

Contribution of Amitav Ghosh in Literature

By

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Amitav Ghosh has incarnated in himself the greatness and a great writer among world literary writers as well as philosophers and anthropologists. Amitav Ghosh possesses a sharp eye and sense of perceiving the human being and their societies in right earnest.

Amitav Ghosh, brought up under discipline of his father, Lt. Col, Shailendrachandra Ghosh has had ample experience to learn the Indian socio-political and cultural events. Having experienced the riots in India in 1984, he has emerged to interpret the relationship among nation and individual as well as cultural societies and individual, through the art of novel and literary writing.

His experience as an extensive traveller in many countries of the world and his research for doctoral degree at oxford are found to have projected in his works. As a novelist, he narrates the societies and human beings and their inter-relationship in his novels. Amitav Ghosh has his stories to tell in highly unconventional methods of narrating history, culture, politics, nations and anthropological aspect of mankind. Amitav Ghosh's literary works have attracted critical attentions of various critics who have bought out writers monographs and anthologies which include Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanamdam's book, *The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh* [2001] and *Interpretation of Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines* [2000], R. K. Dhawan's, *The Novel of Amitav Ghosh* [1999], Novy Kapadia's *Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines — Critical Perspectives* [2001], Brinda Bose's *Amitav Ghosh: Critical 4 Perspectives*, Arvind Chowdhary's *Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines: Critical Essays* [2002] and I. D. Sharma's *Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines*.

Early Life:

Amitav Ghosh was born in Post-independence Era on 11th July 1956 in Calcutta [now Kolkata] city of west-Bengal state. His childhood days were passed in Calcutta [now Kolkata] as well as in Northern India, Dhaka and Colombo. He has grown up erstwhile in East Pakistan [now Bangladesh], Srilanka, Iran and northern India. During his university education he lived at Delhi. His father belonged to small province of state of Bihar and he left Bihar in 1942 to become an officer in the British colonial army in India. Ghosh Amitav's

Parentage:

Amitav Ghosh's father, Lieutenant colonel Sailendra Chandra Ghosh was serving in then British-Indian Army as an officer of the 12th frontier force regiments. He participated in the Second World War. He was in general slim's fourteenth Army during the Burma campaign of 1945 and was twice mentioned in dispatches.

Academic Advancement:

Amitav Ghosh had been educated in West Bengal, Bangladesh, and Northern India. For higher study, he went to Delhi and joined St. 10 Stephen's College, University of Delhi. He became a graduate of St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi and his special subject was history. One would say it – a very right choice to know the past for framing bright future. He possessed the knowledge of boundaries arising out of a cultural, racial, religious and languages as well as geographical drawn by rulers of land. He offered sociology in his post graduation in arts from University of Delhi and acquired Masters' degree in Sociology. After this, he joined various universities and colleges and educational institutions as a lecturer and visiting professor. During this period, a scholarship was granted to him for studying abroad; he joined Oxford University to complete D. Phil. In 1982, he had been awarded Doctorate in Philosophy in Social Anthropology from Oxford University. It is this anthropological study which took him to Alexandria University and he also went to Egypt for field world in the Fell Allan village at Lataifa in Egypt.

His Quest for Identity:

After his academic study, Amitav Ghosh decided to remain amid educationalist and so he was a lecturer in Thiruvananthapuram Kerala and also at the University of Delhi. He also worked at the Indian Express as a journalist during emergency period in India around 1975. He also remained the fellow of centre for studies in social sciences – Calcutta. As a visiting professor, Amitav Ghosh has disclosed intellectual lectures 11 at various American universities such as Virginia, Columbia and Pennsylvania. He further took up lectureship in the department of sociology as well as in the Department of Anthropology of Delhi School of Economics. Amitav Ghosh published his first novel, *The Circle of Reason* – in 1986, when he was teaching at Delhi School of Economics University of Delhi and he depicts in his first novel, the break through from traditional themes and showing ironic mode of narration and outlines of the plot moving transcontinental territories. And during this period of his life, he established his true intellectual stature and degree of eminence in circle of philosophy and literary writers.

Literary Career:

Amitav Ghosh is one of the great Indian novelists, who have written in English. However he is not a prolific writer in the field of fiction, in fact his output has been

numerous. This might be the result of his way of thinking and writing which is methodical and philosophical involving touch of human feelings. After award of Doctorate [Ph. D] from oxford university – London in 1982, Amitav Ghosh published his first novel, The Circle of Reason – in 1986, when he was a lecturer at the Delhi school of economics, university of Delhi. This novel, showing deviation from traditional themes of Indian novel, has become so popular among literary writers that it has been translated in many European languages including French, Italian and German and placed Amitav Ghosh immediately as a master craftsman in the art of fiction. The year 1984 was somehow a turning point in the literary career of Amitav Ghosh. During this period India witnessed violence in Punjab, attack on great Sikh Temple of Amritsar, and events that followed relentlessly. In 1988, Amitav Ghosh published his second novel, titled as The Shadow Lines. This novel is considered Amitav Ghosh's masterpiece is a family saga covering a large span of period of three generations, story ranging from one country to another. In The 13 Shadow Lines, Amitav brings out futility of drawing lines across nations and the story emphasizes the need for co-existence and strong humanitarian ties among cultures, over-looking personal, regional and political considerations. This novel is the work of an eminent writer, whose vocation is evident on every page. This novel is also translated in other language, Such as French, Italian and German. In 1993, Amitav published another novel - In An Antique Land attempt to explore at a deeper level some basic human character and human attitudes that persist through ages. In 1996, Amitav's fourth novel, The Calcutta Chromosome was published and it is the novel of the 21st century narrating the story of a computer programmer in New York in a form of thriller dealing with the science-fiction.

Personality and Outlook:

Amitav Ghosh is of good height and has a commanding personality. His features are in keeping with his descent. He gives one the look of a great intellectual. He is a great writer, researcher, traveller and socio-anthropologist. He is a great novelist philosopher who is full of joy of life. Amitav Ghosh has the travel writer's infallible eye for the quirk that lays bare the soul of a people. Amitav Ghosh describes himself as a traveler interested in men, places and scenery. He advocates that traveling enables man to expand his awareness into realization. This is due to the fact that Amitav has travelled extensively in the Middle East, south Asia, North Africa, Europe, America and Egypt. 17 Amitav Ghosh's personality is stamped in his fictions, which show that he appears as a scholar-writing fluently with exactness of what he wants to tell. Ghosh has ability to combine personal and the historical events in an aesthetic manner. Better sense of personality is revealed in his personal life's decision pertaining to his doctoral study at Oxford, London and finally settling in New York, USA. Even though, as a

post-colonial writer, cultural heritage and identity have become important facts of Amitav Ghosh's personality.

Literary Cosmopolitan:

Amitav Ghosh is very fluent in English, Bengali, Hindi French and Arabic. His peripatetic life has taken him from India to England and finally to America his literary works show deep insight to the study of man during traveling in many parts of the world including Middle East, South Asia, Africa, Europe and America. Though his mother tongue is Bengali, English language is his choice to write novels and other forms of literary works. In *The Shadow Lines* Amitav Ghosh acknowledges no separate national or cultural realities, because for him all such demarcations are shadow lines arbitrary and invaded divisions. Amitav believes that the men of power have created artificial lines between countries and people and have also dismantled them as per their convenience. Few years back there was a partition line between east and West Germany, now it does not exist. Such views of human life hold by Amitav makes him global cosmopolitan personality various prestigious awards given to Amitav's fiction declining with philosophical elements of various cultures are proof that Amitav is a cosmopolitan writer. From the socio-anthropological and philosophical fictions of Amitav's one can easily find that: Standing in his own permanence, professional, dedicated, Amitav Ghosh has sought to interpret in terms of art, the moves of his own people, above all, he has insisted on the need for values – civilizing values which help nourish all enlighten and 20 human society for freedom of man from political, Religious and cultural barriers.

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