CHAPTER-I
The advent of the British rule in India was the prime cause of various social, political and economic changes. This social change was the direct consequence of the establishment of a new social economy, political administration, a new type of trade system and a stable administrative machinery along with the spread of new education. This also led to the emergence of the new social classes because of the basic economic changes brought about by the British imperialist power in order to consolidate its roots in India. Out of the various classes that emerged in the Indian Society, the middle class and the lower middle class deserve special mention rather than the upper class. The socio-political history of the British period in India reveals that "both freedom and division of the country were the work of the middle class.

The coming of the European merchants, missionaries, their contact with the people of India along with the strong hold of the British over the political situation of the country initiated the process of social changes; and a long period of two centuries of British rule strengthened this process of change. Because of the consequences of Western education, commercial progress and the insight gained by the Western educated Indians from the prevalent judiciary
system, the old order yielded place to a new order. As a result of which the barriers created by caste system became loose. The Indian Society was divided into new groups which although differing in wealth, education, profession and occupation, possessed changed characteristics. Those groups tried to promote and protect their specific class interests within the overall interest of the nation. For all these groups and social classes the common interest for the nation was the elimination of the foreign rule from the Indian soil.

In the words of A.R. Desai,

The survival of the remnants of old classes, even though existing in modified form alongside the new classes, made the Indian Society a complicated organism with extremely varied and antagonistic social forces struggling for their respective interests within it. The Indian people became a motley crowd composed of numerous old and new classes. Social groups belonging to various societies, past and present, constituted the Indian Society. Corresponding to this, old outlooks, which were the world conceptions of past epoch, interpreted modern outlooks which sprang from the basic modern social soil. This was one of the reasons which explained the slow growth of national consciousness and national unity among the Indian people.

Essentially it was the incessant growth of the middle class that served the purposes of giving a vital and dynamic form to Indian Society and also quickened the pace of the nationalist movement. As Tara Chand observes:
the credit for spreading national consciousness among the masses of the people, organizing the national liberation movement and ultimately emancipating the country from foreign rule must go to this class.

Fortunately enough the creative force behind the emergence of a vast conscious middle class was the British rule in India. The Britishers destroyed the old ruling class. The new political and economic system gave rise to new groups of landholders, businessmen and intelligentsia. The formation of the business class was a byproduct of European business enterprise. The growth of landholding and intelligentsia was due to the establishment of British administration and introduction of Western education. The East India Company in course of its business expansion brought more and more Indians into its orbit of influence. The middle class people served in various capacities under various European companies and the East India Company in particular. Hence this class comprises of a large body of merchants, agents, directors, executives, managers, inspectors, traders, bankers, manufacturers, judges, civil servants, lawyers, lecturers, professors, writers, artists, journalists, university students, school teachers, clerks, assistants and other social and political workers.
The Indian middle class largely consisted of those who could imitate the ways of the foreign rulers by learning their education and thereby reaping the economic benefits of the new social and economic structure. They constituted the modern Indian intelligentsia whose role in the contemporary history of the country became decisive. In fact most of our national leaders belonged to this class. They were the people who integrated the Indian people and organised various socio-reforms and religio-reform movements in the country. They were the pioneers of all political and national movements. They suffered and sacrificed for the nation. They brought ideas of nationalism and freedom and taught the Indian mass to rise and fight. In the words of A.R. Desai,

They created nice provincial literatures and cultures, trying to impregnate them with the spirit of nationalism and democracy. They produced great scientists, poets, historians, sociologists, literatures, philosophers and economists. In fact, the progressive intelligentsia, which assimilated modern western democratic culture and comprehended the complex problems of the incipient Indian nation, were the makers of modern India.¹

This class imitated the ways of the west and appreciated the values of the English political system. They also criticised the British rule because they wanted a free India. This middle class was subjected to the divide and rule policy of the Britishers. The middle class Indian Muslims under the patronage of the foreign rulers developed
a new trend of separation that led to the partition and the birth of Pakistan. The history of Muslim communalism from Sir Sayyid to Jinnah is a record to that effect. The divide and rule policy adopted by military generals like Lord Clive equally instigated the Hindu fanatics to rise violently against the Muslims. This resulted in communal violence and heart-touching incidents during partition. That is why it has rightly been observed that both freedom and partition were the works of the middle class people irrespective of Hindus and Muslims.

The pioneers of the freedom movement belonging to the middle class have more often been classified as liberals, moderates, extremists and radical leaders. Whatever the classification may be, most of them contributed to the social, cultural, economic and literary developments of a changing Indian Society. The Indian National Congress as a political forum was considered as a privileged arrangement by the Britishers as well as the big machinery of loyal Indians who thought that the Congress would protect and promote their class interest in the name of the country as whole. It is only the second generation of Congress men like Lala Lajpat Ray, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Bihari Pal who belonged to the lower strata of the middle class and who desired that
the congress should be an engine to drive the nation in achieving its freedom. Later on Mahatma Gandhi converted the congress into a movement of the masses. The various social groups while organizing themselves and struggling to satisfy their own specific interests, joined together the mainstream of nationalist movement for constitutional reforms, and then for Dominion Status, and finally for complete independence. As A.R. Desai observes,

All differences submerged into the ocean of nationalist movement that was based on common interest, namely, the removal of political control of India by another nation.

An analysis of the upper class or modern Indian bourgeoisie reveal the truth that they were more inclined to the British rule in India in the initial stages. The impact of social invasions were so intense that in the traditional Hindu Society caste bonds began to loosen themselves so far as the choice of career was concerned. People from the non-trading castes entered the field of commerce and became the pioneers of the new bourgeoisie class. Native Indian bourgeoisie is the outcome of the socio-economic modernisation. This class gradually had its hold over the industrial and financial resources of the country. The establishment of modern industries and banks by the foreign rulers in India helped this class to a great extent. In fact they imitated the British economic policies
and techniques and came forward to protect the alien bourgeoisie. Gradually, under the camouflaged protection of the alien bourgeoisie, they recognised their own interest that naturally led them to become hostile towards their own creator, the Britonizers.

They did not approve of the foreign control over the means of production and distribution. They grew up in phases and started supporting the professional classes who were already fighting against the British monopoly over the Indian economy. The right of free trade of the British ruling class and the social economy of the country forced them to join hands with the nationalist leaders. The upper class joined the mainstream of national movement out of purely economic changes are only possible when India attains political self-rule for herself. The bourgeoisie class was more interested in economic nationalism though as a class it was well-rooted in the world of economic self interests. As Bipin Chandra observes:

They not only appreciated the ways of British bourgeoisie but they termed 'scientific', since they knew that their own advancement could be had on similar lines: they also forcefully asserted that the economic policy of the foreign rule was dictated by the interests of England and not that of India.
Those who failed to adjust to the rapid changes facing the country — though originally they belonged to the class of traditional zamindars and landlords — were ultimately ruined, and became victims of wrath and anger of the proletariat on the one hand and social change on the other. But the vast majority of this class helped the freedom movement to throw off the alien rule so that national freedom could bring about its own freedom in the economic sphere. As Hyson Meiner observes,

The various organisations increasingly turned their attention towards the nationalist movement in the hope that an independent India would adopt policies more sympathetic to the growth of Indian economy in general and Indian business in particular.

It would be partial not to mention of the lower class or the lower proletariat class. This class was much exploited by the upper class in the society as well as by the British industrialists and policy makers. The mushroom growth of population alongside the uneven distribution of wealth made a few of them rich, but the vast majority sank further and further into poverty and misery. The vast mass as Tara Chand says:

remained neglected, submerged in ignorance, enfeebled by disease and oppressed by want.
Cotton manufacturers had to face tough competition from textile industries of Lancashire and Manchester. The British government policies were not helpful for economic development and were mostly injurious to the cause of increase in production and national income. The heavy concentration on land was aggravated by the decay of village industries which compelled many rural workers from occupational castes to abandon their traditional occupations and take to cultivation. Agriculture became unprofitable as the land available to the cultivators diminished to a considerable extent. The land mostly belonged to the upper class and a few privileged middle class. Besides, the famines added to the misery of the proletariats and the peasants.

The proletariats as a force had never been realised until the later half of the nineteenth century, when they formed various industrial and factory workers' associations. It was only after 1918 that the Indian working class formed organisations on class lines and developed increasingly trade unions and political consciousness. Even then there were divisive forces in these unions such as communists and non-communists who were duly exploited by the ruling class for their own political and economic gains. It was quite shocking on the part of the British rulers to see that the
workers joined the demonstrations organised by the Indian National Congress to boycott the Simon Commission in 1928 mostly under their own flag, with their own slogans and under their own leadership. As A.R. Desai observes in this context,

the Indian working class had constituted itself as an independent political force, evolved its own flag and independent class programme, and its own leadership in the united national movement.

The community of Indian peasants showed a remarkable growth of political consciousness in 1920 when it rendered its full and active co-operation to the non-co-operation movement launched by Gandhi. For most of them the Swarajist movement was a struggle against the heavy land tax.

Unlike the middle class, this class of proletariates, like the native bourgeoisie of the pre-independence days looked in the achievement of national independence its own liberation. In this context A.R. Desai once again observes:

while other class of contemporary Indian society desired a free India, Indian labour desired of a free socialist India.

Despite the inherent weakness of people belonging to this class like illiteracy, influence of religious superstition and a fatalistic attitude towards life, this working class kept on growing steadily.
A closer analysis of the nationalist movement of India reveals that it was mostly anti-colonial in nature, and the middle class was the greatest contributing factor leading to success. The people of India fought against economic exploitation of natural resources and manpower which resulted in the enrichment of the masters and the pauperisation of the slaves. The introduction of western cultures and English language made people conscious of their rich heritage of India. English translations of the Indian classics made the people aware of their rich traditions. The introduction of English language also proved a unifying force because it served as the much needed linguistics of India. People became conscious of the evils of social discrimination. In the words of V.P. S. Raghuwanshi,

In the blaze of western influences, India learned to discard the medieval cloak and her nationalism almost kept pace with the progress of her society on modern lines.

Another aspect of Indian nationalist movement shows that the centre of consciousness in the initial stages was found among the westernized intellectuals. They thought and believed in English constitutional system. People like W.C. Bonnerjee, Sir Phirozeeshah Mehta, Aminda Mohan Bose, Dadabhai Naoroji, R.C. Dutt, were the leading personalities who believed that,
the English constitution was the best bulwark of popular liberties elsewhere and the English parliament was the mother democracy allows.  

In the later stage, they were opposed by the middle class extremist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal, popularly known as Lal, Bal, Pal. They influenced people and public opinion through their speeches and writings. The formation of the Indian National Congress inspired by the ideals of 'Swaraj' took a concrete shape under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The story of Gandhi's movements from the non-operation of 1920 to the Quit India Movement of 1942 confirms this fact.  

The pre-independent India had given birth to great reformers, artists and writers who shaped the future of the country through their writings, movements and ways of thinking. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobinda, Tilak, Gokhale, Tagore and Gandhi dreamt of 'Swaraj' but they were masters of English language. That is the reason they could make themselves heard in the west. Of late literary personalities like Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt, Romesh Chandra Dutt and Jawaharlal Nehru are also pioneers in thinking that English is essential for India's progress and maintaining this way of thinking in their writings of various literary forms. Raja Ram Mohan Roy not only wanted English and more
English, he also wanted more English men in India. He advocated in favour of western culture, western scientific outlook and techniques and rationality in thought and action. A master of many languages and as a conscious social reformer, Raja Ram Mohan Roy made tireless endeavour to wipe out the darkness of superstition, the vast ignorance and the general backwardness of the country from the native soil. He pleaded for widow remarriage. In fact it has rightly been said that the renaissance in modern Indian literature begins with Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

As a social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s life was full of hectic activity and tireless endeavour. He was an extremely religious man who felt that the quintessential of Hinduism was nothing but the quintessential of Christian and Islam. Through his writings and active participation in the ‘Anmo Samaj’ he acted as a unifying force. His cherished goal was to establish harmony between men’s accepted faith and their practical observances by a strict monolatrous worship of the one supreme soul.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy fearlessly endeavoured for the total regeneration of India, comprising economic progress, political education, cultural renaissance and spiritual awakening. He started the tradition of writing biographies and proved to be an inspiring source, for the later biographers and autobiographers
Poets like Henry Derozio, and Kashi Prasad Ghose followed Raja Ram Mohan Roy. They were essentially poets and not active social reformers. In his poem 'The Fakir of Jungheera' Henry Derozio describes of the Brahmin widow Huleeni who is carried away by the Fakir, her former lover when she was about to be consumed by the flames on the funeral pyre of the dead husband. Huleeni gets a new lease of life by being absorbed in her lover's arms. Though the poem ends in the tragic death of Huleeni and her lover, Derozio comes out as a prominent social reformer trying to consolidate the movement of social reformation championed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy through his poems.

Of the other names that deserve mention so far as social reform are concerned, the names of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Vivekananda, Ramkrishna Paramahansa and Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, are of national importance. Ramkrishna Paramahansa through his actions and practices and Vivekananda through his writings and speeches animated the gospel of spiritualism in a society which was facing crisis because of the political turmoil.
The literary figures that influenced the national literature of the pre-independent period were Toru Dutt, Ramesh Chander Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. Toru Dutt and Ramesh Chander Dutt were poets of eminence during that period. Both of them got English education in India as well as in England. Though Toru Dutt attempted a novel in French named Le Journal de Madoori, it did not project the life and ethos of the then India. In the words of K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar,

Marguerite, the French maiden and Bianca the Spanish maiden are but abstractions. Toru, their creator is the only reality. Thank God, however, that the psychologists, the literary detectives and the psycho analysts haven't turned their attention to poor Toru!

Both Toru and Aru, her sister died young. But they were the pioneers who took the myths, legends and events from Puranas as the central theme of their poems. A sense of Indianess prevailed in most of their poems rather than in their fictional attempts.

It was Ramesh Chander Dutt who showed his scholarship in writing novels in Bengali and historical surveys and translations in English. His translations were of immense
attraction for the Indian as well as the western readers. His novels like *The Slave Girl of Agra* and *The Lake of Palms* depict the life of Agra and Bengal during the 17th and 19th centuries respectively. This can be said to be the prime phase of narrating the various aspects of Indian social life in English fictional form attempted by a native Indian. Like Toru Dutt he also took to the task of translating Sanskrit masterpieces like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. His translations, notwithstanding their limitations, remain the best introductions in English verse form of the greatest ancient literary epic-like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

Leaving aside other minor poets, the name of Raviindranath Tagore is the most outstanding in modern Bengali literature as well as in Indo-Anglian literature next to Ramesh Chunder Dutt. A multifaceted personality Raviindranath was a poet, dramatist, musician, painter, reformer, philosopher, prophet, novelist and also an educationist and a humanist at the same time. Though he never participated in active politics like Nehru and Gandhī, his writings often and on gave a picture of the political and social life in India. His poems like *Gitanjali* and *The Gardener* attracted the attention of English and American critics amusing them with an excess of spiritual ecstasy. His novels like *Gora*, *The Home and the World*, and *The Wreath* are instances of
Tagore's vision as a novelist so far as characterization and projecting and shaping of the Indian society is concerned. The novel, *The Rack* is packed with improbabilities and coincidences, but at the same time it is packed with characters and incidents appealing to the common reader. In his novel *Goro*, the hero grows up as an orthodox till he learns that he is born of an Irish mother. Goro accepts everything that is Indian and accepts her foster parents, Krishnadayal and Anandaram. He loses his own mother and his father is a victim in the hands of the sepoys. He himself declares of his foster mother as the image of mother India. He says that in him there is no longer any distinction or opposition between Hindu, Mussulman or a Christian. He accepts every caste as his own caste. The novel is a true picture of India in a time of transition. His novel also gives a vision of the type of India that we need. In his novel *The Home and the World* there is a clear picture of the revolutionary Bengal of 1905 crying for 'Swadeshi' and 'Bande Mataram'.

The novel narrates the changes that a traditional Hindu orthodox ashramdar family undergoes in the wave of new ideas of secularism, democracy, swadeshi, and western culture. The traditional Hindu Family is divided between the deep-rooted humanism of the East and the aggressive culture of the West
under a foreign rule. In fact Tagore built the strong room of modern novel in English in India on the foundation laid by Ramesh Chunder Dutt and Bankim Chatterjee capitalising the milieu of a changing Indian society during the pre-independence period. Various other themes like castes, communalism, the bourgeoisie vs. the proletariat, superstition and impact of Western culture and industrialisation have found place in the plays and novels of the Gurudev. Besides, he also wanted a fusion of the East and West in his philosophical treatises as well as through his theory of education. He established Shantiniketan with this end in view.

But the initiation in the field of writing Indo-English novels can never be fully claimed by Ramesh Chunder Dutt and Rabindranath Tagore alone. It was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who gave a boost to this maiden field. He published his first novel Raimohan's Life in English and it was followed by other novels like Anandamath, Dari Chandurani, Vishnupiksha and Kanalkundala. Though most of them appeared in Bengali, it was translated into English. Bankim was a good story-teller and his historical novels are more than often a means of political education. In his famous historical novel Anandamath and in some of his other novels he introduced sannyasi and Fakirs. Later
on the character of the sannyasi took other shapes in Indo-
Anglian novels like The Guru, The Guide, Swami, Yogi, and
Mahatma. His novels appeared in translations in other regional
languages and influenced novelists all over India. Bankim also
ventilated reformative ideas like Hindu widow remarriage
through his characters, like Tagore and Baja Ramchand Roy.

Besides Bankim Chandra Chatterjee there have been other
novelists of repute like Shibnath Shushan Sandopadhyaya, Manik
Sandopadhyaya, Sarat Chandra, Haimi Bhasain and Manoj Basu
who have created unforgettable characters and incidents in
their novels. In fact in the field of writing novels Bengal
litigated the candle for India.

During the pre-independence days and more particularly
the period of the two world wars, it was the Gandhi literature,
that had a massive influence on the novelists of India. In
the true sense of the term Gandhi and Nehru were never novelists
nor professional men of literatures. Gandhi wrote because he
had to write, he spoke because he had to speak. K.R.Srinivasa
Iyengar rightly observes:

Gandhi was no writer, properly so-called
nor was he at any time particularly interested
in the art of writing; but he had to write or
talk a great deal (often in English), even as
we have to walk or eat or breathe. 12
He used language, be it Gujarati or English, as a necessary tool to communicate with the people, for converting people to his own point of view, for achieving freedom by peaceful and non-violent means. But he had mastery over English language and he used his knowledge of English to create wonderful prose to shape the soul and spirit of India. He also translated pieces from The Vedas and The Upanishads and poems of famous ancient Indian poets like Pindidas, Kabir, Sundas, Nanak, Mirabai and Tulsarai. For him all literature aimed at the removal of social inequalities, untouchability, casteism and other social maladies in a free and independent India.

A striking similarity between Gandhi and Tagore was that both of them tried to bring a purposeful blend of the East and the West each in his individual way. Though Gandhi received an Indian till he was shotdead by Nathuram, Europe had a deep influence on shaping his thought and action. Tracing the influence of the West in the development of Gandhi's mind Geoffrey Ashe observes:

England (and the West generally) could at last supply the thinking of a temperate climate, and a culture rooted in law and logic and definition. This was the kind of thinking Gandhi desperately needed. Westerners could not westernize him but they could teach his own people's wisdom better than his own people.
Gandhiji's writings since the time of First World War proved to be an endless source of inspiration not only for the men of literature but also for the general Indian mass. Till 1947 the Indo Anglian novelist like any other artist was pre-occupied with the idea of nationalism and freedom movement. When India became free the problem of partition with its allied causes and consequences occupied the novelist and his art, the protest against partition launched by Gandhi and his mental sufferings were a source of attraction for the people in India and the world at large. In the agony of the father of the nation the country men found a reflection of their own wounded feelings. They were more shocked at the tragic assassination of the light of India, Mahatma Gandhi. This tragic death made his unseen presence felt in every nook and corner of India.

The novelists at that time was facing a crisis of choice. He was indecisive as to the choice of theme and medium. All the ancestors from Raja Rammohan Roy to Mahatma Gandhi disfavoured English rule in India. But they had always been in favour of English language and even English education in India. They also desired that regional language should flourish at par with English. One of the major impacts of Gandhian thought and literature on contemporary Indian literature has been a choice for
bilingualism. Due to the influence of the simple and lucid English used by Gandhi and other writers in India, writers preferred simplicity, clarity and immediate effectiveness rather than ornamentation, profundity and luxurious artistry in expression. As regards the choice of theme, there was a shift of attention from the city to the village, under the influence of Gandhian literature. The beauty, simplicity and nobility of the Indian rural life was the subject of treatment rather than the life in the urban areas. On the thematic level, the political was interwined with the personal in most of the novels that came under the influence of Gandhian literature.

The Gandhian literature remained as powerful in the post-independent period as it was in the pre-independent days. The joy of freedom was overshadowed by the pains of partition. Most of the novelist like Khuswant Singh, M.A. Abbas, Malik Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Ram, Shabani Shankar, and Kamla Malgudi began to deal with the freedom movement and the subsequent partition and the theme of independence in their novels, in different ways. For the post-independent novelist there was no unique theme of national interest. In case of Indo-Anglian novelist the void of a suitable theme was deeply felt since Indo-Anglian novels had always been the choice of the intelligentsia. In this context K.R. Srinivas Iyengar observes:
When independence came, the serious novelist in a sense found his occupation gone, for the traditional villain of the piece — foreign rule — was no more in picture. 16

The shift of attention was towards certain issues that cropped up after independence like communalism, casteism, and other parochial feelings like linguistic and racial chauvinism. The talk of emotional integration remained only in the air; inspite of the professional hardships faced by the Indo-Anglian novelists they continued as a living force, an audible voice and could establish themselves as a living and purposeful genre. These novelists, as any other of their European or American counterparts, began to narrate the social, economic conditions and the resultant sorrows and sufferings of the people of India and tried their utmost to make themselves heard in the West. The novelists who hailed from different parts of India sometimes became the spokesman of their respective regions. But instead of creating a kind of regional ethos in a foreign language they created the national consciousness by using an international medium in art.

There has been a relaxation of tension in the post independent novels in comparison to the revolutionary novels of the early period. Sometimes the novelist has shifted his attention from the nation to the nature and from the national to the personal. Bijod C.Choudhury had his theory of the 'river' 'cult', which according to him symbolised the pro Indian
existence, of the Indian Aryans. The Assamese novelist Rajnikanta Bardoloi also favoured a similar view in his famous novel 'Miri Jiyari'. In the South R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao were no exception. The river whether it is Subansiri or the Brahmaputra in Assam, the Mahanadi or Subarnarekha in Orissa or Saraya and Hemavathy in South is considered as a life force and a living presence telling the history, antiquity, heritage, as well as the joys and sorrows of the Indian community.

Some of the novelists developed the tradition of historical romances. They were more attracted by historical truth and antiquities. In the modern times the novelist has been attracted towards the politics of the later half of the 19th century, the hunger and poverty in India and the Chinese and Pakistani aggression on India though other issues continued to remain in the sub-plot of the novels. K.A. Abbas's Ingliah, Shabani Bhattacharya's So Many Hungers and Shady From Ladoh, Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges and Distant Drum are good examples of historical romances. Though some of the critics would like to group these novels into the category of political novels, the novels are no less a real criticism of the life in the sub-continent.

The major novelists in the Indo-English scene India will always remain indebted to are Mulraj Anand. R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao, popularly known as the 'Trimurthis'. The British regime left India a nation
of proletariats and paupers. After independence India took the path of socialism on the ideals of Gandhi and Nehru. Any literature during that period could not escape describing the Indian peasantry, their life and plight. Mulkraj Anand preferred to describe the life of the low and the lost in the society. In his preface to the second edition of Two Leaves and a Bud, Anand himself says of his preference to describe the pariahs and the bottom dogs rather than the elect, elite and the sophisticated. His famous novels like Untouchable, Coolie and The Village are also clear testimony to this effect. In a sense he was the advocate of the downtrodden and the unprivileged in the southern part of India as Sarat Chandra represented the lower middle class in Bengal or Munshi Premchand represented the rural peasant mass of Uttar Pradesh. In his novel Untouchable 'Bakha', of the Jamadar class is a true representative of the Indian Untouchable and a victim of the changing Indian society after independence. There can be no parallel treatment to the theme of casteism in the Hindu society except Bhabani Bhattacharya's He Who Rides a Tiger. Rather Bhattacharya's 'Kalu' is a revolutionary who challenged the touchables in the society in a heroic manner unlike Bakha who appears to be more like a dreamer. Similarly his character 'Nimoo' in Coolie is an orphan who undergoes the trials and ordeals of life in a world full of greed, selfishness and inhumanity. The characters are treated with a humane touch in his novels.
Talking about fiction, R.K. Narayan has a similar view when he says that during the period of nationalist agitations the subject matter of fiction became inescapably political. The mood of comedy, the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors, the crisis in the individual soul and its resolution and above all the detached observation which constitute the stuff of fiction, were forced into the background. But after independence the writer in India looks to express through his novels and stories, the way of life of the group of people with whose psychology and background he is most familiar, and he hopes that this picture will not only appeal to his own circles but also to a larger audience outside. With this end in view Narayan always tried to present the macroscopic through the microscopic. He dived deep into the characters, atmosphere, background and the changing values of a small place. Malgudi for Narayan was a good slide under the microscope like Hardy’s Casterbridge. Whether it is Swami and Friends, Mr. Srinath or The Guide, the centre of action is Malgudi and the characters are all human, oscillating in a divided world of the East and the West, tradition and change, and manhood and saintliness. R.S. Pathak in his article The Indo-English Novelists’ Quest for Identity observes:
The search for identity through a knowledge of self is the basis of A.K. Narayan's fiction. Almost all his novels verborate with a rhythm of departure and return, ebb and flow. The young quarrel with the old, leave Malgudi for England or America, eat beef and marry foreigners, and sometimes return to vex the quiet hearth.

The characters and incidents are thoroughly nationalistic under the Gandhian influence in Raja Rao's novels, whether it is Hosurthy in Kantapura or Ramaven in The Servant and The Rope the centre of consciousness and the wave of social changes are realised on the banks of Himavathy. Raja Rao is equally influenced by the river cult movement propounded by Mad C. Chaudhuri. But the main stress is on the Gandhian myth that is transmitted from one character to the other characters in the novel with an end in view. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar in this context observes:

Kantapura is the veritable Grammar of the Gandhian Myth, the myth that is but a poetic translation of the reality. It will always have a central place in Gandhi literature.

But conditions changed to a considerable extent after the independence. The outlook changed bringing about rapid changes in people's way of thinking and behaving. The educated intelligentsia were more and more involved in bringing about reformatory changes in the traditional caste system, superstition, communal harmony and national
integration. The middle class and the lower middle class were involved in bringing about an agrarian revolution, developments in cottage and small scale industries and a better distribution system. The upper middle class and the bourgeoisie were more and more interested in importing better technological know-how from the European and American sources and developing indigenous industries to facilitate industrial growth. This rapid industrialisation with its flow of money became the root cause of the development of towns and cities. The privileged during the British regime took active participation in running government offices and various departments in the cities. The life in the city showed a remarkable difference from the traditional village life. The cities were more influenced by the western culture whereas village life remained still traditional in its values and customs. But social changes, as inevitable in any society, took place in the rural areas as time advanced.

In the later novels of Raja Rao like The Serpent and the Rose or The Card and the Shakespeare we find the influence of France, England and America on Allahabad, Benares or Hariharpura. Social changes in various forms are clearly projected in these novels. Marriage as an institution is viewed in quite a different way from the traditional form.
Characters are seen to break the boundaries of caste and creed as well as of nationality. Some of them in some form or other are projections of the fulfillment of Gandhian dreams and aspirations.

In this post independent period the writers in India, and more so the novelists, paid much importance to the social realities of the country. The difference remained only in the mode of treatment of the social realities. While some artists tried to project the psychological changes in a society undergoing various changes, others tried to project the characters as heroes of the situations or protagonists of the times and victims of social change and predicament. The two outstanding novelists who practised the art of painting social realities during this period are Shabani Bhattacharya and Manohar Malgonkar.

These two artists were keenly aware of the social changes, problems and consciously tried to project them in Indo-English novel form. Dr. Paul Verghese observes about Shabani Bhattacharya in the following manner.

Bhattacharya has the vision of a welfare society at heart. His concerns are clear and unambiguous; they are political, economic and social. In other words, the dignity of man both in national and international contexts is uppermost in his mind. In this he follows the traditions of European social realism as does Malik Raj.
In fact after the 'Trimurthis' it is Bhobani Bhattacharya who worked as a novelist with the mind of a sociologist and a keen sense of observation of both. Sat. Lila Roy also has a similar view when she says,

All the novels of Bhattacharya present a true picture of India and its teeming millions surging with life and substance. He does not believe in the art for art's sake. All writing for him has a social purpose. His outlook is highly constructive and purposeful. As we read his writing, we hear the dialogue between man and his situation, between man and man, between man and ideas he lives by. 20

Critics have differed in their opinion on form, style on language. But never a diversified view is found by any critic so far as social realities are concerned in Indo-anglian fictional form after Mulk Raj Anand. L.N. Gupta observes,

Pure intellectuals watch the crowds but do not force themselves on them. They visit slums and absorb the misery of their dwellers in their being. They tour the famine stricken areas. They look into the shrivelled faces and shrunken eyes of the sufferer. They share their distress. But they do not use amplifiers to blare their benefaction. They suffer quietly. The process involves a cycle of soothing tensions. The end product is a major work, say, a great novel in the case of a fiction writer. It is a monument of its time. Such is the case with Bhobani Bhattacharya. 21
Personally he himself was of the opinion that unless a writer has keen observation and an eye for noting the details of general behaviour of folks, he can never write a social novel. And he never missed any opportunity of observing incidents and happenings in and around the society in which he lived. The incidents prior to the independence, like the famous Bengal Famine, various other movements leading to freedom from the foreign rule and incidents after the independence, like the partition tragedy, dispute in Kashmir, aggression of China and Pakistan on India, everything comprised the sweet stuff of his story. In the words of Sudhakar Joshi,

His themes generally revolve round poverty, hunger, pestilence, traditionalism and the resulting controversy of Gaudhian panacea versus rapid industrialisation.22

Though the foundation of writing novels in English was already established in India prior to the times of Shabani Bhattacharya, taking a very keen and insightful interest in the ongoing social changes in various levels was a matter of priority only after the 'Trisurthis' and the 'Duisurthis'. In short it can rightly be said that the 'Panchanurthis' like the panchendriyas of the human body began to feel, realise and recognise the various social problems and transmitted these experiences to the readers through their writings just as the panchendriyas transmit all experiences to the human mind.
Though Bhattacharya stayed outside India for most of the time, he preferred to write for the Indian readers, and by appealing to the Indian readers he desired to be appreciated by the European or American readers. But Malgondkar took the reverse course though he was no less a social realist. Talking on the major weaknesses of Malgondkar and Kamla Markandaya, Chaman Kohal observes:

I should now like to deal with two novelists who by the sheer bulk of their output deserve attention. Malgondkar and Kamla Markandaya. Though their novels deal with specific problems and have specific locals, I find two flaws in their work which prevent one from fully enjoying them: they needlessly spread the story out, and they seem to write with a foreign, non-Indian audience in mind.

In Distant Drum Malgondkar presents the various aspects of the changing values in the British Indian Army, their strict sense of discipline, self-sacrificing attitude as well as human weaknesses. Bhattacharya never attempted this aspect of the Indian society. Both civil life and the military life constitute the two foils of electrode which guide the current of national life in any country. The historical perspective always forms the background of his novels. The prince of Begwad in his novel The Prince is a true representative of his class; a prince who aspired for the survival of the old order and a human victim of the new order in every sphere.
He admits of himself as a spokesman for whatever the princely order once stood for. As an Indian writer's attempt to appeal to the western audience presenting life in India, whether it has been successful in achieving its ends or not is a matter of controversy. But as a novel it has taken all social aspects relating to an Indian prince. As K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes:

"Palace life, school life, army life, primitive life, domestic life, sport, hunting intrigue, demagoguery, sensuality, all are thrown together, and now and then one wonders whether the novel has been put together, shaped and coloured so as to meet the predictable expectations of western readers...."

Here and there one cannot resist the feeling that words or situations are just planted with an eye to the audience, but in its totality the picture of Begum — and Begum as the prototype of the vanished princely order — seems to stand the test enunciated by Abhaya himself.

In A Bend in the Ganges the impact of the two world wars and their impact on the Indian society under a foreign flag is treated adequately. The shattering away of dreams for a free India, the consequent fight between Indian nationalism vs. British colonialism is the main focus here. Very soon the issue between the Hindus and the Muslims took precedence over the fundamental issues between the Indian and the British. Consequently it was the freedom as well as
division of the country both were achieved with a sorrowful feeling. It's a real tale of communal ills and wounds.

In comparison to British or American novels Indo-Anglian novels are smaller in number but they are essentially for the Indians by the Indians and of the Indians. In spite of the fact that these novels have to face tough competition abroad they should be studied and encouraged as a growing genre in the broader framework of English literature, as they cater to the needs of the changing Indian society from time to time.

Tolstoy recommended the novelist to cultivate a clear, fresh view of the universe and Stevenson urges the novelist to keep his mind supple, charitable and bright. The novel is a unique form of expression because it starts from direct impression or perception of life.

Though Indian fictional works have clung to the conventional moulds and patterns it has been much influenced by realism in European novels. This influence is obviously more in regional literatures than in Indo-Anglian literature. But in case of novel the influence is greater than any other form like drama or poetry. This leads us on to a study of the influence of European criticism, artists on the thinking and shaping of Indo-Anglian novelist, writers and artists in India.
NOTES


