

**CHANGING PARADIGM OF ENGLISH STUDIES IN
INDIA: COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL
PERSPECTIVES**

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Abstract:

So far the journey of English Studies in India is concerned, it can broadly be segmentalised in two major segments ie. firstly 'English Studies in Colonial India' and secondly 'English Studies in Post-Colonial India'. This division is very much apt so far as the core objectives of English Studies are concerned. Colonial English Studies were introduced to this nation as the part of intellectual design of colonial forces to cater to their specific requirements by preparing 'a class' of people 'who may be interpreters between them and the millions whom they govern; primarily the stressing motif was to prepare a class of persons 'Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' (Macaulay, *Minute on Education*) and so English was injected in the intellectual veins of Indians whereas in the Post-colonial India English Studies are getting more and more significant and making its impact on the lives of its people. For Post-colonial India English Studies are like insulins to be injected into the intellectual veins of Indians in order to meet out the emerging challenges posed by the Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) and cater to the needs of Cross Cultural Communication (CCC). Towards the beginning of the second decade of the Twenty first century English is playing a pivotal role in diversified areas viz. English as the single most important link-language linking not only to the maximum states of India rather to the maximum nations of the world, as the most techno-friendly language. By speculating the perspectival shifts this study attempts to asses the varied roles of English Studies in colonial and post-colonial India.

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Key Terms: English Studies in India, Cross Cultural Communication (CCC), Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG).

Introduction:-

So far the journey of English Studies in India is concerned it can broadly be segmentalised in two major segments viz. firstly English Studies in Colonial India and the secondly English Studies in Post-Colonial India. This division is very much apt so far as the very objectives of English Studies are concerned. Colonial English Studies is introduced to this nation as the part of intellectual design of colonial forces to cater to their specific requirements by preparing 'a class' of people 'who may be interpreters between them and the millions whom they govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' (Macaulay, *Minute on Education*) and so English was injected in the intellectual veins of Indians whereas in the Post-colonial India English Studies are getting more and more significant and making its impact on the lives of its people. For Post-colonial India English Studies are like insulins to be injected into the intellectual veins of Indians in order to meet out the emerging challenges posed by the Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) and cater to the needs of Cross Cultural Communication (CCC). Towards the beginning of the second decade of the Twenty first century English is playing a pivotal role in diversified areas ie. as the single most important link language linking not only to the maximum states of India rather to the maximum nations of the world, as the most techno-friendly language. This study attempts to estimate the varied roles of English Studies in India and it also focusses on the Post-colonial developments.

Role and importance of English:-

Second only to Mandarin Chinese, English is currently the most widely spreading language in the world, in terms of the number of people who speak it, but second to none in terms of the number of non-native speakers and the number of people learning it. It is spoken by more than 350 million native speakers, and between 700 and 800 million non-native or foreign users. It is currently the primary language used on the World Wide Web, in the political and business arenas. It is the official language of air transport and shipping; the leading language of science, technology, computers, and commerce; and a major medium of education, publishing, and

international negotiation. For this reason, scholars frequently refer to its latest phase as 'World English'. English language comes to our aid in our commercial transactions throughout the globe. English is the language of the latest business management in the world. English is a means not only for international commerce; it has become increasingly essential for inter-state commerce and communication.

Why was English introduced in India ?

The motive behind the introduction of English both as a subject and as a medium of instruction, and the inclusion of English literature in the curriculum of institutions of higher learning in India was designed to cater to the Britishers' diplomatic, political and colonial motives. In 1835, Thomas Macaulay recommended in his *Minute on Education* that Britain should officially encourage English education in India and withdraw its support to Arabic and Sanskrit was not inspired by any altruistic desire of conferring liberal education to the colonised subjects but rather by a design to create an elite class amongst them that would appreciate and consume British goods and imbibe British taste. The colonial compulsion to economise and minimise the costs of administering a vast colony like India led to the creation of an indigenous officialdom. The need arose to fashion 'a class' of people 'who may be interpreters between us and the millions who we govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.' (Macaulay, *Minute on Education*)

As a result of the introduction of English in three Presidency universities in 1856 social power and material gain to a select class was conferred and emerged as a language of power and political privilege whereas the cultural hegemony of English-educated class resulted in the segregation of professional middle class from the masses.

English Studies in India: A Marvellous Journey:-

History of English Studies in India is as old as the very advent of colonial practices on this multi-cultural and multi-lingual land. Even the uneducated and semi-educated citizens here are now aware of the emerging demands of English in India. While highlighting the significance of English in India, long back on June 01, 1921 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi observed in *Young India*:

English is today studied because of its commercial and so-called political value. Our boys think, and rightly in the present circumstance, that without English they cannot get government service. Girls are taught English as a passport to marriage... I know husbands who are sorry that their wives cannot talk to them and their friends in English. I know families in which English is being made the mother-tongue...in many cases, the only meaning of education is a knowledge of English. (June 01, 1921. Gandhi, *Young India*)

As a visionary Gandhi was perfectly apt in his observations, though it was speculated almost a century ago. English entered India as a 'Foreign Language' but it would be unjust to use the term 'Foreign Language' for it as English was popularly accepted by Indians as the 'Second Language'. As the result of the ceaseless efforts of authors like Ram Mohan Roy, Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore, S. Radhakrishnan, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Mulk Raj Anand, Khushwant Singh, R. K. Narayan, Jayant Mahapatra, Keki N. Daruwala, Henry L. Derozio, Asif Karim Bhoj, Amitav Ghosh, Aravind Adiga, Nissim Ezekiel, Salman Rushdie, Muhammad Fakruddin and women writers like Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt, Kamala Das Suraiya, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Shanta Acharya there emerged an 'Indian English Language' and in this way journeying from a 'Foreign Language' then 'Second Language' finally English enjoyed the status of 'Indian English Language' towards the latter half of the twentieth century India, which was later to be considered as 'Hindlish' or 'Hinglish' during the last couple of decades. In a languages' hub like India, English is also flourishing as a 'Linking Language'. Constitution has also recognized English as an 'Official Language' in addition to Hindi. People going from Northern to Southern part of India for education or business mostly communicate in English, which has become a link language. Even in the states where people do not like to communicate in Hindi, English becomes sole means of survival as a 'Lifeline Language'. Same is the fate of those people who do not have any access to Hindi and have to lead their lives only on the use of English for their survival. All these facts of history and present developments in India underline the increasing importance of learning English in addition to vernaculars.

Canons of English Studies in India:-

Broadly speaking English Studies can be divided into two major sub-divisions so far as its

historical and chronological developments are concerned ie. Colonial English and Post-Colonial English Studies in India. Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand, Mulk Raj Anand were trend setters in their authorial practices. Writings of Gandhi and Nehru were pioneering during the pre and post colonial English writing practices. Translators like Gayitri Chakravorty Spivak, Shiv K. Kumar, Harish Trivedi, C. Rajagopala Chari, T. Vijay Kumar, C. Vijayshree, Prabhat K. Pandeya, Mani Meitei are contributing to a comparatively new canon of English Studies ie. Translation studies and Indian classics in translation are now very much in the practice of teaching-learning process. With the passage of time there emerged multiple canons of English Studies in India. To name a few major canons is as follows:

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| a) English Language Teaching | b) Indian Writing in English |
| c) Patriotic/Nationalistic Writings | d) Diasporic Studies |
| e) Trans-national Studies | e) Dalit Canon |
| f) Feminism | g) Writings of Ethnic and Cultural Identity |
| h) Folk-loristic | i) Indian Classics in Translation |
| j) Socialist and Marxist Canon | k) Translation Studies |

Intrusion of Indian Terminology in English Dictionary:-

English, as a language is blessed with extraordinary capacity of assimilation. Since the time of its inception a reader may notice its wonderful ability of absorbing new terminologies of various regional terms. Thus, everyday emerging jargon of this Indian sub-continent has not been exception to this language. Many new terms like rickshaw-walla, tonga-walla, bread-pakora, nabab, kabab, talaq, mahaot, bhelpuri, salla, boka, pan, tulasi, loot, hartaal, anshan, Buddha, Mauksha, etc. are coined constantly in literary practices. Even in the eighth edition of Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary the terms like Maharaja, Maharani, Mahayana, Maharishi are accepted and have been incorporated as English terms carrying specific meanings. As a language it is also adjusting well with the nascent technological vocabulary.

Decolonization of English Studies in India & Indian Bred Literary Texts:-

There were also voices emerging to decolonize English Studies by judging English literary texts

not by European critical tools, but by Indian Critical Theories. For example, Dalit writing which is a revolt against a very rigid caste system of graded hierarchical inequality cannot be judged on the parameters of Marxism which looks at the society just in two segments of 'haves and haven'ts' namely Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. Even classical or derived forms of Marxism cannot effectively sort out the problem of Indian woman who is still struggling to survive in a traditional but highly complex joint family structure which is still very much different from the family structure of any other country in the world. Problems like honour killing, dowry, sati pratha have been alien to western socio-literary sphere.

Demand for Distinguished Literary Theories for Analysing English Studies in India & Indian Bred Literary Texts:-

A debate is still open on the future of English Studies in India. Critics are in denial mode to practise further the western critical tools like catharsis, fancy, imagination, impressionism, expressionism, new criticism, formalism, structuralism, neo-historicism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, reader response theory etc.

Propagators based their logic on post-colonial theories of Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Gauri Vishvanathan and Krishna Rayan to reject the western prescriptive theories. They are of the opinion that western theories should not be applied as the tools for the literary interpretation of Indian texts rather Rasa, Alankara, Dhvani, Vakrokti etc should be applied. Very recently there was a demand to remove certain colonial English texts from the syllabi of Indian university as they were used to colonize the very Indian mind set and subvert it. It was also discussed that alien authors have no appeal to Indian readers and so for having a distinguished appeal to Indian response Islamic, Sikh, Buddhist and dalit canon must be explored accordingly.

English(es) as the Bi-products of the Decolonization of English Studies in India:-

Decolonization couldn't remained confined to the levels of the varieties of expressions, their various types and forms of literariness rather it knocked the doors of the very roots of English language, by crossing the thresholds of very linguistic principle and affected it up to semantic and morphological level. The advent of Indian English doesn't remain confined to the limits of indianization of English rather it began splitting into the various form of English(es). Drastically

varying regional, subregional and sub-subregional dialects and tone groups keep shaping English with variedly differing dimensions; and their increasing acceptability with the existing tones are licensing users to declare such practices as the “intellectual decolonisation of English Studies in India.”

Post-Colonial journey of English Studies in India: Futuristic Horizons to Scale:-

English in India is now adopting diversified features and this organic dynamism is proving it a new shape everyday. India, which itself is a multi-lingual hub, is rapidly developing as the second home of English Studies where prizes like Booker and Nobel are no more alien. While delivering one of his talks in a Refresher Course at UGC-ASC, Manipur University, Imphal, an acknowledged scholar and critic Professor N. D. R. Chandra, rightly expressed his views pointing out that in coming future English will be emerging as the single most dominant language of India encompassing all national and transnational literary features. In the light of the kind of developments going on, this also seems true with regards to the twenty first century, that horizon is the limit as English will be growing like anything as it is the most techno-friendly language. Nascent technological advancements are adding new terms to 'English vocabulary enrichment' everyday. All these cumulative developments are giving birth to altogether different kind of practices which are accountable for the journey of English from physical to virtual by switching over from text to cyber-text; and furthermore from literature to the cyber literature where on the fertile soil of Indian minds new genres will keep sprouting and flourishing in the decades and centuries of future India.

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