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Reviewing English Literary Studies in India

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Literary studies is generally conceived as a “systematic” study of literary texts. It is systematic in the sense that here one gets an idea on how to explore the different literary aspects of texts under the scrutiny. The literary texts that are selected for this purpose are believed as an acclaimed repository of aesthetic value. The teaching of literary texts in an academic setup was a western phenomenon and was envisioned to prove cultural superiority. Apart from highlighting the cultural traditions of a country, it projected the cultural elitism of the country. In the ancient and medieval India, the literary texts were meant for entertainment or moral education of the citizens. They were not intended to be studied in classroom. Of course, there were some important discourses that facilitated systematic study of literary texts, but no formal teaching of literary texts took place in those days. Gunadhya's *Brhatkatha*, Bana's *Kadambari* and *Harsacanita*, Subandhu's *Vasavadatta*, *Panchtantra* and many other literary texts were intended either for entertainment or for moral teaching. The role of different discourses like Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyaloka* and others was to expedite literary studies.

Under the impact of western civilisation, the formal teaching of English literary texts started in the colonial India under the pretexts of enriching English language among the culturally “backward” masses of India. More specifically the teaching of English literary texts was a colonial scheme to westernise Indian mind by proving the cultural superiority of the west over India. Indian scholars could realise this function of English studies in India and advocated for its expulsion if it were to colonise the Indian mind. Mahatma Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* (1909) was perhaps the first nationalistic rejection of English studies since it believed that “to give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them. The foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us. I do not suggest that he has any such intention, but that has been the result” (Gandhi 2010: 73). However, English studies continued in the colonial India and the postcolonial India. The colonial agenda of English literary studies came to front with the publication of Gauri Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquests: Literary Study and British Rule in India* in 1990 that made the Indian scholars to announce a crisis in English literary studies. The book opened up the discussion on the social-cultural functions of

English in India. It was followed by some seminal texts on the cultural implications of English studies in India such as Svati Joshi's *Rethinking English: Essays in Literature, Language, History* (1991), Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan's *The Lie of the Land: English Literary Studies in India* (1992), Sudhakar Marathe's *Provocations: The Teaching of English Literature in India* (1993), Susie Tharu's *Subject to Change: Teaching Literature in Nineties* (1998) and others. The "crisis" was more an imitation of the American academia that witnessed the social-cultural challenges to the teaching of literary studies. The crisis originated from the ideological upheaval found in the three areas of literary studies: (i) English literary studies in the previously colonised countries still continued as an apparatus of cultural hegemony and was the facilitator of Macaulayan agenda, (ii) the challenges to the "European White dead males" became often due to the rising pro-feminist praxis, and (iii) the racist model of the western academy was replaced with the caste-based model in India and claiming of equal representation of the marginalised groups-castes in the syllabi of literary studies. Nevertheless, due to the postcolonial temperament the crisis was presented as a crisis of culture intrusion.

The departments of English in the Indian universities anticipated this crisis as a problem caused by the western cultural imposition and they engaged in decolonising the syllabus of postgraduate English literary studies. They thought that the inclusion of the non-British texts in the MA (English) syllabi would serve their intention. Hence, they introduced the non-British texts in the syllabus of postgraduate study in English. They also formed a canon of Indian English literature by introducing the Indian writers writing in English. The departments of English of the Indian universities which resolved to solve the crisis in English literary studies still struggles a lot, but the crisis has not still ended. A study of the present scenario of English literary studies in the Indian universities hints at two important facts: first, despite numerous attempts to end-up this crisis, the departments of English are still inclined towards the British literary texts, and second, the departments of English, in their attempts of forbidding the colonial and racial model of literary studies espoused by the western literary texts, have promoted the caste-religion-based model in the English literary studies in India. The present paper proves these facts based on data available on the English literary studies in India.

(i)

A study of the syllabi of MA (English) course in the departments of English in the fourteen Indian universities prescribed from 2010 to 2014 suggests that the growing ‘canon concerns’ in the foreign universities have encouraged the Indian universities for the canonical revision of the syllabus¹. This led to the inclusion of many national canons like American, Canadian, Australian, Indian, etc., along with gender-caste-region-based canons into the syllabi of English at postgraduate level. A monograph, entitled “*Whose Curriculum is this Anyway?*” – *Interpretations of Intentions* (2014), suggests that many Indian universities are still obsessed with the western literary texts. The following table on the numbers of the British and the non-British fictions from this monograph hints at the fact that despite abundant efforts the departments of English have failed to decolonise the literary syllabi for the postgraduate studies in India (Luhar 2014: 43):

Table 1: British and Non-British Fictions in the Indian University Syllabi

University*	British	American	Non-British**	Indian	Indian (in translation)
AUV	16	10	19	16	03
KUW	11	11	17	10	02
BUC	10	03	01	01	00
MANUU	14	05	03	04	03
OUH	12	04	07	06	02
GDUA	08	02	05	04	02
KUD	04	05	03	07	07
KUK	14	07	08	11	01

NEHUS	17	08	08	07	07
PUC	08	02	05	03	01
PUP	03	00	02	02	03
CUK	20	12	23	05	04
UJJ	15	08	06	07	00
UKS	12	05	02	06	01
<i>Total</i>	164	72	109	89	36
* Please refer to “Notes 1” for the full name of the universities.					
** It suggests the writers other than the British, the American, and the Indian.					

Table 1 clearly suggests that though the departments of English of the Indian universities have accommodated the numerous literary texts from the different countries like England, Ireland, America, Canada, Australia, Germany, Russia, India, and others, the English literary studies in India is still dominated by the British literary texts. In India, English literary studies has become an equivalent to the British literary Studies. Around one-third (34.89 per cent) of the total fictions are the British. The British and the American fictions together occupy half of the total fictions introduced in the MA (English) syllabi. The non-British fictions occupy 23.19 per cent share. The share of 18.93 per cent is given to Indian English fiction. If one combines the numbers of Indian English fictions and Indian fictions in English translation, this share reaches up to 26.59 per cent. This statistics suggests that the departments of English are still engaged in preserving the canon formed by the “white European males”. These observations make it clear that the departments of English of the Indian universities have also formed the canon of Indian English literature. Seemingly, the departments of English are balancing the numbers of literary texts in literary curricula by accommodating the literary texts in English and in English translation. Apart from the Indian texts, the Russian,

the German, the French, and other world classics are introduced in English translations, but not at the expense of the British literary texts.

Certain observations on the present scenario of English literary studies in India are deplorable. Much of the universities have not yet decided the teaching-learning objectives. There is no model guideline for the design of the syllabus of the MA (English) course. The University Grants Commission (UGC), which is considered the highest authority of designing the model syllabi for various subjects at graduate-postgraduate level, has not updated the model curriculum for English studies for a long time. The modal syllabus that the UGC has proposed is out-dated. Each university decides its own syllabus. It is good that UGC has given sovereignty to the university departments of English of preparing their own syllabi, even though there must be a well-defined guideline or framework according to which the university departments should design their syllabi. Due to the unavailability of fixed guideline, the syllabus of one university department defers from the other. The marks-weight or the credit for each paper-course differs from university to university. The total numbers of papers introduced in the MA (English) programme varies from sixteen to twenty-one. This indicates that this decentralisation of syllabi forms the hierarchy among the universities. This also affects to the quality (in terms of knowledge) of students as well. In the university departments where more papers for English studies are offered, it may be possible that the students of those university departments would possess more knowledge than the university departments wherein less numbers of the papers are introduced.

It is perceptible that the departments of English are interested in highlighting the 'region' where there are located by introducing the texts from their area. Many university departments have introduced the regional works in English translation to make the students aware of regional literary outputs. For instance, Kakatiya University which is located in Warangal (Andhra Pradesh) has introduced Annamayya and Vemana as well as the Bhakti tradition of Nayanars and Alwars, Virasaivism and its contribution to social reform, Vaishnava Bhakti, Haridasa movement etc. in paper named as "Indian Classics in Translation". Similarly, the University of Kashmir, Kashmir, has introduced Kashmiri writers such as Shaikh-ul-Alam, LalDed, Mahmood Garni, Rasul Mir, Qurat-ul-Ain Haider, Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din, HK Bharati,

and HK Koul in the paper called “Translation and Translation Theories”. The same is the case with other universities as well.

To address some complaints concerning the quality of the products (students), the departments of English have introduced many allied papers in addition to the core papers offered. The department of English have frequently come across the complaints such as ‘they have failed in ensuring qualitative education’, ‘their students have command over English literature but not on English language teaching (ELT)’, ‘they do not give an exposure to practical things’, and ‘they teach old useless books’.²The departments of English, realising this threat, decided to prepare the students for the actual classroom conditions. Hence, they have also introduced some allied papers that can be useful to the students. The following table enlists such papers (Luhar 2014: 46; table amended):

Table 2: Allied Papers in the MA (English) course

Language Management and Communication Skills	Writing for Academic and Professional Purposes
Lingo-Literary Studies through Contemporary Films	Soft Skills through Literature – Personal Qualities
Literature: Analysis, Approaches and Applications	Public Speaking, Journalistic and Creative Writing
Classroom Applications	Indian Classics in Translation
Fundamental of Information Technology	The Children’s Literature
Literature and Film	History, Structure and Description of English
History and Spread of English Language	English Grammar and Writing
Phonetics and Spoken English	Literature and Philosophy
History and Literary Movements	English Language Proficiency

Communicative English	Literature and Gender
Applied Linguistics	Modern English Grammar and Usage
Translation and Translation Theory	Linguistics and Stylistics
ELT and CALL	Copy Editing
Literature and Cognitive Sciences	Thinking and Cognition
Research Methodology	Reading Skills

The above table hints at the fact that apart from the core papers concerning literary texts and theories, the departments of English have also introduced many allied papers to make their students competent enough to face real class-room conditions. The papers like “Language Management and Communication Skills”, “Classroom Applications”, “Fundamental of Information Technology”, “Writing for Academic and Professional Purposes”, “English Grammar and Writing”, “Communicative English”, and “Modern English Grammar and Usage” are the consequences of such efforts of the university departments of English. ELT and Linguistics that were once considered of different terrain are now the part of English literary studies. Of course, some universities also have separate postgraduate programmes on these two subjects.

The present scenario of the English literary studies in India makes it clear that the study of MA (English) course is not limited to English-British literature. Numbers of the literatures either in English or in English translation are the parts of English studies. The MA (English) course is stretched to incorporate Indian, American, Australian, Canadian, African and other Commonwealth literatures. Apart from these, Greek, Spanish, Russian, German, Arabian and other literatures are also taught in English translation. The papers entitled as the “World Classics in Translation” and “Modern European Classics” have made the study of classics of the different parts of world possible. The papers named as the “Comparative Literature” and “Regional Literatures in English Translation” has the potential to enrich the students with the knowledge of regional literatures of India. The regional literatures of India is translated

English and taken as a good substitute of English literature. There is a strong need of introducing the paper namely “Comparative Literature” in all the universities of India as this paper has the ability of providing a compendium view of regional literary offspring of India. It would bring all the Indian literatures together and would enhance the knowledge of the students. The Comparative Literature is in itself a large field; however, its study at postgraduate level in form of a paper or two is beneficial. It seems that the departments of English have also engaged themselves in formation of new literary canons. The papers named as “Gender Studies”, “Women’s Writing”, “Indian Diasporic Writing” and “Indian Writing in English” are in fact attempts of forming feminist, diaspora, and Indian English canon.

The departments of English have also decanonised some of the subjects. Earlier in many universities, the paper called “Literary Criticism and Theory” consisted of a portion dealing with the study of Indian Aesthetics wherein different Indian theories of literary appreciation were taught, but in present times, this portion seems vanished in the syllabi of many Indian universities. The students of MA (English) are exposed to the western tradition of literary criticism only. The students must be taught how the Indian theories of literary appreciation can be practised over Indian (English) texts. The decline of the Indian aesthetics in the MA (English) classroom would prove fatal for the Indian universities. Similarly, in the 1980s the Dalit studies has emerged out as a budding area of study. However, the analysis of the selected university syllabi suggests that the dalit studies is ignored intentionally or unintentionally. Many universities have showed their concerns for the Black literature or Afro-American literature but the dalit literature which is homegrown literature is ignored. One must appreciate the inclusion of the papers such as “Children’s Literature”, “Literature and Film”, “Cultural Studies”, “Literature and Philosophy”, “Environment and Indian Writing in English” in the syllabi of MA (English). However, these papers are not offered by all the universities. Literature, being a product of different societal influences, should be analysed in relation with culture, film, philosophy, environment, etc. “Cultural Studies” has emerged as an important field in the western universities, but in many of the Indian universities it is still alien. The same is the case with the “Children’s Literature”. Considering it frivolous, many universities have concentrated on the mainstream literature only.

The above discussion clearly hints that the departments of English are obsessed with the British literary texts. It seems that they are highly influenced by the western academia. The teaching of English that started in the colonial times has not yet changed thoroughly except the inclusion of the non-British literary texts and allied papers in the syllabi. The papers like “Comparative Literature”, “Literature and Gender”, “Literature and Philosophy”, as well as the papers dealing with cultural studies, film studies, and environment also reflect the influence of the western academia on the Indian universities. In absence of well-formulated learning outcomes, no one is sure where the English literary studies would take the students in the Indian universities.

(ii)

Another important observation is that the departments of English have engaged in forming the cultural elitism in India especially in the post-1980s. It is quite perceptible in the selection of the post-1980s Indian English fictions. The cultural elitism operates at four levels: (a) among the department of English and the departments of the teaching of other Indian languages and literature; (b) among the literary texts that have won literary prizes and those which do not have; and (c) among the texts published in India and the texts published in foreign. A reflection on the teaching of Indian English literature suggests that the departments of English are inclined towards the novel published after Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981). Those epoch-making Indian English novels of the pre-1980s only have succeeded in retaining their place in the literary curricula.

In the Indian languages teaching departments, the departments of English occupies an important place. Since English being the functioning language of majority of the Indian universities, the departments of English enjoy the superiority over the departments of other languages and literature. This has often resulted in language debates in India. For English can offer better chances of employment, the departments of other Indian languages as often treated as minor. The students also feel that they study an international language and thus they consider themselves better than who study other regional languages of India. The nativistic movements in literary studies the consequence of such imbalance created by the departments of English. It has been noticed that the award-winning literary works fascinate the departments of English. This fascination has also divided the writers into two categories:

(a) masters, and (b) practitioners. The first indicates the privileged classic-like status, while the other hints at the less significant kind of writers. Though the award of literary prizes do not always reflect over the quality of the literary texts, those who think that the universities as the maker of the literary canons may accept such trend as a rule. Those writers who are not awarded the literary prize are often considered minor and less important. Those writers who have been published by the foreign printing presses are given more importance in the Indian universities. This clearly suggests that the departments of English are more inclined towards literary prizes and foreigner publishers for the making of curricula. The following table would give an idea how the departments of English are involved in forming cultural elitism in India as well as what are the trends found in the English literary studies in India. Though the following table enlists the post-1980s Indian English fiction introduced in the MA (English) syllabi, it makes clear the present scenario of English literary studies and the hegemonic culture it developed in India (Luhar 2014: 56-7):

Table 3: Short Profile of the Post-1980s Indian English Fiction

<i>Name of the Text</i>	<i>Name of the Author</i>	<i>Publisher (Country)</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Author's Religion</i>	<i>Present Place of Domicile</i>
Midnight's Children (1981)	Salman Rushdie	Jonathan Cape (United Kingdom)	Booker Prize (1981)	Muslim	Britain
			Booker of Bookers (1993)		
The Moor's Last Sigh (1996)			Best of Booker (2008)		
			TIME Magazine's Best Book of		

			the Year		
Such a Long Journey (1991)	Rohinton Mistry	McClelland and Stewart (Canada)	Governor General's Award Commonwealth Writers Prize Books in Canada First Novel Award Short listed for Booker Prize (1991)	Parsi	Canada
A Fine Balance (1995)			Giller Prize Short listed for Booker Prize (1996)		
Ice-Candy Man (1988)	Bapsi Sidhwa	Milkweed Edition (United States)	---	Parsi	United States
Tiger for Malgudi (1983)	R. K. Narayan	Viking Press (US) Heinemann (UK)	--	Hindu	India

Clear Light of the Day (1980)	Anita Desai	Heinemann (United Kingdom)	Short listed for Booker Prize (1980)	Hindu	United States
In Custody (1984)			Short listed for Booker Prize (1984)		
Fasting Feasting (1999)		Chatto and Windus (United Kingdom)	Short listed for Booker Prize (1999)		
That Long Silence (1988)	Shashi Deshpande	Virago (United Kingdom)	SahityaAkadamy Award (1990)	Hindu	India
A Matter of Time (1996)		Penguin India	---		
The Binding Vine (1992)			--		
The Shadow Lines (1988)	Amitav Ghosh	Ravi Dayal Publishers (India)	SahityaAkadamy Award (1989)	Hindu	New York
The Hungry Tides (2005)			Hutch Crossword Book Award		
Sea of Poppies (2008)		John Murray (United Kingdom)	Short listed for Booker Prize (2008)		

		Kingdom)			
The Great Indian Novel (1989)	Shashi Tharoor	Viking Press (United States)	---	Hindu	India
Thousand Faces of Night (1992)	Githa Hariharan	Penguin India	Commonwealth Writers Prize (1993)	Hindu	India
Gods, Graves and Grandmother (1994)	Namita Gokhale	Rupa& Co. (India)	--	Hindu	India
The God of Small Things (1997)	Arundhati Roy	IndiaInk (India)	Booker Prize (1997)	Hindu	India
Sister of My Heart (1999)	Chitra Divakaruni	Anchor Books (United States)	---	Hindu	United States
Ladies Coup (2001)	Anita Nair	Penguin India	---	Hindu	India

An analysis of the table 3 from different perspectives highlights some interesting facts. If one splits the above-mentioned Hindu writers into the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin categories, it would certainly come to the notice that the majority of the writers are the Brahmins (around 50%). Remaining 50 per cent is occupied by those non-Brahmin writers who are the upper-

caste westernised Indians. The analysis from a perspective of the religions suggests that around 76 per cent of the Indian English fictions introduced in the MA (English) syllabi are written by the Hindu writers. The numbers of the fictions by the Muslim writer (only one is introduced) are 10 per cent and the Parsi writers are 14 per cent. These statistics may indicate that the departments of English are more fascinated by the works that are the products of the Hindu mind and that also the upper-caste Hindus!

Out of these twenty-one fictions, sixteen fictions have won some literary prizes or at least they have been shortlisted for the prizes. These sixteen fictions are introduced in the syllabi of more than two universities. Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children* (1981), which is introduced in seven universities, occupies the first rank if one looks at the number of repetition of post-1980s Indian English fiction. Those fictions that are not awarded any award or prize are introduced once only. This tendency suggests that the departments of English are fascinated by the award-winning fictions or writers. A look over the publication scenario suggests that out of twenty-one fictions only seven fictions are published in India (around 33% only). Penguin India, Ravi Dayal Publishers, and Rupa & Co., and India Ink are the only four India-based publishing houses. Rest of all (around 67%) are located outside of India. It means that India creativity still largely depends on the western publishing houses for its emergence. The west still has the monopoly over the publication industry and thus hegemony over literary creativity. Another important aspect for the consideration is the authenticity of representing India. Out of the twelve living writers, six writers are non-resident Indians. They have been living in foreign for considerable years of their life; they hardly visit India regularly. India lives in their imagination. When such writer writes a novel on Indian theme, it certainly arouses a question about the authenticity of his/her experience and of the disinterestedness of cultural representation.

Thus, it clearly hints at the fact that the departments of English are more inclined towards the award-winning writers, diaspora writers, and the novels published by the foreign publishers. The curriculum of the university departments of English have lost its value as an accumulation of artistic and aesthetic values. The artistic and aesthetic strength of literary texts is determined not by indigenous practices but by the imitation of the western criterions. It is also observed that the 'common' man is missing in the syllabi of the MA (English) in the

Indian universities. Most of the texts which are selected by the curriculum-makers are written by the Brahmin or the privileged caste. A few texts deal with the common masses of India; in their narration as well they centre on the privileged castes of India. Most of the writers by their professions are engaged with the 'white colour' jobs and have received good education in India or abroad. Hence, the voice which Indian English fiction reflects is in fact a voice of the elite and not common. It also becomes visible that the most of the texts that are selected for MA (English), in the selected university departments of English, have won or at least are shortlisted for some literary prize. So again this leads to a question: is it the case that these texts are stamped as good by awarding prizes that is why the student are made to study them? Another point of observation is that around 67% Indian fiction are published in abroad; thus what is claimed as an Indian product has originally get birth in foreign publishing press. It also hints at an important fact that Indian creativity is still dominated by the west; what the west decides good and publish, the Indian reads that much as Indian writing. The most of the famed Indian writers do not reside in India, they write from abroad. Hence, what they write has an imprint of imaginary homeland. Thus, only to claim that the syllabi of the departments of English is of international standards, the departments are encouraging cultural elitism in India.

(iii)

The above discussion raises serious questions on the design of literary syllabus and inclusion of literary canon in the curriculum. Perhaps, the universities have forgotten the objectives of introducing the literary texts. Possibly, the main purpose of teaching literature could be showcasing the cultural diversities of the different cultures on the globe and to encourage adequate research to understand these culture systematically. Unfortunately, the departments of English are engaged in proving cultural superiority of certain texts over the others that was perhaps never an objective of literary studies. The writers can differ from each other in their use of literary device to make the text aesthetically rich or mature, but they cannot be taken as a criterion to prove the cultural superiority of one writer over the other. The introduction of the English literary texts in the syllabi of the colonial India was perhaps the first cultural mechanism, found in India, to prove superiority of the western culture over the eastern

culture, and thus, a desire to form a canon of English literature. Such type of apparatus still operates in the departments of English.

The formation of different canons could be a matter for appreciation, but not at the expense of cultural symmetry. The universities should have a balanced “syllabus” for the teaching-learning purpose. Any disparity in the syllabus would result in an emergence of new canons. We have also examples of the cultural wars of America that resulted in the formation of the different cultural canons. Selecting texts of a particular group by neglecting or excluding certain texts gives a chance to the selected texts for the imaginary cultural projection. Literary texts are the documents that project certain culture. Thus, they are a kind of capital that has been invested in the forming the hegemonic image of certain culture. The cultural critics like Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige, Ronald Barthes, John Guillory, Pierre Bourdieu and others have also assumed that literary productions entail the idea of “culture capital” and anything that functions as *culture capital* indulges in hegemonic practices. As Stuart Hall holds it, the hegemony can be maintained by “winning and shaping consent so that the power of the dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural” and it can be sustained so long as the dominant classes “succeeds in framing all competing definitions within their range” (Durham 2001: 150). If this hidden agenda fails, it anyway ensures that the presence of the subordinate groups in an ‘ideological’ arena which does not appear *ideological* at all. Such hegemonic control, perhaps, is reminiscent of what Barthes calls ‘mythology’ which performs the functions of naturalisation and normalisation. These assertions lead to an essential facet of hegemony that “it has to be won, reproduced, sustained” (ibid: 151). Precisely, the literary syllabus is a site for winning the consent of different groups for the cultural representation of certain group under the pretext of required knowledge. Syllabus naturalises or normalises the polemic agenda of certain groups and thus claims itself a balanced representation of all the culture. Thus, syllabus is the handy-tool for the formation of varied canons. Canons are not just list of the texts that are considered important, but also a cultural space. It seems that in the Indian universities the he same apparatus is employed by the Brahmins to maintain their superiority over the ‘other’ castes. An ‘intellectual’ space that the Brahmin writers have formed for themselves is in fact the consequence of their shrewdness that came to them through the colonial transaction. During the colonial epoch only, they could envisage the formation of English as a global language and took up the opportunity to rule over the

masses. They were the masters of Sanskrit and wanted to be the master of English. Both the languages kept the close to the power – religious and colonial. Since the formation of the caste-system they knew it well that educating the masses imparts the power to control them, hence the Brahmin as a community, first of all, learnt English only to teach the ‘other’ masses and to maintain their hegemony. Nevertheless, the colonial era was the time of cultural insurgency when it was not possible to entice the majority Indians masses only through teaching. They realised that they must integrate the national flavour in their teaching; it had to be made more social and easily acceptable. The increasing caste-consciousness in the colonial era indicated to them that the shifting wind wanted them to cast-off their Brahminical self and this was the only way out to win the consent of the ruling the masses. This led to the process of de-Brahminisation which was again a stratagem of reproducing and sustaining their Brahminical hold. Prof. VKRV Rao opines that “the de-Brahminised Brahmin may no longer be a caste, but his new ways, being in tune with the forces of change, are likely not only to ensure his survival but felicitate his retaining a position of high status and authority” (Paranjape 2000: 57). The de-Brahminisation was a policy to embrace a newer-secular identity without giving up hereditary caste-based privileges. One can easily find this ideological apparatus still present in the contemporary Indian society and the above-mentioned fictions point towards this fact.

Pierre Bourdieu finds at least four “agents of legitimation” engaged in the formation of cultural capital. They are: writers, literary industry, media, and the audience or the “valuing communities”. The writers and the audience play passive role, whereas the literary industry, which includes publishers, booksellers, reviewers, etc., and media, both print and electronic, are actively engaged agents of this process. These active players have the power of endowing the consecrated authority to those texts that have potential as well as to those that do not have. In present times, the financial sponsorship of the literary awards has raised many questions at its authenticity. Numerous literary awards are sponsored by the transnational corporate houses. The sponsorship of the literary awards guarantees a huge publicity to such companies that function as an authority of deciding the worth of the texts. Bourdieu observes that the contemporary corporate houses have overtaken the earlier hierarchical systems of public and private patronage through which ideas of literature and literary value were upheld. Those government agencies that offer literary prizes like The SahityaAkadamy and others

function as the mediatory between the State and the writers. Hence, it is also difficult to accept the award-winning works purely as aesthetic constructs.

The publication industry is not simply an economic sight but is field of culture production. The publishing literary text is in fact production of cultural goods. The publishing industry creates, what Bourdieu says, symbolic goods. One that has the power to authorise symbolic good has the power to dominate. Because of this, the western publishing houses decide what Indian readers ought to read and how their literary taste should be shaped. What Indian read considering good is first stamped as good by these publishing mega-players; they stamp it good in favour of the west. In addition, what the west can favour as good is generally that thing which supports its hegemonic ideology. Hence, one may conclude that the most of the Indian English fictions which have come to India through foreign publication agencies are supportive of the western hegemonic practices. Another important fact is that the most of publishing house are multinational corporate houses. The texts that are produced in these houses are guaranteed a wide publicity and huge readership. The wide publicity and readership do not penetrate upon artistic and aesthetic quality but are economic strategies of these corporate houses. Thus, the consideration of the Indian English fiction as an artistic construct certainly requires some serious pondering.

Thus, it is observed that the departments of English, in their efforts of coming out of the crisis, have focused on what other think best. They do not have sovereign ideas to make the English studies more democratic that can assure cultural symmetry. To make the syllabi of the English studies the “best”, the departments of English are fumbling for the meagre methods for the selection of literary texts. The departments of English should rethink their desire for the “best” for they have not made it clear what they mean by the “best”.

Notes:

1. For the study on the syllabi of MA (English) course in the departments of English of the Indian universities refer to my monograph, *“Whose Curriculum is this Anyway?” – Interpretations of Intentions* (2014). The names of the fourteen Indian universities are Andhra University, Visakhapatnam (AUV); Kakatiya University, Warangal (KUU); Bharathiar University, Coimbatore (BUC); Maulana Azad National Urdu

University, Hyderabad (MANUU); Osmania University, Hyderabad (OUH); GurunanakDev University, Amritsar (GDUA); Karnataka University, Dharwad (KUD); Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (KUK); North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong (NEHUS); Punjab University, Chandigarh (PUC); Punjabi University, Patiala (PUP); Calcutta University, Kolkata (CUK); University of Jammu, Jammu (UJJ); and University of Kashmir, Srinagar (UKS).

2. These spoken pronouncements are generally heard while discussing the quality of English literary studies in India.

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