

The Impact of Globalization on English Literature with special reference to Girish Karnad's "The Fire and the Rain"

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Abstract

The term 'Globalization' in itself is self-explanatory. It is an international platform for maintaining consistency in the living mode of the people all over the world. Globalization is the resultant of the interchange of worldly views, opinions and the various aspects of the culture everywhere around the world. This is the means for providing an international arena for intermingling of people from different sectors, culture and dialects and learns to move and approach socially without hurting and affecting each others' prestige.

Being Global means a change in one's view of looking at life, Values, Culture & Language. This aspect has been captured wonderfully by Writers all over the World. This paper Presents Girish Karnad's "The Fire & the Rain" in the light of the concept of Globalization and its various effects.

Keywords: Global, Values, Culture, Language, Effects.

In its literal sense, Globalization can be viewed as the process of transformation of local or regional phenomena into global ones. *“It is a continuous process for the veracity of regional economies, societies and cultures through worldwide networks of exchange.”*

Globalization initiated with the masses travelling to other geographic areas for exploration, then with the interest for travel and enjoying personal space. Then came the era of searching for employment opportunities anywhere on the globe to win the race for the ‘survival of the fittest’. With every step that technology took towards modernization, globalization started on rooting its footsteps. In today’s era the various means of telecommunication, social media, and most importantly, the Internet has a big role to play in the spread of globalization.

Globalization has a wide role to play the world over. It has left its footprints in every field of life. The interchange of world views and ideas has resulted in a major transformation of the lifestyle and living standards of people globally. Indian culture is no exception to this transformation process. With the emergence of globalization, our deep rooted traditions and customs have loosened up their hold. India has a rich cultural background which is famous throughout the world. Globalization has not only helped in the westernization of India, but conversely, the Indian culture has also spread its impact globally. Culture and traditions of any geographic region hold a special significance with respect to their uniqueness and that is the differentiating factor for a population within a geographic boundary. This uniqueness has been disturbed in varying degrees in lieu of globalization. Such an impact is very much pronounced when they hit a developing country like India.

Globalization has both positive and negative impacts throughout the globe. Widespread effects ranging from environmental challenges, climatic influence, air, water, soil pollution to Cyber crimes etc., are apt examples of the negative effects of being Global. All areas be it business, trade, and work exposure or the economic and financial status of the country, no field is beyond the reach of globalization.

The effect of Globalization can be seen in the Literatures of the World too, Indian Literature being one of them. With its advent, Contemporary Indian dramatists attempted to cross cultural boundaries across time, going “back to the past” in a metamorphic sense to retrieve ancient traditions by creating them in their dramatic productions. The last few decades have also undergone translations from regional languages in English. This increases the quality of writing

drama in totality. The epics and classics when translated in English become an important part in Indian English literature. Translated texts when taught to the students, increase their creativity and English translations popularize the Indian tradition among the scholars. Translations of regional drama also serve as a pillar for the emergence of “national theatre” into which the streams of theatrical art seem to converge.

The translations have forged a link between the east and west, north and south and they contributed to the growing richness of contemporary creative consciousness. Some notable playwrights and directors such as Utpal Dutt, Badal Sircar, C.T.Khanolkar, Sadanand Rege, Amol Palekar, Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and, Mahesh Elkunchwar contributed much to the growth and development of play scripts and *transhistorical interculturalism*. They also juxtaposed various strands of Indian culture simultaneously in their works. One of these Playwrights is Girish Karnad whose Play “The Fire & the Rain” can be studied in the light of the theory of Globalization.

Born on May 19, 1938, in Mathern, Maharastra, Girish Karnad has become one of India's brightest shining stars, earning international praise as a playwright, poet, actor, director, critic, and translator. As a young man studying at Karnataka University, Dharwar, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics and Statistics in 1958, Karnad dreamed of earning international literary fame, but he thought that he would do so by writing in English. Upon graduation, he went to England and studied at Oxford where he earned a Rhodes scholarship and went on to receive a Master of Arts Degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics. He would eventually achieve the international fame he had dreamed of, but not for his English poetry. Instead, Karnad would earn his reputation through decades of consistent literary output on his native soil.

Reading Girish Karnad's 'The Fire and the Rain' is like reliving an age-old myth even as its multi-faceted characters, which transcend time, play out its inevitable end. It is derived from '*The Myth of Yavakri*' — a part of the renowned epic *Mahabharata*, which recounts the tale of two brothers while exploring the themes of power, love, lust, sacrifice, faith, duty, selfishness and jealousy.

An Old Legend:

Paravasu is the eldest son of the great sage Raibhya. For seven long years he has performed the mahayagya (fire sacrifice) to appease the gods and get rains for the drought-ridden land. He has

forsaken his wife — Vishakha, his brother — Arvasu and all worldly pursuits. His exalted position of Chief Priest of the sacrifice creates discord and animosity within his own family, from his father Raibhya to his cousin Yavakri.

Yavakri, Parvasu's arch-rival, returns home triumphant after ten years of meditation, armed with the boon of eternal knowledge bestowed upon him by the Lord Indra himself. The resentful Yavakri embarks upon a scheme for ultimate revenge at any cost.

Parvasu's younger brother — Arvasu, is in love with a tribal girl — Nittilai, is all set to defy his upper caste Brahmin norms and marry her. But his Brahmin upbringing does not allow him to escape the manipulations of his brother Parvasu, his cousin Yavakri, and his father Raibhya. Unwittingly embroiled in their battle for supremacy, he is eventually forced to choose between love and duty.

In a desperate attempt to assert his position, his dominance in the Brahmin community, Yavakri seduces Vishakha — his past lover and now Parvasu's abandoned wife. Raibhya — Parvasu's father, wreaks his own vengeance on Yavakri by unleashing upon him a demon — the Brahmarakshas.

The appearance of Lord Indra at the end is testament to Arvasu's essential goodness and faith. His dialogue with the God leads him towards the path of duty and spiritual growth, through sacrifice. The purity of his love for Nittilai triumphs as the parched land is granted rain and its people salvation.

The Play has in its side-line many instances which depict the effects of Globalization on a large scale.

Marriage Values:

With the coming of Globalization the sacred institution of Marriage seems to be losing its value. It is very much evident from the increasing number of divorce cases and the extra-marital affairs reported every now and then. Marriage used to be considered as bonding of the souls which will be linked even after the death; but today marriage is like a professional bond or a so-called commitment to share life without compromising their self-interests. The ego factor into the Indian youth is again a product of globalization. This factor is depicted amply in the Play. We get the first glimpse of it in the Speech of Vishakha, when she meets Yavakri after a span of ten years and tells him this about her sexual life which she has had with her husband, “I let my body

be turned inside out as he did his own. I had a sense he was leading me into something. Mystical? Spiritual? We never talked.”(Pg.16)

Adultery:

Both the genders were kept at a distance, with lot many restrictions and limitations to the approach for ages in our culture. With the emergence of globalization and western culture, youth have start mixing up well with each other. The friendly approach and the socializing feature is worth appreciable. But the total breakout of restrictions has adulterated the Indian mindset, playing up with the physical relationship. This has given birth to new relationships in India like live-in relationships. Also the increased cases of rape and sexual abuse cases are a result of the perverted mind which again the imported values very much alien to our mother culture.

In the Play, Puravasa's wife having found her ex-lover Yavakri and having been deprived of sexual pleasures from her husband for a long time ,gets sexually intimate with him and never even once, thinks about the repercussions or feels guilty of cheating on her husband, “I'll give you the knowledge Indra couldn't give you. My body-It's light with speech now,” she says. (Pg.17).

The Concept of Adultery also would incorporate the open-mindedness of the people & characters in the play. Topics concerning Physical Intimacy & Relations between a husband and wife are freely being talked about by Nittilai. Andhaka, Yavakri's servant and a blind man, also takes part in these discussions without restraint. This is best depicted when Arvasu says, “To chew upon, you mean? Your women can be more lewd than your men”. (Pg.6) More shocking is the reply from Nittilai when she says, “It's their prerogative.....” (Pg.6)

Respect for elders:

This is one of the regions where Globalization has played its most wicked role. As a result of lives becoming modernized and people becoming busy, they have forgotten the basic age old Custom that we adhered to. Yavakri goes on to have sexual intercourse with his sister-in law who has been regarded as a mother figure in Indian Vedic Scriptures. One is reminded here of an episode in the Indian Epic of Ramayana- the dialogue between *Sri Rama* and his younger brother *Lakshman* when they were hunting for a lost *Sita*. When asked whether a particular set of jewels belonged to *Sita*, that Lakshman could say was that he does not recognize them, as while talking to her he always looked down at her feet. Such was the respect that the ancient men gave to women.

That people have loose morals and that the Sanctity of the institution of marriage is not upheld is made evident also through another statement by Nittilai, “These high caste men are glad enough to bed our women but not to wed them.” (Pg. 8)

A Sense of Inquisitiveness:

One basic element that has given by the Globalised world is the Urge to question everything. We find this in the ever –questioning nature of Nittilai, the hunter girl, who, Arvasu is in love with. In a dialogue with Arvasu and Andhaka regarding Brahmins she questions, “....Why? What are they afraid of? Look at my people. Everything is done in public view there.” (Pg.10)

And again when she talks about Yavakri’s Penance in the jungle and asks, “....why didn’t Yavakri ask for a couple of good showers.....Not too much to ask of a god, is it?” (Pg.10)

Non-Conformity to Rules/Breaking of the established Conventions:

There are recurring incidents in the Play, of Characters going their way, without paying any heed to the established Customs and Conventions in the Society. Paravasu, the Chief Priest is quite used to it, undeterred by the fact that he has a family and a wife to look after. His Father, Raibhya, also chides him regarding this, “So this is your usual insolence. Wilful transgression of the rules-” (Pg.29)

This reappears in another dialogue by Vishakha, in the same scene, “Yavakri and you. How much you resemble each other. You both go away when you feel like it. Come back without an explanation. As though Indra is explanation enough...” (Pg.31)

Globalization can be called a slow spreading risk factor that has covered almost the entire Play with its severity. Notwithstanding its positive effects, it has had its impact on the various Characters and situations in the Play which gives us a very grim picture of the Reality of Life and People in general. Thus “The Fire and the Rain” can be studied in the light of this Concept and its various related terminologies.

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