Chapter -V

CONCLUSION
Conclusion

Indian literature in English and its historical evolvement had happened alongside the consolidation of British imperialism in India. There however exists ‘a variety of opinion about the first definitive Indian text in English, although critics come to the agreement that history of Indian English literature dates back to at least the early 19th century. Its beginnings had received their impetus from three sources the British government’s education reforms, the endeavour of missionaries and the response and acceptance of English language and literature by upper-class Indians.

The basic historical perspective of English Indian literature is an effort to contextualize the growth and rise of this genre from its inception to its present day glory. First, there were the educational reformers called forth by both the charter Act of 1813 and the 1835 English Education Act of William Bentick. In an endeavour to rectify and equalize some of the materialistic and ravenous, hence compromising, practices of the East India Company servants, the English parliament had approved the Charter Act, which had made England responsible for the educational betterment of the natives. The subsequent English Education Act, prompted by Thomas Babington Macaulay’s ill-famed ‘minute’ on Indian education, made English the medium of Indian education and English literature a disciplinary subject in Indian educational institutions) Indian English literature has natured from a sapling to a firmly rooted tree that bloom with its entirely still awaiting its yet-to-come metamorphosis. Indians however, did not take to penning in English in a day it look umpteen historical events and illustrious and notable personalities to bring Indian writing in English to its contemporary eminence.

Indian literature in English however possesses a relatively recent history; it is actually only one and half centuries old. History of Indian English literature enlightens readers that the first book written by any Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled Travels of Dean Mahomet; Mahomet’s travel treatise was published in 1793 in England In the contemporary Indian Scenario, the country possesses a sizeable number of populace that has English as either primary or secondary language of means of communication. This is precisely because India had once served as a colony of the British Empire; for close to 200 years, thus calling for a
very precise and exact solid reason for history of Indian English literature and its consistent blooming.

The history of English language and literature in India all starts with the advent of the East India Company (an English company established and formed to develop trade with the new British colonies in India and South-eastern Asia) in India. “The East India Company was formed in 1599, at a meeting participated by leading London Merchants and after more than 150 years, the company held the key to the domination of Bengal and India in general. The Battle of Plassey was fought in 1757, but Lord Clive had refused the liability of Diwani or revenue administration and it was in 1772 that the East Indian Company took over its duty. And still later, precisely in 1790, the liability for administering criminal justice was also bestowed upon the company. The company was however interested in political authority and supremacy only to the degree that such supremacy would manifold and multiply its own dividends.”(1)

Warren Hastings had established the Calcutta Madrasah in 1781, Sir William Jones had established the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 and Sir Thomas Munro too was much bemused and stupefied by the Indian ancient cultural wonders. These men came to be renamed as the ‘Brahmanised Britons’, because they admired Indian culture and strongly approved the idea for introducing Western civilization or Christianity into India in any form.

History of English literature in India, had by this time (1813), taken much gigantic proportions, with the nascent buds beginning to bloom in a yet unsure direction. However, in such a context, a token grant of rupees one lakh per year was granted for education and the proposal was to promote only oriental education. Printing presses in different parts of the country and books in the vernacular language as well as in English were begun to be issued since the beginning of the 18th century. Together with grammars, dictionaries and translations the printing presses also brought out the first ever newspaper James Augustus Hickey’s Bengal Gazettee (1780) and others came after in due course.

Last to arrive in the illustrious history of Indian English literature were the private schools that imparted English education. Such schools had been started as early as 1717 at Cuddalore near Madras, 1718 in Bombay (by Richard Cobbe) and 1720 in Calcutta, endowed by the Thomlinsons, closing in the establishment of Hindu College in 1817.
Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his friends David Hare and Sir Edward Hyde East, it became the presidency college in 1855, still recognized as one of the premier educational institutes. Western education was spreading fast in different parts of India and was doing much better than the institutions imparting oriental education. The orientalists and the Anglicists continued to wrangle but it was quite evident that the former were steadily losing ground, and Macaulay’s celebrated ‘Minute’ decided the issue at last.

History of English literature in India was thus gaining its higher grounds by being uplifted and rejuvenated under the still good-hearted Britishers.

On 7th March, 1835 Lord William Bentinck had also resolved that “the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education along.” From 1835 was thus ushered in the ‘Anglicizing period’ in the historical development of English literature for India.

During the 20 years between 1835 to 1855 the number of those educated in English had been rapidly increasing. It is said that even in 1834-5, 32,000 English books sold in India, as against 13,000 in native Indian languages. The vogue for English books increased and the demand came more from English educated Indians than from the Englishmen in India. Western ways-in manners and customs became current in bigger towns and cities. In 1853 the first railway was established in India, in 1854 the first telegraph line and a modern postal system were inaugurated. Distance was abridged and a common medium of communication was being established. Modern European Scientific techniques were slowly being introduced in India. It was thus thought that India was eventually progressing from its static and secure medievalism to a dynamic modernism.

The renaissance in modern Indian literature begins with Raja Ramohan Roy born in a village Radhanagore in Bengal on 22 May 1772, a singular concatenation, a preordained sequence of events in the life of a man who was destined to act as a bridge between India and England.

Ram Mohan Roy mastered while still young many languages, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and Hindustani besides Bengali. After journeying within and outside India and some business ventures at Calcutta, he served in the districts under two British officials-woodforde and digby and the association was more than merely official. It
was when working with Digby that Rammohan completed his mastery of the English language which he had started learning much earlier. Leaving company service at last; Rammohan returned to Calcutta in 1814, started the Atmiya Sabha, and so launched himself on the consciousness of Calcutta society.

The next few years were a period of hectic activity, tireless endeavour and often acrimonious controversy with Christians and Hindus alike, plight of the widows the darkness of superstition, the miasma of ignorance, the general backwardness of the country, all stirred him to action. While being attracted by Christianity, Rammohan realized with sorrow that the bigoted Christian was as conceited as the bigoted Hindus and was hence equally impervious to rational argument. With the starting in 1821 of Sambad Kaumudi, a weekly paper, Rammohan was able to make a bolder and more sustained onslaught on the forces of prejudice and reaction. By 1823 he had fully matured, sharpened his dialectical instruments, tested his friends, and re-thought his ends and means. If he had experienced disillusion, it had only added in the words of his biographer Iqbal Singh, “an adult dimension of chastened judgment to his experience and a surer quality of wisdom to his intelligence.”

Renaissance is basically considered as an inspiration from the past and planning to rebuild the future. Thus, in this respect the renaissance in the life “a nation is like the coming of a new age.” It is adolescence turning, into adulthood: romanticism and revolution replaced by reason, narcissism followed by disillusionment.

Renaissance in India, materialized as a concept imitated from the west, punctuate a social reshuffling. Indian renaissance appears as a reawakening of the latent society, quivering with the threats of orthodoxy, dowry and narrow caste system. Moreover, foreign colonialism at that time was an intense blight over India. Several social uprising and organizations were developed to liberate the society from the shackles of superstition. Quiet visibly, literature composed during this period is the clear specimen of the socio-political ethos of the era.

Renaissance in Indian literature introduced a different style of Indian writing in different regional languages which is regarded as worthwhile and meaningful, writings of young writers, new experiments and exploration of new forms and ideas. Indian literacy works started to depict the life of the poor and depressed.

English education thus effected the Indian cultural, religious and literacy traditions in such a way that there was a great awakening transforming Indian ways
and tradition. This awakening yielded beneficial results in the realm of literature; for there was a rejuvenation of Indian literatures through the adaptation of new literacy forms and genres from the west. Apart from this rejuvenation there was also the beginning of Indian creative effort in English. The evolution of a prose style and its development encouraged the Indian writers to adopt modern forms of literature such as the novel, drama and short story.

In fact, the prose as also the poetry, even in the modern Indian languages was written in a highly anglicized style in the beginning and it look some time before the English garb of these languages could be properly assimilated to their own innate genus. Memorable work has been done in Indo-English literature, particularly in poetry, fiction, philosophy and criticism. “But English as an Indian literary medium wore an artificial look, especially when it was realized that the mother tongue satisfied the inner urges for expression better than any other medium, it will have to play an important and vital role as the medium for interpreting our culture and philosophy and for presenting creative renderings of our ancient and modern classics to the world.”

The novel is the genre of imaginative literature. It is the dominant literary form. The novel as its best has provided a matchless illusion of reality, a sense both of the moment and of time passing, and a compelling vividness as of shared experience. It is the art of everyday life. The novel gives artistic form to the relationship of man and society. In our country it was conspicuously absent until the Nineteen-Twenties.

When the novel first reached India in the late Eighteenth century and the Nineteenth century with the British it was new in every Indian literature, it seemed quite strange even to those few educated Indians who could read English. But did not long remain on alien form. “During the late Nineteenth century it was absorbed into the Bengal literary tradition, while this century, has witnessed a continuous output of novels in English. The strength and maturity of much Indian writing in English as recorded in the Indo-Anglian novels are beyond dispute.”

The progress of Indo-Anglian fiction falls into three natural divisions:
1) Upto 1920- The age of religious and political awakening
2) 1920-1947 – The Gandhian Era
3) 1947 onwards-Independence and after.

This is a convenient way of dividing the progress of Indo-Anglian fiction. “Literary periods cannot well be grouped into watertight compartments and there are
bound to be certain authors who are the fore-runners of the shape of things, to come as such overlapping of tendencies is inevitable.  

The first generation of Indo-Anglian novelists has not show anything like considerable literary merit; most of the novels of this era, seldom if ever, rise above the level of well cultivated mediocrity.

The Indian literary renascence was quickened by the impact of English literature. The Indo-Anglian novels started like a toddling child its steps were faltering but it was trying to imitate the elders and it had abundant energy to learn and improve. Indian writers who, tried to express themselves in English were under the spell of early Victorian models, which they tried to imitate in their own writings.

Indian English novel from its very inception has shown deep involvement with the changing national scene and concern for the destiny of the country. Novel is a vital medium for the expression of the spirit of the age. It can never grow and develop in isolation. The dawn of the 20th century witnessed the advent of a great national awakening in India. The promises made in the Queen’s proclamation of 1858 were not fulfilled and the Indians were discriminated against on the basis of religion, colour and race, and they were denied even fundamental rights and liberties.

The English educated Indians, who were deeply influenced by British liberal thought and democratic traditions, condemned the apathetic and discriminatory attitude of the Government and in order to actively register their discontent they formed the Indian National Congress which played pivotal role in the struggle for the attainment of independence.

The Muslim League, which was formed exclusively as a religious and social organization, joined the mainstream of national life in the wake of the war between Turkey and Britain. The Congress and the Muslim League jointly framed a constitutional scheme with dominion status as its basis. Besides the Congress and the League, various political organizations like the Home Rule Leagues, ardently voiced for political reforms.

The partition of Bengal, the Hindu-Muslim divide and the ruthless suppression of national feelings were the notorious legacies of the British empire, which were vehemently opposed by patriotic Indians. The British Government sensed the trouble and promised responsible government after the turmoils of the First World War subsided. Economic backwardness of millions of Indians, Feudalism which had completely disappeared in European countries, social disparities and the exploitation
of women attracted the attention of social reformers, thinkers, writers and novelists. Christian missionaries, servant of Indian society theosophical society and many social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Moha Govind Ranade, Vivekananda, Swami Ramatirtha etc. castigated these despicable social evils and pleaded for a just social order. A crusade was vigorously launched against these evils and political awakening was correlated with social and economic amelioration of the people of India. The national awakening and the rise of political consciousness gave a great impetus to the growth and development of Indian English novel in its seminal stage. Accounting for the popularity of fiction in the nineteenth century Harish Raizada says: “As the appeal for improving the condition of Indian people and the relationship between India and England was to be made to the English rulers, many of the Indian writers, chose to write in English, and as novel was a literary genre most suited to the proper representation of life and its problems, they took to fiction for expressing their views.”

The English models were the major outside influence on Indian English novel. The technique and pattern of early Victorian novelist was imitated. Indian English novelists tried a variety of subject-social, historical and romantic, and they endeavoured to reveal fundamentally an Indian vision. However, from the viewpoint of technique these novels are not noticeable but they contain the promise of future development. Indian English novelists were still grouping their way at the cross roads of Western models and Eastern subjects. Their works are immature and have only one antiquarian interest for us.

Indian English fiction remained in swaddling cloths during pre-independence time. Novelists who come from different parts of the country, show an awareness of local colour and regional life. However, the Indian English novelists of this period belong to the English educated privileged class. Consequently the themes of their novels are related to characters taken from the feudal class. They write about princes, kings, rajahs, jagirdars, nawabs and zamindars. None of the novelists of this period is the champion of the under dog.

This period is remarkable for the introduction of various fictional genres-the social and realistic novel, historical novel, romances, detective fiction and short story.

Very few novels of this period have achieved even a tolerable measure of artistic beauty. Only a student of literary history would like to turn their pages in want of readability. Technical skill, vivid character portrayal and various artistic methods
of story telling are conspicuous by their absence in the novels of this period. They are weak both in plot construction and characterization. The novelists lean towards didacticism and allegory. The importance “of these novels is only historical as milestones on the path of achievements to come.”

The Indian novel in English which has now established itself as a part of Indian literature has every claim for recognition as a distinct entity. If sometimes its claims as literature or as literature in English are challenged, it is neither the individual writer or the individual critic who is at fault. Since both writing and criticism are still in an experimental stage in the realm of Indian writing in English, neither the writer nor the critic is always sure of what he should expect from the other. “It is this situation which calls for a careful study and reassessment of all the Indian novels in English from the very beginning and the present study confines itself to the novels which appeared during the half-century ending with 1928.”

The First World War ended in 1918 and its impact began gradually to be mirrored in literature from 1921 onwards. The War with its grim carnage had stirred the conscience of the world. Indian writers were doubly affected by the war because, the national consciousness was awakened and liberty and independence were prizes worth fighting and dying for. This idea became more and more marked as the freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi gradually spread over the length and breadth of India. Many a writers wrote the songs of freedom and martyrdom stories and novels of the struggle of independence were written.

The war that shocked humanity had brought forward new sources of inspiration. All these were reflected in the novels and short stories of the Indo-Anglian writers. Like the other periods of change and new ideas, this period also produced bold experiment and exciting successes. Charlatans and imitators jostled with men of originality and genius. It was no time for high polish and excessive refinement. Men were shaken and stimulated by world of events and ideas. There was not a sudden break from the old tradition. Emotions became often consciously dramatic.

Old topics, old technique and old sentimental didactic novels did not disappear. But the realistic novel with a purpose appeared in its own right bringing with it new inspiration, new technique and new vision. The themes also changed.

A man like Mulk Raj Anand would plumb the depth of humble life and reveal dignity or majesty in the manhood of an untouchable or a coolie; another like
R.K.Narayan would depict the middle class man of South India; a Raja Rao or a Karaka would soar into Utopias of the soul and proclaim, “the world’s greatest age begins a new”, yet another like Muhammad Habib or Ahmad Ali would find his solution in weaving sensuous word pictures from “Faery lands forlorn”, another like A.S.P. Ayyar turned away from prevailing ordeals and currents to live with the great men of ancient Indian Gupta period.

This period therefore, marks a great leap forward. There is a clearcut advance in technique, form and style. Raja Rao enriched the novel with highly poetic prose and artistic narration. This period threw up men like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, D.F.Karaka, Ahmed Abbas, Ahmed Ali and many others whose contribution to the growth of the Indo-Anglian novel is of no mean order.

In fact, the Independence Movement in India “was not merely a political struggle, but an all pervasive emotional experience for all Indians in the 1920s and 1930s--- That was an experience that was national in nature.” No Indian writer could avoid this national upsurge. The Indian English novels written during this century deal with this national experience as theme or indirectly as significant public background to a personal narrative.

The ideology of M.K.Gandhi was the moving force behind the National upsurge The Gandhian ideology became not only a philosophy of life but a way of life. The Indian English writer basked in the broad and radiant sunshine of Gandhian ideology. No discussion of Indian English novel would be complete without the assessment of all pervasive influence of the Mahatma.

Meenakshi Mukherjee writes : “The most potent force behind the whole movement, the Mahatma is a recurring presence in these novels, and he is used in different ways to suit the design of each writer. He has been treated variously as an idea, a myth a symbol, a tangible reality, and a benevolent human being. In a few novels he appears in person, in most others his is an invisible presence.”

Mahatma Gandhi’s influence on Indian literature of pre-independence period has been twofold. First, as a writer he evolved chaste, lucid and simple style which influenced contemporary writing. Secondly, he influenced the thematic content. K.R.S. Iyengar remarks : “Besides, whatever the language medium chosen, the stress has been more on simplicity and clarity and immediate effectiveness than on ornamentation or profundity or laborious artistry and this has been as marked in English writing as in writing in the regional languages. As regards the choice of themes and
the portrayal of character, the Gandhian influence has been no less marked. There has been a more or less conscious shift of emphasis from the city to the village or there is implied a contrast between the two-urban luxury and sophistication on the hand and rural modes and manners on the other.”

The Indian political movement was not only a political movement for independence. It combined varied forces which gathered together for ushering India as a sovereign independent nation purged of all social, economic, political and communal evils which had eaten into the very vitals of national life. In point of technique they brought the Indo-Anglian novel within hailing distance of the latest novels of the West. A village granny narrates the dramatic times of the Independence struggle in Raja Rao’s ‘Kanthapura’. The autobiographical form of narration so useful in analyzing the character is well utilised by Raja Rao. The technique here is Conradian; the grandmother in this novel takes the place of Marlow. Mulk Raj Anand used advanced technique of story telling in his novels, at the same time fighting the cause of the poor and the have-nots. The form of these novels showed a clear-cut advance. The novelists have shown considerable knowledge of the form of novel. They have tried all the forms from the traditional novels to the highly advanced novels like ‘Kanthapura’ or ‘Untouchable’.

The Indo-Anglian novelist has by now, understood the emphasis to be laid on character. He has learnt that it is the novelist’s job, “not to describe life, in somerset Maugham’s phrase. “line by line” but, by the exercise of his fastidious selective power, to choose to describe only what is significant. He does not tell all that would be impossible. He suggests by the words he uses, by the gesture he indicates, by the speech he cuts short, he makes us understand what is passing in the minds of those whom he portrays. If he makes us want to know all that he knows, he has mastered the first secret of good novel writing.”

Another change that is discernable in the Indo-Anglian novels of this period is that they are comparatively free from didacticism. Mulk Raj Anand, unluckily, is not free from this propagandist motive “when a conscious purpose, however good, becomes the predominant motive with a literary artist, his creation ceases to be true literature. It becomes only an instrument. Fundamentally, we must realize that literature is the flowering of the creative urge in the artist expressed through words, the spontaneous expression of a mood, emotion or impression of the joy of living or
the anguish of suffering; a creation, like the flower which a tree puts fourth, or the
song which a lark sings as it soars overhead.”

The novelists of before-independence period have tried to make their stories
as realistic as possible. This does not mean that fantastic, impossible to-swallow
stories were not written in pre-independence time.

The Indian English novel of this period deals directly with the national
experience as the central theme. The various momentous events of this turbulent
period-Mahatma Gandhi’s passive resistance movement against the Black Rowalt
Act, the inhuman massacre in Jallianwala Bagh in Amristar, the Khilafat Movement,
the boycott of the foreign goods, the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, the
famous Dandi march, the Government of India Act of 1935, the emancipation
of women, the quit India Movement of 1942 and many other facts of the Gandhian
movement are vividly described in the novels written during pre-independence time.
The novels selected for this research work are Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘Untouchable’ and
Raja Rao’s ‘Kanthapura’ of pre-independence time. ‘Untouchable’ by Mulk Raj
Anand is a story in which, Anand has tackled a very unusual subject, the life of an
untouchable India. ‘Untouchable’ is an unpleasant book in as much as it reveals the
worst putrid sore in the social structure of our Hindu society. The novel is good
inspite of its being unpleasant. “The inference from all this surely is that the reader, if
he asks that a novel should give, in George Eliot’s words, a faithful account of man
and things as they have mirrored themselves in his mind, cannot expect all the time to
have pleasant books and pleasant characters.”

Anand’s first novel ‘Untouchable’ (1935) brings to light the sorrows and
sufferings that caste Hindus inflicted on the untouchables and the outcastes the
scavengers, the leather workers, the washerman, the barbers, the water carries the
grass cutters etc. The novel breathes a strong protest against social injustice meted out
to untouchables. With unflinching realism Anand describes a single day in the life of
an untouchable, Bakha in the town of Bulashan. ‘Untouchable’ is based on the theme
of ostracization and isolation of untouchables from Hindu society. It was a new and
revolutionary theme in novel.

‘Untouchable’, is a story of reform written by a man, who does not follow the
Gandhian ideology. Mulk Raj Anand has described the poor lot of the untouchables
all over India. Mr. Anand inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s nation wide movement
against untouchability. True, Anand does not accept the solution suggested by
Mahatma Gandhi, but there is no gain saying the fact that this novel breathes a strong protest against social injustice meted out to the untouchables and was directly inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s fight against untouchability.

‘Untouchable’ is a novel with a purpose. Anand’s purpose is “to analyse the existentialistic structure of the untouchables predicament.”

The untouchables suffer from the abominable effects of “discrimination, deprivation and a kind of denaturalization of moral and other cherishable values of a civilized society.” The anguish of all untouchables is found in Bakha’s words:

“Unlucky! Unlucky day! What have I done to deserve all this?” The novel is a powerful indictment of the caste system and the writer treats untouchability as a social crime against human dignity by showing the perversion in the caste Hindus. Untouchable “strikes us as the picture of a place, of society, and of certain persons not easily to be forgotten, a picture that is also an indictment of the evils of a decadent and perverted orthodoxy.”

The attainment of independence on 15th August 1947 ushered in a golden era in India. Untouchability was legally and constitutionally abolished. Various constitutional measures were adopted to ameliorate the sad predicament of the schedule castes and tribes. The constitutional safe guards have not yet brought the joy of freedom to the outcastes who form the largest segment of Indian society.

Even the benefit of the policy of reservation in jobs has been availed by a privileged class among the scheduled castes and tribes and the poor and the needy among them are still deprived of the fundamental freedoms and justice.

Another novel which was studied in this research work of pre-independence period is Raja Rao’s ‘Kanthapura’.

‘Kanthapura’ (1938) by Raja Rao is the story of a typical village in the province of Kara in Mysore. The story has no particular hero or heroine. All the people of the village play their part in the story; so we can say that the main character in our novel is Kanthapura itself with its presiding Goddess Kenchamma, with its Himavathy river, with its superstitions, small pox and regular malaria.

Moorthy is the Gandhi man of the village. He advises people about Swarajya, Khadder etc. The Harikatha of Jaya-Ramchar was also about Swarajya and Gandhi movement. The Bade Khan a Mohammedan policeman comes to the village but the villagers ignore him. So Bade Khan goes to the “Skeffington Coffee Estate” and lives
in a hut on that plantation. The Congress movement gradually gathers strength and the villagers take to spinning the Charkha.

K.R.S. Iyengar says, “The sad and simple story of Kanthapura which becomes by the alchemic touch of Raja Rao not merely a ‘Gandhi-Purana’ but an historically authentic saga of the Indian nationalism, invested with the solemn dignity and religiosity of a piece of ancient mythology.”

Kanthapura represents not an isolated village in Mysore but the whole country. Kanthapura portrays the whole drama of Gandhian revolution as enacted in a village in all Frenzy and Fury. The typical feature of real life-its mixture of politics and mythology, its seraphic freedom from the taint of science and technology, its ruggedness and even its vulgarity are faithfully reproduced in terms of art. Even the language has been creatively moulded by the novelist to distil the raciness and the poetic non-stop narration creates at once a sense of dramatic immediacy and personal intimacy.

This is the story of Satyagraha movement lathicharge, and ruined homes. But the old grandmother has narrated this story with realism, irony and humour. Sometimes even rustic vulgarity creeps into her story; but the incidents narrated are vivid and realistic. The author loads the novel with a significance. The heroic sacrifice of the people was not in vain. “Say not the struggle not availed.” The author has portrayed the picture of this struggle “which is not merely, ‘like life’ but ‘true to life’ in a ‘pictorial’ method in which the narrator tells his story as he sees it” a picture that stirs the national consciousness.

The story describes the Satyagraha movement in Kanthapura. Lathi charges have been vividly described and characters have been developed in a life like manner. He has depicted Kanthapura with its superstitions, its jealousy, its caste system, its sincerity, simple heartedness and nationalism. The story is told in a masterly way. It is an epic of noble sacrifice and fortitude for a noble cause. The vividness and artistic perfection of this story stand out clearly. Although the story aims at praising the Congress movement, this propaganda motive does not lessen the artistic blending of harmony, grace and vivid portrayals in the novel.

The Indian English novel of post-independence period has a distinct corpus of works which are conspicuous for revealing the spirit of the age in an authentic manner. Indian society in transition from the old to the new, the traumatic experience of the disintegration of the old values and the instability of the new ones, growing
interest in modernism and progressivism, national awakening and fascination for Gandhi and Gandhian ideology, the rise of realism and humanism, the development of fictional technique and the evolution of various fictional genres are some major characteristics of novel during post-independence period.

The novels of this period show a remarkable advance over the novels before 1920 there has been a major shift in the selection of the themes. The burning problems of the people now occupy Indo-Anglian novelist. He has seen the life as it is actually lived around him and he has consciously tried to depict it in his novel.

The novels thus show the novelists at close grip with life, with its joy, sorrow, hatred and love. This has brought realism to the forefront; long digression and tedious description have started disappearing from the novel and conscious and better artistry is clearly visible in some novels. This period has produced some novels which, in point of technique, can stand in line with front-rank novels of the west.

“The style of the authors shows better polish and grace. The renaissance in Indo-Anglian literature has achieved its flowering. The todding Indo-Anglian novel, inspite of the handicaps, has by now learnt to stand firmly on its own legs.”

The novels of this period show a remarkable advance over the novels before 1920 in respect of the rise of realism and humanism. There has been a major shift in the selection of themes. The major problems confronting the nation now occupy the novelist. He has minutely seen the life around him and he has consciously tried it in his novels. The novelists are at close grip with life, with its joy, sorrow, hatred and love. This has resulted in the rise of realism and humanism.

The novelists of post-independence period lash out among other things at social inequalities, mental inhibitions, moral and religious taboos, economic disparities, political systems and metaphysical subtleties in a spirit of strong, healthy humanitarianism. As the novelists represent the varied caste and communities, various regions and cultural segments, they interpret nearly every aspect of India’s variegated and multitudinous life. “The novel has become a great literary force, a powerful medium for creating social and national awareness and for suggesting ways of changing society. In the post-independence Era novel in English came to maturity and attained full flowering.”

This period has been chosen not only because it was the period which saw the genesis, growth and development of the Indian novel in English but also because most of the novels of this period have been rather unjustly condemned to a state of
obsolescence having been denied the attention they deserve both as individual novels and works of art and as worthy forerunners of the best that was to follow. The achievement of independence by India did not solve many of the most important problems. The people continued to suffer because the class inequality and social injustice were still there after the departure of the English. The partition of the country echoed in the heart of every Indian as a groan; the Hindu-Muslim clashes which followed it were recorded in the history as a bloody tragedy. A similar situation caused the spiritual emptiness of the former active fighters and the growth of pessimism and distrust. “Inevitably, something like an ideological vacuum came into existence, an eminent leader of the Communist party of India, Ajoy Ghosh characterized the situation of 50’s, “old ideas, which stirred those fighting for national freedom, did not have appeal now. No new modern idea had taken their place.” (16)

Modern Indian English novel is thus, preoccupied with the inner life and individual problems of men and women passing through revolutionary changes. The novel in the previous era was mainly concerned with the external aspects of society and little with the exteriorization of the inner landscape of the human psyche.

It has became more subtle, philosophical and psychological. This change in the content of the novel has necessitated the use of new technical devices. Anand deftly uses the device of the stream of consciousness in his first novel untouchable. It does not imply that modern novel is only inward in character. The momentous events which have changed the course of life in India, cross-currents of new ideas, scientific and technological revolution all have left indelible influence on the development of the novel. The inwardness of the individual and conflict between tradition and modernity which are the natural outcome of the epoch making changes in national life.

The year 1947 was the year of great joy and equally great sorrow in Indian history. Independence became an established fact and it stirred new hopes of progress and prosperity for all sections of society. But alongwith freedom and vibrant hopes came the ghastly tragedy of the partition of the country. Bloodshed, unheard of in the history of the world chilled the joy of newly won freedom. The transfer of population was a blot on the conscience of civilized humanity. These glory events deeply stirred the consciousness of the nation and many a writer tried to interpret those momentous and soul-stirring events. Indian English novelist explored the dramatic and fictional potential in the theme of partition.
Modern Indian English fiction is conspicuous for realism. The novelists with observant eyes and understanding hearts have pried deeper and deeper into the varied and multitudinous social life of India. Both the urban and rural areas have been fully explored. The image of India as represented by Anglo-Indian novelists-Meadows Taylor, Rudyard Kipling, John Masters and E.M. Forster is far from realistic. They have presented India as an area of darkness-steeped in ignorance, superstition, occultism, yoga, a country of bejeweled Maharjas, Sadhus, thugs, serpents, giers, elephants a country of grinding poverty and fabulous wealth, slums marring the glory and grandeur of princely states, of Malaria and other fatal diseases, of Taj Mahal and other historical monuments. The Anglo-Indians have missed the soul of India, the deeper currents of Indian politics and the passionate yearnings of her people. The Indian English novelists Anand, Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani, Bhattacharya, Chaman Nahal, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth P.Jhabvala and Anita Desai have touched various facets of Indian social life realistically and have exposed the horrid evils which have been eating into the vitals of social and national life with a view to reforming the existing order.

Some novelists like Anand have an implied purpose and even propaganda of their convictions and committed ideologies but what distinguishes the entire corpus of modern novel is the prominent note of humanism. An important offshoot of realism is the novelist concern with the theme of human suffering which has been the most common place theme of all literature. In Indian English fiction suffering has been broadly dealt with. Mulk Raj Anand describes human suffering in untouchable in terms of social injustice and class inequality.

Modern Indian English novel is realistic in a comprehensive term. The novelist explores and examines the relationship of man with his fellow men, vis-à-vis the social forces at work around him in all their bewildering complexity. Thus, it realistically covers the entire gamut of human experience. The novelists minutely analyse the significant and farreaching changes in individual passing through a period of over all transition. His observant and penetrating eye watches the evolution of new values and new morality. The politicians and social reformers do not feel the subtle changes in man’s individuality and his natural urge for assimilating new values and new morality. The creative artist alone is interested in these basic changes. Hence in these novels the basic changes in the individuality of man and the evolution of new values and new morality is integral to the theme, action and characterization.
All the novelists of this period from Anand to Sulman Rushdie have sincerely and realistically recorded these revolutionary changes in human outlook and, thus, they have envisioned a new social order.

The post-independence novel has shown signs of maturity from the viewpoint of technique, style and language. American and European models began to exercise their influence on novel K.R.S. Iyengar remarks: “Before 1947, the English models were the major outside influence on the Indian novel. After independence, however, novelists in India have shown themselves susceptible to the influence of American and European (especially) Russian models, and also models from oriental countries.”

The advance in fictional technique is a landmark in the history of Indian English novel. The novel had emerged as “a living and evolving genre and is trying in the hands of its practitioners, a fusion of form, substance and expression that is recognizably Indian, yet also bearing the marks of universality.”

In the intellectual circles, particularly among the writers, alongside with the feeling the disillusionment, the declining trends increased. There appeared an ideological confusion which brought about a certain disintegration among the progressive writers who had appeared earlier as a rallying basis of the literary life of India. The spiritual crisis was also intensified by an impact of depression, survived by the creative intelligentsia of Europe that continued to remain for India as a standard of high culture.

Raja Rao’s ‘The Serpent and the Rope’ (1960), the story element is almost threadbare, or to put it the way Raja Rao has packed page after page of his reflections in this story to such an extent that the whole becomes mystifying dull. Raja Rao’s first successful attempt at making Indian mysticism and vedantic philosophy the subject of a regular novel. The Serpent and the Rope are the symbols of illusion and reality in Indian tradition and it is Raja Rao’s fond hope to weave into his novel his ideas regarding illusion and reality.

The abstract and philosophical theme has been brilliantly illustrated through myths and symbols. The Serpent and the Rope contains the myths of Shiva, Parvathis and Nandi, Radha, Krishna and Durvasa; the legends of Satyakama and Ramadevi; the Chinese fable of Wang-Chu and Changyi and the classical myths of Demeter, Poseidon, Ulysses, Tristan and Iseult.
“The Serpent and the Rope’ is a truly philosophical novel in that in it the philosophy is not in the story the philosophy is the story.”(19)

It is one of the finest novels in Indian English literature. “Its philosophical profundity and symbolic richness, its lyrical beauty and descriptive power, and its daring experimentation with form and style make it a major achievement. Few Indian English novels have expressed the Indian sensibility with as much authenticity and power as ‘The Serpent and the Rope’ has.”(20)

Krishna Kripalani wrote about the achievement of independence by India, “No doubt this long-hoped for consummation of national aspirations was hailed with great enthusiasm and joy by the people, but this jubilation was soon submerged in the great agony of partition with its insensate orgy of slaughter and the uprooting of millions of people from their homeland.”(21)

These blood-stained events immediately attracted the attention of Indian writers. The subject of India’s partition was also reflected in Indian English novel; first of all, it is connected with the names of Khushwant Singh and Manohar Malgonkar.

A Bend in the Ganges (1964) by Manohar Malgonkar is one of the most powerful novels dealing with the background of Indian independence and the communal riots in the Punjab Manohar Malgonkar has tried to present before us a powerful story against the background of the troublesome times of India. It is a gripping novel in which events move fast and the reader is kept in suspense to the last page.

Indian literature to be genuine must have an intimate contact with life, its joys, sorrows and smiles. The social novel in Indo-Anglian literature has made satisfactory progress. But we have very few good historical novels. It is a field still unexploited.

“There is a great scope for historical literature. But alas! The pausity of realiable source-material is very great. Throughout the ages, our national habits have been against us in our efforts to produce historical literature. Conjecture has monopolized the field of history. No one ever kept good notes or diaries. This is the case even now. If any keep diaries, the record is far too egoistic to be helpful to historians. Age-long untidiness and negligence in this respect have made good history difficult if not impossible in India. But there is great room and a great need for earnest effort in this direction. We should remember, however that propaganda is not history.”(22)
Indian English literature has always been closely connected with the historical fate of the country; it has been nourished and is being nourished by the saps of the native soil, and is no way less valuable than other literatures in Indian languages.

Indian English literature which came into being as a result of the historical contacts of the west and the East and also of the influence of the English culture on the Indian culture, has already existed for about 150 years.

During this period, it has traversed with accelerated speed almost all the stages of development of European literature both from the point of view of forms, and from the point of view of literary methods having inherited from the west new forms and genres, Indian-English literature has remained mostly Indian in essence in content as well as in style. The specific characteristic of the present literature consists in the fact that the English language is only the outer cover of expression, and that the literary philosophy and evocative system remain essentially Indian.

Usually faithful to the ideals of humanism, it is developing within the general current of modern Indian literature a phenomenon very complex and many-sided: “Indian literature has thus always presented a panorama rather than a scene; in a very graphic and precise manner the former president of Sahitya Akademi of India, Krishna Kriplani, describes its characteristics, “one has to look around and up and below, to see its many landscapes in proper perspective. If India is a land of contrasts, of sweltering heat and perennial snow, of fabled ease and brutalizing want of the wisdoms calm and the clamour of ignorance, so is its literature many-faced many-voiced, here primitive, there sophisticated, now inspired now imitative at once sublime and grotesque, exhilarating and trite. It is not easy to answer the question: what is modern Indian literature like? It is like literature nowhere else. A pantheon of many gods, with some of the gods many-headed and many armed.”

Kripalani’s words about Indian literature can be fully applied to the characteristic features of Indian English literature. When he look at the growth of the Indian English novel we discern three important stages of its development. The first major thrust came in the mid-1930s when the big trio-Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao appeared on the scene and made the real beginning of the Indian English novel. The mid-1950’s and 1960’s mark the second important stage when writers like Arun Joshi, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Nayantara Sahgal came out with their works that changed the face of Indian English novel. While with writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Bhabani...
Bhattacharya the focus was on the socio-economic cultural world of the characters, with writers like Arun Joshi and Anita Desai the internal world of their characters became equally, if not more important. The appearance of women novelists added a new dimension to Indian English novel. They, with their feminine sensibility opened up a new vista of human nature and man-woman relationship.

The third important stage in the development of Indian English novel came in the beginning of the 1980’s. It was then that Indian English writing received international recognition, mainly through writers of Indian origin who have settled abroad. A new landmark was created in 1981 when Salman Rushdie won the Booker prize for his novel, Midnight’s children. This was the first well-known international award for an Indian English work since the historic Nobel prize for Tagore’s Gitanjali in 1936. A new interesting feature was added to the scene when in 1993 Vikram Seth was given a fabulous amount as advance against royalty for his novel, A suitable Boy. He thus became India’s First millionaire novelist. Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of Small Things’ brought both the Booker Prize for 1997 and a great deal of money for her. Jhumpa Lahiri’s Pulitzer award and Shauna Singh Baldwin’s Common Wealth award were new feather in the cap. All these things have established beyond doubt that Indian English writers have arrived in a big way.

One salutary development is the growing interest of Indo-Anglian writers in the Indian literary and critical tradition. They were always aware of the European literary tradition and the intelligent use of the English intimacy with English and American literature. What makes Indo-Anglian literature an Indian literature, and not just an overflow of English literature, is the equality of Indianess in the choice of subject, in the texture of thought and play of sentiment, in the organization of the material in terms of ‘form’ and in the creative use of language.

“It is not necessary that a novel should, in geographical terms, comprehend the whole of India. The action may be located in one place, as in Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘Untouchable’ and yet it may create the impression that it could have happened almost anywhere in India.”(24)

The most significant outcome of this development is that Indian English writers are now writing with a new confidence gone are the days of diffident defiance when they had to justify their existence to their critics both at home and abroad. The new breed of novelists, including writers like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Deshpande, Vikram Chandra, Arundhati Roy
and supercilious criticism. David McCutchion, a prominent English critic and writer reads Indo-Anglian writings very sincerely. His comments on Raja Rao’s ‘The Serpent and the Rope’ “Its sensibility and values are uncompromisingly Indian absorbing all experience from the point of one who seeks Brahman.”(25)

Throw light on the same truth as seen by an westerner. His appreciation of the novel as ‘Sastra’ is a tribute to its spiritual worth. He enters deeper into the scenes of the novel and understands very well the religious spirit and the nuances embodying it. He does not fail to realize and appreciate the theme when Rao says :“But life is so much more intelligent than we care to understand Marxism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Hitlerism, the British Commonwealth, the republic of the United States of America; all are so many names for some unknown principle, which we feel but cannot name for all roads, as the Gita says, lead but to the Absolute.”(26)

Impressed by the authenticity of the novel David McCutchion says :“His ‘Serpent and the Rope’ certainly shows one path the ‘truely Indian novel’ may take; it enables us to experience an authentically Indian mind and remains a never-failing source of mantras: ‘there never was anything but Shivoham-Shivoham; I am the Absolute.”

The novel lacks solid reality. But it is more a technical failure than a failure to resent the Indian world in English. No critics will find any false gesture or false feeling in Raja Rao’s details to convey the Indianness. There are passages and scenes in it, in which Raja Rao makes the Indian world real to us through our senses. The novel is a table of India- Indian culture and religion.

Most of the Indo-Anglian novelists have dealt with one aspect or other of the historic non-violent battle for India’s freedom, fought under the banner of the Indian National Congress. A Gandhian myth (with its credo of non-violence) and the anti Gandhian cult (of violence and terrorism) thematically co-exist in post-independence fiction.

Although the militant spirit of the ‘Great Revolt’ of 1857 seems to have dissolved itself into the potentially peaceful force of the Congress, it certainly re-appears in the ‘Forties’ thereby exposing the pattern of inner contradictions and compulsions that characterize some of the modern Indo-Anglian novels.

Manohar Malgonkar’s ‘A Bend in the Ganges’ (1964), presents among the factors responsible for the Indian predicament, the second World War and the
partition of India. The novel attains almost on “epic grandeur” the projecting the image of the generation that became ‘truly lost’ in the ‘forties’.

The principal characters-Gian Talwar and Debi Dayal-seem to represent the two broadly recognizable strands in the Indian National Movement, the naïve and opportunistic adherence to the creed of non-violence and the uncompromising and ruthless practice of terrorist methods. “Much of the action in the novel seems in hinge on the conflict between these two opposing forces, directly or indirectly. Debi Dayal’s father and princely brother-in-law are loyalists to the core whose attitudes towards the whole freedom struggle, violent, or non-violent appear to be clearly dubious. Debi Dayal’s sister, Sundari, is ambivalent in politics, but sentimentally idealistic in her view of personal relations especially in her attachment to Debi Dayal.”

The novel is divided into 36 chapters. These chapters form three neat though informal parts: chapters one to thirteen cover the period between 1937 to 1939 and are set in the West Punjab; chapters fourteen to twenty three are set in the Andamans and cover a period of four years from 1939 to 1942 and chapters between 1842-1947 which brought the country its independence partition.

Manohar Malgonkar’s ‘A Bend in the Ganges’ is one of the most powerful novels dealing with the background of Indian independence and the communal riots in the Punjab. The novelist has tried to present before us a powerful story against the background of the troublesome times of India. “A Bend in the Ganges is a multi-dimensional novel with multiple viewpoints. It may be called a partition novel for the sake of descriptive convenience. There are, however other equally interesting aspects of it that deserve critical attention.”

Malgonkar has explored bold and challenging themes in his novels and A Bend in the Ganges is no exception. It is obviously part of the novels strategy to discredit non-violence and to demonstrate its ineffectiveness in the context of a life-situation. But the novel is by no means an endorsement of violence as a way of life. “The value that the novel does seek to affirm is the value of love which transcends violence and non-violence the real and the unreal-and brings about freedom and fulfillment to the individuals. This is the value that Gian, the unheroic hero, both discover in the act of living out their separate yet strangely involved lives.”

As a matter of fact the novel explores the theme of revenge and violence in the inter-related lives of such characters such as Gian Talwar, Debi Dayal, Sundari and Shafi Usman. “However, the theme of partition is brought into sharp focus in the last
part of the novel. The action of the novel ranges from domestic feud to national bloodshed. It starts with non-violence, gathers momentum through family feud and the terrorist movement and develops through the communalism and revenge. It rightly ends with the partition tragedy and bloodshed in 1947.\textsuperscript{(30)}

Independence has given a new prestige and status to India and consequently to Indian writers in the international sphere. The Indo-Anglian writers are now taken seriously by the western public, which is eager to understand and appreciate how India thinks and feels. The Indo-Anglian novels have made it clear that the India of today has the same type of men and women, who inspite of their difference in dress, have the same hopes and fears, loves and hatred as the western peoples.

The object of this thesis is to show growth and development of English literature in India and to study Indian English literature in pre and post independence time with the help of specific novels of that time, how this era effected on these novels and their characters.

Post-independence novels show a gradual loss of idealism and disillusionment and cynicism slowly creeps into these novels. But they do not represent the changing political mood of the Indian people.

While summing up briefly the findings of the study attempted in the thesis, highlights all the important aspects of the works of the early novelists and modern novelists and focuses attention on their relevance to Indian English Literature of pre and post independence time. It underscores the basic continuity that marks the growth and development of history of English literature.
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