

Refugee Crisis: A Scrutiny on the Displaced Voices of Nuruddin Farah

S R Monisha^{1*}, Dr. P. Kolappadhas²

^{1*}Register No: 20213154012016 Ph. D. Research Scholar, English Department and Research Center S. T. Hindu College, Nagercoil. Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. India, Email: monishasr6@gmail.com, Mob: 75581 99795.

²Associate Professor (Retd.), English Department and Research Center S.T. Hindu College, Nagercoil. Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. India, Email: p.kolappadhas@gmail.com Mob: 70104 31127.

Abstract:

Refugees are mere fugitives who trusted in the mirage of obtaining a promising future in an unknown land. The inner urge for a better life is the common intention of every refugee who steps out from the homeland with courage and strong determination. The refugee crisis is turning out to be one of the global issues that has to be sorted out immediately. A person who is coerced to leave his native soil is a worrisome thing to witness, hence literature evolved to capture the miseries of the displaced civilians. A literary text that concentrates on the refugee's trajectory of life is regarded as refugee literature. This genre is an extended form of diasporic novels that induces migration of an individual's life from dawn to dusk. Being an expatriate novelist for years, Nuruddin Farah imparts his practical wisdom on the miseries of refugees in his recent works. His empirical approach in the narration aids the reader in correlating with the psyche of a refugee who was deeply vulnerable during the phase of forced displacement. This paper attempts to unveil Farah's novel *North of Dawn* which is enclosed with the tapestry of refugee issues, It also documents the chaotic life of refugees and displays the scrutiny of the displaced voice with an outstanding narrative from the selected text.

Keywords: Home, Refugees, Exile, Displacement, Nostalgia

Refugee Crisis: A Scrutiny on the Displaced Voices of Nuruddin Farah

The mass influx of refugees is one of the alarming large-scale crises that require an efficient solution to redress. Displacing from the roots gives a temporary settlement for a migrant who feels unsafe in his native soil. Sooner or later an epiphany strikes the refugee's mind who believes in the diasporic myth of reconceiving a happy home in the alien land. Primarily, they will be traumatized by their past while reconstructing life in a foreign country. The secondary reason was the deprivation of civil liberties in the host society and it would shatter the blooming hope of a refugee. A stateless refugee is denied the right to get proper education, citizenship, healthcare, employment, and individual freedom. Consequently, the normalcy of his domestic life will be in distress. The modern political system fails to do fair play to the citizens and thus the literary field has evolved to voice out the unhumanitarian urgency of mass influx. Extreme violence and forced displacement lead to aggression and prolonged crises in refugees' lives. Documenting refugees' life experiences and ordeals seems to be a new-wave approach in the modern literary field. As an outcome of spectating human losses in two world Wars, refugee literature sprouts up in the early twentieth century. World Wars seem to be one of the major backdrops that induce mass migration in various countries. The refugee literature notifies the ancient episodes in history or the incidents related to the war sequences in its narration. Refugee narratives prominently exhibit the radical shift undergone in the body and mind of a refugee during the migratory phase. From a refugee's viewpoint, dislocation seems

to be one of the resilience methods. The prime objective of their life is to restore their well-being. But in most of the circumstances, the refugees fail on the mission to regain a new identity in their adoptive land and live on the fringes of the host society.

Nuruiddin Farah in his book, *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora*, gives a brief definition of refugees and their challenging rootless life. The author envies the people who are blessed with a better life without war, famine, and political chaos. His writing is a true testament of Somali life which convicts a profound statement that a man's peace of mind is correlated with the place he resides. The author's empirical approach to refugees' lives provides the reader with a piece of pragmatic information regarding the sufferings of forced migrants and the country that fails to do justice to its people.

I understood the deeper meaning of Somali wisdom in which a high value is placed on owning one's own home, as this affords a greater sense of privacy, self-honor, and dignity. My father, my son, one of my youngest sisters, and a nephew, who were among the first to arrive in the coastal city, shared rooms with people whom they had not known before. I remember my sister alluding to 'one's home being one's protector, a custodian to one's secrets, a sentry at the gate to one's self-pride. Having no home of one's own and no country enjoying the luxury of peace: then perhaps one is a refugee. (VII)

In an era labeled as the relentless flow of displaced populations, refugee literature transpires on the effects of forced migration on the human psyche. A migrant who gets forcibly displaced from his home will encounter homesickness, an identity crisis, battle to survive in the host land, and feel nostalgic in every moment of life. A country's political crisis or famine seems to be the major driving factor that leads to forced migration. Refugee stories implant the traumatic experiences of the characters and hence the narration proves how these migrants were mentally shattered on various levels. One of the prominent British writers, Warhan Shire elucidates the predicaments of refugees in her poem *Home*.

I want to go Home, But home is the mouth of a shark
Home is the barrel of the gun And no one would leave
home Unless home chased you to the shore. (3)

The poem spotlights the sufferings of refugees who were unwilling to leave their homes and were forced to leave their roots in various circumstances. This present research paper attempts to unveil the reasons that induce mass influx and gives an in-depth exploration of the psyche of a refugee in a host land. *North of Dawn* (2018) is the novel taken for the present study which is written by the most prolific novelist of East African literature Nuruiddin Farah. Farah is strong-willed to represent his mother nation and stands as an icon on the global stage through his works. This novel explains the troublesome lives of Somalians who are dislocated from their roots without their concern. They are stamped as strangers in the host land and their deep mental agony is displayed through the writings of Farah.

In the present novel, the author craves out for the lives of refugees with an empathetic understanding. He attempts to throw light on the predicament of refugees from two different generations. Decades before being a professional immigrant, the narrator Mugdi, and his wife Gacalo moved to Norway with their two children. Moreover, he elaborates on the psyche of refugees who were easily prone to existential crisis while assimilating into their adoptive land. These couples who settled long before in Norway still getting affected by their identity crisis.

One of their Somali friends Mugdi named Himmo lost her daughter in a terrible accident plotted by the Christian extremists of Norway towards the Muslim immigrants. The author picturizes the dreadful life of Somalian refugees in the host land from the words of Himmo, she said,

Like many others, I was fooled into assuming that once we'd settled in Norway, a land famous for its peacefulness, our young would not precede us into the grave in the way so many of the young do in Somalia's ongoing civil war. Alas, we've become victims of the very evil we strove so hard to avoid by leaving our homeland and taking refuge here. We thought that by fleeing Somalia when we did, our lives would be spared and our triumph complete. (ND 215)

Through the characters Naciim and Saafi, the author portrays the budding diasporic myth in the minds of the younger generation who were just moving out from Somalia to Norway for a blissful future. To set up a contented future for their grandchildren, Gacalo and Mugdi are taking risks in their lives in Norway to bring Saafi and Naciim from the refugee camp. The author put forward the encircling loops that make the refugees

suffocate for their existence. The disastrous Somalian Civil War induced the natives to relocate their residences and made them seek asylum in other countries.

Prominently these overcrowded refugee camps were insecure for the women and girls. The vulnerable state of women is taken for granted and they were victimized in the form of gender-based violence, rape, forced marriages, and immoral traffics. It is evident in the novel *North of Dawn*, the character Saafi was gang raped in the refugee camp in her helpless state of life. Her mental trauma is realistically pictured by the novelist through her repeated nightmares about the disastrous incident. She also becomes anxious whenever she encounters strangers in her future life.

It is a quite challenging task for the redemption of refugees from victimization. To bring Saafi back to normalcy Gacalo suggested Waliya, Saafi's mother to make an appointment with a psychologist. She said, "Would you approve if we consulted psychologists to help Saafi? A lot of research has been done in Norway on Somali refugee girls who feel trapped in their own bodies, following the horrid experiences they have had back home in war-torn Somalia or the refugee camps" (ND 103). This above incident is correlated with the perception of Denise L. Spitzer in her article, "The Impact of Policy on Somalian Refugee Women in Canada", she affirms the violence against women refugees in the camps which remains concealed before the universal platform, "Moreover, women have been marginalized in refugee camps where they are also vulnerable to gender violence and sexual exploitation" (49).

The predatory nature of climatic shocks and the dehumanized Civil War coerced millions of Somalians to leave their country. Severe drought and unstable political scenarios seem to be the reason for the death of its civilians. For ensuring their safety millions of Somalians were dislocated from their motherland. The trauma of losing their blood ties psychologically impacts the refugees in the migrant camps. The nostalgic memories of the homeland create a void of nothingness in the lives of refugees.

The outstanding narration of Farah advocates the need for cosmopolitanism to level up the standard of refugees in the host land. The lifestyle of Mugdi and Gacalo imprints the essence of cosmopolitanism in the character depiction of the novelist. With a positive outlook, this couple vaguely remembers the traditions of their roots and starts living in a new culture of the Westerners without any inhibition. Through this novel, Farah gives his readers, a secret code of a happier future to forget the past.

The author equates the idea of universal brotherhood with a broader perspective to rectify the refugee crisis severely plaguing the world. The deep vision of the writer is echoed by the dream of a borderless society, where people will not be subjected to any caste, creed, race, or religion. Similarly, in the novel *Exit West*, the author Mohsin Hamid tries to ease the mental agony of refugees who were reminiscing the nostalgic memories of the past and lights up the minds of refugees with optimistic words,

We are all children who lose our parents, all of us, every man and woman and boy and girl, and we too will all be lost by those who come after us and love us, and the loss unites humanity, every human being, the temporary nature of our being-ness, and our shared sorrow, the heartache we each carry and yet too often refuse to acknowledge in one another (N.P...)

Farah stresses the culture of cosmopolitanism to abolish the prolonged trauma of refugees' identities in foreign countries. To optimize the solution to the refugee crisis, a nobleman needs to normalize cosmopolitanism and the thriving of multi-culture in a single society. Climate changes and political chaos are unpredictable, but voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and integration will ensure a safe and stable life for refugees. In the name of humanity, a stable life will make one love one another by keeping race, caste, creed, and gender aside.

Bibliography:

1. Farah, Nuruddin. *North of Dawn*. Riverhead Books, 2018.
2. ---. *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora: Literature, Culture & Identity*. Cassell, 2000.
3. Hamid, Mohsin. *Exit West*. Riverhead Books, 2017.
4. Spitzer, Denise. L. "The Impact of Policy on Somali Refugee Women in Canada". *Refugee: Canada's Journal on Refugees*. Vol. 23, no.2, 2006, pp.47-54.
5. Shire, Warsan. *Home*. Deportation Centre, 2009.