THE FICTIONAL NARRATIVES OF TABISH KHAIR:

A STUDY ON SOCIAL REALISM

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Dedication to My Loving Parents,

Sikha and Sanchita

For their unceasing love, wishes and prayers.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in this study when primary texts as well as the author's other works have been referred to:

BS : *The Bus Stopped* (2004).

FG : *Filming: A Love Story* (2007).

TAT : *The Thing about Thugs* (2010).

HFITMP : *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* (2012).

JJ : *Jihadi Jane* (2016).

NX : *The New Xenophobia* (2016).

NH : *Night of Happiness* (2018).

TBTS : *The Body by the Shore* (2022).

GS : *Ganesh Stuti* (2018).

SS : *Summer Senses* (2012).

BNE : *The Birds of North Europe* (1995).

WPLM : *Where Parallel Lines Meet* (2000).

KAK : *The Kite of Another Kind* (2011).

THESIS STATEMENT

The Argument

There has been much written about Tabish Khair (1966-) and his wide range of works that one must feel it unnecessary to add yet another study to the volumes of works that are already in existence. A major bulk of these writings has been on the study of the themes of Postcolonialism, Colonial Consciousness, Deprivation, Indian Diaspora, Expatriate Literature, Alienation, Exile and the like. However; nothing has been written about the theoretical concept of Social Realism in the fictional works of Tabish Khair and this is the primary purpose of this study to trace these themes. This study proposes to have a bird's eye view on the Social Realism theory looking after the major exponents of this theory as well as the basic tenets. Social Realism is an umbrella term that has been emerged as an antidote to romanticism in the early nineteenth century. It is a unique genre that looks at real life of people and situations exploring their way of living, use of dialects. Realist artists and authors desire to get back to observations of society rather than making exotic imaginary works that are out of touch with the real world.

Realism as a literary movement is based on 'objective reality.' It focuses on showing everyday activities and life, primarily among the middle or lower class society, without romantic idealization or dramatization. According to the literary theorist Kornelije Kvas, "the realistic figuration and re-figuration of reality form logical constructs that are similar to our usual notion of reality, without violating the principle of three types of laws- those of natural sciences, psychological and social ones (2020: 28)."

Honore de Balzac (1799-1850), a French novelist and playwright, is one of the founders of relalism in European literature. He is the most prominent representative of 19th century realism in fiction. His *La Comdie Humaine*, a vast collection of nearly one hundred novels, was the most ambitious scheme ever devised by a writer of fiction. He is renowned for his multi-faceted characters; even his lesser characters are lively and fully humane. Inanimate objects are imbued with characters as well; the city of Paris, a backdrop for much of his writings take on many human qualities. His writing influenced many famous writers including the novelists Charles Dicknes, Emile Zola, Gustave Flaubert and Henry James. Balzac has also influenced popular culture. Many of his fictions have been made into popular films and television serials, including: Travers Vale's *Pere Goriot* (1915), *Les Chouans* (1947), *Le Pere Goriot* (1968 BBC mini-series), and *La Cousine Bette* (1974 BBC mini-series, starring Margaret Tyzack and Helen Mirren; 1998 film, starring Jessica Lange). Balzac is mentioned to humorous effect in Meredith willson's musical *The Music Man*. He is included in Francois Truffaut's 1959 film, *The 400 Blows*. He is regarded to be the greatest social realist in France.

In German literature, realism developed under the name of 'Poetic Realism" or 'Bourgeois Realism'. The major exponents of this literary movement are Theodor Fontane, Gustav Freytag, Gottfried Keller, Wilhelm Raabe, Adalbert, and Theodor Storm. In Italian literature, the realism genre developed a detached description of the social and economic conditions of people in their name and environment. The pionees of realism in Italian literature include- Luigi Capuana, Giovanni Verga, Federico De Roberto, Matilde Serao, and Grazio Deledda, who was the first Italian woman novelist to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1926.

In India, Social Realism Movement in literature is an outcome to construct an identity in the context of the anti-colonial struggles and nation-building. This attempt combined liberal-reformist ideology with an affirmation of an 'Indian' cultural specificity. This concept is developed in 1930s in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao who depict the lives of the poorer castes in traditional Indian society. The realist novel's focus on growth and individual freedom is transformed in the Indian context with the economic conditions of uneven capitalism. Thus, the economic, political and the social conditions served to provide the basis for Realism in Indian English literature. Emergence of Realism as a theme in Indian literature was seen the existence of capitalist exploitation. There was seen the simultaneous co-existence of the postcolonial state apparatuses with an ideology which was liberal and humanist. In the twentieth century, the exponents of Social Realism are Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Deshpande, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Sudhir Kakkar, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri and Tabish Khair.

Indian English Literature is considered as one of the independent disciplines of literature. It has emerged from many factors like colonial rule in India, use of English as official language, English education in India, study of Western thoughts and impact of Western culture etc. All these influences played a pivotal role to bring about a revolutionary trend in Indian English literature. The political and social problems of a colonized country helped to shape and mould the growth of the Indian literature in English which arose from indigenous narrative traditions of ancient culture. This is beautifully exemplified in the works of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Rabindranath Tagore, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Henry Derozio, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sarojini Naidu Toru Dutt and others. The literary endevours of these writers have reflected the

socio-political scenario of the existing society. The Indian English Literature is younger than other regional literature of India like Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil and Urdu which reflect social realism, but it has its own enriched history.

Fiction is regarded as an expression of the most intimate consciousness of life and society which plays an important role in literature. It grows and develops with some purposes to accomplish some thoughts to be contemplated on, and some plans to be acted upon for the welfare of entire humanity. It witnesses some changes which take place in life and society and therefore; these changes are reflected in the fictional world. Indian English fiction is also doing the same thing. It expresses thoughts, feelings and emotions in a rationale and fascinating manner that throws light upon different changes in its own way. Thus; the reflection of change in different fields of Indian society manifests the significance and utility of the Indian creative writing in English. The Indian English fiction, from its very beginning has witnessed socio-cultural, economic and political changes in the destiny of this nation. The development of English novel in India was slower when compared to poetry and drama. Before the 19th century, the Indian literatures consisted of romance, the tale and the fable. The earliest English novels appeared in Bengal. It is said that the beginning of Indian English fiction is marked by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864). He imbibed patriotic feelings of Bengal and exposed the fraud and hypocrisy of contemporary life and society. He taught the lessons of social and cultural values in his writings. The Bengali writers mainly dominated the period from 1864 to 1900. The exponents of social realism in Bengali literature of this period are- Lal Behari Dey, T. C. Mookerjee, Raj Lakshmi Debi, Toru Dutt, K. Charkavarti, Kamala Satthianandhan, Behramji Malabari,

N.V. Pai, R. K. Pant, A. P. Dutta and others. They made use of their knowledge of Western thoughts as well as of the ancient learning in their novels.

The first two decades of the twentieth century are noteworthy as they made significant contributions to the growth and development of Indian English fiction. It was the era of socio-cultural and national consciousness in which Indian English novelists gave their limited contribution through their writings. Romesh Chandra Dutta, a renowned Bengali novelist, translated two of his six novels- *Sansar* and *Madhvi Kankan* into English entitled *The Lake of Palms* (1902) and *The Slave Girl of Agra* (1909) respectively. These novels aimed to reform the society by eliminating social evils and superstitions which were deeply rooted since time immemorial. They focused on social awareness to educate the villagers who were victims of superstition. These are social documents comprising right values and thoughts. Socio-cultural, political changes and social evils like- child marriage, casteism, poverty, exploitation, purdah pratha, inequality, cultural-conflict, realism and romantic tales are dominant themes in the fictions of this period. Parallel to the struggle for political freedom was a social struggle - a fight against superstition, casteism, poverty, illiteracy and many other social evils that were prevalent in Indian society.

The socio-political movement that had caught the imagination of the entire nation also inspired the Indian novelists in English. They realized that novel had a pivotal role to rectify the society from social evils. Therefore; the Indian English novelists, right from the end of the second decade of the 20th century, started focusing their attention largely on contemporary problems. Motivated by socio-cultural and political awareness and changed historical situation, they started to conceive of the state of values around them while presenting life and society realistically in their fictional

works. In the pre-Independence era, novels like Rabindranath Tagore's *The Wreck* (1921) and *Gora* (1923), M. M. Banarji's *Nanda, the Pariah Who Overcame Caste* (1923), D. G. Mukherjee's Hari, the *Jungle Lad* (1924) and *My Brother's Face* (1925), K. S. Venktramani's *Murugan*, *The Tiller* (1927) and other works gave firm footing to the Indian fiction in English and still have sparks of alternative patterns of values, highlighting social issues, stark realism, humanism, regional colour, orthodox, liberal, progressive and Gandhian thoughts. The novels that emerged at different times, in different regions of India showed a preoccupation with historical romance. The development of the Indian novel as a whole may be found with historical romances, social or political fictions and psychological novels. Historical romances, full of sentimental and exotic elements, were predominant until 1930.

The growth of Indian novel is seen very clearly with social novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan. Though historical romances and reform fictions can be traced quite distinctly, the psychological novel is not clearly seen. Novelists like K. S. Venkatramani with novels on rural life, Mulk Raj Anand with realistic novels and passionate progressivism, Raja Rao with philosophic fiction and the emotional zeal for Gandhian ideals and R. K. Narayan with novels on middle class people, have contributed much for the growth of Indian English novel. During 1930s and 1940s novelists of India used the medium to spread Gandhi's message, the problem of casteism and untouchability, facts related to freedom struggle. From Raja Rao to Nayantara Sahgal, we find various shades of intensity with which the Indian fiction adopted itself its new role after independence. The socio-cultural consciousness and the growth of the feelings of nationalism and achievement of national independence gave a fantastic impetus to the growth and development of Indian English fiction.

In Indian literature in English, writers like R. K. Narayan used realism in their novels. But R. K. Narayan does not portray the photographic reality he rather represents reality which is artistic. In this he differs from the French realists and naturalists who were interested in the stark and naked realism of life. Narayan depicts a kind of realism which is something more than reportage, he grabs the Indian mind fully with all its superstitious comprehension of life, its gullibility, its bewildering contradictions and it's sarcastic comic irony. How far Narayan is realistic in the manner of his narration can be seen from the harmony which his narration acquires in the blending of theme and style. Narayan is a realistic writer, but his realism is different from the surface realism of the French Naturalism. He does not see the ugly side of reality. Extreme crudities, naked sex descriptions and cruelties are ignored by him. He portrays the seamy side of reality.

The Indian fiction in English attains maturity, full flowering and wide acclaim in post-independence era. The post-independence writers did not much concern themselves with old fashioned ideas. They imbibed a new freedom. With the attainment of independence, the novelists experience a change in their themes. They treated novel as a "sort of a container for a special kind of reality which may or may not resemble that 'real reality' which we experience outside books." (1979: 6) In brief, they were interested in creating novels having desirable reality. Novelists other than R. K. Narayan are interested in being realistic. The focus is shifted from the public to the private sphere. The inner dilemma, anxiety, alienation, frustration, detachment, involvement, self-condemnation, self approval, restlessness, sense of guilt, loneliness, nausea, etc. became the pinpoints for the themes of the novels of this age. They deal with social themes like rural events, communal riots, cross-cultural conflict, the traumatic events of partition between India and Pakistan, loss of faith and values, curse

of industrialization and materialism, growing hostility among men in the novels of the post-independence fictionists. The exponents of social realism novelists of this era are G. V. Desani, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Nirad C. Chaudhari, Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar, S. N. Ghose, B. Rajan, Kamala Markandeya and others. They present in their works faithfully and realistically the sum total of a society's thought processes, vision of life, needs, aspirations, traditions and national commitments.

But after the independence, no one can rightly claim that India has broken the chains of evil customs, superstition and out-dated ideas of the past. Even though great efforts were made by social reformists in eliminating the evil customs that were present in the past strongly observed by society, they could not be uprooted. These evil practices and customs are still prevalent in free India. Another problem ignored was the position of women which drew the attention of all the right thinking people in independent India. The women are subjugated in male-dominated society. The present generation raised a strong voice against the discrimination shown to women. They give stress on women's empowerment to rectify the society. These progressive writers highlighted the meaning of gender and sexuality and the balance of power between women and men at all levels of society. In the developing countries like India, women were treated as inferior and there is a strong belief that men are superior to them and even own them. This biasness of the male-dominated society against women is reflected in their novels.

Many revolutionary steps have been taken, and drastic reforms are made by the Indian government for the eradication of social problems. Hence; great changes have taken place in the condition of the poor, the women and the weaker sections of society.

Such changes have been portrayed realistically in Indian English novels. These novels reflect the varied features of contemporary society. After independence, the novel has had more scope for diversification. Most of the novelists have touched almost all the strata of Indian society and varied aspects are reproduced artistically and truthfully in their thought-provoking novels. The novelists have tried to draw a lively picture of the modern Indian society, projecting here and there its salient features like, caste system, joint families and their disintegration, man-woman relationship, East-West encounter, traditional concept, position of women in society and the problem of urbanization.

Tabish Khair's eight novels are selected for the study as social documents. His fictions have been included among many others as novels of Social Realism. His novels are categorized as novels of Social Realism genre, which is a trend in Indian English novel during the last two decades of the twentieth century. The school of Social Realism led by Tabish Khair and his contemporaries as well as their novels published in the twentieth century, are not explored to the field of Indian English literature and criticism. Hence; the present study aims to explore eight selected novels of Tabish Khair which are considered as social novels. The study reveals the change in the goals, motivations and achievements. It will become an addition to the critical field of Indian literature. The purpose of the present study is to enquire in-depth the selected Indian English novels of Social Realism, with a view to determine their place in the great tradition of Indian fiction and their contribution to this tradition. The present study examines Tabish Khair's following novels- *The Bus Stopped* (2004), *Filming: A Love Story* (2007), *The Thing about Thugs* (2010), *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* (2012), *The New Xenophobia* (2016), *Jihadi Jane* (2016), *Night of Happiness* (2018) and *The Body by the Shore* (2022) from social realism point of view. Khair has

portrayed life in its various aspects like- identity crisis, cultural ethos, diaspora, observe social scenes acutely, deal with political scenes, life and culture, interpret new aspirations and disillusionment, ideas and realities and stress on social milieu of the changing times.

OBJECTIVE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The topic of the research is "*The Fictional Narratives of Tabish Khair: A Study on Social Realism.*" Identifying the element of social realism in his works would provide significant insight into manifold genre he incorporates into his writings. It would also highlight his grasp and interpretation of socio cultural history, his mastery of language and also the fragmentary quality of existence, which is illustrated by the style of his texts. Thus, this discourse should encourage more queries and debates and contribute to the rapidly expanding sea of knowledge and information.

Aims of the Study

i. To delineate the basic tenets of Social Realism Theory, viz: Racism, Class Struggle, Immigration, Cultural Issues, Humanism, Economic condition of downtrodden class, Ethnicity, Identity Crisis and social anxiety which chiefly focus on some social welfare and human issues.

ii. To establish the fictional works of Tabish Khair including *The Bus Stopped*, *Filming: A Love Story*, *The Thing about Thugs*, *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary* Position, The *New Xenophobia*, *Jihadi Jane*, *Night of Happiness* and *The Body by the Shore*.

iii. To establish the non-fictions of Tabish Khair including *Babu Fictions: Alienation in the contemporary Indian English Novels*, *Other Routes:1500 0f*

African and Asian Travel Writing, Reading Literature Today (*co-authored with Sebastian Dubinsky*), *Where Parallel Lines Meet*.

iv. To illuminate the interest of reading Social Realism Literature among the students of present generation discovering the hidden treasures folded in the pages of it.

HYPOTHESIS

Tabish Khair is one of the well famed contemporary novelists who has faithfully depicted the stark reality of our day- today life. The significant points which emerge relating to social realism need to testify during the course of research which are as follows:

i) Tabish Khair's novel depicts social realism.

ii) The characters in his novels are realistic.

iii) Khair uses his novels to critique society.

A BRIEF REVIEWS OF WORKS ON THE TOPIC RELATED TO THEORY AND LITERATURE ON THE WORKS OF TABISH KHAIR

i. Flaubert, Gaustave: 'On Realism', ed. George J. Becker, *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*. New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1963. Print. This anthology is a wide variety of materials by writers of different nationalities. The foreign contributions have been translated into English under three main headings i.e. 'The Impulse towards Realism', 'The Battle over Naturalism', and 'Twentieth Century Revisions and Evaluations; The author has discussed different kinds of social awareness which have helped to stimulate 'realism' and the writing of 'realistic' –as distinct from 'romantic'- novels. The author hopes that these

documents help the readers to reach to his conclusion about what the realists were trying to do. They illustrate the protean nature of the concept of 'realism', which undergoes continuous shifts and transitions of meaning in these writers' hands. It will also help to distinguish between 'realism' and 'naturalism' in novels and plays.

ii. Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994. Print. This book has assembled the most important ctitical essays of Homi Bhabha, which are allowed for an examination of his contribution to contemporary literary theory. Bhabha is well-known for his theory of cultural hybridity. He has developed it in 'Signs Taken for Wonders' and several other essays included in this collection.

iii. Khair, Tabish. *Capital and New Xenophobia,* Economic and Political Weekly 21 November 2015. Print. Xenophobia, the fear of dislike of strangers. It is commonly seen in the form of communal riots, racial attacks, religious hatred and genocide in history. This article has examined the unexplored relationship of xenophobia with power and capitalism. He argues that how changes in capitalism have altered the construction of the stranger, defines xenophobia in terms of structures of power, and argues for a reconceptualisation of 'civil' and new forms of xenophobia.

iv. Chaubey, Ajay K. *Mapping South Asian Diaspora*, Rawat Publications, Satyam Apts, Sector 3, Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur, 2018. Print. A conversation of Tabish Khair with Ajay K. chaubey has been published in the book. It is an exploration of Khair's varied experiences and sensibility shaping his works through out his career.

v. Cruickshank, Justin's *Realism and Sociology: Anti-Foundationalism, Ontology and Social Research* explorers the Social Realism theory. In recent years, methodological debates in the social sciences have increasingly focused on issues relating to epistemology. *Realism and Sociology* makes an original contribution to

the debate, charting a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism. Critics often hold that realism tries to assume some definitive account of reality. Against this it is argued throughout the book that realism can combine a strong definition of social reality with an anti-foundational approach to knowledge. The position of realist anti-foundationalism that is argued for is developed and defended via the use of immanent critiques. These deal primarily with post-Wittgenstein and positions that seek to define knowledge and social reality in terms of 'rule-following practices' within different ‘forms of life’ and ‘language games’. Specifically, the argument engages with Rorty’s neo-pragmatism and the structuration theory of Giddens. The philosophy of Popper is also drawn upon in a critically appreciative way. While the positions of Rorty and Giddens seek to deflate the claims of 'grand theory', albeit in different ways, they both end up with definitive claims about knowledge and reality that preclude social research. By avoiding the general deflationary approach that relies on reference to ‘practices’, realism is able to combine a strong social ontology with an anti-foundational epistemology, and thus act as an under labourer for empirical research.

vi. Sahu, Ramnath. *The Clay Doll*, Book Rivers, 2022. Print. This novel has focused on social chaos caused by addiction of alchohol which is a burning issue in rural India. The novel has brought into light the dominant nature of partriarchal society where women are highly dependent on the status of men because of the conventions of the society. The novelist has highlighted the social problems which are created by consumption of alcohol in Indian society. The protagonist, Janki is a silent sufferer who is betrayed by her drunkard husband. She learns the nature of her husband at her honeymoon night that he is addicted to alcohol. Being a wife of Kamal, she

neither can leave him nor can tolerate his nature. It happens because of social system where male dominance is considered central. Sahu has depicted a system in which men have supremacy over women, children and property. The oppression of women has historically been condoned due to the assumed differences in physical and mental capabilities of men and women. The women are not allowed to be a part of the decision making process as they are regarded as secondary, and are given few decision making power. This view is realistically illustrated in this novel. Janki, the mouthpiece of Sahu tries to remove this evil from the society. Her only son, Ratan follows the footprints of his father. As a result, both the father and son meet a premature death because of alcoholism. She has brought the revolution to the public, the battle against alchoholism what she has been fighting in her own family. As a 'one-man army' she has been protesting till the last day of her life to ractify the society. It is a tale of courage, vision, and never-say-die attitude, even in the face of life's most challenging odds. At last she has sacrificed her life at the altar of alchohal. Sahu has proved that all daughters are regarded as the Goddess Laxmi, but why all the sons are not considered as Narayans. The theme of the novel is centering around the problems of society and their solutions.

vii. Roy, Bhaskar and Mervyn Hartwig's *The Formation of Critical Realism*: *A Personal Perspective* (Ontological Explorations), is one of those little books, only 237 pages short, but full of absorbing insights, ideas and reflections, to say nothing of providing the only comprehensive overview of the critical realist project available in print, to my knowledge. Comprised of interviews between Roy Bhaskar and Mervyn Hartwig, carried out between August 2007 and March 2008, the book recounds the story of the philosophical formation of critical realism, as told by its

'Chief Architect.' That such an overview of the development of critical realism is available in one volume is worth the price alone. But what makes this book particularly attractive in its promise of interweaving three unfolding and related narratives- the personal narrative of Bhaskar, a child of post-war Britian and Indian Partition and Independence, the intellectual narrative of the emergence and growth of critical realism, and a 'World-historical story' and discussion of the development of modernity…" I found this book to be most inspiring in the sense that it revealed Bhaskar's (albeit fallible) commitment to 'walk the talk', his search for wholeness and 'unity of theory and practice,' as first mentioned in the opening chapter. There may be many examples of this throughout the book, including his early political activism, exploratory practice with psychoanalysis, meditation and other spiritual written in the 1970s while a Professor of Art History at Adelphi University in New York. It provides a unique view of the art world during the period (with University primary resources) into a period that lasted during the turmoil of the U.S. depression for some ten years until the Second World War. Excellent insight into a little reported period, difficult to research for lack of primary resources. Essays include those written by contemporary art critics of the time, including some references to the John Reed Club formed during this short time frame, approximately ten years. David Shapiro provides a clear summary of forces at work during this period in the art world, mostly ignored in today's world of Abstract Expressionist Art.

viii. Narayan, R. K. *The Dark Room*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1938**.** Print. It is a realistic novel which depicts tragedy of domestic life and disharmony attempting a new technique, dexterously real and exquisite with all the paraphernalia of trivial and familiar confrontations; a common feature of the Indian soil. Like his other

novels, Narayan sets down a fragment of life as he actually sees it. The novelist has portrayed the subjugation of women in the male-dominanated Indian society. It is an appeal to the women to challenge the discrimination of genders by deconstructing the existing concept of femininity and masculinity attempting to break away from gender stereotypes in society. It is one of the earliest novels which deals with the theme of gender equality and women's rights. The novel gives stress on women's empowerment with the aid of psychological treatment of characters and sharp social criticism, and concludes by pointing out the timelessness of the predicament of women in Indian society.

ix. Sharma, Pratap. *Days of the Turban* New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 1986. Print. This novel presents a picture of Punjab's rural society that leaves one numb with terror. It provides an insight into the mind of extremists. It shows how extremism builds on fear and then has to reach further into terrorism, not necessarily to further its aim, but for its leadership to keep ahead of its supporters and rivals. Here the reader comes to grips with basic emotions. The drama builds up and it holds the attention of the reader by the margin of his mind. It is so contemporary, so evocative that it will go down in Indian literary history as the most definitive work of fiction on Punjab. It is a novel of social realism, presenting a picture of Indian society from the inside. It shows a country in transition, where the old values are under attack from new ideas but where, in the end, the traditions and ways of life of the past still have their place. It offers an insight into the goings on in the Punjab from a human paint of view. Partap Sharma is at his best on home ground picturing rural life realistically and truthfully with an added flavour of fictionality.

x. Stephanides, Stephanos, and Singh, Karna. *Translating Kali's Feast: The Superstition and Realism*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. Print. This book illustrates Stephanos Stephanides' opinion regarding the theme of the Indian darkness, so prevalent in Tabish Khair, coincides with the orientalist and enlightenment discovery of Western Modernity.

xi. Singh, Manjit Inder. *Writers of Indian Diaspora*. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publication, 2002. Print. This book works through diaspora and diasporic identification and Tabish Khair's placement in it, provides fresh insights into Khair's role and situation as a writer, and locates his work within the dominant theories and critical practices of our time. It exemplifies that Khair's major accomplishment lies not in his contribution to the fictional genre or in developing the outsider's perspective but in attempting to redefine the diasporic imagination as a wandering one, in search of undefined and unknown roots. His works offer a ground to re-examine the prevalent theories of post-colonial literatures, diasporic space and affiliations, and theories projected by writers like Bhabha, Jan Mohammed, Avtar Brah and others.

xii. Mac Cannel, Dean. *The Tourist*: *A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Berkleley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999. Print. The book is an examination of tourism through a social theory lens that encompasses discussions of authenticity, high and low culture, and the construction of social reality. It brings the concerns of Social Science to an analysis of travel and sightseeing in the post industrial age.

xiii. Mohanty, Sachidananda ed. *Travel Writing and Colonialism*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2003. Print. This anthology provides ample resources during the study. In

recent years, new developments in Theory have elevated travel writing to the forefront of literary studies. Basing itself on some of these developments in an interdisciplinary framework, the present volume shows that a study of colonial travel can help us define some of our vexing post-colonial identities. The book purports to make a rich contribution to the domain of literature, travel writing and cross-cultural studies.

xiv. Narayan, R. K., *Waiting for Mahatma*. Michigan State University Press, 1954. Print. This novel highlights the social context and everyday life of common people in our society. It is more suggestive in it's portrayal of Indian reality. The religious aspects of Hinduism has been mirrored in the doings of Granny, who being a pious Hindu, refuses to touch the canvas chair, made out of the skin of dead animals. Even now there are many crones in India who like Granny are piously orthodox & traditionally modern.

xv. Tharoor, Shashi. *Show Business*. Penguin Books India, 1992. Print. This novel describes the working of Bollywood, India's Hindi film industry and the career of a fictional superstar. In this, Tharoor dazzles the readers with a look into the seedy life of Indian movie-making. He deftly captures the sex, intrigue and all about ridiculousness of the world's largest movie industry. The book begins well but down the road it tends to rush a bit. As the characters and the story are based on real life figures, their stories are more complex than what the writer makes the reader believe. The title refers not only to Bollywood but also to politics, which the protagonist joins, and to religion, as practised by Guru, one of the characters; both of which are forms of 'show business', selling illusions to the public. It is the story about the telling of stories, a wonderfully funny tale about the romance and folly of

cinema, a novel on an epic scale of ambition, greed, love, deception and death. And, perhaps most important, it is a fable for our time which teaches us that we live in a world where illusion is the only reality and nothing is what it seems.

xvi. Seth, Vikram. *A Suitable Boy*. Harper Collins (U.S.), 1993. Print. This novel deals with social realism theme which readers are always willing to read and explore its relevance in life. It is a marvel that Seth is able to treat the most serious subject of marriage as a problem, widowhood along with religious fanaticism, academic corruption and the Congress' search for a political base with his masterstroke of wit and irony. The book exemplifies negation of passion whether in inter-relationships, in sex or in politics or in religion, and for those indulging in passion there is no redemption on the part of Seth who as omniscient or semi-omniscient narrator takes his victims to task. With his penetrating insight into the period, Seth is able to impart the contemporary spirit a wider range in varied locales exquisitely strengthened by denser texture. Seth's methods of character delineation must be considered in the context of his fictional credo of social realism, because Seth invests his characters with great realism of detail with the intention of using them to identify and develop a wide array of social-related themes. His thematic preoccupation is not restricted to that of finding a suitable bridegroom for Lata, but rather to define what is 'suitable', and 'balanced' in the context of a new, truncated independent India. Vikram Seth is such an author that he writes with the omniscience and authority on everything including urban and rural social customs, dress, cuisine, funerary rites, cricket and even the technicalities of shoe manufacture. The novel describes with unhurried pace the panorama of India and

illuminates segment of Indian life quite brilliantly. It is the most fecund as well as the most prodigious work of the latter half of this century.

xvii. Narayan, R. K. *The Guide*, Viking Press (U.S.), 1958. Print. This novel deals with the life of middleclass sections of Indian society who are dependent on agriculture. It describes the problem of poor cultivators who depends on monsoon to produce their crops. if monsoon is not sufficient then this worsen the condition of agriculture leading to the unavoidable famine, deficiency of water, vanishing cattle, hording by traders unrests, penance, pujas and sacrifices to please the god of rain. From Rosie we come to know that in modern India rituals like 'Devdasis' Still exist today. She marries with Marco only to set herself free from that stratum of Indian society. Raju's mother wanted that Raju should marry her brother's daughter in a traditional manner. Raju's father wanted that Raju should run his shop near railway station. Rosie once again wanted to do carrier in dancing but her husband refuse to do so. This indicates that Indian people are quite sticking to their old beliefs they don't accept the new beliefs very early compare to other people. When Rosie entered in the life of Raju the family life of Raju get disturbed. She finds it impossible for herself to put up with the immoral living of her son with a tainted woman. The mother's attitude on husband wife relationship is systematically straight. This makes condition more worsen leading mother left behind her son Raju. Besides all these fact Narayan also depicted the social issues like love, sex and money which are important part of human life. These are the driving forces of society. The greed for money, love and sex corrupt every human being that is why Raju was in jail for two years and Marco left Rosie alone. The novel describes the transformation of the protagonist, Raju, from a tourist guide to spiritual guide and

then one of the greatest holy men of India. In this novel, the development of Ragu's fortune has provided an excellent opportunity to the novelist to satirize the nouveau riche of the post-war independent India. The story of sinner like Raju, an impresario becoming a saint, is a story that has the magnanimity and grandeur of the Indian scene and is a tragedy wholly of it. The novels of Narayan have a unique Indian rural setting.

xviii. Nasrin, Tasliama. *Lazza*. Penguin Books India, 1993. Print. This novel deals with the theme of religious chaos which was caused by the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992. It creates a great suffering of Bengali Hindus in Bangladesh. The story follows the mental turmoil of a Hindu family in an Islamic state, Bangladesh, which is facing the consequences of the actions of Hindus in India. Sunonjoy, unemployed in his early 30s, is an atheist and has a despondent and indifferent attitude to the bitter air in the society that threatens his and his family's existence in their native land. Sunonjoy's father Sudhamoy and mother Kiranmoyee are dealing with the trouble at hand in their own distinctive ways, whereas his sister Maya has taken refuge in a Muslim home. The story is a perfect depiction of how evil spawns evil and engenders spite. Mostly seen from the eyes of Suronjon, we discover how an educated youth has found himself descending to the gutters in desperate times. Nasrin has depicted the problems of religious extremism which destroy humanity in our society. She criticizes religion, government for the plight of the minority. The leading characters are realistic and relatable, bringing out the very emotions that engulf people in a place of distress: survival instinct, fear, anxiety, despondence, indifference and hurt. A lot of facts are mentioned, to the extent that one loses all focus from the story and is surrounded by so many names

and places, eventually forgetting all that was going on. I found myself skipping paragraphs and pages at a time. The emotion, the setting, all of it is very real and that is what tugs at your heartstrings. Despite its very obvious flaw, the book is a must read, for it gives a glimpse into the ugliness of extremities. The novel is a religious satire on the bigotries and extremism of religion. But the satire is not mild & indirect but the satire here is very harsh, poignant & denigrating.

xix. Mistry, Rohinton. *Such A Long Journey* McClelland and Stewart, 1991. Print. This novel is based on social realism theme and content. It is set in Bombay against the back drop of war in the Indian subcontinent and the birth of Bangladesh, telling the story of the peculiar way in which the conflict impinges on the lives of Gustad Noble the hero, an ordinary man and his family. *New York Times* book review says that Mistry manages to convey a vivid picture of India through sharp, affectionate sketches of Indian family life and a gift for erotic satire. Mistry's position as a socialist novelist is the result of a genuine inner compulsion rather than an external role enacted by him. He is a powerful chronicler of contemporary social and political life. The remarkable feature of Mistry's fiction is that it captures the crowded throbbing life of India.

xx. Mathur, Anurag. *Making the Minister Smile* Penguin India: 1996 Print. This novel describes about the adventures of an average American among the inscrutable Indians. Here, an American foot ball player comes to Delhi as a result of his family's Corporation's collaboration with an Indian company. Here in India, he becomes enmeshed with industrial disputes. Jayachandran, an eminent critic observes that the solution to the entire Gordian knot of problems in the novel is in

making the minister smile. The novel presents an accurate Indian political scene as it appears to a common man in India.

xxi. Mishra, Pankj. *The Romantics*. Picador India, 2000. Print. It is a novel of social realism theme and content capturing the sights and smells of everyday life. *The Romantics* has highlighted social evils like- caste, class, religion and communal violence. Here in this novel Mishra offers surprisingly assured, provocatively balanced meditation on the familiar culture clash, focusing on a generation of Indian youth bewildered about the value of an ancient heritage others find indispensable. Mishra has vividly depicted the unbridgeable gap between two disparate cultures; between the supercilious sense of superiority which the West holds over the East, a feeling which is perpetuated by those who claim to hold an affinity to the East, seeking to reduce its rich and diverse cultural heritage into an easy set of cliches and platitudes, fetishizing its beliefs, people and practices, cloaking the vapidity of their spiritual séances beneath a garbled set of misconstructions and misconstruements. Moreover, the East, struggling under the weight of a sense of collective cultural inferiority reveres the West to the point of adulation.

xxii. Chaudhuri, Amit. *A New World*, Penguin Random House India Pvt. Ltd. 2000, Print. This novel is a story of Jayojit Chatterjee, a divorced writer living in America and the visit he makes with his son Vikram to his elderly parents' home in Calcutta. Jayojit is an economist, writer and university lecturer. He travels back from the United States to his native India with his son, Vikram known as Bonny. They are to stay for four months to take advantage of the custody settlement following Jayojit's divorce. As father and son re-establish themselves in the city

during the summer, there is a sense of the returning migrants' disorientation within a landscape that is both familiar yet strange. Behind him in America, is the broken relationship that has left Jayojit fragile and depressed, yet he can't help glancing back at that land of wealth and opportunity as if it might also cure him. The novel merely spans the visit of father and son to their native, Calcutta, beginning with Jayojit's arrival in his old world and ending with his departure from it. The novel is almost completely uneventful or it is one that focuses on the small events of everyday life: eating, going to the bank, dealing with neighbors, servants, relatives, and acquaintances. Calcutta, indeed all of India, is no longer Jayojit's world, and his relationship with his parents has also shifted both due to the distance and his divorce. He moves tentatively in these old and only semi-familiar plaus, uncertain of whether he is trying to recapture the old or move on to the new.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The thesis has made use of published as well as electronic sources that are relevant to the author and the area of study. It also attempts comparisons with other Indian English writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Arundhati Roy that are found to have similar styles to some extent as him. Social Realism theory and and its basic tenets which are necessary to the topic are taken up for discussion and understanding. The conclusion attempts to validate the topic of study founded on all the sources mentioned in the bibliography. The latest (Ninth Edition) of the *MLA Handbook for Research Writers* has been consulted for documentation of this thesis.

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Beginnings

The first half of the 20th century has been dominated by the British and American literatures but the second half of the 20th century and the beginning era of the 21st century belongs to the Indian descent English writers. To name just a few, Salman Rusdie, V.S. Naipaul, Jhumpa Lahiri, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhuti Roy, Arvind Adiga, Tabish Khair and others come to mind. Their varied and vibrant works are both challenging and fascinating for us. They are to be regarded as pioneers in globalizing English literature. They plead for multiculturalism which bridges the borders between different cultures and make cultures permeable to humanity. A great many of them including Tabish Khair have explored the possibilities of presenting different cultures through their narratives.

Tabish Khair is a typical representative of the rapid social and cultural changes of the restless present-day world. His fiction and non-fictions deal with the collapse of the social order, the sense of futility of man's situation. He writes about peripheral, amorphous social groups which formed a shunted society with the forms of tradition and cultural surviving but the core lost, submerged, destroyed rendered meaningless and unimportant. Like Arundhuti Roy, his writings too are constantly finding the centre. His creative world is a multiracial, immigrant, slave society imbued with the drive and insecurity of immigrants. There lies the irony of loneliness, frustration and mental anguish through our present world is overpopulated wide and busy all the time. Khair's novels are characterised by his experiences and ethos of the community he belongs to.

This chapter will discuss how social realism brings forth a radical change in the contemporary world literature with special reference to Tabish Khair. It will introduce briefly the Social Realism Theory. It will also include a concise biography of Tabish Khair, his literary influences together with a brief discussion of his works.

1.2 Introduction to the Social Realism Theory

The writings of Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880) and Honore de Balzac (1799-1850) started Realism Movement in Franch which were sustained in England through the novels of Geoge Eliot. It was introduced in the United States of America by William Dean Howell (1837-1920). All these authors, wherever they belong to, despite their different cultural background they are interested in the depiction of the influences of the social class and ethnicity on urban life in America. The authors of this period are interested in the description of the social reality which is kaleidoscopic in nature and it was constituted by the various groups, economic classes and ethnic societies and while doing so they are deploying the method of realism. The Movement of social realism not only in the context of America but in the context of the world is influenced by Russian revolution, Soviet communism, and international Marxism. As these social movements are concentrating on the welfare of the society and fights for individual's rights, they become very popular all over the world. Thus, the Realism in literature spreads worldwide in accordance with the need of the contemporary period. The basic tenets of Social Realism theory are: Racism, Class Struggle, Immigration, Cultural Issues, Humanism, Economic condition of downtrodden class, Ethnicity, Identity Crisis and social anxiety which chiefly focus on some social welfare and human issues.

Realism in literature is the theory or practice of fidelity to nature or to real life situation and to accurate representation without idealization of everyday life. The 18th

century works of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett are among the earliest examples of social realism in English literature. It was adopted as an aesthetic programme in France in the mid 19th century, when interest arose in recording previously ignored aspects of contemporary life and society. The realist emphasis on detachment and objectivity, along with lucid but restrained social criticism, became integral to the novel in the late nineteenth century. The word has also been used critically to denote excessive minuteness of detail or preoccupation with trivial, sordid or filthy subjects. The twentieth century, prevailing models of literary criticism drew a line between realist and anti-realist literature, placing realist works on one side of the line and fantastic works on the opposite side. Despite this inherent questioning of the boundaries and construction of reality, the international literary scene has been largely uniform in its placement of magical realism in the anti-realist category, thereby opposing it to realist fiction.

Novel is a creation of imagination. Although, fiction and realism are opposite to each other, it is difficult to separate them in a novel. However; novelists mix fiction with realism to provide delight and an insight into the facts at the same time; they tend to be fictionally realistic. *New Standard Encyclopedia* defines realism as "a representation of objects and conditions in the way they appear to the senses as opposed to the ideal and fanciful." (1980: 89) The novel is a picture of real life, manners and the time in which it is written. It gives a familiar relation of such things as they pass every day before our eyes.

The major tradition of European fiction in the 19th century is a tradition of realism. Most of the novels are realistic. Victorian novel is characterized by realism that the novel by its very definition is a realistic prose fiction, complete in itself and of a

certain length wherein the word 'realistic' is meant to 'indicate' relevant to real life as opposed to 'Romantic'. But there was a growing dissatisfaction among the novelists to stick to realism alone. Therefore; they have explored new fictional modes which are discussed earlier as different genres. The same thing influenced Indian novels. The novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, K. S. Venkatramani, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao have changed the condition and adopted realism with social insight in their fictional works.

It is the social middle class which provided the most obvious context for the new Indian Writing in English. That is why Ranga Rao's *Fowl Filcher* (1987) is able to communicate a vivid sense of rural and provincial life. But Ranga Rao still acknowledges that "the nation itself has moved from the village centrism of the Gandhian era to the city centrism of the post-Nehru period." (1991: 108)

Social realism novel is marked by consciousness of the period in which it is set. Indian novel shows a unique time consciousness. The bulk of Indian English fiction since its birth has marked time with the period it chose to depict rather in a pretentious manner. Tagore's *Home and the World* (1916) would not have been possible without an awareness of the terrorist movement in Bengal during the First World War. There was a sudden change in Indian society after the independence and the novelists craved to depict the life of people with background. They found that the personal life of a man tends to be formulated by fixed patterns, loosely described as customs which are peculiar to particular castes. The novelists tended to stress the peculiarities of human life to bring home the difference as well as aliveness of life. They treated the themes like poverty, starvation, famine, hunger, caste system, women's position in society and people's economic condition.

Realism in art and literature is an endeavor to portray life as it is. It shows life with reality, omitting nothing that is ugly or painful, and idealizing nothing. To the realists, the writer's most important function is to describe as truthfully as possible what is observed though the senses. Realism began as a recognizable movement in art in the 18th century. By the mid 19th century, it was a principal art form. In past, realism has been an upheaval against classicism and romanticism - artistic movements characterized by works that idealize life. Classicism shows life as being more rational and orderly than it really is; while Romanticism shows life as being more emotionally exciting and satisfying that it normally is. While it was an attempt through realism to present life as it is. This 'life as it is' is what realism is. True realism depicts man and society as complete entities instead of showing merely one or the other of their aspects. It is not just an echo but the real sound of an individual or society or joint voice of their being. Thus, it is very much true what Mulk Raj Anand, a great realist in fiction accepts that the novelist must confront the total reality, including its sordidness, if one was to survive in the world of tragic contrasts between the exalted and noble vision of the blind bard Milton to encompass the eyes dimmed with tears of the many mute Miltons. Among the Indian English novelists, Mulk Raj Anand is the best example of writers who dealt with the themes of untouchability, economic inequality and social injustice. Raja Rao, Manohar Malgaonkar, R. K. Narayan, K. Nagaraj and many other novelists depicted social life in their novels. Their novels present a convincing picture of life and create an awareness of the basic values of life. There was a strain of social existence in the novels of the earlier novelists. Social Realism is not a new concept in Indian fiction.

A realistic novel is more for the sake of life of an individual or a mass presented by a common character as it is found in Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854) and

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935), which make reality more real for the sake of life. Quite a few of the Indian English novelists try to give a graphic picture of the contemporary rural or urban scene. They have, to some extent, been instrumental in adding another dimension to the awareness and insight. In a realistic novel one can easily transfer one's own identity to some of the characters and derive secondary pleasure out of this identification. While continuing to live one's own life one shares to the full the experiences of the characters in the novel by enriching one's own personality. With the finding for the realism or realistic aspects of Anand, it is also very important to look into the contemporary social, political, religious, traditional, cultural and economical issues in India. As it is a representation of the real social life of India, it is counted as a social document painted with rustic brush and dipped into the colour of social and religious layers.

Social Realism developed as a reaction against idealism and Romanticism. The consequences of the industrial revolution became an apparatus; urban centers grew, slums proliferated on a new scale contrasting with the display of wealth of the upper classes with a new sense of social consciousness and the social realists pledged to fight the beautiful art, any style which appeared to the eye or emotions. They focused on the ugly realities of contemporary life and sympathized with working-class people, particularly the poor. They recorded what they saw, as it is existed, in a dispassionate manner.

'Social Realism' is an umbrella term which covers all aspects of human life and their activity with responsibility. It is an extraordinary reach of understanding of social life. In other words, it is an intellectual power of probing into the nature and function of society, its various institutions, traditions and their functioning having an

intellectual penetration of social process. Social Realism involves individual, social and cultural changes in all the spheres of life with their intricacies and nuances: facts relating to family, the class, the marriage, the politics, the inter-relation, economy, morality and religion. It also deals with other issues which are related to life of people like- unemployment, industrial indiscipline, crime, war and their causes and consequences. Social novel is a keen depiction of social condition with a moral awareness. Social insight is a heightened consciousness or comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural milieu- a sense of social fact. Socially conscious refers to an awareness inspired by a social ideology. It implies extreme social involvement and commitment to the socialist programme. It includes social consciousness, social sense and experience and social insight. It is an all embracing term, indicating sound and systematic grasp of the socio-political web, all rolled into one. It unravels the layer within layers of the social fabric through fictional medium. The realist aims at presenting the diverse aspects of society and its complex functioning with the help of an appropriate story, characters, language and fictional technique. Social Realism is not just realism represented in novels. It is, on the other hand, the novelist's way of dealing with realism or sometimes dealing with social facts and events of society for his novel's sake. In the novelists' hands it remains a technique by which truth is represented in an artistic way.

There is difference between social realism and socialist realism. The word 'realist' characterizes that artist whose temperamental preoccupation is with revelation of the actual spirit of life, character and thought with a view to enlighten him and others. The main difference between social realism and socialist realism is between 'is' and 'should be'. Social Realism means the depiction in literature of social reality as it is;

there should be a point one to one correspondence between the society depicted in literature and the actual society. Socialist Realism means the depiction of the social reality not as it is but as it should be, idealized. Socialist Realism demanded that all art must depict some aspect of man's struggle toward socialist progress for a better life. It stressed the need for the creative artist to serve the proletariat by being realistic, optimistic and heroic. The doctrine considered all forms of experimentalism as degenerate and pessimistic. Socialist Realism had its roots in neoclassicism and the traditions of realism in Russian literature of the 19th century that described the life of simple people.

The term 'Social Realism' describes both a specific stylistic approach and an overall attitude towards subject matter. Its primary goal is not to amuse but to convince the observer of the evils. It aims at the unadorned depiction of the contemporary social life in its various aspects. Society is a fluid entity. Its truthful, historically concrete representation with revolutionary development becomes the real depiction of social panorama. The novels selected for the study aim at probing the social milieu systematically through the fictional medium, using appropriate story, characters and fictional technique. These novels reveal the author's artistic, emotional and social involvement in a proportionate manner.

1.3 Social Realism in the East

Indian fiction in English witnessed a spurt in realist in the '80s and 90s. Realism came to an end in European fiction at the close of the 19th century, but in the Indian scenario, we witness its rebirth in the fiction of Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and many other stalwarts. The nascent Indian society has been suffering from many social injustice and the creative mind of the writers reacted sympathetically to the woes

of the downtrodden and the marginalized. In the fictional works of Vikram Seth, Manju Kapur, Aravind Adiga, Arundhati Roy, and in many of our new generation writers, realism has a comeback with an added vigour and vitality. Manju Kapur, Arabind Adiga and Tabish Khair handle realism with its classical characteristics and their writings are like a mirror held against the uncomfortable realities of Indian society. The impact of far-reaching on the Indian social and political scene called by Gandhian Movement can be perceived in K. S. Venkatramani's *Murugan*, *The Tiller* (1927) and *Kandan*, *The Patriot: A Novel of New India in the Making (1932).* A. S. P. Ayyer is one of the prominent social realists of the twentieth century. His novels, *Baladitya* (1930) and *Three Man Desting* (1939) are set in ancient Indian history having Gandhian in spirit. The novelists and their novels paved the way for great trinity: Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao whose emergence was one of the most remarkable events in the realm of Indian English fiction. They are the harbingers of the true Indian English novel. These novelists began writing around the mid 1930s. Bhabani Bhatacharya was also a contemporary of these novelists by birth, but he started writing fiction just after the Indian Independence. Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004), has been the most prolific of the trio. His contribution to Indian English fiction of Social Realism is controvertibly great. His novels including *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) portray vividly the wretched of Indian rural society, solves their problems and guide them. The convention of Social Realism in Indian English fiction, established by Mulk Raj Anand, went flourishing during the nineteen fifties and early sixties through Bhabani Bhatacharya, Monohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh. Social Realism was also adopted by Hindi Films of the 1940s and 1950s, Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* (1946) which won the Palme d'Or at the first Cannes Film Festival, and Bimal Roy's

Two Acres of Land (1953), which won the International Prize at the 1954 Cannes Film Festival. The success gave rise to the Indian New Wave, with early Bengali Art Films such as Ritwik Ghatak's *Nagarik* (1953) and Satyajit Ray's *The Apu Trilogy* (1955--59), Realism in Indian cinema dates back to the 1920s and 1930s with early examples including V. Shantaram's films *Indian Shylock* (1925) and *The Unexpected* (1937).

1.4 Social Realism in the West

The industrial revolution and the rise of middle class society in the beginning of 19th century, sting the interest in the depiction of the social reality in literature. The literature has shifted its focus from the elite life to the everyday working-class life. The novels written in this period depict the life of the protagonist which can be identified with the common man of the contemporary period. The thematic issues of this literature were not the romantic or adventurous one or the setting was not the utopian landscapes but on the contrary it was ordinary scene from the neighbourhood. The characters neither belong to the aristocratic society nor they confront with any heroic, unbelievable deeds but they were simply common men of the society, who are suppressed by the over burden of the power politics, economic crises and dynamics of culture. Before the rise of realism, literature was judgmental in approach as the authors of this tradition attempts to criticize the social scene and points out that what is wrong and what is write. This approach restricts them from the selection of the kaleidoscopic thematic aspects or the exploration of social scenes in their full colours.

This brief survey of the tradition of American Realism will enable us to draw the features of the Realism in the American context. The authors of this period are interested in the depiction of the social reality which is kaleidoscopic in nature as it was constituted by the various social groups, economic classes, and ethnic societies and

while doing so they are deploying the method of realism. The authors of this tradition are – Henry James, Booker T. Washington, Abraham Cahan, Edith Wharton, Edith Maud Eaton, W. E. B. Du Bois, Theodore Dreiser, and Anzia Yezierska. It cannot be claimed that the realism was a monopoly of a specific country or it is restricted in a particular century. All these above mentioned authors, wherever they belong to, despite of their different cultural background they are interested in the depiction of the influence of the social class and ethnicity of urban life in America. In their literature they use the commonplaces as their setting and the everyday event as their action. The dramatic twists were created with the help of the social problems faced by their characters.

Henry James (1843–1916) is a well known author of American literature for his contribution to the literature of realism. He writes not only the realistic novels but also prepares a critical background for the realism by his non-fictional writings. His fictional works create a realistic social scene and authenticated it with the description of the human psyche. Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) was an African-American author, his autobiographies and critical essays focus on the lives of black immigrants in America. The oppression of black slaves and their social status was the major subject matter of his writing and speeches. He is a social activist and a significant reformer in American social history. Abraham Cahan (1860–1951) contributes to the literature of realism in America with his debuted novel *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto* (1896). It is a story of the graphic representation of cultural integration of Russo-Jewish immigrant. Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945) an American author who was generally considered as a member of naturalism school. His novels depict the socio-economic life of America. Edith Wharton (1862 –1937), with her elite heritage, wrote several novels

and short stories while depicting realistic, psychologically nuanced portraits of people representing the urban high society. She uses the dramatic irony to emphasise the reality of her contemporary period. Her novels *The House of Mirth (1905)* and *The Age of Innocence* (1920) are significant contribution to the American literature in which she criticises several aspects of his society. In fact this period can be seen as the transition period in the literary history of America as many authors still linger into the romantic period of literature. Anzia Yezierska (1880-1970), another influential woman author of America, depicts the immigrant life of Jewish community at Manhattan. The issues depicted in her works are primarily the issues of the contemporary women. The social, economic and political status of women is the major subject of her writing. Her works reflect her real life experiences and therefore; counted under the title of realism. These two examples are sufficient to point out that how these authors, as they belong to different ethnic origin, depict the various problems of the society. The real picture of the elite high class society can be observed in the writings of Wharton whereas the real picture of the immigrants can be seen in the short stories of Yezierska. Therefore, it has been revealed that these authors are using the narrative style and depicting the thematic issues of the literary movement of Realism. Their literary works are written in such a manner that they have given the impression of recording or reflecting faithfully an actual way of life.

Realism became prominent in the English novel with such writers as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Laurence Sterne, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Anthony Trollope and William Makepeace Thackeray. In the traditional prose narratives, authors always try to create an idealistic world in which every social evil and the voices of the characters are replaced by the idealistic social

space and attribute their characters with the heroic qualities. In the literary realism, the focus always lies on the objective description of the society as it is without asserting any idealistic feature. So the authors deal with what is there instead of what should be there. In this connection it will be worthwhile to understand the opinions of Raymond Williams which he has discussed in his famous essay, '*Realism and the Contemporary Novel*.' He defines the term realism as:

> To put it in more general terms, I mean this. There is a kind of novel which in fact creates and judges the quality of a whole way of living in terms of the qualities of persons. . . . The distinction of this tradition is that it offers a valuing creation of a whole way of life, a society, that is larger than any of the individuals composing it, and at the same time valuing creations of individual human beings, who while belonging to and affected by and helping to define this way of life, are also, in their own terms, absolute ends in themselves. Neither element, neither the society nor the individual, is there as a priority. The society is not a background against which the personal relationships are studied, nor are the individuals merely illustrations of aspects of the way of life. I call this the realistic tradition because it seems to me to represent a particular kind of mature realism in experience. This, I am saying, is how life is, how I see it when I am trying to see it whole. Every aspect of personal life is radically affected by the quality of the general life, and yet the general life is seen at its most important in completely personal terms. (1958: 22)

Williams focuses how the society plays a significant role in the life of an individual and therefore; suggests that in a realistic narration the priority is neither society nor an individual. Further; he sustains the argument that realism means not just "…detailed stocking descriptions of shops or back parlor or station waiting-rooms." (1958: 22). The realistic novels can use it as setting of their action but the realistic description of these

settings means not the essence of realism. Further in the essay he made a distinction between the social novel and personal novel. According to him in the social novel the focus of an author is on the accurate observation and description of the general life whereas in the personal novel the author accurately observes and describes persons. This comparison clearly points out that "each lacks a dimension, for the way of life is neither aggregation nor unit, but a whole invisible process." (1958: 22) Further he proposes a valid set of characteristic features of a 'realist work'. Williams argues that there are four criteria under which a realist narrative can be evaluated and they are common to all the forms of realism. According to him the first characteristic feature of a realist text is that it should be secular. It means that man should not be judged with the established superstitions and mysticism which surrounds him in the context of society and culture. This separation of man from the superstitions he propelled towards reason and logic. Therefore; according to him realist writing prefers to illustrate the human truth instead of divine truths. The second criterion of realistic novel according to him is that such novels should be grounded in the contemporary scenes in the terms of characters, setting and social issues. In third criterion he suggests that realist narrative should be the social extension. According to this criteria realist text tend to extend the range of characters and topics to include marginal or suppressed groups of the society. The forth criteria of the realist text is the intention of Williams. (1958: 50) These criteria are useful to understand the development of Realism from nineteenth century to the twentieth century.

1.5 Tabish Khair and his works

Tabish Khair (1966-) was born in Ranchi and grew up in Gaya, a small Indian town of historical interest in Bihar, in a Muslim middle class family. He pursued B.A. in

History, Sociology and English at Gaya College and a Masters' in English from Magadh University. Khair's early commitment with social and political issues and with writing led him to work as the district reporter for the Patna Edition of *The Times of India*. After troubles with fundamentalists, he moved to Delhi, where he became a staff reporter for the same prestigious newspaper. Four years afterwards, at the age of thirty, Khair moved to Copenhagen, Denmark to undertake his Ph.D. while he earned his living by dishwashing, floor cleaning and the other labour forced upon immigrants. When he finished his study in 2000, there were no academic opportunities there, so he moved to Aarhus, where he is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Aarhus.

Tabish Khair is a versatile writer of Indian origin who is enjoying immense popularity in English studies on account of his creative novels such as *The Bus Stopped* (2004), *Filming: A Love Story* (2007), *The Thing about Thugs* (2010), *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* (2012), The *New Xenophobia* (2016), *Jihadi Jane* (2016), *Night of Happiness* (2018), and *The Body by the Shore* (2022). Besides these, he has written *Quarantined Sonnets: Sex, Money and Shakespeare* (2020). It is a powerful rewriting of William Shakespeare's sonnets that combine humour and satire with acute social and political commentary. Khair has used 21 Sonnets to paint a memorable and moving picture of the world in corona quarantine. This is the first major work of literature to come out of the corona crisis. With iconoclastic humour and intelligence, it runs the readers through a gamut of emotions. It is also a clarion call for change. These sonnets range from initial humorous riffs on the foibles of our age but grow progressively darker and more acerbic, while always playing with Shakespeare's original works. *Reading Literature Today* (2011) is a path-breaking

intervention in current debates on reading and literature. This is a book of criticism that attempts to rescue literature from both the materialism of the market and the convoluted dryness of academia. The two complementary essays-one on literature and the other on reading-focus largely on texts in English and French, but also refer to other literatures. The author proposes a way of reading literature that not only synthesizes some earlier tendencies and puts them in context, but also propounds a revolutionary understanding of the nature of literature and reading. The writers taken up for discussion include William Shakespeare, Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, Marcel Proust, Charles Baudelaire, Franz Kafka, William Burroughs, Dylan Thomas, Attia Hosain, Albert Wendt, Zadie Smith, Philip Hensher, Mohsin Hamid and many others. Written in the great and dying tradition of literary essays on literature and criticism, this is a bold and ground-breaking book by two exciting writers who believe in reading literature.

The Bus Stopped (2004), Tabish Khair's first novel deals with the theme of journey of human life. The novel indicates his journey from Gaya to Phansa. It is written in the form of a travelogue which has gained immense popularity in the 21st century. *The Bus Stopped* is a kind of narration of the writer which consists of social and realistic elements like- regional spirit, sense of alienation, identity, search for cultural roots, difficulties and travails of the root nation and tension prevailing in the adopted nation. The structure of the novel is very difficult to characterise. Its structure is quite different which deals with more than one narrator. The narrative is divided into two major interesting parts. The first part is a frame story, and the central part consists of multiple journeys, told from inside a bus. The structure of the story has a single narrator, who largely describes the memories on his homes and houses of the past. The journey of the bus is divided into a number of interesting pictures which comes one by

one in front of the reader. These stories deal with the alternate between the point of view of the driver of the bus, Mangal Singh, and the interesting and touching stories of the passengers of the bus.

As the title suggests, it deals with the writer's journey from Gaya to Phansa in which the bus stopped many times which provides a platform to delineate his experiences during the journey. The selection of the title is suitable. As in the opening pages of the novel the bus was stopped. The author has given a subtle description of the bus such as the colour, a rusted mudguard, tyres, and a cracked windscreen etc. Mangal Singh, driver of the bus came and started it:

> Just before he turns the ignition key, again and again coaxing the old engine to start, he puts the whistle to his mouth and gives a short sharp blow on it. A sound that cuts across the dawn, the field and the houses like a bird in flight. (BS: 14)

At the end of the novel bus reached at its destination and bus finally stopped. During the journey from Gaya to Phansa, many times the bus was stopped. And with the every stoppage of the bus there was something new in terms of characters, situations, and the story.

The most remarkable event of the bus was quiet dramatic denouement, for all the passengers, that there was a tribal woman travelling in the bus and she actually carrying a dead child. When the other passengers come to know the fact, the bus stopped and the child was buried finally the bus moved on their route. At the end of the novel we saw that the whole narrative woven in relation to the bus and its journey on a particular route. The bus became a metaphoric symbol in terms of need of journey. Because, when the bus reached its final destination, most of the characters also reached their own

destinations in their lives. Like the eunuch gets married as a woman, the servant boy ran away from his village but ultimately caught, and the Danish character goes back to Denmark. Instead of these characters, the novel ends with many questions yet to be answered depends upon the choice of the reader such as: "the tribal woman gets home? What about the child who was buried by the roadside? What about Chottu? Did he get home with the glittering Banarsi sari, Did he know Mrs. Prasad's fate? , Can a bus be a home?" (BS: 157)

The novel is an enjoyable travelogue because the whole narrative represents the heart of the author, which has been left somewhere in his native land (Khair presently settled in Denmark). He recalls his memories through the journey of his native land. Khair tried to focus the regional spirit of Bihar, the native land of the author. To highlight the regional spirit of a particular region or land is a very important feature of a realistic novel. It becomes very popular social document of post-modern era. Some writer like- Arundhati Roy, M. G. Vassangi, Salman Rushdie, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Anita Desai and Tabish Khair are prominently dealing with this practice. And of course in this post-modern age, Khair becomes a predecessor of this tradition. In the novel with the movement of bus, the location changes, it brings a sense of belongingness as the reader comes in the contact of the common people, routine problems, and happenings etc. With the help of the various characters and their interesting stories the author has narrated a masterpiece of wonderful series of stories.

Travel writing deconstructs the territorial boundaries. Therefore; with the help of the narration of this journey of his native land Khair is able to deconstruct the cultural boundaries of his adopted nation. Here the memories and his experiences over the journey filled his heart with the flavours of his native region. The author finds relief

while portraying his experience of the journey of his land of origin. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are the witness of the changes bought by travel writing in the literature more specifically after the Second World War. And the contemporary travel writing shows one of the most prominent changes that have been taken place in the social scene. The contemporary travel writing reflects the social consciousness. It awaked society from traditional consciousness. In the late twentieth century travelogue becomes one of the most promising and innovative techniques of writing. Traditionally, travelogues have been involved in socio-political and cultural discourse. The theme of diaspora has contributed a lot in the social novels and travel writings. In the present time the travel writers have become subject-oriented. Actually in a travelogue the writer shows a journey, which begins from one specific place and ends with some specific destination. During this period of journey the reader comes in the contact of a variety of social, political and cultural changes. In this novel the reader experiences different social groups and social status by means of different characters. And of course because of these characters and their attractive stories reader feels himself more close to a range of cultures, as India is a land of different cultures. The Indian villages are very different from urban cities, and these differences or the qualities of a small rural region are beautifully showed by the author in the novel. The effort of the author is really remarkable and it brings reader to become more familiar to the narrative. Like one female character in the novel is talking about her experience of partition. There are feelings of two different cultures and socio-political changes of two different countries in the novel- one is India and the other one is Pakistan. Khair attracts our attention towards the difference of the cultures of the passengers in the bus while describing;

> He is dressed in torn but clean clothes, shirt and cotton trousers. He wears thick, black-rimmed glasses; He is obese in a watery sort of way, going bald from both sides of the temple, face swollen in an unhealthy manner. (BS: 105)

Khair describes the different social practices of religion and culture situated in the Indian society. To quote: "one woman wore purdah, though she had lifted a veil inside the bus. Three of others wore relatively clean but crumpled cotton saris (BS: 69)." This novel shows travelling as a social and psychological change of the characters and also in terms of discourse. The character of Mangal Singh reflects some soft traits during the journey. The narrative emphatically represents the rise and fall of eunuchs from Mughal period in India. The eunuch or *hijra* occupied important position in society. Being a realistic author Khair has beautifully written about his homeland. Diaspora is like a transnational connection between two cultures, the native land from where it belongs to, and the land where he is settled. Therefore; he has written emphatically about the social values, cultures, traditions, religion and rituals of his native land.

Indian Diaspora today has emerged with the multiplicity of histories, variety of culture, tradition and a deep instinct for survival. Basically; Diaspora literature involves an idea of homeland. It is a place from where the displacement occurs and narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic compulsions. The expatriate writing is being born and bred out of an overpowering sense of isolation and alienation. Usually Diaspora carries with them an imprint of immigration and expatriation. Tabish Khair is residing in Denmark but he has written and still writing about minute things of India (or about his native region). The geographical elements and social values of their native land always keep alive in their heart. Certain terms like home, identity, nation and cultural roots become very important in the life of a diaspora. They are eager to come

back to their native land. In this particular novel *The Bus Stopped*, Tabish Khair returned to his native with the help of the narration of the memories over a journey of his native region. V. K. Dwivedi claims, about the need or desire of coming back to home of a Diaspora:

> Returning to one's '*desh'* (home country) in the case of partitioned India is to experience a kind of diasporic double consciousness." One's "*desh*" becomes '*videsh'* (another country)" through a denial "that the homelands of Diasporas are themselves contaminated; they carry racial enclaves, with inassimilable minorities and other discrepant community, and a not pure, unified spaces in the first place. (2012: 3)

Tabish Khair is one of the enthusiastic writers of this tradition of realistic and expatriate writing. Still he loves his country and misses every moment of his lovely spent days. Home always remains a symbol of identity in the life of a Diaspora. The novel *The Bus Stopped* describes emphatically the importance of Home and it also distinguishes between house and home. The whole narrative is divided on the basis of structure into three sections: the main part titled as Journeys and remaining two parts, opens with the title Homes and ends with the title of Homes again like a complete journey. It opens with the writer's emphasis upon the word home. To quote:

> Home. A word that, in English or Danish, is spoken with a final clamping down of the lips, like windows shutting, as if what was contained was nothing but space; there is a movement like that of a possessive child gathering his toys in his arms: home; and that, in Hindi or Urdu, is spoken with a soft expulsion of breath, the lips opening like doors, a moving out from the rasp that catches in the throat to the final roll of the tongue: ghar. Ghar is also house. (BS: 195)

The novel strongly raises the idea of notion of home and it also gives a dominant feeling of social identity and memory. The migrant people who have left their homes, their roots, they recall the memories of their native land. This shows that how a person is deeply rooted in the affection of their native place. Khair is residing in Denmark, but he is talking about his native land amazingly. Through this journey he recalls his memories of his lovely spent days in his native land. The migration towards Denmark is a very important step in Khair's life. Therefore; being a realist he defines the meaning of roots and routes. Both the words are from different geographies of diaspora, which are combined through different geographies of home. The roots are related with their actual homeland, from where the person is migrated. The affection for their homeland shows that how he is deeply rooted and the term routes depicts the idea of transcultural geographies of home. The home and identity of a person are particular and have some definite boundary and of course the routes suggested mobility. In this novel, Khair beautifully incorporates these words. He accepts the importance of root and routes in the life of an immigrant writer.

Khair beautifully has created kaleidoscopic impressions of Indian society with the help of variety of characters. He draws the picture of common people, various social groups, and economic condition of downtrodden class. The narrative is very well crafted as all the character becomes alive. His novels unveil the stories of characters in a managed and impressive way. The incidents look naturally woven. He has written about the rise and fall of this character from Mugal Indian period.

Khair gives a feeling of multiculturalism with the help of variety of characters belonging to different social orders and cultures. All the characters are very well portrayed so that they attract the common people travelling or using public transport.

The situations look natural. Language is simple, prosaic but effective and condensed. The range of different characters like, Mr. Sharma belongs to middle class, eunuchs shows a different community especially in Indian society, One tribal woman carrying a child, a female refugee witness of India-Pakistan partition, Rasmus, a Danish tourist etc. collectively gives the feeling of cultural diversity. There is also mingling of certain emotions in the novel such as love, betrayal, memory, wit, and seriousness. Khair manages his tale which is no doubt a tale of Bihar in tradition. He presents his novel in a beautiful and simple manner. The language is simple prosaic but attractive, which overflows with the essence of the region. He uses short and crisp telegraphic sentences.

His next novel, *The Thing about Thugs (2010)* exposes the racist attitude of British people. It is an excellent example of racism and self. The novel unfolds an assortment of characters and their touching stories, spanning over two places Phansa in (Bihar) India and London in United Kingdom. The novel is a counter attack upon the stereotypes and the racist attitude of British towards the East. It effectively deals with some social issues such as, treatment of religion, caste, class, barbarism, culture, civilization and inter-racial relations. Khair highlights some prominent social issues that are central to any discussion on colonial and postcolonial dynamism.

The novel has disclosed the biasness of the West towards the East. They assumed Indian civilization as uncultured, dangerous, diabolical, uncivilized and inferior to the West. It raises the questions of identity, social justice, politics of representation, political action, cultural roots, nostalgia, racism and identifications. He has depicted a realistic picture of the typical stereotype nature of the Western society. It represents a study of racial fear and horror in the novel and it also highlights the racial otherness and ghost stories. There is a counter attack in the novel upon the typical mind-

set of the West, who always considers the East inferior to them. The book represents a study of other that how other has been treated and viewed as a problem, and become a major form of horror, fear, and violence and how they remain other from the Western mind. When Amir goes to London he certainly faces these sets of problems. Khair has examined this through the study of polemical dichotomy of the East and the West.

The title of the novel is very attractive but sometimes looks mysterious and ambiguous. The writer tried to focus on the each and every thing related to the cult of thugee and about the difficult life of the thugs. He showed enormous difference of this practice between India and London. Amir Ali is the protagonist and central character of the novel, presented as a reformed thug but when the narrative takes place he found himself one of them. He had been taken away to London by Captain T. Meadows to investigate the cult of thugee. As Meadows believes being a thug, he better knows the habits, attitudes and needs of thugs. He narrates his tales about thugee, as how it was practiced and institutionalised in India.

The narration of the stories was natural and fantastic. Therefore; the stories become alive in front of the reader. The way of narration of the author is adventurous and lucid which brings many surprises for the reader either in terms of changing situations, or in terms of changes in the shades of characters. These surprises hold the reader up to the end of the novel. While narrating the tales once Amir Ali said to Captain T. Meadows: “And thus Sahib, did my first year as a thug come to an end. How many did we kill that year? Close to seventy.” (TAT: 60)

The Thing about Thugs depicts a sensational and sizzling crime story which covers a wide range of characters. There are two major characters in the novel. Only the character of Amir Ali and author writes in the first person. Amir Ali is the central

character and the protagonist of the novel. He was brought to London from India by Captain Meadows to investigate the cult of thugee in the streets of London. The second character is Captain T. Meadows. Who wants to rewrite these tales of Thugee. One more notable character is Lord Batterstone, was studying phrenology with Captain Meadows. There are two important lady characters in the novel- one is the girlfriend of Amir Ali named Jenny, a British lady. Amir writes a series of Farsi letters about his experience, which helps in the growth of the narrative. The second lady character is Qui Hy. This character seems to resemble Madame Defarge in Charles Dickens *A Tale of Two Cities,* runs a Punjabi Dhaba. The character named Qui Hy is like a Chinese lady. She was always eager to help the poor and played a strong role for their betterment in their lives. The importance of the character is that her connectivity with these kinds of people made her able to catch the real thugs. The lady symbolises the East which is always considered as mute, colonised, suppressed, but very much advanced in the race of civilization.

The character of Amir Ali is the central attraction as he is the narrator of the story. He has represented as a reformed thug. But when the entire story opens he becomes almost one of them. Amir Ali was taken to London by Captain William T. Meadows in the year around 1839. He was taken to London to investigate the cult of Thugee there. Amir has an English girlfriend Jenny, he addresses her Jaanam. Amir's letters become the developing and interesting source for the narrative. These Persian letters was actually intended to negate Amir's talk with Captain Meadows. And the letters were the official record of his life. Amir writes in his first letter to Jenny: "Scribbling away in the murk of the scullery, I wish, perhaps, to leave an account of

myself in words other than the ones Kaptaan Meadows uses in his notebook." (TAT: 26)

The novel is quite interesting as it reflects the childhood memories of the author. The memories were strongly related to his ancestral house at Phansa. It was a place where he was deeply affected by the great writers of English literature such as Dickens, Conrad, Collins and Austen. When the story of the novel progresses we come to know that Amir was not a real thug. He was an innocent man who loved peace. He was a victim of a terrible loss for his escape from India to deceive Captain T. Meadows. Besides doing this, he disguises himself to be a real Thug to investigate serial killings in London. The role of the characters in the narrative is very impactful because all the characters are able to maintain their identity either they are British or Indian. The portrayal of some characters living under ground is wonderful in comparison to the upper class people in London.

Khair draws a realistic picture of the downtrodden class in London. They are prostitutes, beggars, niggers, slaves, opium peddlers and lascars. They all represent different class of the society. Almost all these characters belong to the lower class. They were living in dirty, gloomy, stink, streets of London. The most interesting and touching aspects of such characters is they all represent the plight and reality of this artificial world. The author also tried to highlight the shades of some characters according to their body structure. As the character of Captain Meadows not only take interviews of Amir Ali but he also examines his head. Because Captain Meadows believes the character of a man can be assessed by the shape of his skull. The author exposes the racist attitude of the western thinking. He defines the racist thinking of Lord Batterstone, "just as God did not create all beings equal, it stands to reason that the

marks on the skull are as permanent as souls and not liable to be erased by education or wealth." (TAT: 78) The character of Batterstone highlights the epitome of the White's Enlightenment project.

The style and the tone of Amir's narrating the stories of robbery and murders or describing the regional spirit of Phansa (Bihar) were fabulous. The description of his native village was full of heart touching memories. He describes wonderfully the beauty of Indian landscapes: "…the mighty Himalayas four hundred miles away or flowing into the Ganga or the Jamuna further on." (TAT: 67) But in comparison to London it was dominant, strong, busy, and pungent. And the stories of thugee were dabbled with brutality, horror presented with amazing imagination as they become able to create the British image of the Indians as mysterious, cheat, and unreliable. And this image continues up to the end of the novel. When the story comes to an end the image of the British was proved true. Because the end discloses, the British were real criminals who were responsible for these barbaric practices.

The period portrayed in the novel was nineteenth century which was the colonial period in India. The key point of the process of colonialism was that the European colonialisms involved in a variety of techniques, patterns and tools to dominate all. They brought economic imbalance that was necessary for the growth of European industry, capitalism and culture. Homi K. Bhaba in his *The Locations of Culture* describes about the characteristic of colonial discourse. He writes, "The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instructions." (1994: 70)

This is a process that affects the human not only physically but also psychologically. The purpose of colonisers was to make the colonised country civilized, and cultured. Therefore; they were forced to adopt the civilised culture of colonisers. The gap between colonisation and civilisation is typical and wide. And this process of colonisation is sick and diseased. The interrogation of the author of colonial paradigm is quite emphatic and he charges against the coloniser for their barbaric attitude. Captain Meadows asked Amir Ali how this system can allow this brutal and barbaric habit exists so long. Amir Ali replied very politely: "And are you not fond of battles and wars by which you win a town here and a market there? How much less bloody is the occupation of a Thug." (TAT: 61)

While dealing with the perspective of anti-colonial discourse there are certain issues which come in front of us in the novel highlighted by the author like- the East-West encounter, racism, colonisation vs. civilization, regional spirit of Bihar, diasporic writing etc. The novel represents a racism biased characterization. Like the people belong to the East always considered as lazy, violent, uneducated and uncivilized. And the people of the West are quite intelligent, educated, mannered, and cultured in comparison to the East. Edward Said in *Orientalism* describes about this biased behaviour of the West towards the East.

The primary symbol of racism is the colour, although later it changes into certain terms prevailing in the Indian society like- linguistic, religious, ethnic, sexual and class differences. The racist attitude of British towards the East is emphatically presented in the novel and this theory exists in the *Orientalism*. It exposes racist attitude of the West towards the East. The racist attitude gives them a feeling of superiority complex. According to Marxism, the racism is an important element of class division. Actually

the history is the witness of racist attitude of stereotypes as a complex process. These racist stereotypes of colonial discourses can still be found in science, historical writing, mass media and literature. The one more type of caste distinction represented by the author in the novel in a very lucid manner; "Haldi Ram and his community, being low caste, resided in a hamlet just outside the main village" (TAT: 67). This type of typical mind set for low castes was very common in the colonial India. Racism, caste and class are important features of colonialism. The racist attitude was also defined by Jawahar Lal Nehru in *Discovery of India,* as the East versus the West and Asia versus Europe. While accepting the fact Rudyard Kipling commented on racist attitude in the ending lines of his *The Ballad of East and West:*

> Oh, East is east, and West is west, and never the twain shall meet,
> Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great judgement seat.
> But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
> When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth. (1889: 57)

The British characters in the novel are created and narrated in the same manner like Captains, Lords, majors and others. These British are presented as criminals, murderers, skull collectors, and opium eaters. They belong to high class society in London. On the other hand, the colonised are always taken as suppressed, voiceless, weak, and uncivilized. But the character of Amir Ali and lady character Qui Hy are presented as intelligent, cultured and strong. As both of them, were able to investigate the real thugs.

In the novel Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte made a picture of class division. The Eastern countries are richer in comparison to the West and they had a variety of traditional long living culture but this quality is always ignored by the West. According to the West the orient or India is a country of poverty, illiteracy as well as uncivilised

and of course they are murderers, barbaric and thugs. They always repeated the same attitude towards the East. This typical mind-set is also represented in the writings of the West. The novel strongly highlights the trauma of racism. The Character of Amir Ali is represented as an accused of murder and robbery and he take refuge among his fellow untouchables. This also includes an enjoyable trip through Mole People territory, live in sewer tunnels.

Through the character of Amir Ali, Tabish Khair represents another interesting account of Otherness which operates throughout the narration of Amir's tales of stories. It is very interesting. Amir chooses to adopt Otherness by acting like a real thug that Captain T. Meadows believes his words when Amir says:

> I wish, perhaps, to leave an account of myself in words other than the ones Kaptan Meadows uses in his notebook, the carefully inscribed pages that he intends to turn into a book about the infamous institution of thugee and my fledging career in what he calls ritual murder'. Because, my dear, I was not, I am not what the Kaptan wants me to be I am not Amir Ali, the Thug. (TAT: 30)

These brutal murders were actually done by the Whites. Therefore; this dismantles the superiority of their culture, intelligence and race. The character of an old lady Qui Hy comes out as a smarter lady with a nice reasoning mind in comparison to Major Grayper, or even the journalist, Daniel Oates. Therefore; reason and goodness cannot be associated with any particular race. By making Amir speak like a real thug, Captain Meadows tried to assert the superiority of his culture, civilisation and race. The image of India from the western mind is always made by repellent interpretations and by misrepresentations of Indian civilization. The Orient has been always colonised and

neglected by the Europeans therefore they suffer with the feeling of hatred and aggression in their minds. The thinking of British eye on the Indian life and culture is always different. This difference beautifully described by Edward Said in *Orientalism*:

> The discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice. But in addition I have been using the word to designate that collection of dreams, images and vocabularies available to anyone who has tried to talk about what lies East of the dividing line. These two aspects of Orientalism are not incongruent, since by use of them both Europe could advance securely and unmetaphorically upon the Orient. (1995: 73)

The West always fascinates the East. And because of this attraction there is kind of encounter happens, known as East-West encounter. This novel is an excellent example of the East-West encounter. This encounter is an important part of the concept of anti-colonial discourse. In this novel, Amir the central character went to England and comes in the contact of a different culture. Amir belongs to India, an Eastern country. In his letters to his girlfriend Jenny he certainly writes about his experiences about both the countries. Edward Said in his *Orientalism* claims about the Orient-westerners shore up their identity. So in that way orientalism is a style of the West to dominate and oppress the East and to show their superiority. The colonial era is the witness of first encounter with others. This encounter begins a new age for traders and for the common people also. It also brings a new idea of progress. This cultural encounter emerged as a scientific progress and for the study of otherness. This scientific attitude of the West emphatically described in this novel. The novel focuses on their passion and attraction

towards science. British always think that science is a great tool by which they can construct and sometimes deconstruct religion according to their need.

India is basically known for their long lasting culture and a country of religion. And the maximum numbers are the followers of Hindu religion. This religion from the thinking of the West is always superstitious. Hindu religion is constructed on blind faith in mighty God. There is no space for reasoning and questioning. But the Westerns believe in science, reasoning, progress and questioning. When Amir Ali migrated to London, he found himself inferior to British. There are few characters in the novel who talk about God of Reason. Amir actually belongs to a long lasting culture and civilization of the East. But when he went to London to investigate the cult of thugee happening in the streets of London, he comes in the contact of a very different and new culture. This new culture was dominated by science, observations and reasons. On the other hand; Indian religions and culture are based upon faith.

We could say that there is a theme related to science and religion or a wave carrying the theme. Khair has made a comparison between science and religion throughout the novel. This is because the East is always considered as more religious, optimistic and superstitious in comparison to the West. And therefore; the West always considers they are superior to the East. Two characters of the novel Captain Meadows and Lord Batterstone believe that science is the ultimate truth of the world. They made this conclusion through the study of phrenology. Khair has presented Phrenology as many of the aristocrats' beloved science to help strengthen the global dominance and colonial enthusiasm of the West. Khair is an enthusiastic social realist to depict Indian culture, society and tradition. This reflects that how the memories of his native country are still alive in his heart. The novel deals with the regional spirit of Bihar (Phansa).

Amir Ali talked about his native village in his letters. He made comparison between India and England. Being a diasporic writer, Khair highlights this element in a fruitful manner. Khair himself claimed that he is born in a Muslim community, for him it is just like living in a minority within the minority. So the experiences of being a migrated person like the character of Amir Ali in the novel, sometimes looks same. This reflects how the person is deeply rooted with their native land. The diasporic element of the novel is quite impressive.

Finally; almost at the end of the novel Amir Ali the central character felt exhausted and frustrated with the peculiar atmosphere of the country. He felt tired with all these but he did not want to come back to his native land India. This quality makes a connection of similarity between the author and Amir Ali. It reflects an autobiographical element in the novel. This strategy of narration of the plot leads to a high expectation that Khair as an author will serve both as a guiding voice and true character in the story and his autobiography will help to propel an otherwise standard genre novel to a higher level.

Just like Amir Ali, Khair's mind was also crowded with so many questions when he was living in India. As he belongs to the biggest minority community of India he faces several questions relating to his identity of being an Indian or a Muslim. Yet the person is writing about Indian culture, tradition, discourse etc. This shows that how the person is deep in affection with their country. The description of Amir of his native village was very natural and harmonic. It was the period of British rule in India. Amir says: "Patna was the city of a thousand of gardens, a hundred schools, but they are all gone. Now it is simply a provincial headquarter, sustained by the presence of the company." (TAT: 43)

The ending of the novel is quite ambiguous. Khair presented a total reversal in the roles of the characters. Amir Ali, the protagonist of the novel found himself one of the thugs and the system also suspected that he is a thug because his past life of thugee emerges as a civilised and cultured person. As we know that Amir is presented as a reformed thug. Initially the government suspected that the colonies are responsible for these robberies and murders but the actual criminal was the British who belong to a civilised society.

Khair's *Filming: A Love Story* (2007) is a very beautiful novel set in India and spanning the 20th century. The novel deals with social and historical events including assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the rise of photography and the Bombay film industry and the development of barbed wire with everyday moment that make up the main fabric of our life. The novel deals with social maladies of Indian society. It tells a series, including that of one- time prostitution, Durga who is persuaded to give away her young son, Ashok, and that of Saleem, the son of a prostitute and two-times star of the silver screen. The whole narrative is divided into reels instead of chapters like a complete movie. After three reels it has intermission. All the stories seem to be intertwining and overlapping each other, they combine to create a novel because all stories move around two main characters Harihar (a postal clerk) and Durga (a prostitute). In this novel, Khair describes a realistic picture of the Non-co-operation Movement in India led by Mahatma Gandhi:

> It was an inconsequential day. A day earlier, and Durga's decision would have coincided with History: with the withdrawal of the call for Non-Co-operation by the Congress and Gandhi. Protest against the Rowlatt act, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and the Jallian-Wala Bagh massacre, the First World War when India had

> contributed 1.4 million forgotten soldiers to fight another people's battles, the Khilafat movement, the call for non-co-operation. (F: 59)

But on the whole *Filming* is an excellent recreation to the lost world of early cinema. The novel was ranked by Khushwant Singh as one of best twenty novels in English by Indians or writers of Indian origin.

How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position (2012), is a first person narrative of Tabish Khair. It intertwines a range of sensitive topics and pragmatically functions as a face-threatening act, because it provokingly alludes to religion, terrorism, sex as well as other complex social issues and explicitly aims to discuss a specific set of themes, motifs and atmosphere in the society. The novel pivots around the three main characters from Indians subcontinent who for various reasons end up sharing a flat in the Danish town of Aarhus, the unnamed narrator, a young Pakistani academic working in the Humanities, Ravi, a flamboyant Hindu intellectual and Karim, an Indian Muslim who works as a taxi driver. The sensation of uneasiness and dubiousness underpin the threat of terrorism, emerging and developing with in diasporic communities in the West. Indeed, Al-Wazedi, coins the level of homegrown terrorism to designate this kind of violence which morphs from the complex international plots to small-scale attacks carried out by individuals located within the U.S, U.K. and Denmark. Khair deals with a convoluted matter of Islamism, terrorism, Islamphobia and global politics. He comments on the act of terrorism as:

> Perhaps that was the best policy. But recall- and if you were in Denmark then, You will be able to recall without any effort- how much publicity Ibrahim's 'act of terror' was getting in those days. The Islamist Axe Plot; the Al Qaeda conspiracy, TV, talk shows,

> tabloids, broadsheets, politicians, police officers, security agents: everyone had an opinion, or spoke in loud ominous silence. (HFITMP: 172)

The novel aims to discuss a framework of cultural, social and political dimensions of sentiments. This novel is a story of love, friendship, misunderstanding, betrayal and pain. The tone of the novel is serious, as it deals with a serious subject. The message could be serious but there is an element of fun, which is wonderfully combined by the author.

The New Xenophobia (2016) is beautiful novel on social and political issues. In this novel, Tabish Khair studies his fear in a historical, philosophical and socio-economic context. Tracing the changes in xenophobic thinking over the past three decades, he examined the unexplored relationship of xenophobia with power and capitalism and shows how changes in capitalism have altered the image of the stranger. Xenophobia, the fear or dislike of strangers, has been seen throughout the course of recorded history in the form of communal riots, racist attacks, religious hatred and various kinds of genocide. Hindu-Muslim riots in India, Sinhalese-Tamil tensions in Sri Lanka, the persecution of Roma (Gypsies) in Europe, ethnic cleansing in places like the former Yugoslavia, purging of Shias and Sunnis in Iraq and Syria, skinheads attacking immigrants and the Jewish holocaust are just a few obvious examples. Khair provides new insight into racism and slavery and fresh perspectives on ethnic, cultural and religious politics in today's age of globalization. He mentions as:

> Xenophobia among human beings cannot be based on the proof (if it exists) that two flocks of apes are inevitably hostile to one another (if they are) as again we are talking of a very different context, framed by limits of perception, association, and

> competition that vary hugely from those of human beings. Xenophobia is not natural even if it can be proved that babies are often afraid of strange things or people, because the very survival of babies also depend on their ability to understand, grasp, accept, and relate to the totally strange world they are born into, and the strange beings, ranging from their parents and nurses to day-care workers, etc., who rear them. The bid to base complex factors solely in biological and individual aspects is simplistic in general: Culture and civilization could not have arisen from single individual and thus cannot be reduced to biological mechanism and, even less, can they be reduced to a subset of genetic specification. (NX: 17)

Jihadi Jane (2016) is a social novel which highlights modern Islamic society from realistic point of view. It is a story of two Muslim friends- Ameena and Jamilla, who live in England. Jamilla comes from a family which believes that loud music and working women like that are un-Islamic. On the other hand, Ameena comes from a more liberal household. She moves out of her single, recently-divorced working mother's home to her own flat. She smokes cigarette, wears jeans and is somewhat of rebel at heart. However; through the book, we notice gradual but unmissable transformation of Ameena as she immerses herself in reading the Holy book Quran. She starts wearing loose clothes and hijab. The two friends decide to go to Syria to live a life more Islamic. Jamilla decides to marry a Daesh fighter and Ameena decides to marry a Jihadi bride. Khair refers to a struggle against one's inclinations, an exertion to convert unbelievers or efforts towards the moral betterment of society. The novel is not a story of two girls in particular, but it is a story of the common people who are misguided in the name of religion in our existing Islamic society.

The novel is an account of friendship between the two girls as they go to school together in Yorkshire. Ameena, a child of divorced parents, leads a relatively liberal life. But both the girls are seduced by the idea of joining the Islamic State. They were misguided in the name of religion that they could lead a better life in Syria by Hejiye whom they meet on the internet. Khair has always been a sensitive storyteller in dealing with such serious subject like- religious fundamentalism, extremism, racial clash, diasporic sensibility and ethnicity in *Jihadi Jane*. The book touched, more seriously on Islamic fundamentalism. The narrator Jamilla and her friend Ameena went to Istanbul from England with a view to travelling on to Syria. They became jihadi brides to join the Daesh movement that was widely known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). Khair, being a social realist, has depicted the way of life of Islamic fundamentalism in this novel. Jamilla remarks:

> We knew that there were other girls like us, leaving Western nations to join the Jihad. But we were still part of an early wave; the Western media had yet to make a few dozen women in each country sound like there was a veritable exodus, as if all Muslim women in Europe were about to jump on planes to Istanbul. The security was not too tight yet. And we had received exact instructions. Leaving the airport, we took the metro to the Istanbul suburb of Bayrampasa district, on the European side of the city. We were supposed to wait at the main bus stop there, and we would be contracted by two or three men. (JJ: 84)

Tabish Khair's latest novel *Night of Happiness* (2018) is a deep dive into the seemingly quiet, mundane lives marked by the horrific violence of the Godhra riots in Gujarat. It is a linear first-person narrative. It depicts a sense of confusion, hurt, intrigue and inquiry in the mind of Anil Mehrotra, who deals in export-import multinational business in

India. Khair depicts a realistic picture of death, disaster and inter-communal riots in Gujarat. Besides Mehrotra, it is his colleague, Ahmed who becomes the victim of riots. The social spaces that Mehrotra and Ahmed inhabit converge in a series of intriguing observations from Mehrotra's point of view. His feelings of doubt, empathy, outrage, and suspension constitute to this beautiful novel.

Roshni, Ahmed's wife, contributes to the trope of absence that the author uses quite successfully as the story progresses. In fact, she is never seen because she dwells only in her past and in the presence of other characters, as an apparition would. These details, as well as the account of her tragic death- reportedly at the hands of a murderous anti-Muslim mob following the Godhra train deaths in 2002 are revealed to us through Mehrotra's private detective, Devi Prasad. Ahmed, who has not accepted his wife's death, has everyone around him believe that his life with Roshni is a continuing one, in all its domestic ease and mundaneness. Mehrotra's encounter with Ahmed's favourite halwa is a mystery which the story sets out to unravel. Ahmed's attachment to *Shab-e-baraat,* his mother's halwa-celebrating ritual, which is later supposedly made by his deceased wife Roshni too, brings together the symbolism of night and happiness, highlighting the tragic irony of the situation.

In this novel, real and unreal sight, smell, taste and touch, Anil Mehrotra, the sensible businessman, for all his formulaic business practices, is pleasantly given to quoting Macbeth. From his carefully set-up life to the overwhelming presence of the other as he delves more into Ahmed's strange nature, he confronts for the first time in his life, a tug at his conscience: "Someone was guilty, and I wanted it to be proven that it was not me, because what had happened in that flat had somehow, in some vague, weird manner, imposed a burden of guilt on me too." (NH: 4) In this narrative, the ghost

of our nation, our politics, and our tragedies come together in a subtle dismantling of disbeliefs of various kinds. A victim of one of the worst riots in post-Independent India, Ahmed, who is suspected to be an Islamist as well as a potential madman, fits into that rare tragic persona in this novel. His perceived madness is a reflection of the so-called civilisation that has engulfed us. For Ahmed, *Shab-e-baraat* remains frozen in his mind as the only source of happiness via the smell of the halwa he cherishes so much. Mehrotra, also realises the value of happiness while listening to his private investigator furnish details of Ahmed's curious life: "Yes, this was it, an Ahmedism if ever there was one: One need not search for happiness; one needs to stop for it." (NH: 39)

The author has highlighted some social problems like- ethnicity, inter-communal riots, revenge and violence that the people had faced in 2002, Gujarat in the context of Indian politics. Anil Mehrotra, a businessman, recounts Shab-e-baraat or Night of Happiness to understand his employee and right-hand man Ahmed. Khair is well-versed in the techniques used by writers of the 18th and 19th centuries to push against the boundaries of the enlightenment with its emphasis on reason and rationality. The protagonist of this novel learns to shed his prosaic and dull understanding of business and life through his encounter with the other, an older Muslim man with a sad smile and a knowledge base well outside anything imagined by our businessman. Anil Merotra, the narrator learns from Ahmed about the significance of Shab-e-baraat festival. Khair suggests that we do not see beyond the surface because we choose not to see it.

Khair's last novel, *The Body by the Shore* (2022) is set in the post-pandemic situation in the 21st century which carried the horror of death caused by coronavirus. The author presents Harris Maloub as a symbol of destruction who kills his visitors as soon as they meet him. He poisons like a virus who delights in killing innocent people

in accordance with his sweet will. Khair has highlighted sadistic activity of a secret laboratory where researchers are ghosts. Besides this, the author has given a description of a seminar in 2007, entitled as research on plants, fungi and microbes where most of the participants are dead or untraceable creatures. He asks about the secrecy of their death and the weapon that the powerful syndicates are trying to destroy the world. The novel has focused on social realism theme depicting the consequences of post-pandemic situation around 2030. *The Body of the Shore* has narrated the memory of a retiring Danish police officer, who cannot forget the dead body of a Black man recovered from the seashore some years ago. It is a mystery for for him that the abandoned oil rig in the North Sea has turned into a resort for the rich, Michelle, a young Caribbean woman. Khair had drawn a picture of modern society which is full of suspense, intricacies, and complexity of life on the Earth. It is also a novel about reason and emotion, love and despair, greed and hope, human beings and microbes with great terror and beauty.

Khair has reflected social realism theme and content in these narratives which are based on the lives of common people in the society. His works have been translated into various languages. His writing emphatically focused on theme of realism rather than the topic of the matter. He is mainly concerned with some social issues like anti-coloniality, the East-West encounter, theme of alienation, regionalism, South-Asian diaspora, subalterns, linguistic craftsmanship, expatiate writing etc. These issues have been used emphatically in various texts of Tabish Khair. These are the leading and burning elements of twenty first century English Literature. We find these elements in his writings as the East- West encounter *in Babu verses Coolie*, Anti-Colonial Discourse in *The Thing about Thugs,* Regional spirit of Bihar *in The Bus Stopped,* 'South–Asian diaspora' in *Babu verses Coolie*, 'Cultural hybridity' in *The Gothic, Postcolonialism*

and Othernes, and Islamophobic sentiment *in How To Fight Islamist Terror From the Missionary Position*.

1.6 Conclusion

As has been stated in the beginning of this thesis, the primary aim of this study will be an endeavour to discuss the Social Realism Theory. Therefore; in Chapter-II, it has been traced in details about the immergence of Tabish Khair as social realist, the basic tenets of Social Realism Theory, along with its prominent exponents.

The Chapter-III discusses minute details of the Social Realism Theory and its application in the early novels of Tabish Khair, having a close perusal with the major exponents of the theory. Social Realism has emerged as a key theme for the Hunanities and Social Sciences, and the amount of scholarly work on realism has reached unprecedented levels.

The next Chapter-IV, deals with the Social Realism Theory in the later novels of Tabish Khair. The basic tenets of Social Realism Theory like- Racial Discrimination, Communal Riots, Islamophobia, Barbarism, East-West encounter, Ethnicity and Religion, Circumcision, Religious prejudice are applied in the selected novels of Tabish Khair.

Chapter-V delineates the Social Realism Theory in the recent novels of Tabish Khair. This chapter implements the basic tenets of Social Realism Theory including: Racial and Religious Prejudice, Islamophobia in the West, Exploitation of Muslim Women in the West, Training for Suicide Bombers, Islamic Fundamentalism and Tableeghi Jamait, Polygamy and Identity Crisis in Aristocratic Class. Tabish Khair commenced his career of the realistic novels with his book *The Bus Stopped* (2004). It is

the account of the return journey of an immigrant to Denmark, settled there as an expatriate, officially vising his native country (India) as an outsider. *The Bus Stopped* is not only a travelogue, transcending the enthographic preoccupations, the author also indulges in reflecting social realism elements.

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Chapter –II

Emergence of Tabish Khair as a Social Realist

2.1 Introduction:

Tabish Khair is one of the leading Indian novelists of the socially committed tradition. He shows an extraordinary awareness of social crisis and vulnerability to problems. His strength lies in the fact that unlike other social realists, he does not portray mere problems, but offers his readers a choice to think on the idea of humanity and the world in which they live. All his works- academic, fictions and poems make this statement valid. He is a socially responsible writer whose main purpose is not to entertain, but to consider for the upliftment of moral and ethical values in society. His writings are considered as discourses that promote the idea of humanity in this globalized world. In doing so, he emerges as a liberal humanist and for this reason he always refuses to do his works under the purview of colonialism or post-colonialism.

Khair, being a sensitive artist, uses social realism to present his humanistic vision of life. He is very keen to explore the realities of life and the problems of contemporary Indian society. His deep knowledge of the life of rural and urban India is the result of minute observation of his life. An in-depth overview of the details of social life is necessary to write a successful social novel. His long spells as a journalist and his trips abroad to Denmark for his academic purpose bring him into contact with a wide variety of people and a wide variety of experiences. He is a product of Indian education, society and culture which makes him a realist at heart. Social realism is a notable feature of the Indian English novel in which Indian sensibility is expressed through a foreign language.

2.2 **Social Realism Theory and Tabish Khair's Literary Endeavour**

Tabish Khair, like other Indian novelists, explores the social and political realities of contemporary Indian life. He has established himself as a writer of social realism whose main concern is man and society. Social realism means drawing in literature the social reality in its true colour. The rise of social-realist novels in Indian fiction in English was due to the rise of the nationalist movement. Novelists influenced by this movement instilled feelings of nationalism in the common man through their works. He tried his hand to make people socially and economically aware. In this context T. Anganeyulu says:

> Realism is the term but social realism refers to the events in contemporary society. The novel of social realism presents a mirror reflection of the actual life. Social realism means the accurate depiction of social reality in literature as it is; there should be a point to point resemblance of society depicted in literature and of the actual society. Social realism differs from socialist realism which means the depiction of social reality, not as it is but as it should be idealized. This socialist realism is the typical Marxist approach to literature. The main difference between social realism unusually contemporary events or problems are presented and sometimes solutions to those problems are offered. (1998:5)

Tabish Khair's contribution lies in the depiction of social and political life in India. His social novels cross this ideological boundary and present a real picture of society, covering wider humanity. Through his characters he assimilates contemporary Indian life. He clearly portrays man in relation to society without making a mouthpiece and any prior ideology.

Khair, as a realist, tries to capture the essence of Indian society and its complexity in the bounded literary space of his novels. He presents not only a vignette of Indian life through diverse social images in his works, but also the voices of reassurance or hesitation of various classes of Indians in their union with the broader reality of Indian nationalism. He forms the overall culture of the society and outlines the typical patterns of life of the common people that create harmony despite diverse and heterogeneous lives. His emphasis is on the life of ordinary folk in society, not on portraying the glorious aspects of the elite class.

2.3 Nationalism in Tabish Khair's works

Khair analyses elements of social realism and Indian nationalism in his novels. Some selected fictional works extend Khair's early literary career with his recent creative output and relate to the various cosmic and stark realities of society. His novel, *The Bus Stopped* captures the picture of Indian society through suggestive images of rural and semi urban India. The novel *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* brings forth the complex worldwide intercultural scenario where Indians are deftly balancing their uniqueness with the demands of their living in diasporic setting. These compositions are helpful in studying the nuances of an author's engagement, being vocal about his minority status and aspiring to create an alternative approach to understanding his connection with society. Khair's Muslim status is reflected in both of these works because Muslim characters appear prominently in them. These characters carry out their daily work and show their way of life as a turbulent part of Indian society. He presents them in comparison to and in association with characters from other communities suggesting that Muslims are as much the part of Indian nationhood as are other communities. The differences in their way of living and belief systems are

the part of Indian credo of unity through diversity. He is involved in issues of inter-Muslim standing with the consequences of daily life and is an expression of Indian sentiment reflecting the general issues and problems of society. He captures elements of Indian nationalism by portraying the holistic nature of Indian society, old established local system, narrative of interrelated life, strong mythological anecdotes, rich natural imagery, symbolic sexual undertones, and diasporic elements. He depicts the socio-political issues marginalizing Indianness through his sensibility that also directs the literary subject matter of his works.

Tabish Khair is residing in Denmark but still writing about his native land India, highlighting some burning social issues in his works. His *Babu Fictions* deals with the problems like alienation and class division. *The Bus Stopped* deals with the regionalism as well as diasporic sensibility and *The Thing about Thugs* deals with some burning problems of society like- racism, East-West encounter and religious discrimination. His critical book *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere* focuses upon the colonial and racial otherness and last but not the least his poetic collection *Where Parallel Lines Meet* highlights the quest for identity and cultural roots.

A writer's anti-colonialial sentiment refers to highlight and focus attention on the regional spirit as well as culture of origin. There is a long list of Indian novelists who have written on the issues related to the concept of anti-colonial elements such as Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Bharti Mukherjee, Raja Rao, V. S. Naipaul, R. K. Narayan, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Sashi Tharoor, Tabish Khair and others. Khair is also a predecessor of this tradition. Many writers deal with anti-coloniality highlighting the regional spirit of their native places. Tabish Khair in his novels highlights the regional spirit of Bihar. Khair in his critical book *Babu Fictions:*

Alienation in the Contemporary Indian English Novels has written about these writers, we cannot separate post-colonialism in our insistence from anti-colonialism when we enumerate anti-colonialism as a counter discourse.

Abdelkader Nebbou in his article "The Colonial Discourses verses Anti-Colonial Discourses in West African Post-colonial Literature" defined anti-colonial discourse as: "As opposed to 'colonial discourse' which aimed at hiding the Europeans' intention in their colonies reflecting the effect of that event on their societies. In their struggle against colonialism the work of the postcolonial writers involved the 'claiming back' of their own history. They stressed on the vital importance of the culture and representation of their past as being central and necessary in nation building in the independent, postcolonial era." (2013: 2) Tabish Khair portrays his own lively experiences related to his native country, India and tries to assimilate the cultural conflicts of his root nation and adopted nation. It is true that something must be lost for the present to restore a strong sense of the past, especially in the marginal understanding of their identity. So, we revive the anti-colonial discourse early creating an anti-colonial thinking and practice. The anti-colonial struggle in India was of a very different nature from that of other colonised nations. The then education produces the historical and present knowledge about difference which raises the questions of identity and social justice.

Tabish Khair, being a social realist, faces some problems in a foreign land as an immigrant. These are poignantly depicted in his writings. The migrant literature includes the idea of homeland as well as the sense of homelessness. The home is a place from which displacement occurs due to social, educational and economic compulsions. In fact, diaspora is generally considered the exiled life of a minority community. But

nowadays, no matter who the migrant is - they live outside their motherland. Expatriate writing is originated from a strong sense of isolation from their motherland.

2.4 Diasporic Sensibility in Tabish Khair's Works

Being an immigrant in Denmark, Tabish Khair has raised many social issues related to the life of a migrant writer. He has portrayed social injustice that he has experienced in his own life. The issues raised by Khair have great significance in the post-dependency of Indian English writing which strongly raises elements of anti-colonial discourse. He belongs to the largest minority community in India. Khair, being a citizen of Denmark, has to face the problems faced by an immigrant. Some issues like apathy, homeland, homelessness, casteism, class division, self, segregation, East-West encounter, regional sentiment, stigma of identity, exploration of cultural roots etc. have been beautifully mingled by the author in his narratives. The words like- exile, immigrant and refugee are commonly used to describe the author's diasporic sensibility. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'diaspora' as, "anybody of people living outside their traditional homelands."

Recently, scholars have distinguished between different kinds of diaspora, based on its causes such as imperialism, trade or labour migrations or by the kinds of social coherence within the diaspora community and its ties to the ancestral lands. Diasporas often maintain ties to the country of their historical affiliation and influence the policies of the country where they are located. Diaspora can be considered of two types: one is people migrating to an exiled home to another country. Another is living in peace, but is losing home. Tabish Khair is one of the enthusiastic writers of this tradition. He was born in a Muslim family in Bihar (India) and later he settled in Denmark. Salman Rushdie in his book *Imaginary Homelands* poses the existential question: "What does it

mean to be an Indian outside India? And adds, “To forget that there is a world beyond the community to which we belong, to confine ourselves within a narrowly defined cultural boundary would be to go voluntarily into that form of internal exile in Homeland.” (1992: 15)

Diaspora writing depicts a realistic picture of society based on trauma, bereavement, identity, travel and recognition. This literature uses the term migrant identity to refer to any ethnic enclave in a nation-state that defines itself. Intentionally or unknowingly it is a group of displaced people. This literature comprises works of prominent writers settled at different places in foreign countries like the U.S.A, Canada, Denmark and the U.K. Writers like Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Balachandra Rajan, M.G. Vasanji, Jhumpa Lahiri, Gautam Malkani, Bharti Mukherjee, Siva Naipaul, Tabish Khair, Shauna Singh Baldwin and others exemplified the related trauma of the Indian diaspora in a foreign land. The deepest consequences of imperialism are the radical displacement of people through slavery, resentment and compromise. The spread of major numbers of people around the world can be seen as the result of the inequality of wealth between the whites and the orients. This phenomenon is spread by the economic imperatives of imperialism which rapidly opens the gap between coloniser and colonised. The refugee movement has often rekindled racism in many communities around the world.

The Indian diaspora can be classified into two major categories -forced migration and voluntary migration. Forced migration is primarily related to the cause of indentured labour or slavery in Africa and Caribbean in the 18th century. The voluntary migration occurs to the U.K., Germany, the U.S.A., France, Denmark and other European countries for educational and professional purposes. In many Western

societies, immigrant minorities are still considered less civilized and less capable than white native populations. In relation to Western culture this practice is called eurocentrism. Tabish Khair is one of the Indian migrant writers who fall under the category of voluntary migration. He moved to Denmark searching better opportunities in the field of education and later settled there for advancement of his career. Elleke Boehmer in her book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* describes:

> The immigrant and diasporic people/authors thus: 'ex-colonial by birth, "Third World" in cultural interest, cosmopolitan in almost every other way', these writers work within the precincts of the western metropolis while at the same time retaining thematic and/ or political connections with a national background. (1995: 233)

Tabish Khair is an Indian writer belonging to a middle class Muslim family. His father was a doctor and his mother had a college degree in Political Science. As Muslims are the largest religious minority in India, it can be said that it is a blessing and a curse for the members of the community. Khair has praised himself in an article, *A Blessing for My Children*:

> Within the community of Indian Muslims, my family again belonged to a large minority: that of middle class professional Muslims. When you are born into a minority that is a minority within a minority, you learn to belong in different ways. 'I grew up as Indian and as a Muslim.'I grew up speaking three languages and two scripts. I was told or I read stories and poems from West (especially Russian and British) as well as East (especially Hindi/Urdu). I was bought up on a concept of civilization and modernity that was not spelled E-U-R-O-P-E or W-E-S-T, for while my family member spoke English, while they had imbibed

> western education, they often also had a sense of other sources of rational thinking and possible maternities. It is this that often makes me frustrated even with much of acclaimed post-colonial literature. For very often this literature is only concerned about the bridge of West and the Rest. In my family, over centuries, we had crossed many other bridges. It is also this that made me feel –when I grew older-that the India had grown up it was a fragile entity: it was threatened by various kinds of fundamentalisms Muslim, Hindu and Western; it was always in the minority. (2006:16)

Khair's problem is that he is an Indian Muslim by birth and his understanding of Islam is not only a Muslim religion, for him it is a place where his religious outlook collides with the major religions of Hindus. Therefore, an Indian secular element is imbibed in the writings of Khair. Secondly, his Muslim identity in the West is always under scrutiny which shocks his secular view of Islam.

Khair is a novelist, journalist, critic and a poet who has been listed for various prizes. His novel *Filming: A Love Story* (2007) was short-listed for the Vodaphone Crossword Book Award in India. *The Thing about Thugs* published by Harper Collins in 2009, is short-listed for *The Hindu* Best Fiction Award, the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2012, and the Man Asian Literary prize. His novel *The Bus Stopped* is short-listed for a Major French Translation Prize. Khair used to write reviews for publication in India, Denmark and the U.K. He is very particular in writing for *The Hindu* (India).

Tabish Khair is the writer of various critically acclaimed books, poetry collections and novels like: *The Bus Stopped* (2004), *Filming: A Love Story (*2007), *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* (2012), *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere* (2009), *The Thing about Thugs*

(2010), *Babu Fictions: Alienation in the contemporary Indian English Novels* (2001), *Other Routes:1500 0f African and Asian Travel Writing,, Reading Literature Today* (*co-authored with Sebastian Dubinsky*) (2011), *Where Parallel Lines Meet* (2000), *Jihadi Jane* (2016), *Night of Happiness* (2018), and *The Body by the Shore* (2022). About after four years working as a staff reporter, he left for Copenhagen, Denmark, to pursue a Ph. D. which was completed in the year 2000.

Khair has published his Ph.D. thesis entitled *Babu Fictions: Isolation in Contemporary Indian English Novels* through The Oxford University Press in 2001. It has portrayed the contemporary Indian novels with the concept of social discourse. This book is one of the most important texts on Indian English fictions. In *Babu Fictions*, Khair has examined the wtitings of eminent novelists such as R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh and others. The book presents readings of contemporary Indian English fictions. It also creates class division in Babu-Coolie terms. Khair has dedicated this book to some people who could not read Indian English fiction, but often claim to read. He desires that the book should be read by middle and less English speaking class in the society.

Khair has focused on some social issues like identity, language and agency that are represented in Indian English fiction. He has discussed three related problems like-caste, class and gender. *Babu Fictions* deals with the burning problem of caste system, prevailing in Indian society which nowhere found on this Earth. He has given an interesting name to the chapter, which is ‘Caste: The Hiranyagarbha Syndrome; in which he describes the burning issue of caste system widespread in Indian society. The very title of the book itself reflects that the caste system in India is one of the most important problems to discuss in Indian English fiction. Social realism novels include

Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, Mulk Raj Anand's *Cow and Barricade*, Sudhir Bose's *The Frame of the Forest Can Go*. *Draupadi* by Mahashweta Devi and R. K Narayan's *Financial Expert* have highlighted the burning issues of caste system in Indian society.

Khair has referred 'Hiranyagarbha Syndrome' (golden womb) to analyse the social values of the novels from Mulk Raj Anand to Arundhati Roy, in which the central characters have represented low class strata, having spiritual and moral values. The term 'Hiranyagarbha' means that the soul which is hidden in the safest place in the human body which can never be seen with the naked eye. However, the relevance of the soul cannot be ignored for any living being. Tabish Khair opines that very often the low caste people may be treated as marginalised but their contribution in the growth and development to the Indian society cannot be ignored. Great works such as *The Mahabharata*, *The Ramayana*, *The Vedas* and other scriptures in Indian history have been written by people of lower caste. The Shudras were regarded as slaves during the Mughal period, but they have been given true respect in his contemporary novels. Khair represents downtrodden class as his mouthpiece. Irfan Habib in his *Essays in Indian History* has written about this typical caste system prevailing in the Indian society and Indian fiction as well. He writes:

> Caste is a fairly well marked, separate community, whose individual members are bound to each other through endogamy (and hypergamy) and very often also by a common hereditary profession or duty, actual or supposed. (2002: 161)

Khair approaches caste as a "complex system of social stratification growing out of the three early Aryan classes (Varna): the Kshatriya (warriors/ rulers), the Brahmans (priests), and the Vis (masses)." (2013: 134) The caste and class are related to each

other which are dominating factors in Indian society. Khair has written that he is very aware of the difficulties faced in identifying caste with class. Hence Ania Loomba says:

> Caste was of course a concept that becomes familiar in England from colonial experiences in India, and it marked a social, economic and religious hierarchy overlaid with connotations of purity and pollution, similar to those that shape the idea of race. (1998: 107)

Babu occupies the highest position on the economic ladder of the society. In his book *Babu Fictions* he focuses attention on caste, creed, colour and race differences in Indian society. It also highlights how non-Babu classes breach the cultural walls of Indian English literature.

The author claims that the Indian English focuses upon urban classes and upper caste because they represent the creamy layer of the society. Khair's discussion on Babu vision dominates Indian caste system. But some writers took the low caste people in their narratives such as Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchables,* Raja Rao's *Javani* etc. Such examples supported the argument that other castes were not completely ignored in Indian English fiction. Here a question arises that all these writers are from Babu Class and they have depicted characters of lower caste in their stories. Therefore, a lack of communication between these two different classes is observed. The reason for this is that, how can a higher class person write properly about a class that he is not familiar with. He does not know the real problems, needs and difficulties he faces in his real life. They do not belong to the sufferer class, they are Babus who certainly belong to elite class in the society. Hence it could be said that lower caste people have always been a lack of proper presentation at the hands of Babu writers.

2.5 Social Realism in Khair's Poetic Works

Khair is honoured the *All India Poetry Award* by the British Council and Poetry Society for his contribution to poetry. His first poetry collection was *My World*, 1991 by the prestigious publishing house Rupa & Company, Delhi. Poetry and fiction are included in his early writings. His early poetry collections are - *A Reporter's Diary* and *The Book of Heroes: A Collection of Light Verses* and *Much Worse*. Khair has established himself as a poet with the publication of his poetry volume entitled, *Where Parallel Lines Meet*, 2000. His poetry book, *Man of Glass: Poems*, 2010, has comprised of modern poems. Moreover, Khair is given the respect as an honorary fellow of creative writing at Baptist University, Hong Kong in 2004. He is awarded different fellowships and scholarships at the University of Copenhagen, Oxford University (U.K.), Jamia Millia Islamia University (Delhi) and the University of Delhi. Khair is a poet, a novelist and a scholar who works for the upliftment of society.

Khair's poetic works deal with his overall creative and social responsibility to promote the society. His poems comprise of the themes of his socio-cultural and political thoughts which have emerged from his fictions. His poems are like mini narratives depicting personal feelings and images drawn from experiences, Indian positions and global circumstances. Khair has presented society in his poems focusing on different situations, personages, social associations and cultural experiences. He has depicted realism of Indian society with the help of paradoxes and ironies of Indian characters and claimed them to be a part of Indian nationhood. His poetic collections, entitled, *Where Parallel Lines Meet* and *Man of Glass* are taken up to examine issues of Indian society from social realism point of view.

Khair's poetry book, *Where Parallel Lines Meet* is a collection of sixty-five poems which deal with social and global issues. The very title of the work is an oxymoron conveying different meanings which the readers have to find out themselves through the close reading of these poems. The poet has expressed fragile beauty of the past. The past glory is preserved in his memory though he no longer inhabits in India. Each poem tells a story whether it is in the smell of rain on the Earth, in the taste of mangoes ripening in the straw, in an old nurse's tales, or in a murder in South Delhi. Khair has expressed his feelings of love, the family, landscapes and his exile. The author has referred to new possibilities of human relations in a foreign country. He desires to return to his homeland with his deep-felt experiences of discovery, cruelty and charm. The poems have expressed his acute awareness how rooted we really are in both history and physical world. Khair has highlighted the problem of identity crisis, homelessness, nostalgia and search for cultural roots in *Where Parallel Lines Meet*. The epigraph which begins the poem is extracted from a Ghazal of Asadullah Khan Ghalib, "Dil hi to hai na sang-o khisht dard se bhar na aaye kyon? (It's but a heart, not brick or marble; why shouldn't it fill with pain)?" Khair has depicted miserable condition of human situation in his poetic work.

Khair, being a social realist, has presented Indian art, culture, religion and society of common people. He presents Indian nationhood with social images of daily activities and experiences in the poems collected in this volume. Indian rural life is presented with different images conveying diverse mini narratives. They reflect the compulsions of bare human survival with other socio-cultural issues. His poems depict historical continuity with the present living conditions; the issues of Indian cultural practices with the distinctive non-westernized Indian entity. The nostalgic memories,

the telltale life of common people and the evocative natural imagery are minutely presented through his poems. The poet has reflected Indian sensibility though diverse rituals and images portrayed in these poems. Martin Kich appreciates the native connection of this work: "Khair writes in English, but he challenges his readers by working with geographical details, cultural concepts, and linguistic elements that may be unfamiliar to most British and American readers. In effect, he provides an Anglicized gateway to his own cultural heritage and experience, and he challenges, as much as invites, his readers to enter." (2013: 29)

Khair has highlighted the pathetic conditions of immigrations, loss, segregation, and discursive domination as contextual standpoints to represent Indian situations. The infinity of human situations and Indian idedntity are realistically portrayed in the rich framework of *Where Parallel Lines Meet.* Moreover, his *Man of Glass* is a collection of forty-seven poems which describes three famous writers from across centuries, cultures, literary genres and languages: Kalidasa and his fifth-century Sanskrit play *The Recognition of Shakuntala*, Asadullah Khan Ghalib and his early nineteenth century Urdu Ghazals and H. C. Andersen and his Danish 'fairy tales.' Khair has highlited some social issues like- identity, humanity and divinity, the nature of things and beings, Muslim identity and diasporic sensibility, which he is facing in life. The poetic volume is arranged under three headings namely: "*Water: Fragments from the Recognition of Shakuntala"*, "*Stone: Ghalib Speaks in Tongues*" and *"Glass: Poems He Wrote, Almost*." Khair has written these poems by taking cues from three different referential sources and come out with his innovative and creative sensibility to address issues of Indian nationhood in particular and human situations in general. Pandey observes, "*Man of Glass* . . . emphatically reflects upon the constructs of human consciousness while

probing the precise nature of being and becoming. In this process, Khair brings forth the vision of both the self and the nature as open-ended and inclusive. The poetic vision prompts the poet to glean through issues like love, loss, war, betrayal, human struggle and migration. (2013: 40)

In the first segment of *Man of Glass,* 'Water', Khair presents the story of a simple middle class girl, Shakuntala who seeks better pastures in the west. She is at great variance from the legendary Shakuntala of *The Mahabharata* or of Kalidasa's play *Abhijanana-Shakuntalam* (The Recognition of Shakuntala). The poems in this section emerge as the allegory of current Indian situation where the allurements of better educational opportunities and career avenues entice the youth towards the west. They betray their Indian links or are themselves betrayed in the process.

The second part of the poetry book 'Stone' comprises eight selected poems (ghazals) written by the great Urdu poet, Asadullah Khan Ghalib. Khair points out the rationale in such a choice, "I transcreate some ghazals, chosen freely but building on echoes from the previous section." (2010: 12) These poems express melancholic situation of human existence. Moreover, this third section guides the title, *Man of Glass* conveying multiple symbolic meanings related to Khair's standings and poetic sensibility. Being a man of glass, Khair, as a poet has represented vividly human realities from his personal experiences. The critic, Charles Lock, referring to the concept of 'negative capability', talks about the significance of the metaphor 'man of glass' and comments upon Khair's poetic sensibility, "The man of glass is a figure for the poet who observes; it is not the figure of the men who suffers, unless the better to understand the sufferings of others." (2013: 34) The metaphoric title *Man of Glass*

centres round the issues of Indian nationhood to which Khair is strategically and distantly connected.

Man of Glass lays bare diverse aspects of Indian life through Khair's portrayal of Shakuntala who is divided between her Indian past and present western locale. The fundamental difference in Indian and western worldviews is emphasized through her story of the migration from Indian space to the western Danish world. Her movement away from Indian nation space conveys the betrayal of native links in the expectation of comfortable living in an unknown western corner. However, the non fulfillment of hopes has compelled her to lead a harsh and proscribed life there, accentuating her sense of loss and displacement. Through the portrayal of the diasporic dilemma and the conflict with the preconceived western superior stance, Khair presents the metaphoric character of Shakuntala as a mirror to reflect the conditions of Indian diaspora abroad. The loss of the pristine natural grandeur and the rooted relational mutuality of Indian life also get voice through her character. In the second section, the present Indian positions, which are depicted through Shakuntala, are paired with the cultural past of India through the transcreated poems of Ghalib. The poet tries to connect the present with the past to have a coherent sense of Indian 'modernity' which is to be guided by indigenous knowledge and norms of behaviour. These poems symbolically refer to the way forward to negotiate the agonized human situations by keeping unflinching faith in one's own characteristic standings even in dismal scenario. Khair traverses diverse terrains of human sensibility concerned with respective strands of present and past; materialistic and ideological; and western and Indian through the character of Shakuntala and the philosophical perspective of Ghalib. The subtle commonality in life situations and thought patterns among different sub-cultural Indian groups and the need

to address present maladies through Indian past come out from these two segments. Through the third section, Khair shifts his focus from personal to societal, Indian to universal and individualistic to humanistic space in connecting Indian realties with the broader human issues. He voices the concerns of the subaltern in different temporal and spatial contexts and approaches Indian situations in the overall need to provide a space to their standings in the inclusive narration of Indian nationhood.

These two poetic volumes convey Khair's indispensable concerns about his Indian links, Muslim identity, diasporic location and subaltern resistance. The collected poems artistically present the multilayered strands of his creative and critical sensibility. The deep underlying meanings of his poems become more lucid in the light of the standings emerged from his fictional and non fictional prose works. Khair writes from his personal positions and is categorical about his Indian and Muslim identities. However, he claims that his standings are non-restrictive and enabling, guided by the comprehensive and inclusive frame of reference. He is wary of westernized standpoints in comprehending Indian realities because of their hegemonic positions. The immense diversity of Indian scene and its distinctiveness in maintaining and working through differences are beyond western understanding. Khair repeatedly refers to the effect of colonial hegemony and western ideological influence on the native Indian sensibility and laments the fractured Indian discursive positions. Nevertheless, Khair brings forth the elements of Indian society by the portrayal of characteristic Indian situations, personages, beliefs, cultural practices, rituals, familial ties and relational complexities. The precarious struggle of the subaltern to survive on their own also finds mention in his poems. The deep attachment to home and its various shades in different contexts are also depicted in his poems. He broadens the concept of home to bring forth the global

issues of human migration, diasporic dilemma, displacement and inhospitable immigrant environment. Khair foregrounds the multicultural ethos of composite Indian culture through his writings. Khair's poetic works can be closely read and analyzed in the light of the mentioned issues and positions to find out the elements of social realism in them.

Khair composes his poems from a broader frame of reference but his Muslim identity forms an influencing backdrop of his poetic idiom. He depicts social issues from the Muslim standpoint and shows that the Muslim has inalienable link with Indian nationality. Khair's Muslim persona guides different poems in *Where Parallel Lines Meet* and these poems present varied familial anecdotes, religious festivals, cultural practices and other life situations from Muslim standings. The reference to two well known Muslim scholars, namely, Ghalib and Rumi, in the beginning and at the end of the poetic work respectively, completes the circle of Khair's poetic idiom, conveying the deep reflective tones of his creativity. He tries to relate his differential Muslim cultural grounding with the inclusive framework of Indian nationhood and affirms that the connectedness to one's respective religious or cultural background is a way to bequeath the knowledge and customs to the coming generations. However, despite his firm view about the socializing purpose of socio-cultural practices, he is not oblivious about the differentiation caused on the basis of one's respective standings. He, simultaneously, voices his grumble about his subaltern minority position as Muslim and infers from the same Muharram procession, "This is not anger, not even passion . . . This is dancing with the wound of time / this is my studied failure to feel." (WPLM: 10) Thus, Khair presents the differential shades of connectivity with nation space and the

complex negotiations to find voice in the narrative of nationhood in the mentioned poetic works.

Khair's *Where Parallel Lines Meet,* is considered one of the best collection of poems in recent times. It included some poems depicting some social issues for which he won the prestigious All India Poetry Award. He gives rise to the dilemma of identifying and exploring cultural roots prevalent in the contemporary age of globalization. The title of the collection of the poems is derived from his poem *Kitchen* which is supposed to be the ultimate objective of human life. Kitchen has always considered as the centre or the soul of any house. Therefore; the kitchen becomes a symbol of the poet's affection for his original home. The lines also indicate East-West encounter which merges in the 21st century age of multiculturalism. To Quote:

> Hindu-Muslim sat united round the curved
> Marble- limned table in their polite refusal
> To take another helping, the hard oval
> Littis were left for me and for my brother to break
> And eat more than family pride was to stake
> The Hindu poor, that is- we had one
> Of bricks outside fuelled by cow dungcakes
> You may call this a sort of inferiority, by we
> Knew that as the point where parallel lines meet (WPLM: 99).

Khair is closely attached with his root nation which he intends to revive through his poems. He may not have a comprehensive knowledge of Hinduism in the prime of his career but he tries his level best to explore and portray rituals of Hinduism. The poem *Ganesh Stuti* emphasises the traditional Hindu culture.

His second volume of collection of poems is *Man of Glass* which reflects Khair's knowledge of Indian literary figures like Mirza Galib, who has written in the

form of ghazal and which has primarily translated by Tabish Khair in English language. He also mentions in the collection of the poems that he has adopted and translated from the Sanskrit drama, *Abhigyan Shakuntalam* in English language. Tabish Khair has been deeply influenced by his predecessors of Indian English Litetrature such as Derozio, Toru Dutta, Sarojini Naidu and so on.

The poetry has always been a mode of expression of human life and experiences since the time immemorial. Indian English poetry has a great journey from the pre-independence period. It emerges as a powerful weapon for a large scale of writers, right from the first Indian English poet Henery Derozio. (1808- 1831) He is generally considered as the first poet of Indian English poetry. He has written the first original poetry in English, which was based upon less social consciousness but supports the patriotic spirit.

The writers of pre-independence Indian English Literature includes of writers like Henry Derozio, Toru Dutt, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Kaliprasad Ghosh, Sarojini Naidu, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and others. These writers contributed a lot in the evolution of Indian English traditions. And they have always been a huge source of inspiration for the writers of contemporary age. R. K. Singh remarks about the contribution of the poets of the pre-independence age to the society in his *Voices of the Present: Critical Essays on Some Indian Poets*. He writes as: “collective contribution to the evolution of Indian English tradition has been noteworthy, even if prone to canonization.” (2006: 7)

There is one more unique quality of the contemporary poets they borrow their words from regional languages. Tabish Khair uses typical Indian words in his writings

both in poetry and fiction. In his poetic collection *Where Parallel Lines Meet* he has drawn even some titles of the poems from this collection based on typical Indian regional language words, such as *Amma* (mother), Nimbu- Pani, Godhuli, tarkari, minar, chuteny etc. This practice brings him more close to the common Indian reader.

The pre-independence Indian English poetry was dabbled with the themes related to the freedom struggle of India. The poets of post- independence age face the crisis of identity. Therefore; many of the writers of this age have written about their quest for identity and about their cultural roots. Tabish Khair being a relist depicts the problem of identity crisis which he faces in his life. Hence; he has portrayed the themes related to the dilemma of identity, quest for cultural roots, migration towards the West, alienation and nostalgia.

The post-independence period witnesses of a huge number of migrations towards the West. This becomes a major reason in the way of their several sufferings related to their identity. Therefore; they find themselves alienated in the western society. Some famous writers of contemporary age such as Nissim Ezekiel, Keki N. Daruwalla, Dom Moraes, Shiv K. Kumar, Sarat Chandra, Adil Jassawala and Tabish Khair are from different racial backgrounds and they have written about different social issues. Therefore; we could say that because of their alienated condition in the society the themes like identity, isolation, alienation, nationalism, homelessness, racism and cultural roots turns naturally towards Indian English poetry.

Tabish Khair's poetic collection entitled *Where Parallel Lines Meet* focuses the memories of a man living in exile and the person tries to experience and re-feel the love, colours, traditions, textures and the life of his native land. The book is a collection of

well written poems, especially focusing upon the memories of poet's childhood and through the narration of these memories the poet consoles himself. He desperately remembers his native land. Hence K. Satchidanandan in his article *Mapping Memories* has written about the tone and the richness of the poems of the collection. To quote:

> The poems collected here are essentially the poems of memory, of a man living in exile trying to experience once again the colours, smells, counters and textures of his land, remote in space and time. There is sensuous intensity about many of these poems seldom found in Indian poetry written in English. (2000: 19)

The book was published in 2000 by Penguin books. The collection opens with a poem entitled *Ganesh Stuti.* The title of the poem itself delineates the poet's loving attitude towards typical Indian religion, culture, tradition and society. In the Hindu Indian culture, it is a great tradition to begin something new with a prayer to Lord Ganesh. He was the sixth avatar of Lord Vishnu. It is a short poem which reflects anti-hymn, humorous affections with lightness. The writer narrated here the Ganesh as a Lord of dwarf demons. He writes about Lord Ganesh:

> He squats wooden in a corner of our sitting room, Lord
> Of the dwarf-demons, the long eared one,
> the hang-bellied one, fraud who won two wives sitting in one place.
> It was a race
> Around the world. But would he run? He, the obdurate one,
> Who had half a tusk knocked out by none other than the sixth
> Avatar of Vishnu for refusing to budge, would he?
> No, not him. (GS: 1)

The poem focuses the poet's views, feelings, and respect towards the Indian tradition, culture and religion. Khair tries to define rituals and festivals of Hindu religion that he experiences in the society. His narration is very subtle, sensuous and realistic. The poem *Summer Senses* recalls the memories of sizzling summers on his native town, Bihar. He writes:

> The soft sweet smell of his hookah,
> The starched smell of her Sari,
> Of cooling cement roofs, of Khus
> The smell of sweet and attar, of shadows,
> Of dust in strings of sunlight unravelling,
> From drawn curtains, smell of sleep,
> And the fragrance of slow, circling, conversations.
> Summer is more than what you see,
> You cannot describe or explain it, anymore
> Than you can describe yourself or explain
> The many hatreds your people love, the colour
> Red or who shrieks in the wind outside. (SS: 15)

Khair intensely remembers the past and tries to recover what has left. He is currently living in Denmark and has a migrant base in Denmark during the winter. The author looks to miss this olfactory feeling that somehow connects his present life to the small town life of his homeland. He compared the birds in Northern Europe with his own condition. He acknowledges that they need to migrate to improve their condition. The Poem *The Birds of North Europe* describes the thoughtful attitude of the migrant poet:

Twenty years in different European cities and he had not lost,

His surprise as birds stopped at the threshold

Of their houses. Never,

Flying into rooms, to be decapitated by fan-blades or carefully

Herded through open window to another life, never

Building on the lampshade

Shell feathers, a conspiratorial rustle of wings above end of

An intrigued girl below.

Even the birds in their neat towns

Knew their place. (BNE: 42)

The poet recalls his childhood experiences and memories; how he spends his childhood days in his native land. Like every small kid he was also fond of playing in his childhood therefore has portrayed the small events and festive occasions of his town. It was a time when people enjoy with each other and celebrate together the festive occasions they gather and share their happiness. In the poem *The kite of Another kind,* he remembers the kite flying and the related preparations and enjoyment, as a small kid. The poem describes:

To pierce a foreign heaven; they rode the slender

Currents of air, their sharpened strings sagging

Under the weight of a palpable sky which suddenly

Squalled and tugged and pulled in our arms like a baby.

Roofs were the runway of our flights, the cockpit

From which we monitored our dogfights of paper

And tight skeleton of wood, danger lurked

In the corner of the eye with no computerised beep

Of warning and sometimes trees jumped at our kites. (KAK: 76)

The poem marks an enormous difference between the past days and the present times children who used to play with mechanical games. The present life has become more mechanical which does not improve the mental and physical health of our children. The children of today have missed some healthy games and enjoyment.

2.5 Conclusion

Khair's fictions are translated into different languages. He always highlights some social issues and their solutions for the readers. He is mainly concerned with human's problems like the East-West encounter, theme of alienation, regionalism, South-Asian diaspora, subalterns, linguistic craftsmanship, expatiate writing etc. These issues have been used emphatically in various texts of Tabish Khair. These are the burning issues of the 21st century English Literature. We find these elements in his writings as the East- West encounter *in Babu Fictions*, anti-colonial discourse in *The Thing about Thugs*, regional spirit of Bihar *in The Bus Stopped,* South–Asian diaspora in *Babu verses Coolie*, cultural hybridity in *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness,* Islamophobia *in How To Fight Islamist Terror From the Missionary Position*. In all these works we find an element of anti-colonial elements that carry India's culture and society. He tries to assimilate the cultural conflicts prevailing between his native nation and the adopted nation.

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CHAPTER-III

Social Realism in the Early Novels of Tabish Khair

The Bus Stopped (2004) and *Filming: A Love Story* (2007)

3.1 Implementation of basic tenets and lexicons of Social Realism Theory

This chapter proposes to apply some of the basic tenets and lexicons of social realism theory viz. religion and gender-based discrimination, exploitation of downtrodden section, nationalism and regional spirit, partition, Hindu-Muslim communal riots and diasporic sensibility in Tabish Khair's novels- *The Bus Stopped* and *Filming: A Love Story*. These two novels are categorized as early novels of Khair. He has depicted realistic picture of Indian society in these novels. *The Bus Stopped* is a travelogue written in an autobiographical mode. It has become popular in the 21st century. The novel reflects Khair's journey from Gaya to Phansa portraying social realism themes.

The Bus Stopped has portrayed the author's sense of belongingness, rootlessness and sense of alienation. Khair has interwoven various stories in a realistic manner. The novel gives importance to the image of home and the bus is metaphorically used to explain the need of travel along with the desire of coming back to the home. The author delights in writing the story of the journey towards his mother land. His heart is satisfied with the memories and experiences that he gathers from the journey to his land of origin. The identities which are established on culture create borders. On the other hand, territorial boundaries are deconstructed by travel writing. Tabish Khair has deconstructed the cultural boundaries of his adopted nation through the journey of his native land.

3.2 Religion and Gender-based Discrimination

The Supreme Court of India formally recognized the existence of a third gender in April, 2014. There is no formal definition of the third gender or hijra in India. People who identify as neither completely male nor female are commonly referred to as Hijra or transgender. The Hijra have been subject to discrimination, harassment, and persecution for their gender queer self-identification. Along with the queer community, Hijras have been targeted by law enforcement and government officials under Section 377. This law was used to criminalize any queer sexual acts and has been used to justify discrimination and mistreatment of the hijra community since its enactment in British colonial era India.

In *The Bus Stopped*, Khair has depicted the problems of third gender in our society. They are always looked down upon in the society. In India too, before the arrival of Mughals, they were considered untouchable and they were deprived of all socio-religious, cultural and economical rights. However, with the change of time, such persons lost their relevance and Farhana highlights their perilous struggle to survive in the society.

> Things changed, middle-class morality or upper-caste religiosity- call it what you will- struck back at us. Perhaps the coming of the British, with their black and white theories, their European values and their Victorian morality; the coming of the British started our modern decline. You might be surprised at me a 'mere' eunuch, talking in such precise term, offering rational opinions. After all, you probably associate us with those underdressed, overly made-up, angular 'woman' who jump at you on the streets and demand money or who barge into marriage ceremonies with loud songs and have to be paid to go away. That is what we are now: that is that is what has happened to us. But that is not what we were, or

> what we could have been. We were trained to be dancers, artists, musicians, soldiers, even scholars. We served, but we were seldom servants. (BS: 16)

The third gender or eunuch (hijra) earns their livelihood by performing dance programme with loud songs in marriage ceremonies. They sometimes collect money from the passersby on the streets by begging. Farhana represents this eunuch community. She is interested in using colourful saris. But, unfortunately this community is not considered as a integral part of society. They are considered as untouchables and are categorized as marginalized section. They have their own society which is controlled by an Ustad (leader) for day-today livelihood. Some of them are engaged in prostitution and petty extortion. They led a secluded life being separated from their kith and kin. They were not allowed to enter a temple, and adopt any profession except ritual dancing. The novelist mentions that after the arrival of Islam to India, position of eunuch rose from that of untouchable curiosities to active and legitimate members of society. They become advisers to younger noblemen, artists, keeper of the harem keys, spies, soldiers, builders of cities and so on. They always adopt Muslim names as they have nothing to do with religion. The eunuch is a first person narrator who rides on the bus hiding her identity from a Muslim name Farhana to Hindu name Parvati.

She left home where she was born and brought up to escape from the expanding considerations of new religio-political groups. Farhana Begum has been portrayed to escape of the ludicrous obligation of her gharana. She desired to live like a lady and not like a eunuch. She feels that the existence of a eunuch was undignified. She further comments that:

> Quite frankly, I wished for a job. I wanted to live like a woman and not like a eunuch. The life of a eunuch these days was too degrading for me. Moreover, I feel more like a woman If I were forced to choose, I would rather be a woman than a man. You may even say I look like a woman: I am slight in build and have striking dark eyes, full lips and a fine aquiline nose. I have long, thick hair, falling down to my waist, the envy of most women. My arms are perhaps more veined than is usual among middle-class woman in these parts, but I have seen peasant women with leathery, more muscular arms. Dressed in sari, no one can take me for a eunuch. (BS: 53)

Her account is refined and rather remorseful nostalgic with a happy ending. In this novel an experience with a hijra character opens up the thinking about a storyteller and trains her to live in a postmodern, globalized, diasporic world. Farhana was married to Vijay Mirchandani, a successful businessman. It is a strange human situation for a eunuch to become a wife in the civil society. Khair draws her character with humanistic consideration negating the religion and gender based discrimination.

Farahana disguises herself taking a Hindu name Parvati to draw sympathy from the society. Later she is married to the son of Mrs Mirchandani. She questions on existing human association and gender based discrimination in the society. Khair comments on Farhana: “Once Farhana, now Parvati: it hardly mattered to me. These were all aliases that, for one reason or the other have to obscure my identity, my real name.” (BS: 128) Mrs. Mirchandani takes good care of Farhana as daughter-in-law. She gives her motherly affection. Farhana points out: “Religion is not such an issue with us as it is with men and women.” (BS: 16) She feels that separate identity is based on dress, eating habits and daily religious rituals. She makes philosophical comments:

"human beings like pieces of cloth in rain of time: porous. Cultures seep into us; we get heavy with our and everyone else's history." (BS: 182) Her character presents the bouquet of Indian culture combining and providing space to flowers of multifarious colour, scent and ambience.

In *Filming: A Love Story*, the author has highlighted the dominating nature of Hindus over Muslim people. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S) inspired the Hindus to be united to fight against Islam. They argue that Hindus are victimized in Islamic countries like Pakistan after the partition in 1947. Khair also mentions that the Muslim people are facing religious discrimination in Western countries like Denmark. The novelist has given a realistic picture of the R.S.S. Promukh's views to unite the Hindu people in India. He advocates for the formation of Hindustan by the Hindu people. Khair reveals his feelings through the narrator, Batin. The speaker tells that he has dreamed a dream in the festive evening of Diwali when lamps are being lit. He is fascinated while he imagines that all the people dressing in white are performing a Vedic ritual like ancient monks and priests. The Hindus should be united around a huge lingam, a large black lingam chanting Vedic rituals. It symbolizes the God Shiva. He comments as:

> Hindus should be united united walking around a huge lingam a large black lingam that towers above them that is storeys high the people all dressed in white united in purpose united in effort as the India of my dreams as India as we would make it I hear the Promukh say an India of Hindus one India of Hindus one people one Hindu people the people all in white like Vedic priests like something from the reign of Lord Rama loose flowing garments like dhotis like sheets the people walking around this gigantic

> black lingam except except it is square it is square the lingam is square. (FG: 207)

They united with a purpose to make India as his dream. He hears the Pramukh say that India is of Hindus. One India of Hindus, dressed in white like Vedic priests and monks in the reign of Lord Ram. He dreams as if people are walking around the gigantic black lingam with devotion and respect to make a peaceful India. The speaker is frightened as soon as he wakes up, realizing that it is a square lingam. His mind is filled with the sour, stale taste of doubt and dissatisfaction. His feels a throbbing headache and trampled with fear. It is true that Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.) promotes the ideals of upholding Indian culture and the values of a civil society and spreads the ideology of Hindutva, to strengthen the Hindu community. Khair depicts racial sentiment that is prevalent in our society.

Bala Subramanium, a Hindu businessman plays an important role in this novel. The author has penned the fear of racism through his character. He fears to go to Karachi for a business trip as he heard that it was a dangerous time for Hindus to go to those regions like Karachi, Pakistan after the independence in 1947. Bala expresses his anxiety as:

> Bala's family, unaware of the true situation, were objecting to the planned trip: it was just after the war, and there had been a few riots between Hindus and Muslims, a faint prelude to what was to come in 1946 and 1947; there were even rumours of Hindus leaving Karachi. There were dangerous times for Hindus to go to those regions, his family told him. (FG: 191)

The Pakistani Hindus were treated as second-class citizens. They were discriminated in every walk of life. They were even forced to convert into Islam to escape discrimination

and violence. Poor Hindu families are trapped by giving them loans by the landlords which cannot be repaid. As a result, landlords enslave and abuse the Hindu women in exchange of their debts. Bala's family hinders him from going to his planned trip. It was just after the war, and there had been a few riots between Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus were forced to leave Pakistan after the independence of India. The novelist draws the picture of racial discrimination between Hindus and Muslims after the partitions of India and Pakistan.

Khair describes that though Muslims are the nation's largest religious minority community, they are facing racial discrimination in various parts of the world. The author has described the incident of Batin's death in Denmark whose dead body was not allowed to bury in Danish graveyard. A Barlin-based Indian scholar is describing this matter during his research, remarks on Batin, a famous Urdu scriptwriter as:

> I read of Batin's death in a small Urdu literary magazine about three months after he had been buried in a churchyard, the literary obituary mentioned with some venom, 'because Danish authorities and pressure groups have not allowed construction of a Muslim graveyard even though Muslims are the nation's largest religious minority' (which made me chuckle- the thought of what Batin would have said about such indignation on his behalf) – and finally decided to fill the gaps in my notes, smooth the knots in the story he had told me. It was a story that stretched across a lifetime and a subcontinent. (FG: 97-98)

The scholar comes to learn Bain's death in a small Urdu literary magazine about three months after he had been buried. But Danish authority and pressure groups did not allow the construction of a Muslim graveyard in the churchyard. It happened because he was from a Muslim minority section. The speaker narrates that Batin is addicted to

alcohol. He reaches out to grasp his glass or pour from the bottle regularly. His fingers shiver if does not drink in his old age. He keeps himself free from the pressure of some remembered emotions. The young scholar comments: “stories crowded around him like the night, memories buffeted him like the wind. Stories were fluttering moths around the flickering candle for his memory.” (2007: 96) With the progress of the novel, readers are acquainted with the famous Urdu writer and his contribution to art, culture and literature before independence of India. Khair has expressed his viewpoint on racial discrimination through the character of Batin.

3.3 Exploitation of Downtrodden Section

In *The Bus Stopped*, Khair has described the condition of domestic servants who are ill-treated by their masters. They are one of the subjugated sections in society. A house cannot run smoothly without their help but they are deprived of some basic human rights. The novelist is also akin to their sufferings and documents the life of servants very realistically in the present novel. *The Bus Stopped* portrays various pictures of the poor personages from disadvantageous sections of society. The basic need for human existence is a kind of luxury to them. The poor working class represents this section who cannot think to impart education and better lives for their children. They may be victim of temptation for committing crime to earn their livelihood. They are utilized for various manual works and considered as mysterious mass with no particular shelter and identity of their own. The people like Chottu, Zeenat, Rameshwar and the tribal woman represent the wretched condition of the slum area. They are homeless wonderer as they do not have particular residing place. They are gypsies in the society. Khair describes wretched condition of the cleaning boy, Rameswar in the following lines:

> On one of the unoccupied benches he spots their new cleaning boy, Rameshwar: he is lying on the hard wood, precariously balanced, completely wrapped in a patched kambal of indistinct colour and design. He can tell it is Rameswar, because that is where the boy sleeps every night. He pokes the boy with his index finger and tells him to get the bus cleaned. Wake up, son of a donkey, and wipe the mother-fucking bus clean with your arse, is what he actually says. The bundle starts stirring, mumbling and swearing. Come back for your breakfast, he adds, more kindly. He himself enters a stall and orders sabzi-puri. (BS: 20)

Chottu is a child of eight years who works at Mrs. Prasad's residence as a servant. His parents sent him on the agreement that seventy five percent of his salary would be money-ordered to them every month. Mrs. Prasad tried to educate him in a good school. Her husband worked in a bank who tries his level best to give their children the best possible education in Patna. They also think about Chottu's schooling. In order to provide him formal education, he was admitted to a primary school. But he was reluctant to attend regular classes. The author expresses:

> She sends Chottu to 'English classes' run by one of the wives in an adjoining apartment building. Chottu does not see much point in getting an education. He is no fool. Since he was first brought to Mrs. Prasad's by his village parents at the age of eight or nine and left there on an agreement that 75 per cent of his salary would be money-ordered to his father every month, he has grown to understand and know this new urban world. He knows more people in the neighbourhood than Mrs. Prasad does. He is no longer the small, timid boy, dresses in a ganji and half-trosers, mucus peeping out of one nostril between sobs. He dresses as smartly as he can and carries a comb all the time. He has a collection of cheap sunglasses, mostly of plastic, which Mrs.

> Prasad always makes him take off. His voice has started breaking. He sometimes sits with other boys at the nukkad and gambles with the 25 percent of his salary that is given to him….He knows all about easy money Chottu sees the world quite clearly, though tinted one fixed shade by his own deprivation. (BS: 86-87)

Chottu is taken good care of by Mrs. Prasad but he has left school because of his wicked friends. He is misguided by his friends who are in search of making easy money to lead a city life in Patna. Mrs. Prasad's wish to improve him by imparting education alienates him more because he is tempted by the city life. Moreover, Sottu was tempted to join in a miscreant group for helping in the murder of Mrs. Prasad for money.

Zeenat is the cleaning woman at the house of Mrs. Prasad. Zeenat with her voluptuous look and dominant attitude, reveal the secrets of the decent family to others. Being an illiterate maid she represents domestic servant community in the society. Irfan has secret physical relationship with her. Khair comments:

> When I put my arms around her and kissed her clumsily, she did not object. Her smell had entered that deep part of my soul from which nothing can ever be erased. It would be there for as long as I lived and, at that moment, I did not care what they said about her. Wanton? Whore? To have her touch me, to feel her firm warmth, I would stand up against all those tongues. I let my hands wander and touch her breasts. She half led and half pushed me a few metres further, into the doorway of her room. I hardly felt us moving. I did not if there was no one, for I remember noticing her look around. (BS: 109)

Irfan's mean character is beautifully presented by the author. Besides Zeenat, he has physical relation with other women who are better looking and more cultured than Zeenat. He was taken from village to work as servant for his master. He did not get

opportunity for education in his childhood. So, he was involved in illegal activities. He could not help stealing money from his owner. He was also involved in the murder of Mrs. Prasad, his employer for the sake of money and property. All these domestic servants symbolize poverty- striken family who play a great role in our society. The author has drawn Irfan's lewd nature in a realistic manner. He is mad after physical pleasure with Zeenat. Irfan is a mean servant who considers illicit physical relationship is a game beyond marital knot. He plays the role of a wanton boy who makes love with several women. He represents the lecherous servant class in the society.

The bus is facing congestion several times during the journey from Gaya to Phansa. The author has drawn a pathetic event of the tribal woman who is carrying a dead child in the bus. It represents wretchedness of the downtrodden class in the society. She was helped by other fellow passengers to bury her child on the roadside. The author portrayed this scene in the following lines:

> More voices pitched in, expressing surprise, indignation, shock, scepticism, anger, plain curiosity. The bus started slowing down. I jumped out from the rear exit and ran to the front. A crowed had already spilled out, while a bigger crowed was hanging around the front exist and peering from the windows on our side. On the bottom step of the door sat the tribal women. She was clutching the bundled-up child to her bosom the child is dead. She is carrying a dead, cried the dominant male voice. (BS: 157)

The lady is in search of her husband who is working in a distant place. But she does not know how to find him. The child is dead. The passengers try hard to convince the woman that the baby is no more. But she does not agree with the people. At last the passengers make her feel the coldness there and the lack of heart beats by uncovering the dead child. Finally, she stopped saying the baby is not dead. She did not weep or go

away. She placed the child on the ground before her feet, as if the child no longer belonged to her, and remained sitting on the steps. The tribal woman represents gypsy class in the society.

Wazir Mian is a literate person who has been working as a cook in the author's family for a long time. He can write Urdu very well. He is expert in cooking and knows kitchen- related English words like- steak, stew, tomato basket etc. He does not ascribe much value to English language. This old man has been working for author's grandfather. He was an old attendant, a servant who has worked for an author's family for long time. He solves minor problems sitting on the same chairs used by the owner. Khair presents Wazir Mian as: "Wazir Mian was around, there was no doubt who was the chief in the Kitchen. In the realm of saucers, cups and chullahs, his authority was the final word- not only for his helpers but also for us and, most of the line, for our parents. But the kitchen had started shrinking." (BS: 47)

Khair depicts the society of Phansa, Bihar which is one of the most populous and economically backward states in India. He portrays the picture of poverty of the oppressed class who left their places in search of jobs to earn their wages for food and shelter. Instead of providing shelter and security, home becomes a place of inadequacy and unfulfilled necessities of human existence. Due to inequality and high poverty, the common people are leaving their own places in search of food and shelter. Shankar, the bus conductor, represents the poverty-stricken section. They are landless labourers who move to different parts of Bihar in search of work. They cannot help living on footpath, railway stations and bus shelters at Phansa. Khair remarks on their economic condition as:

> During the early weeks of summer, after Holi, for instance, when the fields are stubbed and bare and the harvest has been stacked

> away or sold, there can be quite a crowd waiting for our bus at Vilaspur. That is when the petty farmers and the landless labourers leave the mufassil in search of jobs in Gaya, Phansa or Akbarabad. A crush of ill-clothed men, much darker than me, stinking of sweat and dung-fire, clutching belongings wrapped in dirty gamchhas or old saris. They usually head for Phansa, the biggest town in this part of the state, and end up sleeping on the pavements there. On summer nights, the railway platforms and the bus shelters of Phansa are full of these bundled figures. The lucky ones get to pull thellas or rickshaws on a regular basis; the less fortunate go about looking for 'daily' jobs, congregating at the city tower every morning and hoping to be picked by a contractor. (BS: 118)

The poor labourers go to Phansa in search of work to earn their daily livelihood. They represent the downtrodden section in the society. They spend their night on the pavements regularly. But during summer, they go to sleep on the ground of railway platform and bus shelters at Phansa town. These labourers work under a contractor who engages them in different construction works. The lucky persons among them get chance to pull rickshaws and thellas on a regular basis. Some of them return to their family at night after fishing their jobs. Khar presents their lives realistically who are victims of hunger and poverty in the society.

Khair has presented the miserable condition of landless cultivators. They cannot produce food grain for their livelihood as they do not have sufficient agricultural land. The downtrodden people face difficulty in returning to their home as they have no work. The author comments on their poverty stricken condition as:

> In the planting and harvesting seasons,they do what they had grown up doing. Farm work. Peasants plodding. That is when they seem to be happiest. I am myself a town dweller- born in Gaya and having worked in Phansa, Hazaribagh, even Patna. I must say I do not share or understand their love for rooting about in the bushes, digging the earth, squabbling over water chanels. They talk about it all the time, even when they are on their way to Phansa or coming back. But, of course, the lands are getting narrower and there is less and less profit in agriculture. That is why, every year, some of the men fail to return. They linger on in Phansa, pulling rickshaws, tending private gardens, working on construction sites or as servants and trying to save up enough to put together a jhuggi so that their wives, children or parents may join them. Some drift on to other, bigger places- to patna, to Kalkutta, even to Dilli. (BS: 119)

The forced migrant conditions of the poor villagers convey Khair's message that diaspoic situation arises within ourselves in our country. Through the portrayal of difficulties of these individuals, the author gives a realistic picture of the depressed section of society. He also has discussed how the downtrodden class is compelled for relocation towards the metropolitan cities like- Kolkata, Patna and Delhi in search of jobs and wages.

Khair has presented the economic condition of the bus driver, Mangal Singh who plays an important role in the novel. He performs his duty with dedication though he gets less salary in his profession. He represents the working class who are essential part and parcel of the society. They provide all necessary human resources for its progress to form a healthy society. They are well skilled in their professions but they are not paid proper wages for their works. They are proud of their handiwork and hard labour. The author has made Mangal Singh, as his mouthpiece who collects different

images from the society through his bus journey from Gaya to Phansa. He is a true observer of life of common people who is abandoned by his wife and brimming with disappointment against his employer. Khair presents him as:

> He is a man who notices such things, he is a man who only notices such things; it seems to him, if he had noticed other things he would have been another man and not a bus driver playing one of the buses of his second cousin's husband. He sees life in still small images, almost frozen, and does not really know what image-momentous or incidental-would etch a particular moment or day or trip into his memory. Some people collect stamps or bottles or coins; he collects images, you have to collect something as worthless as images, don't you, no market value to them, and he has to collect them, nothing but them, images! Images!, one from each trip of his life, thousands of them now, all meticulously remembered, just those single images, a colour, a scene, a face, an act italicized on the pages of memory. Not that he chooses the images consciously; that is simply the way his mind orders the seamless and yet unraveling days of his life. (BS: 12)

He brings forth the hopes, beliefs, desires and grievances of the common people. He serves the people as a bus driver for private passengers on a very small salary of nine hundred rupees only per month. He cannot run his family properly because of his low income. So, he has a sharp feeling of misfortune: "there are distances one measures all through life… Some distances are relations." (BS: 122) Mangal Singh is disappointment for exploitative nature of the bus owner who pays minimum wages to the staff of the bus.

He is depicted as a savage, tempter and drunkard. Khair comments: But this Driver Mangal Singh, he is different. He has a poster of an actress hanging behind his driver's seat; not a poster of Madhubala or Nargis or Hema Malini or even Rekha but of

some half-naked two-chit starlet of today. (BS: 149) Shankar is an honest and God-fearing man who recites the Hanuman Chalisa every morning. But Mangal Singh blames Shankar for his pious nature saying that he will die of starvation, and his children will not be able to pay their school fees, and his wife will run away with his next-door pickpocket. We have noticed the idea of Shankar through the eyes of the hijra. She notices his parasitic mentality towards the old rich lady sitting close to her. The author has presented the character of Shankar, conductor of the bus from the skilled working class community who is also the victim of his employer. He has depicted him as first person narrator and refers to his ingenious ways to cope up with the exploitative working conditions: "we accept the money but do not issue tickets to four or five passengers on every trip. This helps us supplement the ridiculously low wages that the maalik pays us." (2004: 137) However; he attempts to keep himself in the self imposed limits and does not have any desire to overstretch his smart endeavors. He legitimizes the need of limitations and praises his own slow improvement throughout some stretch of time:

> Keep your balance, be content- that is what the scriptures preach. I read the scriptures in Hindi. I listen to the discourse of holy men. Do not push too hard. If you miss a train, let it go; do not run after it. That has been my principle and it has carried me far: from being the 'help' of a motor mechanic, I have worked my way into owning a two-room pukka house. I have a family. I even have a bank account and, if things go well by the grace of Hanuman, I shall buy a minibus within a year and set up on my own. (BS: 149)

His character represents common people who suffer a lot to earn his livelihood through hard work. But they are blessed by the grace of God to be satisfied with their small earning on their own. Hari also represents the working class, who serves as a car driver

of a Danish corporate professional, Rasmus. He is fluent in English language. He is introduced in these words: " Hari had got his job- a lucrative job it was, one that paid almost three times what he would have earned elsewhere- because of his ability to understand and speak English." (2004: 76) He serves people as a tourist guide in Bodh Gaya and Nalanda. He also knows Japanese language very well as Japanese tourists come to visit the area more often for this was the historical heartland of Buddhism. He is happy to make the tourists understand about native place, Bodh Gaya.

Khair has taken the characters from different walks of life. They mirror the various circumstances and characteristics of the society. The readers feel themselves close and natural to the variety of cultures. There is an incredible distinction between Indian society and western country. These distinctions are beautifully depicted by the novelist in this book. Tabish Khair portrays variety of culture of the passengers in the bus in following words:

> The only person in the bus who makes Mangal Singh's restless eyes pause is sitting in one of the front rows. He is dressed in torn but clean clothes, shirt and cotton trousers. He wears thick, black rimmed glasses. He is obese in a watery sort of way, going bald from both sides of the temple, face swollen in an unhealthy manner. Even from this distance, Mangal Singh can see the dandruff that is spread like powder on the dark cloth covering his shoulders. He seems to be in his own world and it is easy to see that the man is not well. Not well at all. (BS: 105)

The novelist describes the journey as a mental transformation of the characters who represent different sections of society. Mangal Singh's humour amuses the passengers. The social position of eunuch or hijra has been realistically described. He has drawn a

life-like picture of Indian society with a different taste. He has depicted two unique religions viz. Hindu and Muslims and divergent cultures prevailing in our society.

In *Filming: A Love Story*, Khair has highlighted the burning issue of poverty, hunger and condition of joblessness in lower class section. It is a curse for them to be alive because they toil hard to earn their livelihood. But they are prejudiced by rich landlords in the society. The novelist has pointed out that the poor people are always subjugated in the society since time immemorial. One who is born being poor is a crime. Ashok is only son of the couple, Harihar and Durga. They are poor and homeless. They earn their livelihood by showing bioscope taking a bullock cart from village to village. When Ashok enters the gate of the haweli of the Chotte Thakur, Munshi comes out of the gate and hold him by the shoulder and peers at his face without any fault. He assaults the boy and treats him as a thief, son of bioscope-wallah. But Ashok does not expect such ill-treatment by an old man. He pushes him by grabbing the scruff of his neck towards the passage. The Munshi abuses the boy's ancestor well into the ninth generation. Ashok does not know the reason of his punishment by Munshi in Chotte Thakur's haweli. Khair remarks on Ashok's condition as:

> Even before Ashok could reply, he was slapped twice in the face. The slaps were largely theatrical, but Ashok was not expecting such sudden, rough handling and he started crying. The Munshi changed his grip to the scruff of Ashok's neck and started pushing him towards the passageway, abusing the boy's ancestors well into ninth generation. Ashok who did not know why he was being punished, tried to defend himself by answering the only question he could answer: my name is Ahok, he shouted. (FG: 102)

Further, Ashok crumples himself out of the Munshi's grip and runs to the matron on the charpoy for help. He says to her that his name is not thief but Ashok. He is also misbehaved by Badi Maalkini who thinks that all the boys like Ashok are thieves. They are homeless wonderer and commit crimes in society. They should not be believed. The author draws this pathetic picture of the downtrodden class. They work hard to survive but they do not get proper wages from their owners. They are trusted as they do not have proper shelter or address. This is the reality Khair makes us feel for them.

Khair, being a social realist, cannot help depicting the condition of poor people who toil hard honestly throughout their lives to establish themselves in society. The novelist proves it through the character of Durga who entertains the villagers by her bioscope show in Anjangarh. She is a beautiful lady of twenty-one years old dressing in light green sari with flowery patterns. Durga comes to the haweli of Chotte Thakur asking for permission to set up their show in the maidan. But the Munshi does not allow her to set up bioscope outside the mansion. He asks her to arrange her programme in a field on the other side of the village. Durga squats down in front of the Munshi and clutches his legs for permission. She tries to remove poverty from his family as her husband is severely ill. She is crying for her helplessness. The author explains as:

> Such a performance would not have been unusual for a low-caste village woman. But this was not a woman who was dressed in town clothes, an expensive brocaded sari, and whose language did not sound rustic. The spectacle drew most of the villagers away from the cart. Even Harihar came running, grasping, as the Munshi was trying to extricate his legs from the woman's clasp. Had she been a low-caste village woman, he would have kicked her away or asked his henchmen to remove her with a few blows from their well-oiled lathis. But a woman like this – pretty, well spoken and

> well dressed- how did one deal with such an uncharacteristic display from a woman like that? (FG: 24)

If Durga were a low-caste village woman, Munshi would have kicked her away, or asked his henchmen to remove her with a few blows from their lathis (sticks). But being a well-mannered lady she suffers a lot at the hands of rich people. She is an artist who performs her show taking a bullock cart attracting the villagers. Khair said that the cart was already attracting open-mouthed spectators like a succulent jalebi collects flies. Later Chotte Thakur gives her permission to set up their tents of bioscope near the haweli. He asked Durga and Harihar what that was they would be showing. Durga replied that they would show star Film's Krishna Arjuna Yuddha. The Chotte Thakur is interested to inaugurate their show and entered the haweli. Khair depicts Durga as a woman of hard work and sincerity in spite of her poverty and suffering.

The novel deals with some social evils like prostitution. The prime reason of prostitution is poverty. The economic crisis of women forces them to take this profession. Durga is a prostitute who helps her mother to runs the brothel with the help of three sisters. Her mother collects customers for her daughters. She sits on a stool to bargain for her three daughters' prices with new customer. Harihar, a widower comes to spend one night with Durga with the help of her mother. She has no idea about the payment for one night. He tries to convince her to work in films rather than working as a prostitute. But her mother considers it immoral to work in films. She believes that watching cinema is harmful to eyes and can make one blind. Further she thinks that exposure to camera can destroy a woman's health and turn them infertile, flat-chested and narrow-hipped hags. The author has given a description of prostitution as:

> But even her mother–who would sit on a stool, legs bared to the knees, layers of fat leaking out of a crumpled but expensive sari,

> mouth filled with paan, and bargain her three daughters' prices with every new customer- considered it immoral to work in films. Her mother had been convinced that seeing made one blind, and exposure to the camera lens impaired the health of women, turning them into ailing, barren, flat-chested, narrow-hipped hags. (FG: 15)

Harihar is fifteen years senior to Durga, a prostitute with whom he shares his dreams that the bioscope is the future of the world. He slept with Durga for having sex and spent half of the night telling her about the death of his wife as well as his only daughter's marriage two years ago. He told Durga stories about travelling bioscope-wallahs who earned enough money to buy theatres and produce films. He thinks to buy the best projector and become a film producer. One day Harihar has brought his bioscope into Durga's neighbourhood. His old films would attract the spectators. Harihar and Durga consider each other as lovers. He spends much time talking about films or listening to her song than making love. One day Durga tells Harihar that she is pregnant. Harihar thinks that she has been sleeping with other customers also who pay the amount her mother demands. He is confused about identity of the new-born child. But he has assumed a kind of fatherhood in spite of the difference of identity, age, class and faith between them.

Durga knows that her mother will never allow her to marry Harihar who is a Hindu Brahmin. Her mother thinks that if Durga is married to Harihar she will lose her customers. So, she allows him to maintain Durga as his mistress. So, Durga elopes with Harihar taking her money and jewellery without informing her mother. They are living together outside the religious knot of marriage. Harihar becomes a bioscope-wallah after leaving his job of a postal clerk thinking that: "I wanted to be out of the stool in the post office. I couldn't wait to be part of the world outside, and I knew I would make more

money showing films than sorting letters. I still believe so. Films are the future, not letters. Films are the world. The bioscope, meri jaan, moving pictures, not the fixed alphabet." (FG: 48)

3.4 Nationalism and Regional Spirit

The existence of oneness despite numerous differences is the meaning of unity in diversity. Here, people of all religions, creeds, castes, dialects, cultures, lifestyles, food habits, rituals of worships coexist peacefully under one roof i.e. one country of India. In India, Hindi is the mother tongue, but many other dialects and languages are spoken along with English in different regions. Many languages are used in different states. English language is used in mixing with other regional dialects like Panjabi and Hindi. A mixture of English with Hindi dialects is termed as Hinglish. It is a blending of South-Asian dialects with English language. The term does not refer especially Hindi yet, it is practised in India with mixing of English. The word Hinglish was utilized for the first time by Devyani Chaubal in her English works. This style of writing was employed by Karan Kumawat and Shobba De in their novels. Like Upamanyu Chatterjee and Salaman Rushdie, Tablish Khair has utilized Hindi dialects willingly in his novels. *The Bus Stopped* is a good example of the use of Hinglish language. It is a strategic technique of using Hinglish words for Hindi speaking people to understand English language in a fascinating way. Thus, the modern novelists follow this style writing to attract the attention of the new generation. In a discussion with Ahmed Hussain, Khair said: "I write in a material world, I am not willing to abandon an engagement with 'reality' in favour of some easy if clever toying around with language qua language or texts qua texts. ...I would see little point in writing just as a literary exercise." (2009: 5)

In *The Bus Stopped*, the author has made use a large number of utterences of Hindi and Urdu dialects through different characters in an enchanting manner. This style has made this book more beautiful and enjoyable for the readers of modern generation in India. He has employed a large number of Hindi dialects which prove his regeional sentiment of Bihar. The words like *lungi, gehun, dehaati, ek cup chai, bararchi, chai ki dukaan, hornbajao, malik* etc. are used in a beautiful manner by Khair. He also reused long sentences of Hindi, like *Yohan sudh desi ghee ki swadist mithaiyan milti hain, sab baghwaan ki leela hai, pura nashta key key challenge, sab lekeni ki Khel hai, ye koifirangistan thode hi hai* etc. These are the examples of extensive use of native languages in this novel.

In India, most of the states are different from each other because of languages, food habits, customs, ceremonies, flavours, religions and environmental conditions. Tabish Khair is born and brought up in Bihar so, his love for his homeland; Gaya is reflected in this novel. His spirit of regionalism is shown in the following lines:

> The fields in the front of the youth, across the potholed road, were stubbled with what remained of October's crop of gunna, thin yellow stalks jutting out of the powdery brown soil, small birds, sparrows, pigeons, and a pair of crested hudhuds, mynahas, squabbling over whatever was still left between the stalks and on the ground. Further on, a few patches of field were being readied for the planting of gehun. From beyond those patches of ploughed-up ground bearing the healing wounds of human intention, from one of the trees, beyond the last thin, divisive aari visible to him, came the sound of a koel thinking aloud. (BS: 143)

Regionalism is one of the components of social realism. Tabish Khair, being a realist of the 21st century penned this novel, *The Bus Stopped* with a sense of regionalism presenting lives of common people, society and habits of the people of Bihar. He has differentiated his native land from the adopted land in an artistic way. His sentiment for his nation springs up with the life and characters in this fiction. Regionalism is one of the remarkable tendencies in the contemporary fiction which Tabish Khair has beautifully executed in *The Bus Stopped*. It has highlighted the author's sense of regionalism in terms of Indian dialects, social manners, customs as well as life style of common villagers in the region of Bihar. He has given a vivid description of paddy field, birds, foods, dwelling places and rituals of his place. The setting of the novel is of two kinds- the social and material setting. The rituals, habits, beliefs, and manner of the individuals can be categorized in social setting. The material setting includes the houses, rooms, walls and the environmental factors from where the journey begins. To portray the picture of house he has written the following lines:

> And yet, the two houses had also been painstakingly built by their masters: built not only with the material available but also with their dreams, hopes and eccentricities. Pillarld with the breath of masters, mistresses, servants, the two houses had been home to us in childhood and early youth; for, as the adage goes, houses are built of brick but homes are made of breath. (BS: 3)

Hence; it can honestly be appreciated that *The Bus Stopped* is a novel of social realism where various stories are interlinked to make this masterwork. This narrative is basically a portrayal of recollections of Khair himself. He has made use of previous events to re-establish the living experience. The novelist has employed two metaphors- the 'Home' and the 'Journey' in the novel. He reused Home as a token of identity and

memories of a diasporic author and the Journeys are introduced as an activity of diasporic dynamism. Tabish Khair, being an expatriate writer in Denmark, desires to explore his memories for his mother land, India through this journey. His purpose of the novel is to investigate recollections and thoughts of his native soil through a journey. Khair does not break his connection with his birth place. There is an endeavor for progression and acquired attributes in his novel. It tends to be viewed as memory on wheels. The book is a journey of suspicion, sentiments as well as encounters along with enthusiasm and delight.

In *Filming: A Love Story*, Khair has brought into light the theme of nationalism at the hearts of Indian people through the Home Rule, autonomy and freedom. The Home Rule movement was propagated by Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak which had begun in 1916 and lasted for two years. It is said that this movement sets the stage for the independence movement under their leadership. The main objective of this movement was to attain a dominion status of India and freedom from the British rule. It also refers to self-government, devolution and independence. The novelist has depicted the picture of Indian society during the period of Freedom Struggle which was full of chaos. The people were dreaming for their freedom from the British rule in India. Khair explains as:

> It was the Chotte Thakur that Harihar shared his dreams now; Durga had become a means to the dream, only one of many. But this realization relieved her; she did not resent it. It was a relief to be released from the burden of sharing someone else's dreams, and she wondered whether any two people- even Harihar and the Chotte Thakur- could ever share the same dream. It was a disturbing thought, for without being fully aware of it she was

> living at a time when tens of millions were suddenly dreaming the same dream: that of Home Rule, autonomy, freedom. (FG: 164)

Durga is the source of inspiration for the Chotte Thakur and Harihar. She knew that both the men desired her in different ways. For Harihar, she was the younger woman who enabled him to believe in his own dreams. Harihar would fulfill her lust violently and brutally and wanted her as a receptacle for his ideas and dreams. Durda, being a prostitute tries to fulfill his cinematic aspiration by her performance. She would let him sit on her lap rocking him like a baby. He gets amusement when Durga sang love songs for him. The author has drawn different portraits of social realism with the help of dreams from various angels of the society.

Khair has depicted the feelings of nationalism in the minds of Indians during the Non Co-operation Movement led by the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi in West Bengal. There was a huge crowd of people coming out side to protest against the Rowlatt Act, the Montagu- Reforms. It was a turbulent period when Harihar and Durga came to perform their show at Howrah in West Bengal. The police sealed the pontoon bridge across the river Hoogly for almost four hours. The author has remarked on the public gathering against the dominating power of the British rule in India:

> The year was 1922. The date was 13 February. It was the inconsequential day. A day earlier, and Durga's decision would have coincided with History: with the withdrawal of the call for Non-Co-operation by the congress and Gandhi. Protest against the Rowlatt Act, the Montagu- Chelmsford Reforms and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the First World War when India contributed 1.4 million forgotten soldiers to fight another people's battles, the Khilafat movement, the call for non-co-operation, it had been a turbulent period. The British were still jittery the day

> after the day when things ought to have officially returned to normality, which was the day stole away to find Harihar and the inconsequential day when an unidentified young man climbed the highest building next to the pontoon bridge and, after railing against the Congress and the British for almost an hour, sent himself plummeting down to the asphalt below. His last words, which have not entered any history book, were: you like determination, Montagu? This is determination. This is determination. (FG: 59-60)

The author has also described the Jallianwala Bagh massacre which took place in 1919 in Amritsar, Punjab. A large crowd gathered to protest against the arrest of pro-Indian independence leaders. India has sacrificed millions of innocent lives in the First World War. The Khilafat Movement and the Non-Co-operation by Gandhi merged into one nationwide movement to fight against the British rule in India. Gandhi took part in the movement to bring both the Hindu-Muslim communities to the mainstream of the freedom struggle in non-violent way. The First World War provided an opportunity to the British government in India to defuse radical and militant Indian nationalists who had challenged colonial rule through acts of political violence. The passage of the Government of India Act of 1919 intended to privilege Indian elites who were politically moderate by creating a road map to allow Indians the ability to eventually govern themselves, but with British supervision. The most well-known post-war reform in British India was the passage of the Government of India Act of 1919, or the Montagu–Chelmsford reforms, after the two men who arranged its passage. Named after the Viceroy of India, Frederic Chelmsford, and the Secretary of State Edwin Montagu, the act has often been marked as a major turning point in the history of twentieth-century India. The provisions for representative self-government were

expanded from a previous set of reforms promulgated in 1909, which had offered minorities, such as Muslims, The reforms were meant to be evaluated after a decade and expanded further if the time seemed right. Some members of the Indian National Congress and Home Rule Leagues imagined that this might be a step toward Indian independence, but the Indian National Congress was unsatisfied with the reforms, arguing that Indians should have *purna swaraj*, or complete independence. British officials were divided on the question of complete Indian sovereignty, although there was some agreement that any constitutional change would have to come gradually through slow and incremental change rather than a quick transfer of power. Harihar and an unidentified young man took part in this movement against the colonial authority. The police erected wooden posts with barbed wire on both sides of the pontoon bridge to resist the mass gathering. Khair describes the sense of nationalism of Indian people through this struggle of various movements before the independence.

Tabish Khair has depicted a realistic picture of the freedom movement in India. Batin addressed the unknown young scholar describing him about the Home Rule movement in India. It paved the way to put intense pressure on British rule by the Nationalist activities. This movement provided strength to nationalist sentiments in the future and this sequence of activities eventually resulted in the Independence of India in 1947 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The British tried to divide Indians by provoking hostility between Hindus and Muslims. They used religion as an instrument to make division between Indians resulting in death and displacement of millions of people. India was a land of socio-cultural diversity. They exploited and controlled the lands. Batin told the unknown scholar about the sentiment of nationalism of Indians during the colonial period in India:

> Do you know, my young scholar, that 1929 was the year we gave up our hopes of Home Rule? Following the British government's witch-haunt against communities, Marxists and trade- union leaders in that year, total independence became the only real option. By 1930, the sham legislatures were being boycotted even by moderate nationalists. The promise of Home Rule was exposed as the carrot at the end of the Maxim gun. But at this time all this appeared to have little to do with the story that I am going to tell you, and if I see a connection today, the shadow of a connection between what happened to Hindustan, and what happened to them, those various dreamers of one independent India, perhaps it is nothing but the meanderings of an old man's mind. (FG: 86)

The problem of the divide and rule policy is still prevalent in our society. The Hindu-Muslim hostility is a burning problem in India since time immerorial. The antagonism often takes a serious form that contributes to marginalize Muslims in India from Hindus. Khair shows that Hindus and Muslims thought each other to be suspicion and felt discomfort in co-existing together during the British rule in India. Khair deals with the problem of the partition of India in January 1948. In the midst of the anxiety of Partition, Saleem one of the employees at the deserted studio complex near Bombay, reminded about a night five years before he met the owners of the small studio remarks:

> The heavy mist from the direction of Marine Drive has seeped its way into the streets and even, it appeared, into the building Saleem Lahori was about to enter. It was thick as a blanket, so dense that he could not make out the third story of the houses. With the buildings decapitated by mist, he could not see what caused the bird to fall down a foot for him. It was a pigeon and it appeared to be dead. It flown into on wall, blinded by the mist or had it been attacked by a hawk higher up where the sky was clear? He picked it up tentatively with two fingers; its feathers were surprisingly

> dry. The bird, wings spread out dangled from his fingers. It felt warm but gave no sign of life. (FG: 168-169)

Here, the mist appeals to a cloudy image fading on the edges. The passage describes an existential unstable place, an urban no-man's land advertising a sense of phenomenological loneliness. Moreover, when the large majority of Indians still resides in rural areas and inflexible social and caste hierarchies, the deserted metropolitan street therefore; developed the most typical site of urbanity and modernity in reputed films. Kapoor had great popularity in India and also frequent to functions as a cultural icon and recognized by Indians. The diseased bird is a symbol of Lahori's fallen possessions as an actor which is found by Saleem. He arrives in the film industry where he has been invited by Nitin Kumar. There are some stars and makers at the party who are entertained by a mass of cheap and tasteless dependents. Saleem Lahori emerges a disillusioned, depressed dropout reminding Kapoor's tramp not merely in dress and behavior but also in his melancholy personal temperament.

Satish Mama, a worker in the mills of Seth Dwarkadas witnessed the arrival of Gandhiji and his family on 9th January 1915 in Bombay. He was welcomed by a crowd with garlands. Satish Mama did not know Gandhi but he was told by a coolie that he had a large army of men and monkeys to fight against the British in Africa and defeated them single-handedly. He was compared with Lord Ram for selfless sacrifice with devotion for mankind. Gandhi dreams for an independent India should be secular country. But Muslim nationalism did not agree with Gandhi. So they challenged him demanding a separate homeland for Muslims as:

> I spent that month on the wharf and I distinctly recall, on 9th January 1915- I even remember the date- watching the arrival of

> Gandhiji and his family while carrying loads to an adjoining ship. He still looked very young then, almost a boy, but there was a crowd with garlands to receive him. I did not know who he was. I was told later by one of the older coolies. The coolie told me how Gandhiji had led a large army of men and monkeys, like Lord Ram, against the British in Africa and almost destroyed them single-handedly. I found it difficult to believe, not just because I do not think our times are the same as the days of Lord Ram, but also because there was around Gandhiji and his family a certain aura of being that, I thought, was very removed from my life. As such, when I urged all of you to Gandhiji's movement some months ago, I did so not because I believed it would succeed, but because it was the right time to do. (FG: 221-222)

Satish mama believes that people should come forward to co-operate Mahatma Gandhi's freedom movement to fight against the British in non-violent way. Gandhi also fights selflessly in the freedom struggle for the sake of common people in India. The narrator believes that it is the right time to fight for independence. He knows that it is a difficult task for the common people to achieve freedom. But Gandhi paves the way for achieving freedom for the downtrodden.

3.5 Hindu-Muslim Communal Riots

The Hindu-Muslim communal riot is a burning problem during the period of partition in India. It continued to ignite since the 1960s. Thousands of people were involved in spreading communal hatred against one another. The Violence gave birth to two countries- India and Pakistan. It has witnessed countless deaths of Hindus and Muslims during riot, ethnic cleansing, and cross-border migration. The novelist has described that some sevaks of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh were handling the situation as their Pramukh instructed them. They came in uniform wearing white shirts

and khaki half-pants with bamboo lathi. Khair has remarked on the Guruji who played an important role in the organization as:

> It was Guruji who did most of the talking. He was a striking elderly man, with snow-white hair, and immaculately drawn caste marks on his forehead. What he said rang with authority and conviction. The three young men who had been chosen for the assignments by the promukh were thrilled by the intensity of his conviction, the furiousness of his determination 'to weed Muslims and communists out of the studios which they make films to pollute the minds of young Hindu men and women. (FG: 304)

He was an elderly man of authority. The three young men were instructed to eliminate Muslims and communists out of the studios because they made films to corrupt the Hindu society. They dreamed to remove the Muslims from India. The young Sevaks were sent to different studios to create trouble for Muslims. Guruji expressed his view that modern nations were built on great gushes of blood, on massacres and not built on ideals and traditions. He also dreamed that the Muslims of India should sacrifice on the altar of the Indian nation. Guruji expressed his disgust on Mahatma Gandhi: "that the bloody Mahatma had turned himself into a scapegoat for the Muslims. To assassinate him would be to do what he wanted; it would save the Muslims, pacifying the Hindus and rendering them a people lacking the iron and blood to make a modern nation." (F: 306-307) Gandhi was assassinated as he advocated for the Muslims in India while Hindus were being butchered in Pakistan. The Sevaks of the R.S.S. did not tolerate Mahatma Gandhi who tried to unite Hindus and Muslims, secularists and traditionalists opposing the partition of India. Gandhi imagined India as an ideal country where all religions like Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians should get equal treatment. He was

associated with the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements, keeping Hindu-Muslim unity in mind even though he faced a lot of criticism.

Sadat Hasan Manto's short story *Toba Tekh Singh* plays a significant role in this novel. The intermission of the novel, *Filming: A Love Story* is followed by an internal monologue subtitled 'Night of 16th January, 1955.' He has depicted the problems of society which is divided into different sections after the partition in the name of the religion. His *Toba Tek Singh* deals with the problem of migration of Hindus and Muslims to India and Pakistan respectively after the partition. He criticises the political regimes of both India and Pakistan because it divided the nation. The decision of the higher authorities of both the countries forced the Muslims to live in Pakistan and non-Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, should go to India leaving their ancestral home without their will. Khair describes the pathetic condition of Muslims in India during partition. Manto remarks:

> Muslims had been leaving Bombay. Only the other day, he had been told that Manto had left, leaving his beloved city to join his family in Lahore. Manto, he had felt like crying out, what will you do there? But he knew Manto knew; he knew Manto had chosen the easier death- not the death of all he had known and believed in, not the death of friends whose faces disappeared or were turned to an icy mask, but his own death. The death of just one person. One witness. One writer. (FG: 354-55)

Muslims were forced to go to Pakistan leaving Bombay. Manto could not help leaving his beloved city, Bombay with tears. He left for Lahore to join his family. He witnessed brutal killings during the partition of India. Many of his friends had met tragic end due to Hindu-Muslim riot. His *Toba Tekh Singh* is set two or three years after the partition. It

revolves around the story of Bishan Singh, a lunatic from Sikh community. The governments of India and Pakistan decided to exchange some Muslim, Sikh and Hindu lunatics. Bishan Singh, from the town of Toba Tekh Singh in Pakistan was sent under police escort to India. But when he was told that his hometown is Toba Tekh Singh in Pakistan, he refused to go. Bishan was lying down in the no man's land between the borders of two countries. It is discrimination between sane and insane. It is a horrible realisation that partition creates not only demographic borders but also makes division between human hearts.

Tabish Khair has focused on the social impact of courtesan culture in the Bombay film industry before the partition period in India. Many films of this category were shot in the 1950s and 1960s which were popularly known as Muslim Socials. It concentrated on Nawabi court culture creating a history. Saadat Hasan Manto and Ismat Chugtai devote positively to the success of the Muslim social as scriptwriters. The stars and actors and some prostitutes behind the scenes of Muslim descent certainly worked under Hindu nicknames. Durga is a Muslim prostitute who takes the Hindu nickname as Durga, and later she is known as Bhuvaneswari. Both the names refer to Goddess Durga. She plays a changing relationship as Ma, Didi, Mausi and Bhabi. Khair comments on Durga as:

> They had called her Bhuvaneshwari, which was as good a name as any and reminded her of the Durga she had once been, for it was the domestic form of the Goddess, through of course Durga carried no echo of the Muslim name she had borne before that. From Durga, wife of Harihar the Bioscopewallah, to Bhuvaneshwari, wife of Director Hari Babu, so many shifting roles and relationship- Ma, Didi, Mausi, Bhabhi in so many different accents, dialects, even languages spoken by the people who had

> come to the studio and to whom she had been mother or aunt or sister or daughter. (F: 238)

The Bombay film industry reflects the courtesan culture in Lahori's circle of friends that consists of two Hindus Avik sen and Balasubramanium, the Muslims Ashiq Painter and Joshila and Doctor Surender Singh, a Sikh. The world of Bombay Films Industry reveals the fact that it appeared to have new space for religious and ethnic discrimination between the working class. During the time of Partition there is a clash between Muslim and Hindu friends. As a result Bala Subramanyam is killed at the border when he tries to go to Lahore to meet his wife. His dead body was returned to Bombay via train like enormous other victims of partition.

Tabish khair has depicted a realistic picture the use of barbed wire by different countries of the world during the time of emergency by two World Wars. Batin, the mouthpiece of the author, has very beautifully been discussing with his young scholar about the importance of barbed wire during the partition of India and Pakistan. He says to the young man that Seth Dharamchand is the only person who has invested a lot of black money in film industry business. He also has funded a lot in manufacturing business of barbed wire before independence. He owned a mill and later went into Construction business. He was a manufacturer of barbed wire and films. The narrator remarks on him as:

> Have I mentioned that Seth Dharamchand had two main sources of income: investing in films in the black- the interest rates were exorbitant during the war and official funding even less likely after independence- and manufacturing barbed wire in the white? He owned a mill and later went into the construction business too, but it was really wire and films that provided him with his initial

> feature. It was a good time to be manufacturing barbed wire. In the 1930s and 40s barbed wire started being used widely by the authorities; its usefulness had been established by two world wars and a series of concentration camps, set up for the Boers by the British, for the Cubans by the Spanish, for the Filipinos by the Americans, for the Jews by the Germans, and then finally by almost all modern nations for the peoples of other nations. (F: 10-11)

Batin, further tries to convince the young man that manufacturing barbed wire was a good business. It started being used widely by the authorities in 1930s and 40s during the First and Second World Wars. The British made some concentration camps for the Boers, the Spanish for the Cubans, the Americans for the Filipinos and Germans for the Jews. Almost all the modern nations made an extensive use of barbed wire for the people of other nations. In India, Seth Dharamchand manufactured and supplied barbed wire for the government. He got all the government contracts as he had an unofficial monopoly on all construction works before and after independence.

Khair describes the beginning of barbed wire and photography through his narrator, Batin in this novel. Batin is addressing to a young man that both photography and barbed wire came into existence in the year 1880. He asserts that with the development of science and technology the modern camera is born. In earlier times a photographer needed a darkroom and be thoroughly acquainted with the rules of focusing and have to adjust lens aperture to light. Barbed wire is a device to fix movement which was used different parts of the world. It was claimed that the first barbed wire patent was invented in the 1860s. The Texan Panhandle is a region of the U.S. states of Texas which was covered by barbed wire against the North erected piecemeal by individual farmers. Batin comments on the origin of barbed wire as:

> Like the camera, barbed wire could in theory have been invented centuries earlier. But it was only in 1860s that the first barbed-wire patents were claimed and it was only in 1880, with the fencing, in effect, of the entire Texan Panhandle- a line of fortification against the North erected piecemeal by individual farmers- that the barbed wire came into its own. It was only in 1880, young man, that the effectiveness of fencing railroads was established, with the Washburn & Moen Manufacturing Co. beating down an anti-wire bill in the Connecticut General Assembly. The devil's rope had arrived. (FG: 69)

The narrator asserts that the fencing of railroad started with the Washburn & Moen Manufacturing Co. when the Connecticut General Assembly beat down an anti-wire bill in 1880. According to him, both fencing and photography are used to capture the movements of the individuals. Both barbed wire and the photograph came to India immediately as it began in the Western countries. Batin says that he is intertwined in the barbed wire of history with his past. He asserts: "How we are entangled in the barbed wire of history and our own pasts, how we erect in our minds the barbed-wire fences that leave our bodies bleeding and it is about violence and about love. But is it one story? To be honest, young man, I do not know, for stories are impossible to fence in either time or space, and I was told this story by three different people, from three different perspectives." (FG: 70-71)

Further, Batin says that the British gifted us barbed wire for demarcation. It was extended across both sides of Hindustan. The boundary demarcation line between India and Pakistan known as the Radcliffe Line came into force on 17th August 1947. The boundary line is named after Sir Cyril Radcliffe the man who had the thankless job of

drawing the lines of partition to carve out Muslim majority Pakistan from India. The narrator comments on the barbed wire demarcation as:

> Do I need to remind you what 1947 and 1948 meant to my generation, my young scholar? They meant barbed wire. It was being stretched across both sides of Hindustan, or it would be soon enough. That was the final gift from the British: they drew lines on a map and, hey presto, barbed wire appeared on the land. Let me get it for you, I still have the cutting from the Dawn. Wait a second… Here it is. I came across it in a pile of old papers when I moved to Pakistan, and I have kept it ever since. Here a boxed item, dated 18th August 1947. Boundary Demarcation At A Glance, it says. So that you could look in the day's paper to see whether your bedroom was still in the same country as your toilet. This thana to Pakistan, that division to India; that district to Pakistan, this village to India. And barbed wire to make all of it real. There are nights when I wonder whether the British would have drawn those lines on paper if barbed wire had not been ready and available. And profitable, young man, profitable. (FG: 138-139)

Barbed wire is used to protect property and to pen animals. Batin described his experience when he moved to Pakistan he found a pile of old papers in a boxed item dated 18th August 1947 mentioning as 'Boundary Demarcation At A Glance' which reveals whether the young man's bedroom had been still in the same country as his toilet was. Whether that thana to Pakistan and that division to India. Similarly that district to Pakistan and that village to India. The barbed wire used to make of that real. The narrator wonders whether the British would have drawn those lines on paper if barbed wire had not been ready and available.

3.6 Representing Home as Identity

Tabish Khair's novels deal with the burning problems of common people, their way of life and culture in Indian society. He always carries terrestrial atoms and virtues in his heart for his native land; India. Different ideas like home, country, identity and cultural roots are clearly portrayed in this novel. Home turns into an identity for diaspora. They are restless and energetic to get back to their native land. Khair, with the help of his past memory returns to his birth place in the novel. His affection for his native place is waving in his heart. But now, he is missing every moment that he spent in his motherland for long twenty five years.

The novel, *The Bus Stopped* depicts the meaning of home and the tendency of coming back to their homes through different characters. The journey started from home and completed after reaching their destination. Being a social realist with diasporic sensibility, Khair realizes the importance of home and homeland. He asserts that houses are built of bricks but homes are made of breath. So, besides giving protection home produces new dreams, beliefs, ideas and relations. The novelist illustrates two different feelings; one is the sense of belongingness and the other is feeling of alienation. The novelist is living far away from the country and describing intentionally relating to his land of origin. It mirrors the sensation of belongingness. He makes use the common issues and feelings in a brave manner. That is the reason the novel is not difficult to infiltrate and introduce a thought which is nearer to common people in Indian society. In this novel, sense of separation reflects that the novelist is alienated from his homeland of origin. He feels himself as in a hostility position. The thoughts of separation and withdrawal from the mother land fortify the

sensations of isolation. The book has expressed Khair's deep passion for home and his native place. He defines Home as:

> We have all returned home, or at least to houses. I have the home of my memories, that house of, shall we say, sixty-nine rooms. It is through the windows of those helter-skelter rooms that I first saw the world I have tried to show you, those rooms that are all jumped up-as if in a bhoolbhoolaiya, as if in a house added to and demolished over the years, as if in one of those mental states (like dreaming or remembering or mediating) when there is seamlessness in the way things flow backwards and forwards. My homes- fragile, confusing, monstrous have not been contained by Ammi ke Yahan and Ghar, even though I have always borne their burden. (BS: 195-96)

The Bus Stopped is a document of the author's memory of journey on a particular course of his native place in India. This book has auto biographical element which begins with first person narrative. Khair has put himself as a character travelling in the bus in certain place and has utilized a number of characters with various circumstances during the journey. In the very beginning of the novel, he has introduced two houses made by his forefather. He asserts that these houses are not worked with the material accessible for developments but these are made with dreams, expectations, beliefs and social responsibilities. He has also informed us about Ammi's home which was built by his great grandfather during the Second World War. It was made of bricks and cement when general people were not permitted to buy cement. He is firmly concerned with the house since he reminds every minor detail about it. Khair makes us realize that only immigrants know the

value and importance of home. There is no meaning of house for a person who spends his/her whole life inside it. The author gives stress on the value of house as:

> Here there are walls between flats and houses, Walls over which it is not always possible to peer, walls on which you cannot perch and hail your third cousin. But here walls are still thin. They stretched like the membranes of your ear, fragile and more felt than seen. And, so often, they lie hidden in the deep recesses of your being. Here the walls are membranes through whose tight secrecy permeates much that may only be heart, not seen. (BS: 30)

Khair has expressed his feelings that Patna, his hometown is a small city where he was nurtured in a joint family speaking many dialects as well as languages. It begets loving attitude, sentiments and creative ideas sharing on the basis of happiness or sadness. In fact, a home plays an important role in shaping one's behavior with the development of human skills like speaking and listening where each of the members reflects his character in the society. A bird feels solace just in its own nest. It goes to a great extent in search of food without forgetting his nest. Thus, home plays a pivotal role in the life of human being including the author, Tabish Khair.

A great many individuals from India are living abroad contributing in the fields of medical, engineering and education. They have a strong sense of feelings in their mind. The vast majority of them communicated their inward view on alienation and separation and their writings form good literature. Khair has depicted various characters with different circumstances and sentiments from the society. All the characters share their own thought and feelings with each other in the bus. Khair manages to battle to liberate

from the grip of the past in an intelligent way. This endures him just in his sleep. As the novel addresses:

> The light surges on, the generators are switched off and you fall asleep. It is a sleep full of sounds. Your father's voice across a decade and three states, the sounds of your past and present, your reality and imagination, all mixed up with creaking beds, footsteps, dog howls, truck sounds, and the drip-drip-drip of the tap. You never cease hearing, though you feel that you have heard it all. (BS: 94)

In the novel, the bus symbolizes a metaphor of self. It expresses a feeling of need of journey with excitement of returning to their homes. Home is a symbol of identification for a person who is living far away from his motherland. The author depicts a diasporic sensibility in this book presenting strength, the nature and new development of human articulation in our contemporary society. As a matter of fact, there are two glorious accounts at the same time in the novel, possibly you continue out travelling and an obscure individual comes to town. Rasmus, a Danish young fellow who was accompanied by different characters in the bus came to live there in the city. The place was quite unfamiliar for him. He was not even well acquainted with languages, culture and environment. Khair, being a talented author shows his mastery in painting of words. The tale envelops wealth of folds and turns and the concluding part of the novel is interesting. The readers can see something new at each end. The arrangement of the characters is advantageous and reasonable. It is a sweet as well as beautiful human experience. Khair has taken characters from different strata to commence various stories. So, the readers are puzzled for the diversification of characters.

Khair mentions the concept of Akhand Bharat during the partition of India and Pakistan. The author has depicted various activities of the R.S.S. volunteers who have come from Poona West Sakha to visit various places near Rajkumar Studio building where Muslims and Communists are barricaded. The novelist says that the youth is the only outsides in the group of youth. Most of them have come from the neighbouring villages to attack the Rajkumar Studio building by throwing stones. It happened so because both Hindu and Muslim people were employed in the studio. Sarpanch Amrish Nath's two family members threw stones at the studio to take revenge on the owner who employed Muslims and communists. He has presented the superstition of the village youth that the stables are haunted by a dwarf on an invisible horse. They took pleasure in a sadistic way. Khair remarks on the mindset of the youth as:

> And meanwhile he watches. He still doesn't know how many people are barricaded behind the doors of that shockingly immense and, to his eyes, entirely alien building. It is in studios like this, he tells himself, rephrasing the powerful words of Guruji, that Bharat has been partitioned, broken off like the pieces of chicken that Hindus and Muslims probably shares in such places, eating off the same plates, drinking from the same glasses, worshipping in the same room. These are stories that Sarpanch's men have told him: how Rajkunwar ignored the request of some villagers who wanted separate utensils for Hindus and Muslims and fired an assistant who did not want to cook for Muslims; how there was a room in the studio in which, Hindu Gods and Muslim relics were kept together; how there was even a mosque hidden somewhere in the compound used by the Muslim studio hands to pray and plot. (FG: 158)

The youth has rephrased Guruji's instruction that India is partitioned and torn into various pieces depending on religion like the pieces of chicken. He desires that if his Shakha or some Shakha in Bombay would send a group of volunteers to take revenge on the owner of the studio. He comments on the fact that the Hindus and Muslims share same food on the plates, drink water from the same glasses and worship in the same room. Rajkumar denied separate utensils for Hindus. They are forced to cook for the Muslims. He burnt the assistant cook who denied for preparing food for the Muslims in the studio. The villagers surprised to learn that Hindu Gods and Muslim relics were kept together in the studio. They were also dissatisfied with the fact that there was a hidden mosque in the Muslim studio. Khair has given a realistic picture of differences between Hindus and Muslims in terms of food habits and religious activities during the partition of India.

3.7 Conclusion

The Bus Stopped is a semi-autobiographical novel in which he delineates and attempts to recollect the elements of reminiscences through his unforgettable memory to portray the region of Bihar. Khair has focused his attention on the life of common people like- the bus driver, thela puller, landless cultivators, prostitutes and domestic servants who are exploited by so-called aristocratic class in the society. He believes that a novel can be shaped and given meaning by what has been found in the commonplace, everyday world, even when this is seemingly no more than a bus journey in a provincial area of Bihar.

The Bus Stopped is a novel that reflects the nature and circumstances of human mobility in our modern, unforgiving world. Being a Diaspora writer, he attempts to throw light on the backward state of Bihar, where he was born and raised. Being a full

time journalist first in India for few years and he went to Denmark to begin his new career as a professor. He depicts himself in one of the characters in the fiction in which he can express his personal opinion. This novel has been written in the concerns of many different perspectives of characters that belong to different strata of society. All the passengers have their own different kinds of problems and life stories. The encapsulation of different passengers on the same bus highlights the distinct pyramids of society. Khair's narrative power is impressive and striking. The flow of his writing is quite amusing and left no stone unturned to intricate the depiction of contemporary issues in his writings.

In the novel *Filming***:** *A love story*, Khair has depicted some social issues which were created during the partition period in India. The partition of India is the most remarkable event in the history of Indian subcontinent. It was such a drastic event that it had a great influence on people in a different way. The remarkable events like partition and riots during the independence inspire writers to record these events for portrayal in history and literature. The tragedy of partition had given birth to a new literary genre like partition literature in almost all dialects and languages in India. The familiar and common themes of these literary works were brutality, violence, communal riots, exploitation, murder, war and alienation etc. All these themes are beautifully reflected in novel *Filming: A Love Story*. The novel has provided sufficient space to the abundance perspective on the partition by using four repeated narrative voices which disappear and reappear, frequently interrupting other and providing its own version of events. The author's focus on actors, films, directors and producers in its plotline implies that the novel itself is structured as a film. The novel accommodates multiple

actors, themes and plots woven together in a fractured and at the same time elusive manner, proceeding to a climax and denouement.

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Chapter- IV

Social Realism in the Later Novels of Tabish Khair

This chapter focuses on social realism theory dealing with Tabish Khair's popular novels *The Thing about Thugs* (2010) and *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* (2012). These two fictions are categorized as his later novels which depict social problems like- racial discrinination, communal riots and Islamophobia, barbarism as well as East-West encounter during the colonial period. *Thing about Thugs* has been shortlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize, DSC Prize for South Asia and the Hindu Best Fiction Award.

4.1 Racial Discrimination

There is no fixed definition of racial discrimination. However, it has been described as any distinction, conduct or action, whether intentional or not, but based on a person's race, which has the effect of imposing burdens on an individual or group, not imposed upon others or which withholds or limits access to benefits available to other members of society. Race need only be a factor for racial discrimination to have occurred. "Race" is a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the "*Code*"), but like racial discrimination, it is not specifically defined. The Commission has explained "race" as socially constructed differences among people based on characteristics such as accent or manner of speech, name, clothing, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences, places of origin and so forth. The process of social construction of race is called racialization: "the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life." Racism is an ideology that either directly or indirectly asserts that one

group is inherently superior to others. It can be openly displayed in racial jokes and slurs or hate crimes but it can be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, these are unconsciously held and have become deeply embedded in systems and institutions that have evolved over time. Racism operates at a number of levels, in particular, individual, systemic and societal.

The term racial discrimination means discrimination against any individual on the basis of their skin color, or racial or ethnic origin. Individuals can discriminate by refusing to do business with, socialize with, or share resources with people of a certain group. Governments can discriminate in a de facto fashion or explicitly in law, for example through policies of racial segregation, disparate enforcement of laws, or disproportionate allocation of resources. Some jurisdictions have anti-discrimination laws which prohibit the government or individuals from discriminating based on race in various circumstances. Some institutions and laws use affirmative action to attempt to overcome or compensate for the effects of racial discrimination. In some cases, this is simply enhanced recruitment of members of underrepresented groups; in other cases, there are firm racial quotas. Opponents of strong remedies like quotas characterize them as reverse discrimination, where members of a dominant or majority group are discriminated against the weaker section of the society. Racial boundaries can involve many factors (such as ancestry, physical appearance, national origin, language, religion, and culture), and may be set in law by governments, or may depend on local cultural norms. Discrimination based on skin color, (measured for example on the Fitzpatrick scale) is closely related to racial discrimination, as skin color is often used as a proxy for race in everyday interactions, and is one factor used by legal systems that apply detailed criteria.

Khair has depicted the character of Amir Ali as an active member of Thuggee culture in British India. Thuggee refers to the acts of the Thugs, who were organized gangs of professional robbers and murderers. It describes the act of murder and robbery of travelers which occurred in the Northern parts of Indian subcontinent. Amir Ali comes to meet Captain T. Meadows at the Firangi Hospital in Patna to narrate the tale of his thug's life. He comes across a dusty road to wish him a quick recovery from his illness. In spite of his illness, Captain T. Meadows desires to learn from Amir Ali about the activities of notorious Thug in India. He comes to serve the captain for financial benefits, telling the lie that he is one of the Thugs and commits many heinous crimes. Amir Ali reminds him that he promises him a large reward for telling the truth about Thugs. Captain T. Meadows tells Amir Ali that the Indians are superstitious believers who worship many God and Goddesses. But he is guided by Reason, which is not known to Amir Ali. He is astonished by the people like Amir Ali who grows up in a society to kill other men for the sake of money and riches. He asserts that rational thinking gives him ears to listen with. Reason is not dictatorial Gods like Allah or Bhowanee which inspires them to kill innocent travelers for money. According to the captain all is built on the scaffold of superstitious faith in the land of Hindoostan. He comments on the blind faith as:

> Reason is not a tyrannical God like Allah, or a bloodthirsty demon like Bhowanee; Reason does not speak in my ears but gives me ears to listen with. For some came and told me of the murders they had committed or participated in, and I asked them about the cult of Thugee and they feigned ignorance or gave differing explanations, and hence I knew they were dissembling, for Reason told me that in the land of Hindoostan all is built on scaffold of superstitious faith. And other came and spoke of being Thugs and

> the cult of Thugee, but claimed to have wandered into the murderous profession. They maintained that they had once been farmers, before the drought burnt all their crops, or that their fathers were carpenters or weavers, and Reason told me they lied because in the land of Hindoostan sons follow in the footstep of their fathers as surely as the mango tree grows out of the stone of a mango, and a cat gives birth to kitten. (TAT: 22)

The captain thinks that the people in India are victims of superstition. They have blind faith in Allah and Bhowanee in their day-to-day lives. Amir Ali believes that Bhowanee is a many-armed Godess, a mischievous devil to bless the Thugs. She is supposed to be the mother of the world who protects us with her blessings. Some people pretended ignorance when they are asked about the cult of Thuggee or give different explanations that cannot be acceptable. Captain T. Meadows asks other people who come and speak of being Thug and of the cult of Thuggee but they cannot reply properly. They are simply involved in murderous profession for their livelihood. They told lies to Captain T. Meadows that they were farmers before the drought burnt all their crops. They also lied that they were the sons of carpenters or weavers. But the captain believed that in land of Hindoostan, a son adopts his father's footstep in future as the mango tree grows out of the mango seed and a cat gives birth to kittens. In a society, every member of it displays ethnic, racial, gender and class identities naturally.

In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, Khair has highlighted the problem of racial prejudices in Danish society. The narrator, who is a professor in the department of English at Aarhus University, has expressed his feeling during his visit to fertility clinic with his wife at Suburban Street. The childless couple is going to be divorced soon as they are unable to beget children. So, the narrator has

been visiting the laboratory for sperm count test for long six months. The novelist has focused on suspicion and racist attitude of Danish people in a realistic way. The narrator expresses his fear and doubt while he notices a police patrolling car approaching to him. Being a Muslim immigrant he is afraid of his Islamic religion in the Western society. The author expresses the narrator's troublesome condition as:

> My heart sank. If this particular cop found the sight of a law-abiding Japanese or Far Asian car, no matter parked where and how, suspicious, what would he think when he discovered that the driver of the car was a more or less Muslim-skinned man? The excitement of the situation must have helped, for at that very moment my beleaguered appendage sent an SOS of sensation back to me, a silent version of the whistle that old-fashioned trains let off in old-fashioned films before they start pulling out of old-fashioned stations. Did I have the time to let this train pull out and the cap of evidence before the patrol car pulled up? And if I did, would I be able to get my clarifications in place quickly enough to make it to the clinic and then to my lecture, for which I was going to be paid money that my gaily mortgaging bank could use in these times of financial crisis? (HFITMP: 2-3)

The narrator is ashamed of his situation because his wife feels that she must have a child. The fertility clinic will be opening at seven o'clock and he has only ten minutes to reach that place in order to share his concern with the doctor regarding their child. He is unable to impregnate his wife because of his infertility problem. So he tries to masturbate into a sperm-sample cup, with a label bearing the name and social security of his wife. He is afraid of being seen ejaculating in a plastic container in a parked car. The sight of wandering police car distracts him, and causes the reader to wander why he

waited until ten minutes before he was due at the fertility clinic to perform this act. The narrator as a follower of Islamic religion does not feel secure in the foreign country. But he tries hard to assimilate in Danish society. He does not hesitate to drink wine as well as eat pork which is against his religion. He is indifferent in accepting a new culture and society by surrendering his own moral ethics. He feels that he should move fast to escape from the police. He is desperate because he is supposed to deliver a guest-lecture at eight for which he is going to be paid money. Moreover he has to repay his loan at the mortgaging bank in these times of financial crisis. The Danish police may charge him as he was a foreigner. The situation reflects the prejudice against Muslims in the West. He decides to leave the place quickly fearing the police and drives back home. Later he gets divorced and sells his mortgaged car and flat at a significant loss. His English wife departed to Ye Old England. The narrator starts sharing a flat with two other immigrants. They are also the victims of racism like the narrator in the foreign country like Denmark.

The Pakistani narrator has described the incident of racial discrimination and communal riots during the partition period. It caused riots, mass casualties, and a colossal wave of migration. As a result millions of Muslims had migrated to Pakistan to save their lives. The narrator's grandparents belonged to Phansa, Bihar in India who had migrated to Pakistan during the partition period in 1947. He has narrated his ancestral connection with India. The narrator being a mohajir, remarks on racial discrimination in Pakistan as:

> That is true. My grandparents had left India with their children during the partition years. I sometimes meet mohajirs in Pakistan who wax eloquent about all they lost in India and lament the

> partition. In my case I am grateful to Jinnah, Patel, Nehru, Mountbatten, Lady and Lord, whoever it was that fucked up in 1947 and sent millions of people to their graves or cross invisible borders. Huge tragedy, sure, don't misread me; but in my case, only good came out of it. I once, just once, visited the town- home, they called it until their death- that my grandparents had left in India. It was the desolate, dingy, dry little landlocked place called Phanssa in Bihar. I returned to lovely, vibrant, sea-side Karachi, relieved to be a mohajir. Since then, I have always been thankful to the whole blind bickering gang of them for their fuck-ups in 1947. (HFITMP: 24)

The narrator's forefathers were Indians by birth. But, due to communal violence in India during the partition year they had migrated to Pakistan with their children. The narrator has described the condition of mohajirs in Pakistan who had lost everything in the time of partition in India. They mourn for the partition that they had experienced in their lives. They are the Muslim immigrants and refugees who migrated from various regions of India after the partition of India to settle in the newly created state of Pakistan. He ironically offers his heartfelt thanks to the political rulers like Md. Ali Jinnah, the Governor of Pakistan, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, Vallabhbhai Patel, Former Deputy Prime Minister of India for the destruction of greater India in 1947. Louis Mountbatten was appointed Viceroy of India who supervised the partition of British India into India and Pakistan. These rulers are responsible for the killings of millions of people both in India and Pakistan. Millions of people became refugees losing everything in invisible borders. This pathetic condition of the immigrant is realistically depicted by the author. The narrator has recalled his memory that once he visited his home town that his grandparents had left in India after the partition. They claimed it to be their own place till their death in Pakistan. His forefathers' native place

is named Phansa in Bihar which is barren and dry little landlocked place in India. The narrator is happy to be a mohajir after arriving at his new homeland, which is lovely and energetic sea-side Karachi in Pakistan. He has always been grateful to the bickering gang for their destruction during the partition in 1947.

The unnamed narrator does not believe in orthodox Islamic practice of Karim's Friday Quran session in their flat. The narrator, being a Muslim, is annoyed for such religious discussion in the Western society. He is surprised at Ravi's active participation in the Quranic discussion on every Friday in their room. Ravi, being a Hindu, has keen desire to acquire knowledge from the religious discussion of Islam. The narrator admits that Ravi attains more intellectual nourishment from the discussion than him because he is not grown up in Muslim environment. So, he is inspired by new thoughts in Islam. The narrator makes a comment on Ravi as:

> But finally I had to concede that Ravi derived more intellectual sustenance from the conversations than I could, perhaps because- not having grown up in Muslim environment- he found some of the ideas and sentiments fresh of thought-provoking. I also suspected that Ravi was wilfully blind to what I had increasingly come to see as the fascist face in Islamism. He hated the suggestion, and with good cause, for in the West, Islam itself is considered fascist or prone to fascism. Ravi objected to that. He argued that Islamism, because it considered Islam universally valid for all human beings, could not be fascist, because fascism was an ideology of ethnic, racist or nationalist exclusiveness. (HFITMP: 131)

The narrator remarks that Islam is a fascist attitude of Muslims in the West. It is connected with radical fundamentalism. He is anxious about Ravi's involvement in such

discussion which he considers as Islamic fascism in the Western society. The narrator regards that the Quran is written in obscure Arabic dialect which is difficult to understand. Karim is a religious-minded person. His flat is a centre for unofficial Quranic studies every Friday evening. Some bearded young men and veiled women take part in this discussion. He also serves coffee, tea and nimki for them. Ravi does not accept the narrator's viewpoint of Islamism. He thinks that it is universally valid and trusted by all human beings. There is no question of fascism in Islam as it is a belief free from racism. He attends the Friday session because of his interest to know Islam as well as to show respect to Karim and his guests. For Ravi, Quranic discussion is a matter of great importance. He asserts: "They discuss matters of significance and do it honestly how to make sense of the world, how to make it a better world. They still have a conscience, these young men and women, not just a bank account like the rest of these people." (HFITMP: 30) Ravi rejects the racial attitude of the Western society towards Muslim community.

The author has focused on the racist attitude of Danish people towards the immigrants. Ravi, being an Indian immigrant, is also a victim in the Western society. He criticises their attitudes towards the foreigners in their land. Though he is disgusted with their culture, he comments humorously the way of adjustment for a Muslim immigrant in the West. Ravi suggests that the Muslim immigrants can choose either of the two options to win favour of the Western people. He remarks as:

> You are a bloody Mussalman from the Land of the fucking Pure have only two options in the Lands of Unbelievers if you want to intrigue a damsel in distrust. Either you talk about how you, at the age of fourteen, broke into your piggy bank and stole money from your traditional dad's wallet to go whoring, or you talk about how

> you grew up praying five and a half times a day and admiring the mujahideen until, O Heart, O Torn and Riven Heart, as recently as a year ago you began to lose your faith. (HFITMP: 72)

In this novel, Khair has disclosed the fact that the position of Muslim immigrants are kept under scrutiny in a foreign land. Ravi makes a funny remark on immigrants that they should do what a boy of fourteen years does to visit a prostitute by stealing money from his father's purse. They can also adopt the way to win the hearts of the Western people like they grow up praying and praising the mujahideen for five and half times a day. In order to escape from racist attitude the foreigners should know the tricks to make them happy and live in their country in a peaceful manner. He asserts that it is possible to assimilate in the Western nationalism by giving up their culture and ethnicity. The Muslims should renounce their religion and ethnicity to be accepted and trusted by the Danish people in their land. Being an immigrant, Ravi cannot accept this kind of racial discrimination in the West.

Ravi falls in love with Lena, a Turkish girl and dates frequently with her. She is a professional singer and is pursuing her Ph.D. in Musicology. She complains in slang language about the immigrant men that they are interested in flirting with Danish women. Ravi replies to her arguing that it is a natural tendency of all hetero men to show interest in women. They may make their romantic relationship with women. Ravi is a romantic person who has been dating on the internet in different Western countries. But his experience in Denmark, regarding dating with white girls is different because they are unfriendly with immigrants. In response to Lena's complaint about immigrant men in Denmark, Ravi comments as:

> Denmark has to do with certain failure to read signals on all sides. 'I can show my interest in Danish woman without them getting offended because, thanks to my colonial brainwashing, I do it the way it is sanctioned in Danish society,' he claimed, and proceeded to illustrate this with examples. She countered with examples. He deconstructed her examples with increasing relish. She looked irritated. Ravi finally told her to read Fanon, try not to speak so much slang, as she did not need to prove how 'well-integrated' she was, and left. 'I don't know what is worse,' he said to me, sipping his coffee, 'a white woman trying to be colourful or a coloured woman trying to be white!' (HFITMP: 48-49)

Ravi, being a defender of minorities in Denmark, does not agree with Lena. He asserts that many men make passes but only immigrants should not be blamed for their romantic attachment. He says that he is also interested in Danish woman. He opposes imperialism because it causes discrimination among the foreigners. He expresses his anti-colonial attitude towards the West for exploiting immigrants religiously and racially. In one of his dates with Lena, Ravi rejects her negative viewpoint towards the foreigners. Ravi advises Lena to read Fanon since she considers herself to be a superior European lady by speaking slang language to complain about immigrants. Ravi expresses his view to the narrator that a white lady tries to be a foreigner and a coloured lady tries to be white in different context. Thus, Ravi reveals his feelings of racial attitude of the white people he is facing in the Western society.

Tabish Khair has depicted the problem of racial discrimination throughout the novel. He focuses this burning issue in the western society. All the characters in the novel are silent sufferers that they undergo in their day-to-day lives in Denmark. Ravi, a flamboyant young man, narrates his dating experiences in different countries in the world

where he has spent various periods as a student and journalist. He is well-versed in dating with beautiful girls in five countries. Ravi being a journalist, has contributed a lot in the U.S.A. and Switzerland. He also has visited England, India and Pakistan where he dated with several ladies in different periods of his life. But, his dating experience in Denmark is different as the Danish girls are not friendly with immigrants. They always fear the coloured man. He remarks on Danish women as:

> It was perhaps the only country left in the Western Hemisphere where 80 per cent of all women were afraid of dating a coloured man and all but one per cent of the rest would only date coloured men if they had a chance. A bit like England in the 1950s; this progressive country is a few decades behind the rest in some areas. (HFITMP: 13)

According to Ravi, Denmark is the only country in the Western Hemisphere where eighty percent of all women are afraid of falling in love with an immigrant. It happens because they have strong sense of racial discrimination against the coloured people. He compares the situation of Denmark with England in the 1950s. In the developed countries like Denmark, a white woman dates a coloured man due to Oriental mysticism. It is a rumour that the white women are attracted by immigrant's superior sexual strength in the West. Ravi tells that Danish people are cruel enough when he reaches there for settlement. It happens because of cultural differences between Asian and European people. Ravi criticizes the Danish People's Party and its anti-immigrant politics which hinder the women from expressing their will freely. The motto of the Danish People's Party is to protect the freedom and cultural heritage of the Danish people. The party holds that Denmark is not naturally a country of immigration. It does not allow a multi-ethnic transformation of Denmark and rejects multiculturalism. The party seeks to reduce non-

western immigrants and opposes cultural assimilation of immigrants from all religions in their land. It has proposed to put a complete stop to all immigrants from non-Western countries in 2010. The party has stated that it is more than happy to help those in need, but have moral responsibility to the people of Denmark to keep Denmark Danish.

Ravi always tries to establish Indianness in Denmark in spite of their racial discrimination. He shows his Indian life style, ethnicity, civilization and identity in the novel. He is the only character in the novel who does not tolerate racial injustice for the immigrants. Because of his Indian habits, he is forced to change his rented house very frequently. Ravi is politely kicked out of several flats before renting a flat together with the narrator. Khair remarks on Ravi's condition as:

> He claimed that he had been asked to leave politely, for playing (mostly Maghrebi) music too loud, frying his food instead of boiling it, walking about in his undergarments, using too much (fried) spice in his cooking, and not cleaning his windows - in that order - in the past. Of course, those were never the reasons given, Ravi confessed under intensive cross-examination by my (now ex-) wife; the reason given were always polite ones. Dammit, yaar, he said to me later, this is not a bloody Third World states; it is a civilized country. You think anyone would give you real reasons in a civilized place? (HFITMP: 4)

Ravi says that the house owners are annoyed with his behavior. His habit of playing loud music, using spices in fried food as well as walking in his undergarments are the causes of dissatisfaction for his rented house owners. Moreover he does not clean his windows as the house owner desires. Ravi also does not like to be accepted in the Western society. But he has nihilist attitude towards this situation. He never desires to be a good citizen in racial circumstances. He confesses to the narrator's wife that he has to leave his flat for

these reasons. But, it is not a developing country like India where nobody wills to tell the truth. According to him, Denmark is a civilized country where people like him cannot abide by their social norms and culture. So he is forced to leave rented houses one after another by the house owners before renting a flat together with the narrator. He criticizes the Western civilization throughout the novel by revealing his anti-Western attitude. Ravi is living like a gypsy status in Aarhus because of his obstinate manner in maintaining food habit, loud music and clothing. Finally, Ravi shares a two-bedroom flat with the narrator which belongs to Karim. He is also an Indian immigrant like Ravi and earns his livelihood by driving a taxi in Aarhus. Karim is an orthodox follower of Islam who is shocked to hear from Ravi about their gay relationship with the narrator. He feels as if he has been slapped by someone hearing such relationship. Karim replies to Ravi as: "Allah forbid, he said, slapping himself lightly on both cheeks, the first time I had seen this traditional gesture of repentance performed anywhere except in a historical Bombay flick, 'Such an indecent thought would never cross my mind, Ravi Bhai." (HFITMP: 7)

Ravi is facing the problem of otherness and sense of belonging in the Western society. He leads a restless life complaining against social and racial injustice that he is facing in day-to-day life in Aarhus. He is searching peace in religious discussion with Karim. He is not a follower of Islam but he attends Karim's Quranic discussion on every Friday. He develops a sense of belonging spiritually in religious session of Karim in his flat. He feels alienated living in the West expressing his dissatisfaction in every occasion. He protests against the Danish government's decision on the ban of smoking in public places. But he starts smoking regularly claiming that the government is working against the working class people. The poor labourers are habituated in smoking to reduce their physical hardship during their work. Khair remarks on his revolutionary thinking as:

> But Ravi had started smoking just a couple of years backs, when smoking was banned in public places in Denmark. He claimed the ban was proof of the sexist and anti-working class turn of Denmark in recent years, for it was mostly women and working class who still smoked. He decided to oppose it by smoking at least one cigarette per day and so far he had steadfastly adhered to his sole, silent, protest against the ruling powers of Denmark. (HFITMP: 12)

He opposes the government's rule by smoking at least one cigarette per day. He always shows his anti-western attitude in his speech as well as action. He feels that the Danish authority is exploiting the poor people. He cannot assimilate with such Western society where cigarette is sold but not permitted to smoke in public places. In accordance with him it should completely be banned if the authority does not give permission to use it openly. Khair has drawn his rebellious nature though his strong sense of Indianness. He has selected the best of the worst place, Denmark for his Ph.D. degree because of his anti-colonial attitude for the Western society. He replies to the narrator about his arrival in Scandinavia for his higher education as: "Every Tom, Dick and Hari from India goes to U.S.A., U.K., Australia or Canada for a Ph.D. these days." (HFITMP: 60) He dares to face challenges race snobbery in spite of his hatred for the Western culture.

The novelist has realistically presented Ravi as a victim of racial prejudice in this novel. He is rich, well-educated and intellectually superior to other European characters in the novel. But he has been marginalized because of his immigrant identity for having dark complexion and ugly face. The narrator describes an incident of a beautiful Danish restaurant where Ravi is not permitted to enter with the parents of Lena, his beloved for his dark skin. Khair remarks on his pathetic condition as:

> Inside, at the reception counter, Ravi was stopped by a very Scandinavian-looking waiter- tall, broad, blond, even teeth cared for by state-subsidized dentistry from kindergarten onwards- who looked at him with some surprise. When Ravi's eyes got used to the gloom and began to register the other guests (almost all the tables appeared to be occupied), he could the surprise in the waiter's eyes: Ravi was perhaps the only dark person in the hall. I am meeting friends here, Ravi told the waiter and walked in. The waiter did not look convinced and might have intercepted Ravi, but at that moment some elderly ladies congesting a table beckoned for attention. The waiter moved in their direction with a dubious glance at Ravi. (HFITMP: 144)

The Scandinavian-looking waiter does not allow Ravi to enter into the restaurant because of his dark skin complexion. Ravi is the only dark person in the hall which surprises the waiter. He remains busy with other guests ignoring Ravi. He tells the waiter that he is going to meet his friends here. But he obstructs him to enter into the hall where the other guests are sitting. He is not allowed to meet Lena as well as her parents in the restaurant. The waiter moves to other direction with a suspicious about Ravi's presence in the hall. An immigrant is treated as doubtful person even by a working class waiter in the restaurant in Danish society. The racist attitude is deeply rooted in all social sections in the Western society. Ravi, being rich and educated person, feels it difficult to be integrated into their so-called cultured and sophisticated Western society for racial as well as anti-immigrant prejudice.

The author has depicted social problems of the Eastern and the Western society from racial as well as religious point of view. The narrator describes an incident that a Pakistani Christian has been killed by Muslims near Lahore who had supplied a copy of

the Quran to a fundamentalist Christian preacher in the U.S.A. He burned a copy of the Quran in America. The news was spread in the international media which reached fundamentalist Islamic preacher in Afghanistan following a mob attack on U.N workers. The Pakistani Christian is mistakenly considered as a guest of the American preacher who is accused to supply a copy of the Quran to him. A mullah (a Muslim learned in Islamic theology and sacred law) judged the matter and punished him to death. He was beheaded by a mob in Pakistan. Khair comments on racial as well as religious prejudices as:

> A Pakistani man- a Christian- in a place near Lahore had been (wrongly) considered a relative of the American preacher. Their names, transcribed inaccurately into Urdu, seemed alike. He had been accused of having provided the American preacher with a copy of the Quran to desecrate. A mob had collected, a mullah had pronounced a verdict, and a poor man had been dragged to a field and beheaded. It was, in my book, another example of the kind of Islamist fascism that held much of Pakistan in thrall, largely because liberal Muslims were too busy defending the complexities of Islam from unfair and at times racist Western charges of fascism to be able to face the actual and glaring fact of fascism in Muslim societies. (HFITMP: 133)

The Pakistani narrator, being a liberal Muslim, feels that Islamic fascism creates a problem of racial prejudices in Islamic countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan. He asserts that honest Muslims are defending the problems of Islamic religion from the racist Western charges of fascism in the society. The matter is discussed on the Friday Quran session at the flat by Karim's disciples. Ali one of the followers of Karim remarks as: "Anyone who insults the Prophet, peace be upon him, should be killed. It is every Muslim's duty." (HFITMP: 135) Ali and his colleagues justify the act of

beheading the Pakistani Christian. But, Ravi blames the mullahs for their racist attitude against the Christians in Pakistan. In Karim's Friday session, the disciples express their viewpoint focusing on the problems of racist and anti-Islamist attitude of the West for Muslim immigrants. The narrator asserts that Danes are not racist by nature but they never tolerate any person who reduces their comfort or convenience. They feel uncomfortable with strangers who are coloured immigrants. Ali is the only person representing fascist attitude and claims death for those Danish artists who had made cartoons on Prophet Muhammad.

Khair has discussed the problem of religious prejudices from the historical perspectives of the 12th century legendary Christian ruler, Prester John. He had protected Europeans from Islamic threats and joined forces with European crusaders. He is there to protect Christendom from Islamic threat. The novelist has remarked on religious prejudices from historical point of view. Ravi, the companion of the narrator, is referring this historical lesson to convince him to marry a girl after his divorce with his English wife. He tries to make him understood to marry again by quoting examples from history as:

> So, over the centuries, a large number of Europeans have needed this mythical Prester John. Sometimes, when they get really desperate, they even Pester John a Muslim people, as they did with the Arabs when Lawrence of Arabia was waging his jihad against the Ottomans. Lately, behold, O Fanatical Believer, ancient Hindoo Inja is the new Prester John: the great non-Muslim ally on the other side of the crescent! We are in, old boys; they actually smile at Indian passports at Customs sometimes. The first time it happened to me, a few months after 9/11, I almost fainted with the shock. Our chances to lay la lasses increased triple-fold after 9/11.

> Provided we do not tie a turban around our heads, as some silly Sikhs still do, and get them all confused because they have seen cartoons depicting your Mohammad in a turban. (HFITMP: 73-74)

Ravi also recalls Thomas Edward Lawrence, a British intelligence officer, who fought against Arab guerrilla forces in the Middle East during the 1st World War. He is greatly shocked to learn the incident of the World Trade Centre attack on 11th September by the militant Islamist terrorist group, Al-Qaeda in 2001. The Muslims do not tie a turban around their heads like some foolish Sikhs. They are bewildered to see cartoons of Mohammad in a turban. Ravi asks him if he has chosen someone to be his future wife. The narrator likes Miss Linen Marx, one of his colleagues in the Department of History to be his would be wife if she desires. She is a divorcee and mother of a child. The narrator has a soft corner for the lady in his heart. Ravi always addresses her as Miss Linen Marx because she generally uses garments made of cotton and linen. The narrator establishes physical relationship with the lady. The lady is also eager to have a new companion in life. She expresses her feelings to the narrator as: "Remember, I am a historian: I except consistency in historical account, she said. She pulled my chair back from the table- Ms. Marx was pretty strong for the size- and sat in my lap, straddling me. She smelled of orange yoghurt. I kissed her. She tested of orange yoghurt too. We ended up making love on the kitchen floor." (HFITMP: 88) The narrator has enjoyed his relationship with Ms. Marx in spite of racial and religious discrimination between them.

The narrator has depicted one of the major tenets of social realism i.e. domestic violence which is very common in the Western society like Denmark. Domestic violence or domestic abuse is violence or other abuse that occurs in a domestic setting, such as in marriage or cohabitation. Domestic violence is often used as a synonym for

intimate partner violence, which is committed by one of the people in an intimate relationship against the other person, and can take place in either heterosexual or same-sex relationship or between former spouses or partners. In broader sense, domestic violence also involves in violence against children, parents, or the elderly. It can abuse multiple forms, including physical, verbal, emotional, economic, religious, reproductive or sexual abuse.

Divorce is a consequence of domestic violence which is very common in the Western society. In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, Tabish Khair has given a true picture of judicial separation case in Danish society where 50 percent divorce rate is found in recent statistics. The narrator has remarked on the divorce case in Denmark as: "For the first time in Denmark, I heard the sounds of domestic strife as I walked up the stairs that night. The evidence I have seen all around me- even the statistics of a nearly 50 percent divorce rate, which, Ravi perversely claimed, was slightly less disturbing than the statistics of a one percent divorce rate in India." (HFITMP: 91) Divorce is one of the major factors of domestic violence which is more prevalent in the Western society including Denmark than in India. In the recent statistics of a one percent divorce rate in India is the least case of all the developed countries in the world.

4.2 Communal Riot and Islamophobia

The word 'communal' means 'shared by or for the use of or a number of people specially people who live together or involving different groups of people in a community' and the word 'riot' means' a situation in which a group of people behave in a violent way in a public place, often a s a protest. (2002: 243, 1103) Again, in other words communal riot is a form of violence that is perpetrated across ethnic or

communal lines, the violent parties feel solidarity for their respective groups, and victims are chosen based upon group membership. The term includes conflicts, riots and other forms of violence between communities of different religious faith or ethnic origins.

'Islamophobia' is a modern term for a prejudice that dates back to the Middle Ages and that permeate Western societies in the 21st century. It refers to the fear of and hostility towards Muslims and Islam, as well as the discriminatory, exclusionary, and violent practices arising from this attitude that target Muslims and those perceived as Muslims. Islamophobia is best understood as a form of cultural racism that instigates animosity based on religious beliefs, cultural traditions and ethnicity.

Tabish Khair has depicted society during the British rule in India in 19th century. He has taken the story of *The Thing about Thugs* from the book Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug,* William T. Meadows' *Notes on a Thug: Character and Circumstances*. Khair has focused on social problems of colonial and post-colonial periods like assumption of identity, race, barbarism and East-West encounter. The author has recollected in his memory after reading the note of Amir Ali about riot between two communities- Hindus and Muslims. He has mentioned various incidents which had taken place between India and England simultaneously. He visualizes riots in the books he has read from his grandfather's library. He remarks:

> Things Change, and do not. I recall around the time I discovered the note of Amir Ali, reading my first report- or the first one that I fully understood and hence recall- of a riot between Hindus and Muslims. The news report, as was the custom, did not use descriptions like 'Hindu" or 'Muslim'; instead, it employed the supposedly safer euphemism of 'one community' and 'another community' when describing the bodies discovered in charred

> houses, the amputated limbs recovered from railway tracks. The writer, surely with the best intentions, tried to clean the bones of the atrocity of flesh and skin and gore, of the passions and anger and bitterness which hung from it like a rat in the claws of a crow. But it was to no avail. My Hindu classmates were convinced that the victims of the riot were Hindus; my Muslim classmates as convinced that the victims were all, and only Muslims. (TAT: 29-30)

Communal riot created havoc between different communities in the society. Khair's Hindus classmates were convinced that the victims of the riot were Hindus and his Muslim classmates thought that they were the only victims in the riot. The dead bodies scattered in different places during the clash between the two communities. The torn bodies were discovered in burnt houses and railway tracks. The novelist compares the anger and bitterness born from riot which is similar to a rat in the claws of a crow.

John May takes the opportunity of such riot to collect skulls from the dead bodies. He deals in skulls for M'lord who worked in The London Society of Phrenology. In his home on the fringes of East London, he works out a scientific routine to scalp the head taking off the hair in a careful manner. He sells the hair separately from the skull. It is an easy task for him to prepare a skull for phrenological study. John May's kitchen smells less of food and more of formaldehyde. The smell of formaldehyde and sulphate grow stronger as soon as he opens the scullery. He put the heads in a dark-stained wooden shelf for sometime: "Death needs time to ripen into art. All he can do is strip off the rotting skin and flesh make two holes in the skull where the eyes used to be, and start to empty the contents with a selective use of acids and chemicals, knife and scalpel. Later, when the skull has been cleaned and emptied, he will have to let it soak in an

aqueous chemical solution for some time, before drying and treating it." (TAT: 31) In this way, John May as a devoted servant of M'lord renders his service to him.

Khair has expressed his feelings of regional spirit of Patna, Bihar through the character of Amir Ali who was taken to London by Captain T. Meadows to investigate Thugs. Amir Ali expresses his love for his native place Patna in his letter written for his beloved, Jaanam. The letter carries autobiographical elements of Amir Ali. He was secretly writing letters to her in Farsi language expressing his inner most feelings. He met her on the second day of her arrival in London. He was feeling a bit of cold as he was not adjusted with the climate. He remembered that when she walked into the kitchen he mistook her as a visitor and not a servant. Jenny mistook him as rich nobleman from Persia. But Nelly Clennam, the cook, disclosed Amir Ali's identity that he was only a paid servant. He was a murderous thug in India who can be mischievous for us all the servants in his household. Amir Ali was afraid of Nelly Clennam because she uttered uncivilized words against her employer, Captain T. Meadows. Her actual name is Jenny but he addresses her as Jaanam with affection. Amir Ali could see the relief in her eyes when she told her about the various names of the lotus flower, the most beautiful and sacred of all flowers in India, and how the most common and esteemed name for it is: "that which grows in the mud. Intoxicated by your smile, I had applied the description to you and confessed that I was secretly writing a series of letters addressed to you, letters to keep a record of what had happened and what was happening to me." (TAT: 37) He addressed her Jaanam which means precious thing or life. He described his attachments of his native village, Patna with Jenny.

Amir Ali tells his beloved, Jaanam that his father died when he was a child. He was brought up and taken care of by his uncle, Mustapha Chacha and his wife. His

mother also died of fever after four years of his father's death. He worked as a domestic servant in a rich family at the age of fifteen in Patna, following the footsteps of his elder cousin, Hamid Bhai. As their ancestral lands were not sufficient for cultivation for more than one family, he left for London with Captain T. Meodows for better future. He describes his love for his native place in a series of letters to his lover, Jaanam. He expresses his feelings as:

> But what can I tell you of Patna, Jaanam? It is a place you had never heard of. And yet there was a time when in all of Asia and perhaps beyond, you would have been laughed at if you said you had not heard of Patna. It would be like someone here, in London, claiming not to have heard of Paris or Rome. Patna was a city of thousand gardens, a hundred schools, but they are all gone. Now it is simply a provincial headquarter, sustained by the presence of the Company, its bureaucrats and its soldiers, its shipping from the ghats. But this is not shipping on a grand scale. The dogs in Patna do not harbour brigantines, bulkats or schooners; it is cluttered with small boats, dinghies, baulias and woolocks. Sometimes a larger craft belonging to some trading company casts anchor to pick up a lot of opium or girmitiyas. But by and large, Patna is nothing but a minor shop on the Ganges, its broad banks lined with wheat or rice to the north and west of the city and poppy flowers to the east. (TAT: 37-38)

Amir Ali is describing about his native place, Patna to his beloved. Once it was a place of historical importance in all of Asia. Someone would be mocked at if he had not heard about the name of Patna. He compares Patna with Rome or Paris. He asserts that someone would have been laughed at if he does not hear about the name of Paris or Rome in London. Once upon a time Patna was a gorgeous city of thousand gardens with beautiful flowers. There were also hundred schools with a huge number of pupils. But

such reputation and gorgeousness are no more. It is merely headquarter of the province now. It is occupied by the Company and its officers and soldiers. The water transportation is not rich enough like earlier days. Now only small boats are visible in the Ganges. Sometimes a ship or large craft which belong to some company can be seen picking up a load of opium or indentured Indian labourers. Amir Ali regrets that Patna becomes a minor stop on the Ganges from where only wheat or rice is transported to the north and west of the city. Poppy flowers are sent to the East from Patna. He recalls his love for his native place so dearly that he cannot help remembering its grandeur even though he lives in London.

Khair has portrayed his memories of native place, Patna through the character of Amir Ali. He is describing the peaceful scenery of the break of dawn in Indian villages which is not known to Jenny, his beloved. But in London, the climate is different because the buildings, the sun and the sky are hidden by the fog. Amir Ali narrates his experience of the second day while he is walking on the road while the sky stretched above him. He could easily identify each birdsong. The sweet songs of myna, the chit-chit-chit sound of baya, the soft cooing of the wood-dove and the shocking beast-screech of the peacock remind Amir Ali about the homely life in Patna. He recalls the scenic beauty of rural life as:

> Amir's description of Indian rural life is very realistic. India is a land of vegetation from How peaceful it is, the break of dawn, in the villages of India. You would have no idea of it, Jaanam, for here the fog and the buildings obscure the sun and the sky. But that morning, my second morning on the road, the sky stretched above me, a grey- blue washed by streaks of white cloud, those to the east tinged with the colour of the rising sun. Birds sang. Now that I was close to my village. I could identify each birdsong: the sibilant

> chee-ee of the shoubeegi, the scolding observations of the myna, the chit-chit-chit of the baya, the soft cooing the wood dove, the shocking beast screech of the peacock. (TAT: 58)

where one gets fresh air. People cultivate various crops to earn their livelihood. The birds are singing with joy. There are so many trees which are wide and majestic. There are so many animals and birds everywhere in India. He depicts the amazing beauty of Indian landscapes, the great Himalayas flowing into the Jamuna or the Ganga. Further has describes beauty in the following lines. India is superior to London in terms of the nature and its blessings to the people of India.

In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, Khair has focused on the issue of Islamophobic sentiment in Danish society. He has described the incident of Danish cartoon controversy on 30th September in 2005. Kurt Westergaard, a Danish cartoonist, had drawn a cartoon of the prophet Muhammad, wearing a bomb in his turban and published in *The Jyllands-Posten*, a Danish newspaper. The incident provoked several assassinations and murders committed by Islamists around the world. Several Islamic countries attacked on Western embassies creating conflicts and riots. Westergaard faced numerous death threats from different Muslim organizations. He has drawn the character of Mr. Hansen, a Danish cartoonist who has drawn a caricature of the prophet Muhammad. The Somali man being a follower of Karim Bhai, always participates in his Quranic discussion on Friday at his flat. He is a follower of Islam religion who cannot tolerate such insult on the Prophet Muhammad. It is a humiliation for the Muslim people in Denmark. The Somali man is in search of the Danish artist, Mr. Bent Hansen who drew controversial cartoons of Prophet Muhammad a few years back. The novelist has remarked on the tragic situation as:

> When Mr. Hansen opened the door, he realized that the man-an African or Arab, as he told the press in the initial interviews had not been knocking at the door. He had been trying to break it down with an axe. The axe was still struck to the door. It had been torn out of the man's hand when Mr Hansen had opened the door. The man lunged for the axe handle, shouting something in a language that Mr Hansen and all his neighbours, some of whom were now peering out of the windows, could not understand. But Mr. Hansen knew what it was all about. He heard the word 'Mohammad' repeated again and again. He felt the spittle on his face. He had been told what to do in such circumstances. He stayed calm and ran into the bathroom to his left. He closed and locked the door. The bathroom had been reinforced by anti-terror expert: it even dad a direct line to the police department. (HFITMP: 168)

Khair has presented the Somali man as an Islamic extremist who has linkage with an Al Qaeda cell in Aarhus. He came to attack the cartoonist with an axe and knife to take vengeance for the insult of Muhammad. He is trying to break the door down in order to kill the old cartoonist who is watching television with his grandchildren. He realizes that the Somali man is chasing the old man uttering the name of Muhammad for several times. He hides himself entering into bathroom and informs the police to rescue him from the attack of the Somali man. The bathroom has been fortified by anti-terror expert and it is connected with the police department. He has informed the police that the Somali man comes to avenge him with an axe. He was frightened for his grandchildren who were watching television with their grandmother. He knows that he is old enough to fight with the young man armed with a knife and an axe. At last the Somali man is arrested for the attempted murder case. Khair has satirised the Islamophobic tendency of the Western society. The readers might wonder how much terror one can spread with an

axe. But the Danish media is submerged with news and views of Al Qaeda and Islamic terror. The author has drawn the attitude of Danish people as soon as a terrorist attack has taken place in Aarhus city. All three immigrant characters were trembled in fear, doubt and endangerment. *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* is a bitter-sweet, spell-binding novel about love and human relationship in a foreign land.

Khair has discussed the social problems of Muslim foreigners in Denmark. He has criticized how they are judged in the Western world. He deals with the problems of xenophobic and Islamophobic attitude of the Western society. The relationship between Muslims and Danish people are always in bitter-sweet situation. The novelist has demonstrated postcolonial conditions and dissatisfaction in a realistic manner in this novel. The Danish media plays a biased role to spread rumour against the Muslim immigrants. Khair has described the incident of cartoon controversy of the Prophet Muhammad drawn by a Danish artist, Herr Hansen. A Somali man tries to take revenge upon him for his act of humiliation. He sharpens the axe and the knife by rubbing them against each other to kill Mr. Hansen. But he is not successful in his mission to kill the artist. He is arrested by police when he tries to break the door of Hansen's house. The Danish media takes the opportunity to spread rumours by organizing talk show on television. Khair has commented on the exaggerated presentation of Islamic terrorism in Print media and on TV channels as:

> The sharpening of the weapons of assault was widely discussed in the media, especially on TV. I remember on such discussion. First (male) panelist: It proves that he had intended to murder Herr Hansen. Why else should he sharpen the weapons? Second (male) panelist: It definitely indicates a degree of premeditation. Third (male) panelist: But does one need to sharpen a knife of an axe in order to kill a man? I mean, it is not as if flesh is that resistant

> or… Hostess (interrupting): Brrr, that's gory… (and turning to the 'expert on terrorism'): What would you say, colonel? Expert (male) on terrorism: "There is a chance that the accused was specially influenced by the Taliban brand of Islamism. In all known cases of Islamist assault, axes as well as ceremonial beheadings have been employed by Taliban-influenced militants four times more often than by other jihadist group…(HFITMP: 166-167)

The Somali man's act of sharpening the garden axe and the kitchen knife is a matter of discussion by the panelist on TV talk show. First panelist declares that he is a terrorist because he attempts to murder Herr Hansen. The second panelist supports the first one that it is a beginning of premeditation for further terrorist activities in the society by Islamic fundamentalists. The third panelist questions them if it is necessary to sharpen an axe and a knife to kill a human being. The hostess claims that it is an act of terror. The expert on terrorism of the talk show clarifies that the accused person is influenced by the Taliban brand of Islamism. He explains that the Taliban-influenced extremists use axe for ceremonial beheading. They are more brutal than other jihadist in the world. The narrator, being a Pakistani Muslim, has expressed his fear of religious identity when Karim Bhai was accused to be involved in the Islamist axe plot controversy in Aarhus. The only fault of Karim Bhai is that he disappears suddenly without informing his tenants, Ravi and the narrator. At the end of the novel, Karim has proved his innocence by telling the police that he has been taking care of his dying wife who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease for a long time. She is twenty years older than Karim. He disappears sometimes only to look after her. He is a pious person who has nothing to do with Islamist fundamentalism. Being a taxi driver, he engages himself in extra night shift to

earn much money to fulfill his necessity. He has become the scapegoat of religious prejudice and Islamophobic tendency of Danish people.

Tabish Khair's *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* is a social document written on the lives of immigrants in the Western culture. The novel is set in Aarhus where Khair has been living for a long period of time. He has presented his personal experiences through the nameless narrator who is an immigrant and teaching in English department at Aarhus University like Khair himself. This novel is an autobiographical work of Khair himself who lives in Denmark from Indian origin. He has expressed his thoughts and feelings through the narrator who is not named in the novel. The narrator resembles Khair's religion, character and academic quality as both of them are professors of English at Aarhus University. He has portrayed various social issues that the immigrants are facing in Denmark. They try to assimilate in the Western society but they are not permitted to do so because of their race, religion, black skin-complexion and foreign nationality.

In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, Khair has introduced three immigrant characters named Ravi, Karim and the unnamed narrator. They live together at Karim's flat for a long time in Aarhus. Karim and Ravi are from India and the unnamed narrator belongs to Pakistan. All the three characters are facing racial prejudices in Danish society. They are treated as doubtful persons because of their coloured skin and foreign identities. The narrator has given detailed information how they have accommodated in a rented flat in Aarhus city. All of the three characters are introduced as:

> At forty-five, Karim was more than a decade older than us. He had a full flowing beard, speckled with grey. Like Ravi, he was an Indian; like me, he was a Muslim. Unlike me, he believed in God and his prophets, especially the very last one; unlike Ravi, he did not get worked up about what the West had been doing to all the rest, as Ravi liked to put it. (HFITMP: 4)

The narrator is a liberal Pakistani Muslim who represents intellectual class in the Western society. He does not follow any Islamic restriction in his food habits. He compares himself with Karim who is an orthodox Muslim foreigner in Denmark. He resembles Karim Bhai in religion and appearance. The narrator is surprised to see Karim that though he suffers prejudiced in the Western society, he never shares his feelings with him and Ravi. He does not suffer from both belongingness and identity crisis. He has strong faith in God that helps him to identify himself with contrary to others. He feels sometimes depressed but never criticizes the Western people. The narrator is disgusted with the nature of Karim who remains unchanged till the end of the novel. He is a decent man and he does not seem to have a problem with being in the West. Unlike Ravi and the narrator, he does not have an identity crisis.

In this novel the author depicts the character of Ravi as his mouthpiece to expresses his views on racism as well as Islamophobia in a humorous way. He asserts that namaaz is more powerful than gunpowder or cannons. It is a powerful weapon of Islam used while colonizing non-Muslim territories. Ravi claims that the namaaz (Muslim prayer) is the mere reason of hatred for Muslim by the Western society. He comments on the religious practices of Islamic people as:

> Now I understand why you fucking mullahs came over and colonized us. It was not the gunpowder and the cannons. It was the namaaz. While we were sitting around on our backsides, jingling bells at our Gods, you were working out five times a day. The namaaz is the gym of Islam; that's why they hate it so much in the West. It is too much competition for their fucking health business. (HFITMP: 11-12)

Karim is pleased with Ravi's active participation in the Quranic class on Friday at his flat. Ravi, being a Hindu Brahmin, tries to find spiritual solace in religious discussion in Western society where they are the victim of racial discrimination. He feels that the West shows Islamophobic attitude towards the Muslim immigrants in Denmark. That is why Karim Bhai, being an honest Muslim, is accused as a terrorist without any evidence. The immigrant Muslims are always treated as criminals and kept under scrutiny in the Western society. Karim is suspected by the narrator to have linkage with extremist group. Ravi remarks on the narrator's doubt of Karim as: "Listen to yourself, yaar. You sound like a Danish tabloid. What do you think they are? The secret Aarhus Cell of Qaeda? Who knows? Karim Bhai, a terrorist." (HFITMP: 30)

Khair has given a realistic picture of Muslim immigrants in the West. They are of various kinds like– radical Islamist, conservative and converted Muslims. Karim represents conservative Muslim community but he is misinterpreted as an Islamic fundamentalist by the Danish society. The novelist has depicted Ajsa as a radical Islamists. She becomes rebellious when she is marginalized by the Western society. She is interested in Karim Bhai's preaching of the Quran. She is converts to Islam against her parents' will. Ajsa changes her religion as soon as she is marginalized. She becomes rebellious to act against the society. She has become Muslim not for her love in Islam but for her belongingness in her society. Khair conveys a message that converted

Muslims acquire their knowledge of Islam from radical Islamist group. Jihadist group attracts them giving a cause to fight against the socity for bright future.

In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, Khair has portrayed Karim as a decent Muslim character. But he is accused to be an Islamic terrorist and imprisoned without any proof. The religious immigrant Muslims are marginalized in the Western society because of radical Islamism. They are treated as extremist in the Western society. The author has differentiated between religious Muslim and radical Islamist though they look alike. Radical Islamist's anti-social activities create hatred and racist attitudes towards Muslim community in the Western society. Khair remarks that Islamist terrorism is the root cause of social problems like racial prejudice, alienation and Islamophobic tendency in the West. The novelist makes it clear through the discussion between Ravi and the narrator that fighting against colonialism and Western capitalism is a continuous process for the immigrants. The narrator has raised this issue as: "I know all about politics, I retorted. I grew up with politics beating down on me. Basically, it all boils down to three points: the Quran is the final hand-autographed word of God; the West is fucking us; the Jews are fucking us via the West." (HFITMP: 30)

Khair has suggested that fighting against Islamist terror has nothing to do with Islam and Muslims. It should not be generalized that all Muslims are terrorists which may create social chaos in the world. The radical Islamism creates Islamophobic and xenophobic sentiments in the West to prove their legitimacy and gathers support from the society all around the world. According to him, fighting against Islamist terrorism without its result, will promote anti-Western tendencies. The author proves that hatred begets hatred in our society. Mutual respect and understanding will solve the problem of

racism and colour discrimination. Thus; the novel, *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* provides different outlooks to the readers from social realism point of view.

4.3 Barbarism

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* the term 'barbarism' means "a state of not having any education, respect for art or cruel and violent behavior (2002: 85). A barbarism is a nonstandard word, expression or pronunciation in a language, particularly one regarded as an error in morphology, while a solecism is an error in syntax. The label was originally applied to mixing Ancient Greek or Latin with other languages, but expanded to indicate any inappropriate words or expressions in classical studies and eventually to any language considered unpolished or rude.

Tabish Khair has given a realistic description of barbaric nature of the British people who committed heinous crimes in the dark streets of London. Lord Batterstone, a villainous person purchases skulls from John May. He pays a handsome amount for them and wants them prepared in a suitable manner to present to The London Society of Phrenology. He is interested in extraordinary-shaped skulls and desires to pay high amount for them. John May collects these skulls from dead people by digging their graves. Besides that, he also kills innocent people just for the sake of their ill-shaped skulls. John May remarks:

> But the beer is not enough to drown John May's thoughts. His mind keeps going back to the money he has made, the money he could still make. All he needs is a remarkable skull. And there are a few walking around in London. For instance, the beggar outside Hyde Park, or the lascar he has occasionally seen selling tracts, or that old woman… Each has an exceptionally interesting skull:

> deformed, ridged, extraordinary, fascinating to men of science. Unfortunately the skulls sit on living shoulders that give no sign of going under, of being killed by disease or age or accident. (TAT: 42)

John May is a greedy man who earns easy money by selling skulls. He needs only exceptional skulls for which he can earn much money. So he is always in search of some poor as well as down-trodden people whom he can kill and collect their skulls for sale. He is waiting to kill the beggar outside Hyde Park, or the lascar and the old woman in the streets of London because they have special type of skulls. He expresses his unhappiness because their skulls are sitting on their living shoulders. There is little chance of their death by disease or age or accident. He imagines that London is a place of accidents. John May is thinking: "They happen all the time; workers falling off scaffoldings, children run down by carriages, women getting crushed between coal wagons, men falling into sewer holes, explosions, drowning, houses collapsing as if they were balloons pricked by an invisible pin." (TAT: 43) Besides John May, Shields is also another barbaric collector of skulls. He thieves dead bodies from graveyards and sells them to scientists, surgeons and students. Khair presents the Victorian London as a place of barbarism, poverty and robbery committed by the Thugs.

Khair has discussed about the scientific study of different races depending upon the skull and brain which was organised by the London Society of Phrenology. The author feels that this scientific study helps the phrenologists like Lord Butterstone to exploit different races like the Negro, Chinaman and Caucasian. Lord Batterstone is a man of racist attitude. Giving scientific and religious proof in the London Society of Phrenology, he asserts that the Asian people are inferior and cruel to the western civilization. He does not accept the proposal that a Caucasian shares the ancestor with lower class Negro. He says that the brain and its organic quality are non-identical in every race. It differs from

one another. The inferior races can never be civilized because of their biological differences in the size of the brain. Lord Batterstone comments on the physical structure of Chinaman and Negro. He claims as:

> But then, the question is implied in some of our circles, is the skull of a Negro or a Chinaman the same as the skull of a Caucasian except in degree? Has the Caucasian simply developed from other forms of man, perchance sharing an ancestor with the lowly Negro? I have, gentlemen, two objections to this contention. First, to make the Caucasian a child of the Negro or some other race, is to blur the essential difference between the races, and forget the lessons of history, which records Greek and Roman antiquity as the cradle of every civilization, as well as the lessons of biology, which reveals a slow degradation of the species, the ill characteristics of the father being strengthened in the son in direct proportion to the loss of vitality that comes with time to both man and civilizations. Second, our science of phrenology- of whose scientific truth not one of us has any doubt- our science of phrenology argues against the assumption that the Chinaman or Negro is almost a Caucasian, failing only in degree. (TAT: 76-77)

As a phrenologist, Lord Batterstone explains that history will be blurred if the Caucasian is considered as the origin of the Negro and other races which were recorded in Greek and Roman age as the base of every civilisation. He asserts that the lessons of biology prove degradation of the species. The evil quality of a father is naturally strengthened in his son in direct proportion. The skull of a Negro or a Chinaman is same but it differs only in degree. He explains that there is difference among men, animals and races of human being. The theory of evolution is applicable only for animal species. There is no scientific evidence for human evolution. Moreover, he says that organs and faculties

cannot operate separately. He asserts that God's craftsmanship helps to distinguish between various races and classes on the basis of wrinkles and face. Lord Batterstone through his scientific and religious experiments expressed his racist attitude towards Negro, Chinaman and Caucasian tribes.

Tabish Khair depicts London as a city of pride, grandeur and imperiousness but it is not free from crime, corruption, murder and social evils. The place is full devilish people who committed crimes by beheading the innocent people. The city is polluted by the murderers like John May and Shields who aim to kill the poor people for their skulls. Both of them are searching for the right person to kill and cut off his head. John May and Shields discuss about those two short listed person who have been ear marked as their next target. The first victim is an Italian boy who performs with his white mice all over the city and next is a lascar. The author remarks:

> London is full of ghosts. It is a place of haunting, of betrayals, hangings, beheadings. And above all, it is a place of dreams and hopes. Ghosts are born of failure, perhaps, but failure itself hatches from hope. If death spawns ghosts then, surely, before death there must be birth, or at least gestation. The ripening of dreams. The swollen belly of hope. And then, well, then comes the knife and the scream, then comes the blood. (TAT: 151)

Khair has depicted London as a city of dreams, hopes and prosperity for the advancement of art, culture and civilization. In spite of the pride in scientific advancement, London is full of social evils. According to the author, hope begets failure and frustration which is similar to death. But before death there must be birth or gestation. In this way dreams are materialized with hopes. John May, Shields, one-eyed Jack and Lord Batterstone are the real thugs and criminals who terrorize the city of

London. They commit crimes against the immigrant labourers in Western society. Daniel Oates is a racist character who has criticized and discriminated immigrants in London. They are the thugs whose sole ambition is to collect skulls from subjugated class in the Western society. They shed blood by beheading poor migrants in the dark streets of London. The thug is one who befools and cheats people by any means and these four people are cheating the whole society by committing crimes in London. *The Thing about Thugs* clearly represents the stereotypical discourse of colonialism and offers an anti-colonial perspective. Cristina M. Gámez-Fernández and Om Prakash Dwivedi remarks as: "Khair suggests that imperialism historically constructed Thuggee as well as pseudo-scientific dogmas which could intellectually justify racism, and therefore oppression." (2014: 25)

4.4 East-West Encounter

The mythification and subsequent attraction for the 'East' has a long tradition in the 'West'. According to Griffiths (2013) "the radically different Oriental 'Other' has always been a function of 'Western' countries needs to define themselves in their autonomous and individuated terms" The Orientalist passion for the Middle East (Proche et Moyen Orient in French) never completely disappeared and even in the beginning of the twenty-first century it is still very vivid. In relation to colonial expansion, writers found a particular interest in the newly 'discovered' territories and populations. Situating the action of their novels in exotic places, they described an Other who fascinated them and whom they wanted to know better, but also sometimes bearing in mind that this process of Othering was indeed implying a form of introspection, a reflexion by 'Westerners' on who they 'really were', and on their own identity (Lüsenbrick 1996). The Western passion for the 'East' crossed all boundaries: it

was noticeable in literature (Shakespeare, Fauconnier), architecture (the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, U.K.), design (rococo Chinoiserie), international relations (Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition) and business (Marco Polo, the Great Navigators).

Tabish Khair has depicted realism of the superiority of British Empire over India. He rejects the typical mind-set of Europeans about Eastern subcontinents. The novel, *The Thing about Thugs* is set in nineteenth century London, the Victorian period. The 19th century was the peak for colonialism when Europeans ruled and controlled developing countries. The West enslaved the native people of colonial empire. The Western people considered themselves to be superior to the Eastern subcontinents. Even an honourable man in a colonized society is regarded inferior to the British people. Amir Ali is one of these noblemen of India who is respected as nawabzada (a powerful landowner) by the people in his village. In one of his Persian letters written to Jenny he has mentioned his respect and social position shown to him by Haldi Ram in India as: "Forgive us for interrupting your journey, not even providing you with a decent breakfast, for what can we poor people serve to a gentleman like you, son of the noble Syed Zahid Ali sahib, nephew of the learned and gracious Mustapha Ali sahib." (TAT: 61)

But, Amir Ali is suspected for the serial murders in London. He is arrested by Major Grayper for murder cases on the streets of London without any evidence. Amir Ali is accused of several murders. Khair remarks on Amir Ali's miserable condition in the prison as:

> Of course, Major Grayper, though proper, was not inexperienced in the art of interrogation. He woke me up well after midnight for my first interrogation- after a bucket of cold water had been splashed on me because, it was said, I had not responded to the prodding

> earlier on. He interrogated me until it was almost dawn, and then had me carted off to another prison. This place: a place that is more frightening to me, for I do not know what it is, or where. What the major was interested in was the night, just five days ago, when the so-called 'head cannibal' killed his latest victim. It was that night I had to explain away. (TAT: 149)

Amir Ali has written to his beloved, Jenny about his punishments he has undergone in the dark room in prison. Major Grayper interrogated Amir Ali as if he is a real criminal in the cell of the prison. It happens because of his past background in India as a Thug. Amir Ali is harassed mentally and physically during his interrogation in jail. A bucket of cold water is swashed on him as he has not responded well to the officer earlier. Amir Ali is shifted to another prison after his first interrogation. The new prison seems more horrible to him as he is brought hooded and blindfolded at night by the police officer. Major Grayper is much more interested in the incident of self-styled head cannibal's latest murder. He instructs the police to treat him properly because he is not proved guilty. Further he is asked if he desires something. Gunga and Qui Hy's Irish husband provide prayer beads, inkpot, quills and notebook to Amir Ali in the cell of prison. They promise Amir Ali that they would do all they could to get him out. They assert that he is innocent and there is no evidence against him. Amir Ali becomes the scapegoat because of his past as a thug which would catch up with him. He confesses his mistakes to his beloved, Jenny as: "I feared that by hatching a thug in words, I had brought to life a real thug, one who was now stalking London and beheading victims. For a moment, I was no longer sure if the story I had told the Captain was not, after all, the true one, and the stories I told you and myself, simply lies." (TAT: 177) The novel

focuses on sadistic mindset of the British authority who suspects that there must be Indians behind these beheading cases.

The people of London suspect that the criminals behind the brutal murders are thugees who belong to India. The image of India has always been interpreted in a biased way since long. The Orient has been always colonised and neglected by the Europeans. Khair disproves this thinking because at the end of the novel it is proved that the Whites are the real criminals who victimized the Orients. Tabish Khair has highlighted the problem of East-West encounter through cultural differences in this novel. Amir Ali is not a murderer but is a neglected subaltern character who cannot speak the truth in the Western society.

In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, the narrator and Ravi are the new tenants of Karim who are suspicious about his nature. They are not well acquainted with him. They are also frightened hearing some information in Danish tabloids that terrorist activities in Arhus are committed by Islamist fundamentalists. The Muslim immigrants are kept under scrutiny when there is any encounter or conflict in the society. The novelist has interlinked stories of the three immigrant characters in a funny manner in Danish society where Muslims are treated as criminals. The Pakistani narrator expresses his doubt for Karim's sudden disappearance. He may be involved in some anti-social activities or spends some nights with prostitute. He expresses his doubts for Karim as:

> We would get used to such sudden disappearances by Karim Bhai. We would not pay it much attention, perhaps even attributing it to the kind of carnal needs that we indulged in, Ravi, with far greater abundance than me, and that Karim Bhai appeared to be so unaffected by. Perhaps, I remember thinking, he needs a day or a

> night out with some prostitute. It made sense to me: I could not imagine a man to whom sex did not matter. Later on, when the controversy broke over us, we started pondering more about these mysterious disappearances of Karim Bhai. They came to be coloured the shade of suspicion that was being cast on all of us by the Danish tabloids. (HFITMP: 22)

Karim is a taxi driver who toils hard to earn his living in Denmark. His Friday discussion on the Quran and his sudden disappearance after getting a phone call from an unknown lady create a doubt and fear in the mind of the narrator and Ravi. Karim's honesty and religious-mindedness are misjudged by the two tenants. His discussion of the Quran with bearded young man and veiled women creates a sense of terror for the readers that there may be some hidden agenda in the guise of religion. He interprets the Quran with his disciples at his flat. His regular activities have surprised the narrator who cannot help thinking about his secret relation with terrorist group.

The narrator feels that Karim is a terrorist who responds different phone calls from mysterious people. He receives the phone speaking in Danish, English and Urdu in a secret manner. Moreover, some wrong numbers from unknown person irritate him regularly. The second kind of phone calls that Karim receives is doubtful and makes the narrator confirmed that he is a terrorist. He answers his phone calls in a controlled manner saying yes or no. sometimes he responds his phone calls closing the door and asked for apology. So, the narrator could not help informing the police for inquiry. He expresses his doubt as:

> Karim Bhai, a terrorist! Really, have you ever come across a person with more seriousness of purpose, more consideration for other people's space, you fanatic? He lets us drink in his flat, and you know what alcohol means to people like him. Perhaps he

> needs the money more than he hates alcohol. Oh yes, perhaps he is the main funder of Al Qaeda? That's why he needs the money so badly! Who knows? He works all the time; he disappears suddenly; he gets strange phone calls; you cannot deny he needs the money for some reason. (HFITMP: 30-31)

The narrator discusses the matter with Ravi that Karim is involved with the secret Arhus cell of Al Qaeda, an Islamic terrorist organization in Denmark. Being an orthodox Muslim he hates alcohol but he allows the tenants to drink wine at his flat for the sake of money. He needs much money to invest in terrorist activities. He also works all the times to earn as much as possible for him. He disappears as soon as he gets unusual phone calls at night. So, the narrator is shocked to learn that he is an active member of some extremist group. But, Ravi does not agree with the narrator. He asserts that Karim is a God-fearing person who cannot be involved in such activities that harm the society. Their discussion of the Quran is involved in uplifting human nature to spirituality. He defends Karim Bhai as: "They discuss matters of significance and do it honestly: how to make sense of the world, how to make it a better world. They still have a conscience, these young men and women, not just a bank account like the rest of these people." (HFITMP: 30) Ravi does not suspect Karim as a radical Islamist. Khair has presented the character of Karim in a mysterious way to create suspense among the readers. He is a righteous Islamist in the Western society, Denmark. But, the narrator informs the police officer about Karim Bhai's Friday session of the Quran with his doubtful person, his sudden escape at night and mysterious phone calls from a lady. The narrator tries to prove his innocence by giving detailed information of Karim Bhai and his disciples to the police about participants in the Quran session at his flat. He is a firm believer in God. He feels that every possible solution is written in the Quran. Karin has remarked about God as: "Only Allah can see into the hearts of men; we have to go by their

words. They did not have to tell me anything. But now that I know they claim to be, I have to do what my Allah wants me to…."(HFITMP: 124) The police inquire the matter according to his information.

In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, Khair has discussed the social problems of Islamic religion in the West where religious practices and colour complexion matter. The narrator has told about Ajsa who is a victim of being Muslim in the western society. She is a follower of Karim Bhai who practises Islam religion under his guidance. She is a described as a Bosnian woman who elopes with a Somali man, Ibrahim against her father's will. She is converted into Islam religion and attends in Karim Bhai's Friday Quran session. The author has presented Ajsa's adoption of Islamic culture as a challenge against the Western society. He makes a remark on her as:

> She was a young woman who had discovered Islam as a reaction to both her parents and the place that history had confined her to: a place where her Nordic looks would probably efface her more easily than if she had been dark-haired and dark-eyed. But it was also obvious that they wanted to talk about maters without Ravi or me overhearing. (HFITMP: 35)

Ajsa's parents are described as Yugoslavian refugees by the narrator. She is influenced by Karim Bhai's preaching of the Quran and she converts herself to Islam as a reaction to her parents. It is a challenge for her to discover Islam as a response to her parents who are atheists as well as to show her disobedience for the society. Karim Bhai's Quran session and the local mosque influence her to embrace Islam at the age of eighteen. Her parents become furious when she decides to marry a Muslim man from Somalia whom she meets in mosque frequently. Ajsa marries her lover and moves with

him. She has promised Karim Bhai that she will collect more veiled Muslim women for the Quran session in his flat. She realises that being a converted Muslim she might have to face disadvantages if she had been dark-haired and black-skinned. As a Muslim, her Nordic appearance helps her to assimilate in the Western society. She does not face problems of being a follower of Islam in spite of her rebellious nature against her parents. Ajsa dresses in Muslim style using veils which enables her to integrate into the society with her white complexion. She is the only Danish lady who has great devotion in Islamic religion and practices.

The unnamed narrator, being a Muslim, is not an orthodox follower of Islam. But he is not free from the anxiety of racial prejudices. His Muslim identity hinders him from assimilating in the western society. He is horrified when Karim Bhai is accused for some terrorist activities by Danish police. He is also arrested and imprisoned for his immigrant Muslim identity. The narrator feels that he should go to police station and tell everything what he knows about Kaim's suspicious activities in his flat. He is afraid of his racial and religious identity. Khair has discussed social problems that emerge from religion and appearance of immigrants in the novel. The narrator expresses his feelings as:

> I am not saying I was uninfluenced by the atmosphere: the Islamist 'Axe Plot', as it was being called, was at its height then, with adjective being fixed and postures struck on all sides. But I still do not think I was paranoid. I had reasons to be suspicious, cause for caution. If you have a Muslim name, you have to be wary in some contexts. (HFITMP: 172-173)

The author has put the narrator in dilemma who suffers from his guilty conscience when he grows suspicious on Karim Bhai claiming that he has good reasons to be suspicious. He does not act with monomania like the Western people do in such matter. He reveals his inner conflict that he is facing a serious problem about his sense of identity and belongingness. He exemplifies Homi Bhabha's Third Space individual which represents a new type of cultural identity. He is alienated from the society literally and socially. He tells the truth that the Muslim is always kept under scrutiny in the West. He feels that if anybody bears the Muslim name he shall face the penalty of being a follower of Islam in the Western culture. He tries to assimilate in the adopted culture by embracing their food habit, language and belief system, but he does not succeed because of his immigrant Muslim identity. The nameless narrator plays a pivotal role in the novel. He is a Pakistani Muslim immigrant who is a professor of English at Aarhus University. He resembles the life of the author, Tabish Khair. The novelist has depicted his personal life through the character of the nameless author.

4.5 Ethnicity and Religion

Though ethnicity is one of the basic tenets of social realism theory, it has been derived from the ethnicity theory propounded by sociologist Robert E. Park in the 1920s. The term 'ethnic' or 'ethnicity' both have been originated from the Greek term 'ethnos', which Werner Sollors asserts has both an inclusive (people in general) and exclusive (other people, in particular non-Jews) meaning (1997: 288). It is based on the notion of "culture". Ethnicity theory says that race is a social category and is but one of several factors in determining ethnicity. Some other criteria include: "religion, language, customs, nationality and political identification" (1994: 15).

Michael Omi and Howard Winant's theory of racial formation directly confronts both ethnicity theory's premises and practices. They argue in Racial Formation in the United States that ethnicity theory was exclusively based on the immigration patterns of a white ethnic population and did not account for the unique experience of non-white in this country (1994: 17). While this theory identifies different stages in an immigration process- contact, conflict, struggles and as the last and best response, assimilation- it did so only for white ethnic communities (1994: 17). The ethnicity paradigm neglects the ways that race complicates a community's interactions with basic social and political structures, especially upon contact. Tabish Khair's fictional works comprise the determining factors of ethnicity.

Tabish Khair has reflected Indian religion, culture and ethnicity through kite festival. Amir Ali, the protagonist of the novel, has written in one of his letters to Jenny about his experiences of flying kites of various colours during his childhood in India. People observe the kite festival to please their Gods and Goddesses. The Goddess Bhownee is worshipped as the guardian deity of thugs of both Hindus and Muslims. In order to satisfy the Goddess, kites of various colours like red, blue, yellow, two-coloured as well as multi-coloured kites are used to satisfy their deities. Amir Ali recalls in his memory about the flying kites which is observed during the Dussehra festival. Khair has written about the kite festival as:

> We started flying kites around Dussehra and kept flying them till Holi the next year, all of us, Hindu and Muslims of various sects and castes. If there was religious involved in this flimsy hoisting of paper in the air, it had long slipped from our memory. But of course, my moon-faced one, that is not something I mentioned to our mutual and, I must add, gracious employer, Kaptaan Wali

> Miaan Khet-Khaliyaam, as we used to call him (behind his back) in Hindustan, or Captain William T. Meadows, as he is known here. I discovered a long time ago, even before offered him my stories and was pressed into his service, that truth and credibility are two different things most of the time. (TAT: 24)

The author has highlighted the secular nature of socio-cultural as well religious bond between Hindus and Muslims in India. All people participate in this kite festival irrespective to their castes, communities and religion to celebrate the Dussehra and it continues till Holi in the next year. The Dussehra festival is celebrated by the Hindus in India. It symbolizes the victory of good over evil. It represents the victory of Goddess Durga. In Hindu scripture, the devil Mahishasura once created horror in Heaven but he was dominated and killed by Durga. The first nine days of Dussehra symbolize the battle which took place between the different manifestations of Durga and Mahishasura. The tenth day is the day when Durga finally defeated him. It also symbolizes the victory of Ram over Ravan as mentioned in the Ramayana. The kite festival is used by the novelist symbolically reflecting the Indian culture, ethnicity and religion in diversity. But Amir Ali confesses to Captain T. Meadows that India is a superstitious nation. So, people fly kites to show their respect to their Gods and Goddesses for their better future. Amir Ali says that his narration of his stories as a thug may be true but not reliable. The captain thinks that Amir is a better source for him to write an article on thugs. He tells Captain T. Meadows what he wants to hear. Amir Ali expresses his feelings to his beloved, Jenny as: "You see, Jaanam, in those hours of imprisonment, a frightening thought crossed my mind. I felt that I had become my own story; my life had turned into the lie I had narrated to Captain Meadows. Suddenly, I was the thug I had claimed to be." (TAT: 177) The author has beautifully drawn Indian rural life reflecting religion, culture and ethnicity in this novel.

Tabish Khair has depicted social practices of idol worshipping which is a kind superstitious belief among Thugs in India. He has given a life-like picture of Thugee culture of the 19th century. It is a profession inherited from father to sons since time immemorial. Amir Ali has taken the charge of this job from his father at the age twelve years. His mother is happy because he has taken the responsibility of his family by helping his father. Amir is glad that he is able to assist his father in his profession. Captain T. Meadows is fascinated to learn from Amir Ali that thugs perform some rituals before their participation in their mission. He says to the captain that both Hindu and Muslim members of thugs worship the Goddess Bhowanee as their guardian deity. Amir Ali remarks as:

> Bhowane is a many-armed goddess, sahib. A mischievous devil to you, for you are favoured by your God of Reason, who enables you to read men like books. But to us- to me too before you shed on me some of the illumination of your greater God- she is the mother of the world, protectress and patroness of our order. All this you know, Kaptaan sahib, for I have already narrated the tale of my order to you. I will not tarry here, nor repeat myself, but proceed with my own story, the story of how I became a Thug. (TAT: 33)

Amir Ali tries to convince the captain that Goddess Bhowanee is a very powerful deity of thugs. She has many arms to control the world. She is the protector and patroness of Thugs. But Captain T. Meadows thinks her to be a harmful devil. He regards that the Indians are superstitious believers to perform such kind of idol worship and other malpractices in the society. He is a phrenologist who is governed by God of Reason. He can read men and their nature by examining their faces and skulls. He does not believe in Amir Ali but he needs some data from him to complete his topic on Thugs.

Amir Ali has described his experience of life to him. He says that an oath taking ceremony is observed for new members organised by jemadaars in the gang of Thugs. His father is one of the jemadaars to lead the organisation. They recite the verses from the Holy Quran before they set out a new mission. Amir Ali worships the Goddess Bhowanee for blessing as: "A Hindu pundit applied vermillion from the plate of offerings to Goddess Bhowanee to my forehead. A bit of consecrated molasses was brought from the temple of the Goddess and placed on my tongue. I swallowed its brown sweetness amid much murmuring of approval and invocation of deities, Muslim and Hindu." (TAT: 34) In this way, after this formality he has become a member of the gang of Thugs, inherited from his forefathers in India.

Tabish Khair has discussed the problem of discrimination among the working class people in the Western society. The servant class of the society has racist attitude towards the other colonized races. Amir Ali is ill-treated in the house of Captain T. Meadows by Nelly Clennam. She knows that Amir Ali is a paid servant and a murderer by profession in India. She feels extreme hatred towards him because of his race and background as a Thug. Amir Ali is a victim of racial discrimination by lower class people in London. Khair remarks as:

> Nelly Clennam, the cook, who, with her instinctive dislike of me, informed you that I was only a 'paid servant' and had been a murderous 'thug' in India, and that it was a danger to all servants, God preserve honest people, and not least to her- for she was a decent woman and had always been, so help me God- to have thugs and murderers living in the houses of gentle folks like the Captain but it is well known that going abroad puts strange ideas in the minds of people and though it was not her position, or habit, to utter a word against her employer, it would be said by many that

> to harbour a nigger, lordey, a cannibal in the kitchen was not only a danger but an act of verging on the unchristian. (TAT: 36)

Nelly Clennam considers Amir Ali as a danger who may cause harm to the other servants in the household of William T. Meadows. She also informs Jenny, his lover about his identity and warns her to be aware of the culprit. She asserts that a murderer and dishonest people like Amir Ali should not be allowed to live with other decent servants in this house. There is a harsh prejudice among servants, and racial maltreatment is seen in their conversations. According to her it is against her religion to protect the corrupted people like a nigger, lordey, a cannibal and a thug in the kitchen of gentle folk. This ranking in the servant class people in the Western society has been highlighted in realistic manner by Tabish Khair. Jenny becomes speechless after listening to Nelly Clennam about Amir Ali's background as a Thug. He prays to God to preserve the honest lady, Jenny with His blessings. He cannot help bearing the insult at the hands of Nelly Clennam who lives in unfamiliar circumstances in the Western society. She should not have complained against Amir Ali as a servant because he is given shelter by William T. Meadows himself in his household. It happens because of his Indianness which is considered inferior to Englishness. The novelist has discussed the problem of racism from the beginning to the end of the novel which was prevalent in almost all sections of the society during the Victorian period.

Khair has presented Haldi Ram and his community as people of low caste who resided in a small hamlet just outside the main village. Amir Ali shares his experience with his beloved, Jenny about an incident which occurred with Haldi Ram and his family. They earned their livelihood by working as agricultural labourers. Haldi Ram and his family worked for Amir Ali when he needed extra help in the fields. He knew that they were

honest people and grateful to Mustapha Chacha for various little helps. Haldi Ram was very aware about his low-caste status in the society. Haldi Ram invited Amir Ali to his hamlet to solve the problem relating to cow and mustard crop. He asked for Amir Ali's forgiveness for his misdeed. Amir Ali narrated the event to his lover as:

> Forgive us, Amir babu, said Haldi Ram. Forgive us for interrupting your journey, not even providing you with a decent breakfast, for what can we poor people serve to a gentleman like you, son of the noble Syed Zahid Ali sahib, nephew of the learned and gracious Mustapha Ali sahib. Small, wizened, much darker than I am, with a tiny, thin moustache, reddish eyes and a pockmarked face, Haldi Ram was a hard worker and harder drinker, but he was also a cautious man. My heart in my mouth, I had to make the appropriate noises until he got to the matter that was troubling him. But for once Haldi Ram's vernacular eloquence failed him. As soon as he started giving me an account of the sacrilege that took place yesterday, he broke down and started to cry like a baby. I was worried now. Haldi Ram did not cry easily; He came from a long line of impoverished peasants who had borne more than most people, suffered more, lost more, and tears did not come easily to his eyes (TAT: 61).

Haldi Ram was a kind-hearted person who respected Amir Ali very much for his helping hand in his life. He repented that he could not provide him good breakfast even after being invited to solve the problem of a cow which destroyed mustard crop of Mirza Habibullah. Haldi Ram was a very careful person whom everybody respected. Haldi Ram was a man of poverty who suffered more in life. He did not cry for small problems. But he was crying loudly that day while he narrated the violent incident to Amir Ali. He got puzzled listening to Haldi Ram's regret for guilt. All the people of low-caste in the small hamlet were frightened because of the social status. Amir Ali did

not look down upon this down-trodden community in the society. He treated them with love and respect. Amir Ali follows Mustapha Chacha's advice as: "He had always maintained that both Islam and humanity- 'insaniyat' was a word he relished- refused to recognize such divisions between human beings." (TAT: 61) In Islamic religion people are equally treated as the sons of Allah where there is no space for caste discrimination among them. But Haldi Ram, being a follower of Hinduism had to suffer a lot for his low-class community in the society. Khair shows how the class division stands as a barrier for development in the society.

Tabish Khair has given a true picture of pathetic condition of the oppressed section by rich people during the British rule in India. The rich exploited the poor section and weaker section in the society. Amir Ali, the mouthpiece of the novelist, has cited an Indian proverb in a letter written to his lover, Jaanam. He says that a tiger preys animals for food but never attacks human beings until it tastes human blood. But once a tiger gets the taste of human flesh, he never preys any animal. Amir Ali remarks:

> We say in our parts that a tiger never attacks a human being until his first taste of human blood. And once a tiger has tasted human blood, he never attacks anything else. It is like that with the powerful: once they have tasted blood, they feast more and more upon the weak. Perhaps it was the same with Habibullah: over the years his atrocities had been increasing; a labourer whipped here, a tribal woman abducted there, and it had finally premeditated murder of his only rival in the village. (TAT: 65)

The author has compared the character of Habibullah, a Thug with the nature of a tiger. He exploited the poor and weaker sections in his village. His brutal activities frightened

labourers. He killed a tribal lady after kidnapping her for property. His henchmen buried the dead body under loose earth in the land of Habibullah without funeral. The lady was supposed to be the rival of Habibullah in his village. So she met a tragic end at the hands his followers. He delighted in snatching away money and property from the helpless people. Amir Ali said to Jaanam that he did not have strength to protest against Habibullah's illegal activities to save the society. His cousin, Hamid Bhai sacrificed his life by fighting against his heinous crimes. Nobody in the village dare to stand against his villainous person. Amir Ali wrote in his letters to Jaanam about taking revenge upon Habibullah, but he did not want to lose his life. It seemed difficult where law failed. Khair depicts the pain, suffering and social injustice of the unprivileged section at the hands of rich and wicked people in the society.

Amir Ali, the protagonist of the novel told Captain T. Meadows about his professional experiences. He recounts his life as a member of the Thuggee, a secret religious cult practising ritual mass murder and robbery. He said that Thuggees consisted of three gangs planned to go in different directions. They decided to meet again after every six months as soon as their mission was over. They selected some particular routes which were much travelled by pilgrims and merchants. Amir Ali describes how the victims were killed by gamchas (a kind of scarf). The author remarks as:

> Quicker than thought, the thugs with gamchas who sat behind the merchant and his son, the bhutottoes who specialized in this business, threw their scarves around their victim's necks. In an instant, the merchant and his son were on their backs, struggling in the agonies of death. Taajoob, Sahib, not a sound escaped them, nothing but an indistinct gurgling. I knew that their servants had met a similar, silent fate a few meters away in the darkness. How

> easy it is, Sahib, to snuff out a life; how easy it is to kill a human being. (TAT: 47)

The Thugs used to kill the merchants by throwing scarves around their necks and throttle them to death. The merchant and his son were crying for painful death. Their servants also faced the same critical situation committed by the Thugs. For Amir Ali, it is very easy to kill a human being for his profession. They buried the dead bodies after cutting their bellies open so that the gases of decay developing in them would not explode in their narrow graves. They were blessed by the Goddess Bhowanee and Allah to perform their murderous profession in a successful manner. Amir was an Indian Thug who was taken away to London by Captain T. Meadows for investigating robberies and murders taken place in various places in London. The novel deals with different characters and events occurring simultaneously in two different places- Patna in India and London in England. Captain T. Meadows got various sources from the mysterious story of Amir Ali, a Thug. He applied his scientific knowledge in his study of phrenology by measuring the size and shape of human skull.

Tabish Khair makes it clear from the story of Amir Ali that Thugs do not accept anything alive from the victim which cannot be sold in the market immediately. It may be a child, a pet or a horse of pedigree as this can easily be recognized and caught by the owners. Amir Ali says that Habibullah, his father's main chela has taken a parrot from a victim and kept it in a cage. The parrot belonged to the murdered holy man which can recite the entire surahs from the holy Quran. Amir's father did not allow him to take the parrot but he refused his suggestion. As a result the parrot proved his father's involvement in the murder of the maulavi. Amir tells Sahib:

> For, in the bazaars of Jehanabad the very next day, the parrot was identified as belonging to the head maulavi of the Nawab of Saleempur, and my father and two of his companions were arrested by the Nawab's men. How could it have been otherwise? Are there many parrots who repeat, in the tone of an old man, the surahs of the Quran? The rest of us, even Habibullah, managed to melt into the crowd, but sahib, you can imagine my sorrow and terror as I beheld, hidden in the crowd, my father being marched away in manacles to imprisonment and death. Then, sahib, I again had doubts about my profession, and it was bad time of such doubts. (TAT: 54)

In the market of Jehanabad, the parrot proved its identity by citing surahs from the Quran which was taught to it by the murdered maulavi of the Nawab of Saleempur. Amir Ali's father and two of his companions were arrested by the Nawab's men for the cruel deed. Habibullah managed somehow to run away in the crowd but Amir Ali's father was marched away in manacles to imprisonment and death. He doubted about his own profession. Habibullah, being an in-charge of the gang of Thugs, instructed Amir Ali to devote himself to the profession. He expected Amir Ali to throttle the first victim after living Patna. His father did not allow him to work actively in murderous activity in this profession. Habibullah told that the rule of Thugee demanded that one should offer his life to Bhowanee as sacrifice. In the words of Captain T. Meadows: "Strange are the hearts of men, Amir Ali, said I, and perchance they grow stranger in a land of so many hidden rites and superstitions as the ancient country of Hindoostan." (TAT: 55)

4.6. Circumcision as Islamic Ritual

Circumcision is a medical procedure that removes the foreskin from the human penis. In the most common form of the procedure, the foreskin is extended with forceps

(in pre-pubescent children its adhesion to the glans must also be broken with a probe), then a circumcision device may be placed, after which the foreskin is excised. In Islam, male circumcision carries religious connotation. It is being practised by Muslims. Circumcision is an act relating to the 'fitrah'. It is an Arabic term used to represent the innate character and instinct of the human creation. Prophet Muhammad suggests that five acts are related to 'fitrah' i.e. circumcision, shaving the pubic hair, cutting the nails, plucking the hair under the armpits and shaving the moustache. The custom of circumcision as explained by Islamic Law (Shariah) is the removal of the skin covering the tip of the penis. The religion recommends performing circumcision at an early age. It is done on the seventh day after birth and it can be carried out until the age of seven years. Circumcision has various health benefits like easier hygiene, risk of urinary tract infection and prevention of penile problems. The wisdom of performing such an act is highlighted in the Quran which states: 'It is the basis of inbred nature, a symbol of Islam, an indication of the law of the Lord, and the attainment of the true society.' According to Islamic belief, the Prophet Abraham is the first person to perform circumcision and it continues thereafter as a highly recommended practice of the messengers. Since time immemorial, the practice of circumcision becomes a tradition and ritual practice which Muslims observe generation after generation.

In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, Khair has discussed some religious and social practices in Islamic society. The unnamed narrator, being a Pakistani Muslim, is deeply concerned about his physical symbol of Muslimness i.e. circumcision. It is an indicator of hierarchy and social difference. Ravi humorously asks the narrator whether he has been circumcised in a proper manner. The narrator answers him as:

> Of course I am circumcised, bastard, I replied. 'You mean, the proper way, when the barber seats five-year-old Munna on a stool, razor glinting, and says look look look a silver bird in the sky…' Ravi did not want his joke to deflate so soon. Know what, bastard, I told him, you are worse than the RSS: everyone goes to the hospitals now. No one is circumcised like that anymore. (HFITMP: 155)

The narrator has remarked that in early days circumcision was performed by barbers in Islamic society in an unscientific way. He asserts that everybody goes to hospital for performing the act of circumcision by medical practitioners. He asks Ravi not to speak like a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh against such ritual of the Muslim. The narrator feels that the R.S.S. cadres oppose some Muslim rituals in India. They are against slaughtering cow and polygamy practiced in Islam. He makes it clear that circumcision is performed by medical practitioner and not by barber in modern society.

In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, Khair mentions that the Western media plays a biased role against the Muslim community. The Danish media suspects that the Islamist activists are involved in the Norway attack in 2011 which caused more than seventy people. But the actual terrorists are white right-wing Christian fundamentalists who are responsible for this barbarous attack. The unnamed narrator comments on the allegation on the Islamic immigrants for this act of terror as:

> The 'Norway attacks', which took place that very afternoon. Ravi, in particular, did not hide his disgust at the ease with which many in the Danish media first blamed it on Islamists and then, when it became clear that a white right-wing, Christian fundamentalist was behind these acts of terror, somehow still managed to suggest at times that immigration and Muslims were the real cause. He tried to discuss this with Karim the next few days, but Karim Bhai just

> strugged, sad, unconcerned or guarded. It was something I mentioned to the police officers later on. (HFITMP: 114)

The Pakistani narrator, being a Muslim, expresses his feelings that the West is Islamophobic for the immigrants who are living in the West. They are categorized as terrorist because of their black-complexion and religion. The narrator has discovered that the Muslims are targeted by Christian fundamentalist in Danish society. Karim Bhai was preoccupied by such terrorist incident. The narrator tries to talk about the matter with Karim Bhai, but he was very absent-minded for such incidents. Karim is an honest Muslim form India who leads his life as a taxi-driver in Denmark. He is not affected by any racial discrimination in the West. He does not suffer from his Muslim identity. He is a religious-minded person who devotes his time in reading the Holy Quran with his disciples at his flat. But the narrator suspects him to be an Islamic fundamentalist who may be involved in terrorist attack.

4.7 Conclusion

In *Thing about Thugs*, Khair has highlighted the social issues like- racism, communal riots, Islamophobia, ethnicity, barbarism, rootlessness, identity crisis and East-West encounter during the British rule in India. The colonial situations are scholarly in nature whereas post-colonial situations are global in nature with an understanding of vibrant fact. The novel has been narrated intellectually by the author sharing different elements of colonial, post-colonial, anti-colonial discourse and post-modern anxiety. In post colonial situations, some innovative fictional strategies are applied by Khair to portray social reality. Being a social realist, he has enriched English vocabulary by introducing some new terms of Indian origin like- Thuggee, bhawnee and many more into the English language. Besides, by the assemblage of Indian sensibilities with the

British culture, he has invented a hybrid of fictional reality which combines the high culture with the low culture.

The Thing about Thugs consists of three different narrative perspectives like-mystery, crime and murders which form the basis of the novel. John May is one character in the novel whose job is to supply skulls to his master Lord Batter Stone. May, along with two other companions is always in search of human skulls. They together wander in the graveyards in the chilly nights, digging out newly buried bodies and cutting off their heads. Then he proceeds on the job of giving different shapes to these skulls by using acid and other such chemicals in a small and secretive lab in his home where entry is prohibited. It bears the characteristics of gothic novel which Khair has beautifully woven from social realism point of view. The novelist has combined the particulars of history with fear and crime. He has mingled separate incidents of India and England in a parallel manner in the novel. Khair has highlighted the burning problem of Hindu-Muslim riot in India. At the same time he has depicted the Victorian London as a place of crime, murder and hypocrisy.

In *The Thing about Thugs*, race comes forward as a system of oppression. The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized are mostly built upon racial differences since the nineteenth century scientific developments were not sufficient to make a clear distinction between biology and culture. Thinking of the protagonist of the novel, Amir Ali, one can assume that racial and biological differences are trying to be used to legalize colonial deeds and prove the superiority of Western culture over colonized ones. Khair refers to this fact in the beginning of the novel. Lord Batterstone, who is from 'the Society' and the villain of the novel, buys skulls with deficiency from a middle-class man, John May. Batterstone is not interested in the way John May

gathers the skulls, whether legal or illegal. He just pays for them and wants them prepared in an appropriate way to present to his Society. He is particularly interested in extraordinary-shaped skulls and willing to pay high amounts for them. Only through the following chapters the reader finds out that John May collects these skulls from freshly dead people by digging their graves and later on, he himself kills people just for the sake of their ill-shaped skulls. The reader understands that they refer to the skulls as 'the Thing' in the novel which also represents the ignored identity of the owner of the skulls. Throughout the novel, there are various examples reflecting the colonizers' attitudes towards the colonized. Lower class people – especially from different nations and mostly from the colonies- are seen as objects rather than individuals. They are there to be used, analysed or thrown away when regarded as useless. This makes the relationship between these two sides quite complicated since the colonized has emotions and ideas to be satisfied and accepted by the colonizer. However, it is mostly impossible to fulfill that aim. One of the most striking examples of it is again at the beginning of the

In *The Thing about Thugs*, Khair's depiction of the Victorian London by focusing on the colonial deeds of England as a colonizer force has revealed the racial and religious prejudices of the time. With the help different characters and setting, the novel becomes quite easy to grasp the roots of racial otherness since the representative characters of the colonizing force. The British people considered themselves superior to the East. They exploited the Indian society with the science of phrenology, a scientific study of skulls. Khair clearly reflects that it is impossible to set a communication medium between the Occident and the Orient in an atmosphere like that. Therefore; the novel emerges as a social critique of the time. Khair diagnoses the roots of the problem with a vibrant narrative style and character formations. Khair has reflected the roots of

traditional sets of belief systems about cultural differences and interracial relationships in the novel.

How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position is written from different perspectives. It brings forth how the political shades of religion imbued with suspicion and distrust have become the part of life in an intercultural scenario. The novel, with the subtle element of suspense, revolves around three characters - the friendly and easily adaptable Hindu Ravi; the conservative and mysterious Muslim Karim, both from India; and the unnamed Muslim narrator from Pakistan but with pre-partition Indian links. The multicultural setting of European country, Denmark forms the backdrop of the story. The novel has conveyed the complex negotiation of Indians with the foreign living situations. The author has focused on some social realism elements like- racial discrimination, communal riots, Islamophobic sentiments, barbarism, East-West encounter, ethnicity and circumcision in this novel. Khair's fictional works, where he is directly speaking about the socio-cultural issues, his minority identity, the elements of Indian sensibility and his connectivity with India, can be helpful in reinforcing or refuting the inferences drawn from these two fictional works in the process of the narration of Indian nationhood.

Khair has presented multiple themes pertaining to Indian culture and society. His language is soft, attractive and lucid. The fictional works amalgamated here reflects the image of his childhood memories which have become a source of inspiration in his writings. He beautifully defines his vision of home, identity, culture, relationships and their connections with each other. His personality has been enriched with equality and inner freedom. Being a diasporic author, he is in search of identity in a foreign land. Although, he is living in Denmark, there is nostalgia in his thoughts and feelings which

bring him back to his native region, India and he is missing his remember able spent days of his childhood memories.

Ravi also comments about Islamophobia in his humorous style in the novel. He claims the namaaz is more powerful than gunpowder or cannons, and the secret weapon of Islam used while colonizing non-Muslim territories. He also shows Muslim pray 'the namaaz' as the reason of hate in the West by implicitly criticizing Western Imperialism again. Khair has proved the fact that Muslim immigrants can easily be labelled as Islamist terrorists in the West because their mostly narrow perspectives through different lifestyles are so suitable for this situation. The narrator, himself as a Muslim immigrant, suspects Karim of being a fundamentalist when he hears about the Islamist Axe Plot. The Muslim characters of his novels also set an example for these lost characters. In *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, Khair has highlighted the truth that all levels of Muslim immigrant society are kept under scrutiny in the West. He has portrayed radical Islamist, conservative, secular and converted Muslim characters. He reflects the psychology of Muslim immigrants who are facing racial and religious prejudices in the Western society. Khair has given his argument in the novel that converted Muslim characters like Ajsa are marginalized and turn out to be radical Islamists. He has presented various factors for this claim. These characters are mostly experiencing social as well as family problems in their lives before conversion to Islam. Being marginalized for any reason in the society is their prime reason to change their religion as a form of rebellion against society. The feeling of acceptance in a social group, whether it is a radical one or not- satisfies their need of belongingness. Therefore; it is not surprising that they become extremists rather than being decent Muslims. Secondly, converted Muslim characters learn 'Islam' from radical Islamists

and radicalized since the romantic portrayal of 'jihad' by radicals is attractive for them which has offered them a cause in their lives. Fighting for something in life is good for people since it is a basic instinct of humankind, especially for those who have lost their aims in the current society.

Khair also gives some background information about Islamophobic tendencies in the West. In a dialogue between Ravi and the narrator, Ravi refers to Prester John, a legendary Christian patriarch and emperor believed in fighting against Saracens with European crusaders. Ravi comments as: "for centuries, he is there, on the other side of every Islamic threat, real or imagined, about to come to the rescue of Christendom." (2014: 62) By giving the example of Prester John, Ravi claims that Europeans have always been in need of anti-Islamic heroes to strengthen their myth of superiority over the Orient. He states that Prester John is only a symbol of uniting against the threat of Islam for Europeans and proposes that Hindu Gods are the new Prester John since they are qualified as the new non-Muslim ally in the Orient especially after 9/11 terrorist attacks in the U.S.A.

This racist attitude is emphasized again through the end of the novel when Karim's innocence is revealed by the police. Three days after Karim's detention with the suspicion of taking part in the 'Islamist Axe Plot', the police release him since he has no connection with the event and Al Qaeda. Despite this announcement, Karim continues to be suspected by many tabloids in the country. It is quite normal in the novel to label someone as a terrorist just because of his or her religion, even skin colour. This fact is also visible in Ajsa's case. Ajsa is described by the narrator as a young blonde Bosnian woman, whose parents are ex-Yugoslavian refugees and 'die-hard atheists'. With the influence of Karim Bhai and as a reaction to her parents, she is

converted to Islam. However, according to the narrator, she does not experience the disadvantages of being a Muslim in the West since she does not have a coloured skin and a Muslim appearance except her Muslim style of dressing. It is quite easy for her to integrate into the society with her blonde complexion.

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Chapter-V

Social Realism in the Recent Novels of Tabish Khair

This chapter explores the concept of Social Realism Theory in his latest novels. The novels *Jihadi Jane* (2016), *Night of Happiness* (2018) and *The Body by the Shore* (2022) have been categorized as his recent novels. *Jihadi Jane* is written on the burning topic of terrorism in our society. The author proves that how the society is affected by the problem of extremism. The novel deals with the problems of radical Islamist group like the ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) in the Western society. *Jihadi Jane* is honoured with the Encore Award, in the U.K. and Crossword Prize in India. Moreover; it has been nominated for the Kirkus Prize, in the U.S.A., Atta Galatta Banglore Festival Book Prize and Tata Book of the year Award in India. It is a realistic work of Khair which depicts social problems like- terrorism, Islamophobia, barbarism and identity crisis in the 21st century of civilized world.

Khair's most recent novels, *Night of Happiness* (2018) and *The Body by the Shore* (2022) will be analyzed from the view point of social realism theory. Khair has focused on social evils like- racial and religious prejudices, Islamophobia, exploitation of women in the West, identity crisis, polygamy in Islamic society, complexity of life and cultural otherness.

5.1 Racial and Religious Prejudice

Khair has depicted the problems of the protagonists- Jallima and Ameena who are Muslim immigrants in England. They are suffering from alienation and identity crisis, though their parents are citizens of that adopted country. The feeling of insecurity makes them revolutionary from their childhood in a foreign culture. Ameena tries to be westernized by adopting their language, habits and other social norms. She belongs to a liberal Muslim family. Ameena's parents are from Bangalore, India who settled in London after getting a job in a multinational company. Her father is a banker and her

mother is a working lady who allows Ameena to do according to her wish. But excessive freedom ruins her character in early school life. She starts smoking regularly and flirts with Alex, her classmate to assimilate in English society. Khair remarks on Ameena as:

> I know Aunty knew about Ameena's smoking; she must have been told about the pranks that Ameena had been involved in- this was before we became friends. She would hang out with any boy who gave her some attention, and half the time it would result in some school prank or class warning. The boy usually a potential dropout-would do something idiotic, and Ameena would wade into it with wide-open eyes. I do not recall where they had lived earlier; growing financial pressure after her divorce had made Aunty sell her flat and buy something much smaller. But from the little that Ameena revealed, it was clear that she used to go about with the dregs of her previous neighbourhood. (JJ: 11-12)

She is in love with Alex and has lost her chastity at the age sixteen. But Alex is an English boy who delights in falling in love with beautiful girls who flirts with him. He used to date many girls simultaneously. His relationship with Ameena breaks when he tries to fuck off her in public place. Ameena suffers from frustration and isolation as soon as her parents get divorced. She is also broken down when she is insulted in her school by her friends. Ameena separates herself from the outside world and embraces fundamental Islamist attitude to rebel against un-Islamic society in the West. Her mother remains busy with her work and is unable to give much time to her. It results in her alienation. Moreover, her parents got divorced when she was a child of seven years old and she did not get proper parental care, passion and devotion from her them. These are the factors of discontent and frustration which bring her towards religion. Jamilla is a religious Muslim girl who belongs to a Pakistani immigrant family in England and Ameena hails from Indian

divorced parents and becomes westernized. Jamilla always covers herself with hijab. Ameena is affected by the Western culture and civilization who wears tight jeans and t-shirts. Jamilla is associated with local mosques in Yorkshire. She tries to transform herself by reading the holy Quran. She visits mosque regularly covering her face using hijab. Jamilla narrates her changes as: "who had no patience with 'Western deviance'. She started borrowing and then buying books about Islam. I guided her. I was happy to guide her. I had been told that every person you bring to the faith- or bring back to faith- opens a new gate in heaven for you." (JJ: 28)

Jamilla, the mouthpiece of the author tells about Ameena's childhood that she is ten years older than other jihadi fighters. She spent her childhood in Wales. Her parents returned to Kuwait and later they went to Saudi Arabia. Ameena got married to a computer programmer in Arab who joined politics after leaving his job. Later he became an active jihadi cadre. Accordingly, he is fighting for the faith in Syria. Ameena is there to help him, which she considers to be a duty of all women to support their husbands who were fighting for the faith. Jamilla narrates the way how they become jihadi activists as:

> Of these fellow 'fighters', the woman Ameena took to most of all was at least a decade older than us, and had grown up in Wales as a child. Then her parents- Kuwaitis- had moved back to Kuwait, and from there to Saudi Arabia. She had married an Arab computer programmer who had quit his job, first to join some Arab political uprising with vaguely democratic aspirations, and then to gradually move towards jihadist groups. Now, she claimed, he was fighting for the 'faith' in Syria, and she was there to support him, which was the job of all women- to help their men fight for the faith. (JJ: 57)

Ameena tries to assimilate in the Western society from her childhood in school. But she is unable to be a part of the society because of religious and racial prejudices she has faced by

English people. Jamilla also suffers from inferiority complex when she is ignored as a Muslim in the Western society. She becomes rebellious like Ameena to fight for the faith in Syria. Both Jamilla and Ameena are alienated from the Western society. Their feelings of identity crisis force them to fly to Turkey to meet the members of Daesh in Istanbul. They are happy for getting homely atmosphere in Turkey. Jamilla expresses her happiness when both of them are welcomed by Turkish women in the airport as: "I felt strangely at home as we stepped out of the airport; the Turkish women around us were dressed in ways that ranged from Saudi-orthodox to a fairly good imitation of Alex's cool girlfriends." (JJ: 79) Both Ameena and Jamilla are taken to lodge in an orphanage run by Hejjiye in Syria- Iraq border. Hejjiye arranges Ameena's marriage with a jihadi bridegroom, Hassan in the orphanage.

Ameena and Jamilla narrate their experiences after they have reached Istanbul without any problem by the help of Hejjiye. They think that there are other Muslim girls in the West who are interested to join the Jihad. The Western media also circulates the news that few dozen of European Muslims are ready to arrive in Istanbul to take part in jihad. Jamilla remarks on their situation after reaching in Istanbul as:

> We knew that we would be in Istanbul before anyone even started suspecting that we were gone. But we did not take any risks-rather, Ameena did not. We tried to act and behave like two young girls visiting Istanbul. Both Hejjiye and Hasan had insisted on that. We knew that there were other girls like us, leaving Western nations to join the jihad. But we were still part of an early wave; the western media had yet to make a few dozen women in each country sound like there was a veritable exodus, as if all Muslim women in Europe were about to jump on planes to Istanbul. The security was not too tight yet. And we had received exact instructions. Leaving

> the airport, we took the metro to the Istanbul suburb of Bayrampara district, on the European side of the city. (JJ: 84)

Both Ameena and Jamilla feel that they are the part of an early wave to come to Istanbul for the cause. They had proceeded towards the Istanbul countryside of Bayrampasa district by taking the metro, on the European side of the city. They were asked to wait at the main bus station and later they had been received by three men. Tabish Khair's *Jihadi Jane* can be considered as a travelogue. He has described the journey of the protagonists, Ameena and Jamilla from England to Syria. The author has narrated how they have reached their destination and fight for their freedom.

Hejjiye plays a pivotal role in the novel, *Jihadi Jane*. She has posted about the ventures of Islamists as well as male jihadists on social media. She motivates young girls to work for the greater Islam which is under threat in the western society. She runs an orphanage which is used as a shelter for female jihadi activists who come from different parts of the world in Syria. Jamilla is fascinated by Hejjiye's inspiring speech and posts circulated in social media to save the Islamic world. She wants her brother Mohammad and Bhabhi to pay attention to Hejjiye's posts on social media regarding the crisis of Muslim community in the West. Jamilla remarks as:

> Once or twice, I attempted to get my brother and his wife interested in following some of these people, especially in particular, Hejjiye. Hejjiye wrote good English; she was a strikingly beautiful woman. I thought my brother would appreciate her views. They tallied with his: Muslims under attack, the duplicity of the West, the lack of faith of Muslims, the role of a wife, the decency expected from women, etc. And Bhabhi would surely ooh and aah over the photos with her dusky Chartreux cat, Batala ('heroine'of Arabic), or her collection of Gucci handbags

> that Hejjiye sometimes posted. But Mohammad and Bhabhi did not seem to have time for all this. (JJ: 58-59)

Jamilla feels that the West is deceptive for the Muslim people who discriminated them religiously and socially. But her brother and Bhabhi have not paid much attention to Hejjiye's posts and videos. Mohammad does not support such activities of Jameela as he has own source of income. He has a job to lead a happy life with his wife. He is not alienated in the Western society like Ameena and Jamilla. Mohammad is intellectually strong to tackle such misguidance by unknown person. Her Bhabhi is jealous for Hejjiye's costly handbags and dusky France cat. But she is not interested in what Jamilla wants to convey her. She is a daughter of a rich man who does not bother about financial problem and identity crisis in the Western society. Khair has conveyed the message that Hejjiye's videos and speeches play an important role to radicalize Ameena and Jamilla.

In *Jihadi Jane*, Khair has described the condition of immigrant Muslims in the Western country. They are victims of racial and religious discrimination. So, they can easily be misguided by anti-social agents like Daesh militant to fight for Islam. In this novel, Hejjiye plays the role of an instructor to enlist new members to join in Jihadi movement in the name of religion. She inspires the young women to join in Daesh movement in Syria for the sake of Islamic society. She has posted several motivational videos, news and views to attract the attention of new generation to work for saving their Islamic culture, identity and religion. Khair has commented on Hejjiye as:

> Hejjiye had been urging women to join the faithful as wives in the holy fight. Women have a role to play in the jihad too, she would tweet or post. The role was that of wife or mother, but it was the role allotted by Allah, and surely what work could match the work given to you by almighty God! Then, if you were the wife of a martyr, you would be taken care of all your life. To be fair, they

> were always these men- claiming to be jihadis (who knows what they really were?)- who would approach me on Facebook or one of the chat pages, urging me to marry them and help usher in the kingdom of God on earth- even if, according to one of them, it would last for just seven years. (JJ: 74)

Hejjiye motivates mostly young women to join Daesh in Syria claiming that women have to play an importance role in jihad as mothers and wives. She points out that God has made an allotment of different roles for women in jihad. So, they should obey the Instruction of the Almighty. Moreover; she asserts that if someone's husband dies as martyr, she would be taken care of all her life with great honour. In this way, Hejjiye attracts the young ladies who are prejudiced immigrants in the name of God in Western society. The protagonists of the novel, Ameena and Jamilla have proved that it is impossible for them to live an Islamic life in the Western context. They are always discontent for being Muslim immigrants to live in England. This is the reason for their radicalization to fight against the Western society who has been victimizing them since time immemorial. Hejjiye helps both the girls for joining the Daesh militant in Syria. The new members are trained up through fundamental Islamic ideology instructed by Daesh fighters. Hejjiye is supervising the orphanage where the newly admitted cadres are given shelter. It is a place where suicide bombers and extremist Islamist are produced by giving physical training and performing brainwash. The female cadres are kept busy in religious lectures with the extremist ideology of Daesh. Hejjiye expresses her delight welcoming Ameena that: "congratulated Ameena and Jamilla for making the right decision and joining the jihad, for Allah would surely bless us in this life and the next." (JJ: 86)

In *Night of Happiness*, Khair has focused on racial conflict between Hindu and Muslim communities in Indian. In the very beginning of the novel, Anil Mehrotra, the

narrator, expresses his feelings of hatred for the Muslim community. He feels difficulty to employ a Muslim candidate in his export-import business. In the initial stage of his business, Anil Mehrotra has employed only three full-time employees. Ahmed was one of the three candidates to be appointed in his business. But Mehrotra is reluctant to give him a job because of his Muslim community. Khair has remarked on Mehrotra's prejudice against Muslim community as:

> I guess I had called him for the interview because of his name- he was the only Muslim applicant. Oh well, I thought, now I bloody well have to. But I was also prepared to reject him. Honestly, I had almost made up my mind to reject him. I did not want to feel prejudiced by not giving him a chance, but I had never known a Muslim intimately, and, well, you know how it is in such matters. One wants to work with known factors. First rule in business, first rule in life: work with known factors. (NH: 8)

Anil Mehrotra, being an employer follows some business ethics in his life. He appoints only reliable person whom he knows well personally. But Ahmed, being an unknown Muslim is not fit for the job. He is called for the interview as an applicant. But, Mehrotra is ready to reject his candidature as he feels that Muslim people are not reliable for the position. He decides to go through the ritual of interviewing him before sending him a kind of rejection slip. However, Mehrotra agrees to appoint Ahmed because of his linguistic proficiency. He notices that Ahmed has ability to speak several languages due to his previous job as a tourist guide in Bodh Gaya. He can speak fluently more than fourteen languages. At last, Ahmed gets appointed in Mehrotra's export-import business and becomes his right-hand person. In spite of Muslim identity, Anil Mehrotra cannot help appointing Ahmed because of his competence and hard-working nature.

In this novel, Khair has depicted an incident of inter-religious marriage between Hindu and Muslim communities. Anil Mehrotra, the employer of Ahmed, has visited his flat in the night of Shab-e-baraat festival on his request and found that Ahmed's wife Roshni belongs to Hindu community. He asked Ahmed if his wife had been converted to Muslim to marry him. Mehrotra has learnt the news that Muslim men marry Hindu women and convert them to Islam. The Hindu fundamentalist has termed it as love-jihad which is a prevalent in Indian society. Anil Mehrotra comments on inter-religious marriage as:

> I said to Ahmed, your wife had to convert to marry you? I thought of what had been in the news recently: 'love jihad' is what those Hindutva lunatics called it, and while I disliked their fervour and terminology, I could not- deep in my heart- totally accept the fact that Muslim men married our women and converted them to Islam. The marriage bit I did not mind, but the conversion? That made me uncomfortable, may be even a bit resentful. I won't pretend otherwise. (NH: 28)

The narrator does not support such conversions of religion in marriage. He feels saddened to learn the condition of Ahmed. He confesses that when Roshni is married to him, his neighbours put pressure on his mother to convert Roshni to Islam. But his mother is not agree to do so because she claims that Roshni is a Muslim name and does not need conversion. Roshni, being a Hindu girl gets married to Ahmed without his mother's consent. She imitates her mother-in-law's custom of using purdah at home. But the Muslim society does not accept Roshni as daughter-in-law in the mohalla. Their marriage is solemnized by a mullah in Both Gaya. The neighbours want that the niqaah should be performed again after Roshni's conversion to Islam. They know that Roshni is a Hindu girl and claim as: "She doesn't look like a Muslim, said those who did not

know anything about her. And those who had heard about her from Both Gaya said, Who know what her father was?" (NH: 112) Khair has focused on the social problems of inter-religious marriage faced by Ahmed and Roshni in this novel. Roshni meets a tragic death as a converted Islam at the hands of Hindu fundamentalists.

5.2 Islamophobia in the West

Khair has pointed out that Islamophobic tendency in the West that separates the immigrant Muslim women from their society. They are categorized as separate identity in the Western society. The conservative Muslim society is criticized for their use of hijab and niqab to cover their body. The Western society separates Muslim women as immigrants. Jamilla, the narrator is describing her experience that being in the West, a Muslim cannot take part in everything as they have some restrictions. They are to be careful to take food when they participate in social gatherings. They have to justify whether it is pork or beef as well as it is halal or non-halal. Khair comments on the difficult situation for Muslim women in the Western society as:

> On the one hand, you cannot really be a part of everything that might empower you as a person, give you the options you want; on the other, you do not want to be a part of all this- the parties, the flirting, the option to grab a sandwich without checking whether it is pork or beef, halal or not, the simple ability to walk down a street without feeling like you are an alien from Mars, and sometimes being treated like one! You opt out of the glitter of the West because of your belief. It takes strength to do so. More strength than Muslim men realize: I wonder if imams would insist on the hijab as much as they do if they had to put it on themselves and cope with the consequences in ordinary life. (JJ: 82)

The author has clearly discussed that the Muslim women are targeted for Islamophobic harassment in the West. The use of dresses like jilbabs and niqabs by Muslim women have negative effects in the Western society. They are supposed to be alien from the Mars when they walk through a street with their Muslim dresses. These dresses symbolically create horror in the minds of the Western people. Jamilla, the mouthpiece of Khair, asserts that one should have strength and courage to be a Muslim woman in the West. She expresses her views that the imams always want to see the Muslim women dressed in hijabs and niqabs as they are using themselves in their lives. The immigrant Muslim women lead a complicated life in a male- dominated society in the West. The feeling of separation from the society is one of the major reasons for the immigrant Muslim women to become radical extremists in the West.

Both Jamilla and Ameena are radicalized because of their separation from their family, school, and society. Ameena turns into Islamist fundamentalist as soon as she is betrayed by her lover, Alex who destroys her chastity. She becomes rebellious when she is insulted by her school friends for being an immigrant Muslim girl in the Western society. So, both the school friends decide to go to Syria in search of peaceful Islamic lives which they imagine and deserve for their bright future. Hejjiye has influenced Ameena to fight for the sake of Islam from clutches of the Western society. The sense of separation as well as social discrimination has ignited Ameena's zeal to fight against the West to save Islam. In order to fulfill her dream, Ameena decides to become a jihadi bride. She establishes herself to fight for the Islamic world. Jamilla narrates the story commenting as: "Was it that ghostly hurt and anger lurking in Ameena's lucid eyes? Was it her lost love for Alex? Was it the way her friends snubbed her? Was it her mother's strong disapproval of the Islamic scarf?" (JJ: 28)

Khair has disclosed the true nature and ideology of the Daesh fighters which contrast with Islamic religion and society. Jamilla repents that Hejjiye has misguided the young Muslim girls by the help of social media to join jihad. Her desire to join Daesh and fight for the cause turns into repentance. She admits that the Muslims get much opportunity in the West to lead liberal lives than in Syria. Khair has differentiated between radical ideology of Daesh fighters and true Islamic virtue. He has brought into light the true identity of Daesh and jihadi militants in this novel. He comments on the artificial transformation of innocent girls into jihadi fighters as:

> They made me feel guilty towards the goodness I had not seen because pettiness had blinded me to it. How had I fail to register the many people who did accept me as I was, veiled and alien in this world, just because there were some who shared, or muttered- or shouted, like that crazy women on the bus? How had I failed to see the decency of vibrant parks with children, care for the weak and unemployed- for what can one call it but decency? How, I sometimes wondered with shock and pain, how had I failed to register this basic decency, simply because there were also idiots in the world who excluded me and mine? Sometimes I lay awake late into the nights, thinking of such matters- and now I had no longer dared email my true thoughts even to Ameena, Let alone any of my other jihadi 'friends'. Is this what I had come to: the inability to trust even my best friend? If human beings cannot have faith in other human beings, despite all their mutual failures, then can they ever have faith in the Almighty, I wondered. (JJ: 153)

Jamilla, the narrator has told that the two Kurdish prisoners make her feel nostalgic about her school days. She realizes her guilt for leaving her family to join the struggle in Syria where she has to face lots of injustice and brutality. Jamilla has revealed that once she enjoyed a more liberal life in England than she could experience in Syria. She feels

uncomfortable in interrogating the two Kurdish prisoners- Dilnaz and Sera. Both of them are Muslim soldiers who are forced to use veil during interrogations. They face severe punishment at the hands of Daesh fighters. Jamilla cannot help realizing that superstitious notion of the Islam religion becomes the driving force of radical Islamism. Jihadi fighters legalize violence for the sake of religion. Hassan, Ameena's jihadi husband, does not believe in religious texts and doctrines. He does not eager to listen to the Quran. He practises what is taught to him by his group of jihadi cadres. Ameena realizes that her rebellious nature creates great trouble in her life after her marriage with Hassan who does not respect for her scholarly reading of Islam. Ameena thinks of Hassan as: "His was almost a technological Islam, its pruned rituals as shorn of ambiguity as a hammer or a computer code, Ameena realized. It was a do-it-yourself manual- and he had many of those too, on repairing motorcycle, preparing bombs, assembling guns, electricity, carpentry…"(JJ: 175)

In *Jihadi Jane*, Khair has depicted the social issues like racism as well as Islamophobia which is prevalent in the Western society. He focuses on the troublesome bond between the West and Islamic society. He compares radical Islamism with European politicians because both of them are exploiting the society with their own policies. Hejjiye is a power monger who has been enjoying all the privileges in the society. She has radicalized the young generation in terms of Islamic religious practices for the sake of power and fame. Khair has narrated her leadership quality through the narrator, Jamilla as:

> It struck me that people like Hejjiye are always driven to safety- and in every culture. At that moment, I finally saw Hejjiye as I would always remember her, as I recall her now: she was a person who would be at home, in control and totally satisfied with herself,

> anywhere. She could have been a politician in Europe, justifying racist immigration laws in the most humane terms; she could have been a corporate head in New York, or a banker in Tokyo. Whatever set rules she found around herself she would employ them to empower herself, not even able to see the monstrous shadows thrown by her goodness. It was only a fluke, I felt, that Hejjiye had been born in circles where the route to power lay through the strictures of Islam. (JJ: 222)

Jamilla has disclosed the character Hejjiye that she does not repent on the death of young girls who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of Islam at her orphanage. The author has mentioned that she is a self-sufficient lady who might have been a politician to rectify the racist immigration laws in Europe. She has the ability to become a corporate head in New York or a banker in Tokyo. Hejjiye has founded some laws empowering herself to fight for the cause of Islam. She runs a school in the orphanage where she keeps women, children and orphans with proper care. She instigates innocent people to fight against the West. The author points out that hatred for Muslims provoke the clash of civilization between the East and the West. The novelist makes it clear that only the West is not responsible for racism and Islamophobia in the society. The Muslims should also be blamed for creating horror in the society. They have given priority to the Western media which circulates racism and hatred against the Muslim society. Therefore; hatred begets hatred between the East and the West as well as Muslims and non-Muslims. The author has also focused that the Muslims show racial discrimination and religious hatred for non-Muslims in this novel. It is clear in the nature of Ameena and Jamilla who have shown their bitterness openly for non-Muslims in the Western society. Once, their school mates, James and his Caribbean girlfriend wanted to visit Ameena and Jamilla in their flat. But they were not allowed to visit them

because they are Christians. They are untouchable because they consume pork and wine. James does not wash himself even after using lavatory. So, Ameena's mother gets upset for this reason and she has changed all the clothes as: "Then she had both of us change all the sheets that could be changed and wipe the table." (JJ: 65)

In *Jihadi Jane*, Tabish Khair has dealt with different social problems faced by modern people. The sense of belongingness and identity crisis are burning issues that immigrant Muslims are facing in the Western society. In this novel, Jamilla, the mouthpiece of the author, narrates the story to Khair who writes down and publishes her story as a novel. In the very beginning of the novel, Jamilla expresses her problem of identity crisis and sense of belongingness. Her sense of belongingness has separated her from the society. Jamilla expresses her feelings as: "I hated being called Jamie- my name is Jamilla- but evidently Europeans cannot stop themselves for giving new names to people and places. I guess it must be hard to stop after all those centuries of remaining stuff in the colonies." (JJ: 8)

Jamilla does not like to be addressed as Jamie by her school friends in England. She feels that the Europeans are habituated in giving new names to people and places. It is a difficult for them to stop such habits. Although, Jamilla is an English Muslim by birth, she cannot assimilate in the Western society because of her sense of identity crisis. She suffers from loss of identity in the West as she is not accepted by her school friends, neighbours as well as other English relatives. It happens because of ethnic and religious differences.

> I walked back to Ameena's flat in a depressed mood. There did not seem to be any option; this way or that, it appeared that I had to marry soon; this boy or that' it hardly mattered. The streets seemed filled with tawdriness and noise. I turned down a ginnel. A group

> of young people in their best bib and tucker- a flurry of high-waisted denim shorts and flowing white tops, of pumped- up kicks and boots, of Fred Perry polo shirts and blazers from Gap- passed by on their way to a pub or a party. At a couple of them were Indian or Pakistani. One of them glanced at me and then looked away pointedly. I felt out of place there. I had grown up in this neighbourhood, but it was not home. I did not belong here, I felt; I never would. The idea of continuing to live a version of this life in Birmingham did not appeal to me. The idea of living it with that vapid, satisfied-looking man in the photo frightened me. I stepped over the garbage, walking faster, my shadow split into many shadows by the lights on the streets and from shuttered shopfronts. (JJ: 71-72)

Jamilla is brought up in a neighbourhood in Birmingham which she can not consider to be her native place because of her immigrant Muslimness. Her sense of alienation is increased when she meets other immigrant people in the Western society. She cannot help feeling that she does not belong to this place and it is not her hometown. It becomes impossible for her to live in this place.

Her physical appearance and Muslim dresses hinder her from assimilating in the society. Being an immigrant Muslim lady, Jamilla is bound to leave England for good. She comments on her departure from England as: “It was August by the time we finally left England. After that betrothal dinner, whose account I had given to Ameena as soon as I had returned to her flat (despite my headache), Ameena became more forthright. She told me that she was organizing with Hejjiye and some others to join Hassan in Syria- why don’t I go with her?” (JJ: 81) Jamilla desires to get married to a suitable Muslim bridegroom and settles in the western society but her dream shattered because of racial discrimination she faced in the West.

Like Jamilla, Ameena is also a Muslim immigrant in England. She belongs to a liberal family. Her divorced parents follow the Western lifestyle. She tries to assimilate in the Western society. But she is rejected by her school friends which makes her realize that it is not possible to be accepted in the Western society. Jamilla remarks on Ameena's radicalization process as:

> What radicalized Ameena ? Was it the religion she learnt in the mosque? I concede that the group I was with had probably the strictest interpretation of Islam among the many Muslims who frequented our mosque; so, in a way, I radicalized Ameeena. I thought so for months, when I finally started thinking about such matters, and I blamed myself terribly, especially after what happened to Ameena. I still do not shrug away my role in all of it, but I ask you- Are you sure it was the mosque that radicalized Ameena? Why ameena out of a thousand or more? Was it only the mosque? Was it only my- and my father's and brother's- Islam? Or was it also Ameena's parents' divorce? Was it that ghostly hurt and anger lurking in Ameena's lucid eyes? Was it her lost love for Alex? Was it the way her friends snubbed her? Was it her mother's strong disapproval of the Islamic scarf?" (JJ: 28)

Jamilla, being a religious-minded woman, succeeds in changing Ameena's life after her break up with the English boy, Alex. She becomes a regular visitor of the mosque and takes active part in the Quranic discussion. The strict principles of the Quran and its interpretation have changed Ameena's life. She has been converted into radical Islamist to sacrifice her life for the welfare of the Islam. Jamilla feels that religious discussions in the mosque play a great role to radicalize Ameena. Jamilla motivates her to read the Quran and other religious scriptures of Islam to open a new gate to heaven for her. Ameena becomes rebellious because of her distorted relations with her divorced parents

in which she is brought up. Alex's rejection in love makes her vindictive against the Western culture. Moreover, she is ignored by her school friends and neighbours. She is marginalized socially and psychologically. The novel, *Jihadi Jane* begins with Ameena's quest for identity in the Western society. Jamilla has also been facing the same problem in England. But they have experienced brutality and rejection after their arrival in Syria. The female protagonists, Ameena and Jamilla are victims of Islamist fundamentalism. They are isolated in the Western society because of their religion and immigrant identity. The Western media plays a pivotal role in making them well acquainted with extremism, religion and foreign culture. Tabish Khair has brought into light how common people get brainwashed by social media like Facebook, Twitter WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube by evil elements in the society.

In *Night of Happiness*, Khair has focused on the burning issue of Hindu-Muslim riot in Gujarat in 2002. He takes it as a background in which the story of the novel revolves around. Ahmed, the protagonist of the novel has witnessed the communal violence in Godhra train station. A group of Muslim people set fire to the Sabarmati Express near Godhra railway station on 27th February in 2002. According to official report, 59 Hindu pilgrims were killed during their return from Ayodhya in the fire. This incident is the beginning that triggers the Gujarat riots in 2002 which results in countless loss of lives, destruction of property and homelessness. Ahmed believes in Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of ahimsa and non-violence to maintain peace and brotherhood during the time of crisis but he is insulted by Hindu fundamentalists. His colleagues support the Hindutva ideology of the Bharatiya Janata Party who instigate the common people to take part in the communal riots. Khair has remarked on the tragic situation as:

> A train was set on fire in Godhra on 27 February 2002, and the fire spread across Gujarat. Violence, Ahmed had once said, is a virus; it spreads by contaminating others. Ahmed had been trying to defend Gandhi's philosophy of ahimsa, which was being criticized by a couple of his colleagues who claimed to support the Hindutva ideology of the BJP for intellectual and not religious reasons. That is when he had said these words. I think his point was that the only way to resist violence is to refuse to harbour it, or you become a carrier of the virus and it spreads further through you. But what if the virus is injected into you? What if the doctors of your society infect you with the virus? (NH: 125-126)

Ahmed believes in non-violence and thinks that violence spreads like virus in the society. If anybody becomes the carrier of the virus, it can easily spread through him in the society. The narrator takes help from a private detective, Devi Prasad of the Prasad and Sons Private Investigations Agency to investigate the Gujarat riots. The agency unfolds the fact that a group of Hindu activists had destroyed a mosque which was built on the site of a temple marking the birthplace of Lord Rama. Muslims are accused of setting fire on the Sabarmati Express in retaliation where more than fifty Hindu pilgrims were killed in the fire. The violence has spread in various places in Gujarat during the governance of Bharatiya Janata Party led by then Chief Minister of Gujarat and present Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi.

Khair has highlighted the brutality of Hindu nationalists who were instigated by minor politicians of the ruling party to kill Muslims. The mob is searching Muslim houses and flats taking a municipal list that they may find out and kill them systematically. Roshni, being a converted Muslim becomes the victim of communal violence who is dragged out from her flat by the organized group of Hindu fundamentalists. It is the old South Indian man, who tries to save Roshni from the

crowd requesting them that Roshni and her husband are not bad Muslims. Both of them take part in puja and other Hindu festivals. But the Hindu fundamentalists pull Roshni out by breaking her door to kill her. Khair remarks on the violence caused by the activists as:

> It was this organizing mob that dragged Roshni down the stairs. They ripped the veil off her. They mocked her. "Where is your God?' they shouted. 'Where is your bastard man?' they mocked. No one can save you now, You Pakistani whore! Roshni, the neighbours reported, said nothing. She just sat in the dust, head bowed, as if lost in deep thought. She did not even react when the South Indian man, in one last attempt to help her, screamed that she was not Muslim. 'Look at her,' he shouted, from his doorway, where the women held him back, 'Look at her. Does she look Muslim? But Roshni did not ply this sliver of doubt inserted in the mob by the old man. She did not claim she was not Muslim. She did not say anything. She neither cried nor remonstrated; she never pleaded. (NH: 129)

They ridiculed and tortured Roshni by asking about her God to save her from them. But she said nothing to them because it was useless to beg them her life. The South Indian man tries his level best to save Roshni's life by saying that she belongs to Hindu community and she does not have a Muslim look. He requests them not to kill her. The mob has insulted her as a prostitute from Pakistan. They killed her by putting fire on her head with kerosene. She meets a tragic death because of her Muslim identity. Ahmed becomes traumatic to accept Roshni's unnatural death which leads him to insanity. The narrator is saddened to witness the condition of Ahmed for his refusal to accept the death of a woman whom he adores. He remarks on the psychological tussle of Ahmed for the death of his beloved wife, Roshni as: "Ahmed claimed and buried her charred

remains in a Muslim graveyard, three or four days later, when such things could be done." (NH: 131)

In *Night of Happiness*, the author has depicted the pathetic condition of Muslims who are victimized in the Gujarat riot. There are many examples of religious violence against the Islamic community since the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. Khair has described the consequences of the violence as given by the Devi Prasad Investigation Agency's report in the novel. The agency reports that more than 790 Muslim people are brutally killed by Hindu nationalists. The Muslim community suffers a lot losing property worth 42 million rupees is destroyed during the violence. Thousands of them are injured and become homeless wanderer after losing houses and properties in the riot. The violence is created by the Hindu nationalist organization for socio-economic as well as political factors where Muslims are the scapegoats. Khair has made a remark on their tragic condition as:

> Based entirely on what the newspapers reported (see Appendix 3A) and not any evidence obtained or sought by this investigator, the riots that followed lead to the death of 790 Muslims- some put the estimate at double that number- and 254 Hindus. Thousands were injured and rendered homeless. It was reported in national newspapers (see Appendix 3B) that women were raped and impaled on spears; children were burned alive. The government of Gujarat was accused- and later absolved, it has to be noted- of purposefully dragging its feet, to give vigilante Hindutva groups, some supposedly led by politicians, a chance to teach 'those Muslims a lesson' (see Appendix 3C). Roshni, as Devi told me, was one of those Muslims. (NH: 127)

According to Devi Prasad's report, Roshni, wife of Ahmed, is one of the Muslim women whom Hindu nationalists have killed ruthlessly. She is an innocent Hindu lady who has been converted to Islam after marriage with Ahmed. Many Muslim women and children are victimized during the riots. The Hindu nationalists terrorize Muslim women by committing sexual violence to them. It is reported that at least 250 Muslim women are raped and killed during this period. The other forms of violence against women include acid attacks, beating and killing of pregnant women. Children are killed by being burnt alive by them. Women are murdered and cut into pieces after molestation. Muslim children are killed by putting fire on them. Allegations are made against the state government of Gujarat and the then Chief Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi who were supposed to be involved in ethnic cleansing in the riots. But all the allegations are proved wrong. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (V.H.P) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.) are also blamed to support the anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat. It is said that Muslims are occupants who are not loyal to the motherland, India. The Hindu nationalists being motivated by politicians take revenge upon the Muslim community. Roshni is a subjugated lady who dies a tragic death at the hands of Hindu nationalists in the Gujarat riots.

Khair has focused on the importance of Shab-e-baraat festival which is celebrated annually in Muslim communities. It is one of the major festivals of Islamic community that is celebrated all around the world. The Muslim people observe on the night between the 14^{th} and 15^{th} night of the month of Shabaan, the eighth month of the Islamic calendar. Khair clarifies the meaning of 'Shab-e-baraat' as: "Shab stands for the 'night' and 'baraat' means so many things: innocence, tryst, salvation, happiness." (NH: 15) The festival is observed by praying to Allah and reciting some parts of the Quran

until dawn by the devotees. They visit graveyards asking forgiveness from God for their deceased ancestors. Charity as well as food is served among the poor people. The festival has a great importance in Islamic society in which the story of the novel revolves. In the very beginning of the novel, the author has described its significance in the society. Shab-e-baraat means 'night of salvation' or 'night of happiness' which is observed by Muslims. Ahmed, the protagonist of the novel, is a reliable employee in the export-import business of Anil Mehrotra. He is serving his employer dedicatedly and becomes his right-hand person. His only demand from his employer is that he should be given one-day-leave in the Shab-e-baraat festival. Mehrotra grants him leave on that day though he does not know the importance of the festival. But, he needs Ahmed to work overtime to complete his office work on the day of Shab-e-baraat night. Ahmed has worked more than expected that night and the stormy weather does not allow him to get home in time. Mehrotra decides for giving him a lift in his car. Ahmed invites Mehrotra as soon as they reach his apartment to eat traditional halwa of Shab-e-baraat festival. Mehrotra has accepted his invitation being courteous. Mehrotra feels something different as soon as he enters his apartment. He has not seen Ahmed's wife in his residence. Mehrotra feels that she may be nervous to speak to unknown person. But he is excited when Ahmed offers him invisible halwa. There is a pile of nimkis and a small spoon on the plate, but no halwa. He feels insulted for his suspicious behaviour. On the day Shab-e-baraat, Ahmed asks his employer to give him one-day-leave that he may enjoy the festival with his wife. This is the most important festival in Ahmed's life. He describes the importance of Shab-e-baraat festival as:

> Tomorrow Mehrotra sa'ab,' Ahmed was saying, I would prefer to stay home. Shab-e-baraat is the only festival that matters to me.' Then, probably feeling he owed me an explanation- we were still

> new to each other- he added, 'you see, Mehrotra sa'ab, ever since Ammajaan passed away, my wife and I have always celebrated Shab-e-baraat together. We cannot go to Ammajaan's grave- she was buried in Phansa- but my wife makes halwa and we consecrate it, pray for peace as is the custom and spend the evening together. It is a kind of family tradition between the two of us now: my wife makes this delicious maida ka halwa taught to her by Ammajaan. I grew up eating that dish. No matter how poor we were, Ammajaan always made that maida ka halwa for Shab-e-baraat. (NH: 16)

Ahmed describes the significance of the festival which is celebrated as: "A full moon day of devotion and celebration in the month of Shabaan." (NH: 15) The Muslim people observe the festival by reminding their ancestors who are no more in this world. It links the past to the future through our present. So, he feels that it is the night of happiness for him. In this festival, he visits the graves of his forefathers and lightens incense sticks. But, some Muslims think it to be un-Islamic. Ahmed reveals that it is a family tradition for them to celebrate Shab-e-baraat and spend the evening together with his wife. It is a way of praying for peace remembering his ancestors. In this occasion, he has not gone to visit his mother's grave who is buried in Phansa. His wife makes maida ka halwa which is taught to her by her mother-in-law. He asserts that poverty cannot hinder them from celebrating Shab-e-baraat festival with halwa.

5.3 Exploitation of Muslim Women in the West

The word exploitation means a situation in which someone treats somebody else in an unfair way, especially in order to make money from their work (2002:441). In *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976) his foundational book on Historical Semantics, Raymond Wilimas includes discussion of the word 'exploitation' because it illustrates the general problem of how impotant historical and social processes

occur within language. Exploitation is a generic sense of unjustness or oppression, referring to a potentially wide range of social relations acroos time and space, e.g. exploitation of women by men, men by women, workers by capitalist, slaves by master, low casts by high castes, serfs by feudal overlords.

Tabish Khair has presented the oppressed condition of Muslim women in the Western society. In general, women are not permitted to work outside without the consent of male in Muslim society. The orthodox society has confined them to use veil and niqab when they go outside. They are not given the opportunity to work outside, take higher education as well as to communicate with the outside world. Their prime duty is only to serve the family by taking care of the household and to bring up their children. The women are subjugated in their society. In *Jihadi Jane*, the author has focused on the problem of women, how they are deprived socially, culturally and religiously. Jamilla's mother represents such kind of woman who is marginalized by the male-dominated Muslim society in the West. Khair remarks on her as: "A woman who spoke no English, stayed home, got anxious about the smallest things, like shopping on her own, never contradicted either Abba or Mohammad, and almost never scolded me for any oversight, real or imagined." (JJ: 11) Jamilla's mother is a Pakistani immigrant in England who always bothers about small things in her life. She depends on others to run her family. She cannot go outside for shopping because she does not know to speak English properly to communicate with others. She is a submissive lady who neither refutes her son, Mohammad nor her husband in their family. She is also affectionate to her daughter, Jamilla. Though Jamilla's mother is a good-natured lady, she suffers from the sense of isolation like other Muslim immigrant woman does in the West. They are recognized as

Muslim immigrants because of their use of veil and niqab when they go outside. It becomes difficult for them to assimilate in the Western society.

The author has depicted the problems of orthodox Muslim society where women are marginalized by their husbands within their own families. Jamilla describes her extreme grief when she along with her mother, is not permitted to visit the graveyard of her father. It happens because they are female. Mohammad had taken care of the burial with the help of his relatives who attended the function in their house as well as in the mosque. But Mohammad and his bearded friends had not allowed his mother and sister, Jamilla to attend the burial ceremony of his demised father. The author has commented on Jamilla's attitude as:

> Mohammad took care of the burial. Some of my father's friends and some of Mohammad's came over for the function in our house and the mosque. Ammi and I were not allowed to go to the burial- we were women. We had not expected to go. But Ammi wanted to visit his grave later on, and protested weakly- the only time I remember- when Mohammad and his bearded friends told her that she shouldn't. 'But we used to be allowed to go to graveyards back home,' she said. That was all wrong, she was told. These practices have to stop. Women should not go to graveyards. It was all wrong in the past, it was not the true Islamic path. They took turns quoting various texts to her. They told her that women are too weak to be allowed into a graveyard. Such soft and emotional hearts they have, for they are wives and mothers. They said that women weep on graves, and open lamentation over the departed is contrary to Islamic beliefs. (JJ: 22)

Khair has pointed out that the women are neglected in Muslim society. Women's visit to a graveyard is an un-Islamic activity for the orthodox Muslims. So, Mohammad does not allow his mother to do so. According to him, women were permitted to visit graveyard in

the past which was against Islam. But the Muslim society has strictly prohibited women to visit graveyards in present times. They have soft and emotional hearts to bear such saddened moment of death of a dear and near person. Their weeping and lamentation over the demise is against Islam. Jamilla's mother used to serve her husband till his death. The author reflects on the religious aspects of Islamic society where woman's participation is restricted. The Muslim society does not provide equal rights like men to lead a decent life. They are alienated within their own families. Jamilla feels that she should visit her father's grave without taking permission from the male-dominated society. She has faith in her religion like others which is gifted by her father. Jamilla has revealed her feelings as: "There was nothing to prevent me. I could have gone without telling anyone. It was not illegal in England, of course, and no guardian of the graveyard would have stopped me." (JJ: 22) This fact also limits their right to express themselves and take decisions in their community. They are forced to adopt a submissive lifestyle limited to their children and home. Jamilla describes her mother's attitudes as a Muslim woman in the novel.

5.4 Training for Suicide Bombers

The term suicide bomber indicates a person, especially a terrorist who carries out a bomb to attack somebody or a targeted goup of people with the intention or expectation of killing themselves as well as himself. In other words, it is an act in which an individual personally delivers explosives and detonates them to inflict the greatest possible damage, killing himself or herself in the process. Sucide bombings are particularly shocking on account of their indiscriminate nature, clearly intending to kill or injure anyone within a range of the explosion. For example, the assassination of Rajib

Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, occurred as a relult of suicide bombing in Sriperumbudur in Tamilnadu on 21st May, 1991. At least fourteen others, in addition to Rajib Gandhi were killed. It was carried out by Thenmozhi Rajaratnam also known as Kalaivani Rajaratnam or Dhanu, a member of the Srilankan Tamil separatist organization Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who also died on the spot of bombing.

Halide, one of the Turkish friends of Jamilla, has depicted the reality of the Jihadi organization in Syria. She has experienced that Hejjiye, the matron of the orphanage is exploiting women who come from various countries with a hope to join jihad for the sake of Islamic world. She does not object to Hejjiye's decision regarding the marriage of girls in the orphanage. The young women are forced to marry jihadi cadre to fulfill their physical need and some girls are prepared to become suicide squad. Halide remarks that Hejjiye has produced three types of women in the orphanage. The older women are given the responsibility as teachers to teach the jihadi's children. The young ladies are groomed to marry jihadi extremist. Halide has complaints regarding Hejjiye's decision as:

> Halide had decided that the girls in the orphanage were either being groomed to marry jihadis- she had no objection to that- or to carry out suicide attacks. I knew this much too, but I had seen it as a matter of personal choice. Halide, on the other hand, argued that this was an institution in which there were just three kinds of women; older women who were teachers or related to jihadis, who were not around to protect them or were recently dead; younger women who were meant to be brides; and women, mostly girls, who were being trained to be suicide bombers. I protested that she was seeing too much system in it. She laughed and said, Believe what you may, but why do you think some girls are taught specifically by Hejjiye and her women? They are being indoctrinated to carry out suicide attacks. (JJ: 138)

Halide objects that Hejjiye should not kill the innocent people by suicide bombers. She feels that suicide is a crime against humanity. But, Jamilla tries to convince her that suicide bombers are used to kill deadly enemies. She prays to God to bless them who sacrifice themselves to save the believers. They are given the responsibility to save the civilians. Halide is observing many formalities in the orphanage to train the girls in various fields. Some favourite girls of Hejjiye are given the chance to become suicide bombers. She exploits the girls to carry the burden of suicide attacks. The girls who do not obey Hejjiye's order are imprisoned as punishment and forced to marry jihadi fighters against their will. Halide, being disobedient to Hejjiye, faces harsh punishment in the orphanage. Halide faces severe punishment when she says to Jejjiye as: "I was taught to believe that Muslims, neither kill themselves nor to kill those who are innocent. I was taught that the prophet, peace be upon him, said that to kill one innocent person is the equivalent of destroying the world." (JJ: 141) She has been put in a cell in the orphanage without being given food and water for several days. Hejjiye arranges her marriage with a jihadi fighter as soon as she gets permission from her sister. Halide protests against the injustice which Hejjiye has imposed in the orphanage.

Khair has employed social media as an instrument in the novel. The extensive use of social media has played a significant role to mould the characters in *Jihadi Jane*. The social networking websites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have changed the lives of the protagonists- Jamilla and Ameena. The novel, *Jihadi Jane* depicts the life story of two school girls, Ameena and Jamilla in the U.K. They belong to British-Muslim families who have gone to Syria to join the jihad. They are misguided by Islamist principle that society should be reformed according to Islamic ideology. Both Jamilla and Ameena are influenced by Hejjiye, a wife of Jihadi extremist who recruits volunteers for the war in Syria over the internet. She is

involved in the insurgency group to fight against the Syrian government. Khair has depicted her character as:

> She used to go by the Twitter name of 'Hejjiye', a word that means 'pilgrim' and is usually employed to refer to old women in parts of Arabia. For all I know, she might still be around on Facebook and Twitter. I do not care to find out now. Hejjiye was completely involved in the insurrection in Syria. She posted accounts of the bravery of the jihadists and knavery of the regime forces and so-called secular opposition. Sometimes the information that she- and others like her- posted on Twitter was at variance with what the Western media reported. You would imagine that such discrepancies would have discredited her in our eyes. By no means! Ameena and I had no trust in the Western media: we saw them- and even today I feel that there was an element of truth in our perception- an 'embedded' reporters, catering to their governments' requirements in most cases, and blinded by their own cultural assumptions in almost all. (JJ: 57-58)

Hejjiye always motivates the younger Muslim generation to join jihad for the salvation of Islam religion through her Facebook and Twitter account. She provokes the protagonists-Jamilla and Ameena to fight against the ruling Government in Syria. She posts various messages praising the bravery of jihadists. They make their journey to Syria for joining the jihadi militant without having knowledge of jihad and their activities in real life situation. Ameena is married to a Jihadi cadre and Jamilla marries a Daesh fighter in Syria. They dedicate themselves to preserve their religion. Both the girls are very impressed by Hejjiye for her posts on Twitter about the untrustworthy nature of regime forces who work as secular opposition in Syria. Jallima does not have faith in Western media's report because it is a biased presentation with their cultural assumption. She also suggests his brother and his wife to follow Hejjiye's posts on Twitter. Her posts in social media comprise as:

"Muslims under attack, the duplicity of the West, the lack of faith of Muslims, the role of a wife, the decency expected from women, etc." (JJ: 59)

The internet plays a great role for communication among different jihadi fighters in the novel. Ameena has described her busy life in the orphanage in Syria. She is chatting with Hejjiye who has been posting strange information regarding a great victory for Islam. Hejjiye's husband has been made a commander of Daesh. She is very happy in describing about recent Daesh victories. Ameena further opens her Facebook page and introduces her future bridegroom, Hassan with Jamilla. Hassan is a young man about thirty years old who hides his face with a checked scarf. Ameena has given a description of her future husband as:

> She opened her Facebook page and clicked on the page of one of her Facebook friends. The photo was that of a man probably in his late thirties, with a checked scarf hiding one side of his face, shading his eyes. He had a long face, not unhandsome, with strong cheekbones and a curly beard. Behind him there seemed to be a ruin. 'This is Hassan,' said Ameena, 'He is my bridegroom.' I sat up. His beard was speckled with grey. He wore a magazine carrier with pockets for grenades, and a gun- "a scoped M4 rifle,' Ameena informed me, 'his favourite weapon'- was slung at his side. Black patches with white Arabic writing adorned the sleeves of his uniform. In his hand, he held a large dagger with a dark blade. (JJ: 73-74)

The Western media plays a very significant role in shaping the characters of the female protagonists- Ameena and Jamilla. Khair has vividly mentioned the use of Internet and other social media like - YouTube, Facebook and Twitter by almost all the characters in this novel. The female characters are habituated by social media. The Western media misinterprets Islam religion which frustrates the protagonists in the novel. Ameena and

Jamilla devoted themselves to lead a more Islamic life in Syria. Ameena starts reading the holy Quran and performs Salah (prayer) regularly. Hassan is an active cadre of jihadi militant who is well equipped with a scoped M4 rifle, grenades and a large dagger with a dark blade. Ameena informs Jamilla about Hassan's identity and his ventures in jihadist activities. But Jamilla does not like her proposal to marry Hassan as he is posted to a distant place. Hassan and Ameena's marriage ceremony is solemnized at the orphanage. Hassan takes Ameena to a hotel in the Town where they have spent only two nights together. Hejjiye tweets that Daesh bears all the expenses of their honeymoon in the hotel as a bonus to a jihadi fighter. In the next day, Hassan starts out for the place where he has been posted after his honeymoon: "With their bridal bed sheet stained with the artificial blood of the made-in-China hymen." (JJ: 163)

Jamilla has described her experiences in orphanage which is used by extremist organization like Daesh in Syria. She considers it to be a safe place. Daesh extremist group is blasting bombs in nearby areas to prove their power and existence. Daesh fighters are using the orphanage as a training centre for young Muslim girls who are brought from different places for their terrorist activities. Hejjiye has been taking care of it. There is an abandoned madrasa which is used as a school for girls. In recent times it is rebuilt as a model school for educating the children of jihadi fighters which is taken care of by Hejjiye. The little children are taught the Quran and the Hadith as well as some Daesh-sanctioned commentaries on these texts. Hejjiye runs the classes with other foreign teachers. Jamilla has remarked about the function of the orphanage as:

> Daesh had selected the orphanage on purpose; parts of it had been built as a madrasa two or three centuries ago, or perhaps earlier. Such historical dates existed in a blur for Hejjiye and us. The madrasa had been abandoned. But in modern time, it had been

> restored and expanded into a school for girls, with an orphanage attached to it. Known as the only institution of the sort in those parts, it had escaped the civil war because of its reputation. The various sides had not fought their battles in or around it, though the Shia houses behind it had been attacked and destroyed by the victorious Daesh. The orphanage still seemed to be functioning. At least, that is the impression I got. About two dozen orphans- some of them young women- lived in the students' dormitories on one side of the building. (JJ: 107-108)

Jamilla has narrated that the older women are given the responsibility as teachers to educate the children of jihadi militants. The younger women are kept to be the future bride for jihadi militants and young girls are prepared by giving proper training to be suicide bombers. Hejjiye's most trusted girls are given the responsibility to become suicide bombers. Halide is also a member of the jihadi extremist group like Jamilla, who expresses her view that killing someone on purpose or to become a suicide bomber is prohibited in Islam religion. She is confused about the ideology of the Daesh fighters who kill the innocent people. So, she refuses to become a suicide bomber. She persuades other girls not to become a killer of innocent people. As a result, she is imprisoned in a cell without any food as a punishment by Hejjiye. Jamilla is also surprised to think that the Daesh militants are very orthodox people who had banned mathematics and literature subjects in the orphanage. They think that the Western subjects should not be taught to their children which are un-Islamic in accordance with the Hadith.

5.5 Islamic Fundamentalism and Tableeghi Jamait

Islamic Fundamentalism (Arabic*: usul*, the "fundamentalists") is the group of religious ideologies seen as advocating a return to the "fundamentals" of Islam: the

Quran and Sunnah. American historian Ira Lapidus calls Islamic fundamentalism "an umbrella designation for a very wide variety of movements, some intolerant and exclusivist, some pluralistic; some favourable to science, some anti-scientific; some primarily devotional and some primarily political; some democratic, some authoritarian; some pacific, some violent. He distinguishes between mainstream Islamists and Fundamentalists, saying a fundamentalist is "a political individual" in search of a "more original Islam," while the Islamist is pursuing a political agenda. (1990: 823)

Tablighi Jamaat is a proselytising group and orthodox believers who spread the Islamic thoughts and faith. Basically, they are trained missionaries who have dedicated much of their lives in spreading Islam across the world. They reach the ordinary Muslims and revive their faith, mainly in matters of rituals, dress, personal behaviour, and so on. Some academics describe the group as an apolitical devotional movement stressing individual faith, introspection, and spiritual development.

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Khandhalawi was one of the prominent Deobandi cleric and scholar and propounder of the Tablighi Jamaat in 1927 in Mewat, India. It was a movement which was launched to reform the personal religious practices and defense the Islamic faith as well as Muslim minority populations. Since Ilyas, the Tablighi Jamaat leaders have been related to him by either marriage or blood. And after the death of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Khandhalawi in 1944, his son Maulana Muhammad Yusuf assumed the leadership. Following the partition of India, Tablighi Jamaat spread rapidly in the new nation of Pakistan.

In the 1950s and onwards, it was spread pan-India and throughout the world. In 1970s, the rapid expansion of the movement into non-Muslim regions began and coincides with the establishment of a synergistic relationship between Saudi Wahhabis

and South Asian Deobandis. Wahhabis are dismissive of other Islamic schools. They single out Tablighi Jamaat for praise. In the late twentieth century, the most influential Wahhabi cleric Sheikh Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz recognised Tablighis' good work and encouraged his Wahhabi brethren to go on missions with them so that they can guide and advise them. It is also said that Tablighi Jamaat is an offshoot of the Deobandi movement. In two decades the organisation grew bigger and established in several parts of India. Around 150-250 million members are there in the organisation at present. It has a good presence also in the United States, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore etc.

The Indian headquarter of Tablighi Jamaat is situated at Nizamuddin which is famous as Markaz. Maulana Saad Khandhalwi, great-grandson of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas is appointed as a head to run the organization. The Tablighi people travel various places to preach the Islamic culture and practices in India. These preachers are scheduled well in advance and Markaz functions as a hostel and accommodation of the Tablighi people. It can accommodate more than 9000 people at any given point of time. In Markaz, preachers participate in several instructional activities. At congregation functions, they divide themselves into small groups and appoint a senior member as a leader of that group. These groups visit the designated destinations through mosques to spread Islamic practices among Muslims.

In *Night of Happiness*, Khair has depicted welfare activities of Tableeghi Jamait to reform the society. Ahmed, being a Sunni Muslim, is a follower of the Tablighi Jamaat who marries a Hindu girl without insisting on conversion to Islam. His father belongs to the society of Tablighi Jamaat who aims to spread the message of the Quran

among the Muslim people who do not practise it. The organization works for peace and brotherhood in society. The narrator expresses his keen desire to explore religious perspectives of the Tablaghi Jamaat as:

> Ahmed's father belonged to the Tableeghi Jamait. This is a small but thriving society among religious Muslims, which is best understood in terms of evangelism, the report explained. These are Muslims who believe that the message of the Quran has to be spread, especially among other Muslims who, in their opinion, have forgotten it. In secular terms, one can describe the society as fundamentalist, but it is both pacifist and, unlike organizations like Jamait-e-Islami, not political. They see themselves as modern, not as tradition or fundamentalists. Their stress is on education and living an ethical life defined by Islamic precepts. While they insist on strict purdah in public, they also encourage women to get an education and seek respectable work. (NH: 71-72)

The Tableeghi Jamaat is a non-political organization that works for education and social upliftment from Islamic point of view. The organization gives stress on using purdah by the Muslim women in public places. It gives stress on education for woman encouraging them to work to establish themselves in society. The narrator explains that the organization can also be termed as fundamentalist who opposes the Westernizing influences on Islamic society. He says that the organization has provided a job of knitting to Ahmed's mother after the death of her husband. She earns her livelihood as well as provides good education to Ahmed. The organization takes the responsibility to teach Ahmed Arabic and Urdu simultaneously in a local mosque. The narrator describes Ahmed's childhood as: "In his spare time, he ran errands for his mother- mostly delivering and fetching her work (saris to be mended with fine raffoo work, pullovers to

be knitted, salwars or trousers to be repaired) from other houses in Muruganj, and especially from the houses of members of the Tableeghi Jamait who made an effort to provide Ammajaan with work and Ahmed with tutelage." (NH: 78-79) Anil Mehrotra, the narrator, feels that he should know the society of Tableeghi Jamaat that will solve the mystery of the invisible halwa which Ahmed has served him. The incident of halwa in the Shab-e-baraat night is a creation of a troubled mind of Ahmed in the novel.

In *Night of Happiness*, Khair has presented Indian society in a realistic manner which has been influenced by postcolonial psychology. He has taken his mouthpiece from Westernized background in Indian context. The author has reflected dominating attitude of aristocratic class through the characters of Anil Mehrotra and Devi Prasad who subjugated the poor and weaker sections in the society. He has focused on class division and alienation which are the creations of rich people like them. Class division is one of the important tenets of racism that has beautifully been reflected in the characters of Anil Mehrotra and Devi Prasad. They are Westernized Indians who are colonizing the society through clashes of social status in existing society. The story of *Night of Happiness* is described from a notes found by someone in a five-star hotel room. Anil Mehrotra is the writer and the narrator of the notes, who has described his lost ethnic identity in society. He is a follower of Hinduism but knows nothing about his religion and Indian cultural. Instead of knowing Indian cultural heritage he has adopted American way of life and culture. Khair remarks that it happens because he is brought up and educated in America. Although he is not an immigrant, he becomes an assimilated postcolonial character having a Western lifestyle in Indian society.

Ahmed is a victim of religious discrimination who was rejected for being a Muslim in the interview conducted by Anil Mehrotra. But, later he is appointed in a job

of export-import business for his efficient communication skill in different languages. He begins his career as a tourist guide in Bodh Gaya. The author describes his reputation as: "He was now being booked before 'parties' reached Bodh Gaya, sometimes even when they were still in Bangkok or Tokyo." (NH: 83)

5.6 Polygamy in Islamic Society

The word Polygamy (from Greek origin '*polygamía*') "is a state of marriage to many spouses" and in other words it is the practice of marrying multiple spouses. When a man is married to more than one wife at the same time, sociologists call this polygyny. When a woman is married to more than one husband at a time, it is called polyandry. Many Muslim-majority countries and some countries with sizable Muslim minorities accept polygamy to varying extents both legally and culturally; some secular countries like India also accept it to varying degrees. Islamic law or *sharia* is a religious law forming part of the Islamic tradition which allows polygamy.

Tabish Khair has beautifully focused on the practice of polygamy as a social institution in Islamic society especially in India. The Quran has permitted a man to have up to four wives in Islam religion. Hejjiye runs the orphanage by the help of her three co-wives. She is the oldest wife of the Daesh commander who treats all the four wives equally. Hejjiye behaves with them as little sisters rather than co-wives. They also obey her instructions with respect. She makes good arrangements of marriage for the young ladies in the orphanage with jihadi militants. They are convinced to marry jihadi fighters who dedicate their lives to the service of Islamic society. Khair comments on Hejjiye as:

> We knew that she lived in a house in the Town. Where her husband sometimes spent the nights. Like all other women, she never ventured out of home alone; she would be accompanied by at least one of her husband's three wives, sometimes all three of

> them. But she was the oldest of the lot, and in any case, they behaved more like her little sisters than co-wives. She could tell them what to do and they would execute her commands with absolute obedience. No wonder the thought crossed my mind that Hejjiye was so happy about the institution of polygamy, sometimes I had accepted as part of my faith but never really had to face up to until then: her husband's three wives were each the perfect combination of sister and slave to her. I wondered what her co-wives thought of the institution. But I pushed the thought away from my mind: after all, Islam did sanction four wives. (JJ: 100-101)

Her husband's three wives render their service as sisters and slaves to her. Jamilla expresses her surprise that all the three co-wives are working together for the institution. Hassan, a jihadi commander also follows polygamy by marrying Ameena for the second time. Hejjiye arranges their marriage in the orphanage. Hassan's earlier wife and her children welcome Ameena as soon as they reach home. The previous wife of Hassan is very happy to get Ameena as a young wife. Hassan and Ameena's marriage ceremony is solemnized by following the Islamic perspective of polygamy. Ameena gives consent to marry Hassan obeying the Islam law of marriage. Ameena has learnt that besides her, Hassan has already had two wives which remain unknown to her. She feels as: "a woman's job is to own up to all errors, not to blame them on her husband. She later discovered that Hassan had yet another wife- and children- safely quartered with his parents in Riyadh." (JJ: 171) Hassan's older wife is an illiterate villager who addresses Ameena as young wife. She accepts Ameena as her companion and analyst to safeguard her from her flawed and tribal Islam in Hassan's perfect world of Islamism. She helps to improve her Arabic language. Ameena is also trying to educate her co-wife's children. Hassan has been encouraged to marry again by his wife to follow the path of Islamic law

of polygamy. At last, Ameena realises that she has made a mistake in marrying Hassan who does not respect her bookish knowledge of Islam. He believes only in technological Islam which is taught and practiced by his group leader. Ameena has described Hassan's religion as: "Hassan's Islam was a do-it-yourself manual for… for what? Ameena did not know: it was either for living a certain kind of life or for gaining certain kind of death, or perhaps both." (JJ: 176) Ameena has discovered that Hassan does not respect her knowledge of the Quran. Khair has depicted the practice of polygamy in Hassan's life with his act of terrorism in *Jihadi Jane*.

Identity crisis is one of the most dominant themes in the novels of Tabish Khair. In *Night of Happiness*, the notion of identity crisis is explored from social realism point of view. He has depicted the character of Roshni who does not have recognition in the society. Being a Hindu lady she is married to Ahmed, a Muslim. She is rejected both by Hindu and Muslim societies because of inter-religious marriage. She is killed mercilessly by Hindu fundamentalists. Her identity remains a mystery because the author has not clarified her parents' identity and religion whether they belong to Hindu, Muslim or Buddist. Khair has introduced her as a mysterious figure for readers to define. Khair has remarked on her belongingness as:

> Who is she? He later asked one of the men. She was given a name, a Hindu one. But another man corrected the first one and gave another name, a Christian one this time. A third man offered a third name. She was a woman of various names. One of them was Roshni. The basic facts of Roshni's life were commonly known, and the men took turns narrating them to Ahmed, though in a hushed voice. She lived upstairs with her mother, who was said to be Muslim and was Jogi's keep. They used the English word 'keep'. The mother was ailing now and surely it was generous of Jogi to let her stay on, as she could not be of any further use to

> him, could she, and there had always been friction between her and Jogi's rightly wedded wife, who lived downstairs with him. (NH: 100)

Roshni faces a lot of obstacles as soon as she has been married to Ahmed. Their Muslim society does not accept their marriage as both of them are representing different religions. But Ahmed's mother is happy that her son's marriage is performed by a mullah. The neighbourers feel that their marriage cannot be granted in their community because she comes from a Hindu family. They do not accept Ahmed's claim that Roshni is a Muslim girl from Bodh Gaya. Their relatives are unhappy with their marriage and express their regret against her as: "Roshni does not look like a Muslim, said those who did not know anything about her. And those who had heard about her from Bodh Gaya said, 'who knows what her father was?" (NH: 112)

Roshni lives in the house of Jogi with her ailing mother who is supposed to be Muslim. She works at his dhaba to earn her livelihood. Jogi claims that she is his natural daughter. Khair mentions that there has always been quarrel between Roshni and Jogi's legal wife because of his sympathetic nature towards Roshni. Her relationship with Ahmed is developing when he starts going to Jogi's dhaba for food. He also helps her to bring medicine and consult doctors for her ailing mother. In this way, their marriage is arranged and performed by a mullah. She struggles hard to assimilate in the society after marriage. But she is murdered by Hindu extremist in the Gujarat riot in 2002. It is an ironic situation in the novel that being a Hindu, she is killed for Muslim identity. Roshni who imitates her mother-in-law is protected by her as: "How can a Muslim be converted to Islam?" (NH: 112) Roshni's feeling of isolation deepens when she is denied by her society. Her identity remains in confusion till her tragic end.

Ahmed, the protagonist of the novel, becomes a victim of identity crisis in the society as soon he marries Roshni who belongs to Hindu religion. He is abandoned for his unexpected marriage after his mother's death by the Islamic society. He cannot but leaves his native town and separates himself from his society. He lives a solitary life after the death of his wife, Roshni who is killed by Hindu fundamentalists during the riot. Ahmed is born in a conservative Muslim family following strict principles of the Tableeghi Jamait. He has got the opportunity to interact with other cultures and religions when he is working as a tourist guide in Bodh Gaya. He has been alienated from his community for the reason that he has given up Friday prayer in the mosque. Besides that, the society does not like him for having Hindu and Buddhist friends. The feeling of identity crisis has led Ahmed to alienate himself from the society. In *Night of Happiness*, the author has skillfully used the symbol of 'invisible halwa' to portray the psychological problem of Ahmed who serves Anil Mehrotra in the night of Shab-e-baraat. The readers are bewildered to recognize whether halwa is invisible or Anil Mehrotra is unable to see it. Khair has depicted the mental condition of Ahmed while he urges Mehrotra to taste the halwa prepared by his wife as:

> I put down my glass and picked up my plate. It was then that it did not contain any halwa. There was pile of nimkis and a small spoon on the plate, but no halwa. At first, it just struck me as an omission: Ahmed may simply forgotten, in his hurry not to detain me longer than necessary, to put halwa- that famous maida ka halwa he always talked about- on my plate! I was going to bring this to his notice with a joke; I glanced up at Ahmed, who was busy eating. My jokey rerark was aborted by the sight of the plate that Ahmed was holding. There was no halwa on it either! Only, as was the case with my plate, a pile of nimkis and a stainlewss-steel spoon. (NH: 32-33)

Anil Mehrotra is asked several times to taste maida ka halwa which is not given to him on his plate. He is served only nimkis with a spoon on his plate. Anil Mehrotra feels that he may forget to give him halwa, a famous dish of Shab-e-baraat festival. But he is surprised when Ahmed is insisting on him to taste it from his plate. He is busy in easting halwa which is not seen on his plate. Mehrotra is horrified to see his eating ghostly halwa from his dish. It is a humiliation for Mehrotra by his employee because he is forced to taste invisible it again and again. Khair has depicted the pathetic condition of Mehrotra who cannot help testing imaginary halwa as: "Yes, I was humiliated, because I felt forced; I felt I had to act a role. What would happen; if I were to say, Ahmed you are crazy, there is no halwa on our plates… which would be disrespectful too, that sort of liberty taken with someone who paid his salary." (NH: 36) He has been having hallucination for his deceased wife, Roshni and feels that she is still living with him. His feeling of isolation is intensified as soon as he is terminated from his job and given one year's leave with full salary for medical treatment. His separation from society as well as from his job leads him to destruction. The author has presented through the character of Ahmed how identity crisis can destroy an honest man, his family as well as the society.

In this novel, Khair has depicted the problem of identity crisis in Indian English writers' community who live abroad. They are proud of being Indians but know nothing about the greatness of Indian heritage. The author has criticized a British writer of Indian origin who is considered as the son of the nation. He has won a major literary award for his creative writing who is participating in a festival in Hong Kong. The Indian publishers arrange a grand feast to felicitate him for his publicity. He represents Indian art, culture and literature in foreign nations although he visits India for the

second time. Khair has revealed that it is not justified to consider him as a representative of Indian culture who has little knowledge about India. Being a writer of great fame and a son of the nation, he is encircled by admiring ladies, aspiring writers as well as well wishers. The author has remarked on him as:

> The son of the nation was, as far as I could see, standing surrounded by a lot of admiring daughters of the nation (and a couple of other nations) in one corner of the hall. This being only his second trip to the country, as the missus had informed me, he must have arrived on time, and was now waiting for the deputy minister and the senior writer to make their appearance. The storm was not the reason those two were late; they would have been the last to arrive in any case. The son of the nation still had to learn the national trick of arriving fashionably late, I thought. (NH: 41)

The narrator's wife has informed him that he must attend on time but he is waiting for the deputy minister and senior writers to accompany him to the conference hall. The guests of honour and the senior writers are arriving late because of the storm. The author has ridiculed the nature of Indian people who are habituated to arrive late in any occasion but the son of the nation has to learn the national trick of arriving late in an event. The hall is decorated to felicitate the great writer who is a pride for the nation. The deputy minister inaugurates the programme giving stress on the importance of sports and health more than of literature in India. The politician assumes that the novel may be written on games and sports as he notices a sketch of cricket bat on the title page. The publisher claims that the new book has redeveloped magical realism which is reflected on the title page of the book. It is an irony that the new novel which is launched, has nothing to do with sports and health. But he asserts that the book

contributes to us as: “to explode the narrow reality of our world and fill it with a universe of worlds, what work of literature can hope to do more than that?” (NH: 45)

5.7 Identity Crisis in Aristocratic Class

An identity crisis is a development event that involves a person questioning their sense of self or place in the world. The concept originates in the works of developmental psychologist Erik Erickson, who believed that the formation of identity was one of the most important conflicts that people face. Identity involves the experiences, relationship, beliefs, values and memories that make a person’s subjective sense of sense.

In *Night of Happiness*, Khair has depicted the problem of identity crisis among aristocratic class in Indian society. Anil Mehrotra, the mouthpiece of the novel, suffers from loss of identity throughout the novel. He has started export-import business in India after completing his M.B.A. and Ph.D. degree in Business Communication from Columbia University in America. Being an Indian, he has not acquainted with Indian culture and religion. He has associated himself more with the Western civilization rather than Indian traditions. The author conveys a message that golf symbolizes social status of elite class which is reflected in the characters of Anil Mehrotra and Devi Prasad. Both of them have played the role of colonizers who try to dominate the society through their international export-import business in India. Devi Prasad represents elite class in Indian society who runs a private investigating agency to help people investigate social crimes demanding a handsome amount of fees from his clients. Anil Mehrotra also takes his help to investigate one of his employees, Ahmed’s private life who has served him invisible halwa in his flat in the Shab-e-baraat festival. Mehrotra, being a client of Devi

Prasad, feels that their children should be trained up to play golf together in the weekend. Their respective wives took their children to the club once a week to train them by an instructor. The author has remarked on the parental care for children of elite class in the society as:

> But I had no trouble getting admitted to him: I was an old client and we played golf together. Or rather our kids did- We had children about the same age, though Devi was a bit older than me- as our respective wives had decided the kids had to play golf. So, once a week, we took them to the club, where an instructor put them through their paces, while we reclined, drink in hand, on wicker chairs outside the club restaurant. This was expected of us, as fathers. The mothers took care of the chore on the other golf-training day of each week. (NH: 54-55)

Anil Mehrotra does not hesitate to tell everything about Ahmed's life to Devi Prasad and desires him to have investigated his domestic and personal circumstances. Being an old client and a good friend, Mehrotra gives him the responsibility to inspect Ahmed's insanity. Anil Mehrotra is very fond of golf, a Western game which symbolizes aristocracy and glamour in society. His love for Western lifestyle alienates him from the others. He remains busy in investigating Ahmed's personal life to find out the truth of invisible halwa, which was served to him. He is bewildered to think about Ahmed's illusion of halwa prepared by Roshmi, his wife who is no more in this world. Khair has presented Anil Mehrotra and Devi Prasad as Westernised characters in Indian society who try to dominate common people in the society. Their civilized attitude separates them from others. The author clarifies that although India gets independence from the British Rule, yet we are not free from the subjugation as well as anxiety of alienation which is still prevailing in our society. The elite class, Anil Mehrotra and Devi Prasad have alienated themselves by adopting Western culture. Khair has depicted the

innermost condition of his mouthpiece, Anil Mehrotra who is horrified to receive a tiffin box kept in the office room in his absence. He remarks as: "I found something wrapped in a clean white towel lying on my desk. I was surprised. I unknotted the towel and its folds revealed a still tiffin box- exactly like the one Ahmed used to bring with him… a delicious smell was emanating from it." (NH: 141) He questions himself about his existence and fears about his possible madness like Ahmed. He cannot help facing the truth by opening the tiffin box which is full of nimkis and halwa.

The Body by the Shore (2022) is the latest novel of Tabish Khair which is narrated from the perspective of the post-pandemic world around 2030. He has moved back to depict the social calamity of the 21st century, and a bits and pieces from the 20th and the 19th century. The author has depicted the the incident of a dead body of a Black man which was recovered from the sea shore of the North Sea some years ago in Denmark. This unpleasant incident annoys a retiring police officer, Jens Erik who tries to find out the criminals behind this brutal murder. The abandoned oil rig has turned into a resort in the North Sea for the rich Michelle, a young Caribbean woman who realised that the man she has followed to this job is not the unidentified dead body what he clims to be. The author has highlighted illegal activities of a science laboratory which organizes seminar on on plants, fungi and microbes in 2007 where most of the participants are dead people. He has highlighted the secret weapon that causes pandenic situation and mass killings. Khair has depicted suspense and speculation about the complexities of life. The novel deals with social realism themes like exploitation, identity crisis, racial discrimination, misuse of science and technology in the society. The novel is a social document of the 21st century dealing with life and death, reason and emotion, love and despire, greed and hope of human race who is terrorized by microbes during the pandemic situation.

5.8 Conclusion

Jihadi Jane is one of the famous novels of Tabish Khair which deals with the theme of extremism in the 21st century. The thought provoking novel is a tragic story of two Muslim immigrants in the Western society who were misguided by Islamic extremist group like ISIS (Islamic State of Iran and Syria) to fight for the cause of Islamic faith. The novel assists to observe that how one gets brainwashed and how fanaticism through social media used by fanatics to ambush vulnerable people. In this novel the author has attempted to answer the question, why the well educated people of the Third World country like India, joined the jihad group. As far as the novel is concerned from social realism point of view, there are the themes of jihad, war, marriage and alienation emerging simultaneously in the novel. The novel comprises of ten sections in which various events have been depicted very apparently by the author. The novel is about two Muslim girls who joined the jihad group in an Islamic state, Syria. The novel has portrayed the horror brought by a gang of terrorists. The two female protagonists, Ameena and Jamilla were misguided by some miscreants, like Hejjie who run the extremist organization in Syria. Khair has highlighted the social problems like- exploitation of women in the West, Islamophobia, religious prejudices, polygamy in Islamic society and identity crisis.

The Muslim paranoia of being invaded by non-Muslims prevents Muslim immigrants from being a part of the Western society. However; it is impossible to avoid the Western culture completely while living inside it. In spite of Abba's fear of losing his lineage in the West and his effort to raise his children as Arabs, Jamilla and his brother Mohammad's first language is English. This problematic identity pattern is what Jamilla complains since she is aware of the fact that she does not share his first language

even with her mother. The feeling of alienation is felt more deeply by Muslim immigrant women in the West. While it is quite hard to be an immigrant, they also experienced the disadvantages of being Muslim women for several reasons. It is more difficult for Muslim women to integrate into the Western society than Muslim men since the men of their Muslim community do not want them to work and have communication with the outside world for religious reasons. Socially, the main duty of a woman in a Muslim community is to take care of the housework and raise her children.

Khair has pointed out the submissive role of Muslim women in the novel. They are not allowed to take part in social institutions. It is proved in the incident that Jamilla's mother is not allowed to visit her husband's grave to pray. However; his son objects to this idea since it is against Islam to allow women to visit graveyards. Despite her weak objection, her son does not allow her to go. Besides this submissive role forced by Muslim men in the community, Muslim women are also alienated by the Western society as immigrants. It is easier for them to be recognized as Muslim immigrants when they are outside since they wear *hijab* and *niqab* to cover themselves. It is a challenging experience for Muslim women in the West since it is nearly impossible. They are mostly seen as the symbol of Islamist terrorism and treated like a supporter of terrorist groups just because their dressing style. For this reason, Jamilla expresses that it takes strength and courage to be a Muslim woman in the West.

Therefore; being a Muslim immigrant is quite complicated in the West for the reasons abovementioned. As an author who knows the psychology of these people as an immigrant in the West, Khair pictures quite simple examples, which makes their life very hard. These simple facts are mostly invisible to non-Muslims or Muslims not living in a foreign culture. This notion of alienation and struggle to survive in a foreign

culture are among the reasons for Muslim immigrants why they radicalized religiously. Through the narration of Jamilla, Khair has questioned how Ameena adopts the path of radicalization in the West. He asks the question whether her attendance to the mosque lectures or some other reasons such as her family relationships radicalize her. After being rejected and insulted by her social surrounding in the school, Ameena has alienated herself from the outside world and adopted a fundamental Islamist perspective with effect of Jamilla who tries to bring back someone to the Islamic faith.

Without imputing to Western concept of Jihad, the writer Tabish Khair has put a new perception or jihad. He has made transparent the perspectives of jihad in front of his readers and has inspired his characters to expand their hearts once they entered in Jihad themselves. What we usually think about jihad is not a complete Juxtaposition with its reality described in the holy Quran and Hadith. The author is certainly admirable for developing up such a relevant thought that has influenced the contemporary world to the extent that the world seems sitting on civilization encounter. Of course, Ammena's death was extra ordinary because she acted on the principle of one versus three. In order to save three lives of Jamilla, Dilnza and Sera she put forward the sacrifice of her own life. Jamilla comes to an attractive small country, Bali she wants to lead a life of invisibility and ignored the thought of returning back to England to her family because she was the cause of pain and humiliation. *Jihadi Jane* has been written in ten chapters, each augmenting and enhancing the strength of the masterful narrative. Moreover, each part of the novel has a separate theme depicting the realities of our times in its terrifying depth. Khair explained that the violence and death can never be the actual substitute of true faith. He has powerfully resolved the religious

deceitfulness and mockery of one of this era. This book can also be categorized as a dystopian novel.

In *Night of Happiness*, the author has depicted the burning issues of Indian society in the 21st century from historical perspectives. He has revealed the contemporary reflections of identity crisis caused by historical background of colonialism. It is set in India which focuses on social realism themes like- identity crisis, religious prejudices, Hindu-Muslim riots, Islamic fundamentalism and polygamy in Islamic society by providing multiple perspectives. The novel has put some questions how different cultures of the past, shape current social and individual dimensions creating the third space individuals by portraying characters with different races, genders and economic backgrounds.

Khair has portrayed a clear picture of contemporary postcolonial India in *Night of Happiness*. He argues that alienation is a traditional habit which has been created in the time of colonization and it is even observed in formerly colonized society of contemporary India. By creating westernized Indian characters like Anil Mehrotra and Devi Prasad, Khair has proved that rich and aristocrat class of the colonized society are playing the role of the colonizer in the postcolonial society by separating themselves from the poorer section in the society. He has mocked such westernized characters as they are not regarded as assimilated and integrated to the colonizing culture since they are just mimic shadows of it. The author has proved this change in the character of Anil Mehrotra who is confused about his own reality when he cannot decide whether he or Ahmed has delusions. Roshni and Ahmad are perfect examples as characters who are trying to identify themselves in the society. But, the society does not allow them because of their inter-religious marriage. Ahmed is a victim of racial prejudices who

had been rejected for being a Muslim in the interview conducted by Anil Mehrotra. Later, he was appointed in a job of export-import business for his efficient skills in communication. His wife, Roshni faces a lot of problems as soon as she was married to Ahmed. Their Muslim society does not accept their marriage as both of them are representing different religions. Roshni was killed by Hindu nationalists during the Gujarat riot in 2002. Khair is famous for portraying lost characters as victims of the clash of civilizations and social injustice.

In *Night of Happiness*, Khair unfolds Mehrotra's suspicions of Ahmed and his struggle to find out the truth about Ahmed's personal life. He takes help from a private detective, Devi Prasad, to collect more information about Ahmed and his past. He begins to question even his own life and identity with his shocking findings about Ahmed and his wife's background. Throughout the novel, identity crisis comes out as a major theme in various aspects and Khair snipes the source of this crisis by sketching characters from different layers of postcolonial Indian society.

The main outcome of this domination in postcolonial society emerges as social and individual identity problems. This problematic issue of identity is common in all formerly colonized societies since these societies are in struggle to rediscover their cultures and form brand new identities for their states. There is not much to talk about identity unless it is in a problematic condition. As Mercer asserts: 'identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty.' (1995: 43) The unstable postcolonial atmosphere creates binary oppositions while defining personal and national identities. It is clear that people need others to define themselves which leads to otherness in society, and otherness causes dislocations of identity. Khair has presented

postcolonial characters realistically who suffer from disorders of identity and sense of belongingness. The psychology of deprived characters is demonstrated in the novel.

The narrator of the novel, Anil Mehrotra, is one of the best examples of postcolonial, disoriented individual. He is a Hindu businessman who studied in the west, and identifies himself more with the western culture rather than his native one. He does not know much about his country and culture. He has nothing to do with his native Hindu culture. On several pages in the novel, he describes his Hollywood-like life in his house with his family. From his descriptions, the reader understands that Mehrotra's family is quite rich with a large residence and several servants. He narrates a typical morning at home and it completely resembles to an opening scene of a Hollywood movie. Another important example of identity crisis in the novel is Roshni. She represents the other in the society. She is not accepted both by Muslims and Hindus. Everyone tries to define her in the novel but they are unable to do that. Roshni's in-between character ends up with the tragic murder of her.

Here, it is possible to say that Roshni is a true example of what immigrants feel in the West. In both Roshni's and immigrants' situations, the main problem is to be seen and accepted by the society. One of the most striking points is Roshni's murder in the novel. During the first years of her marriage, she tries hard to be accepted as a Muslim. However; Khair reveals that she is killed by Hindu fanatics in Gujarat Riots. Her murder is ironic since she is accused of being Muslim and interestingly, her origin seems to be a source of confusion again. One of the men in the crowd shouts at her by defining her as a 'Pakistani whore'. The most striking point in this event is that Roshni does not object to these claims from the crowd. She does not say anything even while she is being burned. This indicates that Roshni now knows it is useless to try to

persuade them or begging for their mercy. She is aware of her situation and simply gives up the idea of being accepted by them. She symbolically shares the same tragic end with many immigrants having problems in orientation and acceptance in the colonizer culture. The death of Roshni is a real trauma for Ahmed who also has serious identity problems. In the beginning of the novel, Ahmed is portrayed by Khair as a decent Muslim man who leads a modest life with his wife. However, as his story is revealed by the narrator, it is understood that Ahmed's life is also far from being simple. In this sense, Ahmed and Karim from Khair's another novel, *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* which will be held in the next chapter, have the same qualities as the minority in the society. They both lead simple lives although they have unsolved problems which are not revealed to the other characters around them.

Ahmed is a character who is in between his religious background and the multicultural atmosphere of his country. He is grown up in a highly conservative Muslim community, but during his days as a tourist guide, he has the chance to interact with other cultures and religions. Ahmed begins to alienate from his 'mohalla', and he becomes the main source of discontent among the community members since he gives up Friday prayers and has Hindu and Buddhist friends. His disapproved marriage and the death of his mother cut the link between him and his community. He leaves his hometown and alienates from the rest of the society. He starts to live as an introvert, and does not share anything with the rest of the people around him. This alienation causes orientation problems again, and it makes Ahmed another 'other' in the novel.

Khair has proved his talent in creating an ironical duplicity in the novel. It is hard to decide whether Anil or Ahmed lives in an illusion. However, it is also apparent that both of them have serious problems with their sense of belonging. Anil has

difficulties in defining himself as Hindu, and as it is mentioned before in this chapter, he does not have consistent knowledge about his country and culture. On the other hand, Ahmed and Roshni try hard to be accepted by the society, but they have the same difficulties with Anil in having a sense of belonging. These problems of identity lead the characters to alienate themselves from the reality, and Khair expresses this fact brilliantly in the novel by employing the symbol of 'invisible halwa'. The reader does not know for sure whether the halwa is invisible or it is Anil who cannot see the reality. It is nearly impossible to find out whose perception is deceptive. This dilemma is also valid in cultural relationships between the colonizer and the colonized since it is hard to say which perception is the reality.

Another important symbol of identity crisis in the novel is 'the son of the nation' case. Khair has portrayed an author of Indian origin called the son of the nation although it is just his second trip to the country. Khair overtly criticizes the contemporary Indian origin writers. According to him, it is nonsense to be seen as the representative of Indian culture without fully understanding it as an Indian. Claiming to be a narrator of the culture with a western mind is deceptive for Khair. His witty and sarcastic narration shows itself again in this part.

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Chapter-VI

Conclusion

6.1 SUMMARY

The concluding chapter presents an overview of the social realism theory and application of this in the fictional works of Tabish Khair as it is discussed in the preceding chapters. The chapter also justifies the place of Tabish Khair in the context of contemporary social realism writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K Narayan, Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy and others. Further, it discusses how the works of Tabish Khair have fostered the flow of literature in those writings after him. This chapter will sum up evaluating his prolific social realistic novels that have opened up the door for his contemporaries and posterity.

Through the literary career spanning about two decades, Tabish Khair has created a corpus of fiction which has called forth recognition and both controversy and appreciation. The quintessence of his achievement lies in exploring new avenues and forging and moulding a tradition for social realist writers and has emerged as a recognizable novelist of social realism. The significance of Tabish Khair's novels is that they depict the naked truth of life that prevails in the society. In his exposition on the role played by history, his awareness of social problems and the crumbling of barriers of the world, Tabish Khair fully voices the present day scenario. Above all, he is a keen observer of humanity, like Mulk Raj Anand and Arundhati Roy, he catches vividly with the lens of his sensitive camera, the burning issues of common people in society. He is truly a twenty-first century novelist capturing the epochal phenomenon of a post-colonial, pastoral, agricultural world becoming decolonized and the travails of poor

people in the third world countries like India. Above all, his novels are the mirror of society.

Tabish Khair's career as a fiction writer also upholds the magnificent tradition of social realism. The art of fictionalizing social realism has a rich tradition that can be traced several European, British and American writers as well as to writers all over the world. Khair's fictions and poetry reflecting society, project his life in different dimensions. The memory of his native place, Phansa in Bihar inspires him for writing his novels which guides and moulds his literature. His novels revolve around the burning issues of immigrants as well as their pain and suffering in Western society. He deals with the basic problem of human being in society like- racial as well as religious discrimination, casteism, alienation, Islamist terrorism and domination of the West. In his search for subjects to work on, he deemed it fit to write about the place he knew best- Phansa, Bihar, the land of his birth and upbringing. Tabish Khair had to struggle a great deal as an aspiring writer in Denmark.

6.2 Conclusion of Chapter-I

The first chapter introduces the reader to the fact that no study in the field of application of the Social Realism Theory in the fictional works of Tabish Khair has been attempted. Therefore; it is imperative that the thesis studies application of theory in literature minutely and brings out some new findings which will fulfill much coveted needs of literary criticism. The chapter further introduces the theory as well as a few major works of Tabish Khair.

The tern realism means a mode of writing that gives the impression of recording or 'reflecting' faithfully and actual way of life. It refers, sometimes confusingly, both to a literary method based on detailed accuracy of description (i.e. verisimilitude) and to a

more general attitude that rejects idealization, escapism, and other extravagant qualities of romance in favour of recognizing soberly the actual problems of life. Modern criticism frequently insists that realism is not a direct or simple reproduction of reality (a slice of life) but a system of conventions producing a lifelike illusion of some real world outside the text, by process of selection, exclusion, description and manners of addressing the readers. …as a dominant literary trend it is associated chiefly with the 19th century novel of middle or lower class life, in which the problems of ordinary people in unremarkable circumstances are rendered with close attention to the details of physical setting and to the complexities of social life. (2008: 281)

In India, Social realism, as a literary mode of writing is rejuvenated in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao in the 19th century. The emergence of the trinity is an important event in the realm of Indian English fiction. They have depicted the problems of downtrodden sections which were exploited by rich landlords during the British Rules in India. The rising Indian culture has been experiencing numerous social biases and the innovative personality of the authors responded to the hardship of the downtrodden class. In the anecdotal works of new generation writers like Vikran Seth, Manju Kapur, Aravind Adiga, Arundhati Roy, social realism is flourished again with pomp and grandeur. Tabish Khair handles authenticity with its established attributes and their writings resemble a mirror held against the awkward realities of Indian society. Social realism is revived in Indian novels, originated by Mulk Raj Anand goes on flourishing during the nineteen fifties and early sixties in the novels of Bhabani Bhatacharya, Monohar Malgonkar and Tabish Khair.

Social Realism was extensively applied in some famous Hindi films of the 1940s and 1950s. Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* (1946) is the first Indian film to gain

recognition at the Cannes Film Festival (International Film Festival). It was the only Hindi film to be awarded the Palme d'Or, Grand Prix. It was a pioneering effort in social realism for Indian cinema which paved the way for many film directors to produce new cinema focusing on social realism in films. Chetan Anand highlighted social problems like poverty, exploitation and injustice during the British Rule in India. The film, *Neecha Nagar* refers to an imaginary town, meaning physically downhill where poor people are residing. The folks from Ooncha Nagar, or the town situated uphill where rich people reside. When a rich businessman, named Sankar decides that the open sewage canal that takes away the dirt of Oocha Nagar, the town opposes. Sankar has a vested interest in the project, and the despite the growing opposition, he moves on with his plan. At one point, he says that the sewage canal is nothing but a stream of dirty water. When Neecha Nagar gets affected with an epidemic because of dirty living condition, Sankar made a hospital so that he can earn much money by exploiting the poor people. This film tells a story of the poor and homeless wanderer who have been subjugated as well as victimized by landlords during the British Rule in India.

Bimal Roy's *Two Acres of Land* (1953), is also a successful endeavour of realistic cinema which has got immense popularity. It was awarded the All India Certificate of Merit for Best Feature Film. It won Filmfare Best Movie Award as well as the first Hindi film to win the International Prize at the Cannes Film Festival (International Film Festival) after *Neecha Nagar* (1946). It paves the way for the new generation film producer in the realistic movement to highlight the social evils like-exploitation of poor by rich landlords, illiteracy, racial discrimination and religious intolerance in Indian society.

Ritwik Ghatak's *Nagarik* (1953), is a film based on social realism theme which is set in the post-partition of India. It revolves around the social as well as economic condition of Ramu, middle-class family and his gradual impoverishment. He is a jobless young man living with his parents in a rented house in a lower-class neighbourhood. He is unable to find a suitable job to run the family. Ramu's family takes a paying guest, Sagar to earn money for maintaining the family. He leaves his rented house and lives on pavement in a slum area as he cannot bear the house rent. His sister-in-law engages in prostitution to fulfill her financial needs. The film has focused on social issues like-religious prejudices, racial discrimination, prostitution and poverty after the partition in India.

Satyajit Ray's *The Apu Trilogy* (1955--59), is based on two Bengali novels written by Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay: *Pather Panchali* (1929) and *Aparajito* (1932). Ray's three films have won many national and international awards. The government of India honoured him with the Bharat Ratna, its highest civilian award in 1992. His three films centre round the life of a small boy Apu (Apurba Kumar Roy) in the early part of the 20th century. Apu was born in a poor Brahmin family in a village in Bengal. In spite of his poverty, he completed his schooling after his father's death. As a student, he was bright who moved to Calcutta to pursue higher education. He became self-centered to alienate himself from his mother and his native village. He desired to become a writer to earn his livelihood getting married to a girl against his mother's will. But their marriage ended in her death during childbirth after which the frustrated Apu could not help taking the responsibility of the child. Satyajit Ray has depicted rural society full of suffering, poverty, illiteracy and casteism in this film.

Shantaram's films *Indian Shylock* (1925), is the first film on social realism. The story of film is extracted from Hari Narayan Apte's novel *Savkari Haak* (call of a money lender), was about a poor cultivator who borrowed money from a moneylender but unable to pay back his debts on time. At last he was forced to sell his paddy field and moved to city for employment. He got a job in a mill as a worker bearing the hardship of city life. The film juxtaposed the trials of a city life with life in the village under debt and drought with everlasting struggle of a homeless wanderer. The story deals with exploitation of poor by rich money lender, religious prejudices and corruption during the British Rule in Indian. His another social classic, *The Unexpected* (1937), is based on the theme of injustice imposed to women by male-dominated Indian society. In this film, the story revolves around the character named Kamala, an orphaned young girl who is forcefully married to an old rich man against her will. It deals with the universal problem of women still today in villages, who are forcibly married to older men. Both the films are made on social issues, faced by poor villagers who toil hard to survive with dignity.

6.3 Chapter- II

The second chapter of the thesis has introduced the basic concepts of the social realism theory, referring to the major works of Tabish Khair as well as its basic tenets. He has focused on social realism concept in his novels, criticism and poems in an innovative manner. Being a social realist, he always bears anti-colonial attitude in his fictions. He bears the stamp of Indianness in Denmark and tries to assimilate the cultural values between homeland, Bihar and adopted nation, Denmark in his works. He is one of the pioneers of social realism who has mingled different themes relating to human life and society in India and abroad in his novels and academic articles. Being a

follower of Islam, Khair criticizes orthodox practices and religious exploitation of women in Muslim society by imams and religious preachers.

In his works, we have found social realism elements like exploitation of downtrodden section, religious prejudices, Islamophobia, extremism, alienation, identity crisis, regionalism, East-West counter etc. His works also reflect anti-colonial sentiment in post-independent Indian society which the common people face in the society. This chapter focuses on the biography of the novelist, Tabish Khair. His life and works have been discussed with social realism point of view. Tabish Khair is one of the pioneers of social realism fictions with anti-colonial spirit in Indian writing in English in the twenty first century. To name a few of this tradition are V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy and others. All these novelists try to show their regional spirit of their native places in their novels to assert Indian originality. Tabish Khair has highlighted his native village Phansa of Bihar, India in his novels. He has given a special description of his birth place Phansa, in his novels where he was born and brought up with bitter-sweet memories of his childhood. He has a deep feeling for India with its unity in diversity which has been paid a special attention in his fictions. Because of his love for India, almost all the characters in his novels are derived from Indian origin. Some of his writings project his autobiographical elements.

In *Babu Fictions*: *Alienation in the Contemporary Indian English Novels*, Khair has criticized some Indian novelists who have highlighted the problems of lower class people in their novels, without having been acquainted with them in reality. The term 'Babu' is referred to the upper class English speaking persons who are rich, cultured and privileged section in society. He has applied the term 'Coolie' to mean the

downtrodden section who are underprivileged, uneducated and marginalized in the society. The author complains that some Indian writers like Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan, V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh handle social realism theme to distinguish between the babu and coolie class in Indian society. Khair asserts that it is an insincerity of the novelists, who belong to aristocratic class to represent hunger, exploitation, pain and suffering of the low caste community in Indian society. He argues that it is unjustified to write in English about people who can neither speak nor write English language. So, they cannot understand the creative works of the elite novelists who have depicted their painful lives. These novelists present social realism theme for the sake of their own satisfaction.

Khair has focused on some basic social issues like racism, exploitation, alienation, class division in *Babu Fictions*. He talks about alienation in society which is one of the major aspects in the works of Anita Desai and Raja Rao. The novels, *Javni* and *The Little Gram Shop* deal with the theme of alienation of man from his family and society. Racism is another burning issue which is generated from colour discrimination in the society. Khair discusses that the West is considered superior to the East because of colour and racial prejudices. The society is divided on the basis of caste, race, ethnicity, religion and economic inequality. In *Babu Fictions*, Khair has highlighted the tenets of social realism novels with anti-colonial attitude.

6.4 Chapter-III

The third chapter has dealt in detail of the concept of the social realism theory by exhibiting its major exponents and its basic tenets in Tabish Khair's earlier novels namely- *The Bus Stopped* and *Filming: A Love Story*. The author has depicted social realism theme and content in a realistic manner. These two novels represent some

common features highlighting some issues of Indian society like- racial discrimination, exploitation of downtrodden section, religion and gender based discrimination, prostitution, use of barbed wire, partition, and national spirit. *The Bus Stopped* is a travelogue in which the author has put many characters from different walks of life. Khair has extracted the characters from downtrodden section, different religions and racial groups, showing unity in diversity in India. The driver of the bus, Mangal Singh, being a mouthpiece of the author represents his journey from Gaya to Phansa. This novel has depicted some social evils which the autor has been facing in Denmark.

In *The Bus Stopped*, the author has interwoven his past memories into a single whole to portray the true picture of Indian society. Khair has expressed his diasporic sensibility through the use of two metaphors namely 'Home' and 'Journeys'. He is searching for his root nation through this bus journey. This travel book is written on the basis of his memory on wheels. The author has depicted a series of memories with a sense of alienation, quest for cultural roots, memories of home, love for his root nation and new experiences of his adopted nation.

Travel writing emerged as a result of an intellectual climate that is interrogating imperialism, colonialism/ post-colonialism, multiculturalism, ethnography, diaspora, visual culture, and spectacle. (2002: 1) One way to gauge whether a discipline is 'taking hold' would be to note whether it has developed its own vocabulary. Those studying travel writing often use words from other disciplines, but give these terms a different 'spin'. Further, in theorizing travel, scholars have created their own set of terms and expressions, instantly recognizable to others investigating travel writing.

The power of travel writing lay in its independence of perspective. The claim to have been there and to have seen with one's own eyes could defeat speculation. Samuel Purchas, the second of the English collectors of travel texts and an enthusiastic proponent of a national ideology, emphasized the power of this individuality in the 1625 introduction to his *Purchas His Pilgrims*:

> What a World of travelers have by their own eyes observed…delivered, not by one preferring Methodically to deliver the History of Nature according to rules of Art, nor philosophically to discuss and dispute, but as in way of Discourse, by each Traveler relating what is the kind he hath Seen. (2002: 4)

The general view holds that 'travel' narratives are objective and scientific, and that they faithfully represent geographical, historical, and social reality. Of course, this is a totally false notion because travel narratives are embedded with fictional elements and figures; likewise, fiction includes many 'travels' constituents and styles, and both deal with representations that are many times exaggerated and inexact, sometimes slurred and grotesque. This is true of many types of written discourses, such as, historical writings, investigative journalism, political treatises, and natural history writings. Dissayanake and Wickramagamage point out: "the distinction between fiction (created) and travel writing (factual) is a false one but also points to the misrepresentation, distortion, orientalisms, and search for cheap effects that characterize much travel writing". (1993: 2) This argument centres around the notion that 'Western' travel writing is geared to notions of colonial narratives, and its quest for representing the 'other' in postcolonial societies, and it does this by referencing the 'other' in relation to the metropolitan centre. But what is interesting is the categories and kind of 'travel' writings that these critics identify.

In *Filming: A Love Story*, Khair has discussed various social issues faced by common people during the partition period of India. It has dealt with the history of freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. The novel is a cinematic narrative in which the author has communicated novelty through presenting social, cultural and political holocaust in India. The subject matter of the novel centers round the reputed Hindi films based on society in mid-twentieth century. Khair has remarked on popular film industry, based in Mumbai as:

> I know the film has become popular with film historians today, but we were young and we were the first generation to move from the redeemable villainy of Bombay films to irredeemable, unalloyed evil of the Bollywood villain, from *Shri 420* to *Sholay*: we found the film boring. I guess we were primed for Bollywood, my entire generation, waiting for the slick violence of *Deewar* and *Muqaddar ka Sikandar*. We were tired of the old family melodramas and social comedies, the love stories where the worst villain, apart from an obdurate father or a lecherous brother-in-law, was time. I guess even though we had not realized it then, the world had changed and we wanted to see a substantial villain like Gabbar Sing being bashed to pulp by some vaulting, limbless hero. (FG: 147)

The author has explained the aesthetic imagination of social novels that is enacted in Hindi films. He has discussed the significance of prominent social realism films of 1940s which have focused on the Indian culture, religion and other social issues. Khair has focused on three famous Bombay films like *Aag, Barsat, and Pyassa* highlighting some problems of Indian society. *Aakhri Raat* (1968) is another Hindi thriller which deals with social realism theme. It gets immense popularity as soon as it was released after independence. The events depicted in the film have taken place on a single night where

several characters share their life stories. It is an interesting depiction of some of the challenges faced by the downtrodden people in society. The author has discussed the role of the R.S.S. (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) which was founded by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in 1925. The organization played an active part in the freedom movement to drive away the British from India. It also worked to unite the society and resist Hindu-Muslin rioting. In *Filming*, the author highlights the concept of Hindu nationalist movement which was advocated by the R.S.S. It has well-organized cadre consisting mostly of upper-caste Brahmins who were dedicated to independence and the protection of Hindu political, cultural and religious interests. It gives emphasis on discipline and dedication to strengthen the youths as well as to foster unity among Hindus of all castes and creeds. Paramilitary training and daily exercise and drills are part of this discipline.

Khair has dealt in multiple perspectives of partition theme in *Filming: A Love Story*. He has focused on the evils of the partition riots which had a great impact on films, actors, producers and directors. He uses this technique in order to emulate the early Bombay films, which one of his narrators, Batin comments as: "almost all the flashbacks and dream sequences had a smoky quality, making vision uncertain but not impossible, making the world a play of shadow and solidity." (FG: 355) The author discusses the condition of Bombay film industry during the partition period as one of the themes of the novel. He uses the filmic term 'starring' as well as 'featuring' for different actors and actresses. Khair uses 'reels' instead of chapters with an 'intermission'. The author focuses on the communal violence of partition, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the rise of photography, the Bombay film industry and the development of barbed wire in this novel. He describes the traumatic condition of Muslim community who could not help changing their names and identities to save their lives during the

partition period. Bruce King comments on Khair's non-linear and polyphonic partition narrative as: "is a history, as we keep being reminded, that can only be known in fragments which the writer or reader will bring together through imagination, a similar process to film making." (2008: 9)

6.5 Chapter-IV

The fourth chapter of the thesis discusses in details the different tenets of the Social Realism theory and its application in Tabish Khair's later novels i.e. *The Thing about Thugs* and *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*. At first, one of the major tenets of Social Realism theory, 'racial discrimination' has been delineated. This tenet is applied to both the later novels of the author. The protagonist of the novel, Amir Ali is the representative of Indian people who has been taken away to London by a British Captain T. Meadows to investigate the cult of thugee and series of brutal beheadings happening in the dark street of London. He faced the problem of racial discrimination by English people in London.

After that the other tenets barbarism, caste and religious discrimination have been applied in Tabish Khair's fictions *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* and *The Thing About Thugs.* Along with these, ethnicity, East-West encounter, Hindu-Muslim communal riot, exploitation of downtrodden Class, discrimination by scientific study, regional spirit of Bihar, practice of idol worshipping, circumcision as a Islamic ritual and Islamophobia are also implemented with citing examples from the select canonical works of Tabish Khair in order to prove these works as the author's social realism works. His writings have moved with our era from the confusion of anti-colonial discourse, with its suspicions, humiliations and continuing dependency, to social

realism which for Khair is a joyful acceptance of the energies, cultural achievements, conflicting claims and freedoms.

6.6 Chapter-V

In the fifth chapter of thesis, the basic tenets of Social Realism theory have been discussed thoroughly and implemented in the recent fictional works of Tabish Khair. Firstly, one of the important tenets 'exploitation' is used in both the works: *Jihadi Jane* and *Night of Happiness*. Here, Khair, being himself an Indian in Denmark, examines the condition of immigrants in the West. He realizes how the Muslim immigrants are exploited in the Western society like the author himself. The author struggles hard to cope with the problems in his own personal life in Danish society which is reflected in his later novels.

Likewise, the other tenets and lexicons of Social Realism theory including: identity crisis, terrorism, racial and religious radicalization, practice of polygamy in Islam, suicide bombers, Islamophobic sentiment, prejudice against Muslim, love jihad, Hindu-Muslim conflict, celebration of Shab-e-baraat, Tableeghi Jamait as social and religious reformer, have also been delineated in later novels of Tabish Khair to have a well and comprehensive discussion.

6.7 Conclusion

The study has revealed that Tabish Khair, the social realist, occupies a significant position in India and abroad for his literary endeavour. With great many literary creations Tabish Khair has made his mark as a very admiring writer inculcating economy of expression and sharpness of perception. He is among the few social realists who has emerged as the most prominent and successful exponents of this new technique of

narration. His innovation of life, representation of society, and ethical values help him to be a stern social realist. Social realism is a powerful strain of his novels which has expressed his philosophy of realism as well as naturalism.

He is considered as one of the pioneers of social realism novel in the twentieth century Indian English literature. One of the first and foremost features of his technique is that, while standing close to the art of a journalist and yet differing fundamentally from his method, the writer of this form makes use of an altogether new mode of expression which enables him to occupy a privileged position and write in the first person while cutting away sharply from the usually known literary forms like travelogue, confessional and journalistic writing. Khair may be called the unacknowledged journalist who has expressed his idea and thought on a given situation in the society. The writer describes things in a seemingly journalistic manner but his statement has a touch of universal truth showing social realism theme in his fictions.

Khair has treated history as a device and makes his technique all the more brilliant and powerful mode of communication. He has treated history in his novels *Filming: A Love Story*, *The Thing about Thugs* and *Night of Happiness* in such a way as to bring the past in close juxtaposition to the present. Tabish Khair has acclaimed great reputation by writing a great many social novels, along with many of his contemporaries like: Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan, Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy and many others, hail from the ex-colonial nations including India.

It is worth mentioning here, that after having implemented the basic tenets and lexicons of social realism theory in the fictional works of Tabish Khair, it has become obvious that he has mingled his anti-colonial sentiment for the growth and development

of characters who always represent poor working class community in India and abroad. As we have found out by implementing the tenets and lexicons of social realism theory in the fictional narratives of Tabish Khair, we can conclude by saying that all the cited works are the embodiments of lively social realism, full of quick vignettes, word sketches and pieces of conversation. Khair has got amazing style of narration, and his technique of writing made him worth to be the award-winning Indian author.

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