

# Pre-Migration Trauma and Psychological Resilience: Analyzing Motivation in Bharathi Mukherjee's *Jasmine and Wife*

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## Abstract

*Migration is often used as an escape system or a major choice of most people influenced by psychological, social and cultural elements. This paper explores the origin of migration which is the motivation to migrate. Many individuals have been motivated by something that was a big struggle in their lives. Trauma plays an important role in migrating into everyone's life. The concept of trauma as a force driving migration is examined in this paper with a proper focus paid to psychological stress, familial expectations, societal expectations and unfulfilled objectives. Studying the characters of Jasmine and Dimple shows that trauma was not only the consequence of migration but also a pre-migratory motivator in the novel *Jasmine and Wife* by Bharathi Mukherjee. Furthermore, pre-migratory motivation and resilience theory are used to understand the psychological landscape of these characters. This paper determines how mental health struggles forced the characters to move out of their hometown and how it changed their life. By using a theoretical framework, this paper explores the internal drives and needs that motivate individuals to escape.*

**Keywords:** Motivation, Migration, Psychological Struggles, Escapism, Trauma, Motivator.

## Introduction

Literature served as a lens for a long time to explore the complexities of migration. It represents the countless experiences of individuals and communities as they cross the struggles of displacement, identity and belonging. Authors shed light on the emotional landscapes of leaving hometown, the search for new beginnings, and the struggle to reconcile past and present through the voices of various characters. Literature not only reflects the realities of migration but also cultivates empathy and understanding across cultures through poignant narratives of loss to triumphant tales of resilience. Migration is a multifarious phenomenon navigated by multiple factors, repeatedly categorised as push and pull forces. This paper proposes that mental health struggles originate from systematic

oppression, stifling familial expectations and a suffocating mass of unfulfilled dreams, which can act as a profound precursor to the decision to migrate. An act of psychological escape, a desperate search for self-preservation and a chance to rephrase their narrative are by no means reasonable migration or decisions. This paper examines how pre-existing psychological agitate further the desire for migration and the experiences of the characters align with pre-migratory motivation and resilience theory through the analysis of Bharathi Mukherjee's *Jasmine and Wife*. Furthermore, it will discuss that trauma is often viewed as a result of the migratory experience and it can act as a potent motivator for the decision to leave.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This paper relies on several theoretical frameworks to study the psychological outlook surrounding migration.

- **Pre-migratory Theory**

This theory highlights the needs and internal drives of the individuals which motivates them to leave. It looks beyond simple economic issues to the complicated relationship of human goals, psychological drives for change, and the quest for self-actualization. In the context of this research, emphasizes the characters' desire to live a life free of the confines of their current situation.

- **Resilience Theory**

This theory investigates how humans adapt and survive in times of tragedy. This concept investigates how humans adapt and prosper in the face of adversity. Though it generally is used in the post-migration environment, this research applies it to better understand the pre-existing psychological resources and coping mechanisms that encourage people to get started on difficult journeys. It explores if the desire to move is a sign of resilience, an intentional decision for overcoming identified psychological restrictions.

## **Trauma as a Motivator**

This concept states that the traumatic events from their childhood may directly or indirectly act as a potential motivator to the individuals to migrate. Focusing on understanding purely as an emotional response to outside influences, it acknowledges how deep-rooted trauma may motivate a longing for a new beginning, a desperate attempt to escape the haunting legacy of the past. The characters in the novel go through several struggles and societal expectations which affect them psychologically. Their brain started to believe that they didn't belong there and prepared to escape from the problems. These are all changing into trauma which motivates them to escape and encourages them to run and start a new life in an alien country where they are even not sure if they would find a feeling of peace. This paper thoroughly investigates how the characters Jasmine and Dimple were influenced to migrate by the traumatic incidents of their life.

## **Analysis of Jasmine**

In the novel, protagonist Jasmine symbolizes the combining of these theoretical concepts. Her life before migration is soaked with several layers of mental pressure.

- **Restricted Freedom and Systemic Oppression**

Growing up in a small Indian town with a traditional, patriarchal environment, Jasmine faces significant restrictions on her freedom of choice and ability to express herself. A strong sensation of psychological captivity is fostered by this tyranny, which is motivated by social and cultural norms.

Her voice has become mute, her education is limited and her path in life has been written in stone. A strong sense of helplessness is bred by this systemic marginalization, which also fuels a desire for drastic change.

### • **Familial Expectations and Unfulfilled Ambitions**

Although her family loves her, societal expectations and traditional standards limit her life. The protagonist has an impassioned desire for education and self-development in her early days but ambitions of her were thwarted by societal forces upon her. Her feelings of psychological alienation have grown which results in the conflict between her personal goals and her familial limitations. Quietly Jasmine was influenced by her husband Prakash whose desire is to immigrate to America. She wanted to use this idea of moving as an excuse to escape from the path that restricted her dreams. Through this dream, she sees the opportunity to not only escape the confines of her village but to perhaps escape the constraints of the patriarchal expectations she faces. This leads her to embrace the escape to a new land.

### **Trauma as Catalyst**

Jasmine faced violent rape following her husband's death become the immediate catalyst for her migration. However, the rape doesn't implicit any trauma but it pushes towards the act of leaving. She has a violent moment with her rapist where she bites his hand, this moment may be a key motivator to leave as it is a moment where she can reclaim some control of her life. The rape does not simply inflict trauma; it serves as the final push towards the dramatic act of leaving. She is desperate to escape the place that holds the traumatizing memory. Jasmine's choice to risk everything to make the journey to America then isn't just economic or opportunistic. It stems from a desire to escape a mental landscape filled with oppression, unfulfilled ambition and the scars of trauma. She is not just moving to a new country. She is moving to escape a version of herself that is chained to her past.

### **Analysis of Wife**

Wife's protagonist, Dimple Dasgupta, is, of course, another example of pre-migratory psychological behaviour. Although her migration seems less directly caused by trauma, it highlights the powerful role of psychological discontent:

### • **Disillusioned over Family Life**

Dimple is frustrated in her marriage to Amit. Her existence in a small apartment in Kolkata is frustrating, she finds, stifling. Her exposure to US magazines makes her unparalleled life seem a total bore in comparison, which only adds to her frustration and drives her to dream of a dazzling life in America. Dimple makes plenty of "wacky" life choices including marrying Amit, but these choices also highlight her desire to break free from a boring life. She is not satisfied with being a housewife, and this is the opposite of what she wants. This dissatisfaction can be a strong motivator for migration before migration.

### • **Unfulfilled Ambitions and Seeking Identity**

Dimple feels a certain lack of purpose in the world. Her ongoing struggles in finding a clear path for both her career and her life only serve to amplify her increasing sense of worthlessness. She wants to be more than just a housewife, a notion inspired by her observations of America and the range of occupations people here can pursue. Her drift to what some would call the American Dream is not simply about the promise of a better life, but the perceived opportunity to start again and find purpose that always eluded her in her current life.

## • Freedom Imprisoned

Dimple's obsession with American magazines and media suggests that she is driven by a deeply routed desire for escapism. She imagines America as a land where she can finally get the fun and satisfaction that her current life lacks. This obsession, in a sense, points to the psychological distance she has already established between herself and her reality. She sees America as a place in which the "wacky" decisions she makes might lead to good things. This fantasy is what fuels the migration to America. Dimple goes to America with Amit not solely for a chance at a better life and an "American Dream" for herself. Instead, it is driven by a psychological condition of dissatisfaction and disillusionment that was already a fact of life. She longs for the new land to affirm her value and ambition as if it were an escape hatch out of the airless roles and repressions that had for so long locked in her inner aspirations. She too, like Jasmine, is trying to flee a version of herself by making her way to the new land.

## Resilience and the Act of Migration

The characters Jasmine and Dimple, therefore, allude to present-day conditions of migration that themselves imply a kind of resilience with their narratives. They desire a better, more empowering future despite their past challenges.

## Jasmine's Resilience

It was Jasmine's exodus from a traumatized refugee to a free and self-contained woman. She should not just survive but adapt and prove her resilience. She finds new definitions of family and changes herself several times including her name till the end of the novel. Since her decision to migrate is a daring act of survival and independence, it might be seen as an example of resilience.

## Dimple's Resilience

Dimple challenges what is expected of her life in Kolkata by moving to America, ignoring the fact that her route has been filled with challenges and obstacles. As she tries to forge a new path for herself, her determination to become more than a housewife is an obvious example of resilience.

Both characters show pre-migration resilience by starting this journey to overcome their current struggles and circumstances and build a brighter future for themselves.

## Conclusion

Bharathi Mukherjee's Jasmine and wife give strong perspectives on psychological struggles motivating individuals to migrate. This paper concludes that mental health issues that result from familial pressures, societal oppression, and unfulfilled goals can be powerful preludes to the actual act of leaving. The experiences that Jasmine and Dimple had before their journey show how psychological distress and trauma are not just effects of migration but may also be strong reasons for leaving. Through the application of resilience theory and pre-migratory motivation, this study highlights the characters' complex psychological environment, exposing migration as a highly personal quest for self-preservation and the prospect of a better life rather than merely a physical journey.

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