

Chapter – I: Introduction

(i) **R. K. NARAYAN: HIS LIFE AND WORKS-**

R. K. Narayan was born on October 10, in 1906, in Madras presidency, British India. His father was a school head master. Narayan did some of his studies at his father's school. As his father's job entailed frequent transfers, Narayan spent part of his childhood under the care of his maternal grandmother, Parvati. His grandmother gave him the nickname of Kunjappa, a name that stuck to him in family circles. She taught him arithmetic, mythology, classical Indian music and Sanskrit. According to his youngest brother R.K. Laxman, the family mostly conversed in English, and grammatical errors on the part of Narayan and his siblings were frowned upon. While living with his grandmother, Narayan studied at a succession of school in Madras, including the Lutheran Mission School in Purasawlkam, C.R.C. High school, and the Christian high school. He was avid reader, and his early literary diet included Dickens, Wodehouse, Arthur Canon Doyle and Thomas Hardy. When he was twelve years old, he participated in a pre-Independence march, for which he was reprimanded by his uncle. His family was apolitical and considered all government wicked.

R.K. Narayan moved to live with his family when his father was transferred to the Maharajah's college high school. The well-stocked library at the school, as well as his father's own, fed his reading habit, and he started writing as well. After completing high school, Narayan failed in the university entrance examination, and spent a year at home reading and writing; He subsequently passed the examination in 1926 and joined Maharaja college of Mysore and took four years to obtain his Bachelor's degree, a year longer than usual, After being persuaded by a friend that taking a Master's Degree (M.A.) would kill his interest in literature, he briefly held a job as a school teacher; however, he quit in protest when that headmaster of the school asked him to substitute for the physical training master. The experience made Narayan realise that the only career waiting for him was in writing, and he decided to stay at home and to write novels.

R.K. Narayan's first published work was a book review of Development of Maritime Laws of 17th century England. Subsequently, he began writing the occasional local story for English newspapers and magazines, although the writing did not pay much (his income for the first year was nine rupees and twelve annas). He had a regular life and few requirements. His family and friends supported his unorthodox choice of carrier. In 1930, R.K. Naranyan wrote his first novel, Swami

and Friends, an effort which was ridiculed by his uncle and rejected by many publishers. With this book, Narayan created Malgudi, a town of imagination, while it ignored the limits imposed by colonial rule.

In 1933, Narayan met Rajam and fell in love with her. Despite many astrological and financial hindrances, Narayan managed to take permission from the girl's father and married her. Following his marriage, Narayan became a reporter for a Madras based paper called the Justice, which was dedicated to the right of non-Brahmins. The publishers were thrilled to have a Brahmin Iyer in Narayan espousing their course. The job brought him in contact with a wide variety of people and issues. Earlier, Narayan had sent the manuscript to Graham Greene. He recommended the book to his publisher, and it was finally published in 1935. He also counselled Narayan on shortening his name to become more familiar to the English-speaking audience. He abbreviated his name to R.K. Narayan. Graham Greene is the real discoverer of R.K. Narayan. The book was semi-autobiographical and built upon many incidents from his own childhood. Reviews were favourable but sales were few.

The next novel *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) was inspired in part by his experiences at college, and dealt with the theme of a rebellious adolescent transitioning to a rather well-adjusted adult. It was published by a different publisher, again at the recommendation of Greene.

Narayan's third novel, *The Dark Room* (1938) was about domestic disharmony, showcasing the man as the oppressor and the woman as the victim within marriage, and was published by yet another publisher. This book also received good reviews. In 1937, Narayan's father died, and he was forced to accept a commission from the government of Mysore, as he was not making any money. In his first three books, Narayan highlights the problem with certain socially accepted practices. In the first book, he focused on the plight of students; punishments of caning in the classroom, and the associated shame. The concept of horoscope- matching in Hindu marriages and the emotional toll it levies on the bride and groom is covered in the second book. In the third book, Narayan addresses the concept of wife putting up with her husband's antics and attitudes. Unfortunately Rajam died of typhoid in 1939. Her death affected Narayan deeply and he remained stressed for a long time. He was also concerned for their daughter Hema, who was then only three years old. The bereavement brought about a significant change in his life and it was the inspiration behind his next novel, *The English Teacher*. This book, like his first two books, is autobiographical, but more so, completes an unintentional thematic trilogy following *The Swami and Friends* and *The Bachelor of Arts*. In subsequent interviews, Narayan acknowledges that *The English Teacher* was almost entirely an autobiography, albeit with different names for the characters and the changes of setting in Malgudi.

He explains that the emotions detailed in the book reflected his own at the time of Rajam's death.

In 1940 R.K. Narayan tried his hand at a Journal, Indian Thought. With the help of his uncle, a car salesman, Narayan managed to get more than a thousand subscribers in Madras city alone. However, the venture did not last long due to Narayan's inability to manage it, and it ceased publication within a year. This first collection of short stories, *The Malgudi Days*, was published in November 1942, followed by *The English Teacher* in 1945. In between, being cut off from England due to the war, Narayan began his own publishing company, Indian Thought Publication. The publishing company was a success and still active, now managed by his grand-daughter. Soon, with a devoted readership stretching from New York to Moscow. His books started selling well, and in 1948 he started building his own house on the outskirts of Mysore. The house was completed in 1953.

After *The English Teacher*, Narayan's writing took a more imaginative and creative style compared to the semi- autobiographical tone of the earlier novels. His next effort, *Mr. Sampath*, was the first book exhibiting this modified approach. However, it is still based on some of his own experiences, particularly the aspect of starting his own Journal. He makes a marked movement away from his earlier novels by

intermixing biographical events. Soon after he published *The Financial Expert*, which was considered his masterpiece and hailed as one of the most original works of fiction in 1951. The next novel, *Waiting for the Mahatma*, loosely based on a fictional visit to Malgudi by Mahatma Gandhi, explains with the protagonist's romantic feeling for a woman, when he attends the discourse of the visiting Mahatma. The woman, named Bharti, is a loose Parody of Bharti, the personification of India and the focus of Gandhi's discourses. While the novel includes significant references to the Indian Independence movement, the focus is on the life of the simple individual, described with Narayan's usual dose of irony.

In 1953, Narayan's works were published in the United State for the first time, by Michigan state university press, who later (in 1958), relinquished the right to Viking press, While Narayan's writings often bring out the anomalies in social structure and views, he was himself a traditionalist. In February 1956, he arranged his daughter's wedding following all orthodox Hindu rituals. 'The Guide' was written while he was visiting united states in 1956 on the Rockefeller Fellowship. While in the U.S., Narayan maintained a daily Journal that was to later serve as the foundation for his book *My Dateless Diary*. On his return to India, *The Guide* was published which is the most representative of Narayan's

writing skills. The book brought him the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958.

R.K. Naryan's next novel, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, was published in 1961. This book was reviewed as narrative in a classical art form of comedy. After the launch of this book, the restless Narayan once again took to travelling, and visited the U.S. and Australia. He spent three weeks in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne giving lectures on Indian literature. The trip was funded by a fellowship from the Australian writers Group. By this time Narayan had also achieved significant success, both literary and financial. With his success, both within India and abroad, he started writing columns for magazines and newspapers including *The Hindu* and *The Atlantic*.

In 1964, Narayan published his first mythological work, '*Gods, Demons and Others*', a collection of rewritten and translated short stories from Hindu epics. Like many of his other works, this book was illustrated by his younger brother R.K. Laxman. The stories included, were a selective list, chosen on the basis of powerful protagonists so that the impact would be lasting, irrespective of the reader's contextual knowledge. Once again, after the book was launched, Narayan took to travelling abroad. In an earlier essay, he had written about the American wanting to understand spirituality from him, and during this visit,

Swedish-American actress Greta Garbo accosted him on the topic, despite his denial of any knowledge. R.K. Narayan's next published work was the novel, *The Vendor of Sweets*. It was inspired in part by his American visits and it consists of extreme characterizations of both the Indian and American stereotypes, drawing on the many cultural differences.

However, while the novel displays his characteristic comedy and narrative, it book was reviewed as lacking in depth. This year, Narayan travelled to England, where he received the first of his honorary doctorates from the university of Leeds. After some time, he published his next book, a collection of short stories, *A Horse and Two Goats*, in 1970. Meanwhile, he remembered a promise made to his dying uncle in 1938, and started translating the Kamban's *Ramayana* to English. The *Ramayana* was published in 1973, after five years of hard work. Almost immediately after Publication of the *Ramayana*, Narayan started working on a condensed translation of the Sanskrit epic, the *Mahabharata*. While he was researching and writing the epic, he also published another book, *The Painter of Signs* (1977). This book is a bit longer than a novella and makes a marked change from Narayan's other works, as he explains with so far unaddressed subjects such as sex, although the growth of the protagonist's character is very similar to his earlier creations. The *Mahabharata* was published subsequently in the year 1978.

R.K. Narayan was commissioned by the government of Karnataka to write a book to promote tourism in the state. The work was published as part of a larger government publication in the late 1970s. He thought it deserved better, and republished it as *The Emerald Route* (Indian Thought Publications, 1980). The book contains his personal and perspective on the local history and heritage, but being bereft of his characters and creations, it misses his enjoyable narrative. The same year, he was elected an honorary member of the American Academy of Art and Letters and won the A.C. Benson medal from the Royal Society of literature.

As a nominated member of Rajya Sabha,(1986-92) R. K. Narayan, in his maiden contribution to the council , raised the issue of heavy school bags through a special mention. Extracts from the special mention is reproduced below to drive home the agitation of the nominated member on the issue of crushing burden of a heavy school bags on children: **“The hardship starts right at home when straight from bed the child is pulled out and got ready for school even before his faculties are awake . He or she is groomed and stuffed into a uniform and packed off with a loaded bag on her back. School bag has become an inevitable burden for the child. I am now pleading for abolition of the school bag by an ordinance .If necessary, I have investigated and**

found that an average child carries strapped to his back like a pack-mule, not less than 6-8 kg. Of books, notebooks and other paraphernalia of modern education in addition to lunch box and water bottle. More children on account of this daily burden develop a stoop and hang their arms forward like a Chimpanzee while walking and, I know some cases of serious spinal injuries of children too.”¹

The concern regarding academic burden on students and unsatisfactory quality of learning has been voiced time and again in our country during the past two decades. The question has been described extensively by several committees and groups. The Ishwarbhai Patel Review Committee (1977), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Working Group (1984) and National Policy on Education (NPE) Review Committees (1990) made several recommendations to reduce the academic burden on students. The curriculum development agencies are generally in agreement with the recommendations of the committee and assure the public that these would be kept in view at the time of the forthcoming revision of curricula. But the problem, instead of being mitigated, becomes more acute when a new curriculum is introduced. This has happened in the case of new curriculum introduced in the wake of implementation of NPE (1986). With a view to have a fresh look on

¹ Extract from R. K. Narayan's speech in Parliament as member of Rajya Sabha

the problems of education, particularly with regard to the problem of academic burden on students.

During his entire six-year term, R.K. Narayan focused on one issue- The plight of school children, especially the heavy load of school books and the negative effect of the system on a child's creativity, which was something that he first highlighted in his debut novel, *Swami and Friends*. His inaugural speech was centralised on this particular problem, and resulted in the formation of a committee chaired by Prof. Yashpal to recommend changes to the school education system.

In 1983, Narayan published his novel, *A Tiger for Malgudi*, which is about a tiger and its relationship with humans. His next novel, *Talkative Man*, Published in 1986, was the tale of an aspiring journalist from Malgudi. During this time, he published two collections of short stories: *Malgudi Days* (1982), A revised edition including the original book and some other stories, and *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories*, a new collection. In 1987 he completed *A Writer's Nightmare*, another collection of essays about topic as diverse as the Caste System, Noble Prize Winners, Love and Monkeys. The collection included essays he had written for news-papers and magazines since 1958. In 1980, Narayan was nominated to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament, for his contributions to literature.

In 1990, the next novel, *The World of Nagaraj*, appeared on literary scene. Narayan's age shows in this work as he appears to skip narrative details that he would have included if this were written earlier in his career. Soon after he finished the novel, Narayan fell ill and moved to Madras to be close to his daughter's family. In 1994 his daughter died of cancer and his grand-daughter Bhubaneswari (Minnie) started taking care of him in addition to managing Indian Thought Publications. Then came the publication of his final book, *Grandmother's Tale*. The book is an autobiographical novella, about his great grandmother who travelled far and wide to find her husband, who ran away shortly after their marriage. The story was narrated to him by his grandmother, when he was a child. During his final years, Narayan, very fond of conversation, would spend almost every evening with N. Ram, the publisher of *The Hindu*.

Despite Narayan's fondness of meeting and talking to people, he stopped giving interviews. The apathy towards interviews was the result of an interview with time, after which Narayan had to spend a few days in the hospital, as he was dragged around the city to take photographs that were never used in the article. In May 2001, Narayan was hospitalised. A few hours before he was to be put on a ventilator, he was planning on writing his next novel, a story about a grandfather. As he was always very selective about his choice of notebook, he asked N. Ram to get him one.

However, Narayan did not get better and never started the novel. He took his last breath on 13 May 2001, in Chennai at the age of 94. R. K. Narayan's greatest achievement was making Indian accessible to the outside world through his literature. He gave his readers something to look forward to with Malgudi and its residents and is considered to be one of the best novelists India has ever produced. He brought small-town India to his audience in a manner that was both believable and experiential. Malgudi was not just fictional town in India, but one teeming with characters, each with their own idiosyncrasies and attitudes, making the situation as familiar to the reader as if it were their own backyard.

Narayan's famous Malgudi Day's describes a fictional, semi-urban town in southern India. He created in September 1930, On Vijayadashami, an auspicious day to start new works and this was chosen for him by his grandmother, As he mentioned in a later interview to his biographers Susan and N. Ram in his mind, he first saw a- railway station, and slowly the Name Malgudi came to him. The town was created with an impeccable historical record, dating to the Ramayana days when it was noted that Lord Rama passed through. It was said that the Buddha visited the town during his travels. While Narayan provided strict physical constraints for the town, he allowed it to form shape with

events in the different stories, becoming a reference point for the future. Dr. James M. Fennelly, a scholar of Narayan's works, created a map of Malgudi based on the fictional descriptors of the town from the various books and stories. Malgudi evolved with the changing political landscape of India. In the 1980s, when the nationalistic fervour in India dictated the changing of British name of towns and localities and removal of British landmarks,

R.K. Narayan's Major Works:

(A) Novels

1. Swami and Friends (1935, Hamish Hamilton)
2. The Bachelor of Arts (1937, Thomas Nelson)
3. The Dark Room (1938, Eyre)
4. The English Teacher (1945, Eyre)
5. Mr. Sampath (1948, Eyre)
6. The Financial Expert (1952, Methuen)
7. Waiting for the Mahatma (1955, Methuen)
8. The Guide (1958, Methuen)
9. The Man- Eater of Malgudi (1961, Viking)
10. The Vendor of Sweets (1967, The Bodley Head)
11. The Painter of Signs (1977, Heinemann)
12. A Tiger for Malgudi (1983, Heinemann)
13. Talkative Man (1986, Heinemann)
14. The World of Nagaraj (1990, Heinemann)
15. Grandmother's Tale (1992, Indian Thought Publications)

(B) Non- Fiction

1. Next Sunday (1960, Indian Thought Publications)
2. My Dateless Diary (1960, Indian Thought Publications)
3. My Days (1974, Viking)
4. Reluctant Guru (1974, Orient Paperbacks)
5. The Emerald Route (1980, Indian Thought Publications)
6. A Writer's Night Mare (1988, Penguin Books)
7. A Story- Teller's World (1989, Penguin Books India)
8. The Writerly Life (2002 Penguin Books India)
9. Mysore (1944, second edition, Indian thought Publications)

(C) Mythology

1. Gods, Demons and Others (1964, Viking)
2. The Ramayana (1973, Chatto & Windus)
3. The Mahabharata (1978, Heinemann)

(D) Short Story Collection

1. Malgudi Day's (1942)

2. An Astrologer's Day and Others Stories (1947. Indian Thought Publications)
3. Lawley Road and Other Stories (1956, Indian Thought Publications)
4. A Horse and Two Goats (1970)
5. Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories (1985)
6. The Grandmother's Tale and Selected Stories (1994, Viking)

In addition to his early works being among the most important English-language fiction from India, he provided his western readers the first works in English to be infused with an eastern and Hindu existential perspective. Mason also holds the view that Edmund Wilson's assessment of Walt Whitman, "**He does not write editorials on events but describes his actual feelings,**"² applies equally to Narayan.

Thus Narayan is a prolific and popular Indian English writer. His novel *The Guide* was adapted to film as *Guide*, a Hindi movie directed by Vijay Anand, an English language version was also released. His novel *Mr. Sampath* was made into a Tamil film. *Miss Malini*, starring Pushpavalli and Kothamangalam Subbu. A Hindi version with Padmini and Motilal was also produced by Gemini studios. Another novel, *The*

² Mason Wyatt, "The Master of Malgudi", (New York, Longman. 2009), p.34

Financial Expert, was made into the Kannada movie Banker Margayya. Swami and Friends, The Vendor of Sweets and Some of Narayan's short stories were adapted by actor-director Shankar Nag into the television series The Malgudi Days.

(ii) **DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN NOVEL IN ENGLISH**

WRITINGS:

In the field of fiction the Indian writers in English have made the most significant contribution. Among all literary genres, the novel is the most popular form today. According to H. M. Williams, **“It is undoubtedly the most popular vehicle for the transmission of Indian ideas to the wider English speaking world.”**³ We in India, to a greater extent, are indebted to the European and English novel because as an art form, it has been imported to India from the West. In other words, it is a gift of Western literature.

In the nineteenth century with the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) and Lal Behari Day's *Govind Samanta* (1874), Indian novel in English has grown by leaps and bounds in respect of thematic variety and linguistic maturity. Both of them have used an acquired language to comment on the Indian social context. But compared to the recent output most of the early novels in English were almost imitative and faulty. It is assumed that Indian novel in English has its roots in the nineteenth century realistic tradition of English novel. The impact of English education, national awakening and the influence of European models are the chief factors responsible for the rise and

³ H.M. Williams Indo-Anglian Literatures; A Survey (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1976), p.109.

development of Indian novel in English. But with the passage of time, the Indian novel in English has become thoroughly Indian in terms of the themes, techniques and the human values. In this regard, Meenakshi Mukherjee observes;

“The novel in India can be seen as the product of configurations in philosophical, aesthetic, economic and political forces in the larger life of the country. Despite obvious, regional variations, a basic pattern seems to emerge from shared factors like the Puranic heritage, hierarchical social structure, colonial education, disjunction of agrarian life and many others that affect the form of novel as well as its content.”⁴

In order to understand rise and development of Indian English Novel, it is necessary to take into consideration its emergence, developing stages and continuing traditions. The Indian novel in English has been divided into three successive periods such as: a) novel from 1875 to 1920, b) novel from 1920 to 1947, and c) novel from 1947 onwards, by the Indian scholars like K.R.S. Iyengar (1962), M.K. Naik (1982) and Meenakshi Mukherjee (1985), considering the socio-political changes in India before and after the Independence. On the other hand, the classification of the novel by P. K. Rajan (1995: 9) refers to a) Early

⁴ Meenakshi Mukherjee, Realism and Reality (Delhi: OUP, 2000), p.65.

Realism: From 1864 to 1935, b) Critical Realism: From 1935 to the 1960's, c) Modernism: From the 1960s to the 1980s, and d) The New Novel: From 1981 onwards. However, such classification has its own limitations as placing an individual writer in a specific period creates several problems. Besides it, an individual writer practices several literary modes and values of representation at the time of writing. Hence, the whole corpus of Indian novel in English may be divided into three broad groups:

- a) The traditional novel of social realism before Independence.
- b) The modern novel of experimentation after Independence.
- c) A new contemporary novel since 1981.

The intellectuals in India before Independence concentrated on the national awakening and the society in a realistic manner. Bengal seems to be the source of the Indian novel in English for the prominent pioneers of the nineteenth century were upper-class Bengali writers, for instance, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Toru Dutt, and Rabindranath Tagore, who dealt with the social problems within their reach. These writers were not merely the imitators of the West but they had in the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee, “**direct involvement in**

values and experiences which are valid in the Indian context.”⁵ The pioneer novelists were trying to establish a new sense of social morality in place of the age-old social values. They were social reformers and with them, the novel became an exercise in social realism.

The Indian novelists in English have their roots in two traditions: the Indian and the Western. It was a challenge for them to express distinctly an Indian sensibility in an acquired language. Though the novels were being written in the regional languages, for instance, in Bengali, Hindi, Marathi and Malayalam, they had no English tradition. Naturally, at the formative stage, the Indian writers were greatly influenced by the European masterpieces of Tolstoy, Balzac and Dostoevsky in English translations. There was a great impact of the novels of the romantics and the early Victorians. Yet they were not the blind imitators of the Western models. On the other hand, they tried to establish their own tradition of novel writing in accordance with the age-old Indian tradition of storytelling.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's only novel in English 'Rajmohan's Wife' laid down the foundation for the first generation novelists to record the rich heritage and social transformation in India. Both the male and female novelists who emphasized their personal and private experiences

⁵ Meenakshi Mukharjee, Twice Born Fiction: Indian Novels in English (Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1971), p.19.

followed him. The early novels were, therefore, sketchy, domestic and aloof from the political happenings. The early novelists depicted rural and domestic life, filled with superstitions and religious whims, with an equal emphasis on morals and social ills. In spite of that, their creative efforts were very poor. The deeper issues of national as well as human life do not enter into their novels. The women writers wrote about nubile romances and marital maladjustment and their male counterparts wrote about social issues. None of the women novelists was as great as Jane Austen, George Eliot and Bronte sisters. However, their world was different from the socio-ethical world of the British novelists. The early novelists in India imitated the Western novel in respect of plot-construction, characterization and narrative technique. In spite of this, the Indian novel in English has definitely taken many steps forward after The First World War. The First World War stimulated the nationalist spirit among the Indians and furthered the freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi which became an all India experience. The entire nation and the Indian novel in English were affected by it during the 1930's. The writers such as Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao attempted to explore the contemporary Indian society without distorting the reality. They were reformists and not didactic, yet, the motive of propaganda remained with them.

Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao emerged on the literary scene in 1930. It was the real beginning of Indian novel in English. They were labelled by William Walsh (1990: 62) as The founding fathers, "**the genuine novelists**"⁶, the inaugurators of the form. They made their appearance in the thirties with the publication of *Untouchable* (1935), *Swami and Friends* (1935) and *Kanthapura* (1938) respectively and established the tradition of Indian English fiction. Indian novel in English around 1930s needed the novelists who could grasp the social scene with an insight into the human consciousness and who could interpret the real Indian world, distinctive in themes, issues and treatment in their fiction.

Indian English Literature has a relatively recent history, it is only one and a half century old. The first book written by an Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled *Travels of Dean Mahomet*; Mahomet's Travel narrative was published in 1793 in England. In its early stages, it was influenced by the western art form of the novel. Early Indian writers used English unadulterated by Indian words to convey an experience which was essentially Indian. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya (1838-1894) wrote *Rajmohan's Wife* published it in the year 1864 which was the first Indian novel written in English. Raja Rao (1908-2006), Indian philosopher authored *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and The Rope*

⁶ William Walsh, Indian Literature in English (New York: 'Longman, 1990), p.62

which are Indian in term of its storytelling qualities. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) wrote in Bengali and English and rendered translations of his own work into English.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji was the first Indian author to win a literary award in United States. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, a writer of non-fiction is, best known for his *The Autobiography of An Unknown Indian* where he relates his life experiences and influences. P. Lal, a Poet, translator, publisher and essayist, founded a press named *Writers Workshop*, in the 1950s for writers of Indian English writing. Ram Nath Kak (1917-1933), a Kashmiri veterinarian wrote his autobiography *Autumn Leaves*, which is one of the most vivid portraits of life in 20th century Kashmir and has become a sort of a classic.

Indian English literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co- native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. It is associated with the works of Members of the Indian Diaspora, such as V.S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahri, Agha shahid Ali, Rohinton Mistry and Salman Rushdie, who are of Indian descent. It is frequently referred to as Indo- Anglian literature,(Indo-Anglian is a specific term in the sole context of writing that should not be confused with the term Anglo- Indian). As a category, this production comes under the broader

realm of postcolonial literature- the production from previously colonised countries such as India.

The Indo-Anglian fiction owes its origin to the translation of different fictional works from the Indian languages into English, notably from Bengali into English. Tagore cast a sweeping and transforming influence on it. His novels *Gora*, *The wreck*, *The Home and The world* and short stories were originally written in Bengali. They were translated into English. The form of his novels is old fashioned. His works brought to Indo- Anglian fiction realism and social purpose. He gave emotional and psychological depth to character portrayal. The Indo-Anglian literature, therefore, is very much associated with Indian English: **“The evolution of a distinct standard the body of which is correct English usage, but whose soul is Indian in thought, colour and imagery and now and then, even in the evolution of an idiom, which is expressive of the unique quality of the Indian mind while conforming to the correctness of English usage. It is illustrative of a social type of language phenomenon a language foreign to the people who use it but acceptable to them because of political and, recently, cultural reasons.”**⁷

⁷ William Walsh, R.K. Narayan; A Critical Appreciation (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1983) p. 65.

Indian English writing means body of literature written by Indian in English. It could be in the form of literary genre poetry, prose, fiction and drama. English is not our mother tongue and we are not native speakers of English, yet when in the early decades of the nineteenth century, English was introduced as the medium of instruction in our educational system, Indians were able to read western literature that was available in English. They found the language and the literature versatile and some intellectuals took to conveying their social and religious thoughts in this language. For instance, the writings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and others started pouring in and gave rise to a prose literature having great socio-cultural relevance. Soon poets like Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Toru Dutt and many others took to writing poetry in English, but this literature was highly influenced by the style and content of English literature. When Sarojini Naidu took to writing poetry while in England and showed it to Sir Edmund Gosse, he advised her to write about her own culture and country so that the outsiders would also come to know of India.

When Indians started using the English language creatively, there were critics who felt that since English was not our native tongue, this writing did 'not belong to the soil. But scholars like K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger and C.D. Narasimhaiah spotted great potential in it. Iyenger's book *Indo Anglican literature*, (1943) and the *Indian Contribution to*

English Literature (1945) gave credibility to Indian writing in English. His Indian Writing in English (1962) was the first comprehensive history of this literature. C.D. Narasimhaiah categorically stated in his *The Swan and The Eagle* (1969) ,that for him Indian writing in English was basically a part of the literature of India.

The period between and after the freedom struggle has been the most fertile. Anand brought to India the new technique of the stream-of-consciousness. The autobiographical form of narration, plot and characterization adopted by Raja Rao were also enriched. There was larger quantity and better quality. The social, rural, detective, historical and romantic type of novel enriched the whole scenario. The contribution of K.S. Venkatramani, Shankar Ram, S. Nagarajan, Kumar Guru, A.S.P. Ayyar, S.K. Chettur, G.V. Desani in this regard are notable. However, the credit of bringing a name and reputation to Indo-Anglian Fiction goes to a few contemporary writers such as Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and Nirad Chaudhuri. They are the four wheels of contemporary Indo- Anglian Fiction. The other luminaries who have enriched the Indo-Anglian Fiction are Khwaja Ahmed, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamla Markandeya, Anita Desai, Mrs. R. Praver Jhabavala, Lumber Mascarenhas, Mrs. Vimla Raina, Khushwant Singh and others.

In spite of diversity in themes and techniques, the Indo-Anglian fiction has simple and common features, namely, the presentation of a personal narrative against the background of modern Indian history, the conflict of value between the family and the individual, and the awareness and social change. The conflict between the West and the East or between Innovation and Tradition is a perennial theme in Indo-Anglian Fiction. The Indo-Anglian writers of fiction wrote with an eye and hope on western readers who influenced their choice of the subject-matter. That is why in Indo-Anglian novels, there are sadhus, fakirs, caves, temples, Vedanta, Gandhi, Rajahs and Nababs, etc. These are subjects that interest the western audience. They represent essentially the western idea of India, but at the same time, there are elements of Indianness, nationalism and patriotism, glorification of India's past and sympathy for the teeming millions of the country, etc. In the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee, **“The Indo-Anglian novel made a different appearance in the nineteen-twenties, then gradually gathered confidence, and established itself in the next two decades. The momentum has yet to subside; the more novels have been published in the sixties than ever before. This increase in output is difficult to account for, especially when there were hardly half a dozen Indo-Anglian novels until the 1920s. Perhaps one of the reasons is that the flowering of Indo-Anglian**

Fiction coincided with the novel's coming to age in the regional language of India.”⁸

The most prominent technique of narration in the Indo-Anglian Fiction is the first person narrative. The central character or the hero is the narrator of a novel. This technique is seen in many novels such as Nayan Tara Sahgal's *A Time to be Happy*, K. Nagarajan's *The chronicles of Kedaram*, etc. We also find a large number of novels written in the third person narrative, e.g., works of Mulk Raj Anand, in Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, and Narayan's *Waiting for Mahatma* and *The Guide* and Mahohar Malgaonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*, etc., we have a fusion of both modes of narration. The theme of happiness and fulfilment through suffering and sanyas is also recurrent in the Indo-Anglian Fiction. It is found in R.K. Narayan's *Guide*, B. Rajan's *Dark Dancer*, Raja Rao's *The Serpent and The Rope* and Bhawani Bhattacharya's *He who Rides a Tiger*. Politics is also inseparably the subject matter of the Indo-Anglian Fiction from 1920 to 1950. The mood of comedy, the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors, the crisis in the individual soul and its resolution, and above all, the detached observation, which constitute the stuff of fiction, were forced into the background.

⁸ Mukharjee Meenakshi, *The Twice Born Fiction* (New Delhi :Arnold Hainemann,1971), p.39.

The political theme as a matter of choice was very much influenced by Gandhi's role and philosophy. These themes are the struggle for independence, the Indian National Army, the Indian Army, The present-day politics, the debacle of Princely India, the partition and independence. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and *The Cow of Barricades*, K.A. Abbas's *Inquilab*, R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Anand's *Sword and The Sickle*, C.N. Zutshi's *Motherland*, Amir Ali's *Conflict*, Zeenut Futehally's *Zohra*, Manohar Malgaonker's *Bend in The Ganges* and many others. These novels deal with Gandhi, and his way of achieving freedom, revolution, Satyagraha, Quit India Movement, etc. Some other novels related to politics, especially the post-independence politics are Nayan Tara Sehgal's *This Time of Morning*, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Manohar Malgoonker's *Bend in the Ganges*, Attia Hossain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, etc.

The East-West encounter as the major theme occurs in the novels of Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope*, J.M. Ganguly's *When East and West Meet* (1960). S.K. Ghose's *Princes of Destiny*, K.S. Venkatra Mani's *Murugan the Tiller* and B. Rajan's *Dark Dancer*. Some recurrent characters in the Indo-Anglian Fiction are the anglicised Indians' Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian Prince or Rajah, Sahib or Englishman, Eurasian, Muslim, saint or Swami and The Suffering Woman.

The English language was transplanted into India because East India Company, soon after establishing their rule in India, began to feel a communication gap between the British rulers and the natives. In order to solve the communication problem, which was a major hindrance in an alien land, Charles Grant, one of the directors of East India Company, pleaded for the adoption of the English language in 1792. Later on, after a gap of forty-three, years, The English language was adopted in 1835 by a brief resolution of the Governor General in council for the promotion of the European literature and science among the natives of India. India witnessed a beginning of a new era with the announcement of Lord William Bentick to impart the Indians the knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of English. In the mid nineteenth century, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who had initiated social reform programmes and in the process favoured the English language for spreading the wealth of information and culture available in British Publications, Roy a master of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic languages, felt that all renaissance knowledge was compiled mainly in the European languages.

At first the Indian's reacted with suspicion towards the English language, but later on welcomed it with open arms. English language was granted a special place in India. The initial requirement of the Indian

writing in English was the English knowing people. The different factors contributed to the creation of a mass expressing itself in English. One of the major factors was the introduction of the English education in India. Despite suspicion from a section of society that English education was being introduced to create a class of clerks and sycophants who will consequently harm the social and cultural fabric of India, it encouraged the cultivation and mastery of English as a language.

The ninetieth century intellectuals began to question the orthodox prejudices, dogmas and superstitions that prevailed in India. The impact of western learning gave a new impetus to Indian Renaissance. Indian society underwent a metamorphosis. The revival of Indian Classical learning and the introduction and the study of European arts and sciences gave rise to an unprecedented awakening in India. For the first time in India, a middle class of intellectuals began to emerge from the feudal society, giving rise to intense nationalism, during which the Indians struggled to articulate their passionate thoughts and feelings through whatever means were available to them. Writers like Bankimchandra and Saratchandra Chaterjee, caught up in the provincial patriotism, revived the regional language, while others believed that the English rule had come to stay studies and used the language of the rulers, giving rise to a

new genre of Indian writing in English, initially termed as Indo-Anglian literature.

The main effort of the Indian Renaissance was to create the actual life that existed in the West, Indo-Anglian literature was born out of instinct of imitation. Thus, when the writers started writing, the western influence was evident. Their works were directly or indirectly inspired by the English writers. The educated Indian class attempted to imitate western techniques and literary forms. Western education imparted to the Indians through English in the educational institutions founded all over the country, had a far reaching influence on these developments. If the progressive steps taken by the missionaries and officials resulted in an overhaul of antiquated education, aims, methods, materials and tools, western education turned the minds of the Indians inside out. It removed the mental blocks and promoted in them a new integral outlook. The transmission of modern scientific and sociological ideas made the Indians aware of the blessings of materialism and social organizations. Under the growing influence of science and sociological ideas, Indians began to realise the great nature of democracy as a way of life. Reason as an instrument of analysis and critical inquiry was looked upon as the champion of free and independent thinking. The awakened Indian started expressing himself in all western literary forms especially in the novel.

Max Mueller's views; the Indian Renaissance was directly related to the Vedic and Buddhist literature. It can be concluded from the views of Max Mueller that the Indian Renaissance took place much before, at least two thousand years before the European, Italian and English Renaissance. Thus Avadhesh Kumar Singh in *Indian Renaissance Literature* remarks:

“This significant thing is that Max Mueller was speaking of learning from India in 1882, almost five decades after. T.B. Macaulay and his brother-in-law Charles Traveyan had rejected Indian knowledge, leave aside the question of learning from it.”⁹

India had a rich potential for the narrative tradition form than the West because of the Indians' gift for story telling which goes back to the Rig-Veda and the Upanishads. The thirty two stories of the throne relating to the king Vikramaditya and Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara* are perhaps the most popular in Sanskrit as well as in the regional languages. The important thing is that tremendous contemporary social reality goes into these stories. Thus the modern Indian writer is an heir to rich cultural past merging into corridors of time. M.K. Naik, about the modern Indian English Writer states; **“He is a tree, with its roots nurtured in the**

⁹ Sharma, R.C., *Indian Renaissance Literature Preface: Reconsidering Indian Renaissance*, (Orient Publishers, New Delhi 1989), p.22.

Indian soil and its branches opening out to breathe the winds that blow from a western sky.”¹⁰

The novel of the Indian writing in English becomes conspicuous in the second half of the nineteenth century. The claimants for the first Indian novel in English are Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864). Raj Lakshmi Devi's, *The Hindu Wife* (1876), Toru Dutt's *Bianca* (1878), Kali Krishna, Lahiri's *Roshinara* (1881) and H. Dutt's and Bijoy chand (1888). Regarding these works, K.R. Srinivasan Iyengar remarks: **“These novels, written in English, have for us today no more than an antiquarian or historical interest.”¹¹**

Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta* (1874) is the first important Indian novel to appear in English. The original edition of *Govind Samanta* bore the title *Govinda Samanta, or the History of a Bengal Raiyat*, while the edition of 1908 published by Macmillan, London was entitled *Bengal peasant life*. The scene of the novel is Burdwan district during 1850-75 and author in his prefatory note makes direct statement on what the reader should and should not expect in the work, For, e.g. he

¹⁰ Jain, Jasbir, Veena Singh, *The Literature of Mulk Raj Anand*, (Rawat Publication Jaipur, 2003), p.9.

¹¹ Rajimwale Sharad, *A History of English Literature, Fourth Edition* (Sterling Publication, New Delhi 2010), p. 315.

should expect here a plain and unvarnished tale of a plain peasant living in this plain country of Bengal, (Govind Samanta).

Toru Dutt (1856-1877) received critical attention as a significant writer. Besides being an eminent poet, she has also written two novels, one in French entitled, *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers*, and an unfinished English novel, *Bianca, or The Young Spanish Maiden*, published posthumously. *Bianca or the young Spanish Madam*, a romance consisting of eight chapters, is believed to be a self- portrayal and was written during the years 1875-76 when Tour Dutt was on her death bed and death proving to have triumphed over life, thus the marvellous piece of work remained incomplete. It reveals a quality of mind that is essentially Indian. The English language lends itself to a sensibility in the hands of a young writer who was by no means a conscious experimental with her Medium.

This novel marks a turning point in the development of Indian fiction by giving it a subjective and inward direction. It marks a transition from an objective, social and public orientation of the old world to the subjective individualist and private that followed evaluating her contribution:

“Had George send or George Eliot died at the age of twenty one, They would certainly not have left behind them any proof of

application or of originality superior to those bequeathed to us by Toru Dutt; and we discover little of merely ephemeral precocity in the attainment of this singular girl. Toru Dutt can be placed in the category of the writers of unfulfilled renown like Thomas Gray and John Keats. The Indian novel in English in the pioneering hands of Toru Dutt revealed possibilities.”¹²

Krupabai Sathinathan (1862-1894) had chosen medical field as her career but had to give it up midway because of her failing health. It was after her death that her two stories were published in the form of books under the titles of *Kamla; A story of Hindu Life* (1894) and *Saguna: A story of Native Christian Life* (1895). Both these novels tell us only the story of her life in its different phases except that the names are fictional. *Saguna* is an autobiographical novel in which a rebellious young girl, in a family recently converted to Christianity, tries to come to terms with change. Despite its serious concerns, it remains a charming, vibrantly descriptive novel.

K.R. Ramamurti observes: **“They are stories of the authors own life told in a simple and straight forward way without being cast into**

¹² Bantham, Marin, A Cambridge Guide to Theatre,(London, 1992), p.44.

the framework of a plot and without being dressed up with incidents and characters born of the imagination.”¹³

It's tragic and unfortunate that both the blooming writers died at early age. They could not find time at their disposal to fulfil their promise otherwise probably they might have made greater contribution than what we have today.

“The tragedy of writers like Toru Dutt and Krupabai was that they died before they had really begin their careers, or had a chance to give full proof of their abilities. Both these writers wrote from their sick beds and yet gave promise of what they might have achieved if they had full lives. Their poetic prose, description of nature, attempt to create characters, and above all, the desperate struggle of their earnest spirits to express themselves shall remain like bright beacons among the dull, timid uncreative Indo-English fiction that was written during the century.”¹⁴

The novel concludes with the author's optimism foreseeing a bright future for the country in the hope that all girls whether married, unmarried or widowed should be well educated. The growth of woman's education and the emancipation of the Indian woman though reformist

¹³ Das, Bijay Kumar, Postmodern Indian English Literature. (New Delhi, 2003),p.54

¹⁴ Shevanthi Bai Mikambe's Ratnabai, (Sterling Publisher, 1895), p.56.

movements were in themselves significant social phenomena. They favoured the rise of the Indian novel in English. They were the features of the emergence of the individualistic social order which was indispensable to the growth as a form of literary expression.

The theme of almost all the novels of the early women writers was the Indian woman, the new woman as the writers saw her emerge. Though the work of these early women writers in Indian writing in English is not keeping in toe with the novel form of its contemporary English writing in the west as they lack in plot, characterization and approach. What unites all of these is the theme of the contemporary Indian, the new woman who emerged from the dynamic social milieu. Though the contribution of Swarna Kumari Ghosal (1855-1932) is not immense, but whatever she produced bears on it the stamp of good writing in English. She has three novels to her credit. They are *The Fatal Garland*, (1910), *An Unfinished Song* (1913), and *An Indian Love Story* (1910). *The Fatal Garland* is a historical romance set against the background of the fifteenth century Bengal. Its theme is the rivalry in love between two beautiful and spirited young girls, Shakti, Moti and Nirupama. *The Fatal Garland* can be appropriately termed as historical romance rather than a historical novel.

A contemporary of Malabar, Nagesh Vishwanathan Pai (1860-1920), is basically remembered for his works, *Stray Sketches from Chakmakpore* (1894) and *the Angel of Misfortune* (1904). The latter is a poem while the former is a pseudo-fictional work. *Chakmakpare* is a fictitious creation of the author, though the town as it is drawn is a forerunner of the fiction of R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Nagrajan and Bhabani Bhattacharya. These novelists owe their success and popularity in no mean a measure to the setting they have created for their own whether it is Malgudi, Kedaram, Kanthapura or Sona Mitti. Each of these little worlds has a personality, an individuality, all its own and yet it may be any town anywhere in India and emphasizes the essential unity which marks the Indian ethos. The significance of Nagesh Pai's sketches lies in their being the first to place characters in a setting which is at once local and pan-Indian, and an attempt to make characters, action and destiny bound up in a subtle way.

Pai's *Stray Sketches from Chamakpore*, like Malabari's *Gujarat and Guajarti's*, is a forerunner of the Indian. Earliest attempts were made by Indian writers to produce good readable stuff in English. The sketches have in them many of the elements and feature which have given the Indian novel in English its own individual quality, such as lively humour, gentle iron, keen social sense and a sound moral purposefulness, The

work also provides an interesting study of man as an individual and as a social animal whom we see in relation to the environment in which he is placed.

T. Ramakrishna Pillai, the next writer combined the sketches and romances in English during the first few years of the twentieth century, made his contribution through works such as *Early Reminiscences* (1907), *Life in an Indian Village* (1891), *Padmini: an Indian Romance* (1903) and *the Dive for Dearth: an Indian romance*.

Tarakanth Ganguli's novel *Swarnalata* (1903) was originally written in Bengali and later translated into English. There are two English versions of the novel, one by Bidhubhushan Mukerjee and another by Edward Thompson.

Swarnalata ushered in a new age in the history of Bengali novel, At a time when novel of Bankimchandra was busy traversing the path of colourful history and cloudy romance, *Swarnalata* took the readers down to earth reality. Taraknath Ganguly is a close observer of men and manners, and he has a faculty, regarded as exclusively his own, for working up ordinary material into a highly effective picture.

Madhavia wrote five novels in English *Satyananda*(1909) , *Clarinda* (1915), *Thillai Govindan*, *Nuthuminakhi* and *Lieut. Col. Panju*.

Satyananda (1909) comes first in the chronological order. Clarinda is a historical novel in the sense that it explains the story of Clarinda, a historical figure.

There exists writing in this period in which the writers are Indian and the subject is Indo-British relationship or what can be termed as colonial encounter. Some of the writers of English fiction in India have taken up this colonial encounters as their theme in which socio-cultural and cultural confrontation between the Englishmen and the natives is depicted. S. M. Mitra and Sart Kumar Ghosh belong to this category of writer's the colonial encounter.

S.M. Mitra's Hindupore: A peep Behind The Indian unrest; An anglo-Indian Romance (1909) is, as the title suggests, a romance in which the British are among the major characters. The purpose of this novel is to describe India and her natives to the British and to plead for their better understanding and sympathy between the two nationalities.

The principal achievement of Hindupore lies in its realism, a realism which borders most often on the gross and the vulgar but appeals to us by its essential irony and humour, Jamunabai ('a stately beauty of fifty'), consults an astrologer on the prospects of her finding a lover.

If the test of a good novel lies in its realism and its closeness to life, Hindupore's claim to that title cannot be poor. The realism of Hindupore is one which is set off by fine touches of romance here and there. Besides an important novel depicting the socio-political condition of the contemporary Indian, the work is also significant from the point of East-west encounter.

“Novels with intrinsic value of their own, they are concerned with intrinsic merits of their own; they are concerned with Indo-British social and cultural relationships broadening into a study of East-west encounters. They show a deeper understanding of and greater writers could show for India and Indian's.”¹⁵

The novelist can be credited for laying the foundation of presenting realism in the Indian writing in English. The realism that was later to be taken to new heights in the writing of Mulk Raj Anand and later by Khushwant Singh. His is not a social realism of Mulk Raj Anand. The realisms of Hindupore have in it a touch of grossness and it is down to earth and ruthless in its graphic description of human nature. But Mitra's realism is different from the kind of 'social realism' or 'progressive realism' which arises from the motif of social reform and social regeneration which runs through the novel of Anand.

¹⁵ Ibid. p82

A few historical romances and novels with as historical background find their presence in this age too. One such illustration is Sardar Jogender Singh's *Nur Jehan, the Romance of an Indian Queen* (1909), It is an important contribution to Indian-English historical fiction. The historical novel ends with the marriage of Nur Jehan to Jahangir and attempts to depict the country life of Akbar.

The early Indian writers of historical fiction imitated Walter Scott and other writers of the west. Though the first Indian novel in English, *Govinda Samantha*, met all the demands of modern realistic prose fiction, most of the novels which appeared in the three decades that followed showed a predilection romance, dream and poetry, not to speak of adventures and escapades of an incredible sort. The novels of the women novelists were more poetic and lyrical than realistic, though they had literary excellences too. The reassertion of realism in Indian writing in English is observed, with the publication of sketches like those of Malabari and Nagesh Vishwanath Pai. As a pioneer of journalism in India, with a satirical and reformistic purpose and as a 'pilgrim reformer'. Malabari pioneered the evolution of the English prose fiction in India, comparable to Addison, Steele and Goldsmith, pioneers in eighteenth century England. Nagesh Vishwanath Pai, on the same lines opened up new dimensions of creativity in the little town of Chakmakpore, and

anticipated Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan. Parallel to these realistic sketches romances like Padmini, The Dive for Death, Sarala and Hingana and The Love of Kusuma also made their appearance, though those novels made their appearances after 1889.

Though the efforts of the early novelists were genuine, yet they did contain certain drawbacks. The themes of these novels are basically social. They wrote these novels with the sole aim of exposing the tyrannical social customs and superstitions or the sad economic plight of the peasants, with a view to bringing about social or economic reform. Such didactic novels could be made interesting by the introduction of well knit interesting plot or vivid characters.

R.K. Narayan is a writer who contributed over many decades and continued to write till his death recently. He was discovered by Graham Greene in the sense that the latter helped him find a publisher in England. Graham Greene and Narayan remained close friends till the end. Similar to Thomas Hardy's Wessex, Narayan created the fictitious town of Malgudi where he set his novels. He is criticised for the parochial, detached and closed world that he created. Others, such as Graham Greene, however, feel that through Malgudi one could vividly understand the Indian experience. During the 1980's and 1990's India had emerged as a major literary nation. Salman Rushdie's 'Midnight's children' had

become a rage around the world, even winning the Booker prize. Its worldwide success made him the first writer of the Indian diasporas to enter the sphere of elite international writers and leave an indelible mark on the global literary scene. Other Indian English novelists of repute of the contemporary times include V.S. Naipaul, Shobha De (selective memory), G.V. Desani, M. Ananthanarayana, Bhavani Bhattacharya, Arun Joshi, Kushwant Singh, O.B. Vijyan, Allan Sealy, (The trotternama), Shashi Tharoor (Show Business, The Great Indian Novel), Amitav Ghose (Circle of Reason, Shadow Lines) and others.

The writers in the genre of Indian English literature, who took the world with a storm, was Arundhati Roy, whose 'The God of Small Things' won the 1997 Booker prize and became an international best-seller overnight. Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga, Kiran Desai (Strange Happning in The Guava Orchard), Sudhir Kakar (The Ascetic of Desire), Ardeshir Vakil (Beach Boy) and Jhumpa Lahiri (Interpreter of Maladies) are some other renowned writer of Indian origin.

The mid-20th century Indian literature in English had witnessed the emergence of poets such as Nissim Ezekiel (The Unfinished Man), P. Lal, A.K. Ramanujan (The Strides, Relations, Second Sight, Selected Poems) Don Moraes (A Beginning), Keki. N.Daruwalla, Geive Patel, were profoundly influenced by literary movements taking place in the west,

like Symbolism, Surrealism, Existentialism, Absurdism and confessional poetry. These authors had heavily made use of Indian phrases alongside English words and had tried to reproduce a blend of the Indian and the western cultures.

Thus Indian English literature is an honest enterprise to demonstrate the ever rare gems of Indian writing in English. From being a singular and exceptional, rather gradual native flare-up of geniuses, Indian English has turned out to be a new form of Indian culture and voice in which Indian converses regularly. While Indian authors- Poets, Novelists, Essayists, and Dramatists have been making momentous and considerable contribution to world literature since the pre-Independence era, the past few years have witnessed a gigantic prospering and thriving of Indian English writing in the global market. If we look at the current scenario, we find that Indian writing English surging on the best- seller list and also earning an immense amount of critical acclamation. Commencing from Mulik Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai, Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt to Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Amitav Ghosh, Jhumpa Lahri. Chitra Benerjee, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Chandra the five Indian writers is long and much augmented.

R.K. Narayan treats the matter with a degree of insight and detachment, resisting handy solutions or value judgments. All the same,

we feel that a subtle hope of a change for the better is kindled. There is an awakening of the spirit, a resurrection of faith in the inevitable emancipation of women through higher education. In this respect, R.K. Narayan may be commended for his characteristic treatment of conservatism versus reform.

“He celebrates the survival of permanent values, as if India is the best witness in the modern world to a wisdom that lies in compromise, hospitality and tolerance”¹⁶.

Moreover, the most significant outcome of these changes is seen in the form of writings full of a new zeal and confidence blended with social aspects and phenomenal situation in the fictional world.

¹⁶ Williams, H.M., Indo-Anglian Literature 1800-1970- A survey, (Macmillan & Co. Ltd. London).