

ISSN 09776-8165

Bi-Monthly, Refereed, and Indexed Open Access eJournal

THE CRITERION

An International Journal in English



Vol. 8, Issue- IV (August 2017)
UGC Approved Journal No 768

Editor-In-Chief: Dr. Vishwanath Bite

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ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Major Trends in Indian Writing in English: A Critical Analysis

Aasif Rashid Wani

Research Scholar,
Deptt of English,
SUBIS, Barla-Raisen (M.P.)

&

Dr. Naveen Kumar Mehta

Associate Professor & I/c Head,
Deptt of English,
SUBIS, Barla-Raisen (M.P)

Article History: Submitted-20/06/2017, Revised-03/08/2017, Accepted-06/08/2017, Published-10/09/2017.

Abstract:

The paper deals with new trends and development in literature. Indian Writing in English reflects the issues and situation of society. We have writers who are writing, translating and transcreating into English. Creativity, translation, Dalit Literature, Diasporic writing, postcolonial, postmodern and feministic writings is growing swiftly in Indian English. During the post-independence period Indian English Literature has undergone many changes in the field of poetry, drama and fiction. This paper fills the lacuna to an extent by studying, from multiple perspectives the various relevant themes in the different genres of Indian English Literature.

Keywords: Individual and Society, Women Empowerment, East-West Encounter, Urbanization and Indianness.

Introduction

Indian Writing in English literature has been a hub of enchanting and put forth a wide verity of characterization and description regarding India and its life. India was ruled by the Britishers more than 200 years, during that period there was favor and support of patriotism, nationalism, mother tongue, and culture. Therefore, the writers tried to depict a real image of India to the rest of the world with the help of English language and literature. Indian English Authors coined different terms related to this form of literature as Indo-Anglican Literature, Indo-English Literature and Indian Writing English.

The first three decades of 19th century marked the beginning of Indian Writing in English was considered the period of incubation. Indian Writing in English offers us an opportunity to examine Indian consciousness and sensibility. This writing is emerging as voice of India through its portrayal of realistic picture of society. Indian English literature can be divided into two parts i-e. Pre-independence period and post independence period and further it also divided into two parts i-e. 'Classical and

Modern'. The classical writing provides us a plenty of literature in which Indian life is presented in a romantic manner and talks about Indians magnificence and glory. Modern literature provides us a realistic picture about India. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee became the first novelist in Indian Writing in English.

Indian writing in English becomes popular in the later period of 19th century with the rise of Nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Jawharlal Nehru, besides writing in their vernacular language adopted English to express their sentiments. Rabindarnath Tagore introduced his *Bangali* poem direct translated into English. Mahatma Gandhi's 'Experiment with Truth' Jawharlal Nehru's, 'Discovery of India and Glimpse of Indian history' was regarded as Jewels of Indian Writing in English. In later 1930 we have founding father of Indian English novels in form of R.K. Narayan, Raj Rao, and Mulk Raj Anand. This trio played a vital role in the development of Indian novels. Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable' provides a glimpse of Dalit writing in Indian Writing in English. He is the pioneer of *Hindustani* and *Punjabi* words into English. Raja Rao considered a nationalist novelist. His novel 'Kanthapura' portrayed exploitation and struggle of Indians against the British rule. R. K. Narayan a regional novelist, his novel 'The Guide' won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award. Modern Indian English authors are having their focus on contemporary issues as gay relationship, martial affairs, family issues, cultural conflict, theme of alienation, social problem and other issues related to mundane affairs related to commoners. The authors of this form of writing represents panorama of India, as they churn out various hidden issues under the surface of Indian culture and tradition. This form of writing got admiration in both home and abroad and heralding a new awareness in the domain of world literature.

Methodology and Objective of Research

The present paper is based on primary and secondary sources. The information is collected from Literature Reviews, library, Research Journals, Magazines, Books, and Newspapers and relevant materials. The main objective of the study is to discuss the main trends in the realm of Indian Writing in English.

Review of Literature

Sindkhedkar (2011) observed that during the seventy years of its effective history Indian Writing in English crossed many milestones and has come to be finally accepted as a major literature of the world.^[1]

Anjali hans (2013) remarked that, In Indian writing feminism has been used as a modest attempt for evaluating the real social scenario as women are concerned. Throughout the world women are deprived of their social and economic rights. Twentieth century has witnessed a growing awareness among women regarding their desires, sexuality, self-definition, existence and destiny. Feministic movement advocates granting the same political, social, and economic rights to women as those enjoyed by men.^[2]

Gove S.L. (2013) expressed that Indian English Literature is not an exception to the aforesaid views. It has brought numerous far-reaching changes in social, political, economic, religious, etc. fields in post-independence era. The radical changes came into existence during pre-independence and post-independence Indian society became the thematic concern of the contemporary writers. ^[3]

Latha Reddy (2014) remarked that, today Indian English as well as Indian Writing in English has got its own identity. A number of recent Indian novelists have produced significant novels, making a mark in the literary world. He intends to look more closely about the changes brought in Indian Literature through his writings. ^[4]

Devanshi Sharma (2015) highlighted that Indian writing is serious about dark issues of contemporary society; the Indian literary canon has seen all these in the changes previous years. The Indian Writing in English has largely transformed in its content, description, characterization and language. Literary Tradition in India has seen a gradual change. ^[5]

Veena (2015) discussed that Indian writing in English seems to have entered a hyper-active stage in its development now with new Indian writers and their books appearing on the literary scene every other day. Hence, Indian English writers are gaining great popularity at the international level. ^[6]

Meti Ravi Pandurang (2015) one of the most outstanding characteristics of Indian writing in English is that the background is Indian and the language though foreign has adopted itself to the needs of the Indians. Today Indian English as well as Indian writing in English has got its own identity. Actually speaking the most interesting aspect of the fiction at the turn of the present century from the Indian point of view is the emergence of new talent. ^[7]

Nandita Sharma (2016) remarked that the new ideas and thoughts are flourished but most of the focus was shifted towards the problems like social, economic, religious, political and familial as bases; which were also enveloped with the feel of National Movement which drew attention of the creative writers. Literature of India still bears some of its ingrained colonial impact and present-day writers often base their works in the colonial backdrop. ^[8]

Rajkumar M Lakhadive (2016) showed the contemporary Indian fiction in English reveals an incredible array of talent. A different perspective might take this trend as the self serving attempt by sections of the elite to represent their own modernity in terms of a continuity with India's past, papering over the cracks in the national imaginary, as it were, to affirm their own authenticity. Similarly, the celebration of plurality and openness could be understood as doing the ideological work of economic liberalization, presenting Indian identity in terms of the shifting surfaces of late capitalism, privileging mobility and cosmopolitanism over local cultures and communities. There has developed, over the past few years, a sense that India sells abroad. It is as usually we may say "Make in India". ^[9]

Yesapogu Venkateswarlu (2016) stated that Indian English literature is now a reality, which cannot be ignored. During the recent decades, it has attracted a widespread interest both in India and abroad. Indian writing in English in the Contemporary literary Scenario enjoys equal status with the literatures of the other

Countries. Especially Indian women writers have made their voice heard around the World in the Indian way, expressing too artistically. Moreover, Indian women Writers in English too in the recent times have managed to excel in all areas of literature and achieved global recognition.^[10]

Trends in Indian Writing in English: Indian Writing in English offers us an opportunity to discover Indian consciousness and sensibility. This writing is emerging as voice of India through its portrayal of realistic picture of society. Following are the main trends in Indian Writing in English as:

Individual and society

Indian Writing in English provides us a wide description of individual characters in a social setup. The aspirations and struggle of individual v/s society is beautifully depicted in some of the leading novels like 'possession'. The leading character opposes social dogmas and superstitious on account of his rational understanding, similarly in Raja Rao's "Kunthapura" Moorty raised voice against the British rule. On the other hand, the poet like *Nissim Ezekiel* in her poetry 'Night of the Scorpion' presented pain and agonies of mother. The ironic twist in the poem comes in the end; the mother was suffered in silence but, at the end she opens her mouth and says, "Thank God the scorpion picked on me and spared my children."^[11] In the novel 'Untouchable' Mulk Raj Anand portrayed the pitiable condition of *Bakhya* and showed how he started his day and how his father calls him "Get up, ohe you Bakhya, you son of a pig."^[12]

Women Empowerment

The world of women is not only depicted by female writers but also male authors as well, the women authors tried to project the issues and challenges for which Indian women has been suffering from long period of time. "Majority of Indian readers comprising both male and female read the novels of the Indian women authors with certain expectations. They look for some "Indianness" in their writings. Only the women novelists of India are capable for conveying the message of feminism in an Indian way."^[13]

The quest for identity has been a prime theme for many Indian English writers. Uma Narayan says "Indian feminism is clearly a response to issues specifically confronting many Indian women."^[14] Manju Kapur describes the position of women through her protagonist Astha "A woman should be aware, self-control, strong will, self-reliant and rational, having faith in the inner strength of womanhood. A meaningful change can be brought only from within by being free in the deeper psychic sense."^[15] In her writings, Manju Kapur has stressed on the issues of male dominances, family relations and she says "There is a man within every woman and a woman in every man when manhood is questioned and womanhood is fragile."^[16] Shashi Deshpande in one of her Interviews expressed her inner thinking about feminist movement as, "If others see something feminist in my writing, I must say that it is not consciously done, it is

because the world for women is like that and I am mirroring the world.”^[17] Toru Dutt depicted archetypes of Indian women like *Sita*. She showed women suffering and self-sacrificing role. Kamala Das raised her voice against women exploitation in both ways physically as well as mentally. In Anita Desai’s novels, we found struggle of women in male dominated society. In “Cry, the Peacock”, Maya had great affection with the world and want to live long. “The astrologer, that creeping sly magician of my hallucinations, no of course they were not hallucinations. Arjun had proved them to me and yet said they be real? Had never said anything to suggest that it was I who has to die, unnatural and violently for years after my marriage, nothing to suggest that he even thought that”^[18]

Urbanization

The concept of urbanization is mostly found in the post-colonial literary works. As the name suggests urbanization brought various drawbacks along with its so called advantages. In modern India due to urbanization, joint family, slum area are growing moral values are degrading, crimes are rising. The authors of Indian writing in English tried to express a realistic picture of India. A. K. Ramanujan in his poetry showed a pitiable condition of Indian masses. Where as we have a novelist like Khushwant Singh and Manohar Malgonkar who realistically provides us the dark side of urbanization. In Amitav Ghosh’s leading works offers a picture of city and rural life. Vikas Swarup in his novel “Q and A” narrated a story of a slum boy who was able to win the famous Quiz show and become millionaire. “If the poor conducts quiz the rich would not able to answer a single question”^[19] the poor are always on the wrong side of the law and only wait to be arrested. The destiny of the apathetic slum-dwellers is too obvious: "When your whole existence is 'illegal', when you live on the brink of penury in an urban wasteland, where you jostle for every inch of space and have to queue even for a shit, arrest has a certain inevitability about it....one day there will be a warrant with your name on it....."^[20]

East-West Encounter

“East is East and West is West the Twin Shall Never Meet”.^[21] The expression of East-West encounter signifies conflict between tradition and morality, spiritual and materialism, tyranny and democracy and orthodox to modern scientific approach. East-West Encounter is the recurrent theme in Indian English literature. Jhumpa Lahiri, R.K. Narayan, Bharati Mukherjee, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, and Anita Desai have tried to provide a glimpse of cultural clashes. “The cultural alienation of Indian writers in English is most often referred as swing towards west, east - west encounter or cross-cultural conflict.”^[22] This clash is bound to occur and over deep rooted valves have to encounter with the materialistic values of the west. Ruth Praver Jhabvala’s ‘Heat and Dust’ and Jhumpa Lahiri’s Namesake, are classical examples of east-west encounter in IndianEnglish literature.

Indianness

The most remarkable point of Indian writing in English is that the writers write in their expression and thoughts in a foreign language, but still their subject, plot, characters, ideas and theme about India. In the novels of R.K. Narayan's we have a charming picture of rural India whereas, we find fascination of westerners towards our country's rich custom and tradition. In the works of Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor and V.S. Naipaul, we have ideas of homeland, rootlessness and their personal feelings towards their country. In Indian English writing, the problem of identity is linked with 'Indianness'. The Indian English writers suffer from two serious problems firstly, they want to search their identity in Indian, and secondly, they want to establish themselves in the vast domain of world literature. The modern Indian English writers are in the state of dilemma in the presentation of cultural identity, they are always in a conflicting position to 'locate' them. Indianness is the key feature of Indian Writing in English. Indian English novelists in the 21st century are more interested in the presentation of 'life beyond life'. "Indianness is the key –feature of Indian writing in English. The modern Indian English writers also try to maintain the same in their creativity. Modern Indian English novelists are much interested in the presentation of modern man's disillusionment in the world of intellectual and spiritual void. The modern man is surrounded by multiple problems and it is too difficult for him to survive in such conditions. A large number of modern Indian English novelists are concerned with the questions of alienation, rootlessness, boredom, disillusionment and sorrow caused by 'conflicts'." [23]

Liberty

The theme of liberty is prominently figured in R.N. Tagore's works. He exhorted the Indians to awaken from the darkness of slavery of bondage "where the mind is with fear and head is held high." [24] It clearly reflects sense of self respect and sense of freedom. In the novel "Kanthapura", we found the theme of liberty through the character of Moorthy who symbolized Gandhian concept of freedom.

Voice of Marginalized

Indian English Novelists provide comprehensive details of marginalized and tribal people, whose rights were often exploited and humiliated. In the works of Mulk Raj Anand, it is clearly visible such as in the "Coolie", Mannu represented the downtrodden class. Even in the "White Tiger" by Arvind Adiga, the driver Ashok wants to get rid of from his class and tried to challenge the aristocratic society. Mahasweta Devi in her works depicted the conditions of poor people from colonial times to the post-modern age. Her literary creation has a vivid agenda of achieving certain activist aims "a responsible writer, standing at a turning point in history, has to take stand in defense of the exploited. Otherwise history would never forgive him . . . I desire a transformation of the present social system . . . After thirty-one years of Independence, I find my people still groaning under hunger, landlessness, indebtedness and bonded labour. An anger, luminous, burning, and passionate, directed against a system that has failed to liberate my people from these horrible constraints, is the only source of inspiration for all my writing . . . Hence I go on

writing to the best of my ability about the people so that I can face myself without any sense of guilt or shame".^[25]

Family Relationship

A relationship between man and women is an outcome of differences between the sexes of man and women. The relationship between Husband-Wife, Son-Mother, Father-Daughter, and Sister-Brother are commonly regarded by the code of conduct to form a family institution. The Indian English Novelists, not only male authors but also female authors depicted this theme in their works and it is one of the prominent themes of Indian English Fiction. Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, R.P Jhabvala, and Manju Kapur depicted the theme in their fictional works. In the "Cry, the Peacock" Maya's marriage to Gautama is more or less a marriage of convenience. It "was grounded upon the friendship of the two men and the mutual respect in which they held each other, rather than anything else"^[26]

Myth or Mythology

It appears in Indian English literature again and again novelists like as Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan, Arundhati Roy showed the theme of mythology at the back drop of their novels. In the Buddhist Literature also found the concept of mythology. In the Rudyard Kipling's 'Kim' the myth serves as the link between the concept of philosopher and the experiences of the commoner. In the works of Githa Hariharan, we have abundant mythical stories. We have Myth and Folklore in Girish Karnad's dramas in abundance as in "the Fire and the Rain" and "Naga-Mandala". In India, the literary artists adopted their mythological stories from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Vedic Literature and Quran.

Love, Sex and Marriage

This is the basic trend of the post modern literary works. Love, Sex and Marriage is boldly highlighted in the works of Indian Writing in English. In "Cry, the Peacock" Maya says to Gautama "you have never loved and you don't love me. Love has no importance for you"^[27] Issues related Gay/Lesbian marriages and live-in relation are also boldly depicted by Indian authors. Mahesh Dattani and Manju Kapur also portrayed such relations through their unforgettable characters.

Concluding Remarks

Thus, it is observed that Indian writing in English is full of quantity, verity, antiquity, philosophy, and quality but still it is regarded at nascent, offspring stage. After the independence it is emerging as one of the most promising and prolific literature of the world. Indian Writing in English is full of quantity and potential and turns out to be a new form Indian culture and voice which cover wide range of poets, dramatists, and novelists who are making their significant contribution to the world literature. They reflect real picture of India and its tradition, culture, and social values.

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