CHAPTER -I

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literature mirrors the society. Humour and satire are two important elements of literature. Both humour and satire fulfill the objectives of literature. They are closely related. Humour is meant to make people laugh where satire is used to attack the vices or follies of the society or individuals. Humour is one of the crucial aspects of everyday life and the tool that we can use to face our hardest times that we confront in different situations. Even some critics opine that humour is the key to get happiness and to reach at the climax of success in society. Not only the individual himself gets happiness but also others become participants of this aspect. Humour brings laughter with positive emotions which simply keep us in a better mood and makes everyone around us happier. Moreover this element of literature lightens the mood and resolves many critical problems. We can change our life doomed with dark shadows with humour and positive emotions. Without humour life seems harder to handle. This might be the cure to a miserable life that goes through hardship and struggling.

Literature is considered as a reflection of good values and lacks in the society. The purpose of the writers is to bring desired changes in a constructive way. Satire is a technique used by the writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society by the use of humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. It targets to get better humanity by criticizing. The writer mocks at something that he doesn’t like. One of the techniques that satire uses is irony. Irony focuses on the discrepancies between what is said and what is meant.

The thought of how humours soothe us is not new which is just a tonic is for us in our burdened life. Humour is rightly said to be the best medicine. Michael (1941) also concerns with this, “Laughter is a therapy. It is healing. As a tonic for what ails us…if
we hurt, we laugh. And laughing we heal” (1-2). The fictional narratives in Indian English, during and after nineteen eighties have employed humour and satire appropriately and to a remarkable extent which necessitate attention among the researchers. Novelists like, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Anurag Mathur and Chetan Bhagat are quite impressive in respect of using these elements in literature. They articulate the foolishness of established beliefs and superstitions of rural India. The aspirations of the middle class to grip prosperity in life and the attitude of dysfunctional bureaucrats to exploit the poor and innocent Indians provide them wide areas to make a number of light moments in their novels and attack the vices and follies in the society. Both British and Indian literature employ humour and satire to such a great extent that is difficult to avoid.

1.2. Role of Humour in Literature

Humour is defined as “the quality of being amusing or comic and the ability to make other people laugh especially as expressed in literature” (Keenoy, 112). Humour is the heart of literature. Without humour, literature is tasteless curry with no spice. G.K.Chesterton (1874-1936), one of the prolific critics, rightly says “Literature is leisure but humour is necessity” (21). In fact humour and satire are the distinct elements of literature. We use humour and satire differently with diverse purposes. Humour means the quality of being funny, which is the propensity of specific cognitive experiences to incite laughter and provide amusement. People from all around the globe pay attention to humour with great interest. David Lubar (1954) rightly remarked in an interview, “Just as humour fits into most areas of art and entertainment it fits into literature that brings pleasure softens tired minds and makes the world a better place”. Humour is often used in literature. It is not a genre but a substance of literature. Humour concerns with emotional aspects. Concerning social aspects of the term, Ross (1998) defines “something that makes a person laugh or smile” (1). Palmer (1994) provides a more sophisticated definition and says humour is “everything that is actually or potentially funny, and the process by which this funniness occurs” (3). Beginning from the Chaucer’s age writers have been making us laugh with humorous writing
through a long time. It is one of the most effective literary weapons to please the audience. It helps the readers to get interest, sustains their concentration, helps them to get united with the characters, emphasizes and connects thoughts and helps the readers to picture the situation. It also provides surprise and revelation.

1.3. Role of Satire in Literature

The word ‘satire’ comes from the Latin word ‘satura’. The Oxford English Dictionary indicates the term that dates back to the 16th century and some other critics opine that it originates from the Latin word ‘satira’, later form of ‘satura’, meaning medley. However in the Current Literary Terms: A Concise Dictionary, Arthur Scott defines satire as the holding of “vices or folly to ridicule” (257).

M.D. Fletcher, a prolific critic and renowned writer who has produced several critical books on satire, calls it, “verbal aggression in which some aspects of historical reality is exposed to ridicule” (ix). “Satire can be defined as the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt scorn, or indignation.”(Abrahams.M.H & Geoffrey Galt Harpham (352). In addition to it, Frank Palmeri, Professor of English at the University of Miami states, “Satiric narrative works indirectly through parodic alteration of celebratory forms, established discourses, and dogmatic pronouncements” (1). A great Canadian commentator Rex Murphy points out that “we throw the term ‘satire’ around rather too generously these days and it's a free upgrade when making simple fun of someone passes as satire” (9).

Satire intends to reform and rectify institutions and persons and aims to clear folly, anguish and evil. Again it targets at criticizing individuals, corporations, government or society itself to perfection. Although satire is used to be comic, its greater principle is to have a beneficial ‘social criticism’ using wit to draw attention to
both particular and broad issues in civilization. On the other hand a satirist aims to bring changes by creating a situation for the individuals to feel ashamed on the basis of his follies and mistakes. Satirists practise it as a corrective of human mistakes. “Satire has usually been justified, by those who practice it as a corrective of human voice and folly” (Abrams 352).

1.4. Humour and Satire in British Literature

Although Chaucer (1343-1400) is primarily known for his love poems and his *The Canterbury Tales* (1387-1400) brilliantly portray the attitudes and traditions of the medieval period. There is an attack on the areas of love, marriage and religion in a comic and satiric way. The Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* gets appreciation for the energetic and vigorous individualized portraits. These aspects claim to be the indicative of social humour and satire. Humour began in British literature with the story telling tradition of Chaucer. The development of the story telling tradition along with ironies paved the way resulting from the concurrence of people from different classes and opinions. Carter Roland (1942) rightly comments, “This theme of joy and pain of love becomes more and more important through Chaucer’s writing”. (30). Since *The Prologue* initiates with humour and satire. The book begins with the Knight who is described as being perfect and brave. Apart from this, Chaucer begins to dig at the Knight. Chaucer thinks to be an ideal warrior but at the same time believes to be very mild which shows a humorous contrast. In fact Chaucer’s best descriptions of various situations like men and manners got prominence. The reference was on the beauty, impressiveness and humour. Humour can be social corrective and forms unity and consistency bringing together a group with common principles to take pleasure in a form of play or joke. *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale* has a kind of humour. It is true that a few poets have the idea or perception of humour like Chaucer. A feeling of fun in life is really hard to find whis is visible in his great talent. Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath* is pointedly satirical. On Chaucer’s characters Bhim. S. Dahiya writes, “Chaucer’s treatment of his characters reveals the power structure of the social hierarchy of his day” (12).
As a greatest myriad minded personality and an ever popular dramatist, William Shakespeare’s works are extraordinarily outstanding and noteworthy for the use of humour and satire. In fact there is quite a bit of humour in Shakespearean comedies. Shakespeare uses light hearted tone with happy ending. In his comedies much of fun arises from the misconception of lovers. His *Much Ado about Nothing* (1600), *As you Like it* (1623) are quite amusing and entertaining. Afterwards Shakespeare’s comedies are quite impressive for the vernacular and street humour. Again Shakespeare’s festive humour in his romance, histories and dark humour in tragedies are really wonderful.

The eighteenth century is the golden age of satire and aims at rectifying the society through criticizing its members and ridiculing established standards of thoughts. It tries to bring Great Britain’s flaws and discipline the double standards of the time. This is the period in which exaltation of wit and rationale come to the front of literature in the form of both Horatian and Juvenalian satires. Different mediums of satires are in use by the great masters of this area like Alexander Pope (1688-1744) and Jonathan Swift (1667-1745). On Swift, Dr. Raghukul Tilak comments, “Swift is the prince of English satirist. In his satires he lashes with rare zeal at all kind of aberrations and departures from the normal” (275). Again David Daiches writes about Swift’s typicality as, “Swift’s misanthropy was of peculiar kind” (608).

They use different types of reason and target to scorn in order to stand out as a separate aspect of British society. In *Rape of the Lock* Alexander Pope skillfully chide society in a refined voice to criticize the follies and false ego of the greater classes. “Pope had in common with Dryden, considerable success in translating Greek and Latin classics especially Homer –into English and also prepared a note , if flawed, edition of Shakespeare, in 1725”(C. Roland and J. McRAE 142). During Restoration Congreve established the comedy of manners. Congreve’s *Love for Love* (1695) and *The Way of the World* (1700) focus on social class and social hypocrisy.
Humour or laughter occupies a large place in the Victorian literature. Humorous references are visible in most of literary creations in this era. Among them the great novelists like Charles Dickens (1812-1870) and William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) deserve a warm discussion. “It is very likely that that the reputation of Dickens will be maintained chiefly as humorist. His humour is broad, humane and creative. It gives such real immortals as Mr. Pickwick, Mrs. Gamp, Mr, Micawber, and Sam Weller-typical literary brotherhood”(Albert 392). The life of Charles Dickens can be seen to reflect the scholarly patterns of the late eighteenth century. “The vein of good natured comedy, well observed character, humorous use of class and dialect difference, and ‘traditional values will be found repeatedly in Dicken’s works.” (Carter Ronald and John McRAE, (251) Again Dicken’s humour goes deep and his satire appears amazing to later generation. “Dicken’s humour is not very subtle, but it goes deep and in expression it is free and vivacious. His satire is apt to develop into burlesque…” (Albert 392). W. Boege wrote, “Dickens is still read for his fun…” (187) Dicken’s Hard times is a superb example of satire against the society he lived. “Hard Times is actually one of the less rich and rewarding of Dicken’s novels, but in many ways his most accessible critique of the society he lived in”(253). Disappointment and disillusionment dominate in Dicken’s Great Expectation. “Great Expectation marks the change from David Copperfield. Here the hero bears a close up semblance to Dickens himself … (ibid). Satire serves as an instrument of socio political protest .Moreover it acts as a reinforcement of class, imperialist, and antifeminist ideologies.

1.5. Indian Writing in English

M.K.Naik (1942), in A History of Indian English Literature remarks, “Indian English Literature began as an interesting by-product of an encounter in late 18th century between a vigorous and enterprising Britain and a stagnant and chaotic India” (01). Indian English literature is an independent body of work of writers writing in English whose native and co-native language could be one of the several languages of India. They are Indian by birth, ancestry or nationality. The phrase Indo-Anglian is used to describe the original creative writing by the Indians. According to K.R.S. Iyengar (1908-1999), there are three types of Indian writings in English, first those who have
acquired their entire education in English schools and universities. Secondly Indians who have settled abroad but are constantly in touch with the changing surrounding and the traditions of their country of adaptation and finally Indians who have acquired English as a second language. On the concept of Britisher’s attitude that suited to the colonized Indians for the language Ketaki Datta writes, “Contrary to the popular belief the foreign masters never encouraged their native subjects to use English as a medium of self expressions. This attitude suited to the colonized Indians very well” (xi).

It is the outcome of many factors like British rule in India, English education, acceptance of English as an official language, impact of western thought and culture. All these influences and many more brought about a revolutionary change in Indian English literature. The factors that shaped, molded and helped the Indian English literature arose much from the political and social problems of a colonized country. The Indian English Literature is comparatively new source. It is only one and half century old. In fact the first book written in Indian English was ‘Travels of Dean Mohomet’ which is a travel narrative by Sake Dean Mohomet and was published in England in 1793. At the initial stage western literature had a great impact on Indian Literature particularly in the area of novel. However most of the early Indian writings in English were in non-fictional work. Most of them were based on biographies and political essays.

1.6. The Rise of Novel in Indian English literature

There are different forms of writings developed in Indian English Literature like poetry, prose and drama, but interestingly fiction as a possible literary form through which a writer can hope to keep himself in constant touch with the common readers. Usually writers get themselves established through this genre. The bulk of Indian English Literature is in the novel form. In fact the growth of the novel in the later years achieved success compared to other forms of literature, Fiction was in fact last to turn up in the literary scenario of Indian English literature. Fiction as the most
influential and dominating form of literary expressions today has attained an impressive image in Indian English literature. Fiction is the most appropriate literary form for the examination of experiences and thoughts in the framework of our time. In fact Indian English novel has its depth not only India but also in the world. Prof. M.K. Naik rightly remarks, “[…] one of the most notable gifts of English education to India is prose fiction for though India was probably a fountain head of storytelling, the novel as we know today was an important from the west”. Today’s fiction differs in its context and content leading to a substantial degree. Margaret Hillenbrand(1972) comments, “Today novels are considered to be entirely concerned with the social or economic or psychological forces that they by necessity exhibit, or with those details of daily life that are for the good novelists only to some deeper end” (Hillenbrand 61).

However Indian writers in English have contributed appreciably to this specific field of novel. Novel as a form of literature appeared as a popular form during the eighteenth century England. Gradual democratization in Great Britain leads to a rapid development of novel. But the novel is a new to India and gained the ground gradually. K .R. Srinivas Iyengar says, “For the novel, properly so called have to wait till the latter half of the eighteenth century” (2).

The novel emerges as one of the most forceful and convincing literary genre recent years. It has been widely accepted as the appropriate form for the searching of new experiences and thoughts in today’s world. “The ‘novel’ as a literary phenomenon is a new to India. Epics, lyrics, dramas, short stories and fables have their respectable ancestries, going back by several centuries, but it is only a period little more than a century that the novel –the long sustained piece of prose fiction –has occurred and taken root in India. (Iyengar 314) “Although the 1930s are generally seen as the take-off decade for the Indian novel in English we can trace its genealogy quite far back into the previous century” (Merhotra 105). Indian English fiction has acquired extensive commendation, distinction and prestigious position in recent times in the whole world. The history of novel in India is aligned to the advent of the Britishers in India spanning over more than two hundred years. Such a prolonged and momentous reign by
Britishers had its adverse as well as beneficial effects in the nation. Leaving out their ruthless colonization; The Britishers did leave their impact in their literary, architectural and political sides. However the western influence had a great impact on the Indian English fiction. The early Indian English novel is derivative and imitative of English models. Early novelists imitated the works of English Romantics and Victorians. However the literary and artistic sides perhaps had overshadowed all the other existences.

Novel as a form of literature emerges out of peculiar social circumstances and deals with human predicaments in its nature. Indian novel in English gained a great momentum gradually but outstandingly after the publication of Bankim Ch Chatterjee’s (1838-1894) *Rajmohan’s Wife* in 1864. In connection of nationalism in Chatterjee’s novel, Makarand.R. Paranjape comments, “Indeed it is not at all unusual to read Bankim as one of the creators of the Indian nationalism …” (163).

Indian English novel has gone to the next range considerably in volume, variety and ripeness. Novel, the small plant at the initial stage, has now accomplished a copious expansion and branched off in a variety of dimensions. The Indian English novel has begun its journey through the eruption of scorching and blistering talks of Henry Derozio, the religious prose of Tagore and the peace loving dictums preached by the great nationalist Mahatma Gandhi. The birth of Indian English novel in India is to some extent, the result of historical, political, social and cultural incidents. Mainly Indian struggle for independence, Gandhian Movements and the partition of India are the raw materials for the birth and growth of the English novel. Dr. Gajendra Kumar says, “The first half of the twentieth century has been rich and fruitful period for the Indo–Anglian novels which show the profound influence of the epoch making political, social and ideological changes because of the Gandhian Movement”(5). As an iconic figure Gandhi had a drastic satiric attitude towards industrial system of production. The two factors, namely the independence movement and nationalistic spirit and its combination paved the way for much momentum and stimulate to the outpouring of
novels in India. Love and fondness for the native land was the driving force which acted as patriotic sentiments of the masses for further momentum. Although early Indian fictions are the depiction of patriotic spirits even we can find deviation to it. For example: Nirad. C. Chaudhuri (1897) viewed India contrary to previous objectives. Chaudhury discarded the fiery Kandan’s patriotism and spiritualism. The themes of Indian novels revolved round the influential spirits of struggle for independence. Raja Rao’s Kanthapura (1938), K.S.Venkatramani’s The Patriot (1934) and Mulkraj Anand’s Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936), The Sword and The Sickle (1942) are fittest examples. The Indian English was a ripe fruit that tested and digested by the world readers with the success of Rabindra Nath Tagore bagging Nobel Prize for literature.

1.7. Development of Novel in Post-Independence Period

Literary works produced after independence, have presented many faces of Indian culture and tradition and search for the greater values in the society. In searching the best form of literature fictions grounded its foot prints better but gradually. Novels written in post-Independence period retained the momentum that had achieved during the Gandhian age. The tradition of social realism established earlier, made its appearance now. Novelists like Bhabhani Bhattacharya (1906-1988), Manohar Malgonkar (1913-2010) and Kushwant Singh (1915-2014) are noted figures during the nineteen fifties and the early sixties.

The trio in the history of Indian English literature namely, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan were the novelists who stabilized and equipped the Indian English fiction with their abundance of literary outputs and their distinctive literary style. Their appearance was the most outstanding event in the dominion of Indian English fiction. R.S. Singh mentions, “The purpose of fiction was clear; to rouse the masses and instill in them a sense of responsibility and dedication either to the land of a glorious past or to the one that had fallen on evil days. The reformist zeal was predominant and the political plight a major obsession” (Singh 44). It is these three
novelists who operated the area in which the novel is to go ahead. The sketched the themes suitable to the age and freed the first models of characters elaborating with logic and manner.

Indian English fiction achieved a recognizable status for the literary works of Mulk Raj Anand who has been most important among others. He writes with personal commitment. Anand’s contribution to the Indian English fiction of social realism is undoubtedly enormous and unsurpassable. Anand’s *Untouchable* (1935) portrays the story of a boy from the low caste. His *Coolie* (1936) depicts protagonists affected by sheer poverty. He was having sympathy for the poor and downtrodden. Both of these fictions are supplication for oppressed, the underprivileged and the outcast, who face economic adversity and emotional embarrassment in an unbending social arrangement. At his initial writing he preferred to write the familiar to the fancied.

R.K.Narayan (1906-200) is one of the most popular literary figures in Indian English literature along with rest of the ‘Big Three’. Narayan is the most prolific Indian novelist in English from a south Indian middle class family and is the first to portray a purely Indian sensibility. Narayan is one of the few writers in India who takes the themes seriously and constantly with a comic note. He remained unapproachable towards the modern-day socio, political issues and explored the south Indian middle class setting in his fiction. Narayan’s works include *Swami and Friends*, (1935), *The Batchlor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), and *The English Teacher* (1946). R. K.Narayan’s fictional arts got maturity only after independence. His next stage of writing includes *The Financial Expert* (1952), *The Guide* (1958), and *Man Eater of Malgudi* (1962).

Raja Rao (1908-2006) is a renowned writer in Indian English Literature and the youngest of the great trios. Rao’s arrival on the literary scene has been described as the emergence of a new star in this area. Rao’s area of literary outputs include *Kanthapura*
(1938), *The serpent and the Rope* (1960), *The Cat and the Shakespeare* (1965), *Comrade Kirillov* (1976) and *The Chess Master and His Moves* (1988) are important. Rao’s *Cat and the Shakespeare* is a metaphysical comedy. The creative genius of these ‘big trios’ examines minutely the Indian sensibility and expose the Indian way of life which makes their works quite attractive. M.K.Naik rightly remarks, “Reverence and irreverence, fantasy and reality, mysticism and Mammonism, the past with its age old philosophy and the present of the global war are all mixed together in thus brief teasing fable” (179).

After the independence of India Indian English literature had many ups and downs with tough challenges to face and many changes came over Indian way of existence. Different political, social and cultural issues led the Indian writers to be independent with self confidence and broadened vision. Consequently developments and important gains were registered. The convention of social realism flourished to a great extent which was initiated by Mulkraj Anand.

After 1960s, however Indian English fiction took a new direction with a shifting from public to private. To some extent it followed western concept of writing. The mass destruction and the turbulence over the world brought unrest and anxiety. As literature mirrors the society, the novelists cannot remain aloof from the current trend. Hence Indian novelists are not exclusion to the recent changes and developments. Outstanding literary figures like Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and Nayantara Sahgal changed the face of Indian English novel through their works that contain seeds of the future expansion of Indian English fiction.

The postmodern Indian English novel emerged decisively with Salman Rushdie’s literary creations. Anita Desai observes Rushdie as “the voice of a new age” (Anita Desai vii). Although Rushdie was a religious controversial writer, the volume of satiric reference didn’t stop. In connection to this Rod Mengham observes Rushdie’s
writing as, “Secular authorship verses religious fatwa, profit against Prophet…such sound bites and headlines are the stuff of Rushdie Affair” (183).

The contemporary Indian English Fiction has created its own niche in the twenty-first century Indian English literature. It has become, in recent years, one of the most dynamic areas of the literary pursuit in India. This is the new generation of the novelists that include many pioneering novelists who have great impressions on the huge number of readers and have shaped the Indian reading habits. This group of writers include writers like Anita Desai (1937), Despande (1938), Salman Rushdie (1947), Manju Kapur (1948), Amitav Ghosh (1956), Kiran Desai (1971), Arundhati Roy, Gita Hariharan (1954), Sobha De (1948), Sashi Tharoor (1956), Upamanyu Chatterjee (1959), Anurag Mathur and Chetan Bhagat (1974).

1.8. Humour and Satire in the Indian English Fiction

Humour and satire got effectiveness among the contemporary Indian English novelists successfully. They intend to articulate the irrationality of traditional beliefs and superstitions of rural India. They refered to the aspirations of the middle class to attain life of prosperity, comfort and the neo-colonial attitude of exploitation of the poor and innocent Indians by those who appropriate power through corrupt and devious means. They also cover the area of grotesque ways of imitating life style, manners and self-seeking mindset of politicians, bureaucrats and businessman.

Amitav Ghosh’s debut novel The Circle of Reason (1986) starts with a note of humorous description of an eight year old orphan boy Alu who is adopted by his elderly uncle a teacher in a small Indian village. He arrives in Lalpukur, a village in Bengal, and startles the villagers with the strange shape of his head, “an extraordinary head-huge, several times too large for an eight year old and curiosity even, bulging all over with knots and bumps” (Pattnaik 3). One of the elderly villagers, Bolai-da describes the head as “alu, a potato, a huge, freshly dug, lumpy potato” (4). The novel centers on Alu
who remains to be the rest of the life. Balaram, Alu’s uncle practices phrenology and is obsessed with the hygienic property of carbolic acid, concludes through his strange ways of measuring different parts of the human body with a pair of calipers. Balaram’s erratic behavior leads to some strange consequences. Unfortunately Alu is involved in a local feud resulting the bombing of his home. Alu, the only survivor and the suspect in the bombing flee closely followed by a young Indian police, arrives at the small Arabian state of al-Ghazira where he works as a laborer. The second part of the novel is replete with a magic realism. Once Alu is found under the collapse of a shopping mall, miraculously saved and “just a hair away from his nose” (240) After a lot of problems Alu returns to India. The plot of the novel opens with Balaram’s obsessions with reason and proceeds to suggest that much of what happens is accidental, unpredictable and absurd making it a comic one.

Kiran Desai’s first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) is a triumph in a comic story telling. The Telegraph comments as “uproarious, whimsical, and occasionally stinging.” It is the story of Sampath Chawla who escapes of the boredom of middle class living in the sleepy, North Indian town of Shahkot into the comical freedom of life on a guava tree and who mysteriously disappears along with a band of langur monkeys when the guava orchard is invaded by the army and government agencies to get rid of the monkeys.

Even contrary to the critics there are some women writers in Indian English who have made their presence through humorous writing. For instance Namita Gokhale (1956), Suniti Namjoshi (1941) and Arundhati Roy (1961), have left an unsurpassable position in Indian English fiction. They have taken the themes such as adultery, inequities in social and legal status, lesbianism, sexual relationships, clas and caste barriers as well as political satire. These three writers have explored the potential of laughter boldly. Namjoshi’s *The Conversation of Cow* is the most light hearted. Although the fiction resembles in its theme to other novels it ends in a joyous tone. The story doesn’t have death at all. Namjoshi challenges the static form of the fable. The
issues like gender inequality and female subject hood are treated with parody, irony and wit. In *Paro Dreams of Passion* Gokhale has chosen a playful title that ironies the goddess, Parvati and the heroin of the legendary story who is a clinched epitome of all things virtuous and unattainable. While the erotic and economic are uneasily intertwined to provide for many hilarious situations, the anger at the gender role prescription and the marginalization of women is humorously grounded through satire. Again Arundhaty Roy’s *God of Small Things* is the most satirical of the novels.

Sashi Tharoor is one of the prominent writers among the post modernists who tries to his best to satirize with different narrative strategies such as satire, pun, parody and humour. Tharoor’s *Great Indian Novel* is well known for his satiric mode predominant in the novel. Tharoor has taken as existing work the Mahabharata with a serious purpose and has contextualized it with the present political condition.

The elements of humour and satire in the fictional narratives in Indian English fiction got appropriated by the three important novelists of the contemporary writers namely, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Anurag Mathur and Chetan Bhagat. The trio has been successful in appropriating the use of humour and satire with an intention of articulating the absurdity of long-established thinking and superstitions of rustic India. The aspirations of the middle class to accomplish the life of affluence and comfort, the neocolonial attitude of exploitation of the poor and innocent Indians by those who appropriate power through dishonest and deceitful way got reference. Again, the ugly ways of imitating western life styles and behavior and self–seeking mindset of politicians, bureaucrats and businessman are satisfactorily described.

The contemporary fiction writers concentrate on the minute and the subtle aspects of human behavior and have tried to bring out multiple shades of their experiences. In an essay entitled “*Defence of the Novel,*” Salman Rushdie announces the emergence of a new form the novel, a de-centered, transitional, inter-lingual, cross
cultural novel”(8). “Rushdie’s implied assumption that the post colonial novel is the quintessence of the contemporary fiction is perhaps the most appropriate way of defining the post modern India English Fiction”(Patnaik 01).

The post independence Indian English fiction grapples with the psychological, sociological and moral implications of transition from the colonial to the post colonial condition. The novel embodies a decisive moment of post colonial condition which has surmounted the agony of negotiating with colonial legacy and celebrates the hybridism as an essential and defining trait of Indian reality. Helen Tiffin remarks the post-colonial, “has been used to describe writing and reading practices grounded in some for colonial experience” (170). The post modernism encompasses radical attitudinal changes in the wake of globalization, consumerist culture and traditional perspectives and reality. “The post modern Indian English is therefore a ramification of post colonial discourse in its contemporary state of assimilating pluralities and multiplicities by dismantling the western binary construction of the east west as well as interrogating which is framed by meta-narratives” (Patnaik 02). The themes of contemporary Indian English novel is now centered around rural, suburban, lower and middle class lives, and thus Malgudi, Nathan, the Untouchable, Gandhism and Munoo are now important in this aspects. The new generation of novelists who are mostly born in and after nineteen-fifties, have been brought up in metropolitan and urban ethos, educated in elitist schools and colleges and their sensibilities have been nurtured by corporate and global value orientations. Therefore it is the social reality they perceive is one of the upper class, urban, cosmopolitan, materialistic and mercenary culture. Contemporary Indian novelists are almost uniformly united in terms of their class composition. “The social realism that the contemporary Indian English novelists use in their novels constitutes the world of bureaucracy, business, politics and cinema. Nayantara Sahgal puts it, “mix of cultures and influences of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, of east and west” (Critical Spectrum 35)
1.9. Humour and Satire in Post-colonial Indian English Literature:

People, all around the globe feel comfortable with humour and all most all cultures of the civilization respond to humour. Indian literature in English can’t lag behind which takes conception during British period and started flowering afterwards. English literature has attained a great maturity with an impressive image in world literature especially over last decades. The last thirty years witnesses a great change in last thirty years. Aftermath of 1980s Indian English writing achieved new ideas and voices enriched with expression of humour and satire especially in the field of fiction. There are many novelists like, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhaty Roy, Kiran Desai, Chetan Bhagat and many more who explored many possibilities of life and literature.

R.K Narayan is another celebrity author and the founding pillar of Indian English writing enjoys a matchless position in the packed fictional scene of Indian fiction especially for the influential skill of humour and satire. Narayan’s humour from different angles is remarkable. The entire story of *The Bachelor of Arts* is full of humour. Chandran’s designs to see Malathi at close quarters are as humorous as the vehement quarrel of the fathers of Chandran and Malathi over the superiority of the horoscopes as if the whole world depends on horoscopes alone. The hero leaves his home because he was disappointed in love and then comes back quietly marries another girl and the transformation is as convincing as it is full of ironic laughter. Margaya’s career in *The Financial Expert* is replete with a rich texture ironic humour. Boisterous carefree laughter also rings through the pages of Narayan. Swami, the schoolboy and his friends go through all sorts of funny adventures and remind us of a subdued Tom Sawyer and his gang. *The English Teacher* (1945) with its somber atmosphere has moments of laughter when Narayan describes the hostel life scenes. Mr. Sampath and Raju keep us laughing in our sleeves as they go through their career, bluffing their customers or clients, helping friends, cheating others—and ending in a complete collapse of themselves. *The Guide* (1958) shows comic moments when the villagers are shown an anti-malaria film at the fasting place of Raju, a screen-size close up of the
mosquito came on the screen and the villagers declared that it was natural that with such mosquitoes foreign people were bound to fall sick. In all his novels, intellectual idea and humour go hand in hand; his novels are pensive comedies. The key note of Narayan’s concern is the minute observation and fine ironic harmonious way of telling story. Swami’s cricket eleven in search of a regular or even an irregular playground is a masterpiece of narration that is equally humorous. The very creation of the character of Mr. Sampath is full of subtle irony. Narayan’s earlier energetic characters like Swami, Chandra and Krishna and the middle novels with the characters like Srinivas, Sriram and the later novels, with the men wounded and exiled like Jagan, Raman are fantastic examples of humour and satire.

Shashi Tharoor is the prominent writer in the arena of post modern Indian writings in English and gets wide impression for his experimental writing using sharp satire to attack socio, economic and political issues both in fiction and non-fictional works. Basically an international civil servant and a star journalist, Tharoor creates image as a political thinker and an intellectual both nationally and internationally. The author achieves acclamation for his exemplary work as a International Civil Servant and also for literary career. Most significantly, Tharoor’s writings are about Indian, but of universal significance. Tharoor’s first novel, The Great Indian Novel (1989), adopts different narrative strategies like satire, joke, burlesques, sarcasm, humour and wit. The skill of using satire and parody are in fact outstanding. Tharoor has become a beacon of satirical mode in Indian Writing in English by adopting satire, an eighteenth century literary mode, to narrate a twentieth century reality. Indian Writing in English has not given much serious attention to satire, like in English literature. Only a few writers have tried to employ satire in their writings. A.K. Ramanujan also employed satire in his poems but not as a serious mode. Shashi Tharoor made use of satire as a dominant mode in his unique way of narration. Through his writings he tries to pose more questions than giving answers, what is usually done by satirists?
To uncover the works of Salman Rushdie and his works, Merhotra writes “Rushdie displays remarkable consistency when it comes to certain ideas, certain literary and philosophical pre-occupation and the formal means through which to achieve them. Fortunately or perhaps unfortunately, for his readers, he is an enormously self conscious writer whose novels, comments, and analyses in interviews and essays insistently direct attention to these pre-occupations and to his craft. Rushdie is also very erotic writer; his work is peppered with all sorts of literary echoes, allusions, and puns, each self consciously deployed with back patting zeal and pleasure which he invites the savvy reader to share with him” (350).

Prof. Pattnaik comments, “The overwhelming reception of Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children in nineteen-eighties led to a prolific production of fiction by Indian writers in the post Rushdie period, many of which were informed by the narrative strategies of fantasy, humour, satire and magic realism. The comic mode seemed especially appropriate to articulate the irrationality of traditional beliefs and superstitions of rural India, the aspirations of the middle class to attain a life of prosperity and comfort, the neocolonial attitude of the exploitation of the poor and innocent Indians by those who appropriated power through corrupt and devious means and the self seeking mindset of politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen” (34).

Arundhati Roy is the best known representative of the contemporary Indian English writers. She deserves a place in the history of English language and literature for expressing boldly: She believes in to be a writer for the victims of the modernity. She satirizes the indifferent attitudes of the government and the policy holders towards goodness of common man. The God of Small Things, the winner of 1998’s Booker Prize Award is a true masterpiece in the realm of novels. Roy variously criticises the caste system, the British Raj, communism, development and globalization.

Amitav Ghosh’s fictional and non-fictional narratives tend to be transitional in sweep, moving restlessly across countries, continents and oceans. Ghosh’s first novel,
*The Circle of Reason* (1986) is typical in the sense. *The Circle of the Reason* begins with the humorous description of an eight-year-old orphan boy who arrives in Lalpukur, a village in Bengal, and startles the villagers with the strange shape of his head, ‘an extraordinary head- huge, several times too large for an eight-year-old and curiously uneven, bulging g all over with knots and bumps’ (Patnaik 34).

“Kiran Desai’s first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998), which is ‘uproarious, whimsical and occasionally stiring,’ as the Telegraph commented and which, as The Pioneer commented, ‘is a triumph in comic storytelling’ (Patnaik 38). “Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is the story of Sampath Chawala who escapes from the boredom of middle class living in the sleepy, North Indian town of Shahkot into the comical freedom of life on a guava tree and who mysteriously disappears along with a band of langur monkeys when the guava orchard is invaded by the army and government agencies to get rid of the monkeys” (ibid).

The present thesis primarily aims at focusing the elements of humour and satire in the selected novelists namely, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Anurag Mathur and Chetan Bhagat. As the post modern Indian English fiction attained maturity and image in the world literature by these writers my next chapters will elaborate their use of humour and satire taking selected novels of each. Hence before going to details of these writers it is better to give a brief introduction on these three novelists in a paragraph.

Upamanyu Chatterjee is one of the most compelling new voices in the domain of the Indian novel in the English Literature that has a profound comic vision in his writing. Chatterjee is always attracted towards the comic aspects of everyday life. He uses the various forms of comedy like farce, black humour, satire and irony to portray the follies and foibles of Indian society. He is a great artisan of humour. “Upamanyu Chatterjee’s *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* (2000), which won the Central Sahitya Academy award in 2004, is both a hilarious comedy and a sharp satire on the functioning of the so-called welfare state which is India”(Patnaik 45). Anurag Mathur’s
The Inscrutable Americans is a hilarious tale of the adventurous of Gopal, a twenty years old bumpkin and son of hair oil merchant in Madhya Pradesh, during the one year he spends as a student of chemical engineering in Eversville, a small university campus in America. (Pattnaik 49). Chetan Bhagat is a revolutionary wave in current literature producing a number of humorous creations. Bhagat’s Half Girlfriend and 2 States: The Story of my Marriage are taken into account. Writers involve in presenting the contemporary life and living in their works. Jesse Matz writes in A Modern Novel; a Short Introduction, “The novel has been modern always concerned mainly with contemporary life, and as the name suggests, always after the new thing” (1).

Novelists around the world have contributed to the arena of fiction writing through their comic and satiric elements to touch the hearts of the readers and fulfill the objectives of literature. Since the writings of Chaucer the literary figures have left influential impression on the audience. Chaucer developed the story telling convention along with ironies that resulted from the twist of fate of people of different classes and points of observation. Shakespeare later developed colloquial speech and street humour in his comedies, festive humour in his in his romances and histories and dark humour in his tragedies. During Restoration Congreve established the comedy of manners. The eighteenth century’s satiric writings are unsurpassable. Although humorous writings are short in supply writings of the above writers is unavoidable. Indian English Literature has attained an independent status in the realm of world literature. Indian writers usually cover a wide range of themes. Among all other forms of literature novel has acquired prominent place. M.K.Naik rightly remarks, “One of the most notable gifts of English education to India is prose fiction for though India was probably a fountain head of story-telling, the novel as we know today was an importation from the west.” Generally Indian novelist’s substantial contribution to the world literature is due to creative literary works generated by their novels. Among the writers in present literature Upamanyu Chatterjee, Anurag Mathur and Chetan Bhagat are most talented and quite impressive to the readers. Very few writers have managed to reach out to such wide audiences who have been a phenomenon that has affected everybody and touched everybody’s life.
Reference:


Web Sources:
