What are the major differences between Telugu poetry produced during colonial times and the aftermath of it?

The major difference between Telugu poetry in colonial times and Postcolonial Telugu poetry is colonial Telugu poetry **deals with the aspects within the period of colonization whereas postcolonial Telugu poetry depicts the aspects or the consequences of colonization and the issues related to the period after the independence of India.**

There are two kinds of anti-colonial Telugu poetry in colonial period. The first kind which resisted colonialism but was little inferior on mentioning about exploitation, it is rather mainly focused on developing patriotism but mostly not about fighting colonialism. The second kind was the poetry which mainly focuses on the greatness of motherland, praising it and teaching why you should be grateful to be born in this country. Since poets were severely punished during colonial period, they did not have the confidence to write against Britishers therefore there was inferiority in mentioning about anticolonialism to overcome that fear poets started writing on patriotism in colonial period. Post-colonial Telugu poetry mainly emphasises the consequences of colonialisation, after the end of colonialism people started to write by starting with an angry note on exploitation of colonialism. Most of the Telugu poets mentioned how much economically exploited we are but they were not interested mentioning cultural, psychological, social exploitation. Even though poets have acknowledged cultural revival they never saw colonialism having a powerful impact on Telugu culture. After colonialism the social evils and many false practices were eradicated completely since during colonialism most of the poets focused on social reforms and eradicating social evils like dowry, child marriage, illiteracy, widow immolation etc. They did not want the such culture to revive back these loop holes in Telugu culture were removed in the period of colonialism. Poets have knowledge on religious tolerance and secularism so instead of focusing on the cultural exploitation, they more often than not highlighted the pre-colonial glory of the land, which existed in the form of architecture, engineering, music, dance and also moral characteristics, such as fraternity, monogamy, female education, gender equality, eradication of class- or caste-based discrimination, etc.

Poets have acknowledged the contribution of Orientalists such as Max Muller or Anne Beasant towards Indian culture and religious practices through their poems. In pre-colonial period poems were mainly praising Mother India and Indian rich heritage, in post-colonial period there was a new trend of praising congress leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel etc. Appreciating freedom fighters through their poems was one of the ways to show gratitude towards late freedom fighters. It is rare to come across names of extreme Nationalists who fought with violence such as Bhagath singh or Subhas Chandra bose, except in leftist literature produced by different schools of Marxism.

**Marxism:** The political, economic and social theories of Karl Marx, society where it is divided into two classes capitalists and workers where capitalists exploit workers, we should reform such that there are no such classes.

The ideas of Mahatma Gandhi such as satyagraha (righteous anger), ahimsa (nonviolence), santi (peace) were inculcated in poems also similar ideas which came in the constitution of India such as pacifism (non-violence), fraternity (brotherhood), unity across communities, equality, abhyudayam (progress), etc. were also made as poems by Telugu poets whose core theme was anti-colonialism in both pre-colonial and post-colonial times.

**Poets and their poetry after colonial period:**

Sri Sri was a self-proclaimed Marxist leader who produced his poetry volumes or cinema songs more on class exploitation than colonial plunder. Sri Sri introduced the Marxist concepts of historical materialism and class exploitation among others into Telugu poetry. Most of his poems promised an ideal world which is socialistic but such world was never materialised. Through writings of Sri Sri, we can understand that he was influenced by Marxist formula that colonialism was an essential phase of any feudal country in order to promote itself to a classless society. Once the country realises how wrong the colonialism is and how the classes in the society make people weak and suffer, they strive for a society without classes as per Karl Marx. So, Sri Sri believed colonialism in a necessary phase in Indian history for occurrence of better socialistic world therefore he never took colonialism or nationalism seriously in his poems. One of his most famous works is “Maha Prasthanam” an anthology of poems where he addressed social injustices.

Devarakonda Bala Gangadhar Tilak was famous for his humanist and rational poetry. He was also a romanticist and his poetry compilation “Amrutham Kurisina Raathri” earned him Sahithya Academy Award posthumously. He did not make explicit critique of colonialism but his work rather talks about the fights with colonialism. His romantic style of writing was acknowledged by people.

The other trend which needs acknowledgement after the colonisation is digambara kavitwam (naked poetry). Six men who called themselves as Cherabanda Raju, Jwalamukhi, Mahaswapna, Nagnamuni, Nikileshwar, Bharaviah produced this volume. Among the six poets that started this trend, only two, namely “Mahaswapna” and “Nagnamuni,” had chosen to stick to this trend for a longer time. They used explicit carnal language and the female body to express their anger toward the society. They claimed that they did this in order to wake up the society and shock it so it could perform its duties better.

After colonial most of the Telugu poets understood to essence of writing in colloquial Telugu and thus their works were also able to reach masses but in pre-colonial period most of the poets were reluctant to write in colloquial Telugu and wrote their works in sankritised Telugu which made it hard to reach majority of people.

After colonial period cinema poets became famous and songs were qualified for poetry for large extent. Since the cinema songs can be easily reached to masses than print literature some vibrant nationalists songs and anti-colonial songs through due to British oppression patriotic songs were not released often later those songs were regularly released.

**Example of Telugu Poetry after colonial period:**

**Stanza of Poem:**

Sainikudi Utharam (Letter from Soldier) by Devarakonda Balagangadhar Tilak

Ikkada nenu kshemam akkada nuvvu kuda

Musali amma pada mancham koodu

Mana chinnabai cheruvulo kongaa

Ipudu rathri ardharatri

Nakem tochadu nalo oka bayam

Tellani dalasari Manchu rathri chekati anchu

Doorangaa pakka deraloo corporal bullets chappudu

Evaroo gadi metti meda nunchi paddatu

Nishabdhamlo nidrichina sainikula guraka

Chachina jeevula meralaa undi

**Nature and Meaning of the poem:**

This poem is almost written in colloquial Telugu with less rhyming but great meaning. The poem shows the feelings of a soldier camping in a battle field and writing a letter to his family with all his feelings about the battle. This poem starts like letter with a salutation to his family and then he starts to express his feelings. During night in the camp, he does not know what to do and he has a fear in his mind. He can hear the bullets sounds of the other battling soldiers. Everything was silent and he can only hear snoring of other soldiers. This poem shows how a solider feel in his camp and how his life goes in the Army. Even Though he always fears that he might not return back to his family but with his patriotism towards his country he pools out his courage and faces every challenge and enemy. In later stanzas he expresses how hard army training is and how they work day and night to protect our country. He also expressing how selfishness of people are leading to wars. One of his comrades has died in front of his eyes and they could not able to protect him. He expresses his frustration and tells his wife in Libya, Berlin and other countries life is so hard due to others selfishness.

This poem also uses some English words which clearly shows how Telugu poems got influenced by colonialism. The poems got more expressiveness than rhyming and shows a different point of view to the reader.

In pre-colonial times most of the poems were on praising country and supressing colonialism but after colonialism ended the Telugu poems were made to remember the sacrifices of many people because of which we obtained this freedom the language was modernised so that people can understand easily.