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National Webinar

**EFFECTS OF CRISIS ON
LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE
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*An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal***One Day National Webinar**

On

Effects of Crisis on Language, Literature and Culture

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*Department of English,**Vasantrao Naik Government Institute of Arts and Social Sciences, Nagpur***Contents**

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**IMPACT OF BRITISH CULTURE ON INDIAN SOCIETY:
A STUDY OF RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA'S *ESMOND IN INDIA*****Lakhan R. Gaidhane**Assistant Professor in English
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lakhangaidhane@yahoo.in**Dr. Dilip Jena,**Assistant Professor in English,
D. B. Science College, Gondia,
dilipsjena@gmail.com**Abstract**

The British came to India as traders but they were so cunning that they started influencing Indian political and economic systems. Gradually, they became rulers and established their colony. They were instrumental in introducing their culture and lifestyle among gullible Indians. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, in her novels, has not only shown the exploitation of Indians at various contexts and situations but also delineated the susceptibility of Indians who became easy preys of devouring and meretricious western civilization and approaches to life. *Esmond in India* is not an exception which portrays the Indian characters like Har Dayal, Ram Nath, Madhuri, Shakuntala, Amrit and Raj have succumbed to overpowering as well as alluring western culture and lifestyle.

Keywords: *Diasporic, Colonial, Culture, Imperial And Post-Colonial*

Colonisation has left an indelible impact over the mentality of colonised. The grand style of foreigners, their attractive dresses and sometimes their way of conversation with fashionable way of speaking impressed the colonised. It took them away from their native culture and traditions. This very attraction increased with a passing of time and they became habitual of colonisers' traditions. During colonial era, Europeans considered natives as savage and called them zoological creatures. The only thing that 'white man' considered colonised people as uneducated and uncivilised. Pramod K. Nayar states clearly regarding the colonised: Fanon argued that colonialism dehumanized the native. This process was so through that the black man can see himself only as the black (mirror) image of the white man. The white man is the master, and represents an object that is to be feared and desired. The

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black therefore tries to be more like the (desirable) white man/master. He puts on ‘white masks’. (2008:23)¹

Similarly, Homi K. Bhabha asserts that colonised people were very much influenced by colonisers. He discloses certain facts in his study about colonisers as he says that they created their stereotypes at the soil of colonised. Pramod K. Nayar describes certain facts concerning Homi K. Bhabha’s theory: Bhabha argues that the stereotype is an indication not of the stable and supreme power of the coloniser, but rather of the fractured nature of the colonial power. What is already known or established has to be endlessly confirmed through repetitions. For Bhabha, this need for repetition points to a lack of certainty about the stereotypes, which indicates their essentially unstable and constructed nature. The coloniser can construct his identity only through the stereotype of the Other. (2008:27)¹

Ruth Praver Jhabvala, being a diasporic citizen of England, is aware about British and their colonial mentality. Her works can be categorized with the different aspects of colonial India. She has depicted the different ways of working of British during colonial era. Characters like Esmond pressurize the natives in many ways like a boss. Some of the natives also behave like the British after they come in contact to the British officers. The rich Indians are prone to the western culture and imperial domination. The novelist herself is also a worshiper and propagator of western education, culture and lifestyle. In some of her novels, it is depicted the westerners marry to Indian and vice versa. The differences in their respective cultures and dress sense have been picturised clearly. *Esmond in India* is based on such themes. The novel is situated in post-colonial era of modern India and it centers on the differences and disparities between natives and colonials.

Influence of British culture is not only found in Britons but also some Indians are enticed and getting acquainted to it in the post-colonial period. Some Indians who afford to pursue higher education in British universities have developed western mentality and life style. Their perception about the things around them gets changed and they criticize the various attributes of their own country. They wear dresses like British and encourage others to behave in same manner. They use an adopted language and mix it with their vernacular tongue. Though it changes the originality of the adopted language, it gives them a kind of



satisfaction. They feel modern and different from other of their same community. They feel superior and make their groups, sometimes, organize gatherings which generally have a westernized scenario. Really, “there were many areas in which British political power and culture intersected with Indian society in formative ways that became part of the legacy of modern India” (British Impact).

The change in attitude of colonised does not happen suddenly but it has some historical reasons that “our lifestyle and mindset have largely been influenced by our colonial past”⁴ (How the British Influenced Indian Culture). Colonial era impacted greatly over the people of post-colonial period. Colonised were trained to become perfect servants for them. They provided education through their educational institutes to them and made them able to perform all their orders. Some of them were sent to take education from foreign universities for improving their understanding power to answer their rulers. Published in 1957, *Esmond in India* depicts developing India in early post-independence era in which people enjoy the mixed experiences of western modernity and various attributes of Indian people. Characters are placed in post-colonial India. The novel recalls the freedom struggle during pre-independence era too. There are many instances of colonial influences among colonised in post-colonial era in the novel. As Esmond is presented with imperial mentality, some Indian characters like Har Dayal and the members of his family have the attributes of the same mentality.

Har Dayal and Ram Nath got education from Cambridge University during colonial era. He used to wear Indian dresses in abroad and he talked in ‘a terrible babu English’ (*EI* 23) and feels, “Oh yes, certainly it changes us” (*EI* 23). They started imitating the dress code, tone and life style of England. His manners and style became showy like any western man. He did not like to wear ‘kurta-pyjama or a dhoti’ (*EI* 23). Moreover, he neither liked to sit on the floor nor felt better eating his meals by fingers. Describing the changes occurred in Ram Nath, Har Dayal narrates: He drank, he smoked, he read so much English poetry, had so many English friends and wore such stylish English clothes. . . . The most fashionable cuts, with waistcoats and flowing neckties and when he went into the country – often we went



tramping on long hikes – he wore plus fours, and white flannels and a blazer for boating. (*EI* 24)

Returning to India, Har Dayal becomes a changed person with his manners and etiquettes. He wears English clothes to transform his look as an English man. He wants everything in his surrounding to be converted into western-like. In this context, Ramesh Chadha asserts, “He and his family are modern and are highly influenced by Western culture Har Dayal and his family feel at ease in the Western as well as Indian ways of life. In their house, Western food is served for lunch and Indian for dinner”⁵ (47). He also sent his children to Cambridge University to pursue their higher education. His sons, Amrit and Raj, are completely inclined and interested in western life style. Har Dayal feels delighted for their sons being westernised.

He asks his wife, Madhuri, and daughter, Shakuntala, to wear westernised clothes and life. He accompanies them in night parties and introduces them with western people for making them acquainted with English language and etiquettes. Many a time, he talks about his transformation from his being Indian to western after his education at Cambridge University. He accepts the fact that his behaviour and life style have been changed under influence of western civilities. He makes him so westernised that he feels immensely happy when he meets western people in the parties. He introduces his daughter with them and does not have any compunction to allow his daughter to have fun with them accompanied with smoking and drinking. He sings English song in the parties in a very haphazard manner but he takes pride of it. His wife and daughter also feel “very proud of him” (*EI* 63).

British influence can be noticed in post-colonial period in some British firm in India where many officers had been replaced on the basis of their native identity. Amrit has been selected because of his education from Cambridge University and his accent is suitable for working place. He becomes a “part of their policy of gradually replacing British executives by Indian ones; and indeed he” is “very suitable for this purpose” (*EI* 43). Since he starts hating Indian worker and its culture, he seems to be like a British. Shakuntala tries to remind him Indian culture and she suggests him to possess caring nature for his close one. She asks her brother to appreciate the work of their father. Amrit gets angry over her lines because he



thinks that they should work for money only. Amrit pays a deaf ear to his sister's words. He is so adamant with his imperial mindset that he has lost all flexibility in his life pertaining to emotion, submission and idealism. He carries forward the legacy of his father having obsessed with imperial attitude of British people. Rather he is one step ahead of his father. He works as “an administrative officer in a large British firm of paint manufacturers” (EI 43). His thinking gets influenced from his work place.

Shakuntala has also similar imperial mindset. She wants everything in British style and manner. She likes western music, western dresses, gathering of western people; as well as western aura at her house. She has been titled as a “Wordsworthian”⁷ (78) emotional girl by Ronald Shepherd. She supports the marriage of Gulab and Esmond as she believes Gulab would have a better life by marrying a British. She enjoys with western people by drinking and smoking when she is introduced them by his father. She always gets fascinated by meeting and keeping relationship with western people. She likes to talk with them for a long time regarding the topics on Indian culture and anything. She feels overjoyed to be invited by Billimoria sisters.

Shakuntala's happiness is massive when she is offered to join “Western Women Organization” (EI 67). She becomes a regular visitor to gatherings of Western Women Organization. She gets closer to Esmond with the help of Betty, a British lady. She gets physically attracted to him in spite of knowing his marital status. She considers Esmond as “a long-suffering Byronic hero”⁷ and he should be helped by a romantic girl like in any British novel (Shepherd, 1994:78). She says, “There is no harm in men and women being friends. In Europe everybody is like that. Of course: nowadays only people in India are old fashioned about this sort of thing” (EI 119). She likes dominated by him. She comes under his influence and gives him everything what she possesses. Esmond enjoys her company during the visit of Agra but hesitates to meet her after coming back. Shakuntala wants to become Esmond's wife. She continues her efforts to attract him and calls him for fulfilling physical desires. She does not regret that she has made physical relationship with him. She asks him, “Do you call our love an awkward position?” (EI 187). She goes to his house and observes his relationships with his wife. After having confirmed about them, she suggests him to ask for



divorce with his wife so they can marry happily. Esmond still neglects her because he wants to go back to England. Shakuntala's happy days have come to an end when she gets the news about her father's decision of marrying her to his friend, Mr. Bhatnagar's son. He gets educated from Howard University.

Madhuri, Har Dayal's wife, desires to be rich and influential. She loves British culture and life style like her husband. She is "a great believer in going abroad" (EI 22). She insists her children to follow the British manners. Both of her sons are being educated from Cambridge University. She dislikes Ram Nath as he is serving poor people without thinking about earning money. For her, accumulating wealth should be the motto of life. She takes pride of her son, Amrit who also believes in the same policy of life and despises Narayan as he decides to carry on the legacy of his father, Ram Nath. She also expects the same mindset from her younger son, Raj who is pursuing his graduation from Cambridge University. She feels, "Yes it was good to have such sons. Especially when all one's life one had to put up with an unstable husband likes Har Dayal. He was unstable, really there was no other words for him" (EI 73). Assessing the characters who hold imperial attitude and follow all the British manners, Ramesh Chadha states, Har Dayal, Madhuri and Shakuntala represent those Indian who are enchanted by the Western culture and way of life and tend to decry anything Indian. They praise English education, life and culture and feel that unless one can imbibe these, one cannot become cultured and sophisticated. (48). Jhabvala seems to be a prey to British influence in this novel. Being a writer, she has given more space to the characters like Har Dayal, Amrit, Shakuntala, Madhuri, Raj and Esmond who keep British mindset and demeanor. Apart from repression, tyranny and exploitation, the British certainly, kept Indians on their toes by making them tempted to appreciate and adopt western culture and lifestyle by introducing English as a medium of instruction in higher education, prompting religious and social reformation movement, recognizing Indian Civil Services, extending economic sphere, motivating scientific spirit and research, upholding art, architecture and literature, initiating urbanization, and ensuring women's position in civil society.

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**Reflection of Transnationalism in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's *A New Dominion*****Lakhan R. Gaidhane**Assit. Professor in English
S.S. Girls' College Gondia
lakhanrgaidhane@yahoo.in**Dr. Dilip Jena**Assit. Professor in English
NMD College, Gondia
dilipsjena@gmail.com**Abstract**

Transnationalism is comparatively a new concept which shows how the periphery of economic, political, social and cultural activities of any region or nation extends beyond the boundaries. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, a diasporic novelist, delivers the things in most of her novels from an oriental perspective. *A New Dominion*, one of her finely wrought novels, intermingles the wandering stories of some Western as well as Indian characters and the whole gamut makes it a point of socio-cultural and religious amalgamation.

Keywords: *multicultural, multinational, spiritual, transnationalism, materialism*

Transnationalism implies that multiple human relationships like familial, social, cultural, religious, organizational, economic and political happen to develop between two nations or among the nations of the world in spite of long distances and specified international borders. It is largely “the diffusion and extension of social, political, economic processes in between and beyond the sovereign jurisdictional boundaries of nation states”¹ (Williams). The social scientists have started to popularize the term as they want to encompass and comprehend the new way of human life, “heightened interconnectivity between people”² (Wikipedia), that is common to all across the globe in

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many aspects. These universal attributes pertaining to the global life of the human being have been reflected through morphological similarities in societies belonging to different nations and communities, multicultural interpretation and blending, dual or multiple identifications like NRIs (Non-Resident Indians), PIO (Persons of Indian Origin), OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) and these sort of identification are being a vogue in other countries also,

multinational companies along with their international transactions, political engagements and agreements among nations and organizations, and construction of translocalities and neighborhoods. Transnationalism, to a great degree of similarity, may be analogically assimilated with the current trend of globalization which stands for the “intensification of economic, cultural, and political practices accelerating across the globe.”³ (Huff) The novels of Ruth Praver Jhabvala attain almost all the colonial and postcolonial concepts in various capacities and many of them are also very identical to the attributes of transnationalism. *A New Dominion* maintains the blending of socio-cultural and religious lives of Westerners as well as Indians. The interpretations project how Westerners are inclined to the transcendental facets of Indian culture and religion. In case of Indians, the materialistic and flamboyant Western lifestyle allures them and they get obsessed with. The prominent Western characters like Miss Charlotte, Raymond, Lee, Evie and Margaret, and Indian character like Gopi have been so befittingly presented by Ruth Praver Jhabvala in *A New Dominion* that they appear to be very suitable and contextual for this empirical study. After the colonial era, the Westerners started suffering from many psychological complications because of their over consciousness regarding their dual or multiple identifications. So, they became either traveler or pleasure-seekers. In this context, Ronald Shepherd asserts, “What is new in *A New Dominion* is that psychological complications which have this far been the preserve of the English and the German are also now shared by Indians” (111).

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Lee, Margaret and Evie come to India in search of spiritual solace. They travel down to India from England and spend one year to acquire knowledge of Indian culture. All of them fail to achieve their goal rather they are deceived and exploited in different situations and context. Lee, a British girl, notices the role of Raymond as a tourist in India and she suggests him, “Tourist don’t live, . . . they only look” (ND 76). She considers him a spiritual bliss seeker like her but he has his own views regarding India after wandering different parts of it. As a matter of fact, excessive materialism has been proved to be a bane for Europeans. As a result these characters come down to India to attain peace and solace. Lee comes to India with positive mind in search of spiritual rejuvenation after she gets panic and frustrated with the materialistic atmosphere of western civilization. Lee has already experienced many love affairs in England but now she wants inner solace and peace of mind through the help of Indian spiritual Sadhus. She tells Raymond that the tombs in Madhya Pradesh give her a kind of mental calmness what she never expects in European countries. She becomes friend to Gopi, an Indian boy. She spends lot of time with him in wandering various places. Having experienced the decorum and grandeur of Mosque at Delhi, Lee exclaims, “I come to these places and I get terribly engrossed” (ND 33).

Lee has come to India with a definite purpose or attaining spiritual bliss but she gathers some bitter experiences after being molested by Swamiji and ill-treated by Banubai. Obviously, she feels trapped and insecure, and searches for some other spiritual gurus. Her longing for her homeland gets doubled because of these insults. She writes regularly to her family members for mental satisfaction. She wishes to achieve the spiritual fulfillment as early as possible by which she can return to her homeland. But it is not easy to go back as Yasmine Gooneratne asserts, “In the final outcome, it is not the traveller who ‘see’, ‘enjoy’ or ‘understand’ India, but India that absorb and dominates them” (187).

Margaret, another prominent character of the novel, is a victim of materialism.



Arrives at India after being fade up with “modern materialism” (ND 37), she wants to attain purity of mind with the help of spiritual gurus. In search of peace, Margaret wanders around the different places in India and takes shelter in various spiritual places. She visits places like ‘Pondicherry’, ‘The Holy Mother’, ‘Ramana Maharishi’ etc. (ND 37). Finally, she goes to Swamiji’s ashram at Benaras. She feels relaxed after reaching the place and comes under the influence of Swamiji. She becomes ready to do anything for gaining spiritual bliss but she is defiled by him. She is also used by Swamiji as a means to attract other foreigners to the ashram. He harasses her by allotting lot of physical works which is more than physical exploitation. At the end, she dies due to weak health and lack of proper treatment. She goes on crying till her death for the homeland. Evie, another gullible British girl, comes under the jaws of Swamiji’s iniquitous intentions. In this context Laurie Sucher states, “Evie has succumbed to the serpent-like Swami, who with the ‘glittering’ eyes has seduced and essentially annihilated her”⁶ (58). Swamiji leaves no stone unturned to harass her physically and exploit her sexually. Gradually, she develops a fetish for Swamiji and the ashram. Evie is induced and so much possessed with the virtues of Hinduism that she starts propagating the religion among Christians. After the death of Margaret, she sternly proclaims to be a Hindu by evading her own Christian religion, “Becoming a Hindu is not like becoming a Christian” (ND 241).

Miss Charlotte is an important character in the novel *A New Dominion*. She runs a shelter house named ‘The Mission House’ for Westerners and it is proved to be a virtual neighborhood for westerners in India. She has been doing so since the colonial era to the present time having its branches all over India. She takes care of every Westerner and provides all type of residential and logistic facilities. In the post-colonial period, Government of India decides to demolish it. She resolves to save it from the demolition. Raymond helps her selflessly and they put their tireless efforts to save the shelter house. Haydn M. Williams describes her well, “Miss Charlotte seems the only one at peace with herself, God and India. She may have obtained the goal seekers look for in vain”⁷ (258).

Raymond has been to India for one year to study the Indian life and culture of



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India. During his stay, he wanders from one place to another and creates acquaintances with many people. He is much more interested and inclined towards the Britons. In spite of the fact that he has been in India for one year of leave, he develops a strong yearning for being back to his homeland. Hence, he writes letters regularly to his mother and sometimes twice and thrice in a week describing his life in India and about his acquaintances. In this context, Yasmine Gooneratne asserts, “In Raymond’s first girlish, gossipy letter to his mother, Ruth Jhabvala does not merely conveys essential information about Indian life to her Western reader in an easily assimilable form, but provides early evidence of the intimacy of his relationship with her, of his observant eye for significant details, and of his capacity for self-criticism and self-satire. (191).

He also feels for the Britons who live in India and wishes that they would return to their homeland as early as possible. Raymond wanders many places in India and studies the real condition of foreigners in the post-colonial era. He is moved by finding them in pathetic condition and tries his best to extend all sorts of help to them. He helps Miss Charlotte in her return journey to England. He feels proud over Miss Charlotte’s efforts to maintain the dignity of their homeland for over thirty years. He sends due letters to his mother about Miss Charlotte’s efforts for their countrymen. While writing his mother he asserts, “I can’t get over the way she’s so *English* considering the years she’s been out here and the sort of work she’s been doing” (ND 77). As soon as Raymond gets an idea about the three victim girls – Lee, Margaret and Evie - in the ashram of Swamiji, he rushes towards the place. He helps to escape Lee from the claws of deceiving Swamiji. He feels for Margaret when she suffers from illness and Swamiji hesitates to take her to the hospital. He finds the hypocrisy of both Banubai and Swamiji against westerners like him and suggests others too to leave the places. It may be Raymond, Lee and Margaret; all are destined to have disastrous end in their lives because of their ceaseless desire to wander.

Gopi, a young Indian boy, in the novel keeps imperial mindset. He is under the impression that western utility things are more fashionable and the most practical. He keeps himself away from his family and close ones. He feels, “Nevertheless there was a foreign atmosphere which simultaneously thrilled and intimidated” (ND 14). He likes to be at Raymond’s house who has come for a year in leave from England. Having influenced by him, he changes his taste of cloth and approach towards Indians. He does not like Indian social gatherings and traditional rituals. When he enters at Raymond’s flat,

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Prerna College of Commerce, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India**

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he feels fresh and energetic. He finds richly decorative western atmosphere and things around him. It concedes solace for him as he points it out as “a foreign atmosphere which simultaneously thrilled and intimidated” him (ND 14). He observes Raymond’s clothes and household goods that have typical European look and standard. He desires for his things and curiously wanders around his room. He wears “Raymond’s dressing-gown and silk scarves and whatever else fitted him” (ND 22-23). He grabs many things whatever available there and feels as if they belong to him.

Gopi finds pleasure in Raymond’s company. He asks him to suggest western things. He had a long cherished desire and inclination towards western style and culture. With his friendship with Raymond, he has got himself acquainted with western clothes, commodities and life style and it provides him essence of fulfillment. On the other hand, Raymond detests western culture as well as mindset. Rather, he prefers Indian culture to British one. He loves friendship with Gopi because of Gopi’s Indian background, not for his western fancies. Gopi’s immodest assumptions about the attributes of British life make him a spoiled brat to his mother and family. He shows no sincerity and commitment to his mother at the time of her necessity since she has provided everything of her life for her son’s education and grooming. He doesn’t even leave Raymond’s flat for a moment and think about family responsibilities though he is expected to provide patronage to his two sisters. Gopi’s behaviour completely changes in the company of Raymond. He forgets the great history and ethics of his country. When they visit the great mosque of Delhi, he misbehaves at the place. He wanders around the mosque and makes fun on the decorum whereas Raymond finds the dignity of religious rituals and aesthetics of the mosque. He tries to disturb the silence of the place.

Evaluating the Western as well as Indian characters, it may be inferred that citizens of underdeveloped countries like India, obviously, have a gilt-edged attraction for an advanced industrial and technological civilization accompanied with splashy lifestyle of developed Western countries. But surprisingly, it appears vice versa as Western characters like Miss Charlotte, Raymond, Lee, Evie and Margaret have shown an immense inclination towards Indian ancient and traditional culture and way of living. Though transnationalism is a newly coined term by the anthropologists to incorporate the current global trend of man’s intense intention and also visible act of crossing the border in all aspects of life like geographic, political, economic, social and cultural, it has had its presence since the inception of human civilization in some way or other.



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