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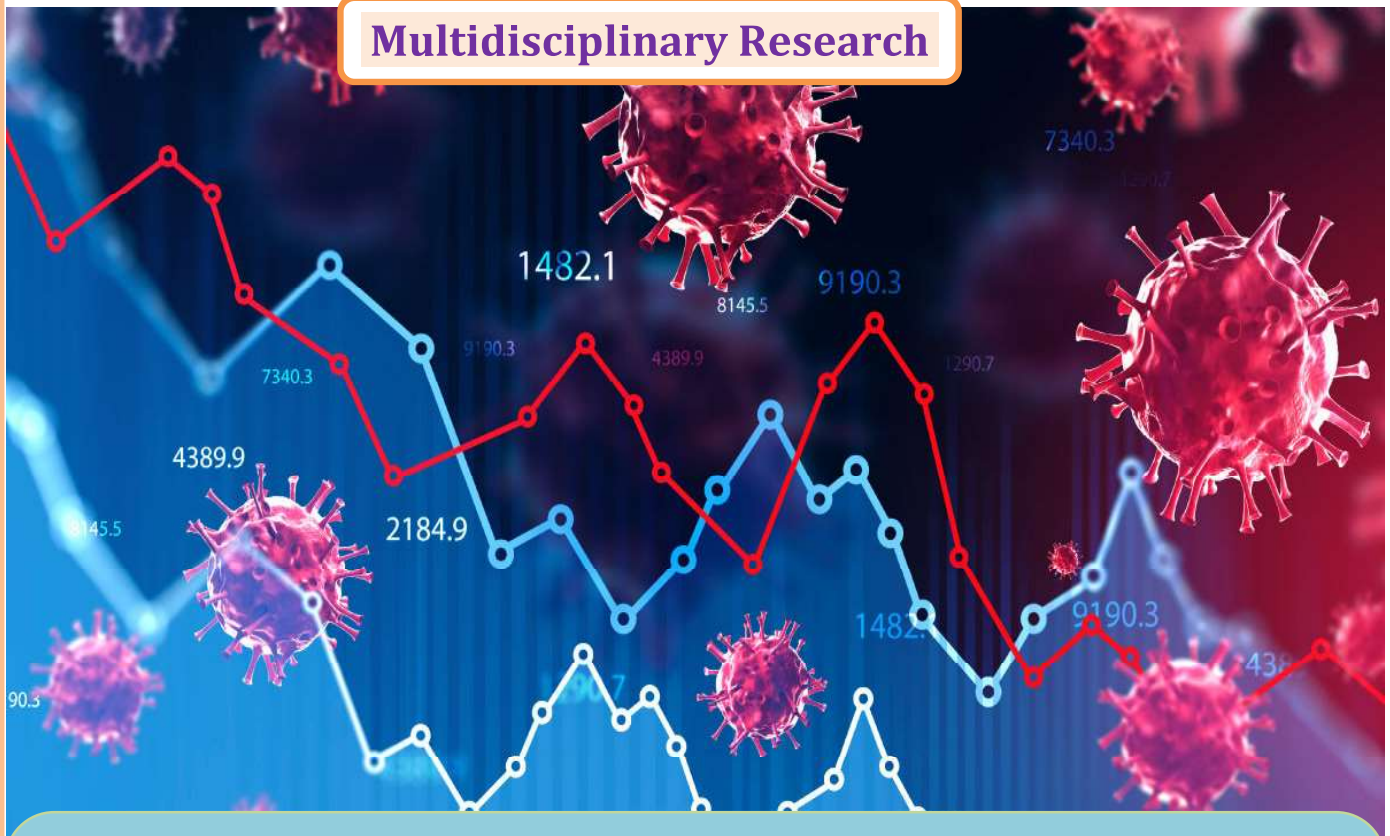
RESEARCH JOURNEY

International E-Research Journal

PEER REFREED & INDEXED JOURNAL

December 2020 Special Issue 256 (C)

Multidisciplinary Research



Guest Editor -
Prof. Dr. Rajani Shikhare,
 Principal,
 R. B. Attal College, Georai
 Dist. - Beed.

Executive Editors :
Dr. B. D. Rupnar,
Dr. P. P. Pangrikar
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Mr. Ranjeet Pagore,

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This Journal is indexed in :

- Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF)
- Cosmoc Impact Factor (CIF)
- Global Impact Factor (GIF)
- International Impact Factor Services (IIFS)



'RESEARCH JOURNEY' International E- Research Journal

Impact Factor - (SJIF) - 6.625 (2019),
Special Issue -256 (C) : Multidisciplinary Research
Peer Reviewed Journal

E-ISSN :
2348-7143
Dec. 2020

Impact Factor – 6.625

E-ISSN – 2348-7143

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Price : Rs. 1000/-

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Cultural Studies : An Introduction

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Cultural Studies emerged in 1950s, it is very broad term. It is Interdisciplinary, Post-Disciplinary or we may call it Anti-disciplinary. It has its relation with history, literature, anthropology, psychology, media etc. Raymond William, Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall pioneered Cultural Studies. Edward Tylor defines culture as various practices shared by people among the group. Cultural Studies throws light on connection between power structure and cultural politics. For Stuart Hall Cultural Studies is body of theories. According to him Production of Knowledge is political practice. Matthew Arnold defines culture as the best that has been thought and said in the world.

If we look back it is necessary for us to understand the socio-political situation of 18th and 19th century England. In those days scholar must read classics. Greek and Latin were dominant languages. English texts were out of university syllabus. Likewise Sanskrit was dominant in India. Cultured person must know Sanskrit. It seems that culture is restricted to aristocratic people not associated with masses. Raymond William, Prof of Cambridge University also found gap between working people and aristocrats. Aristocrats have been trying to protect, defend canonical literature. It seems that aesthetic test is indication of our cultural richness. It is assumed that one who loves classical literature, song is cultured.

It is said that language constitutes our world and our existence. Hence, it is essential to understand set structures in language that enables us to speak and make sense. In short we need to study sign and sign system. Saussure argued for a distinction within language. The system or structure of language and the conventions that rule and govern speech is langue. The actual utterance in the social context is parole. Cultured people focused on langue rather than parole. Cultural studies believe that everything in the world is designed by sign system. According to Stuart Hall the sign system denote something established by the dominant classes. We can give examples of some films, cultural texts to prove it. It is said that someone's gesture is also a text.

Media is important domain of cultural studies as media controls our perception. Contemporary media is deceiving people and propagating particular ideology. Through media the popular culture trying to maintain their dominance. According to Theodor Adorno popular culture maintains their dominance to deceive mass.

Cultural Studies has its relation with Marxism. We can explain it with the explanations of different terms such as Hegemony, Base and Superstructure. The Marxist theory of cultural hegemony, associated particularly with Antonio Gramsci. It is the idea that the ruling class can manipulate the value system so that their view becomes the view of world. Society's superstructure includes the culture, ideology etc. It refers to the social institutions, political structure, and the state or society's governing institutions such as court and others. Marx argued that the superstructure grows out of the base and reflects the ruling class's interests. Here economic base plays very vital role.

Cultural Materialism believes that cultural activities are material and productive Process: "Here the orthodox Marxist model of an economic 'base' determining a cultural (and



political, religious etc.) 'Superstructure' is challenged and replaced by more flexible model in which cultural activities themselves are regarded as 'material' and productive processes."¹ By and large we come to know that the main concern of cultural studies is to specify the functioning of the social, economic, and political forces and power structures that produce all forms of cultural phenomena.

Reference:

1. Baldick Chris, The Conscious Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.p.55

