalore and even in parts of the city, poverty can be seen everywhere; for the other 800 million people of India, the economy has not shone brightly at all.

About 80 per cent of the world's population lies in developing countries, marked by low incomes and high poverty, high unemployment and low education. For those countries, globalisation presents both unprecedented risks and opportunities. Making globalisation work in ways that enrich the whole world requires making it work for the people in those countries. (Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work*, 2007, pp. 25-26)

Stiglitz's evidently and synoptically seems to state the actuality of the phenomenon of globalisation – with its benefits, promises, shortcomings and failures, especially with respect to the economic and the cultural understanding. Where the economic disparity stands stark, the failure of the government to manage globalisation to its benefit seems obvious. At the same time, he also gives an idea of the emergence of the contemporary globalised culture. This is experienced only by a handful – those who are participants of the globalised phenomenon, the corporate elite. What we observe is their unconscious inculcation of the consumerist tendencies. This could be translated in terms of the material possessions, the lifestyle adopted and the very need to display a sense of participation in contemporaneity by experiencing the most happening and temporally pertinent events. Getting back to the question posed at the very beginning, *Is the Globalised World 'Flatly' Flat?*. What we observe is that just as modernity once did the 'urban' now is translated as the urban metropolitan 'global node' marks what can be called as the merging space for the postmodern globality. In terms of postmodern character, it spells the plurality providing

space for an assimilative tendency, denying any attempt towards ‘flatly’ characterising any aspect of its lived reality. In terms of the globalised contexts it exhibits the presence of the capitalist, consumerist character, inculcated subconsciously. With respect to Friedman, the ‘flat world’ is still very much a hypothetical concept.

Power structures have just changed hands. What once was dominated by the industrial modernity has been replaced by the postindustrial, global postmodernity. The transition from the agrarian farmers to the industrial labours, now see a move towards the ‘professional elite’. New social structures, migrations and movements of individuals start spelling different meanings. The historic notions of displacement and pain vanish into those of a choice for a better life in a different land and a need for an improvised lifestyle. The notion of nations, homeland, culture, ethnicity, etcetera, all undergo transitions when exposed to the globalising forces. Terms like ‘the global village’, replace the same. The segregation between the High and Low culture reduces, giving rise to the multicultural approach. This too comes as an outcome, not as much of mutual tolerance but of mutual benefit. With the force of capitalism, the move towards fetish seems to engulf all. Even as these dynamic conditions exist these are equally balanced out by the standard, rooted conventions, still untouched by the global phenomenon. The divide does exist and so does the plurality. With the Television and mass media taking centre stage, and with the very notion of reality under question, what dominates the contemporary time is the need for a spectacle and the insistence of the notion of ‘performativity’. The physical material starts losing validity over the soft, intangible – virtual images and information. With respect to art a similar phenomenon can be observed. The art works of the Modern period were marked by their need for exploration of the physicality of the work and a serious engagement with the formal aspects of the work. It marked the cerebral involvement of the artists in the exploration of the same and at the same time, aiming a position of autonomy in the work. The loss of faith in the notions of progress of modernity, marked a departure from the same. What started coming into the picture was the intangible notion of ideas and concepts. The material concerns taking different dimensions. With the advent of globalisation and new born faith the ICT, the internet and the

computer-generated material, information and communication, also allowed the inclusion of the same in the works of art. This coupled with the notions of the postmodern plurality, and the lack of a singular notion of reality witnessed a transformation, which shall be the core concern to be explored in the final chapter of the study – which is of the transformation from that of ‘modern autonomy’ to that of the ‘postmodern global contingency’.