Chapter VI: Conclusion
6.1. The conclusion and Findings:

The present Thesis entitled, *A Colonial Desire and Hybridity in the Selected Fiction of Amitav Ghosh: A Post-Colonial Study*, has been made to examine four novels include *The Glass Palace, The Shadow Lines, Sea Of Poppies* and *In An Antique Land*. The present study has been divided into six chapters, which have dealt with the most contemporary issues such as Colonial Desire and Hybridity.

The present research is based on the hypothesis that the fictional works of Amitav Ghosh reflected the ideology of Colonial Desire and Hybridity. The thematic selection of his selected fictions have accorded him world-wide readership. He believes that the human sufferings and sacrifices, their trials and tribulations are left unrecorded in history. A critical reading of Ghosh’s fiction opens up a new perspective in literary criticism. As many feminist historians point out that women have been pushed to the margins or wiped out by male historians. History
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has a tendency to ignore women and their participation. However it is important to represent women in order to have a deep and balanced understanding of history.

Amitav Ghosh is responsive towards the contributions of women characters, who are not only great historical figures but particularly ordinary middle class women. His works restore women’s perspectives of the past into fictional narrative, thereby, remapping their history. Uma Devi in *The Glasss Palace* emerges as a woman who lends her voice to the practice of non-violence for the fulfillment of her cherished dream of political freedom. Thamma, *The Shadow Lines*, have been struggle for the liberation of her country from the clutches of the British rule and conquest. She is fascinated and enthralled by nationalism and freedom of her country even as a young girl in college. Her nationalistic passion and love for her country is seen in her deep-rooted desire to work with the freedom fighters, to cook for them, to wash their clothes, to run their errands, in fact to do anything that would be of help to them. Thamma finally donates the only treasure, her cherished gold chain gifted to her by her husband on their first wedding anniversary. Through this character novelist has reflected the patriotic and her political consciousness.

Thus, Ghosh supported to identify the contributions made by women seeking a balance of women against men. Conscious of their nervousness, their dilemma and their devotion to make them heard, he provides them a platform to make their voices heard. He gives them the importance they never had in spite of their involvement and participation in a glorious past. By giving voice to a woman’s awareness and her individualistic opinions, Ghosh provides an alternative vision of the past. His women characters may not come through as the protagonists of his novels but they do play roles that are crucial. They cannot be suppressed nor can
they be ignored. Through a re-reading of the past, Ghosh is engaged in a postcolonial re-interpretation of life itself.

An interpretation of history is incomplete without a reference to nationalism of its citizens as subjects of the imperial rule of the British for over a century. It is this access to the nationalistic fervour of ordinary people that Amitav Ghosh creates in his fictions. In *The Glass Palace* Hardayal Singh is one who feels the suffocation and indication of time and of being a mere puppet in the hands of his masters. It portraits a common man no longer willing to remain a passive victim. The novelist finds to project Hardayal Singh’s nationalistic zeal that is representative of the pain and torture. Through this character he reflects a man caught between conflicting loyalties: loyalty towards his office and love of his country.

The postcolonial re-interpretation of the past also reproduces a postmodernist disbelief in traditional history, an indispensible characteristic of re-inventing of history. Post-modernist school of history challenges traditional history and its grand narratives, as one that is too limited and narrow. It questions the certainties of traditional modes of thinking, social organization and the human self as well. In subverting accepted modes of thought and experience postmodernism reveals the meaninglessness of existence. It is history that depicts human experiences of a kind that has not been registered or represented in any traditional historiography.

Most of his themes are result of his unexpected meetings with ordinary individuals and visits to places. Ghosh introduces the theme of the destiny of the migrant subaltern who is overlooked in the annals of history which is an integral part of selected fictional works. Regarding to this vision of An Egyptian in Baghdad, which records the Gulf War, subsequently appears as epilogue in *In an Antique Land*. The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi appeared in the novel *The Shadow Lines* and
discusses the effect of fear on the memory of the individual. He highlighted the empathy of fellow human beings for the victims of such riots, actions which do not find a mention in journalistic and historical records.

The major theme which forms a part of post-colonial narrative is the struggle against imperialism. Therefore, Ghosh illustrate the predicament and internal conflict faced by the Indian officers in the British army. Arjun and Hardayal express their skepticism and distrust of the very idea of nation. They wonder who are the people and the nation, they are fighting to defend. Though Hardayal had realized this ironical situation quite early in life; Arjun admits it after several initial setbacks. Arjun in the battle of Jitra is a confounded and emotionally distraught individual, who is caught between two worlds.

Through an analysis of selected fiction, the research has tried to unravel the various thematic concerns that have recurred in his novels. The universal travel theme and the desire to dream of a world free of divisions and separations have been inculcated in his works, though in varying manners. The predicament of the migrating subaltern and the changing perspectives of the post-colonial subject are discussed, involving a variety of characters in diverse and exotic geographical settings that change with each of his work. All his works characteristically defy any categorization in terms of genre.

Though Sea of Poppies is not included in the research work yet a reading of the same reveals his persistent post-colonial concerns. The book concerns the life of rural opium farmers in colonial India. Like always the travel motif is present here also, there the travel is through water and the victim of post-colonial predicament is the female subaltern lending the novel strong feminist undertones. The novel is the first among the proposed Ibis trilogy, the second part of which was published recently in June 2011 and is named River of Smoke. Set during the eve of the first
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Opium War between China and Britain in the 1830s, the journey of the characters is carried forward from where *Sea of Poppies* left it. Starting from Mauritius, the book is set mainly in the port-city of Canton, now called Guangzhou. Through an eclectic group of characters thrown together by circumstances and ambitious pursuits – and their struggle to cope with their losses, *River of Smoke* explores life in the foreign commercial settlement, and the politics of the opium trade. Ghosh once again displays his penchant for travel and crossing borders.

Colonial Desire and Hybridity are recurrent themes can be found in the selected fiction of Amitav Ghosh. Hybridity is a well-known phenomenon in post colonial literature, whose intend to explore the identity of man. Man as a whole has no religion, caste, creed etc. on humanity level. But when he shares his survival with any society he has to follow social norms and traditions. In the flow of the complex human setting, he has to suffer a lot due to migration or immigration and his identity is changed. Searching for his identity, he begins to change himself. But it doesn’t mean that he gets his own emotional shelter.

Hybridity refers in its most basic sense to mixture. The term originates from biology and was subsequently employed in linguistics and in racial theory in the nineteenth century. Its contemporary uses are spread across numerous academic disciplines and are salient in popular culture. Key Concepts in Literary Theory described:

> the Hybridity is originally naming something or someone of mixed ancestry or derived from heterogeneous sources, the term has been employed in post-colonialism, particularly in the work of Homi Bhabha, to signify a reading of identities which foregrounds the work of difference in identity resistant to the imposition of fixed, unitary identification which is, in turn, a
hierarchical location of the colonial or subaltern subject. 

[Wolfreys: 2006: 96]

Bhabha defines Hybridity as, ‘a problematic colonial representation that reverses the effect of the colonialist disavowal, so that other denied knowledge enters upon the dominant discourse and estranges the basis of its authority.’ [https://www.scribd.com/] Its first recorded use in the nineteenth century to denote the crossing of people of different races is given in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1861. However since who- point his argument was deny that humans were different species, he never directly used term hybrid to describes humans, speaking instead of mixed or intermediate races. Its appearance between 1843 1nd 1861, therefore, marks the rise of belief that there could be such a thing as human hybrid.

Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and Gaytri Spiva are the real proponent of Hybridity Theory, whose work responds to the increasing multicultural awareness of the early nineteen nineties. A key text in the development of Hybridity theory is Homi Bhabha’s The Location of Culture which analyses the liminality of Hybridity as a paradigm of colonial anxiety. His key argument is that colonial Hybridity, as a cultural form, produced ambivalence in the colonial masters and as such altered the authority of power. Bhabha’s arguments have become keys in the discussion of Hybridity. While he originally developed his theory with respect to narratives of cultural imperialism, his work also develops the concept with respect to the cultural politics of migrancy in the contemporary metropolis. But no longer is Hybridity associated just to migrant populations or border towns it is also used in other contexts when there is a flow of different cultures and both give and receive from each other.

The development of Hybridity theory as a discourse of anti-essentialism marked the height of the popularity of academic Hybridity talk. However the usage of
Hybridity in theory to eliminate essentialist thinking and practices (namely racism) failed as Hybridity itself is prone to the same essentialist framework and thus requires definition and placement. A number of arguments have followed in which promoters and detractors argue the uses of Hybridity theory. Much of this debate can be criticized as being excessively bogged down in theory and pertaining to some unhelpful quarrels on the direction Hybridity should progress e.g. attached to racial theory, post-colonialism, cultural studies, or globalization.

Hybridity is not only a source of sufferings under his depiction, but the Hybridity discourse also risks being elitist if we do not recognize the power inequality that triggers hybrid formations. Such ambivalence demonstrates that the use of Hybridity does not necessarily overlook ethical responsibility.

With the employment of Hybridity, Ghosh devotes to the post-colonial task of seeking social and political justice for the marginalized by encouraging the rewriting of history, but simultaneously foregrounds the argument that knowledge of the past is contextually constructed within certain social, political and historical frameworks. It is paradoxical to challenge historical knowledge but at the same time to acknowledge the rewriting of marginal history as a means of emancipation from the ordeals in the colonial past.

Ghosh, however, does not offer to resolve this paradox. Such open-endedness leaves us in frustration. This, as Mondal points out, ‘reflects our desire for ‘closure of ethical, political and imaginative possibilities in order to pursue a politics that gives us the satisfaction of appearing to do something’.

[http://hub.hku.hk/bitstream/] In other words, the frustration caused by lack of closure underlines our urge to take an unequivocal stance and fulfill the self-sensed moral obligation to seek justice. It is perhaps Ghosh’s intention to observe this ethical imperative and keep open the channels for alternative historical
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representations so that we can understand the voices that have been left out from history. Ghosh’s proposal of alternative histories transcends traditional ethnographic and historical representation.

In this way, Chapter first is entitled as Introduction, open up with the short history of Indian Fiction in English, along with its stress on the contribution of Amitav Ghosh to the literary scenario of Indian English Fiction. It also focuses on the post-colonial approach towards Colonial Desire and Hybridity.

Chapter second is entitled as A Critical Study of The Glass Palace, gives details of a story of three nations such as India, Burma (Now Myanmar) and Malaysia. It describes the family of three generations traveling and moving onward and backward in three countries during the 20th century. It also presents the Indian cultural identity, as well as Burma and Malaysia.

Chapter third is entitled as A Critical Study of The Shadow Line, an account of a middle class Indian family living in Kolkata. It presents three cultures, three nations and three families which becomes a symbol of Hybridity. The novel beautifully shifts from past to present and from present to past, Ghosh manages in a masterly way time of two kinds, time past: memory and time present: reality.

Chapter four is entitled as A Critical Study of Sea of Poppies, records the fictional lives of a different set of Indian, British, American, French, Arakan and Chinese characters, whose fortunes come together on the Ibis, a schooner that was formerly a slave carrier between Africa and America, and now, fittingly, transports indentured laborers from colonized countries to new colonies. The novel presents a mixture of different characters from different cultures, castes, religions, and nations etc. which become a symbol of Hybridity. Colonial desire also reflects throughout this novel.
Chapter fifth is entitled as *A Critical study of In An Antique Land*, recount the life of Abraham Ben Yiju, his family and friend Khadut who travels to Mangalore on west coast India for trade purpose around mid-twentieth century. The novel throws light on life in India of 12th century. Also, the novel portrays the repercussion of villagers of Lataifa in the Iran-Iraq war. The novel portrays the world of trade and commerce in Indian Ocean the Arabian Sea, and Persian Gulf.

The last and the sixth Chapter is *Conclusion*, which gives the conclusion and findings of the research done throughout the previous chapters. It also tells in detail how Amitav Ghosh has described varied characters with different themes throughout his novels. Fiction, having been the most powerful form of literary expression today, has acquired a prestigious position in Indian English Literature. It is generally agreed that the novel is the most acceptable way of expression of experiences and ideas in the context of our time. The Indian Fiction in English has been attracting worldwide attention. One can wonder whether it is a part of the Indian tradition or the European or the English tradition. A thorough analysis can work out the solution to the problems of tradition and modernity.

Having summed up the research, the sixth Chapters present the conclusions and findings as follows:

- Influenced by the pioneers of Post-colonialist like Edward Said, Franz Fanon and Homi Bhabha, Amitav Ghosh has been applied the term Hybridity and Colonial Desire to his writing.
- Hybridity is a well-known phenomenon in post-colonial literature, whose intend to explore the identity of man.
- Hybridity manifests itself in a multitude of ways in races, cultural identities, language and literary genre.
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- Colonial Desire refers to imperial ideology that keeps the colony underestimated so as to rule and master or exploit them.
- The propose of applying such terms to find out cross-cultural contacts, Cultural Identity, binary opposition like colonizers and colonized, centers and marginalized, and east and west.

Thus, the conclusion of this research is to focus on post-colonial text which is the worldwide literature. The image of man is truly depicted in post-colonial literature. Colonial Desire and Hybridity has become core part of this literature. Colonial Desire means to make colony and to rule over them. On the other hand, Hybridity means the mixture of culture, religion and nation etc. However, the post decades of the twentieth century witnessed both in Europe and in several countries of the Third World including India, a diminishing away of the old, established value systems because they were accused of catering to the needs of the privileged few. The new concepts like, subversion, deconstruction, post-modernism, and post colonialism swept away the old literary theories. Consequently, Colonial Desire and Hybridity created a new wave in their respective writing.

6.2. Scope for further research work:

The present work is not the final declaration about the text. But, it can be seen through the under the point of view:

1. It can be focused on Anthropological studies and application of feminist theories.
2. The sociological study of the novels is also suggested for further study.
3. The application of the psycho analytical theories will give remarkable output.
4. It will study under point of view as a Post-colonial rewriting of history and culture.
5. Realistic approach and gender issues, and as a paradigm of social realism can be applied.
6. Present research can reshape our understandings of colonial pasts into a sharper perspective.
7. The issues regarding globalization, borders, migration, repatriating, exile refuges, assimilation, and multiculturalism will also study.

The suggestions regarding the scope of the research of these novels are certainly useful for the up and coming intellectuals think about of the source the texts from the different angles.
Work Cited:

http://hub.hku.hk/bitstream/10722/192982/2/FullText.pdf?accept=1

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