

The Intertextuality and Influence of British Colonialism on Indian Literature

Dr. Mital Bhrahmbhatt

Assistant Professor, T N Rao College, Rajkot

Abstract

Because of its complicated current and colonial history of post-colonial culture, India is a valuable venue for studying intertextuality and its impact within the context of post-colonial culture. To a greater extent than other colonial powers, the British Empire in India was pragmatic, with money serving as the primary motivation rather than evangelism. Indian literature greatly impacted Western literature with the birth of Orientalism; however, this influence was reversed by the intervention of colonial powers at the time. Even though some commentators either condemn or praise the West's impact on India, the answers of Indian writers demonstrate intricate examples of intertextuality and influence. Traditional beliefs, cultural practices, social life, and political climates in India have all had a role in shaping the literary movement in the country. A disruption occurred in India's indigenous governing power due to British rule, which lasted for more than two centuries. British colonization had a significant influence on Indian literature and social life. It is essential to have a solid understanding of the history of English literature to have a complete comprehension of the way of life of the English people, including their educational, social, and cultural perspectives. This research paper takes a comprehensive look at colonial rule's impact on the literary production of English in India.

Keywords: Orientalism, Culture, Colonial, Evangelical, Discriminating, Testimonial.

INTRODUCTION

There is a corpus of literature known as Indian English literature, composed of works published in English by authors from India. The cultural, social, and political shifts that have taken place in India over the ages are reflected in its extensive and varied past, which features a rich and diverse history. Colonization has had a tremendous impact on Indian literature written in English, and this influence has been substantial. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the East India Company was established, and it was given the sole right to engage in commercial transactions with India. This marked the beginning of the British colonization of India. As a result of the tremendous changes, it brought about in India's social, economic, and political systems, the colonization of India had a considerable influence on its culture and literature. Adopting the English language was one of the most significant effects of colonialism on the linguistic landscape of Indian literature written in English. Since English became the language of administration, education, and business in India, many Indians started writing in English due to this cultural shift. As a result of the English language providing Indian writers with a new vehicle of expression, they began experimenting and modifying it to suit their artistic and literary sensitivities.

Introducing Western literary styles and genres into Indian English literature was yet another effect colonialism had on India's literary landscape. Indian authors started to absorb and adapt the rich literary legacy that the British brought, including poetry, novels, and theatre. This was done to accommodate the Indian writers' cultural and social circumstances. Consequently, this resulted in the development of a novel literary style that merged the scholarly traditions of India with the West. In addition, colonization had a significant influence on the topics and subjects that were explored in Indian literature written in English. Indian authors started writing about the social, political, and cultural difficulties due to colonization. These themes included the loss of cultural identity, the battle for independence, and the conflict between tradition and modernity. Indian authors also employed literature as a form of resistance and protest against the injustices caused by colonization across India.

It is safe to say that the influence of colonialism on Indian literature written in English has been significant and far-reaching. The language, literary styles, topics, and subject matter of Indian literature have all undergone substantial changes as a result, and it has also offered Indian writers a new medium of expression. Indian literature written in English has developed into a literary tradition filled with various literary styles. It represents India's intricate history and cultural identity.

COLONIZATION

Colonization is a historical event that has been carried out for ages, and it has had a considerable influence on the planet we currently inhabit. The installation of control by one group over another is referred to as colonialism. The occupation and exploitation of regions outside the country often represent this type of authority. It is possible to trace the roots of colonialism back to the Roman Empire, which used the name "Colonia" to refer to communities or farms created in territory they claimed as their own. However, it wasn't until the 15th century that the phenomena of colonialism started to take shape on a worldwide scale. This was a time when European nations expanded their influence across the world through the use of forced occupation. The quest for raw resources and new markets for items manufactured by machines was one of the primary motivating factors for colonialism.

This finally resulted in a change in how products were produced and consumed worldwide since it took place due to a substantial shift in the exchange system from barter to money. It is also important to note that colonialism tremendously influenced social and cultural institutions. This is because conquerors frequently imposed their morals and ideas on the people they conquered. This particular sort of cultural imperialism was often associated with the power abuse and exploitation of nations that were seen to be weaker.

The colonization of India by the British is a wonderful illustration of how colonialism and imperialism functioned in the real world. The primary reasons for the British government's interest in India were to get raw resources, to take advantage of investment possibilities, and to find a market for their products. A colony known as "British India" was founded by them, which encompassed a significant portion of the Indian subcontinent. Additionally, they constructed "Princely states" governed by Indian monarchs. Colonialism leaves behind a legacy that is extremely complicated and multi-faceted. It has been linked to exploitation,

oppression, and cultural imperialism. However, it has been responsible for great gains in both the economic and technical spheres.

INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE AND WRITINGS

The English literature of India has a long and illustrious history that spans more than a century and a half of British colonial rule. This history is both colourful and intricate. The introduction of English as a medium of instruction in India occurred during this period, and along with it came the birth of a new literary tradition that has since developed and expanded into what is now known as Indian Writing in English. Several distinct periods may be distinguished in the history of Indian English literature. These phases include Indo-English, Indo-Anglian, Indian Writing in English, and Indian literature. Although India's society is comprised of a wide variety of ethnicities, cultures, and faiths, Indian authors writing in English have captured and portrayed the multiculturalism within their societies via their publications. In recent years, there has been a substantial increase in the popularity of Indian literature written in English, both within India and outside of the country. The literary environment of the country is rich and diversified, largely thanks to the contributions of a huge number of writers who have garnered critical recognition and a big readership. Although it has only been around for the past century, novel writing is a phenomenon that is relatively new to Indian literature.

On the other hand, it has rapidly become a popular and lucrative genre, with many authors concentrating on topics such as the fight for independence, the issues that communities face, and the fate of those who are marginalized and oppressed. Indian literature written in English is a significant and dynamic component of the nation's cultural legacy. It reflects the intricacies and variety of the people and culture of India.

COLONIALISM'S IMPACT ON INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

The literary landscape of Indian English literature was profoundly influenced by colonialism. The British colonization of India significantly impacted the literary landscape since the British made English the official language of education and administration. This had a deep impact on the language of Indian literature. At this time, English emerged as the language of power, and Indian authors who wrote in English received more attention and respect than those who wrote

in regional languages. Writers from India started writing in English to extend their reach to a wider audience and garner respect in the world of literature.

The influence of colonialism on Indian literature written in English may be observed in many different ways:

Language: English has become a tool for Indian writers to communicate and express themselves. They used it to convey their thoughts and ideas, which would have been difficult to express in their native language.

Themes: Indian English literature reflects the colonial era's cultural, social, and political changes. The themes of identity, displacement, alienation, and resistance against colonialism are prominent in Indian English literature.

Style: There is a fusion of Western and Indian literary traditions that may be found in the style of Indian English literature. Magical realism, symbolism, and metaphor are all approaches that are characteristic of Indian literature, and Indian writers implemented these tactics to develop a literary style that is distinctively their own.

Representation: Indian English literature offered a platform for Indian writers to portray their culture, customs, and history to an audience worldwide. On the part of Indians, it contributed to developing a feeling of national identity and pride.

POST-COLONIALISM AND INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

The literary landscape of Indian English literature was profoundly influenced by colonialism. A new literary tradition was established due to this, considering the cultural, social, and political shifts throughout colonial rule. Indian literature written in English has made a significant contribution to the canon of literature worldwide and has played a role in developing a feeling of national identity and pride among Indians. A critical theory that evolved in the later part of the 20th century as a response to the influence that European colonialism had on the nations that were colonized is known as post-colonialism. This study focuses on the power dynamics, cultural conflicts, and social inequities that emerged as a result of colonialism and its aftermath. The post-colonial era, which began in 1947 when India won its independence from British colonial authority, gave rise to the literary works written in

English by Indian authors. The literature created in English by Indian authors represents the rich and multidimensional nature of Indian society and the cultural, social, and political developments that have occurred since India gained its freedom. Some topics are frequently investigated in Indian English writing, including hybridity, identity, cultural conflict, and the desire for selfhood. In addition to the impact that Western influences have had on Indian culture, it represents the rich artistic legacy of India and the variety within Indian society.

Because it has offered a framework for understanding the power dynamics and cultural tensions that occurred during colonialism and its aftermath, post-colonialism has considerably affected Indian English writing. This is because it has provided a framework for comprehending these things. Authors from India have utilized the English language as a means of expression to contest the dominance of colonial rule and to affirm their own cultural identity. The works of authors such as Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Amitav Ghosh have garnered international attention and have contributed to the establishment of Indian English literature as a literary tradition that is both active and dynamic. They frequently take inspiration from Indian history, mythology, folklore, and modern political and social themes in their own works. Post-colonialism has been a key influence on the development of Indian English literature. It has provided a crucial framework for comprehending the intricate and sometimes tense interactions between India and its former colonial power and the ongoing fight for cultural and political sovereignty.

- **The Pragmatic Nature of British Imperialism**

In contrast to other colonial powers, which were frequently motivated by a desire for preaching, the primary motivation behind British imperialism in India was economic interests. Beginning with the British East India Company and continuing with the British Crown, the goal was to capitalize on India's immense riches and advantageous position. It is important to note that this pragmatic approach to colonization has profound repercussions for Indian society and culture. The British were responsible for the establishment of educational institutions, the introduction of the English language, and the implementation of new administrative and organizational structures. The purpose of these alterations was to establish a group of Indians who had received an education in English and would be able to contribute to the colony's administration and serve the British's economic interests.

- **Orientalism and Literary Exchange**

In the 18th and 19th centuries, when Orientalism was at its height, India began to exert a significant influence on the literary production of Western countries. India's ancient writings, philosophy, and culture captivated Western academics and writers interested in the Orientalist movement. A significant impact on Western literature and thinking was brought about by translating Indian classics like the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. However, this transaction was not asymmetrical because the British colonial involvement progressively turned the influence flow towards the colonial power. A colonial perspective was used to reinterpret and appropriate Indian literature and culture. This was done through the prism of colonialism.

- **The Impact of Colonial Rule on Indian Literature**

India's literary tradition was strongly influenced by British colonial leadership. A new generation of Indian authors adept in the English language emerged due to the use of English as the medium of instruction in educational institutions such as schools and universities. These authors, including Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, and Mulk Raj Anand, started writing in English and addressed their writing to readers from India and the West. By combining Western literary styles with traditional Indian themes, their writings frequently expressed the conflicts and contradictions in their lives while they lived under colonial control.

- **Complex Intertextuality and Influence**

Intricate instances of intertextuality and different forms of influence characterize the reactions of Indian authors to British colonialism. Certain authors embraced the literary forms and topics of the English language, employing them to criticize colonial authorities' authority and push for social reform. Despite the oppression by colonialism, some worked to maintain and advance indigenous literary traditions. The works of great Indian writers demonstrate this dynamic interaction of acceptance, adaptation, and resistance via their writing.

- **Traditional Attitudes and Cultural Resilience**

Despite the overwhelming effect of British colonialism, traditional Indian views, culture, and social life continued to exist. They contributed to the development of Indian literature throughout the centuries. To challenge colonial myths and establish their own identity, Indian authors relied upon their extensive cultural legacy. Creating a literary heritage that was both distinctive and alive, which represented the intricacies of Indian culture, was accomplished by the combination of aspects of Indian and Western literature.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the study and analysis provided in the paper, it is possible to conclude that colonialism has had a major and long-lasting influence on Indian literature written in English. The research indicates that the imposition of English as the dominant language in India directly resulted from British colonialism. This, in turn, significantly impacted the literary traditions that were prevalent in the nation. This study aims to examine how colonialism affected the topics, styles, and viewpoints of Indian English literature, as well as the use of language itself. Additionally, the study sheds light on how Indian authors have utilized their literary works to resist and subvert the prevailing colonial discourse while simultaneously recovering and protecting their own cultural identity. In general, the article emphasizes the significance of acknowledging the lingering impact of colonization on Indian English literature, as well as the necessity of continuing to investigate and comprehend the intricate ways in which it continues to affect the nation's literary landscape in the present day.

REFERENCE

Bailey, Richard W. *Images of English: A Cultural History of the Language*. University of Michigan Press, 839 Greene St., PO Box 1104, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1104, 1991.

Sussex, Roland. "David Crystal, English as a global language. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. x, 150. Hb \$9.95." *Language in Society* 28.1 (1999): 120-124.

Pennycook, Alastair. *English and the discourses of colonialism*. Routledge, 2002.

Das, Sisir Kumar. *A history of Indian literature*. Vol. 1. Sahitya Akademi, 2005.

Das, Sisir Kumar. "A History of Indian Literature, 1800–1910: Western Impact, Indian Response." *A Window Lived in a Wall* 500 (2005): 22

Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and post-colonial literature: migrant metaphors*. OUP Oxford, 2005.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in post-colonial literatures*. Routledge, 2003.

Shukla, Dipti. "Impact of Colonization on Indian English Literature." *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities* 3.1 (2023): 46-51.

Das, Sisir Kumar. *A history of Indian literature*. Vol. 1. Sahitya Akademi, 2005.