

## MIGRATION: AN ANALYSIS OF *REFUGEE BLUES* BY W.H AUDEN

**Reshma T.M**

MES Asmabi College P.Vemballur, Thrissur, Kerala.

### ABSTRACT

Today migration is not an unheard thing. Actually, it is considered as a normal human activity. People used to move from one place to another for several reasons. Higher education, economic issues, climatic problems, political, religious upheavals are some of the reasons. Everett Lee in his theory of migration has proposed certain factor that leads to the migration of people from one region to another and these migrations may affect them both mentally and physically. The world considers them as refugees. Without considering them as human being, people mistreat and think them as an intruder to the new world. But they are very much aware of their situations, at the same time looking forward to this world to help them. In every migration optimism is the booster thing that leads them to go ahead. They have a strong belief, that something positive will happen somewhere. This article is an analysis of *Refugee Blues* by W H Auden.

**Key words:** Migration, Refugee, Refugee Blues,

### INTRODUCTION

“No one leaves home unless Home is the  
mouth of a shark”

- Warsan Shire, *Home*

Home is a magical place, where every being feels good, a place where we create our memories and dreams. Home is not just a building. Our nation is our home. We enjoy the protection of our parents, their love while we are in our home. The same feeling is there when we think about our country.

Like our own home people love their nation, enjoy the protection given by its laws. Like home, our nation is also a feeling for us. But there are lots and lots of people, who want to get out of their home and their nation. Not just because they hate it but fate made them to think so and they start to migrate to somewhere. They leave behind all the luxuries of life and just look for a safe shelter in some other places or countries. They suppress all their dreams within them and struggle for the survival. Many of them killed physically during their struggle and others lead a lifeless existence.

### Objective

Though the problems of the refugees are well known to the world, no one is ready to help them or raise their voice for the refugees. Most of them in this world knew that refugees are thrown out of their native place because of some problems there and seeking shelter in some other places, nothing more than that. The objective of the article is to explore the various problems related to migration and psychological development of Jewish refugees.

### METHODOLOGY

Everett Lee in his Theory of Migration has pointed out some factors which affect the migration which includes factors associated with the place of origin and destination, intervening obstacle and personal factors. In each of these cases there are some positive and negative factors which affect the process of migration. He also points out a sense of uncertainty or ignorance for the migrant in the new

area. For the refugees, as they have a long association with their own homeland, they are comfortable there. But in the place where they seek some shelters may have a sense of being uncomfortable. In other words, the migrant has no problem or feel comfortable as they have a close relationship with their homeland. But they fail to assess the positive and negative factors in the area of destination.

### Analysis

Simply speaking migration is the movement of people from one geographical location to another. Migration can be voluntary or forced. Voluntary migration can be undertaken by the free will of the person. There are chances of political, social and economic reason for this. In most of the voluntary migration people move to another place in search of better economic condition or housing. People often move from their native place to another in the hope of getting good job opportunities which offers either good salary or better working environment or sometimes both. Some people migrate to another for higher education which demands less cost. There are few others who go to another country to explore the place. Forced migration is one in which people are directed to flee from their motherland to somewhere where they will get some shelter. It is more painful as they are not moving with their free will. They move because of natural or environmental problems, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine or development projects, political-religious upheavals etc. They have no other choice but to move to a new place. They leave behind all their belongings, their home, their job, their dreams and everything and seek shelter in some other places. There after they spend their life in camps, asylums, or some other settlements which worsen their condition because there they might have to face some other

challenges or threats like pandemics. They have to start everything anew. But most often their condition is more vulnerable in the new places where they consider as an 'unwanted outsider'. Natives of the foreign land treat them as an intruder to their comfortable life, as an unwelcomed guest.

"I have heard it said we are the uninvited.

We are the unwelcome" (Hosseini Sea prayer)

The native people of the land always watch them with a suspicion. There arouse a tension in every walks of life in the new country. There will be problems of overpopulation. Fear of sharing the natural resources of the country is also another issue that create a tension between the 'guest' and the 'host'. There will be cultural and language differences between the people living in same country. The refugees have to face racial, economic and social discrimination. They have no peaceful existence in both the places.

*Refugee Blues* is a poem by W H Auden, a prolific writer and one of the leading figures of the twentieth century literary world and he mainly deals with the themes like love, religion, political and social issues. The poem discusses the pathetic life condition of a migrant, a Jew of the World War II. The war left them with no choice. In their homeland they were considered as something vulnerable. The poem highlights the desperate life conditions of Jews where they have lack of choice and lack of identity. Written in 1933 the poem explains the problems faced by them from Nazi Germany.

History of Jews, their nation, religion, culture can be traced back to the earliest centuries. It is said that there is record of Judaism in Greek records. Israel is considered as their original home, though they are widespread throughout the different part of the world. They enjoined prosperity during the

middle ages in Europe and during the Ottoman period. Latter they faced many problems and migrated to other parts of the world. Soon they moved back to their homeland during 1870s and 1880s. But in the Nazi Germany, under Adolf Hitler, the situation of Jews became more severe. Nazi rule lead the migration of Jews from Europe to Palestine, to the United States and to the Soviet Union. Jews were massively killed in the many part of the world. Due to the antisemitic policy Jews were increasingly persecuted and that became an official Nazi policy. Around Six million Jews were killed under Nazi Germany.

The poem begins by introducing a city, a city of ten million people. Some are living in better conditions and some others in little life situations. But for these refugees, there is no place to leave on.

Say this city has ten million souls,  
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:  
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no  
place for us. (Auden line 1-3)

The speaker of the poem even memorises their native place where they cannot go now. Unlike the nature got chance to bloom again every year, the man made documents like passport cannot recovered. The 'consul' considers them as dead as they have no passport, the committee ask them to return to their native place next year but they have no shelter right now, and in the public meeting the speaker said that "if we let them in, they will steal our daily bread" (Auden line 17). Even the animals were welcomed in to the new land, but there is no space for the German Jews. Birds and animals in the universe are celebrating their freedom. But these people have no freedom. The poem ends by saying a dream, a building with

thousand floors, windows and doors but actually, they are standing on the great plain in the falling snow, where ten thousands of soldiers marched to and fro looking for the couple. The speaker finds that he has lost his home, freedom and identity.

In the poem the speaker memorises their homeland, their beautiful life there but there is no space for them because they heard Hitler saying "They must die" (Auden line 20). They fled from the land; they may have some destination but did not find shelter anywhere. On their journey they may face problems from nature, from their fellow being. They have to suffer all these. They become tired physically and mentally because they are carrying the hatred of the world.

Without proper food and other basic necessities these people are wandering here and there. They are weak physically because they have no nutritious food. Their present situations in a foreign land, the attitude of the people there, the sense of insecurity, thoughts about future everything makes them mentally down. They may have lead a peaceful life in the homeland. But due to some forceful reason they flee from the land and in the new place they never get a warm welcome. Everyone in the foreign country might have a suspicious look towards them. They are lacking proper housing or other basic things. They may find it futile to think about a future. There is a sense of insecurity all about their thought process. They are actually looking towards the world, not for our sympathy but for our kind attitude towards them.

If the world clearly analyses the issue of migration, it is evident that migration create lots of positive things to the host country. Migration produces lots of man power to the host country, which they can utilise for their own benefit. They provide varieties of skills and ideas which helps the overall uplift of the nation.

It is impossible for us to forget Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned on his way to take a shelter somewhere as he is facing severe problems in his homeland. His dead body lying on the beach created great impact on people all over the world. But there is no change for the frightful condition of the refugees. Still they are the unwanted group. They are homeless, uprooted

### CONCLUSION

When the refugees look towards the world it is evident that they have a hope towards their future. They may have a strong belief that

something positive will happen somewhere. It is the duty of others as a human being to help them. Considering them as human being is the first step towards their upliftment. Helping them means, not just their material welfare, but the protection of their rights, their cultural assets and identities.

### REFERENCE

Anitha. R, (2017) Jimmy James. Issues that Matters. Macmillan education.

<https://rashidfaridi.com> Hosseini. K. (2018) Sea Prayer. Bloomsbury.