Preamble

Ghosh was born on July 11, 1956, in Calcutta, India, to Shailendra Chandra, a diplomat, and Ansali Ghosh, a homemaker. He traveled frequently in his youth, living in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Sri Lanka, Iran, and India. Ghosh attended Delhi University and received his B.A. with honors in history in 1976 and his M.A. in sociology in 1978. In 1978, he began studies at Oxford University in social anthropology. While at Oxford, Ghosh studied archives of documents from twelfth-century Egypt and was granted a scholarship that allowed him to travel to a small Egyptian village in 1980 to further his research. The village was located in the delta of the Nile River and Ghosh lived among the fellaheen, or Egyptian peasants. He graduated from Oxford earning a Ph.D. in social anthropology in 1982. From 1983 to 1987, Ghosh worked in the Department of Sociology at Delhi University. In 1986, Ghosh's first English-language novel, The Circle of Reason, was published and was awarded France's Prix Medici Etrangère. In 1988 and 1990, Ghosh returned to the Egyptian village he visited previously to continue his research. His third book, In an Antique Land (1992)—which is both a travel-memoir and a historical study—resulted from Ghosh's continuing interest in twelfth-century Egyptian culture. Ghosh has won numerous awards, including the Annual Prize from the Indian Academy of Letters in 1990. In 2001, Ghosh declined a nomination for a regional Commonwealth Writers Prize. Ghosh has served as a visiting professor at several universities, including the University of Virginia, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, and American University in Cairo. Ghosh has also held the title of distinguished professor in the Department of Comparative Literature at Queens College, City University of New York, and has worked as a contributing writer to Indian Express, Granta, and New Republic.

Amitav Ghosh belongs to the literary tradition that was fostered and nourished by Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor and others. The Circle of Reason (1986) is a skillfully constructed novel encompassing a world that stretches from a remote village in Bengal to the shores of the Mediterranean. The novel marks a break from the traditional themes of the Indian English novel. The Shadow Lines (1988), set in Calcutta of the 1960’s moves with an easy felicity through Calcutta and Dhaka and London. The time span of the novel extends from 1939 to 1979 with the 1964 being a very important year for the characters. Memory links the past to the present and many of the characters live more in the past than in the present. The novel seems to mock even
the concept of exclusive national identity. Even ideals nurtured by the freedom struggle suddenly seem meaningless. In an Antique Land (1992), a non-fictional novel delineates some ordinary unheroic characters with their encounters with religious rites and social customs. It mingles history, geography, voyages, trade, adventure, magic, memory and multiple viewpoints. Ghosh brings in his memory of his childhood experience of riots in Dhaka. The post-colonial undertones of the novel cannot be underestimated. As history was written by the colonizers, it hardly took note of the achievements of the subject, colonized people. In The Calcutta Chromosome (1996) the two worlds of science and counter-science, European rationality and Indian myths are brought together against the backdrop of Calcutta’s streets, markets and monuments. Displacement has been a central process in his fictional writings, departures and arrivals have a permanent symbolic relevance in his narrative structure. Countdown (1999) expresses Ghosh’s views on the nuclear lobby in both India and Pakistan. He sums up his argument for the nuclear weapons very succinctly. He states that the motivation for India’s nuclear programme was enhancement of status and not imagined threat to our northern frontiers. The Glass place (2000), an epic novel, tells the history of the 20th century across three generations spread over three interlinked parts of the British Empire: Burma, Malaya, and India.

A lot of research work has been done on the novels of Amitav Ghosh. All the researches have focused on the particular aspects of his writing. Most of them pointed the postmodern traits, orientalism, new historicism, diasporas in his works. Some of the researches also done on the special issues’ like the relation between knowledge and power in his works.

It is needed to study the work of Ghosh enthusiastically with the various aspects of life such as Political, Sociological, Cultural, and Mythological. So the researcher has decided to do research on this area of subject so that the culture of particular part of the nation, its values and the beliefs, feelings, their relation to each other and style of behavior among themselves in the society.