CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Every great and original writer, in proportion
as he is great and original, must himself create
the taste by which he is to be relished.
- William Wordsworth

That society has been the object of study by many writers from time memorable
is true and that human society has been groaning under the disruption caused by the
fissiparous moves and insidious social approaches is also an undeniable fact. For a
long time people belonging to higher communities capitalized on the disadvantages
of the people belonging to lower communities. Educational advantages and social
benefits were denied to them.

These social eyesores like discrimination due to lower birth and lower caste do
not attract many for redressal. They have been complacently living with these ills.
Only a few have sympathized with the people suffering from higher caste people’s
domination and suppression. But they too have not made it a point to act against
these grinding social evils. Only the rationalists and sensitive writers got at the root
of these corrosive and the malignant social facts. They have acted against these with
a view to causing public awareness and introspection among people. They wanted to
bring a consolation to the people suffering from anti social elements and social evils.

Social fiction writers and dramatists have roused the conscience of the public to
realise the damages caused by the horrendous social differences and exploitations.
Their writings have become social eye openers. Their writings abound in social
consciousness which serve as social eye openers and also they have responded adequately to the demand of the removal of the excruciating agonies of the socially low-born and low-placed.

Chaucer refers to the indifferent nun who feeds the dog in her monastery with the special meal and is totally indifferent to the poor people waiting for alms near her convent. Here, Chaucer has made it a point in his *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* to refer to the careless state of the monastic people who are spiritually bound to be kind to men and beasts.

In the same vein, Milton very harshly refers to the “blind mouths” in *Lycidas*. Here he faults the priest who has entered the church with a view to appease his hunger rather than to promote the benevolent and holy intention of Jesus. Here Milton harps on the monastic deterioration of the Roman Catholic Cleric of his day. In the same manner, on the social arena, Mulk Raj Anand and Imayam take cudgels against the rampant social evils in order to expose the exploiting tendencies of the upper class.

The theme of the research is *Social Consciousness* in the select novels of Mulk Raj Anand, an Indian Writer in English, and Imayam, a recipient of Tamilnadu Progressive Writers’ Association Award. Social Consciousness is defined as consciousness shared within a society. It refers to the social awareness of the problems that different societies and communities face in every day life. Many studies have been made for examining the roots of the difficulties and hardships of society, and such studies arise as a social response to social injustices experienced by the individual. Mulk Raj Anand and Imayam as socially conscious writers expose the social evils prevalent in the society and also the hypocritical attitude of the individuals and the society as a whole in their novels.
This research work proposes to study the theme of social consciousness in the works of Mulk Raj Anand and Imayam while comparing their largely different backgrounds and also the time period of their works. Comparing these two authors strictly within the definition of comparative literature is not that easy. Hence, it is important to throw some light on this particular branch of research and its evolution to modern-day context.

This research work falls to a large extent under the analogical study, which is a branch of comparative literature and includes two authors of the same nation but writing in different languages. Here, the authors belong to the same civilization but literatures of different languages. Mulk Raj Anand is an original writer in English language and Imayam writes in Tamil, and his works find entry into English through translation by others. Hence, it cannot be categorically said that works of different languages are analyzed here. Though belonging to the same nation, the authors belong to different cultures and traditions as per the regions they hail from. The Indian subcontinent is unique in that its large geographic distribution not only encompasses various climatic conditions but also a colourful array of traditions and customs dependent on the language spoken in a particular region. While Mulk Raj Anand’s stories are set in the different states of northern India, Imayam’s are exclusively concerned with Tamil Nadu, a south Indian state. This difference is largely geographical and cultural, which does not essentially rob their works of the striking similarity they exhibit. The three-pronged issue of the socially depressed, the economically exploited and the religiously deceived forms the basis of both these authors, but strictly within their regional experiences. It is ironical that different cultures and traditions arise from certain basic unified beliefs and features.
It is difficult to comprehend the vast cultural and customary ‘unity in diversity’ of this nation.

These two authors spare no pains to go down to the lowest of levels and explore the psyche of the downtrodden, impoverished, and outlawed people. The communal and cultural references are regional yet they appeal to the nation because of their similarity.

Mulk Raj Anand and Imayam, exhibit a social consciousness in their works, which is not a refined presentation of fact in fiction, but is forthright and realistic. They immediately evoke two opposing responses of denial and sympathy. The authors in all likelihood intended not just a response but also a reaction to the situation, which is happening right in front of the eyes but invisible because of the internal blindness of the people. Though the authors’ works are set within a timeframe of around seven decades with the earliest of Anand’s work depicting pre-independent India and the latest of Imayam is of modern times, they have highlighted the same issues as existent in their times. Hence, this study is an attempt to showcase the theme of social consciousness prevalent uniformly in the works of Anand and Imayam.

The social novel in which the writer’s social consciousness is projected is also called the social problem novel. It is a work of fiction in which a prevailing social problem, such as gender, race, or class prejudice, is dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel. The roots of the social problem novel in Britain were in the 1830s and 1840s and they arose out of the social and political upheavals which followed the Reform Act of 1832 .The mid 19th century is thus the beginning of this genre of the novel with the publication of the novels like Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Ruth*
(1853), Harriet Beecher Stowe’s anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) and Charles Dickens’ *Hard Times* (1854).

The novels exhibiting the writers’ social consciousness is extended widely first to the United States and Russia, and later on to other countries like India. Earlier examples of the novels of this type are: Harriet Beecher Stowe’s anti-slavery American novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) and Leo Tolstoy’s Russian novels *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. In his novels Leo Tolstoy championed the cause of social reformation in his own country. Other famous British practitioners in this field are Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Kingsley and Harriet Martineau; later authors such as Thomas Hardy and George Gissing may also be included. In the field of drama the most important name is George Bernard Shaw who in his dramas vehemently criticized the flaws and the foibles of society in order to bring about some reformation.

The journey of social novels in Indian English began with the advent of the trio, Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand. Their novels examined specific abuses and hardships which affected the low-born, the poor and the working classes. The social disparity of India which was aptly described by Mulk Raj Anand in his *Coolie*, the imaginary village life with its entire unedited realities in R.K.Narayan’s *Malgudi Days* and, the last but not least, the aura of Gandhism depicted by Raja Rao in his remarkable novel *Kanthapura* portrayed a whole new India. Eminent writers like Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shobha De, V.S.Naipaul, Shasi Tharoor and a few others have given Indian English novel a whole new dimension. The novels include various concepts of fact and fiction and are based on current events and recent social problems.
In Tamil literature there are many social reformers who used fiction effectively to criticize economic, social, moral and religious abuses prevailing in the society of their times. Even from the very beginning of fiction-writing in Tamil, social reformation has been insisted. Tamil novelists like Venkataramani, Akilan, Kalki, Nalla Perumal, Na. Parthasarathi, Janakiraman, Su. Samuthiram, P.S. Ramaiya, Ki. Rajanarayanan, Manian, Sundara Ramasamy, Indira Parthasarathi and Jeyakanthan are some such reformers whose writings are intended to bring social revolution in the lives of the underprivileged. Among women novelists, mention should be made about Rajam Krishnan, Lakshmi, Siva Sankari, Indumathi and Anuradha Ramanan.

Comparative literature is a relatively new phenomenon in the literary scene and it is difficult to find a comprehensive and satisfactory definition for it. Comparative literature is defined by the electronic Random House Webster Unabridged Dictionary as “the study of the literatures of two or more groups differing in cultural background and, usually, in language, concentrating on their relationships to and influences upon each other.” Hence, it is basically a study of the relationship between literatures of two or different linguistic, cultural, and national groups on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief such as painting, culture, music, philosophy and social sciences on the other. It is important to mention the, varied opinions of the two major schools in this regard – the French and the American. The French school endeavours to trace the origin of a work, in that, how it influences other works or was influenced by other works. To the French, comparative literature is a historical and positivist discipline concerned primarily with the study of influence of or reception to an author or authors abroad – Shelley and Bharathi or Byron and Pushkin. The American school limited themselves to critical analysis of literary aspects in works from not just a particular region, but from different areas,
with little or no emphasis on the influences. To the Americans, it is an aesthetic
discipline concerned with the study of analogies or parallels in literature beyond the
confines of one particular country.

It is important here to highlight the difference between comparative literature and
general literature. General literature comprises more than two works or authors or
group of works, whereas comparative literature is strictly restricted to two works or
authors. Comparative literature, though brief to define, comprises quite many factors
which influence a comparative study. The ‘comparatists’, as the scholars and
teachers of the comparative literature, have varied and differing views among
themselves as to the correct comparative methods. Currently, in the wake of
globalization, there is a tendency to widen the borders of comparative literature and
not confine it to a particular nation as usually done. Hence, it is common that most
comparatists are well versed in various languages as well as aspects of translation.
When works of a particular language are chosen for a study, they may also be from
different parts of the world where the language is used. Like any field, comparative
literature also has come a long way in its definition and application.

Comparative literature was first established as a discipline in France in the
second half of the 19th century. It reached the United States with the German
scholars who left Germany during Hitler’s time. The French and American schools
were always in healthy dispute over the definition and scope of the comparative
literature. While the French preferred narrow positivist studies, the American
formed a broad approach to comparative literature. French scholars like Weisstein
created comparative literature as a branch of literary history and a study of
international spiritual relations, inspired by the positivistic or factual studies,
especially in the light of folklore and thematology. Baldensperger, one of the
greatest French comparatists, was against the inclusion of folklore into comparative literature as it involved elaborate material collection and ignored the creative element and the individuality of the writer. These scholars however favoured influence study in that how a literature or author influences another. There was opposition to this too.

The American approach to comparative literature, as defined by H.H. Remak, is the study of any two national literatures or study of literature on the one hand and another discipline like psychology, philosophy, sociology and religion on the other. Though the American definition and scope of comparative literature is broad, some scholars like Ulrich Weisstein recommend a rather conservative approach in the lines of Baldensperger.

It is worth noting some of the important studies which come under the broad heading of comparative literature. Analogical study is a type of comparative literature studying two writers or literatures though there is no positive link between the two. Rene Etiemble is in favour of such parallel studies of two writers belonging to the same civilization, though of different literatures, but recommends circumspection and warns against extending it to different civilizations.

Social consciousness is the awareness of a nation to its everyday hardships from people’s perspective. While great many privileges and rights are on the books, whether the people exercise them or not is doubtful. It is so, partly because people are unaware of these and partly because they are prevented from knowing and utilizing these. Also, the problems that have existed from ages past are still lurking around and it has become a menace to the forward momentum of the nation. Some authors have taken up the task of laying bare the starkest realities of the country and have not minced words in the process. Mulk Raj Anand is one such writer who,
through his realistic portrayal of various problems, has sent a strong signal to the nation about its reality. Mulk Raj Anand was notable in the international arena, along with writers like R.K. Narayan, due to his literary output in the English language. There are many writers who write on the lines of Mulk Raj Anand in regional languages. Thanks to translations, such regional works are also gaining larger audience. Tamil fiction, which in the past catered only to a limited section in India, is now going national and even global through translations. One of the modern Tamil writers, who represent the very essence of Tamil culture and tradition, highlighting the flipside, is Imayam.

Before giving brief sketches of the lives and works of Mulk Raj Anand and Imayam, brief histories of the Indian novel in English and the novel in Tamil literature are given below so as to make proper assessment of the authors under study by focusing our attention on their contributions to novel-writing.

The ‘novel’ as a literary phenomenon is new to India. Epics, lyrics, dramas, short stories and fables have their respectable ancestries, going back by several centuries, but it is only during a period of little more than a century that the novel - the long sustained piece of proce fiction – has occurred and taken root in India. (Iyengar 314)

The second half of the nineteenth century may be called the beginning of the Indian novel in English. The first Indian novel in English was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s Rajmohan’s Wife which appeared as a serial in “Indian Field” in 1864. It was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1774-1883) who established the novel as a major literary form in India. It was he who showed that the ordinary life of middle class Bengali could be the subject matter of a high class novel. Rajmohan’s Wife came in book form only in 1935. It tells the story of Rajmohan’s wife who strives to correct
her husband who has become a victim to the temptation of earning money through unfair means.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee initiated the literary renaissance in Bengal, and following him, came Tagore, Prem Chand, Toru Dutt, Rajam Iyer, Madhaviah, Michael Madhusudhan Dutt, Balakrishna and many others who wrote both in English and regional languages.

Lal Behari Day’s *Govinda Samanta*, published in 1874, is the first important Indian novel in English, as *Rajmohan’s Wife* was published in book form only in 1935. Though *Govinda Samanta* does not have a structurally organized plot, it gives a good picture of the nineteenth century feudal India.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century is very significant because of the emergence of women novelists, like Toru Dutt, Kirupabai Sathianathan, Raj Lakshmi Devi, Mrs. Goshal and Cornelia Sorabai. Of these, Toru Dutt was perhaps the foremost, whose *Bianca*, published in 1878, is a romance in eight chapters. The setting of this novel is, of course, an English village and characters are Spanish, but the novel reveals a quality of mind which is unmistakably Indian. “Toru Dutt’s sensibility, her attitude to feminine beauty and grace, though seemingly English, is essentially Indian, closer as it is to an Indian writer like Narayan than to British writers” (Ramamurti 38, 39).

Krupabai Sathianathan has written two novels, *Kamala: A story of a Hindu Life* (1894) and *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* (1895). Both the novels are autobiographical, though the characters are fictional. Krupabai was a Hindu, but later was converted to Christianity, and her novels deal with these two aspects of her life.

Shevanthi Bai’s *Ratnabai* is a short novel of about a hundred pages, but it became very popular because it advocates woman education. It tells the story of a girl who
gets married at the age of nine. She goes to school in spite of the opposition of her in-
laws, and when her husband returns from London, she is a well-educated girl of
sixteen. The husband and wife begin a happy life. Thus, in Ratnabai Shevanthi Bai
visualizes a bright future for women in India.

Mrs. Swarnakumari Goshal has written three novels: The Fatal Garland (1910), a
historical romance set in the fifteenth century Bengal, dealing with the love of two
girls for the Prince, An Unfinished Song (1913) and An Indian love Story, another love
story involving very sensitive men and women.

Rajam Iyer and Madhaviah are the two South Indian writers, who pioneered the
Tamil novel and who also wrote novels in English. Rajam Iyer has written True
Creatures of Vasudeva Sastrī and Madhaviah has produced five novels: Satyananda,
Clarinda, Thillai Govindan, Muthumeenakshi and Lieutenant Colonel Panju.

Mention should be made about two novels that deal with the East-West
relationship. They are S.M. Mitra’s Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest:
An Anglo-Indian Romance and Sarat Kumar Ghosh’s The Price of Destiny. These
novels are about the Indo-British social and cultural relationships.

Thus, the second half of the nineteenth century marks the birth of the Indian novel
in English. In the field of novel-writing, “Indians have written – and are writing – in
English for communicating with one another and with the outside world, for
achieving self-expression too artistically, using English, if necessary, or necessarily,
in an Indian way” (Iyengar 4).

This was due to socio-economic changes, political awareness, spread of education
and gradual emancipation of women. Though not much was achieved before 1920, the
last part of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century
mark the beginning of the Indian novel in English. The 1920s and the 1930s made
further progress in the new literary genre. As H.M. Williams points out in his *Indo-Anglican Literature*, “the limelight turned away from poets to concentrate on the novelists. In this way a new chapter of Indo-Anglican literature came into being in the nineteen-twenties and thirties” (34).

The main trends during the period between the two world wars, that is, from 1920 to 1945, were nationalism, with Gandhi playing the pivotal role, social awareness and revolutionary tendencies and protest against the English rule. K.S. Venkataramani’s *Murugan the Tiller* (1927) and *Kandan the Patriot* (1932) are novels full of Gandhian principles, exploring and applauding the ideals of Satyagraha and calling the Indians to work for freedom and regeneration of their nation.

the enigmatic writers whose novels have been received with wholehearted commendation. Rao is a powerful writer. He is profoundly metaphysical in the way he thinks and feels, and he has a scholarly background, an intimate familiarity with primary texts of Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian philosophies.

R.K. Narayan, one of the trio, is unusual among Indian authors writing in English in that he has stayed contentedly in his home country, venturing abroad only rarely. He is a traditional teller of tales, a creator of realist fiction which is often gentle, humorous, and warm rather than hard-hitting or profound. Almost all of his writings are set in the fictional city of Malgudi, and are narrowly focused on the lives of relatively humble individuals, neither extremely poor nor very rich. He wrote altogether twenty nine novels all based on Malgudi and numerous short stories. Like many successful persons, he was not immediately successful in his writing career. He struggled to earn his living out of the small money he got by writing stories and essays for various newspapers. But it all changed when the draft of his first novel based on Malgudi titled *Swami and Friends* was read by the famous British writer Graham Greene. It got published with the financial aid of Graham Greene and from then onwards, the writer never looked back and continued enchanting millions of readers all over the world.

Narayan's most celebrated novel, *The Guide*, won him the Sahitya Academy Award of the Indian Literary Academy, his country's highest literary honour. *The Guide* is one of his most interesting books, which begins as a comic look at the life of a rogue, but evolves into something quite different. It should be noted that Narayan is not a devout Hindu, and has accused Westerners of wrongly supposing that all Indians are deeply spiritual beings; but it is also true that he was deeply impressed by some
experiences he had with a medium after the sudden death of his young wife, as described movingly in *The English Teacher* (1945).

Narayan has stated that the incident of the reluctant holy man was based on a real event which he read about in the newspaper. Formerly India's most corrupt tourist guide, Raju - just released from prison - seeks refuge in an abandoned temple. Mistaken for a holy man by people, he plays the part and succeeds so well that God himself intervenes to put Raju's newfound sanctity to the test.

In *The English Teacher* Krishna, as an English teacher at Albert Mission College, has led a mundane and monotonous lifestyle comparable to that of a cow, but this took a turn when his wife, Susila, and their child, Leela, come to live with him. With their welfare on his hands, Krishna learns to be a proper husband and learns how to accept the responsibility of taking care of his family. He feels that his life had comparatively improved, as he understands that there is more meaning to life than to just teaching in the college. However, on the day when they go in search of a new house, Susila contracts typhoid after visiting a dirty lavatory. Susila eventually succumbs to it and passes away. Krishna, destroyed by her loss, has suicidal thoughts but gives them up for the sake of his daughter, Leela. He receives a letter from a stranger who indicates that Susila has been in contact with him and that she wants to communicate with Krishna; he becomes more collected and cheerful. This leads to Krishna's journey in search of enlightenment. Leela goes to a preschool where Krishna gets to meet the Headmaster, a profound man who cares for the students in his school and teaches them moral values through his own methods. The Headmaster puts his students as his top priority but he does not care for his own family and children. Eventually he leaves them on the day predicted by the astrologer to be his last day, which does not come true. Krishna learns from the Headmaster to get on the
journey to enlightenment; eventually learning to communicate to Susila on his own, thus at the end he feels a moment of rare immutable joy.

Raja Rao was born in Hassan (Karnataka) and had his education in Madras, and later in France. He is one of the trio that forms the precursor to Indian Writing in English as we know it today. Raja Rao’s works are steeped in Indian spiritualism, and often the theme is metaphysical. Based on his experiences in Europe, his novels are also about the interplay between Indian and Western culture. The influence of the Indian nationalist movement and Gandhi on Raja Rao is evident in his early books. He received the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 1988 and the Sahitya Academy Award in 1963. He passed away in Texas, Austin.

Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* is remarkable in many ways: the theme is the impact of Gandhi’s name and ideas on an obscure Indian village, anyone almost out of the seven lakhs of Indian villages; the story-teller is a ‘grandmother’, the most gifted of story-tellers because the art of story telling is second nature to the Indian grandmother who narrates for the edification of a new comer the annals of her village long after the actual events in which she had herself participated. The manner of her telling is characteristically Indian. Mahatma Gandhi is Rama; the red-foreigner or the brown inspector of police who flourishes a lathi is but a soldier in ten-headed Ravana’s army of occupation and oppression. The Satyagrahi in prison can be equated to the imprisonment of the divine Krishna himself in Kamsa’s prison. Events gather significance after the passage of some years. The theme of *Kanthapura* may be summed up as ‘Gandhi and our Village’, but the style of narration makes the book more a Gandhi Purana than a piece of mere fiction. Gandhi is the invisible God, Moorthy is the visible avatar. The characters sharply divide into two camps: the rulers and their supporters on the one hand and the satyagrahis and their sympathizers on the
other. Moorthy is Gandhi’s man, the satyagrahi, the leader of the non-violent movement in Kanthapura.

_The Serpent and the Rope_ is a Sahitya Academy-winning novel, highly acclaimed by both critics and writers. It portrays the meeting of the East and the West on the most intimate plane through the story of Rama, an Indian, and Madeleine, a French girl, who meet at a French university shortly after World War II. Their union is the central theme of the book, and it is in telling this story that Rama reveals—with more profundity than most writers are able to suggest in a lifetime—the meaning of love.

_The Cat and Shakespeare_ is a gentle, almost teasing, fable of two friends: Govindan Nair, an astute, down-to-earth philosopher and clerk, who tackles the problems of routine living with extraordinary commonsense and gusto, and whose refreshing and unorthodox conclusions continually panic Ramakrishna Pai, Nair’s friend, neighbour and narrator of the story. Descriptions of daily concerns are compassionate and evocative. The raw texture of Indian life is seen in this plainspoken and humorous tale by the brilliant craftsman.

The novel became the most widely used literary form in recent times. It attracted more writers and readers in India, as elsewhere in the world. The Big Three, mentioned above, continued to write and in addition to them many more novelists came into the field and experimented with new themes in their works. They are so many in number that they cannot be listed out. Yet, the following are the important novelists, besides the above mentioned trio, who belong to more recent times.

K.A. Abbas (_Inquilab_), Bhabani Battacharya (So many Hungers, Music for Mohini, He Who Rides a Tiger, A Goddess Named Gold, Shadow from Ladakh), Anita Desai (Cry, The Peacock, Voices in the city, Bye-Bye Blackbird, Where Shall We go This Summer?, Fire on the Mountain, Clear Light of Day), S.N. Ghose (Cradle of the

The Indian novel in English is rich enough and variegated. Indian writing has detective novels like S.K. Chettur’s Bombay Murder and Kamala Sathianadhan’s Detective Janaki, fantasies like Purushottam Tricamdas’s The Living Mask and the novels of Sudhin N. Ghose, philosophical novels like Dilip Kumar Roy’s The Upward Spiral and Raja Rao’s The Serpent and the Rope and The Cat and Shakespeare, and novels of school life like Narayan’s Swami and Friends and Muriel Wasi’s Too High for Rivalry. Such richness and variety in Indian Writing in English stands as a proof of what Srinivasa Iyengar asserts it to be a distinctive body of writing, and it is likely to grow in volume and vitality. Iyengar also says that there are successes as well as failures in Indian novels, and the failures are more numerous than the successes. Nevertheless, “Novels are published, and they are cleanly of unequal quality. But the best novels - they are not many, but there are some – are very good indeed. It is very true there has occurred no Tolstoy yet, no Dostoevsky, but they will come too; for, always, we must hope that the best is yet to be!” (330).
Anita Desai, herself a novelist, is the first to specifically look at women writers. Surveying women novels, Desai finds them strangely alike and also self-consciously prosaic, which reflect the silence, the falsehoods and the shackles of the past. For Naik, a critic of Indian fiction, quite a few novels deal with politics in artistic terms rather than presenting political ideas. However, many of them are haunted by artificiality.

The main purpose of Meenakshi Mukherjee’s *The Twice-Born Fiction (1971)* is the assessment of the literary achievement of deserving novels by exploring how Indian themes have been treated from a technical point of view – or, in Mark Schorer’s words, present themselves as ‘achieved content’. As Meenakshi Mukherjee, in her novel *The Twice-Born Fiction (1971)* says that novels must be rooted in history and also in the concept that man is shaped by the changing forces around him.

The introductory remarks of S.C. Harres in his two-volume study, *The Fire and the Offering (1977, 1978)*, show little patience with early Indian response to Indian Writing in English. He feels that it was paralysed by parochialism and irrelevant squabbling as well as emotionalism and nationalism. This outspoken verdict appears somewhat harsh but Harrex fortunately presents us with an unprejudiced and balanced view on notable studies of the 1960s and early 1970s from which he then departs to outline of three prerequisites to be heeded by the non-Indian critic that he wants to follow. There is, first of all, the need to take into consideration the Indian cultural and social background. Next, it is necessary to take into account these ‘mixed allegiances’ and the ‘mixed sensibility’ of the individual Indian writer. Finally, he must assess an author’s style as a fundamental test of his originality in handling his subject matter with its wide range of Indian themes. The authors chosen for our study do satisfy the prerequisites prescribed by Harrex.
Imayam, one of the two writers taken for the study, belongs not to Indian writing in English, but to novel writing in Tamil literature. The last quarter of the nineteenth century may be called the birth of the Tamil novel, in which period was published *The Pratapa Mudaliar Saritram* (History of Pratapa Mudaliar) by Samuel Vedanayagam Pillai. Vedanayagam Pillai’s object, as stated in his preface to the first edition of the novel, was to supply the want of prose works in Tamil. In this novel, which he calls a prose epic, he portrays the life of the people, their manners, habits, conventions and many other systems of life. The novel is a bold departure from the conventional prose in terms of theme, plot-construction and style. It is a long story in the first person narrative, depicting the hero as an educated gentleman of wit and humour and narrating the sequences of his birth, education, marriage and many other important events of his life. It is, indeed, a forerunner of Tamil prose literature that developed in later times.

Next significant work in Tamil prose fiction is *Kamalambal Saritram* (The History of Kamalambal), a novel written by Rajam Iyer and published in 1896. It was the first serialized novel in Tamil, which appeared in Viveka Cintamani, a Tamil monthly magazine. It is a realistic portrayal of the life-style of the South Indian Brahmins of the times. The plot, theme and characterization significantly reflect the writer’s richness of thought.

Another important Tamil novel written in the late nineteenth century is Mathavaih’s *Padmavati Saritram* (History of Padmavati) which depicts the story of two cousins, stressing the aspects of good education in general, and women’s education in particular. In *Muthu Meenakshi*, another novel published in 1903, Mathaviah advocates widow’s remarriage. *Muthu Meenakshi* is a bold attempt in depicting the problems connected with remarriage in an orthodox Hindu Brahmin
family. Mathavaiah portrays how the social conditions and caste system forced the socially suppressed people to embrace other religions.

Besides these novels, there are also a few other significant novels written early in the history of Tamil fiction, among which mention should be made about Madhivanan by Sooriya Narayana Sastrigal (Parithimar Kalaigner), Gunaseelan by V. Nataraja Iyer, Vinodha Saritram (Strange History) by D.G. Narayanasamy Pillai, Vijayalakshmi by Devakunchery Ammal, and Natesa Sastrigal’s Deena Dayalu and The Two Orphaned Children. The last mentioned one was a turning point in the history of Tamil fiction in the sense that its theme relating to detective aspects sowed the seeds for future detective fiction in Tamil.

For about three subsequent decades in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century detective novels, Tamil translations of other language fiction and adaptations from other literature dominated Tamil fiction. The detective fiction of Vaduvoor Aarani Kuppusamy Mudaliar and J.R. Rangaraja Mudaliar had an impact on Tamil fiction. Meenakshi Sundarammal denounces the dowry system and other age-old customs and faiths of the Brahmin community in her novel Jayaseelan. Subjects encouraging widow remarriage and discouraging child marriage became the favourite themes. Maraimalai Adigal, in Kokilampal’s Kadithangal [Letters of Kokilampal], advocates intercaste marriage and widow remarriage.

During India’s freedom struggle many Tamil novels like K.S. Venkataraman’s Tesa Baktan [The Patriot] were written to encourage women to take part in Indian freedom. Women, like Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, made efforts to abolish the ‘Devadasi’ system through legislation. Tasikal Muga Valai [The Trap of the Prostitutes] was written by Moovalur R. Ramamirthammal in 1936, in which
prostitution which affects both domestic and social life is strongly condemned. The Devadasis and their miserable social conditions find a good expression in this novel.

Kalki’s *Kalvanin Kaathali* [Dacoit’s lover], published in 1938, portrays how the anti-social elements in the guise of respectable men exploit young men like Muthaiyan. Kalki’s second novel *Thyaga Boomi* [Land of Sacrifice] criticises untouchability as a social evil. Kalki dominated the literary world for nearly two decades to such an extent that the period came to be called the Age of Kalki. Kalki’s novels *Thyaga Boomi, The Solaimalai Ilavarasi* [Princess of Solaimalai], *Makudapathi* and *Alai Osai* [The Sound of the Waves] are even today very popular among novel readers. *Alai Osai* will occupy an everlasting place in Tamil literature. Kalki’s picturesque descriptions, simple style, story narration and characterization are unsurpassed. Kalki’s historical novels, *Parthipan Kanavu* [Parthipan’s Dream], *Solaimalai Ilavarasi* and *Ponniyin Selvan*, actually take the readers back to the corresponding period of Indian history. He won the Sahitya Academy Award for his *Alai Osai*.

Kalki, whose real name is R.Krishnamoorthy, is a legendary Tamil novelist. The mere mention of the name 'Kalki' is enough to send most of the Tamil readers of yesteryears into a journey of nostalgia. Kalki is a name that sparks off memories of kingdoms and the saga of war, patriotism, love and loyalty that go into the making and perishing of those kingdoms in the Cholas dynasty period in South India. Those who have read the novels by Kalki would instantly go into a nostalgic voyage of the scenes as depicted by Kalki at the very mention of his name. For many decades Kalki’s novels were the craze of Tamil readers. Some of Kalki’s masterpieces were serialized in the Tamil magazines *Ananda Vikatan* and later on in *Kalki*. 
Parthiban Kanavu, another famous novel of Kalki, is the story of the realisation of Chola King Parthiban's dream of re-establishing the Chola kingdom, which was in the clutches of Pallava king Narasimhavarman. Parthiban before his death expresses his dream to his son Vikraman who is very young then. A monk vows to Parthiban that he would make Vikraman fulfil his dream. Vikraman after growing up falls in love with a beauty under mysterious circumstances; but he later fulfils his father's dream of an Independent Chola with Uraiyyur as its Capital.

Kalki’s Ponniyin Selvan is a famous twentieth century Tamil historical novel written in five volumes. It narrates the story of Arulmozhivarman [later crowned as Rajaraja Chola]. Ponniyin Selvan [Ponni’s Son] dealt with the fortunes of the Chola Empire during the 10th century. It was serialized in the Tamil periodical Kalki. The serialization went on for three and a half years and every week its publication was awaited with great interest.

Akilan the famous Tamil writer has been one of the most favourites to many Tamilians because of his realistic writing. Akilan was a Gandhian in thoughts and was keenly interested in the upliftment of the society. So he quit his college studies and followed Gandhiji's steps in India's struggle for freedom.

In 1975 Akilan’s novel Chithirapavai, a contemporary social novel, won the prestigious Jnanapit award. This work has been translated into all Indian languages. In 1963 his historical novel Vengaiyn Mainthan [Leopard’s Son] won the Sahitya Akademi award of the Government of India. Engepogirom? [Where are we going?] a peculiar socio-political novel of him won the Raja Sir Annamalai Award in 1975. His children’s book Kananana Kannan [Dear Kannan] was given the special prize by Tamilnadu Educational Department. His works Kayal Vizhi, Nenchin Alaigal [Waves
of the Heart], Sakthivel, Nilavanile [In Blue Sky], Nala Pagan [Good Cook] all won prizes from the Department of Tamil Language Development.

Other significant Tamil novelists belonging to pre-independent period are Devan, C.N.Annadurai and Narana Duraikannan. Devan’s Mr.Vedantham, Justice Jegannathan and Kalyani are well known novels. Annadurai’s Kopotipura Kathal [Love at Kapotipura] was published in 1939. It describes how young daughters of poor parents, given in marriage to aged rich widowers, suffer in life. Narayana Duraikannan’s Uyiroviam [Live Portrait] depicts the negative attitude of Tamil parents to inter-caste marriages.

Recent Tamil novelists took up social themes connected with social problems, like casteism, untouchability and corruption. Akilan, Mu. Varadarajan, Jayakanth, Thi. Janakiraman and Na. Parthasarathy are some such important novelists belonging to this period. Akilan’s skill in handling his themes, narration of events and treatment of social problems are well expressed in his Snehiti [Girl Friend], Valvu Enge? [Where is Life?], Pavai Vilakkku [The Lady Lamp], Pudhu Vellam [New Flood], Ponmalar [Golden Flower] and Enge Pogirom? [Where are we Going?].

Dr. Mu. Varadarajan is both a thinker and critic, whose novels analyse the root cause of social problems. He is highly critical of social evils. His Alli, Karithundu [Charcoal Piece], Agal Vilakku [Small Lamp], Kayamai [Dishonesty] are some of the novels, which have earned him a special place among Tamil novelists. He is also known as Mu. Va. He is a Tamil scholar, author and academician. He was a prolific writer whose published works include thirteen novels, six plays, two short story collections and eleven essay anthologies. He was the head of the Tamil Department at the University of Madras. In 1961, he was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for
Tamil for his novel *Agal Vilakku*. During 1971-74, he was the vice-chancellor of Madurai Kamaraj University.


Ko. Vi. Manisekaran, Indra Parthasarathi, Neela Padmanaban, Nanjil Nadan and Sundara Ramasamy are some other Tamil novelists who have become popular among the novel-reading public.

Sujatha has earned a special place in Tamil fiction as a writer of science fiction and detective fiction. He is a great innovator in style and his novel themes astound both the young and old alike. He had penned with his wife's name. Sujatha's Tamil literary career spanned more than four decades. An engineer by profession, he was proficient in the language of technology. Widely read and knowledgeable, he presented his stories in simple Tamil.

His popularization of technology was one of his greatest contributions - starting with his Silicon Chip writing in *Dinamani Kadhir* and *Yen Yedharku Eppadi* [Why, What for, How?] in *Junior Vikatan*. At one point, his writings appeared in numerous Tamil weeklies and journals simultaneously, including *Ananda Vikatan, Kumudam, Kungumam, Kalki* and *Dhinamani Kadhir*. His notable movies included *Vikram, Thiruda Thiruda* [Thief Thief], *Boys* and *Sivaji*. Most of his early novels were made as movies, including *Priya, Gaytri, Karaiyellam Senbagapoo* and *Anandha Thandavam* [Dance of Joy], among others. Among his popular novels are *Pirivom Sandhipom* [We will Part and Meet] [not related to the recent movie of the same name], *Rettham Ore Niram* [Blood is of Same Colour], and *Kolaiyudhir Kaalam*.
[Murder Season]. Sujatha received an award from Government of India's National Council for Science and Technology in 1993 for making science accessible to the public through his books, magazine contributions and other media.

Some of the domestic novels by women writers, like Lakshmi, Rajam Krishnan, Sivasankari, Indumathi and Anuradha Ramanan, have found an important place in the history of Tamil fiction.

Lakshmi Thiripurasundari studied in Stanley Medical College and became a doctor. She used ‘Lakshmi’ as her pseudonym. Her first short story to be published was Thagunda Thandanaya? [An apt punishment?]. Her first novel was Bhavani. After completing her medical education, she practised at Chennai. Lakshmi was a prolific writer who has published hundreds of short stories and many novels. Her novels Penn Manam [Feminine Mind] and Mithila Vilas [Mithila Palace] were awarded the Tamil Valarchi Kazhagam prize. In 1984, she was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel Oru Kaveriyai Pola [Like the river Kaveri]. Her Kanchanaiyin Kanavu [Dream of Kanchana] and Penn Manam are made into Tamil films.

Sivasankari, born in 1942 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu is a popular Tamil writer and activist. Her writings examine critical situations in society and in personal lives in the face of a fast-changing world. Her novel Oru Manithanin Kathai [Story of a Man] about a drunkard and his plight made her famous overnight and endeared her to Tamil readers. It was subsequently made into tele-serial. She has thirty novels, thirteen travelogues and one hundred and fifty short stories to her credit. Many of them have been translated into English and other languages. Her ambitious project Knit India through Literature has attracted national attention and is receiving the support of the Sahitya Akademi. Among her works Oru Manithanin Kathai, Avan [He], Nandu, [The
crab] Verillatha Marangal [Rootless Trees], Amma Sonna Kathaikal [Stories told by Mother] are considered the best. She is a recipient of numerous awards such as Kasturi Srinivasan Award in 1983; Raja Annamalai Chettiyar Award in 1988; Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award in 1990 and Tamil Annai Award.

Anuradha Ramanan was one of the greatest literary giants Tamilnadu has ever produced. Throughout her literary career, she has penned nearly thousand short stories and eight hundred novels, which is quite unbelievable. Some of her novels have been taken up as story plots for Tamil movies; of them we can name Sirai [Prison], Kootupuzhukkal [Cluster of Worms]. Oru Malarin Payanam [Journey of a Flower] and Oru Veedu Iru Vasal [One House Two Entrances]. Apart from this, great deals of television serials have also been based on the stories of Anuradha Ramanan. A Telegu film based on her story, Oka Baarya katha [Story of a Wife], has won five awards. The Kannada movie Mithilaiyil Seethai [Seethai in Mithila] is also based on Anuradha’s storyline.

Anuradha Ramanan has won a number of awards and prizes, including the Rajiv Gandhi Award, The Queen of Novels award, Awards for best Novelist, Queen of Novels, Gold Medal from Idhayam Pesukirathu and so on. In 1978, she received a gold medal for her contribution to Tamil literature from the former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran. Sirai [Prison], published in Ananda Vikatan, won a gold medal for the best short story.

Since the 1990s the post modern writers emerged as major figures, including Jayamohan, S. Rama Krishnan, Charu Nivedita. The critically acclaimed works include Vishnupuram by Jayamohan, Ubapandavam by S. Ramakrishnan, Zero Degree by Charu Nivedita. There are many other writers of Tamil novels; to list all of
them is not easy. Some write serialized fiction in the weekly or monthly Tamil journals.

The aim of the researcher in giving out brief histories of fiction both in Indian writing in English and Tamil novel is just to give a brief introduction to the most common trends in the respective fields and also some ideas about the most important novelists, and not to give an exhaustive list of novelists and their works.

In the following few pages, brief details about the lives of the authors chosen for this research and the titles of their popular novels are given.

Mulk Raj Anand was born on 12 December 1905 in Preshwar in the North West Province of pre-partition India. His father Lal Chand Anand was a craftsman who later became a Head Clerk in the British Indian Army. His loving mother, Iswar Kaur, was from a strong and sturdy peasant family of Central Punjab. She incessantly fed her son with the fables and folk tales drawn from mythology. This incited his imaginative talent which has, later, been expressed in his novels. His mother’s religious faith was very peculiar that she worshipped all gods and godmen with equal devotion. Her pooja room was adorned with Krishna, Christ, Guru Nanak and the like. But her pantheistic view did not impress Anand.

The supercilious nature of the parsons and the pot-bellied priests evoked his disrespect for God. When he was eleven, Kausalya, his playmate and cousin, died of consumption at the age of nine. The dire incident startled him who was not able to reconcile to this situation. Further, the death of his uncle, Pratap and his beloved aunt, Devaki, intensified his sadness and his doubt about the existence of God. Such loss of lives forced him to find the meaning of life and death. He thought that death is inevitable and even God has no power to stop it. So, he undermined the religious institutions.
Anand was physically weak. So, his playmates did not include him with them in their games and sports. This aloofness gave him an opportunity to develop his imaginative power and to enjoy the scenery in nature such as brooks, valleys, trees, jungles, plantations and fields.

At the time of Jallian Walla Bagh massacre, Anand was given eleven strikes of the cane on his back by the Police, when he broke the curfew order innocently. This inhuman atrocity stirred him up to hate the oppressive imperialists and also his father who worked submissively under them.

When he was a young boy, he ceaselessly interpolated his father who was totally irritated by his inquisitiveness. His father did not like his son raising questions. He wanted him to secure high rank in his examination in order to get a prestigious government job.

Anand studied at Khalsa College, Amritsar, and obtained his B.A (Hons) Degree from Punjab University. During his college study, he was a voracious reader, acquiring thorough knowledge in Urdu, English and continental literatures. He read Marx, Gorky, Hugo and Heine. He had intimate relationship with Iqbal, poet and philosopher. Anand fell in love with Yasmin, the sister-in-law of his friend, Noor Mohammed. Her parents by force married her off to an elderly railway guard. Even after her marriage, they met often secretly and planned for elopement, which her husband came to know. This led to the secret and sudden death of Yasmin. To escape from the wrath of his outrageous father, Anand went to London to do research work for which his mother pawned her jewels to meet his expenses.

In 1925, he started his research work in philosophy for a Doctor’s Degree under the guidance of Professor G.Dawes Hicks, an eminent Gandhian scholar. Soon he understood that his collegiate education received in India was miserably inadequate.
for doing research in philosophy. He should have learnt Sanskrit and Indian
philosophy. It was highly essential and important to have very good knowledge in
Indian philosophy in order to understand British philosophy. So, he started studying
many original texts and their interpretation on Indian philosophy. During this period,
he fell in love with Irene, a science Professor’s daughter who was impressed by him
and the Indian life. She inspired him to write about himself. He wrote his long
confession about 2000 pages and read out earnestly to her at the weekends. She
promised to marry him, if the book was published. But Anand failed to find a
publisher to print this huge volume. So, he could not marry her.

Anand was awarded the Ph.D Degree in 1930 for the thesis on the thoughts of
Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Russell. He attended the seminars on Russell, Hegel,
Bradeley and Kent. He went through Darwin’s theory ‘Origin of Species’ where he
found the denigration of the Biblical conception of Genesis, and his study of Einstein,
Eddington, Freud and Jung denied any relationship between religion and science. The
atheistic view grew intensely in him. He developed an intimate friendship with
eminent scholars like D.H.Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, F.R.Leavis, Middleton Murray,
Herbert Read, F.C. Barlett, C. D. Broad, Bonamee Dob’ee, Eric Gill, Anand
Coomaraswamy and others.

Anand married Kathleen Van Gelder, a theatrical actress, in 1932. She gave birth
to Rajani. He returned to India in the same year. He paid visits to Mahabalipuram and
Konark. He stayed in Sabarmathi Ashram to get necessary suggestion from Gandhi to
shape his first novel, Untouchable. He fell in love with Anil de Silva in Bombay. She
insisted him to start the Modern Architects and Artist’s Group and the art magazine.
Her beauty enslaved him and he went back to London to divorce Kathleen in order to
marry Anil de Silva. When he came back, he was terribly shocked to know that she
got married to a Frenchman. He received severe mental upset and became a nervous wreck. Later he married Shirin Vajifdar, an Indian dancer.

In 1935, he wrote his second important novel, *Coolie*, which earned him name and popularity to flourish in many countries especially Russia and European Countries. He attended the International Writers’ Conference against Fascism, as a representative of India. He established, with the help of his friends, Indian Progressive Writers’ Association.

In 1936, Anand travelled to the Republican Spain to join the International Brigade without a passport. He made very good acquaintance with Stephen Spender, Ralph Fox, Cuthbert Worsly, Malraux and other famous writers. In 1938 Anand was busy in organizing the Progressive Writers’ Movement, which very soon spread to almost all Indian languages. *Indian Literature*, the organ of the Movement, was edited by him. In 1939, he stayed in London and was unable to return to India as the Second World War broke out. During his stay, he worked with Krishna Menon to turn the attention of the British people in favour of liberty for India. After World War II was over, he returned to India and stayed in Punjab for a few years. He published *The Village* trilogy, *The Barbar’s Trade Union and other Stories, The Village, Two Leaves and a Bud, The Golden Breath and Persian Painting*.

In 1948 he travelled to Russia where his novels and stories were read and admired. He attended Paris Peace Conference where his passport was seized for the declaration of the Bombay group of the Progressive Writers’ Association. One of his friends helped him in getting a new passport valid for all countries and this helped him attend World Peace Council in Berlin. He was awarded International Peace Prize of the World by the Peace Council in 1952 for promoting peace through his writings and lectures. He organized Asian Writers’ Conference in Delhi in 1955. He represented
delegations of Indian Writers to the first Anglo-Asian writers Conference held in Tashkent in 1955 and the second Conference held in Cairo. He attended Australian Peace Conference in Melbourne. He gave lectures at many places. He extended his supporting hands in the formation of the Bureau of Anglo-Asian Writers in Colombo.

In 1963, the poet Nicholas Guillian and Professor Marinello invited him to give lecture in the University of Havana. He lectured in various Indian Universities on his theory of comprehensive historical humanism. Anand had devoted more time to the editing of Marg, a high class art journal which dealt with painting, architecture, sculpture, dance, drama music, art and craft. As J.D. Bernall says, he showed it in the living art of music, the dance and the theatre.

As the President of the Lalit Kala Akadami and as the founder editor of the reputed art journal, Marg, he bestowed his valid service to art for which he was honoured with Padma Bushan Award in 1967. He published his Morning Face which won him the Sahitya Akadamy Award for 1971. Anand was an active man rendering his immense service in many fields and his valuable contributions in those fields made him hold responsible positions.

Of Anand’s novels,

….it can be said that they come fresh from contact with the flesh and blood of everyday existence. He has no laborious psychological or ideological preoccupations, and he is content to let his characters live and speak and act. In his work there are no merely sentimental portraits, and generally he presents his characters with a lively curiosity and also a deep compassion.

(Iyengar, 356)

Imayam is the pen name of V.Annamalai, a school teacher from South Arcot District, Tamilnadu. Koveru Kzhudaigal (1994) translated as Beasts of Burden,
Arumugam (1999) and Sedal (2006), are the novels written by Imayam. He has also written collections of short stories titled Manbaaram (2004) and Video Mariamman (2008). He has been honoured with the Agni Akshara Award and the Tamilnadu Progressive Writers’ Association Award.

Generally speaking, Imayam’s stories revolve around human relationships and the feelings and instincts that direct such relationships, which are not usually the same throughout one’s life. They change according to situations and surroundings.

According to Imayam, the truth of life may dawn upon a man in different ways. Truth does not depend upon what we see with our eyes or know from our intellect. What lies at the bottom of our hearts that results in various experiences, dreams and horrors is also the display of truth. In Imayam’s novels there is something more than what is shown to the eyes or the show of experience. The minds of his characters act always in perpetual fear born out of the prospect of failure, because the salvation for their problems does not lie in their hands. Why, even their life does not lie in their hands. It lies in the hands of people of wealth and power and it is diseased by the caste, class and creed.

In Imayam’s novels what the characters speak in their everyday speech is natural and not artful or artificial. Their each and every word is what their experience teaches them or makes them speak. A creator creates not only the story but also the speech of his characters. The story and speech in the case of Imayam are his own.

Mulk Raj Anand and Imayam are significant for the people-centred writing, especially the underprivileged. This thesis is not an attempt to compare them on the literary scale but to highlight their uniqueness of theme in different backdrops and in different social milieu. While many talks and writings are about progressive India, these two endeavoured to shed light on the underdeveloped areas. The age-old agony
of the socially backward people is rather frankly dealt by Anand in *Untouchable* and *The Road* through the protagonists Bakha and Bikhu, sweater and road worker, respectively. The fallacies of economic class system is explicit in *Two leaves and a Bud* and *Coolie*, where though born in upper caste, Munoo (*Coolie*) and Gangu (*Two Leaves and a Bud*) are impoverished while Buta (*Two Leaves and a Bud*) is placed high in rank despite his lower birth in a lower caste. *Untouchable* also highlights religious fallacies as does *Death of a Hero*, wherein Anand lashes out at all religions and their practices. In *Beasts of Burden*, Imayam brings to light the effects of changing times on one of the low community of washermen. In *Arumugam*, through the eyes of the protagonist, we come across how the poor have been forced into prostitution and his own search for love and affection. *Sedal* shows the religious practice of *pottukattu* being forced on a young girl, by marrying her off to the goddess for the sake of the welfare of the village that she belongs to. Through these strong stories, Anand and Imayam drive home the least discussed but rather grave issues of the society.

After defining the title of the thesis, brief histories of Indian English novels as well as the novels in Tamil literature are traced. Also brief outlines of certain important novels, which are not primary sources for this research, are given followed by the lives and works of the authors chosen for this study.

The next chapter is devoted to the treatment of the socially depressed classes.