

## Migration and Development in Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*: A Global Perspective

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Received: February 19, 2022; Revised & Accepted: April 17, 2022

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### Abstract

*The paper analyzes the Manjushree Thapa's Seasons of Flight from the perspective migration and development. Prema the main characters of the novel migrates from Nepal to USA through EDV and see dream of better future, however, she cannot be satisfied with economic prosperity. In this context the study focuses on how Prema is being victim of globalization and migrations and what are problems she faced in her life. Qualitative research design was followed and analyzed the issue with textual evidence. Conclusion has been made on the basis of textual analysis. Through analysis it is proved that Prema wants to be a rich and prestigious personality but she could not be happy in life because she could not feel enjoy in her life.*

**Keywords:** English literature , Nepal, Manjushree Thapa, *Seasons of Flight*

### Introduction

This study analyzes Manjushree Thapa's novel *Seasons of Flight* from the global perspective in terms of migration and development. Globalization brings new spirit among the people of developing nation and opens the legal way to migrate from homeland. After 2000 A.D. many western countries like America, Australia and Canada brings various schemes for the youth of developing nation. Prema is one of the character of this novel participate in EVD program run by American Government , as scheme for the youth of developing nation to entre in America . She is selected by lottery and migrates from Nepal to America. After migration she faces various opportunities and thread in her life. This study concentrates on the consequences Prema's migration from Nepal to America and analyzes the effects of such migration. People migrate from one place to another place for the sake of positive change or development. Prema

also migrates with same ethos and migrates from Nepal due to her desire of being economically prosperous and socially dignified one.

Prema, the protagonist of the novel, born in poverty in rural Nepal, is mostly unstable, migrates to America through the American green card lottery diversity visa program and tries to show herself as belonging to the middle class. In this study, it analyzes how a poor girl, born in a village, changes her class and why she does so and forgets her childhood situation and what are the factors that responsible to change her from lower class to middle class. She comes to the city for study, joins INGO and fills up DV form. She changes her job many times in Nepal and even in America. Through projecting the life of Prema, writer minutely analyzes the effect of globalization and migration that leads the life of youth into difficult situation.

Through the novel writers describes the situation of Nepalese youth and analyzes the socio economic and cultural situation of youth who are migrated from Nepal to western countries. America is the main destination of Nepalese youth. They reach America with golden hope and succeeded to earn money. After earning some money they remember their home land and compare the situation. Prema also remembers her childhood age. She memorizes her past and feels rejoices because she lost natural beauty in America. Manjushree Thapa projects such experiences and highlights problems of migrations and globalization that brings in Nepalese youth.

Since its publication, many critics have analyzed Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* from different perspectives. Archana. Thapa, a critic of this novel, comments on the situation of main character and writes, "Prema who is motivated a strong desire go beyond mentally and physically, love her binocular an instrument of vision that literally takes us beyond immediate location and finally leaves for America after winning a diversity lottery visa. She leaves her partner Rajan, informs her father and sets alone towards an unknown journey" (2). The lines show the situation of Prema who represents a typical young girl of Nepal who faces existential crisis in life. Addressing social issues she tries to acknowledged the problems of society. Though the relationship does begin on expected lines, it soon breaks from a cliché trajectory and explores far-away nooks of the minds and thoughts of both the people in it. In this context, R. Adhikari states, "There is a clearly great deal to understand from the acceptance of this fiction into Nepali readers' community: Nepali society is ready to talk about social taboos, including sex, through books, literature, and newspaper. It also shows that society's attitude towards sex is changing" (2).

Thapa is consciousness of Nepali mind although she mostly lives in abroad. She presents her characters as faithless and homeless that usually dreams of abroad and forgets the importance of self-pride. In the same way, Sally Sawnet Acharya, says, "As the novel traces her life and growth and her search for identity and belonging in America, there are interpolated chapters which also explore her background in Nepal from where she had arrived in America by winning a diversity lottery for green cards."(23). Manjushree involves craftsmanship in exploring human condition damaging effects of the Nepali youth exemplified in cultural dislocation and illusory freedom is apt enough to interpret the western world even if his texts seem detached from any specific cultural ideologies. Through all these multiple layers and themes, one thing

always remains. Regarding her such extraordinary vision, Basant Thapa comments, "His prestige as a novelist has surely assisted him in sustaining his high prolific as an interpreter of the Nepali world" (4). The motive behind Prema's migration to America and all her mobility is to secure better financial status as a sign of development

### **Methodology and Theatrical Tools**

The study was based on qualitative research design and analyzed the issue from the prospective of globalization and migration. Secondary data were used for this study, books, articles; reviews were the main source of secondary data collected gathered through library and internet. Migration and globalization as main triticales tool of analysis

### **Concept of migration and globalization**

Migration is the term which is related to travel people from one place to another place. Dirk Hoerder defines, "The migration of people from place to place in search of better opportunities and higher living standard goes back centuries "(21). People from developing countries are moving towards the developed countries as migrant workers. People migrate from one place to place for better life. Nepal Migration Year Book defines the migration as, "International labor migration has become a survival strategy for men and women of many least developed and developing countries" (1). The international labor migration is one of the main sources of employment to the young Nepali work force. Migration is movement by people from one place to another, sometimes over long distances or in large groups. Historically this movement was nomadic, often causing significant conflict with the indigenous population and their displacement or cultural assimilation. Only a few nomadic people have retained this form of lifestyle in modern times. Migration has continued under the form of both voluntary migration within one's region, country, or beyond and involuntary migration that includes the slave trade, trafficking in human beings and ethnic clearing. People who migrate into a territory are called immigrants, while at the departure point they are called emigrants. Intentional Labour organization defines migration as:

No universally accepted definition for migrant exists. The term migrant was usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of personal convenience and without intervention of an external compelling factor; it therefore applied to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family. The United Nations defines migrant as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. (23)

Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourist and businesspersons would not be considered migrants.

Globalization is the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views products, ideas, and other aspects of culture. Patrick Manning discusses on the history of globalization as, "Philosophy, religion, language, the arts, and other aspects of

culture spread and mixed as nations exchanged products and ideas. Global movement of people goods, and ideas is expanded significantly in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century" (45). The term globalization is derived from the word globalize, which refers to the emergence of an international network of social and economic systems. One of the earliest known usages of the term as a noun was in a 1930 publication entitled, *Towards New Education*, where it denoted a holistic view of human experience in education. Charles Russell says:

Since its inception, the concept of globalization has inspired competing definitions and interpretations, with antecedents dating back to the great movements of trade and empire across Asia and the Indian Ocean from the 15th century onwards. Due to the complexity of the concept, research projects, articles, and discussions often remain focused on a single aspect of globalization.(33)

Its simplistic sense globalization refers to the widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnection; such a definition begs further elaboration. Globalization can be located on a continuum with the local, national and regional. Economic globalization is the opening and deregulation of commodity, capital and labor markets that led toward present neoliberal globalization.

### **Analysis of the Novel**

Youth of developing nation get opportunity to migrate from their home country to western countries like America and Canada due to globalization and international migration. They migrate for the sake of development. Prema a middle class Nepalese family's daughter also get chance to participate in EDV program. Prema describes her home village in this way:

Her family home which she still thought of as hers, though she had not lived in it since she was seventeen-was sturdy, two-storeyed, of stone. It has felt sheltering, and safe, when she used to run through the bamboo grove past the Shiva-Parvati temple that bordered the terraced rice fields, to school. (12)

After Prema reached into America she memorizes her village which different from American city. There was a Shiva Parvati temple in her village. She lives with her friends and family. Environment of her village and school is really beautiful and creative. Her work place is far from the local market where Prema lives with her friends. Each week she visits market place and meets friends. They discuss about function of NGO's related to poverty alleviation and capacity building. The discussion is about development program. Prema describes the situation as, "Rajan lived and worked in a village a two hours' walk up from the hill bazaar. He headed the non-government organization's poverty-alleviation programme. Every few weeks he would come by the bazaar, and he and Prema would walk together to the town at the base of the hills and spend a night, or sometimes two nights, there"(22).

The issues of migration and development appears in the once at time though gig jag narratives of Prema. Thapa use flashback techniques to highlights the issue which she raise in this novel. The plot of novel covers the story of Prema both Nepal and America. She describes

the situation of America and compares the situation of her village where she lived when she was child. Prema portrays Esther situation and says, "Esther's husband Tim had died long ago of what cause Prema never learned. Her stepson Theo, who was Natalie's father-was Tim's son from a previous marriage. He was a stockbroker across the country, in the state of New Jersey" (29). Prema observes the family composition of America which is different from Nepal. In Nepal there is good relationship among family members but in America people believe in individual effort and give priority on fashion, modernity and globalization. In this regard, Prema states, "Her other housemate, Susan Kitterow, was in her forties, with crimped blond hair and a trim figure. Discounting the ageing around her eyes, Susan was attractive in the way of fashion models"(31). Meg and Susan both love to material prosperity and enjoy life by consuming luxurious materials. The situation Prema describes as:

Meg and Susan both had cars; they came and went as they pleased, day or night. In the evenings Prema was alone at home. After dinner she would watch television: car races, court cases, news of celebrity couplings and separations, ads for colonic irrigations, weight-loss breakthroughs and reverse mortgages with tax-free proceeds. (32)

Above lines show the situation of America where people are living different way from Nepal. There finds all kinds of facilities in America. Prema compares the situation of America and Nepal. In Nepal, there is poverty and conflict.

When Prema migrate from Nepal her economic situation is upgrade. She uses the materials which she hears in Nepal. Her mentality is being changed. The living room is different from hill bazaar and village rooms. She drink coffee and talks with friend like western style as, "When the coffee was made, they went to the living room, and talked about nothing much-did they believe in god? He did, she didn't, but did it matter? That sort of thing. They sat on opposite ends of the sofa at first" (94). Relation between Prema and Lousis different from Rajan. While she was in Nepal she talked with Rajan about the situation of Nepalese youth and future life but now she has not any problems of future. In this regard, she says, "The scent of milk, his skin, dizzied her.

The novel projects the situation how a Nepalese youth faces problems in foreign nation after reached and what kinds of memoir s/he collect from new developed nation like America. Prema also faces some problems related to cultural and psychological. She phones her home frequently because she always remembers. In this regard she says, "She had deliberately cut off contact with home. Early on in Little Nepal, she had bought a phone card and telephoned her birth village. After the operator had fetched her father, she had told him she had found work"(115). Prema feels cultural differences in America. Near her apartment there is Mac Arthur Park. In Nepal there is Shiva Parvati temple near the village. The environment is familiar for her in Nepal but in America the situation of different. While she visits the park she reached near the parkas, "She got off at the next stop, before a clutter of groaning old buildings –Upper Mind Church Daily Donut Smoothie JESUS S VES Cappuccino-and made her way back to the greenery. MacArthur Park" (117).The situation she compares with Nepal when she lived in village, she and Rajan also visited many places but the love relation between she and



Ran is differ from now. In America she observes global scenario. In this regard, she says, "They stood in his small kitchen as he drank another Heineken. Through Andy's shiny, tight T-shirt Prema could see his impressive musculature. When he moved closer she did not move away. When he kissed her she kissed him back. But when he held her she could not help thinking of Rajan" (130). Rajan never expressed his love in verbal though he love Prema but in America love is always expresses in world, "I love you." 'I love you.' Each time Luis and she said this, it sounded more resonant, true. How easily they slipped into a relationship. That this was a relationship, or what the Americans called a relationship" (133). Prema first time realizes the fact which she finds in America. American society is highly influenced by global culture.

Prema realizes the fact in her life after comparing her situation. In America there is no gender discrimination but in Nepal male culture dominates women frequently. Women are hegemonies by patriarchy. In this regards, Prema says:

'She kept getting pregnant because she wanted a son! You know how many times? One baby before me, two afterwards-they all died. And she-wanted was a son! In Nepal they still- People still- All these stupid white people American Hindu call this Krishna love? (183)

Above lines show the situation of Nepalese people. They are guided by patriarchy though they are claimed as Hindu. In America Hindus are identify as women lover. Hindu identity is different in America. Migrant people help each other in America basically they supports each other to search job. In this regard, Prema states, "Heya, are you here for the vacancy?" Meg said without glancing at her. 'Sorry I'm late, we had an emergency at the hospital, I just couldn't get away. Glad you're here- I figured you would have left by now, I was thinking I'd call and reschedule" (188). Friends are discussed various issues and makes idea of particular subject.

Globalization helps to transmit various cultures from one part to another through migration. The situation Prema describes as, "The *momos* were soft and succulent, the chicken *savoury* with onion, cumin and coriander. Prema felt she had never eaten anything quite so nourishing. She finished them all at one go, mumbling with her mouth full: 'Delicious" (197). People make romance in holiday by exchanging culture though there is problem of diversity and acknowledgement. The situation Prema mentions, "In one romance, Rihanna, a successful executive, battled her attraction to Jeff, a ruthless executive at a rival company, only to discover that he had been abandoned as a child, and that his fear of love, like hers, stemmed from early rejection" (201). American law respect cultural right and gives chance to perform their culture though there is problems which Prema identifies, "All these things I take for granted... I can't even imagine-I mean, I've only ever lived in American, right? Even that, only in Cali-southern California"(201). In game there are some of the influences of brutality which is related to the myth of king and bishop. Migrants' people take interest on them. The following lines of the novel justify the situation as:

They played several more of these games, one after another. The longest one lasted ten minutes. Most ended quickly. In the first few moves, the king would

be exposed to a fatal attack; or a pawn would knock off a bishop, then a knight, and entrap the king. And the game would end. (202)

Above lines highlights the effect of globalization that brings everyone in single values though all are living in distinct characteristics. Prema memorizes her child hood and compares the situation what she observes now in America. In this regard, she says, "No need, Chhori, no need.' He said, 'I know what it's like there. One of our neighbors-do you remember Jetha-dai? With the house across the bamboo grove? His son went to America" (206). It shows the perception of Nepali people on America. America becomes the dream land of Nepali.

Migration and globalization brings certain problems in Nepalese people projects through the narratives of Prema. She describes the events and consequences which are related to both negative and positive. Nature of America when she lives is not lovely like her home village which she describes, "Following it to a pool by a dry, rocky stretch where an oystercatcher stood, immobile. She began to come here early, bringing along her binoculars and field guide. Some mornings she saw marbled godwits with long, red upturned bills with black tips" (217). America respect human law so people attraction goes toward America which she describes, "All of humanity was fleeting. On landmasses aged billions of years, human society had spanned merely ten, fifteen thousand years. If there were an earthquake now?" (219). Prema compares her life with a butterfly which float during the season of monsoon with full of freedom. She also feels like that though she is unable to do that. In this regard, she says, "A butterfly preserves. How come Prema had never known of the El Segundo Blue? 'You are a butterfly specialist?' she asked. A lepidopterist by passion, but a lawyer by training. I work at this non-profit, Life Corps" (222). She compares life with the crops that people always preserve it until time of ripe.

The narratives are guided by concept of migration and the challenges and opportunity of migration which youth migrated from Nepal faces problem in life. The situation Prema describes, "Do you have a resume?' Fiona asked. 'Pass it on to me, I'll look it over and give you some guidance. You need to throw it around. Check all the websites for openings. And call people up. Knock on doors. Be persistent. Tell everyone-hey, I'm a..." (225). Prema compare human life with the stage of butterfly and compares youth period as season of flight. In this regard she says, "At all the different stages of its life-egg, caterpillar, pupa, chrysalis, butterfly-it had had to elude predators-spiders and wasps-and other competitors for coastal buckwheat" (227). She thinks her situation in America where she realizes the fact of life and says, "When she thought it over later, she felt it was the right thing to do. It would have been unforgivable to abandon Esther. For, charmed as the old lady's life had been what remained of it now?" (229). In the season autumn she saw butterfly in the sky with full of youth and energy which remains silence before the stage. It is similar to human being that she realizes after she reached America. She got no beauty in life and only enjoy in past memory. The situation she explains, "Late that autumn, as wildfires blazed on the hills around the metropolis, Esther suffered a stroke. She lay in a coma in the hospital for three days. Prema remained by her side throughout" (230). In America, she becomes a teacher in a primary school and lead her life like a busy engine. In this regard, she says, "Her job was to teach school children about the California

floral region. They came to the non-profit from inner-city schools and sat in the garden, all weeds and scrubs, that had been restored to native vegetation" (231).She memorizes various friends who helps her to pass life in America. She explains the situation as:

After Haroun was Bobby Sorensen, a forester originally from the state of Maine, a friend of Foina and Randa's. Bobby had a full, feckless laugh, and he was full of stories. Prema and he slept together several times, but she stopped seeing him when he confessed that he was starting to feel a certain fondness for her. (234)

Above lines show the situation Prema in America. She achieves material benefit in new land though she does not feel happy with Luis and other friends. The novel describes the common problem of youths who are migrated western countries with hope of new life and getting opportunity. They earn some money by hard working but they could not properly manage their life. Season of flight allegorically suggest that people flight for freedom though they fall in trap which is the nature of globalization and migration in contemporary time that Thapa artistically projects in this novel

### **Conclusion**

Migration is common phenomena for Nepali youths like Prema and migrates from Nepal to western nations like, Australia, Europe and America. America is one of the dream land of developing nation like Nepal, Prema has also dream of being rich and prestigious one. She has succeeded to achieve material prosperity and fully utilized the benefit of globalization and migration; however, she cannot be happy in life because she is not satisfied with material prosperity. She is hunted by sweet memories of past and hates the present life. Prema is being ultimately being victim of globalization and migration and falls in the situation of identities crisis.

**Financial support and sponsorship:** None

**Conflicts of interest:** None

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**Nepal Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (NJMR)**

**Vol. 5, No.2 , June 2022. Pages: 11-19**

**ISSN: 2645-8470 (Print), ISSN: 2705-4691 (Online)**

**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/njmr.v5i2.46075>**

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