

Indian Languages and its Significance in International Context

Indian Literature: Vedas from India

Four Vedas-Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva are from most ancient text available from India, which have reached throughout the world through mostly English, but through other languages like German translations as well

Ancient Texts-Philosophical and Creative

Vedas, particularly Rig-Veda is known for its creative and aesthetic poetry as well. Upanishads and texts of Shaddarshanas-Six Schools of Indian philosophy, including non believer Samkhya philosophy, Buddhist, Jainism, Atheist Lokayata are more of theoretical texts. These are all known to the world through translations. Apart from these philosophical texts, there is a rich heritage of Sanskrit creative literature as well.

Creative Sanskrit Literature

Sanskrit has been language of philosophical and creative literature-both. Apart from Mahabhartta, Ramayana and texts like Panchtantra and Hitopadesh, Sanskrit literature is known world over for its poetry and drama with Kalidas as most known name.

Shakespeare and Kalidas!aa

It is common refrain among literary critics in India to refer Kalidas as 'Shakespeare of India', though Kalidas lived nearly one thousand years before Shakespeare, that is why some critics will put it in reverse order as well-'Shakespeare as Kalidas of England'! Whatever way, but it reflects the concept of 'World Literature' and also Comparative study of literature, which would never have been possible without translations of the texts.

Shakuntala Translation

Translation of Abhigyan Shakuntalam in English was first done by William Jones in 1789 and after that by Sir Monier Williams in prose form in 1853, later more than 46 translations in twelve European languages appeared and now complete dramas and poetry collections of Kalidas are available in many English translations. English and other languages translations of many other Sanskrit classic writers are also available like that of Bhavbhuti , Kiratarjun etc.

Contribution of Indian Creative Writing to World Literature

Apart from classical Sanskrit literature, medieval period Indian literature is also known to the world, particularly Indian Bhakti movement poets like Kabir, Guru Nanak, Akka Mahadevi and many more through their translations. In modern period, big number of translations were done from Indian languages literatures. India has 22 national languages in 8th schedule of Indian constitution and 24 recognised by Sahitya Akademi-Academy of Letters for purpose of awarding annual best book prizes.

Translations of Mirza Ghalib(Mirza Beg Asadullah Khan also known as Mirza Ghalib was an Urdu and Persian poet of the 19th century Mughal and British era in the Indian Subcontinent)

Many scholars, even from non literary background have been fascinated by Ghalib's philosophical Urdu ghazals. Aijaz Ahmad and many other scholars and translators have rendered Ghalib's poetry and prose in English. Mirza Ghalib lived during 1857's first war of Independence of India and went through lot of hard times as well, but his poetry is claimed to be as national heritage by both India and Pakistan, though there was no Pakistan during Ghalib's times

Role of Translation in First Noble Prize of Literature to India

Rabindranath Tagore, most eminent Indian writer of Bengali language got Noble prize for literature in 1913, till now only Indian to receive this award for literature. Interesting part of this narrative is that Tagore himself translated 103 of his Bengali poems in English and took them to England.

Geetanjali...

Tagore recited his translations in many gatherings and W.B Yeats, the great English poet was so impressed that he wrote forward to these poems and the small collection was published in English.

Tagore received the award for his Bengali poetry, but facilitated by his own English translation of the poems.

Tagore's example of his own translation and Noble prize on it, underlines the significance of Translation as tool of literary communication in the world. Now almost all the Bengali writings of Tagore are available in English and many Indian languages translation, some in other world languages translations as well.

Premchand and his novel 'Godan'

Premchand, a Hindi and Urdu writer published his classic novel-Godan in Hindi and Urdu both, few months before his death. The novel based on the real life of Indian peasantry became Indian classic and has been twice translated into English.

Godan (Novel written by Premchand)

Jai Rattan and P. Lal did first English translation of Godan in 1957, which became quite popular. Later Gordon C Roadarmel did English translation of Godan in 1968, which is considered better than earlier one.

The novel was selected by UNESCO to be translated into many world languages and so it has been. Apart from Godan, many other fiction writings of Premchand are now available in English and other languages. Ghalib, Tagore and Premchand represents India as the best faces of Indian literature on world literary scene.

Importance of Translation in Indian literary Scenario

As mentioned earlier, India itself is storehouse of huge literature written in various Indian languages, which reaches other Indian languages through translation among Indian languages. There are two major source languages of inter Indian literary translation-Hindi and English. Text of any Indian language is first translated into either Hindi or English and then through that medium it is translated into many more Indian languages.

Inter Indian Translations

Generally literature of North, West and East Indian languages like-Punjabi, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Assamese etc. is first translated into Hindi and then from that medium to many other Indian languages.

Translations from South Indian languages are generally done first in English and then from that medium, these are translated into other Indian languages. Southern languages are part of Dravidian group and other three regions languages are from Indo-Aryan group of languages

Inter Indian Languages Translations

These translations are done sometimes without the help of a medium language like Hindi or English too, like Tamil to Bengali or Marathi to Assamese etc.

Sahitya Akademi by instituting National Translation Prize among inter Indian languages translations has encouraged this process as well. This author has also received National Translation Prize from Sahitya Akademi-Indian Academy of Letters for Inter-Indian language translation.

Revolutionary poet Pash and his poetry

Pash created a niche for himself as trendsetter poet in the seventies as a radical poet.

As he was against both Khalistani terrorism and state terrorism, he was assassinated by Khalistani terrorists on 23rd March, his Punjabi poetry in Hindi, which was published in different volumes, one of which mentioned above-Samay O'Bhai Samay'(Time O' Brother Time) ,published in 1993, was awarded National Translation Prize by Sahitya Akademi in 2002.

Hindi translation of Pash clicked so much that poet became more popular in Hindi than his own mother tongue Punjabi. Many more translations were done from Hindi translation of the poet in Marathi, Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali, Malayalam, Telugu etc.

Indian languages and thus designating him as major Indian poet rather than being just a Punjabi poet. His poetry was compared to Pablo Neruda (got noble prize in Literature, 1971) by some critics, so bringing him to the scenario of world literature as English translation of his poetry were also done.