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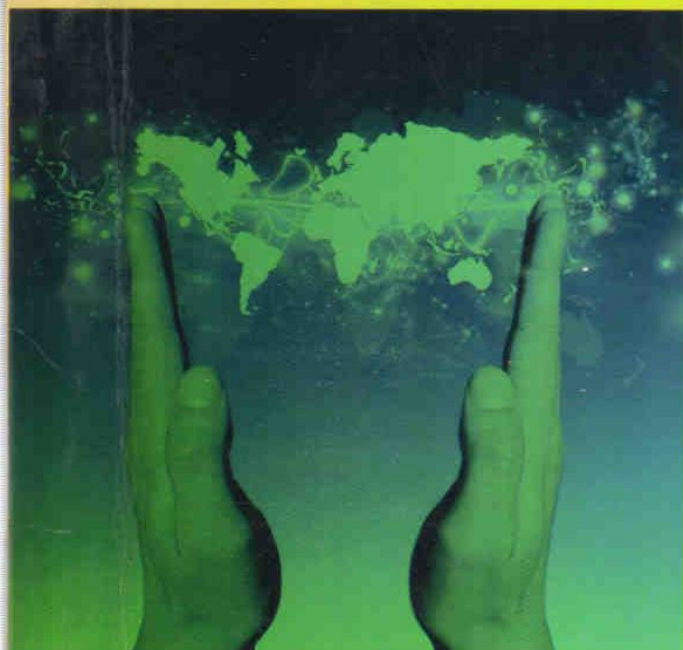
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8. Contribution of Literary Writer in Social Reforms with Special Reference to Indian Writing in English

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Abstract

As British literature is enriched with social reformers who created significant impact on then generation. Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley, Thomas Carlyle, Benjamin Disraeli and G B Shaw, etc. are the remarkable contributors for the contemporary social reform in England. The modern social reforms in India took place after 1835, when Indian intellectual class came into the contact with Western Literature. Specially from 1835 to 1950 most of the leaders of Indian freedom movement were either journalist or barristers. They came into the contact with Western Literature. The humanistic and democratic values prominently reflected in their writings were purely outcome of Modern British Education system. It was the reflection of ancient Indian and Western literature. The present research throws a light on contribution of Indian literary writer in social reforms with special reference to Indian Writing in English.

The Modern Renaissance in India took place after the arrival of Britisher in India. Indian people came into the contact with the Western Literature through English language. Most of the Indian Freedom Fighters were the great social reformist. Indian independence movement had two sides. One group wanted the social reforms should be taken placed first and another wanted complete independence. In this scenario the ill- rotten tradition, caste based system, inequality, discrimination and religious exploitation had created the entire picture gloomy. Then demand and the role were significantly fulfilled by the crusaders of Indian social reformation.

Indian English writing started blooming due the circumstances that prevailed during the British rule. On account of the Western impact resulting in the study of English literature and European thought, there was a new awakening in the Indian consciousness and a new mode of expression. As **M K Naik** puts:

“More than two decades prior to Macaulay’s Minute of 1835, Indians had already started writing in English.” (Naik 13).

Raja Rammohun Roy's essay on 'A Defence of Hindu Theism' (1817) may be regarded as the first original publication of significance in the history of Indian English literature. As **M K Naik** remarks:

"Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), aptly described by Rabindranath Tagore as 'the inaugurator of the modern age in India' was indeed the morning star of the Indian renaissance" (Naik 14).

Raja Rammohan Roy was one of the earliest to plead for English education in India even before Macaulay wrote his Minute. While Raja Rammohan Roy's tract on sati appeared in 1818, even much earlier, the Kavali brothers wrote in English. His English works, as many as thirty-two are original essays on various subjects.

Apart from Raja Rammohun Roy's work there was not a little prose writing of note during mid and later nineteenth century in metropolitan centers like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Most of this writing was on religious, social, historical and political subjects and some of it in the form of journalism and pamphleteering. Their contribution to Indian social reformation was less significant.

Bal Shastri Jambhekar (1812-46), a great pioneer of the new awakening in the Bombay presidency, perhaps the first Sanskrit pundit of note to study English. His contemporary, **Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar** (1814-82), scholar, educationist, religious and social reformer, and author of the earliest standard Marathi Grammar, wrote 'A Hindu Gentleman's Reflections respecting the works of Emanuel Swedenborg' (1878) and enlightened study in comparative religious thought. In contrast with the Bengal, Bombay and Madras presidencies, the north India of the period shows little sustained interest in Indian English writing (Naik 20).

About this time the religious reform movements like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Prarthana Samaj ushered in a new spiritual awakening in the country. Under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Keshub Chander Sen wanted Indians to come out of their lethargy and Swami Vivekananda with his global sweep, brought India face to face with Western civilization. Vivekananda is considered to be a major force in the revival of Hinduism in modern India. Vivekananda left a body of philosophical works which are four Yogas; Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga. As **M K Naik** puts:

“Vivekananda was a man with a two-fold mission. ('I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East,' he said); and he aspired to work for the uplift of India.”(Naik, 82).

There was a considerable amount of prose writing by these religious and social reformers. As **D Ramakrishna** puts it:

“The writings of the pioneers like Mahadeo Govind Ranade, K.T. Telang, Surendranath Banerjee, Rash Behari Ghose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and Lala Lajpat Rai would reveal a high degree of scholarship and personal integrity in addition to their skilful handling of the English language. What is perhaps unacceptable to the modern reader in their writings is their ornate style marred by tautology. Subsequently, however, in the writings of Gandhi, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, Rajagopalachari and Dr Radhakrishnan, one finds a refreshing change for a flexible style. When the writer tends to use language to express his inmost thoughts and feelings, his style takes on a delightfully personal note. Some of the best non-fictional prose writers in this category are Jawaharlal Nehru, K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, K.M. Paniker, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Khushwant Singh, Nissim Ezekiel, M.C. Murugan. Having thus taken on a definite shape in the 1920s Indian English prose recorded a steady growth during the next two decades. Subsequently, in the 1960s and 70s, it has attained a preeminent position in English prose in the world at large, keeping pace with the changing tendencies in theme and technique” (Ramakrishna 68).

The earliest experiments in Indian English prose during the first decade of the twentieth century show the writer's self-conscious use of the language. The writers used ornate and unnatural English. Perhaps it was only in the 1930s that the English sentence became shorter and the creative writers realized that English was no longer an alien tongue and that it could be bent to the shape they liked. As **M K Naik** puts:

“A large part of Indian English prose of the pre-Independence period was inevitably political in character. With the attainment of Independence, the ‘overwhelming’ political question had finally been answered but fresh political thinking continued to be provided by men like M. N. Roy, Jayaprakash Narayan and R. M. Lohia. Other types of prose most of which had also flourished earlier continued to do so equally

vigorously. These include autobiography and biography, historical and religious writing, travelogue and prose of social criticism." (Naik 264).

Contemporary Indian Writing in English has indeed grown into a significant aspect of world literature. One can notice in this writing a development parallel to the multi-faceted advancement of the Indian society since Independence. What was largely a nationalistic writing during the times of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo has become a literature of immense aesthetic and socio-cultural significance for modern India. As **D Ramkrishna** observes:

"The Indian writers in English have generally been successful in fusing the socio-cultural values with the aesthetic, keeping pace with the intellectual currents in the outside world." (Ramkrishna 57).

Early writing in India were carrying the burden to defend the Hindu religion from the westerners, as it was the notion that Hindu Gods were "absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness, and cruelty", (Wilberforce, in the British parliament, on 22 July 1813) and Britishers considered Hindu religious system as "One grand abomination". So it is observed that the early writers became the defenders of the Hinduism. Their writings were full of glorification of Hinduism and spiritualism. Most of the modern social thinkers and literary writers were nothing but the modern interpretator for the old scriptures. They tried to remove the negative perspective of the westerners. They wiped out the false remarks of British Imperialistic writers towards the Indian religion. Their efforts brought the changes in the attitude towards looking the Indian society. They stressed the shades of Indian culture, history and partial representation of regional Indian society. Hence, they had not comprehensive contribution for social reformation, rather they were engaged in religious reformation and interpretation. Apart from them there were few literary writers who contributed for actual social reform through their writings among them are Coomarswamy, R Tagore, Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo, Dr B R Ambedkar, Osho Rajnish, J Krishnamurti, Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Nehru, Iqbal, Bhattacharya, R. N. Dandekar, T.M.P. Mahadevan, T. R. V. Murti, N. V. Banerjee and Daya Krishna.

Ananda Kentish **Coornaraswamy** (1877-1947) felt that the regeneration of India would be possible through vitalization of its arts and crafts. He began to see that such art and craft as ancient and medieval India produced was possible largely because of the social arrangement in which castes and stages of life ordered human activity. Instead of attacking this age-old social stratification of India as many social reformers did, he somewhat organised it. His writing

contains fifteen essays on various themes. Coomaraswamy boldly declared that "nations are made by artists and poets, not by traders and politicians."

Rabindranath Tagore gives the theory of Spiritual Humanism. He was a prophet of love, harmony and fellowship. He was in the favour of spiritual equality. He says that human must inculcate the feature of 'Truth' within itself. Religion for him, means the reconciliation of the superpersonal man, within itself. Tagore's philosophy of life is regarded as more idealistic. He was the apostle of truth, virtue and beauty (Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram). The core of Tagore's philosophy is on the direct relationship of man and nature.

Radhakrishnan wrote authoritative exegesis of India's religious and philosophical literature for the English speaking world. A bridge was build by Radhakrishnan between the East and the West by showing how the philosophical systems of each tradition are comprehensible within the terms of the other. Radhakrishnan gives an importance to intuitive thinking, in his book 'An Idealist View of Life'.

Sri Aurobindo wrote on human progress and a spiritual path which he termed Integral Yoga. Sri Aurobindo's vision is the evolution of life into a 'Life Divine'.

J Krishnamurti was born and brought up as a 'vehicle' for an expected world teacher. J Krishnamurti disavowed that idea and dissolved the worldwide organization (the Order of the Star) established to support it. He claimed allegiance to no nationality, caste, religion or philosophy, and spent the rest of his life travelling the world as an individual speaker, speaking to large and small groups, as well as with interested individuals. Krishnamurti was a renowned writer and speaker on philosophical and spiritual subjects.

DR B R Ambedkar was a great champion of Indian reformation. He fought against the evils of the society. His writing in English has brought a great tumult in the post independence period of India which has resulted into the 'Dalit Movement'. His vision and writing was crystal clear than any other contemporary writer. He used the scientific methodology of research in his writing.

Mahatma Gandhi was more a political leader than a philosopher. His outstanding works are 'My Experiments with Truth', 'Autobiography', 'Commentary', and 'On the Bhagavad Gita'. His philosophy was the resultant of his experiments. His writing is characterized as naturalistic in its setting, idealistic in its aim and Pragmatic in its method.

Pt. Nehru was a philosopher and a politician of National independence. That was the real nerve of his thought and action. Nehru tried to avoid the two extremes. Like any other true philosopher Nehru tried to seek truth, he said: "Perfection is beyond us for it means the end, and we are always journeying, trying to approach something that is ever receding" (Nehru 561).

Osho Ranish writings reflected as a controversial new religious movement and mysticism. His writing had a notable impact on western new age thought. His writing is full of logic and rationality exposing the futility of religious dogmas.

Iqbal's writings revolve around God as one, all knowing and omnipotent. He believes in Monotheism. A notion of God satisfies both the religious urge of man and metaphysical curiosity. Iqbal wrote 'The Reconstruction of Religions Thought in Islam' (1930) and 'The Development of Metaphysics in Persia; (1908).

K C Bhattacharya a Philosopher at Calcutta University was considered as an important figure in contemporary India. His main focus was on the central questions of Hindu philosophy. He wanted to know that how mind, life or consciousness creates an apparently material universe.

Conclusion

There are other writers in the Indian writing in English but they carry little importance in the social reformation point of view. Indian writing in English was trapped in between the ideas and translation at early period. The writings of social reformers were under the certain objectives they possessed in their mind. They fought for their mission and so it is not so comprehensive representation of all part of the society but they dealt with the evil of the society and exposed the system. Till 1950 most of the Indian writers were not able to remove the burden of religion from their mind. But later on Indian writing in English shows its remarkable existence. Indian writing in English in the Contemporary literary Scenario enjoys equal status with the literatures of the other Countries. Indian writers have made their voice heard around the World in the Indian way, expressing too artistically. Contemporary generation writers have concentrated their themes around sociological, Diasporic elements, feminine subjects, science and technologies, explorative writings, and much more. Modern writing in Indian English has created a significant impact on the contemporary generation but still it is under the shadow of regionalism.

As far as Indian literature is concerned, it has perhaps been easier for these first and second generation writings to reflect the new challenges and changes because of the simple fact that its vehicle itself is a globalised language. Again, the writers of the new generation have

mostly been a part of the Indian diaspora. Living in the west, and using English almost like a mother tongue, they have been thoroughly exposed to significant modern western literary movements like Post-Modernism, and to various narrative techniques like magic realism. This has enabled them to give a fresh orientation.

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