

---

**An Analytical Study Of The Post-Colonialist Modernistic Various Major  
Intrinsic Images, Aspects And Elements Those Reflected In Nissim Ezekiel's  
Poetry**

---

**Prof. Rohit Ramkrushna Pawar**

Department Of English, Shri Seth Muralidharji Mansingaka Art's, Science And Commerce  
College, Pachora, Dist. - Jalgaon. E-mail Id : [pawarr91@gmail.com](mailto:pawarr91@gmail.com)

---

**Article Received:** 07/03/2025

**Article Accepted:** 09/04/2025

**Published Online:** 10/04/2025

**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.04.314

---

**Abstract:**

Nissim Ezekiel focuses on the hypocrisy of the English-speaking Indian society and also describes the Indian sensibility in his poems. Nissim Ezekiel was the first Indian poet to express a modern Indian sensibility in a modern idiom. Indianness is an important element in Ezekiel's thoughts, emotions, images and writings. The poet has committed and dedicated himself to Indian values, culture, people and language. The commitment, love and Indianness of the poet towards this country can be seen through his poetry. The present research paper tries to highlight some aspects of nature and the Indian environment in Ezekiel's poem. Apart from the realistic depiction of modern Indian society in his writings, Ezekiel's love for nature also tries to touch Indian culture. Ezekiel is said to be a poet of typical Indian milieu. Various elements of nature symbolize moral values in his poetry. Indian society and culture is a major factor in Ezekiel's poetry. According to him, society is the beginning of any civilization. Society is structured by certain norms that include religion and language. After religion and language comes education which makes man perfect and is also the means of building a healthy society. Every society evolves with time so it is clear that time plays a very important role in the formation of any society. The words civilization, society and culture are complementary to each other. Nissim Ezekiel is a postmodern Indian English poet, he breaks with traditional English poetic themes and styles and embraces modernity, innovation and new ideas in his writings. He expressed his thoughts, ideas and feelings in a new Indian English style. Ezekiel also uses autobiographical elements in his writing as his poems "Background, Casually" and "Jewish Wedding in Bombay" are autobiographical while "Time to Change" (1952), his first collection of poems, is based on his personal life experiences.

**Keywords:** Postmodernism, sensibility, society, civilization, transcendentalism, rationalism, superstitions, morality, spirituality, nature, culture and environment.

**Introduction:**

Nissim Ezekiel, the founder and father of postmodern Indian English poetry, he was

born on 16 December 1924 in Mumbai to a Marathi-speaking Jewish family also known as the 'Bene Israel'. Ezekiel's mother and father were both teachers. Nissim Ezekiel is one of the great post-independence post-modernist poets of Indian Indo-English literature. His position as a writer of Indo-English poetry is unique. We can consider him as one of the towering figures among Indo English poets. He is accepted as a major poet in the history of Indian English poetry. He is considered the father of postmodern Indian English poetry. Nissim Ezekiel was known as an outsider because of his race and he belonged to the group of "new poets". Nissim Ezekiel's poetry has a high level of skill and he is adept at using language in his poetry. He had a strong desire to become a poet from his childhood. In 1936, when he was two years old, he wrote successfully his first complete poem. Ezekiel is called a poet of typical Indian milieu because he tried to use typical Indian colloquial English in his writings. The poet's nature was practical and this is reflected in the use of free verse in many of his poems. He did not care much about the rules for writing poetry. Ezekiel has retained the status of verse for Indian English poetry. Nissim Ezekiel's poems contain very few mythological elements as his poems are full of reality and philosophy of society. He is recognized as one of the major poets in the history of Indian English poetry. Ezekiel's poem is considered an important link between pre-independence and post-independence Indian English poetry. Contemporary poets follow them not only in their style of writing but also in their choice of subjects. He innovated by breaking with traditional English and poetic themes and stylistic conventions about prevailing situations. Ezekiel as a poet expressed their thoughts, ideas and feelings in their own Indian sensibility in a new Indian English style.

#### **Objective:**

A systematic analytical study of Nissim Ezekiel's post-modernist concepts, thoughts and ideas reflected in his writings.

#### **Methodology:**

The writer utilizes only secondary data sources employing an analytical approach in conducting the systematic research.

#### **Findings & Discussion:**

Postmodernism is a reflection of various aspects, elements and subjects of modern society. In terms of literary thoughts; It is a new era after World War II. It represents the way of life, feelings and state of the human mind. Postmodernist writers are free to express their own ideas, they have freedom of expression, they can articulate their opinions and write in any style and on any subject. Postmodernism was a reaction against the traditional style of writing. The post-modernist characteristics of Ezekiel's poetry are playfulness, sarcasm and irony. Related themes are found in the poems "The Professor" and "The Patriot". Nissim Ezekiel not only used free verse in his poetry but also mixed in rhyming lines.

Nissim Ezekiel is a prominent poet in Indo - Anglian literature. Indo - Anglian literature contributed significantly to the creation of Indian sense, sensibility, vitality and consciousness in the postmodern society. His Indian sensibility brings a new charm in his poetry. Autobiographical elements can also be seen in Nissim Ezekiel's poems. The poem "Background, Casually" depicts his experiences in London, where he lived in a basement room where 'Philosophy', 'Poetry' and 'Poverty' were his three companions. He says, "I can

---

no longer be a wanderer; I decided to go back to Bombay - to my roots". He mentions this in the poem.

Ezekiel says, "Man can do something for his environment and without retreating from it, being fully what he is. I have not withdrawn from India". He left England and returned home in 1952. His friend Krishna Paiganakar worked on a warship and found his way back after a forty eight day journey. Nissim mentions it in "Background, Casually". Meanwhile, Fortune Press London published "A Time to Change" (1952), Ezekiel's first collection of poems based on his realistic personal experiences in London. He was married to Daisy Jacobs on November 23, 1952. His poem "Jewish Wedding in Bombay" gives a complete account of the events of the wedding.

In his poems Ezekiel uses 'common Indian colloquial English' influenced by Indian languages which are informal languages and the regular use of the present tense in the poems is indicative of the use of 'Indian English' by native speakers. Michael German's opinion about Ezekiel's contribution to poetry: "He brings to the established traditions of love, religion and the passing hour, the modern attitude of the need for a commitment, an existential plunge into life, and of old analytic disgust, becoming more ironical and detached as he develops". (Garman, Michael 106)

Society is the beginning of civilization. Before understanding the poems of Nissim Ezekiel we must understand the proper meaning and function of social aspects. A society is structured by certain norms of religion, culture and language, in which comes education which is a tool to build a healthy society. Society is nurtured according to the demand of time so time plays a very important role in shaping society. The words civilization and society complement each other.

He has the insight to scan society with his critical eye. The repercussions of World War - II were also felt in India and it was the dawn of modernity. Bombay holds a special place in Ezekiel's life as he spent his beautiful days here. A particular place becomes important when it is attached to our memory. Nissim Ezekiel's poems are filled with philosophy of reality and society. Ezekiel is a transcendentalist. Transcendentalism is the spiritualist philosophy of Immanuel Kant and the concept was further developed by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Rationalism and Transcendentalism are two different schools of thoughts. Ezekiel is able to create awareness in society. His nature was pragmatic and this is reflected in the use of free verse in many of his famous poems. He considered poetry as an internal force to understand the world. In his poem "Night of the Scorpion" the poet successfully depicts a rural society where people believe in karma. The social aspect of Ezekiel's poetry is perfect in terms of realism because Ezekiel also gives a glimpse of the evil forces in society. These evil forces are in the form of bad practices and superstitions which corrupt Indian society and hinder the development of the nation.

Nissim Ezekiel's poems are more serious. The consciousness of Indianness is the

main theme of Ezekiel's poems. The social aspects of the poet's poetry teach us that no one's life is perfect and imperfection is the essence of life. Nissim Ezekiel's poems discuss the complexities of life and relationships. The social aspect of Ezekiel's work reveals that sometimes in life we don't value what we have and keep striving for other things. Perhaps this is basic human nature.

Bruce King says, "His main significance is not, however, as a promoter of poetry; it is in his will to be poet, his continuing involvement in the poetry scene and the ways in which the developing body of his work expresses his quest for a satisfactory way of living in this world. Whereas previously Indian English verse was a hobby, something done in spare moments, Ezekiel made it central to his life. Others wrote poems, he wrote poetry. The difference is reflected in his craftsmanship and purposefulness; this is as much a matter of will as talent. Ezekiel brought a sense of discipline, self-criticism and mastery to Indian English poetry" (Bruce, 1981). It is necessary to live a happy life and destroy bitterness because life is long and there is no point in spending our time and energy on the purpose of destruction. Life keeps changing and we have to accept it to survive.

In the poem "Choices" Ezekiel explores his understanding of morality and spirituality and how the two terms are intertwined. The poet was a liberal, he believed in the doctrine of live and let live. In the poem "The Room", Ezekiel again comments that his personality and conflicted existence is an assumption and that this assumption is like an unclosed door. Ezekiel asks the reader to follow Gandhi's path of non-violence but the writer thinks that it is not the right path every time so Ezekiel's teaching is good but impractical in day-to-day realistic life. Ezekiel's meekness is evident in his "Latter Day Psalms". Although the language used by Nissim Ezekiel is simple and his philosophy is complex yet it attracts the readers. His language is the language of poetry in modern India. Thus, in this paper we have studied the social aspects of Nissim Ezekiel's poetry.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to focus on one aspect of nature and atmosphere in Ezekiel's poem. Ezekiel's love for nature tries to touch Indian culture. Ezekiel is an Indian poet with a fresh, modern and original approach. Elements of nature symbolize moral values in his poetry. "His respect for art makes his poetry more than a mere expression of emotion or imagination" (Abidi, 287). His close relationship with the Indian environment gave a rare significance to his poetry. Ezekiel's love for nature cannot be ignored in terms of Indian ethos and culture. Indeed, nature holds great importance in Indian culture. Elements of nature symbolize moral values in Ezekiel's poetry.

The poem "A Poem of Dedication" is a representation of Ezekiel's personal life experiences and urban environment and Ezekiel's "Behaviour of the Lovebirds," depicts the lustful life of animals as well as Ezekiel's "Enterprise" poem shows the signs of blind faith. In the poem, "The Visitor", the poet expresses disgust and displeasure at the cry of a bird as the crow is also considered as the messenger of 'Yama' in Hinduism. The poem "Songs" presents flowers as symbols of prosperity, charity and clarity. Rain is a traditional symbol of

Indian culture and consequently rain brings prosperity to the life of the Indian farmers. In a poem "After the Rain," Ezekiel describes the rain as symbolizing the purification of life. Ezekiel presents nature as a symbol of purity and peace. Nature is a guiding aspect for the poet to find the truth of life. In "A Time to Change", the poet depicts flowers, seas and cities. In "A Word for the Wind" the poet considers the wind as a source of inspiration. In a poem "Stone", the poet finds solace in the elements of nature. His poem "Side" clearly shows that animals also have feelings and they also love each other. He reveals the fact that carnal desire is a natural tendency and men and women cannot lead a happy life without sexual satisfaction. In fact, the poet is aware of the elements of nature and the events that take place and the eternal reality. His "The Unfinished Man" features urban imagery. He uses various images of nature in his poem "Urban". The elements of hills, rivers, wind, sky, sun and rain represent the polarity of the image of the city. Ezekiel expresses his feelings about the city of Bombay in his poem "Urban", this poem shows the changing behavior, life and culture of the urban man. Commentary by Bijay Kumar Das: "As a man struggles to exist in a modern urban society, to search for truth and identify with himself and society, his struggles, failures and frustrations reveal only his own inner nature. But the inadequacy and weakness of the fallen city ....."

Ezekiel tries to unravel the Indian attitude of the common man through real life experiences through various elements of nature. In fact, the discussion in this paper attempts to reflect Indian cultural ethos through the aspects of nature in his poetry. According to Gieve Patel, "Two major events in Nissim's life are responsible for his personality change. One is his relationship with Linda Hayes and the other is LSD (Drug)". The sad side of Nissim due to his separation from Daisy is the instability of his married life. Daisy lives alone in Kala Niketan with her three children Kavitha, Kalpana and Elkana and Ezekiel stays with his mother till her death.

In the year 1982 "Latter Day Psalms", a book based on his theological study of Hindu, Christian and Judaic scriptures, was published by Oxford University Press and for that he got the "Sahitya Akademi Award" in 1983 and subsequently, in 1988, he was awarded the "Padma Shri" for his contribution to Indo-Anglian literature. A new era of Indo-Anglian literature came to an end when Nissim Ezekiel died on 9th January, 2004 in Mumbai after a long battle with "Alzheimer's".

### **Conclusion:**

Nissim Ezekiel was a post-independence post-modernist Indian English poet. Various aspects and elements are portrayed and reflected in his poems like, Indian sense and sensibility, nature, environment, society, culture, customs, traditions, lifestyle, post modern era, Indianism and patriotism etc. In this research paper, the author has tried to focus on some postmodernist themes and subjects in Ezekiel's poetry. His poetry has a romantic mood and a realistic depiction of the modern Indian environment. His poetry explores sensitive topics like superstition, male-female relationship, hypocrisy, morality, husband-wife relationship, marriage, condition of Indian women, social ethics, modern conducts, thoughts, ideas, concepts, urban life, sentiments, love and sexuality. Apart from this, the writer has done an

---

analytical study of poets' own experiences and autobiographical elements as well as the basic approach of Ezekiel's poems in the presented research paper.

**References :**

- Noorul Hasan, Nissim Ezekiel Remembered. ed. Havovi Anklesaria. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2008.
- Patel Gieve. A Recollection, Nissim Ezekiel Remembered. ed. Havovi Anklesaria. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2008.
- Nissim Ezekiel, Frank Birbalsingh. Journal of South Asian Literature Essays on Indian Writing in English (Summer, Fall). 1987; 22(2): 130-138.
- Narasimhaiah, C. D. The Swan and the Eagle, Simla: Indian Institute of Advance Studies, 1969. P. 40.
- Chindhade, Shirish Five Indian English Poets. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2001, p. 57.
- Nissim Ezekiel, Frank Birbalsingh Journal of South Asian Literature Essays on Indian Writing in English (Summer, Fall). 1987; 22(2): 130-138.
- Naik, M. K. 'The Tale in the Sting An Analysis of Ezekiel's "Night of the Scorpion", Dimensions of Indian English Literature'. New Delhi: Stifling Publishers Private Limited, 1984. p. 35.
- Nissim Ezekiel, "Background, Casually", Hymns in Darkness (Delhi: Oxford University Press. Ed. II, 2005) 179.
- Nissim Ezekiel, "Naipaul's India and Mine", New Writings in India. ed. Adil Jussawalla (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1974) 88-89.
- Nissim Ezekiel, "Background, Casually", Hymns in Darkness (Delhi: Oxford University Press. Ed. II, 2005) 179.
- Das, Bijay Kumar. "Imagery in the Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel." Perspectives on Nissim Ezekiel. Ed. S. C. Dwivedi. New Delhi: Kitab Mahal, 1989. 12-19.
- Ezekiel, Nissim. Collected Poems. New Delhi: O.U.P., 2005. Text. All subsequent references to Ezekiel's poems shall be from this edition.
- Mishra, Sanjit. The Poetic Art of Nissim Ezekiel. New Delhi: Atlantic P. and Distributors, 2001. 50-118. Print.
- Verma, K. D. "Myth and Imagery in the Unfinished Man: A Critical Reading." Journals of South Asian Literature. 11. 3-4 (Spring-Summer 1976): 231. Print.

Abrams, M. H, "A Handbook of Literary Terms", Cengage Learning India Private Limited, 2009, p. 318.

Garman, Michael. "Nissim Ezekiel - Pilgrimage and Myth". Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English. Ed. M. K. Naik, G. S. Amur, et. al. Dharwar: Karnataka University, 1968. Print.

Ezekiel, Nissim. Collected Poems, Second Edition. England: Oxford University Press. 2005 p. 190. Print.

M. H. Abram, H. Geoffery, Glossary of Literary terms ninth Edition, Wadsworth publication 2008, p, 203. Print.

**Citation:**

**Rohit Ramkrushna Pawar** "An Analytical Study Of The Post-Colonialist Modernistic Various Major Intrinsic Images, Aspects And Elements Those Reflected In Nissim Ezekiel's Poetry" *International Journal of English and Studies (IJOES)*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2025, pp. 308-314. DOI: 10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.04.314.