

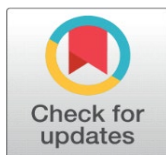
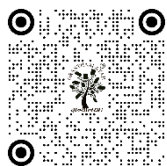
A STYLISTICS STUDY OF DISPLACEMENT AND NOSTALGIA IN GULZAR'S MAHAMARI LAGI THI

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ABSTRACT

The historic reverse migration of Indian migrant labourers, during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), revealed the profound socio-economic vulnerabilities faced by this marginalised community. Despite its magnitude, the human suffering associated with this crisis remained largely unheard and underrepresented. Gulzar's poem Mahamari Lagi Thi emerges as a significant literary response to this unaddressed humanitarian issue, demanding critical attention to the stylistic and thematic strategies through which it articulates migrant anguish.

The research aims to examine the literary and stylistic techniques employed in Gulzar's Mahamari Lagi Thi to foreground the plight, pain, and existential crisis of migrant labourers during the pandemic. It also seeks to explore how themes of nostalgia, displacement, and longing for homeland are used to evoke empathy and social awareness among readers.

The paper adopts a literary stylistics approach, integrating textual analysis with concepts drawn from migration and displacement theory. By analysing imagery, symbolism, diction, and narrative voice, the article interprets how Gulzar's poetic strategies construct meaning and shape readers' emotional responses.

The analysis reveals that Mahamari Lagi Thi effectively blends stylistic devices with socio-cultural realities to create a powerful and realistic narrative of migrant suffering. Gulzar's use of emotive imagery, understated language, and symbolic references intensifies the sense of loss, nostalgia, and existential uncertainty experienced by migrant labourers. The poem's interdisciplinary resonance enhances its coherence and deepens its impact on readers.

The study concludes that Mahamari Lagi Thi stands as a poignant literary testimony to the migrant crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through its nuanced stylistic construction and thematic depth, the poem not only documents a significant moment in recent Indian history but also functions as a moral and emotional appeal, fostering empathy and social consciousness. In doing so, Gulzar reaffirms the role of literature as a powerful medium for representing silenced voices and collective trauma.

Keywords: Coronavirus (COVID-19), Migrant Labourers, Pandemic, Literary Stylistics, Reverse Migration



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PANDEMIC IN INDIA

One of the world's most unexpected and unheard-of disasters, the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), can be observed as a moment of collective trauma that destabilised social, economic, and cultural certainties across the globe. No area of the world has remained untouched by its destruction, neither the first-world countries nor the third-world/commonwealth nations. The tension was not just about an individual's physical and mental health, but also about the global unrest that led to a serious financial and humanitarian crisis. The pandemic emerged as an event that endured psychological aftershocks, particularly for communities already positioned at the margins.

Amid the first and second waves of COVID-19, India not only experienced its 'greatest economic emergency' post-independence [Nahata \(2020\)](#), but also witnessed the second-largest mass relocation, pandemic reverse migration [Nair \(2020\)](#), in the country's history since independence.

The nationwide lockdown imposed during the first phase of the pandemic (2019–2020) functioned as a state-regulated intervention aimed at preserving life through the management of bodies, mobility, and space. However, this governance of life also produced zones of abandonment, where migrant labourers—integral yet expendable within India's urban economy—were rendered precarious subjects. Deprived of employment, shelter, and institutional care, millions were compelled to undertake perilous journeys back to their rural homes, transforming mobility into an embodied experience of exhaustion, hunger, and fear. The pandemic thus exposed the fractured nature of citizenship, wherein migrant workers remain peripheral to the nation's moral and political imagination except during moments of crisis.

Literary representations of COVID-19, particularly Gulzar's pandemic poetry, may be read as acts of cultural testimony that intervene in this historical moment of trauma. Drawing upon a poetics of witnessing, Gulzar articulates the unspeakable dimensions of migrant suffering—physical pain, emotional dislocation, and psychic fragmentation. His work transforms individual suffering into collective memory, functioning as a counter-archive that challenges dominant narratives of resilience and recovery, and insists on recognising trauma, displacement, and precarity as central to understanding the lived realities of the pandemic in India. Through his poem on COVID-19, Gulzar has chronicled the mental, emotional and physical suffering and hardship endured by migrant workers.

2. CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND INDIAN LITERATURE

There is no doubt about the fact that pandemics and historical atrocities have always offered a platform for literature; many authors have created a very informative and useful viewpoint by using them appropriately. Similar to texts available on genocides and atrocities in post-independent Indian history that deal with various facets, either as a personal experience (memoir) or representation of thoughts and viewpoints in the form of political, social, economic and literary discourse, the COVID-19 pandemic in India has generated a rich field of literary and cultural production that documents collective trauma, displacement, and existential precarity. It is the most researched and extensively studied area in recent times. It is not only through newspaper articles, medical and socio-political blogs, Twitter, and statements by eminent economic analysts that one can get relevant and authentic information about the epidemic, but also eminent writers and poets have created literature to vocalise the plight of this recent catastrophe, experienced across the globe. Indian writers across languages and media have responded to the pandemic's social, economic, and political ruptures, contributing to a burgeoning body of pandemic literature that serves as both cultural testimony and historical archive.

According to [Patnaik \(2022\)](#), the coronavirus pandemic has reconfigured literary practice globally. Poetry and narrative prose have emerged as vital modes of expressing economic and medical crises, emotional experience, social isolation, and socio-political tension during lockdown. Indian poetry and prose produced during the coronavirus pandemic were intended to record emotional and social disruption, expressing reactions of fear, isolation, and uncertainty. Several critical studies have assessed that the Literary works produced by Indians have presented the coronavirus pandemic-induced trauma through a lens of psychological distress, helplessness, and even resilience, thus giving rise to pandemic literature.

One of the frequently cited early pandemic literatures produced by India is Shobha [De \(2020\)](#) *Lockdown Liaisons*. It is one such collection of short stories that explores the themes of intimacy and alienation during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, it presents how relationships, identity, and everyday life were transformed by quarantine and isolation.

"Shav-Vahini Ganga," by Parul [Khakhar \(2021\)](#), is a 14-line Gujarati poem that not only captures the imagery of shock and heart-wrenching crematoria. It exhibits overwhelming public grief due to the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, and, at the same time, critiques governmental failure.

As a significant literary contribution in the Asian Literary Project (YOMU), "Stories of Hope from India, during Second Wave of Covid-19," an essay written by Nikhil [Sachan \(2022\)](#), is a collection of narratives foregrounding human resilience and challenges faced by the human race during the catastrophe. Nikhil Sachan, through his essay, invokes literary reflection by citing other literary pieces and linking personal experiences with cultural imagination, to contemplate on hope amidst crises and sufferings. In continuation of this, there are other Indian literary works,

produced in regional languages during COVID-19, that engaged with societal values, spiritual introspection, and human resilience, aiming for a therapeutic effect.

A Hindi poetry collection, “Corona se Atmagyan,” written by Rounak Rai (2020), innovatively composed using verses and drawings to express both suffering, endured during the coronavirus pandemic, and introspection. Exhibiting the function of literary creation as an emotional and existential response to crises, Rounak Rai demonstrates how the coronavirus pandemic taught profound lessons about human nature and social bonds.

Moreover, digital and social media-based pandemic literature like poems, short stories, and online anthologies has proliferated as writers sought to capture the immediacy of experience and collective fear, hope, and frustration during lockdowns. This body of work intersects with broader sociocultural narratives of marginalisation, especially those directed towards migrant labourers whose forced reverse migration exposed structural inequalities and psychosocial suffering. Empirical research on migrant workers’ lived experiences during COVID-19 highlights intense psychological distress, feelings of helplessness, and long-term impacts on mental health and identity—phenomena that many Indian literary texts strive to represent and interrogate.

Literary responses to the pandemic in India thus contribute to a trauma study that reveals pandemic experience as both personal and political, where biopolitical governance, labour precarity, and the precarious subjectivity of subaltern populations are thematically central. These narratives do not merely reflect individual suffering but also challenge dominant discourses of nation, development, and normalcy, insisting that literature can function as a mode of ethical witnessing and cultural memory in the wake of collective catastrophe.

One such literary text (poem) by Gulzar has been taken to study the suffering imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on Indian migrant workers. Through poetry/use of symbolic language, Gulzar reveals the condition of the migrant labourers in India during the sudden, indefinite nationwide lockdown imposed by the Indian government. Unannounced closures of the transportation, financial, and industrial sectors put migrant labourers and daily wagers on the road Ravi (2020). Before the Supreme Court decided on migrant labourers, they were left without food and housing, which ultimately led to an exodus of migrant workers towards their homes to survive Ravi (2020).

The present article analyses the poem Mahamari Lagi Thi from Gulzar’s collection of poetry titled “COVID-19”. Mahamari Lagi Thi depicts the conditions and reasons that influenced the thought process of migrant labourers in India, motivating them to return to their homeland for survival during the coronavirus pandemic (2020).

3. MAHAMARI LAGI THI: DISPLACEMENT AND NOSTALGIA DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN INDIA

As an interior monologue, Gulzar's Mahamari Lagi Thi portrays the inner sentiments of the Indian migrant labourers during the first wave of the coronavirus outbreak. This work of art not only gives the reader a window into the character's mind, but also vividly illustrates their feeling of loneliness in a foreign land/city (shahar) and nostalgia for the homeland/village (gaanv) during the coronavirus pandemic. The subtle use of linguistic and literary expressions throughout the poem brings forth the intense desire of the migrant labourers, settled in Indian metropolises, to relocate themselves to their roots (Appendix 1):

chalo ab ghar chalein ...

[L.18 by Gulzar (2020)]

Come, let’s go home

[L.18 Translation by Rakshanda Jalil (2020)]

While examining the structure of the poem Mahamari Lagi Thi, it has been observed that though the poem has a very simplistic opening, mere mentioning of a temporal setting of a pandemic (Appendix 1):

Mahamari lagi thi

[L.1 by Gulzar (2020)]

The pandemic raged

[L.1 Translation by Rakshanda Jalil (2020)]

The subsequent lines pull the reader into a heart-wrenching monologue that implicitly states the impact of the “post-apocalyptic world” on the migrant labourers, considered to be one of the weaker sections of the Indian society Sainath (2020). The poem depicts their helplessness and loneliness during the nationwide lockdown, as all the workstations/machines ground to a halt in the metropolises (Appendix 1):

Mashinen band hone lag gai thin shahar ki saari

[L.3 by Gulzar (2020)]

All the machines ground to a halt in the cities

[L.3 Translation by Rakshanda Jalil (2020)]

that forced the artisans and labourers to flee back home/native place

gharon ko bhag liye the sabhi mazdoor, karigar.

[L.2 by Gulzar (2020)]

The workers and labourers fled to their homes

[L.2 Translation by Rakshanda Jalil (2020)]

As the poem proceeds, Gulzar reveals the ‘identity of the protagonist’ as an immigrant (in-migration), who resides in a city/urban region for a better livelihood. In the poem, “mashinen” (machines) connotes technical advancement, progression and better living prospects. The equivalence, created by Gulzar, between “mashinen” (machines) and “shahar” (cities) (Appendix 1: L.3), signifies the socioeconomic condition of present-day India, where the urban region (representing prosperity and security) still stands in stark contrast with rural life due to regional disparity.

Migration is a significant area of study in the social sciences. According to Lee (1966), it is considered to be a permanent/semipermanent change of residence that depends upon the “factors associated with the person, their area of origin and destination, along with intervening obstacles” (49-50). However, the process involved in human migration significantly varies from the developed nation/region to the developing nation/region. It symbolises the history of people’s geographic movement, either for better opportunities in order to thrive and survive or to fight from the existing conditions of poverty and instability Das et al. (2012). The former experiences immigration/“in-migration ” (p.1) influenced by “pull factors” like improved social infrastructure accompanied by better economic, ecological and political factors; the latter is subjected to emigration/“out-migration ” (p.1) due to “push factors” like poverty, unemployment, regional disparity, political instability and natural calamities.

India belongs to the group of developing nations where internal migration (in- and out-migration) and external migration (immigration and emigration) take place mostly due to push factors. Since 60 million people are below the poverty line in India, every year, most of the migrants travel hundreds of miles from rural to urban land for employment, for better education and health-care facilities, for socioeconomical, ecological and political security Nag et al. (2016). The same can be observed in the lines of Gulzar’s Mahamari Lagi Thi (Appendix 1):

Mashinen band hone lag gai thin shahar ki saari

unhin se haath paon chalte rehte the

varna jindagi to gaanv hi mein bo ke aaye the.

[L.3-5 by Gulzar (2020)]

All the machines ground to a halt in the cities

Only their hands and feet moved

Their lives they had planted back in the villages.

where the poet clearly depicts the social status of the protagonist, who migrated from a village to a city, and worked as a labourer in a factory since machines (mashinen) were their only source of income/livelihood (Appendix 1: L.4). In India, migrant labourers and workers constitute a major portion of the “vulnerable population” [Khanna \(2020\)](#) and are considered “socioeconomically disadvantaged people” (Agoramoorthy and Hsu, 2020, p.1) because they earn subsistence wages from temporary jobs and endure severe working circumstances that expose them to a variety of occupational risks.

The lives of migrant labourers in India have always been full of hardships. They are treated as “second citizens” [Yadav and Priya, \(2021\)](#), p.65) as they leave their identities at their native place (Appendix 1: L.5) and move to cities in search of better job prospects and living conditions. Ironically, even being “the backbone of the country’s economy” (p.62), they are unable to adjust and create an identity of their own in the new space. Therefore, the relationship between the migrant labourers and their homeland (gaanv) is so intimate that they associate the idea of ‘being/self’ (jindagi) with it. On the contrary, migrant labourers consider urban life (shahar) as lifeless and mechanical (mashinen), where a mechanical mind operates routinely according to external stimuli. In such a situation, the moods, feelings and actions are controlled by others/externalities. The person does not let one’s within to have a say .

Through the use of past marker “the”, “thi” (was), and “thin” (were), Gulzar exhibits the interior monologue of the protagonist, where the protagonist introspects their condition in the city (place of destination) and village (place of origin) before and after the outbreak of the pandemic, thus, experiences an existential crisis and guilt for leaving one’s homeland. The condition of Indian migrant labourers in the metropolis had never been satisfactory; however, it worsened with the outbreak of the present-day pandemic (coronavirus). Indian migrant labourers were left with a chaotic and painful existence in cities due to the implementation of lockdown and social distancing [World Bank \(2020\)](#), which further led to unemployment, insufficient and timely medical care and social insecurity. This led to “dehumanisation” [Pandey, et. al., \(2020\)](#), p.16) of migrant labourers in India as they were exposed to severe adversities due to the traumatic event of COVID-19.

The poet has made extensive use of deictic expressions, namely, spatial deixis: “voh” (those); “vahin” (there); “yahaan” (here), to refer to a certain space in past and present. Additionally, he has made use of person deixis: “apne” (ours) and “unke” (theirs), to refer to a specific person/group of people in past. Through these deictic expressions, the protagonist (migrant labourer) expresses their longing for the homeland as they felt psychologically alienated and homeless in the destination land due to the socio-politically induced constraints (COVID-19 lockdown and social distancing).

The nationwide lockdown, implemented to stop the coronavirus outbreak, did not levy much difficulty on the affluent upper- and middle-class inhabitants as they religiously followed social distancing norms through self-isolation in their homes. Moreover, they complied with the official orders, visited hospitals in case symptoms arose, and abided by the precautionary measures suggested universally. However, the coronavirus-induced lockdown proved to be a disaster and a traumatic experience for the low-income class and migrant labourers, as, on one hand, it significantly damaged many lives due to unaffordable medical facilities and proper shelter and sanitation facilities. On the other hand, it affected the livelihoods by job loss, resulting in an ethical and financial dilemma [Arunachalam and Halwai \(2020\)](#), p.482).

Spatial deixis like “who” (they) and “vahin” (there) are used as anaphoric reference for village/homeland (gaanv) from where the protagonist internally migrated (got displaced), in search of better livelihood, to an urban space/a city (shahar), anaphorically referred to as “yahaan” (here), where the protagonist is trapped in a mechanical life full of hardships, both physical and mental, due to the coronavirus pandemic. In this mechanical world, the protagonist of the poem, Mahamari Lagi Thi, considers their body merely as a machine that functions routinely according to an external stimulus (Appendix 1):

Yahaan toh jism la kar plug lagaye the!’

[L.16 by [Gulzar \(2020\)](#)]

Here, they have only brought their bodies and plugged them in!

[L.16 Translation by Rakshanda Jalil (2020)]

Their emotions, moods and actions are operated by others/externalities as they (migrant labourers/workers) exist in this space without an identity or self. Woh (They) and vahin (there) represent distant space, which is very distant/out of reach in the present-day context. Therefore, the protagonist desires/craves to attain that space, homeland (gaavn). Furthermore, person deixis, apne (ours) and unke (theirs), represent relatedness and a sense of belonging.

The poem Mahamari Lagi Thi is a portrayal of the Diasporic community in the recent post-apocalyptic India. This creative piece represents notable features of diasporic experiences of the weaker section of Indian society, which is greatly devastated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through Mahamari Lagi Thi, the poet narrates the protagonist's "strong attachment to and desire for return to a well-preserved home" Clifford (1994). For the protagonist, who belongs to the weaker section of the Indian society, the idea of homeland (identified as their village) remains unchanged, the same as they experienced before their relocation to the city in search of better life prospects. The presence of lexical items like "zamin" (land), "katai" (reaping), "buai" (sowing), along with the reference to cereals such as "juari", "dhan", "makki", "bajare", centres towards the agrarian culture of rural life. (Appendix 1):

*Woh acre or do ekad zamin, aur paanch ekad
katai or buy sab vahin to thi
juari, dhan, makki, bajare sab.*

[L. 6-8 by Gulzar (2020)]

Those one or two or five acres of agricultural lands
The sowing and the harvesting was all back there
Of the jowar, wheat, corn, bajra – all of it

[L. 6-8 Translation by Rakshanda Jalil (2020)]

Through these lines, Gulzar draws a sharp contrast between the agrarian culture (humanitarian in nature, representing liveliness) and metropolitan culture (materialistic, entirely mechanical). By presenting the human-land relationship (Appendix 1: L.6), the poet focuses on personalised ownership of space, which is intimate and manageable, suggesting emotional attachment (sustaining families and memories), unlike urban space, suggesting economic abstraction. In line 7 (Appendix 1), Gulzar presents the agricultural cycle central to rural culture, epitomising the sense of continuity, movement, and vitality that connects the individual to nature. On the contrary, an urban lifestyle is associated with deadlines and repetitive mechanical routines. Moreover, the listing of cereals (Appendix 1: L.8) reinforces the concepts of self-sufficiency, diversity, abundance, and sustainability that relate to the ecological living system, describing how life survives, renews and flourishes.

For the protagonist of the poem Mahamari Lagi Thi, home is an amalgamation of lived experiences (both positive and negative) and closely-knit social relations:

*Woh bantavare, chachere aur mamere bhaiyon se
fasad naale pay, parnalon pe jhagade
lathait apne, kabhi unke.
Woh nani, dadi aur dadu ke mukadame.
Sagai, shadiyan, khaliyan,
sookha, baadh, har baar aasmaan barse na barse.*

[L.9-14 by Gulzar (2020)]

Those divisions with the cousins and brothers
Those fights at the canals and waterways
The strongmen, hired sometimes from their side and sometimes from this.
The lawsuits dating back to grandparents and grand uncles.
Engagements, marriages, fields,

Drought, flood, the fear: will the skies rain or not?

[L.9-14 Translation by Rakshanda Jalil (2020)]

Gulzar, through his artistic piece, reflect upon the way of living shaped by agriculture and rural practices. The kinship collocation (chachere aur mamere bhaiyon; nani, dadi aur dadu) foregrounds a joint-family system, and a life shaped by ancestral land relations (bantavare). Here, conflicts (bantavare, fasad, jhagade, mukadame) arise from shared natural resources and not abstract legal entities. The line "lathait apne, kabhi unke" represents physical confrontation as a normalised rural practice signifying a customary mode of conflict resolution that reinforces collective belonging (apne, unke) and a communal, direct approach; unlike an urban setting, which is mechanical, legal, and impersonal. The phrase "... nani, dadi aur dadu ke mukadame" depicts long-standing disputes across generations, depicting inheritance of conflicts alongside property.

Through the lexical connotations sagai (engagement), shadiyan (wedding ceremonies), khaliyan (fields, threshing floors), the poet embodies the real spirit of rural culture, which is both social and close to nature. Whether it is a ritual or an agrarian act in rural regions, unlike urban settings, they are collective events where the entire community is involved, not just a personal milestone. Gulzar diminishes the boundaries between work and celebrations, performed in a rural setting, exhibiting that both events are inseparable. Khaliyan (fields, threshing floors) is presented as a multifunctional communal space for social interactions, rituals, and celebrations, and not just labour.

The urban world stands in sharp contrast with rural life, where the concept of space in rural culture is shared, open, and communal; whereas, the concept of urban space is specialised and segregated, and is more personal and regulated. In urban settings, work is mechanised, routinised, detached from social life, and is prioritised over social life.

Use of the past tense (time deixis) by the poet not only indicates temporal distance (complete and not ongoing), but also psychological/emotional distance (nostalgia and loss), thus emphasising the irreversibility of change and cultural alienation. The loss of community, rootedness, and continuity, due to displacement from the village (hometown) to cities for economic and professional establishment, is strongly felt by the protagonist during the covid-19. For the migrant labourers, "home is where the heart is"

'chalo ab ghar chalein ...'

[L.18 by Gulzar (2020)]

'Come, let's go home ...'

[L.18 Translation by Rakshanda Jalil (2020)]

Life is synonymous with existence, the state of being. Existentialism is a philosophical concept that has been widely accepted in literary discourse as a reflection on the condition of human existence, encompassing an individual's emotions, actions, responsibilities, and thoughts, as well as the meaning or purpose of life Mambrol (2016). Gulzar's poem clearly depicts that for the protagonist (the migrant labourer/weaker section of the Indian society), the state of being is his homeland (gaanv).

In the current setting (metropolis city), though a substance made of flesh and blood, the protagonist (migrant labourer) has always been treated as a machine (without any involvement of self) that operates on the instructions/commands received externally.

Yahaan toh jism la kar plug lagaye the!

[L.16 by Gulzar (2020)]

Here, they have only brought their bodies and plugged them in!

[L.16 Translation by Rakshanda Jalil (2020)]

However, due to the incursion of the coronavirus pandemic, the situation worsened as India experienced an economic emergency. This situation not only affected the livelihood of the Indian migrant labourers, but also risked their

lives due to a lack of medical facilities, food and shelter during the pandemic, as they were mere machines that came to a halt due to monetary deficiency.

The fear of dying without an identity in a foreign land forced the protagonist to make a firm decision and move to one's homeland, where s/he is not a mere machine but a self with an identity. In the end, the protagonist makes a decision that reassigns him an identity as a human (Appendix 1).

*Nikaalen plug sabhi ne,
'chalo ab ghar chalein' – or chal diye sab,*

[L.17-18 by [Gulzar \(2020\)](#)]

They pulled out the plugs
Come, let's go home' – and they set off

[L.17-18 Translation by Rakshanda [Jalil \(2020\)](#)]

The protagonist is aware of the fact that the pandemic has left no place untouched; therefore, one cannot escape the deadly disease. However, only living organisms can embrace death. The last line of the poem can be understood through the theory of dichotomy, that is, the concept of death has no existence without the concept of life (Appendix 1).

marenge toh vahin ja kar jahan par jindagi hai!

[L.19 by [Gulzar \(2020\)](#)]

They will go to die there – where there is life.

[L.19 Translation by Rakshanda [Jalil \(2020\)](#)]

The last line of the poem is a conditional sentence that can be explained at multiple levels. At the semantic level, the line juxtaposes two opposite concepts: one is "marenge" that represents death, finality and negation; whereas the second is "jindagi" that represents life, continuity and affirmation.

At the structural level, this statement represents a conditional sentence. It begins with a conditional sentence, "We will die there ... (marenge toh vahin ja kar ...) that sets up an expectation of loss. However, this expectation is subverted by the resolution, "where there is life" (jahan par jindagi hai). Linguistically, this combination leads to a paradox, where death is not represented as an end but a movement towards life (native land/village). The semantic emphasis lies ultimately on "life", thus allowing the line to close on an affirmative note. The placement of the words reaffirms that life, not death, is what lingers cognitively and emotionally with the reader. Therefore, the poem ends on a positive note with an assertion that appears to be a ray of hope for the victims (the migrant labourers) of economic emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This article has made an effort to assess the literary devices used by Gulzar in his poem Mahamari Lagi Thi to express the predicament of migrant workers and to arouse sympathy for their sufferings during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The poem becomes an interior monologue due to the effective use of narrative and focalization strategies. It seems to be a description of significant events that contributed to the rising misery of migrant workers and the degree of agony and distress that must have been experienced. The poet helped us comprehend the interior conflict of the migrant labourers, their longing for their homeland, and existential and identity crises in a foreign land due to the ineffective handling of the weaker section of the Indian society during the time of the pandemic. The themes of the poem can be well understood through the theories of displacement, existentialism and diaspora. The poet is successful in communicating the intensity of the plight of migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, which started as an interior monologue and ended with an assertion to reverse mass relocation for the survival of the victims.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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