



RECENT TRENDS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE RESEARCH

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Abstract:

Research is very powerful instrument of knowledge and development. It is a systematic investigation or enquiry in the field of knowledge to discover over established facts or principles. It is a fresh or novel approach to the particular subject, specific topic or interpretation of facts. Hence it is close, careful and planned study of a topic. The nature and technique of research changes from subject to subject and language to language. This is because the materials and tools of each subject and languages are largely different. It also changes with the rapid progress in society and with passing time. Research in humanities is different from that in natural, arts and fine arts and social sciences. Literatures in different languages come under the category of arts and fine arts. Literature deals with human feeling and emotions. Research in literature depends more on literary scripts rather than field survey or social survey and experiments in laboratory. Research in literature is necessarily a culture centric study. This paper attempts to highlight the recent trends and practices in research particularly English literature.

Introduction

Literature is a branch of arts and fine arts which is different from natural sciences and social sciences. It is the product of the creative minds of the writer. It has different aspects such as plot, setting and characters, different themes and it deals with emotions or feelings. Research in literature cannot confine itself to either literary texts or the writer. It has to study both text as well as writer. Literary research enriches our perception of nature and of human life. It enriches our culture and our emotional world with the unique combination of knowledge and aesthetic pleasure. Research in literature is generally classified into four categories - Bibliographical or Textual research, Biographical research, Theoretical research and Interpretative research. Bibliographical or Textual research is concerned with the establishment of an authoritative text, correction of past editions, chronology, authenticity and attribution. Biographical research is based on the biographical criticism which believes that there are connections and relationships between the events in the life of the author and his works. These types of research reveal the autobiographical elements in the works of art.

Theoretical research is concerned with the various themes of literature and literary criticism. There are many ways of analyzing, interpreting and evaluating literary works. These types of research may propound a theory of literature or modify and improve a theory already in existence. Interpretative research

analyzes, interprets and evaluates a literary text of an author by applying the principles of a particular theory. It may be a study of an author's style, use of imagery or symbolism, exploration of myth, perception of social reality, expression of the inner soul, development of thought or the structure of his texts.

In the 20th century, advances in the science and technology changes everything rapidly. Likewise, advances in psychology, anthropology, linguistics and sociology made people to look at literature from quite different angle. The modern critics have defined their approach, methods and technique and analyzed literary texts and evaluated creative writers on the basis of the theories they have formulated after a wide range of study. Now we have different schools of criticism and critical theories such as New criticism, Structuralism, Formalism, Deconstruction, Post structuralism, Modernism and post Modernism, Marxism, Feminism, Eco-criticism, Queer Lesbian and Gay theories, Reader Response theories etc. Research in language is different from research in literature. Both have different aspects or components which need to be studied separately. Research in language basically deals with phonetics, phonology and philology, vocabulary, grammar and structure, growth and decay of language, dialects, language acquisitions, language teaching methods or pedagogy, linguistics and other discipline. English literature has a long tradition and heritage, so it has huge area to explore. Literatures in English are separated on

the basis of nations in which the English literature is written. It is broadly divided into British literature, American literature, Canadian literature, Australian literature, African literature in English, Indian literature in English, Caribbean literature, Commonwealth literature etc. Every nation has its own history and development of English literature. Earlier researches in English literature deal with different forms of literature such as drama, novel, poetry, short stories etc. and it uses interpretative methods for analyzing the works of literature. It studies thematic aspects, style of the writer, folk literature, vision studies, specific approaches, textual or bibliographical study and history of literature.

Literature changes with age and time. New ways, techniques, theories and methods are evolved to study the literature. During the 19th and 20th century new trends of research practices were used such as Comparative literature, Interdisciplinary studies, Diaspora literature, Reception and Influence studies, gender studies, Reader Response theories, Translation studies, National and World literature, Film studies etc. Due to globalization, different nations of the world have come closer.

There is cultural and social contact of the people. People learned different languages to make communication. Apart from communication, they like to read the literature written in other language. They took interest in reading as well writing in other languages. Writer started to translate their own works in another language or from foreign language to their own language. Translations of literary works bring necessary harmony among different nations and it can be major shaping force in the development of world literature and culture. It has a special significance in India because Indian literature can reach all over the world and in Indian continent only through translation. Research in translation can be broadly classified into two type translation from a foreign language into one of the Indian languages and translation from one of the Indian languages into foreign language. This is novel experiment so this is a significant area of research for scholars.

Research in comparative literature is an intellectual discipline of study which is emerged in 19th century. Mathew Arnold first used the term in English literary criticism. The term 'comparative literature' really means a comparative study of two or more literary works or languages. Comparison can be made between literary genre, periods and movements in literary

history, dominant themes and motifs. Two Indian languages and the literary works in them can be compared. Likewise literary forms in two or more Indian languages or literature can also be compared. Comparative literature offers extraordinary possibilities of exploring the inter relations between literature and languages. Interdisciplinary research is a new approach in the field of literary research. It means two different subjects or disciplines are studied together. The theories or concepts in one subject are applied in other subject or incorporated in other discipline. The study of literature in two different languages can also be called interdisciplinary research. This widens the area of our understanding and perception. This approach has a great applied significance in the field of research. The example of interdisciplinary approach is eco-criticism; here the depiction of environment in literature is studied. Two discipline environment studies and literature come together.

Cultural studies is recent phenomenon in the field of literary studies which examines how cultural practices relate to everyday life, history, structure of power, politics, ideology and the environment. Culture of the society is the significant component of the literature; hence research in this field can strengthen the social and cultural aspects of the society. Culture and society play vital role in the literature because literature is considered as the mirror of the society. Research in this filed is an attempt to understand and correlate society and culture. It is an interdisciplinary filed of studies which draw from any different subject areas including sociology, anthropology, history etc. Research in diaspora literature is a novel approach in literary study. Diaspora literature is produced by globally dispersed minority communities that have common ancestral homeland. It is process by which people of particular country became scattered and settle in other countries. This migration took place for various reason such as war, job, racialism, natural disaster etc. The common themes in diaspora literature are dislocation, multiculturalism, isolation, loneliness, marginality, alienation, hybridity etc. These themes can be explored from diaspora literature. The researcher can study these themes reflected in diaspora literature and compare them with mainstream literature.

Pandemic literature is recent phenomenon due to the pandemic situation of covid-19. Society progresses with rapid change in science and technology and change is

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universal phenomenon. Human race has witnessed such many changes. Many changes are helpful or useful to the society and some changes have adverse effects on human beings. Pandemic diseases are such natural calamities which have adverse effects on the society and it breaks the progress. It includes plague, smallpox, malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, SARS, Ebola, and COVID-19 etc. These epidemics and pandemics are depicted in many works of literature and became popular. The study of pandemics helps us to understand personal relationship, isolation, lockdown, death, politics and socio-economic structures. Thus, pandemic literature is emerging area of literary studies. Film studies, as a branch of literary study emerged during the late 20th century. It studies film history and development, adaptations, theories and practices as well as the basics of film productions.

Many universities has either introduced diploma and degree courses in film studies, or included it in syllabus of under graduate or postgraduate. It can be strongly suggested that film literature or film studies has great advantages to the student's academic life as well as making career because film literature is an emerging and growing branch of study. There is lot of scope to make research in film studies.

Literature like other walks of life changes with rapid pace. There are political, social and technological changes are happening in the society. Apart from above areas of research there is digital dystopia and digital humanities can be studied. Flash fiction and micro fiction is the product of internet and they can be explored. Graphic novels are becoming popular among the readers and there is scope for research. Classic books are revised and epics are interpreted in new way. Due to the technology E-books, Blogs are important steps in the evolutions of new literature. There is increase of access to e-books and audio versions. These are the areas in which the scholars can take interest and explore these areas and themes.

Selected Bibliography

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