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Travel Narratives of Bangla Literature: A Comparative Literary Analysis

After the establishment of colonialism in different parts of the world, forced as well as voluntary displacement had created often varied, complex and violent experiences. Categories such as ‘colonial’, ‘post colonial’ gave nuanced expressions to all those experiences. There are literary examples in the world literature where these stories have described about the universal –global ethos of human civilization whereas there are writers who will talk about the local fragmented histories of ‘little’ people. Travelers from different European nations ‘explored’ different colonial locations to establish the different but stereotypical images of the ‘other’. But interestingly in later point of time, travelers from colonized locations traveled to other parts of the world and the ensuing travel narratives create varied experiences of colonialism, racism faced by these travelers.

In late nineteenth century – early twentieth century Bangla literature we come across an assortment of travel narratives where people like Indumadhab Mullick travelled to China, whereas women travelers like Hariprava Takeda, Abala Basu, Sorojnalini Dutta travelled to Japan and wrote travelogues called *Chin Bhromon*, *Japane Bhanganari* etc. Rabindranath Thakur visited different countries of Europe but he also visited China, Japan, Bali etc. Interestingly, one of the reasons behind Rabindranath Thakur’s visit to Bali was to encounter the influence of ancient Indian civilization on the societies of Bali, Java etc. Consequently Rabindranath published *Europe Prabasir Patro*, *Javajatrir Patro* etc. All these travelogues bring together issues such as nationalism, colonialism, languages and identity politics. But all these travel narratives can be different case study of contact zones where colonizer – colonized interactions or interactions between different colonized locations can be encountered.

In this paper my objective would be to analyse these travel narratives of early twentieth Century Bangla literature to understand the politics of cross cultural exchanges in South Asia. Simultaneously I will discuss how these narratives can be case study of contact and reception of different cultures.