Indianness in Indian Writing in English:

A Study of Amitav Ghosh's Novels

Thesis submitted to the
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Declaration

I, Joy T.T., hereby declare that this thesis entitled 'Indianness in Indian Writing in English: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's Novels', submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is a bona fide record of research carried out by me and that no part of it has been previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or any other similar title of any university.

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Certificate

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled 'Indianness in Indian Writing in English: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's Novels', submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is a bona fide record of research carried out by him under my supervision. No part of it has been previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or any other similar title of any university.

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Introduction

Today Indian literature in English as well as in vernacular languages is emerging as a great literary force in world literature. The contemporary readers, writers, scholars and critics in almost all languages have shown great interest in the unique heritage of India's earlier generations and the translations of Indian classics like *The Ramayana*, *The Mahabharata* and *The Bhagavad Gita* in different languages including English have received wide recognition all over the world. During the pre-Independence period, the colonizers took great effort to spread English education in India. The colonial administration gave utmost encouragement to the translation of Western texts that would facilitate the process of acculturation. It is true that once English was considered as a colonial language and a tool for oppressing native Indians. Consequently, many nationalists, opposed strongly against the spread of English language in India. With the passage of time, the new language, English, became a symbol of power and mastery in the language opened up a whole new world of opportunities to the people of India. Soon, there emerged throughout India a section of writers and intellectuals using English in every society.

Later globalization and computerisation gave a new impetus to English language. The 1990s and 2000s witnessed a dramatic boom in Indian writers working in English, while the study of India's many literary traditions has grown in strength in universities outside of India. Being the second largest populated country of the world, people all over the world show much interest to know more about India and its people. Hence it is quite natural that they turn to Indian Writing in English. The basis of their curiosity lies in their search for diversity

about India's rich, social, geographical, religious and cultural heritage. This can be seen in in Indian Writing in English and this is the chief inspiration in undertaking a research on Indianness in Indian Writing in English .

This project aims to explore as far as possible two different aspects of Indian life and literature. Firstly, the phrase ''to be Indian'' produces a sense of 'unity' or 'homogeneity' among the people residing in India and abroad. Secondly, 'being Indian' means being in one of the twenty-nine states in India whose topography, history, language and culture drastically differ from each other, producing an ever-increasing sense of 'heterogeneity'. In other words, homogeneity as well as heterogeneity, is the essence of Indianness. The same idea is reflected in the popular phrase 'unity in diversity' which is evident in almost all fields of Indian life. Unfortunately, colonial and western scholars, historians and critics viewed these two aspects of Indian life with their own preoccupations and branded them as something backward and less civilized. Being an Indian research scholar, it is our responsibility to highlight the values and merits of Indian life before the world. At the same time, as a responsible well-wisher of mankind, it is our duty to point out the defects, failures, drawbacks, inhuman social and cultural practices that prevailed in the past and continuing in the present age and to suggest practical solutions for solving them. Definitely I hope that a study of Indianness based on Indian Writing in English will be highly useful not only in India but abroad also. It will open up a new ray of light into the so far unknown and unseen aspects of Indian life.

Indianness is reflected in the social, historical, economical, political, religious, philosophical and cultural fields. Its salient features are seen in almost all the genres of Indian Writing in English. As it has to cover personal, official, social, cultural and religious aspects of Indian life, the writers need a wide canvass to describe what they see around themselves. In this case, fiction, exactly novel is a more suitable genre to analyse the various elements of Indianness in Indian English literature. Therefore this research gives emphasis to

novels for finding out Indianness in different realms. Being a product of Bengal Renaissance,Amitav Ghosh is the most meritorious and suitable novelist in the Indian Writing in English to analyse the specific features of Indianness in the varied aspects of Indian life. His six novels are selected in this thesis for a careful and detailed study to assess Indianness.

Research in brief

The chief task of this research is to define 'Indianness' from different perspectives based on the opinions, assumptions, experiences and suggestions of eminent scholars and critics. For this purpose I have visited a number of professors and writers belonging to English as well as Malayalam. I would like to mention at least three of them who have suggested valuable guidelines for the fruitful completion of this project. In the beginning I discussed with Prof. Dr. Sankaran Raveendran, the former Head of the Department of English in Calicut University. He has helped me a lot to prepare my dissertation for M.Phil course at University of Calicut. He read the synopsis of this research diligently and suggested me that I should prepare a brief summary of Indian Writing in English, focusing the origin, various stages in the evolution of different genres and limitations in general. He did his research in the U.S. and therefore he was lucky enough to acquaint himself with the latest trends in research and the most modern critical theories of criticism emerging all over the world. He welcomed the choice of Amitav Ghosh as the case study to analyse and highlight Indianness in Indian English novels. He pointed out that Indianness can be found out in his novels related with cosmopolitanism, terrorism, dangerous trends in the new form of nationalism, economic exploitation, social evils, environmental issues, exhaustion of natural resources, cultural disparities between the east and the west, gender discrimination, etc.

The next competent personality whom I contacted to discusss ‘Indianness’ was Sri T.D. Ramakrishnan, who is one of the most popular writers in contemporary Malayalam literature. He retired as the Southern Railway Chief Controller in 2016 after 35 years of service. Now he is a full time Malayalam writer. His debut novel *Francis Itty Cora*, *Alpha*, *Mama Africa* and latest novel *Sugandi Enna Andal Devanayaki* earned him a permanent place in the minds of Malayalam readers. He is the recipient of Kerala Sahitya Akademy Award, Vayalar Award and Malayattur Award. Many literary and cultural orgainisations have recognised him as a great writer by conferring their honours upon him. Sri Ramakrishnan thinks that the concept of ‘Indianness’ is relative in each phase of Indian history. In the ancient history of India, life and literature was closely associated with vedic texts in Sanskrit language. In Mughal period, there happened a great change in the vision and attitude of Indian society. In the colonial period, western culture, education and languages affected considerably the Indian social life and it lost many of its ancestral values. In the post colonial period many Indian writers followed blindly the western style in their themes and narration. He has summed up his words saying that there is no hard and fast rule to define Indianness. He added that Indian culture is a broad-minded one and it has welcomed almost all sorts of world religions irrespective of their rituals and practices in daily life. This is a remarkable aspect of Indianness which is evident in its life and literature.

Another prominent resource person whom I visited to discuss this research is Prof. Dr. Thomas John, Head of the Department of English, St Alosyious College, Thrissur, who is an authority in the faculty of the Indian Writing in English. He suggested that examining ‘Indianness’ from a single dimension would be far from perfection. Instead it should be reviewed from different perspectives based on social, historical, economical, geographical, political, cultural, linguistic and religious aspects. He meant that these aspects should be analysed and found out how they are reflected in the leading Indian English

writers. Then these findings should be compared with the depiction of Ghosh in his novels and it would pave the way to assess how far Ghosh has contributed to highlight Indianness in his novels.

Data collection for this research was done mainly by visiting libraries of the first grade colleges in Thrissur district other than the general and departmental libraries of St. Thomas College, Thrissur. The authorities of other colleges, especially Vimala College, Thrissur and Sree Kerala Varma College, Thrissur permitted me to refer the books in their libraries. Besides, being a former M.Phil student of University of Calicut, I was allowed to refer the Departmental and General libraries of the university.

To prepare a brief summary of the beginning, development, and salient features of Indian Writing in English, I depended mainly K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Indian Writing in English* of Sterling Publishers, Delhi, 1962 edition. M.K. Naik's *A History of Indian English* published by Sahitya Akademi in 1982 also helped me much to outline the evolution of Indian Writing in English. To analyse and evaluate the theme of the Partition, I referred mainly one of the most popular books *Freedom at Midnight* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre published in 1975. Nisid Hajari's *Midnight Furies* published by Penguin Books in 2015, is also very useful to know the unknown truths connected with the fatal consequences of the Partition.

I used the original six novels of Amitav Ghosh as the primary source for my research. At the same time, I read most of his works to get a general view of his themes and narrative techniques, especially his unique way of using English language. In the case of the novel *Sea of Poppies* I am fortunate to avail the Malayalam translation *Aveen Pookalute Kadal* by Anoop Chandran published by D.C. Books, Kottayam in 2015, which is highly usuful for a better and thorough study of the novel. Besides a large number of printed and online

resources like books, journals, periodicals, newspapers, blogs, forums and websites were collected and made use of in this project. Seminars, conferences and workshops related to the research topic were attended and research papers were presented, to have a deeper knowledge on the subject.

The introductory chapter briefly analyses the current status of English in India, the beginning of Indian English Literature and criticism against Indian English Literature. Then the topic of the research 'Indianness in Indian Writing in English: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's Novels' is introduced in general. After that Indianness is analysed in Indian English poetry, prose, short story, drama and novel. Indianness in social, political, historical, religious, economic, geographical, cultural and philosophical aspects of different Indian communities are assessed elaborately. As a case study, six novels of Amitav Ghosh, the postcolonial Indian English writer has been selected and they are: *The Circle of Reason* (1986); *The Shadow Lines* (1988); *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996); *The Glass Palace* (2000); *The Hungry Tide* (2004); and *Seas of Poppies* (2006).

In Chapter II, under the title 'Socio-Political and Historical facets of Indianness and their reflections in Ghosh's novels', Indianness is analysed from the social point of view. There the various age-old social features of the Indian society like caste system, untouchability, male domination in the society, widowhood in Indian society, east-west encounter, cultural interaction between the East and the West, etc. are revealed in detail with proper examples from famous Indian novels. It is pointed out how Ghosh has reacted to these social elements in his novels. In this chapter, the major historical and political events in Indian history are mentioned and how they are depicted in Indian English novels. Freedom Struggle, Gandhism and the Partition of India, communal riots, etc. are generally estimated. It is summarised how Ghosh has viewed these events in his novels.

In Chapter III, under the title ‘Indian elements in the Religious and Economic dimensions and their depiction in Ghosh’s novels’, themes of asceticism and renunciation in the life of Indian society are reviewed. Religion has great impact in the daily life of an average Indian. It is customary for people in India to visit places of worship before and after important occasions in life. It is observed how Ghosh has depicted such Indian situations in life. This chapter also deals with how colonial authorities have exploited India economically. It is clearly mentioned how they have encouraged the migration of Indians to plantations and labour camps in new British colonies. It is also mentioned how they compelled the Indian farmers to stop the cultivation of food crops and encouraged the farming of opium in their fields. The ruthless exploitation of poor Indians by the colonial authorities for their own monetary benefits is uncovered realistically. It is assessed how Ghosh has reacted to this genuine Indian theme.

In Chapter IV, under the title ‘The Geographical and Cultural aspects in India and Ghosh’s Narrations of Them’, our cultural diversity is explained. It highlights the great idea of ‘Unity in Diversity’ in most of the Indian novels. People belonging to different castes, regions and religions stay together at one place. As a dreamer of a new world without any sort of boundaries or limitations, Ghosh describes such situations in his novels. It is estimated how the Indian English novels have described the geographical and climatic features of the subcontinent. The significance of rivers, seas, cities, hills, forests, deserts, etc. is subjected to analysis, as they are reflected in Ghosh’s novels.

Chapter V entitled, ‘Type Characters in Indian English Novels and Their impact on Ghosh’s Novels’ analyses the stereotype characters in Indian English novels and how they influenced Ghosh’s works.The exploited Indian labourer, The Sati-Savithri or Sacrificial Mother Figure, The Memsahib, The Sahib, The Anglicised Indian, the Royal follower to the

British empire, ascetics, etc. are some common characters in Indian English novels. It is explained whether Ghosh has been influenced by such type characters.

Chapter VI, 'Ghosh's Unique Talent in Using English with Indian Native Languages', analyses the changes that happened to the language of English in India. An Indian English writer will have a certain influence of his First Language or native language in his writing in English. Besides, each writer shows his own skill in transliterating an Indian situation or dialogue from native language to English. These aspects of certain eminent Indian English novelists are reviewed and compared with that of Amitav Ghosh.

In Chapter VII titled 'Conclusion',Ghosh's contribution to world literature, Ghosh as a prophet of cosmopolitanism, his attitude towards ecology or environment, his experience as a writer, and his positive and negative utopian thinking are assessed in general. Then the significance of this research is mentioned briefly and observations made in this project are summed up . Indianness is once again briefly examined and their relevance is verified in Indian English novels. From chapters two to four, the various aspects of Indian life, related with social, political, historical, religious, economic, geographical and cultural spheres are examined in detail . Besides, they are compared with the presentations of the same points in Ghosh's novels. This comparative study will help the literary community to find out the greatness of Ghosh as a historian and anthropologist. Chapter V is exclusively allotted to the type characters in Indian English novels. Certainly they have influenced Ghosh's craft as a writer. At the same time, he has been quite successful in presenting such characters with more genuineness. Chapter VI examines the changes happened in Indian English in general and Ghosh's contribution to Indian English as a linguist. In comparison with his predecessors, 'Conclusion' asserts the unique role of Amitav Ghosh in the themes of Indianness and its varied aspects including the style of English language itself. This chapter is concluded with the scope of this research.

Significance of English in the contemporary India

English has become a part of our lives – personal, social and official. It is the preferred language of higher education, advertising, marketing, Indian Parliament, courts, armed forces, etc. Being an international language the power and use of English is increasing day by day. It is the lingua franca of the world wide web and Internet. Countries like Japan and Germany have taken up the initiative to teach and use English in their countries in order to keep pace with the IT revolution worldwide. India is the third largest English-using nation after the USA and UK which has about 35 million users of the language. English has the status of an 'associate' official language in the constitution. It is the state language of four states and of most of the union territories. India has a large network of English print media with a pan-Indian circulation and is one of the world's three major book publishers in English. English happens to be the primary language of inter-regional interaction in India and of course of India's interaction with the outside world. English is fast getting assimilated into Indian languages.

English in India has a long history of growth and development. The discovery of the sea-route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1498 brought the Portuguese and the Dutch to India long before the British. Later, Queen Elizabeth granted the East India Company to start trade relations with India on 31 December 1599. It was the beginning of a new era in the colonial history of India. The East India Company's real aim was to promote business and secure maximum profit. The company had no idea to conquer and rule the land. But the gradual disintegration of the Mughal empire in the eighteenth century gave a golden chance to the company to undertake the rule of the country.

In the beginning, the British rule had no official education policy. Soon the colonial authorities were convinced that there was an urgent need for Indian clerks, translators and

lower officials in administration. So they were forced to initiate the spread of English education among the people of India. The British imperialists encouraged the spread of English education for the smooth functioning of their administration in India. They thought that it would help Indians to assimilate western culture and be loyal to the foreign rulers. However, the natives welcomed English language and began to express Indian sensibility effectively through the language of the colonizer.

Indian English literature began as a by-product of the Indo-British encounter. Indians first started learning English for the purpose of trade and commerce. The beginnings of Indian English writing are not fully documented. Cavelley Venkata Boriah's "Account of the Jains" published in 1809 in a journal has been considered the first published work by an Indian in English. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's essay "A Defence of Hindu Theism" (1817) is the first original publication in expository prose in the history of Indian writing in English. Bengalis have made an outstanding contribution to early prose writing. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote the first Indian novel in English, titled *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864). He wrote several essays in English. With the growth of English education, a large number of Indians started writing distinguished scholarly books. Romesh Chunder Dutt, a member of the Indian Civil Service, translated *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* to English. Swami Vivekananda made great contributions to Indian English prose through his great speeches in the field of religion. He spoke of the spiritual uniqueness of India, and the greatness of Hinduism. He used simple diction and short sentences. Rabindranath Tagore, another Bengali, contributed much to the development of Indian writing in English. Tagore's prose writings in English were primarily in the form of lectures.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the great social and religious reformer of modern India, wrote thirty - two essays originally in English on various subjects within the first three decades of the nineteenth century which are the early prose writings of Indian English Literature.

It is a fact that Indian writing in English continues to be the bone of contention in the Indian literary world even today. Many of its writers have won national and international awards. Even then critics in other Indian languages and many others believe that it is impossible to do creative writing in English since it is an alien language. Its cultural register and verbal associations are simply inaccessible to us. They maintain that it is closely associated with colonial elitism and does not address to any specific community in India. That is why writers like Budha Dev Bose and S.H. Vatsyayan charge Indian English as primarily urban, middle-class and Western-oriented. It stands far away from the reality of rural-ethos and native traditions.

Murali Das Melwani has made the following observation in his book, *Themes in Indo-Anglian Literature* (1977): 'In 1965 alone, out of 20,115 books published in India, 10,438 were in English.' (English in India. 76) He adds:

> 'Besides books, we have a wealth of written material in English. Serious literary magazines - 15 of them published from various cities all over the country - the numerous English newspapers with impressive circulations, all reveal in style and format the high standards we can achieve with what critics call, 'an alien language' ' (77).

During the last few decades Indian Writing in English has gained much importance in the academic field. In the beginning this branch was known as 'Anglo – Indian Literature'. It comprised of the writings of British or Western authors concerning India. Rudyard Kipling, E.M. Forster, F.W. Bain, Sir Edwin Arnold, F.A Steel, John Masters, Paul Scott, M.M. Kaye and many others have all written about India, but the nature of their work apparently belongs to British literature.

Later different designations like ‘Indo-Anglian Literature’, ‘Indo-English literature’, ‘Indian - English Literature’, and finally ‘Indian Writing in English’ were given to this branch of literature. Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar was a pioneer historian and critic of this discipline, and he gave the title to his first book on the subject as follows: *Indo-Anglian Literature* (1943). But when he published a comprehensive study of the subject in 1962, he changed the title as Indian Writing in English. However, the various appellations given to this branch of literature have caused a bit confusion about the content of the discipline. In this context it is better to remember the definition given to Indian English Literature by Prof. M.K. Naik in his book *A History of Indian English Literature* (1982). ‘Strictly speaking, Indian English Literature may be defined as literature written originally in English by authors Indian by birth, ancestry or nationality’ (2). Braj B. Kachru, another authority on Indian writing in English makes the following remark in his book *The Indianization of English* (1983):‘The term Anglo - Indian writing is used with reference to that body of creative writing which focuses on the Indian subcontinent as the central theme, and is written by those who use English as their first language; e.g., E.M. Forster, Rudyard Kipling, John Masters and Paul Scott’ (86). It also implies that translations from different Indian languages into English cannot be considered as part of Indian English Literature, unless they are translated by the same authors. By the above definition the author hints that Indian Writing in English must be a sincere attempt to nativize the English language to express the Indian sensibility. In short, Indian writing in English refers to a body of work written by Indian writers who write in the English language and whose mother tongue is usually one of the numerous languages of India. At the same time, some scholars and critics point out that Indian literature comprises of several prominent Indian languages like Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi, Kashmiri, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, etc. These different languages have their own great tradition in style and content as well as exceptional unity or

harmony. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in translating excellent creative works from native languages to English by eminent Indian English scholars and such works should be included in Indian Writing in English.

Indianness in Indian Writing in English

Indianness is the key feature of Indian Writing in English. It is essentially an important criterion for examining the worth of Indian Writing in English. Really it is an abstract in essence to expresss the problematic issues of identity and cultural politics involved in the production of literary texts. Many dominant races had invaded India and their contributions and legacies have been transformed and assimilated into an Indian cultural past which can be straightforwardly treated as its Indianness. The cultural history of India, according to A.L. Basham, introduces us to the development of India as a cultural concept. That is why, the term 'Indianness' (*Bharatheeyatha*) becomes a common and popular usage in Indian Writing in English. Indianness as a way of life, as a culture, as a socio-political and economic ethos, is highly complicated to be accommodated into a concept. Indianness is an amalgam of various factors like traditions, culture, regions, religions, languages, national identity, civilisation and many other things closely associated with Indian life. Any attempt to conceptualize the idea of Indianness is marred by a variety of matters like caste, region, religion, language, superstitions, food and dress habits, etc. Therefore, its meaning is relative depending on the perspective. However, it is based on the perception that a Nation is not merely geographical or physical, but it is like an individual, a living entity with body, life, mind, soul and with a unique temperament and genius. According to this perspective, to be an Indian , means to be consciously or unconsciously open to and in tune with the soul and mind of India. There the term becomes very complex and complicated because India is a vast country of 1.2 billion people with 29 states, more than 100 languages and dialects. It has a unique socio-cultural heritage where the yellow, brown, white and dark races live together

and mingle easily. There are races like Dravidians, Aryans, Mongloids, etc. and religious followers like Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Zorastrians, Buddhists, Jains, etc. who follow their own beliefs, customs, worship practices, rituals and traditions. The diversity within the country is much greater than the one that is found among the various nations of Europe. Yet underneath the surface of diversity, there are certain commonly shared features, emotions, taboos and sentiments that contribute to a unified vision of Indianness. India has become an amazing land of cultural wonders and paradoxes. There is no exaggeration in the phrase 'Incredible India'. It highlights the most interesting thing about India that India is not located in any one particular place.

'Indianness' is a controversial topic since it has a number of interpretations. Each interpretation has its own sound arguments and hence an average reader is more confused by them. Its source and meaning begin from the history before Christ and we can call it as the ancient concept of Indianness. Its sense is twisted under Mughal and colonial rule. It assumes a wider implication during the freedom struggle and post independent period. This research has tried to analyse each aspect of Indianness in those different stages and make some generalisations.

Ideas and notions are formed historically and culturally. The notion of Indianness thus provides grounds for discussing the relevance of the various cultural forms made available in India through Indian Writing in English. The term 'Indianness' which grammatically suggests an abstract essence that is often used to address the problematic issues of identity and cultural politics involved in the production of literary texts.Generally it is seen that the idea of Indianness has been used, more than anything else, as a representational mode by Indian English writers. It has become a construct of literary devices and practices that intends to critique and represent Indian realities or realities experienced by the Indians. This realization necessitates a reflection not only on the socio-political and

cultural stances of the writer, but also on the relevance of certain narrative traditions, styles and modes of presentations. When we analyse the various aspects of the notions of 'India' and'Indianness', we are forced to go through the historical, topical, literary, journalistic, political and cultural aspects of the narration of Indian English writers.

It is generally agreed that the notion of Indianness has been a perennial source of debate among the critics as well as writers in and outside India since the Independence. Here it is noteworthy how Raja Rao has defined India in his book *The Meaning of India*: ''India is not a country (desa), it is a perspective (darsana): it is not a climate but a mood (rasa) in the play of the absolute - it is not the Indian who makes India but ''India'' makes the Indian, and this India is in all.'' (Rao 17-18) A.K. Ramanujan has made another interesting argument about Indianness in his essay entitled ''Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?''. He says, ''There is no single Indian way of thinking. There are great and little traditions, ancient and modern, rural and urban, classical and folk. Each language, caste and region had its special worldview.'' (Chattarji & Chakravarty, 143) The famous American writer Mark Twain wrote about India that ''India is the cradle of the human race, the birth place of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and the great – grandmother of tradition.''Max Muller said about Upanishad that - ''there is no book in the world that is so thrilling, stirring and inspiring as the Upanishad.''

The above mentioned remarks clearly suggest that there has never been a single definition of India or Indianness. Any reference to India is closely associated with a particular period and 'Indianness' of that period is represented in the specific work.

The very term 'Indianness' reflects the religious practices, beliefs, food habits, dress code, attitudes and the lifestyle of an average Indian. It hints that anything which is associated with an Indian way of thinking and living comes under this term. In spite of the

different historical, racial, social, cultural and religious differences, there are certain things which unite all Indians together and they are collectively known as the salient aspects of Indianness. Eminent writers highlight the diverse traits of Indianness according to their understanding, experience and imagination. We painfully realize that colonial or western historians and critics evaluate Indian life, society and culture from a superficial point of view. That is why they branded India easily as 'a land of snakes and superstitions'.

Harrex says that Indianness of Indian novels in English makes him accepting of the criteria of inwardness, sensibility, values and the deeper life of vision. Besides this, he relates the problem of Indianness to the question of style which, according to him, is a fundamental test of a writer's originality and of his Englishness or Indianness, Americanness or Africanness, as the case may be (13). He has a word of praise for those writers of India who write creatively in English in order to render language with a sensitivity which genuinely evokes those currents and nuances of Indian life that are his sources of vision. Amar Nath Prasad has made the following remark about Indianness like this:

> Today English is not the heritage of only England but it is gaining ground all over the world. Perhaps this is why these days England has changed its conservative domination over English. It has given space to a number of Indian words in the new English dictionary. Recently England has given the prestigious Booker Prize to Arundhati Roy, an entirely home-grown Indian, who portrays a typical Indian society in her debut novel, *The God of Small Things.* This book contains more than hundreds of words of Indian origin, idiosyncratic use of italics and grammatical constructions (1,2).

Poets, novelists, essayists, dramatists, etc. in India have been speaking about India and Indian way of life to the outside world through Indian Writing in English. The British

who came to India in the 17th century brought their culture and religion. These two social forces are so influential that their impacts are still found in Indian literature. The Indian English poets were more obsessed with the matters of culture and religion in their writings during the Pre-Independence period. Then they imitated the style of ‘‘English’’ poets in their content and craft. Besides, they faced the problem of publication of their works because the western publishers were not interested in publishing the works of Indian English poets. Since Independence, the poets freed themselves from the clutches of Englishness and started writing in a very Indian manner, which gives high impetus to Indian literature. Indian English poetry has marked a very promising bright future in the field of literature.

Indian English poetry is very different from its western counter part in the theme, language, style of writing, imagery, etc. Every poet has his/her own source of inspiration or influence. It is this source that makes Indian English poetry ‘Indian’. Indian poets are very much influenced by the Indian culture, customs, traditions, etc. The poet writes mainly for Indian audience and therefore it is his/her responsibility to maintain an Indian appeal, which is likeable to all people. Besides, they have to consider non-Indian readers, and to them the feature of Indianness makes it exotic and gives a deep feeling and experience of real India.

Indian English poetry marked the beginning with Henry Louis Vivian Derozio who was not only a poet but also a teacher of poetry. He was an Indian in a sense , because his mother was an Indian and his father was a Portuguese. He inherited a great love for India from his mother, and a strong prejudice against Hindus and Hinduism from his father. His writings were criticized for being too western and Christian in outlook. However, his writing has stirred many English – educated Indians to write poetry. His poem such as the *Harp of India* shows genuine interest for India.

Indianness is an element of the poem, which shows India through its language, imagery, sensibility, which marks the Indian as 'Indian'. Indianness in a poem is something that is not really definable yet remains a discernible character in Indian English poems. Indianness can be defined in terms of what and how Indians are and what makes what they are. Broadly speaking Indianness is the quality which must be present in the great works of all Indian writers. Some regard Indianness as'' life – attitudes '' and ''modes of perception''. Prof. V.K. Gokak defines Indianness as a composite awareness in the matter of race, milieu, language and religion. A few others think that Indianness is nothing but depiction of Indian culture. Thus, Indianness is the sum total of cultural patterns of India, deep rooted in ideas and ideas which form the minds of India.

Indian poets writing in English around fifties have produced a large number of poems that is often deeply rooted in the traditional Indian sensibility and yet is strikingly modern in its expression. The question of Indianness is not merely a question of the material of poetry but it is tied up with the factor called audience.Indian English poets write not only for Indian audience but also for non-Indian, western audience.Therefore consciously or unconsciously they make use of their Indianness to a greater or lesser extent in their poems. Every human being is influenced by the environment, culture and tradition of his time and place. Just as western poets show their culture, Indian English poets also show the same characteristic. Indian English poets such as A.K. Ramanujan depict the Hindu tradition of cremation and the process of throwing the ashes in the river in his poem, 'The Obituary'. Likewise, Kamala Das wrote 'the dance of the eunuchs' when she saw them dancing on the streets of Calcutta.

For an Indian English poet living in India would really be influenced by the things happening in and around him. In this process what a poet can do is try to be as natural and honest as possible. An Indian English poet expressing an Indian sensibility will speak more authentically and achieve greater depth, and possibly greatness, than by assuming

cosmopolitan stance. The Indian English poet is writing in a foreign language, which was adopted and used by Indians in a very small percentage, most for formal, official or professional purpose, and it is not really a language of the streets. It has been observed that many Indians use English that are outdated and wooden. So it is the responsibility of the Indian English poet to write in a language, which the reader can understand and feel to be real.

Poem such as ‘‘The Railway Clerk’’ by Nissim Ezekiel makes intensive use of English as it is used by Indians. The suffix,‘-ing’ is used in a wrong manner unnecessarily; this is very typical for Indian users of English. The sentence constructions used by Indians are not up to the standard use of language. It is pointed out that a few Indian English poets highlight these drawbacks of Indian English as a vehicle for humour and satire in their poems.The educated Indians writing English poems are ‘bilingual’ or ‘multilingual’ and they interact in several languages other than English.A.K. Ramanujan has published two collections of verse in Kannada and translated some from Kannada toTamil. Kamala Das has written prose in Malayalam. It is natural that the poet’s mother tongue will surely affect, to a greater or lesser extent, the way he or she writes. This aspect of ‘bilingualism’of Indian English poets can be attributed to many Indian words in their poems.

Being Indian English poets they try to represent Indianness in their poems. They increasingly feel the need to evolve an Indian idiom, and not stick to British rule of correctness. When they write about the superstitions of crows or details about the cows, the non-Indian readers think of them as being written for an exotic appeal. The validity of Indian English poetry depends on the creation of a new idiom – Indian English idiom which is distinct from the idioms of the writers all over the world who write in English. It is a fact that the poets like Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Shiv K. Kumar Daruwalla and a few others have succeeded to some extent in creating a new idiom for Indian English. For example, Ezekiel

uses a number of Indian words like ‘‘guru, goonda, burkha, chapatti, pan’’ etc. These words obviously make their writing more Indian in sensibility.

Jayanta Mahapatra depicts the Orian landscape and presents Indian sensibility in his poems. In ‘‘Dawn at Puri’’, Mahapatra underlines the importance of Puri and what it means to the Hindus. Women wish to die at Puri to attain salvation. The worshipping of the widows and their rites, crow’s cawing, the images of the skull indicating the poverty of Indians, etc. are good examples for Indianness in his poems. Similarly, Indian sensibility is strikingly evident in the poems of A.K. Ramanujan. His Indian sensibility is sharpened by his western education and environment. He portrays the Indian scenes, from across the Atlantic, with complete artistic detachment and irony. His poem ‘‘A River’’is a good testimony for a typical Indian English poem. ‘‘A River’’ is Indian in its theme and location. Vaikai River in Madhurai is presented in the poem. The straw and women’s hair clogging the watergates, the stones like buffaloes and crocodiles, etc. are Indian images. The names of the cows taken away by the flood, Gopi and Brinda are typically Indian. Nissim Ezekiel is another Indian English poet who brings out the quality of Indianness in many of his poems. His poem ‘‘The Railway Clerk’’ deals with the relationships between the railway clerk and his wife. The idioms and expressions used in the poem are only possible in India. They show an Indian situation very touchingly and reveal the quality of Indianness convincingly.

Indianness is as inherent and integral to the poet’s true core as the peels of onion. It finds an authentic expression on the levels of both experience and idioms. Beliefs, attitudes, thought processes, perception of the past and present, images, allusions, myths, ritualistic pattern, etc. reflect Indianness in the poems. In short, Indianness is just one of the characteristics of Indian English poems. At the same time, Indianness by itself cannot become a criterion or guarantee of aesthetic value. As an Indian, the poet cannot hope to escape from Indianness even though the Indianness in the poem may be very subtle.

The western education in English brought about a renaissance and a reawakening in India during the colonial rule. This renaissance first broke out in Bengal in the early years of the nineteenth century. The pioneer of the Renaissance in India was Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He was the most articulate spokesman of intellectual opinion in Bengal. He urged his fellow Indians to embrace European civilization through the medium of the English language and literature, and English ideas and institutions. He believed in the worship of One Supreme Soul and was a great humanitarian and a social reformer. Macaulay's *Minute on Education*, which made the study of English a compulsory language in schools in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy welcomed this reform in education wholeheartedly. Soon the traces of the Bengal renaissance could be seen in Madras , Bombay and the other parts of India.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy is regarded as a great Indian master of English prose. His English works are mostly journalistic essays which appeared in his own weekly papers. The essays were on Vedanta, to uphold the quintessence of Hindu religion, on Christianity, on social reforms essential to restore self-respect and dignity of Hindu women as individuals, on political issues, etc. His friends requested him to write a short autobiographical sketch. This sketch is the first exercise in the Indian English literature in a prose style which was later on emulated by Nehru and Nirad Chaudhary. Roy's journalistic articles inspired several Indians and they converted to Christiantity. They began to attack the errors and inconsistencies of Hinduism through journalism.

In Bombay, Bal Shastri Jambhekar, the Sanskrit Pandit began to study English and started an English – cum – Marathi journal to encourage among his countrymen the pursuit of the English literature and to open a field for free and public discussion. In Madras, Gazulu Lakshmi Narsu started a newspaper with the aim of ameliorating the condition of the Hindus. Cavelly Venkata Ramaswami published a biographical sketches of the Dekkan poets, the first literary biography in Indian English literature of about hundred Indian poets in Sanskrit,

Telugu, Tamil and Marathi. So the literary renaissance in India was ushered in by the journalistic articles and pamphleteering.

Bengal and Bombay dominated in the development of English prose. Bankim Chander Chatterjee, the renowned Bengali novelist, wrote essays in English on the Hindu festivals, philosophy, Vedic literature and Bengali litertature. Romesh Chunder Dutt, a pioneer in the literature of travel and literary history, published a history book under the title *A History of Civilization in Ancient India* in three volumes. He wrote another book, titled *The Two Volumes of The Economic History of India*. The trio - Tagore, Aurbindo and Vivekananda – in Bengal contributed much to Indian English prose. Tagore's prose writings were essentially lectures. Sri Aurbindo wrote several prose articles on religions, metaphysical, social, political, cultural and literary subjects. He contributed them to journals and newspapers. Swami Vivekanand stressed the essential unity of all religions and gave an exposition of Vedanta in his lectures abroad.

Gandhi's autobiography *My Experiments with Truth* (1927) translated by Mahadev Desai is an outstanding work in Indian English prose. But some of his lectures in English, for example, the Benares Hindu University speech of 1916, the speech of the Trial of 1922, his English articles in his journals and letters showed Gandhi solidly grounded in the ancient Indian tradition. He possessed a profound moral earnestness which enabled him to rediscover the ethical values of Indian tradition. He applied his findings boldly to the political and social realities of the colonial India.The contemporaries of Mahatma Gandhi who showed their mastery in English prose were Rajagopalachari, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Jayaprakash Narayan, V.D. Savarkar, etc.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the political heir of Gandhi was a public speaker and a prolific writer. His first book *Soviet Russia* is a collection of sixteen articles, which reveal Nehru's

impressions of Russia after his visit in 1927. *Letters from a Father to his Daughter* consists of thirty-one letters written to Indira Gandhi, who then was ten years old. *Glimpses of World History* comprising letters written to his daughter from prison during 1930-1933 is a summary of the world history from the very beginning of the civilization to 1930s. The book reveals Nehru's secularism, his scientific temper and socialist sympathies. Nehru's *Autobiography* is the crowning achievement of Nehru as a writer. The autobiography presents a vivid picture of both the man and his milieu. Many faces of Nehru's complex personality are uncovered in this work: his scientific outlook, his aversion to organized religion, his admiration for Marxism and nationalism. The autobiography also shares Nehru's emotional and imaginative nature and his aesthetic sense. Nehru's sincerity, objectivity and his capacity for self – analysis are also evident in this work.

The Discovery of India (1944) was written by Nehru during his imprisonment at Ahmednagar fort. Nehru surveys the history of India from the times of the Indus Valley Civilization to the 1940s. The book makes clear Nehru's ideas on secularism, democratic socialism and humanism. Nehru's prose reflects the salient aspects of his personality: sincere and idealistic, urbane and cultured, vigorous and graceful, endowed with sharp mind, strong emotions, a feeling for beauty and a keen comic sense. His prose is free from Latinized words and phrases. His language is simple but the choice of words is apt and remarkable. e.g. Tryst with Destiny.

Sir Radhakrishnan was the exponent of religious and philosophical prose. His first work *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* examined Western philosophical thought. His second book *Indian Philosophy* is a comprehensive account of the Indian philosophical thought. *The Hindu view of Life* is a forceful vindication of Hinduism as a way of life and refutes the popular notion that it is only a rigid set of outmoded doctrines and superstitions. *The Future of Civilization* emphasizes the perils of mechanization and

standardization in the modern technological civilization and pleads for a world order based on harmony of the spirit. Radhakrishnan wrote quite a large number of books after India gained independence. Being a good speaker, his style is rhetorical and epigrammatically brief. His sweet-sounding words and phrases affect his sharp argumentation and logic. Radhakrishnan was a bridge builder between the two cultures of the East and the West.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri is the 'Grand Solitary' among Indian English prose writers. His works include *The Autobiogrpahyof an Unknown Indian , A Passage to England, The Continent of Circe* and *To live or not to live*.*The Autobiography* made him suddenly famous. It is acclaimed as a 'national than personal history'. *The Continent of Circe* is described as an 'essay on the people of India'. He has always maintained a sort of love – hate relationship with India and the people of India. His great merit as an intellectual is that he is not ever too lazy to avoid doing his own thinking or too timid to hesitate to give outspoken expression to his views. He has the supreme faith of the moral man in an amoral society.

The genre short story also has made its own contribution to the Indianness in Indian Writing in English. A large number of Indian English short story writers have successfully dealt with new issues like postcoloniality, multiculturality, indegenization, nativism, the social and political agenda of criticism, etc. in their writings. T.L.Natesan, who wrote under the pen name Shankar Ram, is an early short story writer. His stories in *The Children of Kaveri* (1926) and *Creatures All* (1933) deal mostly with the rustic life in Tamil Nadu. A.S. Ayyar published the following collections of stories: *Indian after – Dinner Stories* (1927), *Sense in Sex and other Stories* (1932), *The Finger of Destiny and other Stories* (1932),*Tales of India* (1944) based on ancient Indian legends and *Famous Tales of India* (1954). The plight of woman in traditional Hindu society, condition of young widows, marriage of young girls to old men for money, abandoned or persecuted wives, victims of the dowry system, the absence of birth control, etc. were some of his constant themes.

Mulk Raj Anand has brought about seven collection of short stories :*The Lost child and other Stories* (1944), *The Barber's Trade Union and other Stories* (1944), *The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and other Stories* (1947), *Reflections on the Golden Bed and other Stories* (1953), *The Power of Darkness and other Stories* (1959), *Lajwanti and otherStories* (1966), and *Between Tears and Laughter* (1973). He also published two traditional Indian tales titled as *Indian Fairy Tales* (1946) and *More Indian Fairy Tales* (1961).His short stories reveal a genuine picture to the social and cultural condition of his period.

R.K. Narayan is another talented short story writer in Indian Writing in English. His main short story collections are the following: *Cyclone and other Stories* (1943), *Dodu and other Stories* (1943), *Malgudi Days* (1943), *An Astrologer's Day and other Stories* (1947), *Lawley Road and other Stories* (1956), *A Horse and two Goats (1970).* Gentle irony and innocent humour situations are the salient features of his short stories. He tries to present the inside of the Indian families and strong relationships prevailing among the family members.

Raja Rao has published only a dozen short stories which are collected in *The Cow of the Barricades and other Stories* (1947) and *The Policeman and the Rose* (1978). K.A. Abbas published four short story collections: *Rice and other Stories* (1947), *Cages of Freedom and other Stories* (1952),*One Thousand Nights on a Bed of Stones and other Stories* (1957) and *The Black Sun and other Stories* (1963). Most of his stories favoured militant Leftism. They also reflect his journalistic and film-world experience, both in conception and technique.

When we analyse the history of the evolution of the Indian English prose and short story works, we realize that Indians have mastered the alien language English with perfection. It was in an infant stage during the pre-independence period but now it has grown up . Indian English Literature, unlike the European literature did not begin with poetry but with the political writings of the great social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy. At the

same time, we find a variety of themes prevalent both in the pre and postindependence period. There has been much experimentation in the past and they are ongoing still. That is why, Indian English literature is widely acclaimed and popular with the readers all over the world.

India has a long and fertile history in Drama, starting from Sanskrit plays of Vedic Age. Dramatists of Indian Writing in English have scaled the length and breadth of experimentation in dramaturgy of India during and after independence. As India had been under the colonial shackles for a time period of three hundred years, the colonial language and culture had cast its direct shadow on Indian drama. At the same time, the Indian English dramatists were aware and closely related withmodern trends in literature like Existentialism, Globalisation, Surrealism, Dadaism, Magic Realism and the Post Colonial issues.

The Indian English Drama began in the 18th century when British Empire came and strengthened its political power in India. It started with the publication of Krishna Mohan Banerjee's *The Persecuted* in 1813. It is a social play in which the author tries to present the conflict between the East and the West. The real journey of Indian English Drama begins with Michael Madusudan Dutt's *Is This Called Civilization* which appeared on the literary horizon in 1871. Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, the two great sage-poets of India, are the first Indian dramatists in English worth considering.R.N. Tagore wrote primarily in Bengali but almost all his Bengali plays are available to us in English renderings. His prominent plays are *Chitra, The Post Office, Sacrifice, Red Oleanders, Chandalika, Muktadhara, Natir Puja, The Mother's Prayer*, etc. These plays are firmly rooted in the Indian ethos and ethics in their themes, characters and treatment. Sri Aurobindo's complete plays are *Perseus the Deliverer, Vasavadutta, Radoguna, The Viziers of Bassora and Eric*. Each of these plays is written in five acts.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya added new dimensions to Indian English drama. He sympathizes with the underdogs same like Mulk Raj Anand. His collection of social plays include*The Windows, The Parrots, The Santry Lantern, The Coffin* and *The Evening Lamps*.

D.M. Borgaonkar's *Image – Breakers* (1938) is a problem play that aims to break the conventions of caste system, horoscope, dowry, etc. S.Fyzee – Rahamin's *Daughter of Ind* (1940) portrays the conflict between love and social barriers, featuring a low-caste girl loving an Englishman. Balwant Gargi's *The Vulture Mung – Wa, The Fugitive* and *The Matriarch* deal with themes which are engaging attention of people everywhere.Another dramatic voice on the Indian literary scene that demands attention is that of T. Kailasam. He wrote both in English and Kannada. Though Kailasam is regarded as the father of modern Kannada drama, his genius finds its full expression in his English plays such as *The Burden* (1933), *Fulfilment* (1933), *The Purpose* (1944), *Karna* (1964), and *Keechaka* (1949).Bharati Sarabhai is the modern woman playwright during the colonial era of Indian English drama. She has written two plays *The Well of the People* (1943) and *Two Women* with some considerable measure of success.Nissim Ezekiel's *Three Plays* (1969) including *Nalini: A Comedy, Marriage Poem: A Tragi Comedy* and *The Sleep Walkers : An Indo – American Farce* are considered to be a welcome addition to the dramaturgy of Indian English drama.

Girish Karnad contributed much to enrich the tradition of Indian English theatre. His well – known plays are *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq*, (1962), *Hayavadana* (1970) and *Nagamandala* (1972). He selected themes and plots for his dramas from history, mythology and old legends.Vijay Tendulkar symbolizes the new awareness and attempts of Indian dramatists of the century to depict the agonies, suffocations and cries of man, focusing on the middle class society. In the plays *Silence* !*The Court Is in Session* (1968) and *Ghasiram Kotwal* (1972), the main theme is oppression. *Sakharam Binder* (1972) is a study in human violence amounted to powerful dramatic statement.

It cannot be denied that post-Independent Indian Drama in English has not achieved the same level that poetry and fiction have accomplished. Four reasons are pointed out for this drawback of Indian English drama: (i) Drama is essentially a composite art involving the playwright, the actors and the audience in a shared experience on the stage. (ii) As Srinivas Iyengar attributed ‘‘the failure to the fact that English is not a natural medium of conversation in India.’’ (iii) Lack of living theatre in our country. (iv) The Indian playwrights do not give much importance to the rich and varied Indian dramatic traditions involving the native myth and Indian historical heritage.

There is no exaggeration in saying that today Indian Writing in English has acquired great recognition in English - speaking world and its credit mainly goes to novel. The novel during the colonial period has a different outlook and was more concerned with the problems of the Indian people suffering under the British Yoke. After independence the Indian writers looked at the Indian scene from the postcolonial point of view. Though there were new hopes, the creative writers focussed on the problems of social, economic, religious, political and familial spheres. They selected topics of the Partition, the communal riots after partition, the problem of casteism, the subjugation of women, the poverty of the illiterate masses, etc. as their focal points. Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya, etc. wrote novels of social realism in the fifties.

B.R. Agrawal and M. Sinha assess the Post-Independence Indian English fiction in the preface of their book, *Major Trends in the Post – Independence Indian English Fiction*, like this:

> Like British, American, Australian, Canadian or South African Literature, Indian English Literature highly complex, varied and rich in content and form is at once a literary piece, a social protest and medium of political assertion. So far as Indian

> English novel is concerned, it is one of the voices in which India speaks. The Indian English novelists of the Post-Independence era use not only the thought, imagery and consciousness of their country's milieu but also a familiar rhythm in order to project the growing major trends in Indian milieu.They have successfully projected the growing trends of change in attitude, outlook and aspirations of a nation committed to ameliorate the lot of crores of people living below poverty line and subjected to economic constraints and orthodox social obligations. The complex social forces, historical vicissitudes, individual limitations, East- West encounter, Marxist approach, Gandhi's philosophy and industrial advancement, and other political, religious and cultural issues form the fabric of the Indian English novels of the first and second generation written during forties to eighties (Preface vi).

The first Indian novel in English, *Rajmohan's Wife* by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was published in 1864. But Indian English novel has achieved amazing growth during the last eight decades or so. Salman Rushdie won the Booker Prize for his novel, *Midnight's Children* in 1981. It was the first well-known international award for an Indian English work since the historic Nobel Prize for Tagore's *Gitanjali* in 1936.Vikram Seth was given a fabulous amount as advance against royalty for his novel, *A Suitable Boy* in 1993 and thus he became India's first millionaire novelist. Arundhati Roy secured the prestigious Booker Prize for her debut novel *The God of Small Things* in 1997 and amassed a large amount of money on account of that work. Jhumpa Lahiri's Pulitzer award and Shauna Singh Baldwin's Commonwealth award are the golden feathers of Indian English fiction. All these things have established the fact that Indian English novelists have advanced a lot like their counterparts in English-speaking world. It is also pointed out that Indian English poetry and Indian English drama have taken a long time to achieve their present status, whereas Indian English novel has shown a variety of themes and excellence in narrative skill within a short time.

Generally scholars and critics agree that there are three important stages in the growth and development of Indian English fiction. The first major thrust happened in the mid - 1930's when the big trio -Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao appeared on the scene. They made the real beginning of the Indian English novel. Their novels clearly depicted the socio-economic and political atmosphere of India in those days. Mulk Raj Anand is regarded as the Indian version of Charles Dickens when we analyse the social aspects of his themes. He raises his voice through his works for the downtrodden. His first three novels - *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and A Bud* (1937) - deal with socially and financially inferior people. Mulk Raj Anand wrote more than a dozen novels and all of them are varied in their themes and backgrounds. His novel: *Seven Summers Morning Face* (1970) secured him Sahitya Academy Award for the year 1972. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar sums up Anand's talent like this : "As a writer of fiction, Anand's notable marks are vitality and a keen sense of actuality. He is a veritable Dickens for describing the inequities and idiosyncrasies in the current human situation with candour as well as accuracy" (Indian Writing in English, 356).

Rashipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan seems to be a quite contrast to Mulk Raj Anand in all sense. Anand was born in the North Western part of India whereas Narayan comes from South India. Narayan's mother - tongue is Tamil, he settled down in Mysore, where the regional language is Kannada and he writes in English. When Anand completed his education in Cambridge and London, Narayan had his education entirely in South India. Anand is regarded as the prophet of the poor, Dalits and downtrodden, and he has raised his voice for their betterment through his works. Narayan doesn't raise his voice to anybody in particular, but simply presents his stories with a delicate blend of gentle irony and sympathy. That is why, his novels are called serious comedies, where his genuine social concerns are manifested through his characters and their backgrounds. He looks at the Indian panorama as

a human comedy. He does not highlight any particular social evil. He simply narrates what he sees around him. He is satisfied to present their frettings and struttings without either praise or condemnation.

Besides Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, another Indian who has achieved national and international recognition through writing novels in English during 1930s and 1940s is Raja Rao. His novels are very popular for the elements of Indianness contained in them. He depicts villages before and after the coming of the British. He picturises the impact of Gandhian movement among the people especially in villages. He blends political and religious elements of the contemporary India harmoniously.

The second important stage occurred in the mid-1950s and 1960s when writers like Arun Joshi, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, etc. came out with their works and changed the face of Indian English novel. Arun Joshi was brought up in a family of scholars in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Kansas University and M.I.T in the United States respectively. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *The Last Labyrinth* in 1982. Most of his characters are urban in lifestyle and speak English. Joshi lived a reclusive life and generally avoided publicity.

Anita's mother was a German, Toni Nime and father a Bengali businessman, D.N. Mazumdar. As an Indian woman novelist, Anita Desai is more interested in the interior landscape of the mind than in political and social realities. Most of her plots are sleek and airy dealing with the life of cities. As a writer she has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize for three times. She won the British Guardian Prize for *The Village by the Sea*. In 2014 the nation honoured Anita by awarding her Padma Bhushan. Her characters are mostly women

who have reached different stages in life. Most of them are fragile introverts who succumb to their fate completely.

The most famous of the Indo-Anglian women novelists is Kamala Markandaya. Kamala Markandaya portrays in minute details both the lives of the people and the setting of the selected regions. Of course, she has presented her female characters with greater understanding and sympathy than the males. The confrontation between the East and the West, between India and England is her main theme. Therefore, we find the difference between Indianness and Englishness in her novels.

Another woman novelist who has received considerable attention and the Booker Prize for fiction in 1975 is Ruth Prawer Jhabwala. She was born in Germany of Polish parents but migrated to England just before the war. She received her education in London University, married an Indian architect, and has made her home in New Delhi. She is different from other Indo-Anglian writers in the sense that she has looked at the Indian social scene with an uncommitted eye. As a foreigner her reaction are likely to be different from those of an Indian, but that does not necessarily make her wrong or unsympathetic. Her understanding of Indian things might not be very deep, but at the same time she figured out certain things overlooked by the Indians because of excessive familiarity. The same things are very minutely observed by her. After all, the defects or even peculiarities of a society are more easily and clearly seen by the foreigners than the members of that society.

Being the daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit and niece of Jawaharlal Nehru, Nayantara had a better idea about the contemporary politics than other writers of her age. Of course, politics is one of her two major concerns. The other one is connected with the modern Indian woman's search for sexual freedom and self-realization. Her first novel *A Time to be Happy* (1958) and the next novel *This Time of Morning* (1965) are set in the post-Gandhian era and

witness the collapse of Gandhism. *This Time of Morning* narrates the political events in India in the last phase of Nehru's Prime Ministership. It is regarded as one of the best political novels in Indian English fiction.

The third important stage in the development of Indian English novel came in the beginning of the 1980s. It was then that Indian English writing received international recognition, mainly through writers of Indian origin who have settled abroad. Salman Rushdie, Khushwant Singh, Vikram Seth, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh, etc. are some important novelists of this period.

Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie is a British Indian novelist and essayist. His second novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981), won the Booker Prize in 1981. He combines magical realism with historical fiction; his work is concerned with the many connections, disruptions, and migrations between Eastern and Western civilizations. Khushwant Singh was an Indian writer, journalist and politician. His experience related with the Partition of India in 1947 inspired him to write *Train to Pakistan* in 1956 (made into film in 1998), which became his most well-known novel.

Vikram Seth is an Indian English writer and poet. He has received several awards such as Padma Shri, Sahitya Academy Award, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, WH Smith Literary Award and Crossword Book Award. He has published eight books of poetry and four novels. His first novel, *The Golden Gate: A Novel in Verse* (1986), describes the experiences of a group of friends living in California. It is composed of no less than 690 rhyming tetrameter sonnets (more than 7000 lines). His next novel, *A Suitable Boy* (1993) earned him a universal reputation as a writer. It is the story of a young girl, Lata, set in India in the early 1950s. In this elaborate 1,349-page novel, Seth has combined satire and romance harmoniously. He took almost a decade to complete this lengthy novel which has earned him

comparison with Leo Tolstoy, Charles Dickens and George Eliot. *An Equal Music* (1999) and *A Suitable Girl* (2018) are his other novels.

Shashi Despande is the second daughter of the famous Kannada dramatist and writer Sriranga. She was born in Karnataka and educated in Bombay and Bangalore. Generally Deshpande doesn't write anything sensational or exotic about India. She is not at all interested in the long history of great kings. Similarly, she doesn't write about the grinding poverty of the Indian masses. She is more concerned about emotions especially of women. The woman deprived of love, understanding, and companionship is the main theme in her writings. She believes strongly that the traditional Indian society is biased against woman. At the same time, she recognizes that it is very often women who oppress their sisters based on the beliefs and practices of age-old centuries.

Suzanna Arundhati Roy is an Indian author best known for her debut novel,*The God of Small Things* (1997), which won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 1997 and became the best-seller book by a non-expatriate Indian author. She is also a political activist involved in human rights and environmental causes.

In a review of the novel in *World Literature Today*, G.R. Taneja writes, '' The new Indian English fiction of the eighties is free from the self-consciousness, shallow idealism, and sentimentalism that characterized the work of the older generation of novelists…… who started writing in the thirties. The fiction of the eighties takes a maturer view of Indian reality.''

Amitav Ghosh as a Postcolonial Indian writer in English

Amitav Ghosh is the first Indian English writer who has received the prestigious Jnanpith Award in 2018. This award so far was bestowed upon the eminent writers in different regional languages in India by the Central Government. By declaring this honour to

Amitav Ghosh, the Central Govt. has recognized English as equal to one of the Indian languages. Hitherto English is considered as a colonial language and it has not been encouraged officially.

Ghosh was born in Calcutta on 11 July 1956. His father was first a Lieutenant Colonel in the army and, later, a diplomat. Ghosh grew up in East Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran and India. He attended Doon school in Dehra Dun, and then received a B.A. (with honours) in History from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University in 1976 and an M.A.in Sociology from the same university in 1978. He received a diploma in Arabic from the Institute Bourguiba des Langues Vivantes in Tunis, Tunisia, in 1979, and then a D.Phil (Ph.D) in Social Anthropology from (St.Edmund's Hall) Oxford University in1982. As part of that course, in 1980 he went to Egypt to do field work in the village of Lataifa.

Ghosh worked for a while as a journalist for The Indian Express newspaper in New Delhi. Since then he had been a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Social Sciences at Trivandrum, Kerala (1982-83), a Visiting Professor of Anthropology at the University of Virginia (1988), the University of Pennsylvania (1989), the American University in Cairo (1994), and Columbia University (1994-97), and Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at Queen's College of the City University of New York(1999-2003). In the spring of 2004, he was Visiting Professor in the Department of English at Harvard University. He spends a part of each year in Calcutta, but lives in New York with his wife, Deborah Baker, an editor at Little Brown and Company, and their children, Leela and Nayan.

Ghosh's first novel, *The Circle of Reason*(1986), was written in defence of reason, logic and rationality. He feels that India is a place where irrationality is pursued almost like a religion. Superstitions, blind beliefs, prejudices, etc. prevailing in the collective psyche does not allow any fresh thinking. He published his next novel *The Shadow Lines* in 1988 which

earned him the Sahitya Academy Award for the year 1989.This book is not about any one historical event but about the meaning of such events and their effects on the individuals who live through them. His next work was *In an Antique Land: History in the Guise of a Traveller's Tale* (1993), which was based on his experience in Egypt. Two years later in 1995 he published *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery*. It is a science fiction novel to give an answer to the west's monopoly over scientific discoveries and inventions. It is a metaphysical exploration of identity itself. *The Glass Palace* (2000) is a family saga which describes European greed and the cruelty of colonization. His next novel, *The Hungry Tide* (2004), is set in the Sunderban Islands in the Bay of Bengal which explores the plight of displaced people residing there. There are no borders to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea, even land from water. The tides reach more than two hundred miles inland, and every day thousands of acres of mangrove forest disappear only to re-emerge hours later.

Ghosh's novel *Sea of Poppies* (2008), is the first part of the *Ibis* trilogy. It is a historical fiction, set in the background of Opium War, between British India and China during the 19th century. It narrates two economic and social themes in detail. One is the cultivation of opium as a cash crop in Bengal and Bihar for Chinese market. The other is the transport of Indian indentured workers to work in sugar factories of the British colonies such as Mauritius, Fiji and Trinidad. Along with these two economic themes, Ghosh depicts the present social system in Bengal and Bihar, highlighting with all evil aspects of caste system.

The River of Smoke (2011) is the second part of the *Ibis* trilogy. It continues the narration of incidents on the *Ibis*, which was caught in a storm and eventually ended up in Mauritius. The shipwreck changed the lives of the inmates completely. The novel has a variety of characters belonging to different social, cultural and geographical backgrounds. The plot takes us to Canton, which is one of the primary centres of opium trade. It depicts the hostilities and

resentments that were building up among the Chinese authorities, the opium merchants and the East India Company. The novel begins with three ships - the Anahita owned by Bahram Modi, who was the Parsi merchant from India, the Redruth owned by Fitcher Penrose, which was in an expedition to find rare species and plants from China, and the *Ibis* transporting convicts and indentured labourers - all three of them were caught by a raging storm in the coast of Canton in 1838. The story primarily goes on to deal with Bahram Modi's struggle to become an opium merchant and also foregrounds the difficult life of the convicts AhFatt and Neel.

The third book in the trilogy, *Flood of Fire* (2015), predominantly describes the tension and conflict in the coasts of China with regard to the opium trade and deals with events that lead to the first opium war. The opium trade had been a significant event in history because it changed the destinies of various nations built up with that money. However, there are very few fictional works to recreate such a momentous event in history. The characters in this novel belong to different groups, communities and professions.They are Havildar Kesri Singh and Captain Mee, soldiers in the British army, the adulterous relationship of Mrs. Burnham with Zachary Reid, the Parsi community, and especially the life of an enterprising yet essentially lonely lady Shireen Modi, people of mixed blood such as Ah Fatt and Reid, and the chronicler of the times, Neel. We also have a lot of subaltern characters, merchants as well as persons in position of power who offer the reader multiple perspectives from which to interpret the history of the times.

Being a postcolonial Indian English writer who has lived and worked in different parts of the world, Ghosh is the right person for analysing Indianness in creative writing. He has introduced a large number of characters and their lives belonging to different countries. He has proved through his writing that people can migrate and live in any part of the modern world. Thus he stands for internationalism or a new world without frontiers. His themes and

characters are best testimonials for his universal concept. Besides, his father, Lieutenant - Colonel Shailendra Chandra Ghosh,fought in the Second World War as an officer of the 12th Frontier Force Regiment, a unit of then British - Indian Army. Thus the boy Amitav Ghosh got direct genuine tips from his own father about the nature of British colonization and imperialism. He has presented them in his works realistically with his high command in English, narrative skill and imagination. Thus they become proper examples for Indianness in Indian Writing in English.

Makarand R. Paranjape has made a noteworthy remark about how Ghosh has created his stories:

> ‘‘They are built from scraps of information or factoids painstakingly strung together, then transformed by creative desire that imaginatively reconstructs them, imbusing them with an independent existence, breathing life into them’’. (117)

M. Asaduddin, while making a review of the book *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspectives* edited by Brinda Bose, he introduces Ghosh like this:

> ‘‘Amitav Ghosh is the most prominent name in Indian English writing today. From *The Circle of Reason* to *The Glass Palace* he has built up an impressive *oeuvre* that will ensure him a permanent place in the hall of literary fame. A deep sense of history, contemporary politics and human destiny inform his writings and characterise the writer and the man.’’(184)

James Clifford begins his book *Routes* with a commendation of Ghosh’s resistant means of doing ethnographic research:

> ‘‘Amitav Ghosh – a native of India educated at an ‘ancient English university’ who has done anthropological field work in Egypt – evokes an increasing

> familiar situation. This ethnographer is no longer a (worldly) traveller visiting (local) natives, departing from a metropolitan centre to study in a rural periphery. Instead, his 'ancient and settled' fieldsite opens on to complex histories of dwelling and travelling, cosmopolitan experiences. Since the generations of Malinowski and Mead, professional ethnography has been based on intensive dwelling albit temporary in delimited 'fields'. But in Ghosh's account, fieldwork is less a matter of localized dwelling and more a series of travel encounters. Everyone's on the move, and has been for centuries: dwelling-in-travel.''(2)

A Brief Summary of the Six Selected Novels of Amitav Ghosh

1.The Circle of Reason (1986)

Ghosh's first novel *The Circle of Reason* (1986) was enormously popular in India but it didn't receive high enthusiam in the West. Really this novel depicts the social and political conditions in the post colonial India. The novel covers the middle decades of the twentieth century, the period of decolonization, and it concludes in the 1980s. More precisely, much of the story *The Circle of Reason* is set against the backdrop of the Bangladeshi war of independence in 1971. The protagonist of the novel is Alu, an orphan, who is involved in a quarrel between his foster father and the village strong man who is a police spy. The police falsely identify him as a dangerous rebel and set a special agent on his trail. When Alu flees to a Gulf kingdom, Assistant superintendent of police Jyothi Das, is assigned as a police detective to pursue him.

The plot of the novel is broadly classified into three parts most matchingly. In the beginning Alu's eccentric misadventures in India are narrated. Then it explains what he does in Al-Ghazira. Finally it reveals his life in Algeria. Apparently the reader sympathises largely

with Alu, who is an entirely innocent fugitive from the police. The other character Das also gets impression of the reader mainly because he has been recruited into the police force rather reluctantly. He is more interested in observing and drawing rare birds than in tracking convicts and criminals among human beings. By the end of the novel, Das abandons his pursuit and resigns his job.

2. *The Shadow Lines* (1988)

The central theme of the novel is that the line dividing past and present is only a shadow, that the past lives in the present and the present is shaped by the past. The title spells out another theme, that is, identical realities across territorial borders which were originally meant to mark out differences, or across communities that are imagined to be different turn out mere shadow lines. Ghosh draws attention to the vagueness of national boundaries with regard to the subcontinent, and questions the types that have defined the assumptions of nationhood. Besides Ghosh thinks that space and time too are shadows, misty categories of habitual perception.

An unnamed narrator tells the whole story in this novel. There are only two parts in this book: (i) Going Away and (ii) Coming Home. There is no chapterwise or sectionwise narration. There are two families in the background of the novel – The Datta Chaudhuries of Bengal and Prices of London. When the narrator explains his relationship with the members of the above-mentioned families, two love affairs - Tridib and May Price, and Nick Price and IIa - are revealed in full detail. Both affairs end in tragedy. With the affairs narrated above we pass through three distinct places in the world - Bengal (India), Dhaka (Bangladesh) and London (England). When we go deeper into the novel, we get a few unforgettable glimpses of some historical events -the freedom movement in India and the rise of insurgency in Bengal, England’s war against Germany, the Chinese aggression and the Indo-Pak War, the

desecration of Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar in 1963, and the communal riots in Khulna. Though the narrator mentions a number of persons, three of them play a significant influence in his life: his uncle Tridib, IIa whom he loves in vain and Tha'mma, his grandmother.

The novel has a first-person narration, but unusually, it is not the narrator's life and experience that is narrated. To the very end of the novel we are never told his name. We know who his parents are, who his friends are, relatives and neighbours are.Yet, we do not know his name. The logic of the novel demands that we should not. To a large extent, his uncle Tridib's experience that forms the subject of narration. It is very clear in the opening lines of the novel: ''In 1939, thirteen years before I was born , my father's aunt, Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib''.The action of the novel, thus starts with the eight years old Tridib being taken to England in 1939 and ends in 1964 when he is murdered by a street mob near his mother's original family home in Dhaka.

3. ***The Calcutta Chromosome*** (1996)

Amitav Ghosh's third novel,*The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), a complicated lengthy one is based on the historical figure Surgeon – Major Ronald Ross and his discovery of the source of malaria, which took place in Calcutta in 1898 and which won him the Nobel prize for medicine in 1902. In this third novel Ghosh experiments successfully his ideas on science, fiction, philosophy, and sociology. It earned Ghosh the prestigious Arthur C. Clarke Award for science fiction and thus he became the first Indian writer winning such an award.There are three parallel searches in this novel; the first one is that of an Egyptian clerk, Antar, who was working alone in a New York apartment in the early years of the twenty – first century. He was trying to trace the advantures of L. Murugan, who disappeared in Calcutta in 1995. The second search is related to Murugan's obsession with the missing links in the history of malaria research. The third and last search is related with that of Urmila Roy, a journalist in

Calcutta in 1995. Urmila is doing research on the works of Phulboni, an eighty- five years old writer, who produced a strange cycle of ‘‘Lakhan stories’’ that he wrote in the 1930s but suppressed thereafter. Murugan, an employee of a Health Organization, finds the circumstances of Ross’s discovery incongruous and gets involved in searches to find out the truth. His investigations take him to Calcutta where he vanishes and reemerges years later on the computer screen of a former colleague of his, Antar. Murugan feels doubts on official science and history and puts together bits and pieces trying to uncover what have been left out by the official reports**.**

4. *The Glass Palace* (2000)

The Glass Palace is a historical novel about three generations of two closely linked families in Burma, India and Malaya from1885 to1956. It happens in the background of the British colonization of Burma. The novel has hundreds of characters but one of the protagonists is an 11-year-old orphan boy named Rajkumar. He is a refugee from India endowed with an entrepreneurial mind and a romantic heart. He begins his life as an assistant in a small food-stall run by a woman called Ma Cho who was half Indian. Later he rises to the level of a great timber merchant in Burma.

The novel begins with the Anglo - Burmese war of 1865. The story starts from the British Raj in Mandalay, the capital of Burma. As the Burmese soldiers didn’t defend the British sincerely, Burma’s king, King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat, and all their family members were under the control of British soldiers. The Burmese publicly viewed the palace with great awe and respect till then. They didn’t dare to enter the palace. But when they happened to know the defeat of the Burmese king, thousands of people rushed to its wide halls and looted whatever they saw there. They took away highly valuable crystals and mirrors, and they sold them in black market later. Similarly, the British soldiers, most of them were Indians, in charge of shifting the king’s precious jewels and costly ornaments from the

palace to the ship tried to pilfer what they could. The British authorities tactfully conquered countries and exiled all royal members to distant places in order to erase them completely even from public memory at home. They chose Ratnagiri in India as the place of the exile for them.

Rajkumar meets Dolly, a 10 year - old beautiful girl who is the favourite servant of the queen in The Glass Palace when the royal family is taken into exile in India. He falls in love with her instantly. He decides that he will make enough money in order to marry her later.While serving in Ma Cho's tea stall as an assistant, Rajkumar gets chance to contact with Saya John, a gentleman from east Asia (China) to whom Ma Cho has an attachment. Saya John also is an orphan like Rajkumar and he was brought up by Catholic priests in Malacca. Now he is a contractor supplying teaks from Malacca. His Chinese wife from Singapore died two years before. He has a little son called Matthew.Though Ma Cho wants to marry him, he says that he will never marry again.

The second part of the novel describes royal family's life in exile in Ratnagiri,a small fishing village in the suburbs of Bombay. Though King Thebaw is initially distraught in exile, soon he adjusts himself to the new living situation under British officials. Queen Supayalat is totally restless as she has lost all her social prestige. She finds it very difficult to manage her family with the ration allowed by the British. However, the villagers have received the royal family as the prominent figures in their place. A new ambitious collector, Beni Prasad Dey, reaches to Ratnagiri from the British India government and changes the social scene in the place completely. He threatens each and everyone around him. Dolly, the wife of Rajkumar, questions some actions of the new collector. But Uma, the collector's wife, apologizes for her husband's ruthless behaviour. Meanwhile Rajkumar becomes a young man and his close association with Saya John and his son, Doh Say, helps him to be a successful businessman. When he earns enough money, he tries to find out Dolly whom he had seen as a

maid of Queen Supayalat years before. Both of them are in their early 40s. He finds out that she is now employed at the collector's house in Ratnagiri. He goes there, meets Dolly, proposes her and persuades her to move back with him to Burma.

Rajkumar and Dolly get married. They do have two children, Neel and Dinu. Rajkumar's several timber ventures flourish. During World War I he tried his luck in rubber industry. It offers him double fortune. Unfortunately, during the World War II his business empire began to show the signs of decline. Japan invaded British Malaya and they did not show any mercy to the business ventures of the locals.They seized all assets of Rajkumar. Soon his family is ruined completely.

5. *The Hungry Tide* (2004)

The Hungry Tide, Amitav Ghosh's fifth novel, is appreciated widely as an ecological novel. It depicts a contemporary story of dislocations, disjunctions and destabilization. He combines his deep knowledge in anthropology, environmentalism, migration, travel, ethnogrphy, photography and landscape with his unique talent in fiction writing in this novel. Comparing to his previous masterpiece novel, *The Glass Place,* it is smaller in design and limited in the number of characters. This story happens only in one region – Sundarbans – a vast archipelago of islands lying below Calcutta on the gulf between India and Bangladesh. As a writer Ghosh raises his serious apprehension in this work about decay and degradation of the rich environment of the Sunderbans by careless activities of the humans. At the same time, he depicts the plight of the poor living in the most uninhabitable forests of the Sundarbans in West Bengal, particularly the island of Morichjhapi. It is the home of the Bengal tiger,which has killed thousands of people. Being an endangered species, the government has taken steps to preserve its natural environment.

This novel is devided into two sections – The Ebb: Bhata and The Flood: Jowar. Each section consists of several small chapters, dealing with a particular incident. It tells the story of Indo-American cetologist Piya Roy, who comes to the tide country of the Sundarbans in Bengal to study river dolphins. She is drawn into a strange love triangle involving the local fisherman Fokir, who helps her to locate dolphins in remote Garjontola pool. The other man is Kanai Dutt, a Delhi dilettante, who is visiting his aunt, Nilima.

Years earlier, Nilima's husband, the Marxist teacher Nirmal, had become involved in aiding and assisting a displaced refugee population who had settled on the Sundarbans island of Morichjhapi. Among these refugees was Kusum, mother of a then infant Fokir. In another love triangle, Nirmal had been motivated to help the refugees out of love for Kusum, who was also being assisted by Horen. Later Kanai returns to the tide country from Delhi to read a 'lost journal' written by his dead uncle, Nirmal. This recounts the final hours before Morichjhapi island was forcibly cleared of refugees by police and military troops following a protracted siege. Kusum was killed in the resulting massacre. At the conclusion of the novel, Fokir also is killed – in a cyclone, while guiding Piya on one of the tide country's many remote waterways. In an odd resolution, Piya decides to continue her acquatic research in the tide country, and asks Nilima to help her set up research trust, as a memorial to Fokir. She also asks Kanai to be her partner in this venture.

Ghosh has revealed his experience of writing *The Hungry Tide* in an interview with Alessandro Vescovi following the Pordenonelegge literary festival:

> 'What I liked most about writing *The Hungry Tide* was just spending time in the Sundarbans. With those people it was so beautiful to hear the language around me all the time and to hear the songs. It was such a wonderful thing to experience the simplicity of that life, because people like me, in Bengal, we all

> come from a peasant background. And I certainly feel a very deep sense of connection with that sort of life …..If I was to write ten books like *The Hungry Tide*, it would never do justice to the absolute magic of being there at night with the tide changing under, the moon, and to hear the tiger nearby. And you know, the quality of one's interaction with the fishermen-there is something so lovely in it, something so beautiful about the texture. I suppose you can experience that if you go to some rural part of Italy. It is something you cannot experience as a tourist. It is because I am Bengali, because I am of a certain age that they can interact like that with me. With that sort of simplicity and openness and a kind of trust.'(140)

6. *Sea of Poppies (2006)*

Sea of Poppies is a historical fiction, set in the background of Opium War, between British India and China during the 19th century. It narrates two economic and social themes in detail. One is the cultivation of opium as a cash crop in Bengal and Bihar for Chinese market. The other is the transport of Indian indentured workers to work in sugar factories of the British colonies such as Mauritius, Fiji and Trinidad.The novel is divided into three parts: 'Land', 'River', and 'Sea'. In the first section 'Land', the characters who were somehow related to the story are introduced along with the ship. The second part 'River' centres on the activities of the owner of the *Ibis* in Calcutta and also some of his friends. The third part 'Sea' is concerned with the inmates of the ship as it leaves Calcutta and moves on towards its destination in Mauritius.

The name of the ship is the *Ibis*, a schooner that was formerly a slave carrier between Africa and America. As the slave trade has been banned, it is rebuilt befitting to carry indentured workers from colonized countries to new colonies. Several main characters come

together in the schooner who belong to different strata of the society.Kalua, an untouchable man from a socially ‘lower’ class, rescues Deeti, a ‘high caste’Hindu widow, from her husband’s funeral pyre. They elope from their native village and get married. They fear the anger of her dead husband’s relatives, become indentured workers to Mauritius and aboard the schooner. Another character Zachary Reid, who is the second officer (foreman) in the *Ibis*, is a mulatto from Boston. He has concealed his mixed-race status from his British employers, fearing discrimination and loss of livelihood. Paulette, another character is a runaway orphan French girl escaping from her British foster family also seeks refuge aboard the *Ibis*. Jodu is a Muslim lascar in the ship who feels attachment to Munia, a Hindu girl and both of them become victims to the wrath of religious bigots on the ship. Neel Rattan, the Raja of Raskhali, accused of forgery is being taken to a jail across the black water as a part of capital punishment. Ah Fatt, an ugly man is the co-convict of Neel Ratan. This first novel of his trilogy ends on a dramatic note of suspense and excitement. The ship faces a great danger in the mid-sea, with half of them trapped on board, and the remaining adrift on a raft amidst a stormy ocean. Ghosh makes use of this long array of characters to depict Indianness in its genuine grandeur.

Chapter II

The Socio-Political and Historical facets of Indianness and their Reflections in Ghosh's Novels

As one of the ancient civilizations of India, its society has its own peculiarities like others. The word 'society' refers to people in general, living together in communities.These communities are formed based on region, customs, race, caste, religion, language, etc. Each community has its own way of thinking, living, tradition, practices and general aims. So it becomes a great task for a novelist to know the social background of each community to narrate his story realistically and effectively. Besides, the novelist must be able to trace out the changes taken place in the life and vision of those communities. Generally, writers raise their voice against the evil customs and outdated practices prevailing in a community, convincing the readers narrating realistic pictures from actual life.

The caste system has been practised in the Indian society for centuries. It originated in the division of functions and responsibilities of agrarian societies among the Aryans. They divided all members of the society into four castes - the Brahmin (priest),the Kshatriya (soldiers and feudal lords), the Vaishya (farmers and shopkeepers) and the Sudra (menial job - doers). Later the Sudras became the outclass in the society and they were forced to do the menial jobs like removing human excrements. Besides, its members were forbidden entry into the temples and they were punished severely for any sort of physical contacts with upper caste Hindus. That was how they were known as untouchables. Thus, untouchability became a salient feature of the Aryan society. In order to maintain such a system, the responsible persons of the society encouraged segregation and curtailed free mingling among the people.

The phenomenon of caste system has always been more controversial than any other aspects of Indian social and cultural life. Since the days of the British rule both historians and anthropologists referred to India as a 'caste society'. Many point out that this is an overstatement about the importance of caste in Indian society. At the sametime, we know that if a person is born as a low caste, he has to remain an untouchable till his death. Such a person is not allowed to learn Sanskrit or any kind of scripts or even Vedas, to equip himself with the power of knowledge to improve his lot. His'dharma' is to work always for the upper-caste. For several centuries, caste constituted the core of social life in India. Yuval Noah Harari, the anthropologist and philosopher makes the following remark about caste system in India in his most famous book,*Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*:

> The Hindu caste system and its attendant laws of purity became deeply embedded in Indian culture. Long after the Indo-Aryan invasion was forgotten, Indians continued to believe in the caste system and to abhor the pollution caused by caste mixing. Castes were not immune to change. In fact, as time went by, large castes were divided into sub-castes. Eventually the original four castesturned into 3,000 different groupings called jati (literally 'birth'). But this proliferation of castes did not change the basic principle of the system, according to which every person is born into a particular rank, and any infringement of its rules pollutes the person and society as a whole. A person's jati determines her profession, the food she can eat, her place of residence and her eligible marriage partners. Usually a person can marry only within his or her caste, and the resulting children inherit that status (155, 156).

It is true that great reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Bhimrao Ambedkar, etc. have tried their best to abolish the horrible caste system and its associated social evils like untouchability, childmarriage,

fundamentalism, fanaticism, etc. Though they interfered effectively to discourage the above-mentioned social evils they could not uproot them completely from Indian society. Even after seventy years of independence these evil customs andpractices are continued. The constitution of free India has forbidden the practice of untouchability in any shape or form. Besides, it has granted to Harijans, special privileges and safeguards in order to ensure equality of treatment and status to them. There is provision for reservation to the posts in government services. Special facilities have been granted to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes regarding their representation in the public services. Various voluntary organisations have come forward to ensure equal status for them. Educational facilities such as free tuition, stipends, scholarships and the provision of free books, stationery and other equipments have been assured. Concessions such as exemption in age limits, relaxation in standard of eligibility and qualifications, selection on minimum-efficiency basis and inclusion for promotion have also been extended to them. Despite all these administrative steps and social efforts, this cancer in our society has not been completely eradicated. The Indian English writers have selected these themes in their works and presented them very touchingly to make reformation in the attitude of the society.

Many Indian English novelists have raised their voice against this inhuman injustice prevailing among Indian society. They have mixed imagination with sharp realities harmoniously. Their novels depict the deplorable condition of the untouchables, the atrocities inflicted on them by the caste Hindus and their humble position in the society. The prominent among them and their works are the following:

Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (1935)

R.K. Narayan, *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955)

Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, *The Nature of Passion* (1956)

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (1997)

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* is an indictment against the cruelty and prejudices of the higher caste people towards the lower castes. This work is regarded as one of the first strong protests against the horrible caste system in Indian society. It questions the mode of disposal of the garbage by a particular section of society called 'untouchables'. The novelist records honestly the wretched living conditions and unhygienic surroundings of the low caste people.

R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for Mahatma* highlights the miserable plight of the untouchables and records the atrocities inflicted on them by caste Hindus. The Harijan Colony where Gandhi stayed with the city sweepers was the worst area of the town. There the huts were just hovels put together with rags. The scavengers living there did all the menial works for the upper class including the removal of nightsoil. But the municipal council didn't extend any of its services to the poor people living in those gutters. The novelist comments, "Deep into the night, their voice could be heard, for alms, in all the semi - dark streets of Malgudi" (37).

Ruth Prawer Jhabwala depicts another negative aspect of caste system in her second novel *The Nature of Passion*. The protagonist in this novel is Lalaji who is a typical high caste Hindu businessman. He makes use of his high caste connections to flourish his business kingdom. Even in the marriage of his youngest daughter he gives more importance not to her will and pleasure, but to his caste, religious and business interests. The novelist hints that caste system in India is used ruthlessly by many not to keep the purity of their races but as a means to make more money.

The harmful aspects of caste system prevailed in India, especially in Travancore of Kerala, is clearly brought out in the novel, *The God of Small Things*, by Arundhati Roy. Most

of the Indian English novelists present caste system as an integral part of the Hindu way of thinking and living. But Arundhati Roy connects it with Christianity and shows how it functions in the so-called Christian communities. She introduces Velutha, a young untouchable boy belonging to Paravans community among the low - caste Hindus, as the representative of outcastes in the society. The problem of untouchability and the condition of the Paravans reflect Indian social realism in the novel. Mammachi remembers how the Paravans were treated in her childhood:

> Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their foot prints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprint. In Mammachi's time, Paravans like other untouchables, were not allowed to cover their upper bodies, not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed. (74)

The untouchables were not permitted to enter into the houses of upper caste through the front door. That is why Velutha comes to Pappachi's house through the back door.The Paravans are not allowed to touch the household articles used by the high caste people. Both Velutha and his father are humble servants very much servile to Pappachi's family. Velutha has an illegal affair with Ammu, a divorcee of two children. When Baby Kochamma happens to know their relationship, her reaction is something unimaginable. She says, "How could she stand by the smells: haven't you noticed, they have a particular smell? These Paravans." (78) This sentence is enough to throw light about the attitude of other people towards the untouchables in Kerala. The situations presented in the novel about the pitiable condition of these people are more or less the same in other states of our country even in our modern times.

Caste system and untouchability in Ghosh's novels

Ghosh depicts the real picture of the caste system prevalent in India during the19th century in the first few chapters of the novel, *Sea of Poppies*. Untouchability, a social evil closely associated with caste system prevailed strongly among the residents of the village. According to this practice, if a higher caste individual happens even to view an untouchable quite accidently, it would pollute him. So Hukam Singh, the husband of Deeti, an upper-class Hindu takes special attention not to view Kalua, his carriage driver an untouchable, while travelling in his bullock cart going to the opium factory in Ghazipur, three miles away:

> Kalua, the driver of the ox-cart, was a giant of a man, but he made no move to help his passenger and was careful to keep his face hidden from him: he was of the leather-workers' caste and Hukam Singh, as a high - caste Rajput, believed that the sight of his face would bode ill for the day ahead. Now, on climbing into the back of the cart, the former sepoy sat facing to the rear, with bundle balanced on his lap, to prevent its coming into direct contact with any of the driver's belongings. Thus, they would sit, driver and passenger as the cart creaked along the road to Ghazipur conversing amicably enough, but never exchanging glances (4).

The cruelty done to the untouchables by the upper class surpasses all our imagination. There were three young scions, thakur - sahibs in Ghazipur, who were much addicted to gambling. They heard about Kalua's physical prowess and promised him an ox-cart for participating in the wrestling matches on behalf of them. He became victorious in all those matches. Eventually he suffered his first defeat in the presence of the Maharaja of Benares. The three landlords humiliated him at first mating him with a well-known prostitue, Hirabai.

Later they forced him to mate with a large black mare. They enjoyed themselves much the cruel scene:

> Suddenly, with a swish of its tail, the mare defecated unloosing a surge of dung over Kalua's belly and thighs. This excited yet more laughter from the three men. One of them dug his whip into Kalua's buttocks: Arre Kalua! Why don't you do the same?(57).

Even the colonial people were passive to the injustice done in the name of caste.Bhyro Singh, the foreman of the *Ibis* seeks permission for sixty lashes to be inflicted on Kalua the untouchable for his elopement with Deeti, an upper caste widow, and his wish is granted by the British Captain of the *Ibis*. The captain was sure that Kalua would certainly die before the flogging came to an end.

Ghosh has done his best as a writer to criticize the traditional caste system in India. There is no exaggeration in saying that he performs the role of a social reformer, especially in the case of caste system. He has applied this commitment to abolish our caste system in his writing wherever it is possible. It is directly evident in the novel *The Calcutta Chromosome*.

The narrative of the story develops at three different levels. In the first one comes Antar, an Egyptian computer clerk who works day and night all alone on his super intelligent computer named Ava. He tries to relocate the adventures of an India born American scientist L. Murugan. He tries to find out the reason behind the incomprehensible fact that Murugan disappeared in Calcutta in 1995. The second level of the story – line is true and historical which revolves around the British Scientist Ronald Ross, who discovered the manner in which Malaria is conveyed by the mosquito in 1902. The third level describes the super human powers of Mangala and Laakhan. At this level Ross's achievement is reduced to a

mere, subordinate activity which, is controlled by more potent power of Mangala and Laakhan.

Ghosh mentions that an Austrian clinician Julius Von Wagner Jauregg was actually ahead of Ronald Ross on malaria research. But even before the Austrian in the 1890s, Mangala, a sweeper woman had achieved remarkable success in this field. Mangala and Laakhan belong to the very lowest rung of Hindu caste system. Mangala of the sweeper caste is worshipped in blood and flesh as well as years after as an image.Ghosh believes strongly that the great supporters of truth, science and higher knowledge can be a 'dhooley bearer' like Laakhan and a sweeper woman Mangala. He demolishes the false concept that class superiority and right to knowledge go together. Here is wishful undoing of Indian caste system and an assertion of the right to knowledge irrespective of class, caste, creed, culture and colour. Twice in the course of the novel, Laakhan is shown as a torch bearer; metaphorically a bearer of knowledge. Ghosh further universalizes the theory by making people of all religious background accepting the entire drama. Hindus (Murugan, Sonali,Urmila) , Muslims (Saiyad Murad Hussain alias Phulboni, Antar) and Christians (Mrs. Aratounian and Countess Pongracz) – all accept the transmigration of souls.

As a philanthropist and writer, Ghosh has raised his voice against this inhuman social practice in his novel *The Hungry Tide*. While narrating the history of the island of Lusibari, he highlights his displeasure on the caste system in India. Sir Daniel Hamilton, a Scottish colonialist, had bought ten thousand acres of the Sundarbans from the forestry department in order to establish a community with new agricultural projects. He invited deprived people to come and settle in his estate on one condition that there would be no caste system and no tribal self rules. Ghosh writes,

‘Everyone who was willing to work was welcome, S’ Daniel said, but on one condition. They could not bring all their petty little divisions and differences. Here there would be no Brahmins or Untouchables, no Bengalis and no Oriyas. Everyone would have to live and work together’. (HT, 51).

Despite the crocodiles, tigers , snakes and dangerous tides in the Sundarbans, many desperately poor people accepted his call and came to live in this semi –communist region where the inhabitants shared all their possessions. Sir Daniel Hamilton built a house in the new settlement called ‘Lusibari’, a pidgin version of ‘‘Lucy’s House’’. Lucy was Hamilton’s wife who had sadly died on her way from England to join him in a shipwreck. Though she never came to the house that had been built for her, people used to call it Lusi’rbari. Later they preferred its shortened form ‘Lusibari’ and that was how the island got the name.

There is good resemblance to Fokir in *The Hungry Tide* and Velutha, an ‘‘untouchable’’ in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*. It is found that like Fokir, Velutha possesses a special connection to the river that runs through the village of Ayemenem where the story happens. Fokir dies in a natural disaster and Velutha meets his death due to cruel torture in a local police station. Roy presents Velutha to Ammu through these words: ‘‘As he rose from the dark river and walked up the stone steps, she saw that the world [his feet] stood in was his. That he belonged to it. That it belonged to him. The water. The mud. The trees.The fish. The stars. He moved so easily through it (Roy 333-34). Ghosh presents Fokir as having the ‘‘river in his viens’’ and the unique capacity to see ‘‘right into the river’s heart.’’ Both Fokir and Velutha know well their local surroundings and every objects around them and they represent indigenous wisdom. Shakti Jaising has made an interesting observation about these two characters in his essay:

> Following his (Velutha) death and in the context of Ayemenem's increasing destruction by the tourism industry, Velutha emerges as a symbol of lost wholeness. Like *The God of Small Things*, *The Hungry Tide* responds to the devastation of rural ecology and culture by depicting Fokir as bearing an organic and stable connection to the natural world.(81)

Deeti is the first character presented in the opening of both *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke*. She is an illiterate and widowed poppy farmer from Bihar who is endowed with a gift of vision. She has been familiar only with a landlocked existence in her native province. She experiences a complete strange situation of the *Ibis*. Francoise Lionnet has made an interesting observation about how Ghosh has presented the histories of slavery and indenture through fictional characters:

> 'As nerve center of the coolie trade and final destination of several central characters(of Indian, Chinese, African, American, and European descent) in the *Ibis* trilogy, Mauritius is a narrative thread that runs through *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke*. In both volumes, Deeti sets the tone: we learn that after being widowed, she was saved from certain death by sati and signed up to join the *girmitiyas* (indentured) travelling to the plantations of Mauritius. Her drawings serve as an alternate form of narration and insight in Ghosh's trilogy, as he successfully brings together the histories of slavery and indenture.'(306)

Ghosh's medium of expression is English. For many years he has been based in New York. Thus he remains physically and emotionally connected to America and, outside India. It is a fact that his popular and academic audience is primarily the Anglo-American world. Even then Ghosh decisively and continuously interpolates Asia into U.S.literature and

consciousness. India is absolutely central to his output, his interpretation of it is heavily localized. Presenting Indian characters, especially Bengali and West Bengal setting, he demonstrates his real commitment to his motherland. Ruth Maxey, the critic has mentioned Ghosh's this aspect in his article, ''Beyond National Literatures: Empire and Amitav Ghosh'' in the following words:

> 'Ghosh's belief in a collective Indianness is reflected in *The Hungry Tide*, where the tide country seems to offers freedom from caste, the promise of social mobility and Indian belonging for NRIS, and in *Sea of Poppies*, where the indentured collective on board the *Ibis* allows a common Indianness to prevail over old caste designations.'

The state of being a widow in India is quite miserable. Formerly she was forced to perform 'sati' and it refers to the former practice in Hinduism of a wife burning herself with the body of her dead husband. Hinduism does not permit remarriage for widows and it is applicable only in the case of women. In the case of a man, if his wife dies, he can marry as he pleases. Hinduism interprets that widowhood is the result of predestiny and karma. It says that a woman becomes a widow only because of her karma. Therefore, Hindu widows have to remain widows all their lives. She has to be tonsured and forbidden from marrying again. She has no right to have children and to enjoy a normal life. However, men are exempted from these things. Moreover, the widows of other religions don't follow such a cruel and inhuman practice. Being an anthropologist Ghosh is determined to eliminate these callous practices from Indian social life convincing the readers its injustice done only to women. He highlights such situations in life most realistically and turn the people to act against the age-old customs from our society.

Ghosh's reformatory approach to performing *sati* in *Sea of Poppies*

The plight of an Indian widow was shocking. The patriarchal system regarded that women's existence should lose 'its rationale once the husband was dead.'(Sakunthala Narasimhan, *Empowering Women: An Alternative Strategy from Rural India*. 51).

The untimely death of Hukam Singh is a terrible blow to Deeti, but her relatives take it as a golden chance to enhance the prestige of the family by forcing her toperform 'sati' (widow burning ceremony). Sati refers to the former practice in Hinduismof a widow burning herself, either willingly or by force, with the body of herdead husband.When Deeti's husband Hukam Singh's health condition grew worse a few weeks before, her brother-in-law Chandan Singh came near to her and promised the positionof a 'mistress' in the case of her husband's death. He assured her if she kept him happy, he would look after her well. But she reacted sharply to him:"I will burn on my husband's pyre rather than give myself to you" (158). It means that she has taken a strong decision to perform *Sati* after her husband'sdeath. Here Ghosh reveals the reasons why many a widow was ready to perform *Sati* in the past. As far as a Hindu widow is concerned, death is more welcome than being dependent on her relatives and kin.

Ghosh describes the ritual of performing *sati* in detail. It is a strange experience to a modern reader. Here the novelist is not a mere silent spectator to a horrible scene. Instead he comes forward with a clear-cut solution. On one evening while Kaluawas coming back to his village, he happened to meet two unknown travellers and knew from them about the death of Hukam Singh, the former sepoy. He came to the scene and assumed that there was already an arrangement for performing 'sati' byDeeti. For the time being he forgot that he was a mere bullock cart driver and an untouchable belonging to the chamar caste, whereas Deeti was the wife of an uppercaste man. He has seen her before when he takes her husband back home

from the Ghazipur Opium factory while he is sick. However, Kalua decides to save Deeti's life from performing 'sati'.

> 'Kalua observed the whole scene concealing himself from others. The pyre was arranged on a great mound of wood, on the banks of the Ganga. Hukam Singh's body was carried out of his dwelling, in procession, and laid upon the mound. A second procession was headed by Deeti, covered in white sari.
>
> Half dragged and half carried, she was brought to the pyre and made to sit cross-legged on it, beside her husband's corpse. Now there was an outbreak of chanting as heaps of kindling were piled around her, and doused with ghee and oil to ready them for the fire' (177).

Kalua waited until the pyre was lit and everyone was intent upon the progress of the flames. He crept down to the edge of the crowd and rose to his feet. He cleared a path through the crowd like a hurricane. People fled to different places like cattle. Then he did the impossible:

> 'Racing to the mound, Kalua placed the platform against the fire, scrambled to the top, and snatched Deeti from the flames. With her inert body slung over his shoulder, he jumped back to the ground and ran towards the river, dragging the now - smouldering bamboo rectangle behind him, on its rope. On reaching the water, he thrust the platform into the river and placed Deeti upon it. Then, pushing free of the shore, he threw himself flat on the improvised raft and began to kick his heels in the water, steering out towards midstream. All of this was the work of a minute or two and by the time Chandan Singh and his cohorts gave chase, the river had carried Kalua and Deeti away from the flaming pyre, into the dark of the night.' (177)

Later we see that Kalua helps Deeti to board a ship named *Ibis* that carries slaves or indentured labourers from Calcutta to Mauritius. They begin a new life after boarding the ship . Deeti becomes Aditi and Kalua becomes Maddow Colver. Thus, Ghosh proves that 'sati' is neither a sacrifice nor a solution to any situation in life.

The practice of sati, the immolation of widows on their husband's funeral pyre has been a controversial topic in postcolonial and feminist discourses. While advocates of Western modernity perceive sati as a murderous ritual, the proponents of orthodox Hinduism regard sati as a courageous cult of ''wifely devotion''. In these two arguments women largely appear as ''mute objects''. Barnali Sarkar examines this topic closely based on the novel Ghosh's 'Sea of Poppies' in an article and finds that Ghosh has brilliantly sidelined the conundrum of polarizing representation of sati along the East-West axis and reflects instead the subjective experience of women as sati. He narrates the background of the practice of sati in India and analyzes the character Deeti in the novel in detail, and makes the following observations:

> Deeti's attempt to become a sati is not motivated by her desire to prove her purity or to bring honor to her family, as, according to Hindu religious regulations, should be the case for the practice of sati. Nor does she take the commandment of religion as her own will in her decision to mount the funeral pyre of her husband as has often been claimed by the West. Instead of nurturing the idea of sporting with her husband in heaven after her immolation, as traditional Hindu scriptures preach, Deethi decides to sacrifice her body in the funeral pyre to escape the skewed reality that threatens her in the form of frequent sexual harassments and fear of forceful accumulation of her land and property by her brother - in - law after her husand's death (287).

Ghosh presents a model widow through the character of Tha'mma in *The Shadow Lines*. She was born in a joint family in Dhaka who was capable to bear all sufferings in her life. When she became a widow, she joined as a teacher in a school to maintain her family. She is a typical middle-class teacher who is proud in all her doings. She does not expect any sort of favour from her sister Mayadebi and husband who are immensely rich. Shubha Tiwari analyses this character from different perspectives and summarises as follows in her book, *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Study* :

> Tha'mma's character is a tribute to so many unrecognized women in this country who is holding the world of their children and near and dear ones together by their toil and labour. She brought up her son alone. But she never showed her vulnerability. Her extraordinarily keen observation and the unbending steel of her personality set her in a class of her own. (34)

Aparna Mujumdar asserts how Ghosh has presented modernity in the conclusion of her essay '' Modernity's Others, Or Other Modernities: South Asian Negotiations with Modernity and Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace''*:

> Ghosh's work indicates that both the political, social and economic consequences of the dissemination of the colonial state's ideologies of modernity and progress, and the responses to them, were varied, and ranged from strategic absorption to cautious negotiation, giving rise to heterogeneous and fluid configurations of modernity in the colonies, which have coexisted with practices and beliefs conventionally understood as traditional and archaic.(182)

Soon after the tragical death of her husband, Uma returned to Lankasuka, her parents' house in Calcutta. Hers was a small family: she had only one brother who was much younger

than herself. Her homecoming was not a happy one. Her father was an archaeologist and a scholar who never insisted on all the customary observances of a Hindu widow. At the same time, he was not impervious to the criticism of his neighbours. As an affectionate father he did what he could to mitigate the rigours of his daughter's situation. But as a widow living at home, she was not free from the rigid constraints and deprivation of the society: 'her hair was shaved off; she could eat no meat nor fish and she was allowed to wear nothing but white. She was twenty-eight and had a lifetime ahead of her. As the months dragged by it became clear that other solution would have to be thought of' (197).

Being the collector's wife, she had the privilege of having a very substantial pension. Besides, her husband had made many astute investments in Uma's name before his death. She had no children to look after and therefore she need not remain at home longer. In those days Uma received a letter from Dolly, inviting her to visit Rangoon. In order to escape from the plight of the widowhood in Calcutta, Uma decided to go abroad. She travelled her head covered, with a shawl to hide her shaven head. Dolly and Rajkumar welcomed her at the Barr Street Jetty, and the moment she stepped off, Dolly tore away her shawl. Later Uma went to London and America, and actively involved in the freedom struggle ongoing abroad. Thus, she saved herself from the traditional fate of an average Hindu widow.

Ghosh narrates in detail another widowhood in the case of Manju after the unexpected death of Neel in the accident in the timberyard in Rangoon. While Manju was a young girl, she had observed the shaving of a widow's head at her neighbour's house in Calcutta. A barber had come to do it and the women of the family had helped him. Nobody said anything about the things that an Indian widow had to follow in her life. Manju seated herself at her dresser, looked into the mirror and tried the scissors taken from the sewing box on her hair. Being a young woman, her hair was strong, thick and black, the blunt blades of the scissors were useless. She dropped them back into her sewing box. The baby began to cry, so Manju

shut the door on her. She went down the stairs to the kitchen and found a long, straight - bladed knife with a wooden handle. She tried it on her hair, but it also didn't help her to cut her hair. Soon she remembered the scythes that had once been used to cut the compound's grass. Ghosh describes her doings in her strange mental condition like this:

> She opened the front door and ran across the compound to the outhouse.The scythes were exactly where she had thought, piled in a heap with the other gardening implements. She stood in the knee-deep grass of the compound and held up her hair, drawing it away from her head. She raised the scythe and hacked at it, blindly, because her hand was behind her head. She saw a lock of hair falling on to the grass and this gave her encouragement. She sawed at another handful and then another. She could see the pile of hair growing in the grass around her feet. The one thing she could not understand was the pain: why should it hurt so much to cut one's hair? (497)

Mr. Raymond came there at that moment, held her hands strongly and the scythe fell from her grasp. She saw that her fingers were smeared with blood. He told her gently that she had cut her scalp in her mad attempt to cut the hair. He led her into the house and made her sit in a chair. He took some cotton wool and swabbed her scal When the baby began to cry, he led her to the stairs. She went up a few steps and then she couldn't go any more. She couldn't bear to think of going into that room and picking up the child. She felt that her breasts had become dry. She could not do anything then. She buried her face in her hands. Raymond approached her and reminded her quietly that she was the mother of the baby. He persuaded her to stop the baby's hunger. He followed her to the room and kept watch until she picked the baby up and held to her breast. Finally when Manju was crossing river with her baby in the presence of Dolly and Rajkumar as refugees to India during the World War II,

she entrusts her baby with her mother-in-law and commits suicide by slipping from the raft into the water. Thus, her widowhood becomes complete.

Ghosh's observation of Indian widowhood is revealed in the end of the conversation between Kishan Singh and Bela. When Kishan Singh came to Lankasuka in Calcutta with Arjun to attend the wedding of Arjun's sister Manju and Neel, Bela the young girl feels a strange curiosity to the soldier in the British army and enquires his details. He explains to her that his village is a long way from Calcutta and it is near Kurukshetra where the great battle of Mahabharata was fought. Therefore, the men of their district are famous for good soldiers. Bela asks him whether he has wanted to be a soldier. He replies to her negatively and adds that he had no other choice. He describes that all men in his family his father, his grandfather and his uncles all had served in the 1/1 Jats regiment. In fact, he had wanted to go to college, but when he was fourteen his father died. His relatives urged him to join the army. That was how he had become a soldier. At once Bela shows interest about the women in their village and she asks:

> 'And the women in your village,' she said, 'what are they like?'
>
> 'Not like you.'
>
> She was hurt by this. 'Why? What do you mean?'
>
> 'In a way,' he said, 'they are soldiers too. From the time they are little they begin to learn what it means to be widowed early; to bring up children without their men; to spend their lives with husbands who are maimed and crippled.'Just then she heard her mother calling her name and went running out of the room (311-312).

Ghosh has presented mainly four widows in the selected novels: Tha'mma in *The Shadow Lines,* Uma Dey and Maju in *The Glass Palace* and Deeti in *Sea of Poppies*. It seems

very clear that as a writer he is dead against this inhuman practice prevailing in Hinduism. He convinces the readers the right of widows to continue their living after death of their husbands. In the case of Tha'mma after the death of her husband, she assumes the job of a teacher, brings up her only child and manages her family without depending anyone else. She becomes a responsible paragon to all widows in future generations. Uma Dey is fortunate for having financial self-reliance as the wife of the Collector. At first, she escapes from the traditional background of Calcutta to Rangoon in Burma. From there she goes to Europe and comes to America, and there involves actively in the freedom movement of India mobilising the few patriot Indians.Thus, she finds new meaning to her life. Though the death of her husband and the dangerous circumstances of war make Manju utterly disappointed, she decides to continue her living for the sake of her child. Finally, in the case of Deeti, Ghosh becomes a reformer against the age-old practice. There a young man named Kalua comes forward and saves her adventurously from the pyre. Later as indentured labourers to Mauritious they get passage in *Ibis*. Thus, Ghosh conveys the message that we have to find out new outlets to solve these inhuman practices from our social life.

Before discussing love and marriage in Indian social conditions, we have to realise the general attitude of the people about man-woman relationship . Indian tradition observes man as powerful and ambitious but woman as meek and benign object. She is subordinate to male members of the family, carrying each and every dictate of the man with downcast eyes, and confined strictly within the four walls of the house. Man has been the master with all the strings in his hand, making her dance to his tunes. She has been subordinated to her father in her girlhood, to her husband in her adulthood and to her son in her old age. In other words, woman always has been a slave in family and society.

After independence there has been great change in the traditional concept about the role of a woman. A progressive vision giving equal importance to man and woman in society

has been developing step by step. The right for education, the right to universal franchise, the change in marital relations, the growth of a new class of working women, etc. have helped a lot to improve the status of women in society. These two attitudes about the role of a woman, traditional as well as progressive, can be seen in the Indian English novels.

Mulk Raj Anand brings forth strikingly the different phases in the development of the central character Gauri in his novel *The Old Woman and The Cow.* In the first phase, she is depicted as submissive, meek and humble like cow, according to the traditional Indian vision. She is mercilessly thrown out of her house by her husband even having ignored her pregnancy. Her mother entrusts her with a Seth at Hoshiarpur. Gradually she becomes more self-reliant and tries her best to fulfil her traditional role as a Hindu wife. Later she escapes from the Seth and goes to work in colonel Mahendra's hospital. There she learns modern values and gets ready to face the grim challenges in her life. In the last chapter, she emerges as a bold defiant woman and leaves her husband like Sita not as a helpless woman, but as a woman conscious of her rights.

It is said that love and marriage in India are closely related with race, caste,region, religion, family's financial status, etc. Child marriage is very common till recently and nobody bothers about the will and pleasure of those who are getting married. The parents of the boy and the girl decide everything. Eventually the system is known as 'arranged marriage'. Our traditional society has never encouraged love-marriages.To some extent, it is forbidden by many because there prevailed caste system and inter-caste marriage was unthinkable. Similarly, members belonging to different religions also cannot get married easily. Even if they get married, their life in the society will be a miserable one.

As a historian and anthropologist, Ghosh has studied well the varied and different aspects of love and marriage in the Indian social background. Here love and marriage are not

purely personal or individual choice, because they are closely connected with race, caste, region, religion, social status of the parents, financial status, etc. He wishes to put an end to these highly complicated social anomalies. He gives meticulous attention in crafting affairs of love and marriage of his characters. Of course, as a writer his main concern is with war and its consequences upon common people in a country. Despite political and cultural diversity Ghosh's men and women follow the dictates of their hearts rather than other considerations. This thematic preoccupation of Ghosh in presenting romantic characters makes his novels more reformatory and interesting.

Though the affair between Tridib and May Price ended in a tragedy, it gives a new dimension to love among the youngsters. Tridib, the 27-year-old Indian youth loves May Price, the 19-year-old English girl who makes her living by playing oboe in an orchestra in London. He had met her as a child in England when he had gone to stay there with his family in 1940. Since then he had been sending greetings regularly to Mrs. Price, but when he was twenty-seven, and May was nineteen he sent a separate greeting to May. After the first three letters, he sent her a pornographic letter to her.

May is a humane and sensible woman. Tridib falls in love with May. His ardent love to her leads to his premature tragical death. When she tried to save the old man from the rioters, Tridib rushed to the spot and he was murdered ruthlessly by them. Ghosh follows his own concept of love and the creation of a new world irrespective of caste, region and religion. Tridib who was born and brought up in a Hindu family in Calcutta doesn't try to think more about loving and marrying a girl, born and brought up in London. For a young man in India has to consider many things before loving and marrying a foreign girl. Ghosh regards such things as superficial and ignores them in the romance of new generation.

Ghosh speaks to the world through his selected characters. Tridib in *The Shadow Lines* is such a character. Ian Almond of Bosphorus University in Istanbul, Turkey, has made a striking observation about this character in one of his article:

> Tridib appears not to know, quite literally, what on earth he is going. He has no clear role or function in life - except, of course as a memory - trainer for the young narrator; his curious, other - wordly presence, homeless and bereft of any real destination, wanders in and out of the pages of the story, peripheral to the narrative of *The Shadow Lines* yet thematically central to its ideas. For Tridib is Ghosh's archetypal imagination - more than anyone else he is creator of worlds par excellence, the one who has developed the gift of reality – fabrication to its highest, most sophisticated degree. The melancholy which his ''tired, withdrawn air'' seems to exude is no symptom of his imaginative powers but a condition for them. Tridib is adept at constructing place and identities precisely because he feels he has none of his own to impede the process; his homelessness is a stimulant to imagination, not a consequence of it.(97-98)

Ila means 'water' in Bengali. Like water Ila has the sparkle and fluidity of water,but like water she is forced to take shape of the container that imprisons her. Ila is a typical new generation girl. She doesn't mind others' needs, interests and difficulties. She has no capacity to understand and judge others. She lives in her own world. She has no sense of commitment to anyone else in this world. The narrator tries his best to draw her attention to him, but what he gets is a normal salute from her. She does not pay any attention to the one who loves her madly. But she loves Nick, an English boy from London who is not capable of any sincere love. Nick is white, strong and big in appearance.

Right from the beginning Nick has plans to start a business where Ila's parents are expected to invest. Ila's father purchases a flat for them in London. He even meets the expenditure for their honeymoon. After the formal registration of marriage in London,Ila, Nick and their families fly to Calcutta for 'one of the most lavish weddings'. All this fairytale stuff soon ends when she knows that Nick has slept with another woman on the previous night. All her father's aura, rank and money, her own beauty, education and everything turn against her. Her husband begins to show his true metal. Poison has already entered their marriage as it normally does into so many marriages. Ila's married life with Nick is bitter, hard and a painful one. However, there is no one else to blame for it except she herself. Their failed married life clearly brings out the East-West encounter. Ila tries her best to be a faithful wife following the Indian tradition but Nick has no such quality as a typical representative of western culture.

The Narrator's Attachment to Ila in *The Shadow Lines*

Love is a major source of pain in the novel *The Shadow Lines*. From the beginning Ila has cast her spell over the narrator. The narrator, a young Indian, enjoys a mysterious love in his relation with Ila and tries hard to make sure of her love in turn. Irony of fate works more gravely in matters of love. Ila is mad after the English youth Nick Price. In London many times he walks miles and miles to get to Ila's space, to see her, her laughter, her eyes, to feel her near him but nothing, just nothing comes from her side.

Love denotes suspension of logic. Love and logic are natural enemies. It also implies that love and every type of rationality ie., justice, equality, etc. are antagonistic. By being irrational, love implies an uncertain, excited and confused state of mind. When one individual becomes the focal point of one's existence, everything and everyone else becomes secondary.

There is lack of control over emotional life. This is what happens in the attachment of the narrator to Ila.

Ghosh presents his idea of love and romance in the context of different countries,cultural backgrounds and life styles. He believes that the elements of race, caste,region, religion, culture, etc. are not at all obstacles to the smooth flow of genuine love. He has followed the same example in his own life. Born and brought up in a Hindu Bengali family in Calcutta, he married a Christian woman born and brought up in America. This is not a part of fiction, but something happened in his real life. So he has been able to depict such romances easily and realistically in his writing. Ghosh expresses his protest against the arranged marriage system through the character Manju in *The Glass Palace*. He writes:

> She was on her own now, and she would have to think about what she was going to do with herself. So far as her mother was concerned, Manju knew, her future had already been decided: she would leave the house as someone's wife and not a day sooner. The mothers of two prospective grooms had already come calling to 'see' Manju. One of them had given her hair a discreet tug to make sure she wasn't wearing a wig: the other had made her bare her teeth as though she were a horse, pushing apart her lips with her fingers, and making faint clucking sounds. Her mother had been apologetic afterwards, but she'd made it clear that it wasn't in her power to ensure that these incidents would not be repeated: this was a part of the process. Manju knew that many more such ordeals probably lay ahead (282).

Love and marriage, and the subsequent family life of Rajkumar and Dolly in *The Glass Palace* can be pointed out as a good testimonial to Ghosh's concept of love and married life. Rajkumar, an orphan teenager from India happens to notice a royal maid in the

The Glass Palace in Mandalaya. When the Indian soldiers fighting under British evacuated King Thebaw and his family from their official residence The Glass Palace, a mob rushed to the palace for looting. The boy Rajkumar also joined the mob and happened to meet Dolly, one of the queen's maid. The novelist describes their first meeting with minimum words when the king and his family were taken to exile in Ratnagiri: "Dolly looked very small when Rajkumar spotted her. She was walking beside at all soldiers, with a small cloth bundle balanced on her head. Her face was grimy and her htameine was caked with dust" (45).

Later Rajkumar joined as a partner in Saya John's business and soon he became a successful timber merchant. He came to Ratnagiri and visited Uma Dey, the collector's wife. With her help he proposed Dolly to marry him and she reluctantly married him.Two sons - Neel and Dinu - were born to them. Rajkumar and Dolly led a happy family life with their sons for a long time. In the depiction of this married life Ghosh crosses the borders - Rajkumar from India and Dolly from Burma - lead a happy family life. Their nationhood does not become an obstacle to live together.

The Burmese Royal family were forced to lead on average middle-class family life in their exile in Ratnagiri. There they began to face new problems and the affair of the First Princess with Mohan Sawant, their coachman was one of them. The conversation between Dolly and Uma about the affair reveals the social aspects of love and marriage in Burma and India. Ghosh writes:

> Dolly bit her lip, looking intently into Uma's eyes. 'If I tell you,' she said, 'will you promise not to tell the Collector?'
>
> 'Yes. Of course.'
>
> 'You promise?'

‘Solemnly. I promise.’

‘It’s about the First Princess.’

‘Yes? Go on.’

‘She’s pregnant.’

Uma gasped, her hand flying to her mouth in disbelief. ‘And the father’?

‘Mohan Sawant.’

‘Your coachman’?

‘Yes. That’s why your Kanhoji is so angry. He is Mohanbai’s uncle. Their family want the Queen to agree to a marriage so that the child will not be born a bastard’.

‘But, Dolly, how could the Queen allow her daughter to marry a coachman?’

‘We don’t think of him as a coachman.’ Dolly said sharply.‘He’s Mohanbhai to us.’

‘But what about his family, his background?’

Dolly flicked her wrist in a gesture of disgust. ‘Oh, you Indians,’ she said. ‘You’re all the same, all obsessed with your castes and your arranged marriages. In Burma when a woman likes a man, she is free to do what she wants.’

‘But Dolly,’ Uma protested, ‘I’ve heard that the Queen is very particular about these things. She thinks there’s not a man in Burma who’s good enough for her daughters.’ [117,118]

As a keen observer of human relationships Ghosh tries to depict married life of different persons their aspirations and disappointments in life. Uma is a memorable character in this novel and she represents an average Indian woman in the beginning and later she rises to the level of an Indian deity. She enters the novel as the wife of the new collector in Ratnagiri. It is the task of the collector to look after the affairs of King The baw and his family. That is why, he decides to pay an official visit with his wife to the Outram House in Ratnagiri where they have been living in exile. Though the visit was a formal one, Uma's resourcefulness attracted Queen Supayalat. The novelist comments like this: "Self - possession was a quality she'd always admired. There was something attractive about this woman, Uma Dey; the liveliness of her manner was a welcome contrast to her husband's arrogance" (108).

Though Uma has her own attractive personality, it does not help her to become a successful wife to Collector Dey. He completed his education abroad and could not adjust with Indian views and doings. His attitude caused a disharmony in their life.Ghosh does not blame them for their situation in life. He has noted what happened with majority of Indian marriages. That is why he writes this:

> ...the wifely virtues she could offer him he had no use for: Cambridge had taught him to want more, to make sure that nothing was held in abeyance, to bargain for a woman's soul with the coin of kindness and patience. The thought of this terrified her. This was subjection beyond decency, beyond her imagining. She could not bring herself to think of it. Anything would be better than to submit (153).

Ghosh draws our attention to the real reason for the failure of many marriages in India. The husband and wife live together for decades without trying to know each other.

They don't care and share their innermost thoughts and feelings of each and everything. There is no chance for the great union of two minds and bodies. Here marriage is degraded to a matter of habit and ordinary ritual of life. The Collector had expected high standards of manners from his wife befitting to his status. Unfortunately, she could not rise to that expectations. From the narration it is clear that Uma does not love her husband. Incidentally, the writer hints how he first met her. He selected Uma after seeing her at a puja when she was sixteen. He wanted a modern girl who could adjust to the situations of her husband's status as a district collector. His family didn't agree with his choice of a life partner. He persisted in his decision and married Uma. Time proved that Uma was not a successful life-partner to the Collector. The Collector knew that Uma was not happy in life with him. It seems that Ghosh presents his idea of marriage through the character of Dey. He tells Uma: "To live with a woman as an equal, in spirit and intellect: this seemed to me the most wonderful thing life could offer. To discover together the world of literature, art: what could be richer, more fulfilling? But what I dreamt is not yet possible, not here, in India, not for us" (173).

Uma had known from Dolly about the affair between the First Princess and the coachman Mohan Sawant, but she didn't convey it to her husband in time. It became a setback in the official life of the collector and it led to his suicide. Soon Uma returns from Ratnagiri to her ancestral home in Calcutta. Later she travels to different parts of the world, becomes a freedom fighter and rises to the level of a busy activist.

The evil aspects of the arranged marriage system prevailing in the Indian society are clearly brought out through the marriage of Deeti with Hukam Singh. In the arranged marriage system horoscope plays a key role in fixing a marriage. Deeti's fateis being ruled by Saturn-Shani-a planet that exercised great power on those born under its influence. It often brought discord, unhappiness and disharmony to the couples. She knew this in advance and never had any high expectations about her future. She told herself that if she were ever to be

married, it would probably be to a much olderman. Otherwise it would be an elderly widower who needed a new wife to nurse his children. Deeti told herself that considering her horoscope, the proposal of Hukam Singh was a better one. Her own brother, Kesari Singh, had proposed the match and had requested her to overlook the future husband's slight lameness as a minor one. Besides, she had to consider his family's connections because one of them had risen to the rank of subedar in the East India Company's army.

On the wedding night itself Deeti was deceived by her mother-in-law and her brother-in-law Chandan Singh. Her husband Hukam Singh was an addicted to opium and had no potency to give birth to a child. He had the habit of smoking opium which he had learnt after he had been wounded and taken to the hospital barracks. He took a mouthful of the smoke, placed his mouth on hers and breathed it into her body himself. She felt that her lungs filled with smoke and slipped away from this world into another beautiful world. When she opened her eyes next morning there was a dull ache in her lower abdomen and a painful soreness between her legs. She noticed that her clothes were displaced and her thighs were crusted with blood. She found her husband was lying beside her undisturbed. Later she was convinced that her brother-in-law had raped her on the wedding night as she had been under the impact of the opium smoke made by her husband. Her mother-in-law was very particular to have a baby from her impotent son Hukkam Singh and thus maintain the prestige of the family. She fulfilled her wish employing her other son cleverly.

Critics point out diverse aspects of Ghosh's writing recognizing him as a great contemporary Indian English writer and depicting a variety of married life is one of them. The couples he has presented in his novels are strikingly different from one to another.In the novel *The Glass Palace* Ghosh presents mainly six couples: Rajkumar and Dolly, King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat, Collector Beni Prasad Dey and his wife Uma, Matthew and his American wife Elsa, Neel and Uma Dey's niece Manju,and Dinu and Alison. In the above

mentioned couples the life of King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat is worth mentioning. King The baw is ineffectual and scholarly type of person whereas Queen Supayalat is an expert in cruel court intrigues and palace politics. He had no ambition to be the king of Burma. As a child he had spent several years in the palace Buddhist monastery, showed genuine interest in scriptural study and passed the difficult *patma-byan* examination at the age of nineteen. However, fate favoured Thebaw and installed him on the throne. He fell in love with one of the princesses in the palace and that was Queen Supayalat. When she became the Queen she proved her real metal.The novelist writes:

> In order to protect him from her family she stripped her mother of her powers and banished her to a corner of the palace, along with her sisters and co-wives. Then she set about ridding Thebaw of this rivals. She ordered the killing of every member of the Royal Family who might ever be considered a threat to her husband. Seventy-nine princes were slaughtered on her orders, some of them new-born infants, and some too old to walk. To prevent the spillage of royalblood she had had them wrapped in carpets and bludgeoned to death. The corpses were thrown into the nearest river (38-39).

Ghosh has admitted that King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat are not fictional characters but they are historical figures in the history of Burma. As a writer he tries to give a didactic message to the readers through the character of the queen. She did along a chain of cruel activities in order to safeguard her husband's kingship. But time revenges her by sending herself and her family to live in exile for twenty years. She is subjected to utter humiliation in her captivity and thus she compensates to all her sins she did as the queen.

Male domination is an integral part of a patriarchal society and therefore it becomes an important element of Indianness. In such a system, women depend on men.Deeti herself

becomes a cruel victim to this social system. Her husband Hukam Singh is an addicted to opium and has no potency to lead a married life. Her shrewd mother-in-law knows this deficiency of her son and tackles it cleverly. Deeti is drugged opium and raped on her wedding night by her brother-in-law, Chandan Singh. Deeti is sure that her mother-in-law also is an accomplice in this cruel deed. She thinks, ‘‘...that confirmed Deeti’s belief that the child in her belly had been fathered not by her husband but by Chandan Singh, her leering, clack jawed brother-in – law” (34).

When Hukam Singh lies in his death bed, his brother Chandan Singh approaches Deeti and offers to be his keep. Besides, the social system is against woman. The property of a man who does not have a male heir would automatically go to his brother. Being the mother of a girl child, Deeti has no chance to possess her husband’s land after his death. Deeti is sure that her relatives would make her life unbearable after her husband’s death. So she decides to end her life by performing sati in her husband’s funeral pyre.

In a patriarchal society a woman has no identity at all. Her identity is closely associated with her father, husband or children. Deeti’s neighbours and relatives do not call or address her using the name given by her parents. Instead they call her ‘Kabutri-ki-ma’ which recognizes her as the mother of Kabutri. In a patriarchal society a girl child was considered as a burden while the male child was an asset to the family. The girl’s parents had to offer money and gifts to the groom to get their daughters married off. Deeti’s father had to thatch the roof of her groom’s house as a part of her dowry.

Malati, the wife of Neel Rattan Halder, is another passive sufferer of a patriarchal society that followed Hindu tradition. She performs her duties as a wife and mother without any complaints. She never complains or questions her husband’s relationship with his mistress Elokeshi. Neel’s mother was also neglected by her husband and she lived in an

isolated gloomy wing of the palace while he enjoyed with his mistresses. Later Neel is put in jail and all his estate is confiscated. Before he is deported to Mauritius as a part of the punishment, Malati comes to jail and meets him. She doesn't show any sign of ill feeling even in the complete ruin of their life. She has been forced to live in a small house. Even then she tells Neel only this to take care of himself. She suffers everything due to the mistake committed by her husband, but never complains. Ghosh becomes a master story teller in depicting Malati as a typical Indian wife who performs her duties without expecting anything.

The woman in the Indian society does not have equal status with man. Even at home she is just an unpaid domestic servant treated as an inferior creature, a pleasure-giving commodity or a child bearing machine. She has to subordinate herself following all dictates of the male members of the family. *Manu Smrithi* explains that she has to be subjected herself to her father in her childhood, to her husband in her in adulthood, and to her son in her old age. This traditional picture of Indian woman is depicted in earlier Indian English novels. That is why we see her more as prostitutes,courtesans, maid servants, etc. in the pre independence fiction. The recent great changes happened in the social and political spheres like the right to universal franchise, the change in marital relations, the growth of a newer class of working women, etc. changed the status of the women in the society.

Though it is a controversial topic, we know that we give special privilege to women in some of our communities. The narrator's family atmosphere in the novel *The Shadow Lines* itself is a good example for it. There Tha'mma decides everything. Nobody questions her. Even the narrator's father who is matured enough feels that Tha'mma should never feel insulted. Thereby he leaves many things as insignificant despite their usefulness. Tha'mma's sister Mayadebi also enjoys great privilege in her family. Her husband the Saheb gives due respect to her words in almost all matters. Though she is unemployed, she doesn't feel any sort of uneasiness in her domestic domain. She follows her husband wherever he goes as a

foreign diplomat. The narrator's mother also receives high respect in her family affairs. Of course she is a woman of average intelligence and unemployed. Still she controls most of the important things in the family. Her husband, the narrator's father gives her maximum freedom in this regard. He never complains about her. He wants to enjoy his freetime with his wife at home. In this she is not a slave at home, but a queen in her kingdom.

Ghosh does not ignore Indian women's love for jewellery. He depicts this aspect without any exaggeration. The narrator admits that his grandmother had a secret fondness for jewellery. There had been nothing secret about this weakness of hers, when she was a girl. It had been a passion to her. He heard his relatives teasing her about her love of jewellery. He heard the relatives had been asking her what had become of all those necklaces and bangles given by his grandfather. Their teasing didn't bother his grandmother at all. Tha'mma's love of jewellery had been a family joke when she was girl. She would often be seen at the little gold-merchant's shop at the corner of Jindabahar Lane, peering in through the bars, staring at the goldsmiths working inside. She took so much delight in exclaiming over her married cousin's jewellery cases that they had kept the keys ready on the ends of their saris whenever she went visiting. At weddings, knowing old housewives would ask for her opinion on the jewellery the bride had been given, as though she were a gold-merchant's grandmother, rather than a small girl.Tha'mma had stopped wearing jewellery publicly after her husband's death. Later when the narrator's father married, she handed over all the ornaments to the narrator's mother. Tha'mma loved to see the narrator's mother wearing the bangles and necklaces she had given her. But the narrator's mother didn't particularly care for jewellery and wore them rarely even to weddings. This infuriated his grandmother. Often she asked the narrator's mother angrily whether she was going to a wedding with her neck bare. She feared that it would give everybody the impression that she was starving there.

Tha'mma used to say she had been struggled hard not to sell her gold ornaments in order to hand over to her daughter-in-law. She is very particular that her daughter-in-law would not have anything to complain about ornaments. Though the narrator's mother is not interested in gold ornaments, she wears them on rare occasions only to satisfy her mother-in-law. On such occasions the narrator has observed, his grandmother would summon his mother and run her fingers over the necklace, smiling to herself and remembering about the place where she had bought it and trying to remember the name of the shop. It is clear that the mere sight of the necklace would make her happy beyond words. There was one piece of jewellery that she had never parted with. It was a long thin gold chain with a tiny ruby locket. It was so much a part of her that she had never taken it off. But all the same, she was very ashamed of wearing it and tried her best to hide it under her blouse, spreading it out over her shoulders. She feared that her relatives would gossip if they saw her wearing it. The grandmother had her own justification in wearing that ornament. Once she told the narrator that it was the first thing her husband ever gave her. He presented it to her in Rangoon soon after they were married. In depicting the grandmother's attachment to gold ornaments, Amitav Ghosh paints not only a Bengali woman but an average Indian woman. Today it is not a secret that the Indian women purchase a large quantity of gold ornaments produced in the world market. Here we see this grandmother in our family with real flesh and blood.

The Indian villages as well as cities are closely associated with Hindi film songs. It is a part of our life. Ghosh has conceived this aspect of the Indian life and depicted it in his novel very spontaneously. When the narrator is going through an acute sensation of love for IIa, he is haunted by an old Hindi film song –'bequraar karke hameyun no jaiyen' (*The Shadow Lines,* 94). He is simply unable to free himself from this recurring tune in his mind. The reader at once identifies with the narrator because with most of the Indians, humming

popular film songs to suit their mental condition is a very natural and spontaneous way of purgating emotions.

We can never ignore the importance which we give to cricket in our life. Often we remember many historical events connecting them with popular cricket matches.When the narrator describes Calcutta riots in 1964 in *The Shadow Lines*, he simply quotes the news in the newspaper:

> Indistinctly through the white haze that was swirling before my eyes, I noticed another headline, at the bottom of the page. It said: Kunderan's day at Madras, Unbeaten 170 in first Test. And right above it was a tiny little box item in bold print, with the headline: Sacred relic reinstalled which said 'the sacred hair of the Prophet Mohammed was reinstalled in the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar today amongst a tremendous upsurge of popular joy and festivity throughout Kashmir' (224) .

Observations on the Historical and Political Elements

If we look at the events in modern India chronologically, the following can be said to be the chain of events about which Indian writers were more concerned and around which they selected their plots, themes and characters:

1. Quit India Movement: 1942
2. Bengal Famine: 1943
3. End of the War: 1945
4. Communal Riots & Partition: 1947
5. Raider' Attack Kashmir: 1947
6. Martyrdom of Mahatma: 1948
7. Constitution of India: 1950

8. Vinoba Bhave's Land-gift movement: 1951
9. Language Agitations: 1956
10. Communist Regime in Kerala: 1957
11. Cape of Tibet and Sino-Indian
12. Death of Nehru: 1964
13. Pakistan Invasion: 1965
14. Death of Shastri and Tashkant Pact: 1966
15. Bangladesh Movement
16. War with Pakistan & the Liberation of Bangladesh: 1971
17. J.P's Movement: 1974-75

Freedom struggle and Gandhism in Indian Writing in English

The Indo-Anglian writers, particularly the novelists of the thirties are immensely influenced by the freedom struggle and the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, who fought for the cause of the under-privileged classes, the have - nots and the downtrodden, the marginalized and defenceless. The novelists have depicted the various incidents and happenings in the freedom struggle and the life of Mahatma Gandhi connecting them with the contemporary social, political, economic and religious spheres of India. Instead of introducing them as mere historical facts or events, they took meticulous care and attention to present them with poetic grandeur and artistic craftsmanship. The following writers have done remarkable contribution with the theme of either Gandhi or the contemporary freedom struggle: Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (1935). Raja Rao, *Kanthapura* (1938); K.S. Venkataramani, *Kandan the Patriot* (1932); D.F. Karaka, *We Never Die* (1944); Amir Ali, *Conflict* (1947); Venu Chitali, *In Transit* (1950); K.A. Abbas, *Inquilab* (1955), R.K. Narayan, *Waiting for the Mahatma*(1956),

Nayantara Sahgal, *A Time to Be Happy* (1955); and K. Nagarajan, *Chronicles of Kedaram* (1961).

Simplicity is one of the salient features of Gandhian literature. Gandhi always followed the principle of 'simple living and high thinking' and it influenced the writers of his age. So they discarded ornateness, artificiality, pedantry and laborious artistry in their language both in English and in the vernaculars. This impact reflected in their themes also. Most of the novelists of Gandhian age preferred the village to the city, the poor to the rich and the cultural heritage of the village to the urban luxury and sophistication. The main characters of the novels of this age represent the lower class of society who are victims of colonial exploitation, poverty and racial or religious discrimination.

Mulk Raj Anand has presented Gandhi as a character in last pages of his first novel,*Untouchable* (1935). He narrates a realistic picture of the one-day life of the protagonist, Bakha, an untouchable sweeper - boy who has to face untold humiliation from the upper class only because he belongs to an untouchable class. He faces bitter experiences wherever he goes that day and at last he mutters to himself: "Why we are always abused? The sentry inspector that day abused my father. They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That is why I came here. I was tired of working on the latrines every day. That is why they don't touch us, the high castes" (58).

In the last pages of the novel, Mahatma Gandhi emerges as a saviour to uproot untouchability and caste discrimination. Bakha attends a big gathering addressed by Mahatma Gandhi in which Gandhi gives a new explanation as 'sons of God to the bhangis and chamars' to the appellation of 'Harijan'. Gandhi said: "The fact that we address God as 'the purifier of the polluted souls'makes it a sin to regard anyone born in Hinduism as polluted - it is satanic to do so. I have never been tired of repeating that it is a great sin. I don't say that

this thing crystallised in me at the age of twelve, but I do say that I did then regard untouchability as a sin" (*Untouchable* 164).The speech of Gandhi acts like a balm on the wounds of Bakha who was totally disappointed by the behaviour of ruthless upper caste Hindus. Gandhi's words helped him to find out his identity in a caste-dominated social framework. He finds a ray of hope in his life and decides to go forward with great confidence.

Raja Rao's first novel *Kanthapura* gives more significance to the ideals of Gandhi than in *Untouchable*. It deals with the powerful impact of Mahatma Gandhi on the peasants of a South Indian village. An elderly widow narrates the whole story spontaneously mixing irony and humour in a village atmosphere. Here, the political activities mostly related to Mahatma Gandhi are described in such a way including the Indian age-long myth, legend, history and religion. The narration looks like a Gandhi Purana in which Moorthy represents the spirit of Gandhi. He appears as a Satyagrahi and the leader of the non-violent movement in *Kanthapura*. The reputed writer K.R.S Iyengar makes the following remark about this book in his work *Indian Writing in English*:

> The characters sharply divide into two camps: the Rulers (and their supporters) on the one hand, and Satyagrahis (and their sympathisers), on the other. There are various other divisions too: orthodoxy is pitted against reform, exploitation against sufferance, the planter against the coolies, the corrupt officials against the self-respecting villagers. But these lines grow hazy when the main issue between the Bureaucracy and Satyagrahis is joined, for now most people are on one or the other side of the barricades (391).

Thus, Raja Rao tries his best to explicate Mahatma Gandhi's universal theory of truth and non-violence as the gospel to the poor and the disappointed Indians.

K.S. Venkataramani discusses the political aspects of Gandhism connected with the Civil Disobedience Movement of the nineteen thirties in his novel *Kandan the Patriot*. It tells the story of Kandan, an Oxford - educated Indian youth. The freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi awakened the patriotic feelings in him and he resigned from the Indian Civil Service in order to join the national movement. We see that Kandan has a prophetic dream before he breathes his last. He makes a long patriotic speech tinged with the spirit of Gandhism.

Amir Ali's famous novel, *Conflict* depicts the political upheavals as well as the sentiments of a Hindu family caught in the Quit - India agitation of 1942. Shankar, a village boy, goes to Bombay for higher education, he is caught in the agitation raised by Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders. He represents all those contemporary intellectuals who left their studies to join the national movement for freedom. In this novel, the novelist has also shown the rustic life of Indians which is trapped in the urban surroundings.Venu Chitale's *In Transit* presents a beautiful picture of Indian history between two World Wars dominated by the ideals of Gandhi. It deals with the various ups and downs going on in the history of modern India.The novel *Inquilab* by Ahmad Abbas presents not only Mahatma Gandhi but also introduces some other personalities of the Gandhian age. It covers the incidents from the Rowlett Bill and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre to the Salt Satyagraha and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. It highlights the Gandhian ideals in its true perspective. Anwar, the protagonist of the novel goes from place to place enjoying experiences of different kinds - political, religious and social. He goes to Aligarh Muslim University where he falls in love with a Muslim girl, Salmah, the daughter of a professor of the university. There he meets a number of students belonging to different ideologies and religions - revolutionaries, congressmen, marxists and communalists. Later he along with other student leaders, is expelled from the University because of their participation in the Independence Pledge in the university campus

on 26 January 1930. Anwar has to pay a lot for his patriotic action because Salmah turns her face against him and marries a Deputy Superintendent of Police. When he releases from the bondage of his affair, he devotes himself fully to the cause of national movement. He travels all over India, accompanied by his friend, Robert, and sees directly the miserable life of the neglected peasants. He witnesses how Mahatma Gandhi and other political leaders turn the minds of the unprivileged mass against the tyranny of the British rule. The novel ends with the tragic note of the revelation of the secret that Anwar is really an illegitimate son of a Hindu merchant who was brought up by a Muslim. On the political plane, the novel ends on the Gandhi-Irwin pact.

R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* as the title suggests, upholds the impact of Gandhi on ordinary people. In this novel the action strays out of Malgudi. The two central characters, Bharati and Sriram are existentially engaged in politics. Sriram a typical weak-willed character, and Bharati, a Congress volunteer devote themselves to national movement. Though the hero is more interested in Bharati than in 'Bharatmata', it gains a new dimension in the background of their common allegiance to the Mahatma. It is not at all easy to introduce a great personality like Mahatma Gandhi in a fiction. Prof. R.K. Srinivasa Iyengar has aptly made the following remark about this aspect of craftsmanship:

> Other novelists, whether writing in English or in the regional languages, have likewise exploited the magic of Gandhi's name and presence, but seldom is the Gandhian role subsumed in the fiction as a whole. Gandhi is too big to be given a minor part: on the other hand, he is sure to turn the novel into a biography if he is given a major (or the central) part. The best thing for the contemporary novelist would be to keep Gandhi in the background but make his influence felt indirectly. (372)

We have to add that the stress is not merely on Gandhi's influence but on Gandhi himself because the novelist describes Gandhi's visit to Malgudi, his last prayer on 30 January 1948, the fatal day he was killed, etc. However, it is believed that the author's effort to fuse many themes doesn't seem successful.

Nayantara Sahgal, the daughter of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit and niece of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in her very first novel, *A Time to be Happy* deals with Congress activities and the Quit India Movement of 1942 in an interesting way. The novelist is basically famous for her strong connections with the contemporary political leaders. The ideals of Gandhi as well as 'Nehruism' influenced her deeply. She was much interested in the political happenings and depicted them in her creative writing. Besides she always pleads for equal status to women in India with that of men in all the walks of life. Sahgal has written five novels and *A Time to be Happy* (1958) was the first one. It is a loose chronicle dealing with two north Indian families during the last stages of the freedom - struggle and the arrival of independence. Sanad, one of the main characters in the novel, is the son of a zamindar who joins a British firm and comes in contact with Western influences.

K. Nagarajan's *Chronicles of Kedaram* clearly points out the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi, his intervention to unite the two Iyengar factions - the tengalai and the vadakalai. It presents a clash between the modernity and antiquity; a conflict between the West and East, a confrontation between the West and the East, a confrontation between the possessed and the unprivileged; a dispute between the Hindu and the Muslim, and the touchable and the untouchable. The novelist finds a contrast in the Iyengar feud. That is why in order to calm down the tension between the two Iyengar groups, the author has deliberately introduced Mahatma Gandhi who got success in making them united.

Pedro Machado has made the following comment about Ghosh's talent in writing historical fiction :

> Amitav Ghosh occupies what in many ways is a unique position as a writer of historical fiction, for as many have noted, he has formal academic training as a social anthropologist and completed doctoral work that required him to develop challenging linguistic competencies, ethnographic specialization, and orthographic skills to read source materials from the extensive twelfth - century Cairo Geniza documents. From his earliest days as a writer, Ghosh has demonstrated an affinity for and appreciation of historical research. (1546)

Ghosh's greatness lies in his unique talent in blending history with fiction. He admits in the Author's Notes of *The Glass Palace*:

> In attempting to write about places and times that I knew only at second-and third-hand, I found myself forced to create a parallel, wholly fictional world. The Glass Palace is thus unqualifiedly a novel and I can state without reservation that except for King Thewbaw, Queen Supayalat and their daughters, none of its principal characters bear any resemblance to real people, living or deceased (587) .

A few years later after the Second World War the Queen and her daughters were allowed to return to their homeland, Burma. The Queen's party made its way slowly across the subcontinent, travelling eastwards from Bombay by rail. They stayed at the Grand Hotel in Calcutta. On April 16, 1919, the Queen and her party boarded the R.M.S. Arankola. They arrived in Rangoon four days later and restarted their Burmese life in a bungalow on Churchill Road.

After many years Jaya visited Ratnagiri. The novelist mentions her visit purposefully in the last part of the novel in order to point out the changes taken place relatively in an unimportant place in India. He writes:

> Ratnagiri's setting was every bit as spectacular as Jaya had imagined. But she quickly discovered that very little remained of the places that she had heard about as a child. The jetty at Mandvi was a crumbling ruin; the Bhagavati temple, once just a spire and a shrine, was now a soaring mass of whitewashed concrete; Outram House, where King Thebaw and his entourage had lived for some twenty-five years, had been torn down and rebuilt. Ratnagiri itself was no longer the small, provincial town of Thebaw's time. It was a thriving city, with industries clustered thickly around it on all sides (526).

Moreover, the historian in Ghosh wishes to highlight the strange and unusual lessons that teach the mankind about history. King Thebaw was a Burmese king who was forced to spend his life with family in exile in Ratnagiri by the British empire. The Indians had no connection with this Burmese king. Even then the reaction of the people to him is quite striking. The novelist becomes a researcher in history and tells:

> But the strange thing was that through all of this, the town had somehow succeeded in keeping King Thebaw and his memory vibrantly alive. Thiba-Raja was omnipresent in Ratnagiri: his name was emblazoned on signs and billboards, on street-corners, restaurants, hotels. The King had been dead more than eighty years, but in the bazaars people spoke of him as though they'd known him at first hand. Jaya found this touching at first, and then deeply moving - that a man such as Thebaw, so profoundly untransportable, should be still so richly loved in the land of his exile (526).

Jaya went to the site of her great-uncle's - the Collector's residence where Uma had lived. It was very near to the hotel where she was staying. The compound was government property and it was surrounded by a massive, forbidding wall. Ratnagiri was looked as a perfect model for colonial district town. There were many district courts and offices in a red-brick Victorian compound. On the last day in Ratnagiri, Jaya hired a scooter-rickshaw and asked the driver to take her to the Bhate beach. When she reached there she noticed that the sand was copper - coloured and it slipped beneath the water at a gentle inctine. There were a number of coconut palms along the edge of the beach. Near the water the sand changed into soil where there was a densely tangled accumulation of grass, shells and dried seaweed. There she found what was looking for - a small stone memorial to her great - uncle, the Collector. The writer selects apt words to narrate this memorable scene in the novel:

> The engraved lettering was worn thin by the combined action of wind, water and sand. There was just enough light to read the inscription. It said: 'To the memory of Beni Prasad Dey Esq., District Collector, 1905-1906.' Jaya stood up to look at the windswept beach, sloping gently down to the waves. The red sand had turned grey with the setting of the sun. Uma had told her, long ago, that if she were to walk from the memorial stone to the water, in a straight line, she would cross the very spot where the Collector's body had been found, along with the wreckage of his capsized boat (529).

Thus, Ghosh gives a befitting epilogue to his chapter 'Ratnagiri' and his craftsmanship helps the readers to remember the place as a memorable one.

The novelist does not forget to mention the great sacrifice of our freedom fighters. He presents it here through the memories of Tridib and the narrator's grandmother. Tridib tells the narrator how the secret societies in Bengal indulged in making bombs at home to kill the

British officials, and how some of the culprits were nabbed and even deported or executed. They were very common in different parts of India, especially in Bengal, during the freedom struggle in India. When Mayadebi and other family members discuss the physical appearance and boldness of Robi in facing a notorious older college mate, the grandmother recollects one of her classmates who associated with the terrorist movement among nationalists in Dhaka. He is a shy and silent boy in the class and nobody noticed him. One day a group of policemen under an English officer came to the class room and arrested him. She narrates the whole incident with horror in her eyes. Tridib asks her anxiously what happened finally to the boy. We read her words with great patriotism in our minds:

> They had heard afterwards that he had been a member of one of the secret terrorist societies since he was fourteen. He'd been exercising with them in their gymnasium, learning to use pistols and make bombs, smuggling messages and running errands. A few months before he was arrested, he had finally been initiated into the society. The first mission they had given him was to assassinate an English magistrate in Khulna district. All his preparations were ready; he was to leave for Khulna at the end of the week. But the police found out – their network of informers was legendary. The boy was tried and later deported to the infamous cellular Gaol in the Andaman Islands (38) .

The narrator says that his grandmother admired the boy martyr as a hero. If she had known his connection with the terrorist movements in advance, she also would have joined with him to murder the English magistrate. When the narrator expresses his doubt, she answers: "I would have been frightened, she said, but I would have prayed for strength, and God willing, yes, I would have killed him. It was for our freedom: I would have done anything to be free" (p39).

In this context Tridib also reveals to the narrator some terrorist movements among nationalists in Bengal in the first few decades of the last century: about secret terrorist societies like Anushilan and Jugantar and all their offshoots, their clandestine networks, and home-made bombs with which they tried to assassinate British officials and policemen, and a little about the arrests, deportations and executions with which the British had retaliated.

Here we see that Ghosh doesn't find anything wrong with the terrorist activities of the Indians during the British rule. To some extent, we feel that he appreciates them.

Ghosh's scholarly knowledge in freedom struggle of our country and craftsmanship for putting it in the proper places in a fiction are shown brilliantly in the presentation of the character Uma Dey. During Uma's stay in Rangoon with Rajkumar and Dolly, one day Rajkumar said to Uma that everything they had they owed to her. If there was anything she would ever need, she should ask them first. Immediately she asked them to book her a passage to Europe.

While Uma was travelling to Europe she met a family friend on the ship namely Mrs Kadambari Dutt. She belonged to the famous Hatkhola Dutts of Calcutta, a cousin of Toru Dutt, the poetess and a relative of the distinguished Mr. Romesh Dutt, the writer and scholar. Mrs Dutt was much older than Uma and had lived a while in England. She was very experienced and knowledgeable about things, and Uma felt that her new friend was the perfect godsend person to have on board. They were enjoying themselves together. The meeting of Uma with Mrs Dutt on board is a striking example for Ghosh's skill in mixing fiction with contemporary events and history.

Mrs Dutt helped Uma to find accommodation in London as the paying guest of an elderly missionary lady who had spent much of her life in India. Soon former friends and colleagues of the Collector, most of them English, came to meet her. Some of them had

known her late husband at Cambridge, and others had worked with him in India. They had all been very kind and taken her to show the important places in and around the city. Uma continued her connection with her shipboard friend, Mrs Dutt. She knew almost all Indians living in London. She introduced many interesting people to Uma and Madame Cama was one among them. She was a Parsee from Bombay but in clothes, manner and appearance she seemed more European than Indian.

Madame Cama impressed Uma much because she spoke to her more truthfully or forthrightly on matters concerning India. She had been kind enough to introduce Uma into her circle. All of them were interesting and idealistic men and women whose views and sentiments were similar to her own. Through these people Uma had begun to understand that a woman like herself could contribute a great deal to India's freedom struggle from overseas. Madame Cama suggested Uma to visit the United States. She had some Irish friends in New York and many of them were sympathetic to India's cause. She thought that Uma should meet such people and she could enjoy living in that city.Uma also didn't want to remain longer in London because everything in the city haunted and reminded her late husband. Soon she decided to leave London and to go to New York.

Uma settled in an apartment of her own at NewYork and took up the job as a proof - reader of a publisher. Besides, she actively involved in politics, participating in meetings, making speeches and writing articles for magazines. In 1929, when Uma was fifty and had been away from India for more than twenty years, she decided to leave America. She had various engagements in Tokyo, Shanghai and Singapore and therefore she preferred to sail across the Pacific rather than the Atlantic. Matthew, Elsa, Dolly and her two sons reached at the port of Georgetown in Malaya to welcome Uma.

At the pier they noticed that a large number of people had already gathered and most of them were Indians. Many of them had flowers and garlands in their hands. When the ship came into view and the crowd shouted loudly: “Uma Dey zindabad, zindabad - long live, long live Uma Dey” (232). Some others made their shouts and slogans in Hindustani: “Inquilab zindabad’ and ‘halla bol, halla bol!” (232). They cheered and welcomed her cordially. After a long interval of 23 years Uma and Dolly met again. After the initial kind regards Dolly asked Uma who were those people that had gathered around there. Uma replied that they had belonged to a group she had been working with and had called them the Indian Independence League. Uma assured Dolly that she would relate everything in detail to her later. In the afternoon Matthew led Uma and others to his ‘Morningside House’ at Penang in Malaya.

Indian Independence League

Amitav Ghosh unveils relatively an unknown chapter in the freedom struggle of India that happened in America through the fictional character Uma. After dinner Dolly accompanied Uma to her bedroom. Dolly wanted to know more about the crowd gathered at the pier of Georgetown port. Uma began saying that it was such a long story and she didn’t know where to begin. She joined the Indian Independence League while she was in New York, inducted by friends, other Indians living in the city. Though the Indians in the city were few in number, they were closely connected. Most of them were passionately political and it was impossible for them to remain aloof.

Dadasaheb Ambedkar was a brilliant leader at Columbia. There was Taraknath Das, gentle in manner but stubborn in spirit. There was the Ramakrishna Mission at Midtown which was managed by a single, saffron-robed saint and scores of American sympathisers. There was an eccentric Raja who believed himself to be India’s Bolivar who stayed at a

tenement south of Houston Street. Soon Uma's apartment had become the centre of all activities of the Indians. She and her compatriots were like explorers or castaways picking apart the details of what they saw around them, trying to derive lessons for themselves and their country.

The Ghadar Party

Among Uma's Indian contemporaries in New York there were many who took their direction from a newsletter published from the University of California, in Berkeley, by Indian students. This publication was called Ghadar, after the Hindustani word for the revolt of 1857. The people who were involved with the magazine were known as the Ghadar Party. Much of their support came from the Indians who had settled on the Pacific coast in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of these immigrants were Sikhs - former soldiers of the British Indian army. The experience of living in America and Canada served to turn many of these former loyalists into revolutionaries. Perceiving a link between their treatment abroad and India's subject status, they had become dedicated enemies of the Empire they had once served. Some of them concentrated their efforts on trying to convert such of their friends and relatives as were still serving in the British Indian army. Others looked for allies abroad, developing links with the Irish resistance in America.

Uma said that the Indians were comparatively beginners in organising revolts. The Irish freedom fighters gave them necessary guidelines and techniques for collecting weapons and using them on unexpected occasions. On St. Patrick's Day in New York a small Indian group participated in the Irish parade, with their own banners, dressed in sherwanis and turbans, dhoties and kurtas, angarkhas and angavastrams.

Amitav Ghosh presents to the readers what he has collected about the freedom struggle in America through the character Uma. After the start of the First World War, the

British intelligence services tightened their network and the Ghadar Party was forced to go underground. Gradually it dispersed into a number of different groups. Of these the Indian Independence League was the most powerful with thousands of partisans among overseas Indians. It was their offices that Uma had been visiting in eastern Asia.

Dolly admits that she has never heard of anything about the League and adds that the papers are always full of Mahatma Gandhi, but no one ever speaks of the League. Ghosh gives his own reasonable explanation to this question in the freedom struggle of Indian history through the character Uma. Uma said that Mr. Gandhi had led the loyal opposition and he followed a soft cornered approach to the British authorities 'instead of striking at its iron first.' (223) Gandhi could not understand that the Empire would always remain secure while its Indian soldiers remained loyal. The Indian army would always put down opposition wherever it was possible, not only in India but also in Burma, Malaya, East Africa, etc. Therefore, the Empire did everything possible to keep these soldiers under their control. The colonial authorities were careful enough to recruit men from certain particular castes. All their soldiers were completely shut off from politics and the wider society. They were given land and assured jobs to their children.

Dolly who does not know much about the politics of the colonial rule and tactics of the freedom fighters asks Uma what she could do in the present context. Uma explains that she and her compatriots have to open eyes of the soldiers. Many of the League's leaders are old soldiers. She points out the example of Giani Amreek, the distinguished Sikh Giani who came to welcome her at the pier on that day. Uma narrates his life story in order to make Dolly understand the attitude of the Indian soldiers.

Uma first met Sikh Giani in California many years before. He was an old military man himself and had risen to the rank of a junior NCO in the British Indian army before his

resignation. He talked Uma for the first time the necessity of opening the eyes of Indian soldiers. At once she asked him why he had taken so much time serving in the army to realise that they had been exploited to conquer others. Then he explained that they were told that the colonial authorities were trying to make the Indians free from their bad kings or their evil customs. He added that it took them a long time to understand that the freedom offered to the people was an excuse for the colonizers to rule here as far as possible. When Dolly asked Uma her plan of action, she concluded like this:

> Uma gave her a wan smile. 'I met many men, Dolly. But we were always like brothers and sisters - that's how we spoke to one another, bhai and bahen. As for me, because they knew that I was a widow, I think the men looked to me to be a kind of ideal woman, a symbol of purity - and to tell you the truth, I didn't much mind. That's the thing about politics - once you get involved in it, it pushes everything else out of your life' (224).

The mass-migration from Burma to Calcutta in *The Glass Palace*

The Glass Palace (2000) Ghosh's fifth novel deals mainly with the theme of the fall of empire of Burma during the period of pre-independence India and how the change of rule affects the life of the royal family members. It also highlights the theme of mass-migration of people from Burma to Calcutta during the Second World War between British and Japanese. These two foreign countries were ready to do anything to make sure territorial domination over Burma. It is an important event in the modern history of India, especially of Bengal. The Japanese took hold of Burma in 1942 and thousands of people mostly Indian and refugees fled away from Burma to Calcutta traveling long distances in their struggle for existence. Rajkumar, Dolly, Manju and the baby reached to the river in an ox-cart. They found a boat that took them upriver, through Meiktila, past Mandalay to the small town of Mawlaik, on the

Chindwin river. Ghosh's talent as an English writer is clearly evident in the narration of their miserable journey:

There they were confronted by a stupefying spectacle: some thirty thousand refugees were squatting along the river-bank, waiting to move on towards the densely forested mountain ranges that lay ahead. Ahead there were no roads, only tracks, rivers of mud, flowing through green tunnels of jungle. Since the start of the Indian exodus, the territory had been mapped by a network of officially recognised evacuation trails: there were 'white' routes and 'black' routes, the former being shorter and less heavily used. Several hundred thousand people had already tramped through this wilderness. Great numbers of refugees were still arriving, every day. To the south the Japanese army was still advancing and there was no turning back (468).

The above passage shows the disastrous effects of war on common people and how it affects the neighbouring countries. The events occurred in Burma cause great changes even in Indian social and cultural life.

The Mu-I-Mubark Incident in *The Shadow Lines*

Amitav Ghosh gives us a minute description of the Mu-I-Mubarak incident. Before narrating the climax scene of the novel, the novelist explains three historical events namely the Mu-I-Mubarak incident in Kashmir, riots in Calcutta and Khulna in Dhaka. Here we forget that it is a novel and begin to think that it is a historic study. The novelist is very careful not to make any comment on the incident. On the contrary, he simply narrates what he has seen in newspapers about the incident.

It was supposed to be a hair of Prophet Mohammed, purchased by a Kashmiri merchant in 1699. It was kept in Hazratbal Mosque near Srinagar. This mosque became a great centre of pilgrimage and every year multitudes of people, Kashmiris of every kind,

Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, would flock to Hazratbal on those occasions when the relic was displayed to the public. Even the European observers have admitted the faith of those ecumenical pilgrims. Over the centuries, the shrine became a symbol of the unique and distinctive culture of Kashmir. On 27 December, 1963, two hundred and sixty three years after it had been brought to Kashmir, the Mui-Mubarak disappeared from its place in the Hazratbal mosque.

As the news spread, life came to a standstill in the valley of Kashmir. Despite the bitter cold, thousands of people, including hundreds of wailing women took part in black-flag demonstrations from Srinagar to Hazratbal mosque. Schools, colleges and shops pulled down their shutters all over the valley and buses and cars vanished from the streets.

The next-day, 29 December, there were huge demonstrations in Srinagar, in which Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus alike took part. There were a number of public meetings too, which were attended and addressed by members of all the major religious communities. There were some incidents of rioting and a curfew was quickly declared by the authorities. The rioters targeted properly identified by the government and the police. The government blamed these attacks as ‘anti-national elements’.

There was a spontaneous show of collective grief in the valley for the next few days. There were innumerable black flag demonstrations. Every shop and building flew a black flag. Every person on the streets wore a black armband. The most remarkable thing was that there wasn’t even one single incident of animosity between Kashmiri Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Strangely enough, the theft of the relic had brought together the people of Kashmir as never before. This credit goes to Maulana Masoodi, an authentic hero of the time. He persuaded the first demonstrators to march with black flags instead of green and thereby drew the various communities of Kashmir together in a collective display of mourning.

Prime Minister Nehru appealed for patience and dispatched the highest officials of the Central Bureau of Intelligence and the Home Ministry to find the missing relic. The Premier of Kashmir declared that the theft was a 'mad act of some miscreants'. There were meetings and demonstrations in towns and cities in Pakistan. The religious authorities declared that the theft of the relic was an attack upon the identity of Muslims. December 31 was observed as a 'Black Day' in Karachi and soon other cities followed suit. The Pakistani newspapers declared that the theft was a part of the deep - laid conspiracy for uprooting the spiritual and national hopes of Kashmiris, and rumbled darkly about 'genocide'.

On 4 February, 1964, the Mu-i- Mubarak was 'recovered' by the officials of the Central Bureau of Intelligence. There were no explanations. So far nobody really knows what happened to the Hazratbal relic. The city of Sringar was in great happiness. People danced on the streets. There were innumerable thanksgiving meetings. Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs marched together in demonstrations demanding the revelation of the conspirators behind the plot. The very rare slogan 'Central Intelligence zindabad!' rang out on the streets of an Indian city.

The same incident created a contrast reaction in Khulna, a small town in the distant east wing of Pakistan. There a demonstration protesting against the theft of the relic turned violent. Some shops were burnt down and a few people were killed.

The Partition and communal riots in Indian English novels

The post-independence Indian English novelists have seriously and painfully recorded the tragedy of Partition and the consequent communal riots in their novels. Evidently writers were at first unable to articulate the enormous tragedy that had unfolded in front of their eyes. They wrote more about violence taken place in those days. It was based on the demented hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims at that time in India.The lack of adequate

preparation and safeguards at the time of the Partition led to a communal carnage of unprecedented proportions resulting in 6,00,000 deaths and exodus of 8.5 million refugees from Pakistan with stories of untold inhuman sufferings.

There are many arguments about the reasons for the Partition. However, it is generally estimated that the Muslim League distrusted a possible dominion status for India with the Congress Party in the governing position because the league leaders believed the Muslim minority would remain in a subordinate position. Gandhiji and Pt. Nehru tried their best to convince the Muslim leaders that they would stand for a secular structure in the Congress Party. Unfortunately, the League agitated for a separate state. Finally, the British Parliament permitted the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten to give freedom to India as two independent states, India and Pakistan, in 1947. Strictly speaking, the basis of Partition of India was the communal and not the economic factor. However, the Partition led to severe bloodshed and communal riots, especially in Bengal and Punjab.

The Partition has been a recurrent theme in Indian English fiction, with a new perspective on the event emerging in each succeeding decade. Though they are branded as partition novels, they highlight the social, political, cultural and religious realities on the Indian subcontinent from the 1950s onwards. The popular writers and their novels on the theme of the Partition are the following:

1. Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan* (1956)

2. Manohar Malgonkar, *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964)

3. Nayantara Sahgal, *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969)

4.Chaman Nahal, *Azadi* (1975)

5. Anita Desai ,*Clear Light of Day* (1980)

6. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1980)

7. Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (1988)

8. Bapsi Sidhwa, *Ice - Candy - Man* (1989)

9. Vikram Seth, *A Suitable Boy* (1993)

Communal hatred and the mechanics of riots is another important dimension discussed in *The Shadow Lines*. Panic, rumour, fear and hatred are universal components of riots. Riots are the same everywhere. The riots started in Khulna. Soon it spread in the neighbouring towns and districts and towards Dhaka. Hindu refugees began to pour over the border into India, in trains and on foot. The Pakistani government provided these trains with armed guards and tried best to protect them. At some places on the border the trains were stopped by mobs with slogans like 'Kashmir Day Zindabad'. The towns and cities of East Pakistan were now in the grip of a 'frenzy' of looting, killing and burning. There is a very moving account of riots in Calcutta. We see riots as they come to children. Children, narrator as one of them, are struck with fear. He climbs his school bus and every one stares at his water bottle. He gets unnerved. Then he comes to know that everyone is advised to drink soda as water supply itself has been poisoned. Strange, loud noises are coming to their classroom when Mrs. Anderson is teaching them. They are deported to their houses amidst a drama of terror and violence. Experiencing the riot, the narrator says, "The streets had turned themselves inside out: our city had turned against us" (203).

There were many rumours in Calcutta about the riots in Khulna. One of them was that the trains from Pakistan were arriving packed with corpses. There were pictures of weeping, stranded Hindu refugees in Calcutta dailies. Angry crowds began to gather at the station. On 10 January Calcutta erupted. Mobs went rampaging through the city, killing Muslims, and burning and looting their shops and houses. The police opened fire on mobs in several places

and a dusk -to-dawn curfew was imposed on parts of the city. The police couldn't control the situation. On 11 January, the army was called out of Fort William and several battalions were deployed throughout the city. It took about a week to get the normal life back.

It was not still estimated how many people were killed in the riots of 1964. It is believed that more people were killed in these riots than that in the war of 1962. The riots taken place in Khulna and Calcutta had its echoes in Dhaka also. That ended in Tridib's tragical murder. Tha'mma and others witnessed the killing of innocent people in communal riots. Tha' mma's aged uncle 'Jethamoshai' and his protector Khalil are cruel victims to this unjust social danger. The drastic event becomes the turning point in the life of Tha' mma. She cannot accept the border line that exists between India and Bangladesh, until her nephew Tridib gets killed. It flashes on her mind that the line of separation is marked not only on the map, but also in the minds and hearts of the people. Hate replaces love, and Th'mma is eager to pay back the Pakistanis in the same coin. She gives away her precious necklace to the war fund.

Had not the tragedy struck Tridib, he would have married May and led a happy married life, setting an example of the conquest of racial and cultural frontiers with love. The nightmarish experience haunt May Price for seventeen years and she cannot recall it without a pang of conscience. She considers herself responsible for the death of Tridib.

Hugh Charles O'Connell assesses Ghosh's skill in countering the western scientific knowledge with the subaltern knowledge of the east in the following remark:

> To imagine subaltern silence turned postcolonial secrecy as the staging ground for the possibility of the radically new, Ghosh subverts the novel form to present this knowledge as something profoundly, nonlinear, indeterminate, and beyond our current phenomenological understanding. Since the reader is

> unable to acquire this knowledge, what the novel ultimately reveals by decentering the Western grip on visions of futuricity, then, is this utopian postcolonial longing for form – for possibilities, unwritten maps, and modes of social organization and being the seemingly impossible - which then requires the realization that our histories are not teleologically determinate, but rather pegnant with possibilities (792).

As a postmodernist writer Ghosh has definite and specific ideas about the concept of a nation - state. It is closely associated with the consequences of the Partition of India. While analysing this aspect of his writing Anshuman A. Mondal has made the following observation:

> Ghosh's anxiety over the fragility of a secular national identity in India is consistently reinforced by the effacement of his nationl identity as an Indian by that of his religious identity as a Hindu, or a non - Muslim. This anxiety raises further ambivalences. If nationalism and communalism are implicated in each other, then they are both consequences of modernity. They are also both, ultimately, concerned with ''identity politics'' and with articulating difference. On the other hand, this is structured by Self / Other dialectic that is totalitarian and does not permit an awareness of difference that is open and respectful. This, too, is a consequence of modernity (29-30).

As a postcolonial writer Ghosh does not agree with the concept of nationalism that prevailed during the two World Wars. Hind Wassef has mentioned Ghosh's view in clear cut terms on this topic in *Newsweek* in an interview:

> Today nationalism,once conceived of as a form of freedom, is really destroying our world. It's destroying the forms of ordinary life that many

people know. The nation-state prevents the development of free exchange between peoples.

Ghosh does not think that the Partition between India and Pakistan was not a permanent solution to the conflict that disturbed the two dominant communities in the subcontinent. This is what he has highlighted in the climax of the novel,*The Shadow Lines*.

Tha'mma,the grandmother of the narrator of the story was born in Jindabahar in Dhaka in a joint family. She loved her native place Dhaka, but she had to leave it early in her life. After the premature death of her husband, Tha'mma took up the job of a teacher in a school in Calcutta. She served there for twenty-seven years and retired as principal in 1962.

After retirement Tha'mma longs to visit Dhaka, her native place. By a strange coincidence, Mayadebi's husband has been transferred to Dhaka then. He has been made Counsellor in the Deputy High Commission there. Later Tha'mma's sister Mayadebi invited her to visit her in Dhaka. Tha'mma did not want to enjoy a holiday trip, but wanted to visit her only uncle Jethamoshai and to take the poor old man back to Calcutta if she could. A few weeks later Tha'mma receives a plane ticket to Dhaka for the third of January, 1964. Oddly enough, May Price happens to visit India at the same time. She wishes to visit Dhaka. Tridib accompanies her. On 2nd January, 1964 the three left for Dhaka from Calcutta.

Tha'mma and others met Mayadebi and others at the Dhaka airport. She took them to her house in Dhanmundi in new-born Bangladesh. After a few days Tha'mma expressed her impatience to go to the old house to fetch their uncle. Mayadebi agreed to go there next day. At once the Shaheb, Mayadebi's husband objected the decision saying that, that was not a good time to go there. He pointed out that the house was in the heart of the old city and there was going to be trouble there. He added that they should not go there then.

Tha'mma was not willing to admit the Shaheb's objection. She added that they had come all the way to Dhaka to save their old uncle and she would not make any delay in her purpose. At last they agreed to go there on next Thursday, one week later. On Thursday morning they started to the old house in Mercedes. There was a security guard in addition to the driver according to the suggestion of the Shaheb. Tha'mma dressed a white sari with a red border. Mayadebi laughed at her saying that she was anxious as a bride going home for the first time. Tha'mma smiled back and retorted that she was going home as a widow for the first time. Robi, Mayadebi's youngest son also accompanied them in the car.

Robi scanned the streets as they drove through them, watching alertly for signs of 'trouble'. But he was soon disappointed: all the shops were open and the streets were crowded at the New Market as usual. The driver pointed out the sights to Tha'mma as they went by: the Plaza Picture Palace with a fifteen-foot hoarding of Ben-Hur hanging outside, the Gulshan Palace Hotel, Ramna Race Course, and so on. Tha'mma admitted them all wonderful. But she enquired where Dhaka was. Soon after they had crossed a bridge, the sights changed. The streets grew narrower and more crowded, the houses older, more dilapidated. Tha'mma was alert sitting on the edge of her seat, looking out, sniffing the air. A few minutes later they turned in to a narrow lane that was lined with shops on both sides. Tha'mma twisted and turned in her seat pointing at everything. Both Tha'mma and her sister Mayadebi were in nostalgia.

Tha'mma and others reached an old house, their destination. When they got off the car, a crowd of curious children swarmed after them. Most of them attached themselves to May because she was an English girl. Robi heard them whispering to each other about her and one little girl tried to touch her. Saifuddin, a mechanic and owner of garage ushered them in. He offered them a bench to sit on. Saifuddin told them that they should do something immediately for the old man. If they delayed, it would not be easy for them to save him.

Mayadebi gave Saifuddin a gift, a saree for his wife. When she tried to step in, Saifuddin stopped her, asking her to wait for Khalil another refugee from Murshidabad in Bengal. The old man sheltered him and later he had been looking after the old man. Khalil made his livelihood by running a cycle rickshaw and doing odd jobs with which he had to maintain his family, his wife and two children.

Tha'mma's old uncle had been an advocate and later he was bedridden. Tha'mma was thunder-struck on hearing that Saifuddin's wife cooked food for the old man. She remembered that the old man had been a genuine orthodox Hindu and never permitted a Muslim to pass a shadow within ten feet of his food. Since the Partition, the refugees had been pouring in, and the old man had been receiving them with open arms because he did not like any of his relatives to come back and claim a share in his house.

When Khalil arrived, Saifudin introduced the visitors to him as Ukil Babu's relatives, who had come to take him back to India. Though Khalil smiled, the very idea of parting with the old man was intolerable to him. May Price liked his smile as simple and sympathetic. Khalil opened the door to let them in. The room was large and very grimy. It was densely crowded with tubes, handle bars and such things. A woman dressed in a sari, with two children clutching her knees, was watching them from the shelter of a curtained door at the far end of the room. Khalil introduced them to his wife as Ukil-Babu's relatives from Calcutta. The curtain dropped and she disappeared, but the children stayed, watching them with bright round eyes.

The old man was sitting on a high four-poster bed at the far end of the room, looking out of the window, unaware of their presence. Robi shrank back. He had never seen anyone as old as that: he was so old that he seemed childlike-shrunken, tiny, with spit hanging in threads from the corners of his mouth. Tha'mma's eyes misted over as she looked at the old

man. She called him Jethamoshai and told him that they had come home at last. He saw her then and turned his head slowly to look at her. She covered her head and hurried towards him. She told him sobbing that they had come to take him with them. It was very clear that he didn't recognise her. The old man stopped her saying that he would not allow women to touch him. Tha'mma taken by surprise obeyed him and sat down.

Khalil told the old man loudly that the visitors were his relatives, not his clients. But the old man didn't listen to his words. His eyes were fixed on May. His sagging mouth had fallen open and his tongue had spilled out from the gaps between his teeth. Khalil introduced her as a foreigner who had come from Calcutta with his relative. The old man began to sing "God save our gracious..." (213). But then he forgot the tune and managed somehow to convert the words into a cheerful hum. May laughed and began to sing too; "God save our..." (213) The old man appreciated her song slapping his pillows.

Tha'mma repeated to the old man with great effort that they had come to take him back to India and not to claim their share in his house. She reminded him that it was not safe for him to be there. The old man admitted that he had understood the meaning of her words. But his response was really shocking:

> Once you start moving you never stop. That's what I told my sons when they took the trains. I said: I don't believe in this India - Shindia. It's all very well, you're going away now, but suppose when you get there, they decide to draw another line somewhere? What will you do then? Where will you move to? No one will have you anywhere. As for me, I was born here, and I'll die here (215).

At that Tha'mma gave up. She sighed and got up to go. She said that there was no use talking to him anymore. She added that they had done what they could. They would

better go then. Saifudin the mechanic understanding the situation suggested that they would have to think of some other way of taking him back. Khalil requested them that they should not take him away. He feared that the old man would die. Moreover, the old man was like a grandfather to his children and what they would do without him.

Khalil's wife came forward against her own husband. She requested to take the old man with them. She felt that Khalil did not know what he was saying. He did not have to cook him and feed him. She had two other children too. She worried that how long they could go on like that and from where they would get money for the family. In that moment of utter confusion, the driver of their car came running up to the door. He shouted that they should return immediately because there was going to be trouble outside. Tha'mma told Khalil in a stern voice that they would take the old man then and keep him with them for a few days, until the trouble was over. Then if he wanted to return, they would bring him back. Khalil didn't try to defend himself any longer. He took up the task to bring him to the station in his rickshaw. He would tell him that he had to go to court, otherwise he would not leave the house. He would follow their car carrying him.

Khalil went up to the old man and whispered something into his ear. Though the old man resented at first, later he surrendered himself. Khalil took a black cotton coat off a peg and helped him to dress it. He pulled out a pair of shoes from under the bed, put them on his feet and tied the laces. He handed him his walking-stick, put an arm around his shoulders, and helped him climb off the bed.Tha'mma and others went to their car. Khalil and the old man followed them behind. When they reached the yard, Tridib helped Khalil to lift the old man into the rickshaw. When the car turned around a corner, a mob stopped their car. Some of them attacked the passengers in the car. They broke the windscreen and injured the driver. The security guard in the car fired a shot at them. They drew back. Soon they saw Khalil's rickshaw carrying the old man and circled round it. Tha'mma wanted the driver of their car to

drive away. But May Price got out of the car and screamed loudly to save the old man and Khalil from the rioters. Tha'mma shouted at May Price that she didn't know what she was doing and due to her every one of them would get killed. May did not listen her words. She was a heroine at that time. She was not ready to listen to a stupid, cowardly old woman. Every one of them except May understood what was going to happen. She began to run towards the rickshaw. Tridib shouted and ran after her. He caught up with her and pushed her, from behind. She stumbled and fell. She thought he would stop to take her back to the car. But he ran on towards the rickshaw.

The mob had surrounded the rickshaw. They had pulled the old man off it. Tridib ran into the mob, and fell upon their backs. He was trying to push his way through to the old man. Then the mob dragged him in. He vanished. May could only see their backs. It took less than a moment. Then the men began to scatter. May picked herself up and began to run towards them. The man had melted away, into the gullies. When she reached there, she saw three dead bodies. They had cut Khalil's stomach open. They had hacked off the old man's head. They had cut Tridib's throat, from ear to ear.

May plays a great role in the tragedy that overtakes Tridib. The old man's fate has been sealed, but if she has not got out of the car in her humanitarian zeal, Tridib would have been driven away to safety. May on her part, is on penance ever since Tridib's death. She sleeps on floor. She fasts. She works for earthquake relief and things like that. She collects money from streets with all her banners, and posters for social welfare. May, like a true disciple of Christ, suffers his death like hell. She is literally on a self-torturing spree. It is only at the very end of the novel she realizes the meaning of sacrifice. She frees herself of her burden of guilt, "But I know now I didn't kill him; I couldn't have, if I'd wanted. He gave himself up; it was a sacrifice. I know I can't understand it, I know. I mustn't try, for any real sacrifice is a mystery" (251-252).

Chapter III

Indian Elements in the Religious and Economic dimensions and Their Depiction in Ghosh's Novels

Religion has a great role in Indian society from its early history onwards. Most of the people in India believe in a supreme being, God, who controls everything in our life. Each individual in the society follows a set of principles of a particular religion in his / her personal life. It has laid emphasis on some values and standards to be followed in human life. But along with this, it has also insisted some ceremonies, rituals and practices, and they have been followed even after the attainment of independence. For example, the Indian society shows great respect to Swamis and Sanyasis who don't have any material interest in their life. They dedicate their lives fully to the matters of the spirit. They lead a simple life and they are free from all worldly vices. People regard them as a source of spiritual comfort. They follow certain role models taken from the classics like *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*.

The widespread education has made modern Indian more rational and sensible, and has begun to question the prevailing customs and practices in the society. It is pointed out that such things are mere blind beliefs and superstitions. Many Indian English novelists like Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Balanchandra Rajan, etc. have raised their voice against such practices prevailing in the society. Besides, they think that the influence of religion leads a large number of people to fanaticism, fundamentalism, and blind imitation of dead customs.

The renunciation of worldly possessions and selfish motives is the foundation stone of Indian religions. The four stages of life as enshrined in the Vedas are Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanaprastha and Sanyas or sacrificing of all wealth and worldly concerns in order to attain a state of spiritual freedom and enlightenment. It has remarkable similarity to the principles followed in Christianity and Buddhism. Almost all religions in India regard the life of a monk as superior to the life of an ordinary person. B.R. Agrawal and M. Sinha have commented on this topic in their book *Major Trends in the Post -Independence Indian English Fiction* like this:

> Indian thinkers and philosophers like Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, Swami Vivekananda and ancient spiritualists like Nanak, Sankaracharya, Chaittanya etc. have upheld the ideals of renunciation and asceticism. A study of the postindependence Indian English novels reveals the recurrence of this theme of renunciation and asceticism, as a great ideal in Indian life and culture. In many of these novels we encounter men who adhere to the ideals of non-attachment, desirelessness and selfless love towards people of all classes (187).

Meenakshi Mukherjee, a scholar on Indian writing in English, has remarked that the ascetic in saffron robe is a ready-made symbol at the disposal of the Indian novelists. She means that the Sadhus in saffron robe are very common in the Indian English novels written even after the attainment of independence. Sometimes they are presented as positive characters as exerting benevolent and consoling influence on those who approach them for solace and peace of mind in their utter disappointed situations of life (106). Whereas in some novels similar characters have been introduced as exerting an insidious influence on people who confront difficult crises in life. e.g., Mulk - Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, R.K. Narayan's

The Guide, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, Kamala Markandaya's *A Silence of Desire*, Bhabani Bhattacharya's *He Who Rides a Tiger*, etc.

Mulk Raj Anand has tried to substantiate the belief through his novels that the Sadhus exploit common people in the name of religion. He argues that these Sadhus are not really ascetics but fake priests leading immoral life. The priest in the temple in *Untouchable* highlights his conviction. When he does not succeed in his attempt to rape Bakha's sister, he complains of impurity in coming near to her. In *Coolie* the ascetic performs certain religious rites to a barren lady and tries to enjoy physical pleasures from her. Similarly, Mulk Raj Anand introduces another fake priest in his novel *The Road*. In the beginning of the novel the Brahmin priest appears as a devout follower of ideals in the scriptures, sanctimonious and religious leader of the society, but later it is proved that he is a debauchee at heart.

In the case of R.K. Narayan it seems that he has complete faith in asceticism or renunciation of worldly goods and attachments for the sake of salvation of soul. But he has presented such characters differently in his novels. In *Waiting for Mahatma* he introduces Mahatma Gandhi as an ideal ascetic who can love and sympathize with all types of people. Covered simple white cloths he walks along the villages on foot and talks to the villagers about spinning, making and wearing khadi dress. He conveys to them the message of love and ahimsa. Thus, Narayan presents Gandhi in the role of a traditional Indian ascetic in the true sense of the word. His saintly philosophy of life resembles to the voice of God himself.

At the same time Narayan presents another type of ascetic in his novel *The Guide*. Raju, the protagonist in the novel is forced to spend a long time in a jail as a punishment for his criminal offence. After releasing from the prison with long hair and beard, he does not go to his own native village. While he is wandering in the village, people think of him an ascetic and thus he becomes a Sadhu unwillingly. Soon he tries his best to perform the varied rites

and rituals successfully. Though Raju doesn't expect any miracle for having rain in the village due to his fasting, he decides to be serious and graceful in his new role as an act of self - discipline. In the last stage of his life he has achieved salvation, a state of renunciation and real human status through his integration with the life of the community.

Raja Rao also has presented characters giving importance to the high ideals of renunciation and sainthood in his pre-independence novel, *Kanthapura*. The narrator is an old grandmother, who tells the story in the garrulous, digressive and breathless style of the Indian purana or The Harikatha, mixing freely narration, description, reflection, religious discourse, folk-lore, etc. Raja Rao has boldly translated Indian words, phrases, expletives and idioms from his native Kannada into English. Moorthy, the main character, rises above the desires of the flesh, the fear of suffering, the excommunication or censure of his fellow beings. He is a Gandhian who knows that the essence of the Indian culture lies in religion.

Religion is closely associated in most of the activities of the majority people in India. Whenever they do have a fortune or misfortune in their life, they give either its credit or its curse to the concerned god or goddess. Uma's nephew Arjun gets selection as an officer cadet to The Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun. The family members couldn't believe what they have heard because for generations, recruitment into the British Indian army had been controlled by racial policies that excluded most men in the country, including those from Bengal. It was impossible for Indians until quite recently to enter the army as commissioned officers. The Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dum of was founded only five years before and the fact that some of its seats were open to public examination had gone largely unnoticed. The reaction of his father is noteworthy: "But Arjun's father was not at all displeased by the news: on the contrary, he was so glad that he immediately organised an expedition of thanksgiving to the temple at Kalighat."(276).

Ghosh has presented innumerable characters belonging to different religions. He gives meticulous attention in moulding his characters and therefore the diverse aspects of each religion have to be narrated in detail. In this regard he shows a particular interest in focussing the major ideas of Buddhism. With this intension in his mind he has cast the character Dolly in *The Glass Palace*. As Dolly was born and brought up in Burma, she followed Buddhism. While her daughter -in-law Manju was pregnant, she gave more importance to its religious practices. They participated in Thadin, the annual three-month period of reflection and abstinence. Often Dolly would read to Manju the scriptures in translation because Manju knew neither Pali nor Burmese. One day Dolly chose a discourse by the Buddha, addressed to his son, Rahula: She read:

> *Develop a state of mind like the earth, Rahula, for on the earth all manner of things are thrown, clean and unclean, dung and urine, spittle, pus and blood, and the earth is not troubled or repelled or disgusted...develop a state of mind like water, for in the water many things are thrown, clean and unclean, and the water is not troubled or repelled or disgusted. And so too with fire, which burns all things, clean and unclean, and with air, which blows upon them all, and with space,which is now here established*... (367).

Amitav Ghosh had chosen the apt occasion to quote the words of Buddha and Dolly's reading of his exact words become a great relief to Manju who is in great tension about delivery. He shows his great respect to those words by printing them in italics. The words are so powerful that they even calm the mind of the readers.Though, Manju is a Hindu, Buddha's words have touched her deeply. After her delivery holding her daughter to her breast, Manju remembered a passage that Dolly had read to her just a few days before: "... it was from the Buddha's first sermon, delivered at Sarnath, two thousand and five hundred years

before...*birth is sorrow, age is sorrow, disease is sorrow, death is sorrow; contact with the unpleasant is sorrow, separation from the pleasant is sorrow, every wish unfulfilled is sorrow..."*(368).

Ghosh presents Dolly as an apt disciple of Buddha in the last part of the novel. He has taken keen interest to mould this character as the personification of the spirit of endurance and acceptance. She is always ready to yield and give in, and this nature in her character is her source of strength. She becomes a solid support in all crises of Rajkumar and his family. After the tragical death of Neel in the timberyard, Dolly tries to look after Manju and her daughter like a guardian angel. At the time of Japanese invasion in Rangoon during World War II, it becomes fatal for Rajkumar and his family to remain there. By this time Manju's behaviour became very erratic. Dolly and Rajkumar decided to take Manju to Calcutta. Their journey from Rangoon to Calcutta was a miserable one which could not be described in words. While they were crossing a river, Manju handed over her baby to Dolly and committed suicide falling into the river.

In 1942 Rajkumar, Dolly and Manju's baby reached to Lankasuka in Calcutta where Uma and Bela were living. For the next six years Dolly and Rajkumar stayed with Uma, in her flat. The baby Jaya, became a bond linking every member of the household. Dolly got a job in an army publications unit, translating wartime pamphlets into Burmese. Rajkumar worked as a supervisor at sawmills and timber yards. In January 1948 Burma got independence from the British. Soon after this Dolly decided that she and Rajkumar would return to Rangoon, at least for a while. In the meantime, they would entrust Jaya with her aunt Bela and her other grandparents. Dolly's eagerness to return to Burma was due to the fact that she had not heard anything from Dinu for the least seven years. She believed that he was still alive and wished to see him. She realised that though Rajkumar was willing to accompany her at first, he was not interested to leave the child whom he was very fond of. So

she decided to leave Rajkumar in Lankasuka itself for his own sake and Jaya's. Uma agreed with the opinion of Dolly. Dolly booked a single, one-way passage to Rangoon at the steamship company's office. She was sure that Rajkumar would accompany her if he learnt of her plans and therefore she didn't tell him anything about her trip to Rangoon. She did her daily business as usual.

On the morning of the departure, Dolly cooked Rajkumar's favourite dish, mohingya noodles. They went for a walk around the lake and afterwards Rajkumar fell asleep. Uma consented Dolly to accompany her to the Khidderpore docks. Both of them knew the finality of that departure and they were silent on the way. Ghosh's excellence in narrating a farewell scene is clearly evident here: At the end, when Dolly was about to board her ship, she said to Uma:

> 'I know Jaya will be fine. There are many of you to care for her. It's Rajkumar that I'm worried about.' 'He'll be all right, Dolly.' 'Will you look after him, Uma? For my sake?' 'I will; I promise.' At Lankasuka, Rajkumar woke to find a note on his pillow: it was written in Dolly's careful hand. He picked up the note and smooted it down. It said: Rajkumar -in my heart, I know that Dinu is still alive and that I shall find him. After that I shall go to Sagaing as I have so long wanted to do. Know that nothing in this world will be harder to renounce than you and the memory of our love. Dolly. He never saw her again (482).

No doubt the above-mentioned passage is the most memorable one in the novel. It highlights Ghosh's concept of Buddhism by shaping a woman character, Dolly, in all her doings. She does all her duties well as a maid, wife, mother, mother-in-law, friend, etc. and finally decides to spend the remaining part of life in God's presence and decides to go to Sagaing. Ghosh's concept of religion is better revealed through this character. He believes

that religion must help an average human being to perform his / her duties in this world with a calm and quite mind, and after that he/she can give up everything in this world however great and intimate they are. Man gets final solace in the presence of God.

Ghosh has presented several characters belonging to different religions in this novel and has given due attention to their religious beliefs and practices. In the beginning of *Sea of Poppies* the novelist describes how Deeti, the protagonist of the novel, begins her normal routine:

> The village in which Deeti lived was on the outskirts of the town of Ghazipur, some fifty miles east of Benares. Like all her neighbours, Deeti was preoccupied with the lateness of her poppy crop: that day, she rose early and went through the motions of her daily routine, laying out a freshly-washed dhoti and kameez for Hukam Singh, her husband, and preparing the rotis and achar he would eat at midday. Once his meal had been wrapped and packed, she broke off to pay a quick visit to her shrine room: later, after she'd bathed and changed, Deeti would do a proper puja, with flowers and offerings; now, being clothed still in her night - time sari, she merely stopped at the door, to join her hands in a brief genuflection (3).

The above scene in the morning is very common in Hindu familes and it highlights Indianness in religious aspects. The primary duty of a wife in the morning is to get ready everything for her husband for going to work. Soon after that she has to pay homage to God. To offer a proper puja before the shrine in the prayer room, a devotee has to follow certain strict rules and practices. As Deeti has not changed the sari which she put on the previous night, she does not enter the prayer room. She just prays at the entrance holding her hands together. Apparently it is a trivial thing, but Ghosh gives more importance to this as an Indian English writer. After a few urgent cooking, both the mother and the daughter went near to the

Ganga for bathing. The novelist has keenly observed such scenes and writes: “A pace or two from the water’s edge, they shouted an invocation to the river - Jai Ganga Mayya ki..... - and gulped down a draught of air, before throwing themselves in” (6). This line throws light to the fact how Hindus regard the river Ganga. Its holiness is stressed in the above line. The writer narrates in detail how Deeti and her daughter come to the prayer room:

> They changed quickly and filled a pitcher with water from the Ganga, for the puja room. When they were back at home, Deeti lit a lamp before leading Kabutri into the shrine. The room was dark, with soot-blackened walls, and it smelled strongly of oil and incense. There was a small altar inside, with statues of Shivji and Bhagwan Ganesh, and framed prints of Ma Durga and Shri Krishna. But the room was a shrine not just to the gods but also to Deeti’s personal pantheon, and it contained many tokens of her family and forebears - among them such relics as her dead father’s wooden clogs, a necklace of rudraksha beads left to her by her mother, and faded imprints of her grandfather’s feet, taken on their funeral pyres (7).

Ghosh tells the world how an average Indian woman regards her belief in God and how it connects her respect to the family members who passed away on different occasions. Our faith in God is closely associated with our elders and relatives. Our family ties are not at all superficial and they can never be likened to that of western culture. Being a historian and philanthropist, Ghosh counts such aspects of human life, especially in India, and brings them out on befitting occasions through proper characters.

Observations on the Economic conditions of India

Colonial exploitation of people, Nature and animals in *The Glass Palace*

The Colonial people expanded the British empire in Asian countries like India, Burma, Malaya, etc. for their economic benefits. Ghosh goes deeper into the timber export in Burma and the rubber plantation in Malaya like a researcher to find out the real nature of exploitation under colonial rule. Both timber and rubber were not a part of the merchandise culture in Burma and Malaya before they were colonized. The British merchants found out the infinite possibility of earning huge profits from the dense forest filled with heavy teaks in Burma. Similarly, they understood the geographical features and climate in Malaya as the most appropriate for rubber plantation. Thus, they commodified and transformed Nature both in Burma and Malaya for their economic benefits.

The British cleared the evergreen teak forests in large quantities. More natives were recruited as coolies or slaves to the felling units in the forests. Even elephants were used for logging teaks. Saya John explains to Rajkumar the changes happened in the Burmese life:

> Look at the oo-sis in this camp; look at the hsin-ouq, lying on his mat, dazed with opium; look at the false pride they have in their skill as trainers of elephants. They think, because their fathers and their families have all worked with elephants, that no one knows their animals as they do. Yet until the Europeans came none of them had ever thought of using elephants for the purpose of logging. Their elephants were used only in pagodas and palaces for wars and ceremonies. It was the Europeans who saw that tame elephants could be made to work for human profit. It was they who invented everything we see around us in this logging camp. This entire way of life is their creation. It was they who thought of these methods of girdling trees, these ways of moving logs with elephants, this system of floating them down river (74).

Thus, the elephants that were the symbol of power, dignity and authority were transformed into commodities. They were degenerated to the levels of mere slaves and tools for accumulating profit.

Ghosh describes in detail how poor people in Madras were recruited and taken to Rangoon in Burma like a historian. Rajkumar borrowed a few hundred rupees from Saya John and three months later he left for India with Baburao. He had to travel for four days from Rangoon to Calcutta and four more days to reach to Madras. Baburao rented two ox-carts at a small market town and decorated them with festive cloths. He bought several sacks of parched rice from the bazaar and recruited six stick-wielding lathiyals to act as guards. They moved to the countryside accompanied by drummers like a bridal procession. On the way Baburao collected more details about the surrounding villages and the natives.

Rajkumar, Baburao and their team stopped at a small hamlet and Baburao seated himself under an immense banyan tree. The drummers started beating their instruments. At once people including women with their babies from the nearby huts and fields gathered around them. Baburao made an eloquent speech explaining that Burma was a land of gold and the British Sarkar had declared it as a part of India. He convinced the people that he was able to become immensely rich only because of the prosperity in Burma. He invited them to accompany him in order to work in Burma and many of them came forward to accept his invitation.

When they reached the coast, Baburao hired a country boat to take them to Calcutta. Many of them were traveling in the sea for the first time in their life. At Calcutta they boarded the S.S. Dufferin which was owned by a British company. They had brought thirty-eight men with them from Madras and arranged space for them at the rear of the ship. Their condition in the ship was beyond all our imagination. Ghosh writes:

> Some two thousand other would-be immigrants were there already. Most were men, but there were also some hundred and fifty women. At the back, jutting out over the ship's make, there was a narrow wooden platform with four holes to serve as toilets. The passage was rough and the floor of the holding area was soon covered with vomit and urine. This foul-smelling layer of slime welled back and forth with the rolling of the ship, rising inches high against the walls. The recruits sat huddled on their tin boxes and cloth bundles. At the first sight of land, off the Arakan coast, several men leapt off the ship. By the third day of the voyage the number of people in the hold had dwindled by a few dozen. The corpses of those who had died on board were carried to the stern and dropped into the ship's churning wake. On reaching the Rangoon docks, Baburao found that the voyage had coast him two men. He was not displeased. 'Two out of thirty-eight is not bad,' he told Rajkumar. 'On occasion I've lost as many as six' (136).

Rajkumar made huge profit by recruiting people to the labour camps in the rubber plantations in Malaya. He justifies his involvement in human trade in indentured labour. He regards it as a charity work because he is helping them to improve their life and welfare. Their economic status is more stabilized as indentured labourers. He regards this world itself as a place for consumption. His attitude of consumption leads him to exploit the helpless women, whom he transports from India to Malaya as coolies. To him they don't have any identity and they are unnamed women. He seduces one such woman and she gives birth to a child of Rajkumar, namely Ilongo. Rajkumar doesn't feel any sense of guilt in having given birth to an illegitimate son. He compensates the whole affair by giving enough money to the unfortunate.

Colonial exploitation of the poor in *Sea of Poppies*

Colonial exploitation of the poor is one of the major themes of Indianness. The story begins among the people lived in Ghazipur, a small Hindu village bordering between Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. People used to grow wheat, cereal and pulses which have been staple food items in the Indian subcontinent for centuries. The British trading company forced them to stop the farming of their traditional food crops and compelled them to cultivate poppy plants. The British factories process these plants in order to extract opium and export it to China in large scale. The majority of the people work in those factories for low wages. Deeti's husband Hukam Singh, an ex-soldier works in Ghazipur opium factory. Here the colonizer exploits the poor villagers in two ways: the authorities tempt them to stop farming of their traditional food crops and lead them to starvation. Besides they lose their employability in farming and are forced to work at low wages in opium factories. The working conditions prevalent in the Ghazipur Opium factory is another example for how the colonizers exploited the Indians. Once Deeti is summoned to the factory to take her sick husband home. She couldn't believe what she witnessed there: "Their eyes were vacant ...completely naked" (p 95). As a historian Amitav Ghosh brings out this unnoticed page of Indian history very realistically. No other Indian English writers have torched on to this dark side of the Indian village life.Binayak Roy has made a comment on the poor Indians in *Sea of Poppies*:

> *Sea of Poppies* explores the destruction of indigenous agricultural practices in history when native peasants were forced by colonizers to cultivate opium. This ecological imperialism was aggravated by the transportation of a pauperized pool of landless laborers to Mauritius. This led to the development of the capitalist world economy with its open plunder of the periphery for the benefit of the center (154).

Ghosh clearly exposes how the judiciary under colonial rule tortures the Indians even the well-off landlords. Such a case is brought out through the landlord of Rashkali, Neel Rattan Halder. He had an unshakable faith in the company's policy and a high regard for the Queen's rule. He and his late father had business dealings with the British merchant, Mr. Burnham. He was ignorant of the cunningness of the colonial agent. Later there arose a dispute between the two and the English magistrate Kendalbush awarded the sentence in favour of his own countryman Mr. Burnham. There were clear indications of the British merchant's forgery. Even then the British Magistrate makes his judgement in an impassive voice:

> 'Being unwilling to add further to your distress,' said the judge, 'it is sufficient to say that none of the applications made on your behalf have suggested a single proper ground for altering the course of the law. Recent precedent, in England as well as in this country, has established forgery to be a felony for which the forfeiture of property is an inadequate penalty: it carries the additional sanction of transportation beyond the seas for a term to be determined by the court. It is in keeping with these precedents that this court pronounces its sentence, which is that all your properties are to be seized and sold, to make good your debts, and that you yourself are to the transported to the penal settlement on the Mauritius Islands for a period of no less than seven years. So, let it be recorded on this, the twentieth day of July, in the year of Our Lord, 1838...' (*Sea of Poppies*, 239).

Ghazipur Opium Factory harvests high profit out of its opium export business to China. But it does not give any financial compensation to Deeti after her husband's death. As a widow and the mother of a girl child, Deeti deserves a reasonable help from the company for the premature death of Hukam Singh. The company doesn't show any moral obligation to

help a destitute who has no other source for survival. The prevailing British judiciary has no provision to insist the company to do something for the unfortunate.

Migration of Indians to new British Colonies

The migration of poor Indians to new British colonies is a common Indian theme in Indian writing in English. Ghosh depicts the situation, highlighting the reasons for such migration. The third part of the novel 'Sea' takes place in the schooner which moves from Calcutta to its destination in Mauritius. Some coolies sign the agreement of labour contract to escape from the poverty and misery at home. Deeti, the protagonist in the novel, is forced to perform 'sati' when her husband Hukam Singh meets a premature death. In the critical moment, just before burning to ashes, Kalua, an untouchable lower caste oxman from the neighbouring village, rescues her. Her escape is not acceptable to her upper caste relatives. In order to escape from the wrath of Deeti's in-laws, she and Kalua become indentured workers on the schooner named 'Ibis'.

Neel Rattan Halder, the native king of Rakshali, who has business dealings with the British, is tried for forgery by Burnham and his cronies. The court punishes him by sentencing him to work as an indentured labourer for seven years in Mauritius. When he comes to the prison in the *Ibis* he gets Ah Fatt, a half Chinese and a half-Parsi, an opium addict from Canton, as his sole companion. Later the two are taken together on the *Ibis.*

Paulette, a French orphan born and brought up in Calcutta easily disguises herself as an Indian woman joins among the indentured workers on the Ibis. She feels more at ease with Indian manners, food, and clothing than with Western ones. After her father's death Mr. Burnham and his family take up her protection. Later she finds that the British family has a plan to get her married to Justice Kendalbush, an old Englishman. So, she decides to run away and joins the *Ibis* disguising herself in a sari.

Ghosh describes the sufferings of the people in labour camp at Calcutta. It is another aspect of Indianness. It was the time of Diwali. The city resounded with celebrations. But there wasn't any sort of enjoyment in the camp. The silence within the camp all the more difficult to bear for the inmates. When Diwali came, the migrants marked it by lighting a few lamps - silently. They had no idea when they would start from Calcutta. New rumours spread in the camp each day. Deeti and Kalua were the only people who believed that a ship would come to take them away. Many of them regarded the camp as a jail where they had been sent to die. Their bodies would be turned into skulls and skeletons, then they could be cut up and fed to the sahib's dogs, or used as bait for fish. The people gathered outside the fence stared at the inmates as if at animals in a cage. The novelist describes:

> One day a migrant tried to escape from the camp. Soon he was caught and brought back to the camp by the spectators outside. He was beaten severely and had to live without food for two days. Several people fell ill due to the poor climate of the city. Some recovered, but others wanted to be sick and to die at the earliest. One night a very young boy became seriously ill, but the sirdars and maistries were drinking toddy and they didn't give him any attention. Before daybreak the boy died. The overseers showed responsibility in carrying the dead body to the nearby burning ghats for cremation. They did not permit the girmitiyas to accompany the dead body. Later a vendor whispered through the fence that the boy had not been cremated at all: 'a hole had been bored in his skull and his corpse had been hung up by the heels, to extract the oil - the mimiai - ka - tel - from his brain (340).

The migrants talked of pujas and namazes, of recitations of the *Qur'an* and *the Ramacharitmanas* and *the Alha-khand* to overcome their hurdles in going to Mauritius. Their great trust in God for mercy is another element of Indianness.

Ghosh has taken special care to present middle class people in his works. Makarand R. Paranjape of Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi has studied how Ghosh has presented middle class people in his novels and made the following observation:

> To me Ghosh's work is especially important because it represents his problematic relationship with the dominant ideology of the still significant *bhadrasamaj* in Bengal and in India. By *bhadrasamaj*, which may be translated as ''genteel society''. I mean the Bengali bourgeoisie newly emergent under colonialism. This amorphous and diverse ''middle class'' was not only constituted by colonialism but also went on to resist it to help forge the nation that became India ("Beyond the Subaltern Syndrome", 358).

Nandini C Sen, University of Delhi, examines the various aspects of Diaspora narrated in the novel *Sea of Poppies* and makes the following comment in the conclusion of her essay:

> A close examination of the South Asian diaspora shows that it can be divided into two distinct phases. Paranjape categorises them as 'settler' or 'visitor' diasporas, taking his cue from *The Empire Writes Back*. Into the first category falls all the forced migrations on account of slavery or indentured labour; and into the second, the voluntary migrations of businessmen and professionals. *Sea of Poppies* being the first of a trilogy, Ghosh concentrates indentured labourers and recreates their voyage across the seas. It is a richly woven story of a voyage where people from all walks of life come together, and the stores of their lives form the tapestry on which the novel is based. However, it is important to remember that Ghosh's attempt is fraught with imagination and his story–telling does not approximate to reality (212-213).

Chapter IV

The Geographical and Cultural Aspects of India and Ghosh's Narration of them

Geographical and Climatic Descriptions of India

The readers in other countries prefer to read fiction not only to enjoy the stories of a country but also to know more about the country including its geographical and climatic conditions. Many people all over the world have been attracted by the phrase 'Incredible India' and they wish to know how far it is truthful. The Indian English novelists have done great service in this regard because they have showed genuine enthusiasm and direct experience of each place in describing the background of their stories. The way of thinking and living of a community is closely associated with its geographical specialities and changes in climate. The mindset of the fishermen community is entirely different from that of people living near to forests and hill areas. Similarly, people living in villages follow a different style of living from that of the people in cities.

Most of the Indian English writers have chosen either rivers or seas as the background for their stories. Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar in his Indian Writing in English comments on this aspect of Indianness like this:

> Novels whose action is set by the side of a river are a category by themselves. Nirad C.Chaudhuri has advanced the ingenious theory that, for the Aryans in India, the 'river cult' is a symbol of their pre-Indian existence-a survival of the Danube! (322).

Iyengar gives a few examples also for his remark. K.S. Venkataramani's novel *Murugan the Tiller* (1927) is set in the background of the village Alvanti on the shore of Cauvery. The action of Humayun Kabir's novel *Men and Rivers* (1945) takes place on the banks of the Padma. R.K. Narayan's novels centred in Malgudi on the shore of the Sarayu. In Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) the river Hemavathy is a person and presence. In his *The Serpent and the Rope*, Raja Rao describes the beautiful pious city of Benares, the holy Ganges river as a goddess and other important surrounding places in detail.

Ghosh has given much preference to local and indigenous knowledge in his writing and the knowledge of Fokir in *The Hungry Tide* is a good example for this attitude. Pramod K.Nayar analyses how Ghosh has used knowledge and power based on the character Kanai in *The Hungry Tide*.

> Kanai has inherited a story, and he wants to tell the story to the world. Considering it is Morichjhapi that he will narrate, the uncanny persistence of the ghosts of the refugees and state violence in the postcolonial age is significant. The postcolonial uncanny in Ghosh is working - out of the question of knowledge and power. The knowledge of the tide country, dolphins and its bloody history is now ''open source''the adopt a contemporary idiom: it will be made available through public databases and narratives. The uncanny agora's past - of - repeated floods, massacres and predators - has to be uncovered, not through sophisticated technologies alone, but with the help of local knowledge (113).

Ghosh also follows his predecessors to present the background of his story. In the first part of the novel, *Sea of Poppies* 'Land' the protagonist Deeti and her daughter Kabutri are living and working in a village near Ghazipur, some 50 kms east of Benares (Varanasi), on

the shore of the Ganges. The second part 'River', centers on the activities of the owner of the *Ibis* and of his friends in Calcutta on the shore of the Hoogli. The final part 'Sea' takes place in the schooner the *Ibis* in the Indian Ocean on its way from Calcutta to its destination in Mauritius.

The places in India presented in *The Glass Palace*

Madras

After overcoming the nominal resistance of the Burmese soldiers, the British army with the help of the Indian soldiers captured The Glass Palace in Mandalay and took King Thebaw, Queen Supayalat and the Princesses as prisoners. The Royal Family spent the night in one of the buildings in the palace grounds and the next day Colonel Sladen, the spokesman of the conquering British army informed the King that the Royal family would be transported from Mandalay the following day. He added that the king could use the remaining time to make his preparations.

The Royal Family were taken to the riverside in two bullock-carts and the maids carrying boxes and bundles followed the carts on foot. They boarded a steamer named Thooriya and after five days on the Irrawaddy it anchored in the Rangoon river. From Rangoon port it continued its journey to Madras. In Madras the Royal Family were taken to a mansion that had been arranged for the duration of their stay in the city. They left Madras a month later on a steamer called the Clive. They sailed through the Palk Straits, with the northern tip of Ceylon visible on the left, and the southernmost point in India, Cape Comorin, in view on the right. Four days after leaving Madras the Clive anchored Ratnagiri.

Ghosh gives a clear idea about the location of Ratnagiri through the conversation between King Thebaw and Mr Cox, the English policeman who was in charge of the Royal Family in their journey from Rangoon:

> ‘What?’ The King stared at him, nonplussed. ‘Where is this place?’ ‘Some hundred and twenty miles south of Bombay. An excellent place, with fine views of the sea.’
>
> ‘Fine views?’
>
> The King sent for a map and asked Mr Cox to show him where Ratnagiri was. Mr Cox indicated a point somewhere between Bombay and Goa. The King was thoroughly alarmed to note that the place was too insignificant to be marked on the map.
>
> ‘But we would rather be in a city, Mr Cox. Here in Madras. Or Bombay or Calcutta. What will we do in a small village?’
>
> ‘Ratnagiri is a district headquarters, Your Highness, not a village by any means’ (64).

In Ratnagiri a large, two-storeyed bungalow set inside a walled garden was alloted for the stay of the last Burmese king and his family. It was called Outram House and it faced the sea. It was very near to the Mandvi jetty. The novelist describes the life of the royal family in exile in Ratnagiri.

Peculiar aspects of the Indian seas especially tide in Bengal in *Sea of Poppies*

Most of the Indian writers in English have taken much pain to depict the geographical features and climatic conditions in India during the different seasons. Salman Rusdhie picturises Bombay genuinely in his work *The Midnight Children*. Several readers prefer books belonging to Indian writing in English in order to understand more about India. Ghosh has never disappointed such readers for he narrates the varied aspects of the Indian rivers and seas. As a native of Bengal, he speaks on the tide in the Hooghly based on his direct

knowledge. He says that no human agency cannot fix the date of the *Ibis*'s departure to Mauritius. Instead 'a quirk of the tides' would fix such things:

> ...the more dangerous oddities of the waterways of Bengal: namely the ban,or bore - a tidal phenomenon that sends walls of water hurtling upriver from the coast. Bores are never more hazardous than in the periods around Holi and Diwali, when the seasons turn upon an equinoctial hinge: at those times, rising to formidable heights and travelling at great speed, the waves can pose a serious threat to the river's traffic. It was one such wave that determined when the Ibis would weigh anchor: the announcement of the hazard having been made well in time, it was decided that the schooner would ride the bore out at her moorings. Her passengers would come on board the day after (343).

Ghosh describes in detail how people get ready for the tide. The harbour-master warned in the morning that the bore was expected on the river around sunset. The moment onwards the riverfront was busy with preparations. The fishermen worked together to carry small boats, sailing boats and even light weight boats. They were moved out of the water and placed them beyond the river's reach. Patelis, budgerows, batelos and other river crafts were too heavy to be lifted from the water. So they were anchored at safe places. Brigs, brigantines, schooners and other ocean - going vessels anchored strongly and unbent their sails.

Cities in the background of the novels in Indian English

Raja Rao has described in detail the beautiful pious city of Benaras, the holy Ganga river and other historical places in his novel *The Serpent and the Rope.* Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, born in Germany of Polish parents, married to an Indian architect and settled in New Delhi. Though she is a foreigner, she has chosen Indian themes for her novels,

especially the background of New Delhi. She describes the over-inflating population of the city and their specialities in their way of thinking and living. She gives minute observation about the numerous foreign embassies, international agencies, foundations, cultural centres, clubs and groups, etc. in the capital city. Anita Desai's novel *Cry the Peacock* (1963) is presented in the background of Delhi. She paints lively and colourful pictures of Delhi with its grand majestic Birla Mandir, old Delhi, Garden, etc. In *Voices in the City,* Anita Desai describes Calcutta city as an area of smoke and darkness, of noise and squalor, and of disease and death. She depicts it as a soulless evil city. Kamala Markandaya's novel *A Handful of Rice* explains the strange aspects of Madras city. Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* describes the darker sides of Bombay city. She says that the pavements of Bombay are garbage-strewn, shit-pocketed, and foul–smelling.

The novel *The Hungry Tide* presents in the background of the 'tide country' of West Bengal - the 'archipelago of islands'. It comprises the Sundarbans delta where the Ganga unfurls into the Indian Ocean. The place is closely connected with a littoral ecosystem that includes the largest surviving mangrove forests and adjacent tiger population in the world today. There remains the nearly extinct or critically threatened Gangetic and Irrawadday dolphins. Moreover, there is a human population of approximately 4 million settlers drawn to the tide country by a series of utopian social projects. As a writer Ghosh always follows three great principles in his narration: love of humankind, an ethic of tolerance and mutual respect in a world of strangers. He faces the dilemma of how to balance the protection of prevailing ecosystem and the miserable life of the poorest people in the islands. Meg Samuelson of University of Cape Town in South Africa summarises Ghosh's strain to present his theme in the following words:

> He seeks to strike the desired balance through a littoral imagination that dissolves distinctions between apparently opposed categories and which

> disperses agency without losing sight of the forces of power assembling against the ecosystem and its human components (196).

Geography and life of people in the Sundarbans

Being a Bengali Ghosh has been able to observe the salient features of the Indian life, especially of Bengal. Robbie B.H. Goh of National University of Singpore has appreciated Ghosh's ability to narrate such things in the following remark:

> The inhabitants of the Sundarbans are intimately but also tragically tied to the land, a particulary treacherous and unforgiving territory of small islands filled with predators like crocodiles and tigers, and deeply affected by silting and changes in the river's course over time. Survival in this strange land depends heavily not only on strength, hard work and courage, but also on deep local knowledge, and almost mystical reverence for the land, which is personified in the local god and protector – figure Bon Bibi (100-5). In this novel, Ghosh is fascinated by the body of the terrain, and the effect that it has on the body of its inhabitants. The first description of the Sundarbans occurs in the excerpt from his uncle's journal that Kanai reads on the train, a highly poetic and symbolic description that emphasizes the region's vast body and complex contours: it is an ''immense archipelago of islands'', ''stretching for almost three hundred kilometres'', with each mangrove forest ''a universe unto itself'', often filled with an ''impassably dense'' foliage (6-8).

Amitav Ghosh gives us a genuine picture of Calcutta city in his second novel *The Shadow Lines*. As he has spent his childhood days there, he knows the city more closely and intimately. The unnamed narrator and other local boys meet Tridib, the elder son of his grandmother's sister Mayadebi at Gola Bazar in Calcutta. The novelist presents a colourful

picture of Calcutta through his lively narration. The busy streets of Calcutta during pooja days deserve our attention because the novelist gives us a photographic picture of the city. Here also we see Indianness in its grandeur. In this context we have to remember that though Amitav Ghosh has settled with his family in New York, he visits Calcutta every year to spend a few days in his home town. That attachment is shown about Calcutta city in many of his works. The unnamed narrator explains:

> It took us much longer than usual to drive through the city: cars have no privilege on the roads at that time of the year; the streets are overwhelmed by the festivities. We had to inch forward near Gariahat, with Nityananda and Tridib hanging out of the windows, begging shoppers to make way. Near Sealdah it took us almost half an hour to skirt around a pandal that was jutting out from the pavement, right into the middle of the street (44).

G.R. Taneja in RLA College, Univeristy of Dehi, has made an interesting observation about Calcutta city related with modern Indian history in the conclusion of his brief review of *The Shadow Lines*:

> The author's evocation of the city of his birth and adolescent years, Calcutta, depicted in remarkably vivid detail, is comparable only with Anita Desai's re-creation of Bomaby in *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988). His experience as a social anthropologist at the Universities of which they exist. He reveals a sense of history and a firm grasp of sociocultural and historical material that underlies his narrative. One of his earliest memories of Calcutta is that of a mob surrounding his house, a memory that he decided to ''exhume'' and confront after he witnessed the 1984 riots (the most traumatic event in contemporary Indian history) that spread through the country after Indira

> Gandhi's assassination. *The Shadow Lines* takes in war–devastated London, civil strife in post-partition East Bengal, and riot–hit Calcutta and projects a major critique of the psychological make up of the contemporary man who thrives on violence(365).

The novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* takes readers to various important places in Calcutta. Sudeep Sen of Aark Arts Books in London has made a striking comment in his this book review:

> Another important strand in the book is painted Urmila Roy, a journalist whose movements allow us to see the present day lower – middle – class Calcutta, revisit real locales such as Rabindra Sadan and Lower Circular Road, and experience the world of Bengali literary fiction and culture. There is always a tension between the said and the unsaid, the known and the unknown, and between what is considered eerie and what is normal (221).

Dutta K. points out how Ghosh has described the geographical aspects in the narration of his novel *The Circle of Reason:*

> Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason* presents a much more enigmatic appreciation. It combines within itself an uncompromising restlessness with a poise and control that suggests peace rather than longing. This is remarkable, for really *The Circle* offers nothing which it can call home. Initially located in a refugee village, the story refers back to Bangladesh and Calcutta, finally moving to the Middle East via Kerala where it reaches its denouement in a desert of shifting sand–dunes. And all the while it travels through environments which are never entirely rural or urban. Nor do its ideas provide a stable attitude. Each idea evolves from the story, posing a challenge to the

> preceding one and is itself qualified by a succeeding understanding. Even a basic element like Time, is not uniformly patterned. *The Circle* is an epic of restlessness (62).

Cultural Aspects of India

The Indian English fiction is quite attractive to readers all over the world for its presentation of the vast and enduring culture of India. Culture is generally defined as the sum total of all that is reflected in the mode of life of people, their thought process and outlook of life and their needs, and aims and aspirations. These abstracts are best expressed through the arts and literature of a country. When a writer is writing either in English or in one of the regional languages, knowingly or unknowingly demonstrates his / her cultural background. Being an ancient culture India has followed certain principles as love, brotherhood, benevolence, tolerance, truth, non-violence, faith in God and reverence for the old, the Guru and the parents. Our culture is closely associated with the faith of the people in their concerned religions.

The Indian English novelists have analysed the eternal values of our ancient culture and emphasized their significance in the present context of individual, family, social, national and international life. These writers have been able to point out how the Western Culture influenced our traditional culture. That is why, Dorothy M.Spencer rightly regards Indian fiction in English as a major source for a systematic study of culture - contact and cultural change, with Indian world-view as the focus.

The narration of a story, background and characters in an Indian English novel will definitely reveal an Indian flavour which will reflect the Indian thought and culture. A close study of Indian English novels can bring out the various aspects of the Indian culture, such as the status of woman in a traditional Indian society, the disruptive influences of femme fatale,

male domination in a society, importance given to the concept of family, Hindu concepts like asceticism and renunciation, the cyclic progression of life and death, attitude of Indian society towards the sufferings of people in other countries, etc.

Raja Rao's second novel *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) which won Sahitya Akademi Award in 1963, is an outstanding model to bring out the cultural legacy of India. Ramaswamy, a young Hindu, who goes to France to do research in history. There he meets, loves and marries Madeleine, a lecturer in history, but they gradually drift apart as Ramaswamy comes to realize the gulf between the Indian and Western conceptions of love, marriage and family. His realisation of his own identity becomes clearer, when he meets Savithri, a Cambridge - educated and militantly modern girl, who is a hard-core Indian at heart. Madeleine finally withdraws not only from Ramaswamy but also from the world itself. He realizes that his love for Savithri is something not meant for mere physical union, but also an ultimate union of the soul with God. Savithri is a paragon of wifely devotion, the Savithri of ancient Hindu legend, who rescued her husband Satyavan from death. Savithri does the same role in the novel - to bring enlightenment to Ramaswamy and save him from dying into a purely worldly life. At last Ramaswamy goes to meet his Guru who alone can destroy his ego and make him fit for his salvation. This novel brings out the Indian view on some basic issues such as love, marriage, sex, family, society, religion, learning, death, etc.

Gisele Cardoso de Lemos summarises what Amitav Ghosh has done in the conclusion of his essay, 'Questioning the Western idea of reason through Hindu philosophy: An analysis of *The Circle of Reason* by Amitav Ghosh':

> In *The Circle of Reason* Ghosh shows the same situation with the incorporation of the fruits of Western analytical reason, symbolized through the sewing machine, phrenology, carbolic acid, etc. and its appropriation

> (selection and transformation) in contact with Indian culture and local needs. However, Ghosh goes further. Using Hindu philosophy as a critical tool of this project, he ends up rehabilitating the notion of reason, turning a limited reason into a liberating one, and showing readers that a former British colony does not necessarily have to reproduce the European reason, as some former colonies did, but offers the example of Indian civilization as an alternative (20).

As a writer it is pointed out that Ghosh is a product of two or more cultures. At the same time, he has been able to make him free from the limited spheres of nationalism, language, or ethnicity. Stephen Alter has mentioned this postcolonial aspect of literature in his article ‘‘Writing Between Cultures’’ like this:

> ‘‘ The cages in which writers were once confined have now been sprung open. Essentially, the problem of alienation is less acute today, because the world is so much more complex, so polyglot, so full of competing voices, that most writers have become nations unto themselves.’’

Unity in Diversity in *The Shadow Lines*

Almost all religions have followers in India. They live together without any ill feeling towards other believers. The two families, the Datta Chaudharies in Bengal and the Prices in London, belong to entirely different religions. There is great amity between these two families despite the racial, religious and cultural disparities. IIa, the Indian girl gets married to Nick,the English boy. May, the English girl falls in love with Tridib, the Indian boy.

The consequences after the disappearance of the sacred relic from the Hazratbal mosque in Kashmir is another good example for ‘unity in diversity’:

> As the news spread, life came to a standstill in the valley of Kashmir. Despite the bittercold thousands of people, including hundreds of wailing women, took part in black - flag demonstrations from Srinagar to the Hazratbal mosque. Schools, colleges and shops pulled down their shutters all over the valley and buses and cars vanished from the streets. The next day, Sunday, 29 December, there were huge demonstrations in Sringar, in which Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus alike took part. There were a number of public meetings too, which were attended and addressed by members of all the major religious communities (225).

The narrator's grandmother believes the principle of diversity of the country. She has her own ideas to retain the diversity of the country. Here is one example: "When she was headmistress, my grandmother had decided once that every girl who opted for Home Science ought to be taught how to cook at least one dish that was a speciality of some part of the country other than her own. It would be a good way, she thought, of teaching them about the diversity and vastness of the country" (116).

Changes happened to the Burmese princesses while their stay in India. It is said that human being is a creation of its circumstances. In anthropology changing circumstances are given supreme importance in the destiny of human beings. As an anthropologist Ghosh keenly observes such changes of his characters and highlights them spontaneously in his writing. During the stay of their early years in Ratnagiri (India) the Princesses usually dressed in Burmese clothes - aingyis and htameins. But with the passage of time their garments changed. The novelist notes their changes like this:

> One day, no one quite remembered when, they appeared in saris - not expensive or sumptuous saris, but the simple green and red cottons of the

> district. They began to wear their hair braided and oiled like Ratnagiri schoolgirls; they learned to speak Marathi and Hindustani as fluently as any of the townsfolk - it was only with their parents that they now spoke Burmese (*The Glass Palace*, 82).

The King and the Queen had four Princesses, among them the first two had been born in Burma. The eldest one married Mohan Sawant, their coachman, lived with him and her children in a small house on the outskirts of Ratnagiri town. The Second Princess and her husband lived in Calcutta for several years before moving to the hillstation of Kalimpong, near Darjeeling. There the Princess and her husband opened a dairy business. So, it happened that of the four Princesses, the two who had been born in Burma both chose to live on India. Their younger sisters, on the other hand, both born in India, chose to settle in Burma: both married and had children.

The Concept of freedom based on culture in *The Shadow Lines*

The Indian concept of freedom is entirely different from that of the Western because it has certain frames and they are based on our culture and tradition. Ghosh has conceived it well and depicted it touchingly. When the narrator, Ila and Robi go to a night club in Calcutta, Ila exerts her freedom. She goes to two businessmen and starts flirting with them. She gets ready to dance with one of them. Robi tries to discourage her from her attempt, but she is firm in her decision. Robi is a physically strong boy. He simply throws away one of the two businessmen. The singing and dancing stops. Robi takes out his purse and hands over one of the waiters a fifty rupee note. Then he puts his arm around Ila and leads them out. The waiters follow them all the way to the pavement. Ila feels humiliated and bursts out. Robi pacifies her:

> Listen Ila, Robi said, shaking his head. You shouldn't have done what you did. You ought to know that; girls don't behave like that here.
>
> What the fuck do you mean? She spat at him. What do you mean 'girls'? I'll do what I bloody well want, when I want and where.
>
> No you won't, he said. Not if I'm around. Girls don't behave like that here.
>
> Why not? She screamed. Why fucking well not?
>
> You can do what you like in England, he said, But here there are certain things you cannot do. That's our culture; that's how we live.....
>
> Then she pushed me away and waved a taxi. It stopped, and darted into it, rolled down the window, and shouted: Do you see now why, I've chosen to live in London? Do you see? It's only because I want to be free.
>
> Free of what? I said.
>
> Free of you! She shouted back. Free of your bloody culture and free of all of you (*The Shadow Lines*, 88-89).

Ila represents the concept of the Western or modern civilization. She finds there, freedom for everything. To her, freedom is something which allows her what she likes to do. To be free of commitments, of relationships, of duties, of everything. Live for one's own self, that seems to be the motto. Certainly, these crazy, mad, free generations do not wish to taste the joy of surrender, unconditional love and acceptance. Robi is the symbol of concept of freedom according to the Indian culture.

The narrator's grandmother Tha'mma also finds the same reason for Ila's decision to live in London. The narrator told his grandmother that Ila lived in London only because she wanted to be free. Tha'mma's reaction is very sharp: "It's not freedom she wants, said my grandmother, her blood shot eyes glowing in the hollows of her withered face. She wants to be left alone to do what she pleases: that's all that any whore would want. She'll find it easily enough over there; that's what those places have to offer. But that is not what it means to be free" (89).Tha'mma makes clear what Ila's concept of freedom is. Later scenes convince us that Ila's concept of freedom is shortlived. It is a synonym to selfishness. Ghosh appreciates the Indian concept of freedom despite its restrictions because in effect it is positive.

Erik Peeters has made an indepth study of these two characters in his article. ''Crossing Boundaries, Making Home: Issues of Belonging and Migration in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines''* and has found out this:

> Despite both women's claim that they seek only freedom, both Ila and Tha'mma become equally and permanently dislocated as a result of their belief in the imaginary idea of culture-space and spatialised belonging. Where Tha'mma submits to an idea of belonging and social being that denies, that she can ever fully belong in India because her place of birth is at odds with her cultural descent, Ila can never belong anywhere because she rejects completely any notion of belonging or descent. Where Tha'mma is forever haunted by the suspicion that she is, after all, a refuge in her homeland because she has lost her place of birth, Ila rejects the notion that she might be at home anywhere, seeking only to be free, a concept utterly vague even in her own mind (33).

Padmini Mongia also has compared these two characters,Tha'mma and Ila, and has suggested the reason for their great difference in attitude like this:

> But although Tha'mma's desire for nationhood is historically determined, as the only woman in this novel whose convictions translate into meaningful action, her actions and beliefs being represented as dated is problematic. Her natural inheritor, Ila, is allowed only the meanest notion of freedom, for to lla freedom means the freedom to choose to dance in a disco in Calcutta as she would in London. That Tha'mma has no respect for such an idea of freedom is no surprise (227).

East - West encounter in Indian English fiction

The prolonged colonial rule made drastic and tremendous changes in the social and cultural life of the Indian society. As an ancient civilization the Indian society has been following its own traditional culture in some spheres of life. Whereas the colonial rulers propagated the ideas of west as the modern in the thought and action of the Indians. So naturally it began to lead a clash between the indigenous Indian tradition and the imported European conceptions. The Indian intellectual witnessed the two forces in his life - the ancient traditional values of Indian and ultra-modern enlightened scientific ideas and attitudes of the West. Thus, an average Indian personality becomes a combination of these two forces, a product of conflict and compromise of the east and the west. The theme of this cultural conflict or reconciliation occupied a pivotal place in the novels written in the post - independence India. Besides the western education and culture injected new thoughts and beliefs in the minds of those Indians living abroad. On their return to India they began to struggle to readjust and revaluate the ideas they received from abroad. Indian English novelists are more serious and conscious about the tension and rift in the personality of an

average modern Indian, according to the changing circumstances in Indian society. Gradually their characters began to adopt western ways in manners and customs, in dress, in eating habits, etc.

Christopher A. Shinn has admired *The Calcutta Chromosome* as a science fiction and has found out a genuine difference between the eastern and western attitude towards science. He has expressed his opinion in the words given below:

> 'As a postcolonial novel, however, Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* does to a certain degree privilege the work of radical subjects in the race for the future. Their opposition to the nineteenth-century bacteriologist Ross and to the late - twentieth - century multinational corporation the International Water Council confronts the assumed authority of the colonizer. Ghosh situates the reader in close proximity to the novel's non-Western subjects to critique the multiple uses of biopower in the calculated global management of life. Bodies have always been discontinuous sites where fierce battles between colonizer and colonized and are waged. In Ghosh's novel, resistance can be found in the massive experimental neural connections that exist in continual tension between the forces of biopower and the politics of life.'

Amitav Ghosh shows great skill in introducing the cultural interaction between the East and the West in his novel *The Shadow Lines*. He makes it more touching by depicting two families - one is Datta Chaudharies in Bengal and Prices family in London. The contrast between these two families itself is a good example for Indianness in this novel. Comparing to the Western concept of family, the Indian concept is more mutual and respectful. Till death Tha'mma is the head of her family. Even her disagreeable character at times is never questioned by others. They bear them silently. Her sister Mayadebi also has her own status in her family.

Ania Spyra examines closely the sense of safety of belonging for women in the modern world based on two female characters Sita Mirchandani in Qurratulain Hyder's *Sita Betrayed* and Ila Datta – Chaudhuri in Amitha Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*. Sita is a woman initially displaced by the Partition and later by her Western education. Ila does not know where she comes from because she spent her childhood in constant movement as a daughter of a U.N. official. Sita lost her family home because the redrawing of the national borders which accompanied Partition. Ila, on the other hand, chooses to live abroad in hopes of evading the communal, patriarchal expectations that bourgeois women in India are supposed to fulfil, but she finds similar patriarchal binaries at work in England. Both women do not find a comfortable space for them to live. Both Sita and Ila are constantly in motion, traveling between communities and nation– states, crossing boundaries in a relentless search for a space belonging. Ania Spyra comments:

> 'While such an inescapability of patriarchy and its epistemic violence on women's bodies may be precisely what Hyder as a feminist writer wanted the reader to see as the reason for her character's sense of being at a loss (rather than at home) in the world, a similar yet inadvertent message can be inferred from Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines.*The novel's female traveler, Ila, shares with Sita a similar uneasy and exoticizing relationship with the men of the ''modern world.'' Ila's situation, however, is all the more difficult in that she puts her faith in this modern world, in which she hopes to find both her home and her freedom from the rigid ideals of bourgeois femininity in India.'

Tridib's relationship with May Price is essentially tragic. Tridib, the 27-year-old Indian youth loves May Price, the 19-year-old English girl who makes her living by playing oboe in an orchestra. They are attracted to each other. He had met her as a child in England when he had gone to stay there with his family in 1940. Since then

> he had been sending greetings regularly to Mrs. Price, but when he was twenty-seven, and May was nineteen he sent a separate greeting to May. After the first three letters, a pornographic letter to her.

May Price comes to India and finds that Tridib is not a monster after all. She finds him lovable. When she first spots him at the railway station, she thinks:

> He looked awkward, absurdly young, and somehow very reassuring. Also, a little funny, because those glasses of his hugely magnified eyes, and he kept blinking in an anxious embarrassed kind of way. She hadn't been able to help throwing her arms around him; it was just pure relief. She knew at last why she had come and she was glad. It had nothing to do with curiosity (167).

May's humanitarian attitude to all living creatures is praiseworthy. While on a drive with Tridib, she forces him to stop the car to attend a wounded dog on the way. She herself slits the throat of the creature to relieve it of its pain. First Tridib resents, but later accepts that she did the right thing. A highly romantic and passionate relationship has developed between this Indian boy and English girl, but by a strange irony of fate, she herself becomes responsible for his untimely death. Tridib's death is the most tragical event in the novel.

The Concept of family in the Indian culture

Since the beginning of our culture it is seen that we give supreme importance to the concept of family. We make great sacrifice for the sake of our families. The master of the family is given utmost respect in our families. Often it is risen to the level of divinity or spirituality. Ghosh has depicted this aspect of our culture in the novel *The Shadow Lines* strikingly. Ghosh pictures the narrator's mother as a typical Indian housewife. Any man with an employed wife can be jealous of the kind of attention and care that mother of the narrator showers on his father. His father is getting rewards for living by convention. His mother

eagerly waits for his father to return from office. Transistor and other noises are shunned off. In this serene, wifely atmosphere, she brings “a clean fresh kurta and a pair of pyjamas and gently nudges him into the bathroom” (128). Then like a king he sits in an easy chair and she narrates soothingly the events of the day. It is a perfect, Indian family picture. Here we never feel it a work of art because it is so common in Indian families.

The attachment to one’s family can be seen in Tha’mma’s decision to visit her ancestral home in Dhaka after her retirement. She feels to bring her aged uncle Jethamoshai from Dhaka and look after him well till his death. The respect given to Tha’mma in her family is another good example for the Indian concept of family. Apparently, she is very strict in her conduct. It is very difficult to adjust with her as the head of the family. She has her own insistence in everything. As the daughter-in-law the narrator’s mother struggles hard to follow her principles. Even then she does not question her. She bears everything silently for the sake of the family. The narrator also knows that some of her ideals are unjust, but he bears them silently.

When we observe the Price family in London, Ghosh’s attitude to the concept of Indian family becomes clearer. There the grown-up daughter May lives at another place in London itself. Her mother doesn’t feel anything wrong in her living alone. Her son Nick also doesn’t show much attachment to his mother. Whatever he does, he thinks of his own achievements. As a mother she doesn’t have any importance in his life.Ila’s attitude to family life also is worth analysing. After her marriage with Nick, she happens to know that he has contact with some other women. She cannot even think of such a thing. She becomes really helpless. She has a divine concept of family and that is entirely different from that of western. Nick does not have any love at all towards Ila. He marries her only for his material prosperity i.e. the money which her father will invest for him on account of her.

Ghosh's historical and geographical knowledge in *Sea of Poppies*

Sandra L. Richards explains why she has recommended *Sea of Poppies* (2008) as a faculty reading for her students in the beginning of the essay 'My General Education: ''Discovering'' Amitav Ghosh':

> Reading Ghosh has offered me not only a fascinating introduction to the Indian Ocean world but also an occasion to reflect upon the dynamics of a good classroom in which both instructor and student are called upon to acknowledge their intellectual vulnerability, commit to working with others to produce knowledge, and recognize that our efforts may result in move questions than answers or in disagreements as well as consensus. Critical generosity and a doubly attentive listening are proposed as strategies by which faculty and students may navigate Ghosh's large geographical, historical, and intellectual terrain and strengthen muscles of reflexivity, collaboration, and respect (255).

After mentioning the travellers on the schooner *Ibis* going from Calcutta to Mauritius, A.Arora makes the following remark:

> As this abbreviated cast of characters suggests, Ghosh constructs a world in which people of different cultural, economic, and linguistic backgrounds, propelled by desperate courage, naïve arrogance, greed, or simple happenstance, find themselves in a new environment in which they must learn how to communicate with each other and craft new identities. His creole society – in – the making hearkens to an earlier epoch of globalization that has had a profound impact upon our own era.

Chapter V

Type Characters in Indian English Novels and Their Impact on Ghosh's novels

Rochalle Almeida published an essay entitled Characters and Their Indianness in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya in *The Anthology of critical essays called Postcolonial Indian Literature in English* (1998) edited by Nilufer. E Bharucha and Vrinda Nabar. In the beginning of his essay he says that 'type' figures dominate Indian English novels. 'Individuals' are less commonly present. He remarks: "It appears that the characters in Indo - English novels can be catagorised into stereotypes both by issue of their frequent presence since the very beginning of Indo-English fiction and by the very pronounced element of realism in their depiction" (332).

The following 'types'stand out in Indo-English writing:

a. The exploited Indian Labourer.

b. The Sati - Savitri or Sacrificial Mother Figure.

c. The Memsahib.

d. The Sahib.

e. The Anglicised Indian.

f. Royalty.

g. Ascetics.

a. The Exploited Indian Labourer

When Dorothy Spencer observes the stereotype characters commonly found in the Indo-English novels, she first finds the Indian peasant. She remarks: “Another peasant, who may be called the man with the hoe, makes his appearance early. We may trace him to the stereotype ...of the peasant bowed with the weight of centuries, over-burdened, poverty - stricken, victimised by landlords and money-lenders, helpless... in the face of social convention, a prey to defeat by the forces arrayed against him” (21).

Though these types of characters are called as stereotype, we cannot deny that they are true to life. We see such ‘‘type’’ characters in Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve* and *The Coffer Dams*: Nathan and Bashiam. The former novel is set in a period prior to Independence and the abolition of the zamindari system. Hence, she gets ample scope to write more about the pathetic lot of the Indian peasant. His labour was very similar to collecting nectar in a sieve, i.e., useless and unrewarding. The major portion of Nathan’s income linnet the treasure-chests of his landlord, leaving him without anything for his survival. Moreover, the vagaries of the weather, famine, drought and flood affect him directly and prevent him earning a decent income.

Kamala Markandaya gets good opportunity to study the lifestyle of the farmer in pre-Independent India through the character of Nathan. Nathan is indeed the typical Indian peasant - ignorant, illiterate, naive, too trusting, a passive believer in fate, burdened by the constant threat of hunger and poverty. He never thinks to rebel against his life or to try to redeem his circumstances. His strength does not come from fighting the external forces that cripple him, but from mustering his own resources: patience, resilience and personal courage.

Nathan is a fine example to the definition of Dorothy Spencer for a typical Indian peasant who seems to be connected with a kind of primitivism, a desire for the simple life, and a

believer in Ram Raj as India's former condition and true goal. Bashiam in *The Coffer Dams* works as a crane operator on a dam site that is being developed in India under British collaboration. Bashiam is in the happy position of having other educated Indians fight for his interests and leading the labourers in a strike; but he himself is a simple aborigine, in awe of white skins, a victim of colonial exploitation, treated as cheap labour, easily dispensable.

b. The Sati-Savithri or Sacrificial Mother Figure

Indo-English fiction seems to be rabbled with the figures of the long-suffering wife and sacrificial mother figure. This recurrent theme of the suffering wife must be analysed in the context of reality and the Indian fictional tradition. In Nectar in a Sieve Rukmani is such a typical stereotype character. Rukmani supports her husband emotionally as well as physically. She assists him in the fields, cooks, cleans and cares for the children. Other novels of Markandaya seem to reinforce this idealised conception of woman as wife and mother. The Indianness in the creation of these characters is clearly evident. Nalini in *A Handful of Rice* falls in love and marries a rakish, charming vagabond. Even her subsequent realisation that her husband is impatient, ill-tempered and given to bouts of drinking, violence and womanizing, does not make her consider leaving him. She temporarily seeks the refuge of her sister's abode, but eventually resolves to make the most of her miserable life. She does not try to analyse her situation rationally. An attempt at bargaining for her freedom, through divorce and the procurement of alimony common enough in the West, would not have occurred to the average Indian woman whom Nalini represented.

In *Pleasure City,* Amma is portrayed as the long-suffering wife and mother, who sticks by her husband through good times and bad. She seems to tower over her husband when it comes to domestic decisions and so far as the upbringing of her children is concerned. The women in Markandaya's novels are more important, more decisive and more

powerful. Dorothy Spencer wonders whether the qualities portrayed by Markandaya through her women are characteristics of Indian women in general. She concludes like other critics that these fictional heroines are cast in the well-established literary tradition found in Indian mythology and other ancient Indian literature: Sita, Savitri, Shakunthala, serve as models, and at the vernacular level in Bengal, for example, Behula, Malanchmala and various others.

The character of Tha'mma

Tha'mma the grandmother of the narrator is a powerful pillar in the novel *The Shadow Lines* who can be considered as typical of sacrificial mother figure. Ghosh depicts all the peculiarities of suffering in her. She is a typical brave middle-class Indian woman. She became a widow at the age of thirty-two. She joined a school to run her family. She has given her life to her school. She retires from the school as its headmistress. She is sincere, devoted, hardworking, disciplined in her life. Therefore, she is quite capable of producing strong disciplined children and coherent family. She cannot see anyone idle at her home. She tells the narrator, her grandson that if anyone wastes time, it starts stinking. She has a militant's attitude to life. She is always on the defensive. She does not want any favour even from her own rich sister, Mayadebi. Mayadebi offers to take them to a place in her car. But Tha'mma does not agree readily to it. This is typical Indian middle-class mindset. The upper class is used to receiving favours. The lower class cannot refuse them because it needs them badly. It is only the upright middle class that tries to balance the scales.

Tha'mma's whole world view is around defending herself and her family against a hostile world. We can even call her a feminist in her own way because of her low opinion of men. Her job becomes her second self. When she gives the narrator a broad, warm smile after her retirement he feels awkward because it was so different from her mistress's tight-lipped smile. Her involvement in her job is complete. Her farewell at school is very touching. She is

full of those small projects, little techniques that a teacher develops in order to encourage her students. The narrator says about his grandmother:

> .....when she was headmistress, my grandmother had decided once that every girl who opted for Home Science ought to be taught how to cook at least one dish that was a speciality of some part of the country other than her own. It would be a good way,she thought, of teaching them, about the diversity and vastness of the country (116).

Tha'mma's character is a tribute to so many unrecognised women in this country who are holding the world of their children and near and dear ones together by their toil and labour. She brought up her son alone. But she never showed her vulnerability. Her extraordinary keen observation and the unbending steel of her personality set her in a class of her own. When the narrator is studying at Delhi, Tha'mma gets sick. He comes home to see her. But what does he receive? Tha'mma accuses him of unnecessarily worshipping lla and also of going to cheap women in Delhi. It is so shocking. The narrator is almost disgusted at the cruelty of her remarks.

When Tha'mma dies, just a day before, she writes in her firm handwriting to the principal of the narrator's college that her grandson is visiting cheap houses, that she tried to talk to him but he showed no signs of repentance and that he should be ousted from the college even though he is her own grandson. Fortunately, the narrator is able to convince the principal of his good conduct and of the sickness that might have affected Tha'mma's mind. After convincing the principal, the narrator writes, 'I have never understood how she learnt of the women I had visited a couple of times, with my friends; nor do I know how she saw that I was in love with Ila so long before I dared to admit it to myself' (93). But her character, her behaviour and the consequences of it, like everything else in this book, have a tragic tinge.

Basically, Tha'mma is a person who has kept relatives at bay. She never allows relatives to influence her immediate family. Except for her sister, Mayadebi's family, there is hardly anyone who matters to her. But after retirement she derails from her regular path. The family and relatives somehow overpower her. The very relatives who have been so hostile, almost enimical, become important to her. The old ghosts come to her and finally claim a precious, young promising life. But then, life goes on its own course. Nobody can control it. She finds a mission in her old age. The mission is to go back and find out her uncle Jethamosahi and help if she can. So a lady who never pretended to have much family feeling, suddenly bursts out, "It doesn't matter whether we recognise each or not. We're same flesh, the same blood, the same bone and now at last, after these years, perhaps we'll be able to make amends for all bitterness and hatred" (129).

In fact, she does not realize that malevolence in human nature does not die. No one, no earthly force can end old bitterness. There is no soap or wash that can clean a heart of its past injuries, humiliation and venom. When she finally gets to meet Jethamoshai, she finds that he has lost his memory. He does not recognise her. But when Tridib reminds him in a loud voice that they are the daughters of his brother who lived in the other part of the house, 'the old man's face lit up. They died! He said, his voice quivering in triumph. They had two daughters: one with face like a vulture, and another one who was poisonous as a cobra, but all pretty and goody, to look at' (214). He has not forgotten; he has not forgiven. Old age does not bring nobility with it; it only brings weakness and so perhaps people bend a little due to compulsions. Whatever the truth may be, Tha'mma's visit to Dhaka and her new passion for relatives is the tragic flaw of her personality. She pays for it. In the end, she has only one thing to say, we have to kill them before they kill us' (237).

c. The Memsahib

While the Indian female protagonist in the Indo-English novel is usually depicted as an idealised being, the European woman on the contrary, is seen negatively as mean and unkind, secure in her position of racial superiority, the consort of the White ruler. Generally we call the white woman as the Memsahib. It is something associated with the colonial rule. The white woman's world in India was a luxurious and idle one, and her wants were attended by a plethora of servants. It was punctuated by leisure time events like Club Dances and sessions at whist. Disdainful of native Indian culture, these women made no attempts to understand or appreciate its differences. They preferred to recreate the feel and ambience of English life in the most remote regions of India. They tended to bring with them the English prejudices of the time. Their attitude was narrow Christian in general. They hadn't anything worth to occupy their minds. Their life was a tedious social round spending more time for gossips. The figure of the Memsahib in Kamala Markandaya's works follow the same pattern in the Indo-English novel. Millie Rawlings in *The Coffer Dams,* Caroline Bell in *Possession* and Lady Copeland in *The Golden Honeycomb* are examples of this sort of English woman.

Mrs Burnham in *Sea of Poppies*

Mrs Burnham serves the role of a memsahib which is a stereotype one in Indian English literature. The novelist introduces her like this: 'And to seal it all, Miss Catherine Bradshaw for a wife - about as pucka a memsahib as ever there was, a brigadier's daughter' (77). Mrs Burnham is the queen of Bethel, the official residence of Mr Burnham in Calcutta. Mr Kendalbushe, the English judge happens to meet Miss Paulette, the French orphan girl, in the dinner at Bethel hosted by Mr Burnham. The judge is an aged widower who wishes to marry Paulette and conveys his desire to Mr Burnham at the Bengal Club on the previous day. Mr Burnham who is lucrative in anything sees the judge's proposal to his adopted

daughter as a golden opportunity to expand his business empire. He at once assures his help to the judge in this matter and arranges his wife to make Paulette agree for the proposal.

When Mrs Burnham reveals the judge's desire to Paulette she couldn't believe what she has heard from her foster-mother. She expresses her unwillingness to marry such an aged man with great disappointment. Mrs Burnham rises to the occasion and convinces her the great prospects that she can achieve by marrying the judge. Mr Kendalbushe is immensely rich and doubled his financial position many times from the China trade. Many madams in Calcutta city have been trying to be his wife.

Mrs Burnham's persuasion of Paulette to marry the judge reveals the western attitude towards marriage and family.There is no question of love whereas everything is connected with material achievement. The conversation between Paulette and Mrs Burnham about the proposal is quite noteworthy:

> '..... I am greatly honoured, Madame - yet I must confess that my sentiments are not the same as those of Mr Kendalbushe.'
>
> At this, Mrs Burnham frowned and sat upright.'Sentiments, my dear Puggly,' she said sternly,'are for dhobis and dashies.We mems can't let that kind of thing get in the way! No, dear, let me tell you - you're lucky to have judge in your sights and you mustn't let your bunduk waver. This is about as fine a shikar as a girl in your situation could possibly hope for.'
>
> 'Oh Madame,' said Paulette, weeping freely now, 'but are not the things of this world mere dross when weighed against love?' 'Love?' said Mrs Burnham, in mounting astonishment. 'What on earth are you backing about? My dear Puggly, with your prospects, you can't be letting your shocks run away with you. I know the judge is not as young as he might be, but he's

> certainly not past giving you a butcha or two before he slips into his dotage. And after that, dear, why, there's nothing a mem needs that can't be cured by a long bath and a couple of cushy-girls' (274).

d. The Sahib

The Englishman in India is known as the Sahib. It has been characterised in literature as belonging predominantly to the middle classes. Such a character is very common in Indian English novels. In depicting such characters knowingly or unknowingly Indianness also is revealed through them. Their attitude to local Indians and vice versa reflect Indianness in such novels. The depiction of the Sahib in Indian English literature can be divided into two groups; the imperial age and the post-imperial age. Rudyard Kipling and E.M.Forster belong to the imperial age. The post imperial age has three main novelists, Mr. Paul Scot, Mr. Manohar Malgonkar and Mrs. R. Prawer Jhabvala. Scott and Malgonkar have written in a reflective vein, depicting the problems which confronted their sahibs during the last two decades of the British Raj, whereas Mrs. Jhabvala concentrated entirely on the Englishman in India today without any reference to the past.

According to Rochelle Almeida, the figure of the British industrialist, the British missionary, the British doctor, the British officer, etc. is common in Indo-English fiction. Such characters represent Indianness in them deliberately or spontaneously. In Some Inner Fury of Kamala Markandaya, Richard Marlowe becomes a representative of ''the British government official''.

Mr Burnham in *Sea of Poppies*

Ghosh introduces Benjamin Burnham in Sea of Poppies as a typical sahib in Indian English literature belonging to the imperial age. He represents the category of the British industrialist who has no other concern except make maximum profits from his ventures. He

bought the schooner *Ibis* with the intention of carrying opium from Calcutta to Canton in China. As the Chinese have forbidden opium trade, Burnham decides to employ his vessel in transporting indentured labourers from Calcutta to Mauritius. The novelist gives a detailed background of Burnham beginning from his early days to the present state. It also reveals how the western culture utilises Christianity in the expansion of their empire even in engaging the forbidden businesses like opium trade.

Benjamin Burnham was a man of imposing height and stately appearance with a full curly beard. He was the son of a Liverpool timber merchant but he had spent hardly ten years at home. As a child young Ben was a 'right shaytan' and a trouble - maker who was clearly destined to spend his lifetime in penitentiaries and houses of correction. Therefore his family had shipped him out as a 'guinea-pig' from England to India. He continued his malice and was deported to the British penal colony of Port Blair, on the Andaman Islands. At Port Blair, Ben Burnham found employment with the prison's chaplain. There he got a chance to acquire faith as well as an education.Then at the age of nineteen he was sailing China wards on a ship that was carrying a well-known Protestant missionary. His accidental acquaintance with the English Reverend was a turning point in his life.

The Reverend helped Benjamin Burnham to secure a job as a clerk with the trading firm of Magniac & Co . He spent most of his time in two China cities - Canton and Macao- the two poles of the Pearl River Delta and during his freetime he engaged in opium trade. He wanted to take part directly at the Calcutta opium auction. In this context Ghosh brings forth an undesirable truth like this: 'As with many another Fanqui merchant in Canton, Burnham's church connections were a great help, since several missionaries had close connections with opium traders'(75,76). In 1817 Burnham got an opportunity to escort a team of Chinese converts to the Baptist Mission College at Serampore in Bengal. There he remembered what he had heard in his boyhood training about another branch of the British Empire's commerce:

"In the good old days people used to say there were only two things to be exported from Calcutta: thugs and drugs - or opium and coolies as some would have it" (76).

Benjamin Burnham began his ventures first with the transportation of convicts. Calcutta was then the principal centre from where Indian prisoners were shipped to the British Empire's network of island prisons - Penang, Bencoolen, Port Blair and Mauritius. Managing a convict ship was not an essay matter. Fortunately Burnham approached his childhood friend Mr Charles Chillingworth who was a competent and bold ship's master. With the help of Captain Chillingworth, Burnham was able to amass a large fortune from Calcutta and entered in the opium trade in China on a larger scale. He had a sizeable fleet of his own ships which helped him to expand his business empire. Soon he had formed a partnership with two of his brothers and started trading centres in such cities as Bombay, Singapore, Aden, Canton, Macao, London and Boston. He strengthened and spread his connections to all the spheres of private as well as public in the city of Calcutta. Moreover, his wife Miss Catherine Bradshaw, a brigadier's daughter, was a strong support to all his ventures. Benjamin Burnham started his business dealings with the father of Raja Neel Rattan Halder about twenty - five years before by leasing one of his properties as an office in Calcutta. He was a Zamindar and shrewd judge of people, and regarded the Englishman of highly promising. He agreed to invest in his business even without inquiring the nature of his business. The old Raja knew this much about Mr Burnham that he was a ship - owner. Each year at the time of their meeting the Zamindar gave a sum of money to Mr Burnham to buy large consignments of opium from Calcutta. At the end of every year he got back a much larger sum. After the death of the father, Neel Rattan continued the same transactions without investigating further about the business. Neel didn't examine the genuineness and financial position of the Raskhali estate, and signed all the documents prepared by his clerks.

Later it was found out that Mr Burnham trapped Neel Rattan by accusing forgery of a document. He was arrested and trial was done for the namesake. The English magistrate Kendalbushe awarded the sentence in favour of his own countryman Mr Burnham. All his properties were seized and handed over to the complainant. Besides he should be deported to the penal settlement on the Mauritius Islands for a period of no less than seven years. No doubt Benjamin Burnham proves himself that he belongs to a ruthless colonial man born for making profits exploiting Indians even in the name of religion.

e. The Anglicised Indian

As a result of widespread English education in India during the British rule, a large number of Indians began to follow the western ways and thoughts in their private as well as public life. The Indian educationist Raja Ram Mohan Roy realised early the importance of English and urged Indians to partake in the learning and mastering of that language. He associated with Lord Macaulay for the propagation of English education neglecting the opposition of many Indian leaders. Besides conversion to Christianity, the missionaries performed some civilizing functions like starting schools, translating the Bible into the vernaculars, setting up printing presses, teaching the English language, etc. The outcome of this education was the Anglicised Indians. These Anglicised Indians were mainly professional people. The majority of them were employed by the Govt. of India. A few of them received employment in private enterprises. The quality of these Anglicised Indians was still in controversy. The followings are some examples to these Anglicised Indians appeared in the Indian English novels.

In 1952 E.M. Forster published *A Passage to India* in which he portrayed the anglicised Indian doctor, Aziz, who after completing his medical studies, returned to Chandrapore to assist the Englishman Callendar at the local hospital. Aziz is bolder and self-

confident when confronted by the rulers of his country. Mrs. Moore wanders alone in the evening through an old mosque. Aziz watches her first and then walks up to her and begins a conversation. He later invites Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested to the Marabar Caves. His boldness outrages the English at Chandrapore, but this does not deter Aziz from remaining conversational and courteous with the ladies from England. Aziz has successfully managed to pierce the bubble of English society at Chandrapore. He partakes with great joy in an evening meal at Hamiduallah's house. The dinner is Indian in choice and it is served in the Indian manner. At this conjecture. E.M. Forster underlines the Indian in the anglicised Aziz and thus shows him as a man who has not really divorced himself from his native background.

Mr. V.S. Naipaul presents such an anglicised Indian in his novel *An Area of Darkness*. He is called Bunty. The name itself sounds out of place for an Indian and produces an effect of ridiculousness. Bunty is anglicised by background and birth; he has not acquired anglicisation during his lifetime and therefore he belongs to caste which at present is the 'Dominant Minority' in the country. Bunty is not struggling for survival; he is established and moreover exclusive. Thus he belongs to a fixed caste within the framework of Hindu casteism. Bunty is qualified not only by birth but also by his adherence to the traditional colonial way of life.

Mrs. R. Prawer Jhabvala portrays the wealthy Anglicised Indian family of Har Dayal in her novel, *Esmond in India*. Har Dayal has always been wealthy. He has been to Cambridge and is now chairman of a government cultural commission. His wife Madhuri is also a member of the same class and comes from an equally wealthy background. They have three children. One is away at Cambridge. Amrit is the elder of the two children. He has studied at Cambridge, is married to Indira and is employed as a box-Wallah by a British paint firm. Shakunthala is his sister, younger than he, a B.A. graduate of Delhi University. Har Dayal is proud of his family and especially of his daughter Shakunthala whom he adores

above all, and his adoration is reciprocated with adulation. But he is also proud of himself, at achieving the mode of behaviour required by an anglicized Indian of the wealthier class. Mrs. Jhabvala displays Har Dayal's deprecative attitude to his Indian past. Har Dayal is ashamed of having belonged to Indian civilization and is triumphant on having divorced himself from the purely Indian India. He has withdrawn from the Indian environment. By shedding one form of civilization he has been able to acquire another and thus he becomes a typical anglicised Indian. In short, when Har Dayal has acquired anglicisation, he rejects his Hindu background.

Mrs. Nayantara Sahgal's novel *This Time of Morning* depicts the lives of diplomats and politicians of contemporary New Delhi. Dhiraj is a successful diplomat with a fire of luxury and good living, and he is wealthy. His son, Vishnu is an undergraduate at Oxford and at present is home on vacation. Vishnu who was studying the newspaper and commenting on the 'appalling' state of affairs in the country, troubled him (Dhiraj) more. Vishnu's favourite word was 'appalling' and every aspect of life in India 'appalled' him. Vishnu had (at Oxford) spent a considerable amount of money on clothes and entertainment and considerably little time on intellectual pursuits.Vishnu's ideals of setting about finding work (after his finals) was for Dad to speak to a director and get a job either in Bombay or Calcutta - the provinces would be too ghastly. It is very clear that Vishnu is a good example for the rootless anglicised Indian. From a sociological point of view, he can be considered as a typical urban character in contemporary India.

Kitsamy (Kit), the Oxford graduate in *Some Inner Fury* is a typical representative of the Anglicized Indian. Everything about Kit is anglicized, including his name. Kit expects others to fall in line with his English ways. He has no patience with so called Indian sloppiness and inefficiency. He calls a blundering Indian driver as ''a bloody incompetent

ass''. Social life is built around a Western pattern. His home after marriage to Premala is furnished entirely in contemporary British style.

Ghosh's anglicised Indian characters

'The Saheb' in *The Shadow Lines*

Ghosh follows his predecessors in moulding anglicised Indian characters. 'The Saheb' in *The Shadow Lines* is a typical example for introducing such characters. It cannot be denied that an average Indian sees his role model in an Englishman. The narrator's grandmother calls her brother-in-law, Mayadebi's husband, the Saheb, because his mother was very proud to regard her son as much Europeanised in his appearance and all his interaction with others. She said that his hat wouldn't come off his head. She even called him 'Saheb' when she was speaking to him directly. He gives maximum attention to his dress and appearance, and spent money lavishly for it. Whatever he wore, there was always a drilled precision about his clothes. Often he looks like a dressed-up doll in a shop window. Ghosh narrates in detail the Saheb's taste for dress. He writes,

> It was my grandmother's theory that the Saheb's wardrobe was divided into sets of hangers, each with its own label: Calcutta zamindar, Indian diplomat, English gentleman, would-be Nehru, South Club tennis player, Non-Aligned Statesman, and so on. It was certainly true that there was always a rigorous completeness about the Saheb's appearance: in Calcutta the fall of his dhoti was always perfect-straight and starched-the top button of his kurta open in an exact equilateral triangle; in Lagos the pockets of his safari suits were never too obtrusive ; his suits, when he wore them, looked as though they had been moulded on to him by the lost looked as though they had been moulded on to him by the lost-wax process whatever he wore, there was always a drilled

> precision about his clothes which seemed to suggest that he was not so much wearing them as putting them on parade. He looks like a dressed up doll in a shop window my grandmother used to say. No wonder everyone stares at him (34).

It is common in India, even today, we try to follow the western way of dressing. Our school and college uniform for boys and girls in most of the institutions is a good example for this. We do not think twice to call a perfectly dressed man as a Saheb. Here we find literal Indianness in these descriptions.

Beni Prasad Dey, the District Collector in Ratnagiri, in *The Glass Palace*

Beni Prasad Dey is another anglicized character of Amitav Ghosh. He was in his early forties and a Bengali from Calcutta. He had the privilege of having English education. He believed that the British way of thinking and living are the best in the world. He took his degree from the Calcutta University, joined the Cambridge University for higher studies and subsequently cleared his administrative service exams. He started his official career as the District Collector in Ratnagiri. His blind admiration to the British ways prompted him to treat the British as the superior and the Indian as the inferior. He dressed in a finely-cut Savile Row suits and wore gold rimmed eyeglasses. He tries hard to prove himself an exceptional Indian who is closer to the British than Indian ways of life. His ultimate goal was to get certified from the colonial authorities as the best Deputy Collector. He works hard as the District Collector of Ratnagiri to impress his superiors. His major responsibility was to take care of the family of the exiled King Thebaw.

Beni Prasad Day married Uma, a girl who was born and brought up in Calcutta. She was some fifteen years junior to her husband. She was a tall and vigorous looking woman, with thick, curly hair. He dreamed of a wife who would be able to comprehend his status in

the society and mingle easily with the upper-class people. Unfortunately Uma fails to fulfil his idea of a wife. She realizes the disparity between herself and her husband, but tries her best to maintain what little was possible for her to make her husband happy.The marriage of the first princess with Mohan Sawanth, the coachman, comes as a blow to him. Though his wife knew it and also knew the gravity of it, she maintains it a secret from him. She was more comfortable with and faithful to the prisoner than the jailer. Dey had to pay very heavily for the mistake done by his wife. He was terminated from the post and was asked to return to Bombay. His failure to prove himself the best leaves a deep scar in him and it leads to his death. His ambition to serve the British well paves the way to his own tragedy: Dey failed not only to fulfil his ideals of life but also to mind the feelings of others like his wife Uma, Mohan Sawant, Queen Supayalat, etc. He regarded them as his wife, coachman, and the queen in exile, respectively. He didn't try to consider them as individuals who are capable of having a life of their own.

Arjun Roy in *The Glass Palace*

Arjun also is another anglicized character of Ghosh. He is proud in saying that he and his colleagues live with the British and have a first-hand knowledge of them. The racial discrimination and disparity in the cantonment do not affect him. In spite of repeated humiliation, Arjun believes that everything about the British is unquestioningly acceptable and admirable. Therefore he regards them superior in all aspects and everything Indian as inferior. Ghosh describes the condition of the youth in the British Indian army through the character Arjun Roy. He makes us understand how the colonial authorities mould the Indian youth and maintain their rule in India. Arjun serves the British army with all his zest and royalty to British. Gradually he realizes the futility of his effort in British army and finds that he is a mere tool in the hands of British. In the beginning of his career, he is a loyal soldier on the British side and he always wishes to be thus till his death. When his intimate friend and

colleague, Kishan Singh, decides to leaves the British camp and join with the Japanese, Arjun experiences a terrible dilemma about his future. His last meeting with his officer Lieutenant - Colonel Buckland clearly brings forth the conflict of a large number of soldiers in the British Indian army:

> 'Sir, do you remember when you were teaching at the academy - you once quoted someone in one of your lectures. An English general - Munro, I think his name was. You quoted something he'd said over a hundred years ago about the Indian army: The spirit of independence will spring up in this army long before it is even thought of among the people....' Lieutenant - Colonel Buckland nodded: 'Yes. I remember that. Very well.' 'All of us in the class were Indians and we were little shocked that you'd chosen to quote something like this to us. We insisted that Munro had been talking nonsense. But you disagreed....'
>
> 'Did I ?
>
> 'Yes. At the time I thought you were playing devil's advocate; that you were just trying to provoke us. But that wasn't true, was it, sir? The truth is you knew all along: you knew what we'd do - you knew it before we did. You knew because you made us. If I were to come away with you now no one would be more surprised than you. I think, in your heart, you would despise me a little.' 'That's rubbish, Roy. Don't be a fool, man. There's still time.' 'No, sir.' Arjun brought himself to a halt and held out his hand. 'I think this is it, sir. This is where I'm going to turn round' … (449,450)

Arjun's friend Hardy became a national figure. He came to see Jaya's grandparents in Calcutta in 1946. He informed them that Arjun had died fighting in one of the INA's last engagements - fought in central Burma, in the final days of the war.

Chapter VI

Ghosh's Unique Talent in Using English with Native Languages

The process of nativization of the English language in India can be compared to the processes of Americanization, Australianization, or Canadianization of the English language. Braj B. Kachru, an authority on the linguistic aspects of Indian English says,

> ... it is argued that the Indianization has resulted in distinct Indian characteristics at all linguistic levels, i.e., phonetic, grammatical, lexical and semantic. These deviations may result from the culturally and linguistically pluralistic context of India, and from the specialized uses of English in India as a language of administration, education, the legal system, and mass media. ("The Indianization of English", 167)

Indianness in Indian English Writing

It is pointed out that the mixing of English with indigenous Indian languages was started during the first wave of Indian English writers, including R.K. Narayan and G.V. Desani, about 65 years before. Even before that, writers such as Rudyard Kipling and Jim Corbett, displayed a similar tendency in their writing, by combining their English with Hindi/ Hindustani words. Today Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Bengali, Konkani and the various other languages of India are seamlessly integrated in Indian English writing. R.K. Narayan has used Hindi words such as *dhoti, saree, puja, jutka, beedi, khadi,* etc. in his works.

Salman Rushdie not only mixes Hindi and Urdu words in his English but also incorporates words and phrases from Gujarati, Marathi, Kashmiri and various other Indian languages, in his novels such as *Midnight's Children* (1981), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995)

and *Shalimar* (2005). In this context Vedita Cowaloosur has made a noteworthy observation about Ghosh in her article:

> Ghosh is even more experimental, for he not only incorporates *bhashas* such as Bengali and Bhojpuri, but also includes a spectacular blend of already hybridized languages, such as the argot of Asian seafarers or lascars (which consists of several *bhashas* such as Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam and Tamil, along with English, Arabic, Persian and Portuguese – among many other languages) pidgins of migrant communities (such as Sahibish and other existing chutneys) in which Indian languages figure. Indian English writing today comprises therefore not just Hinglish, but also Banglish (Bengali and English), Tamlish(Tamil and English) Tamhinglish(Tamil, Hindi and English) and multiple such variations–including the linguistic peculiarities and creative realities of Indian's various diasporas, which, in this day and age, contribute notably in the constitution and dissemination of Indian English (es), both within India and outside (4).

The form and style of a language used in a novel are closely associated with the living conditions and traditions of its characters. Raja Rao, the famous Indian English novelist, has mentioned the above aspect in the 'Foreword' of his great novel *Kanthapura* (1938):

> 'We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it'.

M.K. Naik, the famous historian of Indian English literature, agrees with the above remark, through the following words:

> The narrative technique of the novel (*Kanthapura*) offers the required justification. The narrator is an old grandmother, who tells the story in the garrulous, digressive and breathless style of the Indian *purana* or the *Harikatha*, mixing freely narration, description, reflection, religious discourse, folk-lore, etc. Like Anand, Rao also boldly translates Indian words, phrases, expletives, and idioms – in this case from his native Kannada – into English and uniformly brings a touch of a poet to his style. ("A History of Indian English Literature", 175-176)

Today 'Indian English' has become a prominent variety of English like American English, African English, Canadian English, etc. and many researchers have come forward to study its linguistic and sociological aspects. The term 'Indian English' refers to the English texts written by the Indians. The form of English used by educated Indians could be called ''standard Indian English.'' Macaulay's Minute of 1835 introduced bilingualism in India and thereby the different several native Indian languages began to associate closely with English. This collaboration of native languages with English has caused the evolution of a distinctive Indian variety of English. It is based on the view that institutionalized language varieties can come into existence through 'interference' and the Indianization of English is an outstanding example. The linguists show great interest to examine the relationship between the lexical, syntactic, and stylistic characteristics of Indian English. A minimum knowledge of the functions of English in the Indian context will help the readers to appreciate Indian English better.

Social life in a large country like India is a varied and diversified one. There are people who live in the countryside, the seaside and the hillside whose way of thinking and living are entirely different from one another. Whereas the people who live in cities follow a metro culture. For an Indian English writer narrating a story in English that happened in the Indian social, historical and cultural background is a herculean task. The reader should feel Indianness in each and every word of the novel. It is not easy to translate the strange slangs and idioms used by the common people to English. If it is done, the reader will miss the pleasure of reading. Similarly it is very difficult to find out apt English words for several Hindustani words.

At the same time there are several Indian English writers who have great confidence in English because they believe that English is a pliant language which can be used in different ways as the occasion demands. During the last sixty years, there has been a great deal of experimentation in the use of English language in Indian English fiction. The few writers who wrote novels in English in the early part of the twentieth century used the language carefully, with stiff correctness, as they had the awareness that it was a foreign language. But in the thirties there was a sudden development in Indian English fiction, both in quantity and quality. The writers, especially novelists, began to use English language as one of India's many other languages. This confidence gave them courage to bend and twist this language according to the situation. The Indian English novelist is writing about people who do not normally speak English or think in English. He is generally dealing with non-English speaking people in non-English speaking situations. This problem becomes most accute in the writing of dialogue or presenting conversation.

Although the Indian English novelist writes in English, his area of intimate experience is limited to a small geographical area. The quality of language of such geographical areas will reflect in their writing. For example, when Mulk Raj Anand writes, knowingly or

unknowingly he conveys a Punjabi flavour through his English. The same aspect is seen in the novels of R.K. Narayan and there we see a south Indian touch in his English. Rajo Rao deals with Kannada speaking characters and nuances of their language. There is a Bengali rhythm in the style of Bhabani Bhattacharya's English. Whereas in the works of the Indian English writers like Santha Rama Rau, Kamala Markandaya, Manohar Malgonkar, Salman Rushdie, etc. the influence of their native languages does not reflect seriously. They are able to write in standard English as native speakers of English. The impact of 'Public School English' is clearly seen in their creative writing.

Indian English writers are trying for flavouring the English language with words from native languages (*bhasha* words) and phrases instead of using a homogeneous and standard form of English, not merely in order to represent linguistic diversity and the polylingualism of characters and of settings of their texts, but also as a means to rethink and reimagine the power equations between the Anglophone world and the world that these authors write about. This process has become very common in Indian English today. The code - mixing of English with indigenous Indian languages or *bhashas* is known as in different usages like 'transculturation', 'hybridization', 'chunification', 'biryanification', and 'weirding' of the English language. Harish Trivedi has made a genuine comment on this remarkable feature in his Foreword to *Chutnefying English*:

> 'When did Hinghlish begin to emerge and for what reasons? Evidence suggests that this may have begun as soon as Hindi and English begin to inhabit the same geographical space - with the coming of the British to India. For languages do not exist in watertight compartments; they are organic things and when placed alongside each other they aways interact. In fact, languages feed on each other almost cannibalistically; if they did not, they would die (xii)'.

Uniqueness of English language used by Amitav Ghosh

Though Ghosh was born in Calcutta (Bengal), he studied and worked at different places like Delhi, Colombo, Cairo, London, Cambodia, U.S., etc. His family background, education and career have helped him to acquaint with different forms and style of English. He married Deborah Baker, an American writer and presently has settled in Brooklyn, U.S.A. It seems that a large number of readers and critics think that American English has influenced his creative writing. In fact, he is an Indian English writer because most of his themes are connected with India and he has used a number of words, phrases and idioms from the native languages of India, especially from Hindi and Bengali. He is more popular among his contemporary writers for his thematic diversity and many of his stories happen at different places, sometimes more than two or three places.

Generally, it is reviewed that he has experimented a variety of English in his works according to the theme, plot, context and characters. Even in the case of eminent Indian English writers it is seen that the influence of their native or first language intrude to the flow and meaning of English expression. But in the case of Amitav Ghosh, while assessing his novels we do not even sense that English is his second language. That is why, Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam have commented that Amitav Ghosh brings to the English language an ease of felicity of expression which endows all his fiction with a quality of its own. (Bhatt, Indira and Indira Nityanadam, 'Interpretations Amitav Ghosh's 'The Shadow Lines', *The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh*,' 10)

The awards he has received for his novels not only from India but also from all over the world are good testimonials to his high standard of English language. Ghosh gives utmost attention in using English language quite befitting to the character's education. He has no hesitation in presenting conversations between the characters in simple English as the

occasions demand.Binayak Roy points out how as a writer Amitav Ghosh is different from other contemporary writers in the beginning of his essay 'Imperialism, Exile and Ethics: Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke'*:

> Amitav Ghosh's speciality lies in his deft handling of political and philosophical issues without sacrificing the graces of art. Exhibiting a pound sense of history and space, his novels explore the human drama amidst the broad sweep of political and historical events. He has a personal stance on such events. He has a personal stance on such controversial issues as postcoloniality, postmodernity, subjectivity, and subalternity. He interweaves them in a complex pattern in his works which themselves are generic amalgams. This generic multiplicity stems from an inherent interdisciplinarity within postmodernism which is part of its assault upon the Enlightenment (143-144).

Ghosh's first novel, *The Circle of Reason* (1986) is less celebrated and rarely discussed. But it imprints deeply a 'magical real' sensibility of day to day words used in language. Stephanie Jones has made a striking comment on the language of Ghosh in the concluding part of her article, "A Novel genre: Polylingualism and Magical realism in Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason*":

> Bringing narrative to bear on the apparently discrete themes of *Satwa, Rajas* and *Tamas,The Circle of Reason* comments not just on the difficulty of translation, but insists on the internal inadequacy of broad linguistic categories and the incoherence of heightened philosophical distinctions. The text bears out the definition offered by Deleuze and Guattari, moving through a radically marginal, politically vibrant and creative sense of strangeness within

> the language to offer a 'revolutionary' idea of community, history and genre. The narrative – constantly diverting towards etymological end-points, exceeding and subverting thematic direction, dwelling on the physically weird, psychologically disoriented and historically strange – defines generic containment to evoke a poignantly novel sense of a 'minor' cosmopolitan community, both constrained and liberated by the polylingualism of language (441) .

Ghosh has interlinked some major themes like multiculturalism, diaspora, ethnicity, war, concept of freedom, violence, communal riots, partition of a nation, love, human relationships, and their impact with the life of middle-class families in his second novel *The Shadow Lines.* The action in the novel covers India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and England connecting the present with the past. In the beginning of the novel Ghosh explains the present condition of the Chaudhuri family in Calcutta and its immediate past history. When he narrates the history and the family background, he employs standard English challenging any original English novelist. In this context the remark made by Arjya Sirkar in his article, ''*The Shadow Lines*: The Promise of Another Dawn'' is noteworthy: "And by a strange stroke the English language is a part of the intellectual equipment, his English, therefore,is unobtrusive, unselfconscious and by and large not unnatural". This aspect of Ghosh's English is generally seen throughout this novel. The narrator's description of his cousin Tridib is a good example for this:

> But occasionally, when he was in the mood and somebody happened to say something that made a breach in his vast reservoirs of abstruse information, he would begin to hold forth on all kinds of subjects - Mesopotamian stellate, East European jazz, the habits of arboreal apes, the plays of Garcia Lorca, there seemed to be no end to the things he could talk about. On those

> evenings, looking at the intent faces of his listeners, watching his thin, waspish face, his tousled hair and his bright black eyes glinting behind his gold - rimmed glasses, I would be close to bursting with pride (8-9).

The roots of the Chaudhari family belonging to Dhaka are in present Bangladesh. The protagonist narrator and his family stay in Calcutta, and the story begins and develops in and around Calcutta, and therefore the novelist is forced to use more Bengali words in his narration. In the beginning of the novel, the narrator introduces his grandmother's sister like this: "It startles me now to discover how readily the name comes off my pen as 'Mayadebi' for I have never spoken of her thus; not aloud, at any rate: as my grandmother's only sister, she has always Maya - thakuma to me" (3).

Ghosh doesn't put the word 'Maya - thakuma' in italics or doesn't give any glossary for the word. Similarly when he describes another important character Tridib, he says,

> Then, one evening, on my way to the park I heard he'd surfaced at Gole park again. I doubled back and found him at his favourite adda, on the steps of an old house, surrounded by his acquaintances. I waved to him, from between someone's legs, but he was busy answering their questions and he didn't see me. Where have you been all the while, Tridib - da? Sombody said. It must be three or four months... (11).

"On another occasion Tridib asks his friends, 'Where do you live, mairi?" (9) The words 'adda and mairi' are typical Bengali words. In addressing to one another the writer uses Bengali style, 'Tridib-da'. The narrator's father speaks of Mayadebi's husband very reverently to his colleagues. He says, "My meshomoshai, His Excellency, the Indian Consul - General in Sofia (or wherever happened to be), Shri Himangshushekhar Datta – Chaudhuri" (34). The word 'meshomoshai' is a Bengali word meaning maternal uncle.

The Glass Palace (2000) is a historical fiction in which Ghosh has made an attempt to narrate the family saga of three generations of the main protagonist Rajkumar Raha, his friend Saya John and the arrest and exile of King Thebaw and his family in Burma. In this epic narration he mingles the most important colonial subjects like history, culture and society in three South Asian countries: India, Burma (Myanmar) and Malay (Malaysia). The background of this novel gives Ghosh ample scope to illustrate the mixture of cultures in his writing and it reflects in his language also. With the advent of New Literatures in English almost all the Indian writers in English have dared to represent a new kind of English. The colonization has made great impact in indigenous languages and it also influenced writing in English in India. Ghosh has given proper attention to native languages along with English. He has made use of many local Hindi words or Hindustani language in *The Glass Palace*.

The novel starts in the 19th century with the introduction of the central protagonist, Rajkumar Raha, who lands up in Burma in a state of penury due to a shipwreck. He was an Indian, a 'kalaa', as he came from the sea, a foreigner in an alien country. He was an orphan from Calcutta and got a temporary employment at a food stall in Mandalya owned by a woman named Ma Cho. She was a half-Indian and 'she was in her mid-thirties, more Burmese than Indian in appearance.' She did her cooking sitting by an open fire, and apart from fried baya-gyaw, she also served noodles and soup. It was Rajkumar's job to carry bowls of soup and noodles to the customers. In his spare moments he used to clear the utensils, tended the fire and shredded vegetables for the soup pot. There Rajkumar happened to meet a visitor namely Saya John and through this character Ghosh reveals his theory of multi-culturalism and multilingualism:

> A few days later Saya John was back. Once again he greeted Rajkumar in his broken Hindustani: 'Kaisa hai ? Sub kuchh theek-thaak ?'

> Rajkumar fetched him a bowl of noodles and stood watching as he ate. 'Saya' he asked at last, in Burmese, 'how did you learn to speak an Indian language?'
>
> Saya John looked up at him and smiled. 'I learnt as a child,' he said, 'for I am, like you, an orphan, a foundling. I was brought up by Catholic priests, in a town called Malacca. These men were from everywhere - Portugal, Macao, Goa. They gave me my name - John Martins, which was not what it has become. They used to call me Joao, but I changed this later to John. They spoke many many languages, those priests, and from the Goans I learnt a few Indian words. When I was old enough to work I went to Singapore, where I was for a while an orderly in a military hospital. The soldiers there were mainly Indians and they asked me this very question: how is it that you, who look Chinese and carry a Christian name, can speak our language? When I told them how this had come about, they would laugh and say, you are a dhobi ka kutta - a washerman's dog - na ghar ka na ghat ka - you don't belong anywhere, either by the water or on land, and I'd say, yes, that is exactly what I am'. He laughed,with an infectious hilarity, and Rajkumar joined in (11).

The colonial authorities decided to allot a permanent residence for King Thebaw and his family at a place called Ratnagiri which was some hundred and twenty miles south of Bombay. Thus they who were born and brought up in Burma, were forced to live in India and to mingle with Hindustani languages. When the Queen and the collector's wife Uma interact with each other they use many Burmese and Hindustani words and phrases.

Ghosh has used a number of words from native languages and it is a lengthy list: baya-gyaw (a Burmese food item), aingyi (a Burmese female dress), longyi (a male dress), 'Kaisa hai'? Sub kuchh theek - thaak ?', pwe, pinni, nakhoda, gaung - baung (the turban of

mourning), patama-byan (examination), yethas (bullock-carts), htamein, luga - lei, tai, etc. are some of the words he has used from Burmese language. Besides, he has used a large number of Hindi words, sayings and proverbs in this novel. Some of them are the following: kalaa, kaisa hai ?, Sub kuchh theek thaak?, dhobi ka kutta (a washerman's dog), na ghar ka na ghat ka (you don't belong anywhere), khalasis, ek gaz, do gaz, teen gaz, jhinjhinaka bazaar, gaaris, kuchh to karo, basti, langot, buddhu, havildar, kaun hai, etc. Thus, Ghosh proves himself his masterly knowledge in both languages, Burmese and Hindi.

Several scholars and critics have appreciated Ghosh's use of English in *Sea of Poppies.* When people from different nations belonging to wide range of hierarchies come together in a ship and interact with one another, it is a Herculean task to improvise them in English. Stephanie Han from City University of Hong Kong has appreciated Ghosh's talent in tackling English for diverse occasions in a narration in one of her brief essays:

> Amitav Ghosh's *Seas of Poppies* (2008), set prior to the first of the Opium Wars (1839-42), demonstrates unique and familiar image of polyculturalism and the making of language, identity, and nation through characterizations and dialogue. Ghosh creates a mythical imagined community that emerges on a ship, the *Ibis*, where traditional hierarchical barriers based on language, gender, ethnicity, and class break down. The vessel is bound for Mauritius where the human cargo will toil on plantations and / or serve prison sentences. Ghosh incorporates a spectacular blend of diverse forms of English, including nineteenth-century, British, American, and Indian Englishes, nautical terms, Hindi -, Urdu-, and Chinese- influenced pidgin English, and the language of lascars. He posits English as a flexible and an innovative language that reveals character through dialogue and unites disparate voices in a community that originates on board a ship (298).

Ghosh's skill in using English language is more evident in his novel *Sea of Poppies*. Alan Cheuse has assessed Ghosh's talent in using English in his book review of *Sea of Poppies* like this:

> Ghosh tells the story of how all these characters, Indians and crew alike, end up on this voyage in an appealing, somewhat modified, lingo of the period - when British English mingled with Indian Englishes, and dallied with dozen of other dialects: ships lore, pirate talk, Lascar pidgin, and all other verbal music of the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. And beneath it all like the endless rolling salt sea, Ghosh's own beautifully made sentences and paragraphs buoy up ship, plot,characters, and the setting itself, with a natural ease and beauty (12-13).

Words from Vernacular Languages in *Sea of Poppies*

Stankiewicz of Temple University made an interview with Amitav Ghosh related with anthropology and fiction. He hinted Ghosh that he uses unfamiliar words from vernacular Indian languages with much ease and quoted the following two sentences from *Sea of Poppies* :''Just as the sound of the sunset azan was floating across the water, Neel discovered that he had no more of the fine *shanbaff dhotis* and *abrawan - muslin kurtas* that he usually wore on public occasions : they had all been sent off to be laundered. He had to content himself with a relatively coarse *dosooti dhothi* and an alliballie kurta''. (*Sea of Poppies*: 104) The interviewer meant that why Ghosh uses words from an indigenous language in an English novel. Ghosh's answer to his question really reveals his attitude to different languages:

> It's interesting that you've chosen to quote the bit about *shanbaff dhotis* and *abrawan –muslin*.The reason I'm a writer is because I love words, the very

> sound of them. That's often the only reason why I put them in. Of course I do try to stay within certain boundaries of plausibility: but the real reason why these words are there is not because they refer to details or because they are necessary to the narrative. It's simply because I like the way they sound (539).

Ghosh has his own ideology and principles in employing English language in writing fiction. His talent for experiments in language is clearly visible in the novel *Sea of Poppies*. It is set in the background of Opium War taken place between China and British India when India was an official colony of England. The story begins in the the remote village Ghazipur and there he narrates the life of the poor villagers and workers in the opium factory controlled by the British officials. The villagers speak Hindi and the novelist has to translate them in colonial English. The British officials deal with them in English associated with the local language Hindi. Later the story shifts to the shores of the river Ganges and gives the details of the schooner *Ibis* where the novelist describes the activities of the owner of Ibis in Calcutta and some of his friends. The third part 'Sea' is concerned with the inmates of the ship as it leaves Calcutta and moves on towards its destination in Mauritius. Thus the variety in themes, plots, places and characters give a chance to the novelist to deal with a mixture of languages.

Ghosh does not stick to any particular style of English. His English flows befitting to the situations in his novels. He explains the reason for using a variety of English saying that the idea of fixity in language is so impossible and so unnecessary. Since childhood, we have always been told to use the correct English words, 'to speak properly' and we have developed a deeprooted anxiety about the language. But English used to be much richer than that, and the process of purification should be combated.

Ghosh has genuine interest in the infinite possibilities of language and applies them in the possible spaces. Linguists generally have agreed that modern vocabulary has evolved as a result of cosmopolitan experience and various encounters with different types of people. Ghosh traces the roots of some words and employs them in suitable occasions. His primary knowledge in the native languages like Bengali, Hindi and Urdu has helped him to make use of his fluency in English very cunningly and boldly.

Amitav Ghosh believes in the porosity of languages which help them to interact with even other strange languages, crossing borders of regions and ignoring specific grammar and phonetic rules and guidelines. He thinks that there are certain cultural spaces in this world where there will be an absence of shared language and then hybrid languages come into existence. He introduces such a space in the narration of the scooner *Ibis*. Its crew and passengers are a reflection of the polyglot community from different parts of the world. They belong to diverse racial, regional, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. *Ibis* has a British captain, an American second mate, and a number of Indian soldiers to maintain law and order in the ship . A glance at the crew and passengers surprises us how they communicate with one another. They are a peculiar assortment of people, hailing from different parts of the world like Arabia, east Africa, Malaysia, Burma, Philippines, China, India, England, America, etc. They speak freely, communicate their ideas without any obsession and give commands to their subordinates in their own languages mixing with English. Ghosh presents such dialogues on apt occasions and makes those scenes more lively. Such a scene is given in the beginning of the novel between Serang Ali and Zachary Reid, an American mulatto:

> ‘Serang Ali, where you from?’ he asked.
>
> ‘Serang Ali blongi Rohingya - from Arakan - side.’

‘And where’d you learn that kinda talk?’

‘Afeem ship,’ came the answer. ‘China-side, Yankee gen ‘I’ um allo tim tok so-fashion. Also Mich’man like Malum Zikri.’

‘I ain no midshipman,’ Zachary corrected him. ‘Signed on as the ship’s carpenter.’

‘Nevva mind,’ said the serang in an indulgent, paternal way. ‘Nevva mind: allo same-sem. Malum Zikri sun-sun become pukka gen‘I’ um,. So tell no: Catchi wife -o yet?’

‘No.’ Zachary laughed. ‘ ‘N’ how bout you? Serang Ali catchi wife?’

‘Serang Ali wife - o hab makee die,’ came the answer. ‘Go topside, to hebbin. By’m by Serang Ali catchi nother piece wife...(16).

Ghosh doesn’t attach any glossary for his coined words in English associated with native languages. Surprisingly enough, he doesn’t even use italics for such words. He has his own justification for using words from vernacular languages in the same spelling, even without putting them in italics. Once he commented in an interview like this:

> When he sees Indian writers italicizing words, he is amazed, because there are very few ordinary Hindi or Urdu or Bengali words that are not in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In our age of globalization there’s this idea that English is becoming more expansive, but much the opposite is happening: in the 19th century, it was much more accepting of other influences, especially Asian influences. This is why he feels that if

> Asian writers like him are going to write in this language, then they must reclaim for it what it historically had.

Another remarkable thing about Ghosh's English in *Sea of Poppies* is the extra strain he has taken is finding out the various terms denoting the different parts of the scooner and the varied tasks the sailors have to perform one after another. For the successful controlling and manoeuvring of a sailing ship, the lascars should be acquainted with the names of different parts of it. The anglicized terms are often too erudite and sophisticated for their humble tongues. For proper communication they have to find out a lexicon of their own. As it is a historical fiction taken place in the early half of the nineteenth century under colonial rule, the writer has to find out the words which had been used in that period.

Ghosh expresses his great debt in acknowledgements to many 19th century scholars, dictionarists, linguists and chroniclers in writing this novel. He has referred Report on Colonial Emigration from the Bengal Presidency, 1883, by Sir George Grierson. Besides, he has made use of the same author's book on grammar of the Bhojpuri language and his 1884 and 1886 articles on Bhojpuri folk songs. He has indebted much to J.W.S Mac Arthur who was the superintendent of the Ghazipur Opium Factory for his Notes on an Opium Factory (Thacker, Spink, Calcutta, 1865). Ghosh has great commitment to Lt. Thomas Roebuck for his nautical lexicon, first published in Calcutta, *An English And Hindostanee Naval Dictionary of Technical Terms and Sea Phrases as Also the Various Words of Command Given in Working A Ship & C. With Many Sentences of Great Use at Sea*; To which Is Prefixed *A Short Grammar of The Hindostanee Language* (reprinted in London in 1813) by Black, Parry & Co; booksellers to the Hon. East India Company. Later the same book was revised by George Small, and republished with a new title, *A Laskari Dictionary or Anglo-Indian Vocabulary of Nautical Terms and Phrases in English And Hindustani*, London, 1882. Ghosh has referred one more dictionary thoroughly namely Hobson - Jobson: *A Glossary of*

Colloquial Anglo- Indian Words and Phrases, And of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive.

Ghosh has shown keen interest in the etymology of words contained in the above mentioned lexicons and applied them in the anatomy of the scooner *The Ibis,* descriptions regarding the hierarchy of the crew members, rules connected with the rationing system in the scooner, etc. Their repeated usages on several befitting occasions help the readers to consider those new coined words an an integral part of Indian English. In addition to this, Ghosh has made use of his talent as a linguist to coin new terms based on Hindi, Urudu, Bengali, Bhojpuri, etc.; he has made the first mate of the scooner as 'Burra Malum' and the second mate as 'Chhota Malum'.

Dr. Gazi Tareq Muzamil evaluates Ghosh's English in his book, *Admirable Superseding of Amitav Ghosh* like this:

> As with the other writers of 1980s, Ghosh uses English without dilemma and employs the language with ease. He also experiments with the style and the manner novelists in English,especially from other languages employ in fiction writing. Sea of Poppies demonstrates the dizzying hybrid of slang words that were picked up by lascari speech which gradually made room in English language too. Set during the British Empire's Opium trade with China and when India was an official colony of England, the novel is spread across northern India, Calcutta and the high seas in 1838, which establishes a link between different languages from India as well as other countries and the amalgamation of various words in English (82).

Ghosh narrates some scenes of the story in local language as suitable to the occasion. At the same time, he describes them in English also. While Deeti was going to her new home

after marriage, sitting in the prow of the boat, with her wedding sari drawn over her face, the women in the boat sang:

> Sakhiya - ho, saiya more pise masala
>
> Sakhiya - ho, bara mitha lage masala
>
> Oh friends, my love's a - grinding
>
> Oh friends, how sweet is this spice! (32).

As the above song is given in two languages - Hindi and English - it doesn't hinder the flow of reading.

Ghosh has taken special care in giving meaningful Hindustani names to his important characters. The protagonist is given the name 'Deeti' which means an affectionate, respectable and older woman. This name helps much the reader to feel a genuine attachment to the character. Her daughter is called 'Kabutri' which means very loving. Her husband is given the name Hukam Singh. The family name 'Singh' suggests that they belong to the upper Hindu caste of Kshatriya. The other male character is Kalua who is a giant of a man in size and the name hints at his black colour. Ghosh has selected carefully the names connected with the Zamindar of Raskhali: Raja Neel Rattan Halder, his wife is Malati, his eight-year-old son Raj Rattan, his main servant Parimal and his mistress Elokeshi who was once a famous dancer. All these names give this story a genuine Indian touch.

In *Sea of Poppies*, language significantly serves both as an index of the cross – cultural fusion that was operating in the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, their littoral zone and hinterland in the second quarter of the nineteenth – century, and also as a trope for the emergence of new identities in the *Ibis* trilogy. The mirgants on the ship form transcultural and translingual relationships among themselves during the voyage. The form of

cosmopolitanism in *Sea of Poppies* comes through hardship and suffering, and is based on survival and necessity. Most of them are stateless and homeless, and deported and displaced persons. There we encounter unusual forms of relationships between different classes (Neel and Parimal) between races (Jodue and Paulette) between religions (Jodu and Monia) and between castes (Deeti and Kalua). These strange relationships provide the migrants comfort and consolation, and dignity and solidarity. It gives them strength and courage for defiance and resistance, and desire for ultimate freedom. Ghosh shows remarkable skill to juggle myriad interconnected stories of disguises and transformations among the migrants on the *Ibis.* He displays deep knowledge in the idioms and dialects representing the multiple languages in the novel. Shao-Pin Luo of Dalhousie University in Canada has researched in detail about Ghosh's talent associated with the concept of ''vernacular cosmopolitanism'' and made the following observation:

> ' In Sea of Poppies, he presents a world of heteroglossia that includes seasfaring lingo, French, a fantastic spectrum of English, including Hinglish,Chinglish, and Franglais, pidgin and creole, as well as many indigenous languages – Bhojpuri, Bengali, Hindustani. Moreover, Ghosh describes not only the distinct languages, and their intermingling, but also the intricacies of any one language used in different circumstances. This sea of words clashes and mingles, evoking a vivid sense of living voices as well as demonstrating the linguistic resourcefulness of people in diaspora.'

Chapter VII

Conclusion

When this research project was designed in 2012,English was generally acknowledged as a colonial language. But in 2018 the Central Government of India declared Jnanpith Award to Amitav Ghosh who has been writing exclusively in English. So far, this prestigious award was bestowed upon the eminent writers in different regional languages like Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Telug, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, etc. By conferring this award to a writer in English language, the nation declares that English is really an Indian language and not a colonial language. Majority of our linguists view English as a convenient and comfortable language for the purpose of administration and judiciary. They do not approve Indian sensibility in English and insist that our tradition and culture can be brought out only through native languages.

The new generation of Indian English writers question the above traditional vision and substantiate their potential to express their Indian sensibility in English itself. No doubt Amitav Ghosh is one of the leading figures among the new generation of Indian English writers. In this context it is better to remember an apt comment made by Sunil Gangopadhyay, the great Bengali writer about Amitav Ghosh on the occasion of releasing his novel, *The Hungry Tide*: “Look ! This is a Bengali novel, written in English only!” (19). However time has proved that the choice of case study of Ghosh’s novels to establish the various aspects of Indianness in Indian Writing in English is an apt decision in the present context.

Ghosh's contribution to world literature

Apparently the term ''world literature'' was first coined by Goethe in 1827. By the term, he meant gaining a way to universal human experience through cross-cultural understanding. It was achieved by reading the leading writers of other (Western) nations. There was to be an open dialogue between nations, through which their literatures would eventually reach a synthesis. Today the status of nations has changed dramatically from Goethe's times and trade and communication have multiplied in quantity and speed. We now live in the era of global multicultural world literatures. The aim of the new world literature should try to share universal human experience. It should aim at a peaceful fusion of all differences into some kind of homogeneous multicultural experience.

Ghosh has tried his best through his writing to present the various processes of globalization and power-relationships representing different classes, cultures and ideologies. Although Ghosh's writing is to be identified as postcolonial, he has kept his distance from this field and concentrated on describing the more universal process of globalization, examining from various view points, its impact on Europe and the previous colonies.The migrations of people, the changing status of the nation - states, the spreading of western modes of production and the encounters between different cultures, and all of which are typical effects of globalization.The two dimensions of globalization are well presented: on the one hand, the spreading of Western capital and technology, and on the other, the tensions produced by the meeting of different cultures.

Postcolonial theorists regard multiculturalism as a positive concept and celebrate the border areas of cultural existence as fertile ground for creating new narrative strategies to explain 'hybrid' experiences. They admit that in the postcolonial period the late – capitalist mode of production depends on globalization, and not on colonial expansion.

The idea of diversity - in - one is central to Ghosh's writing. His stories concern the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of his characters. Ghosh's narrators are often from the middle or upper - middle class of Indian society, the privileged group that has had a Western education and is fluent in English (like Ghosh himself).Ghosh emphasises simultaneously on mankind's diversity and universality. Diversity refers to the different beliefs or practices applied to everyone in each cultural heritage or sphere. At the same time, universalism is a self – conscious effort to understand precisely what is common across different cultures. That is why it is said that respect for different cultures is not the antithesis of universalism, but a consequence of universalism. Ghosh's respect for different cultures and appreciation of them is evident in most of Ghosh's writing.

Ghosh as a prophet of cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism is an old concept, emerging etymologically from its roots in ancient Greece. It is generally meant as ''citizenship of the wold''. Contemporary scholars interpet the term as helpful in expanding planetary world, offering new ways to consider actions, identities and ideas that undermine the power of well-defined social borders. In contemporary scholarship, cosmopolitanism has has been used to describe the condition of exiles, refugees and strangers as well as of world travellers, elites and intellectuals. It also offers a specific way of inhabiting the transnational and transcultural currents of contemporary globalization . One of the pre - eminent English language writers of the Indian diaspora, Ghosh has come to be recongnized as a literary theorist of cosmopolitanism. His career spans four continents, ranging across India, England, North Africa and and United States. As an excavator and creator of cosmopolitan histories, Ghosh is shaped by the transnational circuits within which he works.Ghosh's novels actively discuss the important features of modern cosmopolitanism. He presents homes and families of his characters in a postcolonial environment as alternatives to the nations and the practices of traditional

communities. For example, his novels *The Shadow Lines* and *The Glass Palace* are centred on families. He tries to subvert the idea of national identity or allegory by focusing on families as emblems of cosmopolitan formation. He believes that writing about families is one way to oppose the militant nationalism and to support emerging cosmopolitanism.

In delineating his characters Ghosh refrains from emphasizing such separating concepts as nationality, ethnicity and race. These features may come up in background, but he does not use them as representative or definitive qualities of his characters. As Ranjita Basu notes, the ‘‘emotions and passions’’ of Ghosh’s characters are related more to ‘‘their universal humanity’’than to their racial identity (152-153). This limited representation of racial and ethnic difference escapes the grip of Western discourses, which largely define people on the basis of their nationality, race, ethnicity or religion. But the characters in Ghosh’s novels, ethnic or racial differences are of very little consequence. In *The Circle of Reason*, for instance, we only learn that Zindi is an Egyptian towards the end of the novel. As Basu points out, ‘‘this knowledge does not help to define her in any way, for Ghosh has already defined her in a broader, more human context that transcends the boundaries between Indian and foreign.’’ Zindi’s nationality or race has only less significance and therefore it loses its function as a defining feature of her character.

Characters from different walks of life

As a novelist Ghosh has shown unique skill to choose a number of characters from different walks of life and to introduce them in the same background without any artificiality. Laura A. White analyses the theme, background and characters in the novel *The Hungry Tide* and has made the following observation in the concluding part of her article:

> Ghosh’s representation of the interactions between the urban professional Kanai, the Indian - American scientist Piya, and the lower caste fisherman

> Fokir and his progress - oriented wife, Moyna, captures the dissonance of the different, conflicting perspectives. While suggesting that these perspectives all exist together at the same time, Ghosh does not suggest that an easy combination will occur, and he does not erase the different histories and futures associated with the different ways of knowing. Additionally, Ghosh does not suggest that any of these perspectives are static and unchanged by their interaction, with each other. Instead, he uses the ‘‘broad canvas’’ of the novel to show how these individuals and their stories work on each other like the tides. They do not form isolated layers, but interact with one another, influencing each other's perspective and creating new knowledge that emerges from the intersections, which like the interaction between water and land in the tidal rhythm are mutual and do not collapse differences (526) .

As a fiction writer, a journalist and a scholar, Ghosh has definite idea about a cosmopolitan world. He believes that cosmopolitanism emerges from an embrace of domesticity and kinship . He argues that people should be more committed to recognize ‘‘the world’’ through the home. Shameem Black of Yale University in USA has analysed the concept of home in the novel *The Shadow Lines* and made the following observation:

> As a rhetoric comfortable describing psychological identities, cultural geogrpahies, political visions, aesthetic practices and ethical principles, cosmopolitanism currently offers a powerful and sometimes contested languages for lives lived across social borders. In my reading of *The Shadow Lines*, I use the word ‘‘cosmopolitan’’ to connote an attitude of open engagement with unfamiliar people and places. As Ghosh's fiction poignantly reveals, it is entirely possible to gain a wealth of transcultural experience without ever attempting to embrace others unlike oneself.

> Cosmopolitanism gestures towards this ideal of sympathetic perspective - taking, which places as a positive value on an openness to unfamiliar parts of the world (47).

Once Ghosh has admitted his stance as a writer in an interview with John C. Hawley: ‘‘A writer is also a citizen, not just of a country but of the world’’. (qtd. In Hawley 11) G.J.V Prasad has appreciated Ghosh for his cosmopolitanism like this:

> Amitav Ghosh is arguably the most cosmopolitan of contemporary Indian English writers as also the most significant. His significance has its roots in his cosmopolitanism, for he is a writer who travels and remaps the world drawing connections across the boundaries of modern states (56).

Ghosh’s answer to the questions about multiculturalism and the possible direction of the new world literatures is the idea of a heterogeneous whole. He argues that literatures should not aim at ‘‘homogenizing heterogeneity’’, but should aim at a world embracing hybridity that does away with context – specific differences. Tuomas Huttunen of Univeristy of Turku has analysed Ghosh’s talent as a postcolonial writer and how he has contributed to world literature in the conclusion of his article:

> To sum up, then, it would seem that at the level of narrative strategy Ghosh has found as fruitful way of representing global multicultural societies and experiences. By not foregrounding nationality, ethnicity and race (even class) as definitive features of fictional characters, and by searching for representations of different social groups in ways that ensure their authentic voice and agency, he suggests how the new world literatures might diminish the clash between cultures, and conversely, avoid a homogeneous representation of multiculturalism (41-42).

Ghosh's two major concerns - his appeal for a borderless universe and his penchant for recovering lost histories - are reflected in his novel 'The Shadow Lines'. Rituparna Roy has revealed a remarkable finding in her study about the theme of *The Shadow Lines*:

> On the face of it, *The Shadow Lines* has little to do with Partition. But this is to ignore the central incident of the novel - Tridib's death – which can be read as a far – reaching consequence of this long - ago event of 1947. The death of Tridib indeed indicates that the aftermath of the Partition did not die down even after seventeen years, and that even if it is a remote and quite insignificant (from a newsworthy point of view) an incident, it highlights the destructive energies of religious fundamentalism. And quite significantly, it is the remoteness and apparent political insignificance of this central incident that ironically enables the novel to make its statement all the more powerfully(114).

Ghosh's keen awareness of environment

While reading the novel *The Hungry Tide*, we immediately remember the disastrous Tsunami of December 2004, which devastated thousands of lives and decimated the homes and properties of millions of others living in the coastal communities of Indonesia, Sri Lanka , and India. It is heard that Ghosh was one amongst the earliest media personalities to reach the scene of the disaster in the Andaman and Nicobar islands which was the worst afflicted Tsunami sites in India. Having witnessed the horrible sights of the calamity, he dispatched the journalistic essay, ''The Town by the Sea''. Originally published in *The Hindu*, an Indian newspaper, and then widely disseminated across the internet, this report has now been compiled in the collection of occasional non-fiction pieces by Ghosh, *Incendiary Circumstances* (2005).

Ghosh's essay ''The Town by the Sea'' has been widely appreciated as one of the incisive and ecologically sensitive overviews of the Tsunami disaster. It analyses the larger backdrop of the colonial history of the region and its indiscriminate exploitative environmental policies. Of course Ghosh has made a compassionate reporting of the disaster in his essay. More than that he sharply criticises the environmentally blind policies of habitation and development followed by the postcolonial Indian state. Neglecting the treacherous nature of the stormy seas of this region, the Indian government allocated beach - front property to mainlanders following the European model. He also points out that once the Andaman and Nicobar Islands had been one of the world's most insulated tribal populations. The essay is an excellent testimony for Ghosh's deep insight about geography, ecology, environment protection, habitation, wild life, regional plants, ruthless human exploitation of nature, etc. All these elements are more clearly discernible in his novel *The Hungry Tide*.

Ghosh presents his story in the backdrop of the Sundarbans - a vast salt - resistant mangrove forest in the Indo-Gangetic delta situated in the Bay of Bengal that lies between the borders of India and Bangladesh. The Sundarbans are a unique biotic space, a chain of islands that are constantly transformed by the daily ebb and flow of tides that create and destroy, at aberrant intervals, whole islands and eco-niches that struggle to adapt to the shifting levels of salinity in the water. Rajender Kaur has made a remarkable observation in the first part of his essay:

> *The Hungry Tide* gestures to a new kind of postcolonial ethics, one that has transcended the Manichean perspective that defined earlier colonialist thinking. The novel moves us beyond narrow nationalistic, ethnic, and racial binaries to embrace an ecological perspective that is compelled by the understanding that we live, not in many, but in one world (127).

Ghosh's concern about the present ecosystem

Amitav Ghosh presents an entirely different theme, related with climate change and environment protection in his novel *The Hungry Tide*. He believes that global warming is more dangerous than terrorism or separatist movements in different parts of the wold. He points out that every year during monsoons the sea encroaches the land and swallows a large number of people and their belongings. It is a regular phenomenon happened for thousands of kilometres on Indian shores. It is estimated that in Bengal alone, a hundred million people live within one meter of the sea. The central and state governments don't do anything substantially to defend this miserable situation. The people, victims of these disasters, don't take them seriously and they are always ready to move to the nearby emergency camps sponsored by the local administrative bodies. Ghosh laments over this situation in an interview with Mahmood Kooria:

> Bengal is responsible for so much of rice production, and now, because the flow of water has changed, salt water is penetrating deeper and deeper into agricultural land. Very soon, even parts that are cultivated today will no longer be cultivatable. This has already happened in large areas of the Sunderbans. But in terms of public awareness in India, people seem to think that the only important things in the world are cricket and Bollywood. There is no awareness of the nature of the catastrophe that is approaching (16).

Jana Maria Giles has analysed aesthetics, politics and environment in the postcolonial novel *The Hungry Tide* and made the following observation in the conclusion of her article:

> *The Hungry Tide* exemplifies Allan Stoekl's claim that the imagining of a sustainable future can only be fictional, a representation of the freedom of the other as an end rather than a means. If the Anthropocene yokes together

> clashing intellectual formations, then the novel, as an artwork that provokes as a Lyotardian sublime in its audience in the gap between postcolonialism and environmentalism also incites its readers to institute new formations and idioms that have yet to exist. Ghosh sets forth a utopian hope for change that cannot be predetermined but must be evaluated ‘‘*in every single instance*, in such a way as to maintain the idea of a society of free beings,’’ which are the conditions for any possible justice. The postcolonial sublime refutes the ideologies of the past and spurs to witnessing and activism in partnership with those who have been rendered silent and invisible (242).

Ghosh as a postcolonial writer

Several critics and scholars have commented on the narrative style of Ghosh, especially as a postcolonial writer. Eric D. Smith's opinion related with this, is noteworthy:

> Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* has been noted for its mercurial defiance of generic classification. Reviews and critical commentaries variously praise or condemn the book as a traveler's tale, an (auto) ethnography, an alternative history, a polemic against modernization, the personal record of an anthropologist's research, and, perhaps less obviously, a novel. Inasmuch as the book is generically conflicted, it is likewise ideologically conflicted, formally embodying many of the very diremptions and modern disconnections that it ostensibly confronts. Anxieties over nationalism, cultural difference, modernization, historiography, and Third World subalternity not only act as the passive objects of Ghosh's narrative but also insinuate themselves into the very style, structure, and linguistic sensibility of the book in a manner that Bakhtin would recognize as ‘‘novelistic’’ (447).

Amitav Ghosh admits in the Author's Notes, which he attached to his novel, *The Hungry Tide*, that he got historical facts for his theme from an article, *Refugee Resettlement in Forest Reserves: West Bengal Policy Reversal and the Marichjhapi Massacre* by Ross Mallick. Lisa Fletcher observes that Ghosh uses the form of the novel to tell a history that had been largely forgotten beyond the Sundarbans. In this context, the findings of the researcher Omendra Kumar Singh are noteworthy:

> Ghosh's apprehensions become apparent as he imaginatively watches the discursive space of Morichjhapi emerging with the contours of a new nation. These apprehensions can be grasped in the spatial aesthetic of the tide country which assumes distinctive importance in the novel. The geography of the tide country has been shaped in such a way as it alludes to Thomas More's New World island Utopia in his inaugural text *Utopia*, which is a representational meditation on radical difference, otherness, and the systematic nature of the social totality (247).

Robert Dixon in University of Southern Queensland in Australia has analysed Ghosh's style of writing in detail and made the following comment:

> The fact that Amitav Ghosh has been able to move freely in his writing between anthropology, history and fiction is symptomatic of the extent to which traditional boundaries between those disciplines have themselves broken down (5-6).

Claire Chambers of Leeds Metropolitan University in UK has appreciated Ghosh's narrative style in *The Circle of Reason* like this:

> Although *The Circle of Reason* has not received as much critical attention as Ghosh's other works, the novel evinces an important distinguishing

> characteristic of Ghosh's fiction to date: his heterogeneous use of genre. Despite its limitations, this lively first novel demonstrates his eclectic interaction with ideas form both East and West and his ability to create a composite generic framework in which to discuss these ideas (34).

Ghosh has clear strategy to put forward the Oriental thought as an alternative to the Western and it is visibly seen in his work *The Calcutta Chromosme*. James H. Thrall has mentioned this talent in one of his articles:

> With its mingling of medicine and mysticism, Ghosh's counter-science is thus not the opposite of Western science as Orientalism's irrational superstition, nor is it that science itself precisely, but something like its mirror image writ large, if that distinction makes sense. It is a form of rational inquiry of an entirely different order, Eastern rather than Western in orientation, with goals commensurately more vast, and independent from limited perspectives that can accomplish only what is perceived as possible(301).

Sujala Singh has appreciated the skill of Ghosh for mixing fiction and non-fiction in writing in her essay like this:

> His first two novels, *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines,* deploy the researcher figure more covertly and their authority within the narrative is curtailed. I have already shown how, in *Circle*, the eccentric Balaram interprets and lives in the world according to notions of Pasteurian idealism and teaches his young orphaned nephew to do the same. The romantic Tridib in *The Shadow Lines* opens up the cartographies of the globe through the *Bartholomew's Atlas* for the young narrator. The mix of fiction and non-fiction provides a status of authority of Ghosh's texts as 'real' genealogies,

> histories and manuscrpits are laid out for us. The quest is as much for the responsible, politically correct, engaged researcher as for the alternative stories of globalisation that the researcher (who is usually male) unravels and interprets for us (57).

Ghosh's experience as a writer

Ghosh has pursued a number of professions, moving seamlessly between work as anthropologist, journalist, professor and novelist. Pico Iyer analyses Ghosh's experience as a writer like this:

> What this means in practice is that Ghosh has one foot in the comfortable upper-middle-class Bengali world we know from Satyajit Ray movies……. and the other among the displaced peoples of the world, whose sufferings and split identities he has chronicled in reportorial works distinguished for their social conscience and compassion.

Scott McClintock appreciates Ghosh's skill to connect global networks in his essay like this: "Ghosh's fictionalization of the global networks joining Indian and Irish insurgencies recounts a narrative this is increasingly, drawing the interest of historians as well" (17).

The themes and their presentations in Ghosh's novels are really amazing. It is pointed out that he does not imitate any other English writer. Instead he follows his own style boldly and this attitude has made his works outstanding. Yumna Siddiqi analyses the novel *The Circle of Reason* in detail and finds out how it is different from other detective stories. She writes in her conclusion:

> As a story of intrigue, *The Circle of Reason* works against the conventions of classic detective fiction in a number of ways. For one, Ghosh gives the

> detective only a subsidiary part in the narrative. From the outset, Ghosh's detective has been a reluctant sleuth, and has felt little appetite for the chase. In the course of an interrogation, when he was expected to brutalize a witness, he felt the bile churn at the back of his throat, experiencing a visceral horror for the state's repressive tactics that we, as readers, share. Also, *The Circle of Reason* jettisons the type of closure characteristic of the genre of intrigue. Well before the end of the novel, Das abandons his duties as a police detective. In the final passages, the detective and the remaining characters disperse in what is described as a beginning rather than an ending. By constructing the detective's character and role in this way, Ghosh diverts his burlesque of police fiction of the gratifications of heroic detection (202).

Ghosh's heavy risks taken in advance for writing his novels

Amitav Ghosh has revealed the pain and trouble to write the *The Glass Palace* in an interview with Frederick Luis Aldama:

> *The Glass Palace* was like an odyssey, you know ? It took months and months of very organized travel, because I realized at some point that my book was ''about much more than just individual characters. It was also about the history of the Indian diaspora in Southeast Asia, which is an epic history, a very extraordinary history. I realized that the only way I could learn about this was really by talking to people. So I traveled to Malaysia, literally going from compound to compound, finding people who lived through this time, talking to them about the past. I traveled in Burma. I traveled in India.I traveled in Thailand. I traveled on the Burmese/Thai border. I spent time with the insurgents

> who are fighting the Burmese Army. I went into the jungle with them. I was shot at by the Burmese Army, which was quite an experience (88-89).

Christopher A. Shinn of Georgetown University has made a remarkable comment in the introduction of his essay 'On Machines and Mosquitoes: Neuroscience, Bodies, and Cyborgs in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*:

> Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery* (1995) traces the hidden dangers of modern science, exposing the constant threats that surround a futuristic world of new technology and postcolonial cybernetic warfare. The book magnifies concerns about the power of advanced technology to absorb into its fateful design all the nightmarish horrors that surround the spread of global terrorism, crime, disease, war, and empires (145).

Ghosh's positive and negative utopian thinking

Ghosh has always tried to balance positive and negative utopian thinking in his portrayals. The narration about the Morningside Rubber Estate in *The Glass Palace* is a good example to this aspect. John J. Su of Marquette University has observed Ghosh's this style and commented like this:

> In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh attempts to render both positive and negative utopian thinking within the aesthetic form of the novel, such that the two modes of thinking mutually correct each other. The portrayals of the Burmese Queen, the Collector and Arjun emphasize the inescapable dangers of utopian thinking and emphasize that Dinu's vision of people engaged in distinterested debate is a heuristic rather than a reality. *The Glass Palace* proposes the

> conditions under which individuals are invited to engage with each other in ways that respect potentially intractable differences, and Arjun's inability ever to escape from his own biases reminds readers that such conditions are rarely, if ever, met (77).

Significance of this research

This research has been an attempt to define the term 'Indianness' and its various implications from different perspectives. It is admitted in the beginning of the introductory chapter that the term cannot be conceptualized into a single definition. Comparing to other countries India's socio-cultural heritage, racial problems, religious differences, language diversity, issues connected with rural and urban backgrounds, etc. are more complex and complicated. Therefore it is seen that there are a large number of interpretations to the term 'Indianness'. It is reflected in almost all the genres of Indian writing in English. As it reflects the religious beliefs, practices, philosophy of the common people, love and married life, food habits, dress code, family life and the lifestyle of an average Indian, the writers need a wide canvass to describe what they see around themselves. Indianness has been analysed in Indian English poetry, prose, short story, drama and novel. In this thesis more importance has been given to novels in Indian English.

The study of Indianness in Indian Writing in English is significant or useful not only to Indians but to people all over the world. This research has analysed the various aspects of Indianess in Indian Writing in English related with social, political, historical, economic, religious, geographical and cultural aspects of people living in India and abroad. It is true that some of our problems are connected with living in India. At the same time, a few others are common to humanity and in thatsense they are universal. Several Indian English writers are highly skilful in focusing the diverse problems and suggesting solutions to them directly and

indirectly through their works. It is a fact that historians and critics, especially belonging to western culture, view Indian way of living as an inferior one comparing to other world cultures. They do not try to find out the merits and achievements of our civilization. This research is not an attempt to glorify the Indian culture and civilization. On the contrary, it reviews the diverse elements in the Indian way of thinking and living. Though Ghosh plays a neutral role in his narrative, he doesn't overlook the evil aspects of our social life. He suggests possible solutions to those defects using sublime imagination. Whereas he highlights the greatness of family life in India and it is an integral part of our culture.

Observations made in this research

After examining the meaning of the term Indianness, it studies briefly the evolution of Indian writing in English. This study identifies the beginning of the Indian writing in English, observes the charges against Indian English literature and points out its significance in the literary scene all over the world. As this research has chosen fiction for detailed study, it analyses closely the three stages in the growth and development of Indian English fiction. In order to find out and compare the various elements of Indianness, Amitav Ghosh has been selected as an ideal novelist for an in-depth study. His novels cover almost all traits of Indian way of thinking and living. The introductory chapter concludes with brief summaries of his six selected novels: *The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines*, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies*.

The second chapter analyses the different aspects of Indianness connected with the social conditions in India. It highlights how the caste system and untouchability have influenced negatively the goodness of our ancient civilization.The novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Ruth Prawer Jhabwala and Arundhati Roy had raised their voice against these inhuman practices prevailed in our society through their works. This research

admits that these two age-old social evils cannot be rooted out completely even in his post independent era. They still continue in our society in one form or another.

Having made a general evaluation regarding the caste system and untouchability in Indian social scenario, this research estimates how Ghosh reacts to these things. He narrates a few real scenes taken place based on caste system during the 19th century in the first few chapters of his novel *Sea of Poppies*. Though he has depicted the scenes in a remote village of Bihar, we painfully realise that these are not isolated things in north India. The upper caste Hindus regarded the untouchables as equal to animals. The three landlords in Ghazipur village humiliated Kalua, an untouchable, at first mating him with a well-known prostitute and later they forced him to mate with a large black mare. Even in the schooner *Ibis* the upper caste Hindus followed the same system that prevailed on the land. The colonial people didn't find anything wrong in pursuing such callous things even in their ship.

Along with caste system and untouchability, another cruel aspect of our social system is the miserable plight borne by Hindu widows. For a long time, they were forced to perform sati. Due to the strong interference of religious reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, etc. this cruel system was almost eliminated. But the physical situation for a widow to lead a free life has not been improved. She has to be tonsured and forbidden from remarriage. She cannot put on dress as she likes but she has to wear only white dress always. The white sari is not meant to give her any respect but to discriminate her as 'cursed' widow in the community. Widowhood in Hinduism has been analysed and estimated how Ghosh has reacted to such practices prevailing in India. Under this subtitle it has been scrutinized whether Ghosh has risen to the level of a reformer as a writer.

Having analysed caste system, untouchability and widowhood in Hinduism, the other two important aspects like love and marriage in India are examined and compared them in the novels of Ghosh. It has to be started with observing man – woman relationship in Indian society. Most of the communities in India are patriarchal by nature and therefore major decisions in family are always taken by men. It is true that after independence the fate of women has been improved a lot due to a general progressive vision of the society. The widespread education among girls, the right to universal franchise, employment opportunities for women, etc.have helped women in securing and enjoying more freedom in family and society. The writers have depicted well the changes taken place in man-woman relationship associated with love and marriage in their works. Ghosh has presented a variety of love affairs and married life in his novels. While we evaluate the affairs and married life of his characters, it seems that he stands for a new cosmopolitan society irrespective of caste, region, religion, nation, etc. This new vision in writing makes him a unique postcolonial writer.

In *The Shadow Lines*, Tridib a young Indian youth falls in love with May Price an English girl who was born and brought up in London. Similarly, Ila the young Indian girl gets attracted to Nick Price, an English boy. The difference in nationhood does not become a hindrance to their affairs. In *The Glass Palace* Rajkumar, the protagonist who is an Indian marries Dolly, a Burmese girl. Similarly the First Princess of the Burmese Royal family gets married with Mohan Sawant who is an Indian and coachman at Ratnagiri. The Second Princess eloped with a Burmese commoner and hid herself in the Residency. Neel, the son of Rajkumar and Dolly, was born and brought up in Burma but he married Manju, the sister of Arjun, who was a typical Calcutta girl. Matthew, the only son of Saya John, falls in love with an American lady namely Elsa Hoffman. In *Sea of Poppies* Kalua, an untouchable rescues Deeti, an upper class Rajaputhra woman, from her funeral pyre and later marries her.

Ghosh always dreams of a new world where all youth can love and marry whoever he or she likes. The other social elements like region, religion, language, caste, financial status, nobility, etc. should not be obstacles to free love. We regretfully realize that love and marriage in Indian social conditions are often degraded to the level of a kind of trade agreement. At times marriage is arranged not for the merging of two minds, hearts and bodies but for protecting the family's prestige and good will. Ghosh always upholds the ideals of divine love and in this sense,he can be called as the 'prophet of love' to the 21st century.

The other factors connected with Indian social conditions like male domination in the society and status of women in the Indian family and society are also discussed in general and how they are reflected in Ghosh's novels. In addition to this, a few more peculiarities of Indian people are pointed out in this chapter: for example, Indian women's love for jewellery, importance of Hindi film songs, centrality of cricket in Indian psyche, etc.

The important historical and political events in pre and post independent India are discussed briefly and how Indian English writers have presented those incidents in their works. In this section the contrast in the attitude of the earlier writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, etc. and post independent writers like Khushwant Singh, Amitav Ghosh, etc. towards Gandhism and the Partition is highlighted. In *The Glass Palace* Uma Dey the freedom activist, explains the basis of the difference in opinion between Gandhi and Subhash Candra Bose in supporting and opposing the British Empire during the Second World War. Ghosh deals with these historical and political facts in an excellent way connecting them with his fictional characters. In this chapter it is found out how Ghosh has designed his plot and linked it with history. He has admitted in one of his interviews that *The Glass Palace* is based on the military career of his father and uncle's life as a trader in Burma.

In Chapter III the religious and economic aspects of Indian society are highlighted and it is seen that Ghosh gives more importance to economic aspects of Indians in his novels. This chapter also deals with the different economic conditions of India, how the colonial rulers have exploited India's agricultural sector for making huge profits by compelling them to change to poppy cultivation. They discouraged all types of farming connected with food items. It was the beginning of food problem in India. Besides, they started different types of factories all over India and attracted people from rural areas to work in those factories for low wages. In addition to low wages, the working conditions in those huge factories are quite pathetic. The Ghazipur Opium Factory in *Sea of Poppies* substantiates Ghosh's argument.

The colonial people needed cheap labour for their plantations in Malay and other British colonies. They arranged agents to recruit poor people by giving attractive offers and to reach them in Calcutta. From there they were transported to their colonies. Rajkumar Raha in *The Glass Palace* and Nob Kissin Baboo in *Sea of Poppies* are good examples for such recruiting agents. This type of recruitment has helped much Rajkumar to become a timber merchant in Burma later. Till the advent of the British in Burma the teaks in their forests have remained evergreen. Soon they identified the worth of the teak, cut them off in large numbers and shipped them to London. The timber yards in the forests have become a common sight during this period.

Similarly they observed that the Burmese people were using the strong and obedient elephants only as symbols for power and glory, especially in palaces and other places of worship. Soon they trained mahouts for dragging logs by elephants to the nearby ports in order to ship them out. Besides they taught the coolies to drag logs through rivers to the ports. In Malay they found that its soil and climate are really suitable for the cultivation of rubber. They called it rhetorically as 'money plant'. They discouraged all other crops in Malay and started rubber plantations everywhere. Ghosh has done a brilliant task in revealing all these

ruthless activities through his fictional plot and characters. It is a shocking discovery that the colonial people have exploited land, forests, nature, rivers, animals in addition to human beings.

The chapter IV analyses the different geographical features of india.The background of rivers and seas in Indian English novels are analysed in general and how Ghosh has depicted them in his novels. He has described the speciality of Bengal tide in *Sea of Poppies* and suggests that it is a strange phenomenon. He explains the important places like Madras, Ratnagiri, Calcutta, etc. with minute details.

The chapter V is an assessment on type characters in Indian English novels.It is also elucidated that Ghosh has produced a few stereotype characters like his predecessors. Chapter VI is an exclusive view on Indian English. Ghosh has contributed much to Indian English and it is discussed in detail how he is different from other English writers. Comparing to other Indian English writers, he has commendable fluency and vocabulary in English language. He has shown great confidence in a foreign language and proved his talent brilliantly.

Scope of this research

This research work can open up new approaches towards the study of Indianness in IndianWriting in English. Indianness being a vast and complex term, it is not possible to include all elements related with it in a single project. As India is one of the ancient civilizatons of the world, the study of Indianness should have been started with elaborate analysis of the essence of our *vedas* and *puranas*. They still influence considerably the present life of people in India. In this research Indianness is analysed from a general point of view. In this project as a case study for Indianness, six novels of Amitav Ghosh have been selected. The other writers have done meritorious service to present Indianness in their works. The observations and conclusions made in this research on behalf of Indianness and

its depiction in Ghosh's novels will pave the way for further researches in the same sphere. Such findings will be helpful to correct the degraded impression and attitude of writers, historians and critics, especially of Western culture and civilization. This research will be highly useful for students community to analyse and review the books prescribed in Indian Writing in English. It has clearly explained the diverse Indian elements connected with social, political, historical, religious, economic, geographical and cultural aspects. It has also studied in detail great works of other eminent writers.

Finally, it seems that this project has done maximum justice in analysing the different characteristics of Indianness in Indian Writing in English. It has assessed the contribution of the leading writers in each aspect and pointed out how they are reflected in Ghosh's novels. The themes of his novels are varied and strategies to present ideas in each work are also different. There is no exaggeration in saying that Ghosh has made unique contribution to Indian writing in English and he can make further if he maintains his talent more intelligently and cunningly.This project can be concluded with the general comment on India and Indianness:''India is a nation state but Indianness is a not a homogeneous term''.

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