

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION AND IDENTITY IN MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN

*Ruksana M. Mujawar**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19479064>

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between global communication and identity formation in Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie. The novel presents postcolonial India as a space where language, history, and personal identity intersect with global influences. Through the protagonist Saleem Sinai, Rushdie explores how English functions as a medium of global communication while simultaneously shaping fragmented identities. The study argues that the novel reflects the complexities of postcolonial identity in a globalized world, where communication transcends national boundaries but creates tensions between tradition and modernity.

KEYWORDS: *Global Communication, Identity, Postcolonialism, Hybridity, Language, Cultural Identity, Magical Realism.*

* **Ruksana M. Mujawar**, Teaching Assistant, Department of English, BLDEA's Basaveshwar Arts and Commerce College, Basavan Bagewadi.

Introduction:

Postcolonial literature often engages with themes of identity, language, and cultural hybridity. *Midnight's Children* (1981) is a landmark text that portrays India's transition from colonial rule to independence, while also addressing the impact of global communication on identity formation. The novel is deeply rooted in the context of the Indian Independence, which marks not only a political transformation but also a cultural and linguistic shift. Rushdie uses English-a colonial language-as a tool to narrate Indian experiences, thereby transforming it into a global medium of expression. This raises important questions: How does global communication influence identity? How does language mediate personal and national histories? This paper explores these questions through a close reading of the novel.

Global Communication and the Role of English In *Midnight's Children*, English serves as a bridge between cultures. As a global language, English enables the narrator to communicate Indian realities to an international audience. However, Rushdie does not use "standard" English; instead, he adapts it by incorporating Indian idioms, expressions, and cultural references. This linguistic hybridity reflects what Homi K. Bhabha calls the "third space" of enunciation (Bhabha, 1994). Saleem Sinai's narrative voice demonstrates how language becomes a site of negotiation between local and global identities. The use of English allows for global communication, but it also creates a sense of alienation, as it distances the narrator from indigenous languages and traditions (Rushdie, 1981).

Identity and Fragmentation Identity in the novel is not fixed; it is fluid and fragmented. Saleem Sinai, born at the exact moment of India's independence, symbolizes the nation itself. His personal identity is intertwined with national history, yet it is constantly disrupted by political events and personal crises. The concept of fragmented identity aligns with Stuart Hall's theory that identity is "not an already accomplished fact" but a continuous process (Hall, 1990). Saleem's identity shifts as he moves through different cultural, linguistic, and political contexts. His ability to communicate telepathically with other "midnight's children" symbolizes a form of global communication, where boundaries of space and language are

transcended.

Hybridity and Cultural Negotiation Hybridity is a central theme in the novel. Rushdie portrays India as a multicultural society shaped by diverse influences-British, Mughal, and indigenous. This hybridity is reflected in language, culture, and identity. The blending of Eastern and Western elements creates a complex identity that cannot be easily categorized. As Bhabha (1994) suggests, hybridity challenges fixed notions of identity and opens up new possibilities for cultural expression. In *Midnight's Children*, hybridity becomes a means of resisting colonial dominance while also embracing global communication.

History, Memory and Narrative The novel blurs the boundaries between personal memory and historical events. Saleem's narrative is unreliable, fragmented, and often exaggerated, reflecting the complexities of representing history. Rushdie uses magical realism to depict historical events, thereby challenging conventional modes of communication. This narrative technique allows for multiple interpretations, emphasizing that history itself is a form of storytelling (Rushdie, 1981). The interplay between memory and history highlights how identity is constructed through narratives that are influenced by both local experiences and global discourses.

Globalization and Postcolonial Identity Although *Midnight's Children* is set in the mid-20th century, it anticipates the effects of globalization. The novel portrays a world where communication transcends national boundaries, yet identities remain deeply rooted in local contexts. Arjun Appadurai's concept of "global cultural flows" helps explain this phenomenon (Appadurai, 1996). The characters in the novel are influenced by global ideas, languages, and cultures, but they also struggle to maintain their cultural identities. This tension reflects the challenges of living in a globalized world.

Conclusion: *Midnight's Children* offers a profound exploration of global communication and identity. Through its innovative use of language and narrative, the novel highlights the complexities of postcolonial identity in a global context. English serves as both a tool of communication and a source of tension, reflecting the dual nature of globalization. The novel ultimately suggests that identity is not fixed but constantly evolving, shaped by historical events, cultural

interactions, and modes of communication. In this way, Rushdie's work remains highly relevant in understanding the dynamics of identity in today's globalized world.

References:

1. Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.
2. Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
3. Hall, S. (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference* (pp. 222–237). Lawrence & Wishart.
4. Rushdie, S. (1981). *Midnight's children*. Jonathan Cape.