

## Theme of Diaspora in Selected Novels of Amitav Ghosh

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### **Abstract**

*The word 'Diaspora' has originated from Greek language word 'diaspeiro' which signifies the 'disseminating seeds.' This word has been derived by the Hebrew Bible and entered into the Greek language. It disseminates from one country to other. People initiated to think that one day they would come back to their homeland. It exhibits the population, transmigration and proliferation. The term 'Diasporic' plays a significant role between two countries and two cultures and consequently they have faced the different disgusting aspects such as discrimination, cultural transformation, dislocation, nostalgia and the issue of their survival.*

**Keywords:** *Diaspora, dislocation, discrimination, alienation, migration*

When people migrate from one place to another from the established community they have to face the issue of dislocation which remind them of the old things and they compare the old locations to the present ones. In this way, they are physically staying in the present condition but, their minds and hearts do not respond to the present conditions. They always think of their past locations and plunge into therein. They have to undergo a lot of mental stress which compels them to face the nostalgic past. The illustrations of Jews have suffered from their homeland in Palestine. In this way 'Diaspora' term interprets shifting societies of the migrants who migrate from their actual homeland. This impact of thought has mostly been influenced in the process of author's lifestyle. The term 'Diaspora' finds important place in the writing of authors whose remarkable contributions have been shown in the Postcolonial literature too. Some of the important and established authors have widely enriched this term in their literatures. There are V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Desai, Shyam Selvadurai, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee, Kamala Markandaya, etc. They have imparted their unbelievable contribution to flourish this term in the Indian Diasporic literature. Somehow Amitav Ghosh has suffered from this feeling of 'Diaspora'. Eventually, his confusion mounted and having a dilemma mind as also the loneliness compelled to write on it which

is exhibited in his novels. No doubt, Amitav Ghosh occupied a significant place in English literature and he widely elucidated well in respect of diaspora.

As pointed out by V. S. Naipaul in 'A Way in The World,' it mentions that "Sometimes we can be stranger to ourselves." It describes the plight of Amitav Ghosh how he has travelled regularly in the period of adolescence, staying in East Pakistan, Iran and Srilanka and India. All his novels evidently show the picture of his sufferings which he had undergone and enforced to remise the nostalgic past. However, there are so many factors responsible for the dislocation of the society by their native country to unknown country.

When we discuss the term of 'diasporic,' it is used to exhibit the situations in the novels of Amitav Ghosh. We come to know that Amitav Ghosh has delineated this term in his respectively novels. 'The Circle of Reason,' 'The Shadow Lines,' 'The Calcutta Chromosome,' 'The Glass Palace,' 'The Hungry Tide,' and 'Sea of Poppies,' 'In An Antique Land,' 'Dancing In Camobodia,' 'The Ibis Trilogy'. The novel 'The Circle of Reason' got the award in 1990. 'The Shadow Lines' received the Sahitya Akademic award and Anand Puraskar award. 'The Calcutta Chromosome' was awarded the Arthur C. Clarke award in 1997. The novel 'The Glass Palace' received the International e-Book Award in 2001. The novel 'The Hungry Tide' has won the Crossword Book Prize in 2005.

Amitav Ghosh emphasizes on the two families such as Indian and English. When we read this novel completely, we come to know that there are some differences between Indian and English concerning matter of culture and geographical structures which have been incorporated in this novel. In this way, the boundary line is always existed between them. The writer very skilfully shows the difference in this novel and compels the readers to search their self identity which was previously established. The characters are grabbed between two nations as well as countries. They had to undergo problems inadvertently which occurred by their self made personalities due to the impact of migration. Amitav Ghosh has mentioned through the character of Jethamoshai.

"It's all very well, you are 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". (237).

In the novel *The Shadow Lines* the author expressed his painful sentiments through the character of Jethamosha who was staying in the Dhaka country. He is not willing to migrate to the other country from his own. He suggested to his children to go away from it. But he is not agreed to sacrifice his motherland where he has borne and lived from the birth. Here it shows that thought of migration does not change his intention to save his life, while Jethamoshai opposes all restrictions and gets ready to fight all circumstances. Here we find the term 'diasporic' which shows the sentiments of migration from their native country, which is but natural, which, nobody can explain in words. This obscure feeling always attacks in the minds of other characters and thus contributed to the enlargement of the fiction.

As we know that Amitav Ghosh's journeys continued without any break and whatever he saw and understood was preserved in his mind. All these things have made significant impact on Ghosh and enunciated in his novels. This process of thoughts haunts his mind to understand the way of living of diasporic society. All these facets were greatly influenced on Ghosh's activities. As impact found in his first novel *The Circle of Reason*, he portrayed life of a boy whose name is Alu who was staying in India. He had to face some acute circumstance and due to this, he had to leave the domicile in India and preferred to run away to other country i.e. Middle East. During this adventure period, he came across different people of other countries too. Of course, consequently he bears some unknown challenges and digests the cultural displacement and alienation which he could not share it with others ungrudging. Amitav Ghosh has personally undergone these circumstances. He has incorporated this in his fiction through the fictional characters and endeavored to evoke feeling of readers while reading this novel. No doubt the novel *The Circle of Reason* focuses on the migration and displacement as also the loneliness. As Alu wanders in various countries due to the accusation of Balram's murder. As he says,

"Foreign places are similar in that they are not home. It would have made no difference where that bit of land was al -Glazira or Antarctica the journey was within. (266)

Amitav Ghosh through this novel explained that a man had to face so many problems due to the migration. He has to suffer the alienation, self identity, displacement,

etc. The writer enunciates the role of Alu in this novel. He has on personal level undergone these circumstances and travelled through various countries and it derived him immense benefit as he learnt a lot from these countries. But still sometimes he feels deadly disappointed due to the nature of migration and he could not get stable with migration identity. Again we come across cultural displacement in this fiction as he enunciated, "What does it matter whether it is Gangajal to be used for cleaning the place where Kuli's dead by is to be placed of carbolic acid?" (P. N. 411). It is thus interpreted that a lot of cultural disputes cropped up consequently upon the drastically undesired migration.

They had to habituate the use of Gangajal on the demise of a person whereas; some persons criticize on the traditional way while they do not believe in it. As such, naturally, there has been cultural disintegration and displacement. Hence, Amitav Ghosh tries to explain feeling of the migrated people living in other countries whereas they could not share their feelings but conscientious person can easily understand their inner emotions. This dejectedness was spread all over in his novel. Somehow he focuses on the universal citizenship in which a person should be free from all the restrictions, botheration and laws from the man-made rules and regulation. There should be no barriers to go here and there everyone has a right to go to the desired destination as also any country in the world. Naturally his novels come under the influence of diasporic nature.

Somehow Amitav Ghosh has utilized this style in the novel 'The Glass Palace' and searches catastrophe of expatriates. The drastic condition of the King of Burma has been shown in this fiction. When Rajkumar comes to Burma from India to earn his livelihood and to establish a new commercial business. He tries to settle there but sometimes he feels loneliness and expresses his desire to return home. This is the genuine truth of today. As we are watching that so many youngsters are ready to go foreign countries coveting for more money. After occupying their position there, their business in doldrums and again disappointment crop up. This is because of a lot of difference in life style and culture of their country. Indian people are generally of accommodating and adjusting nature and apart from being co-operative, there are habituated to honour the sentiments of the others and only earning money is not sheerly their motto. They are the staunch lovers and worshippers of a person's affection and identity.

Amitav Ghosh has undergone this sentiment, situation and therefore, the war of the opinion that no one else

should face excruciating feeling on the disaster of unwanted migration. Rajkumar's character exhibits the picture of diaporic susceptibility and again we find the theme of migration and alienation in this novel too. No doubt the diasporic writers preoccupied the essence of nostalgia as they search to establish themselves in new cultures. In short we can incontrovertibly say that the most significant elements in the fiction are dislocation, alienation, dislocation, migrations etc, are the major weapons of the diasporic writers.

A true visionary and luminary Amitav Ghosh is not only a productive author but also a most reliable and conscientious writer in the Bengali Community and he mostly concatenates to the Diasporic community. All his fictions demonstrate the diasporic elements which he has personally endured in his life. The immigration and alienation create a significant role in Diasporic Writings.

His novels quest the comprehension of nostalgia or can be melancholy, dejection. The hovering impact of leaving home has to be considered as a great cause of diasporic writings. So, through this we have understood that the dislocation characters demonstrate the true meaning of diasporic agonies.

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