

Perspective Of Indian English Literature

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will try to discuss the introduction of the “English” Language to the British colony of Indian subcontinent. Also, I will try to explore the commencement and development of literature in English in India by the writers of India or the writers of Indian ‘Diaspora’ which is titled as “The Indian English Literature”. The postcolonial Indian English literature portrays the themes of western and eastern political, historical, cultural conflicts and Nationalism. The contemporary postcolonial Indian English literature and writers acclaimed superiority for the literary themes, styles of presentation, narrative structure, and readability

Keywords-Diaspora, Indian English Literature, postcolonial

INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in National identity. Language is one of the vital elements in constructing identity both in personal, cultural, and National level.

Migration of people, travelling, trading, invasions, and settling of the colonies by the foreigners from outside influenced the Indian culture and language. The nature of fluidity in language produces mixing of languages in interaction of the contact zones by adaptation, deconstruction, and reconstruction of linguistics.

India is a country of multilingual, multicultural, multi-racial country of multiple ethnic groups of peoples since ancient times. In spite of diversity in socio-cultural predisposition, India celebrates unity for its cultural and traditional heritage.

The prolonged colonization of the British in India causes a total eclipse in the identity of the Indian natives in the field of the socio-political, cultural, economical, emotional, and linguistic arena. The introduction of the “*ENGLISH*” language by the colonial masters abruptly influenced the Indian natives who were suppressed by the political and cultural hegemony of the colonial reign.

INITIATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

English language was initiated in India by the Imperialist Britishers in their own interest. English was used first by the Christian missionaries to propagate Christianity as “*civilizing Mission*” to the Indian “*savages*.” In the colonizer’s conception, the colonized are abandoned of moral values, cultural heritage, civilization, and history. So the ‘civilizing mission’ is the imperial

In 1835, Lord Macaulay produced and circulated a “*Minute*” to introduce ‘English’ education to the native Indians for creating of “*Babus*” who will assist the colonizer Rulers in the administration of the colonized India. Purpose of Macaulay behind the introduction of English education to the colonized was a ‘*civilizing mission*’ to create “a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and intellect”¹. (Minute of Lord Macaulay, 2nd Feb, 1835).

The social reformers, the educationists, educated Indians and the Indian Nationalist, especially the Ram Mohan Roy demanded English Education to the British Government of India. The British Rulers set up Educational Institutes in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay to provide education in English language. Also, Lord Bentinck wanted to introduce Western Science and literature to the Indian people. Impact of these two reforms influenced the Indian social, political, and religious aspects as well as thinking process.

EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN INDIA

In British India English acquired the importance as official language. The enhancement, spread and development of English language in India was the impact of direct correlation with the powerful imperial rule over the native subjects. The Indians adopted the language of the colonizers and began to use as a communication link in a multilingual country. The English educated 'Elite' group of India began to write prose, poetry, Essays, travelogue, drama and other literary works in English. The writers of the Indian English literature showcase a hilarious and excellent performance of creativity in literature in imperialist 'alien language', English.

Indian English literature evolves through multiple phases over one hundred and fifty years. In colonial or pre-independent phase, the early Indian writers of the colonial India began to use English as pure and original British English language. They used British English and western techniques of literature. The early colonial literature was composed from the colonizer's point of view. The contents of the Anglo Indian literature were realistic nature, traveling or imaginative heroic adventure stories. Many writers like Jim Corbett, Rudyard Kipling, Jim Ruskin Bond, and George Orwell were from British origin.

The first Indian book in English was a travelogue by Dean Mohamet titled "Travels of Dean Mahomet"³ (1793) published in England. Kashi Prasad Ghosh was the first Indian poet to write in English in 1830. Intellectual thoughts of Indian writers are presented in English language in 19th century by Swami Vivekananda, Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and Aurobindo Ghosh. These literary works, especially the Gandhian Literature penned the political, ideological, and philosophical thoughts. Basically, Tagore wrote in Bengali but he wrote a lot in English and translated his own works in English. Bengali writer Bankim Chandra Chatterjee first tried to write Novel in English titled as "Raj Mohan's wife"⁴ which was published in 1864. The famous poets were Toru Dutt, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Sorojini Naidu, etc.

Colonial literature was influenced by the western literature. Since 1930, the Indian literature experienced a changing phase and the writer of India and Indian origin to register their own voice to the map of world literature. The great "*Indian Trio*" Novelists Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand contributed greatly in Indian English literature by presenting the contemporary socio-cultural synthesis of India in their literary works. The Indian English literature came into the panorama of world literature for their realistic and artistic style of presentation.

'Indian English literature' is the production of the binary production cultural and political encounter. The writers used English in their works as the *British mother tongue* became the language of resistance against the oppression of the colonizer dominance. The Indian English literature advances in broad realm and flourished greatly after independence by the literary contribution of the writers of India and Indian 'Diaspora'. Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, V. S. Naipaul, Allan J. Sealy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Agha Shahid Ali, and Rohinton Mistry are the great names in postcolonial Indian English literature. Postcolonial English literature of India is the revisiting of Indian culture and tradition, also the re-writing the '*history*' of India which was recorded by the colonizer Historians from their own point of view.

Salman Rushdie is the pioneer writer of the postcolonial Indian English literature who introduces magic realism, '*chutnyfied*' hybrid or *Indianized "english"*. The concept of "*Hybridity*" is the most important feature of the postcolonial Indian English Literature. Themes of Rushdie's works are based on historical background which helps him in exploration of the postcolonial complexities of identity, culture, traumatic partition of Indian subcontinent, migration, exile, power politics, and political immorality.

The second Novel of Rushdie, "*Midnight Children*" ²(1981) creates a new era in the postcolonial Indian English literature. This path breaking novel won Booker prize and inspire the new generation novelists like Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni to employ the traditional Indian literary mode, myths, re-

working and re-inventing with Indian Epic, realism and western narrative structure to express the complexities of the postcolonial society and politics. The woman writers of India contributed greatly in Indian English Literature. They highlighted the feminine problems which include the dominant themes of gender discriminations, child marriage, and dowry, obstacle in society and family, also the quest of self-realization.

CONCLUSION

In India, the '*English*' Language is transformed as an impact of the regional languages and creates own dialects. The colonial language is Indianized through the mutability or mixing of British English and Indian vernacular languages. The characteristics of the Indian English is deviated from the '*standard British English*' and enriched as it contains the flavor of innovative ideas of Indian sensibility. In the postcolonial India English is used in education, official proceedings and other day-to-day works. As a 'lingua franca', English is used as a bridge language of the multilingual country.

Postcolonial Indian English literature celebrates a huge popularity in the global scenario of the English literature. The writers of India and Indian '*Diaspora*' are prizewinner and enjoying dominance over the world literature.

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