



ASPECTS OF LITERARY GLOBALISATION IN INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

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Abstract:

Globalisation is a continuous process of enhancing cultural conventions, trade, science, technology and sharing of goods, skills and services. It starts from local and leads to global (making the regional international). Globalisation began in India in 1991 with the introduction of New Economic Policy. The Open Trade Policy opened Indian market to all other countries which allowed every country to grab Indian market. The technology wave immensely contributed in speeding up all sorts of communications with the help of the internet. The increase in abroad tours for education, seeking good job opportunities, business and enjoyment contributed in modernizing the lifestyle. The present paper deals with elaborative discussion of the term 'globalisation', the role of English language in the process of globalisation. It throws light on globalisation in literature, precisely Indian English literature. This research paper also attempts to highlight the dark impact of globalisation on literature.

Keywords: globalisation, socio-cultural, literature, language, Diaspora, displacement.

Introduction:

Globalisation is a process that makes the world a single place to affect the culture, literatures of the world and ways of living. Lechner (2009) defined globalisation as 'a process in which more and more people become connected in more different ways across larger distances' (15). It is increasingly possible for people from all over the world to have access to one another's cultures. Advancement in the fields of science, technology, internet banking, trade and marketing played significant role in the spread of globalisation. Globalisation has westernized India more than modernizing it. It hampered the richer cultural background and disturbed the uniqueness of the nation. Yet globalisation has a sound impact on India than any other nation. The outsourcing of jobs, resulting in boost of economy, provides jobs for millions of the middle class employees of the nation. The communication revolution has transformed the world into a global village. The socio-cultural life has been tremendously influenced by modernization, liberalization, privatization, westernization and globalisation. It affects the arts and literature which are essential socio-cultural aspects of modern life, a treasure to keep.

Globalisation:

Dr. Maya delineates 'Globalisation' as 'making something local and all available. Globalisation hastened this process and resulted in the merging of cultural practices and increased marketing of culture through the influx of Macdonald's and Pizza Huts in all metropolitan cities and the celebration of special days like Valentine's Day, Father's Day, etc. The visible impact of globalisation can be found in the metropolises across the world which have suddenly become cosmopolitan and multicultural' (1). Globalisation has a great impact on all spheres of life. India witnessed changes in economical, social, political and cultural aspects. The blind imitation of western life style and etiquettes modernized India at the cost of rich socio-cultural background. Globalisation even passed the issues regarding cultural ethnicity. Indian English literature in the second half of the twentieth century projects all these crises.

Role of English Language in the Process of Globalisation:

English, a lingua franca, has acquired greater importance in the process of globalisation. In the words of Dr. Maya, 'English has repeatedly turned out to be the language in the right place all the time'. She quoted Michael Toolman's remark:

"...political and economic power and a facilitative technology are what cause a language 'go international' and even begin to have global status". She further argues, "English mediated products naturally gained priority over the non- English mediated products. Writing in English and getting published by British publishers gave the writers advantage over those writing in regional languages or being published locally. The Diaspora writing from the West thus assumes greater importance in the context of globalisation. English today is the language that a great number of readers are able to read". The philosopher and scholar George Steiner calls English a 'planetary language'.

English, unlike the other languages, was not born in this country. It was brought in by the colonizers, imposed at first. While all the major languages have regions, states, English belongs nowhere, which oddly enough has given it an advantage for, since it is read all over the country (6).

Globalisation in Literature:

According to Shashi Deshpande, 'Literature has always travelled. Stories from the Arabian Nights or Aesop's Fables or even the *Panchatantra* went beyond their respective countries of origin and were current in a great number of countries. Gauri Deshpande translated Arabian Nights into Marathi in 1980. This English translation was based on its original in French translation. Equally interesting is the story of the global movement of the *Panchatantra* stories which originated in India. They passed into Arabic from a sixth century Persian translation, from the Slavic languages into Greek, from Hebrew into Latin and thence to German and Italian, from which it last entered Elizabethan England. These stories are now, according to Amitav Ghosh, part of the global literature'. (7-18)

Globalisation in Indian English Literature:

Dr. Maya argues that literature produced in the Post-colonial period reflected the artistic flow from one country to another. Indian literature even if in different languages can be regarded as one; all these literatures can be called Indian because they are all part of the geographical entity called India. The writers are the product of different cultures. Many Indian English novelists like Bharati Mukharjee, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Raja Rao, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie reside in the West; 'residing in one, educated in another, moving from one country to another, presenting what Will Kymlicka calls a 'multicultural citizenship' in a globalized world' (qtd Nayar) (1). '..... the Western Diaspora writing is important since the Indian experience serves as a raw material that is processed, taken from the first world, and the finished product receives much acclaim. These writers don't dare to challenge the establishment of the first world' (2). These writers consequently dealt with issues like migrancy, hybridity, loss of identity, multiculturalism and disappearance of rigid natural identities. Even those who live in India like Sasi Tharoor and Arun Joshi are products of different cultures.

Diaspora or displacement of immigrant workers is the popular theme of the post 1990s. It is about dispersed from an original centre to two or more foreign regions. Dispersion is directly coupled with globalisation (Sharma, 79). Indian Diaspora is a global phenomenon. Displacement and rehabilitation problems are the other effects of globalisation. The post globalisation era also has brought many issues of the modern life as social fragmentation, cultural alienation, psychological loneliness, identity crisis, recognition and search for the self. V. S. Naipaul has epitomized the term 'Indian Diaspora'. His most acclaimed novel *A House for Mr. Biswas* is the best example of cross- culturalism where the sense of alienation dominated the sense of belongingness.

Salman Rushdie, a Bombay born Diasporic writer brought up in Pakistan, lives in England. His novels *Midnight Children* and *Shame* deal with sense of displacement, rootlessness and his plight of alienation as he belonged to three countries and yet to none. The novel *Midnight Children* narrates three generations trying to retain their cultural identities as Indians and try to keep balance between the home land and the host country. Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta, later moved to Delhi row, and now resides in New York. His *Sea of Poppies* deals with psychological estrangement of the first generation workers who left their native land never to return again. His novels deal with protagonists' failure in finding their true personalities.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) deals with the problem of immigrants, the emotional struggle of Gogol Ganguli who wants to free from his cultural identity as an Indian to be welcomed by the American society. Her latest novel *The Lowlands* (2013) again deals with sense of dislocation. Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things* describes the Diasporic culture in Kerala dealing with the mental crisis of displacement aspect. The novel depicts modern Indian Diaspora. Search for identity becomes the distinguished aspect of modern life. Kiran Desai in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* deals with ruthlessness of colonial mindset and multicultural global society. It is the story of an illegal migration in search of a better livelihood. It is about globalisation, immigration and class. It challenges the dominance of the West. Arvind Adiga was awarded Man Booker Prize for his debut novel *The White Tiger* in 2008. The theme of the novel is the impact of globalisation on Indian democracy that made radical changes in one's attitude towards life. It traces the effects of globalisation on modern India.

Upamanya Chatterjee's novel *English August: An Indian Story* (1963) deals with protagonists' sense of alienation and cultural devoidness. The three Parsi novelists Firdaus Kanga, Rohinton Mistry and Farrukh Dhondy deal with human predicament. Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* exposes political evil of the modern India. Farrukh Dhondy's *Bombay Duck* deals with communalism and plight of immigration in England. Firdaus Kangs's *Trying to Grow* (1990) deals with the crisis of consciousness.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's contribution is immense in her collection of poetry- *Black Candle, Leaving Yuba City: New and Selected Poems*. The poetry deals with the experience of immigrant women and their struggle for identities. Her first collection of short stories- *Arranged Marriage* focuses on some immigrant Indian women caught between two worlds. Her first novel *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) and the second novel *The Sister of My Heart* describe complicated family relationships. *The Vine of Desire* (2002) depicts marginalized, restricted and deprived condition of women. The terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 Sept. 2001 questioned immigrants' loyalty to America; racism and violence forced on them. Divakaruni depicted it in her novel realistically. *The Palace of Illusion* (2006) takes readers to the time of the great epic *Mahabharata*. Panchali is the narrator of the novel and the epic is told from her point of view. *Showland* (2009) and *One Amazing Thing* (2010), *Oleander Girl* (2013) deal with hardships of the lives of women.

Chetab Bhagat's revolutionary novel *Five Points Someone* has reshaped the entire literary canon. The novel depicts the struggle of students to seek admission in IIT Delhi. His *One Night @ the Call Centre* (2005) is the mouthpiece of young Indians which sold 1,00,000 copies in a month. The novel successfully deals with anxiety, insecurity, and career problems of educated urban Indians. His third novel *The Three Mistakes of my Life: A Story about Business, Cricket and Religion* (2008) is the reflection of socio- cultural issues like inconsistency in relations, marital infidelity and pre- marital sex, etc. His *2 States: The Story of my Marriage* (2009) is a semi- autobiographical work, love and marriage with a Tamilian girl *Anusha*. He wants to insist that in a globalised world, marriages irrespective of caste and religion are the need o f time. His *Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption and Ambition* (2011) deals with exploitation and frustration of young Indians due to corruption in education system. In his *What Young India Wants: Selected Essays and Columns* (2012) is a compilation of his essays that exposes the Post- globalisation problems of a multi- cultural and multi- ethnic modern Indian society. His *Half Girlfriend* (2014) is a rural- urban love story. Bhagat has captured the voice of young urban generations who are exposed to enormous social mutations.

Dark side:

Shashi Deshpande argues that to employ English is not obviously enough. Being considered an excellent novel is furthermore even not enough. She discusses the example of two novels. The first one originally written in English is that of Salman Rushdie, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. The other is a very recent translation by Prof. Ramchandra Sharma of an old Kannada novel *Kanoor Subbamma Heggadithi* by Kuvempu. Kuvempu's novel is deeply rooted in a region, in a particular part of Karnataka. The author makes no attempt to simplify or explain anything. 'Now while both the books are in English language, Rushdie's book clearly presumes a larger and a more cosmopolitan readership while Kuvempu's novel though a classic in Kannada and excellently translated is not accessible to this kind of global readership', Deshpande quotes (11-12).

Marketing is another essential element of globalisation. In the words of Dr. Maya, “The slum dogs have to make themselves heard through Indian writing in English, in opposition to the voice of cosmopolitan elite” (2). Globalisation has given rise to inequalities among the writers within the metropolis projecting non- resident Indian writers over those writing from homes. Quality is no more the criterion by which literature could be judged, but the money and hype it generates. Arundhati Roy’s *God of Small Things* and Vikram Sethi’s *A Suitable Boy* won a worldwide acclaim because of the money they received. Shashi Deshpande rightly observes that the concept of globalisation itself means the successful marketing of the product and treating readers as consumers. ‘The author’s personality and looks also contribute, the better show person the author is, the greater the sales’. The huge advances given to some authors call for a global market; it is the only way the publisher can recover money. And consequently worldwide readings, signing sessions, interviews, and TV appearances become essential points for marketing of a book. Also incessant publicity about the book ensuring that it is constantly talked about calls for a global market. Books are sent to get published with the tags ‘great’ and ‘the best’ already attached to them. What will this kind of globalisation of literature do national or global benefits? Will it lose its place, its value? Will universal books enter the consciousness of readers?’ (15-18).

Conclusion:

Globalization has connected people across larger distances and helped them access one another’s cultures. The boost in economy, outsourcing of jobs and employment for millions are the merits of globalization. It has affected all spheres of life. Literature has not remained aloof of it. English, a lingua franca, played a crucial role in speeding up the process of globalization. It has influenced literature, especially Indian English literature. The Western Diaspora writers consequently dealt with migrancy, loss of identity, multi-culturalism and disappearance of rigid natural identities. The Indian Diaspora also became a global phenomenon. The authors like Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Jhumpa Lahiri, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Arvind Adiga, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Chetan Bhagat and many others dealt with socio- cultural issues of multi-cultural and multi- ethnic modern Indian society.

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