

MEG-10 ENGLISH STUDIES IN INDIA

MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME IN ENGLISH (MEG)

Previous year repeated questions with answers

Important for December examination

1. Why did the Indian National Movement lead to the marginalisation of the English language ? Give reasons.

The Indian National Movement led to the marginalization of the English language for several important reasons:

1. English as a Symbol of British Rule:

- **Colonial Tool:** English was the language of the British rulers. During colonial times, it was used for administration and education, which made it a symbol of control and foreign rule. Many Indians wanted to get rid of English because it reminded them of the British domination.

2. Support for Indian Languages:

- **Cultural Identity:** Leaders in the national movement encouraged people to speak and use their own languages like Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, and others. They believed that to regain India's true identity, people should reconnect with their own languages and culture, not the language of the colonizers.
- **National Unity:** Nationalists promoted the idea that speaking Indian languages would unite people and help in the struggle for independence.

3. Swadeshi Movement:

- **Boycott of British Goods:** The Swadeshi Movement was about being self-reliant and rejecting British goods, including English. This movement encouraged the use of local languages and products, helping to reduce the importance of English.

4. Leaders and Writers Supporting Vernacular Languages:

- **Mahatma Gandhi and Others:** Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi spoke against using English and encouraged the use of Hindi and other Indian languages to build national pride.
- **Books and Newspapers:** Many Indian writers and newspapers started publishing in regional languages, spreading nationalist ideas. This helped people understand the importance of using their own languages.

5. Independence and Political Changes:

- **Rejection of English in Politics:** After independence, many leaders felt that India should not rely on English for politics and governance. While English continued to be used in government, many people wanted Hindi or other Indian languages to become more important in everyday life.

6. Post-Independence Language Decisions:

- **Hindi as National Language:** After India became independent in 1947, the government wanted Hindi to be the common language of the country. Even though English was kept for official use, there was a strong push for Indian languages, making English less important for most people.

Conclusion:

The Indian National Movement made people realize that English was a language of the British rulers and their control. As part of the struggle for independence, people began to focus on using their own languages, which reduced the role of English in Indian society. Even though English is still used in some areas, it is no longer the dominant language in everyday life for most Indians.

Discuss Ram Mohan Roy's views on English studies in India.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a key figure in India's reform movement, was a strong advocate for modern education, particularly in English, to help India progress. In the early 19th century, education in India was limited to a small section of society, mainly in Sanskrit, Persian, or Arabic, and did not include modern subjects. Roy realized that for India to modernize, it needed education in subjects like mathematics, science, and philosophy, which were taught in English. When the British government decided to open a Sanskrit college, Roy

opposed it, arguing that the money should be spent on modern education instead, which he believed would be more useful for India's development.

Roy also saw the benefits of English education for social reform, such as spreading progressive ideas about equality and justice. He was also critical of traditional Sanskrit education, believing it couldn't help India move forward. He advocated for using English as the medium of instruction, opening schools in English, and promoting modern subjects that could uplift Indian society.

Roy's views extended beyond education. During his time in England, he was asked about the settlement of Europeans in India. He acknowledged the potential benefits, such as the introduction of advanced agricultural techniques, improvements in the legal system, and the spread of education. However, he was also aware of the disadvantages, including social tensions and the risk of Europeans seeking exclusive privileges.

Roy's thinking was forward-thinking, as he anticipated the issues that would arise from European settlers and their impact on Indian society. His support for English education and balanced views on European settlers showed his awareness of global trends and his desire for India's progress.

In summary, Ram Mohan Roy's advocacy for English education and his balanced views on European settlement showed his vision for a modern, educated India. His thoughts on education, social reform, and colonial relations remain relevant today and highlight his role as a pioneer in India's intellectual and social transformation.

Describe how Rabindranath Tagore revolutionized the landscape of Indian Literature.

Rabindranath Tagore revolutionized Indian literature by introducing new ideas and styles that changed the way people thought about poetry, music, and culture.

1. New Style of Poetry:

- **Breaking Traditional Boundaries:** Tagore brought a fresh style of writing that was different from the traditional, formal poetry of his time. He combined classical and folk elements, making his poetry simple, yet deep and emotional. His poems expressed personal feelings and a deep connection to nature, spirituality, and the human soul.
- **Use of Bengali Language:** Tagore made Bengali literature rich and modern by using it for both simple everyday themes and grand philosophical ideas. His use of language made his work accessible to ordinary people, not just scholars.

2. Tagore's Major Works:

- **"Gitanjali" (Song Offerings):** His most famous work, *Gitanjali*, is a collection of poems that explore spirituality, the divine, and human emotions. The poems are deeply personal and have a universal appeal. This work earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, making him the first non-European writer to receive this honour.
- **Stories and Plays:** Besides poetry, Tagore wrote many short stories, novels, and plays. His works dealt with social issues, relationships, and the challenges faced by individuals in society. He used literature to express his views on freedom, justice, and equality.

3. Promotion of National Identity:

- **Voice for Freedom:** Tagore's writings were also linked to India's fight for independence. He used his poetry and songs to inspire people to feel proud of their culture and history. His work highlighted the importance of self-respect and freedom for India.
- **Patriotism and Universalism:** Although Tagore was passionate about India's freedom, he also believed in universal brotherhood. He promoted the idea that all people, regardless of their nationality or religion, should live in peace and harmony.

4. Music and Songs:

- **Rabindra Sangeet:** Tagore revolutionized Bengali music by composing hundreds of songs, known as *Rabindra Sangeet*. His songs, with their poetic lyrics and melody, became very popular and are still sung in India and Bangladesh today. These songs connect deeply with people's emotions and are often associated with cultural and national pride.

5. Education and Cultural Reform:

- **Shantiniketan:** Tagore founded a unique school in Shantiniketan (in West Bengal), which focused on holistic education. The school emphasized creativity, freedom, and the connection between nature and learning. It was different from the traditional, rigid schooling systems, and it became a place where art, culture, and literature flourished.
- **Influence on Modern Indian Thought:** Tagore's ideas influenced many thinkers, artists, and leaders in India and abroad. His belief in individual freedom, creativity, and social progress helped shape the modern cultural and intellectual landscape of India.

Conclusion:

Rabindranath Tagore revolutionized Indian literature by introducing new poetic forms, writing about deep human emotions, and promoting a sense of national pride and universal brotherhood. His works in poetry, music, and education left a lasting impact, making him a central figure in Indian culture and a global literary icon.

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