Chapter-VI
Conclusion

By way of conclusion, it is customary to go back to what has already been written in the previous chapters. This chapter, therefore, makes a short synthesis of the chapters discussed so far. Its main purpose is to dwell on the place and status of translation today taking into consideration the dynamic aspects of translation especially when the world has turned into a global village. The findings of the researcher along with the areas in which further research can be carried out in this field will also be identified.

Already the thesis has been introduced and its aims and objectives clarified. Translation has been explained coupled with its various perspectives. Also both its theoretical and practical proposition have been elucidated. The theoretical area has been observed by bringing to light the various theories of translation that have existed from the Roman period till today. The practical issues too have been dealt with by making an attempt to translate, as the title of the thesis explicitly states, a Manipuri novel entitled Bir Tikendrajit Road by one of the noted novelists of Manipur, late Hijam Guno (1926-2010) at least partially. The use of practice in translation has been implied too when the researcher’s experience along with the ways she devises when she is confronted with the problem of untranslatability is noted down.

One can see that this research work has been carried out with focus on translation in general and literary translation in particular. In the first chapter, an introduction to the thesis has been given by emphasizing what is
planned to do in the course of the research and in the following five chapters. The second chapter seeks to find out how translation as a practice works. It tries to look at translation from the angle of its ever widening area of coverage when its definition is expanding and its implications are being multiplied. The third chapter rests on the explication of different theories of translation along with the extent to which they are utilized in the process of translation and if one can still translate without their aid. The fourth chapter focuses on the importance of practice in Translation Studies by attempting to translate. By engaging ourselves in the actual translation work, we benefit ourselves with the prospect of learning on our own how to apply the rules laid down by translators and translation theorists whose names have appeared time and again on every page read in course of writing this thesis. The fifth chapter, namely, “Translation Method as Experience: Viewpoints” is an example of what kind of experience is faced by the translator while translating a part of the novel in question.

The present chapter endeavors to draw a picture of the translation (translation studies) scenario at present. It also deals with the importance of translation when the world has shrunken and all boundaries are either lost or erased every now and then. How this field of study generates academic interest and validates its academic claim are also highlighted.

Having studied the various implications of translation, its importance must be revisited now. The world would have been a different place if not for translation. We would have found ourselves enclosed within some man-made territory and would never have known the treasures embedded in great
works written in different languages and in different cultures. The service translation renders to mankind is priceless.

Because of it we are able to combine the merits of different nations, think with them and create an atmosphere of understanding and also share the values that people in different cultures preserve and cultivate. The service it renders to mankind is priceless.

It builds bridges among people, lands and nations and makes us realize that we are one though we speak different tongues. It binds the delicate emotional connections between cultures and languages and furthers the understanding of human beings across national borders and religious lines. It forms the basis of human existence which is based on mutual understanding and co-operation.

Translation is widely practiced in many fields ranging from literature to religion, science, social science, technical subjects and other fields like administration, legal matters, conferences, tourism etc. When we come to literature, the role translation plays is beyond measure. Anne Louise Germaine de Staël has rightly affirmed that, “The most eminent service one can render to literature is to transport the masterpieces of the human spirit from one language into another” (Lefevere 1992: 17). This happens through translation of the works of great eminence written in languages other than that of the translator. Friar says:

Great translation helps to break down the barrier of time, place, and language, of unique customs and traditions. One has only to consider what gaps of knowledge, sensitivity and
national growth would have existed in countries throughout the world had they not known one another’s cultures through translations (1971: 199).

The perception of the importance of translation has come from several directions. Astradur Eysteinsson and Daniel Weissbort in their general introduction to the book *Translation- Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader* (2006), write that it is translation which helps “works of literature and scholarship to acquire international status”; which makes “ideas and theories, learning and religion, historical and practical knowledge” to traverse the globe; which facilitates “various transactions between groups and nations with different customs and conditions”; which makes it possible for us to “learn of what has transpired in distant places” (2006: 1).

Translation must be performed in every literature. Over and above the role of translation as a mediator between the past and present, the alien and the known and bringing to light what was dark and invisible; it can to a great extent increase the vocabulary of one’s own language through coinage, transliteration etc. from the other languages. The same idea is echoed by Wilhelm von Humboldt when he notes that translation is a must partly because it introduces forms of art and human life that would otherwise have remained totally unknown to those who do not know a language, and above all because it increases the significance and the expressiveness of one’s own language (Lefevere 1992: 137).
Jonas Zdanys also goes to the extent of asserting that translation “can make us aware of aspects of poetry, language, aesthetics and interpretation” and adds that “a study of translation can lead to a qualitative richer understanding” (Gentler 2010: 8).

We can go on listing the ways in which translation becomes indispensable in the globalised world of today but we must make the findings open-ended so that there is room for new developments to flourish. In the course of the study, certain findings from other directions have been made. The upcoming section concentrates on how the researcher puts her points up against some already familiar concepts in the field of translation.

Critics like André Lefevere had emphasized that translation is a form of rewriting. But to treat all kinds of rewriting as translation would be wrong and also all translations cannot be called rewriting. Imitation, paraphrasing, etc. are all rewritings of an existing literature but they can’t be called translation. So are interpretation, criticism, historiography, the putting together of anthologies another kind of rewriting though of a different kind. They enjoy certain freedom which translation does not and cannot. Translation by its very nature must adhere to certain rules and be faithful to certain extent to its original. Again, some translation may become a totally new creation in the hands of some. Rewriting as a form of redoing the original writing cannot be called translation because in translation the translator’s creativity at times has a big role to play by making the work refreshing and more popular. Something like this happened in the case of Omar Khaiyyam’s *Rubaiyat* which turned into a gem in the hands of its English translator, Edward Fitzgerald.
Walter Benjamin in his very influential essay, “The Task of the Translator”, says no work is intended for the readers and no musical composition is prepared with the listeners in mind. This however cannot be applied in the case of translation. Because translation has no reason to exist if not for its new readers who cannot read the original text in the unknown language. If it weren’t for the readers, what is the use of producing it in another version when we know that the original work is already there? Also every translation has some purposes to fulfill. This can be sorted out when we know who our target audience is. Because it is only then that we can sort out how to produce a translation work according to its needs. This way we can justify the need for producing its so called versions. We must always begin to translate with this question- “for whom is the translation going to be produced”?

When we go into the matrix of translation, we find among other things the distinction between the original and the translation. There has been a hierarchical imbalance between the two based on the notion that the original is on a higher position than the translated version. Though there has been this extreme emphasis on the originality of the original, some scholars find but an almost negligible line of separation between a translation and its original because each of them is unique and has its own distinctive character. Seen from this angle, if the original is original, its translation is original too as it too is a creation: unique and distinct. The inverse of this reasoning is also entirely valid too. Octavia Paz writes:

No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation- first from the
nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase
is a translation of another sign, another phrase (1992: 154).

Renato Poggioli also contends that “even original poetry is a form of
translation, an attempt to rephrase the heavenly music that many can no
longer hear in the noisy chaos of this world!” (1959: 144). So two points
arise here which are equally valid. Firstly, if the original is to be treated as
original and unique then so is the translation. Secondly, if the translation is
not original then the original too is the translation of the psychic make-up
which produced the words on the pages. In fact, how can anything be original? How can words leave behind the mental frame which they
represent and claim that they are original as they have been jotted down or
spelled out by a poet or any other human being? With the loss of the
originality of the original, questions are being raised. Would not the
translations have existed if not for the originals? Do they retain the
secondary status stigma even after knowing that the original is as secondary
as them? Again if we believe along with the deconstructionists who maintain
the view that the original texts are constantly being rewritten in the present
and each reading/translation reconstruct the source text, how can we say that
the original text is primary and the translation secondary? The original is as
much indebted to the translation as the translation is to the original. A work
survives because of continuous translation. We would not have had an
inkling of Cervantes’ Don Quixote which is professed to be the translation of
its lost original if not for translation. Here lies the importance of translation
which had not been recognized in olden days.
In the concluding part, we discuss the place of translation at present: the establishment of a new discipline. The traditional concept of translation revolves around the idea of it being a process of transference from one language to another. It also used to be seen merely as a classroom activity or a criterion for foreign language training where the trainees are tested on the basis of their ability to translate between the foreign language and the other language/s that he already knows. André Lefevere has rightly affirmed that, “generations of European schoolchildren have learned foreign languages by means of translation from about 100 AD until the end of World War Two in order to acquire a feel for the language” (1992: 46). It was also taken to be a profession of some uncreative writers in the hiding. Munday talks of translation as having been normally considered as an element of language learning in modern language courses until the first half of the twentieth century. (2001: 8). He continues:

Translation exercises were regarded as a means of learning a new language or of reading a foreign language text until one had the linguistic ability to read the original. Study of a work in translation was generally frowned upon once the student had acquired the necessary skills to read the original (ibid. 8).

So it was like holding on to it until one could read the original. The moment one mastered the language well enough to read the original, there seemed to be no room for translation. Nobody must have bothered after that. But things have changed over the years as also discussed in the previous chapters. Translation, in the present time, has been raised to the status of an independent discipline even.
The rise of translation as a discipline could be seen by the mid-twentieth century though it took years to stabilize and get hold of the position it now occupies. When we take a broad view we could see that it was by 1960’s that courses in translation started to be offered in many universities and specialized schools over the globe. Susan Basnett talks of new courses on translation being offered in universities “from Hong Kong to Brazil, and from Montreal to Vienna” (1980: 2) in her seminal book *Translation Studies*. She also maintains that the kind of interest that people have started to take in translation in this century gradually developed and there is no slowing down of it in the twenty-first century also (*ibid.* 2).

Though its journey has not been easy and though it has met with many a hardship, it finally has a place of its own. James S. Holmes, in his key defining paper ‘The Name and Nature of Translation Studies’, which was first delivered in 1972, talked about the then nascent discipline as being concerned with the problems which revolved around the phenomenon of translating and translation. This discipline gained wider recognition with time. Mary Snell Hornby, in the first edition of her *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (1988), who, wrote that “the demand that translation studies should be viewed as an independent discipline…has come from several quarters in the recent years” (1988: 13), could write about the already established discipline while referring to translation studies in her second edition of the same book which was published just seven years after in 1995. This shows the development of this new discipline. Mona Baker calls it “the discipline of the 1990s”. Jeremy Munday also asserts that:

(T)ranslation studies is a relatively new area of inquiry, dating from the second half of the twentieth century and it has
emerged out of other fields such as modern languages, comparative literature, linguistics (2009: 4-5).

It may be said that it is also through the endless struggle of people who have raised their voice against the positioning of this area of study as affiliated to any other discipline whatsoever and their zeal to give it a place for itself that translation as an independent discipline stands today. The 1980s saw the rise of this new discipline which is not indebted to either comparative literature or philosophy to name a few. Lawrence Venuti makes the remark that: “Translation Studies brings together work in a wide variety of fields, including linguistics, literary study, history, anthropology, psychology, and economics” (1995: vii). So it can be said that translation to some extent makes multidisciplinary approach to any field of enquiry realizable.

In accordance with the height of its development of this discipline, today we have many translation encyclopedias. Mention may be made here of Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha’s *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (1998), Olive Classe's *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation* (2000), Peter France's *Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation* (2000). We also have the Lawrence Venuti’s *The Translation Studies Reader* (2000, 2002). *The Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English* too has been published in 2000. Many more are yet to follow on top of those which have already appeared in print.

Translation offices are set up in government firm to aid in the administrative functioning of the particular department and also in private
firm to translate everything from technical reports and product brochure to publicity. Many organizations, both national and international are working towards the multiplying of texts so that everyone benefits from the text written in a particular language. There are international bodies like the European Society for Translation, organizations like SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics) which is also known as Wycliffe Bible Translators. It is believed to be the most influential and visible organization with the strength of at least 3700 members working on 675 languages in 29 countries.

National bodies like Sahitya Akademi, National Book Trust, National Translation Mission, Katha etc. also encourage translation works by giving translation prize to show recognition to the efforts made by translators. At the state level too, a very important role is being played by the State Sahitya Akademi in enriching the ever growing interest in translation by encouraging translators and honoring their works with prestigious awards. Also many publishing houses like Viva, Macmillan, Pencraft, Atlanta, Routledge have been producing works on translation and also translated works on a large scale. The service they render is priceless because they have made a great contribution in establishing this academic discipline as an independent one.

It, therefore, is no wonder that the twentieth century is known as the age of translation, of reproduction, of information technology, of globalization. The 1960’s is the age of literary translation whereas the 1990’s is known as the age of literary theory of translation (Gentzler 1993: 134). Many new developments have taken place, the emergence of machine translation in the first half of the twentieth century being one of them,
founded by Warren Weaver in 1947 to be precise. Translation which was taken to be a human activity steps beyond its basic definition with the arrival of machine translation, human aided machine translation and machine aided human translation. It becomes necessary to draw a line between them as well. Though nothing can beat human efforts, machine does help to a certain extent.

We are also aware of the other aspects arising out of translation studies though we have not discussed it. New approaches inspired by disciplines such as postcolonial studies and gender studies have all contributed to broadening the field and making it more inclusive. The task of a translator from the feminist perspective is to consider language as a clue to the working of gendered language. We also have the old time metaphor which equates translation to a woman: the far-fetched comparison being based on the concept of faithfulness. It says a translation can either be beautiful or faithful but never both. Feminist approach works towards negating this view and also the comparison of man to the original and woman to the translated version: submissive and dependent.

The postcolonial approach deals with translation in the form of power conquest. What to translate and how to translate are decided by those in power. Translation is power and conquest - whereby the one in possession of it can manipulate the ones over whom it is exercised by choosing what to translate and how to translate and thereby constructing the kind of culture that is most desired. They do so in the interest of their own goals and in order to influence those over whom they have power. An instance of this is the usage of such power by adults who translate for children. They exercise
non-restricted freedom in choosing their own vocabulary which may or may not be appropriate or understandable to children. They should not forget that translation should be target oriented. It should recognize its reader.

Coming on the practical side one can do a comparative study of the different translations attempted by translators of different times and taste. Borges was certain that a translation could enrich or surpass an original and that one of the most fertile of all literary experiences is a comparative survey of the versions of a work (Kristal 2002: 2).

In spite of all these developments seen so far in the field, it is such a pitiful situation that while the first specialized University Postgraduate Courses in interpreting and translating had been set up in the UK as early as the 1960s, a country like India which is known for its multilingual and multicultural assets has taken rather too long to make this discipline a part of its academic curriculum. But it’s better to be late than never. Though there has been this wide gap in between, it happened at last and today many universities in India are offering translation courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. So we can leave it to enjoy its new found place in the academic circle: a full-fledged discipline which has to be evaluated on its own standing and not as being inferior to any other discipline. Translation as such is gaining recognition and its importance is realized like never before.

The state scenario needs to be mentioned here separately as we have just talked about India as a whole yet cannot include our state in it as far as development in the field is concerned. The sole reason is that in spite of it being inhabited by more than 33 ethnic communities speaking different
languages, the University of Manipur offers no courses on translation either at the graduate level or at the post graduate level. Though seminars and workshops on translation are held every now and then, the authority has not realized as yet that it is high time we too had a separate department of translation studies so that its importance is realized and its due is recognized.

This has been the journey so far and now there is no turning back. There can be none. Hilaire Belloc gave a lecture in 1931, ‘On Translation’ wherein he discussed the problems of translating and the status of translated text in a very systematic way. James McFarlane’s article ‘Modes of Translation’ (1953) was regarded as the “first publication in the West to deal with translation and translations from a modern, interdisciplinary view” (Basnett 1980: 77). Steps as these made by scholars and theorists irrespective of their nation and language have contributed a lot and paved the way for translation studies to develop into a full-fledged area of study which we find today. This is how translation which was once regarded as an uncomplicated process of transference has become all the more comprehensive.

It does not stop there yet again. With the increase in cultural exchanges between nations as a result of the new technological developments in communication and digital materials together with the invention of the internet, research in the field of translation has started to take another course, which is more automatic. These changes do not allow translator to sit idly but to seek out for ways to cope up with these changes and to look for more practical techniques that enable them to translate more and waste less. They also feel the need to enter the world of cinematographic
translation, hence the birth of audiovisual translation. The latter technique, also called screen translation, is concerned with the translation of all kinds of TV programs, including films, serials, and documentaries. This field is based on computers and translation software programs, and it is composed of two methods: dubbing and subtitling. In fact, audiovisual translation marks a changing era in the domain of translation.

With all these developments, we can say that it has turned into an industry of late. Popular science texts, economic texts from global organizations, software manuals, and audiovisual translation (subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, dubbing- dubbed films, films with voice over, subtitled films (versions in different languages) are under discussion in the field. They all call for further research. As a result of these changes, definitions of translation are changing too.

Translation, once considered impossible, an imposture, a poor substitute for bilingualism and knowing the foreign language is acknowledged as an essential worldwide means of communication (Newmark 1991: 15).

It can therefore be concluded that until recently, translation was merely an activity performed as a labour of love, as a tribute to the classic, as a hobby, as a homage to the great writers, as a social service to leave for one’s countrymen the beauty and flavour of other literature written all over the globe. To these may be added that it has now developed as a discipline, and is the trademark of one’s culture, the means through which one can be proud of one’s literature. This perhaps is the reason why Derrida could declare: “There is nothing more serious than translation” (Orero 1997: 57).
Works Cited:


