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## The Practice of Postmodern Poetry Among the Students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Bangladesh

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### **Abstract:**

*This research focuses on the postmodern writing style and lifestyle of the young poets of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University at Mymensingh, in Bangladesh. It also reveals their present condition of practices and attitudes toward art and literature especially poetry. It is found that the young poets are struggling to establish their identity as poets. From the qualitative approach of the study their poetry is better understood. In this new age emerging poets are depending more on electronic devices such as computer, smartphone and tablet devices for writing poetry. Their ideological positions are not always clear. However, the young poets are apparently scattering themselves from the mainstream poetry culture in order to find their place in the cultural space.*

**Keywords:** Poetry, Postmodernism, Culture, Subculture, lifestyle

### **Introduction:**

Poetry is a form of art in which language is used to express deep thoughts, imagination, ideas and expression that are higher than normal writing. Poets create poetry. In Bangladesh it is believed that the number of poets are more than the total number of crows living in the country. After the birth of nation, poetry has undergone significant changes because of socio-economic and political reasons. Some people believe that quality poems have been written already by famous poets like Robindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Jibanananda Das, Shamsur Rahman, Al Mahmud and Nirmalendu Gun. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century readers are not getting that type of poets and poetry. Contemporary young poets are failing to attract the readers.

Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University is such a University that is best known for its cultural activities and programs. This institution is very congenial for the practice of poetry for the young students of graduate and post-graduate course. Every department has some students who write poems. However not all write seriously. The serious poets write consciously. They belong to modern or post-modern convention. Mainly they come from separate groups in the campus. Modern poets try to hold conventional practices of poetry. They follow structure, rhyme-scheme and so on. On the other hand the poets who claim themselves as postmodernists deny any kind of boundaries in writing poems. For this reason the groups remain in a conflicting situation with each other. Still the practice is not stopping anyway. This research will focus mainly on the emerging postmodern poets of the university.

### **Literature Review:**

Rezauddin (Stalin 2016), an acclaimed poet stated in an interview that the future of our poetry is at the hands of our youths. If they can take the poetry to the door of readers it will ensure the future of our poetry. Judge (2013) in a blog named Sidekick books discusses the statuses of poetry. Her writing is poetry a subculture? says that a subculture is more than just a group of people with common interests like a bridge club or bungee jumping. It makes codes, beliefs, clans and heroes. Poetry is supposed to be central. It's meant to be one of the barometers of a culture's vitality; poets encapsulate and represent an age for the generations later to come; they define and shape the identity of an territory like nation.

Though it is true that poets do not associate with property, we wouldn't say they do so with territory either. Some are a bit more debatable, but poetry flicks the switch for both. Poets do, on the whole, display a movement out of the home and into non-domestic forms of belonging, notably when they first go to university and start forming ties with other aspiring poets; it is at the point that they first come in touch with the community, one which does not speak to/ with their family or their other social circle. In belief, the literary community does something that is typical of subcultures-it assists its members in the formation of new, non-domestic identity. This process usually starts in the academic arena, and it works so well that many poets never leave it-witness the number of artists who work in universities. But it is certainly not limited to that territory.

The book Poetry and Cultural Studies (2009) by Maria Demon Ira Livingston explores poetry's engagement with society. This volume is first of its kind to collect classic and contemporary work on the intersection of poetry and cultural studies, reaching from Wordsworth's Preface to Lyrical Ballads" and W.E.B Du Bois's to recent-day essays on rap lyrics, queer poetry, folk poetry and beyond. Rethinking notion of poetic experiences and their roles in popular or mass culture, these essays effectively delineate the relationship between post-Enlightenment West and the public and social culture in which it is engendered as private endeavor .

Emerging poets nowadays are also a part of this postmodern world. The Postmodern artists has little confidence in superhuman orders, and s/he will readily concede that whatever order may be apparent in the world is largely a projection of the human Specific Mind ( C17) . The central tenet of modernism, as propounded by Clement Greenberg, is that no texts exist outside and beyond itself. But postmodern poetics suggests an ongoing reinterpretation of the self in the context of others. It is specially investigates the ethical or self-critical capacity of language and its relationship to identity. (M 46)

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The overall objective of the study is to investigate the existing culture among emerging poets of a public university like Jatiya kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. It aims at identifying their approach and progress and problems. And it would take suggestion from the established poets to improve the existing cultural practice. Specific objectives of the study were to:

1. To evaluate the present practice of post modern poetry written by youngster of the campus.
2. To examine the writing style of such poets from various angles.
3. To discuss the position and identity of the poets in the field of literature.
4. To know about their attitude towards art, literature, and society.
5. To find out the problems among them and search the solution to those.

### **Methodology:**

The study has made a questionnaire survey on emerging poets in order to know their knowledge about pros and cons of poetry and culture. For this purpose 50 poets from the various department of Jatiya kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University were taken as respondents. The current researcher also interviewed 2 established poets and teachers from the same institution in order to comment on the responses made by the young poets. Nine open ended and seven close ended questions were set for them. In the close ended question a likert scale with five options (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree) indicating the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the statements of the questionnaire used.

### **Presenting the Results from Questionnaire Survey:**

To find out the young poet's attitude, belief and condition a questionnaire survey was made and tested on the Students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. The results of that survey is shown in the table below. Though in the questionnaire the statements representing different aspect of poetry and poets have been presented randomly to avoid any biases from the respondents. The results of these statements have been analyzed and discussed in their dichotomous relationships as per the requirement of this study.

**Table:** Results of Questionnaire survey



Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean Score
1. I know what poetry and postmodernism mean.	20	20	5	3	2	50	4.06
2. I think poets must have certain types of lifestyle, dresses and attitudes.	18	10	8	11	3	50	3.58
3. I think poetry plays some role in socio-economic development.	7	12	19	10	2	50	3.24
4. I think poetry deals with truth.	23	14	3	4	6	50	3.88
5. I think my poems are relevant to this age.	9	16	17	7	1	50	3.50
6. I have a pen-name and I know why I chose it.	10	20	5	8	7	50	3.36
7. I think cultures of other countries influence my culture greatly.	21	12	10	3	4	50	3.86
8. I think there are many barriers of uplifting/promoting young generation poets.	26	16	3	3	2	50	4.22
9. I take drugs while writing poems.	3	2	20	5	20	50	2.18
10. Newspaper, magazine and other publishers publish my writing.	6	4	3	15	22	50	2.14
11. I think attitudes of Senior poets towards us is acceptable.	5	15	10	3	17	50	2.76
12. I have a published book .	6	5	5	18	16	50	2.34

13. I want to take writing as a profession in future.	16	7	9	14	4	50	3.34
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In the very first statement we see that it has high mean score(4.06 ) that indicates awareness of the students about poetry and postmodernism. Poetry is a high form of art which the students understand. They are not only conscious what they are writing, but also they know what might they portray in heir poems, as postmodernists that comes after modernism discarding fixed rules and ideas. The second statement was kept in order to identify the lifestyle and attitudes of the poets.The low mean score (2.34) reveals that a poet does not need special lifestyle and attitude as a human being because poets are well known and found in their poetry.

Third statement says that poetry plays some role in socio-economic development. The mean score (3.24) indicates average tendency towards the statement. It is because the students think poetry arouses people from sleep, a powerful line from a poem may inspire people and make the society a better place. The fourth statement is set to get idea about the truth of poetry that most of the poets agree (Mean score 3.88). From the result of this statement we assume that young poets agree with the universal theme of poetry. The fifth statement brings high mean score also because present emerging poets of the university believe that their poems are relevant to the present age in terms of themes, style and tone.

The poets against the sixth statements respond positively and it brings an average mean score (3.36). They are aware of the reason for having their own pen-name that brings them freedom and anonymity in writing against their own poetic convention or questioning fixed ideas and rules. Every culture gets influenced by other cultures. Bengali literature and culture is also influenced when it is mixed or remodeled with other culture and literature. Postmodern poets and thinkers believe in variety and celebrate multiculturalism. This is why the result in seventh statement is 3.86 (Mean Score), a high one.

The new and young poets has many problems regarding their development and growth. The very high mean score (4.22) of the statement No.8 confirms and points out barriers of uplifting young generation poets. Then in the ninth statement a different question was asked. The researcher wanted to know whether the poets take drug before writing poems. The low mean score 2.18 shows that not all poets are addicted to drugs. Some poets take it for writing something good and more sophisticated ideas and imagination.

Statement no. 10 brings very low mean score (2.14) and it is understood that newspaper and other publishers seldom publish young poets’ poems in their media. In statement no. 11 a crucial question was asked. It tried to take opinion from the young poets about the attitudes of the senior

poets. The result found is below average Mean score (2.76). It is assumed that relation between them is not quite well.

Statement No. 12 has very low Mean score (2.34) that gives us the information that young poets don't have very few published books. They are still on the way of it and struggling to establish themselves. The last statement has about average mean score (2.96). It is assumed that young poets don't want to choose writing poetry as a profession because it is too tough to become famous and lead one's life through writing.

### **Analysis of Poets' Writing Style:**

The young poets in this Postmodern age don't become stick to any fixed ideas and beliefs. They compose poems that convey multiple meaning and messages. The Common themes of their poetry are sexuality, love, time and imagination of an ideal world etc. Their poems may seem incomplete because the ending is open ended most of the times.

They write freely not maintaining fixed rhythm and meter. Even the lines are broken where needed. Their poems contain literary devices such as personifications, similes, metaphors, alliteration, images, allusions and so on. The common images are also reconstructed. It is evident that the young poets are not following conventional way of writing.

### **Analysis of poets' Lifestyle and belief of the Poets:**

The current researcher interviewed some emerging poets. They believe that it is high time to create something new. They like to write poems in mobile phone, and sometime they also write on paper with pen. They think that it is easier to carry and safe to store poems in electronic storage. As the students of the university, they feel it necessary to be updated with the new technology. They say their main intention is to enrich reader's mind and sensibility. For this reason, they use literary language as a great tool. They also try to respond to the call of time through their writing.

According to Alfred Adler, lifestyle means a person's basic character as established in childhood. It includes something more. The lifestyle of a particular person or a group of people living in a conditions, behaviors, and habits are typical of them or are typical of them or are chosen by them. Emerging poets in the mentioned university stresses not on appearance only. They keep certain type of dress code like Panjabi or Curta with pant or payjama. Some keep long hair and beard. There are some poets who think that taking drugs can enable them writing powerful verses. Bearing these in mind we can better understand the lifestyle of the young poets. We will also see how their attitude, psychology and behaviors are affecting their writing styles.

In their everyday life they faces great problem to continue study alongside poetry writing. They like to live around campus or in some secluded places. They think that poetry is an art and it should be for the sake of art. It is also a part of culture. They urge towards senior poets to come forward and help them to develop themselves. It is a matter of great sorrow that publishing agency

doesn't bother about their writing because of some prejudices. For that reason they can't publish their poems in the newspapers and magazines regularly. Last of all they request all to read and evaluate their poetry. All the emerging poets agree that poetry plays some role in socio-economic sector indirectly. They think they are being neglected which should not be done.

### **Findings and Discussion:**

This part describes result from the previous section. Emerging poets are trying to redefine the existing ideas. They are more like the people of subculture because they don't comply with the ideas of elite culture of mainstream. So they are somewhat isolated from the existing poetry practice. In today's postmodern times identities are ever changing and they are not also specific always. The campus poets are in such a condition that they cannot avoid identity crisis. Their postmodern identity is formed through the pressure of the senior poets who think that they are always in the right tract. Their culture is not regarded dominant culture, but it is related to a variety of subculture and counterculture that develop within the society. Subculture and counterculture are formed by generalization, occupation, class, lifestyle, dislikes, likes and so on.

We have examined the writings of the emerging poets. Their poetry contains lots of distorted version of modern and previous writing. In writing they don't follow particular rules and norms. Mainly we have found the deconstructed expression, images and forms their the poetry. The common themes of their writings include love, sexuality, absurdity and disbelief towards logic and center. They take ideas from various literary inventions like magic realism, surrealism, and hyper reality. "In postmodern poetics there is a paradigmatic shift from the idea that language is transparent to the disclosure of its physicality, its intimacy, its obdurate persistence and its paradoxical fragility (M 43)". These poets freely use slang and local expression in their poetry. According to them there is no fixed rules to writing poetry. This is why they celebrate formlessness very often. However they believe some basic needs are required for poetry such as literary devices, prosody and rhythm.

We know that identity is formed through representation and experience from our everyday life. But these young poets claim their own identity in most of the cases. Generally modern poets believe that they are practicing poetry in right way. They also try to respect senior poets and follow their steps. However postmodern poets are creating something new. They are just a part of a large structure and culture. They think like other that Poetry is an art that expresses the inner thought of the poets. A poet becomes a poet through writing. In every poem there must be meaningful and spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings as said by Wordsworth.

Literature is a sophisticated area for the sophisticated people. All nations or countries have their own distinct literature. From literature we find examples of various cultures of a particular country, group and area. The young generation is no exception. World literature also influences them. Poetry speaks and presents contemporary time and thoughts. Some poets can cross the limit of



their time.

The result shows that their poetry is not recited in the grand cultural program. It may be the reason for making group for themselves and practicing poetry writing regularly. They do not bother to get recognition from any authority. They stress more on practice and learning. The emerging poets commonly use pen names in order to hide their identity and motives. They face some problems from publishing agency. It is maybe for some political reason. So their goal is not to become writer professionally rather they want to challenge and face existing code and conduct of Bengali literature. Poetry deals with fictional truth. The young poets think and believe that arts should be art's sake.

Another thing is that professional and personal life are related with each other. It is not necessary for the poets that they should believe and stick towards any particular dressing and attitude. However, every human being has freedom to work and take any foods. In campus some serious poets take drugs in order to write something supernatural and artistic. Their lives are not well organized. It is hard for them to tackle both academic study and poetry practice. The researcher finds that they disagree with the statement that poetry has lost its appeal among the mass people. They give example of cyber space where hundreds of poetry are seen everyday. So they rather say poetry's days have begun.

### **Conclusion:**

Emerging poets of Jatiya Kabi Nazrul Islam University represent subcultural practices in this post-modern era. Their identity is varied. As students and poets they play vital role in academic and cultural field. So far little researches have been done about them. This research is not enough to judge their current status and attitude. Further investigation is needed in order to comment properly about them. Apparently, they may seem strange to us. The researcher has shown their weakness and strength. Experts and senior poets says that the emerging poets must try to create something new from the convention. They say that youngster should not blindly follow western literary movement in their culture. They suggest them to be hardworking and knowledgeable on poetry. Bengali literature will get some contributors if proper practice is ensured. For this reason, senior and established poets can nurture and help them to become competent and skilled. Emerging poets need platform, encouragement and support in order to ensure their better growth and creativity. Above all we should understand that poetry and poets are not harmful for the nation. They enrich our mind and sensibility through their writing. That is why we must ensure all types of support for the emerging poets.

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