

**MIGRATION AND FORMATION OF DIASPORA IN AMITAV
GHOSH'S**

IBIS TRILOGY

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment
of the**

requirements for the award of the degree of

MASTERS OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

INDIAN DIASPORA

BY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled Migration and Formation of Indian Diaspora in Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis Trilogy* submitted by Miss Pragnya Parimita Chayani bearing the Regd. No- 15SIHD02 in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Masters of Philosophy in Indian Diaspora is a bonafide record of her independent research work under my supervision and guidance which is a plagiarism free dissertation.

This dissertation has not been submitted previously in part or full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “Migration and Formation of Indian Diaspora in Amitav Ghosh’s *Ibis Trilogy*” has been carried out by me under the supervision of Dr.Ajaya Kumar Sahoo at the Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora, University of Hyderabad.

I also declare that my work, in part or in full, has not been submitted for any degree or diploma in this or any other University to the best of my knowledge.

Place

Date

Signature of the Candidate.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognised, the boundary is that from which something begins its essential unfolding.”(Heidegger 1993:356)

Exile, Diaspora, and migration, have been explored and analysed productively and extensively in both postcolonial theory and literary texts. Postcolonial studies focus on those areas of the world that were affected by European colonialism. One-third of the world was dominated and exploited as colonies. As a result, many people were displaced from their original homeland and had to form new identities and new networks with other parts of the world. Now that the period of colonialism is over, formerly colonized territories have become politically independent and even with globalisation they have transcended the geographical boundaries, their movements lead to the confrontation of diverse cultures and that collision is taking many new forms: from the global movement of people in search of opportunities to the concern for environmental and health issues to the growing network via social media. While studying the contemporary transnational dynamic fluid network, it is important to delve deep and even to go beyond of what is visible to the naked eye to understand it and the lives connected to it voluntarily and involuntarily better. The concept of global citizenship also gives rise to the agony of people who migrated because change is not easily accepted by humans and because leaving the place someone considers to belong to is also equally painful. It carries memory. Some people may leave and box this memory, but the memory does not box them. It follows them and that forceful boxing and suppression emerge tearing its boundaries as a distinguished identity-

the diasporic identity which has been a major area of contemporary research.

Migration, indenture, and diaspora

Migration is not new to human history. Rather it is an inseparable part and familiar to both the world of plants and animals. N.Jayaram says, “Migration and dispersion are natural phenomena” (2004:15). Nomadism was a stage preceding to human communities. Time is the witness that in small and large groups people leave one place and establish new homes and the cause behind is sometimes individual; sometimes it is for a group. This will be misleading ourselves to consider these movements as physical. With the physical movement, people carry a sociocultural baggage with it – their social identity, religious beliefs and practices, clothing, family and kinship governing norms, food habits and language. As a result, past-lived place becomes the best place to live in and there is always a ‘myth of return’ criterion which clouds their minds. Today’s internet generation with social networking are well-connected to the places and is another area to do the research on. However, they may keep contacts with their native land, belongingness to the native place, a sense of alienation in the new place and an in-between state of identity govern their personality. May be voluntary or involuntary, migration brings about a change, to the place it started from, to the place it reached, to the lives who got shifted during the process, and also to the lives who are left. Accepting changes easily is not an attribute of humans.

Migrants have been central to significant changes in Modern Asian History; to economics and environmental transformation and to political and religious changes. In short, they form an integral part of it. While talking about migration, the word we imagine first is border crossing thinking that borders were created first, and the mobility, second. Borders do not predate mobility. Many of the routes that Asian migrants followed for trade were traditionally continued; Silk Road, Indian Ocean, and the China Sea. There is a history of Asian migration.

In David Ludden's words,

"...it is also a history of states' continuing attempt to control migration, and of individuals' and communities' efforts to resist, subvert, or adapt to such controls" (2003:1062).

Can we call the person/s, has/ve ever migrated to, a diaspora? It is not monolithic either. One thing is noticed that mobility leads to a collision of diverse cultures which helps to expand the horizon of contact and imaginations. At the same time mobility gives rise to historical research as migration itself means crossing boundaries which can be seen as undermining the fixed lines. The word is derived from Greek *dia* and *speiro*, literally means to disperse, to scatter. If the literary meaning is taken into account and the word is actually used for dispersed Jews community after the Babylonian exile in 586BC and to the aggregate of Jews scattered outside Palestine. In the present scenario, the diaspora is defined as the scattering of people with a common origin, background, and beliefs and as people who possess a hyphenated status irrespective of their generation and irrespective of their acculturation. As Vijay Mishra says in his "Diasporic Imaginary and the Indian Diaspora",

"Diasporas are people who would want to explore the meaning of the hyphen, but perhaps not press the hyphen too far for fear that this would lead to massive communal schizophrenia"(2012:325).

Though the word was referred to in the context of dispersion of the Jews in the strict sense of the term, it also refers to the involuntary migration of people as convicts, slaves, indentured or contract labours. It is a "culture-specific term" (Mishra, "Diasporic Imaginary and the Indian Diaspora"327). With globalisation, the growing interdependence of nation-states and the transnational linkages gained importance and therefore, the word diaspora has been used to refer to the dispersal of people of common origin irrespective of the time and conditions in which they have left their motherland for distant places and carried the sociocultural baggage of identity wherever they go.

"'diaspora' as social form is characterized by a 'triadic relationship' (Sheffer 1986; Safran 1991) between (a) globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic groups; (b) the territorial states and

contexts where such groups reside; and (c) the homeland states and contexts whence they or their forebears came". (Vertovec 2000:144)

So to trace Indian diaspora, there is the need to trace the historical context, causes, and consequences that shaped Indian Emigration as much as the social characteristics, such as education of migrants, caste, place of origin, religion and linguistic identity. The Indian diaspora is of two types old and new. "Old (that is, early modern, classic capitalist, or, more specifically, nineteenth-century indenture)" (Mishra, "Diasporic Imaginary and the Indian Diaspora" 336) is completely different from the new; another dimension to look at.

Looking at the cultural root of India, occasionally it is said that

"One good thing about Indians. Though one can take an Indian out of India, one cannot take India out of an Indian" (qtd. in Basil 2009:244).

In other words, the very Indianness is in the blood of the Indians and this side of their identity creates diaspora. Indian diaspora has a global presence. There is more than 20 million Indian diaspora spread all over the world. As per the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, the current population of the Indian diaspora is 30,843,419(as on December 2016). Though there are regional variations, in terms of sheer numbers, they make the third largest group, next only to the British and Chinese. But in many ways, they exhibit common identity, which is not regional but global. Their adaptability has never taken away their identity.

The study of Indian diaspora has emerged as an important branch of knowledge when the movement of decolonization started holding the global intelligentsia. To go with the contemporary research, we can see two parallel traditions and analyses: literary and ethnographic. Though disciplines like history, sociology, and anthropology are active in studying overseas Indians, literature being the mirror of society also reflects the condition of the Indian diaspora. Since the beginning of the studies, the question of cultural identity and assimilation has been attracting scholarly attention. Studies on Indian diaspora focus on either

migration during colonisation or post-colonisation. Both of these phases are important. Former one for showing how Indians are made to be diaspora and later for moving from national to transnational arena, for uplifting the veil from the illusion of the world that Diaspora possesses a happy face and for emerging as a major area of study. Early emigration of Indians to far-off lands was facilitated by the emerging capitalist system and showing that it is a voluntary journey to earn. With Renaissance in England came geographical exploration, expansion of new colonies and the capital earned by that resulted in plantations and mines which were in need of great and cheap working hands. Catering to the need of labour force and an abolition of slave trade, the British came with the idea of indenture. A cheap, available, and dependable labour force was discovered to work in plantations which will never go against their coloniser masters and imperialism also controlled the dissatisfaction in the name of giving employment. During colonial period, the migration can be broadly divided into three categories. N.Jayaram says,

- “(a). “Indentured” labour emigration,
- (b). “Kangani” and “maistry” labour emigration
- (c). “passage” or “free” emigration” (2004:20).

The indentured or the bonded labour was sponsored by colonisers to the labourers after signing a contract. It began in 1834 and ended in 1920. The majority of North Indians were recruited in this system and were taken to Guyana, Fiji, Trinidad Mauritius, Surinam, and Jamaica. The Kangani system was the recruitment of labourer from Ceylon and Malaya and Maistry system was emigration of the labour force to Burma. The Kangani or maistry himself was one Indian immigrant who recruited labourers from Tamil villages. The labourers were free; no contract was signed by them. Migration did not stop even after the abolishment of indenture. It continued with the emigration from Gujarat and Punjab to South and East Africa and from South India to South-East Asia. But

these labourers paid for their passage.

N.Jayaram says,

“Brief as it may be, the foregoing historical sketch is sufficient to highlight the complex and variegated nature of the phenomenon brought under the rubric Indian Diaspora”(2004:22).

India is a land of diversities in terms of culture, religion, and social life. There is no doubt that emigrants from India are heterogeneous.

“As Benzi Zhang notes, diaspora is the process of crossing and recrossing multiple borders of language, history, race, time and culture [which] must challenge the absolutism of singular place by relocating their identity in the multiplicity of plural relationships.”(qtd. in Rai and Reeves, “Introduction” 2009:4)

Hence, studying Indian diaspora can never be monolithic. It is plural; it is diverse; it is multi-dimensional. At the same time, the migration is sometimes a matter of choice and sometimes a necessity. The reason behind the migration to different places is also different. So tracing diasporic experience becomes challenging so far its diversity is concerned. As Jayaram quotes Rabindranath Tagore,

“To study banyan tree, you not only must know its main stem in its own soil but also must trace the growth of its greatness in the future soil...” (qtd. in Jayaram 2004:15).

The study of different factors connected with migration can give a vivid picture of the bond between Diaspora with its remembered past. Like

- Demographic status of migration
- Reason behind the migration
- “The Background of emigrants” (Jayaram 2004:24)
- “The Process of migration” (Jayaram 2004:24)
- Host country they have migrated to
- The cultural baggage that follows

- Their Negotiations in dealing with the new identity

The evolution of Indian diaspora in a host country depends on these factors. Historically, the magnitude of people migrated to the places differ. Though the demography varies, still forms a major factor of studying them. There is another area which is called reverse migration when some emigrants returned home and that area is least studied so far. Migration during the colonial period was difficult. The decision to migrate after all the superstitions of crossing the black water, losing the caste, and the fear of not being accepted neither in the family nor in the community is further influenced by the factors which in a broader sense can be termed as push-pull factor and a study of those factors also can solve many issues in understanding Indian diaspora better. The religion, region, caste, language, and the culture of the migrants are always close to their hearts. Based on their background story that they carry with them, they can be known and their pain, pleasure, and expectations can be easily figured out. Diasporic subjects while going to an alien land carry all these baggage and in the new land the confrontation of old memory and new culture collides and creates hybridity and since they are diverse, they make a heterogeneous group. As a result, they are viewed not pure or authentic, rather diverse. This 'diversity' leads to a diasporic urge to bring 'authenticity' to his identity.

During the colonial time, the passage of migration was officially sponsored like indenture. Other systems the passage was sometimes financed by agencies, sometimes was free. These processes also tell about the emigrants a lot like who they were and for what they left their land to an alien place. The place they are migrated to has a lot of impact on their mindset and their personalities. The political and economic conditions of the host country provide a backdrop against which the diasporic experience is shaped. The concept of host comes as the diaspora is treated as guests to the alien land and a guest is never welcomed to stay permanently. However, Trinidad is an exception where the so-called 'host society' may consist of only immigrant communities with varying diasporic

history. Even being in an alien land, Indians who evolve as diaspora depends on their abilities to adapt to the multiculturalism and setting of social institutions which bear resemblances to the homeland. By the continuation of marriage rites, caste system, festivals they negotiate and evolve as the diaspora. In the movie *Namesake* (Based on the novel by Jhumpa Lahiri), a relative advises *Gogol*, the protagonist to marry only a *Bengali* and then he can be friends with anyone else which shows the depth of cultural root. They may stay in a foreign land, but deep down remains the underlying smell of Indian soil, the Indian sentiment. Moreover, in a diasporic sense, the concept of 'home' is big. It crosses the boundary of bricks, iron, and wood and extends to the level of memory.

N.Jayram says,

“As Safran (1991:84) has observed, it is a general characteristic of the diasporics that they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to the homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship” (2004:30).

Sometimes the term 'diaspora' is generalised to refer to the Jewish mass dispersion and sometimes it refers to a specific migration by taking into account a group of people and their migration from a specific place to a specific place. Whatever be the use, the term diaspora can never divorce from its history and culture. So the migration that creates a diaspora all with its problematic identity has emerged from nationalism, religion, language, and ethnicity. However, unlike postmodernism, diaspora does not turn its face from history to celebrate the present moments and subjectivity rather it is a nomadic turn where history forms its base. So both the migrant subjects and migratory subjectivity are of major concern and the ongoing dialogues of their subjective identity with their surrounding make the hybrid subject and conscious diaspora. In the context of political and cultural binarism (coloniser/colonised, black/white, West/East), the concept of diaspora gets problematic and there is the need to look back. So diaspora can never be ahistorical.

So far as history is concerned, the old diaspora (indentured labourers) have

received relatively less focus because of their return to homeland once the contract period is over and because of the emergence of later nation-states replacing of national borders with the transnationalism. Old diaspora is characterised by the traumatic experience of belonging, colonial hegemony and ‘reconstruction of memory’ which is a phrase found in Shakespearean plays means memorially constructing something unattainable at the very moment. Literature most of the time gives names to the deeply felt emotions and make easy for the whole world to feel others. Quoting Naipaul, Vijay Mishra says, “so much of this I saw with the literary eye or with the aid of literature” (qtd. in Mishra, “The Familiar Temporariness” 2009:193). Literature becomes a medium to express that pain. Focusing on diasporic experience, Naipaul has concluded his novel, *A House for Mr Biswas* which picturizes the agony of the displaced,

“How terrible it would have been....to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one’s portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated”(Naipaul 1961:12-13).

Literature is a strong medium as to express an emotion lying deep which remains unnoticed, a voice which goes unheard or unmentioned and removes the illusion of generalisation or ignorance.

Third world countries and the intellectual postcolonial attention is the major contemporary topic of literary discussion. Among the vast world of writers, Amitav Ghosh is chosen here as it is widely known that the tale remains authentic if you listen to it from the person who has experienced it rather than who has seen or read about it. Being an Indian diasporic writer, Amitav Ghosh himself feels the trauma, the loss, the memory and the in-between identity of a diaspora better which can be picked from his books. Though he has never claimed to be one, the traits he continuously flashes brilliantly in his novels come under the vast periphery of postcolonial writing- reclaiming history, language, culture, lost past, colonial monopoly etc. However, the debate of pushing Ghosh to the limit of postcolonial space can never lessen his intelligence of portraying the diasporic

experience. To know the future we need to look back to the root to find out the base. That is what old diaspora is very important to be studied as that is the root. Reclaiming the lost history, reconstituting the native culture is a part of Postcolonial studies of which diasporic studies is a part. Even being in this internet revolution, we study history and colonisation to know our base, the root, and the very being. Exactly old diaspora forms an integral part of studying new diaspora. That is what I turned my gaze towards old diaspora and there was no better writer than Amitav Ghosh to quench this thirst.

A flash on selected Author and Texts

1. The Author:

“Writers of Indian origin...are prolific and have successfully made an impact globally by producing commendable writings that have gained global recognition.” (Devarajoo 2009:136)

Born on 11th July 1956 in Calcutta [now Kolkata] city of west-Bengal to Lieutenant Colonel Sailendra Chandra Ghosh, Amitav Ghosh opened his eyes with colonial experiences. “Ghosh was educated at the all-boys The Doon School,” (Wikipedia Contributors. “Amitav Ghosh”). He became a graduate with History major (from St. Stephen’s College) and sociology in his post-graduation, University of Delhi. In 1982, he had been awarded Doctorate in Philosophy in Social Anthropology from Oxford University and in 1999, Ghosh joined the faculty at Queens College, City University of New York, as distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature. He has also been a visiting professor of the English department of Harvard University since 2005. Ghosh subsequently returned to India began working on the *Ibis Trilogy* which comprises *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (published in May 2015). In 2009, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and in 2015 was named a Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow (Wikipedia Contributors. “Amitav Ghosh”).

Ghosh is the author of *The Circle of Reason* (his 1986 debut novel), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The*

Calcutta Chromosome (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), and *Sea of Poppies* (2008), the first volume of *The Ibis Trilogy*, *River of Smoke* (2011), the second volume of *The Ibis Trilogy*. The third volume, *Flood of Fire* (2015), completing the trilogy, has been published 28 May 2015. Ghosh's arena of non-fiction writings are *In an Antique Land* (1992), *Dancing in Cambodia and at Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), and *The Imam and the Indian* (2002), a large collection of essays on different themes such as fundamentalism, history of the novel, Egyptian culture, and literature (Wikipedia Contributors "Amitav Ghosh").

His recent non-fiction book is *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016). He has received many acclamations because of his pen.

The Circle of Reason won the Prix Médicis étranger. *The Shadow Lines* won the Sahitya Akademi Award & the Ananda Puraskar. *The Calcutta Chromosome* won the Arthur C. Clarke Award for 1997. *Sea of Poppies* was shortlisted for the 2008 Man Booker Prize. It was the co-winner of the Vodafone Crossword Book Award in 2009, as well as co-winner of the 2010 Dan David Prize (Israeli literary award). *River of Smoke* was shortlisted for Man Asian Literary Prize 2011. The Government of India awarded him the civilian honour of Padma Shri in 2007. (Wikipedia Contributors. "Amitav Ghosh")

While travelling on the path of traditional theme of Indian English fiction, a reader of Ghosh can easily feel that he/she has deviated from the convention. Ghosh's inclination towards the sea, problems of boundary, history, the value of being shifted (both voluntary and involuntary) in human life form a powerful background for his writings.

In an interview with Mahmood Kooria, he said,

It was not intentional, but sometimes things are intentional without being intentional. Though it was never part of a planned venture and did not begin as a conscious project, I realise in hindsight that this is really what always interested me most: the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the connections and the cross-connections between these regions (Wikipedia Contributors. "Amitav Ghosh").

Writers like Amitav Ghosh who have completed their academic careers in India and in western countries possess extensive living experience of both the ideologies of east and west besides various past and ongoing national and international movements including world war, colonialism, and freedom movements. Amitav Ghosh's subjects like History, Social Anthropology have an

impact on his understanding of colonisation and diasporic experience better; his change of places because of his father's job and his own academics also helped him understand the "value of movements" (Mondal 3) and himself as an Indian diaspora, he bears the testimony of diasporic experience. Mondal feels that Ghosh' movement has made him understand that movement is not only physical and there is a link between shifting and imagination of space,

"If travel is a key register of Ghosh's awareness of the importance of space in human experience, it is nevertheless his recognition that space is not an inert physical dimension exterior to human consciousness but is rather intimately shaped by the particular ways in which it is imagined ..."(2010:3) .

All these things made me choose Amitav Ghosh a writer whose own education has made his understanding clear, someone who understands the politics of border and someone whose experiences colour his writing. It seems all his writings are coming from his own felt experiences, life, and his own blood. We can feel the warmth along with his narration. His own words show the importance of Indian diaspora in contemporary world,

"The modern Indian diaspora - the huge migration from the subcontinent that began in the mid-nineteenth century - is not merely one of the most important demographic dislocations of modern times: it now represents an important force in world culture" ("The Diaspora"1989:73).

As Anshuman Mondal points out that Amitav Ghosh deals with certain "core issues" (2) in his novels and by that he means the persistent treatment of history, partition, and migration. He says that Ghosh deals with,

"...discourse on formerly colonised societies, people, and ideas; the ambivalent relationship to modernity of the so-called 'developing or 'Third' world; the formation and reformation of identities in colonial and postcolonial societies..." (2010:2).

Glass Palace focuses on World War II, *Antique Land* on Afro-Asian connection, a massacre of Bangladeshi refugees in *Hungry Tide* and questioning the colonial narrative of the discovery of Sir Ronald Ross in *Calcutta Chromosome*. By "core issues" (2), perhaps Mondal means that the Third world country and its problems with colonial discourse and its response to that.

2. The Texts:

Looking at diasporic discourse, we can find that,

“Mainly three types of writings can be distinguished: historical, diplomatic and anthropological. The historical works provide an account of the phase of emigration of Indians and their early life situations in foreign land” (Sharma 2004:44).

Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis Trilogy* is a collection of three novels, historical novels to be more specific: *Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke* and *Flood of Fire*. The *Ibis trilogy* is written on the backdrop of first opium war which happened in between 1839-41 fought between British and Chinese where Indians contributed as soldiers, fifiers, cooks, and servants. Above all, Indians carried opium to China as merchants. A part of India cultivated, lost agriculture, went down at the economic level and at last went on indenture. Another part of the country had the merchants who supplied and became rich. Again, Indian soldiers fought the war. But a close inspection of the whole story can reveal the fact that it was nothing but British monopoly. In the interview to Masoom Gupte, The Economic Times Bureau, Nov 25, 2016, 08.39 AM IST, Ghosh said,

“In large parts, the opium war was financed by Indian money—by old Bombay money...Singapore and Hong Kong wouldn't exist today without opium. Essentially opium was the most important commodity of the 19th century...The history of capitalism is sold to us as a great history of financial innovations” (indiatimes.com).

I did not find any other novel/s where this amalgamation of colonisation, diaspora, and indenture, emotional dissonance dealing with the identity issue of the Indians in the alien land and rewriting of long forgotten History is clearly shown or mentioned. Mondal says,

“The recovery of forgotten this episode in the most documented conflict in history testifies to Ghosh's ongoing interest in 'subaltern past' (2010:16).

These three novels not only give a picture of history but also make us think about the capitalism under British imperialism. The diasporic sentiment is pictured in the discussed novels with the proper research of Amitav Ghosh. Even

the epilogue of books contains the sources to prove Ghosh' wide research on this area.

The first novel deals with the journey of the indentured labourers from U.P. and Bihar who went to Mauritius after being financially robbed off due to forced opium cultivation and their sea journey, the pain of leaving home, place, and the scare of an unknown alien land. They sailed in a ship called *Ibis* from Calcutta (Kolkata) to Mauritius where along with labourers there were convicts, disguised botanist *Paulette* while establishing the concept of 'jahaji bhai' which is symbolic of forming a community in diasporic context. The second novel starts with the flashback of the leading lady *Deeti* with her shrine in Mauritius where she makes a 'smriti (memory) temple' of all the characters. It also gives a picture of pre-war set up in China. At the same time, the novels also deal with other two ships *Anahita* that carries opium and *Redruth* that carries plants for a botanical expedition. The third novel forms a circle and brilliantly connects to the first novel, every character is thrown to clear light with their past, present; the cloud is removed; the sun shines brightly; war happens; British wins along with the ports to continue their trade. Along with all these narrations, a diasporic emotion is carefully pictured which moves the general reading public.

Research questions

While dwelling between Diaspora and long forgotten opium war, I will focus on finding answers to -

- Did India create an environment conducive to migration? Were our people first marginalised by us?
- How did the first generation of Indian diaspora view indenture, the first phase of migration?
- Did they succeed in negotiating the loss with the current gain?

- Was the Opium trade a profitable business which made some gain and some lose everything and how far did the first opium war play a major role in the identity of merchant diaspora, Indian soldiers who fought the war and in the lives of people who were more or less connected to war?

Objectives

Amitav Ghosh is a diasporic writer and at the same time, his works fall into the broad category of the movement called Postcolonialism though he has never said or believed so. Postcolonialism concerns itself as a study of colonisation, decolonisation, and neo-colonisation focusing on anti-colonial struggles of Third world countries of Asia, Africa, Caribbean Islands, and South America, interrogating the cultural alienation created by the white Eurocentric men and by giving importance to the multiculturalism as a result of intersection two diverse culture by employing strategies of hybridity, liminality, rewriting history, reconstituting it and reclaiming the lost space which was once taken by colonisers. Postcolonialism focuses on cultural identity, race, nation, ethnicity, language and power struggle. The chosen texts fall under the category of decolonisation as this is an attempt from the side of the author to rewrite the history, to give voice to the silenced indentured labourers, soldiers who fought First Opium War and portrayed the lives who directly or indirectly got affected by that. But the questions arise while going through all these. Why did they fight? For whom did they fight? What did they get in return?

My objectives are-

1. To explore the Indenture system, the *girmitya*'s journey in Amitav Ghosh' *Ibis Trilogy*.
2. To determine how far opium and pre-First opium war impacted the Indian merchant diaspora, soldiers and also acted as a catalyst for some in choosing

indentureship in the context of chosen novels.

3. To find out how far Amitav Ghosh is successful in showing an almost deleted part of History by Eurocentric minds.

4. To explore how Amitav Ghosh brought the diasporic identity issues and how far he is successful in showing the struggle and negotiation a diaspora faces and then searches and succeeds in reaching one in-between identity.

These are the reasons that I have chosen these texts. Amitav Ghosh has shown the journey of the indentured labourers from the different class of the society, their socio-economic state and how they got together from different parts of India. Being heterogeneous, diverse, and plural how they made the journey together facing problems together and more important how they managed to continue with their sense of self, negotiated with the new environment and built their new identities.

Ghosh has also shown how 'opium' which has connected the three novels was a forced cultivation in colonised India and how peasants' lost cultivation and failed economy made them chose to cross the black waters. How Parsis used opium as the main commodity of Indo-Chinese trade and their struggle in British monopoly also is vividly presented. History does talk about the first opium war. But that is contaminated by the colonisers. It does not talk about the Indian lives who fought there, the lives who without even connected directly were worst affected and the mental state of the lives who are left with the harsh, shocking memories of war. War is there, but not the aftermath in Indian lives which is beautifully portrayed in Ghosh. One important part of history is never told and as a diasporic writer claiming to gain back the tale which is our own is the very ethical duty of him as a writer, a diasporic writer. From the palimpsest of history, Ghosh has taken out the scrapped traces of Indian lives and brought to the broad daylight brilliantly.

Whatever the situation is, Ghosh's characters achieve their unique identity. Even the female characters are successful in achieving a strong identity. How small their numbers are, they always rise crossing the border of patriarchy. Society wants to domesticise them, but they domesticize the very border of social ideology by undermining its border and showing an uprise, voicing their opinions, from veil-clad women to personalities who decide and speak for themselves. We can see *Neel's* wife in taking the charge of family even in the absence of husband; *Deeti* in controlling other women on the ship and even leading a mass having her shrine being the spiritual guru; *Paulette* in being successful in her search and motto of being a botanist and in *Mata Taramony* who could influence in being a guru. His characters start as individuals being silenced by social class, caste hierarchy, patriarchy, colonialism and reach in managing the situation in negotiating and expressing themselves and retaining their identities.

Methodology

My research will move further with the broader framework of the qualitative approach. The first step will be gathering the data and my data is my analysis of the content/texts I have. Literature tells indirectly. It is polyphonic as well. It has many voices, many tales to be told, many locks to be opened, many voices to be heard and interpreted. What I understood can be questioned or contradicted since it is completely individualistic. It does not have universal appeal and it is one of the limitations of the qualitative approach that it does not have statistics to rest upon. But at the same time, it is not completely aimless or wayward. Rather it is supported by critical theories and studies already made in the area it falls under. Research is an ongoing process. It does not end. What I interpreted or found can be interrogated or can open many other questions to be explored. This is also a positive point or advantage of qualitative research that its content analysis criteria being subjective open new avenues for further queries, hence, further research.

As a part of the qualitative method, I will first focus on ‘content analysis’ which has a major role and which will further lead me achieving my objectives. After making my objectives clear, content analysis will enable me find where in the texts, author has employed the devices related to the objectives and by interpreting the content I will be able to infer meaning which is subjective and will go on to prove with the help of secondary materials like theoretical arguments made on the field of diaspora, literature and will also read, analyse the critique on Amitav Ghosh and on the chosen texts. Content analysis forms the base of qualitative research as we already have the material to analyse and since it is literature, it needs to study, interpret, infer, and connect with the theory so that the inferred meaning will go parallel with the argument made or the objectives to achieve.

As the first step, I have read all the three books and analysed every chapter, summarised and critically analysed i.e. given my own opinion about the themes employed by the author. To support that I have read secondary texts. My exploration of the texts is the main key to my research. My subjective arguments, my analysis, my interpretation is the base on which the whole objectives will rest on. While analysing I tried to understand the points made and themes put forward by the author first keeping him away from the text, and then adding his intentions to strengthen my viewpoints. By keeping the author away, I mean, separating the text from the author or the socio-cultural or any background information and reading and re-reading to understand the words on the page properly. Then by including the author means how author’s own experience like being the diaspora himself how his experience helped him feel the anguish of a diaspora and he came up with novels and the dominant themes he generally deals with to understand the texts better which can be called deep analysing. This gathering of textual information helped me to arrange the data, go smoothly with the research procedure, and systematise the whole procedure to support my arguments. In short, I would like to say that content analysis and gathering as much information as possible is the first

step of exploration and helps to proceed with qualitative research.

Chapterisation

The dissertation is divided into five parts.

- The Chapter one starts with an Introduction to Diaspora, the selected author, and texts and research questions.
- Chapter two will discuss 'Indenture'-both theoretically and in the context of the novel how Amitav Ghosh has shown the trade and the plight of migrants through his life-like characters.
- Chapter three will focus on 'Opium trade' before the first Opium War and how opium is one of the major themes that the novels have built and how opium at the same time has successfully joined the novels together to make a trilogy.
- Chapter four will talk about the emergence of diaspora broadly focussing on language, food and how the diaspora negotiates and forms a new identity which happens to be called diasporic identity in the context of novels.
- The Chapter five is the Conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

Indentured Labourer: History and *Ibis Trilogy*- A Parallel Analysis

This chapter will focus on indentured labourers in general, exploring the background as in which situation people decided to leave the land, caste, and society. At the same time, it will draw a connection between the history and the novels that focus on the indentured from particular places i.e. from “northern Bihar” (*Sea of Poppies* 3) and Kolkata. This chapter will also show the talent of Amitav Ghosh in representing the situation that forced his characters to go as indentured labourers, also who were sent after being convicts or punished for small crimes. How the treatment the characters received in the ship made them develop the ultimate ‘jahajibhai’ bond undermining the hierarchy of class and caste will also come to light in this chapter with reference to the novels. While presenting the representation of Amitav Ghosh, the chapter will move parallel with the evidence from other research on those particular instances to prove that the novels are not completely fictional. Rather a fictional account of a great portion of history, the indentured. In an interview, Amitav Ghosh speaks about why he writes novels,

“[H]istory and anthropology cannot give you the emotion, it cannot give you the affect, it cannot give you what individual characters feel as they experience history. So this is why I write novels, because I think novels can synthesize geology, history, personal relationships, emotion, everything” (qtd. in. Arora 2012:40).

Creation of diaspora is a remarkable and interesting phenomenon as it has created the mosaic of overseas communities and many contemporary concepts like

‘global village’ are born. But the transnational identity is a fluid one which is one of the problematic issues that has made the intelligentsia turn its gaze towards diaspora, identity, and issues related to them. Historically, the Diaspora can be said of two types: old and new depending on their passage, time period of migration and focusing on their wish to migrate. Since their story is different, so also their transformation as new identities. Generally, the old diaspora is the indentured people who went to different countries to work in the plantation as bonded labourers. The ‘Bonded labourers’ in this context means are people who agreed to work for an employer for a specific number of years taking a specific amount for their work. As Usha Mahajani puts it,

“A new slavery of grossly ill-paid labour, called indenture (an agreement binding a person to serve an employer for a specific period), operated only slightly differently and with a new breed of victims, began to emerge in overseas colonies” (1977:263).

Indenture trade started in 1834 by the colonial power to meet the labour shortage caused by the abolition of slavery in the British Empire which opened paths for Indians to go overseas, as Brij Lal and others observed,

“‘INDIANS ARE UBIQUITOUS’, wrote the Calcutta newspaper The Statesman claimed in August 1980. There were then only five countries where Indians had ‘not yet chosen to stay’. These were Mauritania, North Korea, Romania, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde Islands” (Lal, Reeves, and Rai 2007:10).

When Indians started going out, that was rather a forced one and they formed a small group which was considered minor so far as race or ethnicity is considered. History is the witness that the actions and reactions of subordinate social groups rarely see the light. The indentured labourers as minority groups also received no better treatment than slaves. Sometimes their voices couldn’t reach the medium and sometimes if reached is suppressed and only certain lines were allowed to come to the daylight. Sometimes they lost their way by the hands of colonial hegemony, interpreters, and never were free from European biases

because always there were the colonisers who stood in between them and the help they could have received. No doubt, their voices reached others, but it took long. In 1920, the indenture was stopped.

“Charles Freer Andrews, who saw indenture as a system no less merciless, savage and humiliating for the labourers than slavery”. (Rai and Pinkney 2012:68)

Decontamination of documents related to people from socially lower¹ section is a myth. Naturally, the migrants' experience also faced the same especially during colonial phase as the first generation of Indian diaspora is an involuntary one. The indentured migration can be compared to Jewish experience which serves as a prototype with reference to being the victim or confronting a traumatic experience. Though the indentured labourers did not flee, their shifting was never voluntary. Oppressed by colonial tyranny and dominated by social class and caste hierarchy, they had to leave. From every aspect, they were the victims of colonial and social oppression and they had to go through the traumatic experience of leaving the land and crossing the sea.

...Jews, these peoples conceived their scattering as arising from a cataclysmic event that had traumatised the group as a whole, thereby creating the central historical experience of victimhood at the hands of a cruel oppressor...dispersal following a traumatic event in the homeland...However, when we talk about a trauma afflicting a group collectively, it is perhaps possible to isolate a class of events characterised by their brutality, scale and intensity so as unambiguously to compel emigration or flight.(Cohen 2008:1-2)

With running away or thrown away experience comes trauma - of losing the land and own people and of being transferred to an alien land. The loss and the alienation accompany them and social research calls it the cultural baggage. Their voices never reached as most of the time it was either oral or letters. They wrote to encourage their people to go for migration or to ward off their loneliness in the alien land and those letters never saw the publication and hard to obtain.

In contrast to ancient emigration, modern emigration from India was wholly a British creation. It began

in 1834 when slavery was abolished in the British Empire. Labour was needed to work on the sugar plantations in the various British colonies. Without dependable supplies of labour, survival of plantations would have been extremely difficult. (P.Jain 1989:155)

Talking about the harshness or inhuman treatment, Amitav Ghosh has shown us how the captain speaking in a disgusting way towards the indentured labourers on the ship *Ibis* and let us imagine the treatment they received,

“‘Damned coolies’, muttered the Captain, through a mouthful of lamb. ‘Bloody Doomsday couldn’t put a stop to their caterwauling’” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:255).

Indian emigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which is identified with indentured labour was actually a replacement of slavery began as a rescue package for sugar plantations and mines in far-flung colonies. Mauritius was decided to be the hub of this scheme with the abundance of Indian workers, overwhelmingly male, were sent in ships with high mortality rate.

“A boat will take them to Patna and then to Calcutta, said the guard. And from there they’ll go to a place called Mareech...an island in the sea”. (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:48)

If we look at the history of the indenture, then 19th-century indentured migration was a disputable subject, a ‘coolie trade’ what humanitarians see as a new means of slavery. The ‘coolie trade’ was a free alternative to slavery and its adoption was an immediate solution to economic crises found because of the abolition of slavery. Hugh Tinker (1974) following Lord John Russell, “colonial secretary” (Usha Mahajani 263) named his (Russell’s) fear as ‘new system of slavery’. It was a problematic and an uneasy term since the labourers were not voluntary immigrants in the ordinary sense of the term nor were slaves. It was more of an ambivalent term - a term which cannot be strictly bound by the limit of a definition. It is also an emotional story, a painful saga of many.

“...after the collapse of slavery, the new milch cow was indentured labour. The switch in the form of labour also involved a switch in the sourcing of the labour supply, from Africa to Asia.” (Cohen 2008:64)

As Prakash Jain shows,

EMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF INDIANS ABROAD

Table 1: Estimated Total Migration to and from India: 1834-1937 (000's)

Year	Emigrants	Returned Migrants	Net*
1834-35	62	52	50
1836-40	188	142	46
1841-45	240	167	72
1846-50	247	189	58
1851-55	357	249	108
1856-60	618	431	187
1861-65	793	594	199
1866-70	976	778	197
1871-75	1,235	958	277
1876-80	1,505	1,233	272
1881-85	1,545	1,208	337
1886-90	1,461	1,204	256
1891-95	2,326	1,536	790
1896-1900	1,962	1,268	694
1901-05	1,428	957	471
1906-10	1,864	1,482	382
1911-15	2,483	1,868	615
1916-20	2,087	1,867	220
1921-25	2,762	2,216	547
1926-30	3,298	2,857	441
1931-35	1,940	2,093	-162
1936-37	815	755	59
Total	30,191	23,941	6,250

* Net migration refers to net emigration. The figures do not always correspond to the exact difference between the first two columns because of rounding... (1989:157).

Diaspora in terms of time is divided into old and new. The old diaspora as it is put by Sahoo and Kadekar,

“The old Indian diaspora includes those who emigrated during the colonial period to the British, French, Dutch and Portuguese colonies as slaves, convicts, contract labourers under the indentured system, Kangani system, and free or passage emigrants as traders, clerks, bureaucrats and professionals” (“Introduction” 2012:2).

Same is put in different words which make us think how far indentured labour was synonymous with slavery; we can refer to Prakash Jain's words in the chapter "Emigration and formation of overseas Indian community",

The chief feature of the indenture system were five years of stereotyped state regulated labour, denial of the right to change the employer or employment, recruitment of labour units and not families, gross disproportions of men to women, charges for recruitment by the employer and the denial of increased wages in spite of increased prices and profits. The employer was under a legal obligation to provide fixed wages, free housing, medical attendance and other amenities (qtd. in Jain 1990:14).

The bonded labour system though looked simply like a money-earning job to the naked eye, a microscopic glance would say that it is more or less same to slavery only. Though before indentured labour, people crossed the boundary for pilgrimage, this experience was unique and painful. There is peace, happiness involved in pilgrimage not in the shifting because of a situation, a need which got created by the British to satisfy their need for labour. It was a kind of exile, banishment though it does not look like that clearly. But the underline motif was to throw people who were "resistant to migration" (Rai and Pinkney 66) to work in plantations. Migration as the indentured labourers is different since people from different places went to different plantations. So the socio-economic background of people went as labourers, the reason behind their migration and the treatment they received in the plantation colonies vary. Amitav Ghosh has talked about *girmitiyas* in *Ibis Trilogy* who went to Mauritius on a ship called *Ibis* which was previously a slave-carrying ship. Generally, *girmitiyas* from North India were sent to Mauritius and Fiji and are "understudied segment of the early Indian diaspora" (Rai and Pinkney 67). The *girmitiya* means,

"Agreement"—vernacularized in North Indian languages as *gimit*—and were thereafter known as "girmitiyas" (Mishra 122). The *girmitiyas* were transported to British colonies as far-flung as Mauritius and Fiji to East Africa and the Caribbean (e.g., Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica)" (Rai and Pinkney 66).

By mentioning the slave carrying ship, Amitav Ghosh has tried to draw a

link between the indentured labourers and slaves. How the journey, the treatment, the pain both physical and emotional are more or less same. Less in the sense, the indentured labourers went for a time period and received a small amount of salary.

“Mr Burnham winced. ‘Why no, Reid, Not slaves-coolies. Have you not heard it said that when God closes one door he open another?’ (*Sea of Poppies* 2008: 54)

Novels under discussion show the indenture system during the onset of First Opium War which happened between Britishers and Chinese from 1839-42. Amitav Ghosh has weaved a trilogy around First Opium War, the indenture system and made opium connect these two big events of History and shown how Indians got affected due to war and forced cultivation of opium and opium monopoly of Britishers. Though the story from the first novel to the third novel start from the poppy cultivation, it slowly progresses towards financial weakness, decision of people in going as bonded labourers, Parsi communities as traders of opium; British monopoly in controlling the business and also Chinese ports; Indians, colonised being ready as soldiers to fight against the Chinese; the war situation and at last, how characters again get connected and make a circle. Supporting the time period R.K.Jain says,

“Indenture started in 1834 and was discontinued in 1917 when the Government of India plaud an embargo on indentured emigration” (1993:6).

So far as the recruitment is concerned, there were maistries (middlemen) who worked between the colonisers and the labourers in arranging and bringing them to the port.

“There was a maistry inside, directing operations, and he pointed Munia and Paulette towards the newly made partition.” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:247)

Indenture was nothing but a bonded labour for five years for a fixed work and fixed salary. If we evaluate it on the basis of push/pull factor, then abolition of

slavery and the huge population of colonised India was a better option to cater to the need can be said as a pull factor. The lure of money at the time of crises is the push factor which forced many peasants to go on indenture having no other option. It can be noticed in the context of novels. Even they did not know what the future holds; they started for an unknown land leaving behind everything.

“...To know that you would never again enter your father’s house; that you would never throw your arms around your mother...” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008: 49)

'Caste' is a great evil of Indian society even today it is there. One can imagine what serious effect it would have had centuries ago. During the time of indentured labourers leaving the country and crossing the black waters was a thing which would give shudder even to the strongest. Keeping the taboos outside also, the long sea journey increased death rates. Food and water were main culprits of 'diarrhoea' and 'pox' which led to death. Even movement in tides resulted in a nauseatic condition in many. Who survived became prey to the back-breaking world of labour and helplessness. We can see that the novel *Sea of Poppies* focuses on the socio-economic condition of people who went as *girmityas*, the convicts, people who received punishment and the sea journey in three sections of land, river, and sea. The three sections have symbolically presented the lives of people on 'land', how they were taken in the 'river' to sail as the indentured labourers in the 'sea'. We can also witness how their lives move from fixity to flux and how they move from a national identity to attain a multicultural new identity holding both the parts of life. We can see in the light of this novel, two characters before going as the indentured labourers are talking and thinking before deciding because once crossed the sea means coming back to the society will be restricted for them. Going forever without a chance of coming back is a grave decision for anyone. But when that decision is forceful, there lies the pain, an unbearable pain. Both *Deeti* and *Kalua* knew that they can't come back. But to save their lives from the anger of society

since *Kalua* is a lower caste and married an upper caste widow *Deeti* which is seen as a serious crime so far as social hierarchy is concerned, they had to leave. They had to decide.

“...Kalua said to Deeti: There's no turning back after this. Are you sure about going on?” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:151)

Britishers not only were in need of cheap labour but also men who will take care of administration and police and military in a lower level of management. So they hired middle-men. Marina Carter says,

Thus in 1836, we find Mauritius-based English firm of Blythe & Sons writing to Messrs Bettington & Co. of Sydney, Australia, in the following terms:

“The planters having introduced free Indians, apprenticed generally for five years...The total cost, including passage here and back..., together with food, clothing, etc is no more than 5 shillings per week (1996:21).

Long voyages, fear of unknown, anxiety, the pain of leaving the land where they can't return to are also responsible that labourers could not fight the long voyages. Before reaching the destination place, they breathed their last. No support from anywhere made them weak from inside. The repentance of leaving caste, community, and the society they were once a part of also left a deep scar. Caste is so deeply rooted in Indian society till date, it is easily imaginable the situation during colonialism and the pain and loss people went through who had to leave it. It is like leaving the very identity. How life becomes when someone is in dilemma and when there is a pain in both sides? At that time to save this life is the only thing based on which people decide.

To the native of India, it meant even a severer punishment than to the European, for to be sent to the “kalapani”, or “black water,” in a convict ship or “jetajunaza”, or “living tomb” as they called it, meant especially to a man of high caste...the total loss to him of all that was worth living for... He could never be received in intercourse again with his own people, and so strong are the caste ideas of ceremonial uncleanness that it would be defilement to his friends and relations even to offer him sustenance of any kind, and he was in point of fact excommunicated and avoided. (qtd. in Rai and Pinkney 2012:69)

And since the land is unknown and people who are already tensed of the thought of losing caste, society and there is no hope of being accepted if they come back, stories related to the plantations began to flourish which made them more nervous. Stories of being lost in jungles of the plantations where there are ferocious animals, cannibals where oil is produced from human flesh etc which were only aggravated their fear, tension, and anxiety making them weaker emotionally. Tensed minds always respond to the all stories related to tension. Amitav Ghosh has shown in *Sea of Poppies* that though *Paulette* tries her best to educate the lascars, but since she was under disguise and a woman indentured labourer, none was ready to believe that the lady knows English and educated enough to disbelieve any rumour related to the area of plantation. But like the novels, when indentured labourers left the land they did not have any *Paulette* to give them moral support they may believe or may not. They had to manage their fear. How would the mental state have been when there was no chance to return to family or society and where the new place seemed a land of terror? How would they have managed to deal with this stage and even sailed? Even the sea voyage was not an easy or quick one. I think, their mental depression was also one of the reasons for mortality. The brain has links with our health. We get courage, confidence, and energy from within only. What if it does not work, none is there to share the fear, around are people with the same fear, unknown land with untrustworthy whites on the ship,

“...Story about the jungles of Mareech and how the younger and weaker migrants were destined to be used as bait for the wild animals that lived in those forests” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:266).

The trilogy starts with *Deeti*'s vision of a ship and questions herself about the materialisation of being on a ship when she is in Bihar. Her vision and doubt have nothing unusual because it was quite unbelievable for an ordinary peasant to go on a ship being the bonded labor for years during the time when going in the sea was considered as a taboo and who would leave the place, home, family,

society and go for an unknown and for what? It was like a passing dream only. But the British did everything to make this worst nightmare come real to continue with their imperialism and oppression. They forced the cultivation of opium which they knew will never be sufficient to fill the million Indian stomachs and then came up with the solution of cheap labour system.

The vision of a tall-masted ship, at sail on the ocean, came to Deeti on an otherwise ordinary day, but she knew instantly that the apparition was a sign of destiny, for she had never seen such a vessel before, not even in a dream: how could she have, living as she did in northern Bihar, four hundred miles from the coast? Her village was so far inland that the sea seemed as distant as the netherworld: it was the chasm of darkness where the holy Ganga disappeared into the Kala-Pani, 'the Black Water'. (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:2)

The forced poppy cultivation on the bank of Ganga made the people lose their lands and agriculture. To satisfy the whims of Britishers, people had to sacrifice their lands which further made them helpless and forced them to decide to cross the sea to get a living. Britishers were lured by the unlimited profit of opium trade even at the cost of lives in China. Farmers did not have any other option to choose, any other way out to solve the problem. When Britishers were gaining everything from the opium trade, here in India people were losing everything- land and crop and ready to “sweat themselves half to death for a few handfuls of rice”(*Sea of Poppies* 135) and went as *girmitiyas*.

...the Company's annual gains from opium are almost equal to the entire revenue of your own country, the United States? Do you imagine that British rule would be possible in this impoverished land if it were not for this source of wealth? And if we reflect on the benefits that British rule has conferred upon India, does it not follow that opium is this land's greatest blessing? (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:77)

Concepts like ‘depeasantization’ by forcing poppy as a crop of cultivation and setting up opium factories during colonisation is one of the causes of migration. Once migrated, the process just went on. It can be termed as “ecological imperialism” (Roy 14). British controlled the cultivation completely by forcing poppy as crop, by making opium factories and then sent peasants as

labourers. So to understand the migration of the indentured labourers, the study of efforts made by the British to control the economy should be analysed properly.

Marina Carter says,

“Chakravarty, for example, argues that the push factor in subsistence agriculture is found to be the main, explanatory factor behind labour migration” (“From Village To Depot” 1995:37).

Gangetic plains of Bihar and U.P. are major poppy cultivating regions. The novel talks about the Ghazipur opium factory. British monopoly of forced cultivation not only destroyed families, disturbed Chinese youth making them addicts, killed people for no cause, even resulted in war and constrained Indo-china relation forever. Britishers knew it properly that kicking the stomach is the only option to control the mass and that will force them to send them overseas. They planned; they did but made Indians believe that they are offering help, and they are giving employments which were sheer manipulation. Even they sent the convicts guilty of small crimes as the indentured labourers. As a result, they got easy labour, less payment, a power to control for continuous years – they invented a system of continuing the same slave- trade, human trade and a very shrewd, inhuman way to satisfy their (West, Eurocentric, Coloniser) needs.

She had no grain or fruit to spare, and as for money, there was not a dam's worth of cowrie-shells in the house... The hut's roof was urgently in need of repairs, but in this age of flowers, thatch was not easy to come by: in the old days, the fields would be heavy with wheat in the winter, and after the spring harvest, the straw would be used to repair the damage of the year before. But now, with the sahibs forcing everyone to grow poppy, no one had thatch to spare. (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:19)

East India Company was also sending convicts as labourers.

“...The British colony of Mauritius also hosted an Indian penal settlement between 1815 and 1853” (Lal, Reeves, and Rai 2007:44).

That is why in the novels under discussion, *Raja Neel Haldar* goes on *Ibis* along with the indentured labourers since he was found guilty of treachery. We can

see the emotional moment of looking at his palace while crossing it; his eyes were tear-filled. Some people, guilty of small offences were also declared as convicts to be sent as indentured labourers. Since they were convicts, for labour they were not paid. Sometimes in return of good conduct, a small amount as a perk was paid which can't be considered as salary. Lal, Reeves, and Rai observes,

“Transportation was therefore believed to be a worse punishment than death. At the same time, it conveniently emptied overcrowded main land prisons and supplied new EIC settlement with cheap, controllable and easily replaced labour” (2007:44).

At the same time, we can see abundant opium harvest made the Parsis go for the Indo-Chinese overseas trade. Though that was completely their decision and they were profited also, they faced a lot of difficulties. Britishers allowed them to do the trade because they did not have anything to lose. In fact, they gained. In the context of the novels, opium-carrying ships of *Bahram Modi* faced a storm first, and then *Modi* faced the wrath of both the Titans: Chinese authority and monopoly of British to sell his cargos. Leaving family back in India many Parsis stayed in China for the trade. It is a known fact that today's Bombay (Mumbai) is made of opium money. In *River of Smoke*, looking at children playing *Bahram Modi* is doubtful if the kids will one day get to know the struggle they are into or the pain they are going through because of the trade,

“Do you think they will remember what we went through? Will they remember that it was the money we made here, the lessons we learnt and the things we saw that made it all possible?” (*River of Smoke* 2011:938)

Indenture again made two characters go separate and choose different ways. We come across *Kesri Singh* in *Flood of Fire* who goes in search of his sister *Deeti* who is charged with the crime of being eloped with a lower caste and murder. *Deeti* is actually being saved by the lower caste *Kalua* from being burnt as 'sati' and went as an indentured labour. But her brother-in-law (*Chandan Singh*) who always has eyes on her and on the property of her husband tries to

defame her to grab the property. In *Flood of Fire*, the third novel, *Kesri Singh* gets this news while being in soldiers' camp but is unaware of the reality under the cover of lies. He goes to fight the war having the underlying motif of searching his sister (*Deeti*). He meets *Zachary* on *Hind* and *Zachary* tells him about *Bhyro Singh* story of *Ibis* that how *Kalua* again came to rescue *Deeti* when *Bhyro Singh* (uncle of *Deeti*'s husband) tried to rape her who even was the main culprit in *Deeti*'s rape on her marriage bed and *Zachary* again also gives him information about *Kalua* and *Deeti*. Here the novels get connected and formed a circle-a trilogy. Though the third novel does not exactly deal with the indenture, we find all the characters are related to the indentured labourers and their lives.

Deeti, the main character was married to an impotent, was raped on the marriage bed, tolerated harassments of her brother-in-law, was made to work in the fields to feed her opium addict husband, even was about to be burnt being *Sati* when *Kalua* (a lower caste cart driver) saves her and they became indentured labourers to save their lives and to earn livelihood. But once she left the place, her degraded brother-in-law who always made sexual advances towards her accuses her of committing murder, declared her even a woman of loose character. It shows the society of that time and how the patriarchal society viewed Indian women.

It appears havildar, that your sister had been having illicit relations with another man – a herdsman of low caste...Impossible! I know my sister – I know she would not do anything like that. Now Chandan Singh, who had been crouching tensely in a corner, lost control of himself and began to shout. If you knew that bitch, he screamed, and then you would know that she is a randi– a whore! And a murderer too. She poisoned my mother ... and my brother ...(Flood Of Fire 2015:103)

Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis Trilogy* is a trilogy of a voyage and novels of movements. Most of the time, as K.M.Chandar says,

“...the sea is a recurrent theme. In this sense, Ghosh is in the same tradition of Joseph Conrad, and more particularly, of Herman Melville...” (2010:181).

And there is the constant fluctuation of two things, “time and space” (Chandar 181). From the socio-economic background of the indentured labourers to the voyage to China, it keeps on shifting. The space of power hegemony, patriarchy, class hierarchy, overseas poppy business to China and above all, the pre-war and the aftermath – portrayed in three of these novels. The time shift is also an important factor. *Deeti* gets the vision of ship and one day goes there. She even makes the memory temple. Constant fluctuation of time in novels is another way of showing the movement of memories and the flashbacks in the minds of people away from home as the ‘indentured labourers’ with no chance of contacting the people back home or getting the news or sending the news. Amitav Ghosh has shown in *Sea Of Poppies* how rules in the land that was colonised, the clash of class, feminine domestication in the case of *Deeti* ; untouchability which was strictly in the blood of *Raja Neel* so also the pride of being a king, everything got vanished once they confronted a new situation. They come up with a new powerful identity. They may be convicts like *Neel* or 'coolies' like *Deeti* or the middle man *Nab Kissin*, they emerge as a force, being good human beings, thinking and speaking leaders. Change is the rule of life. Once crossing the previous comfortable status, they managed to build their new identity. It is clear that they were made crossing the water since it is believed to shake the purity of caste.

“In some reflexive part of his mind, Neel noted that the Serjeant had hit him with his left hand, and that had he been at home, he would have had to bathe and change. But that was in some other life...” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:198)

The shy girl *Paulette* who does not allow “cushy girls”(*Sea of Poppies* 186) who clean the white women in the bath tub to touch her even, crossed the boundary of home, country and in disguise became a sailor in *Ibis*. These are the people who fought for equality, justice and emerge as ship brothers on board. *Kalua* fought for others, *Neel* nourished the addict *Ah Fatt* and *Deeti* became the leader. It is the ill-treatment that they received allowed them to be united in spite

of their heterogeneity. Britishers' language towards the laborers like 'baboon' (*Sea of Poppies* 192), even they say Indian names as 'Bloody ooloo name' (*Sea of Poppies* 193) finding difficult to pronounce and their attitude towards the indentured labourers reflects how they treated Indians as savage devoid of right of wage, job-satisfaction, denial of raising voice of resistance which would be termed as slavery only if not strict sense of term. Even once the bond is signed, the labourers were started being treated as slaves which can be seen from the treatment towards inmates of the ship *Ibis* in the voice of the captain *Sea of Poppies*,

The greatest and most important difference between land and Sea is not visible to the eye... The difference is that the laws of the land have no hold on the water. At Sea there is another law, and you should know that on this vessel I am its sole maker. While you are on the *Ibis* and while she is at Sea, I am your fate, your providence, your lawgiver... But remember, always, there is no better keeper of the law than submission and obedience (*Sea of Poppies* 2008: 275-276).

The indentured labourers either left as an individual or in a group, did not show any interest in accepting the culture of the new place because they considered the shifting a forced one. Though they were sent in groups, mostly they were individuals as migrants. It is the pain of leaving which made them come close and develop the sibblingship. This hatred for British, love for the land and pain of leaving home forcefully created the "institution of jahaji or jahajibhai" (R.Jain 1993:11) which helped them to ward off the fear of unknown from their mind and to face the tomorrow bravely. When something is tried to be broken, it grows stronger. This is the case happened with ship-sibling sentiments. When the British tried to break the connection, the bond got stronger.

"We will all be ship-siblings – jaházbhais and jaházbahens – to each other. There'll be no differences between us. This answer was so daring, so ingenious, as fairly to rob the women of their breath ... from now on, there are no differences between us; we are jahaz-bhai and jahazbahen to each other; all of us children of the ship..." (*Sea Of Poppies* 2008:242)

The "traditional tie" (R.Jain 1993:11) whatever it may be, language, caste, place,

formed the basis of their bonding. On *Ibis* (the ship) once the women got to know their similar language, they started talking, singing, and even praying in the language.

“Májhadháraméhaiberamerá
Kripákaráásraihaitera
My raft's adrift in the current
Your mercy is my only refuge ...” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:255).

How meaningful the song is when the singer urges the Almighty to help him to cross the mid of the Sea of life when actually the labourers are in the sea. The literal meaning and the deep meaning are going hand in hand. Amitav Ghosh has portrayed the issues related to the indenture and shown how the indentured labourers tried their utmost to continue with their very self, essential self and how far they have succeeded.

“Lisa Lowe contends that out of the “global intimacies” of Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas, “emerged a modern racialized division of labour” (192). (qtd. in Arora 2012:31)

Quoting Lowe who further says about the indentured labourers, Anupama Arora says,

“Lowe suggests that the Asian indentured labourers “were used instrumentally in this political discourse as a collective figure, a fantasy of ‘free’ yet racialized and indentured labour, at a time when the possession of body, work, life, and death was foreclosed to the enslaved and the indentured alike”(qtd. in Arora 2012:31).

“... I’m drawn to marginal people in India, I’m drawn to marginal people around the world, I’m drawn to Burmese, Cambodians, to obscure figures, defeated figures and people who salvage some sort of life out of wreckage ... these characters appeal to me, they interest me. — Amitav Ghosh, “Diasporic Predicaments”.” (qtd. in Roy 2014:1)

It may be the subjectivity or a subaltern, Ghosh always takes his interest in that which is obvious from his above-mentioned words. He makes these concepts reign in his novels. Agency of marginal voices of society is his favourite area and he leaves no stone unturned in giving them voices. We can see in *Deeti*, in *Kalua*,

in every character in the novels in building their identity when social force or colonial force tries to silence them. Indian widows are best described as an example of socially oppressed category what Ghosh has portrayed in the character of *Deeti* who does not know what even 'marriage' is in the strict sense of the term and becomes a widow. Even decides to burn herself in being 'sati' than giving a nod to *Chandan Singh's* sexual favour. Ghosh gives this socially, domestically oppressed voice, a voice. She becomes the leading voice in the ship for being impartial, for loving and caring for everyone and having a strong husband. Even this concept of having 'strong husband' means having a bodyguard is also removed as story line moves forward to prove that whatever *Deeti* achieves is on the basis her own courage, leadership and being strong. She is seen in leading a mass as a spiritual guru in the alien island, being a mother of a kid and managing her life in absence of her husband. Even to preserve the memory connected to her husband, her ship-siblings, she carves figures in her memory temple. People leaving as labourers are like *Deeti*, socially weak, suppressed by patriarchy and colonialism. Like *Deeti*, they loved to preserve the memory connected to their heart. A memory which they thought that would always remain in memory only. Indenture can be viewed in this sense an opportunity to escape. But it was never proved as an 'escape'. Rather the treatment they received, workload they faced, and the poor living condition they were forced to be in in a minimal salary proves that they landed in a land in the hands of in humans worse than the treatment they received back in the country. They tried to voice, but it did not reach the right ears.

Forced poppy cultivation and economic marginalisation forced the peasants to leave the country even losing the caste for food. Guilt was already there for this step which proved suicidal for many on the sea-journey by taking their lives that leaving caste and community would how far be proved beneficial for them. At the same time fear of plantation with the stories revolved around that scared them and made them mentally, emotionally weak to the extent that some fell ill, some died

and some who remained and reached half-alive, faced difficult work. Indenture is an economically induced migration. *Deeti* and *Kalua*'s situation was also no better in the time of deep crisis when forced poppy has left the people having no food even. They tried to work as porters but the society that they have escaped from did not allow them to do that even. They had to leave. Same is the case with others. There are also some minor characters like *Munia*, *Heeru* who are punished for small offences or faced the situation that they had to come to the ship. *Heeru* "sustained herself by begging, washing clothes" (*Sea of Poppies* 163) for some time, but how long?

...people had been driven from their villages by the flood of flowers that had washed over the countryside: lands that had once provided sustenance were now swamped by the rising tide of poppies; food was so hard to come by that people were glad to lick the leaves in which offerings were made at temples or sip the starchy water from a pot in which rice had been boiled. (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:135)

It is felt like a mass conspiracy against Indians that they are thrown too far off lands to work. It seems as if British found a way to kill people if not in starvation. Indenture was the only option left for the peasants who did not have land or money or education. At the same time, poverty, prevalent social marginalisation of lower castes, double marginalisation of women, domestic violence as well as colonial exploitation are some reasons that people went as bonded labours. Amitav Ghosh here addressed the issues related to the indenture with particular reference to Indian culture, Indian heart. He has connected the indenture with slave trade- "between slavery and the girmitiyas' journey" (Rai and Pinkney 2012:70) by mentioning *Ibis* which was a slave-carrying ship. As Roy says,

"...Ghosh's narration is akin to what Patrick Colm Hogan has named—"particularist universalism" (xvii), which can be characterised as simultaneous universalism and cultural particularism" (Roy 2014:5).

Events of history have always been a favourite to Ghosh. Talking about the

passion for taking history as subject, Amitav Ghosh says,

...research, history _ these things can't carry a novel. What makes a novel powerful, what makes it strong, what wins readers for it in the end, is the same: story _ whether it is a historical novel or whether it is any other kind of novel, it is the characters, the emotions. But there is one thing I'll say. I think what is interesting about, say, history in terms of a novel is that history gives us particular predicaments which are unique predicaments, not repeatable in time and place... (Kumar 101)

For some others, the indenture was a punishment. Minor crimes, mistakes, and frauds were considered to be sent overseas for labour. In the light of present novels, we can understand it better. Since the universe reads what Eurocentric historiography has to say, Ghosh as a priest of the decolonising minds writes and gives voices to them whom whites find as 'others'. He "provincializes the Eurocentrism of History" (Roy 2014:5) and alters the binary of colonised other/coloniser self. He makes them visible what colonisers wanted to delete. The voices of indenture were unheard by them. They even termed Indian people as savage, needs no mention. But Ghosh' choice of the indenture and the opium war as narratives and joining history's two big events with the chord of opium can be viewed as anti-colonial movements in itself.

Mauritius was first of the plantation colonies to receive labourers from India. Indenture is the pioneer of a transnational migration. Indenture made the implied recruiters believe that the migrant individuals have already left 'home' due to some reasons before leaving for overseas. Hence, they are mentally prepared for the journey and it is a voluntary choice. That is what they created depots to receive the migrants to make them realise that they have already left home. Whatever be the reason to leave the place someone thinks that he belongs to is painful. It also gives a picture of the push-pull factor of migration. Britishers felt that the abundance of the population of India needs to be scattered to be controlled and at the same time they will get cheap labour. Though the setting up and maintenance of labour migration required the capital resource, Britishers invested finance in that as it was cheap and the outcome was great. Hence, it can

be said that Britishers at one go created demand for being an indentured labour as well as economic condition in India to push people to leave. Though colonisation ended, its aftermath and the effect of neo-colonisation pushes Indians to migrate (whatever reason they may have and whichever place they may go). The contemporary crafts of transnational migration and fluid identity as its outcome can be better understood if the history behind it can be traced, analysed critically and realise the theory that lies at the bottom of this movement. At the same time how indentured labourers negotiated with the loss of caste and society is also equally important. Preserving the Indian-ness was their only way out. They created some look alike of situations like *Deeti* arranged fire for the ship wedding of *Heeru*. This perseverance of “cultural past” (Rai and Pinkney 73) helped them in negotiation. Women’ talk was also focusing on “the little things they would never see, nor hear, nor smell again” (*Sea of Poppies* 271) and carrying poppy seeds, turmeric with them is like carrying a part of the land as memory and discussing, remembering, missing, being happy thinking are the things where a migrant attains his/her diasporic identity- missing the lost place and thinking that place was the best.

“The wedding being a special occasion, the migrants had pooled their resources and gathered a few lamps and candles to light the dabusa for the last part of the nuptials.”(*Sea of Poppies* 2008:322)

Studies on the indentured migration show migrants as either victims of exploitation, confinement and forced migration, or sometimes as the opportunists and escapists. The documents relied on the reports provided by officials or travellers about the migrants, which is why never free from contamination. Few historians look beyond these documents and the ‘assumptions’ are questioned. Like the concept of being ‘kidnapped’, rumours by previous migrants, recruiters and sometimes by the delay of return could generate myths. However, popular misunderstanding against emigration existed. But rumours and authenticity are two poles apart. In the beginning, the recruits were generally kept at the homes of 'duffadars'. Later depots were created and Calcutta was first to open a depot.

Prior to 1837, to stamp on the willingness of the labourers, they were brought to the magistrates. After some time, formal procedures started. Women who migrated under indentured were not formally registered. They were actually allowed to migrate keeping the reproduction and stabilisation of the plantation colonies in mind. In *Sea of Poppies*, it is seen characters signing the documents where *Deeti* becomes *Aditi* and gets identification of *Kalua's* wife and *Kalua* gets his new name,

“Her name is Aditi, malik; she is my wife...His name was Kalua, malik. This satisfied the gomusta, but not the pilot. 'But how on earth am I to spell it? ...' that's how I'll put him down then – as Maddow Colver” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:193).

One report concluded that death on board was most of the cases are mental pain, depression, unfamiliar surroundings and fear and repentance of crossing the social and cultural boundary in a period when crossing the black waters was similar to losing caste, losing chastity. On sea journey, diet, water, the movement of the ship were the reasons when migrants fall prey to mostly smallpox and cholera. Before reaching the place, death relieves all their pain. As if nature felt for them. During the journey, the disease of casteism also created a problem for the migrants. As economic and social marginalisation compelled them for an alien and painful sea journey, many immigrants were lower castes. They cared a little for any rituals by the higher castes. Though there were differences, the pain, the memory made them one- jahajibhai (ship siblings). Communal feelings did arise; that also got reduced with time.

The cultural ties with India were always enforced by the continuation of cultural practices-food, language, and memory. Though the regular family and social life were disrupted, they consoled themselves by continuing with what they carried with them- the baggage of memory. But research has also shown that return for some indentured labourers, was proved banal. They could not accept or re-integrate with their native place and ended up migrating again. Some are changed

so drastically, in the context of the novel, the leading lady *Deeti* who made her temporary migration her permanent one and made a shrine. But in that shrine, there was the carving of all the characters once sailed on the ship and used to be the most beautiful part of the journey to her shrine when she described the story attached to the figures. She did not want to forget the experiences she had. She wanted to keep those as beautiful memories.

“...the painted walls of the cavern that was known as Deetiji’s ‘Memory-Temple’ – Deetiji-ka-smriti-mandir. Every child in the Fami knew the story of how Deeti had learnt to paint... the gaon where she was born. The village was called Nayanpur and it was in northern Bihar, overlooking the confluence of two great rivers...” (*River of Smoke* 2011:21)

As an indentured labourer after her term, *Deeti* becomes a spiritual mother to a mass. Even her memory temple becomes a place of pilgrimage not only for the people of the island but also for her ship-siblings. She stayed on the island to tell the stories connected to Bihar, her village and every other detail that is close to her heart. Here lays the diasporic sentiment - getting everything but missing very ordinary things once connected to the root and moving forward but looking back. This looking back makes the diaspora. Ghosh has given a clear character sketch of an old diaspora who is “little represented, poorly understood yet vitally important participants” (Rai and Pinkney 2012:65). Her paintings, stories, and the temple actually can be looked as a counter-narrative of the colonisers. It can be seen as an act of resistance, undermining the authorial narration of the culture of East. The temple in an alien island also can be a protest while making herself visible and making others notice that she has come or 'they' have come if diaspora is taken as a group. “Memory is that medium in which utopia can either dissolve into nostalgia or become the mode of transformation” (qtd. in Roy 2014:9). *Deeti*’s temple in the island made itself clear that it crossed the boundary of nation and the “culture becomes transnational” (Roy 2014:9). Roy puts this act of preserving memories,

This Temple becomes a cultural strategy of identity formation. Robbed of a past, a history, a culture,

the descendants of Deeti's clan have developed a culture that draws its energy from displacement, heterogeneity, syncretistic. The saga of the patriarch Kalua's deliverance from the Ibis, given a mythical dimension by Deeti's paintings, is an event oft-recounted by the Colver clan (2014:8).

Marina Carter argues,

"For the ordinary indentured labourers, the reconstructing of a religious and cultural life on and off the plantations was a means of mitigating the trauma of the indenture experience" ("Family, Culture and Religion in the Plantation Context" 1995:265).

But before reaching there and attaining the new identity, it is the journey, the process, the ship which helped the migrants in negotiating. "Historians have long acknowledged the crucial impact of the ship journey on identity formation" (Rai and Pinkney 2012:74) and things happened to them or around them affected them deeply. *Neel* used to believe in untouchability and even in his life obeyed that. But on the ship, he was a changed version. Amidst all the tensions, there flourished on the ship one community, the ship-sibling which later grew to become Indian community and what later emerged as the Indian diaspora that shares the diasporic sentiment. Despite the negative feedbacks, it is also noticed that migrants were benefited from their indenture experience- financially, experience wise and learning another culture. But the question is to what extent.

It is believed that to know someone, we need to know his background. Then only the study becomes clear. To understand the Indian diaspora, we need to look back and see where from it started, how it started and why it is started. We should know its root and that root is the indentured people. Their hope, their anxiety, their darkest fears, their small happiness, their dreams, their loss, their gain- every single detail makes us understand them more and in a way understand us better by getting the understanding clear about the society how it evolved to the present state. Ghosh's dealing with the theme of indenture with a fictional account of picturing some characters and focusing on *girmitiyas*, life and people connected to them is a way of focusing on the trade, its issues, old diaspora who are

understudied and unattained.

“Ghosh’s foregrounding of subaltern participants within the Indian diaspora, whose voices are so richly represented in his historical fiction, valuably supplements historical and scholarly accounts of North India indenture.” (Rai and Pinkney 2012:77)

The next chapter (Chapter-3) is going to discuss the ‘opium’ to show how opium is one of the reasons that Indians went as indentured labour; traded opium and again they fought the opium war and died. Whoever came back from the war had scars for the lifetime. Colonisation, in particular, was the reason behind all these three things. Britishers not only sent Indians as bonded labourers, rather did everything to force them from every possible way to choose the alien land. What looked like a voluntary thing was actually a forced one. The emotional overflow while leaving with all uncertainties of coming back, the voyage, the negotiation to cope with the loss created a chapter of history, the diaspora.

CHAPTER 3

Opium Trade and Parsis as Trade Diaspora

This chapter deals with the Sino-Indian opium trade, first opium war and the lives affected by it. In the light of the novels under discussion, opium will be discussed as the linking cord between various incidents and people. Forced opium cultivation that led the farmer to lose their land and wealth, Parsis trading opium under strict Chinese restrictions faced a lot of difficulties and the people who fought as soldiers during the war will be discussed in this chapter where textual references will move with extracts from researched papers and books.

Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs?
Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,
in that grey vault. The sea. The sea
has locked them up. The sea is History. (Walcott.Sea Is History.1930)

Contemporary research is trying to shed light on aspects of Sino-Indian relationships and tracing the history related to that. Colonialism affected the relation between India and China. A focus on this study will throw light on the tensed cord between the two nations. So far as indenture is concerned, it also does not have any link with China. Indians did not go as the indentured labourer to China, rather early travellers were religious *gurus* (teachers/preachers) and in later periods, traders, especially Parsi opium traders and the pre-opium war migrants like soldiers, troop men went there before the First Opium War. Parsi merchants have played an important role in shaping the present China. Restoring the agency of those Indians and the situation in which they were instrumentalised is something which needs a thorough inspection because again that links India with British on one hand, with China on the other. The trade relations and trade

diaspora, the cross-cultural relationships are the major key areas that it is focusing on. Madhavi Thampi quotes a Chinese scholar (Guo Deyan's unpublished PhD thesis on The Parsee Merchants in Canton during Qing Period, Zhongshan University, Guangzhou, China 2001:6),

“‘Parsi’ is a name that has long been neglected, but Parsi merchants have played an important role in many developments in China’s modern history” (qtd. in Thampi 2005:14).

Early travellers to China were individuals with spiritual goals. As Rabindranath Tagore puts it in his inaugural address on the opening of Cheena Bhavan at Shantiniketan,

“I thought of that great pilgrimage, of those noble heroes, who, for the sake of their faith, their idea of the liberation of self that leads to the perfect love which unites all beings, risked life and accepted banishment from home...Many perished... A few were spared to tell their story..., a story indelibly recorded the cultural memory of their hosts” (Inaugural address 1937).

Trade

Although there were many other facets of Indo-Chinese connection, early Buddhism transmission from both the sides wrote one of the remarkable chapters of history. Indian monks were motivated in spite of hardships during the journey and less chance of coming back. Though both of the nations shared an anti-colonialist mindset, Indians as soldiers in the Opium War stressed the tie between them. The trade and the trade diaspora play important role in tracing the pre-war history. Apart from spiritual connections, India and China had political ties such as historian *Ban Gu* records the arrival of Indian embassies to China and Gupta kings are reported to establish political ties. The best known of this relationship is that between kings of Kanauj, Harsha with Emperor Taizong. Extension of trade relation was started along with that to strengthen the bond. Madhavi Thampi says,

“The Histories of both the former Han and later Han Dynasties enumerates a number of products from different parts of India, including precious stones, pearls, perfumes, spices, fine linen, copper, tin, and exotic animals such as the rhinoceros and peacock” (2005:40).



Fig.1 “The Opium Trade in China, 1833–1839”

Source: https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/opium_wars_01/owl_essay02.htm

But the trade was always impacted by the fluctuating political relations between two countries with the rise and fall of empires. Madhavi Thampi argues,

“Once the sea route was opened up, trade tended to swing between the land and the sea routes, depending on relative security...A study by Liu Xinru highlights the role of religion...in sustaining the demand for certain types of commodities in the Sino-Indian trade during the time of political instability...” (2005:40).

During Song Dynasty, as sea routes were opened up, the trade grew and the

major port of trade was Canton where situated the headquarters of superintendent of maritime trade. Indian traders used to go, stay and after a period of time come back. The presence of Indian traders in Chinese coasts, as Madhavi Thampi says, “dates back to fifth century” (2005:41). Evidence of Hinduism like Hindu temples, Hindu crafts in China has been found in and around Quanzhou in Fujian province and other places along the south China coast, suggesting a Hindu community and particularly Tamil Hindu traders in medieval China. Gradually Persian and Arab traders also started coming in for trade in the Indian Ocean. Then centuries after the ongoing trade in the Indian Ocean, both Indians and Chinese were active. And by that time the Gujaratis started being active and Cambay became the major port of supply from India. Later 18th century shows the growth of British-sponsored and Bombay-based Chinese trade. Indian traders went to China for trade may be for two reasons. One is for better opportunities and the other is as an impact of colonial expansion, the trade network got extended. From their back and forth movement, they moved to trade settlements. Indian Ocean became major ground for the trade, the cross-cultural connection, economic flow which in the later years termed as globalisation that Appadurai says, “...five dimensions of global cultural flows that can be termed (a) ethnoscapas, (b) mediascapas, (c) technoscapas, (d) financescapas, and (e) ideoscapas” (1996: 33). Madhavi Thampi argues that “Indian merchants went far and wide, disapproving notions that religious considerations prevented them from doing so” (2005:48).

Indian trade Diaspora

Better options always attract to go from one place to another. So also did trade opportunities to Indian traders to go overseas and stay there and return home with a good lump sum of money. The economy was the major reason behind the trade diaspora to China in search of trade and arranging a better livelihood for the family back in India. Nevertheless, they were bound by the monopoly of East India Company than sheer expanding their trade. By the term ‘trade-diaspora’, it can be understood that the scattering of Indian traders in China, being away from the

country, missing home while being dispersed in a foreign land. While some settled down there, some came back. Missing home, missing the food, missing family are the things they underwent for the trade and for a little profit in business. Leaving the geographical boundary of the native place has never captured the geography of their imagination. The migration may be a voluntary one but leaving the place, the food, the people and the language that someone thinks of his own is always traumatic. Along with that, they constantly went through war and political turbulence.

From ancient times to the period of Mughals, this trade connection went on. For a long period of time, Indian traders were viewed as peddlers and the opinion is now inadequate for there were Indian traders who dominated the marine trade in the Chinese market. Some of the traders did business with potential partners and some established their own business. Direct trade with Chinese shifted from Cambay to Surat and China supplied tea, gold, and porcelain in exchange of silver, pepper, and sandalwood. Around the middle of 18th century, Bombay became the trading port replacing Surat which was favourable for Parsis to grow their business. In 1735; Lowji Nussarwanji Wadia from Surat became master ship builder of Britishers in Bombay. In the novels, *Bahram Modi* also joined later his father-in-law, who was famous in ship building business,

“...Seth Rustamjee, had made it a mission to prove that India-made vessels-which Europeans commonly spoke of as ‘country-boats’ or ‘black-ships’-could perform as well as, if not better than, any in the world”(River of Smoke 2011: 94).

History of the Parsis in trade

History of Parsis in India bears an example of how an ethnic minority group persisted maintaining its identity being the guardians of their community amidst a foreign culture and even after a constant intersection between two contrasting cultures they not only preserved what can be called as their own but also rose to

be prominent so far as economics of the host land is concerned. Achievement of Parsis is remarkable in Indian History. Scientist Homi J Bhabha, the pioneer of Indian nuclear program, Parliamentarian Feroze Gandhi were among them. Contemporary India also witnesses rich businessmen like Tatas, Wadias, and Godrejs etc. controlling the very scenario of Indian business market and contributed to the overall growth of Bombay(now Mumbai) making it their home city. In trade also, Parsis from India played a major role. Parsis themselves are actually diasporas who

“...are descendants of Iranian Zoroastrians who migrated to and settled in India in order to preserve their Zoroastrian religion” (Palsetia 2001:1).

We call those Zoroastrians in India, Parsis. Though they started as an ethnic minority, history is the witness how they rose to the top with their keen observation of contemporary market, wise decisions, proper planning and investments in trade. From the ship-building to going overseas for trade, they excelled and still excelling everywhere. They “first landed on the island of Diu, off the Gujarat coast” (Palsetia, “Introduction” 4) before finally got settled in Gujarat. No exact date is mentioned anywhere when they arrived. Palsetia has given a brief account of Parsis how the dialogue between two cultures led to assimilation and accommodation to Indian culture while keeping a close tie with their own.

“Following their settlement in Sanjan, Parsis migrated and settled along the coast of Gujarat and from there to Vankanir, Broach, Variav, Anklesvar, Cambay and Navsari.”(Palsetia 2001:9)

Along with Navsari, Surat also became the hub of Parsis and the major business place before Bombay could replace that controlling the Parsi community of India altogether. As a result of the trade minds of Parsis, Surat climbed the ladder of growth. “Many of the Parsis who settled in Bombay traced their ancestry from Surat” (Palsetia 2001:10). “While talking about wealthy and sophisticated” (*River of Smoke* 2011:92) Seth Rustamjee Pestonjee Mistrrie family, Amitav

Ghosh says,

“...Mistrie business had also been founded in Navsari...After winning a major contract from the East India Company, the Mistries had moved to Bombay where they had opened a shipyard in the dockside district of Mazagon” (*River Of Smoke* 2011:89).

They were traditional and conservative and practitioners of endogamy. Host country's culture got assimilated in them and Indian dress tradition, strictly adherence to Hindu food taboos of restricting pork or beef even their language also got erased because of constant to and fro between *Gujarati* dialect. But the novels show one of the Persian traders *Bahram Modi* who got romantically involved with a Chinese boat girl during his stay in China after having family back in India which we can take as an example of hybridity. After the constant intersection of two cultures, a mixed third culture comes up. Just like that, *Bahram* and the Chinese boat girl belonged to two different cultures, came close and their relation is here a hybridised version of the traditional concept of love.

The endogamous alliances sometimes fail to understand and fail to weave the clothes for heart using the delicate threads of emotion. “Society was patriarchal and distinct marriage practices and customs existed to favour ‘racial purity’” (Palsetia, “Introduction” 18). We can refer to *Shireen's* (*Bahram's* wife) confinement in this case. However, as Ghosh's heroine, she dropped her veil to rise as a confident woman taking care of her husband's business, extramarital affair, and son and even dared to go for widow-marriage what Indian society was strictly nontolerant about. She accepted her half son *Ah Fatt* and discusses her decision with him. When he shows his doubt regarding the Parsi community and their restrictions she says,

“Freddie, you should know that Mr Karabedian has asked me to marry Him...will probably never again be able to enter a Fire Temple: that will be the hardest part. But no one can take my faith from me, can they? And maybe, in a few years, people will forget” (*Flood of Fire* 2015:306).

Shireen's words also show the conservative mindset of Parsis. But keeping the traditional value aside, the business mind of the Parsis made them grow and they became prominent among the trade community. Even

“By the nineteenth century, the Parsis were influential and important community determined to promote cooperation, with the other Indian communities of Bombay, including the British...” (Palsetia 2001:19).

Colonialism made the worldview of the Parsis different; even they reviewed themselves accordingly. The talent of the Parsis was the base of this shaping but yes, the effect of colonialism can never be undermined because it acted as a catalyst in their growth. In the beginning, they started making ships for British trade but eventually, they set for overseas trade and they were quite famous for making good ships. Amitav Ghosh throws light on this growth,

“Indeed, their ships were so advanced in design, and built at such little cost, that many European fleets and shipowners-even Her Majesty's Navy-had begun to send commissions to Mistris & Sons in preference to the shipyards of Southampton, Baltimore and Lubeck” (*River Of Smoke* 2011:95).

Among the Parsi families as Palsetia says, “...Modi families...some of the first prominent Parsi inhabitants of Bombay in the late seventeenth century” (Palsetia 2001:37) and we can get the picturization of *Bahram Modi* in the novels of discussion in connecting the history and our fiction,

“In the process, he had built, almost single-handedly, one of the largest and most consistently profitable trading operations in Bombay: the export division of Mistris Brothers” (*River of Smoke* 2011:87).

Palsetia further says that the word *Bahram* in Parsis community means “fire” (7). Perhaps that is symbolic of the growth of the Parsi businessman *Bahram Modi* in *Ibis Trilogy* to the riches from the rogue using his foresight. Perhaps

“Their versatility and adaptability were born of their historical accommodation to their social and cultural milieu and the necessity to safeguard ...identity as Parsis at all times and under all conditions” (Palsetia 2001:47).

When they involve themselves in trade, by 18th-century overseas trade was the chief commercial activity. Not only in trade, but also in the ship-building they succeeded too. *Modi's Anahita* was his own ship built in his manufacture house. But the *Modis* even with all cultural restrictions of being from a priest family, Ghosh has shown *Bahram Modi* falling for a Chinese girl and even encouraged having the baby which shows him as a man of conscience. He even supported his son *Freddie's* education, a boat house for *Chimei* and was constantly after his son to go for education and a good life that follows.

Along with food, cotton, and opium from Malabar were chief commodities that were exported to China. "The lucrative network of private trade" ("Identity and urban setting" 50) established the Parsis to go for the overseas opium trade. Palsetia says, "Jamsetjee and his Indian Partners had established a network...which saw a virtual monopoly of the malwa crop shipped from Bombay by the 1830s" (2001:54).

Because of the monopoly of the British, Parsis "supplied the trade between India and China to the benefit of both themselves and the Company" (Palsetia, "Identity and urban setting" 53) which favoured the interest of East India Company as well and the Parsis were benefited from cotton, silk, sugar, and opium trade. "Look at this new kind of white sugar that people are bringing from China- this thing they call 'cheeni'" (*River of Smoke* 97). "Hirji Jivanji is acknowledged to be the first Parsi to undertake the voyage to China in 1756" (Palsetia 53).

By 1830s, Parsis who started as suppliers, even dwelling in between monopoly and Canton system of trade, managed to start their own trade in Canton, Shanghai, Macao, and Amoy from the major trade ports of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. In 1818 making a milestone in this arena there came "Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy & Co., renamed Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Sons & Co., from 1836 to 1850" (Palsetia 54). From the beginning of 18th century, malwa opium made the Parsis rich and provided the Britishers with the steady revenue even after the "moral reservations" (Palsetia 55). At the same time because of Commissioner Lin's autocratic rules, Parsis got detained and opium also got seized during the pre-opium war. While convincing his father-in-

law for the opium trade *Bahram* said,

“Opium...is such a thing that once people start using it they can’t stop; the market gets larger and larger. That is why the British are trying to take over the trade and keep it to themselves” (*River of Smoke* 2011:97).

However, the intoxicating opium and the war profited the Parsis.

“Do you think the demand for opium in China has abated merely because of an edict from Peking?... The absence of food does not make a man forsake hunger – it only makes him hungrier. The same is true of opium. I am told that the price being offered for a chest of opium in the city is now in the region of three thousand dollars – five times what it was a year ago.”(*River of Smoke* 2011:437)



Fig .2 Opium Addiction.

Source: http://www.jonathanlewy.com/american_opium_trade/

By 1780, Parsis started a large-scale migration to China, settled there for business. Started cotton as the material and later opium got supplied bringing great fortunes for them. Britishers in the beginning continued the trade as it was and along with Bombay merchants they ruled the industry, but slowly in the greed, they changed things. Even after the arrival of the colonisers, Indian trade diaspora dominated the market. Madhavi Thampi argues by quoting Dale (1994:138),

“Stephen Dale has commented that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these diasporas became extensions or personifications not of Indian economic influence, but of newly triumphant European world economy”(qtd. in Thampi 2005:53).

The pioneering voyage of Hirji Jivanji Readymoney in 1756 was exploratory, but his brother established a farm in Canton. This incident followed by many other merchants from Bombay to China and Indian traders along with their servants started settling down in Canton and Macao. Ghosh has shown *Bahram Modi* with his assistant *Vico* and friend *Zadig Bay* also used to stay in Canton. After the 1770s, an unstoppable growth of trade became visible and China's famine compelled the peasants to go for food cultivation than cotton. As a result, a need for raw cotton got increased which was supplied by Indian traders, private British agencies and Gujarat satisfied this need. With due course of time, the 'sky-touching' demand for cotton went down, but the demand for Chinese tea did not see its downfall with Britishers. To continue the trade, Britishers invented another lucrative trade of sending the drug, 'Opium'. Patna opium and malwa opium were the varieties that were sent. Thampi says:

“From the eighteenth century, Patna opium grown in eastern India was one of the commodities, along with Indian textiles, that was shipped by the English as well as Portuguese and Dutch traders... However, a sharp rise in the price of Patna opium in 1816, provided the opportunity for increased sales of malwa drug” (2005:67).

In the present novels under discussion, *Bahram Modi's* ship *Anahita* was loaded with malwa opium and shipped to China from Bombay. The addictive

nature of the drug not only hampered Chinese youth but also impacted health. Talking about *Ah Fatt*, we can see his condition is of an opium-addict Chinese man. When *Neel* met him he gave an impression of an animal lying in the bed covered with mud, faeces, and vomit. Chinese youths' condition deteriorated because of opium which led the authorities to be strict regarding the trade.

“He is an afeemkhor who has no opium...Neel realized that it was not just mud the man was covered in, but also faeces and vomit.” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:216)

Looking at the loss, there was a restriction on opium trading. Talking about Chinese authority's decision, in *River of Smoke*, Dent says at the meeting of commerce,

“It should come as no surprise that the Grand Manchu has decided to demonstrate his omnipotence by prohibiting the entry of opium into this country” (*River Of Smoke* 2011:435).

Bahram also expresses his tension saying, “I have a ship full of opium anchored off Hong Kong and I need to dispose of it quickly” (*River Of Smoke* 2011:438).

Here Indian traders and Britishers got united in the trade and tried to sell their cargos even after the ban. We can call it a patron-client relationship between the Parsi businessmen and the British agency houses. And nearly a century, Parsis dominated the maritime business trade in China. Readymoneys, Banjees, Wadias, Camas, Petirs are prominent Parsis who shone in Chinese soil. Sailing to China at that time was also difficult because of storm and shipwrecks were common. Ghosh has shown three ships: *Anahita* which was an opium carrier, *Red Ruth* which was on a botanical expedition and *Ibis* which was carrying the indentured labourers facing a storm in *Sea Of Poppies*. Even *Deeti* in her shrine draws a storm which later, in reality, changed the direction of their lives.

Madhavi Thampi puts it,

“...the Parsis were more prominent than even the private English traders on the China coast in the

period before the Opium Wars” (2005:76).

They were allowed to do business via a number of Chinese merchants known as Hong merchants and Hong merchants were also grateful to Indian traders for taking goods on credit. In *River Of Smoke*, we can witness a similar situation. *Allow* wanted to do business with *Bahram* when his opium was stuck because of the new restriction of Chinese authorities and *Allow* was just a middleman. He even tried to bribe *Bahram* to get his work done. It is because of the opium addiction among the Chinese. Looking at its bad impact, Chinese commissioner wanted a complete ban as that was creating a nervous breakdown in youth. A big example is *Bahram*’s son *Ah Fatt* whose condition is shown in *Sea of Poppies* and who could pee on his friend for the greed of getting a small piece of opium from the Britishers.

“Patrão, there’s someone to see you... deals in the kind of cargo we need to sell. Middle-level I think; not a wholesaler” (*River Of Smoke* 2011:463).

Talking about their food and dress, it is also found that the Parsis went on continuing holding to their traditional dress and food. They had their own food arrangements. In *Flood of Fire*, we find *Shireen* cooking food famous with the Parsis.

“... on holidays the seths would assemble for prayers in the salon; afterwards they would exchange news of Bombay over meals of dhansak, steamed fish, stewed trotters and baked dishes of creamy, shredded chicken: marghi na mai vahala” (2015:229).

Parsis were mainly the merchants who had their families back in India. So some of them even started their family in China and some got connected to prostitutes. Madhavi Thampi says,

“Parsees are associating with women of bad reputation and prostitutes. Apparently; some Parsi men did enter into formal or informal relationships with Chinese women” (2005:77).

Both *Bahram Modi* and *Zadig* had two families, in India and one in China.

At Canton, they were found in 'chow chow' (miscellaneous) or Parsi factory. However, the mixture of two cultures was hardly seen. But the instances of hybrid generation or mixed race are prominent looking at their children born from Chinese mother. Example is *Freddie*. Unlike Chinese traders, Indian traders did not expand their business in China, rather sent back their money to India.

Soldiers

“Soldiers, policemen and watchmen formed a large and highly visible segment of the Indian population in China between the 1840s and 1940s.” (Thampi 2005:140)

During the time of pre-opium war, it was not only the trade diaspora who went there, another group of men went, stayed for years, fought, got wounded, died and some came back with the scar. These soldiers are mostly an understudied group being away from the light. Their story remained in dark. They left their village, joined the British soldiers' camp to undergo the training and had to do certain things what Britishers call manners to be learned to be with them. The metamorphosis they went through had an impact on them. Even situations were there when they wanted to go back home, but the flow of money and comfort forced the family to force them back to the camps. Amidst these emotional turmoils, they had to sail to China to fight with the Chinese and for years they stayed there. One thing is that soldiers were paid at least a manageable amount, unlike the indentured labourers. But in return, many lost the life and who came back were in an emotional imbalanced state. They could not understand the reason behind the fight when saving its own youth on the part of Chinese was not a crime at all. During the time of war, we can witness in the present context of novels, teens were taken as drummer, fifer etc. Their death by the Chinese bullets was really heart-rendering.

“There was still no answer so Raju flung himself on the unmoving figure and wrapped his arms around him. ‘Please, Dicky, get up. Please listen to me, men. Get up!’” (*Flood of Fire* 2015:327)

British's interest in China was not the indenture rather the lure of getting silver by smuggling opium and also in need of army and Indians were best suited to be the soldiers. It trained and later sent them during opium war. When it was a trend to export labourers to colonies, emigration to China as soldiers can be looked at another form of slavery, 'military labour'. Generally, during the months of January and February people are recruited as they were free due to less work in fields and generally it was done in front of village and family members to instil a greater sense of responsibilities in them. Torture gets reflected in *Flood of Fire* (2015) even in soldiers' training camp. *Bhyro Singh's* monopoly and *Kesri Singh* (*Deeti's* brother) being attacked as he did not obey the order of washing "his nephew's (Hukham Singh who afterwards becomes *Deeti's* husband), underclothing" (60).

"It's time for you to learn that the first rule of soldiering is obedience... his big toe dug right into the crack of *Kesri's* buttocks, tearing through the thin folds of his dhoti and langot... Yaad rakhika and remember, this is just your first dose of this medicine. If it doesn't cure you then there'll be a lot more..." (*Flood of Fire* 2015:60)

Even after the recruitment direct from the village, the soldiers had to go through training on everything, even what the Britishers call civilised 'sahebi' manner and the poor fellows had to face a lot to understand things. The latrine episode here in *Flood of Fire* is humorous and at the same time shows the innocence of Indians and clever thoughts of the British to train them to follow their lifestyle and that they considered modern, manner, and classy. Everywhere they extended their colonies by the sheer manipulation of people; by considering them savage and by making them follow in the name of educating them and in the name of civilising them. They considered themselves the good race or the advanced race to be followed and the colonised as savage, evil, negative who should learn their things. But they forgot that this act of following will one day in return be proved as mimicry and in that way a challenge. Having the capacity to follow exactly is not a weakness in the postcolonial sense, rather making the colonised

powerful enough to interrogate the authenticity or purity of power by altering the binary of pure and impure.

“Seetul’s stomach was upset and he had felt an urgent need to relieve himself. Not knowing where to go, he had decided to do what he would have done in his village – that is ‘look for a bush’... he took the recruits straight to the pakhana... It made them squirm to think of being lined up like that, next to one another...”(*Flood Of Fire* 2015:68)

Once went in the British army, the soldiers get acquainted with a disciplined and a new comfortable life. Here the word ‘comfortable’ can be questioned as in how far comfortable or how much and the answer lies in that much what soldiers from remote villages of India cannot think to afford. Even for the families back it becomes difficult to hold these people back from going again as it would stop the flow of money and above all, the flow of comfort and the respect in their class that the money and fame of working in British army brought. Remittances sent were used to build houses, arrange marriages of the concerned person and the girls in the family. It reflects the attitude of people, the society back home. That also created a hurdle for our people (Indians) may be in coloniser’s army or in plantations to decide to come back forever. Indentured labourers would not be accepted in their society as they lost their caste and soldiers’ money that had already gifted them with comfort cannot be stopped. More or less these two types are similar. India’s socio-economic condition has also compelled people to leave home and also gave them enough reasons not to come back. In the context of the novels, *Keshri Singh*’s case is somewhat same.

On reaching Nayanpur, he was astonished by the stir that was created by his arrival. It turned out that in his absence he had become a figure of some note in the village... Kesri had been inclined to stay; he knew it wouldn’t have been feasible. The family had grown accustomed to the money he sent home... He understood that the gap left by his departure from home had been filled by the continuing flow of their lives; his return, although welcome at the start, had now begun to disrupt the new currents.(*Flood Of Fire* 2015:78)

Though prior to colonial period soldiers used to shift from one ruler to another if he owns a war and one place to another during the time of war or

training. But now they fought for the colonial expansion. They themselves were colonised but helped their master to extend their colonies, extend their evil thoughts of torturing and killing more people, though forcefully. Madhavi Thampi says:

“Overseas service for Indian regiments was a voluntary affair...To induce Indian soldiers to volunteer to serve abroad, special benefits were offered, including enhanced pay, rations and pensions...more than 20,000 Indian sepoys and camp followers had volunteered for overseas duty between 1824 and 1844 ”(2005:142).

It started with First Opium War. Opium led the Indians to go as indentured labours, to be soldiers and go through immense physical and mental pain and also made Chinese youth go addicts and at last, the greed of money involved in opium made the British kill people in war.

The First Opium War

Any event of History cannot be rested upon one thing. It has many dimensions to look at. Certain events shake the spine of politics, economy, history itself so much that it becomes memorable. Opium war, the first to be specific like any other historical event is the cause of many factors. In the light of the novels, we can see that it was the opium which sent people to cross the boundary of the country as the indentured labourers, trade diaspora, soldiers, and ended in war. War was for British gain. What did Indians get? The agricultural land, lives, and people got used and in return, Indians received deaths, pain, and migration. The opium war was not just a war, rather a clash between two contradictory cultures, two values and of two values possessing their own peculiar institutions, norms and ideologies. Britisher's desire to trade and Chinese effort to stop it was the main cause of the war. Further, there was the lack of mutual understanding which was aggravated by the language barriers. No educated Chinese knew English properly; as a result, proper communication was not possible. Chinese were also barbarous and cruel. In 1784, a gunner on the British ship Lady Hughs gave a gun

salute for distinguished Chinese guests who had dined aboard but accidentally caused the death of two Chinese citizens and for this mistaken act the poor gunman had to die without any trial and Britishers had to hand him over even unwillingly. The problem of diplomatic equality and conflicts over judicial sovereignty brought in Sino-British war. The war could have postponed, but never could have stopped.



Fig.3 Opium War.

Source: <http://www.britishempire.co.uk/media/foreigncartoons/foreigncartoon2.htm>

From the point of view of the Western commercial practices holding single port system, Canton was both irregular and humiliating for the British. The single agency, co-hong was also a monopoly and imposed strict restrictions not only on foreign trades even on their right to live which was shameful for the merchants. In the beginning, the English were taking cotton cloth, tea, silk, and porcelain from the Chinese market and in return, they were bringing raw cotton, woollen etc. After 1816, they began to import silver while giving opium. Opium was first brought to China by Turks and Arabs in late 7th and early 8th century. It was called ying-su, mi-sang or po-pi (poppy) what they used to take raw for medicine. Opium is a therapeutic agent having alkaloid (morphine) which relieves pain. Thomas De Quincey and Coleridge among other writers wrote their masterpieces under the spell of opium. On marriage night discovering husband's opium addiction made *Deeti* upset and helpless since the future of an "afeemkhor" (*Sea of Poppies* 23) is dark.

"When the opium began to sizzle and bubble, he put it on the pinhole of his pipe and took a deep draught of the smoke, through the mouthpiece... Deeti understood what the future held... it was as if the shade of Saturn had passed over her face." (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:23)

But at the same time, if it becomes a habit, it makes the addict its slave and the opium becomes a necessity like water. *Ah Fatt's* opium addiction was up to the extent that he peed on his close friend *Neel* and to the extreme chewed goat shit in urgency thinking it to be opium.

"Ah Fatt, no!... Ah Fatt turned his face to the sky and squeezed out a thin trickle of urine over Neel... Gave yer mate a taste o'yer piss and earned y'self a gobful of goat shit to boot" (*Sea Of Poppies* 2008:317)

Trade of opium from Bengal under British monopoly was the largest merchant of opium. The majority of carriers were English (not exactly from England since opium was coming from India) to be sailed at Canton, on the Pearl

River some 40 miles from its mouth, known as the Bogue or Bocca Tigris with cargoes. It is obvious that such a big trade can never be survived without the help from Chinese. First of all, use of opium was limited to upper class only. But slowly it found its way to everyone-mandarins, police, security etc. The habit grew in uncontrollable speed and looking at its phenomenal growth Chinese authorities decided to stop its growth as it not only affected the health but also drained the silver for opium was sold only in return of silver coin and bullion. As a result, the finance of China was handicapped.

Amidst all these chaotic trade situations, Lord Napier, the first superintendent of Trade to Canton arrived China in 1833 to protect English trade. But co-Hong neither met him, rather ordered a complete ban on buying and selling from them. The sudden death of Napier in Macao in September 1833 worsened the tension between the English and Chinese. In 1836, Charles Elliot became superintendent and had to protect both legal and illegal trade keeping both British and Chinese interest intact when it seem quite a difficult task to balance. 10 March 1839, Lin Tse-Hsu, viceroy of Hupei and Honan arrived at Canton to abolish the opium trade completely. He jailed smugglers and tried to educate young Chinese about the dangers of opium addiction. Opium chests are seized from Chinese merchant and foreign warehouses. Around 21000 chests of opium were seized and destroyed. He even wrote a letter to Queen Victoria to prevent her merchants from the opium trade. But everything for the Britishers especially the opium trade was never a crime. *Sea of Poppies* shows how *Serang Ali* turns *Zachary*'s piracy-as-crime accusation on its head,

“Crime, Malum Zikri?’ *Serang Ali*’s eyes flashed. [Is] smuggling opium blongi not crime? Running slave-ship blongi better ’n pi-ra-cy?’”(*Sea of Poppies* 2008:305)

River of Smoke shows the ban on opium trade in China,

“... the Viceroys and Governors of every province must sternly and distinctly demand that their people obey the commands; and they must also order their civilian and military officers to vigorously search all

traitorous merchants who are engaged in the traffic of Opium. And all people who keep Opium shops in the Cities must be apprehended and brought before the Tribunals” (*River of Smoke* 2011:565).

Further, Lin demanded that foreign traders and Elliot sign a bond renouncing the trade, under pain of death though Elliot never did that. Further 1839, Nov, there was an exchange of shots between two forces.

“On June 21, 1840, twenty men-of-war and transports carrying British and Indian troops arrived off Canton to blockade that port.”(Harrison 1967:19)



Fig.4 Opium routes between British-controlled India and China

Source: https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/opium_wars_01/ow1_essay01.ht

Amitav Ghosh has also narrated the same arrival of troops with the intention of forcing Chinese authorities to open ports for them for trade and to compensate

the previous loss. If the demand does not get fulfilled, as they came prepared with weapons and soldiers, they would attack and take lives.

The British fleet had arrived off the China coast five days earlier, and Captain Elliot had rendezvoused with Commodore Bremer near the Ladrone Islands. After extensive deliberations, the Plenipotentiary and the Commodore had agreed on a strategy that required the expeditionary force to be split into two wings... Once Chusan had been seized, the eastern seaboard of China would be at the mercy of the expeditionary force... he (Emperor of China) would soon realise that he had no choice but to accede to Britain's demands for the re-opening of trade and the restitution of past losses. Since the resumption of the opium trade was one of the main objectives of the expedition, the fleet would be accompanied by a number of merchant vessels, many of them opium-carriers. (*Flood of Fire* 2015:205)

Chinese agents refused to pay the compensation for opium seized. Discussions were fruitless. In Jan 1841, Commissioner Lin was replaced by Manchu officials ch'i-san and I'li-pu. Chisen negotiated with British. On August 29, 1842, the treaty of Nanking opened five treaty ports-Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai and the cession of Hong Kong Island. The war that continued from 1839-1842 contained the seed of a kind of mass cultural, political, economic destruction and a lifelong scar.

Recent scholarly attention towards Sino-Indian relationship also focuses on tracing the cross-cultural interactions between Indian and China during colonial period which will help to understand the present day situations better. A little attention to Indians in China is paid so far as there is a question why to study any dead community. The answer is in most cases the confusion, the bitterness of Chinese against Indians somewhat lies in the pain they met during the colonial period, during the war and the answer lies in the question they asked to every Indian weapon if Indians have any reason to kill them for their efforts of saving their(Chinese) youth. They did not understand that Indians, in fact, suffered more than them. A wound in memory wound in conscience in return of the war. History does talk about this war but a half of the story is told. There is the removal of Indian lives that fought for nothing and gained shock, wound, and memories of

loss.

Diaspora, though an over-used and less-theorized word and a generalised term, deals with hybridity, liminality, multiplicity while talking about dislocations, homeland, and memory. Diasporic literature is 'intertextual' in all its richness means can be connected with many other texts to get the proper shape of meaning, different shades while touching various arena of power, hegemony, culture, linguistics, ideology, and intellect. Gaining back the lost history is always one of the major traits of postcolonial literature. It claims its space by removing then veil from the unmentioned long lost history which has a major role in shaping the presence .when many writers like Rohinton Misty's *Such A Long Journey*, *Fine Balance* and Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis Trilogy* or *Shadow lines* situate their work in past, it is a space never personally travelled or lived is not only nostalgic', rather "amnesia" (Singh 12) and also

"a process of fabulation in which a past time or place is not so much recovered or even discovered, but brought into being, invented, made and unmade..."(Singh 2007:12).

"Literary works by diasporic writers have been used extensively in diaspora studies recently" (Devarajoo 2009:135).

But when the writer himself possess a diasporic sentiment, there comes a magical touch of fact, emotion, passion, and brilliance together.They understand the value of shifting, they understand the value of cultures, so also the importance of memory. Their very alienation gets painted in characters created by them making the colour deep leaving a strong impression on the horizon of readers.Though the literary group writing about diaspora was once very small in number, now things are different. They are coming in a remarkable mass to address the diasporic sentiment, the on-going dialogue between diverse cultures, the multiculturalism as a result of the intersection of cultures and negotiation of identities. It's not their number, rather their work is what that started impacting the world.

Chosen texts

Ibis Trilogy is a collection of three historical fictions. Historical since the trilogy deals with pre-first opium war situation, the indenture, history of colonialism, migration, and opium trade. Plot line goes back to pre-first opium war India around 1838. The story starts in the first novel *Sea of Poppies* with complex characters who went in Indenture; the socio-economic condition that forced them and their development as characters. One storm and shipwreck impacts the ships - one with labourers, one with a botanical expedition and others with the malwa opium. The storyline also focuses on Parsi traders who went to China for opium trade and faced opium restriction, pidginized language and affair with Chinese boat girl and pre-war tension in China in the second novel *River of Smoke*. Third novel *Flood of Fire* again comes back to the first novel plot completing the peculiar strategy of forming a trilogy, a circle. It focuses on pre-war and during war Indian soldiers; the story of characters from the first novel, and ends with rock inscription of their tales and a vivid picture of destruction caused by the war. The trilogy is multi-thematic which bears Ghosh's creative genius, proper research, passion for history and deep historical insight. In answer to the question asked in an interview he says about his research that it is his research which gives him confidence and motivation to go on with writing,

...Fiction is fiction, and any novel, whether it is a historical novel or anything else, is fundamentally based upon characters. Characters and their circumstances. So research, in some sense, has very little to do with a novel. What it mainly has is that it provides the writer with _ what shall I say? _ the confidence to go on. That's the part that it plays for me. I mean, if I were to suddenly say to myself, 'OK, I am just going to start a book and get on with it', you know, I can't do that. I need something to get me started. I need to be thinking about it, I need to engage with it. So I'd say that for me the research is not so much the stuff of the novel; it's a way of getting started (Kumar 100).

By following historical reports of Commissioner Lin and referring to painter George Chinnery, Ghosh has proved that it is not completely fictional. It can be called to fall under the Victorian canon as politically the opium war which

is the backdrop of novels happened during queen victoria's reign and literally also that was the period of Victorian literature. Migration and indenture experience has attracted him and he has given voice to the 'coolies', a term used for indentured labourers. Being himself an Indian diaspora, he understood the identity issue and portrayed clearly. He has used the 'opium war' as a connecting cord in his three novels of *Ibis Trilogy*. Ghosh describes opium as "among the most precious jewels in Queen Victoria's crown" (*Sea of Poppies* 61) in his novel and opium was "major source of Government revenue" (Arora 25). Hence, the Chinese restrictions for the opium trade led this dissatisfaction to war.

Opium war holds an important place in Chinese history. At the same time, Indians who fought there during colonisation without getting anything went through tremendous trauma, guilt, and physical injury. The Opium War also indirectly affected lives of many far away from the war ground. Contemporary research when hardly gives a glimpse towards this war, it's faded from memory and with it the pain of many Indians who were directly or indirectly connected to it. Forgetting events in history is forgotten our men and the sacrifice they made and the pain they went through. How was the life of a soldier away from home to kill innocent people? The struggle between him and his conscience was there. The sight of losing people, the sight of bloodshed, death and being in the area where anytime there would be firing cannot be easy. Today also our soldiers are fighting, but the enemy. They don't have to go to any other country to stay there and kill them. Soldiers feel proud for saving the motherland. But here, it was a shame, a shock, and a scar.

Being a postcolonial writer Amitav Ghosh has claimed the space for the lost history and re-invents multiracialism. The metanarrative 'opium trade' combined the novels. Postcolonial hybridization and 'the empire writes back to the centre' flavour are present in the novels with the opium trade, globalisation, and the opium war. The first novel, *Sea of Poppies* shows the forced opium trade and

British imperialism. The storm while opium was carried to China in *Anahita* made *Bahram* face a huge loss and the same storm helped to set five inmates of *Ibis* free. Victorian India and its imperialism got heightened with India's narrowmindedness, superstition, gender violence, poverty, untouchability and above all losing caste in *kala-pani* (crossing black waters). In the quest of better prospects, Indians went as *grimityas*, people who went as indentured labourers from "Gangetic plains of Eastern U.P. and Northern Bihar" (Rai and Pinkney 68) especially from the area of *Bhojpuri* speaking people.

How they struggled to negotiate being in between the sense of self and rapid metamorphosis of socio-cultural values that they have been holding all their lives. Before them, Indians went overseas as pilgrims and as traders. But the number is less. This crossing of black waters was rare and was taken among Hindus particularly as taboo. *Girmityas'* experience was rare and somewhat near to being exiled because of the complete loss of tie with homeland; it was a forced one and the taboo attached to it was also made it a loss - a cultural identity and the essence of being. When even they did not know where Mauritius is and when *Lanka* is the land of *Ravan* and all the demonic forces. Half-literate and ignorant of outside world Indian farmers' plight due to forced cultivation of poppy, his/her fear of leaving for an unknown island and being worried of the independence and at the same time the shock and hard to bear truth of not being accepted into society when they return is being portrayed in *Sea of Poppies*.

"Deeti joined in the conversation, asking, from the shelter of her sari's ghungta: Where is this Mareech? Is it near Dilli? ...Ramsaran-ji laughed. No, he said scornfully. It's an island in the sea – like Lanka, but farther away." (*Sea of Poppies* 2008: 48)

Ghosh has treated the pain of the indentured labourers with utter sympathy. The pain of those Indians, who were twice marginalised, twice displaced and of the women who were thrice marginalised- by the patriarchal society, by colonisers, and the future alien land is vividly presented. These early indentured

labourers who can be said as not studied properly and long forgotten are thrown light here to make the readers feel their pain.

“She tried to imagine what it would be like to be in their place, to know that you were forever an outcaste; to know that you would never again enter your father's house; that you would never throw your arms around your mother; never eat a meal with your sisters and brothers; never feel the cleansing touch of the Ganga.” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008: 49)

The plight of the lead woman Deeti whose dreams are shattered and whose life is devastated by her husband-in-laws, society, and opium can be seen. She was facing severe poverty, “she had no grain or fruit to spare, and as for money, there was not a dam's worth of cowrie-shells in the house” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:19). Looking at “plump poppy pods” (*Sea of Poppies* 19) she said to ‘Kabutri’ (her daughter) “That means the harvest will be good this year. Maybe we'll even be able to fix our roof...” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:19) and the roof got thatched as she shares with her daughter seven years back when she was married which shows the presence of social evil like dowry. Ghosh has also shown light to the plight of Indian life because of colonial pressure for opium cultivation.

“What sane person would want to multiply these labours when there were better, more useful crops to grow, like wheat, dal, vegetables? ... now the factory's appetite for opium seemed never to be sated... English sahibs would allow little else to be planted; their agents would go from home to home, forcing cash advances on the farmers.” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:20)

The traders who got profited due to that, strict Canton system and Chinese authorities towards the trade and soldiers who fought the opium war from Britishers' side—from everywhere the ordinary Indian life was the worst sufferer. The dualism of Indian traders who went to China for the trade and led another family life or “lob-pidgin” (*River of Smoke* 135) there from *Zadig* to *Bahram Modi* the owner of *Anahita* who climbed the ladder of success due to the trade. At the same time, the life of the Parsi wives who are left in India thinking their husbands as heroes and worshipping for their wellbeing. Their plight is picturised by the wife of *Bahram Modi*, *Shiren Bai*. Victorian echo of a strict boundary for women and suppressive narrative— wife of *Neel*, wife of *Behram*, *Deeti*, and

Paulette are vivid here.

During the storm, *Raja Neel* was one of the people who got escaped and met *Bahram Modi*, the Parsi opium trader, owner of *Anahita* from Bombay and worked as his manager keeping the pseudo name *Anil*. *Anahita*, financed by his in-laws, carries not only “the most expensive cargo that Bahram had ever shipped” but also “the single most valuable cargo that had ever been carried out of the Indian sub-continent” (*River of Smoke* 86). With the trade, we get know *Modi*, in the words of Robert Chinnery, son of the painter George Chinnery, he is “one of the great personages of Franqui-town and a splendid figure” (*River of Smoke* 2011:389) and his rise and fall; his affair “lob-pidgin” (*River of Smoke* 2011:135)] with Chinese boat girl *Chimei*; his son, his worries regarding his son and also for his wife back in India. The postcolonial term ‘pidgin’ here is symbolic of amalgamation of two different cultures, languages and personalities from two different geographical areas. It is the opium trade that brought them together. Their son is the perfect example of hybridisation, someone with the impact of opium suffers. *Modi* faced problems in his trade which was an area largely dominated by the Britishers. He also lost his beloved. While dreaming about her, he discovered ‘to find that his arms were empty and she was gone’ (*River Of Smoke* 2011:542) – which eventually leads to his state of taking opium and suicide. We, can find similar narrative in Kunal Basu’s novel *Opium Clerk* (2001) where the opium trade is narrated from the point of view of a clerk and cultural critic Curtis Marez’s *Drug Wars* (2004) though not a novel, explores two hundred years of writings, graphic works, films, and music that both positively and negatively portrayed the trade of cocaine.

Amitav Ghosh with lost history of Opium War has portrayed the diasporic sentiment and how the Opium War made the Indian diaspora, how British imperialism while enforcing the cultivation disturbed common lives and made them cross the geographical, cultural boundary in search of earning to far off

Mauritius. Colonisation made some people become soldiers, fighters in the British army to fight in Opium war. Everywhere things got connected with opium. The second novel describes the multicultural mosaic atmosphere of Chinese ports via the letters of Robin Chinnery, son of George Chinnery. Boat houses, pidgin language, food have a mosaic flavour. Indians who went in trade and stayed there, the merchant diaspora to be specific, their presence brought the hybrid rhythm. How people like *Ah Fatt* who is born of an Indian father and Chinese mother, the second generation of diaspora, looks at life, looks at their father, father's family and try hard to fit into their family is visible. When *Ah Fatt* was complaining to *Neel* about his father, *Neel* as *Bahram*'s employee who got a chance to know the person and an Indian male could understand the pain of *Bahram Modi* and the pain of a father. "For Father 'Freddy' like pet dog. That why he pat and hug and squeeze. Father care only for himself; no one else" (*River of Smoke* 267). *Neel* being a father with an illegitimate relationship with *Elokeshi* and far away from wife and son could connect and understand the pain of his son *Raju*.

Achha Hong and the Thirteen Factories got affected badly by the pre-opium war violence, such as the cruel inhuman public executions of "Punhyqua" (*River of Smoke* 601) and Allow. Robin Chinnery has a premonition seventeen years earlier of the destruction of this incredible place, depicted it in an 1839 engraving (*River of Smoke* 980). In fact, while describing canton, Achha Hong, pre opium war incidents, Robin brought two cultures together, in his paintings and in his letters,

"Paulette's friend Robin Chinnery – has put down the date as July 1839. But the destruction of the Thirteen Factories did not happen until seventeen years later. But it seems that Robin saw it in a dream" (*River of Smoke* 2011:980).

Ibis trilogy deals with politics, history, and trade via sea route. With the backdrop of opium war there are stories of power, exploitation, dominion, violence, pain, resistance, movement, struggle survival- the diaspora. By opium trade, Ghosh has dealt with overseas trade, merchant diaspora, counter-culture,

the pain of soldiers and hybridised outcome. He has treated the Indian Ocean as “palimpsest” (Arora 2012:22). Palimpsest is the book made from animal skin to be used to write in ancient times by Greco-Roman culture. Once there was the necessity to write again, the letters were scratched from palimpsest to be used for writing but the trace of previous writing was always there. Just like the trace of previous writing on the skin, the lost history is always there even if there are the colonial deletion, imperialism, and reconstruction. Ghosh has focused on the long forgotten history of lascars and migrant labour which is connected to the opium trade and emphasised on their marginal place in the main canon. Colonisation which synonymous to politics of power, conquering, exploiting, manipulating and hegemony did its best to reconstruct the history of the colonisers and novelists like Amitav Ghosh have always tried to read the trace of lost history from the palimpsest of archives “Eurocentric history”(Arora 24). It can be a parallel study with Black “Atlantic slave trade” (Arora 24). Once the slave carrying ship changes its shape to carry 'coolies', the tale and pain of the migrating indentured labourers will be written on the hold of the ship that contains traces of the pain of slaves. Jadu could see locks designed for hands and ankles and the familiar human smell, the smell of sweat, vomit, and faeces. Along with that the silent yet loud tale of slaves, inhuman treatment towards humans, the helpless eyes, the unheard voices and the pain bearing bodies, if can't bear, then the end - embraced images of bodies. Images passed before his eyes like a live show.

“He picked up one of the chains, and on looking more closely at the bracelet-like clasps; he became convinced that it was indeed meant for a human wrist or ankle.”(*Sea of Poppies* 2008:96)

Ghosh has shown that opium was the major commodity to smuggle to China. We always safeguard it what we think to be of utmost value to us. Scenes of factory make it clear how valuable opium was for the British. There is no doubt that for their selfish interest and insatiable hunger for Chinese silk, tea and silver, free land and Indian labour, they literally killed people. They used lands; controlled lives, trade, and the direction of Chinese youth, Chinese and Indian

soldiers and above all, they eventually killed people in war. The drug was one of the bases of British Empire and there is no denying to this fact. Describing the strict surveillance of opium factories he says,

“The fortifications here were formidable, and the guards particularly sharp-eyed—and well they might be, for the contents of those few sheds, or so it was said, were worth several million pounds sterling and could buy a good part of the City of London”(Sea Of Poppies 2008:61).

Deeti went inside to bring her sick husband and her confrontation with the factory's worker units made us see the picture of a gigantic mouth of capitalism and its exploitive power. British imperial power not only exercised power over cultivation but also on peasants and on trade. Indians gave their land, their labour, went as sailors, and went as ‘*grimitiyas*’, but profit went to the Britishers. Opium cultivation, factories, and even opium addiction destroyed families and lives. People went overseas as ‘*girimityas*’. These novels are “writing back”(Arora 25) to the covered and somewhat lost history. *Muharir* in citified Hindi said to *Deeti*, “sell your sons. Send them off to Mareech. It's not as if you don't have any choices”(Sea Of Poppies 2008:105).

The dangerous working condition of an opium factory can be seen in *Deeti*'s words when she entered the heart of darkness to bring her sick husband and found acres covered “Opium factory indisputably large and well-guarded”(Sea of Poppies 61) and how in dangerous conditions, people are working.

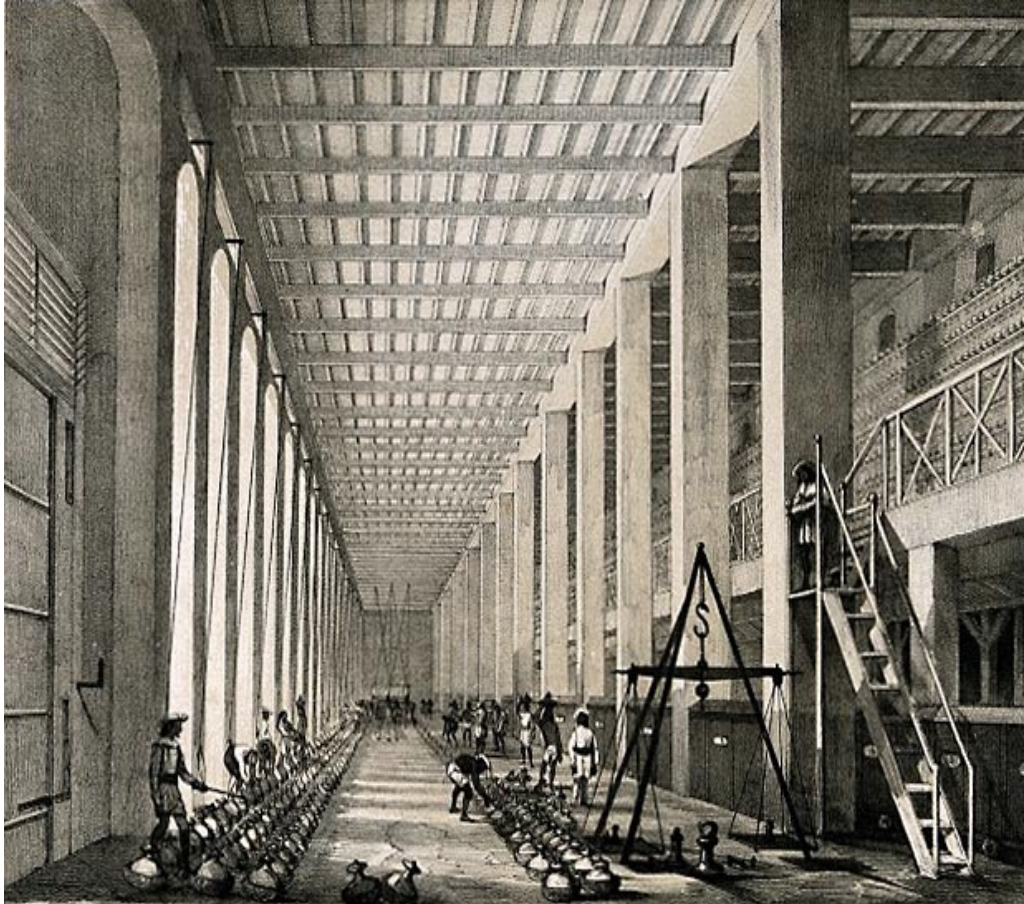


Fig.5 Opium Factory, Bihar, India

Source: https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/opium_wars_01/ow1_essay02.ht

Chinese addiction for opium made Britishers addicted to the cultivation and trade of opium and to quench their thirst for money they abused Indian farmers. Like a multi-headed hydra, they started gulping and gathering opium whichever source they may get. *Mr. Burnham* is being portrayed as someone for whom free trade and freedom were equal.

Ghosh is successful in drawing the “historical links” (Arora 2012:26) between opium cultivation and trade, colonial imperialism and hegemony, and indentured labour—and the close relation between land, river, and sea. The character portrayal of *Deeti*, one of the leading characters in the novel is the important link between all these links. *Deeti* is an upper caste village woman

whose impotent, handicapped and opium addict husband, *Hukam Singh* works in an opium factory of Ghazipur after being injured while working in the British army and even this addiction takes his life. On the marriage night, *Chandan Singh*, the younger brother of *Hukam Singh* consummates the marriage with the help of his mother and uncle when *Deeti* was given opium and she bears a daughter. The drugged lady neither knew nor could remember. *Deeti's* mother-in-law calls her *Draupadi*, in bearing similarity with the *Mahabharat's Draupadi*, someone who bears children of brothers (on the spell of opium of course here). *Deeti* has to drug old mother-in-law to know the truth. *Chandan Singh's* sexual advances let *Deeti* choose to be '*sati*' (widow immolation-a barbaric Hindu Brahmin rite to get burnt on the pyre of the husband to attain a place in the heaven) rather than sleeping with him. She gets rescued by *Kalua*, a lower caste cart-driver and ends up in *Ibis* with *Kalua* and his child in her womb as *girmitiyas*. Her journey starts from there.

Ghosh gave a voice to the marginalised subaltern *Deeti* who became *Aditi* in colonial documents before leaving on the ship and says, “Aditi, she said softly, I am *Aditi*...Wife of Madhu” (*Sea Of Poppies* 156). We get our name with our birth since we get consciousness. Changing the name may seem a simple thing, but looking beyond that is the pain when someone has to change her name and the situation compels her to accept another identity. But even with that *Deeti* manages to voice against injustice and become a leading voice not only in the ship but also in the new island at her shrine. When *Deeti* came,

“... they moved up to make room for her; she lowered herself slowly to her haunches, taking care to keep her face covered. With everyone squatting and every face covered, there followed a sizing-up that was as awkward and inconclusive as the examination of a new bride by her husband's neighbours” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:156).

Even women on the ship started singing the lament songs generally sung during the '*bidai*'(leaving their parents' house for husband's) of brides. It is a

custom across India that girl goes to her husband's house once she gets married. Here Ghosh is comparing *Deeti* to a newly wed and giving the setting a gloomy flavour which generally is felt during the ceremony when a newlywed bride leaves, gives a new direction to the conventional diasporic discourse of being exiled as generally, a diasporic phenomenon is always looked at the exile of *Lord Rama* from Hindu mythology. *Deeti* and other women left their homeland (metaphorically parents' house) and set their journey to the unknown land of their future. The pain here is not of the bride (women as *girmityas*) but also of parents (homeland). Amitav Ghosh is brilliant in looking at things from a new perspective. In three chapters of *Sea of Poppies* which are symbolic of growth of the mind and physical movement of a woman as *girmitya* from Land via River to finally Sea when she came from bank of *Ganga* via river reached Calcutta to go on a voyage in sea, the socio-cultural background that forced her, the deep underlying fear of the unknown and how she emerges in negotiating with the future and attains a new identity which is shown in the next novel *River of Smoke* and finally in *Flood of Fire* when she with some other members of ship is found engraving her story, her pidginized language, her new identity as a spiritual leader is also again symbolic of diaspora negotiated and attained the new hybridised identity. The carving proves that she has not forgotten her history; her pidginized language proves again the third space of her identity and the emergence of her new 'avatar'(role) is symbolic of the outcome constant diasporic dialogue between two different cultures and the unfolding of the hyphenated identity. She is seen negotiating the loss by wearing a *sari*, speaking pidgin, eating food which is more of Indian food like *paratha* and *daal-puris* and craving her story of transformation on *Ibis*, *Kalua's* life in her memory-temple with the name 'Escape'. Though the phenomenon of '*girmitya*' cannot be generalised, Ghosh has brilliantly made *Deeti* stand as the spokesperson of the whole community of women as *girmityas*. Here lies the brilliance of the novelist when he makes the emotion imbibe in historical events. The long forgotten history in shape of novels sees the broad daylight. Other women, minor characters are also portrayed showing romanticised

feelings connected to the land they are leaving, the nostalgia and how little things make their heart go crazy like *Sarju* preserved poppy seeds “it contains seeds of the best Benaras poppy”(Sea Of Poppies 310),*bidai* (lament song of a newlywed).

“Among the women, the talk was of the past, and the little things that they would never see, nor hear, nor smell again: the colour of poppies, spilling across the fields like *ábír* on a rain-drenched Holi; the haunting smell of cooking-fires drifting across the river, bearing news of a wedding in a distant village; the sunset sounds of temple bells and the evening *azan*; late nights in the courtyard, listening to the tales of the elderly. No matter how hard the times at home may have been, in the ashes of every past there were a few cinders of memory that glowed with warmth...” (Sea of Poppies 2008:271)

Another major concept that Amitav Ghosh has discussed is the formation of a deep connection, a universal brotherhood for times to come without having the blood relation while on board. The religious and caste taboos got erased. The ship journey had an important role in the lives of *girmitiyas*. The temple of Lord Jagannath, Puri (Odisha, India) is symbolic of holding love, equality and universal brotherhood where people forget where they belong, their caste, become children of Almighty and eat together the offerings at its yard(*Bada Danda*) and the temple is world famous for its car festival when the idols are brought outside of the temple to be available to every devotee irrespective of caste, religion or race to spread the notion of human futile life which is wasted in quarrelling for the land, for 'your-mine' belonging and how the omniscient, omnipotent God looks at us equally and loves us, blesses us with equal affection. Similar affection grew among them; everyone became equal-the pilgrims and shaped their identities. Cultural restrictions had no place there. It is as if Ghosh has given the message of the spread of universal love and brotherhood is the only solution to the gravest of problems of this land. On the ship, the boundary between castes, between convicts and labourers got blurred undermining social systems.

On a boat of pilgrims, no one can lose caste and everyone is the same: it's like taking a boat to the temple of Jagannath, in Puri. From now on, and forever afterwards, we will all be ship-siblings – *jaházbhais* and *jaházbahens* – to each other. There'll be no differences between us... Yes, said Deeti,

from now on, there are no differences between us; we are jahaz-bhai and jahazbahen to each other; all of us children of the ship. (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:242)

Many families were compelled to go as lascars, their indispensability to join British navy and hop from sea to ocean is pictured and their pain as lascars, as soldiers-both skilled and unskilled migrants. When during the time of Queen Elizabeth whose conquer of Spanish armada made her built the strongest navy and when history is overloaded with the heroic tales of their exploration and discoveries, at the same time the South Asian lascars were heroic enough to write their own tale and make their own history and starting phase of Indian diaspora. Talking about non-European seamen, David Chappell says that the lascars “constitute the unsung working class of Western trading ships” (77). He further argues pointing at the heroic role of lascars and their presence on European ships, “challenges the triumphant tale of European seafarers heroically globalising the world and offers us instead an image of interdependency with alien ‘others,’ whose skills made voyaging so far from home possible” (75–76).

They may be lascars, indentured labourers or slaves- all are varieties of labourers of British imperialism, many heads of the hydra which is called colonialism. Issues on the ships like abuse, disease, death remind of the plight of the slaves. *Mr. Burnham* who at first involved in slave trade, made his fortune because of the opium trade. He sends *Zachary* with the indentured labourers, opium, and convicts. Native is always a commodity, it may be opium, labourers or convicts. Anderson in her essay "convicts and coolies", says,

“...the practices and experiences of indenture are best understood primarily in relation to the institutions and imaginative discourses that framed the well-established contemporary colonial practice of penal transportation as a process of social dislocation and rupture” (2009:2).

Labourers to Mauritius not only suffered from dislocation and relocation but also the loss of caste, family, work, and attachment with the native place. Like the criminals, they were confined to depots for medical inquiries just as *Neel* faced that which was a matter of utter shame whereas he was not a criminal. It suggests

the colonial attitude that the native is subject to all kinds of disciplinary action may be a convict may be a 'coolie'. They knew it very well where to strike the hammer to shatter the confidence of an Indian pride. In the name of physical examining to find the distinguishing mark or trace of communicable disease, they were ripping off the Indians who are sensitive about the nakedness.

“...many of whom would gladly have died – or killed – rather than be subjected to the shame of having their nakedness exposed. Neel's struggles presented no challenge to them and they quickly tore off the remnants of his clothing.” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:196)

Imperialism of British rule kicked Indian stomach to make the forced shifting look like a voluntary one. Amitav Ghosh has picturised the impact of forced cultivation of poppies in *Chhapra*. The picture makes us imagine how painful their life became that people chose to lose their caste, society, home, soil and above all, their very self and were ready to go for an unknown voyage which was scary.

The town was thronged with hundreds of...impoverished transients...willing to sweat themselves half to death for a few handfuls of rice. Many of these people had been driven from their villages by the flood of flowers that had washed over the countryside: lands that had once provided sustenance were now swamped by the rising tide of poppies; food was so hard to come by that people were glad to lick the leaves in which offerings were made at temples or sip the starchy water from a pot in which rice had been boiled. (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:135)

Opium is shown as the backdrop of the novels. More than the war which has created trade diaspora and *girmitiya* is opium which is eventually, the reason behind the opium war and the connecting cord between the three novels in the Trilogy under discussion. Opium which was once under British monopoly passed to the Parsi traders and made Indo-china trade relationship strong, Opium cultivation made Indians go without food, Opium intoxication led Chinese authority to take strong action against the traders and led to the war and strained the relationship with China forever. Soldiers from India also fought the battle against them but got nothing except injuries, death and above all their colonised status did not change even. Ocean holds an important place in the trilogy. It is the

medium, the witness of laborer-shifting, opium trade, and opium war. Ocean has become the archive that holds in his bosom the long forgotten stories. The stories are not simply historical facts, rather tales of power, imperialism, violence, marginalisation, trauma, resistance, optimism, and survival and the stories of unquestioned hegemony. Historians have always focused on the role of Opium wars in colonial expansion. Clare Anderson's "convicts and coolies", Curtis Mariz's *Drug Wars* are among those. Ghosh seems inspired by their study and felt the diasporic sentiment being the diaspora and imagined the life of Indians who went to fight in Opium War and who remained home but got affected by the war. Opium has profited Britishers like anything that they did not hesitate to disrupt the lives of the Indians. Ghosh's *Trilogy* is somehow synonymous of Empire Writes Back when it again goes to the torture, trauma, helplessness of Indians who were affected worst by the trade. The story of those Indian lives which were buried deep putting 'Indian Ocean' as the witness of those painful stories.

Discussing on opium trade, opium war, in the interview with Masoom Gupte, The Economic Times Bureau, Nov 25, 2016, 08.39 AM IST, Ghosh himself said,

Q: "Is the business biography then just a creation of a mythology?"

Ghosh: It's completely the creation of mythology. The whole history of capitalism is the creation of mythology. The way it is written is like this heroic tale of great entrepreneurs. It's nonsense. Opium was produced in India under an East India monopoly. The only part that entrepreneurs played was taking it from here to China and selling it. It was essentially a smuggling trade. The history of capitalism is sold to us as a great history of financial innovations. That too is nonsense. To give you a minor example — if you look up commodities futures market on Wikipedia or any standard business history, what they'll tell you is that it started in Chicago in the 1850s. But the commodities futures markets existed in India going back to the early middle ages. There was a very active opium futures exchange in Calcutta from the 18th century onwards. British tourists used to go see it. It wasn't a secret" (indiatimes.com).

He reflects how the tales of opium is no way a tale of heroism. There was

nothing great involved in that. That was all smuggling trade. Yes, he has shown how the cultivation impacted the ordinary lives and how it invited war where Indian soldiers played a big part to gain nothing in return. The Parsis who were profited because of the trade also suffered the anger of Chinese authority since they were saving their people. But the question is why no one responds to that and why a bigger part of History is omitted if not fully and why the part contains the pain of soldiers, drummers or fifers who went in First Opium War is hidden? Is not forgetting a big part of history is forgetting our own men?

Once people are sure that they are going to face the least expected odd, they have no other option left except accepting their worst fears. They pull all their strengths together not only to face but also to win the situation. This also happens in the case of the diaspora. They face their worst fears and the loss which prepare them to face it and during the procedure, they attain a new self - a new identity.

The next chapter i.e. Chapter 4 will talk about identity in the context of the diaspora which always occupies a place in the scholarly debate. How far Amitav Ghosh has allowed his characters to negotiate the loss of land, loss of family, loss of personal space and has succeeded in allowing them to achieve a new identity which is considered complex in the diasporic sense- the diasporic identity.

CHAPTER 4

Articulation of Diasporic Identity in *Ibis Trilogy*

“...South Asians in the diaspora have not only maintained the homeland culture and identities but also created, recreated and negotiated such identities under different circumstances in the multiracial and multicultural societies.” (Sahoo and Sheffer 2014:1)

This chapter will discuss the concept of identity in the diasporic sense, how diaspora negotiates being in between the nostalgia of memory and new alien circumstances. The chapter will also discuss various identity markers to focus on the ways of negotiation. In the context of the novels, it will deal with the construction of the identity of the characters may be indentured labourers, Parsi traders or the veil-clad women. Amitav Ghosh will be seen giving all power to the characters to emerge as strong thinking, acting human beings and giving voice to the voices that went unheard for a long time under the pressure of colonialism and social hierarchy of class or caste or gender.

“Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!” (Scott, Breathes there the man)

Diaspora is diaspora because there is no universal culture, varieties do exist. They face the contrast when they confront another culture and they become “transnational or multicultural, or hybrid or borderless globalised entities” (Sahoo and Sheffer 2). The tension, the emotional dissonance creates their very identity making them realise that they are different. Though the displacement of Jewish is viewed as precursors to the diaspora, as Clifford puts Saffron’s lines, every diaspora cannot be the Jewish diaspora. Metaphorically or in a superficial sense diasporas can be linked to the global, pain-bearer Jewish so far as the pain of being displaced is concerned.

“In terms of that definition, we may legitimately speak of the Armenian, Maghrebi, Turkish, Palestinian

,Cuban, Greek, and perhaps Chinese diasporas at present and the Polish diaspora of the past ,although none of them fully confirms to the ‘ideal type’ of Jewish diaspora” (Safron 1991: 84;qtd. in Clifford 1994:305).

Safron’s lines clear the thing that there is no universal diasporic phenomenon so far as diasporic discourse is concerned. Again supporting this argument Clifford has discussed Amitav Ghosh’s (1989) argument that South-Asian diaspora,

“is not so much oriented to roots in a specific place and a desire for return as around an ability to recreate a culture in diverse locations-falls outside the strict definition” (Clifford 1994:306).

Diaspora is specific in relation to the place they have left, the place they have moved to and the reason behind the displacement. They grab the lost memory and reconstruct their being or they reject the thing called ‘memory’ and accommodate with the new place. In most of the cases, they choose to continue with the part of them which remained back in the fragrance of the homeland. This again becomes problematic so far second and third generation of diaspora is concerned or if they have moved to different lands. Then the concept of ‘homeland and memory’ becomes questionable making the space confusing for them when there is little chance of missing homeland and people away from home can anytime reach them. No community fully qualifies these characteristics as there is a difference between an immigrant² and diaspora which should not be confused with. However, the diaspora is diaspora because it does not love its hyphenated status and who loves and preserves the lost cord. They are plural.They are heterogeneous and their identity is dynamic. Still,

“There is, to use Stuart Hall’s words,n ‘imaginary coherence’ to a set of disparate, distinctive collection of identities that gives the Indian diaspora its particular character”(Lal, Reeves, and Rai 2007:14).

It is a widely acknowledged that contemporary Indian Diasporas are different than what they once were.They have grown and even started benefitting men back in the homeland and the home country at large. Even if financially they are just doing fine and bringing fortune home, they have to face identity issue if not

every day because identity is close to their being. They are connected to the homeland; the tie is still there whichever form it may get manifested. If that tie is lost, they cross the boundary of being diaspora or being included in the entity i.e. diasporans. People assimilate, accommodate to smoothen their stay in the alien environment. There are people who can't do it and there are people who are in the mid-way. There are people who continue with the tie and at the same time accept the new norms pertaining to the new location, new culture and new people around them. So cultures, identity, and subjectivity - these three things always capture the scenario of intellectual debate.

Identity and subjectivity become problematic when different cultures collide and the question of managing the experience of physical displacement and facing the need to reconstruct home away from home or making a new home comes. Even if it is a new home, what postcolonial critics put it, it becomes a 'palimpsest' or a place where traces of previous memory lasts even in a faded version. Concepts like hybridity, transculturation, and hyphenated status pop up when Indian diaspora is in the mid-way and when there is an ongoing dialogue between two cultures.

³ "Palimpsest" Originally the term for a parchment on which several inscriptions had been made after earlier ones had been erased...While 'layering' effect of history has been mediated by each successive period, 'erasing' what has gone before, all present experience contains ineradicable traces of the past which remain part of the constitution of the present."(Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2009:174)

Though old and new diasporas are different, both of them had and have identity issues. In fact, for the old diaspora, it was difficult to negotiate since it was not a techno-rich world and the memory of past was always close to their heart since their voice could not reach their people. Referring to the first generation of the Indian diaspora, the displacement which in most cases was the forced one if not in the strict sense of the term, they tried their best to do everything which could be done to adapt to the new environment. Women *Sarju* on

Ibis carried the Opium seeds: “seeds of the best Benares poppy” (*Sea of Poppies* 310). There can be different reasons following the sentiments of this act. They may have thought that they won’t be back and tried to preserve the rare seed to use in the new land or they may have carried something carriable closely connected to the place they belong to reconstruct home away from home. The seed is the symbolic of fragments of memory as well as the very Indian Identity, the Indianness⁴ which will grow and bear offspring in favourable circumstances.

This loss of identity can be linked with Gusted, protagonist of Mistry’s *Such A Long Journey* who keeping aside a ballpoint pen and holding the fountain pen, says,

“No one wrote with them anymore, not even in schools. But at one time that was how children made the transition from pencil to ink. That was the bloody problem with modern education. In the name of progress they discarded seemingly unimportant things, without knowing that what they were chuckling out the window of modernity was tradition. And if tradition was lost, then the loss of respect for those who respected and loved tradition always followed” (Mistry 1991:80-81).

If migration is a process, the diasporic sentiment is the outcome. ‘Diaspora’ is a complex term that accounts for scholarly debates. Today the term is being everywhere-literature, anthropology, area studies, ethnic studies, film studies, History and queer theory. We understand diaspora by the historical dispersion of Jewish people. Dispersion is painful as it goes against someone’s will, i.e., forced. At the same time even if it is a voluntary one, leaving the home and settling somewhere else whatever reason it has behind it, also asks for many adjustments in terms of physical and emotional.

“A diaspora exists precisely because it remembers the ‘homeland’. Without this memory...these migrants and settlers would be simply people in a new setting, into which they merge, bringing little or nothing to the new ‘home’, accepting in various ways and forms the mores and attitudes that already exist in their new country and society.” (Lal, Reeves, and Rai 2007:18)

Studying diaspora requires a two-fold perspective -looking at the home and

host land. The continuum thread of memory of homeland and the forceful emergence of a new identity while negotiating between 'no more' and 'not yet' is the essence of 'diaspora'. When new diaspora emerged out of globalisation, old diaspora out of colonial capital and are equally important to be studied so far diasporic sentiments are concerned. Here my focus is on old diaspora and how they constructed, reconstructed their identity. Earlier the migration was mostly labour oriented to the British colonies, but the phase of transnationalism witnesses the shifting of movement to United States, New Zealand, and Australia for various reasons - as professionals, skilled, as intellectuals to pursue higher education, to access better opportunities and lead a better life etc. To understand the multi-dimension of new diaspora, it is necessary to trace its root and the route. History is a process and a connection between old and new, past and present. To understand the 'new' better we need to go back to its old forgotten past. So studying the old diaspora makes studying the contemporary ones easy.

Migration is necessary to some societies, for survival and for betterment. From Buddhists monks to contemporary transnational migrants, every migration is not a curse. Tracing the history, we will find that reason behind the migration differs. It is said who are refused are 'refugees'. Migrants like refugees also live a fear of being alienated, a trauma of leaving native and leaving behind all the memory connected to that and pressure to accommodate themselves in new place, food, language, culture. This is a universal problem. This process of being in an invisible trauma and continuous and conscious effort taken to be one of 'them' makes 'diaspora'. Their situation is problematic. They adopt the new culture to fit in, not to be left alone. At the same time, they regroup, re-socialise and form a brotherhood to make the new journey less difficult and reproduce them as marginalised and alienated.

Culture is not universal and not even one. It is not singular. Having the own distinct cultural background, Indian diaspora also becomes a distinct entity. They

are nevertheless, Indian as they persist and retain some extent various social and cultural patterns and cannot completely belong to the new place as they remain as outsiders to others and sometimes they themselves stay alienated. They may not hold each and every Indian habit but at least continue doing or believing something which has its roots in India like their food habits, using some words in conversation or obeying cultural norms which are typical of Indian flavour. These unchanging habits consciously or unconsciously are actually strong ties and bear the firm grip of the very Indianness. Sometimes because of these persistent habits which are considered not native in the new land, they experience ethnic discrimination, ethnic conflict and political struggles. Still, the Indian heart continues to carry the smell of the soil with its every beat. It questions itself like Nerada C. Chaudhary (1992) '*Ami keno Bilate Achi*' (why am I living in England) because it considers 'Bilat (England)' foreign, not native and staying somewhere which is not own, leads to questions.

Migration in itself a symptom of globalisation, the transformation of ideas and values has become a source or creator of the mosaic population or a mestizo identity. It is an essential part of human history, from the trade of precolonial, colonial indenture, merchant, convict, cook, soldiers and postcolonial migration of both skilled and unskilled, every shifting has a story, an analysis and a critical reception. The concept of contemporary South Asian identities sprang from the human movement, holding the gone memory close to the heart, imagining that place to be the best and hoping to return there one day, the contact and amalgamation of two different cultures and being the diaspora. In the global sphere, the intellectual wind is towards the hybridity, the third space or the in-between identity of the migrant while coping with two different clashing identities. The want of efficiency in daily life and absence of freedom in both civil and political spheres make people think of moving from one place to the developed place. Many don't see the society they live in a right place and allow their children to grow there. Failure of these civil societies, makes people migrate and become (new) diaspora. These

experiences of everyday life and structural context of that experience makes the discipline of cultural studies possible.

Studying Indian diaspora is all about what they do; what they feel; how they negotiate; what they know and what they want. The contemporary South Asian group is formed because of the pain of yester years. So to understand them better, we need to look back. But how the emotion is being addressed by the diaspora itself and by also the world is also another major question to deal with. How they articulate that emotion is what makes them 'diaspora'. How they preserve that memory close to their heart is what makes them 'diaspora'. *Bahram's* constant crossing of borders of India and China shows transnationality, his love for a Chinese girl and having a son shows hybridity and his constant addressing of his emotion for chimei lob-pidgin is also a mosaic of two cultures. He speaks mix Hindi-Chinese that also again the mixture. Roy puts it,

For Parsis in the Indian diaspora, the fact of being a Parsi Zoroastrian marks his/her racial and religious identity followed by the nationalist and the wider transnational identities. Far from cancelling each other out, in *Bahram's* case, they complement one another. Since too much focus on ethnicity leads to fetishization and essentialization of identity, the mobile, hybrid Parsi self operates in ever-widening circles of being and belonging: "Where it concerned matters of belief Parsis had clung faithfully to the old ways, ... but in other respects they had borrowed freely from the customs and usages of their neighbours" (2014:12).

When people cross the boundary, there is a consistent pressure to accept the new situation and gets acquainted with it to avoid the hostility or being alienated in the new world. In that case, it becomes difficult what to choose because of the constant mental dilemma, a diversion of the road and a struggle between the authentic self or the tie with past that makes them believe who they really are and where they belong to and the assimilated other or the changing accepting part of the mind that brings challenges in every step to bring in changes. That moving from established comfort zone to the plurality makes the individual interrogate their self, their belonging, and their identity. Amidst the new people, they feel this

sense of alienation. So they search to build their world, their identity where they can breathe peacefully. Before that comfort label, they need to first discover who they are and there comes every memory of past which makes them realise and many things like language, food carries an important role in reminding them of their past and also becomes one asset in creating their present.

“The move away from the singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organizational categories has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions...” (Bhabha 1994:15)

The struggle in mind puts them in a middle position. The term that best describes this state of being is “liminality”. Liminality is derived from the Latin word *līmen*, meaning "a threshold" which in the diasporic sense means the in-betweenness. Bhabha says,

“It is in the emergence of the interstices--the overlap and displacement of domains of difference--that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How are subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)” (1994:16).

Language as identity marker

“SaareJahan Se Accha, Hindustan Hamara”- [Muhammad Iqbal](#)
(Our India is better than any place in the Universe)

The Indian diaspora is heterogeneous, a challenging, and complex phenomenon. By crossing the geographical boundary of a country, the diaspora transcends and undermines the border. This border here does not only refer to the geographical boundary, but also the social, cultural, and the economic. A border is both political and cultural. But crossing the line does not mean making the culture universal. Homogenization of culture is a myth. Though to a certain extent, they understand, respect and take in a new culture, the tie with the past in one form or the other remains. This in-between state makes them – diaspora.

They suffer from dual loss-loss of the connection (both physical and emotional) they already have and another loss is the pain in holding that memory. Memory is not always a good one. Sometimes memory drills us, shakes us to the core and makes us long for the moments which are gone. In the new land, they dwell in between two different cultures, ideologies, people, and politics. Even if they form a bond with the new things, again it becomes problematic when questions of race or authentic identity prop up. So far as the tie with the native place is concerned, they don't break the connection they have grown with. The tie continues. They may belong to old or new, the tie never breaks. Coming to the old diaspora, when there was no chance to access something that they left, this longing became stronger, deeper and by having no chance of being expressed in front of the people they left or they love, they formed communities to share and that became a strong part of their identity.

Language is one prominent part of that tie. With language they negotiate; they articulate who they are, the very them. It is obvious when we meet someone from our own place, we start talking in the shared language to make the conversation more informal, native and to feel that we both share the same connection. A sense of belongingness comes even if we don't deliberately want that. It is quite natural and known. Vinesh Hookoomsing says,

“When Gandhi stopped in Mauritius in 1901 on his way to India from South Africa, he addressed the local Indian business community in Gujarati.”(2009:36)

The language the migrants have used for a long time is close to their heart. They may cross the boundary, but keep on holding the language. They identify their own people from the language and make their community, share the same experience, same pain. Forming diaspora, language is an important thing. Even English is the most popular language when colonisers made the world believe that it occupies a higher position so far as hierarchy of status is concerned and falling a prey to that manipulation or understanding its wide acceptance,

people consider it as an upper-class language but a migrant heart always falls for their native tongue to form community using shared past, using shared history, using shared food and language.

“...the awareness made Neel giddy, exultant, eager to explore this new realm of power; in this jail, he decided, as in the rest of his life as a convict, he would speak English whenever possible, everywhere possible, starting with this moment, here.”(*Sea of Poppies* 2008:197)

In religious gathering and in functions, they speak and even listen to the songs and dance along with the tune of that which gives them a sense of being close to the place. Dialogue of Karan Johar’s Hindi movie K3G, ‘*Ye desh hamara nehin, ye log hamare nehin...*’ (This country does not belong to us nor its people) while a wife appeals to her husband to go back to India when he was doing great in terms of career front proves the longing of an Indian heart. Many Hindi movies focus on this feeling.

Habits die hard. People can change their food habits, dressing sense, but language can’t be hidden. It comes out whenever it has a slightest of the favourable environment. While counting money, the intrapersonal communication, singing when happy or sad or writing the experience, it is the language close to us comes to the front. All these make a diaspora realise of the place he/she is from and at the same time the realisation of being ‘foreign’ in the present place. In *Sea of Poppies* when the ladies know that they are from the same place from the Bhojpuri language, a bond started growing. Whatever they expressed may be about caste, past experience, reason behind coming as labourers, they expressed in *Bhojpuri*,

“É tohran jāt kaun ha? the girl asked eagerly. And your caste...my husband and I, we are Chamars... you can be bhaijhamār – my sister-in-law...she gave Deeti’s hand a little squeeze as if to affirm a special and secret bond” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:158).

When *Neel* knew that *Paulette* is from Calcutta, a fondness and a connection grew.

In *River of smoke*, Neel talks to Asha didi in Bengali; even he addresses in Bengali when he met Jadu, “*Tuikothay? Tuikothay re Jodu?*”(Flood of Fire 307). Even Shireen talks in her tongue with Dinyar,

“Majhanuche? How is it, Dinyardeekro? ...Su thayudeekro– what’s the matter, son? ...Su kaochthame? What are you talking about, Shireen-auntie?” (Flood of Fire 2015:330)

Even today, there are many Hindi channels operate overseas. People love to watch Hindi songs not only because of its language but also for its settings, the Indian space and characters, for particular cultural traditions. We can look at the songs like *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* (But My Heart Is Still Indian) from the film *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* (2000) and *Yeh Mera India/I Love My India* from the film *Pardes* (1997) and feel how these songs express the sentiment of our diaspora. The phrase, *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* was itself taken from the chorus of the classic song *Mera Joota Hai Japanese* (My Shoes Are Japanese) from the Nehruvian era film *Shree 420* (1955). The lyrics show the continuation of Indian connection after staying in a multicultural space and adopting their lifestyle.

“Mera joota hai japani, yeh patloon Englishtani
Sarpe laal topi roosi, phir bhi dil hai Hindustani.” (Shree 420 1955)

Listening to the Hindi songs or watching Hindi movies shows the anti-colonial struggle, a revolt for the sovereignty of own history being in the land of colonisers. It further can be looked at in different domains - domain of scientific and technological growth of own land and undermining the imperialism of colonisers. Nilanjana quoted Partha Chatterjee,

“Its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battles with imperial power” (qtd. in Bhattacharjya 1993:54).

‘Longing and belonging’ is the same wherever Indians stayed or still are staying. There is no denying that due to heterogeneity things are different but certain things are common when the Indianness is concerned and especially in the

contexts of old diaspora when migration was more or less a forced one. It may vary from place to place in terms of its being shown or in terms of variety of the language or in terms of how deeply the diaspora is being impacted and reacted to the surroundings. The advent of globalisation has built bridges between nations and has done its best to connect to once socially or culturally-excluded minor ethnic groups in the host country with the homeland. Contemporary march is from making little Indias to the making of extended India with finance, trade or tourism interconnectedness. Amitav Ghosh's novels under discussion have thrown light on the lost past when people first migrated as *grimtyas*. Human race evolves. Societies change with time. But History shows a connection with the past. History is not simply a collection of past events, rather a mirror, and a voice which shows us our past and how our present somewhere is connected to that. That is why the contemporary movement of 'Decolonisation', the anti-colonial struggle because the ambience is still colonised and in an intellectual sphere, the revolt is to free from that spell. Diaspora's hyphenated status i.e. for example, Indo-American makes the first word 'Indo' prominent saying in a silent language that they are Indians first. Here comes the question of identity and the ways to respond to that and language is a powerful medium in helping them to articulate and to reach the desired identity.

The indentured labourers to Mauritius were not from the central province of India. They were mostly from Bihar, Gujarat and in some cases from South. The linguistic variety compelled them to hybridise the language to understand each other and to exchange emotion. They lost family and caste (superficially). So they urged to get at least a group of people who faced the same loss and as a result that shared past led to the situation where they got extended families. Rebonding far from the native place proved to be a source to hold the past moments. Talking about identity, language again holds an important position to restore lost identity, to negotiate to come with an identity to suit both the past and present situation. People communicate via language and more than that they express the emotion

while exchanging words. Language matters. It is used to communicate, to build a community, and above all, to build a connection between the present status and the lost status. It never lets the person feel that he/she is far away from the place once was his own. It connects the person to the memories of the place, of the people, of the moments. Whatever be the lingua franca of the new place, they use language that they think 'their' own and among themselves they create a new bond and form a group. As Vinesh Hookoomsing argues,

"The linguistic diversity brought by the Indians into the 19th century Mauritius and their recourse to Bhojpuri as lingua franca are well-known features of Indian settlement in Mauritius"(2009:37).

Amitav Ghosh has given due importance to the language by repeated mention of *Bhojpuri* words and sentences throughout the novels. *Bhojpuri* is spoken as a form of broken *Hindi* or *motya bhasha*, *Hindi* being the refined language while *Bhojpuri* being the dialect. Dialect is looked down upon always. It is not considered language by itself. Colonialism brought linguistic marginalisation by insisting on learning English for their benefits in the name of educating the native. Again dialects are not considered as a language in this scenario proves the double marginalisation. Which language is culturally and emotionally superior and which one is inferior is the internal quarrel that drags this issue to the level of identity. By speaking a dialect in this context means raising voice against the marginalisation which is both in the hands of native and colonial. *Bhojpuri* is chiefly spoken in the Purvanchal region of Uttar Pradesh, in the western part of Bihar and in the northwestern part of Jharkhand in India. Holding the mother tongue is in one way revolting against colonisation by going against the imperialism of English. Sociolinguistics and social science discourse in the context of the diaspora are interrelated. The emergence and evolution of a language in a diasporic sense are usually parts of a larger attempt to retain the cultural identity that the migrants believe to be lost with the shifting from their native place and feel a sense of alienation in the host place. They continue speaking their mother tongue and after a long stay, there comes the emergence of a

hybridised language, the pidgin which is the mixture of mother tongue and language of the new place. In the context of the Indian diaspora, Hinglish is most prominent one.

Before the pidginization or creolization, continuing with the mother tongue is a remarkable effort of the diaspora to claim their lost space. As Vinesh Hookoomising quotes S.Gambhir (1986) regarding the formation of Mauritian *Bhojpuri* that

“First Stage: Bihari and Hindi based multi-dialectalism;
Second Stage: Linguistic adjustment and dialect levelling; and
Third Stage: Emergence of a common linguistic system-Mauritian Bhojpuri”(2009:38).

They find their language as their identity and embrace it close to their heart. They also make a community and by exchange of language, food, memory, they try to restore their loss. Diasporas are always looked at as two groupisms-multiculturalism and multilingualism. Immigration has allowed a nation to be multicultural. It allows diverse culture, languages, individuals, groups, institutions collide and leave enough room for a positive relationship among them. When people from different cultures stay together, an awareness of multicultural space happens. Many a time multiculturalism also brings racial discrimination, indifference, marginalisation of dominant culture towards the immigrants' culture. So thinking of multiculturalism as a boom will be a romanticised notion. Prior to that, in the diasporic sense, it is the awareness of one's own culture and belongingness to that leads him to multicultural awareness and interactions. In this context a clear idea of culture is essential.

“Culture is a construct that captures a socially transmitted system of ideas-ideas that shape behaviour, categorize perceptions, and give names to selected aspects of experience.” (Locke1998:03)

Since language and culture are interwoven, multiculturalism gives rise to multilingualism. Defining multilingualism, we can say that

“... multilingualism fulfils complex communicative functions, in which general linguistic qualities manifest themselves in specific forms, and in which individual and collective, static and dynamic, systematic and cultural aspects of different languages are united” (House and Rehbein 2004: 2).

Diasporic nostalgia compels the Indian diaspora to look back to the homeland. Memories always force them to hold onto the language because human world is constituted of language. Dynamics of language in the society believes in expressing not only an individual rather an identity, a community and a culture. This is the politics of linguistics that finds a place for holding a particular culture amidst cultural pluralism. N.Jayram says,

“In Mauritius, Fiji and Surinam, Indie languages are still spoken. A local dialect of Bhojpuri is used in all informal spheres, and standard Hindi in religious and cultural domains. In Fiji and Mauritius, standard Hindi is even officially recognised” (Jayram 2016:41)

In the context of the novel, *Deeti* speaks “strange mixture of Bhojpuri and Kreol” (*River of Smoke* 12) in the journey to her shrine, “Revey-té! É Banwari; é Mukhpyari! Revey-téna! Hagléba”? (*River of Smoke* 2011:12)

“Asha-didi’s fluency in Hindusthani and Bengali often came as a surprise to Achhas for there was nothing about her to suggest a connection with their homeland.” (*River of Smoke* 2011:584)

Neel clings onto *Bengali* and even in China, *Shiren* speaks Gujrati. *Neel* becomes very happy when *Asha didi* greets him with her *Bengali* phrases like “nomoshkar, kemon achhen?” (*River of Smoke* 591) and “Ekhaney ki korchhen?” (*River of Smoke* 592).

“she greeted them in a familiar tongue – Hindusthani, perhaps, or Bengali, both of which she spoke with perfect ease.” (*River of Smoke* 2011:585)

Understanding the importance of presence of multilanguage Ghosh says in his interview,

“...We live in a society where heteroglossia is commonplace. It’s a society where, if you seek to

represent that society in a single language, no matter what that language is, you are in some profound way distorting the reality of that society...”(Kumar 104).

Ghosh has shown that during the journey in the ship, the labourers were speaking in their regional language. It shows the persistence of the Indians in using their language. Even after going to an alien land, they could not quit it fully. May be because of the fear of being converted to Christianity, their children also did not learn the alien language in the school. Obvious enough, their own mother tongue became the dominant one. When there came a need of understanding, being understood and to communicate to the authority, they adopted creolised English as the link language. Sometimes that is called as ‘plantation Hindustani’. Quoting Tinker (1993: 211-12), Jayaram argues that,

“the plantation Indian learned to regard language as a means of protecting himself—making himself understood, when this was needed, and making himself hard to understand when that would serve him”(qtd. in Jayaram, “The Dynamics of Language in Indian Diaspora” 43).

Showing the census data, Vinesh Hookoomsing says,

“Statistical language data on Mauritius were obtained through the census for the first time in 1931, but at that time they concerned only the European languages, that is, English and French. In 1944, Hindi... Creole and Chinese were added. From 1952 to 1972, specific Indian languages present in Mauritius were added, namely, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Gujarati”(2009:42).

In negotiating identities, language is considered as important in diasporic studies. Social science has explored this area more than linguistics and sociolinguistics.

“As Stuart Hall (1990) has pointed out, diasporas are changing communities, always creolizing the language and values they encounter in diverse lands” (qtd. in Canagarajah and Silberstein 2012:81-82).

“With the creation of an indentured community of “ship-siblings from the Ibis” (RS 11), culture flows between national boundaries undermining the modern narrative of a homogeneous nation. A product of this intercultural negotiation is the “strange mixture of Bhojpuri and Kreol” that becomes Deeti’s “personal idiom of expression” (RS 4)” (Roy 2014:7).

Food as identity marker

“Certain things bring us together - food, faith, fashion, art and music- and then it does not matter whether you have recently arrived from Surat or are a long-term resident of Surrey or Sydney” (Lal, Reeves, and Rai 2007:13).

Most of the personal memories are connected with food. Food though seems simply a means of survival bears cultural tales. It brings happiness. We share food to spread happiness and that happiness gets imprinted in memory along with people and place. In academia, literature and movies, it gets mentioned as memory bearer. In the diasporic sense, it is important in connecting people with their memory, happy or sad. Certain foods are reserved for certain occasions. The way that is prepared is different from normal days. In festivals, we make, eat and distribute food. That spreads happiness, satisfaction and that is viewed as the culture. It shows where we belong to. So food is an important aspect of culture. With globalisation or before it, when people crossed the boundary and carried memory along with them, food occupied a special place in that memory and again while sharing the memory food again helped them in negotiating with the changed ambience, forming communities, in defining who they are and in getting and spreading happiness.

It is seen as a marker of retention of memory of homeland, identity formation and balancing the journey between regional/national identity and a creating a new one. When we come to talk about research in the diaspora, we can find that a great deal of academic work explores this interplay of food in diasporic sentiments. Understanding food habits of a particular group can lead us to understand their cultural past and their present.

“Food is....the medium through which a system of relationships within the family is expressed. Food is both a social matter and part of the provision for care of the body. Instead of isolating the food system; it is instructive to consider it frankly is one of a number of family body systems.” (qtd. in Devasanayan 2009:160)

“If there is one sure thing about food, it is that it is never just food—it is endlessly interpretable—

materialised emotion”. (qtd. in Mannur 2010:107)

So far as Indian mentality is concerned, food carries a message of kinship. Anthropologist Robin Fox says,

...Food is almost always shared; people eat together...Food is also an occasion for sharing, for distributing and giving, for the expression of altruism, whether from parents to children, children to in-laws, or anyone to visitors and strangers. Food is the most important thing a mother gives a child... Thus food becomes not just a symbol of, but the reality of, love and security... Ethnic food preferences only become identity markers in the presence of gustatory “foreigners”, such as when one goes abroad, or when the foreigners visit the home shores (“Food and Eating” 1-2).

Connecting food with memory, Sidney W. Mintz and Christine M. Du Bois say,

“In consecrated contexts, food “binds” people to their faiths through “powerful links between food and memory” (“The Anthropology of Food and Eating” 107).

They further continue saying in “The Anthropology of Food and Eating”,

“...food functions in social allocation, in terms of ethnicity, race, nationality, class... Ethnicity is born of acknowledged difference and works through contrast. Hence an ethnic cuisine is associated with a geographically and/or historically defined eating community” (Sidney and Du Bois, “The Anthropology of Food and Eating” 109).

It carries the shared moments, culture and by making the particular food is like going back to the place in memory and sharing it is further strengthening that memory. This is what they were making *Bengali* food and *Neel* while eating that remembers of Calcutta (present Kolkata), of the place he belongs. The concept of ‘home made’ food brings the image of ‘self’ and ‘other’. Strong aroma of Indian spices makes the mouth of the whole world water. Even we can see making food and spices important in novels like *Mistress of Spices*. Food establishes “rhizomatic connections”(Hedge 90) and just goes on if it is in diasporic connections.

“...Jodu would be ravenously hungry and had arranged for Asha-didi to send over plenty of food – rice, beans, bitter melon, fish curry. Mithu had also made some luchis.”(*Flood of Fire* 2015:170)

River of smoke saws even in *Deeti*'s shrine in Mauritius, there is the mention of "the feast that followed the puja" (*River of Smoke* 12) and in food "parathas and daal-puris" (*River of Smoke* 12) are eaten and loved even staying far from the country she continued with the concept of food after worshipping. These fragments of memory - what she once did, ate or knew connects with her with her past and holding that fragments diaspora reconstructs its identity.

"Chai garam, chai garam! Particularly eagerly awaited was the mid-morning tumbler of chai, which was usually served with a snack...called a samosa – these were small triangles of pastry...Being the ancestor of a popular Indian snack, they were consumed with much relish in the Accha Hong and were spoken of familiarly by their Hindusthani name – samosa" (*River Of Smoke* 2011:347).

When we want something but don't get, the hunger, the urge gets doubled. This is true in every sense. It is like Freudian concept of suppression which says when human mind suppresses something like a traumatic experience, a pain, a memory or an urge because he can't handle it, that very thing in his unconscious sense remains; never gets deleted permanently and keeps on coming making him want that more and making the 'hunger or the urge ' stronger with time. This is same in the case of diaspora and present context of novels we can see the characters may in Mauritius or China, old diaspora continues with their food to keep the memory intact.

"The absence of food does not make a man forsake hunger – it only makes him hungrier" (*River of Smoke* 2011:437).

If the food is served with the special spice of language which is close to heart, then that appears as a perk to soothe the aching heart.

"But Neel had another reason to frequent her eatery: for him the foods of her kitchen were spiced by an additional reward: the pleasure of speaking Bengali" (*River of smoke* 2011:584).

It was also the case with *Asha-didi*'s cooking of typical Indian to be specific Indian meal in China; she got many customers slowly because the food is a space

shared by the community gets united. When Chinese market had abundant good food, why did the *Bengalis* or Indians rush to *Asha-didi*? To get that familiar taste, smell and to get that feeling that they had been missing staying away from home. This is how diaspora manages his pain.

“As word of her cooking spread, more and more Acchas began to seek her out, not just lascars, but also sepoys, sentries and daftardars” (*River of smoke* 2011:588).

“In Hong Kong Asha-didi would be able to start over again, serving biryani, puris, samosas, kababs and all the other items for which her kitchen was famous; with so many lascar-crewed ships in the bay, there would be no shortage of Indian customers” (*Flood of Fire* 2015:312).

Food is not only connected with taste, but also with serving, preparation method, colour, smell or how it is eaten. Everything is special and these things in combination bear the story of a culture. When the Indian diaspora (whatever region he has come from) being far from home, prepares his food, he tries to create the authentic taste and smell which again aggravates the nostalgia. Memory attached to the food gets fresh there. Apart from all the diversities and intellectual debates on cultural pluralism which question the authenticity, the diasporic heart always catches every tiny tie which links him to the lost past. Anita Mannur explains in her essay, “Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora” how in diasporic context, food turns to be “intellectual and emotional anchor” (11) while giving the example of critic Ketu Kartak’s migration from Bombay to the USA. In "Food and Belonging: At 'Home' in 'Alien-Kitchens,'" Indian American cultural critic Ketu Katrak suggests that culinary narratives, suffused with nostalgia, often manage immigrant memories and imagined returns to the "homeland" (Mannur 11). In proving her stand on the argument that food is a language that connects diasporic nostalgia with diaspora’s efforts to reconstruct his identity, she refers to Madhur Jaffrey,

“For ... cookbook author and culinary aficionado Madhur Jaffrey, cooking is one such cultural practice resignified, re- interpreted, and even distorted within the diasporic imaginary... For voluntary exiles and immigrants such as Jaffrey, culinary culture is associated with "feelings" which take on monolithic and

mythological proportions”(2007:14-15).

Anita Mannur further adds,

“Discursive and affective aspects of food are valued over their symbolic or semiotic meaning in nostalgic narratives that negotiate the parameters of "culinary citizenship," a form of affective citizenship which grants subjects the ability to claim and inhabit certain subject positions via their relationship to food” (2007:13).

Today Cookbooks are written as a representation of diasporic longings.

“An Invitation to Indian Cooking by Madhur Jaffrey, the prolific author of numerous cookbooks, and Sara Suleri's memoir, Meatless Days...use culinary discourse to critique nostalgic longings for home and negotiate the pangs of migratory displacement. These texts entangle the language of food, nostalgia, and desire...” (Mannur 2007:13)

Online booking and buying food overseas has also made easy to get the special food with that familiar smell and taste satisfies an Indian heart and it has also made the women making space for them overseas by using their kitchen skill.

“The domestic arena, so frequently associated with femininity, also becomes a space to reproduce culture and national identity” (Mannur 2007:14).

Kitchen, spices and skills to make mouth-watering dishes are the areas always dominated by women. Even after crossing the nation, it does not change. By blogging not only they expressed their love for food and cooking, but also touched every diasporic sentiment which secretly always wants the same taste, same smell that they have once experienced. The online blogging is not just an internet activity, but a phenomenon which gives the transnational identities a way to preserve their traditionalism while expressing their love for food which connects them to their memory of the land they have left and helps in building ethnic communities that share the same love and same interest. Blogs act more like communicating than creating virtual spaces. It helps the diaspora articulating their new identity and creating an India wherever they may be. Prof.Usha Raman and

Sumana Kasturi say,

“The transnational ‘self’ at first looks difficult to attach a cultural or national label to...On closer look, some of the posts demonstrate a sense of being comfortably Indian yet consciously global in perspective and experience” (2014:35).

Women have started their online food business where people get options and order and get within the stipulated time the aroma and taste of a freshly cooked meal. They save money, time and also food is tasty and reminds them of home. There is the frequent mention of food blogs which can be said “literature of the self” (Usha Raman and Sumana Kasturi 25) in contemporary diasporic spheres. Usha Raman and Sumana Kasturi say that women, “...build their presence online and hence construct an identity in this transnational (or global) online space” (2014:30).

Sucharita Sarkar says in her essay “Blogging across borders-Memories, Recipes and Identity in the diaspora”,

Blogs are a versatile medium of self-expression and social interaction in the present century. Apart from their ‘entertainment value’ as popular literature, blogs offer a fluid and post-modern space for negotiating individual and cultural identities. Blogs allow the Diaspora blogger to remember and re-fashion his/her ‘motherland’ and to connect with a like-minded global community from his/her adopted ‘other-land’. The transformative potential of participatory media empowers the blogger to transform his/her ethnic inheritances into a self-fashioned, multi-cultural, multi-dimensional identity (academia.edu).

“The blogs contribute to a shift in the manner and form in which Indian food circulates globally. At the moment when Indian food is trying to secure its identity and place as global haute cuisine in the West, the blogs are claiming a cosmopolitan status for home-cooked Indian food. Through their virtual kitchens, the bloggers strive to introduce a more differentiated picture of regional Indian food.”(Hedge 2014:90)

Looking at the popularity of food blog, cookbooks, we can believe that diaspora loves the food which ties them with the memories of the homeland.

“Migrants preserve their ties to a homeland through their preservation of and participation in traditional customs and rituals of consumption: “Expatriates are adamant, entirely passionate about such matters

as the eating habits of the motherland” (P.Roy 2002:472).

Journalist Jayeeta Ghorail in her article “Indians living abroad take to food writing” published on July 17, 2015, 06.47PM IST says,

Mallika Basu, author of 'Miss Masala: Real Indian Cooking for Busy Living', reminisces how she was "despatched to England for my undergraduate degree by my family, with the recipe for one chicken curry and one dal. I didn't even know how to boil an egg when I arrived at university."...Sandeepa Mukherjee Dutta is an electrical engineer from New Jersey. Her widely followed blog has led to a book by the same name, 'Bong Mom's Cookbook'. "In this far off land [cooking] makes me connect to my home," Sandeepa explains. She hopes that like her daughters, other children born and living on foreign soil can connect to their Indian roots through the channels of food (indiatimes.com).

Today the techno-rich public can enjoy this thing like eating the food and selling the food or sharing a taste of home with their skill. This contemporary facility of technology has helped diaspora in negotiating their loss. Looking at it, we can imagine the plight of the old diaspora when they did not get a chance to reach their people or the days when there was no technology. How would have then they negotiated with the new situation? How difficult would it have been to imagine, express, building memory and then with that memory building connection with the past? This is the pain that helped the old diaspora in forming communities where their pain and happiness got shared.

Amitav Ghosh in the novels used words like *chai* (tea), *samosa* (a fried snack in Hindusthani) to let the world know how even one food item or mention of one word like ‘chai’ was so comfortable to the old diaspora during no media or no techno time. The community got formed on the ship (*Ibis*) because of the underlying pain they have gone through and because of the Indianness and started to “imagine and feel” (qtd. in Hedge 2014:91) together. Lost memory became nostalgia. Once they got down, they used that nostalgia to rebuild the loss and food was one of the available mediums which helped them access their loss.

Some food items are culture specific or region specific, but at the end of the

day, the Indianness gets restored. The human brain is always curious and experimental. Sometimes procedures of making food get fused and give birth to hybridity. Using Indian spices but in the Western method of cooking for a different flavour or taste which makes the diaspora neither leave nor accept something fully and holding on to both the time period of his life. But it would be romanticising things if we talk about indentured labourers and this mix. Obviously, we can imagine this thing about those who did not come back even after the bond is over and settled there in plantations or shifted to somewhere else. Eating the food that the diaspora used to eat home is not a decision made due to low finances, even the Parsis after earning a lot from the trade also love to eat Parsi food.

“Shireen...instructed the cook to prepare aleti-paleti- masala-fried chicken gizzards – one of Dinyar’s favourite Parsi dishes.” (*Flood of Fire* 2015:330)

Identity in the novels

Jasbir Jain says,

“‘Identity’ is the external layer related to color, race, class, social position, economic status, nationality and a whole lot of other outward indicators while ‘self’ constituted through cognitive process, reflection, memory (or in some cases forgetting), education, media, exploration and exposure. It is also constituted by the act of choice amongst other things. It is affected by and affects ‘identity’, and it comes into being through social dynamics” (2004:77).

A choice is one important aspect in forming an identity. The choice of language, friends, food, behaviour, dress etc. shows who we really are. In the novels, some people chose to go as indentured labourers and some are forced or punished. *Kalua* and *Deeti* to save themselves from society, *Neel* was punished; many minor characters are there who are punished. But *Paulette* went as a choice. People who were forced to leave, the migration was not their choice, it was forceful. The need to cope with the situation was needed for them because they were not mentally prepared. So forming a new ‘self’ was necessary for them. By collecting fragments from memory of the culture, they negotiated with the new

situation. On the ship, the lascars arranged candles to make the marriage look a marriage they have seen,

“And what about the fire, for the seven sacramental circlings? Would it be enough to have a candle, or a lamp instead” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:307)?

They continued with their *Bhojpuri* language to express themselves, to share and formed a bond of siblings- the ship-sibling. Coming to clothes, *Deeti* continued wearing saree even in Mauritius. She ate, feed ‘*paratha*’ and even in the pilgrimage to her shrine she tries to “ensure that everyone was scrubbed and bathed, and that not a morsel of food passed anyone’s lips” (*River of Smoke* 12) and there will be a feast after the worship. She even chooses to speak a mixture, a hybridised language, a mixture of “Bhojpuri and kreol” (*River of Smoke* 12). All these things are Indian concepts of being in empty stomach and enjoying post-*puja* (worship) *prasad* (offering) which carry Indian sentiments. These are the things which are not easy to forget; things which are close to heart, things what she thinks are the best and should be continued. This is how she has made her identity, a guru, leading the mass and being a woman that she always wanted to be and a woman who has emotional connections with her birth place *Nayanpur*, her husband *Kalua* and her visions and she herself. She even carves the whole ship clan and narrates the story attached to it. It is like Indian culture there becomes transnational via a shrine in Mauritius, continuation of stories from India and ships in paintings on the walls of shrine, the name her clan which is after her husband’s name “La FamiColver” (*River of Smoke* 11).

“A person's identity is defined as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future.”(qtd. in Sreelatha 2013:441)

On the ship itself *Kalua* becomes *Maddow Colver*, *Deeti* becomes *Aditi* may be perhaps they wanted a new ever desired life. *Deeti* always wanted to voice her opinion supporting justice. It is also seen on *Ibis* that she was leading

being the sister-in-law. *Kalua* always was with the weak and oppressed. His strong physical feature and pure heart in spite of his low caste helped him in gaining a new expressed self. *Deeti* continued her leading qualities even in the new island.

“Jodu turns to be Azad Naskar, Paulette, impersonating into the gumasta Baboo Nob Kissin’s niece Putleshwari or Pugly, is running away from a rigidly defined and divided European community in India. Raja Neel Rattan Haldar becomes Neel and transported as a convict for the offence he has not made” (Sreelatha 2013:441).

Deeti is the perfect voice for Amitav Ghosh. She is found with her vision, though oppressed socially, domestically she has never stopped dreaming, wanting what she really wants, taking care of her family, deciding what to do, running away with *kalua*, marrying him and then going in the indenture. A deep study of novels or a deep analysing the context of the novels, it will be felt how Amitav Ghosh has delved deep not only to the social, political level but also to the corner of the human heart which is out of reach. *Deeti* knew very well what she is doing and even did not step back when the time came to lead. She did exactly what was expected of her. She undermines the double marginalisation which once conferred on her: hierarchy of colonial and social powers. She chooses to be *sati*, to be burnt rather than yielding to the immoral desires of her brother-in-law. Ghosh has given his women a chance to prove them, a chance to rise, given a voice which was always silenced and agency to their ‘subalternity’ which was thrust by the society and colonisers. She emerged as a courageous inspiring leader both as a result of socio-economic background, colonial oppression, sexual harassment, rape that she has faced and also her self-will to cross the boundary set by the society and rose up as *bhauji* (sister-in-law) and as a spiritual leader of a clan. But she did not leave her background. She continues eating Indian food, having a temple, obeying religious norms, being a wife, being a mother, all the things we connect to or we think or mention when we talk about India.

Even then she did not feel herself to be living in the same sense as before: a curious feeling, of joy

mixed with resignation, crept into her heart, for it was as if she really had died and been delivered betimes in rebirth, to her next life: she had shed the body of the old Deeti, with the burden of its karma; she had paid the price her stars had demanded of her, and was free now to create a new destiny as she willed, with whom she chose. (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:121)

Reaching China *Neel* became the manager to Parsi trader *Bahram Modi*. He was punished to be a convict and to go on indenture for the crime he has not committed. He was a man who had illicit relationships, believing in untouchability, behaving like typical *Raja*, lost in lust and luxury. But after being the convict it is that *Neel* who cleaned the dirty body of *Ah Fatt* covered with human faces, taking care of him showing all humanely attributes. Even when *Ah Fatt* urinates on him to win a challenge to get opium in return, he also did not lose his temper. He understood the situation, the human condition and the need for opium to an addict. He shares his language, *Bengali* with *Jadu*, *Asha-didi* and at the same time speaks in English at his job place. Love for what is lost and continuing with what they have is what they did. Inside, he always missed his son and remembered his wife. Language and food helped him in building a bridge between him and what he has lost.

Paulette has also gone through a change from a very shy girl to the confident woman who wanted to be a botanist like her father. She was well read, intelligent and smart. One need was to shed the skin what Ghosh did help her giving her a chance. She sailed being in disguise. Her love for *Zachary* made her win him back at the end even after many roller-coasters of incidents. She assures the lascars when they were terrified of the unknown land that it is a land of beasts. She makes them realise that is not the truth,

“Yes, Mr Reid,’ Paulette repeated, ‘that is my request to you: to be allowed to join your crew. I will be one of them: my hair will be confined, my clothing will be as theirs...I am strong...I can work...” (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:210).

Bahram Modi, the Parsi trader who started his business having nothing and

reached the pinnacle of success with his efforts, sharp brain and opium. He crossed the convention of boundary that man has to love his wife only. He loved a Chinese girl when Parsis were quite conservative regarding love outside the marriage, but never forgot his duties towards his family in India. His gain can be made parallel with the loss in trade and his suicide. Yet, he has shown carrying a hybridised identity, loving Chinese food, understanding the language, loving a Chinese girl and crossing the boundary of India and China frequently.

Both *Shireen* and Neel's wife *Rani Malati* though were not directly connected to the indenture, but the process also impacted and changed their lives. They have shown crossing the veil-clad image and taking care of things in the time of crisis. *Shireen* being a widow and from the orthodox Parsi family, she comes to China to take care of her husband's left business, decides to remarry, even accepts husband's son from another woman. It takes a lot of courage to change a person. But both of them did not lose, rather win the battle. *Shireen* though speaks Gujarati, was wearing salwar and eating Parsi food. Both of these women did not completely forget the ties of their Indianness.

"Men like Bahram-uncle, like myself – the work we do takes us away from home for years at a time. It's very lonely – I think you won't be able to understand how lonely it is. Kharekhar? Really? said Shireen. You think we don't know what loneliness is...?" (Flood of Fire 2015:331)

Malati acted bravely when *Neel* was sent to jail, even trained *Raju* (her son) properly and sent him in the ship which helped him in meeting *Neel*. *Neel* had a mistress. As a wife, *Malati* was always neglected by her husband. Still, she did all her duty of being a wife, strong being a queen, and courageous being a mother.

"Neel stumbled and lowered his eyes; he could not bear for her to look at him; it was as if the uncovering of her face had stripped the veil from his own manhood, leaving him naked and exposed to the gloating pity of the world, to a shame that could never be overcome." (*Sea of Poppies* 2008:118)

Identity makeover or forming a new identity is a matter of choice.

Characters in *Ibis* trilogy: the indentured labourers, convicts, Parsi traders etc. behaved the way they liked or they wanted to do. Main thing is how they did it and what helped them. They took the help of language, food, clothes and above all, their 'selves'. What they learnt, what they went through in the land, in the river, in the sea, they used everything in the new land to articulate a new identity. Their connection with the land, with the memory they left, was always there. That made them who they became. They understood that there is a gap, a gap of culture, gap of behaviour, a gap of language, but one thing was common- the Indianness. Managing that gap created managing identities, managing the loss and gain and also managing in creating a third space to negotiate. This adjustment, this negotiation with the alien environment gives them a new ethnic identity- a hybridised and a hyphenated diasporic identity.

Mondal poses questions of authenticity of novel and he himself answers,

“...some of the most powerful explanatory narratives are those which have served powerful interests and systematically excluded, distorted or degraded the experiences of those without the power to inscribe themselves into such narratives or whose knowledges and beliefs are not recognised by those regimes of truth...” (2010:19-20).

So beyond the question of fact and fiction, Amitav Ghosh is seen using narratives which are powerful, deep and made us question the hierarchical patterns of society, colonisation, gender and ideology. It is through his characters, we can picturise the grand picture of being a diaspora and how and why they do what they do. His characters are not only static humans in a novel, rather living breathing human beings with whom we lived their experience. Ghosh's narration was so real, proper researched and bear similarity with the actual diaspora, every part of it is like a passing image. The story of diaspora may not attract attention if told in documents, but fiction makes others feel their pain. That is what makes a fiction mirror of the society which shows us the reality and at the same time evokes our full involvement in it.

All his works remain a study of ideological debates on the issues of past and present; penetrating through a complex web of historical, political, economical and the cultural nuances. The oeuvre penned down by him stand for assiduous craftsmanship manifesting his creative contribution to the contemporary world and the humanity in general. (Vaishnav 2015:100)

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

In my beginning is my end. (T.S.Eliot, "East Cooker" *Four Quartets* 1943)

Whenever I read this line of Nobel Laureate T.S.Eliot, it makes me think and re-think. It has a deep philosophical meaning which says where we end, we start a new fresh move from there and again says that there is no end. Process continues. No end is actually an end, a beginning of something new, something connected to the old but in a different form. Coming to research, this is not a conclusion rather a beginning of many new queries linked with. Many future ventures to challenge this finding and move from it. No research is the end. It is always open-ended. A new research always pops up and again the search goes on.

Diaspora, an over-generalized term which gives a lot of misconception is actually nothing but a struggle, a growth and in terms of identity it is an achievement of something new which was not there before. People change the place they have been living for years and settle down in a new place for various reasons, which is not an easy process contrary to what it appears to the normal eye. Along with their physical movement, their memory and their connections with the land also get shifted. This feeling in favourable conditions grows. It gets strong when meets with similar and contradictory mindsets. When they come in contact with people with similar feeling, they share their emotion which has been

laid deep within and when they meet situations or people where they feel alienated or where they are alienated, again their very belongingness, their root, their identity in relation to the place they once lived and their every lived memory become fresh.

Amitav Ghosh has brilliantly given a clear picture of the pain of old diaspora. Being able to decide to leave the land amidst the taboo of crossing the sea and being the *girmityas* was never easy for them. The pain they went through both physical and emotional and the marginalisation they faced both by the society because of caste and class and by the Britishers had an impact on them. They were left with no choice rather leaving the place. The sea journey made them come close in spite of heterogeneity in terms of class, caste, religion and reasons behind migration. They evolved as being a new identity, a mixed identity of the past and the strong mindset of embracing the new and they become what we call 'Diaspora'.

Ethnographic studies give us the figures, the data and a systematic presentation of what happened where. This data remain missing from the qualitative research. We fail to figure out exactly how many went as indentured labourers or as soldiers to fight in the Opium war and from which places. However, fiction has one advantage where one can imagine and feel the emotion. It seems a journey along with the characters. Though it has the limitations of not having the number, it represents what happened whatever number they might be. Our focus gets shifted from the number to the humans, to their emotion and we feel them. We understand what they have once gone through. It appeals to the heart. The number never brings change in the masses who have not witnessed. It just gives a report. But the emotion touches every heart how far they may be. Same is the case with the novels under discussion. They are successful in raising pathos among us; making us capable of understanding the emotion of the old diaspora and making us think, re-think, and question the knowledge we already have about them. As Anshuman Mondal says,

“Amitav Ghosh consistently tried to...keep open the channels of communication between ourselves and our others so that we might begin to hear that which [we] do not already understand” (2010:179).

The trilogy that consists of three novels, *Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke* and *Flood of Fire* is written on the backdrop of first Opium War is a tale of old diaspora (the indentured labourers), the Parsi merchants who went to China for opium trade and the soldiers who fought the war. The novels deal with the journey of the peasants who had lost agriculture and land, convicts for minor mistakes, a *Raja* accused of treachery, a French woman in disguise in the path of her dreams, an upper caste widow being accused of adultery with a lower caste that she has never committed and when the truth was the lower caste has saved her from being burnt as *Sati* which was a conspiracy by her brother-in-law to usurp her husband's property. Forced cultivation of poppies in one hand destroyed families and sent people to alien lands. On the other hand, Parsi merchants were profited by trading opium to Chinese market even after restrictions imposed by Chinese authorities. Their story is always hidden in history. No doubt, the opium trade was a kind of smuggling, but at the same time, there is no denying the fact that it strengthened the overseas trade market of India at the cost of the pain of Parsis. Even the soldiers, fifiers, drummers or anyone who contributed to the war from the side of Britishers are the people who always remained in dark. Opium was cultivated. Agriculture was destroyed. Economy suffered. People migrated for food, for a living. Opium took lives making them addicts. People who worked in opium factories also suffered. Parsis who traded opium had to deal with strict Chinese authorities and monopoly of the British and the people who went to the war were also the people who remained far from lights. Along with the novels, all the major incidents of history like indenture, opium trade of Parsis and story of soldiers has got woven together by 'opium'.

Diasporic or expatriate literature is always a tale of rootlessness,

belonging, longing, alienation, and displacement. Diasporic writers staying far from their country go through the same pain that they portray. The tale of nostalgia, the tale of holding tight the memory which is far behind yet near and the tale of being confused in search of identity is the tale of the diaspora. As Uma Parameswaran puts it,

...first is one of nostalgia for the homeland left behind mingled with fear in a strange land. The second is a phase in which one is busy adjusting to the new environment that there is little creative output. The third phase is the shaping of diaspora existence by involving themselves ethnocultural issues. The fourth is when they have 'arrived' 42 and start participating in the larger world of politics and national issues (qtd. in Chapter II-“Indian Diasporic Literature in English” 2017:42-43).

The tie which seems to be lost actually continues. This tale of memory comes to us in the form of literature which may be fiction or movies. As Salman Rushdie says,

“...one physical alienation from India at almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of redeeming precisely the thing that was lost, that will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indians of mind”(qtd. in Chapter II- “Indian Diasporic Literature in English”2017:44-45).

Just the same way Amitav Ghosh has expressed his own emotion along with the tale of indenture. Writers’ diasporic consciousness enables them to feel the belongingness, loss and nostalgia of diaspora, old or new. In this context, Meenakshi Mukherjee’s words in “Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India” say that,

“the birth and development of the novel in India as genre nursed by, if not born out of the tension between opposing systems of values in a colonial society, and modified by certain indigenous pressures.”(qtd. in Vaishnav 2015:1)

From Bharti Mukherjee’s *Jasmin*, and wife, V. S. Naipaul’s *A House For Mr. Biswas*, Kamala Markandaya’s *Nowhere Man*, Chitra Banerjee Divyakaruni’s *The Mistress of Spices*, Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*, Jhumpa Lahiri’s *Interpreter of Maladies* to Amitav Ghosh’s *Ibis Trilogy*, we can see that the diasporic emotion is the same in spite of the heterogeneity in terms of cultures, language, reason

behind migration, class, caste or the place migrated to. The underlying anguish, the longing for the loss, the discomfort of the new environment and the emergence of a new self after going through a turmoil, fear or confusion are same.

Amitav Ghosh is vigorously studied. He is a writer who brings up issues that none addresses. *Ibis Trilogy* talks about the lives woven around opium, pre and during first opium war. He is the first to narrate the tale of forced opium cultivation, Parsi opium trade and pre-opium war situations. Kunal Basu has written *The Opium Clerk* from the point of view of a clerk who has witnessed the opium trade. Though both Ghosh and Basu have dealt with the similar themes, the difference lies in the focus. Amitav Ghosh's focus is not on the war, rather on the situations that led to war and the lives got impacted by pre-war and war both directly and indirectly. His focus is the Indians as *girmitya*, as traders and as soldiers and on their loss, whereas Kunal Basu has focused on three generations of one Anglo-Indian family and narration of opium trade through the eyes of a man who worked as a clerk during that time. Though both of the novels tell the story woven around opium trade, Amitav Ghosh's language, narration and approach are on a larger plane- indenture, Parsi trade, first opium war, soldiers who fought and the lives got affected by colonial monopolisation. As Vaishnav says,

"Ghosh has told Sheela Reddy that his fictions have always been about, "communities coming unmade or remaking themselves...the backdrop is wide but the focus is on an individual..." (2015:11).

Focusing on the way Amitav Ghosh writes, John Hawley says that

"He is obviously clearing a space in his definition of his writing so that the term for what he does will happily include anthropology, historical research, fiction, social commentary, and – in a word – freedom to invent new forms" (2005:166).

Amitav Ghosh's indulgence is mostly with "Subaltern Studies and History" (Vaishnav 55). Social oppression forces people to take decisions against their will and people suffer. Ghosh's novels are also a voice against the marginalisation.

The Circle of Reason shows clear influence of Marxism...Again The Shadow Lines shows multiplicity of ideologies that prevailed in the society during various periods in the twentieth century...the tension between dominant ideology, often of repressive nature and a counter system of belief that challenges the hegemony of the dominant ideology is captured in The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide and Sea of Poppies... (Vaishnav 2015:55-56)

“The Sea of Poppies show how the turn of fortunes and cruelty of fate and society forced these characters to take up the journey which gradually leads to a brotherhood of shared pain”.(Vaishnav 2015:66).

Along with “unexplored places” (Vaishnav 93), Ghosh also deals with unexplored themes. He is the author who is read not to escape from reality. Rather, to face and to question the knowledge we already have. When the world of fiction hardly deals with climate, Ghosh’s latest book, *The Greatest Derangement* talks about climate change issues making it clear that writers’ job is to bring a mirror in front of the society and to reform not by telling rather by showing where the society is heading to by analysing their present actions and showing how it can impact their future. What makes Amitav Ghosh special is “the amount of research work that he carries out before writing” (Vaishnav 2015:100-101).

The Diasporic literature generally deals with the problems that the diaspora faces. Considering this aspect, *Ibis Trilogy* can be studied from other perspectives as well.

- The identity crises of diaspora hold the chief concern of research. The liminal or the in-between or the third space of the characters can be looked at with reference to Bhabha’s theories and on the findings of ethnographer Arnold van Gennep and British cultural anthropologist Victor Witter Turner how far characters have succeeded in negotiating with the new society and attained a new identity, a third space and how postcolonial and anthropological studies talk about this liminal space. How diaspora attains this new space and what happens after that? What happens during the process? Is this new space beneficial or a curse? How liminal space relates diaspora with the past and present and does this new space make a new culture or mere objectify them?

- The ocean is a major aspect of diasporic studies since old diaspora crossed the boundary of nation, boundary of social taboos, the boundary of own fear along with it. The emergence of a new identity is helped by their journey in water. The water bears their tale. This can be studied to show how ocean being the palimpsest holds every tale that has crossed its bosom defying every Eurocentric canonical representation which tries to delete and reconstruct the native history.
- Throughout the novels, we can find the presence of ecology- Sea, ocean, crops which are mingled together. So the novels can be studied from the point of ecocriticism to show the relation between ecology and human beings and how literature shows this relationship proving the interconnectedness.
- *Ibis trilogy* can also be studied as a part of postcolonial literature since the texts bear characteristics that fall under the broad category. The colonial oppression, monopoly and exploitation; the consciousness of self; a narrative that constantly goes back and comes forward; memory holding a strong place throughout; frequent mention of native languages like *Bhojpuri* and *Bengali*; rewriting history qualify the trilogy as a postcolonial text.
- The third novel of the trilogy that broadly focuses on the war and connects it with the first novel by going back to the characters and situations to form a trilogy can be studied as a novel saying about soldiers who fought the first opium war. People crossed the boundary during the war and contributed as soldiers, drummers, fifiers etc. People died. People who came back came with the horrifying experiences of war and the sight of teenagers losing their lives during the war. Before going to war, they went under training. They were mentally prepared to cross the boundary. But how far were they prepared? What happened during the time of war? They again fought the second opium war but the novels don't talk about that. So focusing on first opium war, a study can be done on diaspora who went to war.

Thinking of Amitav Ghosh's oeuvre, Vaishnav in his concluding lines suggests that

“Another possible direction for future research is Ghosh’s involvement with the merger of topographical and cultural moorings from the cultural studies perspective. Ghosh has set out to make a difference to the usage of English language in fiction. This area is also a potential research to carry out...” (2015:101).

To leave something that we consider our own, whatever it may be, without any sign of getting it back, throws us to anguish, anxiety and agony. Just as Alexander Pope’s line “Hope springs eternal in human breast” (An Essay On Man 1733-4), there remains a faint ray of hope of getting it back on one fine morning. We dream and we become happy with the thought of getting back. Same is the case with our people who once left their soil after being manipulated economically, emotionally, and politically for an alien land to earn money as bonded labourers. Some of them came back, some stayed there. But the tie with the land remained and that is never the end of the story. Rather that wrote a new culture, a diaspora culture. That created the saga of diasporic sentiment. Yes, it is true that today diaspora is growing and becoming visible more than ever before. But, we can’t speak of

“...Indian diaspora in the singular. There are, in truth, Diasporas of so many kinds-the ‘dollar’ diaspora of the West and the ‘desperate’ diaspora in the developing world, those which were formed by the ‘brawn’ drain and those formed by the ‘brain’ drain. There are also diasporas within diasporas, whose relationships with India are marked by myriad memories and different distances” (Lal, Reeves, and Rai 2007:13)

Had they never left, never been overseas, never crossed the sea, geographical border, and above all, their own fear, today we would have never realised what our people are capable of even after crossing the seven seas during a time when it was a taboo; being in an alien land amidst strangers facing people of different body colour, different language, different religion, and different culture and above all, facing hostile treatment. Adverse ambience, challenges, and hurdles have never made Indian diaspora weak. They emerged as world’s third largest diaspora giving the homeland remuneration, making the country proud, and making us realise that mere physical absence of some great minds of India from Indian land won’t make India drain of intelligence, power or capability but

wherever they may stay, their gain will always be India's gain, India's pride and India's treasure. Moreover, Indian diaspora has not minimised India rather has made a greater India, an extended India.

Notes

[←1]

People from lower caste, class, and women.

[←2]

Immigration is a physical movement crossing the geographical boundary of a nation to a destined place without possessing citizenship where as being a diaspora is a combination of many awarenesses and complex emotions – being nostalgic about the past and the longing for it, making communities to live the shared memory, possessing a dissatisfactory hyphenated status, continuously facing identity issues etc. If migration is a process, diaspora is the outcome.

[←3]

See Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, especially 174-183 for insightful analysis.

[←4]

Indianness is an emotion; a unique temperament that fills every Indian heart with Indian values so far as ethnicity is concerned transcending its social, religious and cultural diversity.

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