# TRANSLATIONS AND MULTICULTURALISM

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**ABSTRACT:**

There are 7 billion in the world. Scientifically, we are one species i.e. Hkme sapiens, but socially are we one species, one tribe, one class of beings? Clearly, the answer is NO. There are many factors that apparently distinguish us from one another or, we may say, we think that they distinguish us. Religion, language, culture, geography etc play a very decisive role in asserting our identities and creating contours of our identity. A person usually associates himself with one group and distinguishes it from the others in various ways. Language plays a pivotal role in determining the collective identity of a group. It gives a sense of belonging to a community. Language has been reason for breakdown of nations and has played a decisive role in uniting people too. Multiculturalism and multi-linguism need to co-exist in a state.

**INTRODUCTION:**

It is difficult to define multiculturalism. A vibrant and successful multi-cultural society is said to be one which celebrates the heterogeneity and rejects monoculture homogeneity. It is a celebration of Unity in Diversity.The liberal concepts that accompany Multiculturalism are pluralism, protection of minority from the tyranny of the majority and tolerance. "Mere toleration of group differences is said to fall short differences are required through "group-differentiated rights,"

It becomes very important in a democracy to protect the minority from the majority. Multi-cultural and democratic societies are characterised by the formation of ethnic parties, these parties put themselves as the champion of one group's cause, seeking to exclude others and makes

such representation its main basis of mobilisation of people. It has three essential principles, ascriptiveness: the people it chooses to appeal are form a ethnic group, Exclusion: When it chooses to include people for its mobilisation, it excludes many others, Centrality: its central ideology is to represent themselves as the champions of one community. These groups are dangerous in a democracy. Voters don't vote on the basis of ideology but on ethnic lines. Thus, the majority is consolidated on such lines, and if it comes to power, will make policies on a line that benefits that ethnic group which is in power. This, leads to suppression, exclusion and domination of the minority which can in turn lead to conflict.

**Multiculturalism-**

However, accommodation of multiculturalism

has many benefits ranging from political stability, unity, security, economical etc. Thus, it is important that a multicultural democratic nation has multi-ethnic and non-ethnic communities. A multi-ethnic community is defined as " a community that also makes an appeal related to ethnicity central to its mobilisation strategy but that assumes a position of neutrality or equidistance toward all relevant categories on the salient dimension(s) of ethnicity. " An ethnic community seeks to exclude but a multi-ethnic community seeks to include. A non-ethnic community however, is "a party that does not include or exclude categories namely on the basis of ethnic identity, or addresses ethnic demands but doesn't make such demands central to its political platform." Categorisation of such parties can be done on the basis of the message it sends to the electorate.

Thus, culture and language form an inseparable bond as language reflects the culture of a community. Like the community, every language has its own history. To imbibe the values of multi-culturalism, it is pertinent to respect the different cultures present. If one understands the culture, then it will aid multiculturalism. Translation of literary works of one community to other will go a long way to help this. But translation has its own practical problems. This paper seeks to look into the implications of translation in multiculturalism, and the cautionary attitude that the translators should undertake.

Before going into that, we need to look into what is translation? Translation is the communication of the meaning of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target – language text. Simply put, it is an effort to interpret a text in one language to another language and make it accessible to the speakers of the other language. However, a literal word to word translation is not the only way to do so. There are other tools for the same.

The first is iconic translation wherein It is a faithful translation of the text. Not only is the basic textual features such as characters, imagery, the order in which incidents occur, Sometimes, even the number of lines will be the same !

Next is indexical translation in which the translation imbibes the local culture and customs of the language in which it is translated. For example , if a text is indexically translated from hindi to Marathi, then in indexical translation,, the text will contain some traditional Maharashtrian customs and practices, which might be absent in the original.

Then comes symbolic translation, which oftens acts as a counter-text to the original text. There is a minimum usage of the previous text. The characters might be the same but the character-sketch may not be the same. The storyline, imagery etc differs and may even be contradictory to the original text.

It is not pertinent to see the effects of these on multi-culturalism esp. the effect of symbolic translation.

A translator is free to choose amongst the literal and free translation. A faithful translation cant be literal because every word has a culture significance attached to it which changes the translation. Thus to preserve the meaning of the text, iconic translation has to be set aside and literal mistranslation is inevitable.

Translation, involving the transposition of thoughts expressed in one language be one social group into the appropriate expression of another group, entails a process of cultural de-coding, re-coding and en-coding. As cultures are increasingly brought into greater contact with one another ,multicultural considerations are brought to bear to an ever increasing degree. Now, how do all these changes influence us when we are trying to comprehend  a text before finally translating it? We are not just dealing with words written in certain time, space and socio-political situation , most importantly it is the "cultural" aspect of the text that we should take into account. The process of transfer i.e. recoding across cultures, should consequently allocate corresponding attributes vis-à-vis the target culture to ensure credibility in the eyes of the target reader.

There is no doubt that translation  of one language to other helps in understanding of different cultures. The 'self' and 'other' or the 'we' and 'they' tendencies that exists among the community members has a considerable impact on the way a text is interpreted. Readers might start comparing the different ideologies which may lead to appreciation or denunciation of the other culture. This problem also plagues the translator as even he is a member of one group and the way a text of the other group is interpreted by him is reflected in his translated work. All this leads to cultural misunderstandings.

Even direct and literal translation causes cultural misunderstanding. Different cultures have different ways of expressing politeness and interaction. Even cultural values differs wherein one culture favors individualism whereas the other might favour collectivism.

The translator also faces other challenges. The challenge to translation is not to achieve fidelty to the original text but to strike a balance between the desire to reproduce the exact same work and the desire to stir up emotions in the targeted audience for or against the culture and traditions that text portrays.

One example is orientalism.Broadly speaking orientalism is the expression used for the depiction of the eastern society by the western thinkers.In Edward Said's legendary book 'orientalism' , it is analysed that the western scholars construes and depicts the eastern societies as underdeveloped and

static and mirrors the western society as developed rational, flexible and superior.

Essentially, it differentiates itself from the other culture and considers the other to be inferior.This concept was largely aided by the translated works which acted as a site of exchange for the eastern and the western scholars.The political and ideological implication of orientalism in the practise of translation tends to be interpreted in terms of Lawrence Venuti's polarising paradigm of 'domestication' in which the original's features are distorted due to the translator's appropriation of the original, or 'foreignisation' in which translator makes the text appear alien and remote[3].When Bhagwad Gita and Shahkuntala where translated in European languages, it gave a conflicting image of India i.e one which is a spiritually elevated race but the other which is exotic and still closer to nature.

For Schleiermacher, "the genuine translator" is a writer who wants to bring those two completely separated persons, his author and his reader, truly together, and who would like to bring the latter to an understanding and enjoyment of the former as correct and complete as possible without inviting him to leave him to leave the sphere of his mother tongue. (Lefevere 1977:74)[9]

Translators are usually faced with an alien culture that requires that its message be conveyed in anything but an alien way. That culture expresses its idiosyncrasies in a way that is 'culture-bound': cultural words, proverds and of course idiomatic expressions, whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture concerned. So translators are called upon to do a cross-cultural translation whose success will depend on our understanding of the culture we are working with. [10] Thus, every translator is required to have a brief knowledge about the source culture and when a tranlator is faced with two different interpretation of a text then s/he should choose the interpretation which tries to harmonises the two different cultures to uphold to uphold the about the multiculturalist attitude.

Culture is found in people's thinking and practices. Every translator who performs the work of cultural translations must have have knowledge of the culture beyond the text which he aims at Transtating.

**CONCLUSION:**

Lastly, I wish to quote a very prominent example of AK Ramanujam's three hundred Ramayanas which had such a strong impact on the religious sectiments of the society that it was banned from the Delhi University's BA syllabus. Although Ramanujan's description of Ramayanas is just a reflection of vivid religious beliefes, ethnic values, preferences, social economic and geographical conditions pre dominate in other states of India and in different religions. Valmiki portrays Ravana as a demonic character and authors in Jain and Thai version had interpreted his character in such a way that Ravana garners sympathy

from the society. In the numerous telllings of Ramayana, the yuddhakanda which is related to three wars between Rama and Ravana, is more elaborate in Ramakriti than in kannada Version. One of the reasons put forth is that the Thai history was plagued by war and hence there Major concem was survival. The Jain version has termpereddoen the demonic version of Ravana. Here Ravana is a devana is a devout follower of the jain masters and not shiva. It has shown how the jain version has promulgated the virtues of Ahimsa which was propounded by Mahavira. Hence we can conclude that because our country is rich in various cultures, religions and values, it is obvious that variant colours of Indian social fabric will fer

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