

Social Realism Reflect in the Work of Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth

Salisha Chouhan

Research Scholar

Department of Arts and Humanities, RKDF University, Ranchi

Email id: salishachouhan@gmail.com

Abstract:

“Realism in literature is a manner and method of depicting life, as it really is untouched by idealism or romanticism” - the dictionary of literary terms by coles.

Realism in literature is a term which began in the eighteenth century and flourishes in the nineteenth century. The word “social” refers to the people in society and “realism” refers to these people were interpret in each medium. Social realism is a term used for work produced by painter, writer, photographer, film maker, who expressed their artistic feature in visual and other realistic art which depict the real socio-political condition, racial injustice, economic hardship and picture of life struggle. Writers like Balzac, Flaubert, George Eliot, Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Laurence Sterne and Jane Austen reflect the real picture of life in their work. Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth they both woven social reality in their narrative work. They paints the ills as well as the boons of the social life around.

Keywords: realism, depicting, interpret, idealism.

Introduction:

The Indian English fiction is more than half century old. The earliest novel entitled A Journey of forty eight hours of the year 1945 by Kailash Chandra Dutta in a Journal published in The Calcutta literary Gazette in 1835 published a story of an imaginary unsuccessful revolt against the British rule. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee regarded as the father of novel in India was a master of romantic as well as the historical novel. Chatterjee’s first and only novel in English ‘Rajmohan’s wife’ was serialised in the Calcutta weekly, The Indian field in 1864. It appeared in a book form in 1935. The Indian English writing flowering in a real sense in the 1930 and forties with the arrival of the big trio -Mulk raj Anand, R.k .Narayan and the Raja

Rao. Indian English fiction was deeply influenced by the epoch making political, social and ideological ferment. K.S.Venkataramani (1891-1951) published his first novel *Murugan's tiller* (1927). He was chronologically one of the earliest novelist, most of his novel based on south Indian rural life. His *Murugan the tiller*, highlights the careers of two young south Indian friend Kedari and Ramu. His second novel *Kandar the portrait: a novel of new India in the making* (1932) it is a story of an oxford educated Indian youth during civil disobedience movement of the 1930 who resigns from the Indian civil service to plunge into the freedom struggle and finally succumbs to a police bullet. The concept of social realism in the novel has been seen in the early since 19th century and used in French literature by Flaubert and Balzac. George Eliot introduced the term social realism in England. And Ibsen, G.B. Shaw, Harold Pinter and John Galsworthy used realism in their play.

Indian English literature writer represents reality which is artistic. They have a talent to grab the Indian mind fully with all its tragic flow of life. The factor which is affected on Indian English fiction arose as much from the political and social problems of colonized country. Many Indian English writers such as Mulk Raj Anand, Ramesh Chandra Dutta, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu. The works of these writers reflect the socio political condition of the country.

Vikram Seth is the greatest novelist and poet won the Sahitya Akademi Award for *The Golden Gate* born on 20th June 1952 in Calcutta. His father Prem Nath Seth, was an executive of Bata shoe and his mother, Leila Seth, a barrister by training and first woman to become chief justice of a state high court in India. He is the great representative figure who portrays the realistic figure of contemporary society by his novel. He identified the various arenas of an individual in the form of race, culture, class and gender.

Seth has published 8 books of poetry and 3 novels. *An Equal Music* is second novel which empathize the troubled love-life of a Violinist. His more poem including *The Golden Gate*, *Mappings* (1980), *The Humble Administrator's Garden* (1985), *All you Who sleep tonight* (1990) and *Three Chinese Poets* (1992). His *Children's book*, *Beastly Tales from here and there* (1992). His novel *A Suitable boy* (1993) a story about marriage of a young girl searching for her suitable match. This novel portrayed the real image of the society.

Amitav Ghosh is one of the versatile Indian writer born in Calcutta on 11th July 1956 won the 54th Jananpith award and best known for his work in English fiction. He grew up in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. After working as distinguished professor in Comparative literature at Queens College, City University of New York in 1999 and visiting professor at the English department of comparative literature, he returned to India and begins working on the Ibis trio-logy which includes Sea of Poppies(2008),River of smoke(2011),and Flood of Fire(2015).He was awarded the Padma Shri by the Indian government in 2007.His novels reveal the image of the contemporary society. He has written The circle of Reason(1986),The Shadow Lines(1988),The Calcutta Chromosome(1995),The Glass Palace(2000),The Hungry Tide(2004) and Sea of Poppies(2008). In his novels he tries to understand the problem of contemporary Indian society and portrays the realities of life in the country.

He won Sahitya Academy Award for the Shadow Line. This novel draw the real image of communal violence.

Amitav Ghosh's father was an army officer and later as a diplomat which provide him with an opportunity to spend his formative year in India,Iran,Sri Lanka and East Pakistan. His novels reflect the socio-political and cultural issues that emerged in post independent India and rapidly changing the Indian life.

In An Antique Land is a book based on Amitav Ghosh's research on twelfth century which exploring Egypt of twelfth century and lives of people in twentieth century Mangalore, reflect the life style of village life, religious belief, socio-economic and political structure. Ghosh explore the life of village in Egypt:

“Nabeel had vanished into the anonymity of History”

Here Nabeel was one of the many citizen from the villages of Egypt who migrated to Iraq to earn better and caught in the war.

The Shadow Lines:

The Shadow Lines is the story of the Bengali family through which the author reflect and analyses many issues that are being debated in contemporary India. It is primarily focused on

the political turmoil that will eventually engulf India and Pakistan in riots, and on the efforts of his grandmother to bring her uncle back to India from his home in the city of Dhaka.

Vikram Seth is one of the literary figures in Indian English Literature who is strongly rooted in the social and political situation of current India.

A Suitable Boy:

A Suitable Boy, first published in 1993 was Vikram Seth's second novel and the first to receive widespread commercial success. It aspires to provide an idea of India through a realistic approach that has an almost photographic quality. Its sustained popularity and consequent commercial success of the novel in spite of its colossal length of about 1500 pages, has encouraged critical attention from scholarly circles. In *A Suitable Boy*, the nation is an all-inclusive concept that moves from the individual, to the locality, to the regional state, and arrives to embrace the entire nation.

This novel revolves around a mother Mrs Mehra's search for a suitable match for her daughter. In the very first statement Mrs Rupa said to her daughter, "you too will marry a boy I choose". Lata meets and falls in love with Kabir Durani who is a classmate and a budding cricketer. Kabir Durani is a Muslim boy so he is an unsuitable match in the eyes of Lata's mother. When she hears about Lata and Kabir she quickly whisks her off to Calcutta. There Lata meets Haresh, an ambitious, hardworking and successful person. Though many twists and turns come, Lata chooses Haresh for her suitable match. Seth successfully reflects the social, political and economic events in the changing India.

Seth realistically portrays the condition of Hindu and Muslims; they feel anguish for each other although India is a secular country honouring all religions and all types of people.

This story is parallel love stories leading to a marriage. Lata and Haresh's journey towards conjugality through arranged marriage is not a love story in the conventional sense, as it has been arranged by people other than the couple involved, or society in a broad sense. They fall in love in some sense by the end of the novel, but the usual context of a love story is absent and therefore the love story is subverted. Mann and Firoz's relationship is a love story in that conventional sense, but it will never be accepted by society and the people around them. The

elements of social acceptance and love are reversed in the parallel narratives, but in both cases, one has to be sacrificed for the other.

Seth has since embarked on political activism regarding queer issues in India, most famously after the reinstatement of Section 377 in December 2013. In an article accompanying the front cover of *India Today*, he wrote a severe condemnation of the impulses behind the reintroduction of the law:

Vikram Seth portrays the post- independence women attitude, women are associated with family issues only, Social realism of ‘A Suitable Boy’ presents the social environment, its issues and obstacles and individual follows to the society.

Golden Gate:

The ‘Golden Gate’ is in verse form which is composed entirely in rhyming tetrameter sonnet. The Golden Gate follows the fourteen line stanza pattern of Eugene Onegin having 594 sonnets in iambic tetrameter. The rhyme scheme of this pattern is ‘aBaBccDDeFFeGG’. The novel is divided into thirteen chapters and each chapter neatly balanced in its presentation of series of communication with one another characters. This novel is a satirical romance denoting the tale of young professionals in San Francisco. Their love, loss, personal, family relationship with one another. It is narrative about San Francisco written in rhyming sonnet. There are the five main characters in the book. Each of them is defined within the parameters of his profession, personal life and whims and family and social conditions and connections.

This is story about twenty- six year old John Brown, a protagonist is a graduate of Berkley. However he is successful in his work, feels lonely computer executive in Silicon Valley. He is employed in the high – tech computer and electronics industry and works in the area of nuclear research. Janet Hawakaya was the ex- girl friend is of Japanese descent and the only ethnic presence in the novel. She becomes his confidant and in due course once again becomes his lover. She is sensitive by nature as well as artistically gifted. Janet is one of the members in the punk band “Liquid sheep” she is drummer and plays central role in the narrative. Liz Dorati is a twenty seven year old, high powered ex-Stanford Law School attorney.

The novel opens here with the condition of modernity, New challenges and mentalities have appeared with the dispersed conditions of highly educated man. Instead of happy and charming mood, gloomy and hopeless mind reflection disclosed here. The characters in The Golden Gate represent their ability or inability to lead personality happy or fulfilling lives. In the text, the landscapes of the locations, social settings, the values, politics and customs, food, atmosphere and weather play important roles in the lives of the characters.

An Equal Music:

‘An Equal Music’ is published in 1999, This is a music novel and story of love affair between two musicians the Michael Holme who is protagonist and music teacher who fallen love with the girl name Julia. Michael is sensitive and emotional character of the novel. He is permanently in mourning for his life, for Julia , a woman he deserted in Vienna ten years ago. Michael’s story gradually as he goes about is daily routines of teaching , solitary practice and rehearsal, until he gets a fleeting look of Julia.-on a passing a bus-whom he had once loved and left in Vienna and has been unable to find since, The search for Julia, their meeting and its impacts are woven into other larger themes. The novel is in the first person narrative, Thirty –seven years old Michael Holden is a second violinist on an English quarter called the Maggiore, Besides playing in the quarter, Michael supplements his income by teaching the violin to a few music students, which one of whom he is having an affair. Two types of stability one, social and familial, and the other, mental and internal, are depicted in the novel also stressed again and again is the fact that attachment to love and music also leads to a sense of order and stability though of a different type. The novel An Equal Music is a classic in every sense of the world. Whole novel is about the dedication of music. The characters throw their life in the service and dedication for the music. Music has been presented in the novel as noble addiction, Michael and Julia are musicians. One of the most impressive aspect of the novel is the way in which writer manages to convey music through language.

Conclusion:

Fiction is the real mirror of the society, which reflect the image of the society. And Vikram Seth and Amitav Ghosh’s novels shown the life of the society and their problem. A novel of Vikram Seth and Amitav Ghosh are commonly regarded as a realistic portrayal of life. Through the medium of a story the novelist offer to our view picture of life as we live in. A

Suitable boy of Vikram Seth shows the life of four families in the Brahampur town located along the Ganges between Banaras and Patna. This novel set during the strife of political issues in period of post independent national election of 1952. Golden gate is a novel in verses which is written under the inspiration taken by Charles Johnson's translation of Puskin Eugene Onegin. Another novel An Equal Music a romantic tale of two gifted musicians in London. The story of his unforgettable journey from Sinkiang and Tibet which shows the image of China, Tibet and Nepal in his novel From Heaven Lake. His Two live is a story of ups and down coming in the life of his uncle shanti Behari Seth and aunt a Jerman Jewish Henrele Gerda Caro.

Amitav Ghosh is an ambitious and realistic Novelist and poet .And his most of the novels portrayed the realistic figure of life. Among his more important works are The Circle of Reason, In an Antique Land, The Shadow Line, Sea of Poppies and The Calcutta Chromosome: A novel of Fever, Delirium, and Discovery. These novels reflect the image of world. His first novel The Circle of Reason is story of suspected terrorist who leaves India for northern Africa and the Middle East. The Shadow Line is the story of two family Indian and English which shows the event during the departure of the British from India in 1947. The Hungry Tide featuring American and Indian characters. Myth realism is also seen in his novel Gun Island which involve the snake goddess Mansa Devi. Ghosh experiences in a rural Egyptian village in the 1980s is shown in his novel In an Antique Land.

References:

- Seth, Vikram. The Golden Gate, New Delhi: Penguin, 1986. Print.
- Two lives: Non Fictional Work, 2005.
- A Suitable Boy. A New York: Harper Collins Publisher, Inc. 1993.
- An Equal Music, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1999. Print.
- Ghosh. Amitav .The Shadow Lines, 1988.
- Dhawan, R.K.(ed). 1999. The Novel of Amitav Ghosh, New Delhi Prestige Books.
- Ghosh. "commonwealth Essay and Studies (Dijon, France) 14:1 (Autumn, 1991): pp.28-32. The Oxford UP (India)-Delhi Oxford UP , 1995-edition contains 4 articles.
- Daiches. D. (1938): Literature and society.
- Mohanty. S. A critical Analysis of Vikram Seth's poetry and fiction

- Pery ,John Oliver “World Literature Review.Indian’ World literature today 65:3(1991:549- Mahapatra S. Himamsu& Nayak K.Jatindra.”Jane Austen and Vikram Seth. Uses of realism 551.
- Quinn, Judy. “A Reunion for Seth and Shinker” publisher’s weekly 244:51 (1997):20.
- N.Sellei(2014) 20th-21th century British: Literature Recent critical Trends.
- Ghosh. The Shadow Lines , Viking books\$17.95(256p)ISBN 978-670-82633-9
- Ghosh.Sea of Poppies,Farrar Straus & Giroux \$26(515p)ISBN 978-0-374-17422-4
- in A Suitable Boy, An Anthology Recent Criticism,New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005.Print.
- Mukherjee,Meenakshi. Realism and Reality. The Novel and Society in India,
- London: Oxford University Press, 1985. Print.
- Research Journal of English language and literature (RJELAL) A Peer Reviewed (Referred) International Journal.
- DiGirolama.Vincent. The Monterey Peninsula Herald weekend Magazine (july6,1986)12-13
- Dhawan,R.K., ed. Indian writing in the New Millennium. New Delhi; IAES,2000.
- Iyengar Srinivas, K.R. Indian Writing in English. New Delhi; sterling publishers,1995.
- Jaidev and Kaul, R.K. Social Awareness in modern Indian Literature. Shimla; Indian Institute of Advanced study,1993.
- Chandra, Suresh. Culture and Criticism . Delhi; B.R.Publishing Corporation,1987.
- Mohod, Veena, V.Social Realism in R.K.Narayan’s Novels. Jaipur; Book Enclave, 1997.
- Prasad, Madhusudan, ed. Indian English Novelists; An Anthology of critical Essays. New Delhi; Sterling Publishers, 1982.