Preface

It was Dr. G.S. Amur, Professor and Head of the Department of English, Marathwada University, who suggested the topic The Indian Novel in English and Social Change - A Thematic Study as a subject for research. I took up the suggestion seriously which soon grew into an absorbing study. The starting point for research obviously was the apparently isolated empirical facts scattered over various fields of human activities over the last two centuries. To understand their import and to integrate them with the total structure, an appropriate method seemed necessary. The fundamental principle of dialectical materialism is that empirical facts do not become meaningful unless they are integrated into a whole. This is true as much of life as of literature. Neither man nor art can be regarded as an island. They are part of structure changing and developing continually. Two things become obvious: empirical facts are important because they become part of human reality and that man essentially belongs to a continuity or a group. His consciousness is a group consciousness though he may be unaware of it himself. It is this consciousness that crystallizes itself into a work of
art. A trans-literary approach, as a starting point, therefore, could not be ruled out for a study of literature at the centre of which is man and his manifold activities. Thus with a view to understanding the totality of the works of literature it was felt necessary to study: (i) social reality (ii) its reflection in novels and above all (iii) attitudes and ideologies arising out of it.

It was noted that while the minor works or writers merely reflected social reality the major writers or works mediated or transmuted the experience in which was crystallized the social consciousness of the group to which they belonged. It was in their work that the consciousness had reached its highest and best expression in a subtle and complex way. Hence the selection of major novels and major writers for analysis and investigation.

While using the critical method based on dialectical sociology effort was made to avoid a reductive and mechanical approach. Analysis and interpretation prove most rewarding when a critical method is pursued. Hence textual analysis with a perspective was tried.

It is with pleasure that I record my debt of gratitude to Dr. G.S. Amur for suggesting the subject,
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K.R. Shirwadkar