



Oct-Nov—2009

GLOBALIZATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

**Dr. Amar Singh*

***HOD, Department of Economics, Art, Commerce & Science College, Borsad, Gujarat**

ABSTRACT

Most commonly globalization means the removal of national boundaries as impediments to the free flow of capital, of goods, of service. The entire system is crafted, of course, mostly by and for the great multinational corporations who are increasingly in the business of raising capital in one part of the world, investing it in another, to produce something that can be sold in a third. Any great imperial system is always accompanied by declaration of noble purpose. 19th century colonialism was justified as the white man's burden; the Soviet grip on Eastern Europe was justified as upholding the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; likewise the rule of the multinational, the new imperialists of our age, is justified as leveling the international playing field and allowing fair competition.

Languages and literature are important for human beings for two reasons: one, it gives them a sense of identity; two its utility. Naturally, a global language – multinational language is more useful than Indian languages. There are many of us worldwide who are working to maintain diversity, working to confirm the wisdom of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o dictum: "real unity of cultures and species is found in their diversity". This vision is diametrically opposed to a monolingual world view. The words of a Danish linguist are pertinent here. "Learn many languages but do not forget your own". The word 'globalization' sprang from the economic world and slowly percolated to all other spheres of life. The concept came from the developed nations to justify the expanse and reach of multinational companies. Globalization stands for open competition in market, liberal policies and free trade. This phenomenon has immense implications. First and foremost, it has inherent structures of hierarchy. The 'centre' lies with the West. It establishes the superiority of Western things like advanced technology, money, cut-throat competition, nuclear families, success at any rate etc. It sidelines Eastern concepts like joint family

system, peace of mind, mutual trust, spirituality and the art of enjoying life. The race of globalization is blind. By impact, globalization swallows other cultures. It promotes one culture- culture of utter hunger, display and 'tamsik' pleasures. Globalization kills plurality. It finishes the romance, the mystery of life. Everything gets reduced to pay package, hotel living, canned MNC food, rapid technological changes and fast changing paradigms. Nothing remains certain.

**These are suffocating times for poetry.
This city breathes me in and out.
Everyday the buildings crawl higher
Concrete weeds breaking through the sky.
Their glass eye blink hungrily,
Their skin silicon smooth.
Slowly they stretch their long tentacles
Towards the light.
The massage parlours tumble over
Each other.
The chaos of cotton candy, t-shirts,
Buddhas,
Girls in tight skirts who trade in smiles,
Fried insects, warm beer. ¹**

Globalization has basically resulted in mental conflict. The comforts of modern life are alluring. But the loss is also heavy. Globalization has become a necessary evil. It is a dragon we ourselves do not want to get rid of. We all know and realize that we cannot go on exploiting the natural resources forever. We also know that there is a limit up to which we can accelerate the pace and stress of life. There have to be reins over ambition. Life has become more questions and less answers.

The problems in today's world are that everyone is uprooted and 'unrooted'. We do not have loyalties like we had in the world of village and clans. The globe has become a village. The whole world is ours but we belong nowhere. I think it is our collective psyche of thousands of centuries in which we enjoyed settled and secure lives that haunt us. We are scared to go back to nomadic ways. It is true that advancement in technology is not synonymous with sensitivity. Our savage instincts are very much at the fore. The poetic soul does not want to leave the world of chivalry, magnanimity, love, sacrifice and beauty. The globalized soul craves for instant gratification, quick success, fast revenge and short-term relationships. This is the paradox of modern life. Poetry is to feel the beauty of Nature, innocence, childhood, loneliness and struggle. Poetry does not come in a ready-made two-minutes package. Poetry is not manicured. Poetry is not hiding savage instincts. Poetry worth being called poetry is pure, honest and sincere. Poetry can be in words. Poetry can be there in deeds. Poetry can be there in a person. One has to be true.

The problem with today's world is that everyone has become diplomatic. We all lead correct lives. We have mastered the art of showing a perfect face. This is the life that most of us are living – absolutely show-cased, absolutely dry-washed, starched and presentable. As far as, going beneath the surface is concerned, Auden has already declared that the question is absurd.

Honestly speaking, I don't think that today those who are writing poetry or those who are reading it attach much importance to it. There used to be times when poetry changed the world, dethroned kings and inspired revolutions. It is no longer so. Traditionally, much value is associated with literature, especially poetry. Umberto Eco calls literature an

'intangible power' and says, '... literature keeps language alive as our collective heritage ... literature creates a sense of identity and community'²

Today, it does not appear that people take things in earnest. The world is governed by huge economic powers. The voice of the poet is frail before the cacophony of the globalized world. We may say that the conflicts and melancholy of modern life find full expression in today's poems. But at the same time, this expression has not been able to change much. Poetry does change individual hearts but the larger scenario seems to be beyond the poetic powers. This, of course, is not due to any fault of poetry or poets. The reason is the reign of falsehood. We do not want to look what we are. There is immense pretension. Everything is false – love, admiration, fame, success, money. There is purposelessness. I wish to quote a poem written about a very famous actor.

**He arrived in style, to the delight of the press,
The paparazzi, as usual, were complimenting his dress.**

**The crowd exclaimed, 'He's so fair!'
And then they added, 'We love your hair'.**

**The man blew kisses out of passion,
To the people who adored his fashion.**

**He stood tall amongst all like a player,
And everybody there, admired his hair.**

**A woman jumped from the crowd,
She wanted to marry him, she
Screamed aloud.**

**She also said they'd make a great pair,
And yes, she loved his hair.**

**Finally, when the actor reached his home,
He wept like a child when he was alone.**

**He touched his head, remembering the
crowd's jig.**

And lastly he removed his WIG.³

Salutation in morning and at night to thee, O Narmada,

Defend me from the serpent's poison.

Jan Aart Scholte states that "**Globalization stands out for quite a large public spread across the world as one of the terms of late twentieth century social consciousness**".

If we go to scrutinize the impact of globalization on literature, we shall find its gradual develop-

ment in many period of time. It has a motivating power. It has made the writers wide and free thinker they met one another and exchanged their views. We are not blind to get glory and spots of literatians through their composition. It can develop social theme in the mind of modern literarians. We get vivid impact of globalization on literature during two eventual centuries and in geographical space we get a crystal clear example of it. The former Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi, had stated- "Education is a liberating force and in our age it is also democratizing force cutting across the barriers of caste and class something out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances."

Literature is like an infections disease, so the impact of globalization is guide obvious. Literature relates one person to another one country to another. We find that before globalization it had not a vast area. The writer like John Galsworthy has started to write the plays upon the new stage which is desperately based on social problem. The liberty from communalism, and the relation between industrialists and the worker he also considered a great impact of globalization on literature.

The impact of globalization is so wide, that even a single part of the world is not untouched from it. Today it is due to globalization that various languages of different countries have been prescribed for teaching from primary level to higher level. Today, our Indian philosophy, and ancient literature have got a higher place among the other languages.

The rapid development of technology has brought the people closer. Internet, mobile phone, and fax facility have done a revolutionary change in the world. We can consult directly to the various faculties related to subject and literatures.

So, I like to start the analysis of the whole process from two statements. One is the national policy statement made by the former President of India, K.R. Narayanan, and the other a statement by Ninan Koshy. The President in his 2001 Republic Day address said, "Our three-way fast lane of liberalization, privatization, and globalization must provide safe pedestrian crossings for the unempowered India also so that it could move towards 'equality of status and opportunity'". "Ninan Koshy, in his book on Globalization states, "Globalization promotes inequality, unrest, conflict ...

economic inequality is greening : more conflicts and civil wars are emerging. It is important to see a connection between these two situations." ⁴

Dr. Radhkrishnan Commission for the University Education in its report had stated "that for the medium of instruction for higher education English be replaced as early as practicable by the Indian language which cannot be Sanskrit on account of vital difficulties". Also, "Higher education is imparted through the instrumentality of the regional language with the option to use the Federal language as the medium of instruction either for some subjects or for all subjects" and "that English be studied in high schools and in the Universities in order that we may keep in touch with the living stream of ever-growing knowledge." ⁵

The Judiciary in India has adjudicated on the question of what medium of instruction should be employed at different stages of education, and the number and the language (s) to be taught, since decades. The legal discourse during these decades did not go beyond the Fundamental Rights, Minority Rights, and the Rights of the State to make law relating to language issue, etc., as elaborated in the Constitution of India.

Our main concern is to examine the global impact on literary-cultural flowing across the globe. Literary-culture, because of its interconnections and interdependence, lies at the very heart of contemporary globalization. Civilizational exchanges affect the making of literature, and today's literature is the product of acute ideological-war. Every section of society has joined in the war of ideas. No one is ready to miss the chance of self-identification. This is not the time of compromise but of struggle and strife. Under the influence of globalization Man has become selfish, corrupt, self centered and lonely. Individual interest has become more important than social-interest. Powers centers are on the verge of shattering. This is a time of the decentralization and disbelief. This is such a time 'where things fall apart, center cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.' Each group based on certain caste and creed, norms and values, wants to present in the public with a circumscribed agenda of things. They want everyone to view life according to their perspective. Mr. Arnold felt :

“The deliverance consists in man’s comprehension of his present and past. It begins when our mind begins to enter into possession of the general ideas, which are the law of this vast multitude of facts. It is perfect when we have acquired that harmonious acquiescence of mind, which we feel in contemplating a grand spectacle that is intelligible to us.”⁶

Dalit literature, a literature of the untouchables, began in Maharashtra. It is a protest literature against all forms of exploitation based on caste, class, race or occupation. Dalit is Marathi for ‘the spurned’. This term was first used for the untouchables in India in 1930 and later on started as a movement in western India in 1960s and spread all over the globe like petrol fire. One thing is clear in Dalit literature that the sufferings and differences it delineates are not of any individual but of the downtrodden class.

In Dalit literature a few sensitive writers draw the attention of the other by delineating the sufferings of downtrodden people. They want to win sympathy of the rich for the untouchable. But most of the Dalit writers of this day are burning in the fire of revenge against ‘Savarna’, therefore Dalit literature has become a revengeful literature. So the hope to patch up the differences between ‘Savarna’ and ‘Avarna’ has gone away. This literature is simply deepening the trench of differences between the two –oppressors and oppressed. The anger of revenge is reflected in ‘You wrote from Los Angeles’ by Daya Pawar :

**‘In the stores here, in hotels, about the streets,
‘Niggers ! Blacks!’ this is the abuse they fling on me
Reading all this, I felt so damn !
Now you have had a taste of what we have suffered
In this country from generation to generation.’**

In context of Dalit literature, a book, Joothan -written by Om Prakash Valmiki must be in the center of discussion, where there ‘is a searing memoir of the life of a sensitive and intelligent youth, (Valmiki).’ The story depicts contempt, exploitation, violence, poverty, hidden sex-culture, and revenge motive in their challenging and aggressive ways. This work can be called as an authentic picture of a poor person in modern India. Can it be called a true literature ? Can such writing unite us ?

Like Dalit literature, feminist literature is also in its aggressive mood and calling. No doubt for the rights of the women, different forums-social political-psychological-have been raising their voices boldly. In 1960s, giving a call for liberation of women from certain forms of gender based discriminations, a political movement gathered momentum. John Stuart Mill believed that ‘the liberty of the individual is absolutely necessary for the development of society’ and he suggested women’s freedom as an essential condition. Simone De Beauvoir is regarded to have pioneered the feminist standpoint boldly and logically in her ‘The Second Sex’.

The social, political and economic status of Dalits and women must be raised collectively in a sympathetic manner. But this writing may be dalit oriented; it is definitely not literary. No doubt, it is an excellent thing to aim at being sellable, readable and interesting and all literary writers would keep this aim in sight but the popularist is often highly tempted to be merely popular and showy and therefore his writing always leads to slang sensationalism, sexuality and vulgarity. We should keep in mind that good literary writing always has cultural synthesis and harmony of its own. Triviality and literature do not go together.

R E F E R E N C E

1. MANNIX, Aoife.2007. ‘Construction’ in Asian Journal of literature, Culture and Society. Assumption University, Bangkok. Vol.01 No. 02 Oct. 2007. 75 2. Eco, Umberto. 2005. On Literature. London : Vintage Books.2-3. 3. An unpublished poem ‘Actor’ of my son, Tanmay Tiwari, studying in class XII, B, Jyoti Sr. Sec. School, Rewa, (M.P.) India. 4. Ninan Koshy (ed), Globalization-The Imperial Thrust of Modernity. 2002, Vikas Adyayana Kendra, Mumbai. 5. Report of the University Education Commission, Nov. 4, 1948. New Delhi. 6. Y.F.T. Comberlege, Several Essays (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1983), P.90