

**An Exploration of the Diverse Psychology of South Asian Immigrants
Through the Lens of Gender Performativity: Contextualising Bharti
Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane***

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Paper Received on 12-02-2026, Accepted on 12-03-2026

Published on 14-03-26; DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2026.11.01.587

Abstract

South Asia is a region of the world with a long history, a rich cultural heritage, and diverse ethnicities. European colonialism shaped the identity of many South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The offshoot of British colonization of India was the partition, which played a pertinent role in the South Asian migration to Europe and America. The life of South Asian migrants is not easy in a foreign land, as there they face many kinds of humiliation, including racial discrimination, identity crisis, and cultural clash.

In the South Asian diasporic literature, all these issues have been explored scrupulously with serious concerns. The writers from the South Asian diaspora brilliantly reveal the struggles and sufferings experienced by the South Asian migrants abroad. However, the experiences of a man and a woman as migrants differ. Most of the South Asian countries are patriarchal, and so here women face many forms of subjugation and oppression in every aspect of life. European countries and America have much more liberal and open societies than South Asia. Therefore, women from South Asian countries are exploring new freedoms there. That is why, despite many challenges, they mostly prefer to stay abroad as immigrants to cherish their newfound identity and freedom. These discourses are dazzlingly portrayed in Bharati Mukherjee's famous novel *Jasmine* (1989) and Monica Ali's celebrated novel *Brick Lane* (2003), where the two female protagonists, Jasmine and Nazneen, suppress their love for their motherland in order to live a life of freedom by accepting every challenge of an unknown land. This paper explores how gender performativity affects the psychology of South Asian female migrants and how it differentiates the psychology of males and females in the South Asian migration by influencing their choices and decisions regarding migration and immigration in the context of the two novels, *Jasmine* and *Brick Lane*.

Keywords: South Asian Migration, Patriarchal society, Gender role, Gender performativity, and Immigrant Psychology.

Introduction

Once you start moving, you never stop. That's what I told my sons when they took the trains. I don't believe in this India-Shindia. It's all very well, you are going away now, but suppose when you get there, they decide to draw another line somewhere? What will you do then? Where will you move to? No one will have you anywhere.¹ This eloquent expression of Jethamoshai in Amitav Ghosh's popular novel *The Shadow Lines* raises a voice against migration with his edging criticism of the concept of nation, border, and boundary. Indeed, the ideas of nation and nationalism are complex. Notably, Rabindranath Tagore preferred internationalism over nationalism because the false consciousness of nationalism hinders the path of the global brotherhood by creating all kinds of racial discrimination and fanaticism. However, Jethamoshai's every word is poignant, subtly revealing the reality of migration. The uprooted tree hardly finds the soil to root itself again; similarly, migration is all about moving around the world without permanently settling down in a land. Once you become homeless, you will only find various rooms but not a home. Therefore, migration is not only a physical loss, but it is also a psychological loss. In this regard, the words of Nadia Hashimi are justified: "Refugees didn't just escape a place. They had to escape thousand memories until they'd put enough time and distance between them and their misery to wake to a better day."

In the present world, migration is a global problem, and its final solution is mostly unattainable. Migration is a heterogeneous issue that cannot be defined within a single discourse. In reality, migration is a political policy of any nation to retain power. The European colonizers produced the notion of the Orient for the people of the East to project their Western identity as the supreme Occident. In the same way, migrants, refugees, and stateless people are those who are used by the state apparatus in the formulation of the ideas of nation and citizenship. Hence, migration is more about politics than any ethnic or cultural fact.

¹ The lines are spoken by the character Jethamoshai in Amitav Ghosh's famous novel *The Shadow Lines* to criticize the idea of migration, border and nation.

Migration has varied forms, including forced migration, migrant labourers, people who migrate for a better life in a developed country, climate migration, marriage migration, and so on. In each form of migration, the people in state power are responsible for all these. That is why, still, in the 21st century, migration is a serious issue without any permanent solution. Every nation treats migrants as inhuman objects and as an alien entity from another planet. State power uses these unfortunate people as its weapon to make their political intrigue successful and to achieve their political ambition. So, no matter how much the human civilization surmounts its climactic height with the utmost growth of science and technology, these homeless people will neither find their true home nor will their suffering and misery come to an end. So, it is doubtful whether the issue of migration will ever meet a happy denouement.

South Asia has a long and diverse history of migration, as it is a land of varied ethnicities. Moreover, many South Asian countries were once colonies of European colonizers for more than 200 years. So, it is European imperialism that majestically portrayed the sketch of the South Asian migration. After the end of European colonialism in South Asia, it was the partition of 1947, the direct result of British colonialism in India, which played a paramount role in the South Asian migration. The world is walking to the best of its growth with the digital revolution, but simultaneously, the migration of South Asia is increasing surprisingly. Hence, it is true that to enrich one sector of people, the other group must remain deprived of all the rights. Capitalism and late capitalism are the catalysts in this respect. Patti Tamara Lenard perfectly depicts the real condition of refugees and migrants by saying -

If we lived in a just world, all nations would protect their citizens' human rights. But that is not our world. Refugees are just one result of injustice. Crucially, they didn't cause their plight; rather, they are victims of profound injustice. Because their home nation cannot or will not protect even their basic human rights, they must migrate in search of protection. They are entitled to this protection, as all of us are, simply by virtue of being human.²

² These lines are said by Patti Tamara Lenard who uses the lines to explain the facts that refugees and migrants are deprived from all the basic rights of a human being due to the insensitivity and injustice of their own nation. Thus, they lack the identity of the citizenship of any particular country but we need to solve this problem because they deserve all the human rights being humans.

The voices of migrants are dominated and repressed by the rules and regulations of state power. Therefore, we can neither hear their mourning nor can we behold their tears. As Arthur c. Helton appropriately says, “Refugees are neither seen nor heard, but they are everywhere. They are witnesses to the most awful things that people can do to each other, and they become storytellers simply by existing. Refugees embody misery and suffering, and they force us to confront terrible chaos and evil”. Truly, their voice is buried in the grave of power politics because their voice, like the child in Nirendranath Chakravarty’s poem “The Naked King”, has the power to question the naked king (state power) “Hey, where are your clothes, King?” The voice of migrants has the potency to reveal all the injustice of state power and the failure of a government as a ruler. So, it is impossible for both the authorized history and today’s media to show us the skull and skeleton of migration. It is the ship of literature that sometimes tries to take us on a voyage to the exclusive and secret world of refugees and migrants, and thus, we occasionally can hear their voices in transit.

South Asia includes the countries of India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. In the case of South Asia, the appearance of migration has two facets: one is inter-continent migration, and the other is outer-continent migration. In the former case of migration, people of any South Asian country migrate to another South Asian country, like after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina Government in August 2024, Bangladeshi Hindus are leaving their country and coming to India in search of more protected land for their living as their homeland fails to give them a safe shelter. On the other hand, in the case of the latter, people from any South Asian country migrate to other continents, for example, people from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan go to European countries and America for a better career and opportunity. So, the multidimensional issues affect South Asian migration, and one of them is gender performativity. Gender performativity is performing an active role as a new phenomenon in the out-migration of South Asia from the 20th century till now. Hence, now it is the need of the hour to diagnose the role of gender performativity in the discourse of South Asian migration.

WHAT IS GENDER PERFORMATIVITY?

The term gender performativity was coined by the American philosopher and gender studies theorist Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the*

Subversion of Identity, which was published in 1990, but before that, Butler discussed the term in her essay “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” (1988). However, Butler was inspired by Simone de Beauvoir’s book *The Second Sex* (1949) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *The Body in its Sexual Being*, and these two books helped her impressively in conceptualising her theory of gender performativity. Notably, though Butler is a female as a biological identity, in 2020 she declared herself as legally non-binary and so, she now prefers to use the pronoun they/their instead of she/her.

In the work *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir staunchly declares, “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” This revolutionary expression is the nucleus of gender performativity. According to the theory of gender performativity, gender is not an innate or inborn identity, but it is socially constructed behaviours through our culture and ethnic identity. We are bound to acquire these behaviours through practice to fit into society. Hence, we perform our gender. Society creates a certain set of behavioural rules and patterns on the basis of the biological identity of men and women. From childhood, our training for gender performativity is started by our family. In all patriarchal societies, we observe the difference between the nurturing of a male child and a female child. A Patriarchal society always focuses on a boy child, considering him the saviour of the ancestors’ fame and the family’s existence in the world, while on the other hand, a girl child is treated as the other’s property because after marriage, a girl has to go to her husband’s home. In this respect, the concept of home is really shadowy for a girl because she never finds her own home; before marriage, she stays in her father’s home, after marriage, she stays in her husband’s home, and after her husband’s death, she stays in her son’s home. Naturally, our family and our society teach us gender roles from a young day and we follow them without being aware of the fact that whatever we are doing is not a natural biological process. In her book *Undoing Gender* (2004), Butler argues that we perform our gender unknowingly and unconsciously, considering it as our spontaneous characteristic. We repeat our gender roles again and again. Thus, through infinite practices, there comes a time when we internalize these behaviours. So, when being adults, we perform our gender roles flawlessly, then we cannot even recognize that it is a mere performance without any organic relation. As Butler says, “Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that

it is performed". Hence, with time, our gender performativity becomes our natural identity.

THE ROLE OF GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN THE SOUTH ASIAN MIGRATION

Now, it is time to analyze how gender performativity functions in producing the diverse psychology of South Asian migrants. Gender performativity is one of the root causes behind the inequality between men and women in a patriarchal society. The Patriarchy always wants to dominate women as the 'other' by projecting men as the 'self'. The Patriarchal society is constructed on the theory that men are at the centre of everything and women are at the periphery of that centre. Following the norm of gender performativity being the centre and subject of everything, a man has to be rational, intelligent, courageous, brave, and strong. On the contrary, gender performativity presents a female as emotional, imprudent, docile, submissive, shy, and absolutely dependent on men. Being the connoisseur of the patriarchy, South Asian countries rigidly follow gender roles. In these countries, the idea of gender is presented through the binary opposition – male and female, and nothing exists outside it. Either you are a male, or you are a female, it is that simple. But is it easy to identify and frame diverse human beings with diverse biological features and diverse psychologies only within these two binary oppositions? The answer is no. There are so many people with rare identities and rare cravings, and though they do not fall into any of these two categories of gender identity, our society has identified them as the queer community. This queer community is a threat to a patriarchal society because the community debunks the socially constructed strict idea of gender performativity and even violates the patriarchal concept of heterosexual marriage. The queer community, or the LGBTQ community, does not follow the gender role, and sometimes, being women, they act as men and vice versa. Thus, they problematize the concept of the gender role by subverting gender performativity. So, still, the LGBTQ community does not find any recognized safe place on the map of South Asia. South Asia is their motherland, yet they experience an unhomely environment here, and they are also the subject of torture and punishment. That is why the LGBTQ community of South Asia is migrating to Europe and America, which offer a better place for them to live a better life according to their choice and decision.

Similarly, the women of South Asia experience gender inequality here. They cannot enjoy equal rights, and still, they are fighting for it. They are also promoting social awareness to achieve gender equality. The women of South Asia are subjugated,

dominated, and marginalized in their motherland, and the level of all these oppressions varies depending on the religion, class, caste, community, and social status they belong to. So, naturally, when women from South Asia migrate to any European country or America, there they find a different environment that is free from the conventional gender role. So, they feel there is a new kind of freedom and equality that they never experienced in their homeland. However, the foreign land cannot provide these women with the affection and the emotional bonding of the motherland, and there they find many new problems. Indeed, abroad can never be our true home because of racial and cultural prejudices. So, the women of South Asia also feel alien in the unknown land, but abroad gives them some exposure to freedom through which they find their own identity. This fragrance of freedom enchants them to stay there. On the one hand, their reminiscence and their love for the motherland evoke an urge to come back inside them, and on the other hand, it is the fear of losing their freedom and individual identity that prevents them from coming back home. Hence, a tussle goes on in their mind which always makes them restless. However, finally, they chose their freedom above their love. Thus, they prefer to stay abroad as immigrants, consuming all the demerits of a foreign land.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE NOVEL *JASMINE* (1989)

Jasmine is one of the well-acknowledged novels of Indian-American writer Bharati Mukherjee. It is inspired by her earlier short story. Jasmine, a seventeen-year-old Punjabi girl, is the protagonist of the novel. The setting of the novel is late 20th-century India and America. Jasmine's family was actually from Lahore, but after the partition, they had to come to Hasnapur. Jasmine's birth name was Jyoti, but after her marriage, her modern husband renamed her Jasmine. She was married to a liberal-minded man, Prakash, who worked both as a repairman and a bookkeeper. Besides that, Jasmine also used to sell detergent to support Prakash in running their family. Prakash's professor, Dave Vadhera, who lived in America, encouraged him to do his higher studies in the U.S.A. So, after being selected by the Florida International Institute of Technology, Prakash and Jasmine decided to go to America in the hope of a better career and life. However, before that, a great tragedy happened, and unfortunately, Prakash was killed in a bomb attack. However, to fulfil his husband's dream, Jasmine alone went to America as an immigrant by surrendering herself completely to an unknown place and an uncertain future. The foreign land appeared to her red in tooth and claw when Jasmine was raped by the ship captain Half-Face.

In America, Jasmine experienced the whirlwind of migration by facing many terrible problems one by one. Being physically assaulted, Jasmine was forced to kill her rapist to escape that place, and after that, she met Lillian Gordon, who sheltered her with a new identity, Jazzy. Then, she found Vadhera, who kept her in his home with his family, and later helped her by providing a green card for moving safely across the country. An Indian cab driver in America, who was also a victim of the Indian partition like Jasmine, made her aware of the real struggle and suffering of the Indian migrants and immigrants in America. After getting the green card, Jasmine bade farewell to the Vadhera family in search of her true independence. So, she took the work of a governess. As a governess, she started to take care of a little girl, Duff, the adopted daughter of the couple Wylie and Taylor. Jasmine soon fell in love with Taylor, who used to call her Jase. When Taylor's wife left him for her lover, Stuart, after that, Jasmine, Taylor, and Duff started to live as a family, but one day, suddenly, Jasmine found Sukhwinder, who murdered Prakash, and then she left the Taylor family. After that, Jasmine went to Iowa, and there she met the banker, Bud Ripplemayer. Then, being the common-law wife of Bud, she started to live with him and his adopted son, Du, with the new name Jane. Finally, Taylor and his daughter found Jasmine, and they reached Bud's home to take Jasmine back with them. Jasmine felt the dilemma of whether she should leave the helpless Bud, who was a paralyzed person, or not. However, responding to the call of love, Jasmine finally chose Taylor and Duff, and she moved to New York with them, leaving Bud with his ex-wife, Karin, who still loves Bud.

JASMINE: THE ROLE OF GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN THE SOUTH ASIAN MIGRATION

In the patriarchal society of South Asia, the gender performativity of a female is completely distinctive from that of a male. In the countries of South Asia, women are considered ideal when they are only housewives, completely dedicating themselves to nurturing their children and taking care of their husband and family. After marriage, their husbands are everything in their life and they do not have any separate identity in society. If a woman breaks the social stereotype of gender performativity, society labels her as an outcast. India, as a South Asian country, provides us with the same image. So, being an Indian woman, Jasmine was bound to perform her gender performativity. In the novel, Jasmine became a widow at the age of seventeen. We know clearly what the real condition of widowed women in Indian society is. After the death of her husband, a Hindu woman loses all the colour of life,

and in a minute, her life turns white. The life of a Hindu widow is that monsoon sky where there is no rainbow behind the cloud but only the darkness of profound grief. A Hindu widow is bound to follow many rules and rituals, including wearing a white saree, eating pure vegetables, fasting on ekadashi, dedicating herself completely to the thought of God, and so on. On the contrary, a male widow is free from all these, and he never loses the hues of life in the absence of his wife. The Indian poet Jayanta Mahapatra mesmerizingly depicts the condition of Hindu widows in his poem "Dawn at Puri" through the lines where he writes –

White-clad widowed Women
past the centers of their lives
are waiting to enter the Great Temple

Their austere eyes
stare like those caught in a net
hanging by the dawn's shining strands of
faith.

The fail early light catches
ruined, leprous shells leaning against one
another,
a mass of crouched faces without names,³

Jasmine was well aware of this pain of widowhood because she had seen her mother, who tried to burn herself in the pyre of her husband. After the death of a husband, the world of a woman collapses, and life suddenly stops moving. In the patriarchal society of India, it is really hard for a widowed woman to restart a new life with a second marriage, but a widowed man can easily knot himself with a new wife and can start a fresh life ahead, and Jasmine reflected this idea when she says, "I could not imagine a non-genetic child. A child that was not my own, or my husband's, struck me as a monstrous idea. Adoption was as foreign to me as the idea of widow remarriage." That is how gender performativity in a patriarchal society is different for males and females, and the way a patriarchal society constructs the role

³ These lines are extracted from Jayanta Mahapatra's poem "Dawn at Puri". The lines cast a spell on the readers by creating a deep visual impact with the vivid description of the real condition of the Hindu widow women in India.

of gender performativity for a female is oppressive. Marriage as an institution in a patriarchal society gives men a supreme position while it restricts women's sphere by engaging them in various rules and rituals. So, to escape the suffering of widowhood and to concretize the dream of her liberal-minded husband, Jasmine left her motherland, India, and went to America as a South Asian immigrant. In America, as an immigrant, Jasmine suffered a lot, including physical violence, racial discrimination, identity crisis, and so on, yet she chose to live in America as an immigrant in search of freedom by repelling her gender performativity as an Indian Hindu widow. Jasmine continuously tried to make herself an American person in all aspects of life for the purpose of surviving in a foreign land safely and protecting herself from the INS. She was even compelled to change her Indian name, and one by one, she took an Americanized version of her Indian name to earn her livelihood. She went through the names of Jyoti, Jasmine, Jazzy, Jase, and Jane. It shows that the identity of an immigrant is ever-changing and not static. Besides that, in America, Jasmine moved from one place to another – from Florida to New York to Iowa, and again at the end of the novel, she came back to New York, but we cannot be certain whether Jasmine finally settled down in New York with the Taylor family or again she took a new journey with a new name. Jasmine's unstable existence in America proves each word of Jethamoshai true, who in *The Shadow Lines* says that if once we start moving as a migrant, moving becomes our only destiny throughout our whole life because a migrant never finds their true home in a foreign land. Another important aspect of migration is that migrants and immigrants cannot develop emotional connections with the citizens of the foreign land because of the impossibility of complete cultural assimilation and acculturation. That is why Jasmine could easily leave Bud. Indeed, Jasmine followed the path of Bud's adopted son, Du, who also left Bud after finding her sister in California. Like Jasmine, Bud was not an American citizen; he was actually a refugee from Vietnam.

When Jasmine left Bud, she was pregnant with Bud's child. It was the liberal society of America that gave the courage to be a mother outside the traditional wedlock to a woman who, one day, could not even imagine a second marriage. Furthermore, while leaving Bud and going with Taylor, Jasmine had not a single doubt about the fact whether Taylor would accept her with Bud's child or not. This is the confidence Jasmine achieved with her emancipation as a woman in America. Thus, it is the open society of America that liberates her from the prejudices of the patriarchy and ignites in her a free spirit that helps her in making decisions in her

favour. Physical violence against women is a common feature of migration, and Jasmine was also the victim of it. Therefore, the novel *Jasmine*, throughout the life journey of its protagonist Jasmine, depicts the realities of the South Asian migrants and immigrants in America. Jasmine, as an immigrant in America, faced multidimensional problems, but despite facing all the problems and challenges, she never thought of returning to India. The most logical reason for this could be that the freedom and individuality Jasmine experienced in the liberal society of America made her bound to live in America as an immigrant. From her childhood, Jasmine was a liberal-minded person; the orthodox patriarchal society in which she grew up never provided her the chance to discover the true spirit of her existence. That is why, only to celebrate her newfound identity and freedom, Jasmine chose exile abroad over the warm hug of her motherland. Therefore, now it is clear how gender performativity affects the psychology, preferences, and decisions of South Asian female migrants regarding migration and immigration.

A SNAPSHOT OF *BRICK LANE*

Brick Lane (2003) is the debut novel of the Bangladeshi-British writer Monica Ali. Highlighting the two places, Bangladesh and London, the novel mainly covers the years from 1985 to 2001. The protagonist of the novel was an eighteen-year-old Bangladeshi Muslim woman, Nazneen, who was married to a forty-year-old Bangladeshi man, Chanu. Nazneen's husband, Chanu, was a highly qualified person, and he worked in a state institution in London. Consequently, after marriage, Nazneen went to London, accompanying her husband as a migrant. Nazneen and Chanu started to live in East London near Brick Lane, which is famous as a place for Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants. In London, Nazneen engaged herself in an extramarital affair with a second-generation Bangladeshi immigrant, Karim, who became the leader of the Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants' rights group known as the Bengal Tigers. After the incident of September 11, the London anti-immigrant activists, famously known as the Lion Hearts, started their anti-immigrant campaign, which made the lives of Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants tough and unsafe. Due to racial discrimination and the rise of anti-Muslim activism in London, Chanu decided to leave London for the safety of his family. So, accordingly, Chanu arranged money for the tickets for the flight on 27 October 2001, but surprisingly, on that day, Nazneen refused to come back to Bangladesh. As a result, finally, Chanu returned alone, and Nazneen continued to live in London with her two daughters, Shahana and Bibi.

BRICK LANE: A REVELATION OF GENDER PERFORMATIVITY AS THE CATALYST IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENTIATION OF THE SOUTH ASIAN IMMIGRANTS

Brick Lane is that telescope through which we can behold and scrutinize the life of the Bangladeshi Muslim community in London as immigrants. Bangladesh, being a South Asian country, follows a strict patriarchal society. Therefore, the Muslim community of Bangladesh profoundly believes in gender performativity. As the norm of gender performativity, a Muslim man has the right to keep many wives together, but a woman cannot do such a thing. Again, as part of gender performativity, Bangladeshi women are bound to cover themselves with the veil of the burkha, but, on the contrary, there is no such provision for males. From her early childhood, Nazneen learnt the gender performativity of a woman from her mother. Nazneen's father was an abusive husband and when one-day Nazneen asked her mother why she endured all the pain then her mother skillfully expressed to Nazneen the true condition of women in a patriarchal society – “Amma hugged her fiercely. She took Nazneen's wide face between her two palms and spoke to her: If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men”. Thus, indoctrinating Nazneen in the religion of patriarchy, her mother in her childhood taught her successfully that in the patriarchal society, only men have the right to question everything, and women always need to yield themselves completely to men. It is clearly visible that women in a patriarchal society inherit the gender performativity of a female mainly from their mother, and men learn from their father the role of dominance and control.

Therefore, naturally, after marriage, when Nazneen shifted to London, she explored a completely new world. When she went abroad, she only knew two English words: 'sorry' and 'thank you'. So, she wanted to learn English. Although her husband was kind to her, he did not allow her to do so; rather, he advised her to abandon this wish and to devote all her attention to their children and family as an ideal housewife. Over time, Nazneen found that London society is open, flexible, and liberal, and gradually she discovered her freedom, which she had never experienced in Bangladesh. One day, when Nazneen came to know the tragic end of her younger sister Hasina's love marriage, she asked Chanu for help for her sister. When Chanu refused to help Hasina, Nazneen went out of her home in despair and roamed the streets of London, and that was the very first day when she felt emancipated by thinking that now she could travel the city without Chanu's help. Though Chanu was

highly qualified, due to racial prejudices, he could not progress in his career and job, and there came a time when he lost his job. At this point, to support his family, Nazneen took the work of sewing clothes with Chanu's permission. Then, Chanu managed to get a job as a taxi driver. Meanwhile, Nazneen, in the open atmosphere of London, started to breathe the breath of freedom. As a result, when she met a young boy, Karim, who worked as her delivery boy for her clothing business, she began an extramarital affair with him to quench her thirst for love. In this respect, Nazneen makes us remember Anna Karenina and Madame Bovary. Thus, time flew at its own pace, and suddenly, the world's stability was changed with the incident when the terrorist group al-Qaeda attacked the four most famous places of America and demolished the pride of America, the Twin Towers, on 11 September 2001. Suddenly, the air of Brick Lane became fiery, with the rising anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant activism of the group of Londoners known as Lion Hearts, and the condition of Bangladeshi Muslims became claustrophobic and unsafe. Even as an after-effect of 9/11, a Bengali boy was killed in Brick Lane. In this context, the quote of Antonio Manuel de Oliveira Guterres is effective as the quote says, "Refugees are not terrorists. They are often the first victims of terrorism." Indeed, after the tragedy of 9/11, the world started to consider refugees, migrants, and immigrants as terrorists, hinting indirectly at the people of the Muslim community.

Experiencing the increasing racial tension in London, Chanu decided to leave England as soon as possible for the safety of his family, but both Nazneen and her elder daughter, Shahana, could not accept this decision. However, Chanu booked the air tickets for his family to return to Bangladesh, but on the day of returning, surprisingly, Nazneen refused to return with her husband and decided to live in London with her two daughters. This decision shows how, with time, Nazneen evolved as a person by freeing herself from the shackles of the patriarchy. Finally, Chanu was bound to come back alone, and in Bangladesh, he started a soap business. However, Chanu remained connected with his family in London, and on-call Nazneen told him that in the future, there is a chance that she could come to Bangladesh to visit Chanu and her sister, Hasina. Nazneen had long wished to meet her sister and to visit her motherland, which she could have fulfilled easily by returning with Chanu, but she sacrificed this emotional aspect of her soul only to restore her newfound identity as an independent woman, which she might have lost if she had come back with her husband. Moreover, Nazneen told Chanu that she could come to Bangladesh, but she never told Chanu that she would return to Bangladesh by leaving London

forever. The novel ends with the scene in which Nazneen enjoys ice skating for the first time in her life with her daughters and her friend Razia, which symbolizes Nazneen's empowerment as a woman and the birth of a new Nazneen in the English liberal society.

'Here are your boots, Amma.' Nazneen turned round. To get on the ice physically-it hardly seemed to matter. In her mind she was already there. She said, 'But you can't skate in a sari'. Razia was already lacing her boots. 'This is England,' she said. 'You can do whatever you like.'⁴

Nazneen not only dismissed her return with Chanu but also resolved her relationship with her lover Karim. Thus, she made herself completely free from male dominance. The liberal society of London, where Nazneen, for the first time, tasted the flavour of freedom, taught her to live alone as a single mother without depending on masculinity. Nazneen's decision to live in London as an immigrant amidst all the racial discrimination, racial tension, and immigration crisis was her denial and silent protest against her gender performativity as a Bangladeshi Muslim housewife. Due to gender performativity, Nazneen's experience as an immigrant was far more different than Chanu's. Where Chanu found the same freedom in England as he enjoyed in Bangladesh, Nazneen, for the first time, realized what freedom really is. Regarding freedom, England did not increase it for Chanu; rather, he felt powerless there because of racial politics. Again, when in London, Chanu felt dissatisfied with his career opportunities there, for the first time, Nazneen experienced the happiness and satisfaction of earning money for her own family and her independence. Besides that, the open society of London does not support men's dominance over women. So, Chanu could not control Nazneen there in a way that he could have done easily in Bangladesh if he had wished. On the other hand, the free society of London offered Nazneen the opportunity of engaging in a love relationship out of wedlock, which Nazneen could never have imagined in the patriarchal society of Bangladesh. Moreover, when Chanu felt unsafe in London, Nazneen found it a safer place for her and her daughters than Bangladesh, and that is how, when Chanu came back, Nazneen

⁴ These are the last lines of the novel *Brick Lane* and the lines enthrallingly justify how the female migrants of South Asia find a new freedom in the European country by undoing their gender performativity.

preferred to stay. Hence, now it is logically true that gender performativity plays a dominant role in differentiating the psychology of South Asian female migrants from that of males regarding migration and immigration.

CONCLUSION

In his poem "Home", Warsan Shire writes - "No one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land". The line holds the essence of the migration and refugee crisis. People leave their beloved motherland not willingly, but many forces work behind it that compel them to leave their land. This paper delves into the depths of the migration issues, analyzing how the gender performativity of the patriarchal society of South Asia is functioning secretly in the realm of the South Asian migration to America and European countries. Thus, we have reached the culminating point, and what we have found as our exploration is that gender performativity is an indispensable discourse in the realm of South Asian migration. Therefore, now is the time to think profoundly about the reformation of our patriarchal society with much more liberal philosophies of life, replacing the orthodox and rigid social system, which is a barrier in the path of creating a humanitarian social structure. Feminism is working diligently in this respect, and besides that, the emergence of Gender Studies is also contributing efficiently to promote social awareness regarding gender issues, and these two movements are working together to bring a significant change in society in order to attain complete equality of men and women all over the world. When South Asian women can live their lives with equal respect, equal opportunity, equal freedom, and equal value, and with their own individual identity, they will stop their Odysseus journey to the west in search of their freedom and identity. Hence, instead of dominating women, it is necessary to change our social system, and we ought to give women equal exposure to bloom themselves in their full-fledged form, which will enhance the beauty of our own motherland.

Like climate change, the refugee crisis and migration issues have become a global challenge. Therefore, it is not about any single nation but when all nations together will take a united footstep to solve the core problem of the refugee crisis by abandoning their secret political agenda of power dynamics for the welfare of human civilization then only, we will be able to find the panacea for the wound which we human beings have given to the heart of humanity by creating the refugee crisis and migration problem. Kristin Sandvik rightly says, "The refugee crisis is a humanitarian challenge that must be collectively owned and collectively solved, whether we are

talking about legal frameworks, institutional responses, or funding. By crafting new humanitarian solutions to this crisis, critical contributions can be made to international peace and stability.” Indeed, if we can resurrect the soul of humanity from the grave, then the elegy of the refugee crisis and migration will not only be sung through the pages of a book, but this resurrection will make a revolution and an evolution by restoring our ancient human values and ethics. Night signifies that the new sun is going to rise, and with that tune, we can hope that there will come a time when the people in power will realize their mistake, and as an atonement, they will give importance to the welfare of the whole world and humanity instead of personal profit and growth. Hence, we can dream of an upcoming future where all nations, by leaving their political intrigue and the bloody fight against each other, will indoctrinate themselves with the mantra of peace and prosperity. Moreover, we can hope that a new utopian world will emerge where migration will only be a subject of passion of exploring the world to cherish the heart of an adventurer who loves to travel and where every country will accept migrants with their diversities as citizens of the world by believing in the great Indian spiritual philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (This Sanskrit phrase is extracted from the ancient Hindu text Maha Upanishad and it means “The World Is One Family”).

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How to Cite this Article?

Mitra, Papri. “An Exploration of the Diverse Psychology of South Asian Immigrants Through the Lens of Gender Performativity: Contextualising *Jasmine* and *Brick Lane*.” *Research Journal of English (RJOE)*, vol. 11, no. 1, Jan.–Mar. 2026, Oray’s Publications. DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2026.11.01.587.