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*Editor*

**Ravinder Kumar**

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# Contents

## Articles

- E-Governance: A key factor to make citizen *e-Educated***  
**Dr Meftah Dakhil** 7-15
- Spoken English: Towards Standardisation**  
**Ravinder Kumar** 16-22
- Igbo Culture, Its Encounter with  
Colonial Power and Identity Crisis: A Study  
with Reference to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart***  
**Md. Sahidul Islam** 23-27
- Memories of Partition: Shiv K. Kumar's - A River with Three Banks**  
**Varun Vasishtha** 28-37

## Research Paper Discussion

- A Classroom Discussion on Honorable Prof Amritavali's research article at the Women's  
College of Jazan University (KSA)**  
**Ravinder Kumar** 38-39

## Forthcoming Seminars & Conferences 40-40

## Citation Guide 41-41



*From the Editorial Desk*

*This is an attempt to explore the hidden capacity of writing in each individual. This journal will give directions to the educated young scholars of our fraternity to share their academic venture with us. We will publish research articles in our Journal of humanities (ISSN). This will be available in on-line version only. We will be happy to receive your research articles.*

*Further, it gives me immense pleasure to share that our international academicians not only will review articles but they will assist also in writing the same. Secondly, we have started a monthly magazine for sharing your poems, essays and any of writings that show your interest in literary activities will all be published online.*

*One of the main objectives of AJH (Alchemist Journal of Humanities) is to share research in different areas. Since multiculturalism and global changes are in the practices; it becomes challenging to examine how the expectations of Universities can be met. There are following areas of expressions in the Journal.*

- *English Language and Literature*
- *Women's Studies*
- *Dalit Literature*
- *Subaltern Studies*
- *Alternate Therapies*
- *Film Studies*
- *International Studies*
- *Cultural Studies*
- *Regional Languages Studies*
- *Book Reviews*

*Keeping this in the mind, here AJH will provide an opportunity to budding scholars to publish their research papers in peered review journal. AJH's idea and impact will be astoundingly influential in the academic world. Regardless to say, it cannot be achieved without your kind suggestions and cooperation. We would love to have your ideas and suggestion to make our future endeavors fruitful in this field.*

*Regards*

**Ravinder Kumar**

**Dr Meftah Dakhil\***

## **Introduction**

Libya would follow the planning and implementation of e-governance through central system. This is on the basis of information collected by traditional, tedious and manual method which is too slow to sustain. Now we are in the age of 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have seen in last few decades that the progress of information technology with leaps and bounds, which have completely changed the way of life in the developed nations. While internet has changed the established working practice and opened new vistas and provided a platform to connect, this gives the opportunity for collaborative work space that goes beyond the global boundary. Considering this things, focusing on GIS, we proposed a system for collection of socio economic data and resource management information of all areas of Libya via internet. E-Governance system primarily involves the creation, storage, analysis, dissemination and use of information. It can provide vital inputs to the government's policymaking process. E-Governance automates and thereby speeds up routine administrative functions. It enables the government to work better, yields higher revenue growth and costs less, apart from servicing citizens' needs as never before. It also increases the productivity of the government departments. Citizens can freely interact with various government departments anytime, anywhere with minimal effort. E-centers are to be implemented in urban local bodies in Libya. It will also bring confidence to the administration to move into the next generation reforms in E-governance in Urban Local Bodies and rural as well.

The following issues will be discussed in this paper:-

- a) Novel e-Governance Initiatives at Local Levels to Central
- b) GIS For Infra Structure Management
- c) E- Readiness and E- governance in Different Departments
- d) Human Resource Development
- e) Computerization of the Departments
- f) Development of GIS



## Novel e-Governance Initiatives at Local Levels to Central

The conventional use of “e” prefix explains that activity is electronic and digital in nature. The concept of e-gov starts at the local level to educate them technically in order to make people acquainted with the use of ICT. The overall architecture for e-Governance needs to ensure that the architecture components are extensible and scalable to adapt to the changing environments. The e-Governance applications that are emerging as islands of successes have to be interoperable. The basic concept can be categorized in the following way:

- a) Governance
- b) Economic
- c) Social

### a) **Governance**

Under the government these sections are to functioned at the top priority i.e. Core business Management of workflow, finances, personnel, documentation, records, information, knowledge, internal communication, executive information and decision making Transparency E procurement, government portal, on-line availability of laws, regulations Participation On line petitions, notices, comments, citizens’ network, publication of election records, e mails to people concern. The following figure here is inserted to explain the initial stage of e-governance.

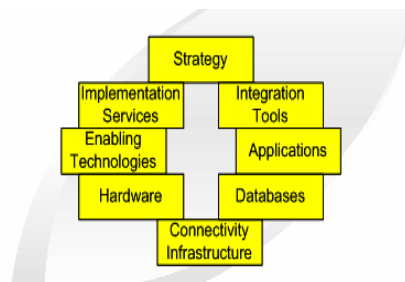


Figure 1. Main components of GIS (Burrough and McDonnell - 1998)

### b) **Economic**

Economic is the second main important factor to be discussed under the this paper i.e. the use of e-gov with the people to make them more educated electronically. These aspects are : Taxation, custom, fee information and management , Financial management , Budget planning, accounting, expenditure, investment, payroll and other information Resources management Geographic and

natural resources information and management, land/property/dwelling management, urban planning, development planning : Business development Enterprise registration, investment, technology and technology transfer information, patent information, market information, statistical analysis, economic forecasting, laws/regulations .

The most important factor that can be placed for the acceleration of the like e-gov is

#### **d) Social**

e-centers are the centers for the people of Libya to facilitate them electronically, in this sector , the most important factors are Social services Civil applications, civil registrations, land and property registrations, person identification documents, social security, vehicle registration. Under the sub-section, Education and Culture Digital libraries, community information centers, educational institutions—information and management Health Distant medicine and prescription services, hospital information and appointment, blood availability reports, Health insurance reimbursement, direct settlement can be placed. Public safety Crime information, drug monitoring and control, prison information and management, transportation information and management, natural disaster forecasting and management Natural environment Natural environment information and management, weather forecasting are again sub-section of social aspects of e-governance.

#### **GIS for Infra Structure Management**

Before discussion of ISM , we must understand that why e-governance is so important, to pursue real economic development goals not just “technology-push” but to make empowerment and developmet of common people through the use of electronic as a tool. Creating the right policy and institutional frameworks from the start in the favour of citizen to give them more electronic environment. To maximize effectiveness of ICT initiatives within Government in order to chnnelise the work in perfect order.the next is to generate savings by applying I&IT in backend processes or other programmatic areas. This is way to map path from pilot experiments to sustainable, scalable systems. Education means to educate people through using all daily activites thorough ICT. This is to design technology architecture (infrastructure, data, standards) for the public sector.

And it is to integrate organizational silos and deliver citizen services through common channels.

E-Governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies to transform and support the processes and structures of a governance system. It is the use by government agencies of information technologies to improve and transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. E-Governance involves making and implementing decisions, proper Leadership, putting in place Organizational arrangements, ensuring Resources and funding, establishing Accountability and measuring success. The infrastructure requirements include, Telecommunications network, internal agency systems, Cross- Government systems, Service delivery network – access points, Internet access and skilled staff. The expected outcomes are Better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, Citizen Empowerment through access to information and more efficient government management. The accruable benefits are increased transparency, Greater convenience, reduced corruption, Revenue growth and reduced cost of running government. The scope of e-Governance covers some foundations of E-government

- Electronic Service Delivery (G2C)
- Delivering information and services electronically to citizens and businesses
- Government to Business Transactions (G2B)
- Delivering information and transacting electronically with businesses.
- Government procurement and infrastructure projects.
- Internal Government Administration (G2G, G2E)
- Improving efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of intradepartmental and inter-department interactions within government, and with government employees
- *Foreign Trade (G2X)*

The following figure is designed in order to understand the concept of the proposed theory



Figure 2. (GIS as an integrating instrument for proper micro watershed planning,

*Prof.J.G.Krishnayya & Ms.Barauh,SRI,Pune, India)*

### E- Readiness and E- governance in Different Departments

The first stage is to design a basic model for implementation of GIS in different departments. So, we must follow **PADI** ( **P**lan , **A**ction , **D**ata and **I**mplementation)

- a) **Plan** : The most important factor is to plan for nature of data , its different sources and the systematic arrangements of plan from local to central level.
- b) **Action**: Action is the process where all human resources work together on a single steam line.
- c) **Data**: It is very essential part to be applied, because it deals with the fundamental idea of implementation of GIS in different departments.
- d) **Implementation**: At this stage user gets acquainted to access, to use and to manipulate the information, how to approach and how to solve the problems and to use Hardware and Software of GIS.

It proposes herewith, the use of our own vast and reliable telephone network as a backbone (for dial up facility), exiting human resource with very basic training of computer ( must have been already trained for computer education by this time out of compulsion by Government ), the existing infrastructure of Shabia and Central ( some bit extra furniture and space could always be spared ) and will require the computer ( with latest configuration ) at least one at each local level and Shabia or as per need. Application software is required to be designed and once being designed this could be issued to various local offices and Shabia as such. The concerned staff of local offices and Shabias need only be able to read simple English text/identify icons (symbol) properly, since now a days most of the software are menu-driven and user-friendly

(hence most easy to be used even by lay man or no voice user as such). Every local staff is being expected to have rigorous surveys to collect the correct and reliable information of various fields/ attributes as per application and enter the same with time to time updating on concern computers which in turn are being connected via inbuilt modem and external telephone to the computers of other Local offices at different places and all local computers to concern Shabia's computer at central office so on.

In this way merely seating at local office, all necessary information that too accurately (that too without going to concern villages) can be collected, analyzed and presented to head office (i.e. Central offices) for further information and effective reliable information regarding water resource management along- with socio-economic data can be made available for betterment and uplifts of rural area at speed beyond imagination.

#### Human Resource Development

The possibilities for the public to engage in the policy process via electronic networks range all the way from sending officials an e-mail to creating a distinct conferencing facility (e-mail box, document repository, chat room, etc.) for each major policy initiative (whether a new policy, or changes in an existing policy). "People use governance in their daily lives to manage human relationships, just as corporations and countries do to manage their interactions and activities" (Linda, 2002) Considered on a global basis, there have been some examples of almost every degree of involvement and combination of elements that one can imagine, although full-fledged electronic engagement is still not very frequent. More useful would be an outline of effective practices that could be used to direct the design of future efforts. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has proposed just such a list. OECD guidelines will enable agenda setting, analysis, synthesis, implementation and monitoring. There are two aspects to successful controllership in E-Gov , both of which much be optimized and integrated to achieve full benefits, namely hardware configuration, and software customization. To affect controllership all informatics and telematics hardware must be interconnect able into a single system. Capacity should also be standardized. Employee e-mailboxes should have similar storage space; all Internet connections should have the same baud rate, and attached documents should all have the same byte-limit on their size. Electronic technologies are playing a large role in shaping the mind-set of citizens, and they will want that mind-set reflected in social

governance. Governance software should also be standardized. The other aspect of software design that needs standardization to accomplish controllership is the use of extensible markup language (XML) for file formats and document layouts. It is used on the Internet, and can be incorporated into each and every software application. This is parallel to the discussion by Okot Uma (2001 and 2005), which focuses on the direct contribution that the “e” plays in advancing principles of governance and particularly good governance. Indeed, he says, “e-governance seeks to realize processes and structures for harnessing the potentialities of information and communication technologies at various levels of government and at the public sector and beyond, for the purpose of enhancing good governance”. Better governance, thanks to the ICTs, would improve, according to Okot-Uma.

### Computerization of the Departments

The basic fundamental key of functioning “e” based infrastructure is a computerized system at the various departments from local to central level. In keeping this into consideration, a well organized system is to be followed by citizen. “The Canadian Government has been a pioneer in developing services “far-reaching” connecting communities and local governments with citizens, allowing their participation, even in control of the decision making process.”(<http://www.gc.ca>)

It is recognized that both the e-government and e-governance need similar enablers for success. Broadly they are Educational levels, Cultural readiness, Income levels, Confidence/trust in Government, Customer readiness, Privacy & data protection, Use of Customer Data by Government, Freedom of Information, Electronic commerce, Copyright regulations and telecommunications. Governments are specialized institutions that contribute to governance for the common people to give them more facilities in more convenient ‘e’-way.

### Development of GIS

Development of GIS can be divided into three different processes:

- a) E-Government Strategy Process 1: The process of application of GIS as **GSP1** as follows, we need to define our vision and goals of different departments’ needs in order to apply the e-factor on the system. To visualize the dream and bring this into reality we need to setup a high level leadership task force i.e. highly skilled personnel in each department.

The consistency is another very important factor that is to be taken into consideration with the economic development priorities. We have to assess the present manpower of the same field and bring that on the one platform to get their experience and ideas.

- b) E-Government Strategy Process 2: **GSP2** means application of GIS in second phase that includes the basic framework to be functioned well. We must check the priority of the government services. We have to make it ensure that how much partnership is to be done by the government with the private sector. It is to be designed data sharing with people to fulfill their respective needs.
- c) E-Government Strategy Process 3: **GSP3** means application of e-governance in third phase. The most important stage is to implement the project within time-bound period. Implementation of whole strategy into phases that is the crucial point of e-gov project. The least, but not last point is to check feedbacks and evaluate results and make the whole procedures under scanning once again.

#### Examples of E-Gov in different Countries

The New Zealand, Australian , Sri Lanka and India are following almost same kind of e-gov model for their people. In Libya , the name would be LIBYANET for the main server office , from where all departments will be controlled. That centre will be central in nature especially the core-centre of information of different departments.

LIBYANET is to be designed by the professional software engineers, that would be connected with satellite and each sub-server at the shabias would be connected with the LIBYANET. In this way all desired goals would be fulfilled of installation of E-Government concept in broader sense. Goals are often based on values, and in today's diverse society, value consensus can be difficult to find or build. Instead, just as there are conflicts of values, so there are conflicts of goals. As such, attaining highest level of E-governance seems more relevant but challenging. As the scale, scope, and complexity of situations and circumstances increases, the significance of E-governance shall have to be intensified.

#### Conclusion

It would be a kind of great idea to implement e-governance in developing country like Libya. This would spread an e-awareness among Libyan. Application of e-governance would enforce people to use electronic equipments for the fulfillment of their needs in larger context.

At the E-governance forums, representatives push forth on citizen-centric services. The standardization, interoperability is one of the major issues that is evolving and needs to be addressed urgently. There is need for an in-depth discussion so as to evolve the developed generation ahead. These steps will not only ensure a better service & information to the Libyan but also help in efficient '*e*' *Management* in the country. The Libyan Officials have taken lot of initiatives towards e-governance. The various departments will have to be prepared, special efforts taken namely establishment of E-governance. The huge infrastructure with modern hardware and software, trained personnel and Internet affordability show that it will capitalize the potentials of modern technologies. After the development of e-governance concept shortly and after the implementation of web based transfer of data the department will strengthen further in this direction. Libya would lead in giving services to its citizens through e-application. Citizen will be more educated with the help of using e-facility and they will be citizen of ***E-LIBYA***.

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## Spoken English: Towards Standardisation

Ravinder Kumar\*

Something of a civilization can be understood by perusing the literature of that time; providing, of course, we are able to correctly interpret the language of that literature. Expository correctness is mandatory to understanding:

“[It] enables one person to make a reaction (R) when another person has the stimulus (S). [It] consists of a great many activities whose union into a single far-reaching complex of habits results from repeated stimulations during the individual’s early life.” (Bloomfield, 1983).

The spoken form of a language exists before it is formalised into symbols - its alphabet. The natural order in learning a language is: first the ears, then the tongue and then the hands. When learning English as a second language (L2) we “...listen (to people talking, to songs, to news, programs, to talk shows and sports commentaries > we begin to understand what we listen to and watch) > we begin to think in English in relation to various real life situations, experiences, observations, etc. > we begin to speak English slowly but steadily > we begin to read English newspapers, journals, magazines, etc.”, (Goraya, 2008).

It is difficult to get a scale of correct pronunciation in the case of a non-native language. People who started doing research, at the beginning used their own scale of correct pronunciation. But some languages are still in the dark age of the history, so to make a criteria to judge someone’s pronunciation on some other’s scale is a little unjustified. Grammarians found techniques of general application as to how a person should write and speak but early in language acquisition mistakes may be made. Fore example: “...the way in which analogy can lead to change is seen in learning words like man and mouse, and the assumption that the analogical plurals are *mans* and *mouses*. Such childish errors are quickly corrected, but analogical formations of this kind also take place in adult speech, and often become accepted in old English. There are many different ways of putting a noun into the plural: for example: *stān* ‘stone’, *stānas* ‘stones’.” (Barber, 2009) But to ensure universal understanding in communication, standardisation is mandatory. Correct pronunciation is an art to make things more understandable of the conversation. Problems of pronunciation arise when we cross boundaries. For example, a person from the Punjab (Indian State) says ***gudd*** instead of good. Humans strive for excellence but the native speaker considers language an ancestral property. A baby picks up its first language easily and naturally without knowing the alphabet and the grammar of the first language. In fact, baby is not aware that there exist many sounds, symbols, rules and grammar of the language h/she is learning. Learners of second languages (L2) are more conscious of using and speaking words correctly in spoken as well as in written expression of language. In a modern educated world, it would be helpful to have a ‘Standard Pronunciation and Grammer’. “The principal design of a Grammar of any Language is to teach us to express ourselves with propriety in that Language; and to enable us to judge of every phrase and form of construction, whether it be right or not.”

(Lowth, 1762). Unfortunately, young people tend to be attracted to wrong and ‘eaten-words-language’, the gift of the electronic media!

## **ACCENT**

As we go from one place to another we hear different types of accent in the same languages. If we aim to communicate well then standard accent is desirable. There are two things to note about the term accent as used technically by linguists: (1) it involves only pronunciation, and (2) it is universal - everybody speaks with an accent. Ellis phrases this, in a note in *The Oxford English Dictionary*: “an accent may include mispronunciation of vowels or consonants, misplacing of stress” (Bauer 2007). The use of the prefix mis- indicates that Ellis sees an accent as undesirable.

Some people are said to ‘speak without an accent’ or ‘not have an accent’. Laurie Bauer (Bauer 2001) sees that this can mean one of three things:

- The person X may say that another person Y does not have an accent if they judge that Y’s accent is, in relevant respects, the same as their own.
- A person may be said not to have an accent if they speak with a standard accent.
- A person who is known not to use English as their first language but who nevertheless sounds like a native English speaker may be said not to have an accent.

For correct pronunciation in English, the formulation of a standard accent is essential to reduce the effect of the speaker’s background. “Each of us shares with the community in which we live a store of words and meanings as well as agreed conventions as to the way in which these words should be arranged to convey a particular message.” (Gimson, 1967). Catford probes the purpose of this statement: “... (the) primary function of language is the co-ordination of human activity in society. We speak or write primarily in order to influence the actions of our fellows.” (Catford, 1967)

## **COMMUNICATION**

Communication means getting the message across. This is something we all fail to do from time to time; either because we lack information, have inaccurate facts or figures, use incorrect vocabulary or grammatical structures, or are unable to analyse the problem and present ideas systemically and convincingly. Any or all of this may render the message ineffective, so much so that it does not achieve the desired result.

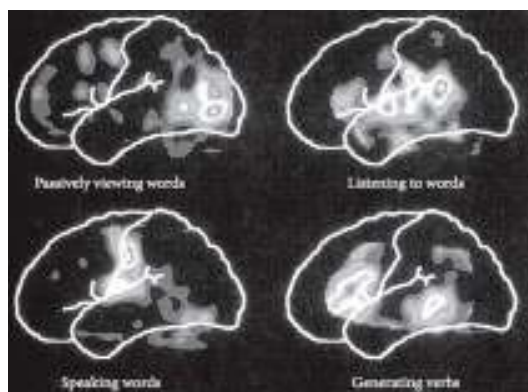
But even if all the inadequacies enumerated above are absent, one factor which will continue to mar the effectiveness of the message is mispronunciation - the domain of the spoken mode of the language. It needs to be appreciated that “language is a system of communication through speech; and written language is [merely] an attempt to represent the spoken language by visual symbols” (Bansal and Harrison, 1983).

Language is a set of instructions that consist of both verbal and non-verbal communications. In non-verbal communication the complete body movement is required in socially accepted gestures. But communication is basically spoken and language is primarily speech. In the history of any language the written form is a much latterly development — indicative of the mental uplift of the linguistic community, requiring it to record what is significant for the posterity so that it may not be lost.

## TOWARDS STANDARDISATION

Many languages of this world are not fully developed grammatically and the local dialect is always variable in day to day activities and interactions. As noted above, in the development of human, we hear words first then start listening and finally speak. So speaking is a repetitive process where a learner imitates the speaker. “By the time we are grown up, the habits of our own language are so strong that they are very difficult to break” (O’Connor, 1967). This is why adults have trouble in mastering the characteristic sounds or sound-system(s) in a foreign language. There is a brain function that is invoked to acquire new words and language.

“Information about brain activity can be built up by varying the tasks set. Brain activity can be compared across a number of individuals (and the results aggregated) and comparisons can be made between different groups of subjects. For example, readers of different languages can be compared to see if the processing systems for the different scripts are similar (e.g. ideographic versus alphabetic scripts). Dyslexic readers can be compared with normal readers and bilingual subjects can be compared working in their different”. (Randall, 2007)



*Figure 1. Examples of PET scans of the left side of the brain during different tasks (from Posner & Rachel, 1994)*

Speech is organised by sounds (phonemes) and taken in by the ear while writing is representation of those speech sounds in marks (graphemes) on paper which make no noise and are taken in by the eye (O’Connor, 1967). The concept of the phoneme is central to all linguistic analyses of spoken language. Each language has a limited set of phonemes which are sounds which have contrastive significance; which make a significant difference to the word if changed. Thus, the two sounds [p] and [b] represent a phonemic contrast in English because the substitution of one

for the other in words means that the meaning of the word changes (e.g. ‘pad’ and ‘bad’ are different words). Both sounds are made by the lips and are thus called ‘bilabial’ consonants.

Standard English has twelve (12) pure vowels or *monophthongs* and eight (8) vowel-glides or *diphthongs* making a total number of twenty (20) vowel sounds (there are five (5) triphthongs as well) and twenty four (24) consonants. For all these forty nine (49) sounds there are only twenty six (26) orthographic symbols or *graphemes*. That is why “the current orthography of English is notoriously deficient in its capacity for showing clearly the pronunciation that a word or a sequence of words should have.....” (McCarthy, 1947).

Spoken English has different variations within the words. English is a borrowed language from different languages, so sometimes, it is confusing when the rules of pronunciation fails in different contexts of the same language. For example,

“In the words *city* /sɪtɪ/, *busy* /bɪzɪ/, *women* /wɪmɪn/, *pretty* /prɪtɪ/, *village* /vɪlɪdʒ/ the letters **i**, **y**, **u**, **o**, **e**, and **a**, all stand for the same phoneme /ɪ/. On the other hand, in *banana* /bənɑ:nə/, *bather* /beɪðə/, *man* /mæn/, *many* /meni/ the letter **a** stands for five different vowel sounds. The same word *read* (present) /ri:d/ and *read* (past) /red/ are pronounced in two different ways, whereas *rain*, *rein* and *reign* are all pronounced /reɪn/. The cluster “**ough**” gives six different pronunciations in **bough** /aʊ/, **though** /əʊ/, **sought** /ɔ:/, **through** /u:/, **cough** /ɒf/ , and **tough** /ʌf/.” ( Rathore, 2009).

Enumeration of the peculiarities of English speech will inevitably highlight the pitfalls in speaking English. First, English has borrowed words readily and freely from various languages retaining their original spellings and original pronunciations, e.g. “bourgeois” /bɔ:ʒwɑ:/ and “restaurant” /restərə:ŋ/ from French, “kimono” /kɪmɒnəʊ/ from Japanese, “rajah” /rɑ:dʒə/ from Hindi, “Nazi” /nɑ:tsɪ/ from German, etc. The spellings of these loan words with their spellings and pronunciations from the foreign languages confuse us.

Secondly, in English orthography many letters are neutral or silent, e.g. “h” in “what, where, vehicle, annihilation”; “l” in “walk, stalk”; or last “r” or “re” in “father, future”. In almost all the Indian languages there is one-to-one correspondence between the grapheme and the phoneme. Therefore, our habit of reading letter by letter causes mispronunciation in English.

Thirdly, there are weak forms of some 50 English words. “The weak forms are weakened pronunciation of certain frequently occurring words whose function in the sentence is structural rather than semantic. As it is normal for such words to be unstressed, they are particularly subject to weakening influences.” (Kingdon, 117) For instance, “can” becomes /kən/, “do” becomes /də/, “he” becomes /ɪ/, etc. in informal speech. In such a situation their full strong pronunciation appears unnatural and artificial.

Fourthly, English is a stress-timed language (unlike French or Indian languages which are syllable-timed languages, implying that any word with two or more than two syllables has a stress or accent on one syllable). However, the system of stressing is erratic and has no consistency. It is on the first syllable in “differ”, on the second in “pre'fer” and on the third in “ciga'rette”. In a sentence these syllables take the stresses and the timing between stressed syllables remains almost the same, e.g. in the following two sentences :

“The 'chair ar'rived.”

“The 'chairman ar'rived.”

the pronunciations of “chair” are different since the time gap between “chair” and “—'rived” in both the sentences will be the same. This syllable is spoken fairly faster in the second sentence than in the first one.

Fifthly, the shift in the stress affects the pronunciation of other syllables, e.g. all the three syllables “pho”, “to” and “graph” of “photograph” /fəʊtəgrɑ:f/ change radically while pronouncing “photographer” /fəʊtəgrəfə/ or “photography” /fəʊtəgrəfi/.

## REMEDIAL ACTION

Ignorance of pronunciation in spoken English is remediable, unless the person is a total dunce and lazy. Reading and listening are the two effective means of remediation. Reading imparts information but does nothing with regard to informing the reader as to the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words. Fortunately there is a lot of English spoken around the world these days, and most people get the opportunity of listening to English in some way or the other, and can remedy their mispronunciation. Mispronunciation not only hampers intelligibility, it creates a poor impression of the speaker indicating lack of proper linguistic training. “Rightly or wrongly, most people consider language as an index of culture, breeding, upbringing, personality, sometimes even the intelligence, decency and integrity. Under the circumstances, it is unwise, not to say harmful, to pay no heed to your language.” (Pei, 1958)

Teachers of English are models as far as the use of the language is concerned. If we make errors, we are not likely to be pardoned so we need to pay attention to our pronunciation as well as remain sensitise to helping our students learn. What we need to do is to cull out those sounds which are not there in our language(s) and hear them carefully in order to train our ears. Then, by imitating we have to acquire the unfamiliar sounds of the target language and train our students accordingly, e.g. /f /, /w /, /z /, /ʒ / etc. We also need to understand the phonetic system of English stress-patterns and weak forms. Also, we should refrain from guessing the pronunciation of unfamiliar words and go to a dictionary in order to check its correct pronunciation.

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## **Igbo Culture, Its Encounter with Colonial Power and Identity Crisis: A Study with Reference to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart***

Md. Sahidul Islam\*

The aim of this article is to examine the quest of the African people for their identity with special emphasis on the customs and culture of the Igbo people and their encounter with the colonial power as depicted in Chinua Achebe's (1930- ) typical modern novel *Things Fall Apart* published in 1958. It has great significance so far as the dominance of British colonial power and the influence of Christian missionaries on the social order of the Igbo people during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are concerned. The author's another novel *Arrow of God* (1964) too dealt with the theme pertaining to the Igbo culture and the suffering of the Igbo people during the pre-colonial period. However, the entire focus is given on *Things Fall Apart* in the present study.

Before the emergence of Chinua Achebe's first novel *Things Fall Apart*, a number of other African writers like Cyprian Ekwensi, Sol Plaatje and Amos Tutuola had published their literary works in English. But Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* has surpassed the fictional works of those writers published earlier in terms of subject matter and contents. Subsequently, the novel received a global acclamation. The writer deserves the credit as he has incorporated a number of influential issues like the influence of British colonialism which has divided the Igbo community; identity crisis; loss of self ruling power etc. as the important themes in the novel. These issues as depicted in *Things Fall Apart* experienced by the Igbo people draws the greatest attention of the readers. Pointing at the likeness/similarity of the incidents as depicted in Achebe's fiction in general with that of the real experience of the Igbo people under the British regime, Anuradha Ghosh aptly says that:

The cultural encounter that the Igbo world of Achebe's novels undergoes can be mapped on different registers but what seems to be fundamental importance is the notion of identity formation as a paradigm of cultural resistance against colonial rule. The process of accumulation that lies at the heart of the colonial experience results in the essential hybridity leading to the subsequent erasure of identities of the colonized. (Ghosh 33)

The title of the novel *Things Fall Apart*, owes to William Butler Yeats' far-sighted poem "The Second Coming" published in 1921. The first four lines of this poem as quoted by Chinua Achebe on the front page of his path breaking novel are as under:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.



'Things fall apart' referred to in the third line of the poem "The Second Coming" implies disturbance of a very old system by external or internal powers. Achebe's consideration of this phrase as a title to his novel is aptly an outline for the theme dealt within his fictional work under discussion. The British administration and its supporting of the cause of missionary campaign brought too much disgrace for the Igbo people to bear. Consequently, it affects their culture of happy living greatly. As Obierika, one of the major characters in the novel says that: "The white man is very clever ... He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (Achebe 124-25). In other words, all the aspects of the happy life of the Igbo people as depicted in the novel (briefly discussed below) were tarnished with the intrusion of the external forces into their land. However, "the birth of national consciousness in Africa has strictly contemporaneous connection with the African consciousness" (Fanon 199).

The happy life of the Igbo people in general as existed before the coming of the external forces that is the missionaries and the colonial power into the Igbo land is no more. The pre-colonial scenario is vividly illustrated in the first part of the novel *Things Fall Apart* by portraying the social, economic, political and religious life of the people living in African villages named Umuofia, Mbanta and other smaller ones. The people of these villages led their life happily without bitterness of any serious kind. They were contented with what they had. According to Obierika the Igbo people themselves are responsible for their own fate. A section of Igbo people have bowed down before the British imperialism and "it is too late" (Achebe 124) to come out of the clutch of the colonial power. However, a brave personality like Okonkwo, his friend Obierika and their cohort have struggle hard to get rid of the imperial dominance. Okonkwo is well determined as he says "I shall fight alone if I choose" (Achebe 142). His bravery is beyond question a positive aspect so far as the protest of the Igbo people against the imperial power is concerned. But at the same time it is unfortunate to note that the majority of the Igbo people came under the influence of the missionaries which led to the division among the people of that community.

The Igbo people depended greatly on farming to earn their livelihood as it was their main occupation. During sowing and harvest seasons they worked hard in their fields from morning till the sun set. Their busy but happy life kept them rather ignorant of what was happening in the continent of Africa. They preferred to keep themselves engrossed in their routine works and cultivated their land using the primitive methods. They hardly had any knowledge of advanced technique of farming. So far as their agriculture is concerned, it was limited to hoe cultivation. However, there grew sufficient to supply their requirements. Igbo people were friendly by nature. They always welcome their guests wholeheartedly. They offered their guests kola-nuts and palm-wine to eat and drink and rejoice in their company. They lived in co-operation with one another. Uchendu (Okankwo's mother's younger brother) and his sons cooperated Okankwo from the bottom of their hearts during the latter's stay at Mbanta for seven years of exile. They gave him plots of land for farming and building his huts. Obierika proved to Okankwo a friend indeed. He "mourned his friend's calamity" and his lamentation for Okankwo is reflected through his speech when he says that: "Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offence he had committed in advertently? But although he thought for a long time he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities" (Achebe 88). Moreover, he looked after his farming at Umuofia for seven years and took the proceeds thereof to his friend Mbanta after every harvest.

The two important festivals observed by Igbo people were “A Week of Peace” and “The New Yam Festival”. These festivals not only provided them the opportunity of eating and drinking but also helped Igbo people develop intimacy among themselves. Of the two festivals ‘The Feast of the New Yam’ was the most notable. It took place once in every year just before the starting of the harvest. On this occasion the Igbo people especially the people of Umuofia give thanks to Ani, “the earth goddess and the source of all fertility” because: “Ani played a greater part in the life of the people than any other deity. She was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct. And what was more she was in close communion with the departed fathers of the clan whose bodies had been committed to earth” (Achebe 26). It is already mentioned above that the Igbo people were very social and friendly in nature and to maintain it they usually “invite large numbers of guests from far and wide” (Achebe 27) to take part in the festival. The chief food of the celebration was Yam foo-foo and vegetable soup. They cooked plenty of it to feed their friends and relatives already invited from their neighbouring villages.

The Igbo people had other sources of recreation also. The most important of them was wrestling. Igbo people were fond of seeing these matches. The very first chapter of *Things Fall Apart* introduces Okonkwo as a brave wrestler who “had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalzine the Cat ... the great wrestler” (Achebe 3). They danced to the beat of the drums and rejoiced in the victory of their favourite wrestlers. Telling funny, ethical and adventurous stories to their children, composing new poems, taking delight in music, playing and gossiping in the silvery light of the moon were the other simple ways of enjoyments of the primitive people.

Igbo people were happy with their political life. There was a council of elders consisting of nine great men of the clans to decide all the political issues in a democratic way. They had no king or government to rule over them. Criminals were punished on the basis of the decisions arrived at in the assembly of elders who were mostly guided by the traditional laws of the clan in this context.

The religion of the Igbo people had a powerful influence on their life. Violation of the rules of conduct as provided for in their religion was treated as nice endangering the existence of the whole clan. The people believed in the supremacy of one God named as Chukwu. Akunna, one of the residents of Umuofia said to Mr. Brown on one of the latter’s visits to the village that: “We also believe in Him and call Him Chukwu” and (Achebe 126-127). However, he further added that “He (Chukwu) made all the world and the other gods ... He appoints the smaller gods to help Him because His work is too great for one person” (Achebe 127). Moreover, the Igbo people had belief in oracles, evil spirits, priesthood, medicine men and magic etc. In short they were happy with their religious life in spite of certain traditional evils like throwing of infant twins, killing of innocent boy like Ekemefuna for others fault, throwing of people suffering from serious illness into Evil Forest to rot and die and banning of burial by clansmen of the dead bodies of the men (like Okonkwo) who happened to commit suicide even for a great cause. When Okonkwo’s dead body was dangling from a tree, Obierika said to the District Commissioner:

We cannot bury him. Only strangers can. We shall pay your men to do it. When he has been buried we will then do our duty by him. We shall make sacrifices to cleanse the desecrated land ... That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog. (Achebe 147)

Europeans entered into the villages of the Igbo people with an intention to exploit the economy of the African continent. Subsequently, the British imperial power began to generate confusion in the happy life of the Igbo people already described above in different phases. The appearances of the missionaries and its simultaneous contact with Igbo culture gave birth to racial prejudice and inter-tribal splits within the community of the Igbo people. The missionaries put their policies into practice through building of churches in different villages. They spread the gospel of Christianity and drew the attention of a vast number of Igbo people to their religion. The number of converts went on increasing day by day. Though, a section of people of Umuofia who are socially marginalized converted into Christianity with a hope to upgrade themselves from their status but it is in vain. Contrarily, “Once co-opted into the new system they actively propagate corruption, are alienated, and become instruments of colonial brutality (Pandurang 18). Slowly but surely, the missionary factor was successful in dividing the primitive people among themselves. On the one hand there occurred tensions between the missionary and the people of Igbo community due to the lack of understanding one another’s traditions and faiths resulting violence. Pointing at the decision of “the white man’s court” on the disputed land, Obierka says to Okonkwo: “Does the white man understand our custom about land? How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says our customs are bad ...” (Achebe 124). The demolition of a local church and the murder of the messenger by Okonkwo are evident to the fact. It is an exposition of anger. The court messenger became a symbol of change which is not congenial to Okonkwo’s struggle to life time; a struggle as it appears to him is now futility. He is anger and unhappy not just with society that disintegrates but also because another is created of which he is a misfit. On the other hand, the rivalry between the converts and their brothers who remained stick to the Igbo culture reached its peak. Their conflict turned them into bitter enemies and the conflict between the two had become a matter of routine. In this context Obierika remarked: “Our own men and sons have joined the ranks of the stranger. They have joined his religion and they help to uphold his government” (Achebe 124). The strictness of Mr. James Smith added much to the bitterness between converts and non-converts. His politics turned the upside down and disturbed the peaceful life of the native people. He observed things in black and white terms, called the Igbo people the sons of darkness, and “believed in slaying the prophets of Baal” (Achebe 130). Due to his provocative words the converts became bitter rival to the other Igbo people. For instance “...on one occasion the missionaries had tried to overstep the bounds. Three converts had gone into the village and boasted openly that all the gods were dead and impotent and that they were prepared to defy them by burning all their shrines”(Achebe 110). Moreover, Mr. Smith openly criticized the policies of Mr. Brown who worked with the true spirit of Christianity without harming anyone.

However the missionaries by themselves failed to destroy the Igbo culture. The “stories were already gaining ground that the white man had not only brought a religion but also a government” (Achebe 110). In fact, the real process of disintegration began when the colonial power had set up its government, courts of justice, prisons and agencies for trade and commerce. The government began to enforce its laws. Igbo people who did not abide by the white man’s laws were thrown behind the bars. “It was even said that they had hanged one man who killed a missionary” (Achebe 110). The members of the council of elders were also not spared. They were insulted, beaten and tortured. Okonkwo lost his patience and killed the government messenger who was sent to announce that the meeting being held was illegal: “In a flash Okonkwo drew his matchet. The Messenger crouched to avoid the blow. It was useless.

Okonkwo's matchet decended twice and the man's head lay beside his uninformed body" (Achebe 144). Okonkwo knew that his clansmen would not cooperate with him and that he would be hanged by the white man. Thinking all that, he committed suicide. His death meant the defeat of Igbo culture and the victory of white man's religion and his political stunt.

Thus, in consonance with the above discussion it can be concluded that Achebe has skilfully dealt with the Igbo culture, the encounter of the Igbo people with colonial power and their search for identity as African in *Things Fall Apart*. Sometimes the part played by Christian missionaries in the take-over of Africa is taken too lightly. However, it should be kept in mind that: "Missionaries were the first foreigners to venture inland in fairly large numbers, and their accounts of what they found helped stimulate imperial ambitions. Such missionaries played an important role in the establishment of British domination over the Igbo people" (Achebe xii). In a nutshell, the external power was successful to shatter the Igbo culture with the knife of its administration combined with missionary campaign.

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## Memories of Partition: Shiv K. Kumar's - A River With Three Banks

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Shiv K. Kumar's, *A River With Three Banks* is a novel delineating the theme of Partition. As Partition meant parting of ways between the Hindus and the Muslims, Kumar's novel deals with the utter discord between the two major communities of India. The novel suggests the dissolution of the first pattern of communal discord that emerged with the Partition of the subcontinent. The ill-will and antagonism between the Hindus and Muslims has been projected through killings, arson and molestation of women in the novel. Communal hatred that engulfs the city of Delhi has been presented in all its ugliness through incidents described in the novel. The death and destruction that is perpetrated by both the communities on each other is a grotesque reminder of the folly of man who cannot feel the pain and misery of another. The writer, however, concludes the narrative on a subtle note of hope and promise.

Creative writers, unless they chose like Raja Rao to completely ignore Partition, have been writing about it ever since 1947. The heat and dust raised by the catastrophe did not settle down for a long time. The unnaturalness of communal strife that gripped the country at that time is still beyond human understanding. Kumar has used the backdrop of Partition in his novel as "a gift of British diplomacy which thrived on the political ambition and the resultant myopia of the seekers of power who chose the trauma for glory."<sup>1</sup> What is different about the novel is that here the writer does not give the picture of different communities living peacefully. Partition has already drifted them apart as the narrative begins.

For Kumar Partition is an experience that he lived and felt as he himself migrated from Lahore to Delhi in August 1947. Thus, in *A River With Three Banks* he looks back at the event after a gap of fifty years. Govind Nihalani, talking about Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1974), explains why it is necessary for a writer to relook at a traumatic even several years later, when he says:

A traumatic even usually finds the artistic/literary response twice. Once during the even or immediately following it and again after a lapse of time, when the even has found its corner in the collective memory of the generation that witnessed it. The initial response tends to be emotionally intense and personal in character, even melodramatic. On the other hand, when the event is reflected upon with emotional detachment and objectivity, a clearer pattern of the various forces that shaped it is likely to emerge<sup>2</sup>.

Similarly, Kumar, like every Punjabi writer, felt the need to get the trauma of the partition out of his system. But in order to have a better understanding of his experience he chooses to look back at it after a gap of fifty years, as he says: "If you are too close to the canvas

of your painting, you can't see it in the proper perspective. You have to stand back a little from the canvas.”<sup>3</sup> Thus he stands 50 years back from 1947.

The action of the novel is located in Delhi, the capital of independent India. For a brief period the action is shifted to Allahabad as well which is hot-bed of communalism during the time. It is the month of August and the Partition has take place. However, the city of Delhi is gripped in the barbarity of communal fury. Unlike Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Kumar's novel has the urban locale. The writer depicts the communal differences and shows how these differences are deliberately fostered. The communal discord has assumed such proportions that the two communities are at a dagger's drawn with each other. Both Hindus and Muslims are on a killing spree in the streets of Delhi. The joint pillars of the gateway to the composite culture of India have crumbled and columns and columns of displaced humanity are moving across both sides of the border while the bloodiest of the acts are being enacted. Delhi is in the throes of the worst communal discord.

The writer points at the incidents of killing, looting, arson and molestation of women, rampant in the streets of Delhi. Though the novel opens on a day that happens to be the quietest day of the week, with only one death reported. The victim is a helpless Muslim, killed by a fanatic Hindu as an act of vendetta for what the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan have suffered at the hands of Muslims. It is after a hectic spell of arson, rape and massacre that Delhi is gradually reverting to normalcy, at least temporarily. Before another curfew paralyses life in the city, people are seen buying groceries and a “a few refugee vendors have spread their wares: coarse woolens (sweaters, stoles, stockings, gloves), necklaces and bracelets in coloured beads, and tiny bronze gods and goddesses “<sup>4</sup>.

Gautam Mehta, the protagonist, who is a journalist, has come to see Father Jones because he wants to convert to Christianity in order to seek divorce from his adulterous wife, Sarita. While he is still in the Church, the lull is broken with the sound of frantic knocking at the front gate of the Church. It is accompanied by ear-splitting cries for help”. Simultaneously, a menacing voice is heard: “Kill him! Har Har Mahadev!” followed by another deafening yell: “Sat Sri Akal!” (9). As the Church gate is unlatched, the body of an old bearded man with his chest, neck and abdomen riddled with stab wounds and intestines sprawled around, slumps on the floor. On seeing the dead body, Father Jones laments that a short while ago the man knocked for admittance but he failed to let him in. But Gautam doubts it , as he says: “We're dealing with blood hounds , not human beings” (10). This shows the barbarity of the attackers. As there is widespread violence in the city, the priest cautions Gautam who is leaving the Church, to be careful and observes: “There is madness on the streets”. (12)

Soon after, on his way back home, Gautam encounters a terrible blaze of fire with yellow, brown and red flames lapping towards the sky. The timber shops of Pahar Ganj, with godowns stacked with teak, bamboo and *deodar* are engulfed and the incensed flames are gutting whatever comes their way. It is suspected that “it must be those bloody Muslim arsonists” (29). The Hindus are enraged and instead of making way for the fire engines, they are blocking the road and shouting “Har Har Mahadev”.

On another occasion when Gautam and his friend Berry are returning from the court after Gautam has sought “Allah-ho-Akbar” is heard and then from the bend of the street emerges a mob of Muslims armed with knives, swords, spears and sticks. The crowd is led by a young man who is blaring away through a microphone: “Khoon-ka-Badla-Khoon! Blood for blood!” and the other join in. “Kill the bloody kafirs! Castrate them! Rape their women!” (54). Thus, it comes out that the city is charged with communal frenzy and the only motive is to kill the members of the rival community.

Whenever there is a brief spell of silence, it is viewed only a lull before the next storm that may erupt any time. Though Kumar does not depict incidents of women being paraded naked through the streets, there are occurrences of molestation and abduction of women in the novel. The bearded old man who was killed at the gate of Church is Abdul Rahim who has come to Delhi in search of his daughter Haseena, abducted from Allahabad. Obviously, the man, when killed, was going to mail the letter. The contents of the letter expose yet another face of brutality. It gives a clue that in the nefarious trade of prostitution both the Hindus and the Muslims (Panna Lal and Suleiman Ghani) are co-workers, as the letter reveals:

This morning I talked to a Muslim shopkeeper in Urdu Bazaar, near Jama Masjid. I was shocked to learn that most have been brought to Delhi, where they are forced into prostitution. O Allah! And, in the nefarious business both Hindus and Muslims are operating as close accomplices. I shudder to think of our dear child. (10)

This reveals another face of violence being executed against women by pimps like Panna Lal who are forcing helpless girls into prostitution for the sake of money. The writer suggests that there are no religious barriers among the pimps. When Panna Lal informs Gautam that the call girl (Haseena) is a Muslim while he (Panna Lal) is a Hindu, Gautam remarks sarcastically, “there’s perfect communal harmony”(70)

The writer describes another incident of assault on a Hindu woman who is abducted along, with the brother while they are on way to see their sick mother. The ruffians kick and stab the brother and strip the woman naked, threatening them:

“We’ll ravish the whole lot of you – bloody grass eaters?”(59)

Gautam and Berry are made to helplessly watch the gruesome spectacle. They find it very agonizing but cannot intervene as that would mean certain death. It is the arrival of the Police which saves the situation as the woman and her brother are escorted to the safety of their house.

The novel suggests how the unprecedented outbreak of communal violence leaves deep scars on the psyche of the surviving victims.. Their agony revives at the slightest touch of nostalgia and they are stirred with the passions of hatred and revenge. The Muslims in India are made to bear the brunt of atrocities committed on Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. The Sikh tonga driver shares his tale of woe with Gautam when he tells him:

My family had the worst of it.....  
Two of my sisters were carried away.  
My old man's throat was slit before my mother's eyes.  
Then he was roasted alive. I was the only one to escape.  
Oh those blasted Muslims! (14)

He, however, feels consoled when he joins the killers of Abdul Rahim who “was a good catch”. In the face of this situation the process of killing does not seem to end.

The writer goes on to reveal that even animals are the objects of communal fury when he describes how a cow falls a prey to the Muslims mob. The barbarity of the action is brought out when one of them hits the cow with a weapon and:

The others now swooped down upon it with knives and spears tearing, apart its body, limb by limb. On their faces, glowing with demoniac rage in the blazing summer sun, was the lust for blood – the blood of even a “Hindu Cow”. (58).

Ironically, in the intensity of the madness of communal hatred, even animals are branded as Hindu or Muslim. Communities, blinded by communal rage indulge in killing without any compunction. Similarly, the novelist describes how Hindu and Sikh refugees coming from Pakistan have been the victims of Muslim fury, while train loads of Muslims leaving for Pakistan are attacked by Hindu and Sikh mobs. He shows how refugee special trains are bringing Hindu and Sikh refugees from Lahore, Multan and Peshawar who are seen squatting on the platform, “their hair unkempt, lips famished, faces moribund” (98) . Hindu volunteers try to help them in the midst of confusion and chaos. The writer draws a picture of their mutilated lives when he remarks:

But how could these volunteers help men with amputated penises, young women whose breasts had been chopped off after they'd been raped? It wasn't the physical pains so much as the social stigma these destitute would have to endure for the rest of their lives. (99)

This is an example of the worst kind of vengeance community can wreak upon the rival community.

The incidence of arson, killings and molestation reveals how bands of hooligans and mobs commit unimaginable crimes against humanity, leaving the victims thoroughly dehumanized. These are the times when mutual hatred serves to whip up emotions and marked places and streets reverberate with anti- Hindu and anti-Muslim slogans. This is the climate when communal rioting is at its worst. So far as communal riots are concerned, these are different from other kinds of riots as these are most violent and most difficult to control.



Moreover, “they are the most virulent because the particular conflict, generally a blend of religious, political and economic aims, becomes imbued with religious ultimacy.”<sup>5</sup>.

These riots also differ from other riots in that they do not remain confined to one location. They can engulf many parts of the country within a span of a few days.

*A River With Three Banks* delineates the dissolution of the first pattern of communal harmony and shows how Hindu and Muslim mobs enact the bloodiest of acts against each other. This takes place when identity in a crowd gets refocused and:

The loss of personal identity in a crowd makes individuals act in terms of the crowd’s identity, for instance, according to the behavior ‘expected’ of an anti-Hindu or anti-Muslim mob. The individual is not operating at some deeply regressed, primitive level of the psyche but according to the norms of the particular group.<sup>6</sup>

The dastardly acts of senseless killing committed during the Partition of the country were a result of this mob mentality.

When the masses are swayed by communal fury, the writer refers to the radio broadcast of the messages of Mountbatten and Nehru, asking people to abide by the great values of the Indian heritage. Mountbatten, the first Governor-General of free India, paying homage to the great tradition of tolerance and forgiveness, asks all communities “to live in peace and enjoy the fruits of freedom”. (36-7) Thereafter, Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India reminds his countrymen:

This is not the freedom we’d fought for – this is not the India of Mahatma Gandhi’s dreams ..... Let there be no ill will against Pakistan; we wish that country peace and prosperity..... We have hitched our destiny to the stars we have miles to go and promises to keep. Let’s march together, hand in hand – resolute, unflinching, and fearless-till we mould the India of our dreams. Jai Hind. (37-8)

Thus, the speeches remind people to work for the building of the country and not waste their energies in senseless killings and mutual hatred.

The novel suggests how the world of nature is a reflection of the gruesome happenings of the human world, when he remarks:

There had hardly been any rain during the entire month of August as though nature had deliberately smothered the monsoon to provide a grim backdrop to the drama of hate

and violence being enacted in Delhi, during the cataclysmic year – 1947 (17).

Khushwant Singh has also referred to the delayed monsoon in *Train to Pakistan* in the backdrop of communal conflict. Thus, it emerges that communal tension of the Partition days had become a part of everyday reality. Both Hindu and Muslims had to pass through a process of untold suffering.

And the line dividing India and Pakistan had not only divided the political map of India but had also become a symbol of the Schizophrenic divide between the two communities.<sup>7</sup>

The heavy loss of life, movement of people on both sides of the border, the destitute men, women and children crowding the streets of the cities, the injury to human modesty and dignity and the loss of faith are some of the tragic consequences of Partition described by Kumar in his novel. The writer, however, does not paint a dark picture despite the collapse of values. There is much in the novel which transcends the horror and brutality of Partition by giving a glimpse of the compassion and understanding that suffering generates. In the midst of Hindu-Muslim divide, Kumar has created the cool face of Christianity, represented by Father Jones. He raises a voice of sanity in the maddening din of communal hatred. Though he has been in India for only six months, he would not like to turn his back on the communal holocaust and desert his flock in the troubled times. In doing so, he believes he would be doing his duty towards God. When Abdul Rahim falls down dead at the Church gate, stabbed by fanatic Hindus, he mutters in anguish, “Oh Jesus”.... “ Is it another crucifixion?” (9).

The priest feels moved at the spectacle and tears moisten his eyes.

Similarly, when Gautam decides to embrace Christianity in order to seek release from his wife, he turns to this faith to find solution to the turmoil he is experiencing in his inner world. However, when Gautam and Berry are caught unawares by the hoodlums, brandishing their knives and swords. Christianity becomes a passport to safety from hooliganism. The title of the novel is symbolic in the sense that the placid waters of the river – India are troubled by the inner currents of brutality. Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are the three banks that condition the flow of nation life-stream, used as “the three powerful functional blocks”.<sup>8</sup>

Kumar’s novel is a symbolic record of man’s vigorous search for harmony across the domains of conflicting social, religious or cultural dogmas. It registers the triumph of life over the forces that unsettle the world through manoeuvres like Partition, riot and psychic unrest. The novel reveals that it is not people like Panna Lal, Suleiman Ghani or the marauders and fanatics who play the game of killing, but people like Gautam, Berry and Haseena who win ultimately; it is such people who add meaning to life.

In Gautam Mehta, the writer has created a liberal humanist, who is able to provide balm to the injured humanity when there is madness all around. He himself is a migrant from Pakistan and his family, though could cross the border intact, and had to leave behind all their property. He, however, does not nurture any ill-will or hatred against Muslims. As a journalist he has been writing on tolerance and non-violence. He is not a religious fanatic and seeks the help of Christianity as a solution to his personal problem. He is above any communal hatred and when he looks carefully at the face of the dead Abdul Rahim, after having read his letter, he finds the face having acquired a new eloquence. And he recognizes “a striking resemblance between Abdul Rahim and his own father – the same wheatish complexion, arched eyebrows, chiselled chin and nose. A handsome face, altogether” (11) Looking at the deteriorating communal situation, Gautam has no hesitation in telling the Bishop:

Look what my co-religionists are doing these days. All this pious talk about *Brahma*, *ahimsa*, the Higher self, cow-worship, and then this senseless killing of innocent Muslims! Of course, Muslims have done no better in Pakistan. (5-6)

He sounds like a religious man in the true sense of the word. He stands for religion that basically advocates brotherhood, compassion, understanding and love. “The essence of all religion is unity. It’s only the outward façade, the ritual, the orthodoxy in each religion that differentiates”.<sup>9</sup>

Gautam has an ability and drive to come out of the crisis. He resolves his internal conflict by deciding to convert to Christianity. However, when he fears delay is his conversion he observes:

To Hell, with Hinduism, Islam or Christianity, he said to himself – all that he wanted was an instant release, a way out of the labyrinth, a quick, painless deliverance. (6)

Thus his real concern is not religion but to secure peace and harmony jeopardized by an unhappy marriage. Again, he has no qualms in embracing Islam if he can secure Haseena as his wife. He rescues Haseena, who was abducted from Allahabad and forced into prostitution in Delhi by Panna Lal. At the initiative of his friend Berry, he is made to spend time with Haseena after his divorce with Sarita. He, however, develops love and understanding with her. On being asked by Haseena if he is a Muslim, he tells her:

I’m now Christian. A few days ago I was a Hindu. He said. And I wouldn’t mind becoming a Muslim. I don’t believe in these religions – they all condone violence, instigate their followers to kill... (80)

His conversion to Christianity was a game but his love for Haseena is true. “It is a love that has grown on the debris of her suffering with a passion and vigour to transcend all socio-religious barriers. It is a flow of the life-force that guides them”<sup>10</sup>. This love admits no barriers. Moreover,

he looks at Haseena not as a girl who belongs to Muslim community but as a human being, a young girl of rare sensitivity, compassion, understanding and commitment to human values.

Gautam's act of rescuing Haseena from the pimp is an act of rare courage. He accompanies Haseena to Allahabad at a great risk for his life. Interestingly, while at Allahabad, he along with Haseena has to move sometime in the guise of a Hindu and sometime in that of a Muslim and finds it very ridiculous as he remarks: "How funny, one's life depends upon what one wears these days" (49). This, however, is necessary for the safety of both Gautam and Haseena. At Allahabad he is chased by the bloodhound Panna Lal, whom Gautam succeeds in killing in a scuffle, thus symbolizing the victory of good over evil.

Haseena's mother, who is already indebted to Gautam for having rescued Haseena and keeping them informed of the murder of her husband Abdul Rahim, readily consents to the proposed marriage of Gautam and her daughter. Gautam's father Sham Lal who is an Arya Samajist, but internally is an indulgent father, comes forward to bless the marriage. So does Gautam's mother. Gautam and Haseena's marriage marks the beginning of a new race of humanity. Against Haseena's wish to be addressed as "Haseena Mehta" Gautam says:

No my love.... Not Haseena Mehta.... Just Haseena  
Gautam – our first names only.... Sans caste, sans religion.  
Sans nationality. (214)

Herein, lies the note of promise – the dreams to liberate the posterity from all narrow considerations and facilitate them with the true freedom. This reflects the novelist's essentially humane outlook on life. He holds the fact that evil cannot snuff out virtue totally. True love is healing and it has the power to sustain mankind against all odds.

Thus, through the love of Haseena and Gautam, Kumar opens the door towards the third pattern of communal relations, viz. reconciliation and rapprochement. It is true love which is the essence of all genuine relationships and basis of harmony and coexistence. The novelist recommends an attitude of tolerance towards "all communities which is a commonwealth for mankind"<sup>11</sup>. The religious strains of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam in the novel get merged in Gautam's life stream as a river with three banks. Not only that he accepts Haseena as his wife, he also safely escorts Haseena's family across the border with the help of Berry's British connections. He risks his own life accompanying them from Allahabad to Amritsar, thus strengthening the bond of mutual harmony.

Shiv K. Kumar, who invariably explores meaning in the last part of his novel, concludes the narrative on a subtle note of promise in a symbolic manner. He expresses a poetic belief in the "trinity of emotion, image and thought"<sup>12</sup>. He brings his protagonist to Allahabad, the sacred city of the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the subterranean Saraswati. The trinity motive is also associated with the Allahabad Fort which was built by Ashoka, renovated by Akbar and it was this fort where a Christian garrison was massacred during the Great Mutiny 1857. Kumar makes Gautam and Haseena's marriage also a part of the trinity motive, as Gautam a Hindu becomes a Christian to get a divorce and then accepts Islam to marry Haseena. Thus the three religions are "a sort of confluence that brings Gautam and Haseena together". This trinity motive

is discernible in other details in the novel as well. Gautam, who gets fascinated by any river, has been described as “thrice born” (117) . Bhole, the Panda and the boatman of Allahabad has “three gold teeth” (125) , and he is “tough-muscled Oarsman, Hindu priest and bloodhound”, and “three-in-one” (130). Gautam recalls his first visit to Allahabad when he saw the priest “feeding three white swans on the holy bank (121). In the boat ride, there are three people – Gautam, Haseena and Bhole. And Gautam asks Haseena – “Let’s not meet for three days” (132).

Similarly, the sky as the third bank has a symbolic significance, when at the end of the novel, the writer observes, “suddenly, a flock of birds shot into the sky, and began to circle joyously over the maize fields on either side, as though scornful of the happenings on the earth below”(214). Man has divided the country into India and Pakistan but the overarching sky keeps them united. Thus the writer suggests that true faith does not recognize bonds and borders and true lovers have faith and not religion.

The novel is Kumar’s powerful denunciation of such notions of religion which divide rather than unite humanity. It describes how human lives were wasted by the monster of communalism during the Partition of the country. He has portrayed a panoramic picture of the riot-torn city of Delhi where both Hindus and Muslims perpetrated atrocities on each other. He also highlights the helplessness and anguish of the women abducted during Partition. However, despite the dark forces of hate, revenge, malice and cruelty which overcast the subcontinent, the writer offers a futuristic vision suggesting the ultimate triumph of good over evil. Mulk Raj Anand has rightly observed that:

Shiv K. Kumar’s novel has both beauty and power. It recreates, in a language that glows with fragrance and colour, not only the trauma that one associates with Partition , but also love, compassion and fragrance that it evokes even in the midst communal frenzy. Here is poet’s visualization of the India of 1947 – its beauty and romance, its agony and ecstasy.<sup>14</sup>

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## *Classroom Discussion*

### **Helping Children become Readers**

**Prof. R. Amritavalli**

*(Article published in Language & Language Teaching, Volume I, January 2012)*

**Honourable Prof. R. Amritavalli,**

I have read your article between the lines that gave me new approach towards thinking critically on this productive skill of language learning. Your article has given new directions to fulfill the needs of the students here at my college. Being supervisor of graduation research project, I discussed your paper with my students. It was a great experience. I would like to express my deep regards for you through this discussion.

### **Para wise discussions on *the paper***

- **Pathways to Literacy**

Under this subheading, writer has given interpretation of “*Reading*” as a subject. As it is said “the ability to read independently, a text of one’s choice and understand it.” Further it is explained that it is not only the ability to understand but to comprehend as well. Reading is a process that helps to get the meanings out of the sentences in particular context. Reading, merely, is not recognition of alphabets written in a system where sentences are forming particular sense. I do agree with the writer that “Text of one’s Choice is trivial”, the said phrase is to be understood in a way where writer wants to point out. This is a skill, of understanding a text that varies individual to individual. Readers have their choices of being selective in nature of understanding the context. This literacy journey takes place through different stages, for example, at the beginning, for a kid, an apple, stands for “*A for Apple*” only. He develops the taste of apple later on in his life. He, then, understands the value of apple as a fruit. When, he gets the information that apple is an essential fruit for health, he starts eating it on regular basis, and hence that keeps the doctor away. This realisation becomes “text of one’s choice”. ‘Creating Reader’ is another beautiful phrase used by writer. This process is purely linked with the creativity of a teacher where s/he applies in the classroom. Reading is a productive skill.

- **Models of reading**

Under this sub-heading, writer has discussed about the various models. ***Bottom-up*** process of reading is applied to the words where, reader encounters reading for the first time. As he becomes acquainted with the word, he doesn’t need to see, letter by letter, syllable by syllable to read the word. It can be concluded here that reading is a habit to be familiar with new words in order to create readers. Adding new word in reading list is an art that it sounds

genuine for the use. Skilled reader is not at all good in proof reading. At the beginning of teaching learners can be trained to be proof reader in nature. All process of creating readers goes from proof reading to skilled reading.

- **Top-down Approach & Interactive**

### **Compensatory Model**

Top-down approach is based on the practising of the frequent occurring words in reading. It is almost pre-defined in skilled-readers' mind that transforms automatically to generate meaning of the context. The context plays an important role to understand the meaning and complete word, even, if it is half written. It is contextualised in nature. As far as the understanding of the text is concerned; reader needs to apply his/her intact knowledge to comprehend the text. Interactive compensatory model is a utility of the both the methods - bottom-up & top down.

- **Learner autonomy and learner-chosen text**

The most fascinating phrase "*book within the textbook*" has been applied that to stir a new debate among the academicians. The phrase is a fantastically imagined to understand the needs of children as each word tells a 'story within the story'. Selection of words has to be taken into consideration while designing the syllabus. To make it more reader-friendly, it is mandatory to see the age of the children. Short texts are extremely helpful to develop the interest in reading. The reference of the researches of UK has been cited to support the argument. It is rather practical in nature to understand the utility of shortness. Rimes, Moral stories and other short rhythmic sentences are easier to grasp. Brain is a systematic-sensible organ of the human body that understands and enjoys the series, rhythms and aptness.

With deep regards  
Academically yours  
*Ravinder Kumar*

### **Prof Amritavalli's comments on the discussion of her article in the classroom**

*Dear Ravinder Kumar,*

*Thank you for your enthusiasm and dedication to your work, and for the effort you have put in to understand and discuss my article. I am sure you can write and publish your own experiences in teaching too! It is a real gift to a writer when a reader responds to the writing. Thank you indeed.*

*Sincerely,*

*Amritavalli*



## Forthcoming Seminars & Conferences

1. 2013 2nd International Conference on Society, Humanity and History - ICSHH 2013  
Conference 10th to 11th August 2013  
Barcelona, Spain , Website: <http://www.icshh.org/>  
Contact person: Secretary of ICSHH 2013  
ICSHH 2013 will be published in the JOEBM (ISSN: 2301-3567), and will be included in the E&T Digital Library, and indexed by EBSCO, WorldCat, Google Scholar, CNKI, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Cross Ref and sent to be reviewed by ISI Proceedings.  
**Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 25th March 2013**
  
2. Translating Myth Conference  
5th to 7th September 2013 Colchester, Essex, United Kingdom  
Website: <http://translatingmyth.wordpress.com/>  
Contact person: Dr Leon Burnett  
An international conference to be held at first site, the home of contemporary visual arts in Colchester. We particularly welcome interdisciplinary contributions.  
**Organized by:** Centre for Myth Studies at the University of Essex
  
3. 6th International Seminar on The Republic in Shakespeare, Jammu, India Seminar  
16th to 18th October 2013 Jammu , Jammu & Kashmir, India  
Website: <http://www.jammuuniversity.in/upload/conference/pic260.PDF>  
Contact person: Prof. Bhim S. Dahiya. The Seminar is an invitation, and a challenge to the scholars of Shakespeare to explore afresh the Bard's ideas related to the relationship between the rulers and the ruled, the privileged and the petitioning, the elected and the and the electing.  
**Organized by:** Univ of Jammu & The Shakespeare Association India  
**Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 31st March 2013**  
Check the [event website](#) for more details.
  
4. The 17th English in Southeast Asia Conference (ESEA 2013) Conference  
5th to 7th December 2013 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Website: <http://umconference.um.edu.my/esea2013>  
Contact person: ESEA2013 Secretariat  
The "English in Southeast Asia" conference series is the result of collaboration between many Southeast Asian universities focusing on various topics on English language development, challenges and changes in the region.  
**Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 30th April 2013**

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