

Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* In The Light Of Mahatma Gandhi's National Movement

Neomi Padma Kumar

Assistant Professor of English

Government P.G .College Garhakota.

Amitav Ghosh, is one of the most widely known Indian writer and author of nine fictions and five non-fictional works, and occupies an important place in the history of Indian English novels. Both his fictional and non-fictional works are enriched with variety of themes. He has taken enormous troubles to accentuate the problems of subalterns, marginality, social discrimination based on caste, creed, colour, religion, gender, and culture. Born on July 11, 1956 in Calcutta. He grew up in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Sri Lanka, Iran and India. When he was young, he was brought up on the stories of Partition, Independence and the Second World War. In an article in the New Yorker, Ghosh remarked: My mother grew up in Calcutta, and her memories were of Mahatma Gandhi, non-violence, Civil-Disobedience and the terror that accompanied Partition in 1947 (Language In India). In all the stories his mother told him, Ghosh says Mahatma Gandhi appeared as “an incomparably vital and endearing protagonist”

As a writer Amitav Ghosh has been immensely influenced by the political and social milieu of the country. Also the stories and events he heard from his parents during his childhood made an indelible impression on his mind, as a result he has blended history and fiction with his vision and philosophy. His novels deal with pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial India. He depicts the Gandhian Movement for freedom struggle, the Second World War, Indian National Army, etc. History has become Amitav Ghosh's prime obsession and his work is imbued with both historical and political consciousness.

The novel *The Glass Palace* is one of the most excellent novel of Amitav Ghosh which projects social and political history observed and narrated by the leading characters Rajkumar Raha, Uma Dey and Saya John. The novel is a saga about three generations of two closely linked families in Burma, India and Malaya from 1885 to 1956. This novel is more than merely a revisionary rewriting of a portion of the history of the British empire from the perspective of the colonized subaltern in India, such as Gandhi's attempt for a social revolution seen from the eyes of the female character,

Uma. Uma is greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's movement against colonialism. Mahatma Gandhi was a staunch supporter of truth and non-violence. Mahatma Ghandi was in firm conviction that "the movement against colonialism was an uprising of unarmed Indians against those who bore arms both Indians and British-and that its chosen instruments were the weapons of the weaponless, it's very weakness its source of strength"(GP254).

The recruitment in the British army was inequitable, "From generations, recruitment in the British Indian Army had been ruled by racial policies that excluded most men in the country, including those from Bengal...The Mahatma thinks that the country can only benefit from having men of conscience in the army. India needs soldiers who won't blindly obey their superiors..."(GP258). Ghosh further remarks that the tasks of ruling were performed by Indian under the tutelage of British masters: "...Very few Indians had ever actually set eyes on Englishman and fewer still had had occasion to speak to one. The English lived in their own enclaves and followed their own pursuits: most of the day to day tasks of ruling were performed by Indians" (GP279). Mahatma Gandhi's quotation used by Uma is important in this regard: "Why should India, in the name of freedom, come to the defense of this Satanic Empire which is itself the greatest menace to liberty that the world had ever known? (GP292). Uma is aware of the fact that unless and until the British Indian soldiers are made to understand their supports and deeds, India would not able to achieve independence. Her active participation in freedom movement is unmatched contribution in Indian freedom movement in 1942, uma becomes an active member of the quit India movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi. She makes her mind to fight against the tyrant and diplomatic British rulers. We also to know that uma and other several Indian supporters were imprisoned in the country. Mahatma Gandhi wakes up the nation with the help of thousands of masses and finally forced the British colonizers to leave India. Thus, Gandhiji and his followers achieve the independence in 1947. Uma is an awakened spirit and is obsessed by the ideas of freedom to her country. The aim of Amitav Ghosh is very clear. He wants to appreciate the marginalized and subaltern figures those who sacrificed the lives in Indian independence movement. In the novel Amitav Ghosh has explicated the marginality through the medium of his character Uma.

Amitav Ghosh with his narrative describes the evils which were prevailing in India before the arrival of British with the portrayal of Dinu. He reflects on "the way women are treated even today...the caste system, untouchability, widow burning...all these terrible, terrible things" (GP294), Uma retorted sharply on his views. But she rejects the idea that imperialism is an enterprise of reform.



Taking an example of Mahatma Gandhi she say, “Mahatma Gandhi has always said that our struggle for independence cannot be separated from our struggle for reform”(GP294). She firmly believes that colonialist would like them to believe that imperialism is an enterprise of reform but there is a simple and clear refiltration. She accepts that India is raised with evils-caste, the mistreatment of women, ignorance, and illiteracy. So she admits the horrors of Indian society which Mahatma Gandhi earnestly wanted to reform.

The novel *The Glass Palace* exhibits his creative research skills and idea in blending history and fiction with his vision and philosophy.

Work Cited :

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