CHAPTER – 1

DEVELOPMENT OF FICTION IN INDIAN LITERARY SCENE

In England, the novel established itself as a distinct genre with the works of Daniel Defoe and Richardson in the eighteenth century. Alongside the development of realism in the novel, the exotic and the adventurous continued to be popular. The novelist’s tradition does not consist of rules but of certain assumptions about the handling of imagined reality. The element of realism helped in differentiating the eighteenth century fiction from the earlier fiction. The one common feature that binds the works of Richardson, Defoe and Fielding, is the quality of realism. Modern English writers of fiction preserve to maintain the startling element which is an aspect of realism. They have endeavored to view life realistically, to investigate and explore the secret of the mind, thus proving that the function of a novelist is the revelation of hidden life.

The reality of a novel thrives in a complex society with a complex social structure. It deals more with the hero or any important character, refusing to accept the norms of idealistic behavior imposed by the epic or romance. Impressionism is another important aspect of modernism. It centers around the mental life of the chief characters rather than on the reality around them. The thematic core of this aspect, to a great extent, is
available in their novels and modern writers of fiction and non-fiction do not conform to the traditional pattern of writing the fiction and nonfiction.

It is quite worthwhile to note that the British impact on India has in due course given to raise on various planes to many things among which the most significant seems to be an impressive mass of writing in English, that could be termed as Indo-English Literature. The English writers, who were fascinated and captivated by the Indian way of life and their culture, depicted these salient features in their literary creations. At the same time, they carefully kept a distance in their attempt to make India the setting of their writings. A chronological survey of literature will reveal the fact that English writers since the time of Chaucer have made vague reference to India in their works. But Indo-Anglian Literature inspired by Englishmen set its roots firmly only with the advent of Sir William Jones towards the close of the eighteenth century.

But quite deceptively the beginning itself proved to be the end as well. This was because of the outcome of obsession of the Indo-Anglians by their sense of the racial superiority and their abrupt reluctance to the fusion of the two cultures. In accordance with it the dawn of Indian independence paved the way for a set-back of Indo-Anglian Literature which lost its distinctive status in spite of the fact that several books have been still written by the Englishman with a more or less recognizable Indian
background. Inspired by the Indo-Anglian Literature, Indian erudite too began exposing their literary talent as a consequence of which we have in the second place literature created by Indians in English. In this regard the credit goes to Raja Ram Roy who was the first Indo-Anglian writer of prose. Undoubtedly, he was a master of lucid English prose.

Maugham is one of the prominent novelists and short story writers of the twentieth century. The Moon and Six Pence, Of Human Bondage, Cakes and Ale and The Razor’s Edge are his masterpieces. He was a versatile writer and at home in serious and comic themes alike. But one can see his deep concern with the human condition from the recurrence of certain themes in his short stories. Loneliness is a significant theme, which finds a parallel in many of Maugham’s novels. His semi autobiographical novel, Of Human Bondage (1915) describes the painful reality of (Philip Carey) the cripple, who carried through life of feeling of sentences friendless and longing for friends, but perversely compounding his alienation by his own aloofness.

James Joyce is one of the greatest novelist of the twentieth century. He is the main exponent of the stream of consciousness novel and his Ulysses (1922) is the finest example of the use of this technique in modern fiction. Dubliners (1914), A Portrait of The Artist As A Young Man (1910) and Fennegan’s Wake (1939) are his important works.
In *Ulysses*, the stream of consciousness technique finds its best exposition. The novel is set in Dublin and seeks to represent and reconstruct life in all its sordid realism. Virginia Woolf is remembered for the gracious and charming circle the Bloomsbury group in twentieth century and also belongs to school of stream of consciousness novelists. She has courage to free from tradition and then to give a new direction new form and a new spiritual awareness, to English novel.

Her novel, *MRS. Dalloway* (1925), is like *Ulysses* to which it is compared, records the events that occur on one particular Wednesday. The particular heroine Clarissa Dalloway is always busy in preparing for a party. Mrs.Woolf proved that conventional methods were unsuitable for her novel and this makes her interior monologue all the more interesting.

In *To The Lighthouse* (1927) Virginia Woolf again abandoned traditional narrative methods. In this, she sought to explore the quality of human relationship and the complex emotions that are involved. Thus she presents with instances of human consciousness that all add up to the order already created. Creating kind of sequence, as one experience succeeds another, the readers are, therefore, allowed an in-depth study of characters in the novel. (Mrs.Ramsay and Mr.Ramsay and their children and Lily Briscoe). The reader finally comes to understand that human life has no continuing stability. Woolf states in her essay *Modern Fiction* that Life is not series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; but is luminous halo, a
semitransparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. The novel in her hands is not just entertainment or propaganda or the vehicle of some fixed ideas or theories or a social document but a voyage of exploration to find out how life is lived and how it can be rendered as it is actually lived without distortion. By showing men and women, in all sorts of combinations, she explores the truth about life.

In American literary tradition, many writers made their mark in the twentieth century literature with new of techniques and themes in their writings. Hemingway, Flannery. O Connor, Miller, O Neil, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker are few of them. Flannery O Connor is a major writer who is greatly influenced by Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. The lacerating satire, the grotesque characters and the shocking plots are all the measure of the abnormality of the predominantly materialistic and irreligious society. O Connor’s stories highlight a disrupted world of the existentially estranged and indicate through marked irony and in direction, a way of overcoming the estrangement.

1.2 UNIVERSITIES ROLE IN INDIAN WRITINGS IN ENGLISH

To add to this, the establishment of universities of Bombay, Kolkatta and Madras in 1857 provided ample scope for the new generations in the field of literature who were fascinated by the mighty harmony of Milton and repeated the style of Edmund Burke. The Indo-Anglian Literature writers
were over-whelmed by warm welcome given to his work and there arouse a fast growing audience to appreciate their work. In fact, Journalism in English quenched the thirst for knowledge of many young men who had their appreciation of poetry.

Eventually poetry too had her votaries. Among these arrays of poets, Michael Madusudhan Dutt stands supreme with a remarkably high rank. The poets who began their literary career were invariably the pioneers but they confined themselves to mere imitation. They happened to be the practitioners who tried in vain to affect a marriage between Indian thoughts and feeling and English forms. The astonishment of the literary world that last three decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the splendid flowing of a new renaissance.

1.3 INDIAN ANGLIAN FICTION

The novel has become the most dominant form of literature in the sense that it is more widely read than the other forms of literature, as it deals with the art of everyday life. It maintains its high literary status by providing a matchless and easily comprehensible illusion of reality and by imaginatively manipulating man’s experience of the momentous present and resourceful past. The novel in the modern period inevitably reflects the author’s confrontation with life and cultural values. In such an age, the novel as a work of art reflects the fragmented nature of the world’s
structure. Most of the existential problems of life are taken up by the experimental modern novelists like Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.

The Indian novel in English came into being with its encounter with the west. The colonial rule left a powerful impact upon the Indian mind and brought about a tremendous change in its institutional values and systems. The last decade of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century saw novel, the main concern of which was propaganda or social document. These novels were partly socialistic and partly reformative in tone. *The Hindu Wife* by Raj Laxmi Devi, *Vasudeva Sastri* by Raja Ram Iyer, *Thillai Govindan* by A.Madaviah, *Sunbabies* by Cornelius Sorabjee, conform to the idea that the function of fiction was to reform society through propagation of their ideals.

The Indian writings in English would have become invariably insignificant but for the works of Aru Dutt and Toru Dutt, who gave a perfect molding and achieved a truly significant chapter of fulfillment. In fact, both Aru and Toru are the inheritors of unfulfilled renown. Yet they proved the fact that they inculcated in their works a rare promise and no mean achievement. It was in 1876, they contributed their English renderings of French lyric of Romantic school with the title *A Sheaf Gleaned In French Fields*. Toru’s Ancient Ballads and legends appeared in
1882. It is quite interesting to note that the Indian fiction in English is marked by certain characteristic features of its own.

The novel proper begins with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s first published work in English *Rajmohan’s wife* in the year 1864. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee is rightly considered the father of the novel in India. Other writers too took the lead and started producing novels in English. The first Indian Fiction in English entitled *Raja Mohan’s Wife* made a dramatic entry in the late sixties i.e.1864, in spite if the fact that the Indian writers began to write poetry in English. It was a significant start for the Indian English novel. Other writers too took the lead and started producing novels in English Notable among them were Rajalakshmi Devi, Toru Dutt, Kali Krishna Lahiri, H.Dutt, and Kshetrapal Chakravarti. The next important figure on the literary scene was Rabindranath Tagore. He came like a colossus on the Indian literary scene. He exerted a tremendous influence on the minds of the people with the choice of his themes. A significant fact of the period was that with the novels of Tagore, the growth of the Indian English novel and novels in regional languages in India developed almost on parallel lines. Tagore’s novels helped the Indians to rediscover themselves and also created a new awareness about their culture. Tagore’s influence is all pervading, as can be seen in the novels of his successors Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and a score of others. The arrival of Mulk
Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan aptly termed ‘the founding fathers’ by William Walsh, on the literary scene gave the Indian English novel a new vigour and direction. Commenting on their decisive contribution, Williams Walsh says:

The three writers are distinguished not only for their own work but as the inaugurators of the form itself since it was they who defined the area in which the Indian novels in English was to operate, drew the first models of its characters and themes and elaborated its particular logic. Each used his own version of English freed from the foggy taste of Britain (Walsh 1990: 62).

Long before the publication of Macaulay’s minutes on English education in India, but as a matter of fact, the novel not withstanding its latest art surpassed in excellence by making of poetry both in the quality and quantity, consequently a great interest was evinced in Indian fiction in English. The novels of the Thirties show concern with national or social problems, and the novels of the Sixties have a distinctly private tone. Compared to the Sixties there was no great spurt of activity in the Seventies. One can come to the conclusion that the novels of the Sixties and Seventies operate within a limited range and afford easy solutions. The reasons for this reduced output in the Seventies are not too hard to see. The
attempt by the individual to take an active role in the making of history is the important theme of the novel of the Eighties. The quest for identity is now against the background of a larger world; cosmopolitanism is the new reality. The new protagonist belongs everywhere, he is a cultural traveler and has the ability to merge into all cultures, coming to terms with the broadening horizons of modern experience. The novels of the Eighties exemplify this theme. At this stage it would be worthwhile to recapitulate the tremendous contribution of the ‘big three’ before elaborating on the novel of the Eighties.

1.4 INDIAN AUTHORS AND THEIR ENGLISH NOVELS

The Indian novel upto 1920 remained mediocre, absurdly romantic and technically faculty. The Freedom movement of Mahatma Gandhi evoked the feelings of all. The writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao appeared on the literary scene. It was during this period that Indian fiction discovered some of its most significant themes such as the problems and plight of the poor of India. After the Second World War, the women novelists of quality have began enriching the field of fiction. Toru Dutt can be the first Indian novelist. Her Bianca (1878) was published posthumously. This serialized novel is mainly autobiographical. The Indian novelists have proved their merit by winning, in competition with writers, whose mother tongue is English, several major literary awards, prizes and distinctions. To note only the most outstanding of these, two new novelists
have won the Booker Prize, supposedly the British equivalent of the Nobel Prize. Salman Rushdie for *Midnight Children* in 1981 (in 1993 this was adjudged the best novel to have won the Booker Prize) and Arundhati Roy for *The God of Small Things* in 1997. R.P. Jhabvala too had won the Booker prize in 1975, but she belonged to an earlier generation. Writers like S.K. Ghose, S.M. Mitra and Raj Laxmi Devi were experimenting to provide recognition to Indo-Anglian Fiction. The period between 1920-1950 was dominated by novels with political and social themes. The contribution of K.S. Venkatramani, Shankar Ram, S. Nagarajan, Kumar Guru, A.S.P. Ayyar, S.K. Chettur and G.V. Desani are notable. During the 1950-85, the acknowledged Indo-Anglians like R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgaonkar, Shashthi Bratta, Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, Arun Josi, Khuswant Singh, D.F. Faraka, Nirad C. Chaudhari and a host of others try their art of fiction writing with unlimited and unrestricted themes. But the credit of bringing a name and reputation to Indo-Anglian fiction goes to a few contemporary writers such as Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and Nirad Chaudhuri. They are the four wheels of contemporary Indo-Anglian fiction.

Miss Sarabji’s *Love And Life Behind The Purdah* and S.B. Bannerjee’s *Tales Of Bengal* are highly expressive of the glaring development of Indian Novels in English. The Indian Novels seem to have
attained maturity and perfection by all means with the publication of Mulk Raj Anand’s *Coolie* and *Untouchable* and Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura*.

Mulk Raj Anand feels that the duty of the writer is to throw light of the evils done by men towards his fellowmen. He wants to create an awareness of evil in the society. He gives pictures of ill treatment and pathetic life of coolies in *Two Leaves and A Bud*. Anand’s *Untouchable*, *Coolie* and *The Big Heart* present the humanistic faith and compassion of the writers. R.K.Narayan depicts human life in all authenticity, honesty, and straight forwardness with an enlivening and refreshing humor. He is one of the few writers in India who takes his craft seriously, constantly striving to improve the instrument, perusing with the sense of dedication what may often seem to be the mirage of technical perfection. Narayan develops an awareness of human nature and life. He has written novels of different types of political, regional, domestic and monetary interest.

Raja Rao’s novels aiming at the theme of search for truth, explain the traditional Hindu view of life, which was revealed in his master piece *The Serpent and Rope*. As an admirer and child of Gandhian age his characters try to convert human life for a larger and greater one of being.

*Kanthapura* is an exemplary one for his exercise. Consequently today the Indian Novelists writing in English make a formidable number—one cannot deny the fact that their contributions have enriched the Indian literary area in English to a great extent. The novelists in India whether
write in English or in any regional language have become invariably a part of his own cultural pattern that he could inevitably reflect that true Indian image. Manohar Malgonkar, Khuaja Abbas and Khuswant Singh have dealt with more serious themes. Their novels have a historical background. The meaninglessness of the bloodshed during the partition is realistically rendered.

Historically, India has her own cultural identity and this Indian consciousness is reflected in the works of the Indo-Anglican writers. They made an attempt to inculcate this consciousness in the minds of the Indian and the other people as well. As a result of this the Indian Novelist faces the problem of giving artistic expression to the advantages of economic changes and the industrialization on the community on class structure and above all family ties. The still water of Indian nationalism with its myriad traditions and cultures were stirred by the stone of western culture which put a girdle upon all aspects of life there by reshuffling the entire system of penetration deep from the urban rural side. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar says,

National Movements, Industrial growth, Egalitarian protest and social reforms as well as political ideologies are directly dealt with or indirectly suggested or reflected in Indian fiction in English as a major source for a systematic study of culture contact and cultural change (17).
The post-second world war era paved the way for a considerable rise to the number of novelists especially by women novelists of quality that enriched the Indian fiction with the delineation of characters representing the contemporary society. In these women novelists, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Jhabvala stand supreme in their character delineation and plot construction apart from faithful portrayal of Indian Society, the whims and fancies of the individual and weaknesses and foibles on Indian Society.

Kamala Markandaya is feminine and stands unique in her sincere exposition of the crises of the domestic ties where most of the families in the Indian setting or pitiable victims. She presents a cross section of the Indian society. Their novels explore comprehensively the social changes of India. Her are usually compared with the novels of Pearl S.Buck. On the other hand Ruth Prawar Jhabavala confines herself to a mere imitator of society. She too excels in portraying the crises in life but she confines to city life and customs. One could visualize a sense of detachment passing through the spine of her novels.

The works of Ruth Prawar Jhabwalla abound in themes exploiting the clash between traditional codes and modern aspirations. Indian novels in English have to their credit enormous themes all focusing on the life style, culture and domestic complexities of men representing all strata of the society, along with political crises in lieu of freedom struggle. Nayantara
Sahgal wrote novels that contain political overtones. Her works give an account of what happens in the corridors of power, in the drawing rooms of politically important people or in the lobbies of parliament.

Santa Rama Rao and Attia Hussain have tried to portray the various facts of Indian life with a wide range of themes like India’s struggle for Independence, the British regime, caste system, feudalistic corruption and exploitation, the orthodox upper class and the clash of generations. But few have been the novels that portray the psychic elements involved in these themes.

The use of stream of consciousness technique figure prominently in Indian fiction of the 1960’s. Novelists like G.V.Desani, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Arun Joshi explore the many aspects of the inner life of man. H.M. Williams asserts that “Markandaya and Desai…. exploring the anguish of the human and personal in modern society” (Naik. 12). As in the words of Srinivasa Iyengar, “Anita Desai has added a new dimension to the achievement of India women writers in English fiction” and also “her forte …. Is the exploration of sensibility” (464). K.B.Vaid commenting on the themes of Indian Novelists says,

portrayal of hunger and diseases, portrayal of widespread social evils and tensions examinations of the survivals of the past, explorations of the hybrid culture of the education
Indian middle classes, analysis of the innumerable dislocations and conflicts in a tradition ridden society under the impact of an incipient halfhearted industrialization. (*The Illustrated Weekly, 113*)

India Struggle for freedom forms the theme of many novels in Indian fiction. K.S. Venkata Ramani’s *Kandan The Patriot* and Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* are the two earliest novels which portray the Indian Scenario of freedom struggle in an elaborate manner apart from good with compact plots. *Kanthapura* marks a definite stage in the formation of an Indian style of writing in English. This novel gains significance because of the exposition of experiences of three planes – the political, the religious, and the social - all invariably fused into a complete whole. There is yet another theme that is to be noted. The confrontation of the East and West is a Theme carefully dealt with by Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya in their novels. The experience of isolation, of alienation and self-exile, the estrangement is shared by the protagonists of most of the contemporary realistic novels.

This aspect has been dealt with by novelists like Kamala Markandaya’s *Nowhere Man* Raja Rao’s *The Serpent and The Rope* Arun Joshi’s *The Foreigner*. All these have been successfully adopted by Anita Desai too in her novels. Eschewing the literary affectations that found in the
works of her contemporaries, Anita Desai endeavored to cultivate an
individual style which is vigorous, vital and suited to her subject matter.

Meenakshi Mukerjee remarks aptly that the women novelists
independence is found to be tied India’s Independence. The women
novelists were concerned with the interaction of traditional values and
modern trends in Indian life. The themes like poverty, squalor, oppression
and human suffering evils of the unjust social system in India were
preferred by them. Fiction writing by women novelists in India attained
maturity with the works of Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer, Jhabwalla,
Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Santa Rama Rao and Attia Hussain.

The East West Confrontation delineates the Heros and Heroines of their
novels as the representatives of the personages drenched into crises. The
above mentioned aspects of Indian fiction in English, its themes, essential
Indianness, and its English have led to the emergence of a national
character suiting the contemporary social and political scenes. But now, on
the other hand we find an apparent diversion or rather deviation towards the
themes of literary interest. The first significant fact is that the number of
Indian English novels published during the last two decades of 20th century
easily surpasses the total output for any corresponding earlier period and
quantity does guarantee quality, increasing recognition for the novelists.
R.K. Narayan’s contribution to the Indian English novel has been exemplary. By his choice of themes and a unique style of presentation, he has carved a niche for himself in the crowded literary scene. His protagonists are all ordinary middle class people and the family constitutes the hub of his preoccupations. Commenting on the thematic concerns of Narayan’s novels, William Walsh says, “The family, indeed, is the immediate context in which the novelists’ sensibility operates, and his novels are remarkable for the subtlety with which family relationships are treated. (1990:74).

Thus Narayan with his depiction of socio-economic aspects of everyday life of ordinary people, put together a wide panorama of life. The whole body of Indian English novels really does not anticipate the novel of the Eighties. The content and the form of the novel of the Eighties are unique.

The novels of Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya deal with the themes of social criticism and political emancipation. The religious and mythical Indian tradition has been successfully presented in the novels of R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Sudhin Ghose. The psychological and social tensions are obvious in the novels of Anita Desai and Nayan Tara Sahgal. The novelists like R.K. Narayan, Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, Arun Josi, Ahmad
Ali, Attia Hussain, Balchandra Rajan, Santha Ram Rao, Salman Rushdie and Nayan Tara Sahgal take their main characters from urban middle class. Narayan presents lively middle class mannerism and their tension between tradition and modernity of the urban middle class. He exposes the vanity, snobbery, sentimentality, pretentiousness, hypocrisy, corruption and evils of the middle class society.

Thus in spite of diversity in themes and techniques, Narayan’s fiction has some common features, namely, the presentation of a personal narrative against the background of modern Indian history, the conflict of values between the family and the individual and the awareness of social change. Meenakshi Mukherjee says that, “…the Indo-Anglian novel made a diffident appearance in the 1920s, they gradually gathered confidence, and established itself in the next two decades…” (1996, 23)

According to Prof. C.D. Narsimhaiah, the Indian novel in English has shown a capacity to accommodate a wide range of concerns; in Mulk Raj Anand a humane concern for the underdog not just a preoccupation with economic determinism; in R.K. Narayan the comic mode is equivalent to the tragic in his evocation of mediocrity; and K. Nagarajan surprises by his sensitive handling of the human significance in the religious and the logical labyrinth so characteristic of Hindu Society.
When Meenakshi Mukherjee is summarizing the themes of Indo-Anglian fiction, she says that, “…the Indo-Anglians have explored the metaphysical, spiritual and romantic aspects of the confrontation each in their own way. Even when the novel does not deal directly with the Forsterian theme, the personal crisis in the life of each Western educated hero or heroine becomes intercultural in nature…” (1999, 23).

**R.K. Narayan – Literary Career**

Among the Indian writers, R.K. Narayan, one of the modern Indo-Anglian writes of world fame, was born on October 10, 1906 in Rasipuram, but had long been established in the city of Madras. He belonged to a Brahmin family. Narayan’s father was a school master. His mother tongue was Tamil, he had settled down in Mysore, where the regional language was Kannada, and he wrote in English.

Narayan chose journalism as his career. He wrote for newspapers and magazines as well as developed creative writing of the finest possible order, from there he started writing novels. He derived neither inspiration nor trained abroad. He was very much an Indian both in spirit and thought. He was the artist who had not cared to write for sensation or for cheap popularity, nor had he written to interpret India to the west. His prime concern had been to view Indian life artistically and to deal with it like a
pure artist. He began by writing under the influence of events in his immediate surroundings.

In 1926, he passed the University Entrance Examination and began his studies at the Majaraja’s College. When Narayan finally graduated in 1930 at the age of twenty four he toyed with the idea of returning to college to take an M.A. Degree in Literature and became a college Lecturer. He made a half-hearted effort to teach. So he was to write novels and live at home. He is not only a great novelist, but also a contented and simple man. The remarkable simplicity in his personal life, as experienced by K.Natwar Singh, may be interesting to be mentioned here:

I walked up the steps and met by a small man in a shirt and lungi, no shoes. “Excuse me, but can you tell me if Mr.R.K.Narayan lives here?” “Yes, he does”, replies the barefooted man. I asked if could see him. “You are doing so right now – I am R.K.Narayan (Natwar Singh 1983: The Times of India, August 7).

He is among a very few writers who hates publicity. Narayan’s dislike of publicity can be told best in his own words:

The ancient tradition of anonymity must have been a great boon for writers, artist, and sculptors of yore. I cannot
imagine any epic writer etching his name on the first leaf of the palmyra strips nor a sculptor chiseling his name first on the back of stone… I visualize an ideal state of affairs where a book will have only its title and not the author’s name, which means that it will have to stand on its own merit rather than on the reputation of the author. The authorship must be a state secret known only to God, the Income-tax Authority and the Accountant at the publisher’s office (Narayan 1981: The Times of India, May 31).

Narayan has been much loved by his modern readers than any other writers. He deserves both praise and appraisal in larger and more discerning terms than he seems to have received so far, for he has produced a sizeable body of novels and collections of short stories. He also presents various shades of humour from gentle irony to parody. This comic vision, which is his strength, also makes his art limited. Narayan is not the novelist who conceives the whole novel in advance. But he weaves his incidents and so presents his plot before us, that under the magic influence of his imagination it becomes highly interesting and captures the attention of the readers.
Narayan started writing at the same time as Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. They fell into neat categories of Anand the Marxist, an angry Protestor, a satirist, a revolutionary novelist, progressive or committed writer and Raja Rao a metaphysical, the religious or philosophical novelist but Narayan the comic genius or pure writer and simple in style. Narayan was simply a novelist as novelist. There was no doubt that R.K.Narayan had taken care to write of things which were more universal in nature. His plots and themes revolved around human joys and sorrows, romance and frustration of the people of Malgudi.

The location for his novels is the town Malgudi, an imaginative version of Narayan’s beloved Mysore. Narayan says “I keep my eyes and ears open and find plenty of material for stories in my companions either in trains, trams or buses in the streets of Mysore and Madras” (Kumar 1949: Illustrated Weekly of India, January 23). As a good story teller Narayan sees to it that his story has a beginning, middle and an end. The end of his novel is a solution to the problem which sets the events moving. The end achieves that completeness towards which the action cannot progress. This end very often consists either in a balance of forces or in counter forces.

It may be pointed out that Narayan as a novelist is also a commentator of the broad tendencies of his society and age. He follows the tradition of story telling as it existing in ancient India but adopts his form
and style from the west. The instruments of his critical strategy are comedy, irony and satire. Narayan keeps very close to surface reality, for his aim is to reveal the tragic comedy implicit in ordinary life.

Narayan calmly views life from an aesthetic distance while standing at a crossroad he gets sufficient material for his writing. He was writing in the Indian Express, April 9, 1979 that he used to get materials from the market road when he was standing there. He presents life as it is. Thus his dispassionate style can be marked and observed in all his writings. As a matter of fact, Narayan is the only pure artist who writes for art’s sake. So we are impressed by his artistic impersonality in his novels. He is a lover of humanity no doubt, but his love for humanity and his views of life are based on common sense, understanding and practical wisdom. That is why his novels evoke a sense of propriety in life.

Not only in Imaginary Locale, Narayan was successful in using the English language as a medium for the expression of creative urge which lies in his device of using – irony, satire and humour-irony. R.K. Narayan, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Bhattacharya are the prominent authors who have used irony as a literary device to expose the human predicament.

V.S.Naipaul and Narayan share many things in common. Their commendable mastery over the English language, member of the third generation Indian immigrant Brahmin community, the Hindu religious past
and the cultural heritage of traditional India. Both of them are likely to keep the racial memory of the vedic past, the Hindu religious Myths and legends along with various socio religious practices observed by their ancestors. The two great Indian epics are also common to these novelists. Yet surprisingly enough, striking contradictions are found in the overall influential effect of the common core of cultural heritage upon their minds. In the case of Narayan, its manifestation that takes a turn which is spiritually positive and leads to an assertion of peace and order in life but in V.S. Naipaul it takes an opposite direction. V.S. Naipaul rejects Hinduism but Narayan is firmly rooted in the Indian tradition and enjoys a feeling of security and homeliness in keeping with his strong faith in the essential continuity of the traditional culture. While Naipaul had the strong urge to escape from Trinidad but Narayan never felt the need for leaving his native surroundings either in search of fictional themes or congenial setting. Narayan’s novels can be classified according to their themes. They are early novels, domestic novels, novels dealing with mammon worshippers and political experience, the lower middle class citizen of the South.


He received the Sahitya Academy Award for The Guide in 1960. He was awarded Padma Bhushan in 1964. The University of Leeds conferred on him the honour of D.Litt in 1967 and Delhi University followed it in 1973. He earned high acclaim in India and abroad. He was a visiting lecturer at Michigan State University in 1958; and lectured at many reputed institutions of America such as the University of California, Kansas University, Yale University and Yassar College. Narayan believes in the principle of Art for Arts sake, and deals with social problems in his novels. He also writes also for the pleasure of creation and beauty. The basic theme of his novels is the place of man in this universe and his predicament. Narayan himself has remarked in an article that “…the mood of comedy, the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors; the crisis in the individual soul and its resolutions are the necessary ingredients in fiction…” (Narayan 1933: 59). He wants to suggest that life is illogical and man is always trying to translate his fantasies into reality. So, through the reversal of fortune, Narayan completes the story of man’s rise and fall and thus presents a total view of life.
AIM OF THE STUDY

The wider canvas of R.K. Narayan’s fiction can also be seen by a study of typical themes and characters. The range has been more widened by the inclusion of versatile themes. The most prominent technique of narration in the R.K. Narayan’s novels is the first person narrative. The aim of the study is to analyse the different domestic themes portrayed by R.K. Narayan in his novels. The title of the research is **A STUDY OF MYTH, REALISM, TOPOGRAPHY AND HIGHER DIMENSIONAL CONCEPTS IN SELECT NOVELS OF R.K. NARAYAN**. In this research, researcher wants to carry out the research focus in a maverick way i.e. R.K. Narayan’s style of handling the themes of myth, realism, Topography and Higher dimensional concepts such as, soul - body concept, Reincarnation and beyond’ in his novels. The Study is aimed at delineate the higher dimensional feature found in R.K. Narayan juxtaposed with the background of the author himself. Here is an attempt to throw light upon the spirit in which these concepts are laid out in order to induce some serious self analysis in the minds of the readers. The higher dimensional concepts herein analysed is contained within the four of R.K. Narayan’s novels namely, *The English Teacher, Mr.Sampath, The Man Eater of Malgudi* and *The Tiger for Malgudi*. A broad analysis of these limited sources is attempted herein. Observations and results analysed in these novels is most likely to be in congruence with the rest of his novels. Hence
the scope of the study of the above few novels is not less than a universal attempt of all his works.

ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

This title of the research “A STUDY OF MYTH, REALISM, TOPOGRAPHY AND HIGHER DIMENSIONAL CONCEPTS IN SELECT NOVELS OF R.K. NARAYAN” is divided into five chapters. The content and focus of each chapter are given below.

Chapter – I titled as ‘INTRODUCTION’ gives a detailed ideas on the origin and development of English Fiction in Indian literary scenario. In addition, it gives a detailed account of the versatile of themes and authors belong to the Indian English fiction. Also this chapter explores the scope of the research, aim and plan of research in the preceding chapters.

Chapter - I I is titled as MYTH IN MAN-EATER OF MALGUDI AND REALISM IN THE GUIDE. This chapter explores the utilization of myth in Man-Eater of Malgudi and Realism in The Guide.

Chapter – I I I is. titled as “TOPOGRAPHY IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF R.K.NARAYAN”. This chapter consider R.K. Narayan as a regional novelist who depicts the physical features, geographical boundaries, mountains and rivers, hills and forests and vales and all that constitutes the region and plays an important role in its delineation
describes the social, political, economic and religious conditions of the locale of his fiction. This chapter discusses the malgudi reference in his novels.

Chapter – IV is titled as “HIGHER DIMENSIONAL CONCEPTS IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF R.K. NARAYAN NOVELS”. This chapter discusses the Vedic perspectives of R.K. Narayan in his novels. How he impregnates the essential concepts of Vedic Philosophy into the sequence of events in his novels is indeed worth admiring. In the most expected places Narayan inserts the profound philosophy which provides the reader with a sudden insight into the concept of WHO AM I? The novels The English Teacher, A Tiger for Malgudi, The Man Eater of Mlagudi and Mr.Sampath become all the more popular among the Indian readers for thus philosophy of life which is a part of the mass consciousness of the Indian people.

Chapter – V is titled as “Conclusions’ gives overall view of the previous chapters and findings of the research. It records the researcher views on every chapter of this research individually. This chapter is followed by bibliography which gives detailed list of primary sources and secondary sources used and referred in this research work. Related documentary evidences are enclosed as ‘Annexure’.