Conclusion
Any representation of India raises, first and foremost, the question of the status of India as a nation. However, the concept of a nation itself emerges as volatile and dynamic, susceptible to quick changes. Starting as a synonym to a country with the underlying principle of homogeneity, in the post-colonial terrains, the issue of ethnicity and historical multiplicity take away this relationship of a nation and country based on homogenization. The ethnic multiplicity, religious diversity, cultural variety and linguistic multifacetedness give India the image of a multi-colored land. India, then, emerges as a heterogeneous group: a nation in the post-colonial sense. Representation requires certain common features to be represented. But India seems too large to have such encompassing features. However, there are several such factors and three of the most important ones are: political history, the oppressor-oppressed relationship and religion.

In spite of the variable political history of India, owing to its geographical vastness, emerging from the Aryans, the history of India can be put under a large but single umbrella. The arrival of the British put the entire landmass together validating the common banner of Indian political history. The second issue common to India is the oppressor-oppressed relationship. India has witnessed this superior-subordinate duality since time immemorial and in fact, it emerges that this social order is a part of global history. The aborigines have played the oppressed to the invaders, the shudras to the high castes and women to men. Moreover, there has been the oppression of the individual by the social norms. There have been voices against this oppression from time to time by the marginalized and the oppressed. Thirdly religion, that has been the omnipresent issue in India, more so since the invasion of the Aryans, who with their own social structure paved the way for Hinduism. The Mughals firmly established Islam and other religions like Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc. grew in India. The British brought Christianity and all the different religious beliefs existed, grew, and sustained themselves. No part of India has been devoid of religious affiliations which have also determined the status and identity of the individual in the society as dominant or dominated. Moreover, the identity thus offered is a ‘group identity’ in contrast to the individualism of the West.
The three chapters of the present research work deal with the issues of Politics, Gender and Religion each, with an attempt being made to analyze how each of the five texts represent India on these parameters. Written across a period of nearly 80 years, the texts belong to authors from different canons and times. Forster belongs to Colonial literature, Rushdie and Tharoor are a part of Diasporic literature, Kamleshwar is a major proponent of Regional literature while Kiran Desai is a female expatriate. Being from varied backgrounds alters their way of looking at India and hence, even though all the five texts deal with a largely common setting, the representation of the three aspects varies.

The first chapter looks at the political history represented in the works of the five authors. A Passage to India reflects the political history of India through British eyes. As a result, British presence in India as a colonizer is not questioned. Moreover, by virtue of having a separate area for the British in the setting, an alternative civilization to India appears, one that does not rely on orality but on written testimonies and is superior to the native. Forster’s sympathy for the Indians emerges in his ‘desiring’ certain modifications in the way of governance. The Great Indian Novel, by an Indian expatriate Shashi Tharoor, represents India as a faded relic of a glorious past. From the great Kurukshetra, the dharma-yudh becomes a political struggle between the political parties, and Gangaji emerges as the shrewd saint in contrast to the ideal Bhishma of The Mahabharata. India, thus, comes across as a decayed nation. The overall representation resembles the West’s representation of India that attempts at justifying the presence of the colonizers in the country. Within the same colonial perspective is another novel, The Inheritance of Loss that represents the political struggle in the Eastern part of India, de-legitimizing the rebellion of the minority without offering them a chance to ‘voice’ their dissent and dissatisfaction. Though it deals with post-independence India, it still caters to the colonial parameters wherein the ‘powerless’ are negated by a powerful ‘self’.

On the other hand is Midnight’s Children, countering the Western ideologies through an alternative narrative of Indian mythologies. The text refuses to follow the Western literary style completely, thereby questioning the West’s creation of the Orient. As a result, the Indian political events emerge with points-of-view emphasizing that it can be seen from multiple perspectives. The Jallianwallah Bagh massacre has the Indian
and the Western perspective while the glory of the Red Fort is blotted by the poverty at its back. *Kitne Pakistan* also presents an alternative genre to the standard Indian English Literature representing India. Written in Hindi, the novel represents various perspectives of the tumultuous Indian political history by moving freely in space and time and raising from the dead characters like Rana Sanga on the one hand, and Babur on the other. It reflects the inadequacy of the binary opposition of hero-villain and stresses on the supremacy of circumstances and perspectives in determining actions. The two texts, then, by virtue of their rejection of the Western tradition and homogeneity, represent a heteroglossia that emerges from the presence of difference in points-of-view.

While the portrayal of a homogeneous colonial order by Forster comes as normal, the novels like *The Great Indian Novel* and *The Inheritance of Loss*, too, concentrating on a homogenization of India and its political history on colonial parameters appears unnatural: while Tharoor reduces it to Hinduism, Desai reduces it in favor of the ethnically dominant. *Midnight's Children* and *Kitne Pakistan*, on the other hand, challenge this homogenization by representing the various perspectives of Indian political history and offering 'voice' and 'space' to the marginalized, acknowledging heterogeneity.

The second chapter analyzes the representation of Gender in the five novels. *A Passage to India*, *The Great Indian Novel* and *The Inheritance of Loss* center around the traditional gender order of the masculine and the male dominating over the feminine and the female. *A Passage to India* distinguishes between the masculine British male and the feminine Indians and the British female. However, the relationship is complex because the British woman as the colonizer is superior to the Indian male but as female she is marginalized. This complexity emerges due to Forster's authorial position as a British male. *The Great Indian Novel* reflects the old Hindu male dominated perspective. This order is homogeneous, irrespective of caste or sex of the characters. The low caste characters and women are under the dominance of the high caste and the males, and everyone is bound by this social gender order. Moreover, the male and the masculine emerge satisfied with the set-up. *The Inheritance of Loss* offers a class based gender order in addition to the traditional
male-female order. In spite of being a woman writer, Desai does not offer female characters space equal to her male characters.

*Midnight's Children* too deals with a social order where the male and the masculine suppress the feminine and the female, as in *The Great Indian Novel*, but there is a major difference. The former places the male and the female in a gendered order and not only the female but the male emerges as oppressed: he emerges as the ‘oppressed oppressor’ of the feminine. The *purdah* offers visibility to the female and reflects the sexuality of the male, a role traditionally assigned to the female. It, along with *Kitne Pakistan* becomes a questioning of the traditional gender order. Kamleshwar’s novel also questions the traditional order by offering a variable point-of-view of womanhood that is a combination of traditionalism and rebellion. She is a sacrificer as well as the one who keeps ‘voice’ hidden from Gods and offers it to the humans who have been marginalized by the masculine and male Gods.

The chapter underlines that conventionally gender order has kept the feminine and the female under the masculine and the male. However, there are narratives that question that order and challenge its legitimacy. One thing that emerges common from the representation of gender in the five texts is the nature of gender which, though it appears rigid, is actually dependent on some other aspects and accordingly moulds itself, though for a short period of time. One such factor is tradition: Naseem’s insistence on the *purdah*, man being assisted by the Goddesses, and the rebellion of Amba as Shikhandin, all fall within the purview of tradition whenever they overrule the gender order. Moreover, the order re-imposes itself after a brief spell of time as, barring the *purdah*, Aadam dominates over Naseem, while the Gods ill-treat the Goddesses who are not completely independent yet.

The third chapter of the thesis analyzes the representation of religion. Except in *Midnight's Children* and *Kitne Pakistan*, religion emerges in terms of binary opposites of Hinduism and Islam with other religions in the periphery and largely negated. This generates the issue of one being negative and the other, positive. In *A Passage to India* Forster’s preference is for Islam rather than Hinduism, though both finally emerge as a ‘muddle’ for him, equally inadequate as Christianity. *The Great Indian Novel* too reflects a Hinduism vs Islam scenario and the blame for the wrongs is laid on Islam and the Muslim League, with Hinduism emerging unblemished. The
nostalgia for the lost Ram Rajya reflects the pro-Hindu perspective in the novel. The Inheritance of Loss, too, reflects on a positive and practical Hinduism against an impossible and impractical Islam.

Though Midnight's Children, too, reflects a Hindu vs Muslim duality, it certainly does not delve into a negative and positive relationship. Both the religions co-exist and have their positives and negatives. There is no mistrust or hatred between the two though circumstances at times do create tensions. Rushdie dwells on various kinds of Islam but that is not a binary relationship with Hinduism for two reasons. One, Rushdie is a Muslim himself and secondly, he does not belittle the other religions at the cost of Islam. Whereas Kitne Pakistan goes one step further by representing Hinduism and Islam as co-existing religions through centuries. Moreover, Kamleshwar offers space to Hinduism and Islam equally, giving both the ‘voices’ an opportunity to engage in a dialogue. Neither emerges as negative or the hero or the minority; rather both are a part of the heterogeneity that comprises India.

The representation of religion in the five texts reflects a peculiar trend. A Passage to India, The Great Indian Novel and The Inheritance of Loss reflect the existence of two antagonistic forces in the form of Hinduism and Islam in India. The latter two vouch for Hinduism while the former is slightly in favor of Islam. Midnight’s Children and Kitne Pakistan, on the other hand, emphasize on the co-existence of the two with each other and with other religions.

The underlying principle behind the representation of religion in India in the former group of three novels is homogeneity. In the backdrop of the Hindu-Muslim duality, for The Great Indian Novel and The Inheritance of Loss, caste Hinduism prevails as the norm while in A Passage to India, it is the negation of Indian features for the purpose of administrative hegemony.

Midnight’s Children throws light on the existence of the two with the other religions and the neutral and conditional relationship they share, while Kitne Pakistan emphasizes on the co-existence of the two religions in India since ancient times. The two texts, comprising the second group, negate the basic premises of the three texts comprising the first group, and advocate the presence of a heterogeneous religious order in India. It is restricted in Midnight’s Children which pushes more towards
Islam but *Kitne Pakistan* accepts the equal importance and prevalence of all religions in India.

The novels in the first group emphasize on the presence of monotheism in India, be it political history, gender or religion. *A Passage to India* was composed in the year 1924, the time when India was under the British colonial rule. As a result, any representation of India was affected by the power principle. The power of representation was vested in the British and any picture of India smacked on Orientalism. Forster’s novel falls in the same category and as a result homogeneity remains a critical factor in his narrative in spite of his sympathetic attitude towards Indians. The colonial in Forster dominated his representation of India. The colonial’s image of India presented a picture of an under-developed, overtly religious country in need of a master for efficient control and development. Forster’s representation also brings across his masculinity as the colonizer and a male.

*The Great Indian Novel* was published in 1989, well into an independent India, and hence is a post-colonial novel. However, the representation of India emphasizes homogeneity and monotheism. These have their roots in the oldest Indian religion, Hinduism. Tharoor represents a Hindu India but one that has lost its original sheen to the forces of secularism and the need to get back to that golden age of caste Hinduism. The nostalgia for the age of *The Mahabharata*, the golden period in Indian history and Hinduism, is evident in the narrative in the wake of a nation in an advanced state of decay. The rotten state in which his India is, reflects a Westernized perspective and hence measures everything in terms of class and individualism, principles woefully inadequate in the East.

Similarly, *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai also revolves around the idea of Hinduism and homogeneity of India. The negation of Muslims and Gurkhas alike represents the narrative’s pro-Hindu approach. The novel was published in 2006, thereby falling into the time frame of post-colonialism but it asserts a monotheism and uniformity in India, negating the multiplicities. Her Western perspective is reflected in the class based Gurkha-Non-gurkha conflict, while her Indian Hindu perspective is reflected clearly in the Hindu-Muslim duality and the negation of the latter.
All the three novels, then, represent India as a homogeneous group, one that has a uniform and single political history, gender order and religious belief with any variations being aberrations that don’t belong here. This ‘single voice’ as a quality of a ‘rotten’ nation asserts the existence of the traditional colonial order that belittles the natives, favoring a ‘superior’ alien culture. The three texts, thus portray the India of the 20th century as a decayed form of the once glorious kind and in doing so, legitimize the West’s notion of the ‘White man’s burden’.

The other group comprising Midnight’s Children and Kitne Pakistan represents an India that is heterogeneous. Midnight’s Children, published in 1981, belongs to the same decade as Tharoor’s The Great Indian Novel, but while the latter emphasizes a ‘middle-class Hindu’ point-of-view, the former challenges the traditional notions of uniformity and homogeneity by questioning the social gender order and reflecting religion as dependent on circumstances and diverse. However, his being an expatriate Muslim has restricted his point-of-view. But unlike Tharoor who lays emphasis on ‘facts’ and subsequently his ‘insider status’, Rushdie accepts his restricted and broken perspective in his narrative where Gandhi continues to die at the wrong time. Tharoor’s narrative borders on the power of memory while Rushdie’s on the limitations of a ‘fallible memory’. Rushdie expatiates on Islam but rather than stressing on a monotheistic Islam, various facets of Islam find a place in the narrative. He acknowledges the presence of diverse ‘voices’ and heterogeneity in his India but accepting his limited perspective owing to his diasporic status, restricts himself to the ‘known’ and objective. The narrative, then, emerges as a partial post-colonial representation of India.

Kitne Pakistan (2000), the other novel in the second category, is a 21st century novel like The Inheritance of Loss. A Hindi novel, hence belonging to the canon of Regional Literature, it represents the global and the Indian. What emerges from the narrative is the existence of heterogeneity, not only in his India but also in the narrative which offers equal space to the various ‘voices’. The Hindus and the Muslims, the males and the females, the oppressed and the oppressor, all are offered space to express their voice. The authorial voice becomes one of the many and in promoting ‘universal respect’ does not side with any of the points-of-view. His India emerges as a collection of independent and unrestrained voices, respecting the heterogeneity that
emerges from such a representation. Moreover, in not siding with any voice, the narrative generates a post-colonial narrative in the true sense of the word.

The two groups and the qualities that create the two groups identify with two critical terms in literature: Colonialism and Post-colonialism. While colonial literatures emphasize on the Orient and a tendency towards uniformity, the post-colonial literatures question the conventional notions of the Orient and any attempt towards standardization in approaching objects that are themselves diverse and hybrid. The latter emphasizes on the points-of-view rather than absolute truths, which the former relies on, acknowledging the presence of power structures that affect the representation.

Post-colonialism generates its own structure in terms of ‘resistance’ and ‘subversion’ of the traditional order. Midnight’s Children creates that resistance through a society that emerges as the disciplinarian rather than the disciplined unlike The Great Indian Novel. Rushdie’s narrative portrays both the male and the female as victims of a social order and hence rebelling against it, unlike Tharoor’s narrative where the male is the oppressor in relation to the female. Kitne Pakistan represents the subversion of the traditional order when the Goddesses save the ‘beikhauf awaaz’ from God for man. It reminds one of the struggle of Prometheus who stole fire from God for man. The offering of the ‘voice’ to the oppressed and the marginalized creates that resistance literature in the narrative, a feature negated in A Passage to India and The Inheritance of Loss where the Indians and the Gurkhas respectively, are not offered a conspicuous ‘voice’.

Another factor crucial in post-colonialism is language which emerges as a sensitive device to question and challenge the colonial notions. Language plays a crucial part in the process of colonization and the diversities that emerge in a post-colonial scenario modify the ‘master’s language’ by giving it inflections of nation, class, religion, ethnicity, etc. The texts in the first group, except one, use Standard English as the language. This reflects the texts’ restriction to the colonizer’s language. In the process, it also reflects the intended audience which is not Indian but Western. The picture that is presented before the West, then, is what they have been used to through the Orient. The only exception is The Inheritance of Loss which uses Hindi as well, but here Hindi fails to be a rebels’ language as their language is Nepali, not Hindi.
The Gurkhas speak in English but it is rejected for them as Nepali is the language that belongs to them.

*Midnight’s Children*, though uses English and targets a Western audience, its use of English is Indianized that partially questions the colonial order. *Kitne Pakistan* uses Hindi as the medium of writing, thereby rejecting the language of the colonial masters for the native language of the country. His choice of the language also asserts his audience group which is Indian rather than Western. Writing for the native becomes a task more difficult for, unlike the Westerner, the native has a first-hand experience of the setting being described. *Kitne Pakistan*, then, through its use of Hindi reflects complete subversion of the colonial order.

It is the popularly held idea that literatures conceived before the independence of a colony comprise Colonial literature, whereas the ones produced after independence, post-colonial, because the power of representation shifts from the hegemonic masters to the natives. As a result the discourse that is produced is not colonially motivated and prejudiced. However, looking at the five texts and their features and perspectives and the discourse generated, it emerges that texts composed after the Indian independence can equally be colonial like the ones produced prior to independence.

*A Passage to India* is a product of colonial India but *The Great Indian Novel* and *The Inheritance of Loss* belong to independent India but still present a colonial picture of India. On the other hand, *Midnight’s Children* and *Kitne Pakistan* reflect a heterogeneous picture of India, but one that does not rest on hostility or binary opposites. Theirs is an India that is open to different perspectives and points-of-view and does not endorse monotheism.

Post-coloniality is not a strictly time bound phenomenon. In other words, a work does not become colonial or post-colonial simply because of its production in a particular period. What determines its post-colonial status or otherwise are the qualities and the features that it exhibits. Post-colonialism problematizes identity constructed by a discourse of religion, language and power structures. *Midnight’s Children* partially, and *Kitne Pakistan* more or less completely, reflect these qualities. It also means that being a native of the former colony is not a criterion or condition for being ‘entitled’
to compose a post-colonial text. The point-of-view of the writer and his status determine his position in the post-colonial paradigm.

The representation of India in the five texts in the context of the three aspects emerges as a heterogeneous one. Not only those texts that emphasize the differences but also those that stress on a homogeneity, reflect multiplicity in their representation. The nostalgia in Tharoor’s *The Great Indian Novel* for a Hindu past reflects the secular forces prevalent in India. His India longs for that homogeneous past in the wake of a diversified present. Similarly, *A Passage to India*, within the colonial paradigm emphasizes the heterogeneity in India, especially religious, which comes across as a muddle to the West. The lack of friendship between the Indians and the West, and the colonial paradigm function in the backdrop of a mutual indifference between the various religions in India. *The Inheritance of Loss* also laments ethnic and religious heterogeneity by reflecting a desire for a homogeneous and monotheistic India. *Midnight's Children* and *Kitne Pakistan*, on the other hand, acknowledge the existence of diversity in their India. For *Midnight’s Children*, the heterogeneity is a part of the normal social order today, for *Kitne Pakistan* this heterogeneity is old in nature.

India, thus, in the five works emerges as a diverse and highly heterogeneous country rather than a traditional nation. The research work has attempted to define certain factors that are common to this heterogeneity of the country and analyze how they have been represented in five narratives composed in different time frames and space. These factors are Political History, Gender and Religion, but it remains equally a fact that India is a vastly diverse country having a lot of features unique to a certain part of it in addition to several that are common, all amenable to multiple interpretations. The five texts, in the final analysis, become five ‘voices’ that represent India in their own ways and this research work attempts to engage these ‘voices’ in a dialogue. There are more voices that represent India and here the role of literature becomes crucial. It is literature that can represent India in all its complexity before the world and for doing so it will have to rely on one of the most ancient principles of writing, revived in the post-colonial times and asserted by Bakhtin: two voices is the minimum for life. Literature has the responsibility of representing India with all Her diversities and the perspectives surrounding them.