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INDIAN WORDS IN ENGLISH—A BRIEF SURVEY OF INDIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS A CULTURAL LINK BETWEEN THE TWO RACES.

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Abstract: Borrowing is essential in every phase of life. languages have been borrowers and lenders. No language anywhere has borrowed so extensively as English. English has been a borrower and lender (more a borrower than lender) all through its history. The wealth of borrowed words treasured in English, loan words, foreign contribution to the English language and so on. The quantum of the Indian element in English is considerably large. Oxford English Dictionary accords recognition to 900 main words of Indian origin and a few thousand derivations of these words. In recent times, English writers were attracted to Indian philosophy. Cheif of them are Aldous Huxley and T.S.Eliot. The present study aims at brief survey of Indian contribution to the English language at different ages of history keeping aloft the Indian element in the enrichment of the English language.

Keywords: Borrowing, quantum, Indian element, philosophy, derivations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Charlton Laird observes, “Borrowing is a great fact of civilization. To confess that one has not borrowed other people's discoveries is to confess that one knows very little.” “A people who have not borrowed anything' is to say that they are like barbarians. Borrowing is essential in every phase of life. Now our concern is about linguistic borrowings. The linguistic borrower “troubles you with no receipt.” He takes whatever he needs, wherever he finds it and is pleased to think that “you have served your function in life by being borrowed from.” In spite of the folk-minded Polonius, who said “Neither a borrower nor a lender be”, languages have been borrowers and lenders. No language anywhere has borrowed so extensively as English. When languages borrow they do not mean to repay. They seem to say “forgive us our debts, for we shall not pay them.” Nor do the languages that lend ask for repayment; they seem to say “thy need is greater than mine.” English has been a borrower and lender (more a borrower than lender) all through its history. The wealth of borrowed words treasured in English, loan words, foreign contribution to the English language and so on. Now we shall examine in considerable detail what Indian words flowed into the English language and in what periods of its history.

The quantum of the Indian element in English is considerably large. Dr. Mary S.Serjeantson first attempted to estimate the amplitude of the Indian element on English vocabulary. In her book on History of Foreign Words in English, she records 188 words in the aggregate. Oxford English Dictionary accords recognition to 900 main words of Indian origin and a few thousand derivations of these words. Yet, considering the length of contact between England and

India, this is a small contribution. It is smaller compared with the vast army of English words that flooded Indian languages. The comparative meagerness of Indian words in English is due to many factors. One of them is that the climate in India prevented her being a Whiteman's country. The Englishman who returned to England after spending some time in India carried with him accounts of strange habits and customs, institutions and articles of trade. His experience in India could not exert any profound influence on the language of his country. Another reason for the niggardly flow of Indian words into English is that the English language has been self-conscious of its rich vocabulary. Further, East India Company instructed their servants to use English words wherever possible.

FACTORS OF CONTRIBUTION:

Factors contributing to the adoption of Indian words into English are many and varied. First, it has been a natural tendency with English to borrow words and this could not be checked by any official command. Many of the Indian words were adopted because they met a real need. Where English names cannot be easily found or coined to denote certain object, actions or concepts, English readily borrowed from any of the languages in India. Thus, a good number of words like calico, tussore, banian, pyjamas, suttee, juggernaut, bandicoot, mango, mongoose, betel, anaconda, catamaron and many others had to be borrowed out of necessity. Again, words like ryot and ryotwar suggest more precise notions of land revenue in South India than does any of their English counterparts, cultivator, agriculturist and peasant. Besides these, many words were

taken into English for the sake of picturesqueness and local colour.

Another important factor is that the English are not free from pedantic show of familiarity with another language. They used some Indian words in their conversation, in their letters and in their speeches. English men of letters were not lagging behind in using Indian words in their writings. Travel-literature and adventure-narrating familiarized the English reading public with some of the Indian words. Milton himself knew some Indian words. Dryden evinced some interest in India and Indian words. Burke and Orme, in the eighteenth century, effectively used Indian words. Scott in his 'The Surgeon's Daughter' made use of surprisingly large number of words of Indian origin. Robert Southey tried to assimilate and naturalize some Indian words into English. Of all, Kipling, Thackeray, E.M. Forster did much to familiarize the English public with Indian words. In recent times, English writers were attracted to Indian philosophy. Chief of them are Aldous Huxley and T.S.Eliot.

Indian words came into the English language in several successive waves of unequal intervals. Mr G.S. Rao observes in his book Indian Words in English, "in many of the words we have enlightening vignettes of history: They tell in an authentic, if inadequate way, the strange story of Indo-British cultural relations through the centuries, from the view point of the English."

It would be interesting to note that some Indian words entered the English lexicon indirectly, long before the advent of British rule in India. These words, which entered English through Greek, Latin and French are few but full of history. They go back to 'the dim backward and abysm' of antiquity 'where Greek and Roman traders ventured over land through Asia Minor and Persia in quest of ivory, spices and precious stones. From this ancient trade came words like beryl, camphor, candy, ginger, mace, musk, pepper, rice, sandal sugar, panther and so on. Elizabethan writers like Marlowe and Shakespeare were quite familiar with these words and they used them figuratively, proverbially and sometimes as attributes.

In 1510, the Portuguese occupied Goa, a state in India, and from that date dominated the trade in the East throughout the following century. A kind of Portuguese-Indian lingua franca evolved in the Portuguese occupied areas along the sea coast. From this, a number of Indian words found their way into English, for example, betel from Malayalam vetilla meaning simple leaf; copra from Malayalam Koppara meaning kernel of the coconut; catamaran from Tamil Kattumaram meaning binding wood, hence a raft; curry from Tamil Kari meaning sauce; monsoon originally from Arabic mausim meaning season; palanquin from Sanskrit Paryanka meaning bed; teak for Malayalam Tekka and verandah from Hindi baranda and so on.

In 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to the East India Company. From this historic date many words started entering the English language. They tell us the history of the 'historical and cultural relations of two races so dissimilar in their ways of life and thought as the English and the Indian. Indian words taken into English in the seventeenth century bear out the commercial nature of

relations between England and India. Hundreds of words were borrowed in this century, but only a few survived; calico, chintz, chuddar, tussore, bengal (applied to piece-goods of different kinds) and such others. Words like copra, ginger pepper, sugar indigo were once again borrowed, though they had already entered English by way of Latin and Greek. So they are called much-travelled words. Other words which have a bearing upon commerce are: banian (hindu trader), coolie, bazaar, godown, rupee, pice, mohur, pagoda, guz, maund, viss, seer, tola and so on. Words like brinjal (From Malayalam, ultimately from Sanskrit),, cutch, jaggery, dubash (originally dobashi meaning a man who knows two languages, hence an interpreter) belong to this century.

A study of the borrowings of the seventeenth century further indicates that the Mogul empire was at its zenith of magnificence, power and splendour. Akbar was described as the Great Mogul. By 1678, the word Mogul acquired in English the general sense of 'a great personage, an autocratic ruler'. That the Englishman of this century took great interest in everything around is borne out by words like pundit, nunshee, gomastha, dubash, 'boy' (in the sense of Palanquin-bearer, originally boyi in Telugu and Malayalam), fakir, jogi, raja, bungalow, choky (toll station), mahal cutcherry besides many others. The Englishman of this century was attracted to the Hindu and Muslim festivals like Holi, Dewalee, Moharram and Ramzan. The history of the word juggernaut is interesting. It is a corrupted form of Lord Jagannath of Puri. The Englishman of this century heard stories that the devotees threw themselves en masse under the wheels of the car of Lord Jagannath on the day of car-festival. The word became very serviceable in the eighteenth century. It was used as a verb to mean 'to crush one to death as a victim'. It was also figuratively used to mean 'an institution, practice or notion to which persons blindly devote themselves or are ruthlessly sacrificed.'

In the eighteenth century, the number of words borrowed is smaller than those of the seventeenth century. This was perhaps due to the fact the already-borrowed words were put to use in figurative and transferred senses. For example, in expressions like Bengal -silk, mango-bird, pagod-worship, dawk-bearers, cot-frame, cutcherry -list, india rubber, Malabar-nut, jaghir lands and many other words of Indian origin are used either attributively or combinatively. A number of derivative words came into use in this century Indianize, Islamism, nabobism, nabobish, nabobese and so on. Some words were used in transferred or figurative meanings. For instance, pagod was used to mean a person superstitiously or extravagantly revered; Indian was also used to European who resides in India or who has returned from India; nabob was used to mean a person of high rank and great wealth, specially one who has returned from India with large fortune acquired there. It was also used to mean rich and luxury-loving person.

While words relating to commerce are quite meagre in this century, political and military words are found in abundance. To this period belong words like, sepoy, sebandy (irregular native soldiery), telinga (a native soldier dressed and disciplined in quasi-European fashion. The term was frequently used in Bengal in the eighteenth century, because

the first soldiers of that type came to Bengal from what was considered to be Telinga country viz. Madras), loot, looty, pindari, dewani, subedar, naik, havildar, jamedar and so on. Further, things like hookah, chillum, moutch, khedda seem to have interested the Englishman of this century greatly.

The character of the words borrowed in this century is different from that of the words borrowed earlier. William Jones and Max-Muller discovered new relation between Europe and India-on linguistic plane. The term Indo-European was first used in this century. Comparative grammar and Indology interested the Englishman of this century. Sanskrit words are freely used in philology; for example: *guna*, *gunate* (verb) *sandhi*, *swarabhakti*. In

In the twentieth century, India's struggle for independence and the unique methods adopted for its achievement are indicated by such words as Gandhism, hartal, khaddar, khilafat, Satyagraha, swadeshi, swaraj. The first world war left its mark by contributing words like blighty, cushy, cootie and such others. Expressions like ack dum, bundook, chello, chit, chitty, dekkho, puggled (from pagal) came into English through the lips of the army men. In the Second World War, the Indian army to the general army slang, a few words like chup (silence; to 'keep chup'). But old borrowings are revived and given wider circulation. Among them are words like buckshee, charpoy, char (cha) dhobey (noun and verb), izzat, jildi, pukka, phut (as in 'go phut'). Peculiarities of usage also are seen; an easy-going officer is said to be cushy; 'to get a god chit' means to earn the praise of the powers; to do a jildi move means to make a hasty retreat.

In the nineteenth century names like Southey,

Walter Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter* has a sprinkle of Indian words. Southey in his almost forgotten poem *The curse of Kehama* uses words like *swarga*, *suras*, *asuras*, *amrita*, *devatas*. Thackeray abundantly used Indian words in his novels. He bends Indian words into strange and humorous use and sometimes turns them into proper nouns. For naming some of his characters he resorts to names of Indian foodstuffs, drinks, fruits, ornaments and coins. Thus we find in his *Book of Snobs* names like Mr. Chutney, General Rice Curry, Mr. Mulligatawney, Mr. Punch, Miss Mac Toddy, Mr. Goldmore, Lady Mary Mango.

E.M. Forster uses Indian words in phrases and idioms such as 'increasing izzat', 'Jao Jeldily' 'be cgyo about it' and many others. In the twentieth century more and more writers are cturnign to Indian themes for their writings. As a result many words like Bharat, Bande Mataram, goondah, Zulum, ahimsa, satyagraha, kumkum, natya, mukti are growing familiar to the Englishman. The influence of Indian life and thought on Aldous Huxley and T.S. Eliot has far reaching effects. Huxley is a vedantist who believes in the necessity of reviving of the order of Sanyasis in modern society. T.S. Eliot admits that the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita impressed him most. Let us look at his use of Indian element in the following passage:-

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavnt.
The jungle crouched, humped in silence
Then spoke the thunder

:o: :o: :o:

Datta Dayadhavam Damyata
Shantih Shantih Shantih

Now, we have surveyed briefly the Indian contribution to the English language. It indicates not only India's contribution to the civilization of England, but also the reaction of the English to the social, political, religious, philosophical life and thought of the Indians. It may be hoped that the friendly relations and the cultural link between England and India will be preserved to enrich the Indian element in the English language.

Indian Words In English---a Brief Survey Of Indian Contribution.....

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