CHAPTER - 3

INDO-ENGLISH LITERATURE AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STATUS
Indo-English literature, i.e. the creative writing in English in India is not more than a couple of centuries old. Indian English literature cannot claim a long history. Until recently its position and significance as contributing to the bulk and adding to the myriad perspectives of the world literature in English was not clearly grasped because the critics applied the standards and perspectives of the English literature produced by the British and the Americans. The essential elements of native cultures and philosophies thus ignored the richness of a tradition cultivated and grown within a short period remained unappreciated. The literary worth and the aesthetic values, however, came to be increasingly appreciated during the recent times thanks to a spate of critical works.

Indian creative writing in English in all its variety is easily comparable with other literatures within the country as well as English literature produced elsewhere. It is common knowledge that literary publications in English in our country (in terms of the number of fiction, essays, similar prose works, poetry, drama etc., critical works, literary periodicals and magazines) occupy a major place. English is taught in

schools, colleges and universities. Research carried out in English literature at the universities and other places is relatively on the higher side.

It is truly believed that of all the literary forms, fiction has gained a pre-eminent position owing to its power of expression and appeal.²

The 'novel' as a literary phenomenon is new to India. The novel as a literary form had its origin in the literary renaissance that swept Bengal in the second half of the 19th century. The literary and extra-literary factors that helped the birth of the novel in India were similar to the conditions that helped the rise of the English novel in the 18th century. Some of the relevant factors were the transition from romance to realism, from poetry to prose and from medievalism to modernity as also the emergence of the individualistic social order, the birth of the age of reason and the liberation. From the tyranny of customs and blind faith, spread of education, the development of printing and spread of journalism, the emancipation of Indian woman and great social and socio-economic reforms which sought to usher in a new era of freedom and social justice.³

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The Indo-English fiction over the time found a fertile soil, particularly in the post-independence period to bloom and perfume. It added to the native tradition the European as well as the abstract world traditions to mean many things to many people. Doubts and dilemmas of tradition and modernism however have come to engage the Indian academics in very many exasperating debates.

Feminism and women's perspectives as revealed in the writings of women also have become increasingly interesting aspects of study. Naturally women novelists, beginning from the second half of the century, gained attention. Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal have come to occupy the same place along with Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and others in the realm of fiction.

Obviously, all this purports to the crying need for bibliographical organisation and control.

A literary scholar and researcher in Indian English literature is terribly handicapped due to the lack of bibliographic control. Either one has to scan through card catalogues, or printed catalogues, or other lists like the INB

or the Accession list (India). Alternatively, and to access, one has to undertake virtually, pilgrimages to the National Library and other large libraries in the country. One might also try the Publisher's catalogue. The result, however, is likely to be less satisfactory. For non-monographic items, one has to labor and labor handling the periodical publications i.e. the primary journals and the secondary journals. But unfortunately there are not adequate tools either for the primary materials or for the secondary materials. Until such time that the libraries in the country are able to service through electronic equipment, the manual system of compilations need to be vigorously pursued.

This is briefly and clearly the aim of this compilation. An initial attempt made to examine and there of collect details of already existing bibliographies listed at the end of this chapter points out that there have been no conscious, concerted and planned bibliographic work done. The list, obviously, reveals the inadequacy of the bibliographies for specific purposes, particularly because they are all general and not exhaustive. They are also not upto-date.

As far as personal bibliographies are concerned, the one compiled by Hilda Pontes is the only one of the kind. The present one is the second in the category. While Hilda
Pontes bibliography is a kind of miscellaney consisting of primary as well as secondary materials covering all works of Sahgal, the present one is a comprehensive bibliography of primary and secondary materials relating to fiction only of two women writers, i.e. Nayantara Sahgal as well as Anita Desai. It is more or less an exhaustive compilation of retrospective as well as current and latest materials.

Entries were collected searching through the library catalogues, reviews, and trade catalogues for primary materials. Further, citations were also examined and listed next. As a third step literary magazines and journals including newspaper articles were included. The whole process was repeated and reviewed to make the listings as comprehensive as possible. The listing thus finalised each item was physically verified and handled so as to ensure correctness of bibliographic details and also prepare annotations under each entry to highlight the contents.

The arrangement consists of listing first, the primary materials (the novels), followed by critical monographs and periodical articles all further arranged chronologically. The effect and the advantage of this arrangement is that the
annotations present a comprehensive view of the critical matter serving the purposes of a review or any account of the development of critical thought on the works of the authors. Thus, for students as well as scholars, this bibliography may prove of great help.