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Specific Features of Indian Literature with Special Reference to Works of R. K. Narayan and Aravind Adiga

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Abstract

India is a vast nation, 29 states, 22 languages, variety of culture, and caste. With every 100 km there exist a different dialect and culture in our country. With every different culture there exist different issues of the community. These common issues are best reflected in the literature of the community. The Indian literature is flexible and adaptive. It adapts to the changing environment and language of the nation. The themes and issues covers the day to day life of people, The miseries of Indian villages, the Diaspora of people in search of better life, the struggle for Independence, the fight for survival amidst the poverty stricken villages, the caste system, the generation clash, the hypocrisy of the higher class people, the exploitation of lower class people, feminism the Historical prospective etc. These themes show case the India of past, present and future. They are the mirror of society. The changing dialects of Indian people according to the change in get ration are best reflected in the literature. Indian literature has also been a catalyst of change in the society.

Keywords: Arbitrary, Mirror of Society, Universal.

Introduction

The Indian literature is a mirror of the vast variety of culture, dialects and living condition of the Indian subcontinent. In India with every changing district the language and living condition of people change. In a certain district the society may be developed and modern, and the next neighboring district will be a village with native culture and dialect present in it. And so the Indian writers who are born out of these different societies bring out a wide variety of themes and language. Their works are the mirror of the society they are born and brought up in. Especially the language used by these writers is widely affected by their upbringing and the environment around them. The Indian literature is flexible and adoptive right from the beginning of its history. It has been ever changing. It has evolved itself with the civilization to appeal to the people of the time, first from the symbol language to the pure form of language of the upper class society and now to the mixed language of the new generation. If we specifically see the Indian English literature its origin heads back to Bankim Chandra's first novel "Rajmohan's Wife" and "The travels of Dean Mohammad" by Dean Mohammad then came Rabindranath who started translating his woks in English to reach to global readers. The next generation of writers included Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao who portrayed the miseries of the colonial India and the poverty and superstition stricken generation. Following them were prominent writer like Salman Rushdie with his theme of magic

realism, Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Vikram Seth with their themes of the common people. Amitav Ghosh portrays the Indian Diaspora in "Sea of Poppies" later came Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Chandra, Arundhati Roy. The present generation of writers include prominent new writers like Arvind Adiga, whose protagonist are hero and villian at the same time. They first want to survive may it be hook or crook, also making marks are writers like Chetan Bhagat. After tracing down the Indian English literature let us see the unique feature of Indian literature –

Arbitrary Language:

Language is defined as the medium of expression of a person, a community a nation. If helps us communicate our thoughts and ideas. According to Robert Henry and David Crystal "Language is a system of conventional spoken manual (signed) or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity play, imaginative expression and emotional release."

Sapir is of the view that ". . . language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntary ship produced sounds." According to Aristotle, "Speech is the representation of the experiences of the mind."

Language according to the above definitions is a representation of human ideas emotions and experiences. The language of Indian English literature has been ever evolving right from its beginning. The early writers translated their works from different language to English like R.N. Tagore and B.C. Chatopadhyay. The translated literature had an impression of native thoughts in them, though they were English by language but they were regional by their soul. When writer like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie began to write in English, they attracted English followers also. And though their language and expression were purely English their themes were Indian. They had a sense of universal appeal in their language. They maintained the pure form of English and respect for the native speakers. Still the style of writing of an author is vastly influenced by the regionalism in him. And so, the formation sentences, choice of words etc are different with different authors. This contributes to the uniqueness of his or her work. With the changing generation the language of the authors is also not left intact. It has changed with time. The use of Indian terminology can be seen right from Narayan's time. Truly there are somethings that cannot find expression in English language and so the authors were forced to use the Hindi terms like 'Jutka' in "The English Teacher", 'Khadi' in "Waiting for the Mahatma". In the present time authors even do not hesitate to use abusive terms as well in their language, for example the term 'fuck' which is not acceptable in speaking also has been used many times in the Booker Prize winning novel. "The White Tiger". And so we can say that the language of the literature has changed with the changing generation.

Mirror of Society-

As is our country vast and varied so are the themes of the Literature. The writers of English did use English as a medium of their expression to reach readers beyond the boundaries of India but their themes were Indian and the thoughts were also Indian. The beginning of Indian English literature dates to the period of colonization, the period of tremendous upwelling. There were many social evils present in Indian society like caste system 'Sati Pratha' 'Zamindari' system religious superstitions and many more. The people were not only slave to the Britishers but also to these social evils. It was then that some of the great minds found there means of protest against these evils through their literature, beginning from the publication of "Sati" by Raja RamMohan Roy in 1818 to the "Untouchables" by Mulk Raj Anand. G V Desai's "All

about Hatter", Bhabani Bhattacharya "So Many Hunger", R.K. Narayan's "The Dark Room" portrays the status of women in families at that time and there are many more such examples. The first generation of Indian writers in English tried to project the prevalent social evils through their works and seeked social reforms through it. The result was definitely positive. Even the negative effect of modernization is aptly portrayed in works like "Vendor of Sweets". The historical works like "Discovery of India" and "Glimpses of the World History" by Jawaharlal Nehru epics like "Mahabharata" translated in English, brought out the glory of the nation in the past, as well as the mistakes made by the rulers and political leaders, which changed the history of the country. "Kanthapura" by Raja Rao "Waiting for the Mahatma" by R.K. Narayan "Inquilab" by K. A. Abbas, Nayantara Sehgal's "A Time to be Happy" aptly portrays the Nationalist movements and the aspirations of the mass of colonial India. The Deadly picture of the partition of India the cruelty men on men can be seen in works of Khushwant Singh's "A Train to Pakistan", Chaman Nahal "Azadi", Manohar Malgonkar's "A Bend in the Ganges" etc.

The Indian literature not only portrays these elevated themes but also brings out the picture of the common man and his struggle in everyday life. The short story collection of R.K. Narayan's Malgudi Days is the best example of this. The individual life chores and needs of people aloof of any national movement or political upwelling is portrayed with precision. Anita Desai's "Fire on the Mountain", Shashi Brata's "Confession of an Indian Woman" are an example of this.

The Indian Diaspora, the generational conflicts, the degradation of value, struggle for survival are some of the other issues taken up in the literature. In "The White Tiger" by Aravind Adiga the protagonist, a simple village boy, is transformed into a cold blooded murderer and then and entrepreneur. He elaborately explains his transformation. He is not the only one in the novel to move from village to city in search of a better life, at every instance he meets several others like him. He rebels with his values, sleeps with paid whores, and has no guilt for what he does. Even in the time of R.K. Narayan live- in- relations can be found in the novel "Vendor of Sweets" where Mali goes abroad against the will of his father for a better future and comes back with a girl presenting him as his wife when in reality they are not married. Indian Literature has also given us wonderful love stories which make us believe in the power of love, "Two States" and "Half Girl friend" by Chetan Bhagat, "The English Teacher" by R.K. Narayan, "The Promise" by Nikita Singh are an example of this.

Thus it can be rightly said that literature is the mirror of society. It showcases the real picture of society. And Society sees its real hidden aspects in its literature. And Indian literature has been doing this since generations and will continue to do it in the time to come.

Global-

It is true that the history of Indian English literature is not very old, but still today Indian English literature has left it's mark at the global level. It has reached far beyond the boundaries of its region and Nation. Firstly the advent of English was opposed by many who thought that it would dominate our mother tongue. It was seen as a language of the oppressors. But ironically it became a medium to spread the Indian literature at the global level. The Indian writers have attracted the attention of the Global readers with their themes like feminism, east west conflict,s cultural portrayal, social realism, portrayal of human psyche etc. Right from the beginning of Indian English literature it has been acknowledged at the global level. When Rabindranath Tagore translated "Gitanjali" in English it won him the Nobel Prize. This work of his contains the Indian aspects of spirituality. RK Narayan with his themes of common man of India, won the AC Benson medal in 1980. He was also an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and letters.

He was also conferred on doctorate by the University of Leeds in 1967. Author like Anita Desai was a member of Royal Society of Arts and literature London. Also the next generation of writers like Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and the most recent Arvind Adiga won the Booker prize from time to time. Salman Rushdie also won the Best of Booker prize in 2008 and the list goes on. These Global acknowledgements shows the acceptance and popularity of Indian literature at the global level

Conclusion

Literature is vast, it is as encompassing and great as the history of human Civilization. Its features cannot be limited to a few pages. But still some of its features are highlighted in this article. Indian English literature brings out the heart and soul of the nation into text form. It is the expression of a lover as well as the aspirations of a freedom fighter. It tells about the pain of a famine stricken poor farmer and also the royal and luxurious life of Kings and Zamindars. It tells us of the journey of an aspiring dancer like Rosie in "The Guide" and also the compromises and aspiring cricketer has to make to reach success in "Selection Day". The stories of Diasporic people and the stories of murder, for money, in the name of caste, in the name of religion are also portrayed in Indian literature. It speaks out the hidden frustration of women in "Cry the Peacock" and also ill fate of a man in "Inheritance of Loss". It tells us about our past and also gives us vision for future. What Indian English literature is today, is the contribution of many known world famous writers and many unacknowledged writers who perhaps had equal love for writing but could not reach are platform. In all Indian English literature is arbitrary, universal, adaptive and ever evolving.

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