

Name of the Scholar:- SHATARUPA SINHA

Name of the Supervisor:- Professor Anisur Rahman

Name of the Department:- Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Languages

Title of the Thesis:- Indian English Literature: A Critical Inquiry into Reading Strategies and Pedagogy

ABSTRACT

Arising out of a complex milieu of social, cultural, philosophical, and political determinants, Indian English Literature has become a major part of a larger body of literary writing known as Indian literature. Indian English Literature that has emerged as a distinct body of literary writing in the larger and hegemonic postcolonial context, it necessitates special tools for its reading as it is characterised by its own terms of reference. Appropriating a unique kind of linguistic expression, this body of writing requires a reading strategy that is contextual and may help towards appreciating its worth.

Literary texts are understood primarily as reconstructions of a particular culture and worldview. As every literary text is rooted in a specific culture and worldview, it needs a critical apparatus that must also be rooted in its corresponding context. In other words, every literary text ought to be examined with critical apparatuses that are compatible with the cultural context(s) of the text(s) in question. For reading an Indian English literary text we may employ a variety of critical tools and/or methodologies. These tools and methodologies may generally be either Indian or Western. Sometimes, they may also be a blend

of the two and develop a balanced view of the text and the tradition under examination. Further, there is yet another possibility whereby one may not necessarily subscribe to any given methodology or tool and develop either a vaguely individualistic, or holistic, or a comparative perspective. The major issue, however, remains: how to bring out the essential nature of the text and its determining conditions. In the current critical scenario, all these methodologies have been followed and they have led to different kinds of readings. Since reading strategies also determine pedagogical practices, there is a need to chart out a map of reading that is comparatively more appropriate, contemporaneously more relevant, and critically more justifiable.

This thesis engages with these questions of great contemporary relevance and tries to propose well argued reading strategies which also make way for developing a pedagogical base for Indian English Literature. This has been done with a view to develop a liberal reading strategy since subscribing to a given or rigid framework to study a literature is liable to make way for constricted, limited, even parochial reading which defeats the aim of scholarship.

Since the purpose of this research is to generate questions on the possible ways of reading and teaching Indian English literary texts, the thesis refrains from being both prescriptive and restrictive, as it will seal the possibilities of all future research. Thus, instead of proposing a final solution, this research aims at providing a synthesis by means of trying to develop a more holistic approach for reading Indian English literary texts.