“Indian writing in English has now grown up into Indian English Literature. With its new face, it represents in its fullness all major aspects of Indian-nests. Now that Indian fiction has become well entrenched within the larger gamut of Indian English literature, feminist fiction has occupied the centre stage as the most powerful and characteristic form of literary expression. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Shashi Deshpande, Mahashweta Devi, Manju Kapur, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri etc have made the Indian novels in English the world’s best sellers” (Prasad and Malik, 2007, 236).

Literature has always been an efficient device in the hands of mankind since time immemorial and contributed for all round development of human beings and for bringing synchronization among different cultures and societies. There are several forms of literature but Drama, Poetry, Short story and Novel occupies the foremost part of literature. All literary works are written in exacting context amidst many communal changes. Legends and histories represent societal changes and a strong sense of general and enriching identity is constructed through writing. Literature is known to signify history without any embellishment or biasness.

The output of Indian English Literature explores the body of works by committed writers in India, who pen austerely in the English language and entire nature or co-nature language could be one of the rich regional and aboriginal languages of India. It is extensively linked with the members of Indian Diaspora. It has come into force only in the previous couple of decades or so, as far as literature goes. The plodding fruition of Indian English Literature had all begun in the summers of 1608, when Emperor Jahangir, in the court of the Mughals, had welcomed Captain William Hawkins, Commander of British Naval Expedition Hector, in a chivalrous manner.

There was no encouraging atmosphere when India was under the British rule. Still the Indian writers welcomed English language as language of non-judgmental and responsiveness education and a vehicle for literary expression with important means of communication amongst various people of disparate religions. Creative writing in English is looked as a central part of the literary traditions in the Indian perception of fine arts. In early times of British rule, the novelistic writing indeed the Indian English dramas and Indian English poetry had immensely arrested the
concentration of the local masses. Rabindranath was one such personality who added creative element to the literary traditions of India in particular and to the world literature in general.

Kashi Prasad made a humble beginning to the start of Indian Literature in English in the year 1830. He was considered to be the former Indian poet writing in English. Sochee Chunder Dutt was the other earliest writer of fiction. He created an incredible attraction and brilliancy of high regard for Indian English novels. It was a note worthy point in Indian Literary fabric where importance was given to socio-political issues. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his amazing literary output reflect social reforms and religious scenario in India absolutely in the medium of English.

The novel is the most admired genre of the Modern age. More or less it can be expressed as ‘A fictitious prose narrative of considerable length’. The history of Indian novels is gifted with rare momentum of Indian freedom movement, promising under its massive umbrella. The Modern Indian English writers have been well bred and mannered to ornate the present and the past incidents in their works. In 1793, SK Dean Mohammed’s book was possibly the first book written by an Indian in English, titled as The Travels of Dean Mohammed.

The novels written in 1930 aimed at inequality, brutality and exploitation of the public. Mulk Raj Anand’s creations Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936) and Two Leaves and a Bud (1938) clearly epitomize the historical nuances to Gandhian Philosophy and communal facts. Following the ancestors, in 1948 G.V. Desani’s All about H.Hatterr showed a change from psychosomatic explorations to individual observations. 1950s witnessed great writers like Kamala Markandaya with her Nectar in Sieve (1954), K.A.Abbas’s Inquilib (1955) and R.K.Narayan’s The Guide (1958) marked the didactic booms in the anguished minds of the characters. Though the western influence was more on people, the novels written in sixties had a highlighted mark of Indian identity. Malgonkar’s A Bend in the Ganges (1964) showed the terrorist movements, while Bhabani Bhattacharya’s Shadow from Ladakh (1966) and R.K.Narayan’s The Vendor of Sweets (1967) focused on the changes of social feelings after the post- independence period.

The novelists in seventies objected to the political and authoritative ships. The period of emergency brought attentiveness in people raising their political
receptiveness. The eighties was blessed with writers like Salman Rushdie, who won Booker Award for *Midnight's Children* (1981) and Vikram Seth for invigorating young Indian brains with his work, *A Suitable Boy* (1993). The history is indeed lucky to remember the decade as it had laid a new path for writing fiction. The decade of nineties was fortunate to the Western publishers, as they were blessed by the writings of Vikram Seth, Shobha De, Amitav Ghosh and Upamanyu Chatterjee.

The repetitive novels which made the westerners dry had come to rescue with the new Indian writer inventions. The inheritance of this period was continued with the advent of the fictional works of K.S.Venkata Ramani (1851-1951). His initial novel *Murugan, the Tiller* (1927) and the second novel *Kanadam and the Patriot* focuses on the awesome influence of Mahatma Gandhi in general and his ideal picture of rural structure as a move towards winning Swaraj. Both the novels narrate so effortlessly and pragmatically the social, political and economic tribulations of the village life and manners of the South Indian setup.

Even ASP Ayyar, the dramatist was a member of Indian civil services. His two novels *Baladitya* (1930) and *Three Men of Destiny* moves round the history of India and Gandhian movement. Then a Tamilian, Krishna Swamy Nagarajan (1893) wrote two novels which stand head and shoulders above the works of both Venkataramani and Ayyar. *Athavar House* (1937) is a Galasworthian family chronicle dealing with an old Maharastrian Vaishnava Brahmin family settled in the south for generations. He dealt with an entirely different social trend. In the later novel, *Kedaram* (1961), Nagarajan seasons his practicality with sharp sense of mockery.

The political setting is the dominant situation of Indian literature in this period and Gandhi ideologies played a major role in it. Mahatma Gandhi’s personality had left an enduring impression on the Indian writers in English also. The writers like Dhan Gopal Mukherjee, Frieda H.Das, K.Nagarajan and N. Zutshi were under the influence of Gandhi and published their works before independence. Dhan Gopal Mukherjee is the prehistoric man of Indian writers in English to describe the unique popularity and fast growing prodigy of Gandhiji among the masses in his autobiographical novel, *My Brother’s Face* (1925). Khwaja Ahmed Abbas was also deeply influenced by the freedom movement. His famous novel *Inquilab* (1955) is
written under the influence of struggle during 1920’s and 30’s. The novel gives a vivid and practical description of Jallianwalla Bagh massacre.

Aurobindo Ghose is known as the ‘Fire brand’ of India. He is a poet, a saint, a philosopher and so on. He is one of the pre-independence Titanic trios of Indian poets – Tagore, Aurobindo and Sarojini. He is mainly known for his Savitri, a poetic epic, The Life Divine and Essays on Gita. He is a great proponent and exponent of ancient Indian contemplation. Bhabani Bhattacharya’s fictional writings like Indian Cavalcade (1942), So Many Hungers (1947), He Who Rides a Tiger (1955), Music for Mohini (1964), A Goddess named Gold (1967), Steel Hawk and other Stories (1968), and Gandhi, the Writer (1969) made mark of his own in Indian literary framework.

Bankim Chandra Chatterji is generally called as The Father of Bengali Fiction. He is well known for his patriotic bent of mind. Of all his writings, 14 novels are historical, some are social and still, others are philosophical with stress and repudiation and non-attachment. Some of his novels are The Poison Tree (1884), Kapala Kundala (1885), Durgeshnandini (1890), Krishnakanta’s Will (1895), The Two Rings (1897), Rajmohan’s Wife (1904), Anand Math (1884) and so on. Anandmath is his most renowned work which deals with Bengal famine and contains the famous song - Vandemataram. Amit Chaudhuri is also one of the eminent writers, whose Real Time: Stories and Reminiscence (2002) has been published by Picador of India.

Nirad C. Chaudari caught the public eye with the publication of his The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian (1951). He raised the status of Indian fiction through the works of A Passage to England (1959), Continent of Circe (1966), The Intellectual of India (1967) and To Live or Not to Live (1970) to greater heights followed by G.V.Desani’s celebrated novel All about H. Hatter (1949). They are highly hilarious works with undertones of irony, satire and cynicism. They expose the sham pretentions of people in social, religious and rational matters. Romesh Chander Dutt, a Bengali writer himself rendered his two novels into English. They are Sansar as The Lake of Palms (1902) and Madhavi Kankan as The Slave Girl of Agra (1909). The Slave Girl of Agra is a historical romance of love, stratagem and distrust. Arun Joshi’s contribution in the context is also note worthy in this context.
Arun Kolatkar, who is a writer in English and Marathi, won the Commonwealth Poetry prize in 1977 for his *Jejuri* which is a model of precise portrayal of scenery. It is a long narrative poem intermingled with conversational words and expressions divided into 31 sections. Khushwant Singh is branded for his novels *Train to Pakistan* (1956) which is a masterpiece, dealt with the theme of partition and *I shall not hear the Nightingale* (1959) describes a Sikh family during pre-independence period. Vikram Seth is an Indian novelist, poet and a travel writer known for his verse novel *The Golden Gate* (1986), *A Suitable Boy* (1993) are his well known works.

While discussing the contribution of Manohar Malgonkar, one of the famous novelists of Modern Indian English fiction, P.P.Mehta, The Times Literary supplement viewed that ‘His novels are conceived on a large scale; they are full of action and exciting stories’. They are also valuable documents. His novels, *Distant Drum* (1960), *The Princes* (1963) and *A Bend in the Ganges* (1965) are believed to be his best novels. *The Princes* is about crumbling of an old aristocratic system in India and *A Bend in the Ganges* is like a fictional leave out of pre-independence Indian history.


T.Rama Krishna wrote some historical romance such as *Padmini* (1903) and *The Dive for Death* (1912). Sri Jogendra Singh’s social novels such as *Nasrin* (1915), *Kamla* (1925) and *Kumari* (1931) though quite emotional and propagandistic have some historical value, at least as such. Sharat Kumar Ghosh’s *The Prince of Destiny* (1909) earned some fame and though professing to be a historical novel, is inherently a romance of same value. Salman Rushdie’s novel *Midnight’s Children* (1981) is a
story based on India and Pakistan attaining independence on the midnight of 14-15 August, 1947. It won the Booker prize in the same year.

Coming to the progress of novels on a linear scale, it was an admitted fact that the emergence of trio Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan gave some commendable shape which was assimilated even in foreign lands. Mulk Raj Anand, though working mainly under the influence of Marxian ideology, has also depicted intensely the wide popularity of Gandhi and describes his powerful hold on the masses, exclusively from Anand’s own viewpoint and own up-bringing. A man with dedication, Anand was a life-long crusader for the cause of have-nots. The legendary writer was born in 1905 in Peshawar (now in Pakistan), to Lalchand; Silversmith, who turned into a sepoy.

For Anand, pen was a medium through which he voiced his public protest. As a critic and a novelist, he wrote widely on political volatility, class and caste exploitation, capitalistic corruption and wretched poverty in India and other parts of the world. Social responsiveness was always the central theme of his novels. The great novelist believed that a writer had a duty towards the world in which he lived. His creativity was with a specific purpose to serve the human race. His abiding pre-occupation with critical and artificial arts stemmed from his humanist commitment to the development of the ‘Whole being of man’. Anand’s humanism and his anxiety for the underdog of the society are reflected in all his novels.

Anand’s unveiling novel Untouchable (1935) is brief. Its action takes place on a single day and it revolves around only one character, named Bhaka. This is perhaps the first novel to appeal on behalf of the lower castes of India. He exposes the evils that exist in the society. He criticizes the Hindu narrow-mindedness that high social status equals moral superiority. The novels Coolie (1936) and Two Leaves and a Bud (1937) deal with the downtrodden and neglected classes in the society. These novels bring into focus the capitalist supremacy that cuts across class, caste, intellectual, social and cultural distinctions. The other novels are The Village (1939), Across the Black Waters (1939), The Sword and Sickle (1942), The Big Heart (1945), Seven Summers (1951), Private Life of a Indian Prince (1953), The Old Woman and the Cow (1960), The Road (1961), The Death of a Hero (1963) and so on.
Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayana Swami is widely regarded as India’s greatest writer and also India’s first full time writer in English. He is also recognized for his lucid and unassuming writing style. He began his writing career with *Swami and Friends* in 1935. His writing style was marked by simplicity and subtle humour. Narayan’s fiction is also at the same time an instance of how a limitation to the fineness of the medium, has been turned to advantage. The result is that words gain a strange translucence absolutely fitted to express an exclusively Indian sensibility. Narayan’s English may repudiate its legacy that suggestive ideas, complex tang – but by doing so it lays claim to greater gain. Its very flatness, bare literal quality, has a strange effect.

Narayan’s people are ordinary, dull, unproductive and queer retain in Lawrence phrase; a peculiar nuclear innocence. The characters retain their native of being human, their inherent right to independent existence; all the more so because care is taken to exclude any attempt to judge them, to fit them into naive modelling or crusading roles. We become intensely aware of the significance of Narayan’s coldness from the great debates and public issues of our time. In 1930, Narayan’s first novel, *Swami and Friends* was rejected for publication. The fictitious town Malgudi has taken its birth in the first book, *Swami and Friends* (1935). *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr.Sampath* (1948), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), *The Painter of Signs* (1976) and other novels are considered to be his work of genius and hailed as one of the most innovative works of fiction as they stand for Indianness, sense of humour, suspense and irony. *Next Sunday* (1960) a non-fiction is a collection of conversational essays.

Raja Rao was an Indian writer of English language novels and short stories, whose works are deeply absorbed with the principles of Hinduism. Unlike Anand and Narayan, Raja Rao has not added volumes to his creations. He has just written four novels beginning with *Kantapura* (1938). It is the only novel before independence. The long silence that followed made many believe that the novelist was an ‘extinct volcano’ and then came *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960). It was awarded with Sahitya Akademy Award in 1963, perhaps the greatest of Indian English novels. *The Serpent and the Rope* is a dispersible voluble book with its theoretical, intensive and symbolic richness. The novel, *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) is a philosophical
fiction. His other novels are *Comrade Kirillov* (1976) and *The Chess master and His moves* (1988). His short story collections are *The Cow of the Barricades and other Stories* (1947) and *The Policeman and the Rose* (1978). Raja Rao’s fiction is different from Anand and Narayan as it is free from burning humanitarian fervours.

**Women input in Indian Fiction:**

Buddhism presented women a chance to break away from the constraints of home life, a key aspect in the rise of Indian Women’s literature in the early 6th century. The earliest known anthology of women’s literature in India has been identified as those belonging to Therigatha nuns, the poets being equals of the Buddha. Mutta’s works translated from Pali, offer a justification through their elucidation. Religious dodging was the only way out for many women who were aggravated with a life inside the home and to break away from the common world of practice and marriage. Thus appeared poems and songs about what it meant to be free from household chores and sexual slavery.

Women literature in India geared up a set of new experiences and authorities as Islam mounted not only as a religion but also as the configuration of the Mughal dynasty who kept India under their control for more than three centuries. Muslim women had to be literate to act in accordance with the requirement of holy Quran, which made it binding for every Muslim, male or female to pray. Gul-Badan Begum writings brought a kind of awareness among Muslim women. In 1730, the publication of Muddupalani especially *Radhika Santwanam* paved the way to bring women into the area of literary fiction followed by the Asaf Jahi Sultanate in the Mughal Empire. Through his writings we come to know that Mahalka Bai Chanda received an ‘elaborate education and performed beautifully as a court poet and song writer’. However, during the 18th century, the amount of support given to women was declined randomly. The East-India Company established in 1600 took over as rulers and thereafter the British Government established its rule in India. As a result of this, the princes and the kings losing their kingdoms and being curbed by a small privy purse, there was a loss of support to woman in courts.

The writing conditions of women in England is not the same now comparing to the past. There are five to six solid women writers who made commendable and appreciable contribution to the field of English fiction. To say a few, we may mention
the writers like Jane Austen, George Eliot, the Brontes, Ms Gaskell, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf. They all had established their individual traditions and made cark of them. But now the situation has changed in England. The woman novelist in England has ‘neither a room of her own nor financial independence, can ordinarily hold her own with the male of the species’. Women are gifted with the talent of telling a story naturally, whether they publish it or not.

The feminists of the past like Mary Wollstonecraft and others tried to educate women to understand their position. She feels that every woman should adopt masculine attitude to free herself from the patriarchal domination. Simon de Beauvoir asserts that women can never enjoy their privileges equal to men, as they are dependents not independents. Many feminists strongly oppose women should blindly follow the nobility of her feminine sensibilities but should be able to think over them. Though it is a bitter truth men never recognise the innate power of women. Though women always aim and do well, their kindness is never identified by the male world.

Among the other early women writers Raj Lakshmi Debi’s The Hindu Wife, or The Enchanted Fruit (1876), Ms Krupabai Satthianadhan’s Kamala, a Story of Hindu Life (1894) and Saguna, a Story of Native Christian Life (1895). All these writers made a mark of their own at an early stage. The credit as the first women novelist in Bengali goes to Ms Ghoshal also known as Swarnakumari Debi. She was also honoured with the credit of her novels being translated into English as An Unfinished Song (1913) and a historical novel, The Fatal Garland (1915). Another intellectual author was Cornelia Sorabji, who has penned a number of stories. These appeared in the Macmillan’s Magazine and in the Nineteenth Century and after. ‘Her best works were collected in Love and Life behind the Purdah (1901), Sun-Babies: Studies in the Child-Life of India (1904) and Between the Twilights (1908).’

The movement of educating women began again in the late 19th century with the rise of reformist group in India which saw more women’s participation in revolting against British rule. This led to a fresh phase in the development of women’s literature in India. The body of work produced was often related to freedom struggle, reforms and nationalist movements. Although there were still women such as Bhabani and Jogeshwari, whose writings in the early 19th century subjected the
patriarchal supremacy of their husbands, the majority concentrated on the freedom struggle.

The earliest woman writing during the reformist period was Savitribai Phule, who along with her husband champed the causes of women’s education. Pandita Ramabai Saraswati was one among the women writers, who followed her and was educated both in English and in Sanskrit. Sarojini Naidu published her first set of poems and dubbed the nightingale of India, at the age of 16 and moved to England for education. As a Governor of U.P and a social activist, her writings reflect her honest and genuine apprehensions about the situation of her country. She fascinated the readers through her writings.

The mid nineteenth century was fortunate to witness more and more women writers in English. Among them, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain was a passionate writer, who created a world of feminist ideologies. In Sultan’s Dream (1908) she talks about a world dictated by women, which is much superior to the one they dealt with. In her woman’s world there were no wars and there was unvarying scientific advancement and care for the environment. The final section on popular Indian English Fiction titled Pop-lit attempts to nudge multicultural, worldwide award-winning Indian English fiction writers out of their contentment of publishing one novel at agap of three to five years.

Hoards of young writers of fiction from both cities and small-towns are making a beeline to publishing offices everyday to get their stories published. The book-market of popular fiction respectfully bows down to the overarching presence of both productive Indian writers of international repute such as Chetan Bhagat and Aravind Adiga in academic forums and bookstores across India, and bestselling authors credited with one or two novels such as Parul Mittal. It seems, there is room for every writer of pop-lit in bookshelves from corner to corner in India. However, when it comes to critical rendezvous with such fictional narratives, a few suggestions may be necessary.

It is important for the critic of such texts to inspect into the engineering of stories that delight and allure readers cutting across age and class. Strategies adopted by the popular culture and literature industry add thrill in narratives, through a certain amount of amnesia that may be explored through a detailed reading of such narratives.
in the light of Western theorists of popular literature such as Umberto Eco. Mahitosh Mandal attempts to hold with Chetan Bhagat’s reception and literariness, but falls short of providing a theoretical appraisal of Bhagat’s literariness. Abhilash Dey’s essay on the Desi Chick-lit novel raises hopes on a more penetrating hypothetical engagement. However, the sociology of the stories seems to control the focal point of decisive attention. Matters of implementation in the sphere of popular fiction have largely remained unaddressed.

Themes of almost all the novels of the earliest women writers of Indian fiction in English were the Indian women, ‘the new women’, as the writers emerge in the fast changing social surroundings. A careful glance at the novels of the earliest women writers of Indian fiction in English as well as Post-Independence era helps us see a distinct continuity of trends and tendencies. The major motivation of the novel from its birth had always been a projection of the social situation and social consciousness. The novel has always been a social comment or social criticism. Women writers particularly shared the experiences of Indian women in general and transmuted them into fictional form.

The early fiction by Indian women writers in all Indian languages was an effort to give expression to their agonies and sufferings of which they never had any dearth. The ability to write in English opened new vistas for young Indian women in the latter half of the 19th century. The precocious and sensitive Bengali girl, Toru Dutt, wrote Benaca or The young Spanish Maiden pub posthumously in 1878. Benaca moves from innocent girlhood to romantic love. The women novelists seem to be increasingly concerned mainly with women wallowing in the mire of lust with the rich, the powerful and corrupt. The novels tend to reflect the contingent reality in an artistic way.

Indian English literature has given a highly privileged status to Fiction, as it was the most powerful form to express literally. Though Novel has originated recently, the latest evolution has become the most powerful and dominant form. It is the best form to express ideas and emotions. The fiction by female writers can be considered as the most powerful form in Indian English literature. It travels deep into the hearts and minds of the characters and makes the readers realize the agony and emotions of the second sex in the society.
Many of the Indian women novelists have a women’s perspective in the male dominated world. Their writings involve the writing of the materials and literature that deal, in a direct or implied fashion, women’s improvements and their general enlightenment. Indians have been writing in English for more than a century now. Contrary to the western notion of retiring, veiled, tradition encrusted, dumb race, some Indian women have proved to be quite vocal. Seen in its totality, literature has several thought provoking facets and most visual of them is of course ‘Feminism’. The French dramatist Alexander Dumas used the term ‘feminism’ in 1872 in a pamphlet ‘L’ hommefemme to select the emerging movement for women’s rights.

It is necessary to arrive at a meaningful definition of the term feminism before how the women writers respond to the movement of feminism which has so far been variously defined. Feminism as many people view, does not mean femalism or femaleness, the qualities which all women possess. It includes personal courage. Feminism is not ‘anti-Sitaism’, in Indian context as some are fond of saying because Sita is often portrayed as symbol of submission. Sita indeed must have been very courageous to resist and fight Ravana for a full year. As to the question of individuality and self-respect, by no means is she lacking them. After uniting her sons with Rama, it is to her mother the earth Goddess that she goes. Feminism at the same time is not living outside the marriage.

Many women fail to understand the real spirit of feminism. The movement of feminism has many facets. It doesn’t mean getting of equal rights which men or women have for the recognition of their creative talents. In fact, it is more than that. No doubt women raising their voice against the injustice, after having gone through the agony for centuries, led to feminism. According to the French models of feminism, as has been expressed in Beauvoir’s The Second Sex and other works, feminism implies greater sexual expression.

Knowing the reality, feminism is not definitely some kind of chauvinistic or aggressive way of living, dressed up like man. A definition like feminism is therefore, ‘mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome’. Women’s writing has relevance and validity for reasons more than one. Not only does it project the observations, situations, responses and struggles of half of humanity it also reflects a consciousness constructed by genders the being which is defined
traditionally by frameworks of kinship, marriage and procreation. At another level it questions values and structures hitherto considered axiomatic women writing throws up all kinds of queries related to oppression and colonization. It has helped both to build and express the idea of female ‘self’ and dismantle the concept of all inclusive male ‘I’.

It is too sorrowful that the Hindu moral code known as The Laws of Manu does not consider woman as a social being apart from her family or husband. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s Rajmohan’s wife in 1864 opened the doors to many authors to concentrate on women’s suffering in the patriarchal society. The role of women in the novels has changed a lot during the past decades. Women writers denied the traditional women and transformed them to modern and sophisticated women. The novels of eighties challenge the two important aspects in a woman’s life, one is marriage and the other is motherhood.

Though women writers have stepped forward creating new images and perceptions, their works were not honoured at par to the works of the male writers. May be this indifference was concerned with the feelings of the male writers that the female writings are just the sufferings and perceptions of their self. The male writers also feel that the women writings are away from the realities of Indian life as English was only for the higher and educated class people. It is natural that their writings cannot reach to the realities of middle class and lower middle class people. So their works were not recognised and valued.

What do they write? Do they choose different themes? Most of their novels revolve round the emotionally disturbed housewives or the women being trapped in their maternal homes. This subject of the disheartened and exploited lives of women is so innate that almost all the authors have sketched in their native languages. What is new should be added to the rapid growth of Indian writing in English. It has already set a big platform and had been receiving national and international awards. The writers have already started questioning the sub ordination status.

The development in modern Indian fiction could be attributed to the growth of feminism. As Patrica Meyer remarked ‘There seems to be something that we call a women’s point of view on outlook sufficiently, distinct to be recognizable through the countries’. The writings of Indian women are important in making the society realise
the woman’s demands. The idea of the female writers is to make every one realise the pressures imposed by the conventional society. Santha Rama Rau’s *Remember the House* (1956), Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s first novel *To Whom She Will* (1955) followed by *Heat and Dust* (1975) and Kamala Marakendaya’s *Two Virgin’s* (1994), Rama Mehta’s *Inside Night* (1992) are some of the leading women contributions with a commendable force that had laid their own stamp in Indian English literature.

There were a number of changes in the images from the yester years. Woman writers shifted their protagonists from traditional, submissive and sacrificing women to incompatible women fighting for independent status. The society and the family believe that women are the pillars of the house, and the house withstands with the strong support of those pillars. But are women honoured and treated with respect? Without a mother or a wife it is very difficult to run a house, how efficient the husband may be. But does he treat his wife with the same intention?

Feminism aims at studying this gender bias and gender specific discrimination against women. It refutes the masculinity approach to women. In the essay, *Professions for Women*, Virginia Woolf complained that woman could not be successful writers as they were much involved in their domestic life. Their lives gave them a different perspective, but women were not fundamentally different from men in their psychological needs and outlooks. *The Second Sex* is Simone de Beauvoir’s comprehensive study of the secondary status lent to women throughout history. Beauvoir is of the view that the history of humanity is a history of systematic attempts to silence the female.

Feminism in India is a by-product of the Western feminist movement but it got sustenance from various native sources such as Indian freedom movement, spread of education, employment opportunities and women’s rights laws. Today, there is a lot of rise in consciousness amongst women, especially in urban areas. Women in India have finally come to realize that they have a separate identity, a self apart from the family. They have slowly mustered courage enough to proclaim their individuality, to reject subordination through domestication. Literate women are more open-minded about their rights and duties. In Literature too, women have begun to express themselves as well as their thoughts and desires.
According to the *Feminist Framework* written by Alison Jaggar and Palva Rothenberg, there are four types of feminism. Liberal Feminism also known as Moderate feminism struggles for the equal rights of women in the dominated patriarchal society. It does not concentrate on challenging the feminist theory, but they challenge the philosophical traditions. The Marxist Feminism feels the oppression of women has originated from the capitalist societies. Radical feminists believe that the oppression is biological. They feel the change in patriarchy automatically brings about a change in the independent status of women. The last school of feminism, Socialist feminism asserts that the main reason for women’s oppression were the capitalist societies, racial indifferences and domination of the opposite sex. Whatever they say, all four theories concentrate to liberate women from domination.

The 20th century women writers have confined themselves to modernisation adding a flavour of political messages. Hamsa Wadekar conveyed an honest impression of a world of professional women whose careers in television and stage segregated them as a class apart, yet subjected to the same brutality and force of patriarchy. Mahashweta Devi also blended the women causes and politics. In *Draupadi*, she shows the fight of the tribes against the capitalist society.

Gender bias has seeped into our collective conscious since times immemorial. Women have always been taught to be tolerant and submissive; to ‘watch’ what they say and ‘when’ they say; and to avoid ‘loud’ behaviour. The patriarchal system of society teaches women to internalize the concept of male domination in the process of their socialization. Modern women writers created a new path to the readers to understand about the women and their emotional psyche which is highly disturbing the roots of traditional families.

The literary characters experience internal emotions which cannot be easily expressed. Generally the inner world of the characters is quite interesting. These characters are usually neurotically disposed. ‘Society compels every individual to repress his instinctual and that way forego the chances of deriving pleasure in the act of living.’ If the character is too weak, sensitive and not intellectually developed, they find another way in neurosis which is a form of both suffering and protest. Many of the new women writers have concentrated on this issue.
Influential Feminist Women Novelists in India:

Ashapurna Devi:

The other much debatable feminist playwright is Ashapurna Devi. She has focused on the stimulation of a reformed time-honoured womanhood that would hold women’s need for self-expression. Unlike the other women writers, she feels a woman should be educated to come out from the traumas of her life. She was well aware of the fact that men suppressed woman. She wants the elder female generations not to teach to the younger generations to be acquiescent and forbearing. In her trilogy, Pratham Pratishruti (1964), Subarnalata (1967) and Bakul Katha (1974), the characters represent the colonial and the post-colonial periods. She shows that the modern, educated and efficiently independent women, like Bakul in Bakul Katha, are more independent than, the women of former generations, like Satyavati and Subarnalata in Pratham Pratishruti and Subarnalatha. Certainly, it was obvious from her observation that these women were surely not honoured by the orthodox women.

Ashapurna Devi’s dream is a bit difficult to be fulfilled. She doesn’t want men and women to be submissive to each other. She knows it is not going to build a healthy relation between them. The age old generations have taught the younger generations to surrender to the dominated sex which makes the elders happy but not the youngsters tied under the conjugal tie. She urges women to rupture the emotional barriers, which would otherwise consume them. She wants the society and family to lay a clear path for the woman to travel steadily throughout their life.

Ismat Chughtai:

Ismat Chughtai, the other high-flying writer attracts our attention with her novel, The Hearts Breaks Free (1993). It is the story of Bua, who was defeated in her life. Here, Chughtai shows the youthful, imperative cool and high-spirited Bua is in dilemma, physically and in fortitude, when she submits to the so-called reforming control of the conventional family. In contrast, rebellious Qudsia and Shabir, by dividing themselves from the traditional community, are able to discover an innovative, fulfilling life. Chughtai has visualization of feminist utopia, which safeguards the individuality and contentment of the oppressed subjects. It is not obviously transformative as far as the patriarchal structure is alarmed. What Shabir
and Qudsia are able to attain is a delightful separatist retreat from the world, a distinctive and subjective feminist utopia that does not offer any blend of sociality and individuality within the normative community.

The novel focuses on the utopian society concerned with its radical and reconstructive forces. The novel presents a new community which is not seen in typical India. The men and the elders are honoured and recognised without any suffering as they do it in India, leaving the female to prove her. The critics have their own doubts regarding the feminist utopians. In her article, *The Ideal Community and the Politics of Difference* she shows her argument through Iris Young’s statement ‘Utopian societies by negating the existing social structures negate the concept of social change or evolution and thereby become static, functioning outside time or history’.

**Kamala Markandaya:**

Kamala Markandaya another great feminist is an Indian resident but settled in England. She is very much conscious of gender differences when she enters her journalistic career. She underlines the traditional attitude to women in her novels such as *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), *Some Inner Fun* (1955), *A Silence of Desire* (1961), *Possession* (1963), *A Handful of Rice* (1966), *The Nowhere Man* (1972), *The Rising* (1973), *The Golden Honey Comb* (1977) and *Pleasure City* (1982) and so on. Women writers in India are moving with their strong and sure strides, matching the pace of the world. The readers observe them bursting out in full bloom spreading their own individual fragrances.

These writers are recognized for their originality, versatility and the indigenous flavour of the soil that they bring to their work. Markandaya in her early novels draw reader’s attention to the secondary and insignificant role of women in ancient India. But in her later works, we find her moving from the female self analysis to a feminine protest. The importance of domestic life and the integrity of the family formed an important part of her fiction. She believes that the truth about human relations can be best expressed in terms of social situations such as marriage and family.
Rukmani is the narrator-heroine of the novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*. She presents the authentic picture of a village. The novel depicts how the dowry system in India has reduced marriage to the level of bargaining as in business. Ira, Rukmani’s daughter is send away from her in-law’s house as she couldn’t produce children. Unfortunately, the things at her maternal home were not favourable and she turns to a prostitute. Rukmani suffers with her son’s and husband’s death but stands as an epitome of womanhood. Markandaya has also vindicated her expressions on the burqua system. Rukmani feels sorry for the Muslim women, who cover themselves with burquas as they neither enjoy the cool air nor the warm sun light. She doesn’t want to give up her freedom caging herself inside the four walls of the house. Markandaya shows Rukmani as the true replica of Indian woman of the rural areas with all hopes, fears and aspirations.

Markandaya’s *A Handful of Rice* represents sociology of India by awakening the humble society to recognise the plight of the rural societies. The story is about Ravi, a fifty year old man trapped in the maelstrom of change, in the move from the established rural society to the machine-ridden, money-orientated urban milieu. The novel begins ends and centres round Ravi’s struggle for hunger. Life in city is depressing; it is a jungle incorporated with dehumanised values and animal conscience. City smiles toothlessly at him but he has to tolerate, as he is not an isolated being, a human being tied up to the society. A handful of rice could suffice and make all the difference between life and death. Markandaya’s Ravi is a new hero; it is this crisis of conscience in him, which makes him to search for his values and identity in the unsympathetic and unconcerned society.

Kamala Markandaya, the earliest of the top ranking women novelists was well recognised with her debut novel. Though she was an Indian writer, as she settled in London, she was familiar with the western and eastern cultures. The same is reflected in her novels in different contexts. The way she explores life in India is highly remarkable, as she deals on the impact of modernity on the traditional Indian society and enriching turmoil. Neither the settings nor the characters in her novels are repeated. She strongly supports the view that literature should play a constructive part in pointing the rights and wrongs prevailing in the society. It is observed, “Personal relationships are Kamla Markandaya’s forte-step by step she builds up relationships,
analyzes them and dramatically makes them represent something larger than themselves” (Uma Parmeswaran, 1976, 124).

**Ruth Prawer Jhabvala:**

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is different from other feminist writers, as she is described as ‘inside outsider and outside insider’. She was the wife of a Parsi architect and came to India at the age of 24. During her 24 years stay in India, she could explore and pour out her creative works. Eight novels and short stories are added to her voluminous productions. Her theme mainly deals on the contact of the European and Indian cultures. Her fictional world is filled with household themes. Most of her novels depict the middle and upper middle class Indian society in Delhi.


She deals with the problems of Indian women who have undergone the impact of global cultures. Her women aim for personal freedom and self-reliance. They want to lead an independent life but finally they return to their traditional roles. Their attitude is clearly depicted in her novels, *To Whom She Will* and *Nature of Passion*. In the former novel the protagonist Amrita flirts with Hari but finally succumbs to tradition and marries the boy whom her parents have chosen for her. In the later novel too Nimmy who is not traditional marries a boy who belongs to their own community.

**Nayantara Sahgal:**

Nayantara Sahgal hails from the illustrious and erudite Nehru’s family. She was the first female Indo-Asian writer to receive global identification. Her major works are *Prison and Chocolate Cake (memoir)* (1954), *This Time of Morning* (1965),
Storm in Chandigarh (1969), The Day in Shadow (1971), Rich like Us (1988) and Lesser Breeds (2003) deals with the institution of marriage, sexuality and equality between man and woman. She presents a contrast between idealism and simplicity, fantasy and reality. She has compassionate approach towards Indian womanhood. She concentrates on both unmarried and married woman.

In Rich like Us (1988), Sahgal throws light on the miseries and tribulations of the low class women. The society and public services gives them a harsh treatment. Their sufferings are beyond imagination and live a distressful life. In Rich like Us, Sahgal renders a living picture of the oppressed and demoralized life of women in India. She deals with two kinds of women, the first kind of women is purely traditional and the other kind has a strong sense of independence and analytical mind. They scuffle between tradition and modernity. Her woman characters stay within the limits of Indian tradition and customs. She shows in the novel, how two wives succumb to tradition and run their family as good sisters.

Nayantara Sahgal is a journalist and a novelist. A part from her six novels, she had two autobiographies added to her credit. She has also published a number of articles and two other books, Freedom Movement in India and Indira Gandhi’s Emergence and Style. Her motive behind the novels is to present the authentic picture of post independent India. Belonging to the family with political background, she is familiar with the politics and she portrays the same in her novels.

Though she is more associated with politics, she never confines to the political situations but also has humanistic concern. She artistically shows the personal dilemmas which run parallel to the political crises they face. She feels chastity is purely related to strength of mind. Her women characters seek fulfilment and eloquence within marriage and if it fails they step out of the marriage system and lead an autonomous life. She wants men to care for women at par and the relationship to be cemented with common trust, love and understanding. She is rightly described as “one of our best socio-political novelists today” (Jasbir Jain, 1978, 140).

Storm in Chandigarh (1969) reflects her writing style and her attitude towards the feminine psyche. Saroj, the protagonist of the novel shares her pre-marital relations to her husband Inder. He accepts her sincerity, but doesn’t stand to loyalty. Saroj wants to be free from the past and have a true companionship with her husband.
But he develops relation with another woman and doubts her impurity. Unable to bear her husband’s infidelity she breaks the marriage and struggles for a true life against him. She shows how woman are sincere and passive and at the same time can even break the relation if they find there is no authenticity and purity in the relation.

**Kamala Das:**

The poetry of Kamala Das is ingenuously honest and full of live impulsiveness. She is a confessional poet. Kamala Das has criticized the convention-based, old-fashioned society which always condemned her unconventional ways of life. Das’s poetry flung open its doors to let in topics that women kept dormant and tamed in their minds and hearts. She alone was the subject of her writing, putting everything boldly in black and white, ornamentalizing her emotional outbreaks in poetry or prose. In one of her better known lyrics, *An Introduction*, she tells us how she was dominated upon and how she retaliated how she wore a shirt and her brother’s trousers, cut her hair short and ignored her womanliness. Her family members expected her to dress in saris, be like a girl, be a good wife, be embroiderer, be a good cook and be a quarreler with servants.

Kamala Das openly confesses that her marriage has condensed her to a beggarly state. She feels so abandoned and timid that she even seeks love outside her home. In *The Stone Age*, the husband is spoken of as an ‘old, fat spider’, and when the husband leaves, she drives to ‘the other man’, the lover, and the deed is done. It is an act of rebelliousness, an assertion of her choice, a breaking away from the unexciting routine of domesticity. Her poems *Jaisurya* and *Afterwards* explore filial love and express the conception of feminism in its best form. *Jaisurya* amusingly describes labour pain and birth of a child.

**Anita Desai:**

Among the Indian English women novelists, Anita Desai occupies a unique place and has caught the imagination of readers in mesmerizing way. She is indisputably one of the notable Indian-English fiction writers. She has an inimitable identity among female writers in India. She has written a number of novels and also has a good number of followers throughout the world. Like the other women writers, her women characters rebel against their inner turmoil’s and domination of the
patriarchal world. They struggle to live according to their wish though they are familiar with the tag that society gives them as rebels.

In fact, Desai’s model of a liberated woman, Bimala in the novel *Clear Light of Day* (1980) is an unmarried woman. Her married women characters like Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), Monisha in *Voices in the City* (1965), Nanda in *Fire in the Mountain* (1977) and Sita in *Where Shall We Go This Summer* (1975) become disheartened, aggressive or self-destructive. They either lose their sense or kill others, or they kill or destroy themselves. But they want to be free from their agonies.

Anita Desai is not basically a feminist but nevertheless, she is a strong representative of the welcome ‘creative release of the feminine sensibility’, which began to materialize after the Second World War. Desai turns her gaze inward to find out the strengths and weaknesses of what goes on into the making of the present Indian middle-class woman. Aware of her role as a modern woman writer, Desai is worried more with thought, emotion and sensation rather than action, experience and achievement. Desai’s is a domestic world, and her focus on the inner psyches of a mind teeters on the threshold. Her women characters are extremely responsive and alert of their feminity. Caught in the trap of marriage, she can do nothing but suffer in misery. The woman anxiously attempts to redefine herself, which unsurprisingly ends up in lack of communication and a variance of wavelength betwixt the spouses.

Maya in *Cry the Peacock* is a subtle housewife unable to muddle through the boredom in her life. The novel opens with her gloomy obsession with death. She wants to escape from the fear of the death, but fails in her attempts. Maya’s memorable days with her father serves as a foil to her depressed life with her husband, Gautama. Monisha in *Voices in the City* is an example of typical woman, created by Desai. Monisha is physically weak with high imaginative powers. As her parents were not socially responsible, a sense of emotional insecurity develops in her inner psyche. Even after the marriage, this insecurity is absorbed in her consciousness due to her husband and his family members’ cold and indifferent behaviour towards her. Unable to resist life’s inscrutability, she becomes a pessimist. Monisha acquires an abnormal personality. These two novels portray husband-wife alienation, though the protagonist’s predicaments are quite indifferent.
Where Shall We Go This Summer (1975) depicts Sita’s unwillingness to deliver or abort her fifth child? Her dreamy wish is that she should keep it in safety in her womb and stop it from being born into this immense bad world. To escape the humdrum reality of her subsistence, she goes to the island of Manori, her childhood home, where instead of finding peace, she becomes isolated. Desai’s novels touch upon most of the relations and phases of a woman’s life cycle: woman as grandmother and granddaughter in Fire on the Mountain (1977) as daughter in Cry, the Peacock (1963) as mother in Clear Light of Day (1980). In Bye-Bye Blackbird (1971), the woman is engrossed in a mixed marriage and in Baumgartner’s Bombay (1988) a woman’s several interracial liaisons are walked around.

The persisting image that resonates in the novels of Desai is the house. For Attia Hossain, the house denotes their country and family divided against each other in her novel, Sunlight on a Broken Column, for Arun Joshi house stands as a symbol of dirt and squalor in her The Last Labyrinth and for Anita Desai, house is the mirror of the individuals self divided from within. In her novels, the house occurs as an inorganic imagery. For her protagonist Monisha, her husband’s house is a cage, whereas on the other hand to him it is a symbol of safety and security. For her protagonist, Sita in Where Shall we go this summer? House is linked to her pale and melancholic psychic life. The house in Fire on the Mountain for Nanda is a refuge for her. The house is symbolised as the house that consoles and satisfies her. The house in Clear Light of Day throws light on the moods of Tara and the unconventional behaviour of Bim. The deserted house in the novel In Custody is the reflection of Deven’s failure to form amiable and harmonious ties. Hari’s house In Village by the Sea stands as a symbol of neglect and abandonment.

Shashi Deshpande:

Shashi Deshpande has been showing an indelible impression of feministic tone since the last three decades. She is one of the prominent writers in India. Roots and Shadows (1973), The Dark Holds No Terror (1980), That Long Silence (1988) projected objectively a new female face with subjective experiences of a geocentric vision. Her chief concern is on the problems and sufferings of the middle class Indian women. Her writings are the outcome of the culture in which she lives. Her remarks finger sympathetically the everyday experiences and give an artistic expression to
simple and mundane activities. Her feminism is confined to Indian women and the predicaments they face in their day to day life, suffocating between traditions and family.

Her novels depict the society and relationships among the individuals. Her ideas are instantly followed in the novels as she observes the society around her and drafts the same in her novels. Her novels show how the characters transform from adolescence to selfhood. In today’s modern discourse the burning issues like gender discrimination and social conditioning are the central themes of her novels. Though Deshpande’s women are educated, self-conscious and sensitive, they face fear, hate, suppression and male chauvinism.

*A Matter of Time* (1996) is the extension of her investigation into the many details of the feminine understanding in writing. In this novel, she has displayed the themes of silence, gender differences, passive sufferings and familiar relationships into much deeper realms. It is a story encompassing three generations of women coming to terms with their life in and all female worlds. The relation women characters share with their men is homered with silence, absence or indifference.

In *Small Remedies* (2000) the theme of the story revolves around three women. She explores how one of the characters, Savitribai, born and brought up in a conventional family and a musician moves out of the traditional clutches of her married love and elopes with a Muslim tabla player. Her novels are the explorations of truth in a married woman’s life. To paint the Indian patriarchal society, she uses silence as a metaphor. She begins her stories with marriages, as she feels marriage is the institution which affects women in most of the cases. Her protagonists are traditional, not originating from the rustic or aristocratic society. Her female characters are aware of the bondages in conventional marriages and refuse to come out of them.

Deshpande has dealt with the sufferings of middle-class educated woman in the patriarchal threshold. *Roots and Shadows* explores a new woman from Indu. New woman here symbolizes a woman, who is educated and lives close to society, throwing aside all its narrow conventions. She has the impact of feminist theorists like Simone de Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf and feminist novelists like Margaret Drabble and Doris Lessing. Though she follows them, her fiction is desi fiction. Her
women are placed between two extreme poles: culture and nature. She also mixes humanism with feminism to show her optimistic view on Indian woman. She is a modern feminist, who resorts freedom to her protagonists intellectually and sexually. For, she believes sexual starvation may lead to extra-marital sex.

Shashi Deshpande is a feminist par excellence. In her works the issue is not just a search for identity of the female protagonist. There is an accelerating movement from a concern with domination to one with the concepts of freedom and choice. The past is important but more important is rewarding participation in the present. The protagonists are not protesors but they learn to grow in the cause of their encounter with the inconsiderate realities of life. Consequently, they create in themselves the power to deal with the male orientation. In The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980), the protagonist Sarita musters up all the courage to face the harsh realities of the world.


Bharati Mukherjee:

The works of Bharati Mukherjee who passed away recently centres on the trend of migration, of the new immigrants and the sentiment of estrangement often experienced by prospect as well as an Indian women and their struggle. Her extraordinary production The Tiger’s Daughter (1971), Wife (1975), An Invisible Woman (Essay), and The Sorrow and the Terror explore the themes of alienation, separation and feeling of not belonging to neither of the cultures. The resemblance between Bharati Mukherjee and other expatriate and immigrant writers is marginal. She completely differs from Naipaul and Markandaya in her approach and inventive implementation of her thoughts. Her situations are crippling sensations and hostile pressures.
Her characters struggle for the expression of their self-conscious and diminutive voice. Tara in *The Tiger’s Daughter* is torn between her two socio-cultural milieus, between her roots in her homeland and her rootlessness in an alien land. She tries to reconcile these two worlds into her mind but she fails to capture them in her heart. She is caught between her inner and outer psychic worlds. Like her other protagonists, Tara is an anguished self, having no security in life. To stable her position, she trudges between her two worlds, one which is already out of the life and the other yet to see the light of the day. She becomes a flaccid personality between the two opposing cultures.

**Shobha De:**

Shobha De is India’s well known novelist and columnist. She is famous for her depiction of socialites and sex in her works. Women in her novels are greedy and lack the holiness that characterizes modern age. Once the moral values are dissolved, Indian women try to come out of their emotional struggle through a different identity. One of the important features of this is they lack an identity. In De’s novels, there are men who abuse women and discard them. In her *Socialite Evenings*, a liberal Indian husband allows his wife to go abroad and get herself screwed once for all as the last gesture of goodwill. Shoba De uses the technique of exploiting the language in order to deconstruct the male ego. According to her woman are not only meek and challenging but are also the embodiments of power.

Shoba De’s novels clearly show the struggle of woman against the domination. The author never tries to give a solution to her woman. When a woman marries a man, it is not just the man alone, but the family also has powers on her and she naturally loses her identity and freedom in marriage and sets pleasing everybody. It’s different for the new generation women with their modern rescue from matrimonial bondage to rebel against the traditions. Her women are liberated individuals in search of their lives through escapades and sexcapades. Her novels delineate the feelings of alienation from the conventional fictional craft of other women writers. Her novels can be rightly acclaimed as pieces of self-dramatization.

**Githa Hariharan:**
Githa Hariharan is a novelist of the modern generation. As her predecessors she deals with the women centred approaches. Her novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) focuses on the inner psyches of the Indian woman. The protagonist Devi is treated as a sexual object rather than a sensitive being. Mahesh her husband fails to understand her inner sensations and she becomes isolated in the world of love. Though she chooses another person and moves into his life, she could realise whoever is the man he needs a woman to satisfy his sexual desires. She finally concludes that men have nothing to do with the inner furies and emotions of their opposite sex. Like the other feminists, she also focuses on the psychological issues of women who want their feelings and emotions to be recognised.

**Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni:**

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni approaches the themes of disillusionment and exile in innovative ways. She came into literary scenario with the projection of varied themes like inter-racial marriages, mobile parents or preference for alternative sexualities, home and family, ethnicity and identity, body and sexuality through which she articulates a perspective of women’s experience of exile in particular and women’s alienation in general. The good-looking collections of her novels *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *Arranged Marriage* (1995), *The Unknown Errors of our Lives* (2001), *The Vine of Desire* (2002), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Palace of Illusions: A Novel* (2008) and so on bring her ideas into the form of story, which makes us feel about the character, and the reality with which she interweaves the story is truly appreciable.

Her novel, *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) was turned into a movie in 2005, starred by Aishwarya Rai. Her novel *Sister of My Heart* (1999) was made a television serial in Tamil, as *Anbulla Snegithiye* meaning loving friend and was aired in India. Divakaruni is a product of the post modern spirit. Her aim is to create a female universe out of the traditional male world. Divakaruni feels the female world cannot be made up of alienated women. They need to have a good bondage among them to create a safe refuge for themselves. Her writings are inspired by her familiar experiences and regular encounters with suffering women. Immigrant writers are evocative of their homeland and make imagination as an important medium to pen
down their feelings. The themes of disillusionment and exile are approached in an innovative way. She interweaves the story with the reality in characters.

**Arundathi Roy:**

The other renowned and popular novelist Arundathi Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997) and major essays *The End of Imagination* (1998) and *The Greater Common Good* (1999) are the best critical readings yielded to lots of fresh insights and issues like environmental feminism. Though she is not marked as a feminist writer, the mark of feminism is observed in her novel, *The God of Small Things*. Her women represent feminine sensibility. *The God of Small Things* truly exhibits her as a cynic. She has used a number of literary devices to make her novel rich. She has also used the vocabulary and phrases from native languages. The novel shows its pride with the use of stylistics and linguistics. She also condemns the policies of Indian Government in her essays.

Roy was conscious about the environment. She knew the nuclear weapons would be the perils for future generations. It would be difficult to protect the urban as well as rural areas. One cannot imagine how the natural resources would be destroyed. There would be a fall in temperatures, may be less than the freezing points and one can imagine the emergence of nuclear winters and water turning into venomous frost. Water from the ground mixes with toxic substances and becomes polluted. This would lead to the death of many living organisms. The only organisms that would multiply their race would be the rats and cockroaches creating a huge competition to the other living creatures.

Each women writer is unique with her own theme in her hand to make the readers be aware of the things happening around them. It is really great to put forward that Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997) dominated the Western literary market, though it deals with Indian issues. The Booker Prize has given more weight to the novel and placed it in the centre of the world literary market. The novel portrays the prevalent caste system in India, Indian landscape and its people in central. The novel is centred with many themes. Caste and untouchability, failure of Christianity and Marxism, social prejudices based on religion and caste, lack of individual autonomy, love affair between a high caste woman and an untouchable man and deterioration of culture are the multi themes present in the novel. Roy’s creation is a postmodernist
fiction, which shows India as rather ugly and backward and people as just caricatures. In post modern texts, the ending has no closure.

*The God of Small Things* gives the readers a clear picture of India and Indian life. The detailed description of the landscape and the environment shows the Indian scenario to the Western readers. The beautiful and dreadful images are introduced. The novel has an exotic setting that attracted the International community. According to Saadia Toor, “*The God of Small Things* is set in Kerala, a state whose multi-layers cultural heritage – a result of centuries of interaction with Arab and Chinese tradesman, Jews, Syrian Christians, Dutch and British colonizers- its tropical climate, and it’s as-yet-unspoilt natural beauty, is ‘Other’ even for most Indians” (Toor, 2000, 19). She shows the beautiful images of birds. It is highly amusing to imagine a bird drying its wings against the sky. The description of the river is amorous and enthralling. As Kerala is famous for coconut trees, they indicate the setting in Asia is different from Europe and the West.

Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things* has skilfully sketched the restrictions on women operating within the patriarchal society. Her maiden novel leans on the hush - hush realities of life - the facts that are supposed to be hidden in closets, in our minds, forbidden to be uttered. As brothers are always blessed, Ammu’s brother Chacko is honoured to move to Oxford for his higher education. The father strongly believed that spending even a single pie on daughter’s education is a mere waste. Though the brother and the sister work at par, the brother is only entitled for the property. Was Chacko wise in using his freedom? He enjoyed his sexual intimacies with the factory female workers. Of course, the mother is not less, she says, ‘Men’s Needs’ contrast to her daughter’s (Ammu) needs and choices which ‘violate’ the sanctity of womanhood’.

**Chhaya Datar:**

Chhaya Datar is one among the writers who makes the characters to think on their own by taking them away from the powerful domineering forces. Her autobiographical story *In Search of Myself*, she writes about the tribal people. She is a social worker and close to the tribal world. She is mostly attached to the female labourers. She follows them to concentrate more on her own problems related to feminism. She was happy with her association with the people there. When she was
the part of the tribal world, she happily comes out of the terrors she had experienced in her life.

Datar’s association with the group makes her sensitive and she emerges with a new power and energy that has come out of her new stage. This in turn helps her to win over her own problems that she uses the power to free herself from the domination. The individuality which she observes and gains from the tribal women makes her to break out from the ‘interment of objectification’. Datar asserted that it is only the woman that can educate the other woman to fight for her autonomy when she is caged in the ascendancy of either patriarchal community or society. Her vision of feminist liberation affords opportunities for women to record their own experiences.

**Jhumpa Lahiri:**

Jhumpa Lahiri, an Indian American author came out with her short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). *The Namesake* (2003), *The Lowland* (2013) depicts the intense struggle of the immigrants in her works. Her debut novel *The Namesake* (2003) was turned into a movie. Lahiri’s talent was duly recognised as she was appointed as the member of President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, by the U.S President Barack Obama. *The Lowland* (2013) was a nominee for the Man Booker Prize.

As Lahiri was well acquainted with the American landscape and mindscape, she knows well about the Bengalis in the Boston area, who appear in her *The Namesake*. She focused her work on the first and second generation Bengali immigrants, investigating the topics of alienation, émigré and adaptation. Her main subject whether it is a story or a novel, is the dislocation of loneliness. She is famous for her kind and convincing way in which the atmosphere of dislocation is evoked. The relationships presented by her show how the second generation Indian immigrants were with varying degrees of acculturation. She also shows through Gogol, in *The Namesake*, how she felt embarrassed with her name as her teacher used to call her by a pet name, Jhumpa, rather than calling her by her full name, Nilanjana Sudeshana.

**Kiran Desai:**
Kiran Desai, daughter of the renowned novelist Anita Desai had come out with several themes like globalization, multiculturalism, nationalism, violence, inequality, class division, religion, immigration, different forms of love and relationships, besides colonial consciousness and postcolonial chaos. All through her novels like *Hullabaloo* (1998), *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) presents a sense of alienation that keeps every character distracted. The cause of alienation is, however, unique in individual case. Dislocation, nationality, migration, immigration, Eurocentrism, racism, fundamentalism, capitalism, class system, community, marginality, religion, education, gender, status, position and background all are causes of alienation in one form or the other.

Dr. Shubha Mukherjee remarked that Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* presented the picture of globalised India. All her characters were pulled by globalization. Being prudent, she focuses on the current topics. In Anita Desai’s novels the destiny of the character is decided by themselves. Sita, Nanda Kaul and Maya are the best examples to show their own hyper-sensitive nature. *Inheritance of Loss* focuses on exile. It analyses the Immigrant experiences and also puts forward the pathetic condition of exile.

Kiran Desai focuses on the process of globalization and its loopholes. She brings out the pathetic condition of the third world countries who dream of a better future and are attracted by the affluence of the rich countries, but have no place in the world of illusions. Kiran Desai keenly observes the tribulations of the public at the time of insurgency. *Inheritance of Loss* concern is on the torture of the poor. Kiran Desai can be compared to Hardy as fate plays a crucial role in their writings. Kiran Desai makes the readers to analyse the eccentricities and paradoxes in life. Her reflective mood is continued from the beginning to the end of the novel. Her novels contain the elements of humour and irony and she makes the readers to travel to a mysterious world.

**Veena Paintal:**

Veena Paintal also writes about the struggle of Indian women, who in spite of their independent status are slaves to traditions and society. *The Autumn Leaf* (1976) and *Spring Returns* (1977) focus on the need for women’s empowerment. In *The Autumn Leaf* she writes about an unorthodox young girl Charisma, but protects her
identity. Charisma doesn’t accept the traditions and gives importance to the man’s ideal behaviour. She gives importance to love marriage than arranged marriage as she feels the later cannot be survived for a long time. She couldn’t imagine of being a slave to a rich man as she may be one of the show piece of the furniture installed in the house. The protagonist faces all kinds of problems and prejudices but curbs them and ascertains her identity amidst the obstacles.

**Manju Kapur:**

Manju Kapur is one of the celebrated novelists, whom I have selected for my research study. Like other prominent women writers, Manju Kapur is also famous for her creations on feminism. She has added six novels to her credit - *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2008), *Custody* (2011) and *Brothers* (2016). These novels have gained status to her as a dazzling writer in and outside India. All her novels are connected with the political or historical backgrounds. *Difficult Daughters* echoes India’s struggle for independence. The novel is set around the time of partition. It is the story of a woman torn between family duty, the desire for education and illicit love. The protagonist Virmati is the eldest child of the ever-pregnant Kasturi. Through the exploration of the novel, we see that the era of subjugation is gone and the women have started asserting themselves. They are no longer traditional Sitas or Savitris.

The two daughters portrayed in these two novels rebel against their parents and the society and are successful in their struggle against the oppressive mechanism of a closed society. Her subsequent novel, *A Married Woman* is a ravishing story of a love at a time of political and religious commotion, of Ram Janma Bhoomi and Ayodhya issue. Astha, who was a humble wife, teacher and mother, feels that she needs to have her own independence and proceeds by having a relation with another woman that poses a threat to her husband and his male dominance. However she was trapped between her family and relation.

Manju Kapur is one of the prominent writers of the modern feminist era. Like the other women writers, whose women protagonists, try to maintain peace and harmony by balancing their emotions and if necessary breaking the constraints of traditions and prejudice, Kapur’s protagonists are ‘new woman’ who wants to ascertain their rights and prove their potentials in the predominant male-dominated society. May be the changes in their attitudes were acquired by the modern education
system, which supported them to revolt against the struggles. Many of the women have changed from introverts to extroverts as they no longer want to confine themselves to the inner walls of the house. The main aim of this study is to analyze the issues related to the internal emotions and social commitments of women, especially in all middle class and upper middle class families.

The research involves a comprehensive study and analysis of her five novels entitled *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, *Home*, *the Immigrant* and *Custody*. Women of today are no longer struggling for their position in the family or the rights to equality on par with men, but they want to prove themselves as successful beings by challenging their independent status. They are stepping into the economic, socio-political fields and proving themselves. That is the reason; today we are able to witness women being successful in politics, aeronautics, banking, business, planning and so on. Manju Kapur has rightly discussed the role of women in her novels focusing on the relevant issues of the day.

The first point that comes to one’s mind when they read Manju Kapur’s novels is a woman not submissive to her role as a wife? Confining herself to either the traditional role or patriarchal structure is not given primary importance. All her novels are family sagas. Her first novel is set against the historical backdrop of partition. The successive novel explores the investigate report of Babri Masjid issue connected with a lesbian relation between two women. Both the novels are narratives of country’s struggle and the resultant frustration and turmoil of the innocent people.

Kapur’s third novel *Home* shows how a family had struggled after partition by starting their life fresh again. *Home* also surveys the complex environment of the Indian family and reveals many issues that are within the family. The women in the *Home* are disgusted with the deep rooted traditions, patriarchal dominations and so on. So they rebel against the age-old traditions, quest for identity and survival of their independent status.

Her fourth novel, *the Immigrant* is about a woman, who crossed oceans to lead a secured life with her husband, but her dreams were shattered and she breaks her marriage and moves to find her feet in the land of opportunities. Her fifth novel, *Custody* is about two burning issues of the family, one is infertility and the other is infidelity. She shows how the two protagonists fight for their happiness and finally succeed to lead a life of their own dreams.
Kapur’s sixth novel was released recently in the month of December, 2016. Though there was a gap of five years, the novel could quench the thirst of the literary enthusiasts. As she is noted for family sagas the sixth novel is also a story of joint family. This time she shifts from Delhi to Rajasthan. In all her novels the politics and history have a place of their own. In this novel politics play a vital role. It shows leaders are born not made. The story of Himmat Singh Gaina, a Jat from rural Rajasthan proves this. Born in a rural area, where there were no proper connections either with the transportation or communication, he becomes the Chief Minister of Rajasthan. He was brutally killed by his brother, Mangal Singh Gaina. The reasons for fratricide were extra marital relationship, thirst for money and power.

In the present days, where modernization and globalisation have gained the predominant status and with the rapid growth in the field of education, women are becoming alienated from their self and femininity. In the present socio-cultural set up, women are frustrated, if they are restricted. The main reasons that can be attributed to the growth of the feminine self can be the privacy, the physical burden and a monotonous family life. Maybe that was the reason why every mother tells to her daughter, ‘Don’t be a house-wife like me’. The seed gets rightly planted into the girl’s mind and she fixes that she should be more than a house wife. Ultimately she succeeds where her mother fails and perhaps that is the secret of success in her career.

With the Western impact on India, the position of Woman started undergoing a change. India acquired an identity of her own in 1947, and there dawned awareness in all walks of life and woman too made effort to acquire her own identity. In the post-independence India, a great stress has been laid on the education of women and redefining their role in family and society. The imparting of higher education inculcated a feeling of confidence in women especially in case of Manju Kapur and she started asserting herself in various walks of life. In various forms, it has provided a glimpse into female psyche and health with full range of female experience. It portrays, without inhabitation in various walks of life.

The predecessors of Kapur made her to think about the image of woman in a new way. When there was a change in the entire world with regard to food and attire, the change would be inevitable in attitudes. Woman cannot always imprison themselves in the house. They need to be aware of the growth that is making the changes in the society. They cannot be in darkness they have to ignite the light. So it
is the feminist writers who create their women as the most powerful beings on the earth. The relation between the two opposite sexes had brought about a great change in the socio-economic conditions which further influenced patriarchal attitudes. This contemporary change is reflected in literature too. Indian writers like Kapur presented the image of a woman which was quite opposite to the woman in the past. Woman was viewed as ‘an evil counterfeit’, ‘a weak vassal’.

Every writer has his/her own perception which may be identical and peculiar. The views change according to their understanding and experience. A writer may be influenced by the cultural and national ethos. Writers are more sensitive to the disturbing happenings and changes around them and tend to respond and react accordingly. The way he views the world depends on his prudence. As Joseph Conrad puts it, “in truth every novelist must begin by creating for himself a world great or little in which he can honestly believe. This world cannot be made otherwise than in his own image” (*Notes on Life and Letters*, 1921, 7, 8).

An observation of the women characters in the fictional world of women writers writing in English focus on the point that women writers have shown great insight, while creating their women characters. Their main concern is to probe, analyze and delve deeper into the internal emotions of women. In general women in the olden days were unreceptive when compared to the women now. Education as well as change of attitudes has brought a palpable transfiguration in modern Indian women. In the following chapters an attempt is made to study the women characters as presented by a feminist writer and to see to what extent her characters are different from the other feminists and male novelists of the past and the present. The research has made a sincere effort in probing, analyzing and dealt deep into the internal emotions of women focusing chiefly on the select works of Manju Kapu.