Chapter VI
Conclusion
Having considered the five chapters of the research project, this final chapter provides certain concluding remarks. The first chapter throws light on the brief history of Indian writing in English referred here indicates an optimistic picture. Beginning from Raja Rammohan Roy to the latest writers like Chetan Bhagat, Indian English literature has better output in quantity as well as quality. The increasing number of English knowing population and interest in reading literature in English language has created an inspiring atmosphere in India. This writing has introduced the world gifted poet like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Maharshi Arvind, melodious poetess Sarojini Naidu, excellent novelists like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, short story writer like Ruskin Bond and many other literary artists. They not only introduced real India to the global readers but also achieved perfection in literary art. A.N. Kaul remarks regarding the output of Indian English novels:

The Indian novel in English is not a new literary phenomenon. From Chetterji (Bankim) to Chetterji (Abhimanyu) its history already spans a whole century. And there is surely more to come. For, notwithstanding debates about the appropriateness or even the legitimacy of Indian writing in English at all, there are powerful portents that they will continue to do so more impressively with each passing decade. (K.N)

Biographical sketches of the three selected authors Rabindranath Tagore, R.K.Narayan and Ruskin Bond for the research study have been given in the sub chapters of the first chapter.

Adolescence describes the teenage years between 13 and 18 and can be considered the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood. However, the physical and psychological changes that occur in adolescence can start earlier at the age of about 9 to 12 years. Adolescence can be a time of both puzzlement and discovery. The transitional period can bring up issues of independence and self-identity; many adolescents face tough choices regarding schoolwork, sexuality, drugs, alcohol, and their social life. Peer groups, romantic interests and external appearance tend to
naturally increase in importance for some time during a teen's journey toward adulthood.

The internal and external growth of an adolescent is affected by geographical conditions, weather, socio-economic status, cultural aspects, and many other factors of the society he/she is member of. The second chapter of the thesis includes some examples of adolescence fictional works of different ages as well as different territories ranging three continents, Europe, America and Asia. It highlights how different writers have depicted the adolescent stage in their novels and short stories. It is a challenging task to refer all literary works dealing with adolescence phase, hence the selection has been made here referring some of the leading fictional works, like *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens, *Playing the Game* by Arhter Mea, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, *I Want to Know Why* by Anderson Sherwood, *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling and *The Leopard in the Night* by Shashikala Skemoi. Every pair selected here represents British, American and Indian novel and short story of teenage characters. The study of other writers’ adolescent stage will provide an opportunity to compare and contrast the features of growing up phase at global stage. Besides, critical works on these writers have also been referred here for better understanding about the growing ups.

The thesis throws light on the process of coming to the age in the novels and short stories of Rabindranath Tagore, R.K.Narayan and Ruskin Bond. Each of them depicts the adolescents in his own way. The adolescents found in their fiction, appear different with certain distinct features. And yet there come out some similar characteristics of the adolescents. Tagore introduces the growing ups from social point of view more. In his fiction, the adolescents particularly, girls are facing social customs, traditions. Subha, Lolita, Sucharita, Sachi, Kusum and such other female adolescents’ life seems full of social restrictions. They are already married or about to be married when they enter the teen-age. His female characters are mostly found in pitiable condition. They have to sacrifice their young days in order to follow the social customs of their time. Their wish doesn’t matter in matrimonial relation. They have to marry when and to whom they are asked. In Tagore’s time, girls were considered a burden for parents. The parents believed the the marriage of their daughter could relieve them from them. In the story of *Subha*, Subha’s parents
consider her a curse because she is dumb. In stead of sympathetic approach of the parents, the girl is considered a curse.

Subha’s parents arrange her marriage at immature age and push her deliberately into the hell by hiding her physical defect from her in laws. Her parents think that they have got rid of the girl. But what about her future, they don’t care. The stories of Tagore reffered in the research present the realistic picture of his time. Of course, his novel Gora introduces some courageous girls like Sucharita and Lolita. They have their own ideology and they try to live life in their own way. But, this boldness takes them to constant clash with the society. Lolita’s travel with Binoy Babu in a night ship creates a serious problem for her character. Her love affair with Binoy Babu becomes the talk of the town. On the other hand, Bond’s adolescent female Sushila boldly sleeps with the protagonist of the story who is double to her age. This sexual game takes places many times without any clash with the society.

Tagore’s portrayal of female adolescents can be observed from the social context. His growing up girls do not live a free life. They are always found under family or social responsibilities. With the birth of a girl child, the parents are worried about her marriage and the settlement of the dowry. Mohim the novel Gora is always found talking about his growing up girl, Sachi’s marriage. On account of marriage very young age, they get the responsibility of motherhood even before they become adult. In some cases, they lose their life because of premature delivery.

Harimohini’s daughter, Manorama also dies of miscarriage owing to pregnancy at teen-age. Another prolem Tagore highlights regarding the growing up females of his time that is widowhood. When girls get married at young stage, there is also possibility of her becoming widow. Kusum, the central character in the story, The River Stairs becomes widow at the age of mere eight. Her life seems to be over before she begins to live as a widow’s life was more miserable than death itself in that rigid society of nineteenth century.

Moreover, on account of strong social customs, the girls were deprived of the greatest benefit of education. To send a girl to school in Tagore’s time was a courageous step. Only few broadminded people like Paresh Babu, a leading character of Gora could take such step of educating his daughters. Education can make girls
independent. But, Tagore’s majority of female characters appear miserable and helpless without the opportunity of education.

Tagore also introduces male adolescents in his fiction. Satish, Sucharita’s brother in *Gora* appears a very curious boy. He every time keeps asking questions to Binoy Babu to get knowledge. The short story *The Home Coming* alone is sufficient to study Tagore’s portrayal of growing up boys. He introduces a group of male adolescents here, particularly Phatik, a fourteen year naughty boy. In the reference to this boy, Tagore comments that in this world of human affairs there is no worse nuisance than a boy at the age of fourteen. He is neither ornamental nor useful. The story displays how Phatik and his brother Makhan fight with each other and create tense situation for their mother. It also shows Phatik’s failure in adjusting in new surrounding at school and his uncle’s home in Colcutta. Tagore demonstrates the homesickness of a growing up boy of fourteen.

Here are some findings about adolescent stage on the base of Tagore’s fiction referred in the research:

- Tagore introduces the growing up characters that most probably belong to ordinary class.
- His female adolescents are found in miserable condition in most of his stories.
- His female youth is deprived of education facilities except few characters like Paresh Babu’s daughters in the novel *Gora*.
- His adolescent female characters marry at young stage of life.
- His juvenile female characters rarely fall in love and succeed in love marriage.
- He does not pay attention on the sexuality of his characters like Ruskin Bond.
- His adolescent female characters appear shy and submissive.
According to him, a boy of fourteen may prove to be a perfect nuisance.

Rabindranath Tagore’s world of the adolescents particularly girls is miserable, R.K.Narayan differs from Tagore in this respect. He creates a pleasant and innocent world of the growing up boys especially in his first novel Swami and Friends. This novel presents the pre-adolescent boys of ten to twelve. Swami is a ten year timid boy. But his fast friend Mani is aggressive. Like Tagore, Narayan also focuses his art on common people. His characters are ordinary folk of Malgudi. We can observe the difference in his portrayal of adolescent boys. Every boy differs from the rest of the boys in the novel. Narayan succeeds in introducing the variety of growing ups. Various growing up boys, fearful Swami, aggressive Mani, heroic Rajam, brilliant Samual, and affectionate Somu are the portrayal of the same writer in the same novel. Narayan introduces the difference among them and yet they are the same ‘young boys’. He highlights certain common features of the adolescents which are found everywhere. His Swami and Friends is the best specimen to go through the innocent world of school boys. Sweet quarrels with friends, running away from classes and home, forming MCC (Malgudi Cricket Club) and daily practice for match, show of exam preparations before parents, giving pet names to the other boys, constant and careless wandering in the summer vacation in the company of friends, visiting railway station, bathing in the river Sarayu and many more activities of growing up boys are found in the centre.

An important fact to be noted about R.K.Narayn is his autobiographical elements. He is present in many scenes of his fiction. In tenth chapter of this novel ‘Swami and Friends’ ‘The Coachman’s Son’ very much resembles to the writer’s own boyhood that is described in ‘My Days’:

With my school closed, I had nothing much to do. All afternoon I wandered about the side streets with a gang of friends also at a loose end. I possessed an iron hoop which I rolled about the streets, followed by my gang…. (R.K., My Days)

In Narayan’s fiction, the father can be noticed as the supreme authority of the family. In novels like Swami and Friends, The Bachelor of Arts, The Vendor of
Sweets, The Financial Expert and short fiction like Ishwaran, Naga the father heads the family. In fact, in Indian way of living, the father is a commanding power. In Narayan’s stories, we come across a struggle between father and son, especially growing up. The son wishes to live freely while the father imposes restrictions upon him. As a result, rebellion, clash between father and son take place. In many of Narayan’s fiction, the adolescent boy may be Swami, Chandran, Balu or Iswaran runs away from home as a sign of revolt. However, he is not capable enough to face the world himself, therefore returns home. His heroes are not having heroic qualities. They are timid and submissive. They run away from difficulties, tension or because of the fear of father, and ultimately return home or are brought home back at the end of story. Narayan has effectively portrayed pre-adolescents like Swami, Mani, Rajam, Somu and other boys in Swami and Friends; while in The Financial Expert he has introduced the entire process of being grown up. Balu, Margayya’s son is introduced with the process of growth from childhood to adulthood. The story of Ishwaran throws light on the stage of late-adolescents. Ishawaran struggles to secure graduation degree of B.A., but fails again again. This story reflects how a frustrated young student loses control of his mind and turns mad. It also shows how madness takes the boy to suicide. In this way, Narayan introduces every stage of development of a child.

The Financial Expert conveys an important message to the parents and elders. Margayya’s failure to understand his growing up son, Balu’s psychology creates troubles for him. The boy always tries to avoid his father’s presence because of clash between them. As it happens in many cases, the father forces his son to study sincerely and the son may not be interested in study at all. Sometimes, the father overestimates the son’s capacity and fixes targets for career that are out of the capacity of the boy. Margayya constantly tries to educate his son who is not interested in study. When the pressure increases, the boy runs away from home. He struggles in Madrass for bread and butter but does not return to his parents. Margayya’s strong wish to educate the boy is due to Indian mentality. In Indian society, it is a matter of status for the family, if the children are brilliant and performing well to shape a good career. The root of the problem lies in the fact that Margayya always treats his son like his boss and not as a friend. The adolescents are highly egoistic. The kids can be controlled with such attitude not growing ups particularly boys. They are prepared to react. If pressurized more, they declare hunger strike, run away from home, shut themselves
into room and take such unwanted steps. They begin to disobey elders. They feel that other forcibly want to keep them under control. It may make them rebellious.

R.K.Narayan’s portrayal of the late adolescent boy Ishwaran is touching. Ishwaran makes several attempts to clear Intermediate Examination but in vein. As a result he becomes frustrated. He is taunted within his family as well as outside regarding his failure. Ishwaran is a representative boy of so many students who experience the same pressure from their family regarding study. The parents seem to neglect the universal truth: ‘Every human being is a unique creation of God.’ The term ‘unique’ means uncomparable. The parents make a serious mistake by comparing their children with other brilliant children regarding performance in study. They do not consider other arts or skills in their children. They always compare their marksheets with the rankers. Majority of parents expect the result that is more than the children’s capacity. Ishwaran becomes the victim of such over expectation from his parents. He is constantly labeled as a failure. As a result, he loses self-confidence. He too begins to call himself a failure in such a way that he fears to check his name in the result-shit. When he notices that he has passed, he loses control of his mind. S.P.Chaubey comments:

It is not difficult for the adolescent to feel emotional tension. He is often in emotions of anger, pleasure or indifference. The adolescent is generally more emotional. He displays anger on flimsy grounds. People also taunt and pass remark over this kind of behavior. This is very painful to him. He often vows not to speak such words which may injure the feelings of others. But he seldom succeeds in this attempt. This failure sometimes makes him feel that he is incompetent. (S.P)

The story of A Shadow reflects a young boy’s deep affection for his dead father. Here, Narayan depicts the working minds of two different stages of life, Sambhu an adolescent boy and his widow mother. The growing up boys’ enthusiasm is incomparable. Sambhu’s story highlights the boundless joy to see his dead father on the cinema screen. His eagerness and waiting for release of the film shows is a sign of boyhood. His constant insistence to his widow mother for watching the film
indicates the immaturity of the growing up boy. As a young boy, he is unable to understand his mother’s grief for her dead husband. But when he finds his mother unconscious during the film because of shock, he shows intense maturity. He appears to have grown up immediately. Narayan points out the difference of working of the mind of the same boy in two situations, before the movie is released and during the film show.

Marriage at young age is one of ancient evils of India. R.K. Narayn discusses this issue in the story, *The Mother and Son*. Here, a teenage boy, Ramu comes across this impractical custom. His mother, like most of mothers, desires to arrange his marriage at young age. She wishes his wedding with her brother’s daughter. The boy faces emotional black-mailing by his own mother. The adolescents, when can’t face the adverse situation, prefer to run away. Ramu’s going out after supper and no returning till morning creates a tense situation for her widow mother. For any mother, any growing up son is a challenging task. Narayan shows this fact in the story *The Home Coming* too. Phatik’s mother constantly fears that he may draw his younger brother Makhan in the river. Ramu’s mother goes to search the boy at early morning and finds him sleeping on a tank. This story strengthens the fact that forcefully or emotionally, an adolescent can’t be controlled. The parents have to treat the young with the understanding of their psychology otherwise the conflict develops between the youth and the adults. Dr. Carl E. Pickhardt observes:

Parent-child conflict increases during adolescence as the healthy teenager pushes for more independence to grow and healthy parents restrain that push in the interests of safety and responsibility.

Each of "the five engines that drive independence”—separation, expansion, differentiation, opposition, responsibility creates a different source of dispute.

SEPARATION can cause disagreements over time with peers versus time with family.
EXPANSION can cause disagreements over what one is old enough to do versus what one is not old enough to do.

DIFFERENTIATION can cause disagreements over what expression of individuality is okay versus what expression of individuality is not okay.

OPPOSITION can cause disagreements over living on adolescent terms versus living on parental terms.

RESPONSIBILITY can cause disagreements over what decisions one is not accountable for versus what decisions one is accountable for.

(http://www.charis.wlc.edu/publications/charis5-3/degner.pdf)

Having studied R.K.Narayan’s select fictional works, the following findings can be considered regarding the adolescence appeals:

- He presents a realistic rather than romantic picture of the growing ups.
- He focuses more on the male adolescents.
- His growing ups are coming from middle class or lower middle class families.
- He introduces the process of growth of children through the characters like Swami of ten to Ishwaran of eighteen and Balu’s growth from his childhood to adulthood.
- His young characters lack heroic qualities that are found in Kim, Tom and other heroic characters.
- In his fiction regarding the growing ups, the father emerges as the commanding authority of the family which affects the freedom of the son.
The adolescents turn to be rebellious because of constant clash with their father.

His adolescents run away from home on account of their failure to handle the adverse circumstances.

His youngsters are not found much conscious about their physical development.

His teenagers can rarely be found falling in love with opposite sex.

In some scenes of his fiction, we come across autobiographical elements, particularly in his novel Swami and Friends.

His young characters are lucky to get the opportunity of education.

Ruskin Bond’s world of the youngsters is wonderful. His creative writing mainly focuses on various features of the growing ups. Generally, he is labeled as a writer of children’s literature, but his contribution to the literature about adolescents is also noteworthy. He is one of very few creative writers who have made artistic use of the story of their own life, and whose literature shows a large part of autobiographical element. It seems that through the stories of the growing ups Bond lives again the same days he left behind. He is found present in many scenes of his fiction. He notes the philosophy of life:

To love and be loved is the greatest happiness…Men and women leave the age of childhood behind, and are so busy with their buyings and sellings, their ambitions and their hopes, their loves and their hates, that they forget they once lived in a land where dreams were real. I will not forget my childhood, I shall not surrender it. (Ruskin, Scenes From a Writer's Life)

His first two novels introduce many characteristics of this strange fase of life. Moreover, his first novel The Room on the Roof was written when he was himself an adolescent of seventeen. This novel depicts careless wandering, bond of friendship,
rebellion against the elders’ authority, becoming homeless, supporting to friends, and many other incidents regarding adolescent life of Rusty and his friends. Rusty’s rebellion against his guardian is a red signal for the parents, elders and guardians. It indicates that the adolescents should not and can’t be controlled by force. Once they become rebellious, they may turn violent and attack the elders. Besides, the novel makes the readers familiar with the building of friendship among the growing ups. Rusty’s running away from his guardian’s home makes him homeless, but this crisis introduces him with true friends like Somi, Ranbir, and Kishan. All these friends are growing up and enjoy vagrancy in a large part of the novel. Rusty at the end of the novel emerges as a responsible and mature adolescent with wide experience of the way of the world. Life teaches him a lot. As a result, like the light house, he shows right path to Kishan who has become a pick pocket in Hardwar and brings him back from the world of crime. This novel is a reliable document of the process of coming to the age.

*Vagrants in the Valley* also takes the readers in the same world of the youth. Here, the boys are more worried about their career, particularly, Rusty. This novel is further development of the first novel, *The Room on the Roof*. The same group of friends can be found here with addition of some new friends like Devinder, Hathi and Sudheer. The adolescent boys always like roaming with friends. As the title of this novel suggests, the central characters move from one place to another. Bond freshens here the sweet memories of the readers of their carefree life in the jolly company of friends during their adolescent phase.

Not only in novels, but also in short stories, Bond depicts the adolescent characters well. His *Chachi’s Funeral* is a fantastic story about temporary anger and true affection of ten year boy for his aunt. The story also shows how his elder sister, Madhu makes a fine use of her presence of mind and calms down his rage. She tactfully brings him out from the sense of guilt. Both young characters appeal the readers by their innocence.

Bond introduces a different kind of story, *Theif* in which readers come across two growing up boys Deepak and Arun. This short fiction highlights the sense of morality of an adolescent boy who is a thief. The narrator peeps into the inner conflict of a young boy, Deepak. This conflict begins within his mind when he steals his
master, Arun’s money. He successfully runs away from the spot leaving Arun sleeping. But goodness in him prevents him deceiving his master. He returns to his master’s home and keeps the stolen money back silently. Sense of morality can be noticed here at growing up phase in Deepak.

The story Night Train at Deoli creates a world of love. Like many other stories, it is also told by the first person singular. Bond presents a glimpse of true love of a collegeon boy for an unknown girl at Deoli railway station. This affection is not based on physical attraction but a pure one. This is feeling of only love and not more than that. A person can never forget his/her first love. The adolescent protagonist’s love for the basket selling girl at station also seems his first love. He only keeps her as an unforgettable sweet memory of his heart.

The Panther’s Moon is an adventurous atory of two adolescents, Bisnu and his sister Pooja who show extreme bravery in killing man-eater panther. A school boy like Bisnu can exhibits unbelievable courage to face the dangerous beast, the panther. Bond introduces here rare teenager in the form of Bisnu who can protect not only his own life but also his family from possible danger of the wild panther. In his another similar thrilling story Tiger in the Tunnel, Bond introduces Tambu, a mere thirteen year boy who has to take responsibility of his family after his father’s death. His father loses his life in an encounter with a wild tiger near a tunnel where he is appointed to give signal to the train. In this fight, he also kills the tiger. Tambu reaches to the tunnel to observe his duty in place of his father in very shrot period of time. In Bond’s short fiction, readers come across extremely courageous and responsible adolescents who look after their family like the head in the absence of dead father.

Bond’s Love is a Sad Song reflects astory of the extraordinary relationship between the protagonist and Sushila. What makes it an unusual story is love and the game of sex between the protagonist of thirty and an adolescent girl of sixteen years, Sushila. In conversative Indian society, such cases are hardly found and not easily accepted. Bond looks bold here to write this kind of story which highlights a female adolescent’s subsequently love making with three different lovers at the age of sixteen.
The following findings can be considered after considering Ruskin Bond’s select novels and short fictions about the growing ups:

- Like Tagore and Narayan, his interest lies in the adolescents belonging to common class people.
- Majority of his growing ups are orphan and homeless like Rusty, Devindar, Sudheer, Deepak, Kishan and many more.
- His adolescents are having extrovert personality and therefore they are amicable.
- His youngsters are found wandering particularly in novels.
- His teenage characters are having the sense of morality.
- The adolescents in his fiction are conscious about their physical growth.
- His growing up girls like Sushila are bold enough to be involved in the game of sex with a lover of double age than hers.
- His adolescents possess heroic qualities e.i. Bisnu and his sister Pooja face the man eater panther and kill it in the story of *The Panther’s Moon*.
- The feelings of love attract his teenagers.
- His novels show autobiographical aspect on a large scale.
- Most of his growing ups are students and the rest are struggling to go to school.
This table is an outcome of the findings of the researcher based on the collected data about the adolescent characters from select fictional works of Rabindranath Tagore, R.K.Narayan and Ruskin Bond. However, there may be exception in some cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of adolescents</th>
<th>Rabindranath Tagore</th>
<th>R.K.Narayan</th>
<th>Ruskin Bond</th>
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<td><strong>Desire for freedom</strong></td>
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The selected fiction writers for this research project demonstrate adolescent world in their own way and yet there come out some common features as well. All three writers concerned here present adolescent characters belonging to middle or lower class background. Bond’s many characters are orphan and homeless. Narayan and Bond’s characters are found to get opportunity for education while very few characters of Tagore get this fair opportunity. One important fact emerges from the above chart is that Tagore majoritily depicts female growing up characters; Narayan’s adolescents are male characters and in Bond’s fiction there are both male and female juvenile. Most probably Bond’s youngsters are found falling in love; they are found interested more in opposite sex in comparison to Tagore and Narayan’s adolescents.
As Tagore’s society was orthodox, his characters are observed with limited friend circle. They are conscious about caste differences. As a result they have limited friends and girls have even very few. While Narayan and Bond’s growing ups spend maximum time with their friends. Boys and girls portrayed in fiction of these three writers desire for freedom; they possess sense of morality; they are directly or indirectly influenced by society. The above mentioned chart gives clear information similaraties and contrasts in the depiction of yongsters in fiction of Tagore, Narayan and Bond.
Works cited


