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Research Papers

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## Research Areas in Literature

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### Abstract

*Research is the most distinguished activity that enhances the quality of higher-education. A person obsessed with research has to face many problems. Apart from having an appropriate guide, the real problem begins with the selection of the research topic. The vast and gleaming research area is always changing its dimensions. Some well-set, readymade and stereotyped topics do not attract the attention of a competent researcher, because he or she is always looking for what is new and qualitative. Instead of accepting the topic given by the guide, the researcher must come up with his own topic and find out his own path. In this paper, an attempt has been made to suggest and focus some of the areas like fiction, poetry, drama and criticism. It covers literatures in English written in India, America and England in which some basic and applied research is possible.*

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The most distinguished activity in the domain of Higher Education is Research. The educationists always talk about the enhancement of the quality of education through research and teaching. Research is a determined and diligent search for new knowledge. It is the researcher's test that brings out his or her best. There are some stages in the process of research.

Extensive creative and critical reading, reading and proper understanding a literary or critical theory, selection of a topic, finding and locating a problem, forming a hypothesis, again reading books-both primary and secondary resources, accumulating the information in the form of words, using it while analyzing and interpreting the problem in the light of the theory, and in the end, presenting one's findings and the whole work in the prescribed format are some of the stages in the process of research. I am mainly concerned with the selection of a topic from some areas in literatures in English in this paper.

A person obsessed with research has to face many problems. Apart from finding an appropriate guide, the real problem begins with the selection of a topic, which is, I think, the most important thing in research. In India there is not enough provision for guiding the young aspiring talents of the universities. The scene is pathetic. A researcher must remember that he or she has to rise himself or herself and find out one's own path.

First of all, the researcher must choose the area of his or her own liking or interest. A beginner or a nascent researcher has to stand and stare at the previous research done in any area. Modern research areas in literature are many. Instead of being swept away in the vast pastures of research, he, at the most, must select a piece of land, barren or fertile and try to cultivate it for himself and for his research. He must decide what is to be studied and how to work on it. Most of the unfortunate researchers get the gifts of research topics from their guides. Is it not better to find out our own path

and develop it?

A glance at the research done in India will introduce the researcher to this vast and gleaming area that is always changing its dimensions. By avoiding the well set, readymade and stereotyped topics he can look for what is new and challenging. I would humbly like to suggest some areas in which the research can be done. I shall be giving a few examples. And the researchers may think over them or the other topics like them and select their own path in this most deserving field.

English, as the medium of expression, is used by many people of different nationalities almost all over the world. There are many literatures in English: British literature, American literature, Indian literature, African literature, Australian literature, Canadian literature and the like. In addition to these, there is an ever increasing branch of knowledge-comparative literature.

As far as the British literature is concerned, most of the major writers are almost literally washed out in research. So there can be a good research on the minor writers. Or it is better to see the places where nobody has yet entered. For example, there is a research done on 'Charles Lamb as a poet' (2005:24), or 'A critical estimate of Alexander Pope's non-satirical poetry'. One can find out the new writers who have written after 1980s and do research on them instead of dwelling on the older ones. The British literature is closely associated with the Indian literature. Much research can be done on the comparative aspects of these two literatures. The following can be the topics for research: a comparative study of imagery and philosophy of life in 'P.B. Shelley and Keshavsut', 'John Keats and B.R.Tambe' and 'William Wordsworth and Balkavi'. There can be a comparison between the two essayists, one from England and the other from Maharashtra, for example 'Bertrand Russell and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar', 'Aldous Huxley and Lokahitvadi. The various forms of social consciousness in the fiction of Mahatma Phule, Mulk Raj Anand and U.R.Anantha Murthy can be studied. Again the subaltern elements in Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice-candy-man; 'Social satire in Jayanta Mahapatra's Poetry'; 'The growth of an artist- A study of Arun Koltkar's Jejuri, Sarpsatra and Kala-Ghoda Poems' and 'Tradition and Modernity in Vilas Sarang, Arun Kolatkar and Dilip Chitre' can be the topics for study. Thus, British literature can be compared with different literatures produced in the different Indian Languages.

Although many new literatures are seen on

the horizons of knowledge, American literature has not lost its vital force. There are many literary traditions all over the world, for example, the western literary tradition or the Eastern literary tradition or the Third world literary tradition. We must try to understand our tradition and our place in it. Under the whirlwind of globalization our good work of art is likely to be forgotten. A young scholar should pick it up and do research on it. Instead of focusing the western influence on the Indian literature, the researcher can stress the Asian influence on the great writers of the West, for example, on the writers like T.S.Eliot, Ezra Pound, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and the like. Some work is no doubt done but undone is vast.

A good deal of work is possible on the narrative strategies used by both the American and British novelists like Nathaniel Hawthorne. Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Joseph Conrad and Virginia Woolf. A study of supernatural elements in Edgar Allan Poe and Amitav Gosh, or a study of human body images in the poetry of Walt Whitman and Vinda Karandikar is possible; or the plight of a woman in Thomas Hardy's Tess, Hawthorne's The scarlet letter and R. K. Narayan's The Guide can be the interesting topics. Race, Colour and Caste are still today the major barriers in the healthy communication and healthy living. One should not forget the contribution of the great scholars of the world. A comparison between the African-American mentor Dr. W.E.B. DuBois and the great Indian democrat Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is possible.

Dalit literature still remains an untouched area in research. There is a remarkable similarity between the life-struggle of the African-Americans and the Indian Dalits. So, the scholars may choose the major and minor essayists, social thinkers, poets, novelists, short story writers and dramatists and try to probe into the social aspects which have marginalized these people and suggest solutions for the better social life. There can be a comparison between 'the Dalit Poetry in Maharashtra and the African-American Poetry of the Harlem Renaissance'; 'The Black Power movement and the Dalit Panther movement including their aftermaths'; 'Namdev Dhasal's Andhale Shatak and Leroi Jone's Social Essays'. The poet Namdev Dhasal can be compared with the American poets like Claude MaCkay, or Countee Cullen or Langston Hughes. The plays of Datta Bhagat and of Leroi Jones can be a good comparative study.

The Indian Literary tradition with its aesthetics seems to be fallen on the bad days because most of our research is westernized. We know Roland Barthes, Lacan, Derrida, Freud and Jung and the western feminists but we have partially lost the memory of the great intellects of our past. We have to look back at those who will help us in comparing our literary and critical concepts like Alankaras, Vakrokti, Rasa and Dhvani in relation to their western counterparts. We have to test the much talked of western concepts in relation to our concepts.

Formerly, there were a few critical approaches to the study of literature. Now a days we have so many new literary and critical theories. It seems that the good old 'isms' like Classicism, Romanticism, Realism and Marxism have lost their glamour. Therefore, one can read what is current, fresh, and new e.g. Orientalism, Colonialism, or Imperialism and their 'neo-forms', Diasporic literature and the Translation studies. One may select any one of these and use it while assessing the work that one has selected. I think literary criticism offers its researchers many golden chances to interpret literature from different angles. One has to keep in mind what Rene Wellek and Austin Warren have said:

A literary work of art is not a simple object but rather a highly complex organization of a stratified character with multiple meanings and relationships. (1945:27)

Many overlapping interdisciplinary subjects co-exist. They are so closely intertwined that it is sometimes a challenge for the researcher to separate and identify them. His research may be original or derivative, or basic or applied. However he or she must take the legitimate pride in doing research. He should remember the following remark of Jacques Bazrun and Henry F. Graff:

At this late date in the world's history very few subjects of research can be entirely original. (1977:19)

Scientific or science fiction is one more area where the ground remains largely uncultivated. Again Humour and its place in human life has been considerably neglected in research. The African-American autobiographies of the militant political leaders and their prison poetry are still the unexplored areas in research. Literature in Translations is now a days a new field that attracts the attention of the scholars. The good bilingual poets and translators like A. K. Ramanujan, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, Arvind

Mehrotra and Jayanta Mahapatra and others from different Indian languages could be studied. One can select the topics like the intra-cultural pollination and the fertilization of ideas, or The search for rootedness or Tradition and modernity in Indian English literature. A researcher may study some of the self-actualized or healthy persons or the dialectics of the fully functioning personalities in the literary world in the light of some modern psychological theories of Jung or of Albert Ellis. His research should not be like the food without taste and while doing research the researcher should work with his own head and speak out his own mind.

#### Works Cited

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