

# MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME IN ENGLISH (MEG)

Term-End Examination December, 2024

## MEG-10 : ENGLISH STUDIES IN INDIA

### Important Questions with Answers in Easy Language

A must watch video before exam

**How did the Social Reform Movement lead to the institutionalisation of English in India ? Explain with examples.**

- **Institutionalization of English in Education:** English became institutionalized in India through its inclusion in school and college curricula. It became the standard for assessing a person's merit during exams and interviews for job placements.
- **Role in Bureaucracy and Judiciary:** English was adopted as the medium for conducting official work in the bureaucracy, judiciary, and other government services, particularly in policy implementation, case studies, and pronouncements of judgments.
- **Systematic Approach to Language in Education:** The Indian government systematically institutionalized education by examining the utility of languages in schools, setting up various commissions to discuss the language of instruction, assessment of merit for government jobs, and syllabus creation at different educational levels.
- **Debates Over National Language:** There was significant debate about which language should be adopted as the national language, with specific focus on Hindi versus English. This debate created challenges, particularly in relation to language policy in government and education.
- **Shifting Language Policies:** Various commissions worked on the language issue, but policies kept changing over time, often driven by the political climate

and national needs. This ongoing debate, especially regarding Hindi and English, was widely discussed in public forums.

- **Impact of Globalization on English:** With the rise of capitalism, a globalized economy, and a unipolar world, English gained more prominence in India. It became a key language in the global market and gained even more strength in the job market and education system.
- **Resistance to English:** Despite its growing dominance, English still faces resistance, particularly from those who see it as a colonial language. The vernacular press has been vocal in criticizing English's use in administration, judiciary, and other fields, reflecting the concerns of those affected by the job market dynamics.
- **Contemporary Situation:** Even after 57 years of independence, the status of English in India remains a subject of debate. The language still holds a powerful position, but its association with colonialism and its influence on the job market continue to fuel resistance and criticism.

### **Detail the attempts made by several Education Commissions to displace English as the medium of instruction in post-independence India.**

In post-independence India, the issue of language in education, particularly the medium of instruction, became a central topic of discussion. Several Education Commissions were set up over the years to address the challenges of selecting an appropriate language for instruction, with many of these commissions making attempts to reduce or displace English from the educational system. Here's a detailed overview of the key attempts made by these commissions:

#### **1. The Kothari Commission (1964-1966):**

- **Objective:** The Kothari Commission, also known as the Education Commission, was established to address the overall issues in India's education system. One of the key concerns was the medium of instruction, particularly the continued use of English.
- **Recommendations:** The Commission recommended that Hindi, or regional languages, should be the medium of instruction at the primary and secondary levels. English was to be taught as a second language, but not as the primary medium of instruction.

- **Impact:** Although the Commission advocated for replacing English in primary education, it was clear that English would continue to be important at higher education levels, particularly in science and technology, due to its global importance. The Kothari Commission acknowledged that a transition away from English would take time, but it emphasized the importance of encouraging the use of Indian languages.

## 2. The M. C. Chagla Commission (1966):

- **Objective:** The Chagla Commission was primarily focused on higher education, particularly universities, and the role of English as the language of instruction.
- **Recommendations:** The commission did not explicitly call for the displacement of English but suggested a greater emphasis on Indian languages. It acknowledged that English was a key medium in global scholarship but highlighted the need to develop Indian languages to be used more widely in academic settings.
- **Impact:** The recommendations were not drastic in terms of displacing English, but they did advocate for an increase in the use of Indian languages for teaching non-technical subjects.

## 3. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1968):

- **Objective:** The NPE 1968 was another significant step towards addressing the role of language in education. The policy aimed to promote national integration and cultural preservation while emphasizing the role of Indian languages.
- **Recommendations:** The NPE 1968 recommended the use of regional languages as the medium of instruction at the primary stage of education and suggested that English should be taught as a second language starting from the secondary level.
- **Impact:** The policy reflected a clear shift towards regional languages in education but did not advocate for an immediate or complete displacement of English. English was still considered essential for higher education and technical fields.

## 4. The Indian Education Commission (1964-1966):

- **Objective:** This Commission aimed to recommend reforms to improve the education system in India after independence. It reviewed the state of education and its relationship with national development.
- **Recommendations:** The Commission recommended that regional languages should replace English as the medium of instruction in schools,

with English to be taught as a subject. The idea was to make education more accessible and relevant to the people by using their mother tongues.

- **Impact:** While the recommendations were progressive in terms of promoting regional languages, English continued to hold a dominant place, especially in areas like science, technology, and governance, where proficiency in English remained a critical skill.

### 5. The Sarkaria Commission (1983):

- **Objective:** The Sarkaria Commission was set up to look into the relationship between the central and state governments, including issues of language and its role in governance and education.
- **Recommendations:** While the Sarkaria Commission was more focused on the use of Hindi as a national language, it also suggested a reduced reliance on English. It emphasized that Hindi should be promoted as the link language between states and central governments. However, it also recognized the continued importance of English in higher education, especially in technical fields.
- **Impact:** The Commission's recommendations were more focused on strengthening Hindi but did not make substantial changes to the role of English in education.

### 6. The National Policy on Education (1986):

- **Objective:** The NPE of 1986, which was later revised in 1992, built on the previous National Policy on Education of 1968 and aimed to further integrate regional languages into the education system.
- **Recommendations:** The NPE 1986 sought to promote Hindi and other regional languages at the school level, with English as an additional subject. It suggested that education in higher education institutions, especially in arts and humanities, could shift to Indian languages, but it maintained that English would remain important in fields like science, technology, and international communication.
- **Impact:** This policy continued to advocate for regional languages in education but accepted the dominant role of English in scientific and technical disciplines.

### Conclusion:

While several Education Commissions made attempts to displace English as the medium of instruction in India, the complexity of the issue, including the need for access to global knowledge, political dynamics, and the lack of infrastructure for regional languages, meant that these efforts were only partially successful. English continues to play a dominant role in India's higher

education system and job market, even as regional languages have gained prominence at the primary and secondary levels.

## **Describe the circumstances that led to the emergence of English writings by Indians.**

The emergence of English writings by Indians can be attributed to a combination of historical, social, political, and cultural factors that shaped the Indian subcontinent over centuries. The circumstances that led to this phenomenon are rooted in colonialism, the introduction of Western education, the need for communication in a multilingual society, and the influence of the British Empire. Here are the key circumstances that contributed to the rise of English literature in India:

### **1. Colonial Influence and British Rule (1757 - 1947)**

- **Introduction of English by the British:** The arrival of the British in India through the East India Company in the mid-18th century marked the beginning of significant cultural and linguistic changes. English was initially introduced as the language of administration, governance, and the legal system. Over time, it became the language of the colonial elite, and its influence spread across various sectors of society.
- **Establishment of English Education:** In the early 19th century, the British colonial government established a formal system of education in India. The **Macaulay Minute (1835)** played a pivotal role in promoting English as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. Lord Macaulay argued that an educated elite, trained in Western knowledge, would act as a bridge between the British rulers and the native population.
- **Promotion of English by British Administrators:** English was made the official language for administration, education, and legal matters. This not only increased the reach of the English language but also created a class of educated Indians who could read, write, and communicate in English.

### **2. Development of a Western-educated Indian Elite**

- **The Rise of a New Intellectual Class:** The introduction of English-medium education led to the formation of a Western-educated elite, which included Indians from both urban and rural backgrounds. This

intellectual class began to engage with Western ideas, philosophies, literature, and social reforms. They were often influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment, such as rationality, individualism, and progress, which inspired them to write and articulate their thoughts in English.

- **Influence of Western Writers and Thinkers:** Indian writers educated in English were often influenced by British literary traditions, such as Romanticism, Victorian literature, and the works of authors like Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Charles Dickens. These Western writers provided models for Indian writers to follow as they began writing in English.

### 3. The Role of English in India's Socio-political Reform Movement

- **Social Reformers and Nationalists:** Many of the social reformers and leaders of the Indian independence movement used English to communicate their ideas and demand change. Leaders like **Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak** recognized the power of English in reaching a larger audience, including the educated elite and the British authorities. English became an important tool for social reform and for challenging the social, political, and religious orthodoxy of the time.
- **The Indian Nationalist Movement:** As the freedom struggle gained momentum, leaders like **Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Subhas Chandra Bose** used English to express their political aspirations. They wrote speeches, essays, and articles in English to communicate with the British rulers and with the Indian diaspora. English thus became the language of political and nationalist discourse, helping articulate demands for Indian self-rule (Swaraj).

### 4. Access to Western Literature and Knowledge

- **Exposure to Western Ideas:** English opened the door to a wealth of knowledge in Western science, literature, philosophy, and history. Many Indians, especially those with a Western education, began reading and writing in English as a means to access and engage with these ideas. The translation of important Western texts into English also allowed Indian intellectuals to discuss and debate ideas in the language.
- **Publication of Indian Writers:** The publication of Indian writing in English was also influenced by the colonial period's expansion of printing presses, newspapers, and magazines. Indian writers could now reach a broader audience both within India and abroad, especially through journals and periodicals written in English. Writers like **Rabindranath**

**Tagore** and **Sarojini Naidu** began their literary careers in English, reaching both Indian and international audiences.

## 5. The Rise of Indian Literature in English (Late 19th and Early 20th Century)

- **First Indian Novels in English:** By the late 19th century, Indian writers began producing novels, poetry, and plays in English. Works like **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's "Anandamath"** and **Rabindranath Tagore's "Gitanjali"** were initially written in English for a wider audience. Tagore's work in English eventually earned him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, marking a significant moment in the history of Indian writing in English.
- **Emergence of Indian Fiction:** The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of Indian fiction and drama written in English, which depicted the socio-political realities of colonial India. Authors like **Mulk Raj Anand**, **R.K. Narayan**, and **Ismat Chughtai** began writing about the lives and struggles of common Indians under British rule.

### Conclusion:

The emergence of English writings by Indians can be traced back to the colonial era when English was introduced by the British as a language of administration and education. Over time, it became an important tool for political, social, and intellectual expression. As Indians began to engage with Western ideas and philosophies, they started writing in English, using it to communicate with both the British rulers and the educated Indian elite. English writing became an important avenue for discussing India's social issues, independence struggle, and national identity. This tradition of English writing continued to grow in the post-independence period, with Indian authors achieving global recognition.