CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Generally postcolonial communication emerges from sharing of colonial treatment in the past. The postcolonial novelists everywhere in the globe declare that their countries have a prominent past, culture and tradition; and they also determine the past from which they have got the sources for their novels. Postcolonial communications stops to be mere altered copy of the West. A fundamental breakup of the European system and a postcolonial rebellion and commandeering of leading European dialogue become noticeable in the procedure of cultural decolonisation. The conventional vision that all cultural and cultural groups as having exclusive qualities and those they are destined with their own defensive unit and cultural ancestry has been questioned in postcolonial communications. Likewise, it has been emphasized that the ancestry, the exclusive quality and even the defensive unit are created in the way of their relocation from one area to the other or from one settlement to another arrangement. The hunt for food and shelter is the main intention of resettlement, but the money-orientated search for capital and principles also rears resettlement by discovering ways to far-off lands and traditions. Therefore routes also control, establish and create traditions.

The regal attack in common and the British raid in specific over the Eastern province like Asia and Africa were stimulated by their push for triumph over and appropriate the rich capital of the East. The enforcement of European traditions,
the coaching of the English language, the coming out of new fields of learning and
knowledge. Departments of government and courts and the opening of trade-
connections aided to institute the Empire of the West. The middle class learned
privileged that had incorporated the principles of freedom, equal opportunity and
brotherhood came out as the latest remedial force and they interrogated and refused
to accept the regal authority guiding principles and its supporting expressions. The
postcolonial disciplines of thought such as Orientalism and New Historicism, and
other various fields of education, unlocked new perspectives of clarification to the
oppressed people. The recently informed age group made an effort to interpret the
imaginings of the subjugated into truth by organising separatist movements which
in turn were sustained by postcolonial writings.

Ironically, it was the same regal instruction which was forced on the
inhabitants that stimulated the anticipations and ambitions of reconstruction the
past among the colonised. With the achievement of independence, people tried to
rebuild their art, architecture, inheritance and position, which consecutively
encouraged them to toil for self-realisation.

Postcolonial clarification endeavoured to assist the oppressed people to
shift from the limits to the core. The requirement for making available the payable
allocation to the colonized by generating new choices and chances drove towards
the appearance of subaltern studies which gave a logical boost to the Tribals, Dalits
and isolated female.

Amitav Ghosh can be accepted as the forerunner of courage and
independence which the contemporary Indian writer in English exemplifies. It is
Amitav Ghosh who has become one of the central figures to come into view as the pioneer to place the post colonial scene on the literary map, yet after the success of Salman Rushdie. Ghosh is one among the writers who combine history with a purely contemporary image of a world free of distinct cartographical divisions. The progression in electronic technology, instant communication and networking, an explosion of global television channels have dissolved all sorts of borders and connected the world closely to a vast level.

Amitav Ghosh is the recipient of a number of awards for his published works. His first novel The Circle of Reason (1986) was translated into many languages. Its French edition received the Prix Medicis Estranger, a prestigious literary award in France. His second novel The Shadow Lines (1988) won two prestigious Indian prizes, the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award (1989) and the Ananda Puraskar. His third novel The Calcutta Chromosome (1996) won the Arthur C. Clarke Award in 1997. The novel was filmed by Gabriele Salvatores, the Oscar winning director of Mediteranno. Ghosh is the winner of the 1999 Pushcart prize, a leading literary award, for an essay that was published in the Kenyon Review. Amitav Ghosh’s fourth novel The Glass Palace (2000) is the winner of the 2001 Frankfurt e-Book Award sponsored by the International eBook Award Foundation at the Frankfurt Book Fair in January 2005. The Hungry Tide (2004) was awarded the Hutch Crossword Book Prize, a major Indian award. He was awarded Padma Sri by the Government of India in 2007. Amitav Ghosh’s work has been translated into nineteen languages and he has served on the jury of the Locarno Film Festival, Switzerland and the Venice Film festival.
Over the past two decades or so, Amitav Ghosh has enchanted readers with novels and travelogues. The fact which is not known widely is that, concurrently Amitav Ghosh has been writing non-fictional prose, reflective essays, political commentary, book reviews, autobiographical articles, academic elucidations and translations from Bengali and literary anthropology. His non-fiction work *In an Antique Land* is rebellious history in the semblance of a traveller’s tale. It is a combination of fiction and history; travel-writing and anthropology which makes to rethink the political borders that split the world and general boundaries that divide narrative styles. The collection of prose pieces titled *The Imam and the Indian* (2002) shares with his fiction certain characteristic subjects and concerns like the connection between past and present, between events and memories and between people, cultures and countries that have shared a past. The travelogue, *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma* (1998) is based upon the author’s travel experiences to countries like Cambodia and Burma and his personal contacts with the native people he had met. *Countdown* (1999) is the result of Amitav Ghosh’s journey into the Pokharan area where Indian government tested five nuclear devices and he expresses the opinion that the pursuit of nuclear weapons in the subcontinent is the moral equivalent of civil war. *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of Our Times* (2006) is a compilation of essays spanning two decades.

In the context of rising political, social and religious unrest, where the world is torn up by terrorism and violence, a study of the novels of Amitav Ghosh which envisage a borderless world of peace, fraternity and love will be highly significant. In the era of globalisation and against the background of the social
construct namely the global village, the study is expected to provide a tool to the readers to perceive the recurring historical events from a new literary perspective.

When the ecological and environmental problems pose a great threat to the existence of living beings on earth, it is mandatory on the part of the contemporary writers to raise the consciousness of the people across the globe and find solutions for the problems. Ghosh in his latest novel *The Hungry Tide* (2004) warns humanity of an impending ecological disaster. Unless people are ready to discard some of the crazy ideas of development, designated as ‘maldevelopment’ by Vandana Siva (Merchant, 1996: 276), global warming and other similar disasters will devour us altogether. Cyclones and earthquakes will become common phenomena, taking a heavy toll of lives. Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* is a reminder to the human community that unless it exercises caution and restraint in the exploitation of nature, it may have to encounter terrible consequences. His prophetic vision came true with the outbreak of tsunami which hit the coastal areas of the Bay of Bengal and obliterated fauna and flora. The catastrophe devastated the whole area rendering many human beings homeless and producing an equal number of orphans without any means of subsistence. Even as India was recovering from the terrible destruction unleashed by the hungry tidal waves, different areas across the globe like New Orleans in America, Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula, Western Cuba, Southern half of Florida and the Caribbean’s had witnessed untold disaster, when extremely dangerous category five storm known under different names like Katrina, Wilma, Beta and Rita raged all over these areas during the record breaking 2005 hurricane season between June and November. In
this context a study of the novels of Amitav Ghosh written with such foresight and intuitive wisdom will be highly rewarding.

To fix Amitav Ghosh in one particular country or culture will be misleading, as he has lived in different locations of the world. Ghosh’s life has been somewhat nomadic. This rootless existence is reflected in his novels as the characters spend most of their lives on the move. Fiction, travelogues, essays, articles, - Amitav Ghosh’s written output is staggeringly large and wide ranging. A visiting professor at various universities like University of Virginia, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania and American University in Cairo, Ghosh has also held the title of Distinguished Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature at Queen’s College, City University of New York. Currently he is a Visiting Professor in the Department of English and American Literature at Harvard. Critics hail him as one of the new generation of cosmopolitan intellectuals writing in English, emerging from the Indian literary scene with a distinctive and confident voice. Apart from being an acclaimed Indian English writer, Ghosh is well known as an anthropologist, an economist and above all, as a globe trotter. He has proved his ability in writing on varied topics like diaspora life in *The Circle of Reason*, the vision of a borderless world as in *The Shadow Lines*, science fiction as in *The Calcutta Chromosome*, re-inscribing history as in *The Glass Palace*, and ecological disaster as in *The Hungry Tide*.

Amitav Ghosh’s main thematic interest likewise is using the travel image to create a neutral space where barriers are dissolved and borders are blurred. It is precisely this universalism which makes Indian novelist of present day stand at par
with and not separate from the global writers of English. Moreover the constant anxiety with the subaltern, who has vanished in the records of history, attracts him towards the readers. The immense amount of research that he puts into his novels is fabricated skilfully in a blend of generic hopes making them perfect attachments for the outstanding thematic interests of the present Indian literary world. A critical study of the main thematic concerns of Amitav Ghosh’s novels is thus an occasion not just to examine a considerable body of work that contemplates up on a central set of problems regarding post colonialism in the contemporary fictional writing with special focus on the marginalised subaltern; but also to view history from the novel point of view.

Postcoloniality comes alive on the pages of Amitav Ghosh’s novels when he tries to supplement the information that he has gathered from history with his insight and observation. In his novels, he assumes the role of a spokesman for the common people and brings to light the agony and ecstasy, pain and pleasure that they have undergone through the voices of fictional characters and thus tries to depict the impact of great historical events upon their lives. Reconstruction of a nation, search for identity and cultural roots also achieve great significance in the fictional world of Amitav Ghosh. Properly documented public events and the undocumented personal lives of individuals in the society are woven together like warp and woof in his novels. This subtle fusion of chronologically ordered history and private experiences of individuals makes his novels an arena for the confluence of history and human insights. Philip Darby, a well-known critic endorses the assumption that ‘fiction’s contribution to historical or political understanding flows from the novelist’s insight, intuition and above all creative
imagination and asserts that these are the qualities lacking in academic analysis (Darby, 1998:34). Hence an attempt is made in this study to analyse the confluence of history and the novelist’s insight, intuition and creative imagination that has gone into the making of the fictional works of Amitav Ghosh.

The present analysis focuses on the role played by the author in highlighting the convergence of history and human insights by analysing the cultural, social and political framework of the historical and fictional characters in his fiction. The way by which Amitav Ghosh combines the cultures of different nations like Burma, India, Malaya, Bangladesh, Africa and England within his narrative framework is being analysed. The study also focuses on the skill employed by Ghosh to knit the social, cultural and political events of different nations and those of the past, present and future.

Ghosh’s novels sketch a lot upon the character, traditions, and divisions of his mother land, yet his hero and themes often stretch further than India’s actual borders most particularly toward the Middle East and Great Britain. Ghosh reveals the cross-cultural relationships between India and her former colonial ruler as well as with her congenial neighbours through his works. Ghosh has journeyed overseas at length and achieved the Doctorate degree from Oxford University, which has been acclaimed by the columnists as one of a new generation of cosmopolitan Indian scholarly writing in English who are counterfeiting a present-day literary art.

Ghosh finds a suitable background as he is talented and innovative. His trials with different forms of novels, current ideas and mode of creative ventures,
Colonization, decolonization, nee-colonialization and recolonization are recurring means of thoughts in Ghosh’s work. He emphasises the requirement for a new type of thinking order which incorporates traditional Indian views with western aptitude of logic. India is a place where absurdity is chased like a creed. False notions, blind beliefs, unfairness, the supremacy of the mystical in the collective consciousness barely allow any new idea. He supports exploration, first hand experience, novel contemplation and improvised way of life.

All of Ghosh’s novels are applicable to the current world and are diverse in form and point of exit. Improving history, documenting one’s individual experience, making fiction, exploring physical facts are all perceived as actions that mix together into each other, as efforts at accomplishing some measure of individual majesty, some degree of personal and communal importance. He is interested with the world of imagination and the several kinds of borders that have a tendency to fold in everybody. These borders may be political, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic, communal, structural or even worldly. But they are all designed for journey. Fantasy and expression lends a hand to everyone to cross all shadow lines and find a suitable place. There is a natural need to go beyond all political borders for making his novels global. Having voyaged a lot he believes travel as a divine quest, a search for attaining importance in a consequent world. Even science is observed as a mode and a product of this holy or artistic pursuit to create the globe in understandable and consequent designs. The eventual plan is to inflict a design, and include oneself in it to give oneself a framework.
The current study endeavours at enlightening the existing issues that constitute in the novels of Amitav Ghosh. He examines and enquires the current concerns craftily. The recent political improvements such as the war on terror, dislocation and its subordinate wretchedness, the assorted and multicultural ambience of the contemporary world accelerated by the universal commercialism, figure the bottom line of his novels. Ghosh copes up with the new literary skills for indicating the entire broken up whirlwind that tremble the current world.

Ghosh’s first novel *The Circle of Reason* appeared in 1986. It is an intricate story of a young Indian boy and his adventures both in India and out of the country. The novel is divided into three sections, comprising the three main stages in the life of the protagonist. Each of these stages also matches the concepts, reason, passion and death, attributes of ancient Indian literature and beliefs. The novel starts with Alu, an orphan, who has an unusually outsized and malformed head. He sets off a fresh life with his aunt and uncle in the town of Lalpukur. Ghosh knits into the novel, the uncle’s odd behaviour and attraction with scientific testings as well as the minor carelessness of other residents of Alu’s new village.

In the second part, Alu, an escapee runs away from Lalpukur following a dreadful incident to a Saharan city across the ocean, followed by a probationary ornithologist policeman. The city, Al-Ghazira accommodates numerous Indian, Arabic and African nomad workforce who have come to toil in the oil fields. This ambience presents an occasion to the novelist to remark on the nomadic tendencies of South Asian and Middle Eastern populace. Here Alu meets odd characters, afterwards is trapped under the misshapen debris of a carelessly erected shopping
complex. In the real nature of tale, though a changed Alu re-emerges and starts to present alike his uncle’s insane zeal for science. In the third segment, Alu alights in North Africa where the different characters and themes arrive at their culmination. Ghosh has handled universal commercialism that has smashed the ancient business traditions.

Nation, traditions and borders are the chief discussion of Amitav Ghosh in his second novel *The Shadow Lines* as well. It takes the migration of East Pakistan as its normal occasion. It is a novel of three generation, the narrator’s Bengali family in pre-partition Dhaka and Calcutta, and their English friends, the family of the Prices whose past includes both the World Wars, the left book club and shades of the current London. This novel sheds light on the irrationality of borders and frontiers, the lines of disappointment and the calamity that crisscross personal lives and public actions.

In *The Shadow Lines* the storyteller is an observer who is also a component of the momentous scene of the disbandment. He is amusingly contemplative, he has dissimilar grabs of eavesdropped dialogues; an unfortunate relative who anticipates the irregular visits of stylish relatives with their description of an enchanted life in foreign capital cities; a loyal admirer of cousin Tridib, a Bohemian archaeologist who rebuilds with genuine detail from his visit to London during the Second World War, when he was nine years old, with the intention of shaping his imaginary character, in case he may be compelled to live with the creation of others. Finally the boy’s consciousness is fashioned and he as a student in Delhi and Oxford makes an effort to join together the parts of the lives of many
and period which include him. The novel knits many stories into a picture perfect quality, putting together actually detached detail into a logical and empathetic whole.

The novel is divided into two sections with the title *Going Away* and *coming Home*, which bend the remains of a recollected life that discloses that habitat is the reminiscence carried along in fascination. His characters come and go in diverse courses that the storyteller is grateful to shoot the question, what is meant by home, and whether there is such a thing as separate mother country.

The first segment starts with an Indian route to England; the second part highlights the narrator's return to the ancestors' residence in Dhaka in 1964. But this return booms with sarcasm. His grandmother wishes to fetch her uncle back from Pakistan, the country of their foes, to her residence in Calcutta. But actually Pakistan is her home, the objective of her ceremonial homecoming. When the grandmother peeps down from the plane as they bypass from India into Pakistan, she is astonished to notice that there is no noticeable boundary on the earth. Hence the new questions such as the most fundamental composition such as peoples, borders, states, space and expanse. Ghosh's investigation is intense than that of investigation of the self to knowledge of others, in time or in void. All these issues come to stand on Tridib's death, a small outcome limited within, to a great extent larger reason. Tridib dies in a rebellion that stretches India and East Pakistan when Hindus were killing Muslims and Muslims were killing Hindus. The narrator can unite the significant rebellions that killed his uncle to the one he witnessed as a school boy only when he was grown up. The detection makes him traumatized and
it breaches (and ultimately destroys) his usual faith that alters actually across which sentiment cannot surge. *The Shadow Lines* refers to the indistinct lines between nations, lands, families, as well as within one’s individuality. His characters are held between two worlds, and the fight to arrive at compromise with both their present lives as well as their past, shapes the centre of the novel. All through the novel Ghosh transports basically idealistic problems into the reader’s knowledge with a kindness, an appeal that mirror the transparency of the storyteller’s character.

In *The Glass Palace*, Amitav Ghosh scrutinizes a less significant, former Indian diaspora with Indians dwelling in Burma and at the same time investigates the groundwork of current Indian individuality. The novel starts with the British incursion of Burma in 1885. Rajkumar, a destitute orphan from India, tiptoes into the prohibited fortress and meets Dolly, a good-looking royal assistant. Through complete cleverness and bravery, he turns out to be a wealthy trader in Burma and gets married with Dolly. Both Rajkumar and Dolly develop proximate friendship with a Malayan tradesman Saya John and an Indian woman Uma whose families were already knotted with the lives of the ancestors of both Rajkumar and Dolly.

History serves further than mere a backdrop for the tale of Dolly and Rajkumar. They battle through an approximately a number of overpowering violent trials; British royalism, misery, Second World War, the Japanese attack on Burma and Malaya, India’s combat for freedom and military rule in Myanmar. Similar to his previous works, Ghosh associates quite a lot of complicated story lines which interlink the existence of many characters in the novel.
The inactual agitations of unrest begin with the crossbreed character of Beni Prasad Dey, the district collector as well as Uma’s husband. He is accountable for the wellbeing of the king of Burma, who was banished to Ratnagiri in India. The collector has attained the final rank of an Indian, as a well-regarded public servant in the domineering country. Eventhen he is disturbed by suspicions and is troubled by the apprehension of his British associates considering him as inefficient. Beni undergoes ill at ease with his uncomfortable situation of continuing to be an enthusiastic subordinate to a foreign authority. Towards the commencement of the twentieth century, the British kingdom had progressed from being an influent trading corporation into gigantic Government machinery, commanding its chain of command and code of behaviour on its settlement. Characters like Beni were strove in putting into effect its innumerable colonial rules, even the most illogical ones, for example, behaving towards the king of Burma akin to an animal in a cage. The Collector as an agent of the regime meddles even in the personal lives of people. The Collector is a catastrophic character, is ingrained with an embryonic patriotism, disenchanted by time and space.

In the late 1930s, a generation afterwards, Arjun, Uma’s nephew carries this self-interrogation to a climax that is excruciating altitude. Arjun joins the British defence force and turns out to be one of the first Indian officers to ascend in its ranks. Arjun is enterprising where few Indians would never dream of merging with the English people and even communicating and acting like them. Since the West symbolizes dynamic modernization, Arjun imitates the Western culture. Still, Arjun is disturbed by the humiliation of the British officers and the grumble of
discontent among associate Indian armed forces that raise questions at the crown’s aims. He starts to suspect his soldier’s training, during Second World War, when he comes across those who are driven towards the aspirations, of the Indian National Army. As a fellow soldier comments, "It was strange to be sitting on one side of a battle line, knowing that you had to fight and knowing at the same time that it wasn't really your fight..." (406).

At the time of the Japanese attack, Arjun comes to realization of what does it mean to give over his prepared physique in a gory fight. He was in awe whether he is in control of his own self. In yielding himself completely to the British army, he understands that "he had never acted of his own volition; never had a moment of true self-consciousness" (431). He has become a machine, well-managed to fight for the crown. He forgoes his very short life which he considers no longer his own. *The Glass Palace* is soaked with these questions of agency and volition. The novel, thoroughly dissects the impact of British colonial enterprise in India and Burma. Ghosh shows how, in spite of all its subjugation, British colonialism has lent a hand to generate a multi-ethnic culture in which Indians and others rebuild themselves. In this novel Ghosh hits a balance between the sweep of history and its intensity and intricacy.

Most of the characters in the novels of Ghosh are Indians migrated to other nations and these books reveal Ghosh’s enduring interest in crossing borders. In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh selects an unusual setting without limiting the boundaries, the Sundarbans. In this group of islands there are no banks or borders to split fresh water from the sea water, Ghosh limits his ground (geographical) to
these islands in the Bay of Bengal as well as (conceptual) to two plots. The first one investigates the predicament of dislocated folks a frequently recurring theme of Ghosh and the second deals with the method in which the men and animals take part in a difficult and dangerous eco system.

Ghosh never recognizes any tale or history as the final fact, as fact differs based on perceptions and settings. Hence, his novels board on an expedition of unearthing for ancestry and reasons revival of the past and of the future. An individual’s life itself is a journey. He has the potential; takes the enterprise and starts on a voyage true to his urge. The ordinary layman goes ahead a life like the wreckage on the surface of the sea while the hero instigates on the pursuit of discovery. He has to go through three stages necessarily in the rites of passage of the quest alienation from his community due to his uniqueness from the group, his wakening up because of his understanding of the existing predicaments when the others are sightless to it; the final stage of initiation engages his bravery and defeating the trials and tribulations during his hunt for some solution to the problems that sickens the humanity. After passing through these means of passage, the hero is developed enough and attains complete manhood. He comes back to his society from which he once fled, not capable of reconciling to the hidden state existing in his society. But his experiences during the launching period humiliate him of all his self-centredness and help him triumph over his unfairness. In the end, he realizes the need that the community expects from him, its clutch on him being very powerful; he comes under its embrace once again willingly and happily to save his people and work for a better cause. Joseph Campbell in his \textit{Hero with a Thousand Faces} (1949) describes these stages in detail. The journey is embarked
on at many levels: the physical and metaphysical and memorial or cultural. The
journey can also be associated to the procedure of individualization after which, a
man develops into a whole man.

Amitav Ghosh’s novels are engrossed with the problems about questions of
harmony in a multi-ethnic set-up and questions that arise from it. The novelist
considers the old modus operandi of pure cultures as utopian in the era of
globalization. Even Holy Books cannot offer solutions to all the current problems.
The protagonist’s journey through the degenerated society for framing a new world
order indicating the likelihood of getting better the existing social order. The
unbending social and cultural environment has to be cast off allowing mobility and
elasticity so as to grip new values which alone can help survival in the world.

The characters undertake a journey to the imaginary motherland where
boundaries are indistinct and cultures smash together creating a perplexity and
complication. Ghosh’s artistic taste is a fictional break up of historical, political
minor concepts and an intellectual examination of both the chief as well as the
oppressed, circumstances of contemporary history, patriotism, internationalism,
emigration, reminiscence, homesickness, brutality and socialism.

The individual’s role in the political episodes, how personal lives get
impinged on, the doubtful character of boundaries whether between nations or
people or between one literary genre or the other, the part of reminiscence in one’s
revival of individuality, the want for redrafting the past, the artist’s part in the
society, the significance of novel in moulding the past are some of the frequent
themes of Amitav Ghosh’s novels, like the other existing writers. He declares that
his necessary interest is in people and their lives, histories and predicaments. In all his novels he has challenged the productiveness of everything. He is intensely interested in the modes of knowledge and in the ways of knowing. John C. Hawley in his book, Amitav Ghosh: An Introduction refers to two of the most interesting themes that persist in the novels of Amitav Ghosh:

The first is the novelist’s enduring interest in paying attention to the voice of the unidentified person, the normal person who is unrecorded in history, an unfathomable slave and his master in In An Antique land, a strange brat living in an Indian railway station in The Calcutta Chromosome an ignored fisherman in The Hungry Tide. John Thieme is among the many who have observed that Ghosh, in all his writings has achieved a greater degree of ingenious compassion, "the product of a humanist concern to transcend culturally constructed differences... with the recuperation and rendering of individual experiences operates against the kind of totalizing theory that habitually consigns subalternity to oblivion. (16-17).

The postcolonial novelists misuse colonialism as an allegory for conveying their experiences to the Universe. Colonialism and the unavoidable post-colonialism that followed have charged a chief cultural interaction and reaction. Postcolonialism is a passionate response to colonialism. It deals with the economic, cultural, social, political and intellectual force of the colonizer on the colonized and their communities. Frantz Fanon, Kafka, Ashish Nandy have also studied the impact of the colonizing process. Edward Said, Gayathri Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha have scrutinized the ground-breaking force of colonialism on the native social order. Their focal point is largely on colonial knowledge, colonial power and the crossing point between them.
These diasporic and colonial consequences can be found in Amitav Ghosh’s fiction. In his novel *The Circle of Reason*, Ghosh explains the disturbing condition of the nomad laborers who have been shipped to Al-Ghazira as:

Those ghosts behind the fence were not men; they were tools- helpless, picked for their poverty. In those days when Al- Ghazira was still a real country they were brought here to slip between its men and their work, like the first whiffs of an opium dream; they were brought as weapons, to divide the Ghaziris from themselves and the world of sanity; to turn them into buffoons for the world to laugh at. (261).

Colonialism was primarily a matter of territory: seizing lands, attacking and enslaving the community of those lands and challenging the purpose, earlier rationale and significance of the territory. The colonized place is awkwardly organized to segregate the land so as to maintain dynamically the chain of command between the colonizer and the colonized. This partition of colonialism articulates and guarantees the other sorts of variations between the colonized and the colonizer. Colonialism altered location, rearrange and streamlining the environment it settled along with the people in the colonized settings.

Arjun in *The Glass Palace* is viewed as the white man’s dual to ultimately face the Colonial power. Colonial ideas such as assignment, intention, faithfulness, rejuvenation, cultural dominance, harmony were the basis of their faith. Amitav Ghosh’s novel lodges over the colonial oppositions and erects an indisputable anti-colonial dispute. It generates a number of frameworks that describe the deception and futility of the colonizer’s supposition. Moreover he exhibits how colonial
supremacy was achieved first by the stable requisition, integration and restraint of disparity, and also by a delicate, sharp, and forceful reverberation of commanding connotations and principles.

Ghosh obtains an occasion to represent the derogatory accusation of the connection between commercialism, technology and neo-colonialism when he explains the entrance of Mariamma at Al-Ghazira. The temptation that catches the attention of the nomads on board is alive in their first sight of the lights scattered along the cape at night.

The portrayal of the colonial as sensible, logical, cultured, learned as in opposition to the colonized being irrational, embarrassed, citizen and uninformed. European colonialism preserved the disproportion of authority and power structures to bottle up the colonized. Colonial structure for its achievement completely depended on the energies, efforts and skills of the suppressed. The mournful sob of the expelled native people as reverberated in Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide stands proof to the condition of the undermined puzzled human race.

Who, indeed, are we? Where do we belong? And as I listened to the sound of those syllables, it was as if I were hearing the deepest uncertainties of my heart being spoken to the rivers and the tides. (25).

Almost all postcolonial novelists take advantage of the idea of taking possession of the mind so as to examine the procedure of decolonizing and re-colonizing the mind. The ideas of low standard about themselves, the working-mind-set, sceptical of their own prospective and demeaning their own cultural
tradition are all implanted in the minds of the people so ineradicably by the conqueror.

Amitav Ghosh takes efforts to make the minds of the people free from slavery through his novels. He takes up concerns such as dislocation, eruption of brutality, multiculturalism as the current trend through which decolonization has to occur. Decolonization as a process has to combat with turbulence/subverted issues.

In the course of the act of taking possession of other countries and people, the west suppressed the colonies politically, cost-effectively, ethnically, traditionally, sociologically and epistemologically. The west utilized both physical compulsion and mental instruction to steer home the misinformation of dominance of the west and the so-called uncivilized people. Under the alleged reason of humanizing the rest of the world, the west degraded other traditions, dehumanized other human - beings and run down the riches of the colonies.

Ghosh communicates his fervour at the unfairness of the territory in all his novels. He tracks the history of weaving in his novel *The Circle of Reason* and talks elaborately about the silk trade and the silk route. The global business routes are more strong-minded by financial forces unfolding the history of colonial misuse. In the same novel he argues how when the British discovered the oil deposits in Al-Ghazira they espoused menacing ways of influence to make the Malik surrender. Ghosh proposes that the outcomes of the detection of oil in the Gulf are as important as the development of the spice deal centuries back. Consumerism is represented as being a more long-lasting and threatening way of domineering nations than absolute colonial violence. However the native people
are also persuaded by the aspiration for the imported commodities and material
assets. The subjugated are deceived into considering that the British people and
their products are of better-quality; hence a demand was created artificially for the
commodities in the perspective markets. Ghosh tries to dismiss this mind-set of the
community so as to break free their mind. Decolonization can take place only
when there is an emotional catastrophe. The colonizer’s scorn for the brown
complexion, the disproportion in their significance and financial condition strikes
upon him only afterwards. This poignant discussion figures the cructip accelerating
the creation of knowledge. Ghosh attempts to read again and write again the
particular pasts through his novels. Through his generous visualization Ghosh
steers home the note that there is "a world of accommodations ...... still alive, and,
in some tiny measure, still retrievable" (237).

One of the postulations on which the research has been supported is that in
a central culture, even when the culture stumbles upon socio-political and
economic alterations in its due course of continued existence, the cultural qualities
will stay stable. The resourceless, itinerant, upset people are more defenceless to
cultural suppression of the colonial masters. The image of orphans and twins
portrayed in Ghosh’s novels appears to propose the tragic results of the division
and the following awareness of the unpleasantness of human ambitions.

The historical characters portrayed in the novels of Amitav Ghosh are the
factual delegates of the socio-cultural and political arrangement of the area,
traditions or nation concerned; whereas the imaginary characters appear to have
their model in the society but is victimized to conversion to go well with the
quality of the effort.

The study intends to utilise the primary works of Amitav Ghosh and the
secondary sources of information to explore the flowing together of history of post
colonialism and its effect on the people. All the fictional and non-fictional works
including travelogues, prose pieces and articles of Amitav Ghosh are reconsidered.
However, the thesis will be confined to the following five novels: *The Circle of

The secondary sources such as review articles and critical works on Amitav
Ghosh, which come within the purview of colonial, postcolonial and subaltern
studies, have been analysed to trace the network of literary theories made use of in
his novels. Secondary sources available in the Internet and interview articles in
journals also have been explored to support the arguments.

The Chapter II would deal with the latest proportions given to the theme of
denial of discrete cultures and borders and the idea of nationalism in *The Shadow
Lines*. The chapter would attempt to study how Ghosh employs memory, time and
place to establish the futility of cartographical divisions, in an indirect narrative.
Ghosh’s division of the book into two parts ‘Going Away’ and ‘Coming Home’, to
bring home the implications of ‘Home’ in a post-colonial state of affairs, where the
native is the traveller, would be discussed. Above all, the effect of the violence
which came in the stir of the partition of the nations, on the personal perception of
the protagonist as presented in the novel would be studied.
Also this chapter discusses the impact of significant events like the freedom movement of Bengal, the Second World War, and the partition of India and mist of communal detestation breaking out into riots in East Pakistan following the Hazratbal shrine incident in Srinagar in 1964. It is an apt eye-opener of the feebleness of partition, borderlines between countries and the cartographical lines which assert to separate people and communities. It is the collective consciousness and the memory of common historical events that transcends the boundaries of nations and brings people of different countries together.

Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* (TSL) is a story that arises out of the narrator’s reminiscences, recollected in tranquillity and looked at with all the wisdom of the retrospection. It is about necessitation as a process, and its probing into in a range of ways. Necessitation is a hazardous misleading obsession, especially when its intention is a smart segregation of human beings into groups on the basis of individual personality. Even then, upholding the meaning of water tight compartments of civilization becomes very complicated when homogeneity is likely to wipe away the well defined boundaries, making them faint and obscure. One of the many attractive components is the way it looks at the accident that tumbled down on the pages of history: the creation of two nations on the basis of the variance of two religious groups and their mutual detestation. East and West Pakistan were engraved out of the British India on the basis of the two nation theory that totally opposed any possibility of co-existence. Boundaries were created and people were forced to adjust their lives and character to accommodate them to the intangible nations that the powerful individuals have formed.
Throughout Ghosh’s novel *The Shadow Lines*, a vast number of post-colonial themes arise into surface, to be examined by the reader, through the consecutive descriptions of the emerging memories of the unnamed narrator who has experienced the effects of colonisation. The novel itself is for the author a means of asserting and at the same time questioning, the notion of an Indian national identity and the arbitrariness of national boundaries through literature; a means which has been extensively used as a tool to “modernize” and subdue the natives under the British Empire. Ghosh ultimately, uses the language of the oppressor, in his attempt to find and define his own voice within it and express his crossbreed identity.

Similarly, within the framework of the novel, the author attempts to bring back Calcutta in his imagination, to characterize its culture and identity again through the conception of what is referred to as an “imaginary homeland” that is approached within its pages, presenting the reader with a possible version of India that emerges partially from the reminiscences of the author and partially from his fantasy, as all that was lost cannot be ever disciplined; *The Shadow Lines* can be essentially characterised as “a novel of memory about memory”. As a result, the assorted notion of public identity is not possible, taking into contemplation that no post-colonial novel can be totally purposeful and precise, or declare to have the complete historical truth; the novel also follows an indirect time arrangement in order to illustrate that.

Moreover, the storyteller in the novel appears to be completely aware of it as he speaks the following words: “when we try to speak of events of which we do
not know the meaning, we must lose ourselves in the silence that lies in the gap between words and the world… and things which did not fit my vocabulary were merely pushed over the edge into the chasm of that silence.” The scrapped reflection of the past that portrays the novels of the migrant diasporic writers, such as Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*, unavoidably allows cultural differences to be exaggerated and opens up room for a multicultural definition of the “self” to appear and crossbreed to be held close. It demonstrates how diasporic dislocation is not simply a loss, but a source of creativity as well; through the rebirth of a new bilingual person and multi-ethnic culture that takes place as a result of it.

The Chapter III strives to disclose the aspect of isolation and imposed dislodgment of the characters that have to go beyond the borders and create numerous adaptations all through their existence in the novel *The Glass Palace*. The novel exposes how Ghosh has woven the stories of a great number of characters from various nations into a post-colonial story of larger-than-life scale. This chapter would examine in detail the identity loss faced by the Indians particularly the Indian officers serving in the British army during the pre-independent period. The prominence again would be on unravelling the destruction of borders which is a result of leaving their countries and adaptations offered by the novelist in his novel.

*The Glass Palace* is a story about three generations of two closely related families in Burma, India and Malaya from 1885 to 1956. As it deals with the history of the British colonization of Burma, it can also be called a historical novel. When imperialism breaks up the frontiers and these borders lays down restrictions
to liberty, the characters of the novel naturally spread out so easily over
countrywide and family precincts through friendship and marriage which turns out
to be complicated to identify a character’s attachment whether an absolutely Indian
or Burmese or Chinese or Malay. This novel seems to be a rewriting of a segment
of the history of the British Empire from the perception of the subordinate
colonizer.

*The Glass Palace* opens in Mandalay in 1885 and is about the protagonist
Rajkumar. This novel serves to be a faultless illustration of the colonized world
and postcolonized world. Amitav Ghosh deals with double state of affairs and
intricacies like the crossbreed culture. As people experienced the circumstances of
colonization and subsequent periods, the culture becoming crossbreed is likely.
Always people really would wish to have their own identity; and also they strive
for it. Rajkumar is not an exemption. He undergoes the consequences of war when
Japanese bombed the adjacent fields and he lost everything. The point between the
colonialism and postcolonialism is a fake one and nowadays postcolonialism has
become a myth. The marginal group and exploitation and oppression,
displacement, nostalgia and the loss of language and culture are the predominant
issues related to postcolonialism are found in *The Glass Palace*. The monarch and
the citizens, the master and the slave, the powerful and the powerless, the colonizer
and the colonized are some broad terms which need a close study. In fact these
terms comprise the Third World Literature in English.

The novel discloses how diplomatically the British occupied the countries
and brought the whole population under their control by sending away the
authorized kings to wipe them out totally from memory of the public at home
country. A generation ago, the last of the Mughal Kings, Bahadur Shah Zafar,
exiled to Rangoon, after killing his two princes right before the eyes of the
common people, and the Burmese King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat’s exile to
Ratnagiri in India worth to be mentioned as some of the shrewd steps by the
triumpant Britain. Then they freely plundered the Burmese natural resource, like
the teak, ivory and petroleum, having compelled the rulers into a life of darkness.
Two elder ministers of Burma, Kinwun Mingyi and Taingda Mingyi are too eager
to keep the Royal family under guard because they anticipated getting rich rewards
from the English for waiving the royal couple, king Thebaw and Queen Supayalat,
along with their family to them. As the royal family prepared to admit defeat the
plunderers, the Burmese public who were in fear now swiftly move into the palace.
Similarly, the British soldiers who are in charge of transferring the precious jewels
and ornaments of the king from the palace to the ship which was waiting on the sea
to carry the royal family into banishment also walk off with that wealth. Here
Ghosh removes the covering off human nature to disclose the rough and vicious
greediness that forces people at different levels.

The Chapter IV takes an eco-critical perspective as well as the settlement in
Sundarbans. Amitav Ghosh’s novel ‘The Hungry Tide’ is set in the Sundarbans, the
lower region of the Ganges delta, which extends over 250 km from the Hugli River
estuary in West Bengal, India, to the banks of the Meghna River in Bangladesh.
The Hungry Tide is a detailed chronological description of colonial and
postcolonial settlement in the Sundarbans, which describes in rich detail the
continuously changing landscape of this island.
The Hungry Tide, where nature for the most part takes the responsibility of annihilating and re-defining borders. This chapter is an effort to examine how besides geographical divisions, Ghosh deals with the more cherished world of personal splitting up between men and women. Moreover it also talks about how Ghosh continues his trialling with varieties by merging ecological perspective with scientific research work and a permeating wish for a society free without any divisions.

Mondal (2007) identifies Ghosh as a postcolonial writer whose novels articulate and interrogate some of the core issues of postcolonial scholarship; Mondal (2007: 7) also suggests that novels such as The Shadow Lines (1988), The Calcutta Chromosome (1995) and The Glass Palace (2002) intervene in broader public discourses about the aftermath of colonialism: “[w]hat really sets [Ghosh] apart from academic discourse is the accessibility of his work, the way in which his intellectualism is worn lightly on the fabric of his prose”. This comment makes a similar claim in connection to The Hungry Tide and Ghosh’s commitment with some of the inner concerns of island settlement. [Mondal, A.A. (2007) Amitav Ghosh, Manchester, Manchester University Press].

To a great extent Ghosh’s work, ‘The Hungry Tide’ surveys the importance of place to the construction and expression of personal and social identities in India and the Indian diaspora. Ghosh’s antagonism towards the tag “postcolonial” is familiar. The portrayal of the Sundarbans as maiden territory, a landscape in its unaffected natural condition, is both unaware and amounts to a serious unfair criticism of local knowledge and identities. However, The Hungry Tide portrays the Sundarbans as a region where clear antagonism of residents to strangers and
knowledge to ignorance break down and become unsustainable. The landscape of
the estuarine islands comes to be symbolic of the weakness of human kinds of
significance and identity, especially in relation to their connections to place.

Reading the profoundly touching anecdotes of outsiders who visit and then
settle in the Sundarbans in *The Hungry Tide* may lend a hand to plan a direction
past the intellectual disagreement which this islander/outsider duality creates.
Otherwise, the dominance of the insider/outsider duality in island settlement
endangers strengthening the postulation that the most valid and reliable analysis of
islands will come from islanders, an identity which this novel makes difficult.

Ghosh’s mental picture of a materworld which is free from insignificant
partitions and borders provides the novel the sense of a Marxist stretch. “What he
wanted was to build a new society, a new kind of country. It would be a country
run by co-operatives, he said here people wouldn’t exploit each other and everyone
would have a share in the land” (52). Even the banknotes he has designed for this
new free land says:

“The note is based on the living man, not on the dead coin. It costs
practically nothing, and yields a dividend of one hundred percent in land
reclaimed, tanks excavated, houses built, etc and in a more healthy and abundant
life” (53).

Ghosh, as the knowledgeable scholar, even copes up to make clear the
events during the Indian freedom struggle while arguing the building of Port
Canning. For instance he informs the readers:
“If you were here then, on the banks of the Matla, you would never have known that in northern India chapattis were passing from village to village; that Mangal Pandey had turned his gun on his officers; that women and children were being massacred and rebels were being tied to the mouths of cannons” (285).

Ghosh’s portrayal of the planned utopian society is diverse not just in the environment of the population, but even the religious beliefs and the way they are worshipped show an elimination of borders. For instance Fokir and Tutul pay respect to a shrine in Garjontola and their method of prayer is a blending of Hindu and Muslim modes.

The novel is occupied with amazing characters. Each character is prominent in the multitude and is an individual in his own right. They are connected powerfully to the Sundarbans, but each is connected in a different way with the islands. Fokir is rooted in the old traditions; his wife, Moyna, who is undergoing a training to become a nurse, wants to have better outlook for the future of her son. Nilima runs a charitable trust, a hospital, a guest house and educational services in the name of Badabon trust, for the benefit of the residents of the island. Piya and Kanai, both are well educated, professionals on their own aspiration desires return to the Sundarbans.

Nirmal Bose, a school teacher, ex-activist and an optimist is brought back to life by the older story. The Sundarbans are exposed through his perspective and social consciousness, his knowledge of history, geography and geology. His diary notes about the revolution that brushes off from corner to corner of the island of Morichjhapi are rooted in an actual rebellion among expelled people trying to adopt
for themselves, a life, a world, and an existence beyond that of the native Indians. But the revolution did not accomplish anything and the expelled remain as they are. Their pursuit to recreate themselves becomes useless. So is Nirmal’s life long quest for a pure revolution.

His previous novel *The Glass Palace* tells the story of Burma, Malaya, the Indian National Army during World War II, in other words it is an epic tale of south-east Asia. *The Hungry Tide* in contrast, is restricted to Sundarbans islands and is geographically quite narrow. Apart from a range of interlinking stories, characters, it consists of only two important plots. First is how the human beings share a difficult and hazardous ecosystem with animals (river dolphins and tigers) and the other is the dilemma of exiled migrants of the Morichhapi islands who are literally slaughtered by the government. Amardeep Singh writes in his review of the novel:

Ghosh has managed to turn *The Hungry Tide* into an absolute suspense, beautifully controlled and schemed while surrendering not a bit of his brand historical range.

The Chapter V deals elaborately with Ghosh’s unvarying responsibility of the conditions of national, cultural and mental barriers. The chapter would make an attempt to study the arrangement of the travel image and the important connections like circumstances and causes on the path. Ghosh combined his experimentation with Rushdie’s ‘Magic Realism’ being inspired by Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children. The novelist has mixed historical and out of this world elements to create a fascinating work of
fiction. Numerous instances in the novel exemplify the fine blending of fantasy and realism in *The Circle of Reason*. The extra-ordinary head of Alu reminds one of Saleem Sinai’s prominent noses in *Midnight’s Children*. The head was “huge, several times too large for an eight year old, and curiously uneven, bulging all over with knots and bumps.” A “big spectacle shaped lump which covered a large part of the back and sides” (37) was also a sight of wonder for the villagers.

Amitav has continued the travel motif, his unexpected incidents while wandering far and wide in his journey from Lalpukur, across the Indian Ocean to the oil town of al-Ghazira on the Persian Gulf, forms both the setting and the major occupation of the novel.

Ghosh’s fondness for demolishing borders in terms of subject as well as generic trialling is launched in this very first fictional work. But superseding all this is the depiction of the secondary class and the travel image as the subalterns are in an eternal journey. The circular pattern of this novel is inspired by the Indian philosophy. The three parts of the novel are named after the three gunas – Satwa, Rajas and Tamas with the respective characteristics dominating in each part. This is due to Ghosh’s inspiration from The Bhagavad-Gita that he named the three sections of the novel.

*The Circle of Reason* has as its setting the small village of Lalpukur, near Calcutta. The central character is Alu, whose picaresque experiences in the track of his journey from Lalpukur, across the Indian Ocean to the oil town of al-Ghazira on the Persian Gulf, form both the setting and the chief concern of the novel. The village Lalpukur, where the first half of the novel is set, is a perfect manifestation
of diasporic, absorbent cultural space where people from different cultures, nations and languages live together and cooperate with one-another in perfect synchronization. The village does not stand for Indian tradition in contrast to Western tradition and culture, as a usual post-colonial novel would normally give a picture of it in a setting. To a certain extent the village was established by refugees from East Pakistan after the formation of Bangladesh in 1971. Thus, the village serves to be an obvious symbol of traditional India, which is itself the product of a diaspora. The people of Lalpukur were;

“Vomited out of their native soil years ago, and dumped hundreds of miles away… borders dissolved under the weight of millions of people in panic-stricken flight from an army of animals” (59-60).

The novel can be studied as a bildungsroman, the story of the future life of the protagonist Alu, who arrives as an orphan child of Balaram’s elder brother, to Lalpukur where Balaram lives with his wife Toru Debi who have not yet borne a child. The lengthy opening part of the novel further describes Alu, who has received training as a weaver with Shombhu Debnath, a master weaver, while his uncle Balaram the village school master is obsessed with western ideas, characterized by his passion for phrenology and the writings of Louis Pasteur. In his zeal to spread his strange scientific ideas and fascination with cleanliness, he sets up the Pasteur School of Reason where he teaches the creating of Reason, and carries out drives of making the village germ-free using carbolic acid. He employs Shombhu Debnath to teach weaving while his wife teaches sewing and stitching. It is his obsession with carbolic acid and enmity with Bhudeb Roy, the owner of
village school that brings about his ruin along with the rest of the members except Alu who flees to go aboard for the rest of his journey to other parts of the world.

The Circle of Reason like Ghosh’s other novels explicates simple disagreements between tradition and modernity or different eastern and western cultures. The history of weaving and the international cloth trade keep on appearing again and again in this novel and each of his succeeding novels. It becomes a synecdoche of that ‘intricate network of differences’ in which all cultures are entangled with their neighbours. Balaram encourages Alu with the history of the know-how of weaving and how weaving too suggests the cultural unsteadiness and boundaries absorbent by water, air, etc., a result of appropriating across borders when decided to build the young Alu a weaver.

Thus, the history of weaving has no single national roots, but it traverses complex international routes. It can be read as an example of a traditional craft as opposed to western science and technology. It is another illustration that questions the idea of discrete divisions between cultures and nations.

The Chapter VI highlights how the novel The Calcutta Chromosome goes on to survey Ghosh’s unusual themes in a genre that is largely a science fiction, but assimilates tracks of history, investigator’s pursuit and even mysticism. The chapter would discuss how the author scrutinizes the late nineteenth century history of malaria research, bringing back to the subaltern researcher and his deserved place in history. The attempt would be to reveal further how the conquered subaltern, especially the female who resettled two times, is provided a totalitarian tone of voice in the novel. This chapter would call attention to the
aspect of how the borders between the discoverers and the discovered are slowly made unclear and later wiped out in this eccentric work of science fiction which tries to look deeply into the past.

The novel is set in the near future, the chief plot of the novel spins around an investigation of the history of malaria research conducted by Murugan, the pessimistic hero, who is of the belief that there is a secret history that has been removed from the clerical accounts of medical history in the late nineteenth century.

The chapter makes an effort to unfold the theme of post-coloniality, handled in an unusual manner, wherein, it is the subaltern colonized native who has the major advantage, in the place of the fortunate immigrants. The novel highlights the success of the twice-colonized female, who leads the research work and that also, one from the backward class of sweepers.

All over his total work, Ghosh has shown evidence of his love of histories, and his novels stick to the reality of chronicles to a great level. The chapter discusses how Ghosh's concern with the difficult situations of the subaltern who has been incomprehensible in history, be in the majority in the medical history in the disguise of science-fiction.

The seventh chapter would provide the conclusion devoted to the justification of Ghosh's contribution to the reading society about the continuing manner of outcomes in his novels. It would sum up the findings of the preceding chapters and offer a complete analysis of the findings. The chapter would take an
apparent glance at Ghosh’s non-fiction which is the true forerunner of the themes dealt with by him, in his fiction. The frequent and widely spread theme of breaking up of borders and divisions as well as Ghosh’s art of fiction, the fundamental and formal features of his works under study are dealt in detail. In the end, the findings of the preceding chapters are summed up and a complete perspective of the findings of the study is furnished.