



## URBAN CITIES IN AUTHORS' PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

India plays an important role and provides address to 17.5% of world's population. The major four urban cities of India are Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta and Hyderabad. Cities are critical medium of historic change. Authors are the backbone of innovative thoughts and capable of emanating original histories. This paper handles views and experiences of powerful and influential authors on urban cities, and evolution of great and broken metropolis in three decades. In novel, "Twilight in Delhi", Ahmed Ali explains moving portrayal of cultural and lifestyle of this city on the decadence of the Mughal Era. Anita Desai demonstrates sarcastic consequences of life in Calcutta of Indian family in "Voices in the city." "Zohra" by Zeenuth Futehally clearly portrays turbulent conditions and current affairs of Hyderabad that reflected on people, living in those times. Finally, the influence of drugs, alcohol, God, glamour, power, money and sex on people in Mumbai was expressed in the novel "Narcopolis" by Jeet Thayil. The above authors were successful in stipulating and unfolding the real facts. They have very well correlated the situation of the city with the characters of the novel and their behavior in that situation. And they were able to explore the evolution of the urban cities and absolute scenario by their unique writing style in these novels. The main intention of this research paper is to memorialize the views of eminent authors on class extremes, culture change, family value, individualism and social heterogeneity of large and complex cities through their own novels.

**Key Words:** Urban Cities, Historic Importance, Muslim Culture, Tradition, Drug, Feminism, Society, Moral Value

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The second biggest urban populace in the world is India. The urban cities are overflowing with huge amount of human population and human-built features. The wealth of urban cities in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were showed by their monumental buildings and their imperial grandeur. The buildings of the cities were habitually intended to symbolize ideas e.g., regal power, patriotism and religious beauty. These cities were turned into

bigger one with more space as the population grows and also one by linking islands. The urban cities were perplexing area where life appeared constantly in change. There was extreme distinction between rich and poor. The chosen authors clearly illustrate the loss of some precious values caused by British rule over India and colonization, such as identity, supremacy, moral, social value, cultural value, economical value and religion value in Indian urban cities e.g., Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Hyderabad.

And also atrocities endured by people because of their colonizers.

## 2. DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Ahmed Ali

Ahmed Ali is a great novelist, critic and poet born in undivided India, farther moved to Pakistan. The extraordinary products of Ahmed Ali were number of interesting and ground-breaking literary and scholarly works. His works were philosophical portrayal of our olden times and society as a nation. Ahmed Ali is a person who believes in his own thoughts and act accordingly. He has never intended to label the term progressive. He is well known for his first superlative novel "Twilight in Delhi". Ali's essential motive behind this novel is to exhibit a part of our national life, and decay of our complete culture in Delhi which has changed beyond nostalgia and recognition.

In "Twilight in Delhi", Ahmed Ali presents original picture of Muslim culture of that period of time and rise of Hindu elite in colonial rule during 1910 to 1919. The base of this novel is love story, but it effectively explains the cultural revolution of Muslims of Delhi. The novel clearly explains destruction of Mughal Empire, love and lost in the characters, moral decay in characters, male chauvinism, female uselessness, and savagery of time. Ali grieves on the loss of some precious values in Delhi during colonial period using his novel characters. And the characters have been grasping false values supported for quite a while by their predecessors. The loss of values is narrated in terms of loss of innocence.

The loss of supremacy and identity are described by Nihal. He sheds tears by recalling his golden history of majestic rule of Mughal Dynasty for remarkable past of Muslims of Delhi and its Subcontinent, when pomp and show of British Raj fire ups his old heart. The life style and marriage verdicts of Asghar, the youngest son of Mir Nihal explain the loss of cultural value in novel. He has adopted the western style of life without listening to his father words. Economic value loss is described by explaining traders or shop owners experiencing pressure of tax and inflation, which leads to destruction of their established businesses. When grave diggers charged higher rates for the coffin

sheets after monitoring increasing death ratio, this shows the loss of religious and moral values. The loss of moral and ethical value is completely dead when we see Asghar's blunted behavior towards his elders. Ali represents the conservative women trapped in their own household associations. According to patriarchy women are irrational, emotional, and sentimental fools. Always men have the pre-imagined idea that women are useful to no end. Ali does not stay away from this belief throughout the novel.

### 2.2 Anita Desai

Anita Desai is a fiction writer, and prominent contributor to the improvement of English novel. She is famous for her art of characterization. Anita is a distinctive example of bicultural legacy of postcolonial India. She has continually published children's literature, novels and short stories. She clearly portrays both cultural change and social change occurred in India during certain times. The characters created by Anita are solitary and unique. The main themes of Anita's fiction novels are family relationship and differences, anti-Semitism, women's oppression and quest for fulfilling identity, and crumbling of traditions. The characters of Anita are desolate, introvert, despondent, frustrated, disconcerted, baffled, obstinate, free minded and tragic. The novels of Anita expose specific cyclical patterns in characterizations, plots and settings. The novel, "Voices in the City" is her second novel. The novel comprehends the Anita's experiences in city of Calcutta. The novel is locus of poverty and wealth, darkness and light, human relationship, and idea of freedom in life. The main theme in the novel is characters' quest for their individual identity and meaning behind their lives. All the characters' will struggle with conflicts to make their lives significant, noteworthy and ambitious. A logical and new description of life was symbolized in "Voices in the City". City of Calcutta is idol of the novel "Voices in the city". The novel is narrated and explained in new vein and sensibility. The disavowal of life's realism was intensely revealed. Calcutta is a home for complete actions of the novel and functions as background. It influences and affects all the main characters in the novel. The main focus of the novel

is influence of Calcutta on Nirode and also on two sisters of Nirode, Monisha and Amla. Destructive effects of city life on Indian Family are clearly described in the novel. People in this novel are subjected rapid changes in lives due to circumstances and incidents in the city. The novel clearly explains the way how society changes the human life.

All the time, Nirode dreams of lovely and fruitful life, but the truth is that he was suffering throughout his life with deficiency of money. This is worst scenario of materialistic world where people have more respect only to money rather than to humanity. Monisha was immersed in the household responsibilities. She was suffocated by the surroundings and tradition-bound family where ladies have to follow "feet before faces" syndrome rules. Since Monisha is not capable of being a mother of a kid due to her personal health issues, she was put up in a room alone. This is how Monisha is treated by her family. Even when Monisha is living in combined family in crowded Calcutta, She feels completely isolated, lonely and neglected. Both Nirode and Monisha feel themselves detached from this city. They were struggling to face the Calcutta's demanding life in which people are so determined and voracious. Amla, intellectual and open-minded women, is muted rendition of Nirode. World of Amla is totally differ with Nirode and Monisha. She is in the idea of enjoying her life with complete enthusiasm. She is the one who is very clear about her own visions, and demonstrates the universe of the high society. Amla hates the lower-class society in Calcutta. She acutely looks forward for the upbeat life and vocation in the huge city. However, her encounters of the praise city life disappoint her in such a large number of ways. All three characters fight against Calcutta in order to uphold their inner integrity and struggled by self-denial. In all three, only Amla appears to win over because she has either the extreme incredulity of Nirode or the psychoneurosis of Monisha.

### 2.3 Zeenuth Futehally

Zeenuth Futehally is a significant Muslim writer, who grew up in an aristocratic Muslim family. She has started writing poems at the age of 13. Zeenuth registers the involvement of Muslim

woman's in the political life and social life of India during the period of the Independence struggle in the novel "Zohra". "Zohra" is the very first English novel work by Zeenuth Futehally. The setting of "Zohra" is early-twentieth century of Hyderabad, which had then quite recently been united into the Indian Union. The unsettled condition of state affairs is redirected in the living people in those times. The leading character in the novel, "Zohra" is Zohra. Zohra is brought up in a Nawabi family of Hyderabad. Zeenuth writes this, in the motive to explain the fast disappearing Hyderabad way of life. This novel shows the changing view of Muslim social life in Hyderabad experiencing slow change. The culture of Hyderabad is a mixture of Muslim and Hindu. The "Zohra" memorializes Hyderabad culture and history and intellectuals of Muslims and their families, and convincingly portrays princely state of Hyderabad in Gandhian period.

"Zohra" is narrative of high society Muslim woman, Zohra. Zohra's emotional development and growth reflect the advancement of the Indian national awareness. Zohra can indulge in her desires only to a certain limit. Because her parents believed and feared that literate women would ever follow the rules and regulations in domestic life. And also their chances of decent marriages will be reduced. Her marriage is fixed with Bashir by her parents, although the fact that she is not yet mentally prepared for this kind of vast change in her life. Zohra says that a Hyderabad girl have no right to raise a question to her own parents. Zohra is compelled to wed against her desires at 18 years old at the expense of her inventive slants. The thing happening to Zohra is really worst that her husband is interested in her but he is not ready to share her creative interests. She lives a normal life. As result of this, she has started to maintain distance from her husband and move close toward her brother-in-law, Hamid who has come from England. Hamid, the symbol of modern India, is obsessive, committed, and influenced by Gandhian methods. There is a distinct difference between the both Bashir and Hamid, say for example when we consider problems such as modes of political protest. Hamid follows Gandhian methods, while Bashir has interest in violent/aggressive method. In between all these

consequences, Zohra is trying to equate responsibility with passion. She is married to a man who loves her a lot, and fascinated by a man who loves and understands her very well. Zeenuth clearly portrays responses to the attention of men other than her husband and her struggles to maintain her commitment towards marriage. All her experiences are strongly depicted with excessive seriousness and sensitivity.

#### 2.4 Jeet Thayil

Jeet Thayil is a poet, songwriter and guitarist. He is a fear-free novelist who has started writing poems, when he was just thirteen. Thayil received 2013 South Asian Literature Prize for the novel "Narcopolis". Jeet was an alcoholic and drug addict for almost two decades. He found antidote for his addiction by writing "Narcopolis". His 20 years of addiction is the output of this novel. Jeet is one of the bravest Indian authors, who are not much bothered about controversies on his opinions and thoughts. The "Narcopolis" is set in Mumbai filled with opium dens and brothels. "Narcopolis" is extraordinary picture of lovely and accursed generation in a country to offer its spirit. Mumbai is a city made of British reclaimed islands, and multilingual society in which all Indian languages, religions and castes blend. According to Jeet, Mumbai mingles with people, creates problems for people, provides pleasure to the people, and thrashes people. The novel travels through the smoke alley of Mumbai's drug world. Mumbai is as much the focus of the novel as the narrator, revamps itself over the span of the novel.

Rashid is a deplorable criminal attempting to get a name but suddenly he ends being a wealthy businessperson. Rashid creates best landmark for opium. He supplies first quality O and genuine opium pipes. When Rashid is at his end of life, he would sit in an easy chair and relaxing himself by counting prayer beads. His magnetism had completely vanished and there was a quality of inapproachability about his face. The soul of the novel "Narcopolis" is Dimple. Dimple is man or woman, a eunuch, and emotional part of the novel. In reality, Dimple is a man but mentioned throughout with pronouns of female, and likes to wear woman's clothing. When Dimple was six years,

she was given to priest due to poverty. From there she was shifted to brothel. She was working in opium den as part timer. She is on a perpetual quest for information and magnificence. She has taught herself to read and speak English. She used to make that opium pipe in a neat way that cannot be explained in words. Like all the characters in the "Narcopolis", Dimple is also a drug addict. She heals her pain of the heart only through this drug. Despite her unpleasant encounters she has the sweetness, tenderness, resilience and adorableness which go long ways past the standard thing "tart-with-a-heart" buzzword. Jamal, Rashid's older son was a businessman at the age of six. He has the capability of showing up without making a sound. He has started smoking at the age of six, and follows his father way of life to become salesperson who is interested in finding out new drugs and also its flavor. Jeet explains the disconcerting representation of Mumbai city through all these characters relationships, behaviors and living style.

#### 3. CONCLUSION

Through the journey of all these four novels it is clearly understood that the authors have lived in these urban cities through all the novel characters. Even though the authors are from variety of backgrounds, they resonate the feelings of people lived in urban cities in such a way that we can feel their pains and troubles undergone by them. This paper efficiently explains the role of cities on the people's lives. The authors amazingly present the importance and disadvantages of love, friendship, parent ship, money, social value, circumstance, freedom, social class, customs, religion, etc. The ultimate motive behind all these novels is not for entertaining people, but to seize the actual truth causing impact on people of urban cities in certain period. The circumstances in cities affect physical space and mental space of people, which results in multiple social problems. At times, the novel characters seem to be bad, stupid, idiotic and senseless, it's all out of the impact of cities and society on them. As a conclusion, the attempt made by the authors to explain the exact scenario of urban cities through their own experiences was just a great impressive achievement.

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