

## Indian English Literature - an epicenter of SAARC English Fiction

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### Abstract

The term 'Epicenter' has been used metaphorically to denote that SAARC literature, particularly literature written in English in SAARC countries owes much to Indian English literature. SAARC came into existence in 1985 and there is not much noteworthy English literature in SAARC countries before this date. The roots of English literature in these countries get sap from India. The fact remains that by 1985 Indian English literature, especially fiction had attained full blossom by this date. Even if we don't mention the trio- the post-independence Indian English fiction succeeded in establishing itself as a compendious body of literature worthy enough to be ranked with world literature. The novelists under scrutiny have had immense influence of Indian writers and their writings on them. The present research paper will scrutinize these influences in a critical manner.

**Keywords:** SAARC, Epicenter, Metaphorically, Nation, Culture

The term SAARC was first coined in the year 1980. SAARC means South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation. This organization consists of eight countries in southern Asia. It was established on December 8, 1985 by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. In April 2007, at the Association's 14th summit Afghanistan has become its eighth member.

The south Asian region boasts of rich and diverse cultural expressions, which covers vast spectrum including music, art design, signs and symbols, performances, architectural forms, handicrafts, customs, social behavior and narratives etc. The culture of south Asia plays a vital role in defining the identity of south Asian people. The recorded heritage of the cultural expression in south Asia dates back to early civilization of the world. The culture of south Asian region has evolved over the centuries with influence of internal and external factors. These systems, particularly those practiced by the minority indigenous and vulnerable communities; however, face a great threat in this modern era due to the influence of globalization and other factors.

With the extensive reliance on scientific knowledge, trends

in globalization and homogenization, the culture of south Asian countries are facing the threat of extinction. The influence of western knowledge system like, the influence of information technology in creating homogenization of culture is also threatening the culture. The distinctiveness is the mark of any culture is being eroded by the internal and external influences. If the rich culture is not safeguarded from the influence of globalization, we will not be able to pass down this culture to our next generations. The preservation and promotion of the culture in south Asia is developed by western policy makers with little or no consultation with the cultural bearers and policy makers in south Asia. As a result, the views and issues of south Asia are not adequately represented at international level and are not properly reflected in policy making. The writings, of the novelists selected for study becomes more relevant because literature especially fiction records unrecorded history of marginalized human groups and their socio-cultural behavior. Much care is taken in selecting the novelists. As a matter of fact, the unheard voices of these marginalized human groups are well reflected in the writings of these novelists. SAARC countries have privileged of all the culture of country. SAARC political identity is founded on common cultural and historical background. Besides geographical proximity five of these countries have a common history of colonial subjugation and struggle for freedom. Their literature though in different languages celebrates same composite Asian spirit and western value.

The novelists in the likes of Maheswata Devi, Khuswant Singh, Ajeet Caur, Amitav Ghosh, Shiv K. Kumar of India. Adib Khan, Tahmima Anam, Mahmud Ramman of Bangladesh, Khaled Hosseini of Afghanistan, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, Asad Mohammad Khan, Asif Farrukhi of Pakistan, Michael Ondaatje, Selbadurai of Sri Lanka, Kunzang Choden of Bhutan, Ibrahim Haheed of Maldives and Lochantara Taludhar, Phanindra Ratna Bajracharya of Nepal, that come under the umbrella of SAARC,

The early Indian English novels basically revolved round the works of three figures-Mulk Raj Anand, R.k Narayan and Raja Rao. They started their writings in the nineteen

thirties. All the three novelists wrote their writings during freedom movement. They raised some national issues and reforms to construct ideal nation. All the characters depicted in the novel are ideal persons. A large number of writers wrote their writings after 1947. Bhabani Bhattacharya was a great social realist novelist. His first novel is *So Many Hungers* (1947) depicted the picture of Bengal famine. Khuswant Singh a great post independence writer, his first and popular novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956) tell the real story of partition trauma of two family in India and Pakistan brooders.

In the post independence period the women novelists also contributed a lot of works to Indian fictions. Kamala Markandaya advocated the different roles in society and also pictured the concern over east and west encounter. All the characters tell life of urbanization and modernization. Nayantara Sehgal was apolitical novelist. She fought for women identity and a space for women in political field. Anita Desai novels focus on the inner character of the women. In her novels the female characters are lonely figures struggling for existence. She is conceded as a prominent women writer in English fiction.

The socio-political and cultural contexts of contemporary India as represented in the works of numbers of writers in English in India. India has plays a key role in SAARC literature is to acquire its own entity. India can be both a cementing and dispelling force. Kiran Desai's *Inheritance of Loss* (2006), the winner of man Booker prize, set in Kalimpong, during Gorkhaland agitation. The fiction explores the conflict of class and issues of nationalism and migration. The novelist tries to cleanse the dross from the society. Kiran Desai tries to show past colonial maladies and otherness of the Indian narratives consciously. And shows and create awareness in the society about discrimination and unwanted problematic institutions. The novelist sees the vision of utopian world and in the process; she needed to clean the dross from the society. Whether the country reach the vision or not but the novelist expects the height from the society. So, the sub conscious awareness needed for the cleansing the dross. Find the way from unstable to stable. Kiran Desai tries to show losses of values, losses of economy, losses of identity through the characters. Here Kiran Desai demarcated various from of dross in the society. In this way Kiran Desai wants to achieve total freedom.

The most of the literature of English Literature of Pakistan influenced by Indian literature. Pakistan is the nation of unstable political condition and strict dictatorial democracies. The literature of the country could not fully portray the truth of the present reality and they have

produced literature shielded in metaphors and abstractions. Bapsi Sidhwa's partition novel *"Ice Candy Man and the Crow Eaters"* a hilarious account of Parsi life in Pakistan. She produced an impressive body of literature. Though the socio political situation at home forced her to look for pasture in western countries. The novel *"Burnt Shadows"* deals with partition of the family and war. Partition means limited the space but not independence. Identity starts with individual and ends in social. In the novel the story of separation of two families runs parallel as the separation of India and Pakistan. Pakistan is an imaginary land. The formation of Pakistan based on ideological basis. India and Pakistan are a single soul. According to Freudian psychoanalysis one is ego and another is id. Before partition there is a dichotomy between India and Pakistan's identity. The dichotomy is divided into one is conscious and another is sub conscious. There is a dialogue between India and Pakistan dynamic in nature. The identity of two nations is changed concept. One's identity is expressed by otherness. The identity of Pakistan is India and India's identity of Pakistan.

Sri Lanka has a long history of cultural history. The cultural relation between India and Sri Lanka is very ancient. The writer of the country deeply engaged in the socio-political tradition and ethnicity, which is an integral part of the reality of Sri Lankan people, which are frequently shown in the works of Sri Lankan writers. The relation between India and Sri Lanka on anthropological history, geographical attachment and myth. Influence of foreign forces on indigenous culture. The Contribution of Sri Lanka in SAARC politics is aims to reach the cultural origin due to absence of fulfillment pleasure. They engaged in Garila war, Tamil tiger and underworld activities. Title of the novel *'The Road from the Elephant pass'* has pointed out some symbolic meanings which retracing the source of pleasure and basic needs of the life. This is the code used by the writers and intellectuals reflected in their works.

English writing in Bangladesh is largely over shadowed by the bigger countries like India. The main concern of Bangladesh writers is the 1971 war for Independence. Bangladesh reconcile with SAARC politics through the literary works and genres. The role of communities in the period of partition governed secular way or Islamic way that will reflected in novels. The practicing Muslim motivated in secular ways and the fundamentalist Muslims are governed by politically motivated and created turbulence in the society. Tahmima Anam enquired these things through the works. The practicing of Muslims conforms with the society. How the hostile

forces agree with the way of the main stream of society

The role of India for the Afghanistan is prominent. There are some issues with bilateral politics with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka from middle ages to present. It is also gateway from the western side. The country leads in progressive state. there is cultural dynamism among the people. The novel 'kite Runner' highlights different issues cultural dynamism and motives. There is dynamism in relationship and values and also some socio-political issues. The country reconciles with other influential countries like India, Pakistan, China, Russia. All the other countries engaged in politics with Afghanistan. That psyche of writers and intellectuals reflected in the literature of Afghanistan.

Nepal and Bhutan have close relation with India since from their birth both politically and individually in pre independence period and post-independence period. Bhutan is a place of Buddhist and Nepal has Hindu and Buddhist populated country. Nepal's internal issues are suppressed in their own states but the novelists of the Nepal's address their culture to the world in their literature. Literature shows how extent Nepal achieve the modern civilization and culture . Nepal is a peaceful land in the past but now Nepal converted a place of common interest and also amalgamation of all religions. Nepal lost its monolithic ethic. Nepal is moving towards advancement. Nepal has some identity crisis. In the novel Seasons of Flight Manjushree Thappa delineated all these issues in view of SAARC perspectives. Here the novelist shows that how Nepal want to remove outside of the country and also outside of SAARC region and want to revalue their culture and ethic. They are totally confused about their value of self-inside the country. So, they want to see their nation from the outside of the country and see the nation from others perspectives and evaluate their values and shortcomings.

The relationship between Bhutan and India Bhutan is based on religious and cultural. Bhutanese are migrated to different countries to propoganda their culture ethic and civilization. They have some spiritual and political motives to adopt to modern civilization and culture. So they adopt modernism and spiritualism. In the novel 'circle of karma' the novelist Kunzang Choden related their character to move one nation to another nation to find out the identity in the view of spiritual and ethical ways. Most of Maldives way of life influenced by India . Now it adopts global culture .it is the way to challenge the modernism. The people has developed the adoptability with the modernism. Maldives has very few numbers of English fiction writers but they analyses their past and present culture and literature and doing a challenge make a place in SAARC

Thus SAARC literature has all the possibilities to flourish with greater regional cooperation and interaction . The contribution of India for the formation of SAARC as compendious body of literature is immense .India plays as pivotal role in the subcontinent. All the writers and artists of SAARC countries can effectively work together and establish an influential place in world literature.

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