**INTRODUCTION**

Indian English literature is the cultural manifestation of the British dominion over India, that brought out the flowering of the English language in the British government's endeavours to promote English education and culture in India. Two factors have been mainly responsible in this respect, first the concentrated efforts of the missionaries who set out to spread the Christian religion through printed material like sermon-pamphlets, prayer books and news sheets, and secondly, the reformers and educationists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Edward Hyde East and David Hare, who pushed forward the English language as the medium of introduction in schools and colleges. The latter were aided by public speakers like Thomas Babington Macaulay, who forcefully defended the cause of English in India.

The missionaries brought out through the print presses, several important English language works such as dictionaries and grammar books. They were instrumental in publishing India's first English language newspaper *Hicky's Bengal Gazette* in 1730. Along with this revolutionary change in the world of written work, another momentous transformation was taking place in the world of education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy urged the introduction of the English language at the
educational level because he foresaw the Western education as the instrument of modernization both in the religious and social fields of India. Englishmen like David Hare and Edward East wanted Indians to have modern education and liberalized viewpoints to have greater regard for English culture and literature. Though Macaulay's intention in promoting the English language was mainly imperialistic, yet he also held the view that Western-educated Indians would be more an asset than the Orientalists who were clamouring for the importance of Sanskrit and Arabic languages. His inspired speech in favour of English as the medium of instruction in schools, which he delivered as the president of the "Committee of Inquiry into Public Instruction", carried the issue, and in 1835, the council under Governor General William Bentick passed a minute on education, making English the medium of instruction in government subsidized schools. This marked the beginning of the use of English as the official language of India. Even before this, the private schools, established in 1717 at Madras, in 1718 at Bombay and in 1720 at Calcutta were already imparting education through the medium of English. Thus from 1835 onwards, English began to be considered as the most important language both in the educational and literary fields.

The Indian Renaissance, which started in the later half of the nineteenth century, witnessed the growth of the
vernacular and the Indian English literature. The latter, which began initially in the form of translations from Indian religious works in English prose, soon blossomed in the form of poetry of great significance towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The novel and the short story, though less popular earlier, developed into dominant genres in Indian English literature during the period of the Indian National Movement for Independence.

The Indian English literature which acquired a great vogue in modern India, has been subjected to wide-ranging criticism on several issues pertaining to its nomenclature, the desirability of the choice of English as a medium for creative expression and its controversial association with the Indian or English tradition of literature.

The present appellation, Indian English literature has come through different variations that marked its development as a vehicle for mature creative writings of Indians in English. The works of English writers who took up Indian themes, were given the name of 'Anglo-Indian' literature. This term was also applied in the beginning to the Indians who wrote about their native land in English. Thus a fundamental difference between these two kinds of writers - a foreigner writing with fluency and ease in his own
language about an alien land and people, and a native depicting themes intimately connected with him through his birth, in an alien language, was over-looked. Edward Farley Oaten uses the term 'Anglo-Indian' to cover all such writings in English about India, in his Essay published in 1908 in the form of a book entitled A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature. Dr. P. Sheshdhari and Dr. Bhupal Singh have also used the term 'Anglo-Indian' writing the cover the contribution of both the Indian and non-Indian writings about India in English. Dr. Bhupal Singh treats the English fiction of the early Indian writers in a five page appendix bearing the heading 'A Note on Some Indian Writers of English Fiction' attached to his brilliant work A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction. Mr. George Sampson, the author of The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, has devoted a chapter to Anglo-Indian literature, which includes for critical evaluation, both English and Indian writers writing about India.

In the early forties Dr. K.R.S. Iyengar felt the need of distinguishing the writings of English men about Indian life from those of Indians writing on Indian themes or their experiences abroad in English. While he maintained the nomenclature 'Anglo-Indian' literature for the former, for the latter he coined the application 'Indo-Anglian.' Thus 'Anglo Indian' Literature included the contribution of writers like
Flora Annie Steele, Medows Taylor, Rudyard Kipling and the recent ones like John Masters, Jim Corbett, Kenneth Anderson, Mary Taylor, even including the most criticised of them all, Katharine Mayo. They were set as a class apart from the Indian writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Bose, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu etc. who came to be designated as Indo-Anglian writers. Prof. Iyenger points out that the term 'Indo-Anglian' was used as early as 1883 to describe a volume printed in Calcutta containing "Specimen Compositions from Native Students".

Though 'Indo-Anglian' literature gained a wide popularity as the nomenclature for the literature written by Indians directly in English, the alternative terms like 'Indo-English literature' and 'Indian writing in English' were also frequently used by the writers and critics. Despite the suggestion of V. R. Sokak and Jyotirmoy Mukherjee to use 'Indo-Anglian' for original Indian writing in English and 'Indo-English' for translations into English of regional Indian literature, 'Indo-English' continued to be in vogue as a designation for the former as well. Prof. Amritjit Singh is of the view that despite the difficulties sometimes expressed in using 'Indo-English' as a substantive, "it remains a preferable description". This debate, however, seems to have come to a close after Sahitya Akademi's decision on the
basis of Muluk Rajanand's suggestion, to describe the Indian literature written directly in English as 'Indian English Literature.'

Whether Indian English writing is to be treated as a variety of Indian literature or English literature, is another problem that confronts the critics. Since it is the creation of Indians and represents their lives and aspirations, it is likely to be classified as a part of Indian writing. On the other hand, as its medium is English, it claims very justifiably to be treated as a kind of regional branch of English literature. The Times Literary Supplement for instance prefers to regard Indian English writing as a regional branch of English literature. It however appears anomalous to treat these writers as English merely because they write in English; after all what Americans and Australians write is no more regarded as English literature either. It is true that early Indian English writers like Toru Dutt, Janmohan Ghose, Aurobindo Ghose and others wrote mostly in the English tradition and hence their writings could, with some justification be regarded as an extension of English literature. The later Indian English writers, particularly the more recent ones have, however, completely broken away from the tradition of the earlier ones. It will, therefore, not be proper to classify them as a part of English literature.
Most of the contemporary writers are at one with each other in treating Indian English literature as part of the Indian literature. This approach is appropriately in consonance with Indian English writer's own sense of his being part of the Indian literary scene. R. Lal, in the Writers Workshop Credo that prefaces his huge Anthology, *Modern Indian Poetry in English* is emphatic on this point and most of the poets included in his Anthology agree with him in regarding themselves as Indians. They see nothing Un-Indian or alien in their use of English for creative expression. As Keshab Malik puts it: "Certainly, one's personal identity cannot change easily, but language is only one of its configurations. I can not become English; I will remain a foreigner. But I am not foreign to English." Prof. Iyenger for example aptly points out:

We can not list Ram Mohan Roy and Ranade, Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Tilak and Gokhale, Tagore and Gandhii in the Calendar of our prophets and poets and yet cultivate a blind antipathy towards the language they used as the forceful means of communicating their meaning and message to India and the world. These stalwarts were among the makers of modern India and what they said and wrote must therefore be cherished as our national literature. English, then is one of our natural languages and Indo-English literature too is one of our national literatures.

Some of the writers even argue that Indian writing in
English is more Indian than the writings in regional languages, for while they represent their own regions, it alone reflects the variegated life of the country as a whole. It is national while they are pronouncedly regional. Indian English literature is, therefore, to be considered Indian as Canadian and Australian literature, though written in English, is Canadian and Australian and not English.

Still more exciting is the controversy that has raged about the choice of English as a medium of self expression by Indians. While W.B. Yeats disapproves of the Indians' attempt to write in English because he feels "no man can think or write with music or vigour except in his mother-tongue," there are others who assert that English has not succeeded in wholly acclimatizing itself to the Indian soil and that no Indian knows it well enough to be able to use it as a suitable medium for his creative writing. Iqbal Singh, who describes Indian English literature as the 'hybrid' product, points out that the Indian writer, writing in English, does violence to his spirit as well as to his instrument of communication:

"In trying to convey one's spirit through someone else's language one is apt to do violence both to the spirit that is struggling for expression and to the instrument of communication. Not frequently, this leads to a breakdown of articulation, the setting up of an impediment not to voice alone but to the
pulsation of the mind behind the voice, and ultimately even to a kind of intermittent imaginative mutism which is the deadly enemy of promise. At any rate, in India, despite a long tradition of bilingualism to which Raja Rao refers, the result has been an enormous and wholly unnecessary stultification in wastage of talent.

M. Chalapathi Rau's observations regarding the use of English by Indians are more denunciatory than those of Iqbal Singh:

"Indian writing in English is at its best composition, and the best of it is translation. Nothing more is possible except for someone who can live the language, think the language, and write, not compose in the language. The English of the New Delhi drawing-rooms is not a living language and the idiom of places which are familiar in films is not speech. We have no prose; we have strings of words: gawkily arranged like beads. There is no rhythm; there is at best a street-walker's gait. The present sentiment, the Tughlak Road propriety, or the occasional bout of bearishness is not reality.

The mandarins have not brought a renaissance in the teaching or writing of English. They are teachers of English, Indian teachers of Indian English. When encounter emissaries encourage us to write Indian English, they forget there can be no Indian English. Americans have English as their mother tongue and they make it; even the Australians make it. But nobody thinks of Japanese English or even Canadian English. Indian English is just bad, Babu English.

Some of the writers object to the use of English as a
medium of creative writing in India because they presume that since an Indian writer is using a foreign language, he is incapable of expressing in it the nuances of an Indian sensibility or of relating his perception vitally to the landscape and movement of Indian life. It is pointed out that Indian consciousness can be expressed only through an Indian language and that the attempt of the Indian novelist in English to depict the life of those whose emotional and intellectual life is fashioned by a different language is characterized by a total absence of the mutual nourishment between the writer and his society. Kailasapathy and Anantha Murthy remark:

"English with most Indians is still a language of official public affairs, of intellectual and academic debate. They do not use English for their most intimate purposes, "to think and feel, bless and curse, quarrel and kiss."9

Sachchidananda Vatsyayan, a leading Hindi writer, thinks, "India can not have a literature..... I mean a great literature, one in which her spirit will find expression... except in an Indian language."12

It is also often argued that -

"The Inoo Anglian tends to write with an eye on an outland reading public and picks up themes and situations that might appeal to the West."13

Indian English writing is, therefore, considered more
as a guide literature than an independent creative writing. It is treated as a product of external necessity than of the inner urge of the writer. Michael Edwardes, for example, observed:

"There is also the fact that Indians writing in English are writing specifically for a foreign market. They are, therefore, more inclined to supply what they feel the market requires rather than writing something from their experience or out of their heart. Today an Indian novelist writing in English hopes of course to make both reputation and money in the West, in the English speaking part of it at least, and if there is to be any chance of success there, he must make his book suit the people who, he hopes, will read it".14

Krishna Baldev Vaid endorses this view when he remarks:

"Most Indian writers in English have found the temptation to pad their works... this refers specifically to fiction— with dead details of tourist interest almost irresistible. Hence the charge that their foreign audience has a conditioning influence on their work, on its quality seems to me to be valid."15

It is, however, lost sight of that an Indian English writer may also write to satisfy his creative urge and that his work may also grow "in its own environment" and may thus be "recolent of soil". If he chooses to write in English, it is because he is more at home in it than in any other
language and also because he considers it as the best medium for self expression. In a country where English has occupied the pre-eminent position for more than a century it should not be considered a rare phenomenon. Bhabana Shattarcharya emphasises the fact that it is the writer himself who is most competent to judge which medium suits his purpose best and in which he can express his creative urge fully, when he writes:

...The Indian writer must be free to use any language he likes unharrassed by criticism either tacitly implied or plainly stated and by any kind of compulsion, direct or indirect, which may come out of the strengthening mood or linguistic chavinism.... The concept of freedom will have to include the medium of expression to which the writer, out of his inner urge, commits himself.... It is far more difficult to write creatively in a foreign language than in one's own. But that must be regarded as the writer's own business.

G.D. Sarasimhaiah endorses this view when he remarks: "I presume that no one who can write a great poem or novel in an Indian language prefers to write an inferior one in English. The medium is a matter of inner compulsion and it will be rejected if it inhibits response, distorts truth, does not create what it pretends to convey. Joseph Conrad has admitted: 'If I had not written in English I would not have written at all.'
Judged from the artistic point of view, some of the works of Indian English writers are of very high merit. They have been warmly commended by the established foreign critics and authors like Edmund Grosse, Arthur Symons, E. M. Forster, Graham Greene etc. It will be wrong to suggest that these critics and authors are dishonest in their views and that they praise Indian writers only to flatter them. There is no gain in denying the fact that Indian English writers like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Shabani Bhattacharya, B. Rajan, Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and others are able to express themselves in English both with freshness and lyricism. They have also enriched the English language considerably by annexing to it new forms of expression, metaphoric idiom, imagery and prose rhythm. This distinctive contribution of Indians to English, has not escaped the notice of even some of the English critics. Robert Layne in a book review (of one of the Indian English novels) headed "Alien Rhythms in Our Prose," observes thus in this connection:

The English language is being perpetually renewed from abroad. Italian and French worked on the English tongue in the age of Elizabeth, so that there are times when even Shakespeare seems to be thinking in some language which is not English so much as a compendium of two or three languages. There is
richness in the diversity. Now, when all the world this side of the curtain knows some English, we can expect increasingly to come upon books written by foreigners who know our language well, yet they write it with prose rhythms borrowed from their native tongues.\(^\text{18}\)

The very fact that Indians still continue to produce creative works in English - and their number is legion now - even when the British have left India, proves that English has come to stay in our country as one of the significant mediums of our expression, both in creative writing and day-to-day communication. David McCutchion has correctly remarked: "By a strange irony, Indian literature in English has been flourishing since independence more successfully than it even flourished before."\(^\text{19}\)

Indian English literature came into limelight with the poetical writings of Henry Derozio, Sora Rutt and her sister Aru, Nirmal Shander Rutt, Manmohan Ghose, Sri Aurobindo and Sarojini Naiou in the later half of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century. Indian English poetry fell in a state of torpor after the valuable contribution made by these great writers. Though there were some sporadic and stray experiments by minor poets, English poetry in India did not make any great strides in the thirties and the forties. There was, however, a sudden spurt of poetry from the 1950s onwards.
The new Indian English poetry has emerged into a self-conscious movement. The new poets believe that English could come "into its own as a language capable of poetry only after Indians got rid of its original speakers." According to them, "Indian poetry in English does not seriously begin to exist till after independence."21

These new voices are represented by Kassia Ezekiel, Kadal Ves, K. Parthasarathy, K.N. Karuwalla, ... Satyak, Neil Jessuwalla, Jayanta Chopatra, British Teddy and others have completely dissociated themselves from the earlier Indian English poetic tradition. They feel it was high time the past of Indian English verse was forgotten. By persisting to speak in the borrowed voice of the English poets, the Indian poets lost, over the years, the use of their own voice. They consider earlier Indian English poets as 'colonialists' and abjure their romantic tradition to veer round their own type of realistic poetry, which looks inwards towards the roots of personal experience. They reject the fruitless dialogue with eternity and superfluous search for the spiritual dimension to man's fate and instead look into themselves and search for their answers there. They deal with the din and hubbub, the confusion and indecision, the flashes of beauty and goodness of their own age and treat of man-woman relationship in blunt, bitter and concrete terms.
The writings of these poets have won wide acclaim both in India and abroad. Some of them, like Nissim Ezekiel, are fairly well compared with the contemporary English poets like Thomas Blackburn, Thom Gunn, Philip Larkin, for the use of deft precision of phrase, everyday subject matter, self-irony, distrust of passion and hatred of pretension. As new voices are being added to their fold every year, one can hope with some justification that Indian English poetry will continue to flourish in our country.

The beginning of Indian English fiction is not associated with such glamorous names as we come across in the genre of poetry. Most of the novels like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's "Narayan's Wife", Roru Butta's unfinished "Biance or The Young Spanish Maiden", K. Chakravarty's "Barla and Hingane", K. Rajan Iyer's "Vasudev Shastri" which appeared in the later half of the nineteenth century were in the form of romances and could not provide any serious study of Indian life. The only significant contribution to the field of Indian English novel was made in this period by Lal Behari Ray whose "Bengal Peasant Life" is a very mature work both because of its genuinely realistic presentation of Indian peasantry and labour class in the mid-nineteenth century and the artistic portrayal of living characters.
The first two decades of the twentieth century also witnessed the vogue of romances in Indian English fiction. Among the most well-known of these are Sardar Jogencar Singh's *Nurjaha*, *Razneen*, *Kamla* and *Kamni*, Bal Krishna's *The Love of Kusuma*, S. Chose's *The Indian Lights* or *The Trials of Narayan Lal* and *The Prince of Destiny*, S. Mitra's *Hindupore*, L. Rama Krishna Pillai's *Ragini: An Indian Romance*, *The Drive for Death* and K. C. Ghomat's *My Friend the Barrister*.

The romances of S. Chose, S. Mitra and K. C. Ghomat reflect the political situation in India against the backdrop of the world politics. They remind us of the strained relation between India and England, resulting in political unrest and the sporadic revolutionary activities in Bengal. They attributed the causes of this widespread wave of distrust between the ruler and the ruled, to the arrogant behaviour and feelings of racial superiority of English administrators towards Indians and the provocative writings of the imperialist poet, Rudyard Kipling.

S. B. Banerjee's *Tales of Bengal* is a collection of seventeen stories portraying the village life in Bengal. The tales are based on domestic quarrels in Indian families, rivalries among villagers, perjury, police corruption, the poverty of the peasants and the cruel and callous exploitation
of Indian peasants by money lenders and landlords. These are moving tales of the miserable and pitiable conditions of Indian villagers, written in a realistic vein. A similar tract is maintained by A. Madharish, a prominent writer from the south who satirises the social abuses of Hindu society such as the dowry system, untouchability and caste-distinctions in his collection of stories entitled Kusika's short Stories. In the novel Thillai Govindan by the same author, the novelist from South—Thillai Govindan, describes the confrontation of the east and the west. The protagonist is depicted as a typical educated Indian of the early decade of the twentieth century, whose traditional values of life are shattered by the impact of European materialism. Though the Indian English writers of this period have succeeded in reflecting the variegated regional life and the political climate of the country in the early decades of the twentieth century, technically they do not appear to have made any impressive advance in the genre of the novel.

It is with the beginning of the Gandhian movement that Indian English fiction acquires a significant artistic maturity. One finds an intimate connection between the growth of the Freedom Movement and the rise of the Indian English novel in the thirties and forties. M.K. Naik has rightly remarked:

Upto the 1930's there was no Indian novelist who could claim sustained and considerable achievement in fiction
originally written in English. Then came a sudden flowering and it is significant that it came in the 1930s—a period during which the glory that was Gandhi's attained perhaps its brightest splendour.... it is possible to see a connection between this development and the rise of the Indian novel in English; for fiction, of all literary forms, is most vitally concerned with social conditions and values.22

Mahatma Gandhi's ideology and the national movement have left an abiding imprint on the novels and short stories of the Indian writers in English. Dhanopal Mukherjee is the earliest of the Indian English writers to describe the phenomenal popularity and the fast growing legend of Gandhi among the masses in his autobiographical novel, *My Brother's Face* (1925). K.C. Venkat Ramani, who deals with the theme of village reconstruction in Gandhian way in his novel *Murugan The Tiller* (1927) gives an artistic expression to the Gandhian movement in Indian politics in the late twenties and early thirties in his novel *Kandan The Patriot*. The most powerful of the Indian novels in English, portraying the impact of the Gandhian movement on the Indian masses, is, however, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938). No other novel is the atmosphere of the Indian village aflame with the intoxication of Nationalism so widely portrayed and nowhere else is the Gandhian philosophy so comprehensively and clearly analysed in all its aspects:—its religious character, its economic and social
concern and its political ideals. Two other reputed novelists, R. Nagarajan in his novel *Athwar house* (1945) and L. Narasimha, in his book, *We never die* (1949) also seek to present the national upsurge of the twenties and the thirties as it spreads to the remotest villages of India and engulfs the whole country.

The Marxist viewpoint in the political arena is represented by two well-known novelists, Mulk Raj Anand and Khwaja Ahmad Abbas. Both of them have created special places in the hearts of their readers as well as thinkers, critics and novelists of the foremost rank. Both are deeply concerned with the social problems and are novelists with a mission.

Mulk Raj Anand's first novel *Untouchable* (1935) introduced the new trend of progressive literature through the depiction of the underdog in exploitation, with pitiless realism and deep sympathy. He continues the same vein in *Cooie* (1935), *Two Leaves and A Bird* (1937), and the trilogy under three different titles:- *The Village* (1939), *Across The Black Waters* (1940) and *The Sword And the Sickle* (1942). *The Big Heart* (1944) deals with the theme of unity among labourers. In his novels and numerous stories Anand portrays the hypocrisy that mankind has to right if it wants equality and brotherhood in the real sense.
Khwaja Ahmad Abbas has experimented with different media to reach the human heart and expose it to the exploitation, corruption and suffocation exercised and felt in a double-standard society. He has written a prolific number of novels, of which *Tomorrow is Ours* (1943), is his first and most memorable novel, which has been described as a novel of today. It is written to express the different stands of the Indian Political Parties towards the second World War. *Defeat For Death: A Story Without Names* (1944) depicts the ruthless suppression of the Indians by the British imperialists. *Blood And Stones* (1947) is a novel based on the communal riots of the forties. In all these novels Abbas has brought out the pitiable conditions of the downtrodden with ruthless realism and unlimited sympathy. He also has cautioned the Indian elite that it has to adopt the path of equality and brotherhood and bridge the gap between the 'haves' and the 'haves not'. *Inquilab* (1950) was first published in Russia in 1955. *The World is My Village* has been published in 1984, and it is an autobiographical novel depicting the history of the National Movement. His autobiography, *I Am Not An Island* is also a comprehensive picture of the Freedom Movement in India.

Apart from the socio-political problems the Indian English novelists have also dealt with considerable skill, with the themes of other varieties such as the man-woman relationship particularly its physical dimension. If the pre-independence
writers were not very much in favour of frank and uninhibited treatment of sexuality in novels, it was due to the effect of the traditionalism in culture and religion that still limited their horizons, lending them a rather prudish approach.

The fiction of entertainment including the novels of detection of crime and supernatural mysteries has occupied a not less conspicuous corner of the Indian English literary scene in the pre-independence era. Novelists like S.M. Banerjee - *Indian Detective Stories* (1910), S. Mukherji - *Indian Ghost Stories* (1914) and S.K. Chettur - *Bombay Murder* (1910) have contributed much in this field. They have tried to present their themes in the popular method of racy and sensational plot-lines.

Thus, the pre-independence novel has become an integral part of the literary scene both in India and abroad, completing a full circle, one may say, beginning with romantic extravaganzas, journeying through sociological and political spheres, the field of entertainment and of stark realism leading to the novel of self analysis, of inner action based on psychological approach found in the post-independence period.

The post-independence period shows a definite departure from the pre-independence novelistic trend even though basically it maintains the socio-political structure. The British had left
India in shambles and the divide and rule policy yielded cavi
cenous by shattering the country's very foundation of economy
and culture. The partition of India brought a thunderbolt in
which millions lost their lives and homes, suffered intense
humiliation and torture. There was a spurt of outrage expres
by the novelists like Khushwant Singh - *A Train to Pakistan* (1955)
and *I shall not hear the Nightingale* (1956), Attia Hosain -
sunlight on a broken column (1961), Manohar Malhotra - *A Dying
in the Ganges* (1964), Raj Gills - *The Rape* (1974), Chaman Lal -
Duggal - *Twice Born, Twice Dead* (1979) and others. Similarly the
outbreak of the famine in the fifties promoted prominent Indian
English novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya (*So Many Hungers*,
published in 1957) to highlight in their fiction, a different
dimension based on socio-economic-political exploitation of the
poor by the rich and the opportunist.

The post-independent India became an inhabitable place for
the princes, who were not able to find any advantage in the
democratic set up of the country. Their predicament has been
effectively presented in the novels of Manohar Malhotra -
The Princes (1963) and Mulik Raj Anand - *Private Life of an India
Prince* (1955). The sudden turnover in their status for the
worse and the consequential fall from the ivory towers, had made
the princes vulnerable to acute social humiliation, which was brilliantly portrayed by these novelists.

Manohar Malgonker has also introduced in his *Combat of Shadows* a new social problem of the post-independent India, the social position of the Anglo-Indians or the Eurasians who constitute a community by themselves. S.C. Harrex has remarked in this relation:

"Manohar Malgonker's *Combat of Shadows* is such a work, and at the same time is interesting in that it adds a new social dimension to Indian fiction in English - the life of the Anglo Indian (i.e. Eurasian) and his relationship with Indians and in particular with the British in India".23

Apart from the socio-economic or socio-political themes, the post independent Indian English fiction has been constantly experimenting in many other spheres. In fact it has been a many-splendoured thing and has brought forward an existential novelist like Arun Joshi making his mark or a thoroughly modern and original novelist like Salman Rushdie drop a bombshell with his *Midnight's Children*. A painter turned writer, Balraj Khanna, in his novel *Nation of Fools: Scenes from Indian Life* has tried to introduce a new method of writing the English language, that may or may not have found favour with the critical mind, but certainly it is a step towards original creativity. An author like Farruk Dhondy (*Poona Company*), insists that his writings
are not a recapitulation of his Indian past; but a step
towards original creativity. And certainly, values are changing
in the widening horizon as newer and more categorical questions
are asked, such as, who is an Indian writer, are writers living
in India necessarily more Indian than the expatriate writers? Is being an Indian a literary value? ... sometimes it is
more important to frame the questions correctly than to find the
final solution.

As Mulk Raj Anand points out:

"There may be approximations in the
new novels to the classics of the past,
but we must not mistake the old novels
for Bibles. Always the past works
prepare the way for the present and the
future. The new novels, by the virtue of
the word, 'novel' which means new, are
fresh upturnings of the soil, in which
new flowers may grow. There are no
symbols which are inherently poetical
and permanent. There are no forms
which can last forever. Only perhaps,
the fundamentals of human life are
eternal - life itself recurs. And, love,
pain, hatred, jealousy, desire and the
longing for light against darkness
ever urge us on to live."24

The impact of Western education and ideas had inspired
many women writers in the pre-independence days, to choose
English as the medium for creative writing. This was more true
in the field of poetry. Aru Butt, Feroz Butt and Sarojini Naidu
were the pioneers among the Indian-English poetesses. There are
some other important poetesses like Ambika, Savita Devi, Allima
Devi, Lotika Ghose and Elsa Kazi, who have contributed their shares in the field of Indian English poetry in the pre-independence era. In the post-independence period a new kind of poetic fervour characterised by individualism and feminist revolt is expressed in the poetry of Leela Dharamraj, Kanala Das, Monika Verma, Margaret Chaticrjee, Tapani Moonkerji, Lilottama Rajan, Suniti Namjoshi, Sujatha Nala Subramaniam, Mary Brukh and Gauri Deshpande.

Alongwith poetry, Indian-English women writers had made a significant contribution to fiction also. Novelists and short-story writers like Toru Dutt, Rajlakshmi Devi, Kamala Santhianadhan, Cornelia Sorabji, Nalini Turkhud, Krishna Hethesingh, Ela Sen and Iqballunnissa Hussain were significant contributors to the development of English fiction in India.

The writings of these women literateurs however, suffered from one marked limitation. They were mostly content with the theme of exploitation of women in the traditional world. They did not seek to introduce any revolutionary change in the pattern of society. Thus, the novel in their hands, was more or less a traditional mode of expression to reflect the social evils, surrounding the lives of women of all classes, ranging from the aristocracy to the lowest strata of life. Thus, compared to such stalwarts like Mulkrarj Anand and Haja Rao, the women novelists of this period occupy a less significant place.
With the dawn of independence, the women novelists in particular, have been greatly influenced by the feminist movement, that has shaken the very foundations of the traditional values. They are now very much conscious of their equal status and confident of their footings. This has widened the scope of the themes tackled and techniques used by them and has made them interested in subjects like social and economic exploitation of women. There is no dearth of subjects for the women novelists today. Women novelists possess a more straightforward and uninhibited approach to the themes with bearing on sexual passion than their male counterparts. It may be because they want to register a jolt to the reading public to ensure freedom of thought and expression.

In case of technique also they have adopted different methods experimenting with varied types of fiction. In the case of presentation, 'the point of view device with special emphasis on 'selective omniscience' has been used by most of the authoresses. The 'protagonist-narrator' point of view of autobiographical device has been exquisitely used by Kamala Markandaya and Arinatini Sarabhai. Attia Hossein adopted the device of 'witness-narrator' variety of internal point of view in her two novels. This shows that the artistic sensibility is being disciplined to obtain better craftsmanship. Thus, in the modern period it is a neck to neck race between the women novelists and the novelists like Manohar Malgonkar, Arun Joshi and
Sulman Rushdie, to name a few.

Among the Indian-English women novelists today, four names distinctly represent this changing pattern of fiction. They are: Kamala Markandaya, Santha Rama Rau, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai. All the current trends of thought, the experimentation in matters of technique and theme can be found in their novels. While Markandaya and Sahgal have represented the dramatic form of novel, Rau and Desai have risen to mature heights as novelists of inner-sensibility. They have given the Indian-English fiction, maturity and clarity in approach and have been compared favourably with the European and Asian English language women novelists. Hence, they can lay claim to being not only the pioneers of modern Indian-English novelists, but also their best representatives. In their works, the realistic approach to political, psychological and the stream of consciousness technique is amply found to substantiate the veracity of this claim.

My purpose in this proposed thesis, is to study the involvement, contribution and achievement of these four novelists, in their respective fields. A great deal of research is being done on prominent authors like Narayan, Anand and Raja Rao. Compared to this, these women novelists, in spite of their significant contribution to the Indian-English fiction
have almost been ignored. Thus I feel that a comprehensive and detailed study of these four novelists and their achievements will be worthwhile. Let the other Indian-English women novelists of the pre-independence and the post-independence period remain unrepresented, I devote two separate chapters to the critical assessment of their writings as well.

Some scholars may object to the exclusion of Mrs. Ruth P. Jhabvala from this study. There are, however, two grounds for not including her in this work. First, to my mind she belongs more to the category of Anglo-Indian novelists than Indian-English novelists because of her not being an Indian by birth. She is a Polish-Jew though married to an Indian. No doubt, her contribution to English language fiction is considered, but also she writes more like an outsider-observer than a participant. There is less of involvement and more of social criticism in her novels. She can not be strictly called an Indian English novelist for the same reasons which debar Rudyard Kipling and E.M. Forster from being included in its fold. Secondly, if Mrs. Jhabvala has to be considered as an Indian-English novelist, by virtue of her marriage and place of residence, then we can not be justified in calling Kamala Markandaya who is married to an Englishman and settled in England as an Indian-English writer. Thus, Mrs. Jhabvala belongs to a different category of novelists like John Masters, who has written on Indian themes but as an outsider.
REFERENCES

1. Iyengar refers how in his book Literature and Authorship in India published in London in 1943, 'Indo Anglian' was printed by mistake as 'Indo-Anglican'. Even though he explained the circumstances which led to the mistake, the term Indo Anglican literature also gained currency for quite sometime to designate Indian writings in English (See 'Introduction' by K.R.S. Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962), P.3.


10. B. Rajan, 'Writing in English', The Illustrated Weekly of India, (May 26, 1963), P.44.

11. Kailasapathy and Anantha Murthy, The Times Literary Supplement (Oct. 15, 1964), P.946. This remark has been made in reply to S. Nageswaran's observation;
"There are quite a few people in India for whom English is the only language in which they can think and feel, bless and curse, quarrel and kiss." (The Times Literary Supplement, October 5, 1964).


21. Ibid.

