

Current Issue

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**PANIC OF MIGRATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AMITAV GHOSH'S 'THE CIRCLE OF REASON'.****Dr. Prashant S. Dafar**Smt. Rajkamal Baburao Tidke Mahavidyalaya,
Mouda Dist. Nagpur**Abstract**

The motif of the present paper is to focus the panic of migration in Amitav Ghosh's novel 'The Circle of Reason'. The novel shows complete relationship of life with the rich diversity of the modern world. The situation of war compels the characters to migrate from one place to another place which is imaginary. They are so uneducated and ignorant that they are unable to comprehend their own life. Panic in the minds of the woman who is victim of migration cannot dream a secure life for the generation and the next generation too. The concept of nationalism and migration are rooted in globalization in the contemporary world without borders. The conflicts in the minds of the characters for secured life have been discussed.

Keywords: *Panic, Migration, Contemporary, Conflicts, Society*

Many Indian novelists contributed to Indian English novels in 1980's. They introduced various themes based on the social, political, religious and economic issues. All those novels and their themes focused on the contemporary issues in Indian scenario. These novelists have earned recognition for their work. Some of them who influenced Indian English Literature, are Shobha Dey, Shashi Tharoor, Shashi Deshpande, Gurucharan Das, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh etc. These novelists depicted the panorama of Indian society in their writings. They put forward a true picture of not only different issues but also

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the effect of circumstances which have taken place in the society as their themes have been correlated with them. Moreover, the characters in their novels are the presentation of the psychology of the people who have been affected by the circumstances in the society. Social, political, religious and political conflicts have been woven around the society and the novelists' heartily efforts are to illustrate those conflicts skillfully. Therefore, their novels are proved to be mirror of the contemporary Indian panorama.

Among all above novelists, Amitav Ghosh, a well-known Indian novelist, introduced various themes illustrating different conflicts and the whole tenor of contemporary scene. It was for this reason that the contribution of the novelists like Amitav Ghosh in Indian English Literature brought it on national as well as international platform. Amitav Ghosh whose father was an army man, was grown up in the background of war affairs. He was greatly influenced by stories of Indian freedom fight which his mother used to explain him in his childhood. Moreover, his father, a lieutenant colonel in Indian Army, had fought in the Second World War in 1945. Amitav Ghosh's personality and mind were grown up in such war affairs and panic atmosphere which was full of social, political and national conflicts. As a man of creativity, Anitav Ghosh composed such novels which brought richness to Indian English Literature. He blended traditional and nontraditional elements in his novels. His novels have been critically studied in the world of literature. Binoo k. John writes: "In the history of a country's literature such chapters are seldom written. And when most of it is in the language seemingly alien, the magnitude of the literary Renaissance becomes awe inspiring..." (John). Amitah Ghosh's fiction is an experiment in postmodernism. His effort was to articulate Indian social life by introducing various themes in his novels.

As a son of an army man, Amitav Ghosh spent his childhood in Calcutta, Dhaka and Colombo. In an interview with Neluka Silva and Alex Tickel, Amitav Ghosh admits, "The most important thing I suppose it's my childhood which was spent in various parts of the

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subcontinent. I suppose the thing that has been most important is Calcutta. (N.Silva and Alex Tichel). These words are enough to prove psychological impact of Amitav Ghosh.

Being a lecturer in the Department of Anthropology in Delhi, School of Economics and later on as a professor in Columbia University, he visited national and international universities an account of his intellectual scholarship. In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine critically Amitav Ghosh's depiction of panic of migration in his most famous novel 'The Circle of Reason'.

Amitav composed this novel under the influence of the Bangladesh War in 1971 and the international tide of migration to the Middle East in 1970's. It has been considered in the novel to be the period of British rule in India. As the British tried to prove Western knowledge superior, Amitav's effort was to show cultural creation of Indian knowledge. Amitav Ghosh wrote this novel 'The Circle of Reason' under the influence of Bangladesh War and international migration on the basis of class, race and gender. He has depicted the psychology of the migrants in this novel. The novel focuses the desires of a migrant woman for home and belongings. It is a depiction of the poor and the middle class migrants who suffer because of class, gender and race which bring them panic situation in the period of war. Amitav mentions an imaginary island al-Ghazira and Algeria. He illustrates, "the experiences of the persons in transition, those caught in between nation and states, those going back and forth as travellers and migrants in search of lost homes and better lives." (Kavita Daiya 37)

Mariamma, a character in *The Circle of Reason*, with other passengers, is carried to al-Ghazira which is a sea port of trade. The passengers include Alu, protagonist, a traditional and corrupted village landlord Bhudeb Roy and Zindi whose business is prostitution in al-Ghazira. Zindi takes Karthamma and Kulfi for the business of prostitution.

Mariamma bears moral values. She is a "Madam..... if she wasn't why would she be herding these poor women across the sea? Why would she be keeping them shut away like prisoners in the cabin? ... (CR173). Zindi's thinking is that prostitution is only a work and so

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she explains they are not business relation but family. She goes to India to look for good, clean, polite and hardworking girls. No doubt, she gets little extra money but she does not call it a business. She calls it a 'family'. She has reciprocal love relation with the women who have been migrated. Kartamma is pregnant and her pregnancy on the boat is painful. However, her psychology is not to deliver a baby on the boat. "She won't let the labor start. She's sitting on the floor and kicking and fighting. She's stuffed her hands into her womb, right in, up to her waist. May be she is trying to kill it....." (CR177). She does not allow delivering baby without material comfort and secured life for the child. Her words 'Home' does not mean a domestic home but a secured community. Being an ignorant and uneducated lady, she quests for a house and material things.

Amitav Ghosh depicts nationalism of the migrants. The migrants seek a secure life. No doubt, it is an impact of globalization. The people are affected by 'imagined world'. Their concept of secure life in secure form signifies the panic of migration that they cannot live a secure life because of the disturbed system.

Karathamma is not educated; even she does not know when a baby has been stuck inside her womb. The word "form" refers to the right of property, home and all material things. In this regard, Patricca Williams observes: "the guarantee of the right is very important and necessary for those who are without rights because the right provides them equal status as a human being. Karthamma desires legitimacy with the form in a place al-Ghazira which is a symbol of modern everyday life." (Williams 153) In this sense, the form refers to a middle class life. In the opinion of Appadurai, the people who are living in the modern world desire imagined world. However, Karthamma's desire cannot be fulfilled. It is beyond to gain what she desires as she is being migrated. Her concept of newness is associated with coming future. She wishes to kill her child and die. As Appadurai's theory is concerned, it is "certain fundamental disjuncture between economy, culture and politics". (Appadurai 328) Karthamma's wish to live life with new style can never be fulfilled as she is

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a victim of disturbed system and difference in class and gender. She thinks not to deliver the child and die. In this regard, Spivak observes that her desire is ruthless dislocation of "interest, motives (desires) and power (knowledge)." (Spivak280)

The psychology of Karthamma and Zindi's work create a situation full of conflict. As they are being migrated, they suffer lack of consciousness. Karthamma's concept of insecure life and her psychology, Zindi's reciprocal love relations are caused by sufferings of the migration. Considering Karthamma's past life in India, her hopes are meaningless at the present disturbed situation. Her way of thinking of a secure life is nothing but the future full of disappointment and poverty. The panic of war affair and moving from one country to another shattered her life. However, Karthamma denies her past in India and expects a new secured life. Not only Karthamma but other female fellow travelers who are the workers, are to be denied the life they desire. As a result of the war, the borders of the countries are separated and people are moving from one country to another country. It is also an expression of separation of human beings considering their class, race and gender. However, the psychology of the women like Karthamma, an innocent and uneducated woman grown up in the influence of Indian culture and tradition, is the best instance to show the panic of migration.

All the characters that are being migrated from India to al Ghazira in the novel are also victims. They are haunted by global capitalism and hence their desires are unfulfilled in panic situation. What they dream is not to be fulfilled. Their lives are shattered in the circle of international migration.

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