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## **The Identity of Indian English Literature at Global level**

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### **Abstract**

India is a nation where there is diversity in various regions, religions, castes with individual cultures, living styles, languages and dialects in accordance with social, political and economical aspects. Hindi is known to be the national language, but one thing is undoubtedly clear, due to regional differences; few states cannot communicate even in Hindi. In such situation, English which is a global and curriculum language of Indian Education system is used effectively for communication within Indian continent. In the British colonial period, the colonial administrators studied prevalent Indian local language texts of Indian laws and religions and translated them in English language criticizing them as inappropriate according to situation. The, then Indian social worker Raja Ram Mohan Rai guaranteed English language essential for future Indian development in every aspect of life. There after English became the medium of instruction and curriculum language in the Indian Education system. Due to English language compulsion, a sense of national unity and patriotism was developed among Indian intellectuals and literary artists. It was due to the British education system that Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Dr. Ambedkar were able to fight against the inhuman Hindu Varna system. In independent India, the three languages viz Hindi, one regional and English as global language were compulsorily taught in the curriculum of every state. Recently, in the National Education Policy-2020, the freedom of language choice in curriculum is given to students. The first phase Indian literary writers strived hard for upliftment of Indian people. Their literature has been written to preach spirituality, philosophy and patriotism. In the post-modern era, the Indian regional texts are being translated in English especially to reach out at the global market. Many notable writers have contributed in enriching Indian English literature, exploring diverse themes and styles. Indian English writers have proved themselves in various literary genres like poetry, prose (story-telling, fiction), and drama.

### **Keywords**

Indian English Literature, Global, Colonialism, English Language, Poetry, Fiction, Drama

### **Objectives**

The present article systematically analyzes the journey of Indian English literature from colonial period to reaching it and establishing its identity at a global level.

### **Methodology**

The critical essays, journals, and web resources are taken into consideration to write the research article. The standard laid down by the MLA style sheet, Eighth Edition is followed for reference material.

### **Introduction**

The present article focuses on the identity of contemporary Indian English Literature from global point of view. Initially, India has been divided into various regions, religions, castes having differences in individual cultures, living styles, languages and dialects in accordance with social, political and economical aspects. Nevertheless, its constitutional and democratic rights help in maintaining freedom, equality, and fraternity among every citizen in spite of several differences. Hindi is regarded as the national language of India used for national level communication, but every state has its own regional language used for communication. The three languages program viz Hindi, one regional and English as global language are being taught in the curriculum of every state. Recently, in the National Education Policy-2020, the freedom has been given to students for choice of languages to be studied in curriculum. But one thing is undoubtedly clear, due to regional differences; few states cannot communicate in Hindi too. In such situation, it is the global language English that is used for communication effectively within Indian continent. It is worth noting that foreign language like English is used at first hand for communication in one's own country giving secondary place to national language Hindi, but it is a fact. English has been assigned as a language to fulfill overall aspects of inter-communication important to maintain unity in diversity, expression of ideas and feelings, mutual exchange, friendly relations with other countries, and for development in science, commerce, industries, export-import on which the economy of India highly depend. This also helped Indian people to be the masters of English language both at national and global level. Due to fluency in English language, Indian experts are invited to teach English in many Asian, African and European countries. India has established its dominance in English language throughout the World and become one of the leading English speaking nations from global point of view. But it does not happened suddenly, we have to study it historically,

### **History of Establishment of Colonialism and English Language**

The Oxford English Dictionary defined Colonialism as 'an alleged policy of exploitation of backward or weak people by a large power.' Here colonization (settling colonies) by the Europeans began in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries throughout the world including India to put control over it thoroughly. Colonialism actually was not meant for political or economic development but for modifying cultural and epistemological systems of the natives. The compulsion of English language education in the curriculum by the colonizers became the means of the cultural change in Indian continent.

The colonial administrators like T.B Macaulay, Warren Hastings, Lord William Benting scholars like William Jones, James Mill all studied Indian Sanskrit and Persian language texts of Indian laws and religions and translated in English language criticizing them as outdated and irrelevant. There after English became the medium of instruction and curriculum language. The, then Indian social worker like Raja Ram Mohan Rai also guaranteed that English language alone

might change the future of India. He strongly defended the study of English language for gaining knowledge of the Western World and its culture and hence India would become the strongest nation in future. There were some Indian scholars like Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Tilak, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose and few others who themselves were good at English but reacted against the compulsion of English in Indian curriculum. They believed on mother tongue education for the benefit of lower classes and illiterate masses. In spite of their opposition, English language continued to dominate the curriculum of Indian schools, colleges and universities. The languages that fulfil the demand and easily create a bond of fraternity among the citizens of the world obviously become the epoch language. English brought about an intimate bond of political democracy among the Indian political leaders, freedom fighters and educationists to fight against the British rule. A sense of national unity and patriotism was developed among Indian intellectuals and literary artists. English education was open to all and therefore offered equal opportunities to every sections of the Indian society despite of having caste differences in India. The study of English in a way helped the neglected lower classes to free themselves from the bondages of rigid Indian caste system.

During the British Empire, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and host of few others had not learned the English language; they would never have gained the World knowledge and understand differences in Indian caste culture. It was due to the British education system that Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Dr. Ambedkar were able to fight against the inhuman Hindu Varna system. They understood the importance of education for the lower classes and therefore started education institutions for the Dalit Bahun community students. Before them no Indian intellectual had ever insisted on the formal education of the Dalit and untouchables of India. It was Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution who provided such a flexible constitution that demands freedom, equality and fraternity to every Indian citizen in every aspects of social life. In the post-independent India, the masses could understand the importance of education in development of their communities. Today we have noticed that many students from exploited classes of society have obtained many important positions not only in the country but also at abroad after receiving higher education in English. Today, Indian youths are proving their mark of scholarship in every field of life. If there is any country whose citizens live the most at abroad for employment, it is India. Undoubtedly, the credit for this solely and exclusively development goes to the British rule and the English language education they started in India. The contemporary colonial administrators believed that English alone could ensure equality, liberty, development and modernization in India.

### **History of Indian English Literature**

First phase of Indian English writers include Poets like Michael Madhusudan, Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sarojini Naidu, Shri. Aurobindo. All were from the Elite class of Indian society. The first phase literary poets and novelists strived hard for upliftment of Indian people. Their literature has been written to preach spirituality, philosophy and patriotism.

With the rise of the Indian nationalist movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, literature began to reflect the growing desire for freedom from British colonial rule. English, which was once the ruling language of the colonizers, became a weapon for the Indian writers to share feelings of independence, and social reforms to countrymen. Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography has been appreciated as the first class literature of its own kind. The writings and speeches of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar in English has been appreciated, studied and researched in several foreign universities.

Indian English writers have proved themselves in various literary genres like poetry, prose (story-telling, fiction), and drama. The literary poets like Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das, Nizzim Ezekiel have established their own genius in the poetical forms. Anita Desai, Khushwant Singh, Shobha Dey, Nai Paul, Vikram Seth, etc have contributed in Indian English literature from the bottom of their heart to touch every Indian soul as well as global world. The prime aim of Indian writers is to share one's own practical experiences of life to the readers. R. K. Narayan has depicted the natural and ecofriendly landscape of colonial India in his almost every novel. The fictional Malgudi village and character of Swami has proved in maintaining the idealism of 'unity in diversity' in a typical Indian style. The bonding of custom with individual talent is being rampant in his literature. The Anglo-Indian tradition can be intimately felt by the readers in his Indian English literature. Indian writers express themselves not only to communicate with each other but also with the global world using English language in an Indian way. Indian English writings speak as a new voice and have established its own identity in the contemporary world literature. In the contemporary Indian English literature, Meena Kandasamy, the noted Dalit writer calls her English as Taminglish.

Many notable writers have contributed in enriching Indian English literature, exploring diverse themes and styles. Some important writings include Rabindranath Tagore's 'Gitanjali', Raja Rao's 'Kanthapura', 'The Serpent and the Rope', Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable', Manohar Malgonkar's 'Spy in Amber', Amrita Pritam's 'Pinjar', Anita Desai's 'Clear Light on Day', Nirad Choudhuri's 'The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian', Vikram Seth's 'A Suitable Boy', Arvind Adiga's 'The White Tiger', Khushwant Singh's 'Train To Pakistan', Kiran Desai's 'The Inheritance of Loss', Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Interpreter of Maladies', Salman Rusdie's 'The Midnight Children', Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things', Meena Kandasamy's 'The Gypsy Goddess', Jeet Thayil's 'Narcopolis', Shashi Tharoor's 'The Great Indian Novel', Chetan Bhagat's novels are full of romance and typical Indianness. His '3 Mistakes, Half Girlfriend and Revolution 2020' are the best sellers at global market. Vikram Chandra is a thriller writer and has won Commonwealth Writers prize for his debut novel 'Red Earth and Pouring Rain'. Samit Basu is a pioneer in Science fiction writing in India. His novel 'Turbulence' made him famous in the western countries.

### **Conclusion**

In the post-modern era, the Indian regional texts are being translated in English especially to reach out at the global market. The recent trend of subaltern writings is at the highest peak of excellence due to the mix multimedia culture. There are number of writers coming from deprived

classes of society who have produced rich variety of vernacular literature for the sake of Indian society and not for art's sake. What was once called as high culture especially designed for the elite, upper and urban class has been substituted by the stamp of regionalism in Indian English using multiple narrative techniques, and without caring much for arbitrary artistic qualities. The romantic and fantasy literature of elite class is being replaced by the self-narratives of masses. Indian English has become an arena for multicultural writings that helps in producing the quality literature related with philosophy, scientific discoveries, politics, economics, education and technology. Indian English literature also destroyed the monopoly of any one social or cultural group giving way to the unspoken sections of society. English helped in removing the caste and cultural barriers and providing the opportunities of expression to all sections of society. Now everyone even the village masses have the right to write their literature in accordance with the mainstream literature.

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