Ever since Gandhi’s advent on India’s socio-political scene, there have been a number of novels in all Indian languages and English that have the natural awakening of India as their dominant theme. However, each novelist derived from Gandhi what was in accordance with his temperament, ideological orientation, if any, absorption of western modern culture and above all his creative needs and vision of life. A lot of critical works fathomed deep into these novels assessing the aesthetic and literary significance of the novels. But a very few attempts have been made to evaluate these novels in terms of the socio-political milieu that generated them. As different novelists delineated Gandhi in accordance with their temperament and world outlook, an attempt has been made in the following pages to bring the various images of Gandhi that emerge from my study of Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable, R.K. Narayan’s Waiting For The Mahatma and The Vendor of Sweets, Raja Rao’s Kanthapura, Bhabani Bhattacharya’s So ManyHungers and Chaman Nahal’s The Crown and The Loincloth to a central focus in terms of socio-political milieu that generated them. We have taken into account the point of view of Marxist critics also, as they also analyse literary works within the framework of an ideological system.
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