“Comparative Literature is emblematic of the urge for the convergence in the modern world both at the intellectual and the cultural levels. The boundaries of knowledge are transcended by the contemporary currents of thought in various fields where these currents are impelled by a passion for synthesis. Comparative Literature has not only interdisciplinary approach but also a transnational dimension though; it has its roots in the national literature”.1 (K Chellappan, p.109)

Comparative Literature is an interdisciplinary field; it studies literature across national borders, across time period, across language, across genes, across boundaries. It provides geographically and chronologically broader perspective on the literary and cultural achievement of human kind than is possible from within the single literature alone.

Comparative Literature crosses the barriers of borders of single language and national literature. Comparative Literature studies literature with reference to the other literatures, generally on a bi- or multilingual or national basis.

After Goethe’s proclamation in 1827 that national literature did not mean much any more and that the time for world literature approaching, literary studies all over the world gradually moved towards deprovincialization, towards working together for a better literary and social consciousness.
Comparative Literature as a distinct discipline has been nurtured in the Western universities for more than 150 years. It became a subject of study in the latter part of the 19th century.

Though comparative literature as a literary concept is of recent origin, comparison as tool of criticism has been in use since the birth of criticism. "The method of comparison is not peculiar to comparative literature; it is ubiquitous in all literary study and in all sciences, social and natural. Nor does literary study, even in the practice of the most orthodox comparative scholars, proceed by the method of comparison alone. Any literary criticism will not only compare but reproduce, analyse, interpret, evoke, evaluate, generalize etc, in all one page".2 (Rene Wellek, p.17)

But it was Matthew Arnold who used the term 'Comparative Literature' for the first time in English in 1848. Arnold wrote – "How plain it is now, though an attention to the comparative literature for the last fifty years might have instructed any one of it that England is in a certain sense for behind the continent."3 (GWE Russell, p.8) But it was a private letter not published till 1895. In English the decisive use was by Posnett, who used the term on the title of his book in 1886. In France, Villemain was the first to use the term.

The word 'Comparative Literature' has given rise to debates over the years. There is no consensus about its meaning, scope and methods. According to Wellek and Warren the term comparative literature initially meant the study of oral literature, especially of the themes folk tales, in relation to their migration into higher artistic
literature. They also defined that the study of relationships between two or more literatures comes under the purview of comparative literature. In addition they propounded the conception, which identified comparative literature with the study of literature in its totality with world literature. They envisage the ideal of the unification all literature into one great synthesis, where each nation would play its role without abandoning its individuality.

Van Tieghem defined comparative literature as thus, "The object of comparative literature is essentially the study of diverse literatures in their relation with one another".4 (qtd in Rene Wellek, p.15) He confines comparative literature to binary relations. As Wellek says, "Comparative literature is the narrow sense of binary relations cannot make a meaningful discipline, as it would have to deal only with 'foreign trade' between fragments of literary production".5 (qtd in Rene Wellek, p.15)

The more inclusive definition is given by H.H. H. Remak. He puts it, "The study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country of the study of the relationships between literature on one hand and the other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts, philosophy, history the social sciences, religion, etc, on the other hand".6 (qtd in Rene Wellek, p.15)

Comparative literature emerged as a new discipline to work against the notion of national literatures. Its final aim is to visualize the total literary activities of man as a single universe. As Rene Wellek says – "Comparative literature has crystallized the movement..."
against the romantic emphasis on a single national literature; it obviously cannot and should not disperse of this basis in the study of single works and single literatures and will not and cannot ignore national differences. But it will transcend them and aim at a distant ideal goal, a universal literary history, and a universal literary theory.⁷

Comparative literature needs at least two literatures to start with. But this dual concern is not sufficient to meet all the demands of comparative literature. Because comparative literature views the literatures produced in all languages and in all countries as an indivisible whole. A comparatist has to go beyond one language and one literature. He has to extend his area of investigation to as many languages and literatures as possible.

“A comparatist is hardly in a position to exercise any aesthetic judgement in choosing the best works in all languages of the world. He is concerned mainly with the relationships, the resemblances and differences between national literatures; with their convergences and divergences. He has to work within a rigorous frame work to avoid subjective predilections and personal preferences. But at the same time he wants to arrive at a certain general understanding of literary activities of man and to help create a universal poetics. Goethe wanted common reader to come out of the narrow confines of his languages and geography and to enjoy the finest achievements of man. The comparatist also wants to come out of the confines of language and geography, but not so much to identify the best in all
literatures as to understand the relationships between literatures in their totality".8 (Sisir kumar Das, p.96)

Why Comparative Literature?

National literatures have played the great social roles in different countries. Literature has played role in creating a sense of cultural superiority. “The study of national literature is not tough for any nation. No national literature howsoever powerful, is sufficient to counteract the innate provincialism of man; no national literature, no single literature, howsoever rich is rich enough to present the highest literary achievements of man. The study of literature, then, has to be directed towards these goals, one dependent on the other, namely an enlargement of taste and an inheritance of the total achievement of literature”.9 (Sisir Kumar Das, p.6)

The present age has shown keen interest in the variety of literatures produced in different languages of the world. The ancient people were happy with their own literary achievement. They did not have any desire to know the literature of other countries. The exclusiveness of the ancients began to break down gradually with changes in political and religious life. Today the impact of one literature on another has become a part of the creative process. The revolution in transport and communication, especially internet has made the world a global village. People have realized the immensity of the world literature – Today’s reader is more knowledgeable about the literatures of various nations than readers in the preceding centuries. The translations of classics have created a silent revolution.
"The greatest singular effort of the availability of significant works of literatures of different nations in translation is liberalization and an enlargement of taste".\(^\text{10}\)(Sisir Kumar Das, pp.6-7)

The growth of multi-lingual situations, migrations of people from one country to another country has created awareness of literatures of other countries.

The concept of comparative literature is more relevant to multi-lingual and multi-cultural nation like India to rediscover the unity of the country. "Comparative Literature in the broader sense sees the unity of human consciousness and the unity underlying the different ways in which the human spirit has sought expression creatively, producing different cultural patterns".\(^\text{11}\)(K. Chellappan, p.110)

Comparative Literature provides readers a serious, sustained understanding of cultures beyond their own and helps them to become better global citizens.

**Scope and Methodology:**

As Wellek says, Comparative Literature is a genre of literary research without boundaries of language, ethics and politics. It aims at studying all genres of literature from an international angle because all creative literary writings and experience have an aspect of unity. There exists the distant ideal of anticipating from the international angle the establishment of a global history of literature and global studies of literature. The scope of its research covers historically unrelated phenomena in language and style', as well as origins and
influence in history. Comparative Literature studies both the history of literature and theories of criticism.

For the study of various literatures comparison is the main tool. As Eliot says comparison and analysis are the chief tools of the critic. Anybody who wants to bring out the specialties of a work compares it unconsciously and automatically with similar works. But for a comparatist the method of comparison becomes fundamental. He compares consciously, “Comparative Literature is explicitly comparative. It tries to be systematic without being eclectic and this single-mindedness implies a method”¹² (I.N. Choudhary, p.3)

But Comparative Literature cannot be confined to comparison alone. Instead various methods including description, the portrayal of characteristics, interpretation, narration, explanation and evaluation should be used as frequently as ‘comparison”¹³ (Warren and Wellek, p. 3)

International contextualism in literary history and comparative criticism are the laws which determine the overall plan or method for the proper understanding of the field. ¹⁴ (I.N. Choudhary, p.3)

Now comparative literature has taken shape into five dimensional discipline:

Thematic studies or thematics
Genre studies or genology
Influence studies
Comparative poetics
Translation studies
COMPARATIVE INDIAN LITERATURE

Two major Indian literatures Sanskrit and Tamil are ancient, while the rest of an average age of eight to nine hundred years - except one recent arrival in the nineteenth century as an outcome of the colonial Western impact (Indian English). Although some of these literatures are more substantial than others and contain greater complexities, no further gradation into major and minor is usually made. A writer in any one language is counted as much Indian by the Sahitya Akademi as a writer in any other and no distinction is made between one literature prize and another. Thus, while there is a plurality of so-called major literatures in India, scholars are confronted by a particular problematic question: Is Indian literature, in the singular, a valid category, or rather should be spoken as Indian literatures in the plural?

However most scholars are still single literature specialists. Similarly, literary histories written in India by Indian scholars also focused and still focus on a single literature. This single-focus perspective is a result of both a colonial and a post-colonial perspective, the latter found in the motto of the Sahitya Akademi: "Indian literature is one though written in many languages" (Radhakrishnan). However, many scholars opposed this perspective and argued that a country where so many languages coexist should be understood as a country with literatures (in the plural).

Some scholars argue that there is unity in diversity in Indian Literature; however this maxim to some is a type of intrusion on the
individualities of the diverse literatures. In other words, a cultural relativist analogy is implied here, difference is underlined and corroborated by the fact that both writers and readers of particular and individual literatures are overwhelmingly concerned with their own literature. It is from this perspective that to the Akademi's motto 'Indian literature is one though written in many languages', the retort is 'Indian literature is one because it is written in many languages.' 15 (qtd in Amiya Dev, p.4)

India being a country of immense linguistic diversity is thus a country of many literatures. Based on history, ideology, and often on politics, scholars of literature argue either for a unity of Indian literature or for a diversity and distinctness of the literatures of India. In India the study of literature involves the notion of the interliterary process and a dialectical view of literary interaction. It should be remembered that Indian homogeneity has the weight of tradition behind it.

Aijaz Ahmad argues, "The problem is in the "Indian" archive of literature, Indianness ultimately proves limited when compared with the different literature comprised in each of the twenty-two literatures recognized by the Sahitya Akademi. While it is evident that in each of these languages and literatures there is material taken from the others or another, their totality does not constitute one archive. Rather, they constitute twenty-two different archives."16 (qtd in Amiya Dev, p.4-5)
Thus Indian literature is neither a simple unity as hegemonists of the nation-state persuasion would not like it to be, nor a simple diversity as relativists or poststructuralists would like it to be. Majumdar suggests that "Indian literature is neither "one" nor "many" but rather a systemic whole where many sub-systems interact towards one in a continuous and never-ending dialectic. Such a systemic view of Indian literature predicates that we take all Indian literatures together, age by age, and view them comparatively."17 (p.7)

Comparative study of various literatures in the West and in India is not quite the same. The fact that Indian Literatures are a product of multicultural, social-historical mélange cannot be overlooked. Also, common socio-cultural and historical bonds bind writers with common linguistic background and from different linguistic background.

In the Indian context a two-fold approach has to be taken towards Comparative literature: first, the influence of European writers on our writers and vice versa. Second the influence of Indian writers of one region on the writers of other regions.

According to Remak literary theory and literary history are interdependent, the former views literature as a simultaneous flow and the latter sees it a continuous flow. Indian literary history is made up of several histories but at the same time there are certain common currents, which connect different streams. In India the Bhakti movement can be called as a kind of Renaissance and Reformation put together.18 (Chellappan.p.9) However the other noticeable
Renaissance was at the beginning of the Modern period in which Indian culture simultaneously recovered its ancient roots and also accepted the new Western humanism.\(^\text{19}\) (Bijoy Kumar Das, p.6)

In Indian literary history there is a significant correlation between certain political events and literary periods, e.g. 1857 marks the rise of Indian novel and all of them deal with plunging onto modernity, symbolised by women's quest for freedom and identity.

The study of the literature of any one Indian language cannot be properly taken in total exclusion of the others. It is needless to say that comparative study of literature broadens the horizon of our literary study and gives a cosmopolitan view. Hence the study of Indian comparative literature can be transnational or international.

**COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION**

The existence of comparative literature depends a lot on translation. Comparative literature is dedicated to the study of literature from an international perspective; it is hinged upon the art of translation. Literature, art, culture and ideas do not develop in isolation, but draw upon, for example, other works of art, historical movements, political views, religious beliefs and cultural concepts from near and far. The study of comparative literature explores this process of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary translation as well as inter-lingual translation that makes such examination possible. Translation studies as a discipline promotes the cause of comparative literature.
Translation has come a long way from mere imitation of the original to a 'compound art of reading and writing' simultaneously. The use of translation is invaluable in the study of comparative literature in the multi-lingual and multi-cultural context. Susan Basnett and Andre Lefevere have emphasized this in the following words: “With the development of translation studies as a discipline in its own right, with a methodology that draws on comparatistics and cultural history, the time has come to think again, translation has been a major shaping force in the development of world culture and no study of comparative literature can take place without regard to translation.” 20 (Basnett and Lefevere, p.160)

Comparative literature is a study of intertextuality. For example if we have to compare a novel of English with that of Kannada we have to use either English or Kannada but if we have to compare a Bengali novel (the language which is unknown to us) we have to read first an English version of Bengali novel and then compare it with Kannada novel and use either Kannada or English, the two languages we know, as the medium of assessment. What is suggested here is that it is through translation we read the literature written in a language which we do not know and therefore, translation becomes a tool for the study of comparative literature. “Translation brings intertextuality to our knowledge and that intertextuality is the core of comparative literature”.21 (B.K. Das, p.126)

Today comparatists agree that translation is a real filter through which comparative studies are taking place.
Without translation comparative literature is unthinkable. It deals with two languages which are the basic ingredients of comparative literature. Translation of one regional literature into another regional literature provides an opportunity to make a comparative study between them. In India it is inevitable. As B.K.Das says: “Translation has proven as a major factor for the development of culture all over the world. As a discipline it has attracted the attention of translators and scholars everywhere in the late 20th and early 21st century. It brings a correlation between literature and culture in every multi-lingual and multi-cultural society. Hence translation highly promotes the cause of comparative literature”.22 (p.133)

It can be said that translation is an essential factor in the study of comparative literature, which is concerned with patterns of connections of literature across both time and space. In a multi-lingual and multi-cultural country like India comparative literature helps in creating an all India ethos and brings regional literature for meaningful study. Thus the study of translation of regional literatures leads to the study of comparative literature. Paradoxically comparative literature in India can help the cause of national integration.
The present study is a thematic study in comparison of the works of the two chosen litterateurs Tagore and Bendre, based on translated works of Tagore and in some cases of Bendre. The two belong to two distinct states of India – Bengal and Karnataka. Distinct in sense of their position – the former is to the east and the latter in the south; distinct also in language as Bengali is Sanskrit based and Kannada is a Dravidian language. The day-to-day culture and traditions of these two peoples also are distinct, as it is with every Indian state. Thus a comparative study of two renowned poets of these two states, even while showing similarities and differences, will underline and strengthen the bond of strong Indian culture and tradition that bind the people of this sub-continent together, in spite of all variations.

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