

LITERATURE AND CULTURAL ASPECTS IN THE INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

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Abstract

Broadly literature means the entire body of writings dealing with a particular area of subject. Literature has played immense role in the struggle for independence of India as it existed as one of the important sources of mass communication medium to bring awareness and arouse nationalistic consciousness among the masses. The different genres of writing which immensely impacted the emotional framework included poems, essays, articles, stories in newspapers, Books, novels, etc. Writers like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in Bengal, Subramania Bharati in Tamil Nadu, and Rabindranath Tagore in Bengal crafted literary works that celebrated the richness of Indian culture, depicted the sufferings of the people under British rule, and called for a collective uprising. These literary works not only influenced public sentiment but also served as a source of inspiration for freedom fighters and revolutionaries.

Cultural aspects were equally significant during the Indian War of Independence. Indian traditions, customs, and symbols played a pivotal role in unifying the diverse Indian society against colonial rule. The rebellion drew upon the rich tapestry of Indian culture, incorporating religious and social elements as catalysts for resistance. The Sepoy soldiers, who played a crucial role in the rebellion, were deeply influenced by their cultural and religious beliefs, which fueled their determination to fight against the British. literature and cultural aspects played integral roles in the Indian War of Independence. The power of words, expressed through various literary forms, awakened the masses, instilled a spirit of resistance, and preserved the memory of the struggle for future generations.

Keywords: *Literature, independence, struggle, Indian culture, freedom fighters, sepoy solders*

Introduction

An important event in India's history was the Indian War of Independence, also known as the Indian Rebellion of 1857 or the First War of Independence. This armed revolt against British colonial rule not only had profound effects on politics and society, but it also had a long-lasting effect on the country's literature and culture. The conflict propelled a rich scholarly custom that encapsulated opposition and the yearning for opportunity. Additionally, it became a driving force behind cultural revival and the creation of a unified national identity. A deeper comprehension of the significance of this significant event in history and its lasting legacy can be gained by studying its literary and cultural aspects. Overall, the Indian War of Independence had a transformative effect on literature and cultural aspects in India. It gave rise to a wave of nationalistic literature, inspired folk traditions, influenced language usage, and shaped the cultural symbols and icons associated with the struggle for independence. These cultural expressions played a vital role in galvanizing public support and shaping the collective consciousness of the Indian people during their fight against British colonialism. Evoking emotions: Art helped nationalist in their struggle by evoking emotions related to oppression or kind of injustice to people that they had been facing for a long time. It helped to increase the sensitivity among elite and bourgeoisie class towards the suffering of the common man by depicting their poor living condition and atrocities.



Raising nationalist sentiments: The nationalistic sentiment replaced what was earlier widely dominated by the portraits and songs or bhajans based on gods and goddesses only. It influenced people through painting battle scenes between Indian and British soldiers and portraying brutalities, to people singing and writing nationalistic poetries, plays, and stories. Fiction and poetry was used for a patriotic purpose and to create a nationalist discourse.

Overcoming linguistic barriers: Indian art helped in overcoming linguistic differences across the country in the form of visual and performing art. Further, nationalist literature was in the local language that helped many common people to take part in India's freedom struggle.

Spreading awareness: Writers and poets such as Rabindranath Tagore, Josh Malihabadi, Muhammad Iqbal, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Mohammad Ali Jouhar, and Kazi Nazrul Islam used literature, poetry and speech as a tool to spread awareness against the atrocities by British on Indians and to provoke the thought of freedom to encourage people to fight for the country.

Women participation: Women leaders like Begum Rokeya and Sarojini Naidu promoted the emancipation of Indian women and to encourage their participation in national politics. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Devi Chaudharani*, became an inspiration to women to take up the cause of independence. In this novel, he made a woman the protagonist and leader of the struggle. Anandamath also featured a strong woman character, and in both books, while women do take up arms, they fight while embodying the values of love.

Revival of cultural identities: When the Swadeshi movement started gaining momentum, Indian artists attempted to revive their cultural identities which were suppressed by the British. This led to the creation of the Bengal School of Art, led by the reworked Indian styles with a focus on nationalism of Abanindranath Tagore. An example of this is the painting of 'The Passing of Shah Jahan' by Abanindranath Tagore which evoked the recent past of Indian history which was being seen to be glorious. Many other artists like Jamini Roy and later SH Raza took inspiration from folk traditions.

A tool of propaganda: Literature played an important role and was used as a tool of propaganda. Newspapers like *Bande Mataram*, *Jungantar Patrika*, and *Harijansought* to make Indian citizens not only socially and politically aware but also unite them for one common cause. Pamphlets written and distributed across India provided critical information and served as propaganda against the British.

Spread patriotic feelings: Art and literature was used to spread the message of patriotism and expose atrocities of British. In *Anandamath*, set during the famine in Bengal, Chattopadhyay highlighted various patriotic acts of and sacrifices made by his characters, ordinary people who left their homes and families to fight against subjection, and in service of the Mother. National song, *Bande Mataram*, was first published as a poem in this novel as the rallying cry of the characters who used it to give themselves courage and to urge people to fight against the British.

Thus, art and literature played an immense role in India's freedom struggle. It gave birth to many nationalist artists who tried to influence public psyche through their work. It not only led to a silent criticism of colonial atrocities but also acted as a force to unite mass against colonial forces.

Literature Review

Dr. Sheela Narwade (2022) Toward the start of nineteenth hundred years, nationalistic thoughts arose in Writing and number of journalists started to compose with devoted and nationalistic purposes. Literature bolstered the freedom struggle and inspired individuals to take part in it. Writing roused individuals to make a wide range of penances for the reason for opportunity. The requirement for opportunity was communicated in Writing. Freedom is regarded as the ideal state for all people in India.

Hiral Soni (2019) According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, nationalism is defined as "loyalty and devotion to a nation, especially a sense of national consciousness," and "exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups. The major Indian writers in English like Tagore, Soshee Chandra Dutt, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Manohar Malgonkar, K.A. Abbas, G V Desani, Bhabani Bhattacharya and many others depicted the dominant themes of nationalist struggle apart from their civilizational, cultural and historical antecedents.

Indian literature

one of the oldest literatures has been the model for the rest of the world. The term refers to the literary work that has been produced in various Indian languages over the centuries. In ancient times, literary works were transmitted orally. The earliest ancient Indian literature is Sanskrit literature including the Rig Veda, Ramayana and Mahabharata written in the first millennium BC. Later, Kannada and Telugu literature developed during the Middle Ages. This is followed by Marathi, Bengali and Urdu literature. Among the literary figures of India, the name of Bengali writer Rabindra Nath Tagore shines the most. He became the first Indian to receive the Nobel Prize for his literary genius. There are two Indian awards for literature - the Jnanpith Prize and the Sahitya Fellow Academy Award. Literary traditions in India dominate much of Indian culture. Traditionally, Indian literature is poetry and oral literature. The ancient literary works in India are the Vedas, Ramayana and Mahabharata (Hindu epics) and some other scriptures such as Vaastu Shastra in architecture and town planning, and Arthashastra in political science.

Importance of Indian Culture

Indian culture is known worldwide for its diversity in music, art, dance, language, cuisine, costume, philosophy and literature. An important feature of Indian culture is civilized communication, beliefs, values, etiquette and rituals. India is known worldwide for "Unity in Diversity". This means that India is a diverse country where people of many religions live peacefully together with different cultures. So, we see people living together in India with different languages, clothing, eating habits and rituals.

India has 29 states and 7 union territories. India has 22 languages and several religions including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. Hindi is the official language of India. But India is an ancient civilization where people still follow the old culture of caring and humanity. In modern society, although people have modernized, they still observe the holidays according to their customs. Festivals play an important role in Indian culture and traditions. People celebrate various festivals in India. Popular festivals like Diwali, Dussehra, Navaratri, Janmashtami, Shivratri, Ganesh Chaturthi, Eid al-Adha, Bakrid and many other festivals are celebrated with great devotion. Apart from this, there are many harvest festivals

such as Makar Sankranti, Chapchar kut, Pongal, Sohrai and many more. It was celebrated with joy all over India

Literature and cultural aspects in the Indian war of Independence

India's literature and culture were profoundly impacted by the war, which primarily had political and military dimensions. Some important points:

Literary Resurgence: The Indian War of Independence served as a catalyst for a literary resurgence in India. Indian writers and intellectuals started expressing their political and social discontent through literature. Works of fiction, poetry, and plays emerged, addressing themes of nationalism, freedom, and resistance. These literary expressions played a crucial role in shaping public opinion and inspiring the masses.

Emergence of Nationalist Literature: Many Indian writers began to emphasize the importance of Indian identity and culture in their works, highlighting the need for nationalistic pride and unity. Writers like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, and Michael Madhusudan Dutt wrote extensively on patriotic themes, encouraging resistance against British rule and advocating for independence.

Folklore and Ballads: Folklore and ballads became powerful means of communication during the war. They were used to spread stories of heroism, sacrifice, and bravery, keeping the spirit of resistance alive among the common people. These oral traditions served as a source of inspiration and were often passed down through generations.

Role of Print Media: The war led to an increased demand for newspapers and other print media that provided information, analysis, and commentary on the events unfolding across the country. Publications like "The Indian Mirror" and "The Bengali" became important platforms for nationalists to express their views and disseminate information. They played a significant role in shaping public opinion and mobilizing support for the cause of independence.

Cultural Symbols and Icons: The Indian War of Independence inspired the creation and adoption of cultural symbols and icons that represented the struggle for freedom. The concept of Bharat Mata (Mother India) gained prominence, symbolizing the nation as a mother figure, representing the collective aspirations of the people. The use of nationalistic symbols, such as the tricolor flag, also became more widespread.

Impact on Indian Languages: The war had a profound impact on Indian languages and their usage. Indian languages, including Hindi, Bengali, and Urdu, gained prominence as mediums of expression for nationalist sentiments. The use of vernacular languages in literature and public discourse helped in mobilizing people across different regions of India, transcending linguistic barriers.

Legacy and Influence: The Indian War of Independence left a lasting legacy on Indian literature and cultural movements. It fueled the nationalist movement and contributed to the development of a distinct Indian literary identity. The ideas of resistance, patriotism, and self-determination that emerged during this period continue to resonate in Indian literature and cultural expressions to this day.

Cultural Factors

The story of Indian culture is one of continuity, synthesis and enrichment. Culture is also a source of unity as well as diversity like religion. Powerful kingdoms and empires such as the

Mauryas and the Guptas did not aggressively intervene in social and cultural matters; leaving much diversity intact. Although Islam was the politically dominant religion in large parts of the country for several centuries it did not absorb Hinduism, or disturb the Hindu social structure. Nor did Hinduism, which was demographically and otherwise dominant seek to eliminate the beliefs and practices, characteristic of other religions. Various beliefs and practices are pursued and maintained by Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike. Over the time Indian society has come to be divided into innumerable tribes, castes, sub-castes, clans, sects and communities each of which seek to maintain their own style of life and code of conduct. Many sociologists have recorded in detail the immense variety in the habits, practices and customs of the people in different geographical regions. The distribution of material traits such as dress, habitation, arts and crafts, endless variety of food and their preparation, makes India a living example of regional diversity. The role played by Indian religion, philosophy, art and literature in bringing about unity is conspicuous. Social institutions like the caste system and the joint family, which are found throughout the length and breadth of the country, are typically Indian. The celebration of festivals is observed all over India in much the same manner. Likewise, similarities in art and culture engraved on the temple and palace walls all over India have generated the feeling of oneness. In spite of their distinctiveness the coexistence of cultures is celebrated.

India is a diverse nation with a huge population made up of people of different castes and religions. Hindus are dominant, but there are also many Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, and followers of Jainism, all of which have literary and artistic traditions and religious festivals that contribute to the vibrancy of daily life. Indians are family oriented and largely conservative people with a scholarly and friendly nature. Thousands of years of urbanized living have allowed literature, art, architecture and philosophy to flourish, which can be seen everywhere, particularly in the regionally varied buildings and cuisine. The cycles of nature, particularly of the mighty Ganges River, play a huge part in the national consciousness of India, which is a busy, noisy, colorful, diverse, and spiritually aware place.

British impact on society and culture

Indian society underwent numerous transformations following the British colonization of the country. Female infanticide, child marriage, sati, polygamy, and a rigid caste system all became more common in the 19th century. These practices violated human values and dignity. Women were disadvantaged members of society and faced discrimination at every stage of their lives. They were unable to take advantage of any development opportunities to raise their standing. Only a handful of upper caste men had access to education. Brahmins approached the Vedas which were written in Sanskrit. The priestly class established costly practices, sacrifices, and rituals following birth or death. At the point when the English came to India, they brought novel thoughts, for example, freedom, uniformity, opportunity and common liberties from the Renaissance, the Renewal Development and the different upsets that occurred in Europe. These thoughts engaged a segment of our general public and prompted a few change developments in various pieces of the country. At the very front of these developments were visionary Indians, for example, Raja Slam Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Aruna Asaf Ali and Pandita Ramabai. The goals of these movements were social cohesion, liberty, equality, and brotherhood. In an effort to raise women's status,

numerous legal measures were implemented. For instance, the then-Governor General, Lord Bentinck, outlawed sati in 1829. A law passed in 1856 permitted widow remarriage. Marriages between people of different castes and religions were allowed by law in 1872. In 1929, the Sharda Act was passed to prevent child marriage. The law stated that a girl under the age of 14 and a boy under the age of 18 could not be married. Every one of the developments seriously censured the position framework and particularly the act of untouchability.

The impact of the efforts made by these numerous individuals, reform societies, and religious organizations was felt all over and was most evident in the national movement. Women started getting better education opportunities and took up professions and public employment outside their homes. The role of women like Captain Laxmi Sehgal of Indian National Army (INA), Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant, Aruna Asaf Ali and many others were extremely important in the freedom struggle

Indian literature in war of Independence

Literature has been an integral part of every major revolution that has ever occurred. Like that it assumed a vital part in Indian history. In honor of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, it is necessary to reflect on the significance of pre-Independence literature to the freedom struggle. Literature is utilized by contemporary writers for patriotic discourses and national discourses. Literature, poetry, and discourse were used as a weapon against the brutal rule of Britishers by writers like Rabindranath Tagor, Subramanya Bharathi, Josh Malihabali Mohammed Iqbal, Bakim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Mohammed Ali, Johar, and the Kazi Nazrul Islam. This raised people's hopes for freedom and inspired them to fight against the British Empire for India. Women pioneers like Sarojini Naidu Begum Rokeya incite people for their cooperation in war of independence and public arrangement.

Bakim Chandra Chattopadhyay propagated patriotism through literature. In Anandamath, he emphasized a number of patriotic deeds and sacrifices made by his characters ordinary people who gave up their homes and families to fight for freedom and serve "The Mother" (1882).

A different universe celebrated name in Indian English writing is Rabindranath Tagore. He has earned an alcove for himself as a novelist, playwright, short story writer, musician, philosopher, painter, educationalist, reformer, and critic in every field. In 1913, his enduring masterpiece Gitanjali earned him the Nobel Prize for literature. With their distinctive writing and literary style, the triumvirs Mulk Raj Anand Raja Rao and RK Narayan stabilized and strengthened Indian English literature.

R. K. Narayan is one more extraordinary essayist in Indian English composition during the English Domain. He had the capacity to captivate the fascinate the readers with the depiction of contemporary society. He has depicted a typical family's socioeconomic circumstances. The fact that he wrote in such straight forward language that ordinary people could easily understand it is a wonderful aspect of his writings. He explores the oddities of human nature through ironic humor. In his novel, Malgudi, he created a town similar to Wessex by Thomas Hardy. His books rotate around the nonexistent town Malgudi.

Mulk Raj Anand was among the earliest Indian authors in English. To be sure Indian English writing during the English domain had effortlessly caught verse, exposition, show, and books. In addition to his short story The Lost Child, he has written prose, poetry, and drama. In his

three novels, Coolie, Untouchable, and The Woman and the Cow, he tells the stories of poor and disadvantaged Indians.

Raja Rao is one of the extraordinary authors during this period. The peruser obviously noticed the impact of the Gandhian development in his clever Kantapura(1938). The essayist zeroed in on a little town where the locals were affected by the freedom struggle

Conclusion

The Indian War of Independence holds immense significance in terms of literature and cultural aspects. It inspired a rich body of literary works that immortalized the spirit of resistance and became a source of inspiration for generations to come. The rebellion also served as a unifying force, fostering a collective national identity that transcended regional and religious divides. Moreover, the war played a pivotal role in shaping India's quest for independence, setting the stage for future movements that eventually led to the country's liberation from British rule.

literature and cultural aspects played integral roles in the Indian War of Independence. The power of words, expressed through various literary forms, awakened the masses, instilled a spirit of resistance, and preserved the memory of the struggle for future generations. Simultaneously, cultural aspects acted as unifying forces, providing a sense of identity, pride, and inspiration that propelled the Indian population towards liberation from British colonial rule. Recognizing the significance of literature and cultural aspects in the Indian War of Independence enables a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of the struggle and its lasting impact on Indian society.

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