CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

The term ‘Indian English Literature’ formerly known as “Indo Anglian” or “Indo-English Literature” connotes literature written in English by Indian authors. It remarkably differs from Anglo-Indian literature which was created by Englishmen in India, who were fascinated by her romantic and exotic charm. They made India the main theme of their writings. It is for the most part, merely English literature marked by Indian local colour. Indian English literature is the outcome of the cross fertilization of two fruitful cultures – Indian and English. It is literature created by Indians both before and after independence. All Indian writers who wrote in English since the days of Raja Ram Mohan Roy down to our own time belong to Indian English literature.

English has been domesticated and nativized in India like one of our own languages. Hence literature written in Indianized and nativized English is Indian English literature. It bears an indelible stamp of indianness which implies life attitudes, modes of perception, life patterns, behaviour of the people and traditions that have emerged over the years in India. Indianness or the Indian experience of life cannot be restricted to rigid definitions, as its expression varies from person to person, writer to writer, poet to poet and novelist to novelist. It is this richness and variety of experience which imparts colour and beauty to Indian English literature. It embodies the Indian sensibility which has come down to us through the hoary Vedic period.

Indian writing in English developed in the beginning of the 20th century. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio was a pioneer both in poetry and journalism. He edited and published The East Indian. He taught English literature in Hindu College, Kolkata
when he was hardly eighteen. Although his poetry was influenced by English
romantic poets, patriotism and love for India distinguished his sonnets. His *The Fakir
of Jungheera, a Metrical Tale* (1828) expresses his social reform. It was influenced
by Byranic echoes. *The Harp of India to India* is an anthology of poems.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1827 – 1873) another great writer embraced
Christianity and married a European lady. He created Indian atmosphere and expressed
Indian sentiment. “Michael Madhusudan Award” for the Indian English Poets is
instituted after his wave. His *The Captive Lady* is a long metrical romance. He describes
the love story of Prithviraj and Samyukta. He made a conscious effort to use Indian
imagery and Indian sentiments.

Indianness is further developed by the great writers. Romesh Chunder Dutt
(1848 – 1909) is a man of versatile thoughts. He was a great master of English prose,
and he wrote History of Civilization in Ancient India, Economic History of India and
Indian in the Victorian Age. He did not write original poetry. He rendered into
English verse *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* in a style which is noticeable for
stateliness, dignity, solemnity, epic grandeur and lucidity. He imparted a touch of
originality to his translations. He skilfully adopted the metre employed by Tennyson
in *Locksley Hall* in the translations of *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. He also
translated into English selections from *The Rig-Veda, The Upanishads*, Buddhist
literature, Kalidasa’s *Kumarsambhava* and Bharvi’s *Kiratarjuniya*.

There are many writers in India, who has been influenced by the Britishers.
One such writer is Manmohan Ghose (1869 – 1924), who was influenced by
Wordsworth, Milton, Landor and Keats. He was the elder brother of Sir Aurobindo.
He served as a Professor of English in Presidency College, Kolkata. His wife’s
chronic illness, his own health and blindness added to his inner gloom and suffering. Manmohan, a heart broken poet, felt himself alien in the land of his forefathers. He was a gifted and versatile poet. He started composing lyrics at the age of seventeen and contributed poems to “Fox’s Family Magazine”. Some of his early poems appeared in “Prime Vara” to which Lawrence Binyon, Stephen Phillis and Arthur Griff also contributed. Ghose poetry is conspicuous for variety of themes. He was a Hellenist. He was a classicist. He does not interpret Indian thought and sensibility but interpret Hellenic spirit to India. He stands unrivalled in Indian English poetry. He was a great craftsman who deftly used various poetic forms – lyric, sonnet, epic, poetic drama, ode and elegy.

Swami Vivekanandha (1863 – 1902) and Swami Ramtirtha (1873 – 1906) were the pioneers of the saint poetry, which comes down to us from the heary ages of The Vedas, The Upanishads and the great epics The Ramayana and The Mahabharata which were composed by rishis embodying the spiritual heritage of India. The two illustrious saints, who were well versed with the use of English, composed beautiful poems soaked in India’s mysticism, spiritualism and vedantic wisdom. Both these saint poets belong to the Indian saint poetry of the school of Kabir, Tulsi, Sur, Mir, Tukaram, Dadu, Nanak etc.

Toru Dutt (1856 – 1877) belonged to a rich and respectable family. The Dutts were well known people of Calcutta. Her father Govid Chunder Dutt was a good linguist. Her mother was a deeply religious lady. Toru had an elder brother Abju and elder sister Aru. Toru had fragile health but highly intelligent and sensitive mind and heart. The family moved to Cambridge and Toru studied French and English literature. She joined Cambridge University and attended higher lectures for women. She
became a life-long friend of Mary Martin. She lost her brother and sister Aru. She learnt from her mother about the cultural greatness of India. She read *The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, The Sakuntala, The Vishnu Puran* and *The Bhagvad Gita*. Her *Ancient Legends and Ballads of Hindustan* was published posthumously in 1882. In it, she sang of the glorious vision of her motherland. *The Ancient Legends of Ballads of Hindustan* is her masterpiece. The narrative poems in this volume may be called ballad. The miscellaneous poems are highly imaginative and lyrical. *Lotus* and *Baugmaree* are well-known sonnets which reveal her love for nature. She is a skilled poetic craftsman and her technical skill is exhibited in metrical arrangement, diction, imagery and adroit employment of various verse genres. Her poetic diction is characterized by simplicity, ease and vigour.

Edmund Gosse was a poetical mentor who paid rich tribute to her short-lived life. Her poetry is characterized by 7 fine narrative presentations, simplicity of style and deft use of ballad measure. She borrowed her themes from Indian mythology and legends. She depicted famous mythological and Puranic characters like Savitri, Dhruva, Lakshman, Prahlad etc. Her works have indelible stamp of Indianness, mysticism, love for nature, fine narrative art and sensuous appeal which reminds us of Keats.

Behramji Malabari (1853 – 1912), a Gujarati Parsi has contributed to journalism and literature. He wrote in Gujarati and English. He was influenced by Tennyson, Wordsworth and also the Gujarati poet Premananda and Akho. He penned *The Indian Muse in English Garb* (1876), *Gurarat and Gujaratis* and *The Indian Eye of English Life*. Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) was the first Indian writer who gained a permanent place on the world literary map. He wrote mainly in Bengali but translated many of his Bengali poems and plays into English. So his renderings are
called transcreations. Tagore was a mystic romantic poet like Blake and Wordsworth, but his romanticism has a typical Indian flavor. His romanticism and mysticism was derived from the multiform streams of Upanishadic and Vaishnavic thought of his own country. In *Gitanjali*, mysticism and romanticism have been superbly blended together. W.B.Yeats, the poet Laureate of England, was so much impressed by it.

Sarojini Naidu (1879 – 1948) is a daughter of Dr.Aghorenath, who was an eminent scientist; and her mother was a pious lady. Her parents influenced her. Her brother Virendranath Chattopadhyaya was a linguist and revolutionary, and her other brother Harindranath Chattopadhyaya was a poet, playwright and composer. She inherited secular values from her family which are reflected in her poems *Ode to H.H.The Nizam of Hyderabad, The Pardah Nashin, Wandering Beggars, The Prayers of Islam*, and *The Old Woman and Imam Bara*. She began composing poetry at the age of twelve. Before leaving for England in 1895 she had composed many poems, including *Lady of the Lake* of 1300 lines. At Cambridge she came in contact with Sir Edmund Gosse, who recognized her poetic talent and advised her to seek motivation from India and not from England. Edmund Goose and Arthur Symons introduced her to W.B.Yeats, William Watson, John Davidson, Oscar Wilde and other members of the Rhymer’s Club, which was founded in 1890 by W.B.Yeats and Ernest Rhys. Her early poetry is imitative of English romantics and Pre-Raphaelites. Her poetry is suffused with Indian atmosphere and sensibility. Her poems always foreground India of palanquin bearers, corn-grinders, wandering beggars, paradah nashin, of meditation, love and solitude. She presents men and women of different ranks in society singing harvest hymn to invoke *The Lord of the Universe*, village folk singing Hymn to Indra, Lord of Rain, maidens, brides, mothers, widows, artisans, peasants, victors, scholars, priests, poets, dancers, weavers, bangle sellers etc.,
Sri Aurobindo (1872 – 1950) is known as the firebrand of India. He is a poet, a saint, a philosopher, statesman, yogi and a prophet. He is one of the pre-Independence Titanic trios of Indian poets – Tagore, Aurobindo and Sarojini Naidu. He is a great exponent and proponent of ancient Indian thought. He is a man of versatile genius and achievements. He was the profounder of Yoga, the prophet of Life Divine, the fiery revolutionary and nationalist, the illustrious scholar and interpreter of the Vedas, the matchless teacher, the poet, dramatist, critic, orator and prose writer par excellence.

He translated into English, the verses of Chandidas and Jananadas, Kalidasa’s Meghdoot, Vikramorvasi and Bhartrihari’s Niti Shatak. Sri Aurobindo also composed Urvasi, one of his finest poems which is remarkable for its epic majesty, love and death which deals with the theme of love of Ruru and Priyumvada. Sri Aurobindo is a poet-philosopher, poet-prophet and poet-visionary par excellence in Indian English poetry. He is a mystic. S.K.Ghose considers Sri Aurobindo as the poet’s poet.

Harindra Nath Chattopadhyaya, the brother of Sarojini Naidu was a dramatist, poet, actor, musician, mystic, Marxist and revolutionary. He was a born poet. He was regarded as distinguished poet as Sarojini Naidu. He was a mystic. He was primarily a lyric poet. His lyrics are simple, sensuous, direct, neither stale nor startling. His poems were regularly published in “Blitz” (Bombay). The Feast of Youth is the first example of his mysticism. It is full of Aurobindonian mysticism. The poet experienced mystical joy in God and Nature, something of the direct God-union. The poem on Shiva has the typical stamp of Indianess. Spring in Winter is a collection of poems in which love is the cardinal element. It contains 209 lyrics. They vividly record various moods of lover – moods of union and separation, joy and sorrow.
The new poets got rid of the stigma of writing under English influence. The new poetry is not imaginative and romantic as was the poetry in the previous generation. It is remarkable for fecundity, originality, experimentation and the vivid presentation of contemporary reality. The World War II anticipated the modern poetry. The harsh reality of the war, the political and economic uncertainties created a spirit of protest and resentment against the existing order in literatures of all over the world. The new poets discarded the influence of the Romantics and the Victorians and preferred Walt Whitman, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, W.H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, Allen Tate and Wallace Stevens. Indianness is permeated in modern poetry. It is the inborn Indianness, the feeling of being Indian in the real sense that has fascinated the modern Indian English poet. Tradition penetrates deeper and deeper into the poet’s consciousness and influences his observations of the living present. The past, thus, runs into the present and shapes the future. Our racial or local history, have shaped modern poetry. Love, sex and man-woman relationship are dealt with frankness and clarity in the poetry of Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Shiva K. Kumar, Jayant Mahapatra and many others. Modern Indian English poetry is urban and intellectual.

Nissim Ezekiel is a man of varied interests. He was the professor of English in Mumbai University. He was a Professor at Leeds University in 1964 and in 1974 he was an invitee of US Government under its International Visitor Programme. In 1975, he went to Australia as a Cultural Award Visitor. Although his interests and occupations were varied, his primary interest was poetry. He was the great Indian English poet in the Modern Age. He has attained a very high place in the world of poetic art as a poet of international standard. He may truly be called the barometer of Modern India’s Literary Atmosphere. His poetry is the discovery of self, the identification of his self with his environment. Despite his Jewish background Ezekiel shows no feeling of
alienation and rootlessness in his poetry. He has achieved complete identification with his environment as is evident from the careful study of his poems, especially Island, Minority poem, India, Case study etc. He is an urban poet, a poet of the city, Mumbai, which symbolizes Modern urban life with all its complexities. His poetry is noticeable for the depiction of typical Indian ethos. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983. His poetry collections include - A Time to Changes (1952), Sixty Poems (1953), The Third (1959) and The Night of Scorpion. He is the first Modern Indian English poet to express Modern Indian sensibility in the Modern Idiom.

A.K.Ramanujan – He is a bilingual poet who is well versed in Kannada and English. He worked as lecturer in English at Quilon, Belgaun and Baroda for eight years. He served for a number of years as the William E.Colvin Professor in the department of South Indian Languages and civilization and Linguistics at the University of Chicago, U.S.A. Ramanujan, a versatile author has copiously translated from Tamil and Kannada into English. He was awarded Padma Sri in 1976 and Mac Arthur Prize in 1983. He was influenced by the poetry of Wallace Mariane Moore, Philip Larkin, Ted Hughes and Thomas Gun. Under the influence of these poets he became the pioneer of a new kind of poetry, the poetry of self. His translations include Fifteen Tamil Poems (1965). He was awarded the Gold Medal of Tamil Writer’s Association for his The Interior Landscape (1967). R.Parthasarathy is celebrated editor of Poetry From Leeds and Ten Twentieth Century Poets. His Rough Passage (1976) is remembered for this volume of verse. It is divided into three parts – Exile, Trial and Home Coming. It is an autobiographical interest. P. Lal is the pioneer of modern Indian English poetry and the founder of the Writer’s Workshop, Kolkata. He was awarded Hawthoranden Prize for Poetry in 1958. His favourite themes are love, nature and man.
Indian English Novel is developed in the late twentieth century. R.C.Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore are the Three Musketeers of Bengali Literature. R.C.Dutt wrote six novels in Bengal. Two of them translated into English. His *The Lake of Palms* (1909) is based on the theme of widow marriage and has a social purpose. Another novel *The Slave Girl of Agra* (or) *Madhavi Kankan* (1909) is a historical romance of love, intrigue and jealousy. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838 – 94) is generally called “the Father of Bengali fiction”. He wrote 14 novels. Some of them are historical, social and philosophical with stress on renunciation and non-attachment. His famous novel *The Poison Tree* (1884) is a story of Hindu life in Bengal. His other novels are *Kapalkundala* (1885), *Durgeshnandini* (1890), *Krishankanta’s Will* (1895), *The Two Rings* (1897), *Rajmohan’s Wife* (1904). *Anand Math* (1884) is his most famous work which deals with Bengal famine and contains the famous song ‘Vande Mataram’.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote his novels in Bengal and he has written three novels in English. *The Wreck* (1921) is an immature social novel which discusses the problem of marriage. The name of the hero is Ramesh who finds himself in a boat which is wrecked in the Ganges, with a girl who is not his real wife. The story has a happy ending as with the meeting of Kamala with her husband Nalinaksha. *Gora* (1923) is his most famous novel. In this patriotic novel, Tagore expresses the voice of the resurgent India longing to throw away the yoke of slavery. *Home and the World* (1919) is a social novel which includes a deep psychological character study. The story revolves around three characters Nikhil, Bimala, Nikhil’s wife, Sandip, Nikhil’s friend. Tagore is one of the pioneers and greatest writer of short stories in India. *Hungry Stones and Other Stories, Mashi and Other Stories, Broken Ties and Other Stories, Glimpses of Bengal Life* are his collection of short stories.
K.S. Venkatramani’s *Paper Boats* (1921) gave a few vignettes of South Indian life. His *Murugan, the Tiller* depicts the vivid pictures of village life. *Kandan, the Patriot: A Novel of New India in the Making* (1932) is set against the background of the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930s. A.S.P. Ayyar is a historical novelist. He combines history with imagination. His famous novels are *Baladitya* (1930), *Three Men of Destiny* (1939), *Humayun Kabir, Men and Rivers* (1945). *Three Stories* (1945) is the first poignant love tragedy in rural background.

K.A. Abbas is a famous journalist and film producer, director. He is a famous novelist and short story writer. He translates his social vision into artistic terms and reveals infinite sympathy and compassion for the underdog. Like Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and C.N. Zutshi, he was greatly influenced by the freedom movement. Many of his novels were written in Urdu. His *Inquilab* (1955) was his famous novel influenced the struggle during the nineteen twenties and thirties. It gives a vivid and realistic description of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The influence of Mahatma Gandhi and the Khilafat Movement on the author is quite visible in the novel. His novels are *One Thousand Nights on a Bed at Stories, The Black Sun and Other Stories* (1964), *Mera Namm Joker* (1970), *Blood and Stones* (1947) is a novelette. It is about communal disharmony.

D.F. Karaka is a man of versatile genius. He is an aggressive writer with social purpose. He wrote three novels *Just Flesh* (1940), *Three Lay the City* (1947) and *We Never Die* (1944). Dhan Gopal Mukherjee wrote many books on Indian village and wild life. His novels are *My Brother’s Face, The Secret Listeners of the East, The Face of Silence, The Chief of the Herd Hari, the Jungle Lad and Gay Neck.*
The post-independence novel has shown signs of maturity from the viewpoint of technique, style and language. Mulkraj Anand (1905 – 2004) was greatly influenced by Premchand on the one hand and Tagore on the other. He is often known as the mouthpiece of the underdog. He is a prolific writer and a short story writer. He is a social reformer, realist, and humanist. He is the harbinger of social change and he has exposed with frankness the shames and hypocrisy underlying the polished veneer of social life with Dickensian piquancy of realism. Untouchable (1935) talked about the social injustice and underdog of a community. It is his first novel won him the Sahitya Academy Award in 1972. It has been described as a ‘minor classic’. The novel records the events of a single day in the life of a sweeper boy Bakha, the hero of the novel. Two Leaves and a Bud (1937) is the story of Gangu, a simple Punjabi peasant who joins the tea-plantation of Assam with his wife and daughter. Like other coolies they are also subjected to injustice and exploitation by white tea-planter, Roggie Hunt. The Village (1939), a trilogy consists of The Village, Across the Black Waters and The Sword and the Sickle. The Big Heart (1945) is the best of his novels which opens with the conflict between the coppersmiths and the capitalists. As the tale proceeds, a feverish atmosphere is created resulting in the tragic climax – the death of Ananta. The Old Woman and The Cow (1960) tells the story of a cruel husband and a meek wife. Gauri tolerates the abnormal behaviour of Panchi like a true Hindu wife but gets nothing but brutality, distrust and suspicion. The novel is the most effective one as a piece of implied indictment of cruelty against wives.

R.K.Naryan (1906 - 2005) is the pioneer of regional novel. The imaginative region of Malgudi is the domain of Narayan’s imagination. Scott created the Waverley, Wordsworth immortalized the Lake District in his poetry, Hardy’s Wessex
is the district more real than the present districts of England and Arnold Bennett’s Pottery Town has their own individuality. He has written the autobiographical novel in his trilogy – *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1936), *and The English Teacher* (1938). In his *English Teacher*, Krishna’s wife Sushila dies half-way through the novel, - yet she comes back to be with him forever spiritually. Krishnan is enabled to establish, after a long practice, a psychical contact with her spirit. A realization that eases the pain of his wounded heart and enables him to come to terms with life.

*Mr. Sampath* (1952) is a novel about a lovable rogue. Mr.Sampath is innocently crooked, cunningly foolish, unselfishly selfish and sadly cheerful. He is a masterly first impressionist in whose spacious gestures and rich evasive words a creaky press and one exhausted boy somehow becomes a big establishment. In *The Financial Expert* (1955), Margayya is the central character in it. He dreams of wealth, his ambition to rise in social status, his innocent pride in his badly spoiled son and his inner confusion – all these form the rich texture of the novel. He is cautious, shrewd, evasive, superstitious, ambitious and self confident. The novel is about the rise and fall of Margayya’s fortune.

*The Guide* (1958) is his famous novel. He won the Sahitya Academy Award for this in 1961. It is the story of Raju, a restless and ambitious shopkeeper on Malgudi Railway station who turns as a tourist guide who discharges of such duties in one case rides on the crest of an adulterous passion for Rosie, a dancer, right into jail. At the conclusion of a two-year imprisonment, he emerges only to embark upon another crisis of his life which ends with his last adventure in realms of enforced sainthood. The story has two parts – the past and the present. The past story is narrated by
Raju, the present by the author. The past and the present are related by the skilful plot
construction.

*Waiting for the Mahatma* (1967) presents a full-length portrait of Mahatma
Gandhi as a character and not as a symbol. Events from 1941 to 1948 cover the pages
of the novel. Its action ranges from Malgudi to Delhi. The love story of Bharti and
Sriram advances in the background of the freedom struggle. The novel closes with the
close of the Mahatma’s life. In *The Vendor of Sweets*, Mahatma Gandhi is kept in the
background and his influence is made to be felt indirectly. Jagan is constantly brought
out as a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. He has been in jail during the freedom struggle
and on occasion plies a ‘Charkha’. He draped his shoulders with a ‘Khaddar’ shawl,
and shod his feet with thick sandals made of the leather of an animal which had died
of old age. In Jagan, Narayan has depicted a ‘Karmayogi’ who lives in accordance
with the teaching of the “Gita”. He can dispense with sugar and believes in
Naturopathy. It is unbelievable that anyone should bite a pig’s tail first thing in the
morning.

Raja Rao came under the influence of Prof. Dickinson, the famous educationist,
who soon discovered Raja Rao’s gift for writing and encouraged him in the study of
French and English literature. At the age of twenty, he went to France as a research
student of literature and western mysticism, and studied at the University of Montpellier
and the Sorbone. In 1930, his first collection of short stories “Javni” was published in
France. He is the novelist of the Gandhian age. He is one of the recipients named in
1988 for the 25,000 dollars Nenstadt International Prize for Literature. He was also
awarded the Padma Bhusan for his literary achievements. He introduced the elements
of an epic breath of vision, a metaphysical rigour, a philosophical depth and a symbolic
richness in Indian English novel. He has produced a truly Indian species of novel. He has learnt the art of narration from Joyce, Conrad, Valmiki, and Ved Vyas. He subtly weaves Indian sensibility, tradition, myth, mysticism, religion and narrative technique in the themes of his novels. He is a recipient of Padma Bhushan Award in 1969. His novel *Kanthapura* (1938) deals with the theme of Gandhian impact on a village community. It is narrated by the village grandmother by a series of happenings. Moorthy is a follower of Mahatma Gandhi. He works for the uplift of the untouchables and becomes an enemy of the orthodox Hindus. He is ex-communicated by local guardians like Swami Atmananda, the great Vedantic philosopher. He is arrested for his nationalistic activities and sentenced to three months imprisonment. After having completed his term of imprisonment, he returns and starts his Civil Disobedience Campaign among the labourers whom he incites not to pay their taxes. So he wins the favour of the village community.

Raja Rao’s another novel, *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) won him the Sahitya Academy Award for this novel in 1964. If *Kanthapura* is Raja Rao’s *Ramayana*, *The Serpent and the Rope* is his *Mahabharata*. *The Serpent and the Rope* is the symbols of fantasy and reality in Indian tradition. The central character of the novel, Ramaswami is a South Indian Brahmin. He is in France writing a doctoral thesis. He is trying to connect the Albegensian heresy with Brahminical influences. He marries a French girl Madeline. They are blessed with a child who dies while Ramaswami is on a visit to India. He meets Savitri and they become lovers while he is researching in London and Cambridge Universities. But Savitri marries a government official. While Rama is on a second visit to India, Madeline’s second child is born dead. He returns to France and finds that she has already taken up Buddhist penances
for purification. His thesis is completed; he applies for divorce and sets out for Travancore in search of “Him” without knowing His name.

*The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) is his third novel which deals with a few middle class families of Kerala during the period of the Second World War. Nair and Pai are the next door neighbours. Pai has a wife (Saroja) who is practical minded, and two young children Usha, the girl and Vithal, the boy. Pai falls in love with a young school-mistress Shantha who has a child by him. Shantha also gives him her private money for the purchase of a house. Pai’s friend Govindan Nair loses his little son Shridhar who is supposed to marry Pai’s daughter Usha. He is charged with bribery and is locked up in prison, though he is ordered to be released by the High Court. After release he shifts elsewhere from Trivendrum. The cat plays a central part in the incident at the office which was evidently meant as a practical joke against him. But the joke has a tragic consequence for the office boss. Bhootlinga Iyer dies when the cat jumps on his head. The cat is produced in the court too. The reader is persuaded to believe that the cat serves as the linchpin that keeps this whole delicate fabric together.

G.V. Desani, a famous novelist wrote a number of novels. His *All about Mr. Hatterer* (1948) is a comic novel. It is a complex novel combining a variety of themes – East-West encounter, search of identity in the midst of national and cultural restlessness. Sense and non-sense, humour and irony, lofty wisdom and sheer buffoonery, fantasy and realism, comedy and tragedy, pathos and bathos are packed together in this novel.

Another famous novelist is Bhabani Bhattacharya, who has contributed six novels. His novels grasp the meaning and matrix of movements in society and document them. His *So Many Hungers* (1946) gives a realistic picture of man-made
famine in Bengal in 1942. The story centres around the Basu family, the peasant family, the girl Kajoli, her mother and her brother. Samarendra Basu thinks of organising the concern of Bengal Rice Limited and the unscrupulous Sri Lakshminath helps the company extend its branches to every far-off corner of the province. It is this man’s genius that has so well spread the grease of corruption and stored the accumulated food grains. The wells of pity seem to have almost dried up and only the jackals and the vultures have been vigorous and jubilant. His *Music for Mohini* (1952) deals with caste distinctions and poverty. In this novel, a young girl of seventeen is married in the traditional manner after observing the auspicious signs and comparing the horoscopes. Mohini goes to her new home. Jayadev, the quite scholar who lives in his ancestral village, and Mohini, the young city-bred wife of his who adapts herself very well to her new environment are the two forces that put the village on the path of progress and modernisation. The superstitious old mother of Jayadev realises in the end her mistake and reconciles herself to the changing times. The characters of Mohini and Jayadev and Heealal are well drawn with sculpturesque precision and facile expression.

Bhattacharya’s *He, Who Rides A Tiger* (1954) is an attack on both who protested on people’s misery during the famine and those who exploited them as caste tyrants. It is a legend of freedom, a legend to inspire and awaken. Here he discusses a variation on the theme of hunger. A humble village blacksmith, named Kalo takes his revenge on a rigid, caste-ridden society and makes a living for himself and his daughter by faking a miracle – a miracle that begins as a fraud and ends as a legend and passing himself as a Brahmin priest. The story ends with a note of triumph for the soul over flesh.
Eventually when the fraud is detected, other low caste people hail him as their brother and the outraged upholders of caste are custom panic.

Bhattacharya’s *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960) is a masterly satire on those who live by the lure of Gold. It tells how high spiritual values like spontaneous kindness are sought to be prostituted for purpose of gold. It is a modern fable of rural India and the close textured fabric of its life on the eve of Independence in 1947. Meera’s grand-father, a wandering minstrel gives her an amulet (an ornament or small piece of jewellery thought to give protection against evil or danger) and tells her that it will acquire the power to turn the base metals into gold, if she does an act of real kindness. She rescues a child. Seth Samsunderji seeks to profit out of India’s new found freedom and enters into a business deal with Meera on a fifty-fifty basis. Meera gets disgusted with if finally and throws the amulet into the river. The minstrel returns soon and explains that freedom is the real touch stone. His *Shadow from Ladakh* (1967) was awarded Sahitya Academy Award for 1967 for this. He deals with the topical theme of China’s betrayal of India. It provides an insight into the contrasting contemporary life of India symbolised by Satyajit who regards Indian village life as the ideal life and by the Westernised American trained Bhaskar, the forward-looking Chief Engineer in a steel-plant, who feels India’s future lies in industrialisation, ends on a week note of co-existence of these two ideologies. Bhaskar wants to disposses Gandhigram, because it is a hindrance to India’s industrialisation.

against the Union Govt’s Seige of The Golden Temple, Amritsar. He has published four novels. His *Train to Pakistan* (1956) won the Grove Press Award for this. It is his first novel. It is described on partition of India. It is set in an imaginary village called Maono Majria, which is situated on the newly drawn India-Pakistan Border in 1947. It is a realistic masterpiece which contains a well thought out structure, an artistically conceived plot, an absorbing narrative and imaginatively realised characters. Khushwant Singh’s *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959) describes the life of a Sikh family in pre-independence days with care and sympathy.

Manohar Malgonkar, a born story teller is worked in the Indian Army during the Second World War and ranked of Lieutenant Colonel. His novels are remarkable for thematic variety – military life, the life of princes, the communal frenzy, during the partition of the country and the mutiny of 1857. His *Distant Drum* (1960) explains his army experiences. It is his first novel. His *The Princes* (1963) is about disintegration of old aristocratic system in India. *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) is a fictional leave out of pre-Independence Indian history.

Chaman Nahal was worked as a teacher in Delhi University. His *My True Faces* (1973) is about the broken marriage. His famous novel *Azadi* (1975) is a partition novel which won him the Sahitya Academy Award for this novel in 1977. Another novel *The English Queen* (1979) is remarkable for technical excellence. It is racially and vigorously told by the omniscient narrator.

Arun Joshi (1939 – 2003) is an outstanding novelist of human predicament. He brought out in his novels the inner crisis of modern man. His protagonists are alienated from the sinister, materialistic world around them and they try to work out their destiny in their own way. He was influenced by Camus, Sartre and Kierkegard. He was also influenced by the Gita and Mahatma Gandhi. His novels present the existential vision of life. He received the Sahitya Academy Award in 1982. His

Salman Rushdie is one of the most controversial novelists in contemporary literature. He is a writer of global fame. The content of his novel is realistic and is based mainly on contemporary history. His *Grimius* (1975) allegorizes the politics of Western powers is a science fiction. The predominant element of this novel is fantasy. His *Midnight’s Children* (1981) deals with distorted politics of eastern Hindu India. It discusses with the vivisection of political secularism and may be termed a historical political secularism and may be termed a historical political fantasy about the Indian subcontinent. It is a prose epic which spans six decades and almost three generations of India’s pre and post, colonial 20th century history. *Shame* (1983) dramatises military politics of the divided Muslim India. It is about truth. It is a political novel about the creation of Pakistan which was unreal before August 15, 1947. His most famous and controversial novel is *The Satanic Verses* (Published on September 22, 1988). It was nominated for the Booker Prize. It is considered to be one of the most controversial books in modern literature. It has been alleged that it contains passages and descriptions which hurt the feelings of the followers of Islam and hence the Govt. of Iran had passed the sentence of death on Rushdie, which was lifted after many years when he tendered an unconditional apology to the Muslim World. It has been banned in a number of countries including India. The great literary celebrities like Tom Stoppard, the playwright; Kingsley Amis, the novelist, the renowned poets Stephen Spender and Philip Spender have condemned the ban on *The Satanic Verses*
which is written in Rushdie’s famous style of magic realism. It is one of the most misinterpreted and misunderstood books.

Vikram Seth is a famous novelist. His *From Heaven’s Lake* is a travel book about China. His *The Golden Gate* (1986) is a novel in verse consisting of 596 sonnets. He was inspired to use the poetic form for novel by Alexander Ruskin’s masterpiece, *Eugene Onegin* (1831) which is skillfully written in the poetic form. It has been admired as a great masterpiece. Gorey Vidal called it the great California novel. It is divided into thirteen parts, which thematically depict alienation and isolation that characterize contemporary life, life of yuppies, a succession of romantic relationships, including a homosexual one, anti-war demonstrations, hobbies, wine making and pet iguanas. It is a unique artistic feat, which is infused with charm, elegance, wits, effortness fluency and flawless mastery over language. *A Suitable Boy* (1994) is his masterpiece. *Two Lives* (2005) is a biography of Seth’s maternal great uncle, known as Shanti uncle and his wife Henry, is a best seller.

Upamanyu Chatterjee, an IAS Officer wrote number of novels. His *English August: An Indian Story* (1988) exposes the moribund culture of Babudom in this novel. *The Memories of the Welfare State* is a sequel to *English August*. It exposes the hollowness of the welfare state which is managed by political dynasty and serviced by a sovereign state within the state of civil servants.

Amitav Ghosh is a print journalist with “The Indian Express” during the Emergency. He observed minutely the changing political and social conditions in India. His *The Circle of Reason* (1982) tramples the ground from an obscure village in Bengal to Mediterranean ports and takes in its sweep electric ideas and cultures. *An Antique Land* (1986) focuses on a narrator’s family in Kolkata and Dhaka and their connection with an English family in London. He won the Sahitya Academy for it. *The Calcutta Chromosome* is his third novel. It is a science fiction won Arthur
C.Clarke Award, British’s top science prize for it. *In An Antique Land* (1992) is an anthropological historical inquiry by a novelist with an abundant imagination.

P.V.Narsimha Rao, the former Prime Minister of India, published his famous autobiographical novel *The Insider* (1998). Anand, the protagonist is the writer’s alter ego. It is neither a regular autobiography, nor entirely a work of fiction. It meshes historical reality with the lives of characters that are both fictional and semi-fictional. *The Insider* tells the truth of the writer who has been in the thick of politics for about half a century. The truth has been fictionalized.

David Davidar’s *The House of Blue Mangoes* (2002) is a novel of epic dimension. It spans three generations and a pretty long span of Indian history from the far end of the nineteenth century to Independence in 1947. He has created a fictional region Chevathar, where are abundant groves of Chevathar Neelam the blue mangoes. It stands comparison with Narayans’ Malgudi. Davidar has created a fictional world both compelling and complete.

Andrew Harvey is known for his debut novel *One Last Mirror* (1985). It is a story of a 70 year old Sri Lankan woman, Savitri. Andrew Harvey has presented in this riveting novel, a microcosm of the world today, a world where people thrive for their own petty interests, unaware of the consequences that may follow. And once they realise the futility of their life, they run away from the truth the last mirror they are uncomfortable with.

Rohinton Mistry is known for his famous novel *Family Matters*, which is one of the best sellers in India. The hero of the novel is Nariman, a Parsi, who is compelled to abandon his beloved Lucy, as he is pressed to marry within the Parsi brethren. Nariman’s tragedy gets redoubled when in the concluding parts of the novel, his son-in-law Yezad, previously a moderate, and changes over to life of a fundamentalist.
The novel contains highly moving scenes and situations while presenting an overall picture of mid-1990 Mumbai life. He was shortlisted for the Booker Prize.

Women novelists emerged in the second part of the twentieth century. Some of the novelists wrote novels before independence, but they were not famous. Kamala Markandaya is a famous novelist. Her themes are the tension between tradition and modernity, rural poverty and hunger, conflict between the rural and the urban, East-West encounters, industrialization and its impact on tradition, psychological maladjustment and husband-wife relationship etc. Her famous novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) deals with the theme of hungry and rural life. Nathan and Rukmani represent the East, whereas Dr. Kenny represents the West. The novel is a sad tale of hunger, starvation and helplessness. Hunger drives Ira, the daughter of Rukmani to prostitution. The novel depicts the suffering of the poor, illiterate Indian people but also their fortitude and courage. Her *Some Inner Fury* (1955) is a novel of violence and destruction. *A Silence of Desire* (1960) depicts the East-West encounter in the form of a conflict between the Indian spiritualism and the western modernism. The conflict between the husband and the wife in the novel represents the conflict between science and superstition. The novelist tries to bridge the charm between matter and spirit. *A Handful of Rice* (1966) is one of her famous novels. It is on love and poverty in poor segments in Calcutta society. Her other novels *The Coffer Dams* (1969) is laid in the jungle of South India. The novel deals with the conflict between materials versus spiritual values. It is on the predicament of migrants caused by dam construction. *The Nowhere Man* deals with the theme of East-West encounter through individual relationships and experience. The characters in the novel are Indian immigrants in England who experience the sense of alienation and rootlessness. The
novel is an indictment of violence of all type. *Two Virgins* refers to the East-West encounter in the form of a contrast between the traditional simple village life and the artificial city life. It is a story of two sisters – Lalitha and Saroja. Lalitha is lured by the glamour of city life and the film world but she is disillusioned in the end. *The Golden Honey Comb* is a historical novel which assesses Indo-British relations. It is on East-West dichotomy.

Ruth P.Jhabvala is a German citizen married to an Indian architect. She occupies a unique place in Indian English novel. She has written about delicate relationship and family life in her novels. She expresses her characters in a humorous and ironic manner. *To Whom She Will* (1955) is depicted the contemporary life of Delhi. *The Nature of Passion* (1956) depicts realistically the life of upper classes in New Delhi. *Esmond in India* (1958) is a serious of social comedy. *The Householder* (1960) is a life of newly married couple in Delhi is discussed. *Heat and Dust* (1975) won her the prestigious Booker Prize in 1975. It is a story of two women Olivia and the young anonymous narrator. The narrator is a step granddaughter of Olivia. The young narrator comes to India to know about the step grandmother’s life. Olivia was the wife of Douglas, the assistant collector of Satipur who is attracted to young and handsome Nawab of Khatm. She has sexual affairs with him and becomes pregnant. She lives in the mountains as the mistress of the Nawab. The narrator also has sexual encounter with Chid, an Englishman turned into Hindu Sadhu and also with Inderlal her clerk lover. She, like Olivia becomes pregnant but she decides to have the baby and live in the mountains and join an ashram.

*Sunlight on A Broken Column* (1960) is Ruth P.Jhabvala’s autobiographical and retrospective novel. It deals with a young woman Laila’s personal crisis set
against the larger historical background of the independence movement in India. She is an orphan girl living in a Muslim joint family. The novel depicts the freedom struggle with the events of history like the Second World War, communal violence, and attainment of independence and partition of the country. The plot is the story of Laila’s revolt against the joint family system which treats women like caged animals. The conflict between society and individual has been depicted in the novel.

Anita Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) describes the story of the psychological problems of a young girl called Maya. Her *Voices in the City* describes the wretched life of Nirode, Monisha and Amla in the city of Calcutta. In it, the city Calcutta is personified as the city of Kali, the Goddess of Death. *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971) is her third novel which deals with the predicament of Indian immigrants Adit and Dev in London. The title of the novel stands for England’s bidding farewell to an Indian – a ‘blackbird’. The novel contains three parts – ‘Arrival’, ‘Discovery’, and ‘Recognition’ and ‘Departure’. Her fourth novel is *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975) describes the anxiety between Sita, a sensitive woman and her rational husband Raman. Her *Fire on the Mountain* won the National Academy of Letters Award in 1978. The novel deals with the story of an old lady Nanda Kaul, who dies at the end due to her psychological problem. Her novel *Clear Light of Day* describes this novel as a ‘four dimensional piece’. The novel is about time. It highlights time as a destructive force and a protective force and about what the bondage of time does to people. It is the story of Bimla. It is divided into four sections.

*Village By the Sea* (1982) has a rural background. It depicts the psychological conflicts of the character. Lila, a girl of thirteen years and her brother Hari, a boy of twelve years take care of themselves. They also look after their younger sisters Beta
and Kamal. Besides, they are suffered due to the ill-health of their mother and the unemployment of their drunkard father. *In Custody*, the protagonist of the novel is Deven Sharma who is a lecturer of Hindi in a college at Mirpore near Delhi. He is a naive. He is a young man. He is influenced by an idea of creating a work of his lifetime but unfortunately defeated by his own helplessness. Her other novels are *Baumgartner’s Bombay* (1988), *Journey to Ithaca*, *Fasting Feasting* (1999) and *The Zigzag Way*.

Nayantara Sehgal is the daughter of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Jawaharlal Nehru’s Sister. She is a blessed writer. Her main concern is human value. *A Time To Be Happy* (1957) is a light but a realistic novel of upper-class society just before independence. Here we find the enigmas of the East-West encounter. The protagonist Sanad Shivapal faces the problem of regaining his roots because of his English education and distance from his own culture and people. Her *The Time of Morning* (1965) recapitulates the political happenings during the last years of Nehru’s government. The characters can be equated with historical figures. Her next novel, *Strom in Chandigarh* (1969) records the events that followed partition of Punjab into the Hindu dominated Haryana and the Sikh dominated Punjab. The novel centres round the theme of violence, disorder, chaos not only at political level but also at the personal level. It depicts the violence that enveloped the free India during the sixties. Harpal Singh of Haryana and Gyan Singh of Punjab symbolise opposite political ideologies. Gyan Singh resorts to politics of intimidation and suppression while Harpal Singh stands for justice and liberal outlook. Gyan Singh links the issue of Punjab with language and religion for his personal position. Harpal Singh disapproves of the partition of states based on religion or language. Vishal Dubey is an officer
appointed to watch over the situation is perturbed that Harpal Singh decides to resign as he feels incapable of fighting against the divisive forces.

Nayantara Sehgal’s *The Day in Shadow* (1971) is written with delicate sensitivity. Raj, the protagonist is a modern liberal humanist like Vishal Dubey. He possesses intense love for life. Simrit, the wife of a Punjabi industrialist, soon gets a divorce from her husband and falls in love with Raja, an MLA. It is a well-told story with Simrit’s psychological sufferings after separation from her husband. It also gives an authentic picture of political bureaucratic life in Delhi. *A New Situation in New Delhi* (1977) deals with the life and love of Devi, a minister. It is a novel about petty politicians without any morals and frustrated young people who turn into terrorists. Devi’s own son Rishard seeks refuge in terrorism. There is also a character despite his wife’s attachment to Pakistan. Shivaraj, the charismatic leader is dead but his greatness is remembered and cherished by the characters like Usman. Nayantara Sehgal’s other famous novels is *Rich like Us*.

Kamala Das is a well-known Kerala writer who writes equally well both in English and Malayalam. She is a poet, novelist and short story writer. She was converted into Islam in 1999. She is known as Suraiya Begum. She is a poet, novelist and prose writer. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1985. Her name was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature. She was bestowed Kent Award for Asian English Writing. Vayalar Award for Literature and Ezthuthachan Award for her outstanding contribution to literature and language. Her two novels deal with the quest for identity in a male dominated society. *Alphabet of Lust* (1980) is the story of Manasi, the heroine and her unhappy married life with Amol Mitra, a Government official who looks old enough to be her father. Manasi becomes a poetess out of her melancholy and despondency. She develops sexual relations with Vijay and other
important people. She receives many prestigious awards because of their influence and favour. She is even appointed the Home Minister.

Shashi Despande deals with the issues concerned with the women’s movement for liberation. *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) presents the upsurge of feminine rebellion against conventions and parental authority through the character of Sarita. *Roots and Shadows* (1983) won the Thirumathi Rangmal Award. *That Long Silence* (1988) – Quest for identity is the theme of this novel. She was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award for this novel. Jaya is the central character of the novel. She is a writer, sensitive observant, questioning and determinedly objective about her own experiences. Her power of self-determination is corroded by interiorization of patriarchal role expectations. The result of perpetual lack of individuation causes an intense self-alienation.

Gita Mehta is a well-known novelist. Her novel *Karma Cola* deals with the theme of age-old tradition turning into commodities. Her novel *Raj* is about bloody civil wars of independence. Her novel *A River Sutra* is the story of a bureaucrat who retires to the sacred river in search of tranquility but he encounters a girl who has run away from her kidnappers and a naked ascetic and the child he has saved from prostitution. Vanity of so-called religious people has been exposed through the tale of the monk. Mehta satirises the hypocrisy of the religious practices and beliefs. Gita Mehta presents the paradoxes and contradictions in religious practices in India.

Shobha De started her career as a journalist and edited – Stardust, Society, and Celebrity. She writes columns in “The Times of India”. She is a renowned contemporary Indian English novelist and TV serial script writer. She is a staunch exponent of women empowerment, recognizes the displacement and marginalization
of women in India. She has feelings of sympathy for the women who have forsaken domesticity and marriage, and assert their identity. She is a modern novelist who emerges as the spokesman of the urban woman in her novels. She deals with sex in a frank and forthright manner. Her greatness lies in her intimate understanding of the psyche of women. She is really a feminist writer. Desire to be loved and romantic adventures are the recurring themes of her fiction. Her protagonists try to seek new selves and a fresh truth in their romantic or sexual adventures. She has tried to expose the moral and the spiritual vacuum of modern men and women in urban society. Her style is racy and yet simple, poetic and metaphysical.


Bharati Mukherjee’s life and works are very interesting. She is an Indian-born American novelist and a short-story writer. Her works reflect Indian culture and immigrant experience. She was born in Calcutta, West Bengal, India. She later travelled with her parents to Europe after Independence, only returning to Calcutta in the early 1950s. There she attended the Loreto School, Kolkata. She received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Calcutta in 1959 and her Master of Arts from
the University of Baroda in 1961. She next travelled to the United States to study at the University of Iowa. She received her Master of Fine Arts from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop in 1963 and her Doctor of Philosophy in 1969 from the Department of Comparative Literature. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She is also a U.S. citizen.

Mukherjee married writer Clark Blaise in 1963. Together they have written two works of nonfiction, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* (1977) and *The Sorrow and the Terror: the Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy* (1987). After more than a decade, Mukherjee with her husband and two children returned to the United States. She has taught at McGill University, Skidmore College, Queens College, and City University of New York. Her early and popular work of fiction is *Jasmine* (1989). In this novel, a young Indian woman becomes an illegal immigrant to the United States and acculturates by taking on a series of different identities.

Mukherjee strives in her novels to understand what is meant by the idea of an American identity, and whether in a world of hybridity and multiplicity, such a notion can exist. This is particularly evident in her more recent works *The Holder of the World* (1993), *Leave It to Me* (1997) and *Desirable Daughters* (2002). Her latest novel is *The Tree Bride* (2004).

*The Tiger’s Daughter*, published in 1972, Mukherjee creates a heroine, Tara, who, like herself, returns to India after several years in the West to discover a country quite unlike the one she remembered. Memories of a genteel Brahmin lifestyle are usurped by new impressions of poverty, hungry children, and political unrest.

Mukherjee’s second novel, *Wife*, is the story of a young Indian woman, Dimple, who attempts to reconcile the Bengali ideal of the perfect passive wife with the
demands of real life. Dimple's arranged marriage to an engineer is followed by the couple's immigration to a New York City neighborhood.

The gradual merger of the First and Third Worlds is the topic underlying *Jasmine*, Mukherjee’s third novel. Jasmine, a poor but independent young Hindu woman, leaves her native country after her husband is killed in a terrorist bombing, gaining passage to Florida via ship. Brutally raped by the ship's captain whom she kills in self-defense, Jasmine travels to New York City to work as an au pair for a Yuppie couple and as a language tutor at Columbia University. After the couple’s relationship goes sour, the Indian woman moves to Iowa, where she hopes to escape the flux of modern society.

Mukherjee has proved her skill with short stories as well as novels. *Darkness*, published in 1985, contains a dozen tales, most of which were written shortly after the author had moved from Canada to the United States. All of the stories feature immigrants who attempt to transcend either their cultural past or the unpleasant circumstances of their present. Particularly in the stories that take place in Canada, racial oppression predominates. In *The World* according to Hsu, for example, the title character becomes almost paranoid due to the overt contempt for Indians exhibited by those she seeks to call her fellow countrymen. Mukherjee’s second story collection *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988) focuses on the immigrant experiences in the United States and Canada; *The Middleman* continues to examine the intimate commingling of East and West. Through narrators that include a Smyrnan mercenary, an investment banker based in Atlanta, and, particularly, Indian women attempting to redefine their traditional Hindu upbringing within a far more liberal American culture, Mukherjee’s stories remain unsentimental yet affecting in their approach.
After a ten-year sojourn in Canada, Mukherjee returned to her native country in 1973, accompanied by her husband, Clark Blaise, who was visiting for the first time and eager to embrace his wife’s former culture. Together they encountered an India neither anticipated: she found a world far less innocent than the one she remembered, and he met a people more enigmatic than he had imagined. Rather than examine the culture broadly, as her foreign-born husband can, Mukherjee sees individuals, particularly those upper-class women with whom she grew up and who she would have become.

Mukherjee produced another critically praised novel with *The Holder of the World*. Framed by the narrative of Beigh Masters, a self-styled asset searcher on a client-directed quest for a large diamond known as the Emperor's Tear, the novel takes readers three centuries into the past of both the United States and India. The novel’s heroine, Hannah Easton, is a rebellious young woman born in Massachusetts in 1670. As the daughter of a Puritan mother and her Native American lover, Hannah is abandoned by her mother, whose defiance of Western culture serves as an example to her daughter. Hannah's life progresses unconventionally; she marries an East India Company trader and travels to India. There, after being abandoned by her husband, who has become a pirate, she takes Indian lovers, eventually becoming the wife of a prince. It is told in Mukherjee’s wonderful prose, whose economy allows for lyricism without clutter, noted Kathryn Harrison in Chicago *Tribune Books*. Hannah’s life is the same sort of cross-cultural fairy tale that captivated in *Jasmine*, Harrison concluded.

Mukherjee’s common themes of identity and dislocation are again a part of *Leave It to Me*, which was published in 1997. As in *Jasmine*, the central character passes through many earthly incarnations. Born in India to an American mother and a
Eurasian father, she is abandoned and then placed in a home in Schenectady, New York. Eventually, Debby leaves her adopted Italian-American family to look for her birth mother in San Francisco. There, she finds the ex-flower-child who is her birth mother, has sexual intercourse with the man she believes is her biological father, abets her mother's murder, and flees the police when an earthquake diverts their attention from the crime scene. Debby reinvents herself as Devi Dee, not realizing that this name of an Indian goddess is embedded in the name of the village of Devigaon, where Debby/Devi was born.

Contemporary Novelists commented that this is Mukherjee's most American work and they are calling *Leave It to Me* as an enigmatic and alarming meditation on the consequences of America's recent past—the hippie culture of the 1960s, Vietnam—rather than a novel of dislocation in the diasporic sense of her earlier fiction. In this novel Mukherjee's shift from immigrant diasporic writer to multicultural writer is complete. Still, the essayist had some qualms about the book, noting that few of the characters are as convincing as those who populated her earlier works, and at times the level of coincidence works against this novel.

*Leave It to Me* is, concluded Friedman, a novel of new realism, post feminist and post canonical American narratology. The novel is a warning that what America sowed in the Sixties, it will eventually have to reap. In Mukherjee’s view, this has led to a generation of adults with an inflated sense of entitlement and a shriveled sense of accountability. And it has bred kids like Devi, who have grown up hungry for their own apocalyptic role in history.

Mukherjee’s works focus on the phenomenon of migration, the status of new immigrants, and the feeling of alienation often experienced by expatriates as well as
on Indian women and their struggle. Her own struggle with identity first as an exile from India, then an Indian expatriate in Canada, and finally as a immigrant in the United States has lead to her current contentment of being an immigrant in a country of immigrants. Mukherjee’s works correspond with biographer Fakrul Alam’s categorization of Mukherjee’s life into three phases. Her earlier works, such as The Tiger’s Daughter and parts of Days and Nights in Calcutta, are her attempts to find her identity in her Indian heritage.

The Tiger’s Daughter is a story about a young girl named Tara who ventures back to India after many years of being away only to return to poverty and turmoil. This story parallels Mukherjee’s own venture back to India with Clark Blaise in 1973 when she was deeply affected by the chaos and poverty of Indian and mistreatment of women in the name of tradition. Her husband, however, became very intrigued by the magic of the myth and culture that surrounded every part of Bengal; These differences of opinion, her shock and his awe, are seen in one of their joint publications, Days and Nights in Calcutta. The second phase of her writing encompasses works such as Wife, the short stories in Darkness and the Sorrow and the Terror, a joint effort with her husband. These works originate in Mukherjee’s own experience of racism in Canada, where despite being a tenured professor, she felt humiliated and on the edge of being a housebound, fearful, obsessive, and unforgiving queen of bitterness. After moving back to the United States, she wrote about her personal experiences. One of her short stories entitled Isolated Incidents explores the biased Canadian view towards immigrants that she encountered, as well as how government agencies handled assaults on particular races. Another short story titled The Tenant continues to reflect on her focus on
immigrant Indian women and their mistreatment. The story is about a divorced Indian woman studying in the States and her experiences with interracial relationships.

The origin of the word ‘Diaspora’ is from the Greek ‘dia’ (through) and ‘speirein’ (scatter). As such, it gives the sense of dispersal through space. Going into the history of its usage, we find that it was first applied to the Jewish community, which had been stateless since Biblical times and was spread all over the world, where it faced discrimination and oppression. The term ‘Diaspora’ referred to these Jews. It was only in 1949 that the present state of Israel was carved out of the Palestine territory occupied by the Allied Powers during the Second World War. This creation of the new nation has not been peaceful and even now it continues to be a major cause of conflict in West Asia.

However, the term became popular and was used in the context of other nationalities which had been scattered from the original homelands due to one reason or the other. Not going far back in time, we can relate the present major Diasporas to the period when certain nations of Europe became maritime powers and started the phase of colonization which led to the system of slavery whereby human beings were forcibly captured and made to work like cattle in distant colonies. The black population of America owes its origin to this inhuman practice.

When slavery was abolished by the British Government in 1833-34, France and Holland also followed suit. In its place, the system of indentured (agreement) labour was introduced and large contingents (dependents) of people were taken from colonies by the colonizers to other places where they were treated as bonded labourers. It happened in the case of Indians who were taken to far-off Mauritius, Fiji or South Africa by the ruling British to work as plantation workers. Other colonial powers like France and Portugal also took Indian workers to Surinam, Martinique,
Angola, Mozambique, etc. Similarly, Indian soldiers were forcibly sent by the British rulers to fight wars on their behalf.

The past century witnessed large-scale displacement and dispersal (scattering) of populations across the world as a result of major political upheavals – among them the two European wars decolonization and the Cold War. Following these, globalization, spurred by free trade and increased capital flows, and new technologies of communication, information, and travel, has accelerated the movement of people, commodities, ideas, and cultures across the world.

Diaspora is regarded not as a singular phenomenon but as historically varied and heterogeneous in its aspects. The transnational mobility of people may be the result of forced or voluntary migration, of self-exile or expulsion. Refugees, people in transit, are the product of war, ethnic conflict and natural calamity.

So far as we in India are concerned, the second wave of immigration was not under duress (pressure, force, threat, coercion, compulsion, constraint). Business-minded Gujarati people moved to certain African countries like Kenya and South Africa for the sake of establishing business there and created what is dubbed as the ‘trade Diaspora’. The recent times saw the migration of skilled and semi-skilled manpower, mainly from Kerala, to the oil-rich Sheikhdoms of the United Arab Emirates. Also professionals and entrepreneurs went to the First World countries like the UK and the USA. After a gap this trend has picked up in our times as the third wave of migration of professionals and educated elite, who have gone wherever they could find greener pastures.

All such Indians who have been living outside India constitute the Indian Diaspora. The Indian Diaspora, which is twenty million strong and is scattered in
more than 110 countries of the world, has never stopped looking back at their homeland. When India was under the British Rule the Diaspora shaped the history of the independence movement of India but then a little chaff always comes with the grain. Even though distinction has to be made between forced and willing movement of people, the phenomenon of Diaspora necessarily involves a structure of location followed by dislocation and relocation. Moving away from one’s homeland and settling elsewhere on a long-term basis does mean dislocation that brings in a sense of loss and nostalgia. This is followed by a bid for relocation in an alien milieu through negotiation and adjustment. And yet there is no guarantee that the outcome will be sure success; hybridity or in-betweenness being quite common here.

The diasporic communities are defined as the groups of people that are distanced from their homeland – as political and economic migrants in search of work or refugees escaping war. The experience of exile may be accompanied by a sense of belonging to the former homeland and a continued allegiance to that remembered culture while staying within the host country.

As such, the Diasporas can be defined as heterogeneous cultures, spatially separated from their place of origin yet living between places in their identity and cultural life. The stress on in-betweenness in such cases has to be underlined here. This very characteristic has been brashly put forth by Salman Rushdie in his *Imaginary Homelands*: “Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools” (15).

Pointing to the common characteristics of the Diaspora members, William Saffron comments that they retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland and believe they cannot be fully accepted by their lost society and
therefore feel partly alienated. At the same time, they regard their ancestral homeland
as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendents would (or
should) eventually return when conditions are appropriate. They continue to relate to
that homeland and also feel committed to its maintenance or restoration. As can be
seen these characteristics are not without gaps and contradictions which is a
concomitant of the essentializing process that overlooks the differences in which the
Diaspora members live. According to Bill Ashcroft, “The development of diasporic
cultures the ideology of the unified, ‘natural’ cultural norm, one that underpins the
centre/margin model of colonist discourse” (70).

It is common experience that when one driven away from home due to
economic compulsions/ambitions, has been living abroad for a long time, one feels
home-sick. This is on two counts: One misses the extended family and friends back
home. The time spent in the country of origin is the early part of life – childhood,
adolescence, etc. when experience of life under the care of parents is positive and
enjoyable. Secondly lack of proper adjustment within the milieu of the adopted
country at a state in life when struggle is called for, makes one turn to pleasant
memories of the native land. In such a situation, the bonding of culture, religion,
literature and language is especially strong among the expatriates. But whereas it
provides ethnic identity and a sense of self, it can also alienate one from the host
culture. It is this displacement which gives diasporic writing its peculiar sense of loss
and nostalgia. Therefore, loss and nostalgia constitute key elements of any diasporic
writing. At the same time it gives vent to certain alienation due to incomplete assimilation
in the adopted society, which has much to do with factors like race and ethnicity mostly marked in body colour and features, which cannot be wished away.

Another way to look at the diasporic writing is to note the motifs of dislocation, homelessness, rootlessness and escape. These are the narratives of grief and joys, aspirations and helplessness. It is this experience that is sought to be transmitted to readers through the diasporic literature. It would be seen that the diaspora writers are obsessed with search for identity and their writing displays a poetics of exile and displacement. Some of the common themes of the diasporic writing focus on the linkage between the individual and his socio-cultural environment. It also stresses the importance of religion and an ethics that is based upon religion.

So far as the writers of the Indian Diaspora are concerned from Raja Rao and G.V.Dasani to Jhumpa Lahiri and Arvind Adiga, a number of them have tried to give expression to their experience and reflections. One can simply not miss out on Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, V.S.Naipaul, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohinton Mistry, M.G.Vassanji, Amitav Ghosh, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Firdaus Kanga, Boman Desai, Kiran Desai, Irwin Allen Sealy, Ardashir Vakil, Hari Kunzru etc.

The area of Diaspora studies is a multidisciplinary one which has linkages not only to literature but also to anthropology, geography, psychology, post-structuralism theory, history, cultural studies etc. The postcolonial thinkers are involved in Diaspora studies in a big way as the phenomenon of cross continent migration picked up again after the decolonization. Among the leading theorists of the Diaspora studies may be counted Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gloria Anzaldua, Stuart Hall, James Clifford,
Paul Gilroy, Rey Chow, Arjun Appadurai, Theodor Adorno, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, etc.

The problem of identity is writ large all over diasporic literature. Franz Fanon (1925-61), the French-Algerian psychiatrist in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) writes about the situation of the Antilles islands, which were the French colonies in the Caribbean and were populated mainly by the erstwhile black slaves brought there by the colonizer. Fanon comments that the language is the most significant identity marker and that its replacement with any other language – the colonizer’s in this case – divests the colonized not only of his language but also of his cultural moorings. He notes that those black Antilleans in the French army, who had been taught French – the language of power –, used other compatriots as interpreters to convey orders of their French masters to native Antilleans. Those Antilleans who understood French used French only to emphasize their difference from his compatriots. Most of the Caribbean people now speak Creole in place of their native language. A psychiatrist as he is, Fanon avers that this compulsive use of French impinges on the sense of identity of the native people – a black Diaspora – and affects their psyche.

Though the situation in India is a different one, Homi K. Bhabha comments in *Nation and Narration* edited by him that “Cultural difference emerges from the borderline moment of translation . . . the transfer of meaning can never be total between differential systems of meaning” (314).

In his book *Location of Culture* (2004), Bhabha expounds his concept of hybridity at length. The postcolonial discourse attaches great importance to the question of identity. First underlined in the context of newly-free nations, the notion
was quickly taken up to described the condition of any minority group pitted against a majority based on different colour, race, sex, etc.

In the case of the immigrants in any society, their identity is threatened by the culture of the host country. The trajectory (route) of a migrant follows the pattern of location, dislocation and relocation, each one of these phases being luminal rather than sharply defined ones. The process of acculturation is a slow one-sided one and is not without a sense of loss and exile. It is also not a clear transformation; it gives rise to hybridity marking different stages of acculturation. According to Homi-Bhabha, “This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (2004:4).

In his Decolonization and the Decolonized (2006), Albert Memmi reconsiders the myth of return with regard to the Diaspora. The commonly held notion has been that the life of the migrant is temporary and sooner or later, he must return to his homeland after satisfying his quest for green bucks or career goals. But Memmi debunks this stand with regard both to literary characters and the discipline of ethnographic studies of the Diaspora communities. The idea is that there is never a complete integration into the adopted society / country / culture.

Paul Gilroy in his books The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (1993) and After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture? (2004) approaches the issue of Diaspora through the concept of black Atlantic world. What he means by this is the interconnectedness of all the black people living in the world on the basis of shared histories between the blacks and the whites. The latter point harks back to the times when the Europeans travelled to Africa, brought back Africans as slaves to work in the Caribbeans and then shipped back to Africa the goods
produced by those slaves. It does not merely lead to the feelings among the black people that they are both ‘insiders’ as well as ‘outsiders’ with regard to the West, but it also enables readers to read the European history afresh.

Gilroy considers that the development of Britain cannot be viewed as discrete or separate from the development of the black Diaspora. Thus, the concept of relational identity of signifiers is transplanted in the area of racial development by him. On the other hand, W.E.B.DuBois, another theorist, argues that, imprisonment within racial identity meant that the racial group attained greater importance for the individual than the nation itself. Also segregation leads to inculcate a hatred of the other race.

Sindhu Menon in her article “And then Again, Why not?” writes about the unbound of and unrecorded alternative histories and subaltern voices of the so called ‘little people’ which confesses that our annals and pathetically incomplete and impoverished. Veena Agarwal in the article “Cross Cultural Dilemma in Bharati Mukharjee’s Desirable Daughters,” briefs about changes in cultures undergone by protagonist and her wish to return to her origin. It also tells about the Indian life, Indian values, dignity of rituals, the fidelity to traditions and the grace of human relations. Manju Jaidka in her article “Expatriate Writing from India: So What’s Indian About it?” attempts to define the critical space the diasporic Indian writers occupy. She discusses the position of a gamut of expatriate writers like Bharati Mukherjee and many others. Rochelle Almedia in her article “Representation of South Asian Feminity: Evolution in Bharati Mukharjee” delineates the trauma of the hyphenated identity in writing of Bharati Mukherjee and traces the evolution of her female characters to being wide-eyed ingeneous in the West, naive, helpless and
determined to fit in, to being confident professionals who live life in the west on their own terms.

The present researcher’s title focuses on the theme of “Diasporic Disintegration and Reconstructing Identities” which focuses on how chief characters proclaim themselves with a momentous presence in the dominion of society and culture. The culturally constructed images are restructured by themselves so as to scratch a new path of their own thereby carving a distinctive identity for themselves.

The present researcher has done an in depth study of Bharati Mukharjee’s four diasporic novels namely *Jasmine, Desirable Daughters, Tiger’s Daughter* and *Wife*. The research is about the problem of identity, exploitation, suppression, sufferings, transformation and endurance faced by the women in an alien country.

The thesis is comprehensively divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces Diaspora, its genesis and its repercussion. It also traces the various aspects of Indian writings in English, biography of Bharati Mukherjee and her contribution to Diaspora literature. The second chapter investigates the various aspects of culture and its diversifications. The chapter also discusses the cross cultural conflicts in the novels taken for study. The third chapter is oriented towards the cause of establishing an identity. The fourth chapter explores reconstructing cultural identities. The fifth chapter summarises the research problems and its possible outcome.