Chapter - I

Introduction

Postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath. It is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past. (Gandhi 4)

Indian English literature has achieved a distinct place in the literary arena of India and gained world-wide interest. Indian English writers have contributed in all the branches of creative writing like poetry, prose, drama, and fiction. Westernization and English education have helped, to a large extent, the growth of Indian English Literature. It has been established with its unique identity. Themes like freedom struggle, Gandhian philosophy, nationalism, and Indianness have been elaborately dealt with. Literature with psychological and immigrant backdrops and dealing with gender question has gained momentum. Most of the Indian English writers use the Indian milieu with a view to reach the Western readers. A wide range of analytical studies have been undertaken, thereby bringing the East and the West closer, English language serving as the main link.
The pioneers of the English fiction in India have been innovators and experimentists in their own right. They have faced the problem of evolving a "form" and a "medium" for their novels. They have worked hard to reconcile their Indian themes to a form that is totally alien to the Indian tradition of story-telling and also to evolve a medium that would convey Indian sensibility. Writers like R.C. Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore have influenced Indian English fiction in its formative years. Dutt introduces the theme of social reformation and well-portrayed characters in his novels. Chatterjee introduces realism in his novels. In his historical novels, there are elements of patriotism and revolution. Tagore's novels and short-stories are translated into English which have the elements of realism and social purpose.

The early writers of Indian English fiction have focussed on social, historical and romantic themes, using the traditional devices of allegory and didactism in their novels. No remarkable development is seen in plot-construction and characterization. In the era of freedom struggle, Indian English fiction was influenced by the freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi. Many facets of the freedom struggle and
contemporary social problems were dealt with. As R.S. Singh observes in Indian Novel in English: A Critical Study, "Indo-Anglian Fiction, like fiction in any other languages, starting with the historical romances in the early periods of its growth, came to concern itself with domestic and social problems during the Gandhian era" (35).

After Independence, the Indian English writers began to write with freedom of expression. Mulk Raj Anand's novels deal with the problems of hunger and poverty, economic exploitation and class distinction. R.K. Narayan depicts the dinky world of Malgudi with a rare mixture of humour, compassion and irony. Raja Rao writes philosophical fiction. Kamala Markandaya portrays realistically the consequences of poverty and hunger in her novels. Anita Desai attacks the outmoded customs and traditions of our society in her writings.

A recurring theme of the novels of the women writers of recent years is an exploration of woman's identity. The women novelists like Toru Dutt, Mrs. Ghoshal and Cornelia Sorabji, instead of condemning the society, express their feelings of concern and sympathy for the suffering Indian women. In the novels of Markandaya and Nayantara Sahgal, the theme of the conflict between the East and the West and the
Old India and the New India is dominant. The writings of post-independence women novelists reflect other kinds of tensions emerging out of socio-political changes and their impact on life at personal and domestic levels. Both the early and the recent writers have strong links with the Western life and culture. They love both the East and the West with equal ardour and passion.

In the field of theory also, great progress has been achieved. Colonialism, post-colonialism, modernism, post-modernism, structuralism, post-structuralism and other theories have been in practice. Among these theories, post-colonial theory is quite relevant for a meaningful discussion of any post-independent Indian English writer. Bhabani Bhattacharya, quite interestingly, belongs to the period of 1950s, often thought of along with Manohar Malgonkar, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan.

A bird's eye-view of post-colonial criticism will be relevant here to identify the specific dimensions of post-colonialism with which Bhattacharya's novels are being interpreted in this study. By the time of the First World War, European colonial powers invaded and occupied a huge area of the globe. At the time of the twentieth century, they covered
a vast area that included parts of Africa, Asia, Australia, Canada, the Caribbean and Ireland. In countries like Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, the English people colonized and established their culture, while in India and Nigeria where they were rulers, introduced their culture by force and imposed their institutions and norms. As Elleke Boehmer defines in her book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, Colonialism is the "settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands" (qtd. in Mc Leod 8). The ultimate aim of the colonizer is to capture political power thereby exploiting the indigenous people and their country. As Robert Young explains in *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction*, the history of colonialism includes

... slavery, of untold, unnumbered deaths from oppression or neglect, of the enforced migration and diaspora of millions of peoples, ... of the institutionalization of racism, of the destruction of cultures and the superimposition of other cultures. (4)

The impact of European colonialism on the world is always a complex process. The indigenous culture has been damaged, reshaping
physical territories, social terrains as well as human identities. The suffering and loss of life can never be measured. Colonialism has affected the colonized because their history, culture and the politico-socio-economic matrix have been ransacked. As Ania Loomba explains, in *Colonialism/Post-colonialism*, "... colonial violence is understood as including an 'epistemic aspect', i.e. an attack on the culture, ideas and value systems of the colonised peoples" (54). It makes the colonized rootless in their own lands. The colonizer has always been inescapably the "Self" making the colonized, the marginalised "Other".

If colonialism condemned the people to a life of subservience and dispossession, anti-colonial nationalism led to the independence and political determination of colonized peoples. Anti-colonial struggles had to create new and powerful identities for colonized people. It challenged colonialism not only at a political or intellectual level but also at an emotional plane. It was a struggle to represent, create or recover a culture and a selfhood that has been systematically repressed and eroded during colonial rule. The colonized tried to restore their land to its original state without the remnants of foreign conquest. They visualised a land of "Caliban without Prospero" as their rightful place.
Also, the glorious civilization which has been devastated by the colonizers should be recovered through anti-colonial movements. Such movements should bring about not only political liberation but also create an awareness of one's own culture, tradition, literature, philosophy, art, and architecture.

Colonial experience is a live experience in the consciousness of the colonized people. It is a continuing psychic experience which still haunts the minds of the colonized even after actual political colonization has been over. It has affected the native's sensibility. It is a spiritual and moral curbing of the native's character and confidence that has left him incapable of meeting the challenges of running a country independently. Though the political freedom has been achieved, the feeling of inferiority and insecurity, and a sense of subordination still continue.

The granting of independence to India in 1947 was a landmark in the history of India in a global context. The twentieth century has been the century of decolonisation. The process of decolonisation begins when the natives of a country under alien rule try to establish self-governance violently or by other peaceful means, to free their country from colonial rule. In India, after 1857, non-violent attempts
were made in the process of decolonisation. While discussing Arun Joshi's novel, Adesh Pal says in his essay "The City and the River: A Paradigm of Resistance", "with the mass achievement of statehood by the colonies and the demise of European empires in the post 1947 era marked the high period of decolonisation" (256). As regards the imperial venture of the British empire, there are three distinct periods of decolonisation when the colonized nations won the right to govern their own affairs. The first was the declaration of American independence in the eighteenth century. The second period covers the end of the nineteenth century to the first decade of the twentieth century. The independent nations of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa come under this period. The third period has been noted for the achievement of Independence by India and Pakistan in 1947. Further, the decades of the 1970s and 1980s saw busy decolonisation throughout the declining empire. These independent countries later came to be grouped under an umbrella term - "Commonwealth Nations".

Colonial-settler states in America, New Zealand and South Africa got their independence during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Most countries in Africa and Asia, in contrast, gained independence
during the twentieth century, some in the 1930s (Iraq) a few more in the
1940s (India, Lebanon) and still others in the 1960s (Algeria, Senegal)
and the 1970s (Angola, Mozambique) while others are yet to achieve it.

Indian independence in 1947 marked the post-colonial era. Immediately after independence, the terms often used were independence
and post-independence. For two decades, it was a forward-looking
period. Independence was the take-off point for all post-independence
achievements. But, slowly and gradually terms like "colonial" and
"post-colonial" came into use. One of the reasons for their use was the
realization that the end of the British rule did not necessarily bring about
the fundamental changes. The freedom movement had also led to an
introspection and an objective evaluation. As Mary David rightly
observes in "The Writer and the Post-colonial African State",

... independence did not bring about fundamental
changes. There was no alleviation of poverty, no end to
political repression. There was colossal mismanagement
of the resources. The corruption and moral decadence of
the leaders and the elite was staggering. (117)
The term, "Post-colonial" itself is problematic. It seems to lack a coherent methodology. Disagreement arises regarding the meaning of the two terms, "Post-colonialism", the hyphenated word and "Postcolonialism" (without hyphen). Francis Barker and others in their introduction to Colonial Discourse / Post-colonial Theory specify that "they have distinguished between 'post-colonial' used as a temporal marker and 'postcolonial' to indicate the analytical concept of greater range and ambition, as in 'post colonial theory' or the 'post colonial condition'"(4). Leela Gandhi in Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction argues that some critics invoke the hyphenated form "post - colonialism" as a temporal marker of the decolonising process, others fiercely query the implied chronological separation between colonialism and its aftermath-on the grounds that the post colonial condition is inaugurated with the onset rather than the end of colonial occupation. Accordingly, it is argued that the unbroken term 'postcolonialism' is more sensitive to the long history of colonial consequences. (3)
Bill Ashcroft explains the difference between the two terms in Post-colonial Transformation:

The hyphen puts an emphasis on the discursive and material effects of the historical fact of colonialism, while the term 'postcolonialism' has come to represent an increasingly indiscriminate attention to cultural difference and marginality of all kinds, whether a consequence of the historical experience of colonialism or not. (10)

The term "Post-colonial" deals with the political, linguistic and cultural experience of societies that were former European colonies. It examines the processes and effects of and reactions to European colonialism from sixteenth century to the present day. The other dimensions of the two terms are also established by Ashcroft and others in Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies:

'Post-colonialism / postcolonialism' is now used in wide and diverse ways to include the study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of
empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and most importantly perhaps, the differing responses to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre- and post-independence nations and communities. (187)

"Post" in post-colonial is a historical marker of the period after decolonisation. It signifies both changes in power structures after colonialism as well as its continuing effects. It carries with it the implication that colonialism is now a matter of the past, undermining colonialism's economic, political and cultural deformative traces in the present. In "Comparative Studies and Post-colonial Settler Cultures" Alan Lawson comments, Post-colonialism is "a politically motivated, historical - analytical movement which engages with, resists and seeks to dismantle the effects of colonialism in the material, historical, cultural, political, pedagogical, discursive and textual domains" (qtd. in Gilbert 2). It represents a conflict within one's self, a conflict through which the colonizer tries to step outside his colonial self, the Western training, the history of the imperial phase, and to approach his own past, history and
reality from this position. As Stephen Slemon explains in "Post-colonial Critical Theories",

... the one-way traffic of imperial centre to colonial periphery is reformulated as a genuine circulation of peoples, so that members of various cultural and national backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and languages move more freely across international borders than they used to, in the process developing new structures for group identification and collectivity. (180)

Post-colonialism represents an attitude to resist colonialism, to step outside its influence and to reclaim an autonomous and free identity. It discusses many problems such as the hybridization of culture, universalism, language, cross-cultural recovery and the suppression of indigenous traditions.

In Key Concepts in Cultural Theory, Edgar Andrew and Peter Sedgwick have used "post-colonial" "to indicate a range of global cultural developments which occurred in the aftermath of the Second World War" (291). It conveys the hybridities and multiplicities of the
postcolonial world. In The Empire Writes Back, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin use the term "to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (2). The imperial structure has been dismantled in political terms, yet it continues to have its impact and domination in a neo-colonial mode on the literary and cultural planes in most postcolonial countries.

All postcolonial societies are still subject to various forms of neo-colonial domination and independence by itself has not solved this problem. Bill Ashcroft and others explain this predicament in Post-colonial Studies Reader,

The development of new elites within independent societies often buttressed by neo-colonial institutions; the development of internal divisions based on racial, linguistic or religious discriminations; the continuing unequal treatment of indigenous peoples in settler / invader societies - all these testify to the fact that post-colonialism is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction. (2)
Post-colonialism's agenda is more specifically political to dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create the binary oppositions such as "us" and "them", "first world" and "third world", "white" and "black", "colonizer" and "colonized". Therefore the post-colonial writings contain, as Vilashini Cooppan explains in "Whither Post-colonial Studies? Towards the Transnation Study of Race and Nation",

... the sharply binarized colonial, anti-colonial and neo-colonial struggles - Occident versus Orient, colonizer versus colonized, metropolitan culture's linguistic and governmental imperium versus the array of resistant indigenous linguistic, political, cultural and social practices, a foreign modernity versus a tradition variously vital or moribund and also contains blurry markers of the post-colonial experience as national expatriation, linguistic appropriation, cultural syncretism and identity fragmentation (3).

It includes the attempts to develop the distinctive modes of representation of societies on which colonization has had a decisive impact. The most
urgent need of the society is to repossess its own past and take control of its own reality.

Post-colonial studies have elaborated many of its most urgent questions including the nature and locales of resistance, the formation of subaltern identities and the fate of national culture and post-colonial independence. Explaining the complexity of a post-colonial study, in his essay, "Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1792", Peter Hulme remarks, "It is historicist in method, often materialist in analysis and explicitly concerned with the connections between discursive regimes, social identities and political categories, including empire, colony and anti-colony, nation and globe, local community and diasporic network" (qtd. in Chrisman 6).

Post-colonial studies are identified to have two broad contexts:

The first is the history of decolonization itself. Intellectuals and activists who fought against colonial rule and their successors who now engage with its continuing legacy, challenged and revised dominant definitions of race, culture, language and class in the process of making
their voices heard. The second context is the revolution, within Western intellectual traditions, in thinking about some of the same issues - language and how it articulates experience, how ideologies work and how human subjectivities are formed and what we might mean by culture. (Loomba 20)

The Post-colonial Indian English novelists have attempted to depict the historical fact of colonization and its far-reaching impact on the present condition and status of their country. They have stressed the necessity of regenerating the dead spirit and self-respect, shedding off the oppressive influence of colonization and by depicting to the world at large, the native's own identity and achievement. They have awakened, through their writing, the ignorant, inert masses to the challenges of belonging to a free country after many years of subjugation. So, the persistent themes in their writings are,

The impact of colonized experience on native's consciousness, the social problems of the newly liberated nation, the erosion of indigenous culture and values
through continued Western domination, the dilemma posed by biculturalism, the search for identity and alienation in the products of a dual culture and the strident self-assertion and urge for decolonization in the liberated Indian. (Maya 14)

The Postcolonial experience dealing with the socio-political issues has been presented exquisitely by many novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, Narayan, Anita Desai, Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Bhattacharya. When his contemporaries dealt with themes like nationalism, existentialism, familial relationship, human psychology and other such aspects, Bhattacharya is interested in highlighting social problems in order to bring transformation. Almost all his novels show his sociological commitment and a humanistic involvement in the urgent problems of the society. He presents realism with all its dimensions in his novels. His art of narration adds a new dimension to his technique of story-telling, the society becoming the unifying backdrop. In his novels, he has his focus on problems confronting society, especially the problems of the underdogs - the poor people and women. He wants to reveal a bitter truth that, even after independence, the common man's life has not been
changed. B.N. Singh's general observations on post-colonial literature hold good for Bhattacharya's writing as well in a very significant way:

Post-colonial writing, then, springs not only from the nation which has been colonized but also from the colonies that have got 'problematical flag independence'. On the one hand, this writing validates what has been denigrated by the empire and thus serves nationalism. The literature of ex-colonies have had to struggle to dislodge the imperial centre and to overcome a perception of themselves as peripheral. Their anti-imperialism creates new centre where once there had been only margins. On the other hand, the post-colonialism dealing with the plight of the marginals / peripherals implies a questioning of centre wherever they are located. (143)

A critical study of Bhattacharya's novels from this post-colonial perspective is the scope of the thesis. A brief sketch of the life and works of Bhattacharya will be useful here. Bhattacharya was born on Nov.10, 1906 at Bhagalpur, Bihar. His parents were Promotho and Kiranbala Bhattacharya. He had his school education at Puri and
undergraduate studies, he joined Patna University. He was awarded Ph.D. degree on historical research by the University of London in 1934. His wife, Salila Mukherji encouraged him in his literary career. In 1950, he became Press Attache to the Embassy of India in Washington. He travelled widely. He visited Soviet Union as a member of the team of the first Indian cultural delegation of writers and scientists. He attended the International Conference of Writers at Stockholm as a participant. In 1959, he participated as a delegate in the Harvard International Seminar held at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Next year, he attended a similar seminar at Tokyo, Japan. For giving lectures, he went to New Zealand, Australia and West Germany. He attended a Writers' conference at Adelaide. As a Senior Specialist, he went to East-West centre, Honolulu and in 1971, he was appointed a visiting Professor in the University of Hawaii. In 1973, he joined the University of Washington, Seattle, as Walker-Ames Professor. His experience abroad proves him to be an international citizen which explains the diasporic nature of his writings. He makes a distinction between the East and the West in his writings. He also paints the cultural crisis which he has observed during his
stay abroad. His wide world experience has also helped to exploit the
English language very effectively. He is both an insider and outsider
which provides him with a kind of objectivity which helps him to look at
the problems of Indian people unbiased.

Bhattacharya started his literary career with the publication
of *The Golden Boat* (1932) - a translation of Tagore's short - stories. His
other works include *The Indian Cavalcade* (1944) - a collection of
historical sketches, *Gandhi, the Writer: The Image as It Grew* (1967),
*Steel Hawk and Other Stories* (1968) - a collection of fifteen short -
stories, and six novels. His novels are *So Many Hungers* (1947),
Named Gold* (1960), *A Shadow from Ladakh* (1966), and *A Dream in

Bhattacharya's novels are a microcosm of India. He does not
believe in the dictum-art for art's sake. To him, a novel must have a
social purpose and it should be concerned with social reality. In general,
the novels of Bhattacharya are set against the background of the changes
in the political, economic and social life in India. He feels that these
three aspects - political, economic and social - affect the human values and their way of life. His characters are samples who represent the entire nation. The novelist evokes sympathy in the minds of the readers through his effective presentation and his art of narration. His first novel, Hunger set against the background of the Quit India Movement of 1942 and the Bengal Famine of 1943, deals with the political, economic and social exploitation. As the title implies, it shows many hungers - hunger for food, for freedom, for love, for lust, for money, for name and fame, for human dignity and self-respect. It depicts the inhuman atrocities committed upon human beings by their own kind in the wake of man-made famine. As Srinivasa Iyengar states in Indian Writing in English, "So Many Hungers is no doubt an impeachment of man's inhumanity to man..." (414).

Of all the hungers, the novel gives importance to the twin issues - hunger for food and hunger for freedom. The story centres around two main characters, Rahoul and Kajoli. While Rahoul's story portrays the struggle for freedom, the story of Kajoli is a pathetic record of the sufferings due to famine. As Chandrasekharan rightly states in Bhabani Bhattacharya,
Rahoul's story is a representation in miniature of the struggle for freedom. The sad tale of Kajoli is likewise a pathetic record of what happened to more than two million men and women who became victims of a famine which was not an act of God, but which was brought about by the rapacity and selfishness of profiteers and the indifference of an alien government. (11)

Rahoul, the elder son of Samarendra Basu is an astrophysicist in the University of Calcutta. He is a staunch nationalist. His brother, Kunal is a spirited, adventurous young lad who joins the army as a junior officer. Their father, Samarendra Basu is money-minded and has no sense of patriotism. His only aim is to earn titles and to accumulate a huge wealth. By starting a trading concern with the name, "Cheap Rice, Limited", he collects rice and hoards it and later on sells it at inflated prices. He is quite opposite to his father, Devesh Basu who stands for love, truth and non-violence. Devesh Basu is a Gandhian character. He is very much loved and respected by the people of Baruni village. They call him "Devata" [a celestial Being]. He always thinks about the
welfare of the villagers who are "the core of his being, his blood and bone" (Hunger 64). Because of his influence, his grandson, Rahoul decides to fight for the liberation of the country. When the leaders are arrested, Rahoul is not arrested. His father informs the rulers that he is on the way to finding out Death Ray. The arrest of Nehru in Gorakpur has stirred the country. Rahoul joins Quit India Movement. When he is arrested, the other prisoners join him and at the prison gate, they sing in a chorus, "The more they tighten the chains, the more the chains loosen!" (205).

The various planes of hunger are effectively brought out simultaneously in Hunger. Rahoul yearns for freedom for the country, while Kajoli, a peasant girl from Baruni Village struggles for food. She lives with her mother and her younger brother Onu. Her father and her elder brother Kanu have been arrested for joining the Civil Disobedience Movement. They live in poverty because of Bengal famine. Kajoli marries Kishore but her happiness is short-lived. As conditions deteriorate in the village, Kishore decides to go to Calcutta where he hopes to get some employment. On his way to the railway station, he is shot dead by a soldier guarding the track. In order to find their
livelihood, Kajoli and her family decide to go to Calcutta. They suffer a lot on the way to Calcutta. Kajoli is raped by a soldier and she is admitted in the hospital. After her discharge from the hospital, she has decided to become a prostitute in order to look after her family. When she goes with the betel - woman, a brothel agent, she hears the newspaper vendors shouting about Devata's fast unto death at Dehra Dun. She remembers Devata's parting words, "Be strong, Be true, Be deathless"(72). She wants to live an honest life by becoming a newspaper vendor. In his article, "Bhabani Bhattacharya's Response to British Colonialism in India", Harcharan Singh Boparai comments, "Devata is the beacon which enlightens the path of Kajoli, Rahoul and the villagers"(139).

In his second novel Music, Bhattacharya exposes absurd beliefs and practices prevalent in Indian social life. It is a satire on Hindu orthodoxy. The story happens in a village called Behula. The novel reveals the difference between the cultures of the East and of the West. It also explains the intellectual and emotional development of the heroine, Mohini. When the story begins, she is seventeen years old. She lives with her father who is called "Professor" and her grandmother addressed
as "Old Mother" and her brother, Heeralal. She is proposed to Jayadev, the head of the aristocratic family called the Big House in Behula Village. Jayadev's widowed mother, a staunch pillar of orthodoxy, has approved of the match only when she finds eight signs of luck and symbols on Mohini's palm. After marriage, Rooplekha, Jayadev's sister tells Mohini.

My mother is the usual orthodox Hindu woman, only she is more intense than others and all her faith is pinned to family tradition. No deviation for her, not one inch. Stern-willed, though tender at heart, she is a simple soul, with singleness of purpose, a one-eyed mind. She exists for the Big House; she wouldn't have it changed the least way. (Music 94)

Bhattacharya juxtaposes Mohini and her mother-in-law which is at once typical of any Indian joint family. The mother-in-law-husband-wife trio in an Indian family find it difficult to adjust and that leads to the break of joint family system. But Bhattacharya does not allow this to happen to Mohini.

At first, as mistress of the Big House, Mohini feels uncomfortable because, "the Big House will make heavy demands on its
young mistress. Demands that you'll find unreasonable. Some of them will have to be met with patience and a spirit of give-and-take. Other foolish demands must be resisted"(78). Her main problem in the family is her mental adjustment to her mother-in-law and to her husband. She stands for vitality and life. According to her, "a life without love is like jasmine without scent" (20). The writer explains the needs of her as: "To love and to be loved, and a bit admired, those were her needs, simple human needs" (80). But Jayadev's attitude is different. He is an intellectual with a tireless quest for knowledge. He expects her to help him in his programme of social reform. As Iyengar explains, "It is the difference in the intellectual level of husband and wife and the consequences of this gulf that forms the integral part of the theme of the novel, Music for Mohini" (325).

Mohini decides to bring happiness to the Big House by making adjustment with her husband. Hereafter, "She would be his true partner in feeling, in faith, and in dream" (129). She begins to educate the villagers. This sharing of interest brings Jayadev and Mohini closer. But the problem arises when Jayadev becomes twenty eight years old. According to his horoscope, Jayadev will not live long after his twenty eighth year. "If he gets a child, he'll have the normal span of life through
the little one's 'father-luck', the new influence wiping out the old" (116). When Jayadev is bitten by a snake, the mother feels, it is a warning. She curses Mohini for her barrenness: "What evil destiny made me bring you into this house? your barrenness will curse it for all time. You will take the life of your husband, you will"(167). She advises Mohini to offer blood from her bosom to the Virgin Goddess so as to be blessed with a child. Mohini is saved by Jayadev in the last moment. His modern attitude has at last defeated the mother's orthodoxy. Mohini allows her husband to marry her rival, Sudha as his second wife to beget a child. Fortunately, it is known that Mohini is already pregnant. So, life once again becomes a bed of roses for her. The novel pictures the harmonisation of many contrastive aspects of human life in the Hindu society of post - independence India. The novelist stresses the need to bring changes in social outlook and to bring transformation in Indian society.

**Tiger** is Bhattacharya's third novel. It narrates how the central character, Kalo disguises himself to fulfil his vengeance on society but ultimately realises the futility of his disguise. It is based on an ancient saying - "A man who rides a tiger cannot dismount". But the
hero, Kalo has the courage to dismount from the tiger in an hour of crisis. Like *Hunger*, this novel has the same background of the Indian freedom struggle and the Bengal Famine of 1943. But the treatment of the theme and the final effect produced make them different. As Chandrasekharan explains,

> While the earlier novel focuses attention on the national movement and Bengal's travail and their cataclysmic effect on the teeming millions of people, the later novel is more concerned with the history of one mind or at the most of two or three minds. (58)

*Tiger* attacks the social order based on the barriers of caste, class and creed which bring the disintegration of society. Kalo, a low-born blacksmith lives in the small town, Jharna: "His roots were deep in the age-richened soil of his own caste"(*Tiger* 12). His wife dies of child birth. His daughter is Chandra Lekha, a name casually suggested by a brahmin priest when he came to his smithy for some work. He loves his daughter very much as she was "the very spark of his being" and the "sole reason for his existence" (47). The shadow of the Bengal Famine begins to fall over Jharna town. Having found no work, Kalo
decides to go to Calcutta, leaving Chandra Lekha under the care of an old aunt. He travels on the footboard of a train. Out of hunger, he steals bananas. He is arrested and given three months imprisonment with hard labour. In the prison, Kalo shares a cell with a man whose name is Bikash Mukherji. But in the prison, he is called by his number, B-10. They become good friends. When released from the jail, Kalo does the mean work of carrying the corpses of destitutes into municipal trucks and also becomes a pimp for a group of brothels. One night, he happens to see his daughter in a brothel. Though he rescues her, he is haunted by these thoughts:

His daughter was polluted, fallen. Even to have breathed the air of the harlot-house would mark a woman as fallen. That was the terrible fact, almost displacing all feeling. Whoever was to blame, the fact was there. What could he do about it? Was he not helpless against the social idea which branded her for all time?. (71)

He decides to fight against this evil society. He transforms himself into Mangal Adikari, the Brahmin priest and impresses the people by making
an image of Shiva emerge from the ground. The ignorant people mistake this event as a miracle. A temple is erected and very soon, he becomes the prosperous priest of the new Shiva temple. Now he is treated respectfully by all. He wonders, "society, red-eyed with rage, had branded him as evil when he had done nothing truly wrong. But now that he was engaged in work truly evil, he was smiled at and paid handsomely" (76). Inspite of his best attempts to assimilate brahminism, Kalo remains in his heart of hearts the simple blacksmith. Chandra Lekha is bored with the game of make-believe that she and her father have been playing. Kalo says "In life, sometimes, a big compromise has to be made" (191). People wish to glorify Chandra Lekha and install her as Mother of Sevenfold Bliss. At the end, Kalo realises that Chandra Lekha is going to ruin herself for his sake by marrying Motichand, who already has four wives. "Monogamy was the rule of his life" (143). Kalo feels that he has deceived not only his enemies but his own inner-self. He takes a bold step of revealing his true identity on the day of the ceremony for the installation of Lekha as the Mother of Sevenfold Bliss. This revelation produces different reactions among the people. The Brahmins want to beat him up while the people of his own caste appreciate him
by shouting "Victory to our brother!" (243). Kalo and Lekha go back to their former way of life. No more does Kalo feel inferior to anyone in caste or social status. "Never again would the smith be despised, mocked, trampled upon. Never again. For the fetters of his mind had been cut. The look in his eyes was clear and undazzled (238). The novelist's concern is to focus on the evils of caste barriers and class distinctions among the people. The novel also exposes the wicked practices of the hollow religion and the exploitation of the blind faith of the people.

Bhattacharya's fourth novel, Gold highlights the post-independence national consciousness. B. Shyamala Rao in "A Goddess Named Gold (Freedom to be Free)" rightly calls it a feminist novel: "It is a feminist novel as the liberation of the country from the clutches of the Sethji is accomplished by women only" (80).

The action of this novel takes place in a village called Sonamitti, symbolic of earth yielding gold. When the story begins, Bhattacharya introduces a group of six women who call themselves "Cowhouse Five". Usually they have their daily meetings in the unused cow-shed in the house of Lakshmi who is also one among them. They are all ardent nationalists, imprisoned for participation in the Quit India
Movement. Lakshmi's husband, Seth Samsundar is a cloth merchant and money lender, whose lust for gold knows no limits. Making use of the countrywide shortage of sari, he has cornered the supply and pushed up prices. "The village was neck-deep in debt to him and tethered to his stiff rate of interest" (Gold 9). When Sam refuses to sell saris at fair prices in the time of scarcity, the women organize a protest march to his shop and are ready to strip themselves naked. When his wife Lakshmi begins to remove her sari, he agrees to sell saris to the village women. He has also decided to contest the election to the District Board. In order to win people's support also, he agrees to sell saris at a fair price.

Meera, a sixteen year old girl lives with her grand mother. Her grand father, Atmaram is a wandering minstrel. Meera leads the womenfolk of Sonamitti against the tyranny of Sam. One day her grandfather gives an amulet to Meera and tells her, "wearing it on your person, you will do an act of kindness. Real Kindness. Then all copper on your body will turn to gold . . . parted from your arm, the touchstone will be dead, a worthless pebble" (85). Meera refuses the offer of a gold ring given by Lakshmi for saving her son's life. One day when Meera is asleep, Lakshmi exchanges her gold ring with Meera's copper ring and
this makes Sam believe that the amulet has the power to turn copper into gold. Sam plans to exploit Meera's possession of the amulet. He offers to be her partner in this enterprise and they may share the proceeds equally. Meera accepts this proposal and she decides to use this share to help the needy.

Sam has to make experiments. He has created many situations for Meera to perform acts of kindness, "She was to be his new field of business, his new ledger, the most productive of all!" (173). He earns a lot of money which alone gives his life its meaning and value. But to Meera, with this share of money, she wants to make "Sonamitti, a bright jewel" (194). At last Meera's eyes are opened to reality and she becomes tired of this game of deception. When the villagers misunderstand her real purpose and start cursing her, she is much worried. Only her lover, Sohanlal can understand her. He consoles her by saying,

... they see the taveez but not the feeling. All they have hoped for is the smallest share in your fortune. Seeking crumbs of charity from your hands they lost you, they assigned you to the Seth's World. If only they knew the truth!. (225)
In depression, Meera takes off all the copper ornaments and throws them into the river. With the arrival of the minstrel, her grandfather, all the problems come to an end. He tells that freedom is the real touchstone. It belongs to everyone of them but will yield results and transmute copper into gold only if acts of faith are performed. Freedom is not merely political freedom or economic freedom but freedom of the mind, "freedom to be free". The novel ends with the decision of the villagers to elect the minstrel to the District board.

The novel depicts how the feminist organization, the Cowhouse Five with its members Munni, Champa, Meera, Subhadri, Sohagi and Lakshmi plays a great role in the freedom through the Gandhian way of Satyagraha. The novel also exposes the hunger for gold, miracle, power and possessions.

Bhattacharya in his fifth novel, Ladakh aims at a vision of social regeneration in India by synthesising Gandhian and Nehruvian ways of life. It shows a synthesis of the spinning wheel and the spindle. Another synthesis is Gandhiji's asceticism and Tagore's aestheticism.

Gandhigram believes in simple living and cottage industries whereas Steeltown is fond of Western ways of life and industrialisation.
Satyajit is the leader of Gandhigram: "Satyajit is the very soul of Gandhigram. He is Gandhigram. Without his guidance, the structure of ideas he's been building will topple like a thing of sand" (Ladakh 131). He is a true Gandhian in an austere life and ascetic thought: "Material possessions had always meant little to him. It was inner satisfaction that had counted" (14). He takes a vow of brahmacharya [chastity of body and of thought]. But he tells his wife Suruchi "I cannot impose my ideas on you. That would be against the very spirit of non violence. That would be against Gandhiji's lifelong teaching" (23). His only daughter is Sumita who is carefully trained in ascetic ideals by her father. Her father's wish is law for Sumita. She wears only white cotton sari: "The only Indian girl of her age who wore no adornment, not even glass, nor the customary red mark on the brow" (41).

The American-trained young chief engineer, Bhaskar Roy is the moving force behind Steeltown. He wants to annex Gandhigram in order to expand his Steeltown factory. According to him, "Steel means economic progress. [...] steel to fight poverty and hunger. But steel has gained a second meaning. It stands for country's freedom. [...] Development plus defense - a compulsion of our current history" (30).
Satyajit wants to undertake a fast unto death in order to prevent Steeltown's expansion. Bhaskar plans to build a Meadow House, a centre of social communication. The villagers of Gandhigram are invited to share the Meadow House with the workers of Steeltown. They will see modern amenities that have become the part of the city's everyday life. They will compare the two ways of living. They prefer a life of fulfillment: "Not all work. Recreation, Relaxation, Respite from the round of duties. A cultural outlet" (89). Thus he is sure of winning over the people of Gandhigram to his side by a non-violent method. Most of the people from Gandhigram including Sumita begins to take interest in the activities of the Meadow House. Bhaskar and Sumita begin to love each other. Their love results in a synthesis of the two different ideologies. Bhaskar changes his attitude. He ultimately decides not to annex Gandhigram. The mill workers take a procession shouting "victory to Satyajit". Bhaskar also joins and leads the procession. The victory of Satyajit is the victory of Bhaskar also. Sumita is free at last to choose Bhaskar as her life-partner.

In this novel, Bhattacharya advocates Tagore's aestheticism also. N.L. Gupta elucidates the principles of Tagore in *An Introduction to Eastern Ways of Thinking,*
Everything in the World is harmonious and beautiful. Man's life is a saga of discovering and establishing this harmony between his own personality and the universal person and the Supreme person. Harmony, beauty and bliss or ananda are the key notes of his philosophy and approach to life. (79)

Even though Suruchi accepts Satyajit's request to lead a life of brahmacharya, she cannot set over her longing for another child. At the end, she triumphs over her husband who surrenders himself to her will. He is ready to abandon some of his rigorous principles and accept some of the good ideals of Steeltown and thus becoming "a happy combination of Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore together" (Sarma 268).

Bhattacharya seems to suggest that a harmonious combination of Gandhism and Nehruism would be an answer to the problems facing the nation today. He approves of the use of modern technology for the well-being of individuals and society, yet without neglecting spiritual values.

Bhattacharya's last novel is Hawaii. The novel, . . . encompasses the period that begins with the celebration of Swami Yogananda's 'hundredth' birthday
in Hawaii, when he leaves his ashram, Sadhana, in Rishikesh to accompany Stella Gregson, his American disciple and his return trip to India on a JAL flight when he dissociates himself from Dr. Vincent Swift's mercenary dream of a World Yoga Centre at Hawaii. (Goyal 121)

The two value systems - spiritualism and materialism - are brought into a clash and the entire structure of the novel is built on this clash. The two characters, Swami Yogananda and Walt Gregson represent Eastern spiritualism and Western materialism respectively. In the beginning, they stand opposite to each other but at the end of the novel, they realise that one cannot exist without the other.

Neeloy Mookerji is a professor of Indian philosophy teaching in Indian Universities for six years. His student, Devjani's words, "A star cannot be a firefly!" (87) acts as a catalyst to transform Neeloy into a popular Yogi. But he is not wholly metamorphosed into Yogananda because he still loves Devjani. Stella Gregson, an American tourist requests him to go to America to give lectures on Vedantic philosophy. The Western society is desperate for spiritual leadership.
Stella does not live with her husband, Walt Gregson. Sexual incompatibility leads to clash of egos. She is far from being the right partner in what Walt calls the body's demandful rapture. She is helpless when he moves away from her and starts to look elsewhere for the kind of experience he wants. There is a succession of women. He makes no secret of it all. Walt says, "The right to enjoy sex—that's normal. Abstinence, societal or self-imposed—that's abnormal. In our permissive society, abstinence has no validity whatever" (57-58).

Vincent Swift, President of the Hawaii Academy persuades Swami Yogananda to establish a World Yoga Centre in Hawaii. They have taken serious efforts to build the World Yoga Centre on a massive scale. Swift plans to turn the Yoga Centre into a business centre. He decides to bring hatha-Yogi, an astrologer and an exorcist to the Yoga centre for making money. Swami Yogananda informs Vincent that the World Centre as planned against his wish is unfit for Vedantic studies. He plans to leave America.

Swami Yogananda, though he is a Yogi, is unable to forget his love for Devjani who is now in Hawaii, as a research student at the East-West centre. Walt Gregson suspects Swami Yogananda's sanctity
and he sends his mistress Sylia Koo to seduce him. It betrays the sickness deep down in him. At last he confesses his love to Devjani. "You have to know the truth. Swami Yogananda has ceased to exist. This man you see is Neeloy Mookherji. The yellow garb he still has to wear must be discarded" (211). The famed Yogi of Sadhana has not found release from Neeloy. To the surprise of all, he leaves America by the next flight so that back in India, he could be Neeloy, just Neeloy again. In this novel, Bhattacharya stresses that man should not ignore the spiritual and physical claims of the body.

While analysing the novels of Bhattacharya, it is clear that he exposes social problems of India. The problems discussed in his novels are still relevant. An unbiased retrospective look at India reveals the bitter fact that freedom has not been achieved in the real sense. It is true that some evils of colonialism have been removed, but the fact remains that the common man does not realise any major difference between the British imperialist and the Indian imperialist. The native rulers have only replaced the foreign rulers. The wide gap between the leaders and the masses underlines the fact that even after independence nothing has brought a progressive change in the life of the common man.
He continues to be exploited while corruption and self-interest mar ameliorative efforts. On the economic and social front, the rulers have failed to wipe out the problems of poverty, unemployment, over-population, hunger, illiteracy and women's oppression.

Bhattacharya looks at the present predicament of his native country with a noble desire to reform it. Almost all his novels deal with the social problems and Bhattacharya tries to suggest solutions to overcome them. The novels present crises and opposites through the characters. He unites them all by hiding the misunderstandings. He favours the members of the society to come together breaking all the barriers - religion, caste, power and racial differences. Bhattacharya's characters are not quite sensitive or vigorous. Most of them are submissive and understandable. With a commitment, they work for the society. Particularly, the novels **Hunger** and **Tiger** tell about the hungers of Bengal - the former is man-made and the latter is natural calamity. In both the occasions, Bhattacharya brings out the human sufferings which are not taken care of. This element of suffering holds the centre stage of Bhattacharya's writings.

Enough critical output has come out on the writings of Bhattacharya. A brief analysis of the review of literature available on
Bhattacharya will help to comprehend his writings from the right perspective. It is imperative that a great artist is never exhausted. The avenues still open on the works of Bhattacharya are equally interesting.

Most of the early studies deal with Bhattacharya's life, realism, social aspects, characterisation and a few articles deal with his style. The writers have limited themselves to particular areas and they never enter the post modern elements in his works. In B. Shyamala Rao's *Bhabani Bhattacharya* (1988), the different aspects of Bhattacharya's literary genius - as a novelist, as a short-story writer, as a historian, as a biographer, as a translator of Tagore's works and as a writer in the other harmony are dealt with an uncanny skill. This book is an inexhaustive critical study of Bhattacharya. Rao has also dealt with Bhattacharya's exposing the cannibalism of man, the cruel strangler hold of traditions, the blind self-deception in orthodoxy, the obstinate unthinking faith, industrialization, and the hunger for gold. This book is also one of the pioneering books on Bhattacharya's fiction. Balram S.Sorot's *The Novels of Bhabani Bhattacharya* (1991) is also like Rao's book, but Sorot has launched a dimension in understanding Bhattacharya's novels by his influence and by comparing his novels on the basis of his concept of fiction.
Malta Grover's book, *Bhabani Bhattacharya as a Novelist of Social Conscience* (1991) attempts to highlight the creative genius of Bhattacharya. Grover reveals the outraged conscience of the novelist to the prevalent wrongs and evils of society. It is this sensitive conscience which arouses the reader from apathy and complacency towards exploitation of all types. This book also reveals Bhattacharya's maintaining a fine balance between the moral and aesthetic concerns in his works. This book also traces the social issues, reality, human values, tradition and modernity. The writer has given two of Bhattacharya's letters, confirming that his novels mostly bring out the East-West 'encounter which is possible because of his vast but rich experiences at different European countries.'

Another critic, Nathan M. Aston in his *Bhabani Bhattacharya: A Stylistic Analysis of His Novels* (1994) is devoted to a stylistic study of Bhattacharya's four novels, *Music, Tiger, Gold* and *Hawaii*. He begins with a serious consideration of everyday language as a means to communicate the mock realities of fictional works. He explains concepts like "functional significance" and focuses on the interpersonal function of language in creative writings. It is interesting to note the analysis of
the style of **Music** which is concentrated on the verbal exchange between two characters compelling the hearer to act at the command of the speaker. In the novel, **Tiger**, the emphasis is on the *Indianisation* of English with special reference to the rapport established by the author with the reader. Modes of address are dealt with in **Gold** while in **Hawaii**, the focus is in the illusionary forces of the speech acts involving questions and answers. The author has developed this technique to create an awareness on Bhattacharya's views on humanism and realism.

Rai's book, **Bhabani Bhattacharya : A Study of His Novels** (1995) is an analysis of the main features of Bhattacharya as a novelist, his realism, his humanism and his technique of writing. His attempt is to make Bhattacharya's message and mastery of fictional art known to a wide range of readers. He has traced Bhattacharya's art of characterization, the style and his criticism of the society in this book. He has done a meticulous analysis of the novels and the lucidity of style makes the book valuable to researchers.

K.H. Kunjo Singh in the book, **The Fiction of Bhabani Bhattacharya** (2002) provides a general survey of the Indian English fiction and a detailed analysis of the prominent political fictions and the
fiction of Bhattacharya. Focusing Bhattacharya's position and achievement in the domain of Indian fiction, the book studies his art of writing novels of political and social value. Singh, in the book, also dwells on the Indian English fiction of varied themes-social, political, nationalistic, diplomatic, cultural—and of pre and post-independence periods and shows the significant place of the Indian political novels and those of Bhattacharya. The Indian context of the political novels has created a context for the study of his novels. The book also depicts the contemporary, social, political, economic and religious realities of India before and after Independence. It also highlights his plea for the social and moral function of art and for reality and truth in literature and also his defending of the use of contemporary events as worthy subjects for writing novels. This book also presents Bhattacharya as an innovator and a free user of English language in an Indianised style.

The significant omissions by the critics are the lack of concentration on the cultural backdrop and a synthetic and dispassionate post-colonial perspective. The researcher intends to analyse the works of Bhattacharya from a post-colonial perspective, evaluating the
microcosmic presentation of India in the fictional pages of Bhattacharya. All his novels and a few relevant short-stories have been chosen for study.

The primary concern of the second chapter is how Bhattacharya, both as a diasporic and a post-colonial writer, presents the sociological issues—especially the oppression of the marginalised.