CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Indian Writing in English refers to literature written in English by Indian authors who have an Indian language as their native tongue. It also includes the body of work in English by Indian Diaspora who are settled in different countries like UK, Canada, USA, Germany, Australia and West Indies. It has a long history of growth and development as it involves several historical events and distinguished personalities. To stabilize their empire, the imperialists encouraged the spread of English education in India. They thought that Indians would by and large assimilate Western culture and help them to administer the state without much trouble. The natives, however adopted English language to express Indian sensibility effectively. The origin of Indian literature in English is traced back to the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a Bengali social reformer and a master of English prose pioneered the development of Indian Literature in English. His essays on various subjects, written within the first three decades of the nineteenth century are the early prose writing of Indian English Literature. Historical perspective contextualises the growth and rise of Indian English literature from its inception to its present glory.

Indian writing in English was but only one of the manifestations of the new creative urge in India – referred to as the literary renaissance in India. The renaissance in India appeared in the 19th century as a social reform movement, to awaken the dormant society, steeped in social evils like child marriage, dowry, polygamy and casteism. Several social movements and organizations were established to liberate the society from the fetters of superstition and orthodoxy. The Literary works of this period reflect the
socio political ethos of the era. The literary renaissance manifested first in Bengal and then spread to Chennai, Mumbai and other parts of India.

*Rajmohan’s Wife* (1864) written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee is acclaimed as the earliest Indian novel written in English. The novel which reveals the suffering of a Hindu wife paved way for *Anand Math* (1884) India’s first political novel. Writers from the presidencies of Bengal and Madras dominated the period from 1864 to 1900. In this experimental stage of fiction writing, western influence was clearly seen in their works. They drew upon eighteenth and nineteenth century British fiction for their models, especially that of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding and Walter Scott.

The history of the English novel shows that the novel as an art form is essentially a social document. Following the track of the early English novels, the Indian English novels of the pre-independence era had its immediate context in the Nationalist movement. Some of the major themes of the novelists of this period were nationalism, Gandhian ideology, struggle for independence and social and economic issues such as caste discrimination, poverty and industrial development. In the post-independence era the focus shifted to the colonial period, the re-examination of Imperialism, multiculturism, the psycho analysis of identity and so on.

The novelists of the early twentieth century took up contemporary social issues like caste discrimination, child marriage and poverty. *The Lake of Palms: A Study of Indian Domestic Life* (1909) by Romesh Chandra Dutt and Madhaviah’s *Nanda, the Pariah who overcame Caste* (1923) are illustrations of novels written with the aim of social reform, their themes being widow remarriage and caste discrimination. The impact of the nationwide movement of Mahatma Gandhi in the thirties provided the Indian
novelists with some of their prominent themes such as the struggle for freedom, the East-West encounter and the miserable conditions of the poor and the downtrodden. Nationalism and freedom struggle along with social consciousness dominated the novelists’ concerns in the thirties and forties.

With the appearance of the big trio- Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K.Narayan, the Indian English novel stepped into the world of post colonialism. Mulk Raj Anand’s social novels, *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936) and *Two leaves and a Bud* (1937) expose the cruelty of exploitation, caste discrimination and economic suppression in colonial India. Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938) portrays a realistic picture of Gandhian philosophy of passive resistance against imperialism in a small south Indian village. In *Swami and Friends* R.K.Narayan takes a dig at the educational system of the British Raj which produced masses of subordinates and unimaginative clerks. These three novelists heralded the beginning of Indian English novel in the true sense. They established the suppositions, the language, the style and the nature of the themes which were to give the Indian novel its particular distinctiveness.

The post-independence writing of the fifties and sixties marks out a new phase of emotional and intellectual growth in the history of Indian novel. The social, economic, religious, political and familial problems that were submerged in the flood of freedom movement drew the attention of the creative writers of this era. While Kushwant Singh portrayed the communal riots after partition, in *Train to Pakistan* (1956), economic problems like the strained relationship between land owners and landless peasants, the impact of industrialisation on the life of common man and the consequent poverty of the rural folks became the focal point of novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya and Manohar Malgoankar. With writers Arun Joshi who appeared in the late sixties, the internal world
of the characters became important. His novels plunge into the depth of human mind to enhance the reader a vision of the psychic world of the characters.

The appearance of the women novelists during this period gave a new dimension to Indian English writing. The latter half of the twentieth century witnessed a creative surge in women’s writing. Eminent writers like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Nayantra Saghal, Anita Desai, Rama Mehta, Shashi Deshpande, Shoba De and Arundhati Roy emerged during this period. Kamala Markandaya’s novels manifest her awareness of the social problems of post-independent India and her concern for the downtrodden. Her *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) tells the story of a South Indian village where industry and modern technology play havoc. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala too deals with the social and economic problems of the contemporary society, corruption in Indian public life and exploitation of poor.

Anita Desai, Rama Mehta and Shashi Deshpande focus on the existential predicaments and travails of the subdued women in a male dominated society. Their motive was to voice their own bitter experiences as women, with a view to influencing the society and thereby effecting social reforms. The novels of Anita Desai penetrate psychologically into the inner working of women and present the trauma faced by womanhood. Another woman novelist who traverses along the same path of the study of psychic mind is Rama Mehta. Shashi Deshpande projects a realistic picture of the financially independent middle- class educated women who represent larger part of the suffering society. Women deprived of love and companionship and their search for identity and individuality are the recurrent themes in all her works. The works of Shoba De project the varied facets of Indian metropolises and deal with problems concerning the modern urban society.

Influenced by the wave of post modernism the novels of this period have heralded a new insight in theme and style, feeling and form. There is a shift in locale from the village to the metropolis and a broadening of the thematic range from Indian to global and transnational. Lack of faith in religion, declining moral standards, corruption in public as well as private lives of individuals are some of the predominant themes in postmodern novels. The fiction writers of this era have adopted a new way of writing, the mingling of the historical facts with fiction. Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee and Amitav Ghosh are some of the practitioners of this trend.

The works of Amitav Ghosh are replete with political, historical and social consciousness. Like many of his contemporaries he has been greatly influenced by the political and cultural milieu of post-independent India. Following Rushdie, he has brought about the relationship of the socio historical aspects of the country and the individual. In his novels there is a parallel presentation of the historical and the fictional. His works are underpinned by a mass of research, that he remains unquestionable and impartial in his narration.
Amitav Ghosh was born on July 11, 1956 in Calcutta. His father Lieutenant Colonel Shailendra Chandra Ghosh was an officer of the pre-independence Indian army. As a diplomat, his father was posted in different countries and consequently Ghosh was brought up in India, Srilanka, Bangladesh and Iran. He belongs to the elite group of Indian writers in English who attended exclusive schools in the post colonial period and are more comfortable with English rather than any other Indian language. He studied at the Doon School, Dehra Dun, and then did B.A. in History in St.Stephen’s College, Delhi. He received an M.A in Sociology from Delhi University in 1978 and then went to UK to do his Doctorate. In 1982 he received a D.Phil in Social Anthropology from Oxford University.

Ghosh started his career, as a journalist at the Indian Express newspaper in Delhi. He had been a Fellow at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta and Centre for Development Studies in Trivandrum, before joining the faculty at Queens College, New York in 1995 as Professor in Comparative literature. He has also been a visiting professor to the English Department of Harvard University since 2005. He is commended in the literary world both for his fiction and non-fictional writings. The Indian Government awarded him the Padma Shri in 2007. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2009. In 2011, he was awarded Canada’s Blue Metropolis Literary Prize in recognition of his lifetime literary achievement. He is married to Deborah Baker and lives in New York with his wife and two children Lila and Nayan.


His novels have won many major awards. The French edition of his novel, The Circle of Reason won the Prix Medicis etranger award. The Shadow Lines won two prestigious awards, the Sahitya Akademi Award (1989) and the Ananda Puraskar. The Calcutta Chromosome was awarded the Arthur C. Clarke Award in 1997. The Glass Palace won the 2001 Frankfurt e-book Award sponsored by the International eBook Award Foundation and was also awarded the Best Novel in Eurasian section in Commonwealth Writers’ Prize. But Ghosh withdrew the novel from the competition objecting the term ‘Commonwealth’ and the unfairness of the English-language requirement specified in the rules. Hungry Tide won the Hutch Crossword Book Prize in 2004. Sea of Poppies was the co-winner of the Vodafone Crossword Book Award in 2009 and also the Israeli literary award, Dan David Prize in 2010. Sea of Poppies and River of Smoke were shortlisted for 2008 Booker Prize and 2011 Man Asian Literary Prize respectively.

“Ghosh’s writing is constantly attentive to details of local persons and places, while also demonstrating their imbrications in global historical movements” (Sanga 78). His choice of subject matter and diasporic subjectivity has led many critics to see him as a blossoming post colonial critic.

Using the motif of journey Ghosh’s debut novel, The Circle of Reason, tells the story of a young boy’s coming to terms with the rationale of life. The book is about an eight year old orphan Alu, a weaver who is brought up by his uncle Balaram in a small village in West Bengal. He is falsely accused as a member of a terrorist group and flees
westward to Middle East, then to Cairo and finally Algeria. The novel is an episodic, picaresque novel divided into three parts. In the first part *satwa*, he lives with his uncle Balaram in Lalpukur. Fleeing from the Indian authorities he finds himself in the fictive Gulf Emirate of Al-Ghazira where he joins the crowd of illegal immigrants from Africa, Bangladesh, India and other Arab countries and works as an illegal labourer. The second part revolves around Zindi, a former courtesan with whom Alu lives in Al-Ghazira. Accompanied by Zindi, Alu makes a narrow escape when his community is attacked along with his lands in Algerian Sahara. The third section ‘Tamas’ is in Sahara where they end up under the roof of an Indian doctor Mrs. Verma. Wherever he goes Alu takes his country with him intertwining his past with his present. This novel was highly acclaimed and appeared in Italian, Swedish, French and Danish translations.

Ghosh’s second novel, *The shadow Lines*, focuses on the post-partition scenario of violence. It narrates the story of an upper middle class Bengali family that lives in Calcutta but has its roots in Pakistan. Set in the Calcutta of the 1960’s the novel follows the lives of the narrator’s family for three generations spread over Dhaka, Calcutta and London. The novel is divided into two parts, ‘Going Away’ and ‘Home Coming’. The first part deals with the family’s exit from Dhaka during the riot ridden days of the partition and the second part deals with the grandmother’s return to Dhaka and her futile attempt to save her uncle from their ancestral house surrounded by Muslim refugees. The novel probes into the various faces of violence and is taken to be the author’s voice against the folly of creating several nation states on the basis of religion.

*In an Antique Land* combines Ghosh’s experience of his life in small villages in Egypt, with the life of a Hindu slave of a Jewish trader Abraham Ben Yiju from the documents of Cairo Geniza. In the 12th century, Jewish settlers in Cairo were hesitant to
throw away written documents, for they feared that it would desecrate the name of God that the documents might contain. So a cellar was created in the synagogues where people might deposit these documents without fear of desecration. The geniza with its wealth of History was discovered by western scholars at the end of the nineteenth century. While doing his research work at Oxford, Ghosh came across a reference to an Indian slave called Bomma in the records of the geniza. Ghosh set out to Egypt in the eighties for his doctoral dissertation to find out more information about the slave who had travelled to Middle East in the 12th century and landed up in Lataifa, a small village in the Nile Delta. Combining historical research with shrewd observation, the book juxtaposes the fictionalized history of the Jewish merchant and his Indian slave and the stories of Ghosh’s neighbours in Egypt. The effective portrayal of their daily encounters, social customs and religious rites exposes Ghosh’s sharp observation and his familiarity with the small village community. The book establishes Ghosh not just as a writer of fiction but a diligent and genuine researcher, a keen traveller and observer and a social anthropologist and historian.

*The Calcutta Chromosome* sub titled *A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery* is a science-fiction that centres on the research for a cure from malaria. It is set in three different time periods – the late nineteenth and twentieth century and the future. The novel tries to deconstruct the aura around Ronald Ross, the British scientist who found the cause for Malaria. The fiction tries to give an answer to the western monopoly over scientific inventions. It also highlights women’s problems and pleads for women’s emancipation and a rightful place for them in the society.

*The Hungry Tide* is set in the immense archipelago of islands -Sundarbans which lies in the eastern coast of India between the sea and plains of Bengal. In this isolated
place of mangroves, the poor villagers had a dangerous existence. Survival was an
everyday battle for them for the tigers routinely attacked and often killed the islanders.
Piya Rai, a cetologist of Indian parentage but raised in America comes to this place
searching for a rare variety of Irawaddy dolphins and engages the local fisherman Fokir,
as her assistant. Kanai Dutt, a sophisticated business and a professional translator, visits his
aunt who hands over to him, his late uncle’s account of the confrontation of a group of
refugees from Bangladesh with the Indian state in 1979. The novel dynamically weaves
the stories of Piya Roy, Kanai and Fokir with the environmental and political history of
the region. On one hand it explores the predicaments of the displaced group of refugees;
on the other it raises questions about humans sharing a dangerous ecosystem with
animals.

_The Glass Palace_ is concerned with the rise and fall of Imperialism in the
twentieth century; the impact of the colonial encounters on the political, social and
cultural lives of South Asian countries like Burma, India and Malaysia. The novel spans a
century from the fall of the Konbaung dynasty in Mandalay through the Second World
War to modern times. The book has been translated into more than 25 languages including
Burmese. A lot of research has gone into the making of the novel. As Ghosh
acknowledges in the author’s note to _The Glass Palace_, in the five years it took to write
the novel he had visited all the places that figure in the novel and has “read hundreds of
books, travelogues, memoirs, gazetteers, articles and notebooks” (_TGP_ 549). He has used
material derived from a variety of sources- recollections and remembered accounts of his
father, uncle and several other living persons. The research he has done to write the novel
is reflected in the detailed description of the people, places and events that occur in the
novel.
Amitav Ghosh's two latest novels, *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke* carry the readers deep inside the opium trade of the 1830s which imposed a plague of addiction on the Chinese population. *Sea of Poppies* is the first part of the Ibis trilogy which takes its name from a ship that has been used for carrying slaves. Bought by a British company whose owner intends to transport opium to China, the ship is engaged to carry indentured slaves to the sugar plantations in Mauritius owing to the dispute over opium trade in China. The novel chronicles the ship’s voyage and with it the history of opium trade. The novel closes with the ship caught in a storm and the escape of five of the passengers on board.

*River of Smoke*, the second volume of the *Ibis* trilogy catches another storm-tossed vessel, the Anahita, a cargo-ship laden with opium, owned by Bombay merchant Bahram Modi, as it heads to China. In the same waters is the Redruth, on which sails Fitcher Penrose, a Cornish botanist looking for rare variety of plants. The sequel follows the story of opium trade from the shores of Ganges and Calcutta where the poppies are grown and opium processed, to Canton in China where it is sold. The country’s attempts to stop the illicit trafficking that addicted its population failed misereably. This historical novel by Ghosh is a daring indictment of colonial avarice. Jaideep Sarangi observes, “As a post-colonial writer and a member of a small group of English-speaking (and writing) Indians, catering to an international community of English-speaking people, Amitav Ghosh clearly adopts a globally acceptable stance” (140).

*The Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies* have been chosen for the present study as the two novels have similar thematic concerns – the impact of colonialism on South Asian countries namely India and Burma. They explore the intricacies of colonialism and wars and present the suppression and exploitation of the subjugated people. The study
examines the socio historic conditions of the colonial period and the consequences of colonialism as presented in the selected novels. The nineteenth century witnessed the ‘rise of the West’, and “Western power allowed the imperial metropolitan centres to acquire and accumulate territory and subjects on a truly astonishing scale. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Europe held 85 percent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions and commonwealths” (Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 6). Said further points out that in Europe itself at the end of the nineteenth century, the facts of the empire was apparent in every corner of life. “… the economies were hungry for overseas markets, raw materials, cheap labor and hugely profitable land and defense and foreign-policy establishments were more and more committed to the maintenance of vast tracts of distant territory and large numbers of subjugated peoples” (ibid. 7)

Elleke Boehmer defines colonialism as “the settlement of territory, the exploitation of resources, and attempts to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands” (*Colonial and Post Colonial Literature*2). It initiates a pattern of cultural and political marginalisation of the colonized country. Post-colonialism is a literary theory that deals with the impact of colonialism on the culture and thoughts of the settled population. Mc Leod defines post colonialism as “a mode of reading texts concerned with the workings and legacy of colonialism either in the past or the present” (*Beginning Post colonialism* 33) In cultural studies the term is applied not to the time when officially colonialism ended but rather to the moment it started- from the early filtration of British traders into the Indian ethos through the British Raj to the present day. Ashcroft et al. use the term ‘post-colonial’ “to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day… because there is a continuity of
preoccupation throughout the historical process initiated by European aggression” (The Empire Writes Back 2).

Some of the major issues in the field are ambivalence, diaspora, hybridity, quest for identity, ethnicity and subalternity. Ambivalence is the indistinct way in which colonizer and colonized regard each other. The colonizer considers the colonized as inferior while the colonized consider the colonizers as corrupt. Diaspora is the displacement of people from their native homelands – either voluntary or enforced. A sense of rootlessness is experienced by this migration which results in identity crisis and a search for identity. Hybridity is the new cultural form - social, political, linguistic or religious that arises from cross-cultural exchange. Subaltern refers to the colonised classes who have limited or no access to the cultural imperialism.

Post Colonial Literature deals with the problems and consequences of European colonization. It studies the implications of colonialism on cultures and societies, the conflicts between the ruler and subject, mainstream and marginalized, oppressors and oppressed. The indigenous people were made to believe that their culture was inferior to that of their masters. Disrespect and negation of native values and culture resulted in the erosion of personal and cultural identity. Applying the theories of post colonial theorists like Homi Bhaba, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Edward W. Said, the study presents the history of oppression in the colonial and post colonial set up.

It also makes a stylistic analysis of these two novels. Leech and Short have defined style as the “way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person for a given purpose” (Style in Fiction 9). To clarify this, Leech adopts Saussure’s distinction of language into langue and parole. Langue is the code or the features of a language common to all the speakers of the language which includes the system of
grammar, spelling, syntax and punctuation. *Parole* is the concrete use of the system, the actual utterance. A stylistic study analyses a text beyond the level of mere linguistic structures. “It studies the features of situationally distinctive uses (varieties) of language and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for particular choices made by individual and social groups in their use of language” (Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* 332).

Language does not exist in vacuum but is used in concrete social, cultural and historical circumstances. Language and society are so intertwined that there is no human society that does not depend upon language to shape itself nor is there any language that is not shaped by society. Language is not just a linguistic occurrence but a social and human phenomenon. It is a part and product of society and it is not possible to understand one without the other. Hence it goes without saying language must be investigated only within the social context of the community that uses it. Malinowski points out that “linguistic behaviour could be defined and interpreted only in its appropriate socio-cultural contexts” (40). So analysis of a text has to take into account the social, cultural and cognitive context in which a text occurs.

There is an intimate relationship between the culture of a society and the content of language. Language in literature is functional and purpose oriented. It is a transaction between a speaker and a hearer or a writer and a reader as an interactional activity whose structure is firmly decided by its social purpose. An interpretation of a literary work as a piece of interactional activity between a writer and a reader involves correlating the meaning of an item of the linguistic code with the meaning it takes on in the context in which it occurs. Since language is an important part of the culture of a particular group and its patterns, linguistic changes take place in response to cultural changes.
Indian writers are aware of the inadequacies of standard literary English to convey experiences that are primarily Indian. Raja Rao in his foreword to *Kanthapura* opines “One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own. One has to convey the various shades of a certain thought movement that looks maltreated in an alien language” (v-vi). The Indian writers have appropriated the English language to suit their purpose and nativized it to make it relevant to the society. Galante defines Nativisation as the “adaptation of a language to a speech community’s particular needs” (21). Borrowings from the Indian languages have been incorporated into their writings and the language has been made a suitable medium for expressing values of Indian culture and civilization.

Yamuna Kachru opines about the position of English language in India thus: “though English was introduced into the subcontinent by the British as an instrument of colonial rule the language has taken root and is now considered as an equal of the indigenous languages....” (*Culture, Style and Discourse* 343). In India, English has developed through education and is used as the Second Language which is acquired after one has learnt the First Language. This co-existence of languages, a foreign language and the first or native language results in interference of one’s first language on the second language. Interference from L1 occurs at all the levels: phonological, lexical and syntactic. The phonological, lexical, syntactic features of English thus acquired constitute what is known as the Indianness in English. As Kachru remarks, “The Indianization of the English language is a consequence of what linguists have traditionally termed interference” (*The Indianization of English* 1).

English moreover is not just an acquired language but a transplanted language as it is used by a number of speakers in social, cultural and geographical contexts different
from the context in which it was originally used. As a consequence a non-native variety of English with distinct sociolinguistic features different from the Standard English has come to be known as Indian variety of English. Thorat has pointed out that “Indian variety of English is a transplanted variety of native English which has its root in the socio-cultural constraints of India” (Five great Indian Novels 103). Hence as P.E. Dustoor, a noted scholar of the English language claims “there will always be a more or less indigenous flavour about our English. In our imagery, in our choice of words, in the nuances of meaning we put into our words, we must be expected to be different from Englishmen and Americans alike” (quoted Kachru, The Indianization of English 3).

“Indianisms in Indian English are then linguistic manifestations of pragmatic needs for appropriate language use in a new linguistic and cultural context” (Kachru, The Indianization of English 2). Kachru calls these Indianisms ‘deviations’ and makes a distinction between “deviations” and “mistakes” with regard to non-native varieties of English.

A “mistake” may be defined as any deviation which is rejected by a native speaker of English as out of the linguistic “code” of the English language, and which may not be justified in Indian English on formal or contextual grounds. A “deviation” may involve differences from a norm, but such deviations may be explained in terms of the cultural and/ or linguistic context in which a language functions.

(Quoted Sumana Bandyopadhyay 13)

Influence from the local languages is a unique feature of the Indian literature in English. Describing his stylistic experimentation G.V. Desani writes, “I have chosen the craft of writing. And my entire linguistic creed.... is simply to find a suitable medium. I
find the English language is that kind of medium. It needs to be modified to suit my purpose” (Quoted in Ann Lowry, Style Range in New English Literature 284). Bill Bufford remarks “In America, English was something that had to be appropriated from the British and made new again. It is possible that we are witnessing a similar thing now among Indian writers. Fifty years after independence a new kind of English is finding a voice, distinctly Indian English, one that is at once global and international, of its culture and of the nation” (8).

Commenting on the stylistic innovations of the Indian writers, Kachru remarks “in current creative writing (e.g. of Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Allan Seelye) such creativity has become almost a marker of ‘liberation’ in Indian English writing” (South Asian English 17). If English in India is the result of conquest and colonialism, Indianness in English is the result of post-colonialism. Control over language was one of the major features of imperial oppression as “the imperial education system established a ‘standard version’ of the metropolitan language as norm and marginalized all ‘variants’ as impurities...Language becomes a medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated and the medium through which conceptions of ‘truth’, ‘order’, and reality’ become established” (The Empire Writes Back 7).

In the context of post-colonialism, language became a site for resistance and the Indian writers have refused to give the language of the colonizer a privileged position and rejected the notion of correctness of usage that goes with it. Ashcroft et al. have pointed out that subversive tendencies towards colonialism have taken the forms of abrogation of the language of the centre and appropriation of that language for the expression of postcolonial experience. “Appropriation is the process by which the language is taken and
made to ‘bear the burden’ of one’s own cultural experience… Language is adopted as a tool and utilized in various ways widely differing cultural experiences” (ibid. 38)

Ghosh works on a global canvas that transcends boundaries and hence his novels champion a form of multilingualism. In *The Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies* he has recreated the history of individuals tossed around the world by the economic forces and how in the process they shape language and culture. While hybridity of language reflects the theme of postcolonial displacement in *The Glass Palace*, the language forms used in *Sea of Poppies* seem to transcend national boundaries and resist European hegemony. Ghosh’s text engages multiple languages, dialects and cultures deployed by the characters. Mapping the Indian Ocean as a platform of colonial power Ghosh uses language to mirror socio-historic issues. He has not only brought in Bhojpuri, Bengali and Hindustani but has also incorporated French, Anglo Indian speech and a range of nautical discourse including laskari and pidgin into the text. A stylistic analysis of the texts shows how the language has been appropriated to make it culturally significant.

The objectives of the research are

- to trace the socio-cultural scene of the nineteenth century as presented in the selected novels and to examine the thematic concerns of the novels
- to delineate the historical background of the selected novels and to bring out the implications of history on individual lives
- to bring out the post colonial features in the novels and to expose the issues of colonialism
- to expound the appropriation of language and to show how language has been adapted to express cultural experiences.

The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in post-Colonial Literature, one of the most significant books published in the field of post colonialism, gives a theoretical account of a wide range of postcolonial texts and their relationship with issues of postcolonial culture. As the authors state, the book “is concerned with the world as it exists during and after the period of European imperial domination and the effects of this on contemporary literatures” (2). After discussing “the development of descriptive models of post-colonial writing’ the book explains how the existing post-colonial theory ‘interacts with, and dismantles, some of the assumptions of European theory” (12).

Braj B. Kachru (1983) in his book The Indianization of English: The English language in India has studied the linguistic aspects of the Indianization of the English language in India. Kachru argues that the Indian socio-cultural setting and linguistic setting has affected features of the English language in India. With illustrations from Indian English literature he argues that in Indian English there is transfer of Indian cultural patterns to English and transfer of L1 meanings to L2 items. He concludes that Indian English is culture-bound in the socio-cultural setting of India.
Some of the works done in this area are reviewed to serve as a background for the present study. A survey of the major critical works on Amitav Ghosh has also been done with a view to establishing the fact that the present study has its own significance.

Bloom and Gumperz (1972) have investigated the structural patterns, functional determinants, social correlates and psycholinguistic processes of code switching. Making a study on the diverse communities in Norway they distinguish between two types of code switching- situational and metaphorical. In situational code-switching the switch is in response to a change in the situation. In metaphorical code switching the switch has a stylistic or textual function. Code switching is thus not random but functionally motivated.

Tay (1989) in his article “Code switching and code mixing as a communicative strategy in multilingual discourse” has pointed out the difference between diglossia and code switching. Diglossia occurs across domain boundaries and code switching occurs within domains. In diglossic situations people are aware that they have switched from one variety to another, H to L or vice versa but code switching appears to be unconscious and at the functional level the code switcher is not aware why he switches codes at some points of the discourse.

Myers Scotton (1993) has pointed out the various functions of code switching and code mixing. The most prominent function is identity marking. A speaker may use a particular code to signal a specific type of identity. For example English or French is used for modernity, sophistication or authority in most parts of the world. Mixing can also be employed as a strategy of neutrality when the use of any one language might suggest the wrong message such as suggesting an uncultivated persona (70). It is also used for stylistic functions.
Columnas (1997) in his book, *The handbook of Sociolinguistics* has studied the relationship between language use and social structures. The author describes language use as a social phenomenon and attempts to establish links between language and society. Micro- Sociolinguistics investigates how social structure influences the way people talk and how language varieties and patterns of use correlate with social attributes such as class, sex and age. Macro- Sociolinguistics studies what societies do with their languages, “attitudes that account for the functional distribution of speech forms in society and interaction of speech communities” (2).

Peter Trudgill (2000) in his book *Sociolinguistics: An introduction to Language and Society* examines the link between language and society and the many factors that influence the way we speak: gender, environment, age, race, class, region and politics. Trudgill surveys languages and societies from all over the world drawing on examples from Africaans to Yiddish. He has also studied how a non-native speaker’s use of a language develops it.

Peter Stockwell (2002) in his book, *Sociolinguistics: A Resource book for students* has made a study of the variables in sociolinguistics - the social variable and the linguistic variable. Social variable includes factors like gender, geography, age, occupation while the linguistic variable might be a language, a style, a register, a syntactic pattern or a particular phrase. The key concepts in sociolinguistics according to him are

*All language events consist of a piece of language in a social context.*

* Every different social context determines that particular form of language.

* The language used in particular situation determines the nature of that social event. (1)
Jaydeep Sarangi (2005) in his book *Indian Novels in English-A Sociolinguistic study* has analysed the language structure, style and socio-cultural nuances in Indian novels in English. He has selected nine Indian English novelists MulkRaj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya, khushwant Singh, Rama Mehta, Anita Desai, Amitav Ghosh and Arundhati Roy and made a sociolinguistic analysis of Indian English. The key sociolinguistic concepts used are code-switching, code-mixing, role-relationships and turn taking.

Sundarsingh (2005) in his Ph.D dissertation “Language and Mind Style in Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence*” has made a study on the typical Indian English and mind style with reference to Fowler’s Mind Style. He has also analysed the novel based on Kachru’s examination of the linguistic aspects of Indianisation of the English language in India with special reference to his contextualisation, Indianness and lexical innovations.

Arjun Jadhav (2010) in his journal article entitled “Pragmatic Analysis of abuses in *Coolie*” has attempted to study the abuses in Mulk Raj Anand’s *Coolie* treating abuses as speech acts. The abusive speech acts in *Coolie* reflect the socio-cultural environment: class discrimination in the Indian society and the attitude of the upper class towards the lower class. The characters extensively use swear words in Hindi or English. Sometimes the abusive words are literal translation of Hindi words while at times the address term has derogatory connotative meaning in the Indian context. Code switching is used as a device to convey anger and annoyance.

Abdulkafi Albirini (2011) in his article “The sociolinguistic function of code-switching between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic” has examined the social functions of code-switching between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic. With the data collected from thirty five audio and video recordings in the domains of religious lectures, political
debates and soccer commentaries, he suggests that speakers create a functional division between the two varieties by designating issues of importance and seriousness to the high code and aligning less important, less serious topics with Dialectal Arabic, the low code. He has also discussed the functions of code-switching as a marker of speaker’s attitude.

Some of the works done on the author are reviewed to serve as a background for the present study and to establish the fact that the present study has its own significance.

Vijayalakshmi.T. (2010) in her Ph.D dissertation on “A Postmodern critique of Select novels of Amitav Ghosh” has studied Ghosh’s works from a postmodern perspective- the quest for truth of the various characters and how they fail in their attempts, the concept of time and space in his fiction, the narrative mode and the techniques used by the author.

Jayashree Chakraborty (2011) in her journal article “Code- Switching and Code – Mixing: A case study of Amitav Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide” has examined how code switched and code mixed varieties of language provide Indianness to Amitav Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide. Code switching occurs at the discourse level while code mixing occurs at the phrase level. From the speaker’s perspective code switching is used by bilinguals and multilinguals as an important tool of communication for some specific purposes. Code mixing is used not only by bilinguals and multilinguals but also by monolinguals. The monolinguals use code mixing unconsciously and spontaneously. This is because they have picked up those words from their immediate environment and these words have been nativised in this language. The paper shows how Amitav Ghosh has used code switching and code mixing to show the Indian traits in the conversation of the characters. She gives an extended view of the Bengali society interweaving Bengali expression and vocabulary into English.
Jaishree. N. (2011) in her dissertation “Struggle, Displacement and the Quest for Identity in the Select Novels of Amitav Ghosh” analyses the aspects of existential struggle of the migrants; the cause and the consequences of it under different backdrops. The physical, psychological and cultural dislocation of the characters, migration, diasporic feelings, rootlessness and a new kind of sensibility born out of these factors are brought under detailed study. It also focuses on the characters’ unquenchable thirst to gain personal identity and significance.

Rajnish Mishra (2013) in the essay entitled “Sea of Poppies: A Postcolonial Critique of the Past”, has brought to light the imperial exploitation of the people of Asia. The article shows how the novel takes a fresh look at that part of the history of Asia that had been whitewashed by the dominant discourses very effectively. The author is of the view that the imperial mission has not come to an end with the independence of the colonies, but neo-colonialism has come to the fore. The way in which the past imperial power exploited their subject people finds parallel in the way USA dealt with Iraq. The idea of the empire has undergone a transformation but its core remains the same.

Raichel M.Sylus (2013) in the essay entitled “The Enigma of Diaspora in Amitav Ghosh’s Sea of Poppies” brings out the nature of exile, the collective and individual experiences of the immigrants in the novel, and the solitude faced amidst the chaos of migrating from one country to another. Frustration and confusion are deeply entrenched among the migrants who are caught between conflicting cultures and borders.

Malathy Krishnan (2005) in the journal article entitled “Time and Space in Amitav Ghosh’s The Glass Palace” has studied how the novel juxtaposes the past and the present and how the author has succeeded in bringing accuracy and specificity to every date and has intertwined the specific dates with the stories of the characters in the novel. The novel
also moves across geographical boundaries from Chittagong, Aykyab, Mandalay, Rangoon, Calcutta through the coast of the Bay of Bengal to Madras and to Ratnagiri on the western coast of the Indian Peninsula on one side and from Calcutta to Middle East, Europe and to America on the other side.

Indira Javed and Neeta Puranik (2013) in the journal article entitled “Amitav Ghosh’s Penchant for Unexplored Indian History” have analysed the socio-cultural and economic ramifications of British rule in India as presented in Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke*. The opium trade which fractured Indian economy and the lives of the Indian lower class adversely affected by the trade have been dealt with in detail.

Urjani Chakravarthy and Rajyashree Khushu-Lahiri (2010) in the journal article entitled “Intercultural Communication in Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*: A Relevance Theoretic Study” have studied the portrayal of intercultural communication in Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* within the Relevance Theoretic framework. The study is based on the hypothesis that a literary discourse and the daily act of communication are linguistic phenomena of inherently the same nature and hence theories related to intercultural communication are applicable to literary discourse. Selecting extracts from the novel, wherein the author has used words from the Indian languages and from various creoles and pidgins that have arisen from Indian seaports since the eighteenth century, the study analyses the process involved in the creation of literary discourse, criteria for interpretation and the role of intention in literary studies.

Shao- Pin Luo (2013) in the journal article entitled “The way of words: Vernacular Cosmopolitanism in Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*”, examines the ways of practising resistance by the concept of “vernacular cosmopolitanism”. The article discusses the use of English in different contexts and studies the history of words used in the text. It also
analyses the linguistic aspect of the concept of cosmopolitanism and shows how language serves as an indicator of the cross-cultural fusion that was operating in the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal during the colonial period.

The thesis has been divided into six chapters.

Chapter I traces the history of Indian Writing in English, introduces the author, previews his works and themes and ascertains his place as an artist in Indian Writing. It also gives a brief introduction of post colonial theory and literature and presents the need for appropriation of language in Indian Writings.

Chapter II analyses the social scenario of nineteenth century India and Burma, the customs, culture, traditions, prevalent beliefs, manners and practices of the people and the thematic concerns of the novels. It also critiques the Indian conventional powers which were often deliberately patriarchal, feudal and anti-feminist in nature.

Chapter III presents the repercussions of history on the lives of ordinary men and women and societies. History is viewed from the perspective of the subaltern forced by circumstances to adapt to new environs and a new way of life. The individual is presented as a victim of history. It also presents how history has been revisited and rewritten to focus on forgotten and marginalised histories.

Chapter IV unfolds the sordid reality of imperialism and its impact on the various aspects of human life. It highlights the imperial greed in the exploitation of resources and the many forms of subjugation common under colonial rule- physical, economic, political, religious, judicial and social. It also studies displacement as the existential predicament of
the characters and presents the poignant accounts of people scattered through colonial dislocation - the stories of ordinary peasants and that of royalty under colonialism.

Chapter V presents the nativisation of language in the select novels by applying Kachru’s Indianization of English and shows how Indianness gets reflected in the lexical and discoursal identities of Indian English. It studies how Standard English has been abrogated and the language appropriated to make it relevant to the social context. The chapter also focuses on intercultural communication and analyses the complexities of multilingualism and the interaction of languages in a global set up.

Chapter VI sums up the study and presents the findings.