

# The Plight of Immigrants in “Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Lowland”

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## Abstract

The novel *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri utilized many disciplines to enhance the Plot of plight of immigrants. The author employs storytelling technique to bring out the Cultural identities, nostalgia, generational issues and beliefs of Indian immigrants living in a foreign country. This research explores the novel’s themes of diaspora, feminist Perspectives, character alienation and assimilation. This paper underscores the diverse characteristics allow for comprehensive analysis. This fiction is a poignant exploration of the intricate bonds between two brothers, Subhash and Udayan, against the backdrop of Socio-political turbulence in post-colonial India. Lahiri skilfully weaves a narrative that spans continents and generation, delving into themes of identity, sacrifice, and the enduring impact of choices. The novel’s deep emotional resonance and rich character development offer a profound reflection on the complexities of family and the inexorable passage of time. This paper focuses on the immigrants suffering and battle in a foreign country and the paper will be exploring the immigrant enduring quest for self-discovering making the fiction a profound exploration of the human experience.

## Keywords

Jhumpa Lahiri, Diaspora, Identity, Assimilation and Alienation

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The *Lowland* is a great ambitious novel which explains about brotherly bonding inter connected with political backdrop, detailing about Bengali family settled in US. Lahiri took us on an emotional rollercoaster ride which passes through elements like rashness, hesitation and regret in one’s life.

The story opens in Tollygunge in Calcutta where a polar opposite brothers Subhash and Udayan resides sharing a love and hate relationship. As the year passes the brother’s opted for two different paths. Udayan, a charismatic but reckless guy with Marxist ideas associated himself with Naxalite movements in Calcutta. Our responsible Subhash choose to pursue his higher education in Rhode Island, US. Udayan love starts to sparkle when he meet Gauri through this mutual friend that is none other than Gauri’s brother. They initially was not in sync and later get into rhythm by discussing and debating their ideas about communism. Subhash entered into romantic relationship with Holly who has a son named Joshua. At this point the story take a turn when Udayan was hanged by police in front of his house watched by his helpless parents and his pregnant wife. Subhash is informed about the demise of his brother and returned to Calcutta to pay his visit. There he happens to see the inequality and troubles Gauri goes through in his parents’ home whose only motive is to take away the child and cast Gauri out.

The sad ending of Udayan after surrendering to police was explained to Subhash by Gauri. She told how the policemen make death threat to the family asking Udayan to surrender and explains about Udayan surrender and his execution at the same point. Analysing the situation in hometown Subhash requested Gauri to marry him and relocate to Rhode Island

along with him for her safety and future.

Rhode Island gets some new people with Gauri and her daughter Bela who born there. As time goes love started to bloom between Subhash and Gauri. Later Subhash and Holly crossed paths and share a brief greetings where Holly reunited with his husband Keith. Gauri went to graduate school in US and she was in the process of self-discovery. Subhash and Bela spent quality times together. In part five, Bela and Subhash travels to Calcutta on the demise of his father. Subhash mother Bijoli nearly revealed to Bela that Udayan is her biological father. Later Subhash explains that he is Bela’s uncle who is no more. The story took a deep turn when Subhash learned Gauri left them behind and shifted her base to California from Rhode island.

The story return to Gauri. She travels through emotional rollercoaster through out her where Udayan gave her happiness, regret, unconditional love, sacrifice and at last left her alone in the wild world .She decided to live for herself and for the happiness she deserves. Her skills are improving and her works were appreciated. Lorna, a graduate student from ULCA asks Gauri for help with her thesis and soon those two embark on a sexual relationship. The History repeating itself when Subhash found Bela loaded with a fatherless child as same as Gauri decades ago. Subhash breaks to Bela that Udayan is her biological father. They both seems to be off for sometimes and later get along after period of time.

Gauri came to visit Bela and her daughter Meghna and was shocked to the core when she came to know about Udayan from Bela herself. Bella shot years of regret as questions towards Gauri asking about how she failed to provide the love

and care as a mother, making selfish decision of leaving her behind and so on. Bella concludes that both her biological parents are dead to her where one left because of death and other left her out of choices. This incident completely shattered Gauri and then she leaves divorce papers with Bela.

Gauri takes a trip back to Calcutta only to find everything changed around there. She thought of committing suicide but took a little step back and made her way back to California where she finds a letter by Bela stating that Meghan ask about her and there may be chances for them to meet in future. Subhash met a women named Elise who is one of the Bela’s teacher at Richard’s funeral. They instantly clicked and had a romantic relationship later they two got into a wedlock. Bela visits them from time to time.

In the final part of the novel, Subhash and Elisa went on Honeymoon where on seeing a rock Subhash remembered his brother. He thought how the life would have been changed if Udayan met Gauri sooner and changed his path for all good reasons. The novel ends with revisiting the day of Udayan death.

Lahiri’s novel not merely explains about the existence of the characters but also touches the historical and cultural heritage of their upbringing and well connected with the political environment at the times where the characters lived. Even though the brothers are polar opposite in nature, Lahiri make sure that the readers can relate themselves with the character through their emotions.

The Lowland comes with different time period connecting events from the past to the future in too and fro motion by which the pace of the book keeps interesting. Readers dive deep down into the sea of emotion shown by different characters. The story make sure we witness different perspective an incident to make people more connected with the thoughts and actions of the characters. Revealing of details and secrets to one another in a slow and overlapping manner adds great strength to the story.

The vulnerable characterisation in the story makes it even more genuine and acceptable. It also give strength to reader to accept their flaws and to improvise themselves. The acceptance approach is much needed one in the present generation where people often tend to be perfect by hiding their flaws from the outer world. It Provide greater strength and confidence to face the world when we accept and love ourselves a little more each day, every day.

The metamorphic connection of two ponds with the brothers of Calcutta in the story works wonder. reader doesn’t need anything to figure out that the two ponds symbolize the two brothers at times always together. Lahiri add scenery like connecting the lowland as their playground in the past and as a battlefield of emotions in the future where the lives of Udayan, Subhash and Gauri crossed paths with one another.

The novel ends with tons of emotional turmoil for the main characters. They experience solid and confusing feelings about the rash decision they made in life and regrets it for all the life worth living. The state of confusion, uncertainty or

anxiety travels from the start and travel towards the end of the novel. After all this Hurricane the characters resumes to their routine life by accepting their flaws and in the motive to move forward.

Jhumpa Lahiri main characters in the novel lived as a perfect example of diasporic dilemma. It adds to the uniqueness of the characters which is perfectly flawed yet beautiful in their own ways. The cultural variations and generation gaps with the two time period of the story also symbolise the diaspora as their ideology differs to a greater extend. Thus, Jhumpa Lahiri successfully knitted the diasporic sensation in “The Lowland” by scrutinize multifarious personalities and perplexing relationships.

## References

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