Regional literature is as old as realistic literature in the world. The regional relates to regal, royal and real. This writing is neither imaginative nor mythical. It is not too idealistic. Regional literature, though it contains universal values, it is not classical literature or global writing. Another word for regional literature is local (color) literature.

Regional literature is universal in the sense it is local literature; it is what we can call folklore. It is the very popular literature with mass appeal. The following are the characteristic features of it:

1. It is local in its birth, scope and purposes.
2. It has the appeal of folk and popular literature.
3. It is in dialects.

Realism is applied by literary critics in two diverse ways: (1) to identify a movement in the writing of novels during the 19th century that included Honore de Balzac in France, George Eliot in England, and William Dean Howells in America and (2) to designate a recurrent mode, in various eras and literary forms, of representing human life and experience in literature.

Realistic fiction is often opposed to romantic fiction or fantasy. The romance is said to present life as we would have it. It may be more picturesque, fantastic, adventurous, or heroic than actuality. Realism, on the other hand, is said to represent life as it really is. It is more useful to identify realism in terms of the intended effect on the reader. Realistic fiction is written to give the effect that it represents life and the social world as it seems to the common reader, evoking the sense that its characters might in fact exist and that such things might well happen. To achieve such effects, the novelists may or may not be selective in subject matter – although most of them prefer the commonplace and
the everyday. For example, Daniel Defoe dealt with the extraordinary adventures of a shipwrecked mariner named Robinson Crusoe and with the extraordinary misadventures of a woman named Moll Flanders; but he made his novels seem to readers a mirror held up to reality by his reportorial manner of rendering all the events, whether ordinary or extraordinary. Both the fictions of Franz Kafka and the present-day novels of magic realism achieve their effects in large part by exploiting a realistic manner in rendering events that are in themselves fantastic, absurd, and or flatly impossible.

The Russian formalists proposed that both the selection of subject matter and the techniques of rendering it in a realistic novel depend on their accordance with literary convention and codes which the reader has learned to interpret, or naturalize. Some theorists draw the conclusion that since all literary representations are constituted by arbitrary conventions, there is no valid ground for holding any one kind of fiction to be more realistic than any other. It is a matter of common knowledge and experience, however that some novels in fact produce on the reader the effect of representing the ordinary course of events.

It is said, “The regional novel describes people and landscape of an actual locality outside the metropolis.” (Drabble 590) It is a kind of rural thing. Early examples are set in Ireland (M. Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent*) and Scotland (J. Galt’s *The Provost*) and are primarily studies of individual societies and characters or tribes. Sir Walter Scott, however, combined a historically informed feeling for local with an aesthetic appreciation of natural scenery. By the mid-19th century the localities described are often smaller, the focus being partly sociological/anthropological, as in Charlotte Bronte’s *Shirley*, and in the rural fiction of Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell (*Cheshire*) and George Eliot (*The Midlands*). Thomas Hardy set his works in a fictive Wessex where an appreciation of both aesthetic and geological aspects of landscape complements a concern with agricultural and economic issues. Later these two approaches tend to diverge.
In the mid-19th century, even when the industrial society developed, more didactically slanted accounts of particular regions are found in the Shropshire romances of Mary Webb and the early work of H. Williamson (Devonshire) in which country life is contrasted favourably with that of the towns.

The trend of regional fiction continued. The continued oscillation between romantic and realistic handling of regionalism in the 20th century is reflected in the popularity enjoyed by the Cornish novels of D. du Maurier, the Tyneside ones of Catherine Cookson, and the historical Cornish novels of Winston Graham (1909-2003), whose Pol-dark series appeared in 1945. Examples of regionalism of an exclusively naturalistic kind are A. Bennett’s tales of the Staffordshire ‘Five Towns’, and the accounts of farming life of S. Kaye-Smith (1887-1956) (Kent and Sussex) and Adrain Bell (1901-80 Suffolk). Emphasis on social realism becomes more pronounced in the 1920s in the work of Phyllis Bentley (1894-1977), who wrote of the textile industry in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and H.E. Bates (Northamptonshire). Bates was also an Anglo-Indian writer. In D.H. Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* (Nottinghamshire) and *A Glastonbury Romance* by J.C. Powys the potential limitations of the genre are surmounted through the integration of particular landscapes and places with individual psychological, religious, and emotional experience.

In the second half of the 20th century regional writers continued to favour a realistic approach, as in the work of Leo Walmsley (1892-1966) with his trilogy set on the north Yorkshire coast, John Moore (1907-1967), with works based in Gloucestershire, and John Toft (1933- ), Staffordshire. In particular the regional novel has become a sociological attuned vehicle for working-class concerns.

The western regional fiction has had its influence all over the world. Regional writings have been quite popular in America as elsewhere. Regional literature is nothing but local color literature. It is a style/genre of writing that became popular in the 19th century. The setting is important there and writers
emphasize specific features such as dialect, customs, history, and landscape of a particular region. Such locales will be rural and provincial.

The so-called local colorists like frontier humor, and the local color writing has old roots but produced its best works long after the Civil War. Obviously, many pre-war writers, from Henry David Thoreau and Nathaniel Hawthorne to James Greenleaf Whittier and James Russell Lowell, paint striking portraits of specific American regions. What sets the colorists apart is their self-conscious and exclusive interest in rendering a given location, and their scrupulously factual, realistic technique.

Bret Harte (1836-1902) is remembered as the author of adventurous stories such as “The Luck of Roaring Camp” and The Outcasts of Poker Flat”, set along the western mining frontier in the USA. As the first great success in the local colorist school, Harte for a brief time was perhaps the best-known writer in America—such was the appeal of his romantic version of the gun-slinging West. Outwardly realistic, he was one of the first to introduce low-life characters — cunning gamblers, gaudy prostitutes, and uncouth robbers— into serious literary works. He got away with this (as had Charles Dickens in England, who greatly admired Harte’s work) by showing in the end that these seeming derelicts really had hearts of gold.

Likewise, several women writers are remembered for their fine depictions of New England: Mary Wilkins Freeman (1852-1930), Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1895), and especially Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909). Jewett’s story “The White Heron” in Country of the Pointed Firs (1896) is too popular. Stowe’s local color works, especially The Pearl of Orr’s Island (1862), depicting humble Maine fishing communities, greatly influenced Jewett. The nineteenth-century women writers formed their own networks of moral support and influence, as their letters show. Women made up the major audience for fiction, and many women wrote popular novels, poems, and humorous pieces.
All regions of the country celebrated themselves in writing influenced by local color. Some of it included social protest, especially toward the end of the century, when social inequality and economic hardship were burning issues. Racial injustice and inequality between the sexes appear in the works of southern writers such as George Washington Cable (1844-1925) and Kate Chopin (1851-1904), whose powerful novels set in Cajun/French Louisiana transcend the local color label. Cable’s *The Grandissimes* (1880) treats racial injustice with great artistry like Kate Chopin’s daring novel *The Awakening* (1899), about a woman’s doomed attempt to find her own identity through passion.

Often paired with *The Awakening* is the fine story “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935). Both works were forgotten for a time, but rediscovered by feminist literary critics late in the 20th century. In Gilman’s story, a condescending doctor drives his wife mad by confining her in a room to ‘cure’ her of nervous exhaustion. The imprisoned wife projects her entrapment onto the wallpaper, in the design of which she sees imprisoned women creeping behind bars.

Regional literature is available in commonwealth countries like India, West Indies, Nigeria, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The following is a critical survey-cum analysis of the regional aspects of Indian English literature. This is subsumed in the critical analysis of Indian English literature in general in order to showcase the status of regionalism (which looks like theatre in comparison with cinema) in Indian literature.

Indian English literature was born when the British encountered Indian sensibility in the 18th century. As F.W. Bain put it “India, a withered trunk… suddenly shot out with foreign foliage.” (Bain xv) Indians gradually followed their English masters in writing about India. This body of writing came to be known as Indo-Anglian Literature, Indian Writing in English and Indo-English literature. There was a little confusion about the nature of this literature. What
was Anglo-Indian Literature and Indo-Anglian Literature was not clear. The Indian literature in English translation was in confusion. Literary historians E.F. Daten, Bhupal Singh, and even V.K. Gokak had this confusion. So did others like K.R.S. Iyengar and H.M. Williams later. Strictly speaking, Indian English literature may be defined as literature written originally in English by authors Indian by birth, ancestry or nationality. Literature is literature written by Indians (not western authors like Kipling and Forster) in English (not translations into English).

On the other hand, a work like *Gitanjali* which is a creative translation by the author himself should qualify for the inclusion. The crux of the matter is the distinctive literary phenomenon that emerges when an Indian sensibility tries to express itself originally in a medium of expression which is not primarily Indian. There is, of course, that infinitesimally small class of Indian society called the ‘Anglo-Indian’, i.e., the Eurasians, who claim English as their mother tongue; but with notable exceptions like Henry Derozio, Aubrey Menen and Ruskin Bond, few of them have tried to express themselves creatively in English. There are exceptional cases like Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. The former, born of a Srilankan Tamil father and an English mother, was neither an Indian citizen nor did he live in India; and yet the entire orientation of his thought is so unmistakably Indian. But Jhabvala is an international phenomenon. On the other hand, V.S. Naipaul’s Indian ancestry is indisputable, but he is so much of an outsider when he writes about India and so much of an insider while dealing with Caribbean life and character.

Indian English literature is Indian literature as American literature is American literature. It is, no doubt, Indian in its ethos and expression. Its use of English as a medium may also give it a place in Commonwealth literature, but that is merely a matter of critical convenience, since the Commonwealth is largely a political entity. Nowadays, this body of writing is redesignated as postcolonial literature.
Indian English literature is the right term for our writing today. Prof. K.R.S. Iyengar has used it making it quite general. Prof. M.K. Naik too popularized this expression. It is said:

The Sahitya Akademi has recently accepted ‘Indian English Literature’ as the most suitable appellation for this body of writing. The term emphasizes two significant ideas: first that this literature constitutes one of the many streams that join the great ocean called Indian literature, which, though written in different languages, has an unmistakable unity; and secondly, that it is an inevitable product of the nativization of the English language to express the Indian sensibility. Nevertheless, by whatever name Indian English literature is called, it remains a literary phenomenon worthy of serious scrutiny. (Naik 5)

A petition addressed to King Henry VIII in 1511 reads: ‘The Indies are discovered and vast treasures brought from thence everyday. Let us therefore bend our endeavours thitherwards.’ Finally, the East India Company which was to link India’s destiny firmly with Britain for almost two centuries was granted its first charter by Queen Elizabeth I on the last day of the last month of the last year of the sixteenth century, as if to usher in a new era in the East-West relationship.

When it comes to the survey of Indian English literature, the best history is that of Iyengar’s. But alas! It is not updated. The next best chronicle of Indian English literature is M.K. Naik’s history published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. Prof. Naik divides his history of Indian English literature into periods as follows:

1. The Pagoda Tree: from the Beginnings to 1857
2. The Winds of Change: 1857 to 1920

This division of Indian English literature is fruitful for a proper understanding.
The present thesis focuses on the regional aspects of Indian English literature. India is a republic of states where dozens of languages of Samskrit and Dravidian family operate. People follow many religions, cultures, ethos, ideas and attitudes. The intelligentsia is not different in this regard. The writers even in English are too different in different parts of India. This certainly leads to regionalism in our ideas, expression and form.

The East India Company began its rule of India in the beginning of 17th century. The Company rule shook the Indian Pagoda Tree. This even sowed the seeds for Indian awakening the so called Bengal Renaissance. The British encouraged Samskrit and Persian languages. Sir William Jones was the first to do it with his Bengal Asiatic Society (est. 1784). H.T. Colebrooke, the author of *Digest of Hindu on Contracts and Succession* (1794-98), and James Prinsep, the discoverer of the clue to the Asokan inscriptions, were some of the representative white men in India. While these Englishmen were rediscovering India’s past, the gradual spread of English education and Western ideas brought forth a band of earnest Indians who drank deep at the fountain of European learning.

The British humanists and reformers advocated for the study of and education of regional languages and literature in Samskrit and Persain. Colleges for the same were established in Calcutta (a Madrasa in 1781) and Banaras (a Samskrit college in 1792). There were two intellectual groups: the orientalists and the occidentalists. The orientalists stood for whatever that was regional / vernacular / local, which was most essential for the understanding and appreciation of India as Edward Said thinks.

Furthermore, with the rise of Evangelical movement in Britain, the ideal of spreading the word of Christ among the natives assumed vital importance. Even before the close of the eighteenth century, Mission schools which taught English besides the vernacular had already been functioning in the South, while the beginning of the 19th century saw the establishment of similar schools in
Bengal and Bombay. The missionaries believed that in imparting Western education to Indians, every teacher was breaking to pieces with a rod of iron the earthenware vessels of Hinduism. Charles Grant, who argued: “To introduce the language of the conquerors seems to be an obvious means of assimilating a conquered people to them.” (Wood 187)

The cause of English education found its ablest Indian champion in Raja Rammohun Roy. Lord Macaulay’s famous Minute on Education (1835) was supportive to this. The orientalists’ struggle to dominate continued. The extremism of this policy was sought to be corrected some time later by Sir Charles Wood, a member of the Select Committee of the British Parliament in 1852-53. In his well-known Despatch of 19 July 1854, while reiterating the necessity to extend European knowledge throughout all classes of the people, he observed that ‘this object must be effected by means of the English language in the higher branches of instruction, and by that of the vernacular languages of India to the great mass of the people. The logical outcome of Wood’s Despatch was the establishment of the three first Indian universities – those of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras – in 1857. These universities soon became the nurseries of the resurgent Indian genius, which within hardly a generation thereafter ushered in a renaissance in the political, social, cultural and literary spheres of Indian life.

Indian English literature began in 1809 itself when Cavelly Boriah published his account of the Jains in Asiatic Researches in London. Boriah (1776-1803), an assistant to Col. Colin Machenzie (1753-1821) – the first Surveyor General of India and well-known in South Indian history for the collection, Mackenzie Manuscripts – was described by Machenize as ‘a youth of the quickest genius.’ This was the first considerable attempt by an Indian to write in English. Raja Rammohun Roy’s essay “A Defence of Hindu Theism” (1817) may be regarded as the first original publication of significance in the history of Indian English literature. Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), aptly
described by Tagore as the inaugurator of the modern age in India was indeed the morning star of Indian renaissance. The casual Western reader of today who perhaps remembers him best as the original of the absurd Rummon Loll in Thackeray’s *Newcomes*, certainly does him less than justice. A pioneer in religious, educational, social and political reform, he was a man cast in the mould of the Humanists of the European Renaissance. He edited periodicals in three languages – *The Brahmunnunal Magazine* in English (1821-23), *Sambad Kaumudi* in Bengali (1821) and *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* in Persian (1822-23). In 1828, he founded the Brahmo Sabha, which was the earliest attempt of its kind in the 19th century to revitalize Hinduism. Proficient in about half a dozen oriental and an equal number of occidental languages, Rammohun Roy wrote extensively in Bengali, Persian, Hindi, Sanskrit and English. His collected writings – *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* (6 vols., 1945-51) were edited by Kalidas Nag and Debaijyoti Burman. Selected Works of Raja Rammohun Roy, issued by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, appeared in 1977. Of his English works, as many as thirty-two are original essays on various subjects.

Rammohun Roy’s writings obviously belong to the category of ‘Literature of Knowledge’, rather than ‘Literature of Power.’ Yet he is a master of a distinguished English prose style. In a personal letter, Jeremy Bentham complimented Rammohun Roy on ‘a style, which but for the name of a Hindoo, I should certainly have ascribed to the pen of a superiorly educated and instructed Englishman.’ (Bentham 33)

Raja Rammohan Roy’s Bengal was the cradle of Hindu renaissance in the 19th century. Henry Derozio’s two disciples Krishna Mohan Banerji (1813-85) and Ram Gopal Ghose (1815-68), both wrote prose. Banerji’s *Dialogues* (1861) and Aryan *Witness* (1875) and Ghose’s pamphlets are too well-known. Hurish Chunder Mukerji (1824-60) edited *The Hindoo Patriot* from 1854 to 1860 with a passionate sense of mission, championing widow-remarriage, counseling,
reconciliation after the Mutiny and exposing the iniquities of the British planters. Rajendra Lal Mitra (1824-91), Assistant Secretary and Librarian, Bengal Asiatic Society, and hailed by Tagore as ‘Sabyasachi’ (i.e., ambidextrous) was one of earliest Indian antiquarians, indologists and historians. Girish Chunder Ghosh’s (1829-69) two Bengali journals were remarkable.

Bombay Presidency too produced lot of regional literature in this period upto 1857. Bal Shastri Jambhekar (1812-46) was a great man there; and Naoroji, Bhou Daji and K.L. Chatre were his followers. His contemporary Dadoba Pandurang (1814-82) wrote on education.

In the Madras presidency, apart from Boriah’s “Account of the Jains,” another noteworthy early document is Vannelakanti Soobrow’s (he was, significantly known as ‘English Soobrow’) report on the State of Education in 1820. The Madras presidency enjoys biography in Indian English literature. This was Cavelly Venkata (1829). Ramaswami (1765-1840), the elder brother of C.V. Boriah describes in this book the lives of more than a hundred Indian poets, both ancient and modern, in Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and Marathi. The accounts vary in length and accuracy and are written in a rather pedestrian style. This is a good example of local color literature.

When it comes to early poetry upto 1857, we can, in passing mention, Ramaswami’s English rendering of Viswagunadarshana. The first Indian English poet of note, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-31) was the son of an Indo-Portuguese father and an English mother. Derozio wrote The Fakeer of Jungheera (1828), and numerous short poems. A noteworthy feature of Derozio’s poetry is its burning nationalistic zeal, somewhat surprising in a Eurasian at a time when the average representative of his class was prone to repudiate his Indian blood and identify himself with the white man. Khashiprasad Ghose (1809-73), M.M. Dutt (1824-73), and others attempted fine poetry. M.K. Naik thinks the first period of Indian English literature may be
said to end in the 1850s, a few years before the Indian Revolt of 1857-- that great watershed in the relationship between India and Britain.

Once the great Revolt of 1857 took place, the monarch of England Queen Victoria took over the charge of the British Empire. The Queen’s proclamation of 1 November 1858 heralded the birth of a new age. The Revolt and its aftermath led to several radical changes in the Indo-British relationship. The Evangelical revival in England, the social and educational reforms of the 1830s, the advent of the steamships during the 1840s, and the changes made in the system of recruitment to company service in the 1850s ushered in totally changed attitudes.

The Indian renaissance became much easier with the political change. If the British attitude to the Indian thus underwent a radical transformation, the Indian too was changing. When the first products of higher education in India started coming out of the portals of the earliest Indian universities (established ironically enough in the year of the Revolt itself), the seeds of the ideas sown by Raja Rammohun Roy a generation earlier began to sprout vigorously.

In Bengal Roy’s successor Dwarakanath Tagore (the poet’s father) and Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-84) expanded the socio-religious reforms. In Bombay, M.G. Ranade and R.G. Bhandarkar initiated social reforms. Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore, and of course, Sri Aurobindo were next to come.

A similar movement was Arya Samaj, established in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83). This was an attempt to revive Hinduism in the pristine purity of the Vedic age. Repudiation of Puranism and polytheism, rejection of the hereditary caste system and revival of proselytization were its chief doctrines.

The year which marked the establishment of Arya Samaj also saw the rise of another movement based on ancient Hindu religious and philosophical thought. This was the Theosophical Society founded in New York by Madame
H.P. Blavatsky, Col. H.S. Olcott, W.O. Judge and others. Unlike the Arya Samaj this was a western movement but the society shifted to Adyar, near Madras in India in 1878.

The general climate of resurgence in the country did not fail to affect the Muslim community as well, though there orthodoxy was even more firmly entrenched. Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-98) became to the Muslims what Rammohun Roy was to the Hindus earlier. Making the dissemination of western ideas and education among the Muslims the sole mission of his life, he founded the Anglo-Arabic College at Aligarh (1875), which later developed into Aligarh Muslim University.

In a way, the western ideas of Marx and Freud, the English education, the political changes all affected the life in the Indian sub-continent. The revolutionary movements in China and Turkey in the first decade of the 20th century and the Persian liberal movement all suggested that the path of progress consisted in using western techniques and ideas to regenerate ancient societies and then to use western weapons against western supremacy.

This conviction was strengthened by the impact of World War I and its aftermath. As Percival Spear thinks American democracy emerged as a force which might counter the old Western imperialism. President Wilson’s Fourteen Points and his doctrine of self-determination shot a thrill of expectancy through Asia. Thus, during the period from 1857 to 1920, the Indian ethos gradually underwent a sea-change from the shock of defeat and frustration and the trauma of inferiority feeling to a new-found self-awareness and self-confidence.

As for writing it was in the 1870s onwards, the Dutts emerged as the foremost writers in Bengal. Writers like Govind Chunder, Hur and Greece Chundur, Omesh Chunder, Kashiprasad Ghose, Rama Sharma, and others emerged as if Bengal’s cultural heritage. Toru Dutt was the crowning glory of all. The best regional writers of the time were Behramji Malabari (1853-1912) and Cowasji Nowrosi Vesuvala, M.M. Kunte and Nagash Wishwanath Pai.
It was, however, not Bombay, but Bengal – the first home of Indian English literature – that was to continue to dominate the poetic scene for many more years.

Manmohun Ghose’s poems in *Primavera* (1890), which included the work of Stephen Phillips, Laurence Binyon and Arthur Cripps, are typical of the mood of world-weariness and yearning and the colourful aestheticism of the Eighteen Nineties. A younger brother of Manmohun Ghose, Aurobindo Ghose (Sri Aurobindo) (1872-1950) provides a striking contrast. Though he had very much the same kind of upbringing as his elder brother, whom he accompanied to England at the age of seven, Sri Aurobindo found his roots in Indian culture and thought immediately on his return to India from Cambridge in 1893. Manmohan’s career is a sad story of arrested artistic development. Sri Aurobindo’s, a glorious chronicle of progress from patriot to poet, yogi and seer. After a brief, quiet spell in Baroda State Service (1893-1906) and a much shorter but far more hectic one as a political radical (1906-10), which landed him in jail for one year, Sri Aurobindo escaped to Pondicherry (then a French possession) in 1910, and made it his permanent home thereafter. Aurobindo’s great works include *Life Divine* and *Savitri*.

Sri Aurobindo invites comparison with another prominent contemporary, who was actually his senior in age, but whose work in English began much later. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), hailed by Mahatma Gandhi as ‘The Great Sentinel’, was one of those versatile men of his age, who touched and enriched modern Indian life at several points. Poet, dramatist, novelist, short story writer, composer, painter, thinker, educationist, nationalist and internationalist – such were the various roles that Tagore played with uniform distinction during his long career.

Tagore got Nobel Prize for literature for his transcreation *Geetanjali* in 1913. W.B. Yeats was instrumental in this regard. The rest is history. *Gitanjali* (1912) took the literary world of London by storm and was followed in quick
succession by The Gardener (1913) and The Crescent Moon (1913). More collections followed. Tagore wrote plays, novels, short stories, philosophical treatises and criticism with a regional touch.

Younger than both Sri Aurobindo and Tagore, Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949), however, won recognition in England much earlier. Daughter of a Bengali educationist settled in Hyderabad, she started writing poetry early. She studied at London and Cambridge for three years. Naidu’s collections include The Bird of Time (1912), and The Broken Wing (1917). Naidu’s younger brother, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya (1898–) is a poet also cast, though somewhat less rigidly, in the romantic mould. His works include The Magic Tree (1922), Poems and Plays (1927) and Spring in Winter (1955).

Regionalism is better expressed in Indian English prose and in poetry. The prose of thought, to begin with provincial, was thought of in Dadabhai Naoroji’s writings. One must read his speeches about India against the British. Two of Naoroji’s most illustrious pupils at the Elphinstone Institute, where he taught early were V.N. Mandlik and R.G. Bhandarkar. Hailed as ‘Rishi Ranade’ by Srinivasa Sastri, Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901) was a gentle colossus of the late 19th century. A scholar with virtually encyclopaedic interests, he was a patriot, a social and religious reformer and a thinker, who deeply influenced the intellectual life of his age. His Rise of the Maratha Power (1900) is, like Bhandarkar’s histories, a pioneering effort which laid the foundation of historical research in Maharashtra. In his brief career, Kashinath Trimbuck Telang (1850-93) crowded much hectic activity in diverse fields such as law, journalism, politics, social reform, education, orientology and the development of vernacular literature. He was a founder-member of the Indian National Congress and the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay. Two prominent Parsi contemporaries of Ranade were Sir Pherozeshah Merwanjee Mehta (1845-1915) and Sir Dinsha Edulji Wacha (1844-1936). ‘Ferocious Mehta’, an imperious personality, was the ‘uncrowned king of
Bombay’ for well over a generation. In politics, however, his role was that of a gentle Moderate. His *Speeches and Writings* was edited by J.R.V. Jeejeebhai in 1918. Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), Tilak’s younger contemporary, was the ablest disciple of Ranade and was acknowledged by Gandhi as his political guru. His *Speeches* (1916) are characteristic of an earnest and upright, and gentle and cultured soul, wholly dedicated to his country’s cause.

The Bengali renaissance continued. In Bengal, the editorship of the *Hindoo Patriot* came after the death of Hurish Chunder Mukherji in 1860 to Kristo Das Pal (1834-84), who headed the paper with great distinction for almost a quarter century. Writing in *Concord* in 1887, G.A. Stacks, editor of the *Calcutta Review* observed, “The old race of native writers who were masters of pure, polished and idiomatic English appears to have died out with K.D. Pal.” (Pillai 271)

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94), renowned Bengali novelist and author of one of the earliest Indian English novels, wrote several essays in English, including ‘On the Origin of Hindu Festivals’ (1870), ‘Bengali Literature’ (1871), ‘The Study of Hindu Philosophy’ (1873) and ‘Vedic Literature’ (1894). His spirited defence of Hinduism in *Letters on Hinduism* appeared in 1940, long after his death. Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee (1844-1906), the first president of the Indian National Congress (1885), established the London India Society in 1865, which later merged into the East Indian Association. His speeches are collected in *Life, Letters and Speeches of W.C. Bonnerjee* (1923) edited by K.L. Bandopadhyaya. Of the three notable Ghoshes of the period (apart from Manmohan Ghose and Sri Aurobindo) Rashbihari Ghosh (1845-1921) and Lalmohan Ghosh (1849-1909) were Moderate Congress leaders. Rashbihari’s *Speeches* were published in 1919 and Lalmohan’s (2 Vols.) in 1883. Motilal Ghosh (1847-1902) founded the well-known newspaper, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in 1868. Another Moderate Bengali leader, Ambica Charan Mazumdar (1850-1922) wrote *Indian National Evolution* (1915).
Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909), whose poetry has already been considered, was an administrator with wide experience. Keenly aware of the political and economic problems of India, he brought his vast knowledge and experience to bear upon them in scholarly studies like *The Peasantry of Bengal* (1875) and *A History of Civilization in Ancient India* (1889). Dutt’s friend, Surendranath Banerjea (1848-1925) was acclaimed by his age as perhaps its most powerful orator in English. His *Speeches 1880-1908* (1908) and *The Trumpet Voice of India* (1919) declared self-government within the empire as Indians’ goal.

M.K. Naik thinks it was another trio- this time a purely Bengali one – which produced the most noteworthy prose of the period. It comprises Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. Tagore’s writings are too many. Most of Vivekananda’s speeches were delivered extempore, and not a little of their appeal was derived from his dominant personality which exuded a sense of both tranquility and power.

As compared to the Bombay and Bengal presidencies, north India produced fewer figures of national stature during this period. Among the most outstanding were Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946), Motilal Nehru (1861-1931), and Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928).

Muslim political thought from North India is represented by Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-98), whose role in the reawakening of his people has already been considered. His *Causes of the Indian Revolt* (1858) was translated into English by Colvin and Shan Mohammed in 1972. In contrast with Badruddin Tyabji, that the interests of the Muslims would be best served by remaining aloof from the Indian National Congress. Ameer Ali (1849-1928), author of *The Spirit of Islam* (1891) and *A Short History of the Saracens* (1916) was the first Indian Muslim to become a High Court Judge and member of the British Privy Council. He advocated a rediscovery of the basic principles of Islam and its former glory.
In the south, the first noteworthy name is that of Maharaja Sir Rama Varma of Travancore (1837-84), one of the earliest of enlightened Indian princes. Interested in the study of science, history and literature, he wrote both in Malayalam and English. A frequent contributor to the *Madras Athenaeum* in which he published a ‘Political Sketch of Travancore’ (1856), Rama Varma wrote in the *Indian Statesman* open letters with the heading “Topics For Mr. F.N. Maltby” in 1858-59. Among the prominent political figures in the south then was Sir S. Subramania Iyer (1842-1924), called the ‘grand old man of South India’. His *Speeches and Writings* (1918) have been edited by D.V. Gundappa. M. Veeraraghavachariar (1857-1906) founded *The Hindu* in 1878 and S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar (1859-1923), who acquired it in 1905, made it one of the most influential English dailies in India. Sir P.S. Sivaswanti Iyer (1864-1946) was a noted liberal leader. *A Great Liberal: Speeches and Writings of Sivaswami Iyer*, edited by K. Nilakantha Sastri appeared in 1965. The most renowned of the Southern Moderate leaders was V.S. Sirnivas Sastri (1869-1946). A disciple of G.K. Gokhale, he was known as ‘the silver-tongued orator of the Empire’.

Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), the distinguished Indo-Sinhalese scholar, the spirit of whose work vindicates his own rhetorical query, ‘Can we think of India as complete without Ceylon?’, must legitimately find a place among Indian English prose writers. The son of a Sri Lankan Tamil father and an English mother, Coomaraswamy was trained as a geologist and worked as Director, Minerological Survey of Ceylon for sometime before embarking on the study of Eastern art. For a number of years he was keeper of Indian and Muhammedan Art and Research Fellow in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. He was a prolific writer and the bibliography of his publications comprises about a thousand items, including books, pamphlets, and articles on art, religion, metaphysics, language and culture. Among his principal works are *Medieval Sinhalese Art* (1908), *Essays on National Idealism* (1909), *Art and Swadeshi*
Regional / provincial literature flourished in the period up to 1920. The literary historian M.K. Naik provides voluminous information about the growth of biography, autobiography, travelogue, essays and criticism.

Apart from Srinivasa Sastri’s biographical studies, this period produced a number of biographies of various kinds. These include lives of ancient prophets and sages like Ameer Ali’s *Life of Muhammad* (1873), Manmath Nath Dutt’s *Prophets of Ind.* (2 Vols., 1894), Khetrapal Chakravarti’s *Life of Sri Chaitanya* (1897) and Sisir Kumar Ghose’s *Lord Gauranga: Life of Kirshna Chaitanya of Nadia* (1897-8); political biographies like T. Rama Row’s *Biographical Sketches of the Rajahs of Venktagiri* (1875) and W.E. Dhanakoti Raju’s *Queen Empress Victoria* (1887); collections of brief sketches of the lives of modern Indians like Ram Gopal Sanyal’s *A General Biography of Bengal Celebrities* (1889), Sohrabji Jahangir’s *Representative Indians* (1897); full-length biographies of modern Indians like *Lights and Shades of the East* by Framji Bomanji (1863); *Memoir of the Late Hon’ble Justice Onooucool Chunder Mookerjee* by Mohindranauth Mookerjee (1873), two studies of Kristo Das Pal by Ram Coomar Dey (1886) and Nagendra Nath Ghose (1887) respectively; two studies of Behramaji M. Malabari by Dayaram Gidumal (1888) and R.P. Kakaria (1896), respectively; and R.P. Paranjpye’s *Life of G.K. Gokhale* (1915) and *Life of D.K. Karve* (1915). As regards autobiography, besides works like Surendranath Banerjea’s *A Nation in the Making* and N.G. Chandavarkar’s *A Wrestling Soul* which have already been mentioned, an early notable attempt is Abdul Latif Khan’s *A Short Account of my Public Life* (1885).

Among travel books, perhaps the earliest notable effort is Bolanath Chandra’s *The Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts of Bengal and Upper India* (1869). Chattrapati Rajaram, the Maharaja of Kolhapur’s diary of his brief sojourn in Europe ending in his untimely death appeared in 1872 under the title *Diary of the Late Rajah of Kolhapur*. R.C. Dutt’s *Three Years in Europe* (1895).
More diverting owing to the strong admixture of comedy in them are the travelogues of Behramji Malabari.

Indian English drama too contains threads of regional culture. Most of this drama began as local culture literature first, and then extended beyond the frontiers. Indian English drama dates from 1831, when Krishna Mohan Banerji wrote *The Persecuted*. Micheal Madhusudan Dutt, the poet, translated three of his own Bengali plays into English: *Ratnavali* (1858) – a version of Harsha’s wellknown Sanskrit play, *Sermista* (1859) and *Is This Called Civilization?* (1871). Ramkinoo Dutt’s *Manipura Tragedy* (1893) completes the all too brief tale of Indian English drama published in Bengal. Owing to the lack of a firm dramatic tradition nourished on actual performance in a live theatre, early Indian English drama in Bengal, as elsewhere in India, grew sporadically as mostly closet drama; and even later, only Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya produced a substantial corpus of dramatic writing.

Sri Aurobindo wrote five complete and six incomplete verse plays. Of these, the earliest are two fragments written during his student days abroad: *The Witch of Ilmi: A Dream of the Woodlands* (1891) and *Achab and Esar* (n.d.). To the Baroda period (1893-1906) belong *The Viziers of Bassora – A Dramatic Romance*, *Perseus the Deliverer*, *Rodogune* and three fragments: *The Maid in the Mill: Love Shuffles the Cards*, *The House of Brut* and *The Birth of Sin. Prince of Edur* was written in 1907, while *Eric: A Dramatic Romance* and *Vasavadutta* are assigned to the period between 1912 and 1916. All the five complete plays, with the exception of *Perseus the Deliverer*, were published years later, between 1957 and 1960. All the eleven plays have now appeared in the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Volumes 6 and 7 – *Collected Plays and Short Stories*.

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore has been a great playwright with innovations and experiment. In examining the plays of Tagore, a distinction has
once again to be made, as in the case of his verse, between translations done by the author himself and those produced by others. This excludes the better-known plays such as The Post Office and The King of the Dark Chamber as the two are translations. Nevertheless, there remain almost a dozen plays done into English by Tagore and these include Chitra (1913), The Cycle of Spring (1917), and Sacrifice and Other Plays (1917). All these appear in the Collected Poems and Plays (1936). Red Oleanders, translated by Tagore himself from his Raktakarabi in Bengali was first published in the Visva-Bharati Quarterly in 1924. Tagore’s own translation of his Natir Puja appeared in the same journal in 1927, thus predating the one by Marjorie Sykes in 1950.

Poet-playwright Harindranath Chattopadhyaya began his career as a dramatist with Abu Hassan (1918), a light fantasy in prose and verse. His Poems and Plays (1927) contain seven verse plays on the lives of Indian saints: Pundalik, Saku Bai, Jayadeva, Chokha Mela, Ekanath, Raidas and Tukaram. The poetic quality of these plays is superior to their dramatic virtues. Five Plays (1929) are in prose and are strongly coloured by the author’s socialist sympathies. The Window and The Parrot are glimpses into the lives of the poor and The Coffin and The Evening Lamp, ironical sketches of two young romantics. The Sentry’s Lantern is a symbolic expression of the hope of the dawn of a new era.

Apart from the plays of Sri Auronbindo, Tagore and Chattopadhyaya, there are only stray efforts during the period like Sarath Kumar Ghose’s The Prince of Destiny (1910), Kendernath Das Gupta’s Calif for a Day (1916) and Bharata (1918) and Dhan Gopal Mukherji’s Layla-Majnu (1916).

With the rise of modern drama in Marathi and Gujarati heralded by Annasaheb Kirloskar’s epoch-making production of Shakuntal in Marathi in 1880, the vernacular stage soon posed a formidable challenge to English drama. The only available examples of Indian English drama in Bombay during the 19th century are C.S. Nazir’s verse play The First Parsi Baronet (1886), and
D.M. Wadia’s *The Indian Heroine* (1877), based on the events of 1857. And P.P. Meherjee’s *Dolly Parsen* (1918) is the only other effort of note before 1920.

Madras began later than Bombay but soon surpassed it in playwriting. The Madras Dramatic Society, which encouraged amateur European theatricals, was founded in 1875. The Oriental Drama Club followed in 1882 and the first Indian amateur dramatic society in South India. The Sarasa Vinodini Sabha was founded by Krishnamachary of Bellary in 1890. Srinivas Aiyangar’s (1871-1954) plays appeared. Aiyangar is at his entertaining best in light comedies with a farcical touch, dealing with South Indian urban middle class life like *Vitchu’s Wife* and *The Surgeon-General’s Prescription*. None of the other Madras playwrights was equally active. Among these were P.V.R. Raju (*Urjoon Sing*, 1875) and *Lord Likely*, 1876); Krishnamacharya (*Dasratha*, 1901); J. Virabhadra Rao (*Mani and Ratna*, 1911); A. Srinivasacharya (*Harischandra*, 1912); Krishna Iyer (*Lord Clive*, 1913)); S. Ranga Iyer (*The Hanging Doctor*, 1913); A.C. Krishnaswamy (*The Two Twice-borns*, 1914); R.S. Narayanaswami Aiyar (*Srimad Ramayana I*, 1916); T.B. Krishnaswamy (*Nur Jehan*, 1918) and K.S. Ramaswami Sastri (*Harischandra*, 1918)

Indian English fiction rose fast. The English novelists were a legion. Though its growth in later years far exceeded that of most other forms, fiction was actually the last to arrive on the Indian English literary scene. The earliest fictional efforts – tales rather than novels proper – appeared in journals. Some of the earliest novelists were Kylash Chunder Dutt, Shashee Chunder Dutt, and then, of course, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Bankim’s *Rajmohan’s Wife* (1864) is the first significant Indian English novel. This is described as a provincial story of a feudal family. Toru Dutt’s *Bianca* (1878) was unfinished.

Krupabhai Satthianadhan’s *Kamala* (Bombay, 1895), and *Saguna* (Bombay, 1895) – both thinly veiled exercises in autobiography; and Shevantibai M. Nikambe’s *Ratanbai* (London, 1895) are the early novels.
Among the novels to be published between 1864 and 1900 were Ram Krishna Punt’s *The Boy of Bengal* (London, 1866); Tarachand Mookerjee’s *The Scorpions* (Allahabad, 1868); Lal Behari Day’s *Govinda Samanta* (London, 1874); *Gowry*, an Indian Village Girl by an anonymous author (Madras, 1876); Ananda Prosad Dutt’s *The Indolence* (Calcutta, 1878); Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s *The Wedding* (Midnapore, 1884); Mirza Moorad Alec Beg’s *Lalun, the Beragun* (Bombay, 1884); Sanjihi Mull’s *The Interesting Story of Prince Poorun* (Delhi, 1886); M. Dutt’s *Bijoy Chand* (Calcutta, 1888), and *Lt. Suresh Biswas* (Calcutta, 1900); Yogendranath Chattopadhyaya’s *The Girl and Her Tutor* (Bhagalpur, 1891); and B.R. Rajam Iyer’s fragment of a religious novel, *True Greatness*.

Two prominent Madras contemporaries of these novelists from Bengal were A. Madhaviah and T. Ramakrishna Piallai. After an early effort – *Stayananda* (1909) – a slight work, Madhaviah wrote *Thillai Govindan* (London, 1916). This is an absorbing account, probably autobiographical, of the mental development of a contemporary south Indian Brahmin youth.

At the beginning of the 20th century we have the first Indian English short story writer with a considerable literary output. Cornelia Sorabji, a Parsi lady educated in Britain, became the first woman advocate in Calcutta in 1924. All her four collections were published in London: *Love and Life Behind the Pardah* (1901), *Sunbabies* (1904), *Between the Twilights* (1908) and *Indian Tales of the Great Ones among Men, Women and Bird-People* (1916). These studies of mostly Hindu and occasionally Parsi life in both princely and plebian circles are a mixed collection of stories, anecdotes and character-sketches. M. K. Naik thinks:

This survey of the period between the Great Revolt of 1857 and the first countrywide Non-cooperation movement of 1920 has shown how these sixty-odd years produced a number of mature works in verse and prose, though drama was yet to establish a tradition and fiction still remained in
swaddling clothes. At the same time, this critical survey is perceptive enough to demonstrate the regional elements in Indian English literature. (Naik 116)

The Bengal renaissance awakened India by and large. The British rule itself provoked the Indians to revolt against them for self-rule. World War I was to add a fresh impetus. The arrival of Mahatma Gandhi as Nehru puts it was like a powerful current of fresh air that made people to stretch themselves and take deep breaths.

The 1920s Non-Cooperation movement and the 1930s Civil Disobedience movement shook the British Empire. Already the European wars, Japan’s defeating of China, and Russia’s intervention, the use of science and technology, and above all, American democracy had changed man’s world vision. Gandhi led India to its initial Swaraj in the 1930s and 1940s. Finally, because of his leadership, India got its independence in 1947 at the cost of partition. The entire period of near three decades of Gandhian age was one of far-reaching changes not only in the political scene but in practically all areas of Indian life.

India awoke to its cultural heritage one may say. Most of the Indian writers began their life in provinces. They lived locally and thought of as a nation. Their world was narrow and limited. Many Indian writers first began as regional writers.

Of the earliest Indian English prose writers, mention must be made of Gandhi himself. Gandhi, who first spent a few years in South Africa, returned to India as if a ready man to fight for India’s independence. He had faced the white man and the darkness in man in general. He fought against that darkness in man. He had started a few journals including Indian Opinion. His early writings were in Gujarati, with regional touch. He began to write in English and Hindi gradually, and his imagination, experience and objectives turned from the Indian to the universal.
Indian English literature of the Gandhian age was inevitably influenced by these epoch-making developments in Indian life. A highly significant feature is the sudden flowering of the novel during the thirties, when the Gandhian movement was perhaps at its best. It is possible to see the connection here if one remembers that by this decade, the nationalist upsurge had stirred the entire Indian society to the roots to a degree and on a scale unprecedented earlier, making it acutely conscious of the pressures of the present in all fields of national life; and it is out of this consciousness that fiction, in Lionel Trilling’s words for our time the most effective agent of the moral imagination emerges. Fiction, as Hazlitt thinks is constituted of the very web and texture of society as it really exists and hence finds a fertile soil in a society in ferment. The work of K.S. Venkataramani, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao would not perhaps have been possible had the miracle that was Gandhi not occurred during this period.

During the thirty-three years of the Indian period (1915-48), Gandhi ran the two well-known journals, *Young India* (1919-32) and *Harijan* (1933-48), and all his writings henceforth appeared in serial form. Most of these were written originally in Gujarati and were translated, not by the author, but by others into English, though the translation was mostly revised at places by Gandhi. It is therefore a moot point whether, unlike *Hind Swaraj*, they can legitimately form part of Indian English literature. Among these, his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* translated by Mahadev Desai is easily the most outstanding. Essentially a spiritual manual as its title indicates, it is absorbing in its self-portraiture. It is said,

Gandhi’s writings are a mine of stimulating thought on political, social, economic, cultural and spiritual issues. He was no erudite scholar, by no means an original thinker with a razorsharp mind, nor a brilliant theoretician. But solidly grounded in the ancient Indian tradition, he possessed a profound moral earnestness which enabled him to rediscover the ethical values of this tradition; and with his convictions supported by
similar trends in ancient and modern Western thought. He boldly applied his findings to the political and social realities of colonial India. (Naik, 128).

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) is credited with solid prose writings like *Autobiography* (1936) and *Glimpses of World History* (1934). The latter is a living record of the eventful course of Indian history for well over a generation unmistakably offering the impression of time constantly on the march of events taking shape and changes materializing – in short, a strong sense of history on the anvil. This picture is all the more vivid because the narrative is filled with many pen-portraits of people which reveal Nehru’s shrewd understanding of human nature.

Subhash Chandra Bose (1897-1945) wrote *Speeches and Writings* (1946). He was a radical humanist. The foremost representatives of Muslim reaction to Congress policies and Gandhism were Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938), M.A. Jinnah (1875-1948), Maulana Muhammad Ali (1878-1931), and Maulana Abdul Ali Maudoodi (1903-). Iqbal, Urdu poet and religious philosopher, tried to reinterpret ancient Islamic thought with a view to demonstrating its universality as well as its essential modernity.

In addition to the early writings of M.N. Roy, Indian Communist thought is well represented in S.A. Dange’s (1899-) *Gandhi and Lenin* (1921) and *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery* (1949), and G. Adhikar’s (ed.) *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*.

The regional touch is more so bold in biographies, autobiographies, journalistic writings, history, religious and philosophical prose of the times upto 1947.

Biography and autobiography have always been forms in which Indian English literature is rich. Of the numerous biographies of public men written during the period, a few stand out by their literary excellence. These include H.P. Mody’s *Sir Pherozshah Mehta* (1921), N.C. Kelkar’s *Landmarks in
Lokmanya’s Life (1924); P.C. Ray’s Life and Times of C.R. Das (1927), R.P. Masani’s Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India (1939) and D.K. Roy’s Among the Great (1947).

Bhupal Singh’s A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction (1934) clubs together British writers on Indian subjects with Indian English writers, whose works begin to be studied increasingly during this period. K.R. Srinivas Iyengar’s pioneering surveys – Indo-Anglian Literature (1943) and Indian Contribution to English Literature (1945) appeared before Independence, though his comprehensive Indian Writing in English was to be published later in 1962.

Indian English poetry is rich as that of the prose of the period. The followers of both Sri Aurobindo and Tagore appeared. To the school of Sri Aurobindo belong K.D. Sethna (The Secret Splendour, 1941), Punjalal (Lotus Petals, 1943), Nolini Kanta Gupta (To the Heights, 1944), Nirodbaran (Sun-Blossoms, 1947) and Nishikanto (Dream Cadences, 1947). Their verse faithfully echoes the master in theme and sentiment, diction and imagery, but hardly succeeds in transmuting the echo in individual voice. Of the writers of religious-philosophical verse in general, J. Krishnamurti is one of the most notable, although for reasons not predominantly literary. A child prodigy, a protégé of Annie Besant and sometime head of the international organization, the Order of the Star of East, he enjoyed a considerable following. His book The Search (1927) and The Immortal Friend (1928) contain religious musings in free verse in which the poetic accent is less authentic than the message. This must also be said of Swami Paramanand’s The Vigil (1923), Swami Ram Tirtha’s Poems of Rama (1924), and T.L. Vaswani’s Quest (1928). Brajendranath Seal’s The Quest Eternal (1936) is an ambitious attempt to transcribe basic philosophical ideas in forms of pure poetry.

Those who derive their light mainly from the sun of British Romanticism form a much larger group, many of them being academicians of note. G.K. Chettur (1898-1936) published five collections of verse including Sounds and
Images (1921), The Temple Tank and Other Poems (1932) and The Shadow of God (1934). The sonnet was his favourite plot of ground and he tried to till its exhausted soil with unavailing application. His brother, S.K. Chettur (1905-1973), brought out a solitary collection: Golden Stair and Other Poems (1961). Armando Menezes (1902-) experimented with the mock-epic in The Fund (1923) and satire in The Emigrant (1933) before he found his lyrical voice in Chords and Discords (1936), Chaos and Dancing Star (1946) and The Ancestral Face (1951).

Indian English drama of Gandhian Age is lean as the age witnessed a lot of political turmoil. Some of the prominent playwrights were A.S. Panchapakesa Ayyar (1899-1963), T.P. Kailasam (1885-1946), Bharati Sarabhai (1912-), Joseph Mathias Lobo-Prabhu, and others. Ayyar’s plays have a regional touch. Kailasama’s plays are puranic. Sarabhai’s two plays The Well of the People (1943) and Two Women (1952) show Gandhian impact on local folks as that of Raja Rao’s Kanthapura.

The Gandhian whirlwind affected the Indian English fiction. Gandhi influenced the people and their writers to sketch regional life uniquely. K.S. Venkataramani’s Murugan, The Tiller (1927) and Kandan, the Patriot (1932) are the early examples for this. K. Nagarajan’s Athavar House (1937) reads like George Eliot’s Weathering House. His Chronicles of Kedaram (1961) too. What is Mulk Raj Anand’s early fiction (Coolie (1936) and Untouchable (1935))? They depict the social realities of a region colorfully, and the same sounds universal.

In his two chronicles of coolies – Coolie (1936) and Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), Anand turns to the lot of another class of the under-privileged. The range and scope of his fiction have now widened and his canvas expanded, and there is an orchestration of themes which are barely hinted at in Untouchable – themes such as the contrast between rural and urban India. A luckier Punjabi peasant is the protagonist of the ambitious trilogy – The Village (1939), Across
the Black Waters (1941) and The Sword and the Sickle (1942). Anand wrote many more novels later.

R.K. Narayan is from Mysore. He sounds like Thomas Hardy. Mysore can be Naryan’s Malgudi. His early novels The Dark Room (1938), The English Teacher (1946), The Financial Expert (1952) and The Man-eater of Malgudi (1962) are in this mould. The Guide (1958), Narayan’s master-piece is unique, however. Nowhere else is his irony sharper or more firmly wedded to the moral imagination, nor has his technique been subtler. Raja -- Rosie narrative alternates between the past and the present, swinging backward and forward. The blend of the omniscient and the autobiographical methods of narration endow the story with a double perspective. The novel, which opens with Raju in the ruined village temple about to be reverentially accepted as a sadhu, ends in the same locality with his enforced death, thus giving the tale a perfectly rounded, circular structure.

The third of the ‘trio’ is Raja Rao, whose first novel Kanthapura became a classic of regional fiction. Like its sensibility, the form and style of Kanthapura belong to the living Indian tradition. In his Foreword, which has now become a classic, Raja Rao wrote,

We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctutive and colourful as the Irish or the American.

Time alone will justify it. (Raja Rao, qt Naik, 175)

The narrative technique of the novel offers the required justification. The narrator is an old grandmother, who tells the story in the garrulous, digressive and breathless style of the Indian purana or the Harikantha, mixing freely narration, description, reflection, religious discourse, folk-lore, etc. Like Anand, Rao boldly translates Indian words, phrases, expletives and idioms – in this case
from his native Kannada into English and uniformly brings a touch of a poet to his style.

Apart from the work of Anand, Narayan and Rao quite a considerable amount of fiction was produced during the period, much of it in a minor vein. An interesting phenomenon is the number of Muslim novelists, most of whom wrote evocatively about Muslim life. *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) by Ahmed Ali (who became a Pakistani national after Partition) aims, according to the author, at depicting ‘a phase in our national life and the decay of a whole culture, a particular mode of thought and living. The other Muslim novelists who blended the regional ethos into the national were Iqbalunnisa Hussain, Humayun Kabir, and Amir Ali. Kabir’s novel *Men and Rivers* (1945) is a classic work of provincial life of Bangladesh.


India got its independence in 1947 at the cost of partition. The two new nations Pakistan and Bangladesh were to be born, creating Hindu-Muslim discord forever. In the economic sphere, the most significant developments were the implementation of a number of Five Year Plans; the inception of large industrial projects in the public sector and multi-purpose river schemes; agrarian reforms in which Vinoba Bhave’s ‘Bhoodan’ movement of the 1950s played an important role; Community Development Projects and the nationalization of Life Insurance and banks.

Indian society changed a lot. Traditional social inequalities were sought to be removed by progressive measures such as the Untouchability Offences Act of 1955 and numerous schemes for the uplift of the Scheduled and Backward Castes and Tribes. The Hindu Code Bill, which superseded the traditional personal laws of the Hindus, was a revolutionary measure which
sought to improve women’s position. In education, there were notable quantitative gains at all levels, the percentage of literacy rising rapidly.

One farsighted decision taken at Independence was that India should remain a member of the British Commonwealth. This ensured that while the political bondage to Britain was destroyed, the cultural bonds not only remained secure but actually became even stronger. Because of this, the use of English as a pan-Indian language / official language continued. Thus India became the third largest country for the English speakers (after the UK and USA).

Indian arts and literatures began to stabilize and fertilize. Most of the regional languages had but an impetus to grow. India is a republic of states, and most of the states have their own languages. Each provincial language has its own literature and cultural differences. This straightway led to regionalism in English literature.

The Indian literature and art industry in the 1960s and 1970s was growing rapidly. George Woodcock once wrote of this decade, ‘India was going through a vast and lengthy social revolution.’ The European modernism affected Indian literature, no doubt. The work of Eliot, Yeats and Pound in poetry, Lawrence, Forster, Conrad, Woolf and Hemingway in fiction, Bernard Shaw, Ibsen, Brecht and others in drama may be noticed.

Indian poets who were influenced by the English Romanticism and Sri Aurobindo continued to write. Poets like V.K. Gokak continued in the old mould. The 1950s had, however, created ‘new poetry’ as influenced by European Modernism. P. Lal and K. Raghavendra Rao wrote its manifesto. The new poets were Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Moraes, Adil Jussawalla, A.K. Ramanujan, K. Parthasarathy, Gieve Patel, A.K. Mehrotra, Pritish Nandy and others. The 1970s witnessed the arrival of K.N. Daruwalla, Shiv K. Kumar, Jayanta Mahapatra and Arun Kolatkar.

The elements of regionalism were too prominent in Indian English fiction. M. K. Naik writes,
Post-Independence Indian English fiction retains the momentum the novel had gained during the Gandhian age. The tradition of social realism established earlier on a sound footing by Mulk Raj Anand is continued by novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh, who made their appearance during the nineteen fifties and the early sixties. (Naik 222)

The Gandhian impact continued. One gradual change was the impact of realism on Indian literatures. Our writers adopted a realistic mode of writing as India had become free from the foreign rule. Some of these great writers are Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, S, Menon Marath, Balachandra Rajan, Sudhindra Ghose, G.V. Desani, Arun Joshi, Chaman Nahal, R.P. Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantra Sahgal and Anita Desai.

Three novels of these writers deserve mention when it comes to regional literature. These three novels are Bhattacharya’s *So Many Hungers!* Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* and Arun Joshi’s *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas.*

Bhattacharya’s *So Many Hungers!* deals with the 1942 Bengal famine. The novel is known for its provincial coloring. Set against the background of the Quit India movement and the Bengal famine of the early 1940s, the novel deals with the theme of exploitation – political, economic and social. The ‘so many hungers’ of the title are those for political freedom (in the case of India); for imperial expansion (in the case of the axis powers); for money (in the case of the capitalists who create an artificial food scarcity by hoarding rice), for food (in the case of the starved Bengali poor); for sex (in the particular case of the sex-starved soldier who rapes the destitute rustic girl Kajoli); for human dignity and self-respect (in the case of Kajoli, who rejects the brothel), and the hunger as a spiritual weapon employed by the freedom-fighters who go on a hunger strike in jail -- ‘Devata,’ an important character even undertaking a fast unto death. Of these several hungers, the novelist has succeeded best in dealing
with the hunger for food, and the scenes depicting the havoc wrought by the famine among the rural poor in Bengal. The novel is a fine example for depicting the provincial turned into the universal.

Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is subtitled “Manomajra” (a village in the Punjab). The impact of Partition on a small village on the Indo-Pakistan border is shown here with pitiless realism of description and the swift tempo of the narrative carries the reader along. The integrity of the novel is however flawed in two ways: the only role that Iqbal, the Communist who comes to the village for party work, seems to play is that of acting as the mouthpiece of the author; and there is also the conventionally romantic motif of the love of Jugga, the Sikh village gangster, for a Muslim girl, in saving whom he duly sacrifices his life.

Then Arun Joshi’s *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971) is a classic case of regionalism and of tribal culture. The novel presents a protagonist alienated from the higher middle-class society in which he is born and brought up and in which he is compelled to live, though he finds in himself an overpowering urge to march to a different path altogether. Right from his adolescence Biswas has been conscious of ‘a great force – a primitive force’ within himself, which continues to register its presence times and again. His higher training in anthropology in the USA accentuates this consciousness further. After his return to India, marriage and a secure teaching job in a university fail to stifle the nagging, strident primitive voice within, and Biswas runs away during an anthropological survey expedition to join a primitive tribe, where he is soon accepted as an incarnation of a legendary ancient king. The ‘short happy life’ of Biswas ends when, during an attempt by his near relations to reclaim him, he is shot dead accidentally by a policeman. Biswas’s transformation, unlike Sindi’s, is well-motivated throughout and the absorbing narrative quickens its pace, leading to the final, tragic man-hunt. Still the novel fails to be a major fictional achievement because it is not, in the final analysis,
informed with sufficient imaginative power to make so unusual a narrative absolutely convincing, especially in its picture of the tribal society.

Two regional novels provide revealing glimpses into the lives of Muslim families: Zeenuth Futehally’s *Zohra* (1951) with Hyderabad in the Gandhian age as its setting and Attiah Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), a nostalgic account of aristocratic life in pre-Partition Lucknow. Likewise, Perin Bharucha’s *The Fire Worshippers* (1968) deals with Parsi life in Bombay.

The 1950s and 60s witnessed comparatively few novels by women. Among these are Lotika Ghose’s *White Dawn of Awakening* (1950); Mrinalini Sarabhai’s *This Alone is True* (1952); Bani Ray’s *Srilata and Sampa* (1953); Sally Athogia’s *Gold in the Dust* (1958); Tapati Mookerjee’s *Murder Needs a Staircase* (1962) and *Six Faces of Eve* (1963); Padmini Sengupta’s *Red Hibiscus* (1962); Muriel Wasi’s *Too High For Rivalry* (1967) a fine picture of a girl’s school drawn by an insider; Hilda Raj’s *The House of Ramiah* (1967); Sita Ratnammal’s *Beyond the Jungle* (1968) and Meenakshi Puri’s *Pay on the First* (1968). Veena Paintal’s *Serenity in Storm* (1966) and other novels including the later *Midnight Woman* (1979) are unabashed pot-boilers.

Among novels by women published during the 1970s maybe mentioned Raji Narasimhan’s *The Hear of Standing is you cannot Fly* (1973) and *Forever Free* (1979) – an absorbing tale of a young woman’s search for fulfilment; Bharati Mukherjee’s *Tiger’s Daughter* (1973) and *Wife* (1976), a sympathetic study of a frustrated Bengali wife in New York; Veena Nagpal’s *Karmayogi* (1974) and *Compulsion* (1975), which follow the best-seller formula with a vengeance; Jai Nimbkar’s *Temporary Answers* (1974); Shanta Rameshwar Rao’s *Children of God* (1976), which has a Harijan woman as its protagonist; Kamala Das’s *Alphabet of Lust* (1976), which suggests that the novel is not the right medium for this talented poet; Rama Mehta’s *Inside the Haveli* (1977, Sahitya Akademi Award 1979) an engaging story of Rajasthan Purdah life; Shouri Daniels’s *The Salt Doll* (1977); Jyoti Jafa’s *Nurjahan* (1978); Uma
Vasudeva’s *The Song of Anasuya* (1978) and Anita Kumar’s *The Night of the Seven Dawns* (1979).

Most of the minor novelists indulged in provincial writing or local color literature. Mention may be made of D.K. Roy, Huthi Singh, Abrey Menen, Victor Anant, P.M. Nityananda, Ved Mehta and others.

The Indian English short story flourished too. Bhattacharya, Singh, Manoj Das, Sasthi Brata, Anita Desai and many others wrote fine short fiction in this period.

The Indian English drama continued its growth as feebly as ever before. The drama of the period 1950s to 1990s had its practitioners in Lakhan Deb, B.A. Krisnaswami, Asif Currimbhoy, Pratap Sharma, Ezekiel, Gurucharan Das and Girish Karnad. Mahesh Dattani is a latest addition. Some of these playwrights still write.

The post-independence prose is quite vigorous and varied. We have too many writers like Nirad Choudhury, K.A. Abbas, Moraes, K.P. S. Menon, S.K. Chettur, Malgonkar, Chalapathi Rau, N.G. Jog, R.R. Diwakar, Iyengar and others. These writers wrote biographies, autobiographies, books on religion and philosophy, travel and metaphysics.

The contemporary Indian English writing is as usual. There are many new faces shining bright. Writers like Salman Rusdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Arundhati Roy, Aravind Adig, Manjula Kapur, Shastri Deshpande, Anita Nair, C.B. Divakaruni, Rohinton Mistry, Upamanyu Chattarjee and others have written voluminously. The list of regional writers includes Meena Alexander (*Namapally Road*), Basavaraj Naikar (*Queen of Kittur*), Rajendra Chenni (*Mud Town*), Mallikarjun Patil (*Under the Mango Tree*) and many others across the country. Provincial literature stretches in all genres of literature. Basavaraj Naikar is a classic case in this regard.

**Basavaraj Naikar:**
Basavaraj Naikar has been one of the most renowned regional novelists and short story writers of India. Like any litterateur, Naikar is a product of his upbringing and his environment. The information about his personal life is helpful in understanding his works better. This section attempts to trace the main events in Naikar’s life as well as the development of his career as a writer. It deals with the various influences on him.

In his endeavour to discern the otherwise inscrutable absolutes and to realize himself, Naikar strives to transmute his spiritual concerns into an art-form. The reader’s attention is arrested by the author’s profound concerns which are at once timeless and temporal, eastern and western, metaphysical and social. Naikar’s writings delve deep into the profound philosophical principles of the Vedas and Upanisads. Naikar’s uniqueness lies in the fact that he presents themes, philosophical theories to a layman in the form of simple narrative.

Naikar has made a significant contribution to the development of Indian English novel, which has acquired an identity of its own over the decades. His novels undoubtedly project a lively image of India, and thus amply reflect his passionate concern with the surrounding social reality. They exemplify a realistic sensibility of a writer, capable to plumb the very depths of human personality crushed under the inhuman social structure. He attacks religious bigotry, established institutions, and the Indian state of affairs through his socially conscious novels and short stories. He has enriched the provincial’s literary heritage.

**Birth, Education and Career**

Basavaraj Naikar was born in Naragund of the then Dharwad district (the present Gadag district) in Karnataka on August 1, 1949. His parents were Shivashankarappa and Nilaganga. His father was a government servant occupied himself as Shirastedar of Dharwad District. His mother, a second wife
of Shivashankarappa, was a house wife. Naikar was brought up in a religious and ethical atmosphere. Being a devotee of Lord Santaralinga, Shivashakarappa used to observe various kinds of spiritual programmes at home. He was educated in the Practising School of Government Training College for Men, Dharwad from the first standard to the fourth standard, i.e. 1956 to 1960 under the care of his maternal grandparents. Then he studied in the then Municipal High School at Naragund from the fifth standard up to SSLC from 1960 to 1966 under the care of his parents. During this period he lost his father in 1963, which came as a blow to the entire family and landed them in financial crisis. He was then taken care of by his maternal grandfather.

In an interview with Jayadeep Sarangi Naikar has shared his early experience as under:

Although I missed my parents there (as they lived in my native place, Naragund) I was carefree and lived the life of pure innocence. I can never forget my friends, the tall trees of sky jasmine, the aromatic flowers, the melodious music of nightingale, twitter of birds and a variety of birds, and the beauty of Nature and the classical beauty of the College buildings which were built in the British rule in India. (Sarangi’s Interview)

Naikar was trained in classical Hindustani vocal music by Shri Dattubuawa Thakurdas at Naragund and passed three examinations in music conducted by Gandharva Mahavidyalaya of Pune. His father wanted him to be a professional musician, but his music teacher advised his father to continue his education first and then think of a musical career perhaps as a hobby. But the unexpected death of his father upset all his plans. Then they shifted their family to Dharwad, where he completed his Bachelor of Arts with English as his major subject and Sanskrit and Kannada as minor subjects at Karnataka Arts College
in 1970 and Master of Arts from Karnataka University, Dharwad. Indian writing in English and American literature were his optional subjects in his P.G. course.

After his educational career Naikar started his professional career as a teacher of English at Bassel Mission Junior college, Dharwad. Later he served as a teacher at the University of Gulbarga and Karnataka University, Dharwad. He did his PhD under the guidance of T.R. Rajasekharai. During his career as a teacher he guided five research students in completion of their researches. Recognising his merit the UGC appointed him as Professor Emeritus at Karnataka University, Dharwad. To name a few aspects of literature that Prof. Naikar taught in his career are British literature, Commonwealth literature, Indian writing in English, classics in translation, American literature, Anglo-Indian literature and criticism. He retired from his job in 2009.

To quote his answer to interviewer Sarangi:

As I joined the Post-Graduate Centre of Karnataka University newly started at Gulbarga as a Lecturer, I struggled hard to earn my PhD. on a difficult topic, “Epic Affirmation in Shakespeare’s Last Plays” under the guidance of a more difficult supervisor, Professor T.R. Rajasekharai while staying at the most difficult place, i.e. non-academic and non-literary backward place. It was during that time that I decided to become a creative writer, especially a novelist, a short story writer and a dramatist. I knew that I could not become a poet, because I was too intellectual to be toying with images and metaphors. I was more interested in ideas and discursive writing and philosophy and other sciences like anthropology and psychology and occult sciences than in merely descriptive writings. I began to write short stories in English even when I was struggling with my PhD.
The moment I completed the doctorate degree, I heaved a sigh of relief and took to creative writing very seriously. (Sarangi)

**Writing Career:**

Naikar began his creative writing as early as 1970 when he was still an MA student. In fact, he wrote his first story “Fulfillment” at that time but did not publish it until he was fifty years of age, simply because he could not receive any guidance or encouragement from any senior writers.

Naikar has translated in both ways, from Kannada into English and vice versa. He has translated the plays of J. M. Synge, Tagore, Terence and Breckt, some French stories, *Beowulf* and *Epic of Gilgamesh* into Kannada. Right now he is busy translating Dante’s *The Divine Comedy* into Kannada prose. Similarly he has translated some plays and epics from Kannada into English, like *Fall of Kalyana*, *Sangya: Balya: A Tale of Love and Betrayal*, *The Vacanas of Sarvajna* and *The Frolic Play of the Lord (Prabhulinga Lile)*. He believes that translation is of enormous importance in our multilingual country.

In Naikar’s opinion, if every Indian teacher of English had translated at least one regional classic into English during these sixty years of independence, most of our rich literary heritage would have been available in English and reached the world. But our English teachers have been criminally wasting their time in parroting the Western critical theories without enriching the global literature with local literature. The author himself has admitted that his works are autobiographical as they are being influenced by regional/ local fervor. His love for his home town and desire to depict the life in his novels made him to write about them in his works.
Naikar’s mode of story-telling, fluent and artistic as it was, moulded his taste and temperament so greatly that he felt a kinship with such literary forms as novels and short stories in particular.

Naragund, Naikar’s birth-place, had all along been an attractive place for him. His sense of pride has been revealed itself through his writings. Talks about his own village, his own district, his experiences, folk elements drawn from rural background and introduction of varied characters as he saw and different stories woven into the texture of his novels are a testimony of author’s adherence to regionalism in literature.

Naikar’s works include,

(i) *Thief of Nagarahalli and Other Stories*. 1999
(ii) *The Rebellions Rani of Belavadi and Other Stories*, 2001
(iii) *The Sun Behind the Cloud* (a historical novel), 2001
(iv) Light in the House, 2006
(v) Translation of Sangya Balya:Betrayal: A Folk Tragedy
(vi) Musings of Sarvajna
(vii) *The Queen of Kittur*, 2009
(viii) Dreamer of Freedom (A historical play about 1857 India), 2010
(ix) Rayanna The Patriot and Other Novellas, 2011
(x) The Folk Theatre of North Karnataka
(xi) Frolic Play of The Lord Prabhulinga
(xii) *Critical Articles on Nirad C.Chaudhuri*
(xiii) *Indian Response to Shakespeare*
(xiv) *Indian English Literature* (ed)
(xv) *Critical Response to Indian English Literature* (ed)
(xvi) *Kanakadasa*
Hundreds of articles on American, Indian English, and Indian Literature in English Translation, Anglo-Indian and Commonwealth Literatures are published in several journals and anthologies of India.

Reviews Indian books for *World Literature Today* (Oklahoma, USA) regularly

## Awards and Honors

1. Gulbarga University Award for translation, 1991
2. Olive Reddick Award from A.S.R.C, Hyderabad for research
3. Gemini Award from Panipat for literature
4. D.Litt from International University at Los Altos, California (U.S.A), 1996
5. Vasudev Bhupalam Award from Kannada Sahitya parishad Bangalore, 2007

## Normative Influences on Basavaraj Naikar:

Right from the beginning of his childhood Naikar was nourished on religious and spiritual discourses. His maternal great-grandfather initiated him into the mellifluous religious poetry of Nijaguna Sivayogi during his primary school days. Then his father initiated him into the religious literature of Allamaprabhu and Basaveswara during his High School Days. During his college and university days he was reading philosophical books, although he was not formally trained in philosophy. Now also he divides his reading time between secular literature and religious/philosophical literature.

Naikar wished to be known as a creative writer as he was rather disillusioned with the world of criticism, which was ever growing stale and
outdated. He chose the genre of historical novel because he feels that we Indians have very little historical consciousness as compared with our vast and variegated history. Naikar wishes to write about the historical celebrities of his area i.e. North Karnataka and get national and international recognition. He admires writers like Kuvempu, Karanth, B. Puttaswamayya, S. L. Bhyrappa, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru, Swami Vivekananda, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Nirad Chaudhuri, Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal among others. All these writers seem to have influenced him. But it is for the critics to study this aspect of his creativity. He considers Rohinton Mistry and Amitav Ghosh as very interesting writers from India. Of course, he admires the enfant terrible of letters, Salman Rushdie whole-heartedly. He keeps on reading vastly both in Kannada and in English; not merely literature but history, religion and philosophy.

A Brief Survey of Naikar’s Works:

A brief summary of Naikar’s major works has been attempted besides works selected for the study.

The Sun Behind the Cloud: A Historical Novel (2001):

Naikar’s The Sun Behind the Cloud is a historical novel. It is in the line of Sir Walter Scot and Alexander Dumas’s works. In our own country, Manohar Malgonkar’s A Bend in the Ganges, Chaman Nahal’s Azadi, Khushwant Singh’s I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale, K. A. Abbas’s Inquilab and Vimala Raine’s Ambapali are good historical narratives. In these novels whether of the West or of the East, the pervading strain is the bygone. What we find is a dynasty or a kingdom being depicted in all its regal glory. As Henry James, in his article “The Art of Fiction” (James, 855) thinks here the historical character is determined of the incidents – of the wars, peace, conflicts, or colonial encounter as in the case of Naikar’s novel. A historical novel unravels the period history
of a dynasty, its kings, administration, wars and conflicts. Sociological and political interest overlap there. The Sun Behind the Cloud deals with the King of Naragund, Bhaskararao Bhave’s colonial encounter with the British East India Company, on the events of disarmament and adoption in the latter part of the 19th century. The king’s dynasty is well depicted: his welfare state, the British rule and its interference, the king’s own enemies from within and without, the role of his ministers and army general Virabhadranayaka.

Light in the House (2006):

The novel portrays the life of Sharif as a well-known scholar, profound singer and a man possessing mysterious force. Naikar is getting it done in recording the 19th century milieu. Notwithstanding, he abuses the class of novel to the degree that Light in the House remains a novel as a hegiography. Further, it expresses that the novel has a couple of bits of knowledge to offer into the life of the holy person and that it is extremely fruitful in meeting the prerequisites of the non-Kannada readers. It claims attention of non-Kannadigas to read and understand the glory and richness of philosophy and spiritual fervor.

The Queen of Kittur (2009)

The Queen of Kittur can be read as a postmodern realistic novel that seamlessly blends the limits amongst certainty and fiction. This study orders the novel as an agent of historiographic meta-fiction which empower distinctive voices - the voice of history and the voice of fiction is to be heard by opening the overwhelming talk of history to various recognitions. The postmodern content is investigated concerning the author's accentuation on how history is basically a human construct.

Rayanna, the Patriot and Other Novellas (2011)
When the freedom of India was at stake on account of the British policy of Doctrine of Lapse, Rayanna came out as a patriot who fought for his master (king). This patriotism for the Queen of Kittur is beautifully portrayed by Naikar. The regional elements like common festivals, pathos, taboos and other ceremonies attract the attention of readers and they take interest in knowing the regional festivals of north Karnataka. Other novellas like Jakanacharya, the great architect, Kanakadasa, an ardent devotee of Lord Adikeshav, Raja Mallasarja the heroic king of Kittur kingdom, too have regional elements. If Jakanacharya deals with architecture, Kanakadas depicts religious devotion and Mallasarja has valour.

**The Thief of Nagarahalli and Other Stories (1999)**


**Rebellious Rani of Belavadi and Other Stories (2001)**

Here, Naikar discovers the history of Belavadi kingdom. He shows the religious changes in a royal family. He underlines one vital thing that is religious character. Individuals, particularly rulers, used to change their religions to have their energy on a kingdom.

Further minor religion is highlighted: the ceremonies, traditions, and customs of Lingayat religion. Naikar presents them regularly in his works. All real characters perform every day puja to their individual divine beings. A little bit of puja and its subtle elements clarify this: On a Monday morning, both Raj Isaprabhu and Rani Mallamma went on a palanquin to the sanctuary of Lord
Virabhadra and went to the uncommon love of the divinity. The book has 12 short stories.

**Sangya Balya: Betrayal (2004)**

The play manages the natural interests of affection and selling out as they interweave with the fates of conventional mortals. The plot is set in North Karnataka. The main themes of the play are love, immoral sex, destitution, treachery and vengeance. In spite of the fact that the playwright has taken the subject of the play from a genuine occasion, which took place during his lifetime, he has made it a paramount one by giving it an artistic picture of his vision about human relationship.

**Musings of Sarvajna (2013)**

Naikar, the endless seeker and imaginative essayist second to none of his region, has brought out two volumes titled “Sarvajna, the Omniscient Poet of Karnataka” and “Musings of Sarvajna,” which empower the non-Kannada group of onlookers to get a handle on the vital truth and astuteness emanated by the Saiva religion.

**Dreamer of Freedom: A Historical Play (2010)**

The play can be drawn nearer as an inventive stride in reconstructing Karnataka’s history. Adding human flavor to the unwritten stuff of developing patriotism in the 19th century, the dramatist has chosen a befitting hero named Bhaskararao Bhave of Naragund, popularly known as Babasaheb. The plot is based on Naikar’s own novel *The Sun behind the Cloud*

**Frolic Play of the Lord Prabhulinga (2011)**
In this work of a quarter century Chamarasa's Allama is the pith of the otherworldly magnificence as brought about by the best personalities in Virasaiva epistemology.

**Critical Work on Nirad C. Chaudhuri (1985)**

Naikar regards Chaudhari as an Indian historian who has attempted to present the past event in an objective tone. Chaudhuri speaks of his countrymen in such an opinion that there is an absence of intellectuality among Indians. He holds that Hindus are more perfect in Vedantic philosophy than what is more necessary for their art of life. Naikar has written a book on Chaudhuri.

**Indian Response to Shakespeare (2002)**

Another work of Naikar holds an abject mirror of Indians opinion towards the works of Shakespeare. Naikar’s work contains topics like Indian Response to Shakespeare, Literary Communication of Shakespeare and Shakespeare in Kabuki, The Growth of Universal Entropy in Julius Caesar, An Indian a Hegelian, Predeterminism and Free will in Shakespeares, Off stage Action in the Plays of Shakespeare, and other topics.

**Indian English Literature (2011)**

Naikar has edited this anthology containing perceptive articles on the major Indian English writers like novelists, dramatists and poets who have contributed for the enrichment of literature. Naikar has edited a dozen books on Indian literature.

**Kanakadasa-A Biography (2011)**

A comprehensive account of Kanakadasa has been the subject matter of this biography. Kanakadas has been the saint poet of Karnataka. There is a description of childhood days till the attainment of his sainthood. The author
has appreciated the art of composition of his religious poetry. Kanakadas is one of the saint poets like Basaveshawara, Eknath, Tukaram and others.

Basavaraj Naikar who has come from a middle class family rose to the position of university teacher and has thus contributed his creativity and criticism to literature. Indian literature has been enriched by his works as he not only writes on his own but also comments his thought towards the great Indian tradition. The author is an objective observer of history, myth and social life of the people of north Karnataka. Naikar’s attempt to exhibit his land and life of the people can be remembered forever.
References:


