Chapter I

Introduction
CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

The history of twentieth century literature is characterized by two broad categories namely modernism and postmodernism. Like modernist literature, postmodern literature is a part of socio-cultural and historical development and it can be observed as an exact way of a portrayal of the postmodern life and culture. The readers envisage that modernism is a response of postmodernism and hence they believe that both modernism and postmodernism is a different aspect of a similar faction. The late nineteenth century’s compilation of civilizing actions and the early hours of twentieth century is called Modernism. It began in the 1890s and lasted on 1945. A sequence of improvement actions in fine art, style, writing, melody, and functional talents comprises modernism. The human intelligence sought to develop its environment by a dramatic change of thought which was characterized by it and by involving science and technology in every aspect of life into it. With the aid of technology and experimentation, modernization suggests a change in all field of existence and the approach of mankind. This shows the way to progress in the entire spirit.

In the Second World War, Postmodernism, a response to modernism was influenced by the disillusionment. It refers to the situation as intricate, uncertain, and
varied that lacks a vital hierarchy. Postmodernism was impacted by the improvements in the world, the financial system and the customs of the 1960s. In the concluding decades of the twentieth century, the term postcolonialism has gained currency and it has eclipsed terms like postmodernism, poststructuralism and so on. In the words of Charles Jencks, the American architectural theorist and critic, “Postmodernism is now a worldwide movement in all the arts and disciplines. There are more books on postmodernism than its parent modernism, which is not to say that it is more mature or better, but just here to stay”(6). In general, the period that follows modernism is termed as postmodernism. The cynical interpretation of finance, culture, art, architecture, literature, philosophy, fiction and fictitious analysis often serves as an ambiguous overarching term for postmodernism. Critically, it is often used to describe writers, artists, or critics though being an intransigent stereotype, who give the notion that they deem in no absolute truth or optimistic realism.

The term postmodernism is collected with post and modern. In Latin, it refers to the recent era and in literature it is believed more conspicuously than in other branches. Dr. Clayton Whisnant scrutinizes in his work that there are mainly three ways with the intention to employ the expression postmodernism as:

first, to describe a specific era, sometimes dated from the end of World War II but more frequently starting as late as the 1970s;
second, to describe a body of philosophical ideas and critical studies
that date back to the late 1960s with such poststructuralist thinkers
as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and
Jean Baudrillard, but then in the 1970s and 1980s comes to include
a whole series of different analyses involving language and
symbolic systems that utilizes some of the insights of these earlier
poststructuralist thinkers

and, finally, a whole body of different artistic works that makes
reference to or embodies the ideas promoted by the above
thinkers. (1)

The term postmodernism is first used by the famous historian Arnold Toynbee
with broad diversity regulations of sculpture, structural design, tune, movie, literature,
sociology, communications, trend, technology, philosophy and critical theory.
Postmodernism is mainly response to explain authenticity to the unspecified belief of
logical and idea labors. Inspirit, it stalks from a credit that realism is not merely
reflected in individual consideration but rather it is built to recognize its individual
scrupulous and personal reality. Because of that, postmodernism is alive for all
groups, customs, conventions, or contests with highly skeptical explanations which
focus on every person’s virtual truths. In the postmodern consideration, though
elucidation is the whole thing, actuality only comes into life form during explanation
of an individual. Thus, postmodernism is meaningful when the effect of one's own
experience will inevitably be mortal and virtual that relies on concrete experience
over conceptual ethics, rather than certain and universal.

Indeed, postmodernism is not a detach progress, but merely it is a prolongation
of the great effort of the modernist. From these words, the concept of postmodernism
is developed into a subject of intellectual learning and is recognized. It is a scholarly
segment was first expressed during the enlightenment, born to face challenge with
several modernist themes such as technical optimism, the progress of individual
inevitability, and the possible human rationale to attend vital fact of physical and
communal circumstances. These themes create them delightful to organize rationally.

As mentioned by the authors about postmodernism and its critics that “the primary
tenets of the postmodern movement include: (1) an elevation of text and language as
the fundamental phenomena of existence, (2) the application of literary analysis to all
phenomena, (3) a questioning of reality and representation, (4) a critique of
metanarratives, (5) an argument against method and evaluation, (6) a focus upon
power relations and hegemony, (7) and a general critique of Western institutions and
knowledge” (Salberg).
The intellectual culture of that community can certainly resolve and life and matters with its wider postulation can be shared. In a severe sagacity, literary theory is the literary nature’s cram and the methods for scrutinizing literature. Infact, there is an umbrella term for the word theory for a mixture of reading texts with intellectual approach. By mixing up custom and contemporary ideas in the creation of art, Indian writing in English has embossed its immensity. The oral broadcast of Indian literary works gained position progressively at the onset, which formed a permanent blotch in the intellect and spirit of the followers of art. The literary curiosity turned the energy and technique of the writers to innovate new form and style of writing and lit the fiery longing in them. Indian Writing in English has applauded abundant approbation in its full swing in both home and abroad. It has carved out a new track, a new vision that is replete with an unswerving faith and hope, myths and traditions, customs and rites. India has enshrined in her bosom from the time immemorial. If the readers dive deep into the works of the Indian stalwarts of English fictions, it is revealed that their works are not an imitation of English literary pattern but highly original and intensely Indian in both theme and spirit. Indian Writing in English is a reliable tool to express one’s idea, thought, concept and imagination. It is not abruptly materialized but it has attained maturity with its segments of progress. It is to be noted that Indian Writing in English came into existence after the collision of a vigorous and enterprising Britain and a stagnant and chaotic India. In course of time, the seed which was first sowed by
Lord Macaulay for introducing English in the educational system began to take root and shoot, and now it is blooming and blossoming like a sweet rose dispersing its fragrance in each and every corner. This situation, therefore, is that literary guardians are taking more and more interest in English and are getting more and more awards and prizes in both India and abroad.

The English education in India instigates through Indian English literature as a necessary effect under colonial rule. Nowadays, it fascinated extensive interest in India and abroad. At present, Indian English literature is distinguished as a division of Commonwealth literature and it dwells in an immense position and importance in literature of the world. Nowadays, many Indian writers in English significantly donated to contemporary English literature. As suggested by Ram Mohan Roy, the harbinger of the Indian revitalization and Macaulay, the English language educator in India were apparently conscious in requisites of fictitious consciousness for Indians. It has succeeded global approval and merit today. The most influential form of literary term, fiction, has gained a celebrated place in literature. It is commonly approved that, for the investigation of experiences and ideas, the most suitable literary form is the framework of our time. In England and America, the reviewers and observers appreciated Indian English novels in the field of literature because it dwells in its proper place.
The most significant contribution to the field of novel is given by Indian writers in English. The first Indian English novel Bankimchandra Chatterjee’s *Rajmohan’s Wife* was published in 1864 and Indian novel has grown greatly in volume, variety and development. The novel that began as a small plant has now achieved a luxuriant growth and pronged off in various directions. Certain definite patterns follow the development of Indian novel, and it is not difficult to map out its gradual development from the derivative stage to the realistic, psychological and experimental stage. Today English is not the heritage of England only, but it is gaining ground all over the world. Perhaps this is why these days England has changed its conservative domination over English. It has given space to a number of Indian words in the new English dictionary. Indian novels are making the significant marks in the field of world fictions. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar holds this view as:

“English has become ours, it is not less ours for being primarily the English man’s or the American’s and Indo-Anglian Literature too is our literature, the literature which, with all its limitations, still taught us to be a new nation and a new people” (Prasad 8).

R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao’s emergence in the realm of Indian English fiction was the mainly marvelous event because they were the augury of the true Indian English novel and they became the trinity of Indian writing in
English. William Walsh, the English critic picked out these three most famous writers of the literary path and said:

It is these three writers who defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established its assumptions; they sketched its main themes, freed the first models of its characters and elaborated its particular logic. Each of them used an easy, natural idiom which was unaffected by the opacity of a British inheritance. Their language has been freed of the foggy taste of Britain and transferred to a wholly new setting of brutal heat and brilliant light. (Indian Writing, 6)

During the mid 1930s, these novelists began writing. Though Bhabani Bhattacharya was a contemporary novelist by birth in this time, he started writing fiction only after independence of India. The Indian English novel moved in the right direction during the writing of these novelists. The Indian novels are obliged much to their efforts and discovered an entire new world in Indian English fiction for firm vision and to achieve its own identity. These novels took the Indo-Anglican novel in sleeting distance of the new western novels and described the locale in which the Indian novel was to function. The beliefs, the conduct, the idea of nature, and its themes were established by them to provide the Indian work of fiction with its scrupulous individuality. The genuine Indo-Anglican novels telling the Indian experience as a dimension of individuality and the writers laid the foundation for it.
A gratuitous eulogize to Indian Writing in English is given by Salman Rushdie, in his famous article, *Dame, This is the Oriental Scene for you*. This lopsided observations made by Rushdie do not sound well to those Indians who strongly and immensely believe in the universality and creativity of regional languages. The readers should not forget that though English is progressing by leaps and bounds, it cannot have the richness and vitality, flout and ease of the vernaculars. The Nobel Prize was given to Rabindranath Tagore not for English but for his Bengali book, *Geetanjali*. There exists a long tradition of literary dynasties in vernaculars that made their indelible marks in both home and abroad. Satyajit Roy in Bengal has earned his popularity especially on his Bengali films only. Mahasweta Devi who won the famous Magasasay and Jnanpith awards has written the book, *The Mother of 1084*, originally in Bengali language. The same is the case with Taslima Nasrin too who wrote her controversial book *Lazza* in Bengali language. In Hindi, there is a line of great authors like Jai Shankar Prasad, Sumitra Nandan Pant, Mahadevi Verma, Bhartendu Harischand, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi whose works have left a great heritage for the next generation. Their works are highly symbolic and suggestive like those of the great authors of English. So, Rushdie’s scathing statement about “eighteen recognized language” is partial, illogical and groundless.

Thus, it is obvious that however profound or powerful English language may be, it cannot beget, in comparison with the regional language, a natural instinct which
is generally associated with the mother tongue. But in spite of all these, English Writing is flourishing without any full stop. The reason is that, it serves as a main liaison of communication amid the educated speakers from diverse parts of India. It has gone to the extent of taking the title of world language these days. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar rightly says:

But for all India administration, inter-state communication, pursuit of knowledge at the higher levels, and for maintaining and promoting international contacts, English is proving an indispensable tool, a commenting force, a key, and a channel all at once. Neither the conscientious Englishman nor the patriotic Indian need now be apologetic about the introduction and continuation of English education in India. (Prasad 3)

The Indian literature is a contour of verse, text novel or play. The readers are foreign speakers of English and it is not the mother tongue of all of them. In the nineteenth century educational system, English was introduced as the intermediate of teaching. So that Indians grasp the available Western literature that was in English. They originate words and the writing was multitalented and scholars took to transmitting their communal and spiritual beliefs in the words. The prose literature
The foreign language is used by Indians imaginatively but, some reviewers believed that this text did not fit in to the earth since English was not our native tongue. But, researchers like K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar and C. D. Narasimhaiah marked a huge prospective in it. The books of Srinivasa Iyengar namely, *Indo-Anglian Literature* in 1943 and *The Indian Contribution to English Literature* in 1945 offered reliability to Indian writing in English. The first wide-ranging narration of this literature is *Indian Writing in English* published in 1962. C. D. Narasimhaiah firmly affirmed in his *The Swan and the Eagle* which was published in 1969. For him, Indians are functioning susceptibility, Indian writing is the inscription.

The storytelling is a long custom of India. The style and technique of narration is the permanent resources of stories such as Panchatantra, Hitopadesha, Jatakas, Vetala Panchvimshati and Kathasaritsagara are unique and are linked together with one story to the other by the frame narrator and gripping the curiosity of the booklover and the listeners. The verbal form stories swayed lengthy and eventual and they cannot go down in the group of the novel. In the same way plays, epics, lyrics and poetry have existed here. Indians may familiar with the rich body of our literature which is formed by Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, conscious of the Ramayana and the
Mahabharata and they get pleasure from the rhyming Sanskrit lyrics and the poem from provincial language. However, at a much later stage, the novel in India came in. In reality, it is materialized in the Indian educational pattern only after the introduction of English. Indians too inspired by the English novel and in the regional languages they experimented the variety. Some of those novels of Indians were translated into English, afterwards some writers seized to write originally in English.

In the next half of the nineteenth century, the novel came into subsistence in India. In the Indian provincial languages and in English, Indians started writing the novels. The credit of writing the earliest Indian English fiction goes to the members of the Dutt family. *The Calcutta Literary Gazette* published in 1835, Kylas Chunder Dutt's *A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours of the Year 1945* was published, whereas Shoshee Chunder Dutt's *The Republic of Orissa: A Page from the Annals of the 20th Century* was published in 1845. Among Indian novels in English, after the first full length novel was published in 1864, Chatterjee grasped up his writing in own mother tongue, Bangla in which all his other novels are written. Other early novels comprise Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta or The History of a Bengal Raiyat* which was published in 1874 and Shoshee Chunder Dutt's *The Young Zemindar* in 1883 were written in English. A. Madhaviah, a bilingual writer was praised with initiating the novel in Tamil. Amid the first of the four novels he wrote in English, *Thillai*
Govindan published in 1903, has an autobiographical feel. Mirza Moorad Ali Beg’s Lalun, the Beragan, or, The Battle of Panipat published in 1884, Joginder Singh’s Nur Jehan in 1909 and Madhaviah’s Clarinda in 1915 are historical novels. The theme of east-west encounter focused in S. M. Mitra’s Hindupore’s A Peep behind the Indian Unrest and S. K. Ghosh’s The Prince of Destiny when published in 1909.

The figure of writing in English improved rapidly in the early decades of the twentieth century. My Brother's Face is the only novel for adults with a postmodern idea, searching for individuality, published in 1924 written by the children's writer Dhan Gopal Mukerji that has alarmed many later Indian novelists. The Indian English novel started taking origin slowly and in 1927 and 1932, K. S. Venkataramani's novels Murugan the Tiller and Kandan the Patriot were published respectively. However, it was only after the embryonic of the giant three writers Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayanan the Indian novel sketched the interest of reviewers and researchers.

Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable and Coolie published in 1935 and 1936 respectively was applauded for revealing the burning realism of the existence of the subjugated and the impecunious segments of the world. Anand’s dedication and Raja Rao's proclivity towards Indian metaphysics and the idealistic tension turn out to be the trademark of his novels. For setting the novels, R. K. Narayanan formed the
famous Malgudi which is from *Swami and Friends* in 1935 to *The World of Nagaraj* in 1990 and he was loved for his sarcastic dream of living. The Indian English novel is not possible to think of without these three novelists and they are the principal path gleaming Indian novelists in English.

Women novelists have also shown their extraordinary caliber and immutable imprint in the realm of Indian fictions in English. They have shown their mettle in every field and in some respects, far better than the male. The recounting of Indian women novelists in English generally begins with Toru Dutt who died at the early age of twenty one, lesser than John Keats of the Romantic School of poetry. Both the novels *Blanca* and *De Journal de Mademoiselle* dealt with the autobiographical projections of the novelists, the experience sugary and vinegary she collected in her very short life. The anguish and catharsis take place out of sisterly love and remembrance in those novels are very beautifully predictable. Other women novelists include Krupabai Satthianadhan wrote two novels namely *Kamala* in 1894 and *Saguna* in 1895, and Shevantibai M. Nikambe authored *Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife* in 1895. Indian women novelists got a new track and a new vision after the Second World War.

Bhabani Bhattacharya gave a new trend to novel and they are all on track to compact with new subject matter. In the era of psychological fiction, Arun Joshi and
Anita Desai were accompanied. In the themes, use of language, style and techniques the novel had developed sufficiently in 1980's. Now writers like Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Shashi Deshpande and many others who have grossed a good name and celebrity.

Initially, the improvement of the Indian novel in English was feeble and uncertain. Technically, it was neither strong nor innovative. India was onlooker to a chaotic historical period from 1920's to 1940's. The struggle for freedom, ideology of Gandhi and society's modern destiny of India, the detachment, the latest India’s emergence, rustic India’s problems are the different themes for their stories found by the novelists. When readers glance at the novel from this point of view, they find rich stuff having socio-cultural consequence.

Though tradition does not change overnight and cannot be bound to one particular day, yet, broadly speaking one notices a certain difference between the concerns, occupations of the Indian English novelists in the pre-independence era and their perspectives and challenges in the years following independence. As the concerns and perspectives of the recent Indian English novelists are varied, equally varied are the challenges and problems before them. A novelist is tossed among many questions, whether to write as a scientist or a realist, or a naturalist. The problem of
choice of the subject, the medium, the technique and the audience bristles with endless difficulties.

The reality, however, is that the Indian English novelists knows that by writing in English can reach a far wider audience. Furthermore, the modern India represents to a large extent, a synthesis of East and West, this synthesis and its experience can be adequately expressed in Indian Writing in English which itself represents part of this process. The novel emerges as an authentic portrayal of the epoch making period in all its nuances.

A close perusal of recent Indian English Fiction would convince the readers about its multi-facetedness, its rootedness in tradition, unscornful of changes and experimentation. To an Indian English novelist, it is still a testing time and the debate between the old and the new which has for long formed the main themes goes on unabated. The recent Indian English novelists have a sense of fiction moving in new directions. The novels have the inner excitement of a psychological tale told with a new articulation and sophistry. There are several reasons for the popularity of recent books published by Indian Writers in India and abroad. Of the several qualities a book needs to have, the most important is its capacity to capture the imagination of the reader. In other words, the most pertinent question is whether a book is ‘readable’. A great body of historical fiction has emerged on the literary scene in the recent times.
Many Indian English novelists have turned to the past as much to trace the deepening mood of nationalism as to cherish the memories of the departed days.

The works of literature after 1980 refers to postmodernism in Indian English literature. Postmodern literature was analysed in the book of Dr. Bijay Kumar Das as genre-wise verse, work of fiction, short fairy-tales, stage show and life history. In the postmodern period, this is a serious record of Indian English literature, intended for scholars, investigators as well as instructors who look for an introduction to it. In the recent years, a good number of Indian English fiction writers have witnessed and stunned the literary world with their works. In the world literature, their works have deepened and they have been awarded with praise and prizes in the field of literature. But after a careful study of the development in the fiction world makes it clear that there are two kinds of writers who contributed to the genre of novel. The various social problem of India like poverty, class discrimination, social dogmas and rigid religious norms are focused by the first group of writers which has an appeal to the West. The second group of writers sees the independent realities of Indian. They are global Indians, who are Indian by birth but they have lived abroad. They are alleviating with the English language and also enriched English language with their creativity. These writers are no longer the mindless imitators of English though they handled Indian emotional response. They used English so artistically that the novelty
becomes a major characteristic in their language. They have researched with the language and combined Indian power in the foreign language. They make up new words and colloquial expressions in English and added a new flavor in English language.

Amitav Ghosh’s brilliance has revealed among the modern writers in the Indian English fiction. The list of best modern Indian English novelist ruins incomplete without Amitav Ghosh’s name. He was born in a middle class family on 11 July 1956, in Kolkata. His father was a retired officer of the preindependence Indian Army, a deputy colonel Shailendra Chandra Ghosh. He spent much of his childhood traveling around the globe right from India to Sri Lanka, to Iran, Egypt, United Kingdom and Bangladesh. Amitav Ghosh received his early education from Doon School in Uttarakhand and later went to St. Stephen's College, Delhi, to complete his graduation. He moved to England for higher studies and he received his doctorate degree in Social Anthropology from St. Edmund Hall, Oxford in the year 1982. He currently lives in New York with his wife, Deborah Baker, author of the Laura Riding biography In Extremis: The Life of Laura Riding which was published in 1993 and a senior editor at a publishing house located in the U.S.A. They have two children, Lila and Nayan. He has been a Fellow at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences in Calcutta. In 1999, he joined as distinguished Professor in Comparative Literature at Queens College, City University of New York. He has also been a
visiting professor to the English department of Harvard University since 2005. Apart from instigating a swerve of books, he has been actively involved in writing columns for magazines. He has taught in many universities in India and the USA, including Delhi University, Columbia, Queens College and Harvard.

The President of India awarded the Padma Shri, one of India’s highest honors, to him in January 2007 by and voluntary doctorate by Queens College, New York and the Sorbonne, Paris in 2010 for his distinguished contribution to literature and also received other noted merits like Grinzane Cavour Award in Italy. He was approved a fellowship in Royal Society of Literature and at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta in 2009. He was a joint winner of a Dan David Award for 2010 along with Margaret Atwood, awarded three prizes of one million dollars each for achievements in science, technology and culture annually and for the marvelous performance that distinguished attainments to form and enhance the current world.

Though Amitav Ghosh got Ph.D. in Anthropology, his writings admire for history is well evident in his works. Initially he took up a job in a print media company as a local tabloid called the Indian Express and he followed his passion for writing. With the magical realistic mode of Salman Rushdie, his very first novel, Circle of Reason published in 1986, attempts to recuperate an enduring tradition of cultural replace for India. Over the years, he wrote numerous books such as The

Admirable involvement of Amitav Ghosh in the realm of literary writing has received several awards and appreciation. The Circle of Reason won the France's top literary Prix Medicis Etranger award. The Sahitya Akademi Award and the Ananda Puraskar award were given to The Shadow Lines. The Calcutta Chromosome won the Arthur C. Clarke Award in 1997. In 2001, The Glass Palace won the International e-Book Award at the Frankfurt book fair. In 2005, The Hungry Tide was awarded a major Indian award, the Crossword Book Prize. In 2008, Sea of Poppies won the Man Booker Prize and the co-winner of the Vodafone Crossword Book Award in 2009 and the India Plaza Golden Quill Award and got much appreciation from his devotees for his brilliant plot and storyline. His recent novel, River of Smoke won Man Asian Literary Prize in 2011 and will be heralded as a masterpiece of twenty-first century literature.

The most remarkable factual writings of Amitav Ghosh encompass In an Antique Land, a subversive olden times in the semblance of a traveller’s story. This
fiction is an amalgam of fiction, history, travel-writing and anthropology which makes the readers rethink the political boundaries that divide the world and generic boundaries that divide narrative styles. The collection of prose pieces titled *The Imam and the Indian* published in 2002, shares his fiction with certain characteristic subjects and concerns like the relationship that have a past communal between past and present, events and memories, people, cultures and countries. In 1998, the travelogue *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma* is based upon the author’s voyage knowledge and his own associates with the native people he had met in countries like Cambodia and Burma. *Countdown* which was published in 1999 is the result of his journey into the Bokhara area where Indian government tested five nuclear devices and he expresses the opinion that the quest of nuclear weapons in the subcontinent is the moral corresponding of civil war. The novel *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of Our Times* in 2006 is a compilation of essays spanning two decades.

The works of Amitav Ghosh has been translated into more than twenty languages. He has served on the Jury of the Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland and the Venice Film Festival in 2001. His essays *The Imam and the Indian* and *Incendiary Circumstances* have been published in The New Yorker, The New Republic and The New York Times by Penguin India and Houghton Mifflin USA. As a writer, Ghosh
has been enormously influenced by the political and social environment of the
country. Also, the stories and events he heard from his parents during his childhood
made an indelible impression on his mind. His father worked in the British colonial
army in India and his stories were of the war and of his fellow-Indians who fought
loyally beside the British. The image of the political and social change in India cast a
deep shadow on his mind. The contemporary academic confers his fiction about
colonialism and culture is formulaic. Ghosh is concerned with India’s superior
worldwide artistic systems as a noted author, a playwright and a factual writer of his
repute. His status in the monarchy of literature is truly incomparable. Though he is a
recipient of prestigious awards like the Sahitya Akademy Award, the Padma Shri and
the Prix Medicis Etranger for his brilliance in script and his achievement in both
fiction and nonfiction literature is venerable. Amitav Ghosh with so many events and
endeavors, it would not be an embellishment to articulate that Amitav Ghosh is
undeniably an existing celebrity.

The novels written especially after the Second World War in the late 20th
century are considered as postmodern novels. Salman Rushdie, Vikaram Seth, Shashi
Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee and Amitav Ghosh created the new pattern in writing
novels with postmodern thoughts and emotions. In the post independent India, he is
greatly powered by the political and cultural locale. The present scenario of the world
which is passing through in his novels after having the opportunity of visiting strange
lands is commented. The major preoccupations in the writings of Amitav Ghosh are
cultural breakup and deterioration, the power structures of colonial and neo-colonial,
the worldly offshoots of modern civilization, human relationship vanishing,
unification of actuality and desire, search for love and protection and diasporas.

In the novels of Amitav Ghosh, the rudimentary qualities of postmodernism
are clearly present. The postmodernists trust that nationalism is the source for wars
and they articulate in favor of globalization and nationalized border, a barrier to soul
communication. For the insecurities bewilderment and disintegration, postmodernism
bestows vote and his novels mostly deal with one of the postmodern traits as
insecurities in the survival of human race. As a wandering cosmopolitan, his novels
centre on multi-racial and multi-ethnic concerns and he wanders around and weaves
them with his gorgeousness of narration.

Ghosh’s writing is combined in the temporary nature of global culture and
fascinated with generic creativity and winner of postmodern cultural weightlessness.
He has conveyed stuff and series to Indian English novel in the last two decades.
Indeed, he wonderfully included the literature of the subcontinent as a whole. For the
unconventional themes of Ghosh, his books won him great glories apart from the
distinction of writer par excellence. The plea of his work lies in his skill with a
remarkable mixture of his individual attitude and well-built postcolonial themes to weave escorted indo-nostalgic rudiments.

A dynamic role in the life of many people believes in realistic themes of Amitav Ghosh. His fictional works is characterized with self-reflexity and confessionality. The central process in his fictional writings is displacement and in his narrative structure exit and influx have a permanent figurative significance. He has been credited for successfully mastering the genre known as ‘magical realism’. In India, it was largely developed by Salman Rushdie and Gabriel Garcia Marquez of South America. Fruitfully, without forgiving the ancient histories of separate lands, his writing deals with the postcolonial culture of the modern world. Amitav Ghosh perfectly combines reality and novel with magical realism like Salman Rushdie. While collecting the material he is so systematic, in categorizing the material he is so semiotic, and in the formation of fictionalized history he is so creative. He intertwines the postmodern themes and reconceptualizes the present world and the past with magical realistic plot.

Like the contemporary writers like Shashi Tharoor and Mukul Kesavan, Amitav Ghosh’s profession did commence in the trial arouse of *Midnight’s Children*. Miraculous pragmatism, lampoon, jousting, folklore, elaborates stories, and strata of interrelated story techniques are found on the play. His first novel *Circle of Reason*
portrays on these possessions and released up a affluent layer of stories and themes that he would hollow out in afterward works. His writing draws out poetry, insight and amazing histories from deeds in the material world, almost indeed ordinary such as felling of teak, drumming of rubber, production of opium, dolphin’s migration, weaving of garments and even the malaria causing mosquitos.

Ghosh’s themes woven in the loose or organic plot structure, possess a substantial value and genuine human meaning as they are not concerned with trivialities but with passions, conflicts, and problems. His novels with its conventional or unconventional plot structure, lays its foundation broad and deep in perspective of things which most constantly and seriously appeal to the readers in the struggle and fortunes of common humanity.

Amitav Ghosh weaves the violence, communal riots and such incidents in the plot structure comparing it with similar incidents in past history in the novel with view to prevent possible misapprehension of such incidents. He does not follow a rigid mechanical system of organizing the structure of plot in his novels and he values the meaningful synthesis of stories in main plots and subplots to achieve desired objectives of storytelling as well as stressing the impact of violence and other disruptive elements of political and communal malignity on minds of individuals. At some time, he develops the plot where time and space are larger in scope for many
characters, which requires introspection. He stray the traditional use of structure and designing of the novels found in the novels of early colonials and postcolonial times in Indian literature in English. Though, however, while designing plot structure, he appears to have taken care of unifying the plot and characterization establishing due relationship. Through the relationship of characterization and structure of plot, he has projected the thematic considerations relating to violence, communal riots, national boundaries, rootlessness and national identity as well as fallacious freedom movement by fundamentalists of religion and faith. These themes are woven in synthesis of plots and sub plots structure in all the novels.

The unique mode of writing of Amitav Ghosh blends the thoughts of a writer with the shrewd restraining of an anthropologist. He transcends the boundaries of fiction and non-fiction after capturing the covered events in history and showering over them with the colours of his imagination. With a bit of pedagogy, his quaint essential style of writings fascinates narratives with their eccentric plea. In all probability, his style of writing epitomizes the intention of his work to achieve a trans-socio-temporal range. Though with the changing terrains of the Bengali is his focus supposed to lie, his outlook cannot be reviled as ethnic. Through his writing, in the language, often strikes as an anxiety with conscious oscillation and with no distinct stylistic pattern.
The emergence of authors of English came out with despair in the basic assertion. From the colonized moment to the present day, the term ‘postcolonial’ is used to swathe all the way of life affected by the imposing progression because there preoccupation continues during the historical process commenced by European imperial hostility. From the mid forties, with a multiple nationalistic scenario, postcolonial literature can be traced in Amitav Ghosh’s writings. A mass of known and unknown languages is bounced. Amitav Ghosh is probably the first Indian author, avoiding this interlaces of theory and counter-theory and portrays the uprooted native’s problem in a strange context through elucidation of themes. At the similar occasion, diasporic literature, considered as a popular way path to the Booker Award is being hindered into the status by Ghosh. Amitav Ghosh, the promoter of diasporic literature freely permits modern western aesthetics influence in his writing. He had incorporated the diaspora in a ancestral bind and his stylistic pursuit for a centrality is not only towards a past but also a resolution of the present. His intention is proved with his steady refutation to sort out his work under the commonwealth literature.

While having an attentiveness of the unavoidably written nature of the process, this theoretical betrayal allows him to pursue his detection with the subaltern consciousness. Therefore Amitav Ghosh’s language and style are not an isolating scene but a wide fringe, in which the readers can unite with active participation. His
style in English language reflects his ability to write in English smoothly and confidently with an integrating existence. His novels depict him as an attentive and effortless writer in English. About Amitav Ghosh’s English language, Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam while introducing the fiction of Ghosh expresses as: “He uses the English language skilfully and artistically. His style can be compared to a flowing river with all its moods” (11).

Amitav Ghosh’s art of narration is not confined to just one narrative technique. His novels reveal different and various narrative techniques. He does not seem to be satisfied with traditional ways of narration and narrative art. As a creative writer of our time, Amitav Ghosh’s fictional novels reveal new creations in the art of narration also. G. J. V. Prasad in his review article Nebulous Boundaries comments: “To my mind every book that Ghosh has written (and hopefully will write) is of importance because of what he is trying to say and how he says it. If human being survives that long, well yes, they will be reading his books a century hence” (19).

Amitav Ghosh employs various different narrative techniques in all his novels. Through the novels, he reveals himself as a talented, innovative experimentalist. He tactfully makes experiment with the form and narrative art in his novels. His writing exhibits extraordinary narrative techniques. His technique of narrating the story is undoubtedly gripping and makes the reader absorbed in the events of the story. His art
of narration and narrative technique are supplemented by his rich knowledge of English language which is fluently and effectively used to depict the events or story or the objects. Amitav Ghosh thus uses various narrative techniques and makes his fiction with real experience to go through the novel in such a way that the reader is absorbed in the lives and events narrated in the novel. Inspite of the fact that Amitav Ghosh applies non-linear narrative mode as well as chronological shifts and leaps in the text of his novels, he has studied history, sociology and social anthropology for his D. Phil. His fiction depicts amalgamation of historical events and stories of life of middle class families by following his own particular narrative strategy.

The narrative techniques employed by the author to integrate the fictional and historical characters and to recreate the history of nations by filling up the gaps and absences are also analyzed in the course of the study. One of the assumptions has been based is that in a core culture, even when the culture encounters socio-political and economic changes in its due course of survival, the cultural traits will remain constant. The resourceless, rootless, and unsettled people are more vulnerable to cultural subjugation of the colonial masters. The metaphor of orphans and twins depicted in Amitav Ghosh’s novels seems to suggest the tragic consequences of the partition and the subsequent realisation of the suffocation of human aspirations.
Postcolonial writers of our time have presented many typical Indian characters but in Amitav Ghosh’s characters middle class people reveal their problems of alienation. He correlates such problems of alienation with those of similar type of problem with historical facts. They have various visions for better prospect of life and they move beyond national boundaries in search for better work and better life. N. Eakambaram in his article “The Theme of violence in The Shadow Lines” comments: “Ghosh’s characters go as far as Delhi or London on work or travel, and come home to Calcutta or Dhaka only to learn that peace is as elusive as ever” (236).

The characters in Amitav Ghosh’s novel strive to substantiate their identity in face of constant challenges and existential problems. They are all middle class family members and all are facing the similar problems of rootlessness as well as existential challenges as a result of political or communal frenzy. It is most cleverly of Amitav Ghosh that the life and meaning of life and experiences of human beings, drawn from his actual experiences as well as from his study of sociology and history, and such life experiences are projected by creating the characters in the novels. In details and reasoning characters are so complete and appear so real at their appropriate stages of life that better art of characterization are exhibited by Amitav Ghosh.

Amitav Ghosh is a man of ideas which are innovative. Through the experiments of characterization, Amitav Ghosh portrays the men and women of
ordinary prudent drawn from the society entangled by political, irrational religion and clashes arising from the blind belief, prejudices and extensive dominance of violence to assert the creed of particular culture of community. To frame the characters with their specific deliberation in the form of novel is demanding higher creative skills of writing and that is what Amitav Ghosh has displayed in his novels, which projects various characters of different talent and caliber. The characters in the Amitav Ghosh novels strive to establish their identity and existence even in the uncontrolled social and political disorders. The characters possess different facets of entities such as professionals, friends, family members, spouses and lovers.

A picaresque tale, with comic and intellectual overtures, *The Circle of Reason* tells the story of the orphan Alu, adopted by his elderly uncle, a teacher in a small Indian village. Balaram Bose had been a brilliant student, but his obsession with rationalism has declined into a fanatical study of phrenology. After measuring Alu’s lumpy head, he has apprenticed him as a weaver, where he soon surpasses even his master. Unfortunately, Balaram also is involved in a local feud, which ultimately results in the bombing of his home. Alu, the only survivor and a suspect in the violence, escapes, closely followed by a young Indian policeman, Jyoti Das. Taking ship across the Arabian Sea, Alu arrives at the small, oil-rich state of al-Ghazira, where he moves into the home of Zindi, an enormously fat madam. After a near fatal
accident, he has a vision worthy of his uncle that the people of the Indian quarter will wage war on germs and money. This bizarre social experiment almost succeeds, until the local government brutally ends it. Alu flees again with Zindi and other friends, still closely pursued by Das. Finally, after wandering over much of North Africa, they accidentally meet in a small Saharan village, concluding with a sad denouement, which determines their future.

A mere plot summary hardly does justice to this dense novel, loaded as it is with plots, subplots, dozens of nationalities, and the complicated intellectual rationale for Alu and Balaram’s theories. American readers may find this heavy going, but close reading will yield definite rewards. Amitav Ghosh has undeniable talent, particularly in that peculiar synthesis of the intellectual, the comic, and the ridiculous which is so intrinsic to life in India, but he would be well-advised to prune his cast and plot in future works. Still, this is an amusing and provoking look at the “real” India, for those with the time and interest.

The Shadow Lines confines viewpoint of time and events, brings people together and hold them separately and obviously evident from one view of imaginary to another. Lines stay alive in one’s memory and in another's imagination. The narrative never imagines telling a story but it builds complex memories of many people that continuously interweaving web. Rather it provokes the reader to invent
one among the many recollections to the same experience that grasp mirrors of conflicting glooms. The novel pursues with young boy’s life, his brought up in Calcutta and after that in Delhi and London and how his family are linked by the friendship between their respective patriarchs. The marvelous information and his viewpoint of the events and situations admire Tridib by the narrator. According to Thamma, Tridib to set up a job, refuses to use his family associations and appears to find out to waste his life at rest hedonism. The narrator loves listening to Tridib contradictory to his grandmother. For the narrator, the experience of Tridib is awfully diverse from the assortment of truth and information. The narrator is sexually fascinated to Ila but he never expresses his way of thinking to her. He thought that the relationship that exists between them may lose and became passive. On the other hand, he shows his thoughts one day when she was varying garments in front of him being ignorant of his mind-set involuntarily and she suffers sorry for him. Thamma does not like Ila and her grandson to support her. The dreadful past of Thamma wants to bring back together her family and departs to Dhaka to bring rear her uncle. Swadeshi movement, Second World War, Partition of India and Communal riots in Dhaka and Calcutta were some of the historical events that set against the backdrop of the fiction.
The Glass Palace is a historical and masterly novel with brilliant impassion, sets in Burma, India, and Malay and covers the early twentieth century from the descend of the Alaungpaya Dynasty in Mandalay through the Second World War to recent era. The novel explores a wide variety of problems that range from the changing financial scenery of Burma and India with significant issues such as what constitutes a nation and how these changes in the world is flounced by the flood of modernity. The name of the novel originates from an old Burmese historical work, the Glass Palace Chronicle, ordered by King Bagyidaw in 1829. This fabulous story tells love and war of people, fortune, and a family and its fate among the devastating of the kingdom of Burma and ignites an immense and passionate love. During the British invasion in 1885, the novel tells of Rajkumar, a poor boy boosted on political and communal anarchy with its tides and how he assist Dolly, the woman whose love will shape his life. In the Burmese teak forest, it creates a domain, than he marries her and they return to Burma. Uma, wife of the district collector posted in Ratnagiri becomes a friend of Dolly. After her husband dies, Uma becomes involved in the freedom struggle and travels to Europe and America. The story moves on to the next generation where the children are occupied with various businesses across India, Burma and Malaya, even as Japan and England go to war. The lives of people are thrown into chaos and turmoil. The Indian soldiers fighting in various countries for the British are mere employees doing a job for money, without any love or patriotic
feeling for England. The last few chapters return to a changed Burma, where people live in perpetual fear and mistrust in the midst of all the ruination bequeathed to them by the ravaging foreigner who came to their land for the love of teak. The initial setting of this story Burma, King’s palace, fort, and the time marked by the historical event of English invasion make it very interesting and charming.

A predictive novel *The Hungry Tide* is with remarkable insight, beauty, and humanity. This novel sets in one of the most enthralling regions on the earth and tells a very existing story of journey and unlikely care, uniqueness and the bygone times. In the Bay of Bengal, off the easternmost coast of India, the immense maze of small islands is situated known as the Sundarbans. The enormously insecure life and attacks of deadly tigers are common for the settlers here. At any time, the continuous pressures are strife and exile because without warning, tidal floods rise and flow over the land, leaving destruction in their wake. The lives of three people from different worlds smash together in this place of vengeful beauty. A young marine biologist, Piyali Roy, of Indian descent but stubbornly American, is in search of an uncommon, endangered river dolphin, Orcaella brevirostris. Her ride starts with a catastrophe that she is thrown from a boat into crocodile infected water. She is rescued by a young illiterate fisherman, Fokir. Piya and Fokir are vigorously drawn to each other, giving out a weird instinct for the ways of the sea though they have no language between
them. Piya gets a translator Kanai Dutt, a businessman from Delhi and keeps Fokir to help with her research. They are strained unsuspecting into the hidden undercurrents of this isolated world when the three of them launch into the complicated remote place. The biased chaos exacts a personal levy as powerful as the devastating tide and explores humanism and environmentalism especially, when they come into a divergence of curiosity with each other. The thousands of Bengali migrant who had settled on the island when the government of West Bengal forcibly driven out during the Morichjhanpi massacre incident forms a milieu for some parts of the novel. Amitav Ghosh transfers the Morichjhanpi incident in the novel from Nirmal's peak of scrutiny and the current day travel of Piya Roy, Kanai and Fokir. This time-travel creates an intricate of sub-topics and plots which is vital to the story and another trait they stand undifferentiated is the fastidious study that permits a concoction of creative writing and truth. Ghosh takes the reader through a hurricane of events and emotions by touching upon various topics from immigrants, liberty and battle, and existence of place.

The setting of the first volume of the Ibis trilogy, *Sea of Poppies* is on the banks of the holy stream Ganges and in Calcutta prior to the Opium Wars. The lifeline of the Egyptian civilization, Nile, is compared by the author with the Ganges faceting the basis and development of the cultures to these unselfish and continually flowing
corpses. The story begins with Deeti, a straightforward, virtuous woman, kind mother and a capable housewife. The unlucky Deeti records out that on her wedding night when she gets married with unfruitful spouse. The brother-in-law is the real father of her daughter Kabutri. Deeti sends Kabutri to stay with relatives after her husband’s death. Kalua, the ox man from the neighbouring village enters when Deeti chooses to go through with the sati practice to meet her fate to save her and flees and unites. The villagers not accepted this and at the same time, Deeti uninterruptedly wants to escape from in-laws. So, Deeti and Kalua become bonded servants on the Ibis.

The yacht began the difficult voyage and trusts with an American sailor Zachary Reid, the boy obtains a plenty of concentration on the Ibis, further to pass on by means of it. He upholds that in his existence, he has by no means noticed a more estimable item than the Ibis, that supports him in his shadowy times and delights him in his bliss and it is no less than a mother to him. With the prop up of Serang Ali, the head of the lascars that was overhauled to take contracted labour to the island of Mauritius as a replacement for of the tradable opium and he becomes the second in authority of the ship. Mr. Burnham is tackled with Neel Rattan Halder, a wealthy rajah, for his necessitate selling sour from his estates to give for the arrears that he had acquired at the time of opium trade with China. Because of the opposition shown by the Chinese authorities, the deal has at present come to be idle. But he declines the
deal because the zamindary is family’s inherited assets of him. Many poor living in his household and zamindary, and if it sells it may twirl his back. He is tried to counterfeit, but it is a deception test organized by Burnham and his associates. As an indentured laborer, the court punishes him to work for seven years in Mauritius. After that he convenes his sole companion in prison Ah Fatt, a half-Chinese, half-Parsi opium enthusiast from Canton are finally elated collectively on the Ibis.

The novel also attributes a French orphan, Paulette, who has matured up in India with her father, a weird and a kind botanist. After her father's death, Mr. and Mrs. Burnham seize Paulette into their home. But, Mr. Burnham has acted in an agitating way with her personally and also trying to get her married to his friend and the strict elderly Justice Kendalbushe. As this ensues, she becomes strong-minded to run away and there in the dinner at the Burnham home, she had met Zachary Reid, the American sailor. She has determined to travel to Mauritius with the hope of finding a better future. Paulette using her fluent Bengali, easily disguises herself as an Indian woman, which she learned in childhood with Jodu, her friend or brother and his mother growing up at close proximity. After the amalgamation of stories, Ibis becomes a shelter to each carrying its split of joyfulness and sorrowfulness in destitution.
The keen interest in Indian English literature made the researcher to search the modern Indian English writers. Amitav Ghosh possesses a sharp eye and sense of perceiving the human being and their societies in right earnest. The sincere efforts of research are directed on postmodern phenomena in the novels of Amitav Ghosh.

The study intends to utilize the primary works of Amitav Ghosh and the secondary sources of information to explore the idea of research. However, the thesis is confined to the following five selected novels: *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and *Sea of Poppies* (2008). The secondary sources such as review articles and critical works on Amitav Ghosh, which come within the purview of postmodernism has been analyzed to trace the network of phenomena in his novels. Secondary sources available in the internet and interview articles in journals also have been explored to support the arguments.

The first chapter entitled *Introduction* deals with the terms modernism and postmodernism, origin, concept and features of postmodernism, development of English, Indian English literature and Indian Fiction with its backdrop, Ghosh’s biography, works and Ghosh’s place in Indian English literature. It also discusses various categories of novels such as characterization, themes, style, art of narration and plot construction which are depicted in the novels by Amitav Ghosh and a short
analysis of the selected five novels. Chapter one further introduces the basis, supposition, mode and framework of the study.

The second chapter entitled *Thematic Concerns* discusses the critical apprehension of major thematic consideration in the selected five novels of Amitav Ghosh. Most of the Indian English novel writers of recent times have chosen materials for their art from contemporary Indian socio-cultural situations. They also undertake the exploration of the relationship between the East and the West. It has become a recurring theme in contemporary Indian English fiction because of the nature of the linguistic medium the novelist uses. In the works of literature and art, issues or concepts are covered in thematic concerns. Such ideas or concepts are intentionally discussed, portrayed or promoted by the researcher.

The third chapter entitled *Postcolonial Interpretation* describes and analyses the theoretical development of the study beginning with colonialism and the subsequent emergence of Commonwealth literature to postcolonialism in order to locate and identify the fictional works of Amitav Ghosh in the theoretical framework. 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. An attempt has been made to illustrate the position of Amitav Ghosh in
the postcolonial literary scenario and his role in reconstruction of a nation, search for
identity and cultural roots also achieve great significance in the fictional world.

The fourth chapter *Narrative Techniques* focuses the way in which Amitav Ghosh interweaves within his narrative framework, cultures of different nations like Burma, India, Malaya, Bangladesh, Africa and England is being analyzed. Literary concepts such as heteroglossia and polyphony formulated by the Russian theoretician and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin are studied in relation to the narrative strategies employed in the fictional works of Amitav Ghosh. For projecting the ideologies as well as human problem in the fiction Ghosh applies different narrative techniques and devices in his novels. So, this chapter tries to explore the narrative techniques employed by the author and it highlights his linguistic experimentation using innovative techniques.

Chapter five entitled *Conclusion* summarizes the observations and findings of the research study. Besides, it includes scope for further study with reference to Amitav Ghosh and his writings. This study is designed as per the methodology given in the seventh edition of MLA Handbook.