The literary renaissance was quickened by the impact of English literature. The Indian scholars who came in contact with western models were eager to put before their countrymen the enriched wealth of English literature. They attempted to transplant these literary models into Indian soil. Their contact with English brought about two fruitful changes:

(A) The regional languages developed fast and soon became the media of literary expressions.

(B) It inspired more and more Indians to take up to write in English.

Thus, The Indian-English fiction came to be written in India only as a consequence of the British contact and it derived its inspiration from the western writings. “The characters of the English novels having obtained Indian names, continued to exist in India. The themes of plays and novels and the types of personages were transplanted, like flowers, from the European conservatories to the Indian soil, and the seedlings got acclimatized.”*1 Early Indian-English novels appeared, “When Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott had become classics and Dickens had written most of his novels in England: when in France, Balzac and Alexander Dumas were in their grave; when in Russia, Dostoevesky and Tolstoy had published most of their important novels.”*2 For example- Bankim

Chandra Chattopadhyaya’s novels as *Durgesh Nandani*, *The General’s Daughter*, were nothing but a photocopy of Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*. Kishorilal Goswami also adopted the theme of Shakespeare’s play *Tempest* for the writing of a Hindi story *Indumati*. Imitations of Shakespeare’s plays and also those of Molliere and Hugo by Indian regional writers are not uncommon. Thus, the British impact benevolently stimulated native Indian literatures especially Bengali, Hindi and Marathi. Indian-English fiction undoubtedly has also been matured beside these regional writings under the same impact. It is true that most of the novels of this period were but sorry imitations of early Victorian novels and did not show considerable literary merit because most of the novels of this period could not rise above the level of mediocrity. These writers were still groping their way at the crossroad of western models and eastern themes because of lack of their direct involvement in the experiences of the Indian life. “Whatever be the language in which it is written, a novel by an Indian writer demands direct involvement in values and experiences which are vaid in Indian context. There was certain lack of such direct involvement in the early generations of English-educated Indians who hoped to create literature in English...”*1

It is a common assumption that Indian-English fiction came into existence with Bankim Chandra’s *Raj Mohan’s wife*, first published in a periodical in 1864. It is a romantic

tale of domestic life in a Bengal village. Though, there may be a controversy regarding the exact period of the birth of Indian-English fiction but its stable, consistent and sustained growth could be easily traced to the fruitful establishment of its superiority over the contemporary regional fiction. Some critics are of the opinion that Indian-English fiction came to run on the regular literary track with the advent of Gandhiji as late as in 1920. In their opinion the novels written before 1920 were not of high order and were valuable only to the students of sociology because they were concerned mainly with the sociological aspect of human life. “The Indo-Anglian novel made a diffident appearance in the nineteen-twenties, then gradually gathered confidence, and established itself in the next two decades.”\(^1\) But it is surprising that notwithstanding its late start, it has gone ahead of others both in quality as well as quantity.

It is necessary to mention here that some novels like *A journal of Forty Eight Hours* (1835) by Kylash chander Dutt and *The Republic of Orissa* (1845) by Sochee Chunder Dutt, appeared in English even before Bankim Chand Chatterjee’s *Raj Mohan’s wife* came into light in 1864. These earliest stray attempts are discovered and discussed in Bengali and in English by Dr. Pallab Sen Gupta and Prof. Amalendu Bose respectively. Therefore whatever may be said in favour of it, it is an unchallenging reality that the dawn of the fiction may be dated back to the publication of the novels of

\(^1\) Mukerjee, Meenakshi, *The Twice Born Fiction*, p.19.
the earliest period, especially *A journal of Forty Eight Hours* and *The Republic of Orissa*.

Now it is pertinent to explore the conceptual diversity of general trends in India-English fiction. India is a composite culture because since the dawn of history, this country has been the centre of attraction for the great scholars and thinkers, traders and tourists, artists and pilgrims and even for the invaders and oppressors who usurped and made this country of their own. Nevertheless, it has retained the stability of its own glorious culture. Therefore Indian society is truly an ocean of humanity where in many streams have entered. The contribution of Europe and especially of great Britain to the spread of English in India is very significant. But Indian-English novelists “drew their inspiration from Indian culture and Indian people; they learnt or tried to learn the craft of fiction not from Indian masters but from the best English and European masters of fiction. They learnt their technique from western models”.[*1 All the western art forms like the novel, biography, tragedy, comedy, the essay and the lyric with their subdivisions were the moulds into which the spirit of awakened India poured itself. The western Culture also revealed to the Indians the greatness of Indian culture. The glorious culture of India cast a spell on myriad of foreign scholars from France and Germany like Sir William Jones, Goethe, Maxmuller and John Leyden who revealed the importance of Indian culture in their writings. Indian scholars came in contact with such men

of letter:s who studied art, history and philosophy of India and were greatly influenced by them. They were also influenced by their sense of hospitality and national pride, and hence Indian Scholars also began to explore their own sense of Identity and expressed it through their efforts to create their own artistic and literary work of high order. Thus Indian-English fiction seems an outcome of such assiduous efforts of great scholars.

In the 20th Century, the popularity of European literature in India was very significant. It was through English translations that Indians got familiar with the French classical writers like voltaire, Rousseau, Molliere, Hugo, Moupassant, Balzac, Zola and also with the works of the Russian writers-Tolstoy, Gorky, Dostoevsky, Gogol Turgenev and others. The influence of these writers and their works has been direct on the Indian-English novelists. Translations of their works imparted new techniques, new thoughts, new progress and new life-giving rich ideas to the Indian-English fiction. For example, S.K. Ghosh's 'One Thousand and one Nights' (1905) is a romantic imitation of the well known Arabian Nights which was available then in English. Realism of Dostoevsky or Tolstoy can be seen in the novels of Rabindranath Tagore. Owing to this similarity a French Critic has called Rabindranath Tagore, "A Hindu Tolstoy". Thus, 'Translations' played a very significant role in furthering the vogue of writing novels and gave a new impetus to the Indian-English fiction. No discussion of the trends in Indian-English novel would be complete without a discussion of these translations. Translations came
into two forms in the panorama of Indian-English fiction—

(i) The translations of western masterpieces of fiction into English.

(ii) The translations of Indian novels into English.

Though a number of regional novels are available in English translations, but they failed to exert a very profound influence on Indian-English novelists; only the translations of the novels of Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chand Chatterjee and R.C. Dutt came as a rich source of inspiration for them.

Romesh Chunder Dutt, a Bengali novelist of considerable stature, translated his two Bengali novels *Sansar* and *Madhvi Kankan* into English—*The Lake of Palms* (1902) and *The Slave Girl of Agra* (1909) respectively. Dutt’s novels are called as didactic novels because they are aimed at the elimination of the social evils, and hence his endeavour to present the faithful picture of Indian society is clearly visible in these novels.

Bankim Chand Chatterjee, the father of Bengali fiction, started his career by writing a social novel in English *Raj Mohan’s Wife* (1864). In the subsequent stages, he wrote historical (Durgeshnandini), Patriotic (Anandnath), and Philosophical (Devi Choudharani) novels also. His fourteen Bengali novels were translated into English and contributed enormously to the growth and development of literary renaissance in Indian-English fiction. His “Bandemataram” included in his novel *Anandmath* (1982) became the
‘National Anthem’, and a dynamic force to install the spirit of National Indentity.

Tagore’s contribution to the development of Indian-English fiction is of vital importance. He always stands for synthesis and for the power of integrating vision. The most famous novels of Rabindranath Tagore, which were translated into English are *The Home and the World* (1919), *The Wreck* (1921) and *Gora* (1923). *The Wreck* is a social novel dealing with the problems of marriage, *The Home and the World* and *Gora* are the patriotic novels portraying the aspirations of resurgent India with Tagore’s silent expression of growing national awakening among Indian masses.

Thus, it is noteworthy that the English translations of these great stalwarts gave initial momentum to the Indian-English fiction. Though in writing novel, there were many problems like the problems of models, tradition and idiom etc. but these problems inspired the diligent writers of the days to find out their solution, and in this process the literary value of Indian-English fiction could never be overlooked. Their consistent efforts helped to establish firmly the roots of Indian-English fiction deep into the soil of literary field. It could be possible only through the translations which not only brought the child of novel into being but also saw it growing into vigorous youth.

Translations of the great novels offered to the Indian-English fiction the first model of historical, patriotic and social novel. From the very first novel itself, they endeavoured to
portray a kaleidoscopic view of social, economic, traditional, political, religious and regional life of India. It was the sustained effort of these Indian-English novelists to bring to the forefront the long suppressed identity of the people which was almost on the verge of disappearance due to prolonged subjugation under the British Raj. Hence it is evidently clear that these translations laid a concreate base for the grand edifice of Indian-English fiction.

Though the influence of translations stimulated the creation of Indian novels in English but no significant novel was written till the end of the nineteenth century. Before 1920, there were stray endeavours to consciously assert the national identity of Indians through writings by highlighting the social, economic, traditional and cultural background of India. It was only from 1920 onwards with the emergence of Gandhiji on the Socio-political horizon of India, novel came to mature into a genre.

Novels written before 1920 were mainly of sociological interests and the novelists looked deeper into the society and focussed their attention on the common people and their problems of poverty, of the peasants, of child marriage, of Hindu widow etc. Raj Laxmi Devi’s, *The Hindu Wife* (1876), Krupabai Satthianandan’s *Kamala* (1894), a story of Hindu life and Mrs. Swaraná Kumari Ghosal’s *The Fatal Garland* (1915) presented brilliant social picture of Indian women. Kshetrapal Chakrabarti’s *Sarat and Hingana* (1895) and Sir Jogendra Sing’s *Nasrin* (1915) portrayed typical
Indian family life. Rajan Iyar's *Vasudev Sastrî* (1905) and A. Madhavan's *Thillai Govindan* (1916) are significant for religious reforms. Bal Krishna's *The Love of Kusuma* (1910) is the photography of Indian social life. Miss Cornelia Sorabji's novels like *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* (1901), *Between the Twilights* (1908) reveal the sad plight of women in India and her *Sun Babies* (1904) is written for the eradication of the evil of children's plight in India. Besides it, some political and historical novels also came to be written in this period. S.M. Mitra's *Hindupore* (1909) and some stories from S.B. Bannerjee's *Tales of Bengal* (1910) depicted the political outlook of contemporary times. Two novels of T. Ramkrishna *Padmini* (1903), *The Dive for Death* (1912) and Sir Jogendar Singh's *Nur-Jahan* (1909) came as historical novels under the influence of Sir Walter Scott. In addition to the above, some more novels with similar themes saw the light of the day, but they do not merit to draw our attention to be scrutinized here, nevertheless, they certainly contributed to pave the path for subsequent writings.

One can not find adequate semantic definition of the term like national identity. Every people seems to understand something different about this word, in the light of their traditions, habits of mind and experience. I have attempted to discuss the relevance of this term in the context of India. National Identity emerges into one which is about India or
Indians, presents an Indian point of view, consists a storehouse of significant recorded values based on the stock images of Indian culture and way of life.

The sense of national identity before the nineteenth century was somewhat a precarious issue. The emergence, proliferation and culmination of the notion (concept) of national identity could be well noticed with the rise of national consciousness under the tyrannical attitude of the British Raj. Before India came under the British rule and even during the early part of this rule, Indian people had never thought in terms of one nation. India was then only a mere conglomeration of many princely states where there lived the people of different races, religions and castes speaking a number of languages and dialects. It was only the development of English education and the suppression, exploitation and humiliation of Indians by the British that brought the concept of Indian nationhood. Now Indians became more conscious about their social, economic and political rights and began to feel themselves a collective entity and to realise how the English had cramped them under their autocratic and bureaucratic rule and deprived them of individual and constitutional liberty. The attitude of the rulers which was the result of their superiority complex, incited Indians to assert themselves, and the Indians educated in the new system of Western education through the medium
of English, started to distinguish their manners and customs, religious and social institutions, and culture and civilization so that their rulers and others might know their distinct identity.

Besides this, the National Identity is inescapable to any one using his native tongue. A writer cannot divorce himself from traces of national identity because he is concerned, whether he wishes it or not, with his environment, his people, his situations and the events that take place around him. Only by belonging to his soil and people can he discover his roots and find a voice that will ring with authenticity and integrity. Though the recognition and declaration of one’s national identity is not an easy job specially for those nations like India whose cultural heritage has become smothered under a colonial rule yet the people of the country roused by nationalism make their efforts to eulogise glorious, age-old traditions, peculiar manners and customs to show that they are by no means inferior to their rulers. The issue of Indian English novelists’ quest for national identity has been variously treated. There can be different avowed values which constitute national identity.

One of the approaches that a writer may take to affirm national identity is the creation of an ideal cultural environment. Every culture has its own image; consequently, the artistic endeavour to project it has its positive value.
Culture is reflected in the modes of life of a people, their thought processes, their innermost urges and longings and their fulfilments and frustrations. Tradition, as I understand it in this context, has an important role in cultural development, though tradition itself is the outcome of the built-in urges and beliefs of a people. It signifies certain innate compulsions peculiar to the way of life of a community. Certain modes and ways of feeling become characteristic of the psyche of a people and form part of their cultural pattern. These cultural patterns develop through a process of individuation and enable a people to evolve their identity. Writers and artists wish to give an individualistic expression to these urges, which issue from their cultural consciousness. The Indian artist, who gives expression to his particular, cultural pattern, presents a facet of experience which is individual, social, racial and national. Indian writers in English are, therefore, invariably involved in formulating and projecting the Indian image.

The Indian English novelists in their novels showed that India’s ancient past had produced a vital and living cultural tradition that had persisted. Having a distinct culture had given the Indian people an overarching unity of spirit and strength. To find and study what this culture or spirit consisted of was a difficult but crucial task for the novelist. The Indian English fiction which focus on the vital concept of
national identity revealed not only India's past experiences and strengths but also serve as an aid both to understanding India's present situation and suggesting a way ahead to meet future challenges.

They have also drawn a sketch of the condition of society and the economy i.n the Ancient Indian period. The picture that emerges is that of a highly developed culture that had evolved complex sets of relations and practices. An advanced economy existed, based on a wide range of manufacturing and craft related activities. There was a network of widespread and active trade relations all through India as well as abroad. All these achievements, including the advances made in the field of science and education, together formed an energetic and vital culture. In this section, they have also examined traditional Indian social organization, in particular, the role and function of the caste system. Evolved over centuries, the caste system was also the organizing principle that promoted stabilizing group identification in our society. Therefore to simply condemn and dismantle such a structure was only a part of the task of social renewal in India. There was also the need to simultaneously evolve a suitable alternative basis for collective or group strength, to be a resource for modern Indian society. In their novels, they have also observed that it was the diversity of India both in the nature of its terrain as well as its people that most struck
the eye. The differences in race, custom, habit and language that existed between the various regions in India were astonishing. However, underlying all these differences, there existed a single heritage. All Indians shared a common cultural background and values, that were characterized by tolerance and co-existence. This common way of thinking had accommodated and integrated even the sharpest differences in custom and belief. These differences had shaped and in turn had been shaped by a gradually evolving national culture. In this way, their novels as part of the national literary canon, were used to support the educational framework with a view to foster a sense of national identity through an understanding of the glorious intellectual and spiritual tradition of the country. Certainly their writings motivated young people to embrace and sustain the spirit of India's freedom and integrity.

Another factor related to the national identity is the glorification of legendary heroes and heroines. When the people of India living under an autocratic and oppressive rule of British subjugation wanted to throw off that rule to establish a political set-up of home rule, it was mandatory on their part to have been imbued with the spirit of national identity. In their zeal to display that they were by no means inferior to their rulers, they started to eulogise the glory and greatness of their ancestors of whom Indians can rightly be
proud of. There are historical novels in English by Indian writers showing the peculiarities-heroism, chivalry, sacrificial urge, intolerance, magnanimity of historical personalities with the purpose of probing into the past for drawing lessons for the present.

The most important instrument for the display of the sense of identity is the proferation of nationalism in the form of social and political awakening. The first half of the nineteenth century saw the beginning of social and cultural awakening and the second half bore fruits of renaissance. When thoughtful Indians like Raja Rammohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Vivekanand etc. looked deeper into the defects of society, they, for removing them, founded reformative societies like Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ram Krishna Mission etc. which got ample of reflection in Indian English fiction. These societies did a lot to eliminate social evils like sati system, child marriage, untouchability and casteism. No sphere of society remained unaffected from such social and cultural revivalism caused by these reform movements. It developed among Indians a sense of independent thinking, a feeling of unity, liberty and patriotism. Consequently an urge for freedom from the foreign thralldom began to be accelerated.

The movement for Independence was a part of large spectrum of social and political awakening which enveloped
all aspects of national life. The freedom struggle which began with the army revolt of 1857 and which passed through various phases like liberalism, terrorism, satyagrah, non-cooperation, Congress-muslim league negotiations and communal riots, ultimately culminated in the achievement of complete independence on Aug 15, 1947. The Independence won after so much of protracted struggle and sacrifice tasted bitter at the core. It brought several unusual crises like partition and its aftermath, the merger of princely states to the Indian union India’s confrontation with Pakistan and degeneration of politics. Thus it is obvious that modern India, as a political entity, is a product of a variety of influences, strands and traditions spread over thousands of years and of alternating experiences of glory and degeneration, achievements and frustrations, freedom and subjugation. The legacy of India’s past is a mixed heritage of positive and negative elements. In positive terms, it brought the legacy of idealization of traditional Indian values of harmony, unity, reconciliation, self-sacrifice and tolerance, and provided common man the long awaited fruits of freedom in the form of better life and prosperity. The negative aspects have tended to growout the frustration with the new breed of politicians and their nexus with big capital and crime.

It is noteworthy that some of the major Indian English novels show that the preceding two hundred years of political
history thus witnessed India's emergence as a 'nation' in a pervasive sense, inheriting a legacy of mixed acquisitions, notable attainments and missed opportunities, soaring idealism and realism, inclusive of conservative, liberal and radical strands of protest, though qualified by a universal appreciation of the inevitability of national independence.

Now, it is evident that there were multiple values to assert national identity and to consolidate it. Sometimes it has been affirmed by throwing light on the glorious chapters of their society, sometimes by going deep into the past to seek lessons for the present, sometimes by criticising contemporary society with a hope to build up a strong, better nation and sometimes by depicting the various phases of freedom struggle with the implied motive of making people conscious of their prime identity.

Glorification of India's past like the stable culture and prized traditions by Indian-English novelists is another major aspect of the quest for national identity in Indian-English fiction. Though, it is not a singular attempt of the Indian-English novelists to explore the field of India's past heritage, culture and glorious traditions because for many centuries, the men of letters from several countries have been coming to discover curiously the past of India, nevertheless it contributed largely to arouse the spirit of national awareness in Indian
masses. The curiosity of the foreigners in India’s past gave an extra impetus to the novelists at home to search and glorify the past. They presented their country favourably and sympathetically before readers. In their novels they narrated the glories of our past and the greatness of our national heroes to give to the readers a detailed picture of the various features of Indian life of a particular period or person. The novelist accomplishes this task through his curious blending of fact and fiction. Thus the primary objective of the novelist has been usually to revive and rejuvenate the glory of nation’s past and encourage the readers to be proud of being Indian nationals. A large number of novels projecting the glorification of India’s past were poured out of press in succession at various stages of the development of Indian-English fiction. The systematic expression of this spirit in Indian-English fiction follows in the subsequent pages.

The diligent efforts of Mirja Murad Alee Beg in this regard need mention as he projected the historical glory of India through his famous novel *Lalun the Beragun*. Published in 1884, it “takes its place among the earliest first three novels of Indo-Anglian fiction and becomes the first Indo-Anglian historical novel.”*1 The novel highlights the outstanding spirit of Indian chivalry and also projects the glorious image of India through the lively description of the *Battle of Panipat*. Further through the probes into the religious rights of Maratha, it amply reflects the graphical picture of ancient India.

The another novel which achieved commendable success in depicting the glorification of the past India is K.K. Sinha’s *Sanjogita* (1903). The theme of the novel is concerned with the life story of Sanjogita, the young and beautiful daughter of Jay Chand, the Rathore King of Kannauj. Inspite of a sworn animosity between her father and Prithviraj Chauhan, the King of Ajmere, she gives her heart to Prithviraj and wants to marry him. But on the occasion of her Swayambara, Jay Chand does not invite him and for insulting him, he puts the golden statue of Prithviraj at the door as a doorkeeper. Sanjogita too garlands the statue of Prithviraj. Suddenly at this moment, Prithviraj appears and carries Sanjogita with him.

Through the portrayal of the love story of Prithviraj and Sanjogita, the novelist has endeavoured to highlight the gravity of human relations, sacrificial urge of Indian womanhood and the rare heroism of Indian chivalry. Prithviraj is applauded and celebrated even today as the ancient national hero who laid down his life fighting against the muslim invader Mohammad Gauri. But simultaneously we learn from the details of the novel that the traitors like Jay chand also contributed to endanger the unity and integrity of India by extending their aid and support to the foreign invaders. Thus the novelist makes us aware of these traitors and react favourably to the heroism of the national heroes of the past like Prithviraj. The author in the preface to the novel observes:
"To remind his countrymen of the glory and greatness of their ancestors, to draw their attention to the direct causes of their fall, to show up the glaring evils of disunion and to stamp the manly virtues on their minds have been some of the prominent objects which he has kept in view."

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*Padmini* (1903) by T. Ramakrishna is a curious blend of romance and Indian chivalry. It discloses the past history of India through the great battle of Talkot. This battle led to the fall of the glorious Hindu kingdom, Vijaynagar at the hands of Muslims. Hence the moving description of the past national events shows on the part of the author to make an attempt to arouse the nationalistic spirit of Indian masses and redefine the national credentials.

The next novel which traces the historical glories of India's past is Sirdar Jogendar Singh's *Nurjehan*, Published in 1909. The title based story of this novel is concerned with the various stages of the life of Nurjehan, the queen of Moghal Emperor, Jehangir. The novel is also replete with the historical references of India's great Emperor Akbar and his magnanimity, and kindness in the field of religious tolerance and Justice. Ignoring religious prejudices, Akbar made several sincere efforts to unite the heterogenous and narrow minded people into a compact nation by his philosophical teachings

*1. Sinha, K.K., *Sanjogita* (Dinapore : The Author, 1903), In the preface.
and religious exhortations. He propagated among the masses the didactic ideas of secularism through his teachings that the religious differences should not lead to the dissociation of the society, rather it should be a means to the harmonious unification of social setup. The Emperor projected the justice loving image of India throughout the world and sustained secular ideals. He formed his own divine religion by which he kindled the fire of love in the hearts of his subjects to burn away all the differences which separate one individual from another. Such reference of Akbar’s preoccupation with an attempt to the unification of India shows author’s serious concern for national consolidation. The chief motive behind the glorification of India’s historical heritage through the universal policies of Akbar is to exhibit the fact of weaving different communities into a single national fabric to stand firm against the foreign invaders. One such instance of exhortation to the people of India is quoted here in the speech of Akbar:

"May the lesson bear fruit and unite these heterogeneous, wrong thinking, narrow minded, blind people into a united Indian nation."*1

A.S. Panchapakesha Ayyar also strives to search curiously the glorious past of India in his historical novels. He wrote four historical novels dealing with the historical

background of Gupta and Maurya periods. His first novel, *Baladitya* with a theme of *historical romance of ancient India*, appeared in 1930. The story of the novel is concerned with Baladitya, the king of Magadh and his friend Yasodharman, the king of Malwa and of Mahakosala. Both launched their expedition of victory against the leaders of Huns—Toramana and his son Mihiragula who seized many kingdoms of India and overthrew their emperors from power. Baladitya and Yasodharman did not accept their (Huns) sovereignty. For defeating Huns, they united the kings of different kingdoms of India and then with allied forces they fought against Huns and victory, ultimately, fell to them.

Besides depicting the crushing defeat of foreign invaders in the hands of Indians, the author has also highlighted proudly the bright aspects of India’s rich culture, tradition and civilization of the sixth century. The description of India’s remarkable achievements in various fields like trade, commerce, astrology, astronomy and shipment also projects the glorious past of India.

The author’s purpose behind the selection of this theme is to present before Indians an ideal example of the unity of the Indian kingdoms of the past against the barbarians and the foreign invaders who repeatedly attempted to tyrannize over us when the forces of dissension and disintegration proved dominant over the national integrity. Indian kings formed a confederation to drive out the foreigners and showed their ability to unite country for defence, freedom and prosperity.
Thus the author intends to encourage and inspire Indian masses in the present context through the glorious allusions of the past to stand unitedly against the British rulers and drive them out. The speech of Yashodharman exhorts us to the need of unity in the present state of thraldom:

“Our enemies, the Huns, are assembled in full force in order to crush our attempts at independence... Let everyone of our soldiers, be his caste what it may, acquit himself like a true Kahatriya today.”*1

*Three men of Destiny* (1939), the second historical novel of A.S.P. Ayyar Covers the period from 327 B.C. to 298 B.C. The story of the novel recalls the rise and fall of three men of destiny—Alexander, Chandhya and Chandragupta. If on the one hand, the novel portrays the subjugation of myriad of Indian kings to the tyrannic authority of Alexander recalling in particular the story of Poros’s, defeat, on the other hand, it highlights the heroic struggle of Chandragupta to fight against the satanic rule of Nand with the help of his master Chandhya.

After the victory of Chandragupta over Nand dynasty, he undertook an ambitious mission of uniting the scattered kingdoms of India. He forcibly subjugated those who did not contribute to the noble task of unification and ultimately he succeeded in bringing together the different kings under a

common flag. Thus he fulfilled the dream of his guide Chanakya to see India as a compact nation.

Besides showing the power and prudence of three men of destiny in the unification of India, the author has also attempted to reflect the different phases of Indian glory and fame. The description of India’s advancement in the field of literature, art, science, trade and commerce, the reference of India’s notable religious book like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Vedas, the Purans, the description of unity and cordial interrelation among all the Kingdoms of India, the spread of Indian civilization to the neighbouring countries as Java, Sumatra, Bali, and Malaya, duly reflect India’s rich culture and tradition and narrate the tale of ancient Indian glory.

Vimala Raina’s *Ambapali* (1962) also belongs to the same category of historical novels projecting the glorified image of ancient India of the period of lord Buddha. The novelist’s intention is well reflected in her introductory remark that her attempt is to bring to the light the live force of our country as far back as 600 B.C. and to portray its religion, culture, and philosophy.

G.D. Khosla’s *The Last Moghal*, published in 1970, also falls in the series of historical novels. It exhibits the contribution of the last Moghal emperor Bahadur Shah Jafar to the national cause. The novel throws light on the different facets of the socio-political picture of those days. The author’s chief objective to focus on the glimpses of India’s history was intended to make Indians aware of the sacrifice of our ancient
leaders and to arouse national pride and consciousness among the present readers.

The next historical novel in this regard is Bhagwan S. Gidwani's *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* (1976). Gidwani in this celebrated historical novel attempts to highlight the sustained efforts of Tipu Sultan to fight against the British rule to withhold the unity and integrity of India. P.P. Mehta observes: "The author's purpose is not only to rehabilitate Tipu Sultan in national memory but also to underline the lesson of history that India's real danger is the enemy within."1

Since literature in general is the mirror of society, the relation between society and literature is integral and pervasive. In fact, the range of social influences on literature is as broad as the entire range of operative social forces. The literature of a nation, besides reflecting the changes which take place in course of time in society, also reflects the basic national character of that nation. The same is true to the Indian-English fiction also. Since no creative writer living in the throes of such emotional turbulence of national experience, could stand aloof and was drawn into it, Indian-English novelist was also deeply inspired by the rising spirit of national consciousness. His inspiration knew neither linguistic nor cultural barriers and served to establish links between literature and society, between national awareness and prized traditions.

The emergence of national awareness in the form of political consciousness in Indian-English fiction is amply

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perceptible in early novels like *A Journal of Forty eight Hours of the year 1945* (1835) by K.C. Dutt and *The Republic of Orissa: Annals from the pages of the twentieth century* (1845) by S.C. Dutt. Both have anticipated the future glimpses of national scenario, one by a hundred and ten years and the other by seventy five years.

The story of *A Journal of Forty Eight Hours* is set in Calcutta in the year 1945. It depicts the revolt of the native students of the Anglo-Indian College of Calcutta against the unusual rapacity of imperial Government. It is clear from the following speech of Bhubanmohan, a young revolutionary:

"Consider for a moment the cruelties which from generation to generation you have suffered. What improvements in our conditions could be expected from the enormities of Clive, the despotism of Wellesley, the Wenton cruelty of Warren Hastings and the inordinate rapacity of our present odious Government? Let us unfurl the banner of freedom and plant it where Britannia now proudly stands."*1

It is, indeed, the author’s strong sense of nationalism that has made Bhubanmohan criticize so vehemently against the atrocities of the Britishers like Clive, Wellesley and Warren Hastings.

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In *The Republic of Orissa* also the author portrays the violent resentment of the native population against the misdeeds of the Britishers. In ‘A Journal of Forty Eight Hours’ revolt arises only in Calcutta but in the ‘The Republic of Orissa’ it comes from three states i.e. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa Battles take place for the cause of freedom. Moved by the patriotic spirit of simmering nationalism, the author intends to portray the launching of an anticipatory battle for the cause of India’s freedom by three states- Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Though it is only Orissa that wins out of three but it is not unworthy of arousing the people to the optimistic dream of freedom.

Here it is noteworthy to mention that the English translations of regional novels like *Anandmath* (1882), of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and *Gora* (1923) and *The Home and the World* (1919) by Rabindranath Tagore played a significant role in bringing the spirit of national consciousness to Indian-English fiction.

Bankim Chandra brought to Indian-English fiction the feeling of revolution and patriotism, fusion of moral strength with religious feeling into patriotic work (the religion of patriotism). His political novel *Anandmath* embodies the famous national anthem ‘Bandemataram’ which proved to be a call of nationalism.

Rabindranath Tagore’s *The Home and the World* is the story of growing nationalistic feelings among Indians in addition to the Bengal revolutionaries. Tagore in this novel has supported the cause of Swadeshi Movement through
peaceful and non-violent means. He denounces the evil motive of communistic ideologies of aggressive nationalism.

There are three main characters in the novel—Nikhil, his wife Vimala and his friend Sandeep. Nikhil is the exponent of the non-violent force of peace, Sandeep is an aggressive nationalist and Nikhil’s wife Vimala is motivated by Sandeep’s ideology of excitement. Both the friends Sandeep and Nikhil are ideologically polesapart. Sandeep like an arch villain robs Vimala of her money and gold for the continuation of the national movement. Vimala is torn between Nikhil and Sandeep and is temporarily swayed away by the maddening cry of pseudo-nationalism. Tagore through this story endeavours to reveal the fact of the mushrooming of treacherous villains during the crucial period of national awakening and robbing of innocent patriot on the name of patriotism.

Nikhil’s devotional love for India is shown as very refined and unshakable. He incites and arouses his countrymen to the national consciousness. His love for Swadeshi is reflected in the words of Vimala when she confesses:

“From the time my husband had been a college student he had been trying to get the things required by our people produced in our own country.”*1

As wisdom dawns on Vimala, she soon gets disillusioned by Sandip’s hollow cry of nationalism and

Swadeshi movement. The clouds of confusion about Nikhil’s ideology of non-violence and Swadeshi movement in Vimala’s mind got cleared and now she regards these means to be true and the real service of the nation. “In Home and The World, Tagore attributes this view to Nikhil, a character who seems to come close to representing Tagore’s own opinions.”

Thus, Tagore’s theme of *The Home and World* is replete with the gradual growth of national love and with the reiterative cry of famous anthem ‘Bandemataram’.

“Bande Mataram! Bande Mataram! Bande Mataram! It seems as though the skies would be rent and scattered into a thousand fragments.”

Tagore’s *Gora* is considered more than mere a novel because it projects Tagore’s patriotic aspirations of resurgent India. It came at a time when our social conscience, intellectual awareness, political consciousness and national identity were in the throes of great churning. No other book gives so masterly an analysis of the character of Indian nationalism as *Gora*.

The protagonist Gora is the symbol of devotion and extreme nationalism parexcellence. Since he has been brought up by Anandmayi (the symbol of India), his love for motherland

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is staunch and extreme. His body and soul are devoted to the service of nation. Gora's extreme sense of nationhood is revealed in these lines:

"When the whole world forshaken India and heaps insult upon her, I for my part wish to share her seat of dishonour- this caste-ridden, this superstitions, this idolatrous India of mine".*1

Gora is deeply hurt when he perceives that the vital feelings of patriotism in the masses are being suppressed mercilessly by the alien rule who judges the affairs of India from a tyrant's point of view. But he is strongly optimistic of India's freedom in near future. He confidently asserts his friend Binoy that India's struggle for Independence has already begun and he should wholeheartedly contribute to its fulfilment.

"Binoy, I urge you again and again, never even in your dreams think it impossible for our country to become free. With the conviction of its freedom firm in our hearts, we must keep ourselves in readiness- you want to rest content with the vague idea that at some propitious moment the battle for India's freedom will commence. I say that fight has already begun and is being carried on every moment."


*2. Ibid, P. 79.
Thus it is evidently clear that the English translations of these regional novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore provided an extra impetus to the portrayal of the growing national awareness in Indian-English fiction.

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