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Globalisation in 21st Century Indian English Poetry

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Abstract - Poetry is regarded as a powerful form of literature. Although English poetry has a very rich and long tradition, the history of English poetry rooted in Indian environment is not very old. 175-200 years of short Indian English poetry had to go through many transitions. The early Indian English poetry was influenced by the poetry of poets of high standards like Shakespeare, Keats, Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, Milton, Yeats, Elist etc. The progress of English poetry in India was somewhat stumbling in the beginning. Early Indian English poetry touched many topics like Indianness, patriotism, slavery, war, genocide mythology God, faith etc. today many topics of international level have entered in it and globalisation is one of them. The period of globalisation is the period after 1990. Today the entire world has found itself in the grip of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. How can India and its literary field remain well apart from it? Majority of Indian English poets reside in urban India. The Chief aim of this research paper is to trace the poetry of these metropolitan Indian English poets in the 21st century and highlight their understanding of modernity, globalisation and other themes of their poetry.

Keywords: Globalisation, liberalisation, privatisation, literature, metropolitan

Introduction:

In the context of globalisation, it is often said that the world has become a global village or the world has come closer to us. The concept of globalisation is a multifaceted and wide ranging concept. Globalisation is the process of transferring local goods or events to global level. "Globalisation is an expansion of economic activities across the political boundaries of nation states."¹ Although, this term is mostly used in relation to economic globalisation, globalisation is seen to affect all sectors of the world. Globalisation means spreading something all over the world and to think broadly of the whole world or all the people of the world at once. Globalisation is a broad concept characterized by increasing socio-economic, industrial, cultural relations among people living in different areas of the world. Globalisation has taught us to think holistically about the whole world. "Globalisation is inevitable in today's world and we have to prepare ourselves for the challenges and opportunities it offers. In other words, it can be said that globalisation is a universal process. No country is exception of this process and so is India."² "Globalisation has enriched human ideology by increasing the sense of humanity worldview and universal brotherhood. The experiences became global. New knowledge and new ideas emerged. This globalisation has left its footprints in all fields. On one hand, the rise

of globalisation began to shake the tightly knit traditions and customs of Indian culture, while on the other hand, the great culture of India came to the world through globalisation.

Both literature and culture are interconnected with each other and they have not been isolated from the impact of globalisation. On the contrary, globalisation is a major topic reflected in the literature in almost all the major languages of the world. Today's new generation of Indian English poets recognized the steps of changing times and wrote poetry of the different forms of the changed world. After the 1990's, a flurry of privatisation, liberalisation and globalisation began. Life received extraordinary speed. Science and information technology started making the world a huge village. In the process of globalisation, the people living in metropolitan cities, urban, semi-urban areas, rural areas have undergone decisive changes in their occupations, means of livelihood, their ways of living and thinking. We are living in an uneasy age of increased chauvinism, criminality the waning of love in the human race and the ebb in the flow of kindness. But even in this troubled present, the sun of tomorrow will surely rise with the rays of freedom, compassion and affection. After seeing today's Indian poets writing in English language who write poems of rich content, we can positively yearn for the rays of hope for bright future of Indian English literature.

We have embraced globalisation. The dreams of development were shown. But the real effects of globalisation are now visible. The gap between rich and the poor has widened. New inequalities are being born. A system that exploits the common man and renders him non-existent is complicating the problems of common man's survival. Confusion arises as to whether globalisation is beneficial or detrimental. The benefits of globalisation are visible, the conveniences are visible. India has made spectacular progress in various fields on the strength of information technology and science. From all these aspects, the picture of development stands before our eyes. But along with that, the hearts of sensitive poets who have experienced one or more harsh realities such as unemployment, ill health, miseries of farmers, government system that cripples the education sector, brought to the world by globalisation seen to be expressed in their poetry. If we consider the English poetry of Indians as a whole, it seems that the effects of different events and situations arising from time to time are reflected in Indian English poetry. If we look back at Indian English poetry, we can see that from the earliest poetry to the present day in the 21st century, every phase reflects that era. This poetry seems to be more and more enriched with new experiences and experiments. This poetry is continuously seen depicting the social life with a new world of experience, new world of senses and new content. Globalization has in fact made Indian English poetry more dynamic and brought Indian literature and culture to the world stage.

Indian English Poetry till 1990

The writings of poets who are Indian but who write poetry in English language is called as Indian English poetry. In the middle of the 19th century the roots of Indian English poetry sought during the colonial era. By evolving experiences and intermediacy of time, this poetry experimented Indian multiculturalism and diversity. From the earlier phase, this poetry enjoyed diversity of subject matter. All time popular themes like nationalism, identity, social justice, inequality, love, relationships, cultural heritage, customs and traditions were the themes present in early Indian English poetry also. Colonialism introduced English to Indians and today English has become an integral part of our lives. 1850-1900 is the early period of Indian English poetry.

This period seems to have been more influenced by the romantic poets like Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley Keats etc. Henry Derozio, a poet of the first half of the 19th century, is said to be the first Indian English poet. The major poets of this first phase are Henry Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Manmohan Ghoshe and Toru Dutt. These poets celebrated nature, love in their poetry. These poets immortalized many heroes and famous characters of India's history through their poetry. Some poets started raising mild voices against British slavery. "In post-colonial writing greater emphasis was put on the process of colonization and an attempt was made to record strong resistance to the masters of the colonized societies and commenting on contemporary realities of life"³

1901-1950 is considered as the second phase of Indian English poetry. During this period too, the poets had romantic qualities. But during this phase the poets created more and more poems on patriotism, spirituality and mysticism. Poets like Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Aurobindo Ghose, Chattopadhyay were influential during this period. Sarojini Naidu, who also had a good knowledge of Urdu and Persian poetry, wrote beautiful lyrics in English as well and was called as the 'Nightingale of India' due to the musical quality of her poetry. Many of second phase poets wrote poems commenting on India's troubled present. Gradually breaking away from the romanticism of the early poetry, the poets of this period wrote poetry with a new breath, a language of facing new challenges and ready to fight for existence. But after 1950s means post-independence India, English, poetry started actually flourishing. After independence, Indians became aware of their national existence, self-power and self-confidence that they are capable of commenting on the past, future and present. "Famous English poets such as W.B. Yeats; T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, Ezra Pound were popular and influential in the English literary world. Modern Indian English poets made even more experimental during this period.⁴ "Urbanization, industrialization, independence, social change, T.V. media, films, radio etc. revolutions led to the emergence of new culture in India. Poetry was written during this period mainly in free verse. Poets deliberately ignored rhyming, metrical as well as stanzaic form of poetry. A.K. Ramanujan, Dom Moraes, Nissim Ezekiel, Adil Jussawalla, R. Parthasarathy, Jayant Mahapatra, Pritish Nandy, Kamala Das, Keki Daruwalla, Shivkumar, Dilip Chitre, Meena Alexander, Agha Shahid Ali, Vikram Shetty, J. Krishnamurti, Humayun Kabir, Arun Kolatkar, Manohar Shetty, Menka Shivdasani, Tara Pattel, Raja Rao, are the famous poets of this second phase. This poetry differs from the early English poetry. India's independence sets this poetry apart. Many benefits conferred by independence led the masses to a life of happiness and prosperity. The panorama of development in the 21st century started showing their existence in the second half of the 20th century. In the 21st century, the field of literature has developed like any other field." The Indian literature of 21st century has undergone phenomenal changes in recent times. Although with the advent of technology, the brilliance of Indian literature has waned considerably."⁵

Poets writing in 21st Century

Post-1990's post-modern English poetry in India started a new trend in Indian literature. In the post 1990's era privatization, globalisation and liberalization have changed the face of the entire world. Human life became commoditized and commercialized. Globalisation had major economic, social and political effects on social life. At the same time, it has had deep and far-reaching effects on human culture and values of our country. A chauvinistic and moderately dominant culture has reduced the morals of man. Communication, intimacy,

interest, humanity, morality have been lost. Autistic, selfish, senseless mentality prevailed everywhere. On one hand, huge development, money and on other hand, increasing poverty and loneliness have lost the health of life. In today's most complicated times, people are confused, helpless and demoralized in the decline of values. The reflection of all these aspects is strongly visible in the poetry of today's 21st century. The restless sensibility of metropolitan life is strongly conveyed in today's Indian English poetry. The characteristics of the poetry of all these globalists can be seen clearly in the poetry of Saleem Peerdina, Santan Rodrigues, Ranjit Hoskote, Vinita Agarwal, Kirti Sengupta, Sharmila Ray, Sanjukta Dasgupta, Sanjeev Sethi, Sudeep Sen, Gopal Lahiri, Tishani Doshi, Ravishankar, Kushal Poddar, Linda Ashok, Srividya Shivkumar, Nitoo Das, Amit Shankar Saha, Meena Kandasamy, Melanie Silgado, Bibhu Padhi, Sujatha Bhatt, Sanjeer Bhatla, Tabish Khair, Jeet Thagil, Vijay Nambison these poets today.

Although many of these Indian English poets are important and have lived for a few years in the 21st century, the globalisation of their poetry has been not studied in this article as their collections of poetry have not been published in 21st century. Poems by the poets whose anthologies have been published in 21st century and the poets who are still alive and writing poetry are considered here. Needless to say, this is a limitation of this paper. This group of new poets of 21st century is seen to be facing the challenges of the new era and embracing all that is beautiful in the new world. These poets are writing poetry in a style that is conducive to Indianness by breaking the chains of English. Just as poets like Nissim Ezekiel used English words that are not found in English dictionary like Gunda, babu, pan etc. Many poets today are using some words from their own language in their English poetry. If not globalisation, what can we call it? These poets developed their own poetic vision and focused on depicting life experiences without blind imitation of the predecessors. Globalisation has affected literature, society and culture. And the combined effect of all these is the literature of the 21st century. The most powerful form of literature is poetry. The significant changes of this new world are reflected spontaneously and powerfully in their poetry. "No doubt, globalisation affected literature, society, culture etc worldwide and literature is capable of influencing the changing mindset of a changing society of all ages."⁶

Globalisation has given rise to many innovations. It has an impact on international affairs, politics, economy, society, culture and human relations too. As well, the task of stirring the psyche of the people and forcing them to adopt innovations originated from many effects of globalisation. Today's Indian English poetry is coloured with many contemporary issues, struggles and pathetic events that have arisen in this new era. Today's poets have started expressing their feelings in clear and direct prosaic style rather than narrating the pains and sufferings in metrical form. It will be better to today's poetry has preserved the sensitivity more than the rhythm of poetry. As mentioned above, some Indian English poets lived for a few years in the 21st century but as their collections of poetry were not published in the 21st century, the poetry of poets like Agha Shahid Ali, Kamala Das, Nissim Ezekiel, P. Lal, Santan Rodrigues, Adil Jussawalla, Meena Alexander is not considered in this paper.

Vijay Nambisan and Jeet Thayil won the hearts of the readers with their sensitive minds touching of numerous question of the 21st century in their jointly published book of poetry "Gemini." Jeet Thayil's "Jeet Thayil's Collected Poems" and "These Errors Are Correct" and Vijay Nambisan's "These were My Home" reflect their understanding of human suffering. Poet Tabish Khair, in his collection " "First Infinite" describes his migration to Europe, his longing for homeland, the blurred existence of those who have migrated from India to abroad, their intrusion and expresses the effects of migration that has become common in globalisation. Poetess Sujatha Bhatt championed feminism. Her poetry on 21st century's inter-personal relations and inter-cultural relations and various social issues became popular. In ""Living with Lorenzo" and "The Games Heart Must Play", "Bibhu Padhi, a poet from Odisha, wrote poetry on various themes like nature, peace of mind, society, politics, religion and provided food for thought to the readers. Melanie Silgado , a poetess from Goa cited the writings of many women in her collection of poetry. " This poetess also hits hard on my the various vices of the modern age. Meena Kandasamy, in her collections " "Ms. Militancy " "Tomorrow Someone will Arrest You", gave a to her revolutionary thoughts issues related to caste, gender untouchability etc. Poet Amit Shankar Saha in his anthologies "Balconies of Time" and " Illicit Poems" pointed out the limitations of globalisation mentioning the rampant corruption, injustice, immorality and arbitrariness in the changed Indian society

Poet, Nitoo Das presented nature, feminism in her poetry collections like "Boki" "Cyborg proverbs" and the confusion of mind while adjusting to the age evas presented in a striking way through her poetry. Srividya Sivkumar also reiterated women empowerment through the anthology "The Blue Note". She commented on the stifling of women in a male dominated culture. The poems written by the intelligent poet Linda Ashoka are having scientific point of view. In her "Whorelight", "Waiting for Helicopter", "Sharpless 29" she tries to invent a new humanistic culture by looking at culture, religion, spirituality from a scientific point of view. In "The Dance of the Peacock" poet Gopi Kattoor comments on the diasporic India, the brain drain from India to abroad, the permanence of nature, the human life and various human instincts.

Jayant Mahapatra, a famous Oriya poet, in his collections of poems like "Random Descent", "Noon: New and Selected poems" touched upon many themes such as the problems faced by the underprivileged in the world, fragile human relations, corruption in modern times, the need of morality. Society, human nature, patriotism etc. Keki Darwala addressed the religious sentiments of Indians in his anthologies like "Night River" Collected Poems". He also expressed concern about the brain drain of the Indians to foreign countries and the damage caused to India due to this brain drainage. Gieve Patel expressed the social inequality, pains and sufferings of the Parsi community through poetry. Arvind mehrotra in his poetry elaborated modernity, tradition, interplay between local and global.

Poet Shiv K. Kumar presented the real contemporary India before the world in his "Losing My Way", "Which of My Selves Do You wish to speak to" vulnerability of human life, depression, modern life. East-West conflict are frequently mentioned in his poetry. Saleem Peerdina wrote poetry in conversational style. In his anthology of poetry "Heart's Beast", he satirized the modern era and modern lifestyle. Manohar Shetty in his books of poetry "Morning Lights" "Personal Effects" depicts disillusionment, loss, sex" violence, bloodshed, the world of birds and animals better than human's world through his poetry and asserts that the

world needs peace. Vikram Seth one of the few poets who elevated Indian English poetry to international level, gave importance to rhythm in poetry in his anthology "Summer Requiem: Book of Poems." He believes that musicality is important in poetry. He opposes the prosaic poetry that is becoming popular in the world. R. Parthasarathy, a poet with a humanist approach to life, in his collection of poems called "Rough Passage" expresses concern over the current unrest by describing various incidents of cultural conflicts, oppression of migrants abroad, exploitation in the world. Poet like Dilip Chitre expressed the miserable state of alienation, exile, isolation man made world in his poetry. "As Is Where Is". In his poem "Bombay Poem" he expresses the sad consequences of globalization and says that Bombay is like a living human being but it is marked by decay, poverty and harshness. Arun Kolatkar expresses the ill effects of globalization and metropolitan life in his anthologies "Kala Ghoda" and "Sarpasatra". Arun Kolatkar is famous as a poet who addresses the world by referring to Indian history, geography, culture and legends.

A noted poet Ranjit Hoskote criticizes the tendency to forget Indian culture and adopt modern thinking. In his "Zones of Assault", "Central Time", "Sleepwalker's Archieve" he dealt with the topics like post-colonial Indian society, displacement, transformation, cross time, wars of identity and criticized the moral decline and degradation of modern India. Menka Shivdasani, the poetess of "stet" wrote poetry on urban life, alienation of the people, human life sufferings, disillusionment, conflict between tradition and modernity and gained great popularity. Vinita Agrawal is one of the strongest voices in literature for women's empowerment in the 21st century. Her anthologies "Silk of Hunger," "Longest Pleasure" are important in the world of literature which includes themes like women empowerment, women's struggle for existence, death etc. Kirti Sengupta, who became popular with the anthologies like "Oneness", "Water Has Many Colours", wrote many poems touching on the topics of human - nature relationship, spirituality, life, social commitment etc. Even in the 21st century, caste system, untouchability and religious heterogeneity prevail in our India. Many Indian English poets presented this terrible social reality of India in their poetry. One of such poets is poetess Sharmila Ray. In her anthologies "Scrawls and Scribbles" "Varanasi Within Varanasi", she dealt with the woes of the marginalised class, Indian social system entrenched with inequality, religion and exploitation of the downtrodden. Sanjukta Dasgupta is one of these leading poets who commented on such social system. She expressed the pains of Indian untouchables, the suppressed and oppressed sections of society in her anthologies like "Poems" "Indomitable Draupadi!" She advocated feminism and used many Indian and foreign myths in her poetry.

Sanjeev Sethi, an important poet, in his collection of poems "Wrappings in Bespoke," wrote poems on the burning issues of superstitious Indian society, bigotry, inequality and the usual caste-religion conflicts. Poet Sandeep Sen has written striking poems on love, art, myths, politics; death etc. in his anthology "Constant Uneasiness with Legacy of Art". Gopal Lahiri has poignantly commented on the changed social life due to globalisation, liberalisation privatization in his book of poetry "Fugitive Words" "Orphan Smile"! He created poetry that tells the philosophy of life, expresses love and unconditional love, has affinity for anonymity and is full of mysticism. Tishani Doshi is a notable poetess of this period. She has expressed her feelings of immigration, human struggles, loneliness in the modern era through her poetry "A God at Door" and "Countries of Body" In the anthologies like "Durable Transit" and "Many Uses of Mint" she expresses her love for homeland, the feelings of displacement, diaspora asserting that there can be no other place of residence like

motherland. A budding poet Kushal Poddar who has emerged as a good poet in a short period of time expressed his feeling on the transience of life and death in his anthology. "A Place For Your Ghost Animals". His poems have got a contemplative vision of people's religious naivety, superstitions, falsity behind religious rituals, heresies and the reality of social life.

Conclusion:

Globalisation has been adopted by Indian English poetry and along with metropolitan poets, poets living in semi-urban and rural areas of India have sensitively dealt with globalisation and its effects in their poetry. Globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation changed common man's life style. A gap between rich and poor has been created in our country. Trade and industries were boosted due to open economy. Jobs were created in the cities. The educated youth preferred to rush to the cities for employment. A large number of educated people, who felt that they were not getting opportunities suitable for them in India, went abroad. Brain drain took place. People who went abroad and served there, adopted new lifestyle there but the love of motherland always remained close to their hearts. Due to globalisation metropolitan area increased. Population increased. It is no longer a situation where everyone will get employment. Morality and humanity have fallen in this modern age. No matter how much the information technology and science age has developed, the conflict between caste-religion, ethics, people's struggle to survive, people's lost sensitivity, the chaotic atmosphere etc. have become the main themes of Indian English poetry in 21st century. It is clear as the sunlight that this poetry will continue to search for true humanity in the modern age where humanity has been lost in the grip of globalisation. It is certainly true that Indian English literature has a valuable contribution to world literature. In the age of globalisation, the geographical boundaries are blurring and a new world culture is about to take root. Before 1990, Indian writers were writing literature keeping in mind the minds of Indian readers. The contemporary Indian English literature has a readership not only from India but from all over the world and this is certainly a positive thing for the bright future of Indian English literature.

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