Chapter - I

Introduction

Literature reflects the society and a writer represents it through a work of art. The different views about the practical world replicate in literature. The different genres of literature modify the ideas of a writer. As a genre of literature, poetry is the oldest form of literature. An attempt is made to overview Greek, British and Indian English literature with special reference to the surfacing of novel as a genre of literature.

Greek Literature was the foundation of all literatures. Most of the Greek literature was found in the form of poetry. In the medieval time, prose was also prominent rather than poetry. In the modern epoch, novel or fiction is
the prominent form of literature. Few literary thinkers claim that poetry in the old age is far better than any modern forms of literature.

Fiction is one of the modern forms of literature. Its origin lies in the womb of medieval romances. Actually, it is a fragmented form of the old epic. As B. Prasad describes –

‘In 1350, Boccaccio wrote a world famous collection of love stories in prose, entitled the ‘Decameron’ such short stories are called in Italian ‘Novella’’. [Prasad, Birjadish: 2009: 193]

In the preliminary time, this form was gradually developed. But, it was never recognized as a novel. It was in between epic story and prose. In the old age, this infant form was known as ‘fresh story’. Sometimes, it was called ‘Romance’. For instance, the work of Malory is famous as a historical novel. Primarily, it is a pictorial form of light fiction with emotions. In the words of F. Marion Crawford –

‘The novel is a ‘pocket theatre’ containing as it does all the accessories of drama without requiring to be staged before an audience.’ [Ibid: 193]

In the modern world, novel is a shorter form. It gives an experience of theatre to the audience. Though it is the loose form of literature, it gives the rational picture of practical life. The other forms of literature rarely represent the genuine world in the work of art.

Novel is a portrayal of human thought and action. It also gives an experience to the audience like Drama. Though it is not performed on stage, it has the qualities of theatrical experience. Whichever is not performed on stage can be reflected in the novel. The writer of the novel skillfully arranges the aspect of Drama. The crises and climax are elaborated in the novel. In comparison with other languages, English novels have prominent place. As B. Prasad explores –
‘The Novel has, in fact no rigid framework, and English authors have taken full advantage of the freedom this affords them.’ [Ibid: 194]

In English literature, novel has a wide history. At the outset, novel was never considered as a separate form of literature. The seeds of the novel have been fertile in the form of prose writing. In the Elizabethan age, the prose form was flourished. The work of John Lyly’s *Euphues* and *The Anatomy of Wit* had wide popularity. The works of Robert Green were also comparatively famous. All these works of literature are included in romances. The initial part of John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim Progress* is also ranked as a novel. As novel developed in the later period, it had been skillfully used by writers to emancipate human emotions. It gradually became a prominent tool for writers to judge human feelings and emotions. The famous work in the eighth century was Jonathan Swifts *Gulliver Travels*. It describes the experiences during the travel of the sailor, Gulliver.

Meanwhile, in the later age, the novel unfolded the human feelings and inner turmoil of human psyche. One of the famous novelists, Samuel Richardson used these techniques in his famous work *Pamela* in 1740. On the verge of the eighteenth century, novel became prominent in practice. It was popularized with the novels like Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* and Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones*. In the eighteenth century, novel mostly dealt with the inner experience and moods of writer. Sometimes, it was related with the experience of the author. As B. Prasad describes –

‘Stern’s *Tristram Shandy* which was practically no plot, Opened up the possibilities of the novel as direct expression of the authors own whim, humours, and opinion.’ [Ibid: 200]

Here, novel became popular due to its reflection of the human experiences. It also created the model for the future writers. Hence, it became a vehicle for philosophy of morality.

The novel was more flourished in the nineteenth century. In this era, it dealt with the studies of the society. The characters dealt with the social crises.
The prominent writer of this type of genre was Jane Austen. She was the pioneer in creating the pictorial effect of the characters in the novel. Her major work, *Wuthering Heights* was a fantastic representation of terror. It heightened the passion of human story without the effect of absurdity. The novels of nineteenth century made an outset of the detailed description of the romantic elements. The contemporary of Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott inaugurated the historical novel. It was a new frame for novel in which the novelist skillfully painted the moral men and the humble women. It made the novel more classical than its older form.

Further, novel was encountered with the new ideas and trends. It, in the words of Charles Dickens, –

‘consists in going round and round the idea, as you see a bird in his cage go about and about his sugar before he touches it.’ [Ibid: 202]

The basic development in the nineteenth century novel was that it became the tool for reformation of the conventional society. Further, it occupied the various facets of life like philosophy, politics and social issues. One of the towering women in this type was George Eliot who skillfully introduced the philosophical as well as social aspects through her characters. As B. Prasad pointed out –

‘She stands midway between Thackeray and Henry James, that is to say, between the old novels and new.’ [Ibid: 203]

The new thing emerged in the nineteenth century novel is psycho analysis of the characters. The writers of the modern period portray the psyche of the protagonist. They also reflect the struggle of the characters for their existence. Hence, the characters in the modern fiction are found in pursuance of mind and heart.

In the modern period, writers explored the new directions of life in novel. They also emphasized on the awareness of social issues. The drastic change appeared in the novel after world war. The novel became prominent

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instrument in the social upheavals. The style and content of the novel were also changed. The revolution in society was attempted through novel. It widened its range to comprise almost all subjects to present social life. The twentieth century novel redefined its style and manner. As it is suggested by David Daiches –

‘The plot patterns were constructed out of incidents And situations which were seen to matter in human affairs equally by writer and reader’
[Ibid: 207]

The modern novel tended towards the new tradition and social evolution. One of the most important subjects which were explored in novel is feminism. Social equality about the women was introduced in the writing of the famous feminist writer, George Eliot. She skillfully handled the theme of equality and plight of women through her novels. The modern women novelists introduced the condition of women in the modern society. As regards this, B. Prasad explained –

‘Other feminist writers who command interest are Edna O’Brien, Elizabeth Bowen, A. S. Byatt and Penelope Mortimer to name only a few. They have written about the real grievances of woman with lucidity.’[Ibid: 224]

Fiction and novels have made an impact on society. Especially, British literature adopted this form for social reformation. Besides this, colonialism was the base of the development of novel. As the British rule widened throughout the world, the English language spread up in many countries. As a result, British literature also became popular in the soil of various nations. Later, Indian English literature formed its base in India and emerged as the significant literature in the world.

1.1. A Brief Survey of Indian English Literature:

Before discussing Indian English Literature, we need to focus on the history of Indian English literature. Indian Literature was also unknown to the world until the founding of British colonies in India. At some extent, we have to accept that the history of Indian literature has occupied many centuries for its
development. It has vast history than other modern literatures. Nevertheless, it is still under the veil of modernization. Sanskrit was the oldest language in Indian Literature. It was the language of every day communication and the main stream of knowledge. India had ornamented with various regional languages. Every regional language had vast canvas of tradition and history. Sanskrit was the source for the development of regional languages. The Vedas and the Upanishads were the oldest literary works in the Sanskrit language. Actually, it was the base of Indian literature. The Rigveda, the Samveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharva Veda were the source of tradition and rituals. The language of the Vedas and the Upanishads were developed form of Sanskrit. Many linguists have explained about the history and development of Sanskrit Language. Regional languages have also contributed to the development of old Indian Literature. But, at some extent, they have limitations of region and script. Hence, G. N. Devy says about the Sanskrit language –

“We know that Sanskrit had ceased to be the language understood by any large number of people by the thirteenth Century, and that most poets had started using the newly emergent regional language as Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, etc. Yet the “history” of Sanskrit literature shows that many poets as Vishwanath, and Jagannath kept employing Sanskrit for creative use.’[Devy, G. N.: 1992: 7]

In the old era of Indian civilization, Sanskrit was the language of communication and knowledge. After the establishment of British colonies in India in the 16th century, English was at initial stage. Afterwards, British government decided to include English Literature in the education of India. It created the path for Indians to acquaint with the English Language. Gradually, English was prominently used in offices and being a part of education. The use of British Literature in Indian languages created an impact on Indian English Literature. With effect of this, Indian Literature undeniably created a sustainable place in English literature. Many bilingual writers contributed to the development of Indian English Literature with their immense quality of writing. Actually, these bilingual writers expanded the horizon of Indian English Literature. As we overlook the bilingual Indian English Literature, we found that Bengali writers had prominently contributed to Indian English
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Literature. G. N. Devy opined about bilingualism in Indian English Literature –

‘The fact that the relationship of Indian English Literature is essentially bilingual, together with the fact that most writers themselves are bilingual writers active in both languages or passive in one of the two or alternately active and passive in one makes it a bilingual literature. The bilingualism becomes more prominent when one includes the vast body of Indian literature in English translation.’ [Ibid: 7]

It is clear that Indian English Literature has also occupied the wide span of the translation. At the dawn of nineteenth century, Indian English Literature has made the platform for the development of Indian English Literature. Indian English Literature has practiced in various genre of literature. The old Indian Literature was contained the developed form of the poetry. The old Sanskrit literature and other regional languages contained the developed poetry form. The other genre of literature was still unknown to the Indian Literature. Especially Indian English Literature which had acquired the other genre of literature and flourished in the nineteenth century. Poetry is the prominent form in the old Indian Literature. Simultaneously, fiction was also published. While discussing the development of fiction or novel form of literature, Iyengar suggests –

‘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 prose fiction has occurred and taken root in India.’ [Iyengar, Srinivasa K. R.: 2011: 314]

Actually, fiction or novel was new form in Indian Literature. Some critics protest that Indian literature especially Sanskrit literature is far better than the other literature. The drastic change appeared with the foundation of western education in Indian society. The growth and imitation of western culture emerged after the formation of Christian Missionaries. The Christian
Missionaries translated the Bible into many regional languages in India with an aim of propagating Christianity. It was at the initial time when the new literature tried to root in the soil of India. Actually, novel or fiction is the western form of the literature. As regards this, V. S. Naipaul comments –

‘The novel is of the West. It is part of that Western concern with the condition of men, a response to the here and now… In Indian thoughtful men have preferred to turn their backs on the here and now and satisfy what Dr. Radhakrishnan calls ‘The basic human hunger for the unseen’. it is not good qualification for the writing or reading of novels… it is part of the mimicry of the west, the Indian self violation’ [Ramamurti, K. S.: 1987: 2]

But the question remains that whether Indian literature is unaware about this new form of literature. Actually, storytelling had a long tradition in Indian literature. Sanskrit and other regional Indian languages contain fables from centuries ago. The influence of the western tradition evokes the novel form in Indian Literature. The effect of this was that the Indian authors tried to present the new form in Indian context:

‘A novel written by an Indian writer will certainly be Indian without any conscious effort on the part of the writer to the extent to which it depicts Indian life and culture reflects faithfully the life and spirit of the Indian ethos and grapple with the problems and tension generated by the rather unique way in which individual’s life and character are determined by home, family and society in the Indian social milieu.’ [Ibid: 4]

Though the development took place in the novel / fiction, it was still an infant in Indian English Literature. In this context, novel was compared with storytelling. But story-telling is different in comparison to novel. The reason is discussed by Ramamurti –

‘The novel of the earlier period appeared at a time when writers were little known outside the narrow world and intellectuals and the leisured upper classes who could offered the luxury of owning and reading book.’ [Ibid: 7]
The reason expressed by Ramamurti is appropriate that fiction or novel had limited audience. Hence, it was not approached to minor readers. And the second reason is lack of education in English. The creative writing in the field of novel was rare in the old age. In Indian context, the novels were related to the upper class only. Later on, this picture was vanished with the education in the English language. And afterwards the creative and quality writing appeared in the field of literature. Hence, the growth in the field of fiction and novel gradually appeared in Indian literature. Regarding this, Ramamurti expressed his view –

‘There has been, in fact a great spurt of creative writing in English in India in the recent years and Indian Literature in English particularly fiction has shown a steady growth through the years favored by number of extra-literary factors such as the popularity of the Indian novels in the west, especially because of their ability to satisfy the western curiosity India and Indian life, the tremendous increase within India in the size of the English-educated reading public which has kept pace with the growth of the country’s population, the multiplication of English magazines and weeklies with increasing calculation potentials and increasing demand for fiction in English among the educated classes especially among educated women, whether housewives or working women’. [Ibid: 7-8]

When we consider the history of novel and fiction, Bengal is the prominent place where the seeds of this genre rooted and flourished. Bengal was the place considered for literary renaissance where the literary evolution progressed. When we observe the growth of Indian English fiction, the first novel appeared in the Bengali language. *Alaler Gaharer* was considered as the first literary work which had an equal quality and style of fiction. Then, the writer who made new dimension in Bengali literature was Bankim Chandra Chatterji. He produced the first work in English entitled *Rajmohan’s Wife*. It created pathway for Indian English literature.

Thus, Bankim Chandra Chatterji was pioneer in romantic and historical fiction rather than humour. His towering work, *Anandmath* was considered as
one of the greatest works in Indian Literature. It was translated in many regional languages in India. Shri Aurobindo had commented about Bankim Chandra –

‘It was the gospel of fortress strength and force which he preached under a veil and in images in *Anandmath* and *Devi Chaudhurani*. And he had an inspiring unerring vision of the moral strength which must be at the back of the outer force. He perceived that the first element of the moral strength must be *tyaga*, complete self-sacrifice for the country and complete self devotion to the work of liberation …. Again, he perceived that the second element of the moral strength in the elaborate training of *Devi Chaudhurani* for her work, in the strict rules of the association of the *Anandmath* and in the pictures of perfect organization which those books contain. Lastly, he perceived that the third element of moral strength must be the infusion of religious feeling into patriotic work. The religion of patriotism that is the master idea of Bankim’s writing.’ [Op.cit: 316]

The writing in the time of Bankim Chandra Chatterji was mostly concentrated on the patriotic theme. Especially, the Bengali novelists practiced the theme of nationalism at their best. Not only Bankim Chandra Chatterji, but the other well-known Bengali novelists coined the theme of nationalism. In this connection, Anand Shankar Roy points out –

‘The chief question was hoar to restore the national self respect. In Rabindranath’s time, it was how to bridge the East and the West. In this dynamic age, it is how to identify ourselves with the common people’ [Ibid: 317]

On this point of view, it is clear that the development of novel and fiction was in between the imitation of the west and originality. Rabindranath Tagore was considered as one of the pioneers of the modern literary era. He was considerably successful novelist in Indian English Literature. His works comprised reality from Indian social milieu. Dr. Sukumar Sen comments on this –

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‘Here for the first time in Indian Literature…. the actions and reactions arising out of the impact of the mind of individuals propel the plot and not so much the external happenings’ [Ibid: 317]

The excessive development of the Indian Writing in English takes place when the authors like Tagore and Saratchandra Chatterji truly imitate Bankim Chandra Chatterji. It was he who tries to elaborate the real Indian social situation through immense words. As Iyengar explains –

‘Sarat Chandra identified himself with the down and outs and boldly portrayed the tears and sweats of the lower middle and had not classes.’ [Ibid: 318]

It was a transition period of Indian English Literature. Bankim Chandra Chatterji practically represents the Indian society through his masterpieces. But, S. P. Ayyer, a great dramatist, states –

‘Nothing is more appropriate in the present glorious renaissance period of India, when Eastern and Western ideas are stirring the people into various kinds of political, artistic and religious expression peculiarly their own than depicting the story of the time when India first came into violent contact with the greatest and most civilized nation in Europe then, the Greeks.’ [Naik M. K.: 2007: 153]

Thus, we observe that Indian writing in English is the mixture of Indian and Western culture. One of the major twists appeared in Indian social milieu when British Government ruled over India. The British influence appeared not only on economics, but on the entire political and educational system. The cultural transition was held after foundation of new education system in India. The major outcome of the new education system in India was English education. It revealed the new western culture and literature to India. The influence of western culture was clearly observed in the Indian context. Iyengar explores it –

‘Notwithstanding the peculiar occupational ailments that beset the novelist in India, it is gratifying to note that the novel is a living and
evolving literary 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.’ [Op.cit: 322]

The Indian English renaissance started with the appearance of the great politician and educationist, Raja Rammohan Roy. He was the great follower of *Bramho Samaj*. He was a modern thinker who struggled against the evil rituals of India society. He fought for the development of women. He not only struggled for education and evil rituals of Indian social communities, but also the plight of Indian women. He himself was well educated in English and was aware of the importance of education for women. He also suggested the English education in school and colleges. He commented on the importance of education in English. To him, English can change the social scenario of India. Hence, he was considered as the pioneer of modern social thinking and social reformer of India. He explained the importance of English education in the development of society. He himself was good in English language. He also thoroughly contributed in the development of English in India. Iyengar comments on it—

‘Rammohan, although he could be named as the first of the Indian masters of English prose, was great in so many fields that he belongs to Indian history more than to more Indo-Anglian literary history.’ [Ibid: 333]

The writing of Raja Rammohan Roy created the milestone in social reformation. His writing was inspirational for many other contemporary writers. The poet who was also influenced with the writings of Raja Rammohan Roy was Derazio. Though he was a teacher by profession, his poetic style was compared to that of John Keats. His writing pointed out the conventional Hindu thinking.

Another writer who had contributed to Indian English Literature was Michael Madhusudan Dutt. He was a sensational writer in Bengali language. He was inspired by Byron’s poetry. His poetic and romantic style was glorious and magnificent. He was the first Indian poet who had practiced blank verse in
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the middle of Nineteenth century. He was considered as the founder of blank verse in Indian context. His famous epic poem, *Meghnadh Badh Kavya* was widely popular. He was famous for his versatile writing style. His life was full with struggles. He was a great reformer who moulded the Bengali literature into new dimension. He changed the structure of Bengali Literature with his immense writing style. Hence, his contribution in Indian Literature was countless.

Another important literary figure from Dutt family, who not only contributed to Indian English Literature, but had created a new pathway for the future writers, was Toru Dutt. She was the first poetess in Indian Literature. She had both Indian and European influences in her childhood. Her father, Govind Chunder Dutt was a rich man and hence she had good educational environment. She attempted translation from French into English in her work ‘She of Gleaned in French Field’. Her interest in was flourished with Sanskrit. She had contributed a lot in Sanskrit translation.

Another Bengali writer who had flourished the Indian Literature was Romesh Chandur Dutt. He was influenced by the writing of Michel Madhusudan Dutt and Bankim Chandra Chatterji. He explored the common life through creativity. His translated work not only fulfilled the Bengali reader, but also the reader of the other languages. His writing was a real portrait of the contemporary society. Iyengar elucidates –

‘Romesh Chandur’s novels and historical surveys needn’t detain us. *The Slave Girl* takes us to the Mughal times and we have glimpses of life in 17th century Agra love, intrigue jealously being the inevitable ingredients of this romance’. [Ibid: 75]

Romesh Chandur Dutt devoted much of his time in the creation of literature. His historical writing was also phenomenal. He had a mastery over history of ancient India. His famous historical work, ‘A History of Civilization in Ancient India’ was tremendously popular. The works like *Later Hindu Civilization, India in Victorian Age* and *Brief History of Ancient and Modern Bengal* were comparatively appreciated by audience. He also achieved
glorious success with his translation of the Ramayana into English. Iyengar writes about it –

‘To turn from Auru and Toru Dutt to Romesh Chandur Dutt is like passing from the bud and the flower to the ripened fruit; from Erato and Melpoments to Clio and Calliope from Ushas, rosy-fingered and short lived, to the trailing sun on the ascendant; from infinite promise to impressive achievement’. [Ibid: 74]

Another towering personality who gave an outstanding contribution in Indian Literature was Manmohan Ghose. He was an elder brother of famous Indian philosopher Aurobindo Ghose. He had a wide knowledge about Indian and foreign culture. His own life was full of ups and downs. He had published only a single collection of poems entitled *Love Songs and Elegies*. His collection of poems, *Primavera* was appreciated by many critics. His quality of writing and using proper words created sensation. George Santayana comments –

‘That a reader of Manmohan poems would reality take them as the work of an English poet trained in the classical tradition’. [Ibid: 89]

Thus, the writing style of Manmohan Ghosh was different than his contemporaries. Even, his cousin brother, Aurobindo wrote about nationalism.

It was the renaissance time in Indian Literature. Though the changes in literature mostly appeared in Bengal, they became popular when Rabindranath Tagore appeared on the literary scenario. Rabindranath Tagore was the first Indian author who achieved the prominent position in modern Indian literature. Rabindranath Tagore [1961-1941] was the first Indian who took Indian culture and literature on global scale. He was the first Indian author who was honoured with Nobel Prize for Literature. He primarily wrote in Bengali language. He was also maestro in English. He was a philosopher, reformer, prophet and poet. He was influenced by the romantic poets like Keats, Shelley and Wordsworth. He also admired great Victorian writers.
Tagore’s writing was ornamented with beauty of words. As regards this, Iyengar explains –

‘Tagore was not a voracious or a systematic reader, but like Shakespeare, although he apparently read at random, he turned to capital use what had some his way.’ [Ibid: 100]

He himself was translated some of his plays in the later time. Sanyasi [1883] was translated and appreciated by many readers. Rabindranath Tagore has credited many poems, plays, novels and translated works. He was left the treasure of truly pure art which is a lighthouse to the further writers. Many critics say that Rabindranath Tagore’s writing is no doubt better than other writer. The reason that Iyengar discusses –

‘The images, the conceits, the basic experience, the longing, the trial, the promise, the realization all have the quaintly unique Indian flavor and taste.’ [2007: 110]

Tagore presented the real Indian social condition through his writings. Though he was criticized by many critics that his writing was old fashioned, he commemorated the great classical subject and theme. He was a real social reformer who was against caste and racial conflict in the contemporary period. Hence, he was considered as the great literary figure on the horizon of Indian English Literature. The memorable words that Iyengar used for Rabindranath Tagore –

‘As the years passed, he became more and more a legendary figure; in his flowing beard and immaculate white robes he looked rather like a Rishi of Upanishadic time, and indeed he was truly the line of the great Rishis nearing witness to the triune Reality, seeing the way and showing it to others.’ [Ibid: 103]

Another great Indian writer and philosopher in the Bengali soil was Aurobindo Ghose. In Indian philosophy, the contribution of Aurobindo was remarkable. He was one of the incontestably outstanding figures in Indo-Anglian Literature. He was considerably phenomenal in poetry. His poetry
was classical and full of love and myth. His notable work, *Songs to Myrtilla* appeared in 1895. His work was merely a reflection of Bengali society. His *Bhavani Mandir* was a notable work about the change in Bengali society. His poetry was a pathway to future life. His philosophy and poetic style were marvelous. Hence, he was considered as the master of philosophic and poetic literature. The masterpiece of Aurobindo, *Savitri* appeared with a great success. It was divided in three parts and twelve books. It was a great epic poem. The modernity of the poem was really striking. He himself said about *Savitri* –

‘An attempt to catch something of the Upanishadic and Kalidasian movement, so far as that is possible in English’. [Ibid: 103]

Professor Raymond Franks concludes about *Savitri* –

‘… during a period of nearly fifty years before his passing in 1950, he [Aurobindo] …. expanding man’s mind towards the absolute.’ [Ibid: 206]

Another phenomenal Indian poetess who contributed in the development of poetry was Sarojini Naidu. She was the first Indian poetess who had made a pathway for Indian poetry. Her writing was filled with pain, agony and hope. Her first collection of poetry, *The Golden Threshold* appeared in 1905. Her next collections of poetry, *The Songs of Life and Death* and *The Bird of Time* appeared in 1912. Her final collection of poetry, *The Broken Wing* was published in 1917. Iyengar concludes about Sarojini Naidu –

‘She was above all sensitive to beauty, the beauty of living things, the beauty of holiness, the beauty of Buddha’s compassion. The beauty of Brindavan’s Lord.’ [Ibid: 225]

The literary scenario changed on the horizon of Indian Literature. The Indian society was in the process of freedom struggle. After Bal Gangadhar Tilak, India was in the impression of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. His vision and thought brought the new stream of hope in the freedom struggle. His new thought shook the established social condition of India. Though
Mahatma Gandhi was never considered a literary figure like Tagore, his writing created a new pathway for the next generation. But the greatness of Mahatma Gandhi was that he was a common man with greatness. His greatness not only occupied politics, but also economics, sociology, education and religion. His impression on every field changed the Indian social scenario. He was a real social reformer. He fought for social equality. He culminated his experience by presenting *Hind Swaraj* in Gujrati and translated it afterwards in English. In Africa, he wrote a pamphlet entitled ‘An appeal of Every Briton in South Africa’ in 1896. All his agitation about social injustice in India was covered in his two well known journals, ‘Young India’ [1919-1932] and ‘Harijan’ [1933-1948]. Through these journals, he introduced the social indifference and sufferings of the depressed class. His phenomenal work that dealt with his personal life and experiences was *My Experiments with Truth*. His detailed and frank writing was a real treasure of truthfulness. Iyengar writes about this –

‘But the authentic WORD albeit spread over some fifty volumes- is our guarantee that the Truth about Gandhi the man and his message of hope for humanity will not have passed from India and the world.’ [Ibid: 294]

Another famous Indian politician and first Prime Minister of India was Jawaharlal Nehru. He was a real follower of Gandhi and Gandhian thoughts. He was brought up in a well educated and rich family. His father, Motilal Nehru was a famous politician. Jawaharlal Nehru was a great orator and leader. He was also a phenomenal writer who had great influence of Rabindranath Tagore. His first epistolary collection, *Letter from a father to a Daughter* which was addressed to his daughter, Indira appeared in 1930. His most celebrated work, *The Glimpses of World History* was introduced in 1934. Iyengar comments about it –

‘In historical portrait use to neither elaborate nor over-subtle with side-tracking psychological chatter- Jawaharlal manages with a few touches to call to life the great figure of the past.’ [Ibid: 301]
The book was merely a portrait of history and development. *An Autobiography* [1936] achieved great success. It had a great influence of Mahatma Gandhi’s *My Experiments with Truth* on him. His next historical work, *Discovery of India* was widely celebrated. Iyengar points out—

‘The principal merit of the ‘Discovery’ is that it lets us see the mind of its author, helps is to forge the links of our racial memory and firmly turns our face to the future but only after a long, affectionate, an understanding an almost lingering gaze at the past.’ [Ibid: 308]

It was the literary appraisal in India. Though the new genre of literature, novel was still new and strange in India, it got reputation with the three great Indian authors, R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.

The author who gave new face to Indian English Literature was Mulk Raj Anand. He was born in the Kshatriya family on 12th December 1905. He was brought up into a common family. Afterwards, he entered in civil service. His adventure and struggle of his father’s life were reflected in his writing. He was well concerned with the exploited, downtrodden and neglected society. He himself had experienced poverty and struggle of middle and lower middle class. He determined the social order about the human being. He had quest for injustice for the downtrodden society. Iyengar says about it—

‘It is not as though Anand the novelist is necessarily in shades to political evangelist, the advocate of the downtrodden, and the underprivileged.’ [Ibid: 335]

His writing shows an ample picture of reality. In the novels like *Coolie* and *The Untouchable*, Anand describes struggle of the neglected society. Edwin Muir called them the novels of character. Anand had already moved towards the fiction with the publication of *Persian Painting* [1930], *Curries and Other Indian Dishes* [1932], *The Hindu View of Art* [1933], *The Golden Breath* [1933], *The Lost Child and Other Stories* [1933]. It was an early period of Mulk Raj Anand’s life that was ornamented with the bunch of fiction. But, he had a great vision of life. Hence, he afterwards had produced the great
novels like *The Untouchable* [1935], *Coolie* [1936], *Two leaves and a Bud* [1937], *The Village* [1939] and *Across the Black Waters* [1940].

*The Untouchable* was his prominent work. It was not considered as a significant work in the initial time, but afterwards it became popular. Actually, Anand had attempted a difficult subject of class discrimination. His writing style and pictorial language had given the glory to the work. Anand’s style of writing was retained with the realistic situation. In *Coolie*, he attempted a different subject of exploitation and malnutrition. Anand had a great hand to reveal reality with effective words. He had unveiled the sufferings of the exploited and untouchables. In his another novel, *Two Leaves and a Bud* he dealt with the cruel class system and exploitation. His important work, *The Sword and the Sickle* dealt with the class system and class oppression. It was also reflected the revolution against the cruel class discrimination. In the words of Iyengar –

‘Anand has given us a hint of this early fire and drive behind his first novels. In writing of the pariahs and the bottom dogs rather than of the elect and the sophisticated, he had ventured into territory that had been largely ignored till then by Indian writers.’ [Ibid: 333]

Anand had not only attempted the writings about the neglected and downtrodden social communities, but he had also handled the different subject matters with ease. In his novel, *Private Life of an Indian Prince* [1953], he described the life of a prince after independence. Iyengar writes about Mulk Raj Anand –

‘As a writer of fiction, Anand’s notable marks are vitality and a keen sense of actuality. He is a veritable Dickens for describing the inequities and idiosyncrasies in the current human situation with candour as well as accuracy.’ [Ibid: 356]

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayanan [1907-2001] was one of the towering personalities in Indian English fiction. He was brought up in a South Indian family where the regional languages had long history of literature. He
gave a significant contribution to the development of the Indo-Anglian novel. Among the three great novelists of Indian English Fiction, Anand was politically committed writer who took deep interest in the problems of the oppressed and the downtrodden. Raja Rao was better known as the creator of the metaphysical novel. With his metaphysical vision and symbolic intensity, he occupied a distinguished place in the field of fiction. Out of these three, Narayan seemed to be the least complex, but most consistent in the growth of his art. He employed his comic sensibility, meticulously controlled by irony and artistic detachment. He exerted the comic mode for depicting the little irony of life in a fascinating manner.

R. K. Narayan’s novels belonged to the first generation of Indo-Anglian novel which is a distinct and an established form of literature. Actually, he had frustration in his early career. Later, Graham Green, a reputed British novelist became his companion and introduced *Swami and Friends* - his first novel - to the western reader. In 1935, he determined to live by pen alone. Narayan wrote over a dozen of novels. He devoted himself exclusive to writing, a rare observable fact in the modern Indian Literature. His simple life style and the village background were reflected in his grand work, *Malgudi Days*.

Narayan’s experiences were truly reflected in his first introducing novel, *Swami and Friends*. It is a story of an average Indian school boy. It was the quality of R. K. Narayan who picked up the setting from the common life. In his next novel, *The Bachelor of Arts* [1937], he portrayed the frustrated hero who had struggled in his life. Narayan had a skill to unfold the layers of life of a common man with immense use of words. Iyengar explains it –

‘The story of their, we added life is a prose lyric on which Narayan has lavished his best gift as a writer. Spring is no hard material substance: it is a presence, it is unfolding, it is ineffable becoming that strain after being. A thousand little occurrences, leaps of light, bubbles of sound, a thousand smiles revealing their rainbow magnificence through the film of tearful happiness or fulfillment, a thousand murmurs of ecstasy, meaningless worries, tremendous trifles, a thousand

*A Ph.D. Thesis, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad*
stabs of pain that are somehow transcended a
thousand shared anxieties, excitements and
adorations: it is out of these that the texture of
wedded happiness is wrought, and Narayan is a
adroit at giving form and meaning to this glory of
holy wedded love. Quotation is difficult because
the perfume is nowhere concentrated but fills the
entire atmosphere.’ [Ibid: 367]

Narayan’s *The Dark Room* is an early novel. It was a real pictorial
work of Narayan which dealt with the awakening of an Indian woman. It is the
story of a woman who is a real victim of the oppression caused by her
assertive and exigent husband. The protagonist of the novel, Savitri is a
common middleclass Indian woman who is tortured by her husband. But she is
for the Mahatma* stands apart from the other novels. In it, he successfully
exerts political theme. In the words of Iyengar –

‘*Waiting for the Mahatma* is an ambitious effort
and an impressive feat.’ [Ibid: 373]

*The Financial Expert* is his sparkling work. It was mildly satirical,
unexcitingly interesting and entertaining. The novel also deals with the theme
of avarice. The protagonist of this novel is Maragayya. The novel is
distributed into five parts. In each of them, Narayan uses the ironic element
with ease.

*The Guide* [1958] is his eighth novel. It was beautifully organized by
R. K. Narayan. Hence, it is considered his best and profoundly mature work of
literary art. The novel won Sahitya academy Award in the year 1960.
However, many critics acclaimed that *The Guide* achieved the unique success.
It was a great achievement in the world of fiction. It is a story of Raju and
Rosie. Narayan has presented the story with ironic complications. The novel
actually raises the basic question of human action. Narayan has unique quality
to unveil reality with appropriate words. As Iyengar explains –

‘Speaking generally, Narayan is the art of resolved
limitation and conscientious exploration; he is
content like Jane Austen with his little bit of ivory
just so many inches wide he would like to be a
detached observer to concentrate on a narrow scene
to sense the atmosphere of the place, to shape a
small group of characters in their oddities and
angularities: he would, if he could explore the inner
countries of the mind, heart and soul, catch the
uniqueness in the ordinary, the tragic in the prosaic.
‘Malgudi’ is Narayan’s ‘Casterbridge’, but the
inhabitants of Malgudi although they may have
their recognizable local trapping- are- essentially
human and hence have their kinship with all
humanity. In this sense ‘Malgudi’ is everywhere.’
[Ibid: 360]

His next novel is Man Eater of Malgudi which has explored the evil
and traditional substance. Narayan has used the traditional myth of
‘Bhasmasura’ in the extremely modern form. The novel itself has a mystic
quality. However, it became the instrument of moral discovery. In Vendor of
Sweets, it deals with the generation gap. It is mingled with the father-son
relationship. In this novel, Narayan unfolds the conflict between two
generations, Jagan and his son. Every character of the novel enacts with
human qualities. Narayan has made his sincere effort to do the justice for
them. On the whole, Narayan’s writing won a distinct place for him in the
field of Indo-Anglian fiction. As Iyengar concludes –

‘The soul of Narayan’s fiction is not this delicately
self adjusted mechanism of ironic comedy, but
rather the miracle of transcendence and the renewal
of life, love, beauty peace.’ [Ibid: 385]

Another famous author who has contributed to the Indo-Anglian
literature is Raja Rao. He is also a child of Gandhian age. His work is
ornamented with social awareness. Raja Rao’s writing is different with his
contemporary writers. His novel has handled the different subject matter. His
novel, Kanthapura considers the finest piece of evolution of Gandhian
thought. The Gandhian impact is clearly reflected in the introductory novel of
Raja Rao.

In Kanthapura, Raja Rao portrays the character, Moorthy which is
Gandhian. He was active in national movement. Raja Rao unveiled the village
setting and national movement. He not only describes the Gandhian thought of Moorthi, but the freedom struggle in Indian village too.

His second novel, *The Serpent and the Rope* [1960] is highly complex. It is also sensitive and imaginative. Raja Rao, through this novel, unveils the quest of knowledge and self fulfillment. Iyengar explains –

> ‘The Serpent and the Rope is an ambitious and meritorious effort at achieving a total projection of India in vivid fictional terms; and perhaps it is the most impressive novel yet written by an Indian in English.’ [Ibid: 406]

Actually, Raja Rao in this novel skillfully used the myth and legend. He was a prolific writer who made the link between the myth and legend and the characters. It is a symbolic writing which made the novel famous. It is highly philosophical which deals with the self realization.

His next novel, *The Cat and Shakespeare* [1965] was also a symbolic piece of Raja Rao. It had Upanishadic impact that was beautifully arranged by the novelist. Iyengar explains –

> ‘Upanishadic illumination is a matter of lightning flashes, not the steady light of day. Hence the shortness of The Cat and Shakespeare; hence too its impact on us, which is ok into a cloudy day rent by lightening.’ [Ibid: 410]

Thus, the writing of Raja Rao is different than his contemporary novelists, Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan. The fiction of Raja Rao is more philosophical and sensitive. The writing of Raja Rao has acquired the human tendencies than other fiction writers.

The post independence Indian fiction retains the momentum which had special impact during the Gandhian age. Indian fiction has contributed not only for artistic pleasure, but social reform also. Social realism was established with the fiction in the postmodern period. Indian fiction has achieved new dimension and position. B. K. Das elaborates in this connection –
‘Of all genre of Indian English Literature, fiction is the most developed and well received one in the postmodern period both at home and abroad with Arundhati Roy’s Booker Prize Award winning novel *The God of Small things* [1997] Indian English novel has won international recognition.’

[Das, Bijay Kumar: 2003: 125]

In brief, Indian English fiction has ornamented with prolific writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao in the Gandhian age. Besides this, the writers like Arun Joshi, Anita Desai and a few other writers have won recognition both home and abroad. But the earlier Indian fiction had never attracted the western audience as it happened with modern Indian fiction. In modern literary era, the writers like Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Deshpande and many more gave the new identity to modern Indian English literature. G. N. Devy also remarks –

‘I think, since Indian English fiction has now a sufficient number….. included Pound and Eliot.’

[Ibid: 56]

Besides, theme of ‘Self’ and Cultural Identity analyze the fiction of Indian English literature. These are the major characteristics of modern Indian English literature. The main change appears in the fiction that has its shift from Gandhian era to modern era. The Gandhian era chiefly is focused in villages. Hence, the modern Indian English fiction has the setting which is modern in the sense of character, place and situation. That is why, modern and postmodern Indian English fiction has got recognition worldwide. The towering issue that emerges in the post modern era was the cultural crises between East and West.

The authors like Homi Bhaba wrote about cultural differences between the East and West. He had explored the difference between Indian and Western culture. Another new tendency that evoked after the dawn of 1980 was family and failure of marriage. It showed the new trends of Indian English fiction. Arundhati Roy also gave the new face to the Indian English fiction with her award winning novel *God of Small Things*. Another new phase that
Theme of ‘Self’ and Cultural Identity in the Fiction of Manju Kapur and Jhumpa Lahiri

arose in the post modern era was failure of love and struggle of women in modern society. Bijay Kumar Das explores –

‘So is the case with Manju Kapur’s Difficult Daughters. Marriage as a social institution has lost its sanctity and relevance in the post 1980 era.’ [Ibid: 56-57]

Another new theme that put forth in post modern fiction was decline of morals and religious strain. The novel like Lajja by Taslima Nasrine evokes the declination of social morality. In the post modern era of Indian English fiction, the great change emerged with the appearance women novelists. B. K. Das explains –

‘Apart from love, sex and contemporary reality, Indian English women novelists have also written feminist novels. Rights of women must be preserved, the women novelist seem to say.’ [Ibid: 57]

In the initial time of independence, Toru Dutt portrayed the woman first time in fictional literature. She unveiled the romantic and traditional world of woman. She made a pathway to the future women novelists. Raj Lakshmi Devi was also earlier woman novelist who bagged the novels like The Hindu Wife or The Enchanted Fruit [1876]. The first Bengali woman writer, Swarnkumari Debi contributed her two well known translated novels, An Unfinished Song [1913] and The Fatal Garland [1915].

The Parsi-Christian woman writer, Cornelia Sorabji was famous for her realistic novels. Her novels unfolded the truth behind the walls of religious rituals. Her novels like Love and Life behind the Purdah [1904] Sun Babies; Studies in the Child–Life of India [1904] and Between the Twilights [1908] portrayed the vivid reality of evil rituals of religion. We observe the woman in her novel as –

‘Woman was easily caught in the meshes of intrigue and social taboos of all kinds and her subservience to man gave her very little freedom of action.’ [Iyengar, Srinivasa K. R: 2011: 437]
Among the other woman authors, Kamala Markandaya was unquestionably outstanding in Indian English literature. Her prime novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* [1954] shows a picture of struggle of woman. It also describes suffering and sacrifice of woman. Iyengar explains about the writing of Kamala Markandaya.

‘If her writing is less rich in imagery, it has more ease and partakes more of life’s fulfill fever.’ [Ibid: 439]


Ruth Prawar Jhabvala was also an eminent woman author who had bagged famous novels like *To Whom She Will* [1955], *The Nature of Passion* [1956], *Esmond in India* [1918], *The Householder* [1960], *Get Ready for Battle* [1962] and *A Background Place* [1965]. Iyengar puts focus on the writing of Jhabvala –

‘Mrs. Jhabvala has had opportunities of exercising her power of close observation on a milieu that changes chameleon-like from local to cosmopolitan, from traditional to conventional, from naïve to sophisticated’ [Ibid: 450-451]

The writing of the Jhabvala has new tendency. Her novel has focused on the rapid change in Indian social context. She specially observes the Indian social customs. The changing tradition and modern community was closely observed by Jhabwala. About her observation, Iyengar explains –

‘In the world of Mrs. Jhabvala’s fiction, human beings appear always a little bit ludicrous, but some people, some situations, are more intrinsically funny than others.’ [Ibid: 460]
Among the Indian English women writers, Markandaya and Jhabvala were prominent writers who wrote about the struggle and plight of women. They set the pathway to the future woman writers. Next woman author who had sensitively observed the subject of struggle of woman is Anis Attia Hosain. Her novels, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* [1961] and *Phoenix Fled* [1953] realistically portrayed the plight and struggle of Indian women.

Anita Desai a prominent modern woman writer who had added a new dimension to the achievement of Indian woman writers in English fiction. Her writing mostly focused on the exploration of sensibility. One thing that is important about her novel is *Streams of Consciousness*. Anita Desai skillfully used the Stream of Consciousness technique in her novels like *Cry, the Peacock* [1963] and *Voices in the City* [1965]. She had also explored the plight of immigrant in her latest novel, *Bye-Bye Blackbird* [1971].

Another phenomenal woman writer who had contributed in the development of Indian woman writing in English is Shakuntala Shrinagesh, an author of *The Little Black Box* [1955]. Nayantara Sahgal who had contributed with her works like *A Time to be Happy* [1957], *This Time of Morning* [1965] and *Storm in Chandigarh* [1969]. The woman writing also occupied historical setting in the novel *Ambapal* [1962] by Vimala Raina.

The era of Indian woman fiction in Indian English Literature occupied the tremendous success with handling many subjects related to woman. Feminism is a term referred to an intense awareness of identity to a woman and her problems. The famous critique, Janet Richard argues about feminism –

‘The essence of feminism has a strong fundamental case intended to mean only that there are excellent reasons for thinking that woman suffers from systematic social injustice because of their sex, the proposition is to be regarded as constituting feminism.’ [Richard, Janet: 1981: 3]

The separate study of this gender discrimination is the main discussion in feminism. In other words, Simen De Beauvoir vividly expresses about the gender discrimination –
‘One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economical fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as female’ [Ajaz, Parveen: 2011: 48]

Feminist revolution was planted after 1960. It was an evolution against the social structure which made female interior in the male dominant society. The feminist critics never deny the biological differences between male and woman. But, it is not the reason to think that male is superior and woman as inferior. The social ethics made woman in a marginalized position. The strong wave between 1960 and 1970 helped theories of woman’s discourse. Feminist theories unveil the evil patriarchal dominance. They deny the patriarchal norms which reduce woman’s status.

Cultural identity is the towering issue generated in the modern world of literature. The question of ‘Identity’ is vigorously debated in social theory. In essence, the argument is that the old identities which stabilized the social world for so long are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual as unified subject. This is called ‘crisis of identity’ which is seen as part of a wider process of change. It dislocates the central structures and processes of modern societies and undermines the framework which gives individuals stable anchorage in the social world. A distinctive type of structural change transforms modern societies in the late twentieth century. This fragments the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality which give us firm location as social individuals. In the post modern subject, individuality or identity is conceptualized as having no fixed, essential, or permanent identity. Thus, Identity becomes a ‘moveable feast’ formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways addressed in the cultural system surrounding us.

Cultural identities are marked by a number of factors – race, ethnicity, gender and class. The real locus of these factors, however, is the notion of difference. The question of difference is emotive. we hear ideas about ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘friend’ and ‘foe’, ‘belonging’ and ‘not belonging’, ‘in-groups’ and
‘out-groups’, which define ‘us’ in relation to ‘others’, or the ‘Other’. From this we get ideas about communities, even imagined communities. [Clarke, Simon: 2011: 24]

1.2. Feminism:

As Virginia Woolf elucidates about feminism i.e. the power of money, a woman who desires to write fiction should have her own money and room. If woman has power, she will maintain her status. *The Room of One’s Own* also reflects the orthodox society which thinks that the woman have no right to think freely. It was not a simple way for woman in the traditional downtrodden social milieu. She is never considered as individual. She has a place of dependent and not independent. She has faced many obstacles in her life. Actually, the downtrodden society of many countries denies the freedom of female mind. Virginia Woolf made an attempt to give exposure to women through her writing. She discovered the strange thing about the woman that many books are found on woman by male authors. But no books have been found on men either by male or female.

Another phenomenal woman author Ashraf Behan also exposes one strange thing that the woman has every time neglected though she has conceived tremendous efforts for family. She has working a lot without consuming any money. Actually woman has a quality to change the society. They have more submissive that male. Feminism is a struggle for equality for woman in the society. In other word we may say that the feminism is an opposition of the patriarchal power. Chaman Nahal has defines the feminism in his own word –

‘I define feminism as a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. There is dependence syndrome whether it is husband, father, the community or a religious group. When women will free themselves of the dependence syndrome and leads a normal life, my idea of feminism materializes.’ [Nahal, Chaman: 1991: 17]
1.3. Waves of Feminism:

1.3.1. First Wave of Feminism [Pre 1920]:
The first wave of feminism emerged in the Nineteenth century and early dawn of the twentieth century. It was the earlier period of brooding of feminism. The country which was prominent for the first wave of feminism was the United Kingdom, Canada, Netherland and the United States. The first wave of feminism mostly concentrates on the equality and suffrage of woman.

The prominent feminist author in the first wave of feminism was Mary Wollstonecraft with her first publication, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* [1792]. Actually, the first wave of feminism was more moderate and conservative. In the early age of Nineteenth Century and in the mid of Twentieth Century, Feminists thinkers concentrated on gender equality. It was in the age of 1960 to the end of 1990s, the countries like Turkey and the part of Asia mainly focused on the suffrage of woman.

Then, the first wave of feminism was transferred towards the liberation of woman. This evolution was started with the work of *The Feminine Mystique* [1963] by Betty Friedan. The major trend of literature in the early Nineteenth Century feminist literature was confessional writing. The writing about the woman in the first wave was based on the personal experience.

But, the real change appeared in feminism in 60’s and 70’s with Marxism. The main aim of Marxism was equal cooperation. The emphasis of Marxism was on class rather than sex. Equal opportunity to all was the base of Marxist Feminism.

1.3.2. Second Wave of Feminism [post 1920]:
The post feminist theories after 1920 were more prominent than earlier feminist theories. It was important because the theories in this age were argued with the superiority of ‘women’ rather than ‘men’. The present feminist theory struggles against the subordinate feeling and oppression of woman.

The major issues that were exposed in the Post feminist wave were domestic violence and the structure of patriarchal pattern. The feminist thinker...
in the second wave of feminism was argued over the oppression of woman. They gave the appropriate justification that the structure of patriarchal society was the main cause for suppression and degradation of woman. At the edge of Twentieth Century, the feminist theories got new dimension with the appearance of Post Structuralism and Post Modernism. Actually, in this period the feminist fought for the equal position and liberation of woman which was quiet complex with the theory of Post Structuralism. But, the Twentieth Century feminist wave had got new way of thinking with the appearance of the two towering personalities in the feminist theory i.e. Elaine Showalter and Helene Cixous. Elaine Showalter had exposed the Gynocriticism, while Helene Cixous had introduced *Ecriture Feminine*.

1.3.3. Third-Wave of Feminism [Post 1950]:

The third wave of feminism had created an impact rather than the earlier feminist theories. Actually, it was the reformation of the second wave of feminism. It mostly argued about the diversity and change in the society. It also focused on the gender and sexuality which were the issues in Post Structuralism. It discussed the subject of anti-racism, girl power, Post Modernism, Eco-feminism and gender identity.

The feminist theories pervaded in many developing countries like India. But feminism in India has gone beyond its Western counterparts. Uma Narayan explains –

‘Third world of feminism is not a mindless mimicking of Western Agenda in one clear and simple sense Indian feminist is clearly a response to the issues related to Indian woman.’ [Narayan, Uma: 1996: 243]

Literature plays a significant role to reinforce feminism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries. Feminism has transformed the precision of life and literature. Pam Mpros made an attempt to analyze the connection between literature and feminism –

‘It has traditionally been believed that creative forms of writing can offer special insight into
human experience and sharpen our perception of social reality. Literary texts may therefore provide a more powerful understanding of the ways in which society works to the disadvantage of women. In addition, the strong emotional impact of imaginative writing may be brought into play to increase indignation at gender discrimination and hence helps to end it, positive image of female experience and qualities can be used to raise woman’s self-esteem and tend authority to their political demand.’ [Roy, Anuradha: 1999: 11]

Indian English fiction has vastly contributed to feminism in Indian context. Shashi Deshpande, in one of her interviews, argues in this regard –

‘It is a curious fact that serious writing by woman is invariably regarded as feminist writing. A woman who writes of woman’s experience often brings in some aspect of those experiences that have angered her, caused her strong feelings. I don’t see why this has to be labeled feminist fiction.’ [Ibid: 12]

It shows that woman writing has categories as literature of miniature. It recalls the new revolutionary dimension of upliftment of status of woman. Indian society which is highly traditional and orthodox has denied the equality of woman in the social context. But, literature has changed the scenario in the modern world. The writers like Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai and Manju Kapur strive for the status of Indian woman. The writers like Manju Kapur and Jhumpa Lahiri have exposed the plight of Indian woman. They have tried to unfold the awful loneliness and struggles of identity of woman. The modern fiction has exposed the restricted life of woman in the fictional world. The modern feminist writer has expressed the development of woman in the modern world. To conclude feminism in Indian English fiction, Sanjay Kumar has expressed –

‘It is in this sense that the modern feminist fiction seems to have evolved considerably. To the modern feminist writers, it is the human life and its mystified ambience that is the truth to explore. Thus, they refuse to confine themselves in depicting the exploited, traumatized and troubled
At this point, the feminism occupied the vast area in literary world. Many authors depict the plight of woman in the fiction. Literature is the best source to inculcate the feminism in the society. The drastic condition of woman thoroughly discussed in the literary work. The literature contains the feminist attitude world wide.
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