CHAPTER – II

DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN WOMEN NOVELISTS IN ENGLISH.

As the country progressing from tradition to modernity, the Indo-Anglian literature reveals a chain of women writers lining up with each other. In such a transitional period women have been playing an important role as a harbinger of the change. Fiction by women writers contributes a major segment of the contemporary Indian writing in English. It provides insights, a wealth of understanding, a reservoirs of meanings and basis of discussion. Many of the Indian women novelists focus on women’s issues and predicaments; they have women’s perspective in the world. The emergence of women novelists is a distinct and major feature, if not a tradition of the Post-independence Indian English novel. Indian women novelists in English and in other vernaculars try their best to deal with apart from many other things, the pathetic plight of forsaken women who are fated to suffer from birth to death. These Indian women novelists get an awareness because of their wide acquaintance with the nuances of life in the East as well as the West.

These women novelists who have high educational and intellectual standards, have sharpened their observation of life and have imparted a psychological depth to their writings. So these writers have created a new canvas for the younger generation of Indian women novelists. These women writers have projected an insider’s view of female psyche, inner aspiration and their peculiar responses to men and things. In this respect Naik observes:

The ‘new’ women novelists naturally share most of the preoccupations of their male counterparts, though in spite of what fanatical feminists would claim, they do have ‘a room of their own’ in the fictional mansion, in terms of certain pressing concerns and attitude towards them (210).

Let us see the contribution made by these contemporary women novelists in Indian English fiction.
The dominant and leading woman novelist of this generation is **Shashi Deshpande**. She is a popular contemporary Indian English woman novelist, short story writer and an author for children. She was born in Dharwad in 1938 in Karnataka, a daughter of renowned Kannada writer and Sanskrit scholar, Adya Rangachar, popularly known as Sriranga, a cerebral man who wrote plays of ideas. This Kannada playwright was described as the Bernard Shaw of Kannada theatre. Deshpande is a widely read person, though she has never identified herself with any particular group of writers, whether of India or abroad. She emerged on the Indian fictional scene in 1970s. She had her graduation in Economics from Eliphinstone College, Mumbai and degree of law from the Government, Law College, Bangalore. Later on, she had an M.A. degree in English from Mysore University and also did a course of journalism. The ten novels, six collections of short stories, four books for children and a screen play prove evidence that Deshpande is one of the most prolific women writers in English in contemporary India.

She is the recipient of prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990 for her novel, *That Long Silence*, and her literary crown becomes more by her works, which have been translated into a number of languages, such as German, Russian, Dutch and Danish. She has made her debut as a writer after the birth of her two sons, with collection of short stories, *The Legacy*, which was published in 1978. Her first novel to be published was *The Dark Holds No Terrors* in 1980. Then it was followed by a short novella entitled as, *If I Die Today* in 1982. And in 1983, her second novel, *Roots and Shadows* was published by which she won a prize of Thirumathi Rangmmal for the best Indian novel of 1982-83. And her prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award winner novel, *That Long Silence* was published in 1988, and *The Binding Vine* and *Come Up and Be Dead* both appeared in 1993. *It was the Nightingale* and *Intrusion and Other Stories* were published in the year 1993. Her three latest novels are, *A Matter of Time* (1996), *Small Remedies* (2000) and *The Stone Women* (2000). In her writing career of 30 years Deshpande published her tenth and recent novel, *In the Country of Deceit* (2008).
Genuinely her writings reveal that she never wrote with the Western readers and critics in mind, as well as never wrote from the point of view of ‘marketability’. She wrote of simple day-to-day Indian middle class life. Each of the novels of Deshpande offers sufficient food for thought especially in the context of human relationships and emotions. The contemporary women writers project Indian women from different perspectives based on their interests and ideologies. Nayantara Sahgal, Shobhhaa De, Namita Gokhale, to name a few, present women belonging to upper class society and with most modern and contemporary in their outlook. The women characters that these women novelists depict are not relevant to the values of morality; consciously maintain extramarital relationship, cravings for sex before marriage, and their recklessness about its consequences. In her novels, Anita Desai has vigorously projected psyche of the protagonist and discusses husband-wife relationship and its effects on the lives of other characters. But apart from them Deshpande emerges as a novelist, preoccupied with middleclass women, typically housewives and middle class career women. The novels of Deshpande present the scenario of the typical Indian joint families, the working out of relationships within families and marriages and detached relationships in the family. Her work is not restricted to the urban middle class, instead she explores the lives of people who barely manage to survive within the norms of respectability and households which lack modern facilities and sophistication.

The novels of Deshpande broadly project the social milieu of many complex relationships. In her novels many men and women living together, journeying across life in their different age groups, classes and gendered roles. The young and old are equally caught in a world of transition faced with incessant quest for new moorings and guidelines. The younger generation women are particularly caught in the process of redefining and rediscovering their own roles, position and relationship within their given social world. Like Anita Desai, Deshpande, too was immensely influenced by Jane Austen’s presentation of family crisis and its effects on other members especially of the
younger generation under the umbrella of modernization. In the last few decades due to the modernization, the concept of marriage is going under the drastic changes and consequently it seems that new woman is suffering with various ordeals and predicaments in her marital status. The confusion, the subjugation and ultimate desperation or sudden desertion of the new woman in her marital life has been the central theme in the novels of Deshpande.

Very skilfully and successfully she has represented the new relationship between human beings as brother and sister, mother and daughter, father and daughter and above all between husband and wife. Deshpande also deftly dwells on sense of guilt and loss, loneliness and alienation of young married woman pitted against ill-mated marriage and hostile circumstances around her. Traditional barriers and cultural shackles have no place in the lives of her heroines. Her protagonists are modern, educated young women who have suppressed under the male-dominated and tradition bound society. Thus her sincere attempt is to give an honest portrayal of their sufferings, their inner cries, disappointments and frustration makes her novels realistic.

In presenting women’s point of view Deshpande has very keenly put stress on clash between tradition and modernity, which is reflected in the form of generation gap and the conflict between women. Her young characters rebel against the traditional way of life, its rituals, ceremonies, customs and patriarchal values and even they are not ready to cope up with stifling atmosphere or new residence. Naik observes Deshpande’s work as woman’s quest for fulfillment. To quote him: “The most outstanding women novelist of the period is Shashi Deshpande, the overarching theme in whose work is woman’s quest for fulfilment and then she is thwarted at every stage by the forces of custom and tradition” (211).

She emerges as a very serious Indian English woman novelist who has very consistently and faithfully depicted different aspects of Indian woman’s life, especially the middle-class woman’s life. However, at the same time, curiously enough, it is also significant that she has repeatedly refused to be
labelled as a feminist. As she has elaborated in many public speeches and interviews that she believes in having a contended life, in spite of her pleading for the freedom of woman in the Indian society.

Anita Desai is known as the grand dame of Indian English Literature emerged as a prolific and promising novelist in India today. She was born of Bengali father D. N. Mazumdar, a businessman and German mother Toni Nime on 24th June, 1937, in Mussori and just at the budding age of seven, she began to show her literary spark by her creative writing and published her first story at the age of nine as a small piece of art in children’s magazine. Undoubtedly, she is one of the major voices and replicas of desolate Indian women, and thus echoing since 1960 as a most powerful contemporary Indian novelist in English.

She was educated in Delhi at Queen Mary’s secondary school and Miranda House, Delhi University where she received B.A. degree in English Literature in 1957. In the following year she married a successful businessman Ashwin Desai and they had four children. Cry, the Peacock (1963) is Desai’s debut novel which sets exciting pace for her career as a novelist. With this novel, she became widely recognized as an exponent of the psychological novel in Indian English fiction. Her second novel, Voices in the City (1965) explores the existential themes of alienation from society, and husband-wife alienation. Bye-Bye, Blackbird (1971), Desai’s third novel, portrays the lives of Indian immigrants in England. Her other novels are – Where Shall We Go This Summer (1975), Fire on the Mountain (1977), Clear Light of Day (1980), The Village By The Sea (1982), In Custody (1984), Baumgartner’s Bombay (1987), Journey to Ithaca (1995) and Fasting, Feasting (1999) that fuelled her into the arena of fame. The latest novel, The Zigzag Way (2004), she departed from her familiar territories and set the story in Mexico. She has also published two collections of short stories – Games of Twilight and Other Stories (1978) and Star Dust and Other Stories (2001).
In 1986 she was a Visiting Fellow at Colleges including Smith, Mount Holyoke and Girton College and Cambridge University. She was a member of the advisory board for English of the National Academy of Letters in Delhi, beginning in 1972, known in India as *The Sahitya Akademi* which awarded Desai, its tip Prize in 1979. In 1993 Massachusetts Institute of Technology appointed Desai as the first Professor of Writing in English for more than 20 years. She was also Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and designated as a Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Thrice she was short-listed for the prestigious Booker Prize. She was honoured with ‘Padmashri’ award by the Government of India. When Desai started her career as a novelist in 1960s, she had no room of her own, no big advances, nor publishers in contemporary literature in English writing. Today in the age of quick-reads scenario, she vigorously draws attention with the same unwavering quality to her work that she earlier displayed, when she penned *Cry, The Peacock* in 1963. Like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, Desai’s themes too deal with human nature and human relationship. In the post independence Indian English fiction earlier women novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Jhabwala and Nayantara Sahagal and others, rarely portray the psychic tension and tribulation of contemporary woman in a traditional society. Unlike them, Desai portrays these trials and tribulations, and presents in the perspective of the present days understanding.

In her novels, Desai broadly and effectively deals with the themes of rootlessness, alienation, anxiety, material disharmony, interpersonal relationships and patriarchal dominance. She has given a new dimension, vision and face to the Indian novel in English by shifting the emphasis from outer to inner reality. Her artistic skill lies chiefly in the delineation of the psychic conditions of the characters who indulge in self-analysis and discover themselves in the process. Sometimes they alienate themselves from their surrounding. Sometimes they grow neurotic, psychotic or schizophrenic. The young men are in arms against tradition and their own families, while the women are exposed to far greater tragedies and spiritual struggles. Desai’s
female protagonists represent ‘the creative release of feminine sensibility’, which began to emerge after World War II. Her women characters are not ordinary, mainstream women but they are mostly from affluent families and do not have to worry about daily subsistence. The psychological novel is said to stress, “moments of feeling rather than matters of fact.” The Works of Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner testify to this. Desai has employed the same technique in her novels. Her protagonists, mostly centred in the cities, turn out to be drifting alienated products of a mixed heritage.

Desai explores the inner world of her heroines and reveals the deeper forces at work in creating the feminine sensibility. The new emerging woman of the eighties is demonstrated best in the heroines of her novels. Man woman’s complex relationship may be considered as the major theme, used regularly and recurrently by Desai in her novels to dramatically depict the psychological development and inward reality of her characters. She depicts characters who feel a terrible isolation in their suffocating darkish life and longing for love and communion which they perceive as ‘the panacea of the ills of the world.’ Her characters suffer intensely because of their futile attempt to find emotional contact, response and understanding and to escape from the tyrannical walls of sounds and from stifling dungeon like atmosphere. Her chief concern is human relationship. Her central theme is the existential predicament of an individual which she projects through incompatible couples, very sensitive wives and ill-matched husbands. She is a mute observer, perceiving everything minutely and delicately and presents it dexterously in a form of action. Though her characters are self-conscious of the reality around them, yet they carry with them a sense of loneliness, alienation and pessimism. She adds a new dimension turning inward into the realities of life and plunges into fathom of the human psyche to score out its mysterious turmoil and chaos inside the mind of her characters.
Meenakshi Mukherjee, while reviewing the fictional survey of the 70s decade, attributes Desai’s position as an Indian English woman novelist in the following words:

Another Indo-Anglian novelist whose distinctive style and intensely individual imagery deserves mention is Anita Desai. She is a comparatively young writer who has written only three novels so far, but already her style shows a strong individuality. Her language is marked by three characteristics: sensuous richness, a high-stung sensitiveness, and a love for the sound of words (Mukherjee 179).

Significantly, in the same perspective Indian English critic M. K. Naik, too, applauded the vigorous contribution of Desai. He explains:

Anita Desai unravels the tortuous involutions of sensibility with subtlety and finesse and her ability to evoke the changing aspects of Nature matched with human moods is another of her assets, through her easy mastery of the language and her penchant for image and symbol occasionally result in preciously and overwriting. If her fiction is able to advance from the vision of ‘aloneness’ as a psychological state of mind that of alienation as a metaphysical enigma-as one hopes it will – Anita Desai may one day achieve an amplified pattern of significant exploration of consciousness comparable to Virginia Woolf at her best (Naik 254).

Thus the projection of young women with their predicaments in the novels of Desai certainly evinces the onset of a new age. Though Naik’s comparison of her, with Woolf is consistent, yet at the same time, she appears and emerges as the true inheritor of Jane Austen, for her depiction is unsparing in revealing the warped violence of family life and lack of proper proportion and sense of responsibility among parents. Desai has portrayed the hurdles of marital discord in almost all of her novels and her characters or protagonists pass through crisis after crisis. Most of them are in a quest of better partners to seek their hearts within.

Bharati Mukherjee was born on 27th July, 1940, in a Bengali Brahmin family of Calcutta to wealthy parents, SudhirLal and Bina Mukherjee. Since her father was a co-owner of a pharmaceutical factory, she enjoyed blissful and comfortable circumstances in her life. Shortly after the
restoration of India’s freedom by the Britishers, she lived with her parents and two sisters in London for about three and half years, there she excelled in fluency of English language. At the age of ten, she had a perception to become a writer and this aspiration was fulfilled by writing numerous short stories. In the meantime, Mukherjee completed her B.A. (Honour) in English at the University of Calcutta in 1959, and completed her M.A. in English and Ancient Indian Culture from the University of Baroda in 1961. Then she went to the USA and became a recipient of a scholarship from the University of Iowa and got MFA in creative writing in 1963 and Ph.D. in English and comparative literature in 1969. In her stay at the campus of Iowa, she met Clark Blaise to whom she married on September 19, 1963. Thus the two writers, after their brief courtship, became the life partners.

Initially she took up teaching as her career in the University. In 1980, Mukherjee took a bold decision to quit her professional appointment at McGill University in Montreal and move to America and since then they have been living there as U.S. citizens. At present she is a Professor at University of California, Berkeley. Her academic and professional career won her many a laurel. In 1968 and 1976, she availed herself of McGill University, also winning Canada Arts Council, Grant twice in the year 1973-74 and 1977. She was honoured by the prestigious Shastri-Indo Institution grant in the year 1976-77. In the year 1978-79 she became the recipient of Guggenheim Foundation award and Canadian Government award in 1982. She also won the first prize from Periodical Distribution Association in 1980 for her short story, Isolated Incidents. She has also been awarded with the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1989 for her short story collection.

co-authored with her husband two non-fiction works. A dominant and recurring motif that occurs through all Mukherjee’s eight works of fiction is the difference of – cultural, religious, racial, sexual and economic class. Mukherjee’s fiction vigorously projects the human predicament and issues due to the process of globalization of the world. After 1980, the sensibility of the immigrant is reflected gradually in her writings. During her odyssey as a writer, like the eponymous narrator of her novel *Jasmine*, almost three decades her creative sensibility has undergone many changes. She has projected an ‘on going quest’ from ‘expatriation to immigration’, in her writing. Her major pleading as a writer has been the life of South-Asian expatriates or immigrants in Canada and USA and the problem of ‘Acculturation’ and ‘Assimilation’. Through her novels and short stories, she has emphasized on contemporary themes and concerns. One of these is the emotional and psychic consequences of the search for self identity.

Her writing broadly reflects her personal experience as a woman caught between two cultures. Mukherjee’s literary work is divided into two parts. The first part covers her writing before 1980, as an expatriate writer and second part after 1980, as an American immigrant writer. As an expatriate writer, the protagonists are Indians of her early three novels, like Tara, Dimple and Jasmine. Though after having published two novels – *The Tiger’s Daughter* and *Wife*, she remained still as an outsider in the Canadian literary scenario. Once she was humiliated by Canada Council. Her personal experiences in Canada and America and obvious changes in her psyche are truly reflected in her works. Initially as a debutant novelist V. S. Naipaul was her literary model. But later on she changed her literary model and accepted Bernard Malamud as her next model. There are several contemporary writers who have also projected the theme of expatriation. The women writers such as R. P. Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai and host of others who have projected the theme of expatriation. The women writers like Anita Desai, Markandaya present the similar theme which resembles very close to that of Mukherjee’s styles.
Mukherjee’s work corresponds with the various phases of her life, as her protagonists are close projection of her self. In brief, her writings reflect her perception of what it means to be a woman writer of Bengali-Indian origin who lived in both Canada and America. She found it difficult to restrict herself. So she goes beyond boundaries and perceives herself as a pioneer of new territories, experiences and literatures.

**Githa Hariharan**, another dominant women novelist, published her debut novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) which arises waves in the literary world and won 1993 Common Wealth writer’s prize. The novel forwards the female bond and attempts to create new paradigms for the recreation of woman’s identity. The mother-daughter relationship has been redefined in this novel. In a patriarchal setup, mother daughter relationship is ‘deformed’ and motherhood has restricted meaning. The novel is the story of Devi’s quest for self image.

Hariharan’s second novel, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994) is centered on protagonist a retired school teacher named Vasu. In this novel the primary focus is on problems encountered by Vasu master as a teacher and not on the problems of his ‘feminine ghosts’. The novel presents the background of the role of teacher and student. It gives the academic identity of a boy and teacher.

Hariharan’s third novel, *When Dreams Travel* (1991) is a kind of feminist retelling of the *Arabian Nights*. The physical affinity between the two sisters bring into focus another facet of their troublesome relationship. Hariharan’s novel thus becomes the quest for the power of feminine in a male bastion. Here the author attempts to write a metafiction through an elaborate intertext that is made foreground the feminist issue from a fresh perspective.

*In Times of Siege* is Hariharan’s fourth novel. The novel is looking at what happens when people who cherish liberal ideals are put to test. The setting of the novel is in two Universities in Delhi i.e. Kasturba Gandhi University and Kamala Nehru University. And through Meena as her
mouthpiece, Hariharan writes the link between fascism and the ugly faces of Hinduism. The novel implicitly concludes that basic human rights must be protected not only for the sake of individuals and countries involved but to preserve the human race.

**Arundhati Roy**, a prominent woman novelist of the decade shot into international limelight by her Booker prize winner debut novel *The God of Small Things* in October 1997. In this debut novel, she has very aptly and beautifully portrayed class antagonism and class exploitation; exposure of the ostentation and hypocrisy of big man-Marxism, patriarchal domination and callous police administration; the problem of love laws; a forbidden relationship between a touchable and untouchable and above all, a highly debated theme of incestuous relation between the twins. In the last decade of the century young women writers in the Indian sub continent have been generally preoccupied with the woman’s subordination under traditional laws. Roy, in her first and instantly famous novel – *The God of Small Things*, has also included within her focus the oppression of the other marginal group i.e. ‘untouchable’. Roy tries to sensitize this society to the cruelty of some of its traditions and dehumanizing taboos. She depicts how the women and the untouchables are treated as impersonal and subjugative objects in this social structure, how things are decided for both by the patriarchal ideology of an ancient culture which also cultivates the pervasive snobbery and violence by the ‘touchables’ towards the ‘untouchables’. Thus the novel is depiction of powerful indictment of those ugly social forces which crush an innocent young man Velutha, who belongs to an untouchable class Paravan. The in-depth study of the novel shows that Velutha is a victim of many ugly social forces.

**Namita Gokhale’s** *Paro : Dreams of Passion* (1984) also appears in the decade as a great deal of talent and significant contribution. The title *Paro* based on the popular myth of Devdas to the image of docility that is generally endangered by traditional Indian literature. The Paro of this novel is far from being the ‘ideal’ woman. Married several times and living in an adulterous
relationship with a man much younger than herself, *Paro* transgresses moral boundaries of the typical ‘Bharatiya nari’ set down by society. In positing Paro and not Devdas as the central character, Gokhale threatens to tell the story from a woman’s point of view.

Namita Gokhale’s second novel *Gods Graves and Grandmother*, narrates the story in the first person narrative technique through Gudiya, with frankness and candour and often in a brutally straightforward manner. Gokhale’s approach is more or less, natural, neutral and secular. Thus the protagonist, the young daughter of a prostitute, dreams of a glamorous future.


Whereas Gokhale’s fourth novel *The Book of Shadows* (1999) deals with protagonist, Rachita a supercilious teacher of Delhi College. Her life changes dramatically when her lover commits suicide, and his sister throws acid on Rachita to punish her for her brother’s death. The disfigured protagonist goes away to her ancestral home in Himalayas.

**Manju Kapur** is a Professor of English literature at Miranda House, Delhi University. At present Kapur has credited four novels on her account. Educated in India and abroad, she is avid reader and widely travelled person. She was a poetess and playwright prior to becoming a novelist. She does not regret the fact that she has made a late beginning at the age of 42, when she began writing, *Difficult Daughters* (1998). Kapur’s maiden venture received a huge international acclaim and brought overnight popularity and she bagged 1999 Commonwealth Writer’s Prize for the Best First Book (Eurasia region). Her other novels are - *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006) and *The Immigrant* (2008). Kapur’s novels are about women trying to build lives for themselves within or outside the conventional family life. Of all the contemporary Indian novelists writing in English of the nineteen nineties decade, she is, perhaps, the most perceptive and consistent explorer of the
inner life, traumas, predicaments, especially that of young Indian women of
the present generation. In the galaxy of Indian feminist fiction writers, Kapur
has secured a niche for herself by adding her maiden novel, *Difficult Daughters*, has invited the critical attention of Meenakshi Mukherjee,
Pushpalata and host of others. To quote Pushpalata: "as it unfolds the story,
where the narrator laboriously attempts to reveal the ‘truth’ that Indian women
are breaking the shackles of male hegemony and are striving hard to realize
their own self" (PushpaLata 199).

Modern Indian English writing is emerging as a thriving branch of
contemporary world literature. There are many upcoming writers who make
their own contributions and get acknowledged for their creative aspirations.
**Sunny Singh** has also emerged as one of the dominant Indian women
novelists of the decade nineteen nineties. With her debut novel, *Nani’s Book
of Suicides*, she has left effective hallmarks on Post Modern Indian English
literature. Singh was born in Varanasi (U.P.) India, and received her education
in various parts of India and parts of the world. She has graduated with
honours from Brandeis University, Waltham, M.A. in 1990 with a degree in
English and American literature. In 2000, she returned to the college to
pursue a Master degree in Spanish Language, Literature and Culture at the
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, which she has completed with
honours in May 2002. Before she started her career as a writer, she has also
contributed as a journalist, teacher and deserved position as a Management
Executive, for multinationals in Mexico, Chile and South Africa. For the last
nine years, she has been writing full-time, and as a writer, she has also
contributed as a playwright by publishing *Birthing Athena*. The theme of the
play focused on evolving relationships and price of ambition in post-
liberalisation India. *The Times of India*, has appreciated the play as an
“intensely cathartic experience.” Her debut novel, *Nani’s Book of Suicides*,
had been published in 2000. The present novel is described by the *Hindustan
Times* as a “first novel of rare scope and power”. The novel explores the
cultural identity of a young Indian woman, through a fund of myths, family lore and contemporary reality.

Her second book, *Single In The City : The Independent Women’s Handbook* (2001) has been released by Penguin India. She has been writing her another novel, titled as, *With Krishna’s Eyes*, and also working on collection of short stories. She has been finalizing her Ph.D. dissertation in commercial Hindi cinema. As a writer she is inspired by Dante Aligarhi and Salmon Rushdie and like Rushdie, she has effectively employed the literary themes of magic realism and mythology in her work. Apart from being a writer her social commitment and contribution is also noteworthy. She is the founder of the Jhalak Foundation, an organization that organizes pediatric cardiac surgery for underprivileged children in India. As a young writer of the present generation who has visited the foreign countries like Mexico, Chile and South Africa. Through her personality, she reflects the zeal and moods of modernization. Talking about herself on blog she says: “I am often seen as model example of my generation. I wear western clothes, studied at foreign university, worked overseas for MNC for ridiculous amount of hard currency. I speak languages other than English, originated in Europe” (Website 1). Thus Singh after living abroad for about ten years has returned to India to live and understand her home as an adult. Her writing reflects the village life in UP and Bihar, the small-town life of places like Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, as well as the big urban experiences of Delhi.

**Shobhhaa De** has emerged as one of the most popular and most prolific writers on the scenario of contemporary Indian English fiction. Today she is popularly known as India’s best selling author. On January 7, 1947, she was born in an upper middle class Saraswat Brahmin family in Maharashtra and educated in Delhi and Mumbai. She has completed her graduation in Psychology from St. Xavier College, Mumbai. In the late sixties, though there was protest by her father, she presented herself as a model whereas in 1970, she began her career in journalism and she has founded as well as edited three popular magazines, namely *Stardust, Society* and *Celebrity* and had
contributed as a consulting editor to *Sunday* and *Megacity*. She achieved both name and fame while working as a freelance writer and columnist for several leading newspapers and magazines.

De has published twelve books out of which, seven are novels. Her debut novel *Socialite Evenings* (1989) is known as the bestselling novel. It was written because of the insistence of David Davidar, the editor and publisher of Penguin Books, India division. Her second novel *Starry Nights* was published in 1990. Her other novels are, *Sisters* (1992), *Strange Obsession* (1992), *Sultry Days* (1994), *Snapshots* (1996), *Second Thoughts* (1996) and recently published book, *Superstar India : From Incredible to Unstoppable* (2008). As a writer, the peculiarity of De appears different from her counterparts of India by her unique and realistic ‘life like’ presentation of themes in her novels. As she has completed her graduation in the subject like Psychology, her success as a novelist, lies in her keen interest of understanding of the psyche of woman and the Ordeals which she confronts in her day to day life. Like Shashi Deshpande and Anita Desai, De’s concern is about women’s feelings of modern days and the problems that arise due to the gender discrimination. The women novelists have projected the various images of ‘The New Woman’ which means new literary female-model. She is presented in the form of assertive and self-willed, searching for her discovery of self-identity. ‘The New Woman’ in fact belongs to the stream of urban middle class woman, who, too, suffers but not as a passive, submissive and docile sufferer. De very dexterously has brought out on the anvil the women’s displacement and marginalization at the hands of patriarchal system and society in almost all walks of life. Her novels have been read by the readers because of their piercing deep insight into urban women’s life and realistic ‘Life-size’ live presentation of them. Today most of the critics have critisized her work on the moral ground. These critics still argue that “she is responsible for the downfall of the moral conduct of the youth of India for the instrumental in expediting sexual revolution in India” (Anish Kumar 142).
But the above charge by the conservative critics appears not relevant and to the point of contemporary situation. Whatever De has presented in her novels is just reflection of contemporary scenario and bitter reality of the contemporary situation. To some extent, whatever she has presented is sheer reality of the multidimensional and mechanical life style of Mumbaities, and the same is reflected sometimes, in a smaller or broader canvass on the coverpage of the daily newspapers. And some times some of the truths are suppressed themselves by the male hegemony. De constantly tries to shatter patriarchal hegemony and raises the voice of protest against male dominancy. And for this, she explores the world of urban Indian women. So to this justification De’s place appears more as a literary writer and less as a popular novelist. Mostly, her writings have instigated reaction, because of their life like, indepth depiction of life and her capacity to expose society, but she fends off herself by saying that it is important for her to present, this glamorous vision of world which very few people know about. That is why the female protagonists of De’s are enterprising, bold, innovative and ready to accept challenges. Her artistic, creative and literary concerns deserve serious and close look. She has depicted in her novels, dissatisfied housewives, sex workers, marriages – its bliss and pangs, husbands in the garb of male hegemony and so many characters to prove her agenda. She is critique of patriarchy besides economic globalization and subterranean complexity. She is a writer of social consciousness, and at the same is reflected in her writings, where the women are vulnerable to exploitation in the context of tradition and culture, which appears very disastrous for the cozy atmosphere of the society. Sometimes she tears out the mask of pretending goodness of the upper middle class urban people through her novels.

Like the Restoration playwright, William Congreve’s depiction of contemporary aristocratic society, their whims and whimsicalities in the play, *The Way of The World*, De also cleverly projects the glamorous images of the attractive, apparently independent and highly professional women trying to dominate the power structures. But the outward glory and the glitter in the
life of these women is merely like a mirage, marked by inherent frustration and disgust, as an outcome of their deviant behaviour. She has tried her best to project the moral breakdown of modern society in which a hopeless and forsaken woman longs for fulfillment and wants to soar over in the sky unfettered. Her novels deal with the men and women belonging to the upper class or middle class – their obsessions, disappointments and insecurities. In the similar way Indrani Banerjee in an article “Hush … it’s a Honey Trap” in *Sunday Times of India*, writes about how today women using sex as a bait and that men have been great honey traps too. She also made somewhat the same expressions asserted about the modern women. She observes:

> It’s a world of lies and deceit … of crumpled beds, heartbroken spouses, explicit letters and ruined lives. So what entices a woman where cases could lead to dangerous situation is it thrill of the chase or is it the satisfaction of matching skill for skill with their male counterparts? (*Times Life* 1).

The protagonists and other female characters of her novels belong to sophisticated middle class and glittering world. Accordingly their predicaments and concerns are apart from those of the ordinary, traditional, middle class women. The recent notions about liberation of women brought to them awareness about their marginalization and developed an intense yearning for self-exploration and search for identity. While expressing the views and controversy of De’s writing, N. K. Neb justifies her place in the contemporary Indian writing in English:

> A critical study of De’s novels in this context reveals that De has not only concentrated on the presentation of strange and startling world marking the emergence of recent trends in society but also shown her concern for the problems faced by contemporary high society women …. (158).

In De’s novels a victimized female protagonist is presented as facing life confidently. Similarly through her characters the novelist perhaps attempted to emphasize the fact that emotions like love never restrict to the barriers of class, caste, and even age though indiscretion results of breakdown of essential ties. Thus, De succeeds in projecting a picture of a very different
stratum of society. In reality through the vehicle of novel, De introduces the reader to the inner lives of the elite class women of Mumbai. She shatters the myth that these women have really enjoyed a life, full of happiness and contentment. On the contrary, she probes the psyche of her women characters to reveal the trauma, insecurity and agony that lies beneath the glitter.

Kavery Nambisan was born in Coorg, one of the most picturesque regions of Karnataka, and was schooled in Delhi and graduated from St. John Medical College, Bangalore. She stood first in Surgery. Afterwards, she was sponsored by the University of Liverpool for higher training and went to England to do her F.R.C.S. She obtained the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons when she was 24. What is significant about this Johnite Physician is that she is a Surgeon in rural India and is also recently emerging as a well-known fiction writer. She has initiated her career as a Surgeon at St. Nazareth hospital in Mokama (Bihar), a dacoit-infested rural town and this was her unusual experience of working under the difficult and adverse conditions and it was one she would never forget. Later she worked in Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. She could not adjust to city practice for various reasons and private hospitals in Kerala also, where she was asked to leave the job because, she refused to indulge in the malpractice blatantly practised there. She was recipient of Tata Excellence Award in 2001 for her work in Tamil Nadu. At present she lives and works in Maharashtra with her husband Vijay Nambisan, the reputed poet and journalist. Her first marriage to K. R. Bhatt, as colleague in college sadly ended after 18 good years, and they have a daughter, named Chetna.

She was invited to the University of Iowa as a Fellow of the International writing programme in 2007. During her stay in the U.S. she lectured at Cornell Yale, Berkeley and Columbia Universities and did reading excerpts from her novels. She also received generous contributions for ARSI following her to Physician groups in U.S. At present she runs a clinic for the migrant labour who comes from the interior Maharashtra and from North
Karnataka in search of work. She and her husband also run a learning centre and library for their children.

She began her literary career writing for women’s magazines. She tried her hand at writing children’s books and won the UNICEF-CBT award for her adventure story, *Once Upon a Forest*, which was later serialised on television. She also writes about health care issues for the national media and is vocal about injustices and female foeticide. She is an active member of the Association of Rural surgeons of India (ARSI) and has been governing council member for several years. Her debut as a writer with adult fiction was, *The Truth (Almost) About Bharat* (1991) published by Penguin India. It is the story of a rebellious young medical student who begins a cross-country road trip on his motorcycle and one of the few campus novels in Indian writing in English. Her career in medicine has been a strong influence in her fiction. Followed by it, *The Scent of Pepper* was published by her in 1997. Her third novel, *Mango-Coloured Fish* was published by Penguin in 1998 and the same has been selected by the researcher for the present study. Her fourth novel, *On Wings of Butterflies* (2002) and her fifth novel *The Hills of Angheri* (2005) also published by Penguin India. Her latest work, *The Story That Must Not Be Told* is one of the 21 books chosen on the list for Man Asian Literary Prize 2008.

**Shauna Singh Baldwin**, an Indo-Canadian writer, who belongs to the Sikh community, was born in Montreal and her family returned to India in 1972, when Shauna was ten and grew up in Delhi. She addresses herself a second generation diasporic writer because her perceptions are distinct from those of earlier diasporic writers, such as Bharati Mukherjee and Chitra Banerjee Divakurani. Baldwin has initiated her career as an author of *English Lessons and Other Stories* (1996) and co-author of *A Foreign Visitor’s Survival Guide to America*. She is also a former Radio producer with hosting a Radio show called *Sunno* and ‘e-commerce consultant’. At the same time her fiction and poems are widely published in literary magazines and anthologies in the U.S.A., Canada and India. Her debut novel, *What the Body
Remembers, was published in 1999. On April, 14th, 2000 she became the recipient of Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best book in the Canada Caribbean region. The present novel has been translated into fourteen languages. Her second novel, The Tiger Claw (2004) was finalist for the 2004 Giller Prize. Shashi Tharoor, an eminent creative writer in Indian English literature described this novel, as deeply felt, richly evocative novel, and addresses as a major literary voice. Her one more book We Are Not in Pakistan (2007) is a collection of ten stories.

She was a recipient of many awards – India’s International Nehru Award (gold medal), the National Shastri Award, a silver medal, the 1995 Writers Union of Canada Award for short prose, the 1996 Friends of American Writers Award, the 1997 Canadian Literary Award, Wisconian Arts Board Literary Arts Fellowship in 2003. She received the degree of M.B.A. from Marquette University and M.F.A. from the University of British Columbia.

Having seen contemporary major women novelists it is to be noted that a host of minor contemporary women novelists have equally contributed to the development of Indian English novel. They are as follows:

Among other women novelists in Indian English fiction is Suniti Namjoshi (b. 1941) who effectively played the part of Rushdie in ushering in Magic Realism in Women’s Fiction, though she relies more on allegory and symbol exclusively. In Her Conversations of Cow (1985) the protagonist, an Indian academic one day finds her guru in the form a cow. Whereas Namjoshi second novel, The Mother of Maya Diip (1989) appears as more substantial work. This novel is a description of a feminist Utopia, in which boys are milked for sperms when they attain puberty and then terminated. She has drawn very skillfully the mythologies from a treasure chest of Eastern and Western, her writing activates intertextual memories that constantly collide with each creating humour and irony.
Nina Sibal (b. 1948), another woman novelist, has obviously followed the trodden paths of Rushdie’s *Midnight Children* in her novel *Yatra* in 1987. The protagonist Krishan is evidently like that of Rushdie’s Saleem Sinai being gifted with miraculous powers. The novel deals with the Sikh history, especially the political ferment of the nineteen twenties in the Punjab. The novel belongs to both the groups of novels “Magic Realism” and “Regional Novels”. It has other themes such as birth of Bangla Desh 1971, the Chipko movement in the 80’s. Sibal’s second novel *The Dogs of Justice* (1998) is a regional novel about Kashmir problem. It covers three decades in the life of Shahnaz, a rich beautiful Kashmiri girl.

Gita Mehata, another woman novelist began her fiction writing with *Karma Cola* in 1980. Beginning with a study of the social classes during colonial rule, a River Sutra moves into more serious questions like and death. She has received acclaim as being an international cross-cultural critic. Using the technique of story telling this novel records a series of experiences as narrated by different characters to a retired bureaucrat on the banks of Narmada. The novel delves into many aspects of Indian culture. Gita Mehata’s *Raj* (1989) delineates life in an Indian royal family, but too much of untrasmuted history finds its way into this autobiography of a young girl, whose marriage is arranged with a prince. The novel deals with the coming of Indian independence as well as emancipation of the heroine.

Raji Narasimhan (b. 1937) published her novel, *Drifting to a Dawn* (1983) which drifts from Raman to Jana, to their son Surya. Though the novel is not quite satisfactory, the language is handled with sensitivity. In her another novel, *The Sky Changes* (1992), Narasimhan describes the sufferings of the heroine Krishna from a superfine sensitivity. The novel is stepped in an atmosphere of inexorable pain and melancholy.

Indira Mahindra also emerged as a woman novelist with her debut novel in 1984, titled *The Club*. It is set in the early sixties and centres round Lucy and step-sister Mabel who have stayed on in India after the other
English people left. Her second novel, *The End Play* (1994) has a young woman narrator. It exposes personal relationships in modern India, revealing the power struggle in an Indian joint family.

In this decade **Indira Ganesan** (b. 1960) made her contribution to Indian fiction by publishing her two novels, *The Journey* (1990) and *Inheritance* (1997). The first novel proves that fictional India is still a saleable commodity in the West. Whereas the second novel has a protagonist, the youngest of the three sisters, all with different fathers. Her father is an American and the girl keeps fantasizing about him.

**Shonas Ramaya's** *Flute* (1989) is a very unusual Raj novel, in which an aristocratic Englishman, Julian, Sixth Earl of Ravinspur, who plays on the flute superbly is taken to be avatar of Krishna. The fantasy lacks credibility, even by the loose standards of Magic Realism.

**Leena Dhingra** (b. 1942) wrote *First Light* in 1988. In it the heroine Meera is settled in England, but feels dissatisfied with her life there, and wants to comeback to India.

**Basanti Karamarkar's** *Love in the Throes of Tradition* (1990) is a realistic description of three generations of a Bengali family.

**Prema Nandkumar's** *Atom and the Serpent* (1982) appeared in the form of campus novel. Like M. K. Naik’s *Corridors of Knowledge*, it presents an Indian University where little true research goes on, and ironically throws light on the academic staff’s internal disputes and they compete for funds and foreign assignments.

**Rani Dharker's** *The Virgin Syndrome* (1997) is among few novels in English by an Indian woman writer that boldly deals with issues of female sexuality. The novel was nominated for the Common Wealth prize for Euro-Asia region in 1997. Siddarth being the young man finds love and fulfillment with forty plus heroine. Dharker’s concern with female sexuality prevents her from giving a complete picture of any character other than the heroine.
Another woman novelist of the decade is Dina Mehta, whose novel *And Some Take a Lover* (1992) portrays the growing up of a young Parsi girl who loves Sudhir, a dedicated follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Thus political events in the early 1940’s figure prominently in this novel. The novel is written from the point of view Roshni, a young college girl from Parsi family. She has no shortage of admirers in her highly Westernized circle, but she loves only Sudhir, a dedicated follower of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mrinal Pande, a one time Editor of the *Saptahik Hindustan*, a popular Hindi Weekly, wrote *Daughter’s Daughter* (1993) which focuses on gender bias. The novel is about a loosely connected series of episodes, seen through the eyes of Tinu, a north Indian girl growing up after independence. At her maternal grandmother’s home, her cousin Kuki, her uncle’s son, is given preference in all things over Tinu, a daughter’s daughter. The graphic picture of discrimination against the female child is based on fact. Pande’s English style is as lucid and straightforward as that of R. K. Narayan.

*My Own Mistress* is Pande’s second novel based on her own experience in television and journalism. It reveals the way women journalists, even now are expected to deal only with “Women’s issues” i.e. cooking, interior decorations etc. leaving serious issues to their male colleagues through the experiences of the protagonist.

Uma Vasudev’s *Shreya of Sonagarh* (1993) deals with the theme of sex in relation to woman’s relationship with her husband as well as with her paramour. Uma Vasudev views Shreya as an introverted and ugly girl, an ambitious teenager who ‘hated people, entertainment, socializing, sex or politics.’ The novel ends with an optimistic note, asserting the validity of true love which transgresses all mundane sexual values to attain a spiritual wholeness. Thus the novel depicts Shreya’s sexual odyssey, her journey from self-alienation to self-identification from rejection to acceptance.

Anita Nair joined the literary horizon with her ventures produced some good works and in a little span of her career she has gained an
international reputation. *The Better Man* is the debut novel by Nair. The novel is a straight forward tale set in a Kerala village. Mukundan Nair, the protagonist has been traumatized by his brutal father’s tyranny. His father Achuthan Nair has done everything to destroy his son’s self esteem. Throughout the novel, Nair prioritises the theme of loneliness above all other themes. Nair’s second novel *Ladies Coup* (2001) is set in railway compartment specially meant for six ladies traveling in the coup narrate their stories and share their secrets lying deep in their hearts. Thus the novel as a whole is the story of resurrection, the resurrection of self.

In the recent time, the expatriate writings have surprisingly come into limelight. They flourished so much so that they all occupied a significant place in the formation of national literature world over. One sparking sequin on the fabric of Diaspora writing is Pulitzer winner *Jhumpa Lahiri*. She has never been an Indian by citizenship. She has been born, brought up and educated in London and Boston. Her connectivity with India and Indian people is borrowed from her grand parents, books and other NRIs. Lahiri has travelled extensively to India and has experienced the issues of the Diaspora as it exists. As a writer she is very candid in her confession regarding her visit to her native country:

I went to Calcutta (Kolkata) neither as a tourist nor as a former resident – a valuable position. I think as a writer, I learned to observe things as an outsider and yet I also knew that as different as Kolkata is from Rhodes Island, I belonged there in some fundamental ways. I didn’t seem to belong to the United States (Devika 113).

*Interpreter of Maladies* is her first book, published in the form of collection of short stories, for which she won the Pulitzer Prize for literature in 1999. Her merit as an author can be easily gauged by the fact that the title story of the collection of Interpreter of Maladies has been selected for the O’Henry Award as well as the best American short story. Lahiri’s first novel *The Namesake* (2003) depicts her favourite, heartfelt theme of migration and different dilemmas regarding it. The novel is an extension of various themes
which she portrays in her short stories. Dominant themes like alienation, quest for identity, loneliness, and self invention for an expatriate are reflected in her novel. The novel deals with immigrants in the United States as well as their children – the first and second generation immigrants. Lahiri’s works are the impressive exploration of human mind and life.

Kiran Desai’s *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) has a style and sensibility little in common with her mother Anita Desai. The novel deals with a holy man and gullibility of the public. The novel is rich in irony and keeps the readers sense of humour alive throughout the novel. The novel is an ironical novel satirizing Indian mentality.

Desai’s latest novel, *Inheritance of Loss* (2006) is replete with predicaments of human identities and the frustrations associated post colonial impact and its aftermath. In the age of globalization, when the world is striving to work together hand in hand, there wander souls deprived of their labour and loyalty and suffering in where they had served and worked all throughout their lives. They are the Gorkha’s whose rights and binding to the land they had served since pre-independence have been denied and thwarted.

Rama Mehta’s *Inside the Haveli*, projects the predicaments that a married woman faces in her husbands house. The pivotal character Geeta, a girl born in Mumbai, exemplifies the feminist move. Geeta is married into a Rajasthani family and as she enters the haveli, the door of which is closed upon her by the orthodox family members. Geeta through patience and understanding passed the ordeal and brings the change in that custom-ridden haveli.

Recipient of a Sahitya Akademi Award Sunetra Gupta’s *Memories of Rain*, has a heroine, a young Bengali girl who is swept off her feet by an Englishman visiting Kolkata. But later on she realizes that he is unfaithful. Consequently she denies living as a cozy threesome with his new girl friend and she returns to India with her child. The novel has some memorable scenes of life in Kolkatta. Whereas, Gupta’s second novel, *The Glass Blower’s*
Breath (1993) is set in the cities of London, New York and Kolkatta. The protagonist is young Indian woman in search of ideal love and companionship. Gupta’s third novel Moonlight into Marzipan (1995) has large portions written in the present tense, addition to it many passage using the second person. The protagonist Promothesh makes an important scientific discovery in Kolkatta. A Sin of Colour (1999) is the fourth novel by Gupta is about the hero Debendranath Roy, who is falling desperately in love with highly accomplished wife of his elder brother. He comes away to England and marries Jennifer, but disappears from punt in Cambridge. He appears twenty years later in Kolkata, because he is losing his eyesight. The devoted Jennifer comes here to look after him. She seems to be modeled on the self sacrificing Indian wife.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the significant women novelists of the decade, also vigorously contributed two novels to the decade of nineties. In her novel The Mistress of Spices (1997) the protagonist’s ship is wrecked on a remote Island, which carried away only women travelers. Here the protagonist learns magic from a mysterious ugly old woman, who specializes in her power of spices, which are more than of cooking. Divakaruni’s second novel Sister of Heart describes realistically the complicated relationships in a family in Bengal. The Chatterjee family fortunes are at a low ebb, as there are only widows at home- the girls’ mothers and their aunt. Gradually the dark secrets of the past are unveiled. The Indian discrimination against women stands exposed. The girls consider themselves inferior beings because they are female.

Radhika Jha’s Smell is well narrative tale of a young girl suddenly uprooted from contented life in Kenya. Eighteen year old Leela studying in college, is sent away to live with her paternal uncle in Paris, when the natives murder her father by setting his store in fire. Leela has a sense of smell that she becomes a wonderful cook, but her life consists of drifting from one lover to another. She is driven away of her uncle’s home for revealing her extra-
marital affairs. She is obsessed with smells and is terrified that she herself gives off unbearable smell, smell becomes a metaphor for cultural differences.

**Jaishree Mishra’s** *Ancient Promises* (2000) is the moving story of a young mother trying to cope with mentally handicapped baby. The novelist gives a vivid description of life in Kerala and the pitiable status of widows even in a matrilineal society. Mishra’s second novel *Afterwards* (2004) reverberates with the echo of her debut novel *Ancient Promises*, the heroine flees to England, with a single child clung to her bosom, with a conveniently acquired lover. The heroines of both the novels leave behind skeletons of mismatched marriages, escaping through the most convenient backdoor routes.

**Kamalini Sengupta’s** *A Seasoned Couple* (1994) is an account, from marriage to death, of the life of Aditi and her husband Ashok Prasad, a civil servant. She presents a clear picture of middle class life in Kerala with linear narration, lucid style.


*Manhattan Music* (1997) is the second novel by Alexander deals with lives and predicaments of Indian immigrants residing in America.

**Manorama Mathai’s** *Mulligatawny Soup* (1993) is a novel with Anglo-Indian background which becomes a metaphor for the dangling woman, yearning for selfhood and making a place for herself by learning to rise above heartbreak and failure.

**Anuradha Marwah Roy’s** novel *Idol Love* (1999) presents a chilling and bleak picture of Indian dystopia in the twenty first century. The novelist’s attention to detail in recreating day to day life in India makes this dystopia utterly credible.
Sohaila Abdulali’s *The Mad Woman of Jogare* is set against the background of foot hills of Maharashtra and she voices here the Ecofeminist’s firm faith in nurturing the health of mankind along with the natural environment. As a keen observes she has observed the exploitation of the tribals and rapid deforestation by greedy property developers.

Nirmala Moorthy’s novel *Maya* (1997) deals with the life in an Ultra orthodox South Indian Brahmin household. Traditional concepts of women and the place of women ruin the lives of first two daughters in that family. The protagonist of the novel is the youngest daughter of the family who successfully breaks away shackles of orthodoxy.

Moorthy’s second novel *The Coiled Serpent* (2000) investigates the psyche of the protagonist in greater depth. Brought up in a rich matrilineal Nair household in Kerala, young Meena is encouraged to confine her interest in domestic matters. The coiled serpent refers to the armlet she loves to wear, a symbol of the Kundalini Shakti.

Zia Whitaker published a biography titled as *Snakeman*, a biography of her husband, Romulus Whitkar, the naturalist. Then in 1992 Zia’s first novel *Up The Ghat* published and it was shortlisted for the Common Wealth writers prize in the best first Book category of the Eurasian region in 1993. The novelist throws light on the comic side of the frustrations of the Indian woman.

Anjana Appachana, another expatriate woman novelist, projects the dominant themes like- the discrimination against the daughter, the silence of women and the lack of communication between sexes, etc. An in-depth treatment of these are woven dexterously in Appachana’s debut novel, *Listening Now* (1998) This is a complex and gripping novel takes place its action in the middle class women in Indian city and their negotiations between personal aspirations and social expectations.

Belinder Dhanoa in her novel *Waiting For Winter* (1991) presents a gloomy picture of the growth of an Indian girl, Pratibha of a rich family in
Chandigarh. In spite of her best education from a boarding school in Simla and a University degree, she could not cope with life. Thus the novelist presents some scenes in the format of filmscript, with stage directions by employing flashbacks.

_The Gin Drinkers_ (2000) is an ambitious novel by **Sagarika Ghosh**. The setting of the novel is Delhi where Christine has come from Oxford to do field work on her project – _The Third Elite_. The novel projects all aspects and nuances of the elite society and culture of the present day parallel to it also an atmosphere of certain pessimism and frustration.

Another woman novelist of the decade is **Ruchira Mukherjee**, whose novel, _A Toad in My Garden_, deals with the two women, young Megha and the middle-aged Damyanti. Megha’s life doomed by, her uncle Nilu, whereas Damayanti’s by her husband, Beni Madho. Then the young lecturer suddenly appears and transforms everything. Consequently man is appeared as the saviour perpetrator.

To sum up the genre of the novel in Indo-Anglian literature becomes more and more matured and healthier than other genres of literature. The novel form as a literary phenomenon emerges from Bankim upto the contemporary time that is the novels of Vikram Seth or Arundhati Roy; it has been passing through evolutionary phases. The Indo-Anglian novel witnesses a new phase of development in relation to its imaginative expansion, thematic and technical maturity. It is in the novel, more than in any other genre, the individual awareness of life encounters the fullest expression. Contemporary novelists daringly experiment with the language of fiction. The novel is essentially a social form and it explores the human condition through the use of narrative fiction. In this respect it is distinct from mythology, epics and religious text, for it records mankind’s struggle with itself rather than in a theological context. As compared to drama, poetry and other literary forms, the novel form emerges vigorously and attains most of the coveted prizes, fabulous royalties. Indian fiction in English having grown over the years in
variety and maturity has aroused considerable interest both in India and abroad. In this present research study, it modestly aims at in-depth study of problems of the teenage youth, which quite clearly reflected in the darker form in contemporary Indian novels in English. Though the horizon of the contemporary Indian English fiction is rich and larger one, it might be very difficult task to carry out many novels for the research study. Hence in this present research study, it is Researcher’s sincere and modest attempt to cover the ten specific novels from 1989 to 2003.
REFERENCES


