Indian English Literature or Indian Literature in English has attracted a widespread interest recently both in India and abroad. It is now realized that Indian English literature and commonwealth literature are in no way inferior to other literature. Indian English Literature has a luxuriant growth in the Post Modern period. It has been making great strides during the last two decades thereby attracts the international attention. It has been all around development not only in literature by the whole literary history of Indian country. The Post Modern writer had thoroughly contributed to the development of Indian English Literature. The Old Indian Literature especially Sanskrit Literature
was famous for its critical and religious writing. But the modern Indian Literature contains the modern form of literature. Indian English poets and writers have won world-wide acclaim during nineteen eighties and afterwards. The survey of Indian English literature has shown that among other form of literature drama happens to be the poorest form in Indian Literary context. On the other hand, fiction has its major share in the literary world of Indian English.

Fiction has been the most powerful form of literary expression. It has acquired a prestigious position in Indian English Literature. It considers that the novel is the best and most acceptable form of literature to express the experiences and ideas. The fiction has created tremendous change in the Indian English Literature. And it has become the tradition in Indian literature. The fiction has retained the momentum form Gandhian age. The fiction is the best mean to reveal the social realism. The trio, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao has given new dimension to the Indian English Literature. These three trios develop the novel from and it becomes the prominent for social reformation. The main changed occurred with the writing of this trio was to shift the Western impression from Indian Fiction. Hence, Indian literature has acclaimed worldwide recognition. The fiction especially Mulk Raj Anand creates a sensation in his contemporary time. M. K. Naik comments that –

‘Anand’s fiction has been shaped by what he himself calls ‘the double burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European tradition and the Himalaya of my India past.’[Naik M. K: 2007: 155]

The impression of the writing of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao was derived in the further fictional writing of Indian Literature. The sustainable development of the fiction was maintained by the writers like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgaonkar and Khushwant Singh. The Postmodern Indian fiction has gone through the development. The towering change was appeared with the emergence of the woman novelist on the horizon of Indian English Literature. The leading figures among them are Ruth Prawar Jhabwala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai.
The women novelist deals with the themes of love, marriage, loneliness and search of identity. The discussion of women novelist in the postmodern period was incomplete without the reference of Kamala Markandaya. She wrote only one novel *Pleasure City* [1982]. M. K. Naik comments on it –

‘The cultural confrontation here is not the usual East verses West, it is tradition and modernity. An efficient multinational corporation comes to a sleepy fishing village on the Coromandal coast to build a holiday resort, Shalimar, the pleasure city; and the villagers, struggling at subsistence level, cannot resist the regular income offered by jobs in it. Markandaya gives a vivid picture of a fisherman’s family: the old father, his elder son who scorns education, and Rikki, his adopted son, the hero of the novel, who has been educated by missionaries. Toby Tully, the manager, is descended from the Copelands and Tullys administrators under the Raj [Copeland was the sympathetic British official in the Golden Honeycomb, 1977]. The minor characters too, such as Ranji, the young army officer proud of independent India, are vividly sketched; though Kamala Markandaya’s infelicitous choice of names persists.’[Das, Bijay Kumar: 2003: 76]

Like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala’s fiction offers a greater variety of setting, character and effect. She has created the characters in meaningful dilemma. Her novels create an impact on social milieu of India. Another phenomenal woman author who had contributed to Indian English fiction was Nayantara Sahagal [1927]. Her novels put focus on political issues. Her fiction has exposed the political theme and sexual freedom of woman in modern social context. The theme of her fiction has also exposed the torment of broken marriages. Among the other contemporary women writers, the writing of Anita Desai takes more interests and concentrates on interior landscape of mind rather than cultural, political and social realities of the time. One of her assets is that she unravels the tortuous involution of sensibility with subtlety and fineness. She is most capable of evoking the changing aspects of Nature matched with human moods, through her casual mastery of language and use of images and symbols.
Another postmodern woman novelist who was honoured with Sahitya Academy Award was Shashi Deshpande. She is considered as one of the most accomplished women novelists of the contemporary time. Her writing concentrates on female relationship i.e. identity of the ‘self’. Her lucid writing and exactness in the pictorial form of the characterization have created an impact on reader. Her famous novel, *That Long Silence* depicts the plight of an educated woman. Besides, Shohba Day is considered one of the important woman novelists in the postmodern era. Bijay Kumar Das explains:

‘Shobha De is known for her erotic novels. Erotica apart her novels have immense literary values in terms of the experimentation in the use of language and creation of an Indian English idiom.’ [*Ibid:* 82]

Another characteristic of Shobha De’s writing is the immense words for the expression of emotions of protagonist. She has exposed the breaking up of the institution of marriage. Bijay Kumar Das again explains –

‘Shobha De presents love, sex and quarrels within the ambit of fictional framework. Life is presented as it is, not as it should be. De’s use of language and her creation of a new idiom by acclimatizing the contemporary society to the English language, adds to the charm of the novel.’ [*Ibid:* 86]

A phenomenal woman novelist who has created history in the Indian fictional world was Arundhati Roy. She was the first Indian English novelist to win the coveted Booker Award. *God of Small Things* is considered as the outstanding novel in Indian English Literature. After 1990’s, the postmodern Indian woman writing concentrated on failure of marriage and loneliness of woman. The phenomenal woman writer, Manju Kapur skillfully describes the plight of Indian woman. Her writing explores the middle class woman’s cultural identity and the struggle for the ‘self’.

### 2.1. Life and Works of Manju Kapur:

India comprises the multicultural tradition and modernity. There is a hot debate on its limitation. Actually, modernity is not limited to Indian society. But, Indian literature occupies the subject of conflict between traditionalism
and modernism. The author in the postmodern period has raised the issue of evil social customs. Indian English Literature in the postmodern time has comprised the new tradition and shape. It has occupied the various facts and factors in the current social condition. P. P. Raveendran quotes –

‘The nineteenth century and after in Indian history, it may be remembered, is the period of colonist and capitalist expression, social reform movements, nationalist awakening and the freedom struggle leading finally to the country’s independence. It is also the period of increasing modernization of the society with its attendant good and evil effects, an expanding English studies programme, a proliferating print culture, the democratization of the reading public and in the sphere of literature, an overall consolidation of the Western ideology of hermetic aesthetic. The impact of these diverse developments can be seen imprinted in the kind of scholarship of Indian literature that got constituted during this period.’ [Singh, Shaleen Kumar : 2012: 100]

The Indian writer explains the customs and traditional attitude of the changing Indian social context. Especially, the Indian woman writer has followed the great tradition of Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan. The new woman writer that arose in the Nineteenth century was Manju Kapur. Born on 25th October 1948, she was brought up in the affluent family. As a lecturer in Miranada House, she was acquainted with the suffering of woman. Manju Kapur elaborates the traditional Indian families and modern thinking of characters. As Shaleen Sharma comments –

‘Manju Kapur has successfully portrayed the conflict of tradition and modernity in her characters. The specially is that her female characters are only involved in clash against male dominated traditional world but they have also suffered this conflict in the form of generation gap.’[Ibid : 101]

In the fiction of Manju Kapur, the role of woman has undergone a significant alteration and has controlled over their thinking and freedom. Her
writing is merely an analysis of female character and cultural identity. In one of her interview, she unfolds –

‘I get both inspired and depressed. I wish I could write like that. Writing is a muscle that needs to be exercised all the time.’[Kumar, Satendra: 2012: 98]

The female protagonists of Manju Kapur’s novels lead forward in the ambiguous manner in the midst of relentless urbanization and the far reaching of Western influence. Ashok Kumar comments –

‘A major preoccupation in recent Indian women’s writing has been a delineation of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships. In a culture where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the women’s role at home is a central focus, it is interesting to see the emergence of not just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural displacement. Manju Kapur has joined the growing number of women writers from India on whom the image of the suffering but stoic woman eventually breaking traditional boundaries has had a significant impact.’ [Rajpur, Kalpna: 2012: 95]

Manju Kapur describes the female character in a real way. The woman in the novels of Manju Kapur is personified as a new female who struggles against the social evil customs. The protagonists of her novels try to break the tradition of silence. Her first novel, Difficult Daughters was published in 1998. It won the ‘Commonwealth Prize for Eurasia Section’. Dr. Gupta comments on it –

‘Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur is an absorbing story of a woman torn between opposite forces of society and her ardent desire to break that silence. Though she does her best to break that silence and to raise arms against social customs and norms but social norms are cruel enough to allow her to succeed. The story tells how she is torn between her family duties, the desire for education and elicit love.’ [Dr. Gupta, Rani Poonam: 2013: 109]
Manju Kapur has continued with the theme of female struggle and her strive of breaking up of the shackles of cruel tradition. Her second novel, *A Married Woman* has created a sensation after its publication. Dr. Kumar explains –

‘*A Married Woman* [2002] was the second novel by Manju Kapur once again underlining and articulating the central concerns of Indian woman. In this novel Astha, the young heroine, is the representative of the woman striving to gain their space in life and socio-cultural domains. Like *Difficult Daughters* [1998] the theme of patriarchal bondage runs deep in the story.’ [Kumar, Satendra: 2012: 99]

It is another new aspect of the novel that searches of woman’s identity. It is the novel of cries of woman for freedom. It has exposed the struggle of woman against the traditional patriarchal society. K M. Kavita expresses:

‘*A Married Woman* is a story of an educated, upper middle class, working Delhite woman, Astha, one such a person who is in search of her soul and soul mate. In quest of her identity, she forges many relationships with different persons. She represents the whole woman race, the changing Indian society where the upper middle class educated woman who, although financially independent, is still facing the problems of adjustment between idealism and pragmatism. It explores the space of such women through Ashta and boldly presents a new perspective.’ [Kavita, K. M: 2013: 58]

Manju Kapur’s next novel, *Home* creates an impact on the society. The theme of the novel is different from her earlier novels. It is the pictorial theme of joint family. The novel presents the problems of the joint family. Satendra Kumar expresses:

‘Manju Kapur’s superb novel Home [2006] is about the intricate dance of manners that is joint family life. Their marriages augmented, their habits conserved- this is the principle upon which the family home is built. Children are brought up to protect the same values. All is well as long as they fall in line. For those who rebel, justice is swift and
accurate: knives that wounded, and once the
damage had been done, gestures that reconciled.’
[Kumar, Satendra: 2012: 116]

Manju Kapur expresses the strained relationship in the joint family. It
is the story of three generations. The novelist portrays the clashes in the
relations and generation gap. The novel delivers the drastic truth of the love in
the relations. The writer also pictures the struggle of women in the joint
family. Dr. Satendra Kumar says:

‘Kapur brings out some agonizing truths of a
‘home’ in the novel, yet she does it from an
extraordinarily mature and detached outlook,
suggesting that many of the things that go wrong
breed naturally from the human condition rather
than from the flows in any one way of life.’ [Ibid:
117]

Manju Kapur’s another phenomenal novel, *The Immigrant* appeared in
2008. The novel explores the awful loneliness of woman. The novelist has
exposed the immigrant experience of an Indian couple. The protagonist of the
novel has experienced alienation in the country, Canada. Manju Kapur
expresses the plight of woman in the foreign country. Her awful aloofness was
skillfully presented by the novelist. Dr Satendra Kumar expresses:

‘The immigrant is an intimate portrait of an
arranged marriage and another mesmerizing saga
from this most beloved of novelists in which an
attempt has been made for mental thirst at the cost
of physical lust.’ [Ibid: 119]

*The Immigrant* unfolds the theme of ‘Self’ and Cultural identity. It
shows a picture of struggle of existence in the foreign land. Nina, a middle
class woman is bound in the shackles of cultural differences in the alienated
land. The novel is an excellent presentation of cultural conflict between the
east and the west. Shailendra Singh says:

‘Manju Kapur’s fourth novel *The immigrant*,
published in 2008, is a tale of middle-class,
globalized individuals, whose spatial and temporal
identities are in a state of constant flux, as their
lives become sites of contest between divergent cultural influences. The modern middle-class migrants, driven by a longing of professional utopias and affluent lifestyles, voluntarily abandon their homes, in the country of their birth, for establishing a home in their adopted country.'
[Singh, Shailendra: 2012: 88]

2.2. Life and Works of Jhumpa Lahiri:
Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri was born in 1967 in London. She was the daughter of the Bengali Immigrant. Hence, Immigrant’s experience is mirrored in her writing. Besides, her writing explores the identity of the persons especially the identity of the ‘Self’. Nandini Sahu illustrates about the writing of Jhumpa Lahiri –

‘The Semiotic creativity is enhanced by significant enrichment of the narrative in the hands of young experts like Arundhati Roy and Jhumpa Lahiri who employ their cultural, racial past as well as familial past as their recurring theme.’ [Sahu, Nandini: 2006: 120]

Her Bengali background often reflects in her works. She has a nick name ‘Jhumpa’ and she adopts the same issue for her famous novel, The Namesake. In one of her interviews, she reveals the adaptation of the theme of the novel –

‘I always knew that the protagonist of the Namesake would be a boy. The original spark of the book was the fact that a friend of my cousin in India had the pet name Gogol. I wanted to write about the pet name/ good name distinction for a long time, and I knew I needed the space of a novel to explore the idea. It’s almost too perfect a metaphor for the experience of growing up as a child of immigrants having a divided identity, divided loyalties, etc.’ [Das, Nigamananda: 2012: 130]

Jhumpa Lahiri has used the unique style of writing especially about the immigrant. Her own experience was reflected in the form of literature. Her
writing is concentrated on hybridization of culture. She has exposed her experience in her literary works. A. J. Sebastian explains:

‘Her fiction is essentially autobiographical with details from her Bengali community and personal experiences. As a diasporic writer, she is superb in her portrayal of the life of Indian migrants to America.’ [Sabastian A. J.: 2012: 10]

Jhumpa Lahiri explored the cultural degradation as well as Diaspora. She explained the plight of the immigrant. The cultural degradation was artistically described by Jhumpa Lahiri. In her fiction, the protagonist experiences the rootlessness and alienation in the foreign land. Nigamananda Das comments –

‘Lahiri therefore prefers to steer clear of this neat but facile categorization, and maintains that she creates not mere ‘diasporic characters’ but ‘distinctly individualized characters’ and writes not about ‘a specific cultural experience’ but about ‘human beings and the difficulties of existence. Her focus is the ‘mindscape of characters’ and ‘human predicament in its wider perspective.’ [Das, Nigamananda: 2012: 131]

Another quality of Jhumpa Lahiri is about the stream of consciousness technique. Her writing concentrates on the mental plight of the character. Her novels explore the psychology of the character. A. J. Sabastian explains –

‘Lahiri writes like James Joyce in the manner of stream of consciousness writers with the epiphanic representation of cloud formation. “Disheartened, he raised his eyes towards the slow drifting clouds dappled and seaborne. They were voyaging across the deserts of the sky”. Joyce brings in the mythology of Daedalus and Icarus bringing to focus how the protagonist Stephen must always balance his desire to flee Ireland and his dream plan to pursue his own identity.

‘He was alone. He was unheeded…. A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea…. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph,
Jhumpa Lahiri’s literary career started with the appearance of her first book of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*. It discusses the same issue of the immigrant and cultural crises. At the surface level, it seems to offer an image of the complicated cultural relationships between India and the West. It investigates the troubled position of the displaced individual caught between two cultures which, in most cases, he/she finds unfamiliar. On a second, more in-depth reading, all the stories record journeys across visible and invisible frontiers that the characters must transgress in order to find their real self. ‘A Temporary Matter’ is a story about anguish and the secrets people keep from one another. The Husband and wife, Shukumar and Shoba reel from the loss of their child six months earlier. They avoid each other and their friends. Shoba fills her time with work and Shukumar engages in finishing his dissertation. The author delicately discusses the pain of couple who lost their son recently. It also reflects the relationship of couple who is unfamiliar since the death of their son.

‘When Mr. Pirzads Came to Dine’ is a short story narrated by Lilia, primarily in her 10th year. Jhumpa Lahiri explores the heavy topic through the eyes of a child. The story elaborates the pain of Mr. Pirzada and his sufferings. The writer also depicts the plight of Laila who stand in between the two different cultures. The expression of the short story is simple and narrative. The topic like war is expressed by Jhumpa Lahiri. The story unveils the emotions of every character. The story ‘Interpreter of Maladies’ discusses the same theme. The theme of cultural differences between Indians and Indian-Americans is another important component in this story. At first glance, the Das family appears to be Indian, but Mr. Kapasi knows them to be tourists. Their manner of dress and attitude give them a way despite their skin tone. The story explores the emotional situation of Mr. Kapasi. Jhumpa Lahiri skillfully unfolds the pain of the protagonist who just has lost his child because of illness. He interprets the maladies of the people to the local doctor. But, he never interprets his own pain.
‘A Real Durwan’ is primarily a story about class and resentment. Boori Ma, a poor woman, forced to sweep stairwells in her old age, comforts herself with tales of her previous riches. The author explores the agony of an old woman who is now in destitute situation. The writer skillfully manages the emotion of Boori Ma. Agony and glory is delicately observed in the story. Whether or not these anecdotes are true, they have the same consequence. The past stories are retreat for her, a way to escape the reality of her life for just a moment.

‘Sexy’ is a story that is centered on gender and race and the confusion. The author explores the serious topic of gender and race. Miranda, the main character has an affair with Dev, an older, married Indian man. She is attracted to Dev; it is suggested, for two primary reasons – his age and his race. The process of absorption is very difficult for Mrs. Sen. Unlike the narrator of ‘The Third and Final Continent’ or even Lilia’s parents, Mrs. Sen finds it impossible to integrate into her new country. Her refusal to learn how to drive is the culmination of her distress. The protagonist of the story deals with his own distress. ‘This Blessed House’ is another exploration of love and marriage and the effects of communication. Sanjeev and Twinkle are newlyweds who have known each other for only a short time. Jhumpa Lahiri exposes the strain between the relationship of husband and wife in the story. Actually, the story is about the tradition and practical life. The marriage of Sanjeev and Twinkle creates conflict between the relationships. Though their marriage is not an arranged in the traditional sense, they are matched by their parents and wed after only a brief, long-distance courtship. It is this long-distance aspect to their relationship that both helps and hurts the marriage. Twinkle and Sanjeev do not know each other and both fail to live up to the other’s expectations of what a husband or wife should be.

Marriage in ‘Interpreter of Maladies’ is often fraught with loneliness. The breakdown in the communication creates the pain to the couple and they suffer with awful loneliness. The malady that afflicts Bibi Haldar has many possible interpretations. The story expresses the anguish of woman. The author expresses the sexuality of woman. The setting and tone of the story is
simple. The emotion and sexuality are delicately represented in the story. It expresses the practicality of modern life. The relations are bound on the ground of profit. The story exposes the plight of ill woman. The protagonist of the story is emotionally imbalance. But, the family never supports her. The author vividly exposes the destitute situation of the protagonist. The story expresses the emotions of woman who desires love and care.

The final story of Interpreter of Maladies, ‘The Third and Final Continent’ emphasizes the immigrant experience in America. The Bengali background creates an impact on reader. The narrator recalls his school days in London, rooming with other expatriate Bengalis, with a wistful tone. The story exposes the plight of narrator who excites about his future in a new country. The author expresses the distress of the narrator. The story narrates the struggle of the protagonist and his agony of adjustment. Jhumpa Lahiri expresses the dilemma of the protagonist who tries to adjust his life in the foreign country. Nandini Sahu elaborates –

‘Her quest for identity is a consciousness towards exile, the dynamics force working to bring about this quest is a point of active engagement between two cultures- Indian and Western.’ [Sahu, Nandini: 2006: 45]

Every protagonist of this collection strives for struggle for existence. Her most celebrated work, The Namesake is the story of a young boy who tries to maintain his new identity with a new name. It is the story of Gogol who has represented the second generation of immigrant in the foreign land. Thus, Jhumpa Lahiri skillfully connects the generation gap of Ashima and Gogol. In one of her interviews, she says:

‘I always knew that the protagonist of The Namesake would be a boy. The original spark of the book was the fact that a friend of my cousin in India had the pet name Gogol. I wanted to write about the pet name/goodname distinction for a long time, and I knew I needed the space a novel to explore the idea. It’s almost too perfect a metaphor for the experience of growing up as a child of immigrants having a divided identity, divided
Thus, *The Namesake* is a story of a young boy who is in search of cultural identity in the foreign land. He actually hates his Indian name. He is suffocated between Indian and foreign culture. He admires his parents who have turned their life according to the situation. But, he suffocates in the foreign land. He is in search of his identity in the crowd of foreign faces. His friends often call him ABCD (American Born Confused Desi). Hence, he is neither completely American nor Indian. His sufferings are skillfully presented by Jhumpa Lahiri.

Jhumpa Lahiri’s another phenomenal creation of short stories is *Unaccustomed Earth*. The book is a real portrait of the globalization. She never forgets the exposure of immigrant’s suffrage and cultural conflict. Aju Mukhopadhyay comments –

‘Though the stories of immigrants still continue to occupy the pages of her book, she has in the meantime spread more of her roots in American soil. The title of the book has been borrowed from Nathaniel Hawthorne’s story, *The Custom House*. The forces of globalization have shifted more Indian intellectuals- professors, students and professionals as the main characters of her stories, across the countries.’ [Mukhopadhyay, Aju: 2012: 70]

*Unaccustomed Earth* is a collection of eight stories. The first five stories are independent and the final three are linked and overlapping each other. *Unaccustomed Earth* is a collection of those stories which vividly explore the destiny of each character. It also has unexpected ending. Jhumpa Lahiri skillfully elaborates the tragic ending of each story. Her earlier collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies* deals with the same issue. Every short story of this collection creates deep impact on reader and the author successfully organizes each theme and setting of short story which deals with the vivid description of normal life. However, the stories continue
to hinge on the sense of alienation and isolation of characters in their quest for identity.

The title story of this same collection that is also the title of this collection is *Unaccustomed Earth*. It is the story of two different generations. The title story deals with a daughter who nervously hosts her widowed father in Seattle, where she lives with her husband and young son. According to the culture of Bengal that after the death of mother, Ruma, the daughter, should take care of her father. Actually, Jhumpa Lahiri here skillfully describes the agitation of women. Ruma, though lawyer, remains in the house because of her pregnancy. Jhumpa Lahiri here explores that in foreign country also, the woman is suppressed and neglected by dominant male centered society. Ruma, newly pregnant and grieving the loss of her mother, is terribly conflicted by the sense of obligation. In reality, it is the story which based on the metaphor of nourishment. In the first short story Jhumpa Lahiri focuses on the theme of settlement of old generation with new generation. On the whole, the story unveils the isolation between the originating culture of the Indian Immigrant parents and the acquisition of the American culture in their American-reared children that is the second generation’s experience in America.
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