A new Indian English Novel has emerged with its multiple themes, multiple techniques and hybrid idiom. The efforts of the Indian English writers right from Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in the 1860s to the trio of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan and the experimental duo of G.V.Desani and Arun Joshi in the 1960s have resulted in the attainment of a triumphant climax with the outburst of the new Indian English novel of the 1980s and 1990s. Rushdie's experiment with his *Midnight’s Children* has paved the way for the writers of the young generation of the day to produce a considerable significant fiction which cover the ethno-religious, diasporic, feminist and socio-political discourses. This thesis rose from the need not to study the authors not as writers possessing individual talents but functioning as a group, and representing a radically new phase in the development of the Indian English novel during the 1990s.

This thesis entitled “THE ETHNO-RELIGIOUS, DIASPORIC, FEMINIST AND SOCIO-POLITICAL DISCOURSES OF THE NINETEEN NINETIES” focusses on the Indian English novel of the nineties. It is based on the literary evidence contained in many novels written during the decade. The novel has not remained static but has explored new thoughts and new techniques. It is not suggested that the nineties broke away from the eighties. Some of the 1980s novelists also wrote in the nineties but their concerns, their perceptions of individuals and the society showed their evolving commitment to humanity.

The following texts have been chosen for the study. They are Upamanyu Chatterjee’s *English, August - An Indian Story* (1988) and *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* (2000), Salman Rushdie’s

In the first chapter INTRODUCTION, an attempt has been made to trace the important landmarks in the history of the Indo-Anglian writing since its beginnings. The contributions of writers such as Bankim Chandra, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and many other novelists who succeeded have been discussed. The post-colonial novel and its special characteristics up to the 1980s are outlined. The chapter includes the novel of the nineties with reference to the major works published in the nineties.

The second chapter POSTCOLONIALITY AND DISCOVERY OF SELF discusses the concepts such as colonialism, multiculturalism, freedom, identity, gender issues, alienation, ennui, angst, sexuality, corruption, marginalisation, hybridity, diaspora, globalisation, exploitation, assertion of one’s self and rights and decolonization. This is a chapter which relies heavily on the insights offered by a host of scholars from India and abroad, and the following texts have been so selected to fit into the postcolonial discussions. They are Upamanyu Chatterjee's English, August, followed by The Mammaries of the Welfare State, Gita Hariharan's The Ghosts of Vasu Master, Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, Amitav Ghosh's The
Calcutta Chromosome and The Glass Palace, R.K.Jha’s The Blue Bedspread, Khuswant Singh’s The Company of Women and Pankaj Mishra’s The Romantics.

The third chapter FAMILY SAGAS deals with texts which have families spread over generations. The impact of colonization is shown to affect the families in ways such as loss of legacy of tradition and of cultural values. Amitav Ghosh’s The Glass Palace is an apt metaphor of the crumbling of the royal family in the sweeping tide of the British colonialism and imperialism. The colonial history entwines with personal histories to destroy and recreate new histories and cultures. The factual story of history mingles with the fictional of the individuals intersecting class, race and religion. Languages and cultures mix and The Glass Palace incorporates complex instantiations of cultural syncreticism and metamorphosis. Customs are invented and absorbed to create new cultures in the realm of family ethics. The relationships between the families become denser through love, marriage and emotional involvements. Salman Rushdie’s The Ground Beneath Her Feet is a saga of families and their interactions entwined with the elements of romance, music, rock’n’roll, myths and earthquakes. Families break up and experience circumstantial drift across countries and continents in pursuit of survival, personal happiness and anchorage. Polygamous marriages and sexual promiscuity happen to be circumstantial necessities for successful survival. David Davidar’s The House of Blue Mangoes highlights the age-old ideal of home, family and community. Family and Home and their continuity take precedence over the cause of freedom for nation. The novel thrusts towards a vision of family, home and community which incidentally might affirm casteism, which appears a safe and guaranteed path to human happiness in the Indian context.
The fourth chapter FEMINIST FICTIONS draws on western feminist theories of Adrienne Rich, Simon de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, Betty Friedan, Elaine Showalter and Linda Gordan through which the texts chosen for study have been viewed. Man-woman relationship in modern times has undergone a sea change. The modern writers have tried to underline these significant changes by creating illustrative situations and characters in different context.

The fifth chapter CONCLUSION briefly summarises the entire thesis drawing attention to the major contributions of the 1990s. Some important themes and techniques have also been dealt with. Right from the novels of the 1980s to the novels of 1990s there are continuities, shifts and disruptions.

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