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MIGRATION AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS
A STUDY OF BENYAMIN'S NOVEL *GOAT DAYS*

Nitesh Narnolia and Mousam



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A Study of Benjamin's Novel Goat Days

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Abstract

Migration is a process of social, cultural and psychological changes where an individual leaves one geographical area and settles down in a new geographical area. The reasons behind migration can be different, such as economic betterment, political upheaval, and education. When people migrate from one nation to other, they carry their culture and traditions with them with a sense of distress, dislocation and displacement. While they try to settle down in a new land, they have to adopt that culture and during this process of assimilation their cultural identities losses somewhere in midst of their 'hanging' lives. This identity loss leads them to fragmented identities and they begin to loss their social bonds as well as culture of their homeland. This situation of brain drain leads them to psychological trauma and they begin to raise questions on their own existence, this result in existential crisis. This paper tries to understand the social, cultural and psychological impacts of migration through the study of Benyamin's novel Goat Days. The novel depicts the life of Najeeb Muhammad, an Indian emigrant whose dream was to work in the Persian Gulf states and earn enough money to send back at home. But, he achieves his dream only to be destroyed by a series of incidents which led him into a slave-like existence herding goats in the middle of the Saudi desert. This paper attempts to explore the existential crisis of the protagonist, Najeeb, in Benyamin's Aadu Jeevitham, translated in English by Joseph Koyippally under the title Goat Days. It aims to analyse his crisis on the basis of transformation in his social, cultural and psychological state which leads him to existential crisis.

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Statement: All the views expressed in the paper are of the author(s).

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1.1. Introduction

Over the last decades, migration has become a mass phenomenon as millions of people move from one country to another due to unfavorable situations or in the hope of bettering their lives. Migration, in broad sense, is the movement of people from one place to another led by economic, social or political situations. Thus, it results in permanent or temporary shifts in people's residence. The process of migration can take place either within the borders of a country or between different countries. Migration can take place in two different forms: first one is forced migration, affected by the factors like political pressures, religious persecutions, natural calamities etc. at the place of origin and the second form of migration is voluntary, caused by economic consideration like material gains, employment opportunities etc.

Migration is a process of social, cultural and psychological changes where an individual leaves one geographical area and settles down in a new geographical area. The reasons behind migration can be different, such as economic betterment, political upheaval, and education. When people migrate from one nation to other, they carry their culture and traditions with them with a sense of distress, dislocation and displacement. While they try to settle down in a new land, they have to adopt that culture and during this process of assimilation their cultural identities losses somewhere in midst of their 'hanging' lives. This identity loss leads them to fragmented identities and they begin to loss their social bonds as well as culture of their homeland. This situation of brain drain leads them to psychological trauma and

they begin to raise questions on their own existence, this result in existential crisis.

This paper therefore focuses on the social, cultural and psychological impacts of migration through the study of Benjamin's novel *Goat Days*. The novel depicts the life of Najeeb Muhammad, an Indian emigrant whose dream was to work in the Persian Gulf states and earn enough money to send back at home. But, he achieves his dream only to be destroyed by a series of incidents which led him into a slave-like existence herding goats in the middle of the Saudi desert. This paper attempts to explore the existential crisis of the protagonist, Najeeb, in Benjamin's *Aadu Jeevitham*, translated in English by Joseph Koyippally under the title *Goat Days*. It aims to analyse his crisis on the basis of transformation in his social, cultural and psychological state which leads him to existential crisis.

1.2. Concept of Migration and Its Psychological Impacts

The word 'migration' is derived from the Latin word 'migrate', which means to change one's residence. The Encyclopedia Americana defines the term as a co-ordinated voluntary movement of a considerable number of people from an accustomed habitat to a new one (48). The International Encyclopedia of Social Science has defined migration as the relatively permanent movement of person over a significant distance (286). In International Encyclopedia of Population, 'migration' has been defined as a geographical mobility that involves a change of usual residence between defined political or statical areas or between resi-

dence areas of different types (448).

Migration is one of the important features of human beings which has been occurring from the very beginning of man's existence in this universe. Though human migration was a characteristic of stone age, but rapid development of industrialization and urbanization in the modern age has worked as a push factor for this process and with the development of transport and communication, thousands of people from different countries—especially from the third world, started to leave their country of origin in search of new and fresh opportunities. Migration is one of the causes of social and demographic change. C.J. Lewish comments that:

Migration is a two way of process; it is a response to economic and social change and equally it is catalyst to change for those areas gaining and losing migrants (01).

Thus, migration has become an important area of study due to its complex role in the contemporary society. It has influenced the socio-economic condition of both the country of origin and destination.

The concept of migration can be defined as the crossing of a spatial boundary by one or more persons involved in a change of residence. But the concept of migration involves both space and time. Space is addressed twice in this process, once in the place of departure and second in the place of arrival. Time factor also has to be defined according to the duration of stay in each place.

The understanding of psychological process inherent to migration has become a challenge now. The exploration of the experiences of migration from the psychoanalytic perspective has developed in the last forty years only. Loss is considered as an inevitable part of migration and almost every immigrant experiences multiple losses, primarily, the loss of loved ones or the loss of motherland and secondarily, the loss of self-respect and identity. These losses may be physical losses, such as the loss of homeland or less of social support, or symbolic losses, such as the loss of culture. Thus,

the losses inherent in the process of migration may lead to grief and these grief reactions can be considered as the psychological reaction to migration. Julia Mirsky writes:

Mourning in migration is not seen as a state, but rather as a process similar to the one all mourners go through, from an initial denial of loss, through realisation and reconciliation with the reality of loss (14).

Psychoanalytical study of migration also recognises the centrality of mourning. The loss of significant objects, such as familiar place, landscape, food, language and customs, causes pain and leads to a mourning process. In the course of internal process during their stay an alien land, immigrants relinquish the lost objects and with the help of identification, begin to identify some aspects of these objects with the other objects present around them, thus transforming their identity. So does Najeeb, the protagonist of Benyamin's novel *Goat Days*.

1.3. The Novel *Goat Days*: Textual Analysis

Goat Days (2002) is a novel written by Bahrain based Indian author Benyamin in Malayalam, entitled *Aadujeevitham* and translated into English by Dr. Joshep Koyippally as *Goat Days* in 2012. The novel depicts the life of Najeeb Muhammad, an Indian emigrant whose dream was to work in the Gulf States to earn enough money to settle down his old debts and to give a beautiful life to his wife Sainu and their child. But, he achieves his dream only into slave-like existence, herding goats in the middle of the Saudi dessert. After much suffering, Najeeb is able to escape from the dessert with the help of Ibrahim. Joy Gosney illustrates the novel as "the strange and bitter comedy of Najeeb's life in the dessert" and "a universal tale of loneliness and alienation" (back cover, Benyamin, 2012).

Goat Days can be placed with many diasporic writing in shedding light on the atrocities faced by labour migrants, travelling from India to Gulf countries in search of better employment and better life. The graphic and insightful description of

the life of these migrants in a remote Arabic desert is quite annoying. This novel reflects upon the brutalities, experienced by millions of labour migrants through the story of Najeeb. The novel *Goat Days* navigates across barriers of time and space to bring to light the displacement and helplessness of the people like Najeeb who have been trapped in the midst of desert and are compelled to work as slaves. This novel gives voice to the labour migrants who are now audible across globe through the translation of the novel into English. It explores the diasporic elements of the protagonist's life in order to convey the harsh realities of the Gulf countries. The writer addresses the cause of voluntary migration and its consequences as well as psychological impacts on the migrants. The novel is an eye opener for people throughout world who desire to migrate in foreign lands to make their lives better. The novel narrates the story of one such labour migrant to Gulf from India who stood determined even in the state of deprivation and agony in an Arabian desert. Being determined, he got the opportunity to return to his native land and to narrate his experiences in that desert. This piece of writing focuses on the South Asian Diaspora in Gulf countries, not commonly explored.

Like many of the Malayalis, Najeeb also used to dream about travelling to Gulf to raise his economic condition. So, he did not let go the opportunity of working in Gulf when one of his friends told him about availability of Visa. He arranged the money to give the agent by 'mortgaging the house and the little gold Sainu has jewellery, and by collecting small amounts from other sand miners (36)' to live his dream of working in a Gulf country. With this dream in his eyes, Najeeb with his fellow Hakeem landed on the earth by Riyadh, cheerfully exclaiming, "City of my dreams, I have arrived. Kindly receive me. Ahlan wa sahlan! (43)." But Najeeb dream transformed into darkness of slavery life the moment when they (Najeeb and Hakeem) got kidnapped at the airport and forcibly transported to a goat shed in an unfamiliar desert by a local Arab. During his journey from airport to the desert, Najeeb was able to calculate

his future. Najeeb's distress is revealed in his words:

From that moment, like the maniyān fly, an unknown fear began to envelop my mind. An irrational doubt began to grip me, a feeling that this journey was not leading me to the Gulf like that I had been dreaming about and craving for (52).

After a long journey, Najeeb was brought to a goat shed in the desert. In no time Najeeb had a rough idea of his job there when he heard the bleat of a lamb there. He confronts with a scary figure there in whose words, he could feel pity. Najeeb describes:

I was somewhat aware of the situation I had ended up, and about the nature of my job. I shuddered for a second thinking about becoming another scary figure (62).

Thus, from this point, Najeeb begins to feel isolated and distressed in the midst of the desert. Further incidents in the novel present social, cultural and psychological transformation of Najeeb in these unfavourable situations which lead him to existential crisis. The transformation of social and cultural surroundings led Najeeb to identity crisis.

1.3.1. State of Identity Crisis in the Novel

Before discussing Najeeb's state of identity crisis, it is necessary to understand the meaning of identity crisis and the situations, leading to identify crisis. Eric Erikson in his article, "What is an Identity Crisis? How Identity grows out from personal conflict?" defines that the basic notion of identity is a personal sense as well as a quality of identity of personal sameness and permanence of some shared world representation. In the novel *Goat Days*, Najeeb's identity that he had before coming to masara and the one he has formed after becoming a part of masara is the result of his personal sense and also influenced by his shared world representation. To feel connected to his past identity, Najeeb gives names of people he knows from his earlier life, to the goats and tries to relate these names and his personal identity with these goats

and their names. In a passage of 'A Turn in the South', V.S. Naipaul states identity crisis as a result of 'losing one's history and one's past identity in the complex world of the present' (qtd in Sen, 18). In the Najeeb suffers from identity crisis as he has lost his past identity, back at home in the complex situation of his Present life in masara. He has lost each and every aspect of his life at home and has to adopt a new life there among the goats.

'Moratorium' is one of the identity statuses defined by Erickson. It is a state where a person explores different identities at a time but unable to commit any of these explored identities. A person explores various identities when there is a clash within his existing identity. In the novel, Najeeb explores different identities at a time. He tries to relate himself with goats, as he says,

I ate the wheat with salt... I slept in the masara with the goats. By then I had indeed become a goat (Benyamin, 150).

Thus, he begins to identify himself as a goat. Another identity he explores in the masara is that of scary figure, without bathing and cleaning himself. But, Najeeb could not associate himself with these identities and to explore his past identity, he gives different names to the goats to identify himself with all these people whom he knew. He explores all these identities because he could no longer able to relate to his past identity like a person with different ideology of life. Thus, in the novel Najeeb is facing an identity crisis since he is not able to hold on his identities of the past.

Cherki Karkaba is his article "Deconstructing Identity in Postcolonial Fiction" deals with postcolonial view of identity and identity crisis and difference between traditional discourse of identity and postcolonial view of identity. According to traditional discourse, identity is related to a fixed point which is a particular set of values that serves as a half-mark for the individual in society. Contrary to it, postcolonial discourse identifies a completely new identity discourse which supports the fragmented and destabilised concept of identity. It involves the relationship of the self and the other. According to postcolonial identity discourse, there

would be no self identity without the other. It perceives identity as a process in which the self is in negotiation with the other. According to traditional discourse of identity, if there is a flux in identity, then there can be an identity crisis. Here in the novel, Najeeb's identity is unstable throughout his life, as before coming to masara, he is a person leading his life by hard work but happy by his existence but after coming to masara, his identity is changed into a shepherd or sometimes merely as a goat. So, there occurs an identity crisis in him due to this instability of identity. As per the description of identity from postcolonial view, there is no 'other' with Najeeb to whom he can negotiate his identity. He is all alone in the masara, only arbab is present there as a human being but there is no intimacy between them. Thus, in absence of the 'other' there can be no self identity and Najeeb suffers from an identity crisis.

Identity crisis is not only restricted to any particular characteristics, but different aspects of personality can cause identity crisis. When a person feels uncomfortable in his present situation and thinks that he is caught in that distressing situation in which he is completely powerless and has no control over his future, then he feels an identity crisis. In the novel, Najeeb is uncomfortable in the masara and he has no power on any situation. He is not allowed to follow any of his beliefs and values and has to leave all his social and moral ideologies. In this condition of 'belonging no-where', identity crisis occurs in him and he loses his control over his future.

1.3.2. Social Transformation of Najeeb

In the masara, Najeeb has to do the back-breaking work and in not at all given enough food and water, neither to drink nor wash himself. He shares one such incident in the novel when he has been tired but no one cared for him. He says,

Fatigue sunk in, and my running stomach made it worse. I complained to the scary figure and to the arbab, nevertheless, my workload was unaffected. The arbab cared only about my work, not about my discomfort (94).

Further, he describes another occasion he is attacked by a he-goat while taking then for a walk and then receiving a hard beating by the arbab. His pain can be understood when he says,

I saw fumes coming out of its nostrils. The next moment, it charged at me, and without giving me a chance to evade, hit me right on the chest... Then when I opened my eyes, the arbab was in front of me. All the arbab did was pour some hot water on my face. Then he called me himar and shouted something (117).

The arbab is still furious and pays no attention to the pain of Najeeb and orders him to gather all the goats, scattered in the desert. Najeeb describes,

I became conscious of a terrible pain in my left hand. An immense unbearable pain. The hand was swollen. I told the arbab that my hand felt broken. He removed his belt and hit me, and shouted at me to run and fetch all the goats quickly. The arbab warned me that it would be my end if even of them was lost (117-118).

Like this incident, there are a number of instances in the novel that show the pain and sufferings of Najeeb as unheard, unnoticed, exploited and a poor figure in the work place. These pathetic situations lead Najeeb to transformation in his beliefs as well as social and cultural.

In the book *Sociology*, James Flucher and John Scott speak about the relationship of socialization and identity construction. It states that individuals are social animals and defines socialisation as the process through which an individual of a certain society discovers on how to be a good citizen of that society. It is through this process that individuals get habitual of their traditions and customs as well as their specific talents and capabilities. Individuals get a sense of social identity and able to perceive an image of self as a human being through the process of socialisation. An individual's behaviour and manners are also defined by the people whom they come in contact in different situations (121-39). The absence of socialization may result in identity crisis and people may transform into other being.

The novel *Goat Days* depicts the process of socialisation of Najeeb with arbab and the goats. It also depicts the absence of proper socialisation in Najeeb's life in the masara and social transformation of Najeeb in the masara. It is through Najeeb's socialisation with arbab and the goats that he was able to know how to look after these animals and how to survive in unfavourable situations following the orders of arbab. Although the socialisation he receive there in desert is different that he has seen throughout his earlier phase of life, but Najeeb accepts it as God's will. During this process of socialisation with arbab and the animals, Najeeb has to relate himself to a goat and has to leave the identity he has acquired from his earlier phase of life. He had an identity that said he is Najeeb, he is from this place, he is married and he knows so many people from this place etc. But, in the masara he had to change his identity from a man to an animal and thinks that he and goats have so many common traits. Although Najeeb have dreamt to be a shepherd when he was a child, but when he got the opportunity to live a life of shepherd, he realises the pain inherited in this job and states,

We shouldn't dream about the unfamiliar and about what only looks good from afar. When such dreams become reality, they are often impossible to come to terms with (124).

In absence of a proper society to communicate, Najeeb feels alienated and would feel happy and relieved whenever he sees any other man except arbab. Najeeb's alienation and his joy of seeing other human being is revealed in the novel when he describes:

I lived on an alien planet inhabited by some goats, my arbab and me. The only interruptions to the monotony of my life were the visits of the water truck twice a week, the hay truck once a week and the wheat trailer once a month. These vehicles were the only means by which I could connect with the outside universe... my heart would flutter with inexpressible joy whenever those vehicles reached the masara (125-126).

Thus, even a ray of hope to communicate with a proper society fills Najeeb with joy and the ab-

sence of socialisation leads him to identity crisis. Although Najeeb tries to transform himself according to the society in which he is living and begins to identify with a goat completely and faces existential crisis.

1.3.3. Cultural Transformation of Najeeb

Social surrounding around Najeeb leads him to cultured transformation. An individual is compelled to transform his/her culture according to the society in which an individual lives. Each and everything in an individual including habits, language, food, dress and manners are affected by the culture and when he/she has to undergo cultural transformation.

In the novel, Najeeb has to face cultural transformation when he is being trapped in the masara to lead the life of a shepherd. Habits of an individual also change with the transformation of culture and when a person is not able to follow his/her habits; he/she faces an identity crisis. In the novel, it is clearly given that Najeeb has to violate all his habits like bathing, brushing, cleaning and sleeping at nine after dinner etc. According to his habits at home, he wouldn't even drink coffee without taking a bath, but here in the masara, he has to change his habits and eat without even brushing teeth and morning rituals. This violation of his habits affects his identity and culture, but situations lead him to violate all his habits as he says, "Hunger for one and a half days forced me to ignore my habits (68)."

Further, Najeeb also has to compromise his habits of cleanliness, as there were restrictions on sanitation due to scarcity of water in desert. He cleaned himself with stones after defecation. Najeeb angrily asserts that,

I had never faced such a predicament in my life... without water nothing happened in my life. Cleanliness had been my ideology... but the breaking of all my habits began that day... the harshest for me was this ban on situation (78).

Najeeb's body would be aching because of hard work throughout the day but inability to clean

himself is more painful for Najeeb. He had the habit of coming out of river only after bathing, but here in masara, the inability to take bath reduces him to sleepless nights. He even suffered from several itches from the unclean hair and beard. He had several eruptions from the muddy hair in his armpits and public area. The frustration he has to bear from the lack of cleanliness and neatness is evident from the instance when he felt relieved after bathing in the rain for a long time, he states, "... each raindrop refreshed me. I enjoyed that rain... And thus after a long time, the rain washed me clean. Dirt quietly tickled down my body (134)."

Thus, his inability to follow habits develops an identity crisis in him. Without these habits, he is not the original Najeeb. He becomes another man without his habits.

Najeeb, during his life in masara has also face transformation in his food and dress habits. In the novel, Najeeb is asked to change his clothes for his work as a shepherd. He is Given a thobe, 'the dress of the typical Saudi Arab man, a long, while, shirt-like garment, loose fitting, long sleeved and extending to the ankle, usually made out of cotton' (69) and a pair of boots. The clothes worn by an individual decide his/her identity and thus, Najeeb has become a shepherd, bound to goats wearing that typical Arab dress. The outfit provided to him is gull of stench and Najeeb himself says, "It was my initiation to the stench, the first step to becoming another scary figure (70)." Thus, the outfit, Najeeb is going wear for the rest of his life in masara would decide his identity and transform his culture of dressing himself properly.

Food habits of Najeeb are also changed with the transformation of culture. On the first day of his arriving in masara, Najeeb is offered khubus to eat by his arbab without anything to dip it in. later, it becomes habit of Najeeb to eat khubus with water for three times a day. Food habits were different in Kerala. In Kerala, people boil milk before drinking it, but here in the desert, Najeeb is supposed to drink milk without boiling it. These situations were producing a disgusting effect on him. This

socio-cultural transformation also impacts the psychological self of Najeeb.

Man is a social animal and wishes to live in the company of another man or has the urge of social interactions. Solitary confinement can lead an individual to several psychological challenges including depression and mental trauma. In the novel, Najeeb is also confined to extreme isolation on a desert and have company of only his arbab and goats. As arbab is not intimate with him and also Najeeb don't understand the Arabic language, so his circumstances are not better than solitary confinement. There is no occasion in Najeeb's life to speak to another person and no connection with outside world. The state of loneliness and isolation affect his psychological self during his life in masara. The importance of having a human being in front of one's eyes and working with him throughout the day in these unfavourable circumstances is shown when one day Najeeb finds the scary figure missing from masara. He states:

A few words were all that we had exchanged. Didn't know his name, native place, nothing. Still it hurt a lot when I realised he had gone. I couldn't fathom the reason for that pain. It might have originated from the anguish of intense loneliness (99).

The melancholic mood that overcame him often has made him more helpless. He begins to identify himself with goats. His happiness on arriving two men to masara for some work is revealed in the novel when he says, "One day, when winter was coming to an end, two men came to shear the sheep... Filled with the joy of meeting people after a long time, I followed them around like a puppy (142)." This shows the psychological condition of Najeeb as he compares himself with a dog and forgets about his manly existence. These experiences of Najeeb lead him to existential crisis.

1.4. Psychological Impacts of Socio-Cultural Transformation

This state of identity crisis leads Najeeb to his social, cultural and psychological transformation. His life in the masara, herding goats, compels Na-

jeeb to transform himself socially and culturally which impacts his psychological self and he suffers from existential crisis.

"Existentialism is a term applied to the work of certain 19th and 20th century philosophers who despite profound doctrinal differences shared the belief that philosophical thinking begins with the human subject – not merely the thinking subject, but the acting feeling, living human individual" (Macquaire). In existentialism the character has a sense of disorientation, confusion in the face of a meaningless or absurd world. Soren Kierkegaard is considered to be the first existential philosopher, but the term coined by the French philosopher Johan Sebastian Gabriel Marcel in the mid-1940s. The roots of existentialism can be traced in the philosophy of Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers and Jean Paul Sartre. Their aim was to raise the individual consciousness to an awareness of his own existence, freedom and choice.

Benyamin's novel Goat Days, the protagonist Najeeb is represented as a man suffering from existential crisis. It is a story of rootlessness, meaninglessness and absurdity in the life of Najeeb, who accidentally has been placed in a wrong profession in a foreign land. His identity is demolished as he lives the 'life of goat' until his escape from the desert where he had been placed and returns to his native land. Najeeb has been placed in the job of herding goats in the desert, he is made to live with the goats, sleep with the goats, and eat with the goats. As a result, he begins to consider himself as one of them. He speaks with them and gives them names of his relatives and friends to feel himself in company of them. He often raises questions about his identity and his work. It can be found in his narrative as he says, "I have to go", "I cannot be here", "I did not come for this work". Although he knows that the arbab did not understand a thing, but he felt that it was his duty to say what he had to say (66). He could not even meet with the friend, Hakeem, with whom he came on the first day. Hakeem was also facing the same miseries in the very next masara. "The poor boy was so near yet so far.

It was only then that I registered the extent of my cocooned existence" (135). Further instances of his existential crisis are reflected in below lines:

"I spent the winter as a sheep among the sheep" (140).

"I didn't have enough food, water, clothes, a proper place to sleep, wages, dream or aspiration. But I did have something precious left – my life" (141).

Najeeb feels his life without any meaning after reaching there at the tent of his arbab and having a feeling of his job there. Before reaching there he has dreamt of a luxurious life in the Gulf, he has thought of earning enough money to his needs and then to return back to his home to live happily with his wife and unborn child. But his entire dream has shattered off when he reaches to his workplace and feels that his life is meaningless.

The absurdity of his life is reflected in his words when he says goodbye to his family and makes promise to return soon, then remembering all these incidents happened to him in last few days, he says that "some situations in our lives are even more absurd than a film scene" (39). Then when he was initiated into the world of the shepherd and was given his dress of the Saudi Arab man, he realizes the absurdity of his life. He realized that now his life is bound to the goats. He is made to live with goats; as a result he feels his life associated only with goats. After being caught while an attempt to escape from that hell, he is beaten by his arbab and put into masara with goats. He is made to eat goat meat and not allowed to drink water. In the nights, he eats raw wheat with little salt and thus he feels that finally he has become a goat. He is no more aware of his human existence and considers himself as one of the goats. The absurdity of his life has shown through his existence as a goat among the goats.

In the life of a shepherd, at a strange place and among the goats, he felt loneliness and emptiness as he felt out of place. The unexpected profession made him to crave for home, he was not used to a

shepherd's life, so he felt rootless, as the place was so different and he was away from human company. He was away from his home and his native land, so he felt the urge to go back to his home, he remembers his home and thinks that "unlike in our place, where vines spread through rocks and sand, there was not a speck of green here. It was sterile waste land" (74).

He cursed his life of loneliness and alienated. His sense of alienation was so high that he felt he was not on Earth. "I lived on an alien planet inhabited by some goats, my arbab and me" (125). He felt so lonely that the sight of human beings brought him great joy.

My heart would flutter with inexpressible joy whenever those vehicles reached the masara I'd be elated as if some loved ones had come to visit us. I would chat with the goats more than usual. But when those vehicles raising dust faded away, I felt like the world itself had run away from me. Then a heart draining fatigue would come over me (126).

Thus, he feels alienated from society. He wishes for his freedom and freewill, lives in despair. Finally he escapes with Hakeem and Khadiri the new co-worker Hakeem. The final fleeing away from the masara was a personal choice and as an existentialist, this helped him to regain his identity as Najeeb – the human once again.

1.5. Conclusion

Identity crisis which leads to psychological trauma is the major problem faced by almost everyone at some point of life. Although it varies from person to person, as it depends on the situation and social surroundings of a person, yet the impacts of identity crisis are same to an extent. In the novel that is taken for this paper, the protagonist Najeeb faces identity crisis because of his social and cultural transformation which leads him to psychological trauma.

This paper is an attempt to trace the identity crisis faced by the protagonist Najeeb, in the novel Goat

Days. The paper has pointed out various instances that had led Najeeb to identity crisis in one way or other. The paper has tried to picturise the identity loss of a person as a human being whose identity has been trapped in between the animal and human being.

Thus, it can be said that the psychological impacts of social and cultural transformation led Najeeb to existential crisis and he becomes an existentialist because of his alienated behaviour, his being an outsider in an alien society and his exile from the masara, from the absurdity of his meaningless life as a goat, his constant conflicts and consciousness about the nothingness of his existence and his rejection of the goats life forever. Najeeb is a seeker of his identity, freedom and meaning in life. For him his native land, his society is the ultimate meaning of his life. Therefore he flees and finally returns to Kerala his homeland.

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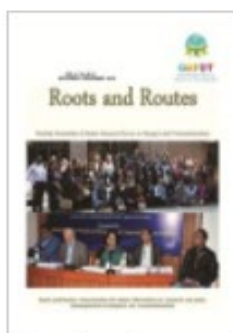
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GRFDT NEWSLETTER

***Roots and Routes* disseminates the latest information on research and policy developments in Diaspora and trans**

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Roots and Routes is a monthly newsletter of the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT). It is inclusive of articles, book reviews and news analysis, which help in disseminating latest information on research and policy development in Diaspora and Transnationalism. The newsletter enjoys readership of academicians, policy experts, diaspora think tanks etc.

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