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A Postcolonial Study: Abolition of Native Language by Invaders in Munshi Premchand's *My Elder Brother*

N. Subaha Benitta

II MA English Literature


Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1838-5271>

D. Srija

Assistant Professor of English

Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4261-1718>

Abstract

Munshi Premchand was one of the prominent Indian Writers in Hindi and Urdu. His works were mainly focused on important social issues of his period. This study analyses his work "My Elder Brother" where he depicts the relationship of two brothers. He explains the divergence between them. This attitude indicates that he also had a different opinion than other writers. Because, other writers preferred to write in English language. But, he used to write in his native language. This study examines how Indians are easily adopted to English language. Through the character of Elder brother, it was understood that Younger generation don't know about their native language but they knew about British and their language. It had happened because of the British Education system. Premchand believed that this system eradicated the native language and it made people learn English. So, he focused on the displacement of Native Language by the invaders. Similarly, Post- Colonial Writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o was against the abolition of Native Languages in Africa. Premchand scrutinized the people who learned English in India. This paper explores how British infused their language to India and abolished native language.

Keywords: Abolition, Infusion, Native Language, British Education System, English Language.

Post-Colonial Literature refers to the works produced by writers who belonged to colonized nation. Post colonialism was a literary movement in which people started to raise their voice against the Europeans. In that literature, post- colonial writers expressed their anger towards the British and they wanted to regain their culture, religion and language.

Mohammad Khosravi Shakib in his article "The position of language in development of colonization", talks about the importance of language to people. He believed that language gives cultural identity to people. He suggested people to use their mother tongue rather than other languages. He focused on the influence of colonizers in the language of colonized nations. He thought that native language brings their national identity.

Behbood Mohammadzadeh in his article "A Postcolonial Reading of Wole Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest", talks about the impact of colonialism in Africa. He believed that even after colonialism, Europeans left indigenous colonizers to continue their control over Africans. He explains the anomy in the states of Africa. He discusses the postcolonial issues in Africa.

There are two groups of writers in post colonialism. One group of writers used their native language and another group preferred the language of colonizers. Premchand belonged to the first group. Because, he wanted to convey his ideas through his native language. But the second group of writers expressed their ideas in English Language. Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and Chinua Achebe belonged to this group. They used foreign language to show their feelings.

British came to India for trading purposes. Once they saw the rich natural resources in the nation, they took all the wealth from the nation. It was a Political and Economical Exploitation. They infused their language and made people to move away from their language and created an image that colonizers were enlightening the people and it is their duty to civilize the people. But post-colonial writers did not believe this feigned story. So, they wanted to show that they were not uncivilized. They considered the colonization as a brutal action of British and it was not a civilization or Enlightenment. Premchand did not believe this false story which was created by British. He was a post-colonial writer who talks about the abolition of Native language in his work.

This story was revolving around two characters, one is elder brother and another one is younger brother. The younger brother was a narrator and his elder brother was five years older than him. Premchand compared elder brother with the British. Because, the elder one controlled his brother and he never allowed him to play outside. It was interlinked with people of India who were controlled by British and never allowed to speak independently. Elder brother was a victim of British Education System. Because, he was favoured to English language. He advised his younger brother to learn English. It was a clear evidence that people of those period gives priority to English language, not to their own languages. Schools were teaching the lesson from the basis of British Education system. So, this system tries to change the people towards English. Elder one spends his time in learning. But younger one was not interested in his studies. Elder one advised him to focus on his studies and he delivered a long speech. In that speech, he explained the significance of English language. It shows that people accepted

English language. He suggested that they wanted to excel in that language. But it was not an easy task to become a master in English. Later, the younger one started to cry and he decided to learn English. It shows that how people's mind are easily changed towards English. He prepared timetable for his studies. In that schedule, he gave priority to English rather than his native language. It was understood that they were influenced by English in their lives. Before colonialism, India had its own Education system. In that system, they gave importance to their own native languages. But, British changed this system and they formulated a new Education System. It was Macaulay's Education System. This system told that Native learning is inferior and people wanted to learn English. They offered jobs only for the persons who can speak and write English. So, people started to learn English and they slowly neglected their native language. In schools, they taught the history and culture of British. So, younger generation didn't understand their own culture and its history. It witnessed the attitude of Elder brother who do not even talk about his language and history but he always spoke about British and their history.

Premchand was a man who was against this system. He talked about the story of Ravan, a king of Srilanka. In that story, he compared British with Ravan. He was a mighty king in the world. So, he become haughty. But it turned him to loss everything. In the same way, British were proud of their language and thought their language is superior to all languages in the world. Premchand believed that one day or other, British language will also be destroyed like Ravan by the native languages of India. It showed his anger against the British. So, he criticized the British Education System which was truly devoted to them. The Indian Children studied all about the Kings and Queens of the British. It was witnessed in the speech of Elder brother. He memorised all the kings of British and he knew historical background of each king's period. Through his speech, Premchand was mocking them that they didn't have enough name for their king's and they were simply using the same name with suffix as first, second or third, etc... It was compulsory for the students to memorise all these names. So, they began to forget their own history and insisted to study the

history of British. Premchand didn't like the people who choose the language of British. It indicates that he doesn't like English.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o was a Kenyan writer. First, he began to write in English. Later, he believed that displacement of native languages is not necessary. So, he used to write in his native language. In his Essay "Decolonizing the Mind", he talked about the influence of English and the abolition of native languages in Africa. He dedicated this essay to those who write in African languages. Similarly, Premchand was an Indian writer who wrote in Hindi and Urdu. Later, his works were translated into many languages especially in English language. He emphasised native writing in literature. Because, he believed that if he writes in English, it cannot be understood by native people and it created language problems in India. So, he wanted to reintroduce native learning in Indian schools.

Conclusion

This paper find out the influence of English in their life and it talks about impact of British Education System in India. It explores how British infused their language and destroyed Indian culture and its history. Through this study, it is observed that Indians are moving towards English and British used this chance to abolish native languages. So, he believed that Indians are deceived by British and forget their cultural values. They began to follow western culture and used their language. He thought that British Education System was used by British as a tool to demolish native languages. He wanted to see native language as medium of instruction in schools. He thought that native language is important to future generation and he wished to offer native language to them. He desired native language to be alive and it cannot be abolished. He requested Indians to prefer their language instead of other languages.

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Author Details

N. Subaha Benitta, *II MA English Literature, Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India,*
Email ID: 21men011@stc.ac.in.

D. Srija, *Assistant Professor of English, Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India,*
Email ID: srija.d@stc.ac.in.