Chapter I: Survey of Indian English Novel
1.1 Introduction

Indian English literature originated as a necessary outcome of the introduction of English education in India under the British colonial rule. In the recent years, it has attracted widespread interest, both in India and abroad. It is now recognized that Indian English literature is not only part of the Commonwealth Literature but has also acquired great significance in the World Literature. Literature is a powerful medium in the hands of creative writers to modulate and modify or change the societal framework. It cannot be created in a vacuum, and has invariably the basis of socio-cultural, political conditions. It might be seen as an individual’s perspective on the social, historical, political, economic and cultural patterns of the times. Literature has always been used by creative writers as a medium to fight against the well-established, conventional social norms and traditions, hypocritical reactions, outmoded customs, and so on.

Nowadays a number of Indian writers in English have contributed substantially to the Modern English Literature. Credit goes to Raja Ram Mohan Roy who heralded the Indian Renaissance and Lord Macaulay who initiated English language education in India. Today, it has won for itself international acclaim and distinction. It was supported to open up fresh avenues of thought and culture, art and literature, science and technology. Therefore, Paul Varghese rightly emphasizes the colonial context in which the English language was introduced in India and became the medium of expression for the educated elite. He writes:

A study of the problems of the Indian writer in English is intimately bound up with the historicity of the development of English as the official language during British rule and as an important common medium of expression among the cultured Indians of the time, and occasionally also, as the vehicle of creative expression for a few Indian writers. (Paul, 1970: 1)

Therefore, the introduction of English education and the knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of English language offered a fresh avenue for the growth and expansion of English in India. The expansion of English, by and large, created a conducive environment for the growth and development of the Indian narrative not only in English, but also in the various Indian languages as well. It
directly marks an enriched heritage of different genres of literature-drama, poetry and fiction.

1.1.1 Objectives of the Research

The present doctoral research aims at revealing the journey of successful novelists like Bapsi Sidhwa and Mahasweta Devi. The study aims at exposing the issues concerning, struggle for identity and socio-cultural conflict. The objective of the study is to introduce the readers to the existing issues like the role of community, gender, religion and culture, portrayed by the two renowned female novelists whose study is undertaken by the present researcher as a part of the Ph.D. programme. The present research aims to emphasize the impact of social-cultural events, personal experiences and political issues dealt with fictional writing by Sidhwa and Mahasweta Devi.

1.1.2 Research Methodology

The research methodology employed is exploratory, interpretative, descriptive and analytical as well as evaluative, with the help of various data collection. The critical approach to the topic is the interdisciplinary and method adopted is partly historical and partly comparative. By and large it is descriptive in keeping with the demands of the subject. The emphasis is on cultural conflict. That is why it was felt that a single approach might not do justice to such a complex topic. Hence, the use of multiple approaches is applied here.

1.1.3 Scope and limitation

The present study is limited to the two woman novelists and their select novels. The present research study plays an important role to understand the contribution of the women novelists like Bapsi Sidhwa, a Pakistani woman novelist and Devi, a Bengali woman novelist. Even though they belong to different parts of the continent, a common thread of cultural conflicts seems to run through their novels. The present study is limited to the portrayal of cultural conflict and confrontations as depicted in their novels.
1.1.4 Data collection for the Research

(i) Primary Sources

The sources of the present study are: primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources will be the original texts of the novels, and the secondary sources the criticism of them.

(ii) Secondary Sources

Not only books but periodicals also have been referred to. They have been studied and commented upon from different points of views. Research aids and reference books are consulted such as encyclopaedia, dictionaries, compendia, histories of literature and literary criticism. For this research work check lists, internet and other library materials have been studied in order to update the informative spectrum of these writers and their novels.

Both the primary and secondary sources have been listed to determine the nature, method and scope of this research work. Many other relevant critical works, periodicals, articles, reviews and other sources have been cited and referred to, whenever necessary.

1.1.5 Review of Literature

There are some researchers who have carried out their research like *Voices of Minority: A Critical Study of the Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa* by Dr. Totawad. He has illustrated the characteristics of minority community and its problems. Dr Rahul Dhaware has worked on *Love, Marriage and Parsi life in the Selected Novels of Dina Mehta, Nergis Dalal and Bapsi Sidhwa*, he has investigated love, marriage and Parsi life, but his research work is limited to the Parsi life in the selected novels. The present research work is titled as *Cultural Conflict in the Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa and Mahasweta Devi: A Comparative Study of the Selected Novels*. A number of critical articles and some full length studies with regard to the two writers have appeared individually but no one has compared Bapsi Sidhwa and Mahasweta Devi, therefore, the present research work is different as well as more useful for the further researchers.
1.1.6 Chapter Scheme

The present thesis entitled *Cultural Conflict in the Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa and Mahasweta Devi: A Comparative Analysis with reference to the Selected Novels* is divided into six chapters.

I. It includes a survey of novels as a literary genre, with a focus on cultural conflicts in the major novels written by the influential novelists.

II. It focuses on the biography of Bapsi Sidhwa and Mahasweta Devi. It also includes a survey of their literary career with a focus on the major themes of their fictional writings.

III. It focuses on Sidhwa’s *The Pakistani Bride* and Mahasweta Devi’s *Mother of 1084* with respect to the cultural conflict, involved in the action of their novels.

IV. It focuses and critically analyzes cultural conflict in the novels of Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man* and Mahasweta Devi’s *Aranyer Adhikar*.

V. It is a critical analysis of Bapsi Sidhwa’s *An American Brat* and Mahasweta Devi’s *Rudali* and artistically brings the cultural differences of urban and tribal life.

It sums up the essence of Sidhwa and Mahasweta Devi’s writings with a flow of light on the cultural conflict. It shows briefly the observations made and inferences drawn in the course of the study.

1.2 The Origin of the Genre Novel

The Indian reception of the genre called novel was led by Bengal and Maharashtra as the trading centres at both Calcutta and Bombay where the earliest cities were exposed to the western ways of life and thought. The significant changes in the society and life style of Bengal after the advent of the British Rule like the decline of village community, emergence of an urban middle class, development of liberal ideology and growth of scientific temper gave momentum to the process of creative cross-fertilization between the Western culture and the native culture. As the novel is ‘an expression of bourgeois culture’, it got an added impetus owing to the favorable socio-economic conditions in Bengal and the European influence through English education which combined to popularize this new form of writing, called novel.
Although India had an ancient indigenous narrative tradition in Sanskrit and other Indian languages going back to two or three millennia, the new kind of story that invites the nomenclature novel with its peculiar characteristics developed during the 18th century in English and other European languages. M. K. Naik has convincingly said that:

One of the most notable gifts of English education to India is prose fiction for though India was probably a fountain head of story-telling, the novel as we know today was an importation from the West. (Naik, 1985: 99)

The monuments of the rich legacy of the folk narrative tradition in India like *Panchtantra, Kathasarita Sagara, Jatak Katas, Kadambari, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata* have close resemblance to the Western form but these indigenous stories or pre-novel narratives lacked certain essential ingredients of the Western art form.

Beginning with translations, imitations and adaptations, both acknowledged and unacknowledged, the novel in India, achieved its distinctive character and native hue and colour towards the end of the 19th century. The following observation made by Meenakshi Mukherjee, an astute analyst and scholar-critic, is quite judicious here:

It is a critical platitude to say that the Indian novel has a derivative form, imitated from the West. This is only superficially true. A form cannot be superimposed upon a culture which lacks the appropriate conditions to sustain its growth. The reality of the Indian social situation could be and was bent to suit the exigencies of Western realism. The realistic novel was able to come into existence because the tension between individual and society had acquired certain intensity. (Mukherjee, 1985: 99)

While emphasizing the role of appropriate conditions for sustaining the growth of the novel in India, Meenakshi Mukherjee highlights certain coordinates of the form novel like the tension between individual and society, growth of reading public, socio-economic transformation and several related factors. She further refutes V.S. Naipaul’s allegation of its being a ‘part of the mimicry of the West, the Indian self-
violation’ by substantiating how “the novel in India is nursed by, if not born out of the tension between opposing systems of value in a colonized society and modified by certain indigenous pressures.” (Mukherjee, 1985: vii) Therefore, she argues that the study of the emergence and growth of the novel in India cannot be a purely literary exercise owing to its fashioning by complex cultural determinant like caste based, hierarchical, social structure, subordinate status of women, joint family system, Puranic heritage agrarian pattern of life and colonial education.

E.M. Foster in his *Aspects of the Modern Novel*, points out that “the great probability which distinguishes the novel from other arts is that, it has the power to make the secret life visible.” (Foster, 1927) Novel, being the most powerful form of literary expression today, has acquired a prestigious position in Indian English literature. It is generally agreed that the novel is the most suitable literary form for the exploration of experiences and ideas. It reflects the condition of religious, moral, political and cultural instability in which we live. Therefore, Indian English novel occupies its proper place in the field of literature. When Prof. M.K. Naik remarks that the novel was an importation from the West, it was critically attacked by C.D. Narasimhaiah, he rightly finds the novel most congenial to the creative spirit of India as this genre in its content, structure and function gives many aspects with the rich narrative tradition of India. He says:

In one sense, India had a richer potential for the novel form than the west, thanks to the Indians gift for story telling which goes back to the *Rigveda* and the Upanishads … And the Indian novel in English has shown a capacity to accommodate a wide range of concerns … and the distinguished critics of art and literature like Anand Coomaraswamy, Aurobindo and others who must all help in recovering the rich critical heritage of India. (Narasimhaiah, 1968: XI, XII)

The narrative tradition of India is so rich and strong which paved the way to modern fiction. It is a landmark in the development of the novel.

1.2.1 Growth and Development of the Indian Novel

The novel in India is conventionally thought to have emerged in the middle of the 19th century. It was in the presidency of Bengal that the novel first emerged as a
distinct literary genre and later in the Madras and Bombay presidencies too, the novel appeared in Tamil, Marathi and English. The early novelists in India had to struggle for the reconciliation of two diametrically opposed sets of values the one based on individual perceptions obtained by reading an ‘alien literature’ and the other available in their own ways based on the hierarchical and role-oriented structure of traditional Indian society. The socio-cultural forces necessary for the production of fiction like a large audience, an educated class, a new questioning of age-old socio-religious dogmas and a consuming urge for knowledge and interpretation of society got naturally combined to favour the development of the genre novel suited to the temper of the newly educated intelligentsia. Such a tendency of blind and slavish imitation of the Western models ended with the arrival of the ‘great trio’ of Bengali fiction on the horizon of Indian fiction. The great trio Bankimchandra Chatterjee (1834-1894), Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and Saratchandra Chatterjee (1876-1938) well-known throughout India through the translations of their works laid the foundation of the Indian novel in the real sense of the term. Bankimchandra Chatterjee’s novels like Rajmohan’s Wife (1864), Durgesh Nandini (1865), Visha Vriksha (1873), Chandrashekhar (1877), Anandmath (1882) and Debi Chaudhurani (1884) dictated the fictional scene in India for a long time. While commenting on Bankimchandra Chatterjee’s pioneering contribution to the development of Indian novel, Krishna Kriplani has made a significant observation:

It was Bankimchandra who established the novel as major literary form in India. He had his limitations … was no peer of his great European contemporaries, Balzac and Dicken’s, much less of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. There have been better novelists in India since then, but they all stand on Bankim’s shoulders. (Kriplani, 1968: 45)

He is credited with the masterly adaptation of an “alien form” and sensibility which are essentially Indian in all his novels.

Towards the last decade of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century, many novelists with somewhat substantial output appeared on the Indian literary scene. The major novelists of this early phase are Romesh Chunder Dutt, K.S. Venkatramani and Krishnaswamy Nagarajan who took the Indian English novel to greater heights. The main thematic preoccupations of the pre-independence Indian
novelists in English were portrayal of poverty, depiction of widespread social evils and tensions. The practices of untouchability and caste discrimination and conflicts between forces as tradition and modernity.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) started his career as a novelist with *Chokar Bali* and contributed considerably to the growth and development of Indian novel through such remarkable novels as *Gora* (1910), *Ghare Baire* (1916), *Seser Kavita* (1929) and so on. Sharatchandra Chatterjee who appeared on the literary scene with his fictional masterpieces like *Srikanta* (1917), *Bamuner Meye* (1920), *Ses Prashna* (1931) identified himself with “the poorest and the lowliest and the lost” and realistically portrayed the tears and sweat of the lower middle class. Like this great trio-Bankim-Ravindra-Sharatchandra, the parallel development of the novel in Indian regional languages and in English owed much to certain definite socio-economic and cultural condition all over the century like the emergence of individualistic social order, growth of prose and journalism and transitions from tradition to modernity. This simultaneous emergence of the novel as a distinct literary form in different Indian vernaculars connotes that the rise result of mere imitative tendencies but part of a general creative surge manifested in almost all the literature of India.

In Indian context, too, the spirit of individuality and human dignity was responsible for the rise and growth of novel. Therefore, Humayun Kabir rightly comments:

> The new middle classes stress individuality and human dignity. It is natural that their major literary form, the novel should deal with ordinary men as opposed to the princes and princelings who were heroes of the earlier tales. Because the novel deals with ordinary men, a novelist must possess the power of acute observation which enables him to distinguish one individual from another. (Kabir, 1968: 40)

As middle classes consolidated their position in India, the novel, too, emerged with the growth of the middle classes which were not only a reader of this new genre but also started using it to analyze and criticize the Indian reality in fictive terms. It means that the novel intends to appear as a slice of life itself to represent real men and women in real situations. It is not wrong to say that the novel should not record the
hypothetical phenomenon or life but the inner life, the spirit of life itself. There are many factors which were responsible for maturing the novel form.

1.2.2 The Impact of the Gandhian Ideology

The Gandhian whirlwind blew across the country during 1920-1947 under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi established political notions started vanishing from the scene and in turn new ideas and methods appeared, not only in the political field but in almost every walk of Indian life. The inevitable impact of the Gandhian movement on Indian English literature was the sudden flowering of realistic novels during the 1930’s. Novelists turned their attention away from the past to concentrate on the contemporary issues. Such great national experience must surely help in maturing the novel form, because an experience shared by the people at large becomes the matrix of a society and the novel flourishes best in a society that is integrated. The nationwide movement of Gandhi not only inspired Indian English novelists but also provided them with some of their prominent themes, such as the struggle for freedom, the East-West encounter the communal problem and the miserable condition of the untouchables, the landless poor, the downtrodden, the economically exploited and the oppressed, suffered cultural loss and conflicts etc. A large number of their novels tend to concentrate on the so-called encounter between East and West, not only at the level of people but also at the level of ideas. This is an area of concern neither limited in scope nor marginal in impact. As a matter of fact, this is one of the most significant layers of Indian experience today and therefore, valid material for the Indian novelist. The impact of the West has created certain cultural problems and crises in values in all parts of India.

The impact of the far-reaching change on the Indian social and political scene caused by the Gandhian movement can be perceived by K.S. Venkatramani’s Murugan the Triller (1927). The Patriot: this was neither a bloody revolution nor an armed struggle for power. But it certainly demanded of all Indians a radically new approach to life. It was an emotional as well as an ideological experience spread over a much longer period of time than any other nationalist revolution in the world history. The Gandhian way itself had different implications for different kinds of people, for some, it was a philosophy of life: for others, an expedient strategy in achieving freedom. Such ideals of different parties often came into conflict.
1.2.3 The Impact of the Marxist Ideology

Even in the case of Premchand, it seems that he came under the impact of the Marxist philosophy of West. Though he was a great social realist, he pleaded for a literature that would generate dynamism, struggle and uneasiness; the themes of nationalism and Gandhism appear especially in the works of Premchand. His *Rangbhumi, Karambhumi and Godan* make literary dimension wider, because it shows the plight of a woman is directly linked with the political struggle. He attacks the exploitative nature of the capitalist system. His criticism of the contemporary civilization seems like a political caricature in which there is a message for the uplift of the suppressed humanity. According to him, the novel can greatly help the reader to become a “whole man alive and can save him from becoming a dead man in life.” It is said that, Premchand depicts a micro picture of role of culture and its effect on the Indian people. Meenakshi Mukherjee rightly expresses her views:

This second phase in the development of the Indian novel is seen very clearly is Indo-Anglian fiction as we move from Venkataram’s *Murgan the Tiller* (1927) and *Kandan the patriot* to Mulk Raj Anand’s passionate progressivism and the emotional zeal for Gandhian ideals in Raja Rao’s early works. (Mukherjee, 1967: 37)

They were the harbingers of the true Indo-English novel. The writing of these novelists moved the Indian English novel in the right direction. They discovered a whole new world in Indo-English fiction and the Indian novel owes much to their efforts for gaining solid ground. They established an identity of their own. They defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate and they established the supposition the manners, the concept of character and the nature of the themes which were to give the Indian novel its particular distinctiveness. They “laid the foundation for the genuine Indo-Anglian novel, each imparting to the Indian experience, a dimension of individuality based on their particular approach to content and form.”(Rao, 1985: p.99)

Indo-Anglian novelists are keen to reveal the socio-cultural complexities of the modern India. Simultaneously, majority of the Indo-Anglian novelists seem to show their various vigour to meet the new, which have emerged because of the
modern technology. Therefore, the responsibility of the novelist is challenging to treat the complexities of socio-political and cultural life of India so that the novel writing may be a mirror of the society rather than the slice of life. Thus, Indo-Anglian novelist, sometimes, seems to be a fighter against the social evils. There are numerous competing centres of their thematic concerns, caste system and class system, religion, education, and the status of women. They have attempted a fictional projection that is relevant to the understanding of the predicament of contemporary man. Therefore, Elizabeth Boa and J.H. Reid rightly express their viewpoint which focuses the relationship between literature and society.

That man is the ensemble of his social connections is thus most obviously applicable to the world of the novel. A sociological approach seems appropriate in this field at least. How does a particular novel reflect the society of the age in which it is written? What relevance does it have for the age in which it is being read? (Boa and Reid)

They represented a man in the social, cultural and political context.

1.2.4 Legacy of Socio-Realism in the Contemporary Indian novel: Phase I

Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004) has been the most prolific of the trio. His contribution to the Indian English fiction is social realism. His *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936) both novels are:

A plea for the downtrodden, the poor and the outcast, who face economic hardship and emotional humiliation in a rigid social structure. (Singh, 1997: p.127)

*Untouchable* (1935) happens to be the first novel written by Mulk Raj Anand under the deep influence of Mahatma Gandhi. It is an archetypal novel dealing with the worst evil of India society i.e. untouchability perpetrated by the Varna system propounded by the laws of Manu. Bakha, the protagonist of the novel is an untouchable coming from the lowest stratum of Indian society. The protagonist of the novel belongs to the lower caste. He has to clean the latrines more than twice a day. According to Varna system, he has to work in accordance with the rules of his caste. Therefore, he suffers a lot at the hands of the upper caste people. The novel depicts
the events that happen in one day of Bakha’s life. As a sensitive boy, Bakha suffers a
great humiliation at the hands of upper caste Hindus. The hypocrisy of the Brahmin
priest, who curses him for polluting the temple by standing outside the door. There are
many humiliating experiences that occur in his life, He belongs to dream of becoming
an honorable man, but it was just a dream, because reality was different. It creates a
conflict in his psyche. The novel is a powerful indictment on the caste discrimination
and hypocrisy of the Hindus, especially Brahmins.

Mulk Raj Anand’s second novel *Coolie* (1936) is an epic scale. The
protagonist of the novel is a hill boy called Munno who is an orphan and who is
forced out of his village in search of a livelihood. He also belongs to the lower caste
and how he was exploited by the upper caste people. At all stages of his life, he is ill-
treated, insulted and disdained, because of his birth in the lower strata. Here, Mulk Raj Anand attacks in the social and cultural division as well as class system, capitalism and *karma*. Munno also experienced cultural conflict till his death.

Mulk Raj Anand is a cultural critic. He portrays vividly the wretched
condition of Indian rural society. He is one who “believes that literature must serve
society, solve their problems and guide them.”(Behera, 1999: p.11) Through his
novels he says that poverty, class, caste system and other wide spread evils of society
are like a poison that infects society and makes it sordid and inhuman. He is
considered the Indian version of Charles Dickens as far as the treatments of social
themes are concerned. According to Anand, art must be an instrument for social and
moral transformation. Anand feels that the substance of his work is the whole of his
varied experience. He almost reveals a humanistic relationship between man and
society. Though he emphasizes that man is, after all, a social creature. He has a
remarkable insight into the psychology of the characters belonging to the lower
castes. He is aware of their sacred sentiment and secret longings. Therefore E.M.
Foster rightly evaluates Anand:

Anand has dexterously dealt with this familiar Indian theme
with “the right mixture of insight and detachment.” (Foster,
1939: p.7)

R.K. Narayan (1906-2001) one of the most prolific of Indian novelists in English. He
remained aloof from contemporary socio-political issues and explored the south
Indian middle class milieu in his fiction. He created an imaginary small town named Malgudi. He has proven as persistently present as a writer over the decades. His works are Swami and Friends (1935), The Bachelor of Arts (1937), and The Dark Room (1938), The World of Nagaraj (1990). Mr. Sampath, The English Teacher. The Vendor of Sweets, The Painter of Signs etc. He has always been drawn to the lives of “ordinary” men and women, taking us inside the experiences of people who remind us of our own neighbours, our sibling’s etc. He is primarily an observer of man and the social affairs. He sees significance in the details of everyday ‘common’ life of individuals. He feels that meaning is revealed through experience.

Narayan’s first novel, Swami and Friends (1935), through this novel, he presented cultural conflict occurs in the Swami’s life. Mr. Ebenezer critically attacks him:

“Oh wretched idiots!” The teacher said, clenching his fists, “why do you worship dirty, lifeless, wooden idols and stone images? Can they talk? No, can they see? No, can they bless you? No, can they take you to heaven? No”, next minute his face became purple with rage as he thought of Sri Krishna: ‘Did our Jesus go gadding about with dancing girls like your Krishna? Did our Jesus go about stealing butter Like that arch-scoundrel Krishna? Did our Jesus practice dark tricks on those around him? He paused for breath. The teacher was intolerable today, Swami’s blood boiled. He got up and asked, “If he did not, why was he crucified? – if he was a god, why did he eat flesh and drink wine?” as a Brahmin boy it was inconceivable to him that a god should be a non-vegetarian. In answer to this, Ebenezer left his seat, advance slowly toward Swami and tried to wrench his left ear. (Narayan, 1935: p 3-4)

Through this interaction between them, it shows how he criticizes the Hindu god because he belongs to Christian. Narayan tried to show that cultural conflict would be occurring from simple, innocent childhood. Swami is a perfect example of such conflict.

Narayan’s novel The Dark Room (1938), delves into a more serious and somber theme. Savitri is a main character, a strong intelligent, faithful woman who
finds herself incapable of escaping from a marriage turned sour. Her will and passion suggested that she storms out of the house because of her unfaithful husband. There is a conflict between moral and immoral, faithful wife and unfaithful husband. Therefore, such cultural conflict pushed her to commit suicide. Even after she is saved and taken to a nearby village and there meets almost tyrannical village woman Ponni. Ponni attempts to set her on a new career path by getting her to work as a temple caretaker for the local priest. She discovers that she is incapable of living outside of her cultural environment. Narayan tried to show the role of culture for women, where their ways are bound with it. In his novels, it portrays college boys, teachers, guides, tourists, taxi drivers of Malgudi, but through the provincial themes, he forges a universal vision.

Raja Rao (1908-2006) is one of the most significant writers of modern India. Whose “advent on the literary scene had been described as the appearance of a new star shining bright. (Azam, 200:p.34). Raja Rao, primarily, explores the relationship of man with reality. His perspective even explores the individual’s relationship with the culture and philosophy according to the pedantic metaphysical concept. He tries to synthesize the cultural heritage of India with the modern reality of the contemporary society. Therefore, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata plays a remarkable role in shaping his critical framework.

He is a very keen observer of the culture. When he left India for France at the early age of 19 to pursue his education. It is significant that he should have still felt an inner compulsion to write about the Indian culture. Rao’s novels are different, because they throw a flood of light on spiritual and cultural values i.e. The Serpent and the Rope (1960), Kanthapura (1930). The Cat and Shakespeare (1971), Comrade Kirillov (1967), The Chessmate and his Moves (1988) etc. The Serpent and the Rope is winner of the Sahitya Academy Award in 1963, is considered a landmark in Indian English fiction.

Kanthapura (1938) is a perhaps the finest representation of the Gandhian whirlwind in Indian English fiction. It presents the Gandhian ideology of non-violence and abolition of untouchability. It is true that the story is narrated by an old woman who is an active participator in the movement. Kanthapura appears as a microcosmic India, her past giving to a soothing compromise with the present, though
the village is literally transmuted into a budding industrial town. C. Paul Varghese comments

*Kanthapura* is not merely a political novel; for the three distinct strands of experience in it the political, the religious and the social are so dovetailed in to one another as to present to the reader a realistic picture of the social, political and religious revival that took place in the twenties of this century in India.

He tries to synthesize the cultural heritage of India with the modern reality of the contemporary society. *Kanthapura* is a novel of village life, a village that lies in the valleys of *Himavathy*. The village like any other in India has a rich sthala-purana, a legendary history of its own that gives meaning to the life of the people.

The village presents a complex caste structure with its Brahmin, Pariah, weavers and a Sudra, quarters. His power of observation, description and characterization is so keen that it is reflected in Raja Rao’s novels. Through this novel, he presents caste system, social and cultural way of life, sometimes; it creates social and cultural conflict in the life of villagers.

Raja Rao’s most remarkable novel *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960). It is said to be a largely autobiographical novel, “sad and uneven chronicle” of a south Indian Brahmin Ramaswamy who becomes an orphan at the tender age of four. Raja Rao significantly shows the theme of homelessness at both personal and cosmic level. He leaves for France at an early age to pursue his education. Here he meets Madeleine, a French woman, five years senior. He falls in love and marries, has a son Pierre Krishna who dies. Madeleine never recovers from his death. She was completely shattered; therefore she turns to Buddhism for Solace. Raja Rao, through the novel depicts the relationship between Ramaswamy and Madeleine just like East-West encounter which lends a depth, a dimension to the novel. The novel begins with homelessness and ends with the thought. Raja Rao a cultural critic, who presented a very introspective hero’s journey where he suffered from different social and cultural perceptive.
1.2.5 Legacy of Social Realism in the Contemporary Indian Novel: Phase II

The Indian English novel continued its march with even greater speed and rapid strides during the post-independence period at the hands of Raja Rao. Manohar Malgaonkar, Kamala Markandaya, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Khwaja Ahmad Abbas as well as new talents like Khushwant Singh, Arun Joshi, Chaman Nahal, Shiv K. Kumar, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal and Ruth Pravar Jhabwala. This phase witnessed a continuation of the earlier tradition as well as a gradual breaking away in search of new avenues of expression and experimentation. A great majority of Indian novelists flowed with the general tide but a few talented and self-conscious writers started experimenting with new techniques, narrative strategies and a variety of themes. The dominant trend of social realism set earlier by Premchand, Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand and Kamala Markandaya is continued by the post-independence Indian novelists in all Indian languages as well as in English. They documented the prevalent attitudes, moods, socio-cultural problems or the contemporary period and thus envisioned a new social order. The existing socio-cultural economic and political evils like casteism, illiteracy, superstitions, communal disharmony, poverty, child marriages, widening gulf between the have’s and have not’s, etc. preoccupied their creative imagination. They inaugurated a new concept of Indian Literature based on liberal outlook, modernism and radical transformation in all walks of life. All these novelists depicted a realistic picture of the period, events and people of contemporary India with an emphasis on the changing values of the middle and lower classes in India.

The post-independence Indian novel in English made rapid strides during the 1950’s and the 1960’s and gained momentum in the 1970’s and the 1980’s. The younger novelists living in a changed socio-cultural milieu wrote about contemporary problems totally different from their predecessors. Many of them are concerned with the situation of the individual in a society undergoing transition from a traditional village-oriented structure to a modern technology-oriented one. They are thus recording a new experience and sensibility of a newly independent nation with democracy, secularizes and socialism. Their familiarity with Western philosophy, psychology and literature greatly influenced the nature and quality of their work. Therefore, these novelists are compelled to experiment with new forms, themes and techniques. The post-independence Indian novelists have succeeded in delineating the
growing trends of dynamic change in attitude and aspirations. They have portrayed
the orthodox social obligations, economic inequalities, caste and class discrimination,
political chaos religious and communal prejudices and prevalent superstitions
governing the destinies of men and women in every stratum of existence. Walter
Allen’s observation about the contemporary English fiction is stunningly relevant and
tru of Indian English novel also. He asserts:

Contemporary novels are the mirror of the age, but a very
special kind of mirror, a mirror that reflects not merely the
external features of the age but also its inner face, its nervous
system, coursing of its blood and the unconscious
promptings and conflicts which sway it. (Allen, 1960: 18)

Therefore, the responsibility of the novelist is challenging as to how to respond or to
treat the complexities of socio-political and cultural life of India so that the novel-
writing may be a mirror of the society rather than the slice of life. And in this way, the
novel-writing or reading may be a cope of reflecting reality what John Peck
understands it:

… The novel is the “ideal form for presenting a picture of
human experience, in particular the problems that beset the
individual in society, so far the novel has been treated almost
as a clear window on the world. (Peck, p.52)

Thus, the Indo-Anglian novelists sometimes seem to be fighter against the social
evils. Although there are numerous competing centres of attention identifiable with
their thematic concerns, caste, class system, religion, education and the status of
women, etc.

Bhabani Bhattacharya’s fiction bore social purpose. He believes that the
“novel must have a social purpose.’His first novel So many Hungers (1947) dealt with
the theme of exploitation on the political, economic and social ground.
Music for Mohini (1952), He Who Rides a Tiger (1952), Goddess Named Gold
(1960), Shadow from Ladakh (1966) based on the Chinese invasion. His contribution
to Indian English fiction is noteworthy. He is the only Indo-Anglian writer whose
works have been translated into over two dozen foreign languages.
Bhattacharya’s novel *So Many Hungers and He Who Rides a Tiger*, deals with the theme of hunger and the famine of 1943. Kalo, the protagonist, in *He Who Rides a Tiger* leads a happy life with his young daughter, Chandra Lekha at Jharna. His crusade against the discrimination based on caste system, it begins silently when he gets his daughter admitted to a convent school of Jharna town. She is subjected to this discrimination throughout her studentship at the hands of upper caste school mates. She wins ‘Ashok Memorial Medal’ in an essay competition defeating Calcutta’s participants. She does not beckon the attention of the own town folk simply because she is the daughter of a blacksmith. The caste system is so deep rooted in the consciousness of the people that, they honour the caste hierarchy with all its taboos as if it is a divine design. The predicament of Kalo and Lekha reminds us of the hunger of Nathan and Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve*.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala presents an ironic survey of the east-west confrontation. Her novels *To Whom She will* (1955), *The Nature of Passion* (1956), *Heat and Dust* (1975) and *Get Ready for Battle* (1962). In all her novels, she observes keenly the strangeness of human behaviour and presents it with gentle irony.

Mahasweta Devi is today acknowledged as a writer of international stature and the English translations of her literary works have been read in the larger context of postcolonial studies. Her works are an outcome of the three inter-twining concerns of her life-social activism, journalistic reportage and creative literature. Literature for Mahasweta Devi is an instrument of political, social and historical justice, a stance that is reflected in her writings that combine moral power and integrity with aesthetic appeal. Her fictional works are mostly read as texts that seek to inscribe subaltern history and identity within the larger narrative of Indian history and culture, and of representing subaltern exploitation on the level of tribe, caste, class and gender in the context of the colonial and postcolonial Indian nation. She has concentrated mainly on the lives of these subaltern groups in the states of west Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Her major works *Hajar Churashir Maa* (Mother of 1084) published in 1974. *Aranyer Adhikar* (the occupation of the forest) published in 1977, which won her Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979 and *Agnigarbha* (1978) *Chotti Munda and his Arrow* (1980) translated by Gayatri Spivak, *Imaginary Maps* (1995) and so on.

Mahasweta Devi’s major novels and most of her celebrated short stories represents the tribals, and they stand out in her oeuvre as rare and significant works of
art that have made an important contribution to the inscription of the lost socio-cultural history of the tribes in the discourse of Indian history. Mahasweta Devi’s fictional works on tribes, namely the issue of class exploitation, the concern with ecology, and the focus on gender, even after so many years of independence, the marginal are deprived of their basic rights. Devi, the veteran Bengali writer is among those irresistible voices who puts a question mark on the so-called progressive, democratic and civilized nation called India.

Nayantara Sahgal whose forte is politics. Her literary work spans nearly five decades with her first work *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954), *A Time to be Happy* (1962) and *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969). *Plans for Departure* (1985), *This Time of Morning* (1965), *The Day in Shadow* (1971) etc. She shows her pre-occupation with the modern Indian women’s search for sexual freedom and self-realization. In all her novels the political turmoil of the outside world and the private torment of individuals are woven together. Her novels truthfully mirror the contemporary Indian political theme. Her attitude in the novels is tantamount to that of Nehru that is co-mingled with the Western Outlook. Her novels only portray the contemporary incidents and political realities saturated with artistic colour and objectivity. *The Day in Shadow* (1971) is richly inspired by the political movement of the society. Though the main theme of the novel is politics, yet the problem of divorce and disintegration of the marriage in a typical Indian setting is also beautifully dealt with *A Situation in New Delhi* (1977) points out the Naxalite movements and student unrest and above all, the aftermath of Nehru’s death. There is no gap between the private world and the political world; both the worlds are reciprocally treated in which action characters are co-mingled. On evaluating the novels of Sahgal, it is pointed out that east-west encounter, problems of multiculturalism and the place of woman in society and family etc. It shows how her protagonists suffered not only from social problems but also from cultural conflicts.

Manohar Malgaonkar, who marked different imprint with his publications like *Distant Drum* (1960), *Combat of Shadows* (1962), *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964). He used ancient Indian history as background for his novel. He juxtaposes fact and fiction, his novels reflect the writer’s thought and the author becomes sensitive to the cultural heritage.
A Bend in the Ganges (1964), one of the best novels of Malgaonkar’s and also selected as one of the three best novels of 1964 by E.M. Foster. He compliments it as a fine novel written in English by an Indian. He presents here a powerful story against the background of the troublesome times of India. The novel starts with Civil Disobedience movement of the early 1930’s and ends with the partition riots in the Punjab. It also encompasses Swadeshi Movement, the activities of the freedom fighters, the outbreak of the Second World War and the division of India. The sheer massacring of events may have been intended to provide the novel with epic dimensions. This prompts Mukherjee to remark that A Bend in the Ganges is a political novel “… panoramic in scope and epic in aspiration.” (Mukherjee. 59)

Khushwant Singh considers A Bend in the Ganges, a successful novel due to the number of great national events depicted by the author and praises it as one of the few books that are ‘… samples of good writing by Indian English writers of today (Singh, 284). The novel portrays the communal riots which shook the very foundation of the nation on the eve of independence and also focuses on its impact on the thought and behaviour of people. It also presents the ideological conflict between violence and non-violence which is a characteristic feature of the social-political life of the 1930’s, and the 1940’s in India. The present novel is a very minute analysis of different social, cultural and political aspects and how each aspect affects the lives of people.

Khushwant Singh (1915), one of the best known Indian writers of all times. His name is bound to go down in Indian literary history as one of the finest historians and novelists, a forthright political commentator and an outstanding observer and social critic. He is best known for his trenchant secularism. He is a recipient of the Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award in India. Singh’s major contribution Train to Pakistan (1956), I Shall not Hear the Nightingale (1959), The Fall of the Kingdom of the Punjab (1962), Tragedy of Punjab (1984), and so on. He performs the duty of a real artist by presenting contemporary socio-political and cultural crises through the novels.

Khushwant Singh’s magnum opus novel, Train to Pakistan is a historical novel. It centers on the theme of partition and depicts all the essential ingredients of an excellent literary work. There is an interesting fusion of sex, humour, pain and agony, violence, cultural conflicts in this novel. The novel portrays the picture of prevailing atmosphere of hatred and newly generated distrust between the Hindus and
the Muslims at the time of partition. Singh depicted the picture of Mano Majra, a small village, where the Sikhs and the Muslims have been living there in peaceful co-existence for many centuries. The partition was a political pronouncement, which had caused miseries and sufferings to the people from diverse communities and cultures, particularly the Sikhs, the Hindus and the Muslims. It had devalued humanistic values and principles and created a sense of hatred, antagonism and hostility among different communities and cultures. It was not only a geo-political division of the country into two parts, but it was also a division of religions, cultures, customs and heritage, etc. In Mano Majra, the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims have been living side by side with a range of varying cultures, ideals and customs situation have turned hostile with the announcement of the partition and created cultural conflicts among them. Such socio-cultural diversity encourages a healthy competition among them.

1.2.6 Legacy of Social Realism in the Contemporary Indian Novel: Phase III

As the country has been progressing from tradition to modernity, the Indo-Anglian literature reveals a chain of women writers lining up with each other. In such a transitional period women have been playing an important role as a harbinger of the change. Fiction by women writers contributes a major segment of the contemporary Indian writing in English. It provides insights, a wealth of understanding, and a reservoir of meanings. Many of the Indian women novelist focus on women’s issues and predicaments: they have women’s perspective on the world. These women novelists get awareness because of their wide acquaintance with the nuances of life in the East as well as the West.

These women novelists, who have high educational and intellectual standards, have sharpened their observation of life and have imparted a psychological depth to their writings. So these writers have created a new canvas for the younger generation of Indian women novelists. These women writers have projected an insider’s view of female psyche, inner aspiration and their peculiar responses to the world and to the culture created by man. In this respect Naik observes:

The ‘new’ women novelists naturally share most of the preoccupations of their male counterparts, though in spite of what fanatical feminists would claim, they do have ‘a room of their own’ in the fictional mansion, in terms of certain
pressing concerns and attitude towards them. (Naik, 2004: 210)

All these new women novelists could not remain aloof from those currents issue. They were not exclusively concerned with the exploration and interpretation of a social milieu, but dealt with new subjects of human existence and man’s quest for self in all its complicated situations. This shift of focus in Indian English fiction becomes clearer particularly with Anita Desai and Arun Joshi who explore the agonized existence of modern man in their writing which “changed the face of Indian English Novel.” (Verma, 2002: p.1)

Those New Indian women novelists have given a new dimension to the Indian Literature. Women novelists have incorporated the recurring female experiences through their writings. There is a revolutionary cry against the age-old customs, traditions, social institutions and conventions. They have brought a stylized pattern in the whole context of India Literature. The outstanding masterpieces of this era include Kamala Markandaya’s *Two Virgins* (1973), Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* (1975), Anita Desai’s *Clear Light of Day* (1980) and Arun Joshi’s *The Last Labyrinth* (1981).


Markandaya’s debut novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), a tragedy engineered by economics, is a woeful tale of the trials and tribulations of a peasant couple, Nathan and Rukmani. It is designed to capture the tragedy of Indian village life affected by poverty, hunger and the influx of modernization. The rural folk, particularly the farmers, are the helpless victims of natural, social and economic forces that are beyond their grasp. Critics have compared the novel with Pearl Buck’s *The Good Earth*, Alan Paton’s *Cry, Beloved Country* and Bhattacharya’s *So Many Hungers*, etc.
The story is enfolded in a flashback by Rukmani. She devotes herself to Nathan. The ways in which Rukmani and Nathan face that adversity help to define them as strong, who embrace traditional Hindu values and accept the challenges of their lower caste status with courage and fortitude. In *A Silence of Desire* (1961), her third novel, it depicts the conflict between Indian spiritual faith and modernism. Markandaya’s focus shifts from the Westernized rich class to the middle class perceptions. Dandekar is a protagonist of the novel, who is a traditional husband as well as he has one set of rules for himself and the other for the females. Sarojani is an ideal wife, for her, the swami is an epitome of power, it is silent power of faith. The writer presented two conflicting ideology between husband and wife, therefore, tragedy occurs in their life. Dandekar is afraid of the swami’s power over his wife. In desperation he turns to prostitutes, he neglects his wife, children. Markandaya shows how the subaltern and self-effacing person can also be empowered with faith. The conflict between the Western and the Eastern values takes on socio-cultural economic colour in her next novel *Possession* (1963) Kamala Markandaya, through her novels shows that a woman’s life is trapped in the complex web of tradition and modernity. She is dangling between the old and the new womanhood, the self-constructive and self-destructive. There are many conflicting obstacles in her life i.e. society, culture and economic, and so on, it naturally creates conflict in their ideology.

Anita Desai (1937), one of the literary luminaries of contemporary Indian fiction in English, is the most prominent among the Indian English novelists who have tried to portray the tragedy of human souls trapped in the circumstances of life. Her fictional world is just like an ice-berg mostly hidden and partly visible: it is overcast by mist and fog, half revealed and half concealed. Her inner voyage of the characters in the novels in greatly influenced by what Woolf maintains:

> Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged: life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from beginning of consciousness to the end. (Woolf, 1953: p.177)

Thus, Desai deals with the mind and the soul of a character, their inner workings and hidden and silent thoughts rather than his outer appearances. There is a chain of themes, in her novels i.e. loneliness, rootlessness and alienation and dislocation of culture, domination of patriarchy, cultural incompatibility and so on. Through her

*Cry, the Peacock* (1963) is a highly impressionistic account of the incompatible marital life of Maya a hypersensitive woman who causes her detached and indifferent husband, Gautama’s death. The *Cry of the Peacock* symbolizes the elusive equipoise to which she aspires. The tragedy occurred in their life because of emotional incompatibility between them. Many is presented as emotional character, where as her husband is so practical. Therefore conflicts created in the novel. Anita Desai’s second novel *Voices in the City*, deals with psychoanalyses the inner mind of three characters Nirod Ray and his sister Manish and Amla. They profess a mysterious longing to return home in kalipong but they are forced to live in Calcutta, which is a city of despair and death for them.

Desai’s novel *Bye Bye Black Bird* (1971) is an authentic study of man-woman relationships bedeviled by cultural encounters. She said in an interview “of all my novels *Bye Bye Black Bird* is the most rooted and experienced and the least literary in derivation.” (Dhawan, 92) Her novel seems pre-eminently a novel about East-West encounter and the traumas of cross-cultural adjustments, the anger, shame and frustrations of characters re-enact the colonial experience of both. The heroine of the novel, Sarah stands between the poles- India and England. She becomes a victim of psychic and social alienation. Adit, an Indian is married to Sarah an English girl. Both of them suffer from problems such as the loss of identity, alienation and humiliation largely on account of racial and cultural prejudices. He longs for Indian friends, food, music and culture. She is not liked by her own countrymen for having married an Indian. They love each other even though their language and culture continue to differ, sometimes such aspect created cultural conflicts in their life.

Arun Joshi (1939-1993) is an Indian writer of English, like Anita Desai, has recorded modern man’s traumas and agonies in her novels with rare competence and gravity.

It is with the novels of Arun Joshi and Anita Desai that a new era in the indo-English fiction began and also witnessed a change in the treatment of themes (Prasad, 2000: p.112)
His emphasis is on the individual psyche of the protagonist throughout his five novels. He won the prestigious Sahitya Akadami Award for his novel *The Last Labyrinth* (1982). His technique of introspection intensified by self-mockery opens a new dimension in the art of Indian English fiction. Joshi recognizes a reality beyond the mere phenomenal world, a reality which only an artist could imagine and capture by giving a consistent form to the shapeless face of human existence. His remarkable novels are: *The Foreigner* (1968), *The Strange case of Billy Biswas* (1971), *The Apprentice* (1974), *The City and the River* (1990) Arun Joshi’s *The Foreigner* (1968), it has been hailed as “one of the most compelling existential works of Indian English fiction.” The novel is thorough existentialist as it is about an individual’s loneliness and feelings of anguish emanating from his estrangement from the environment and tradition. *The Foreigner* relates how Sindi Oberoi, an immigrant Indian, suffers in the search for meaning and purpose of his life; He has no roots as he himself admits, “I have no roots” (143). Sindi Oberoi, born of Kenyan-Indian father and English mother, is orphaned at the age of four. H.M. Prasad defines about Sindi in an appropriate way: “Denied of love, familial nourishment and cultural roots, he grows with a built in fissure in his personality and becomes a wandering alien, rootless like Naipaul’s unanchored souls or Camus *Outsider.* (Prasad, 1982: p. 51-52) The protagonist’s detachment to the worldly affairs, it reflects his psychic turmoil. Many times he tried to commit suicide. Through, the present novel, Arun Joshi very reflectively presents psychological conflict created in the protagonist’s life.


Nahal’s *Azadi* deals with the theme of partition of Indian subcontinent. As Nahal, he was a refugee. The novel is historical, political and cultural, above all a great work of art. Nahal has presented life like picture of the period of partition. The division of the novel into three parts ‘lull’, ‘storm’ and ‘Aftermath’ makes it clear that the novel is about the silent atmosphere before the announcement of partition. Nahal has used the seven families of a Muslim-dominated city Sialkot to represent thousands
of sufferers like them. It tells the story of the flight of a Hindu family from Sialkot to Delhi during the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947. The love story of a Hindu boy and a Muslim girl unfolds against the sense of terror and violence.

Nahal has depicted the horror of partition experienced by Lala Kanshi Ram. He is the protagonist of the novel and a spokesman of the Hindus; it depicts life as seen through his consciousness. The peaceful life of Sialkot was disturbed by the announcement of partition. The Muslims started celebrating the creation of Pakistan, whereas Hindu’s and Sikh’s are disappointed because of their rootlessness, loss of identity and loss of culture.

After 1980 began the period of so-called ‘new’ fiction, in this period a breed of new novelists emerged. It included Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Shashi Deshpande and Shobha De, Amitav Ghose and Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desia and so on. A major development in modern Indian fiction is the growth of a feminist or women centred approach, that seeks to project and interpret experience, from the point of a feminine consciousness and sensibility. As Patricia Mayer Smacks remarks:

There seems to be something that we call a women’s point of view on outlook sufficiently distinct to be recognizable through the countries. (Smacks, 1989: p.48)

Many Indian women novelists have explored female subjectivity in order to establish an identity. The image of women in fiction has undergone a change during the last four decades. Women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of enduring self-sacrificing women towards conflicts. It is interesting to note the emergence of just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural displacement. The last three decades have seen the emergence of prominent feminist in Indian Literature.

Shashi Deshpande (1939) is a writer par excellence. She occupies a prominent position among the Indian women novelists who have made the most significant contribution in the field of fiction. She is one of those writers whose works reflect the whole gamut of Indian cultural issues. She effectively portrays the Indian women as she handles the significant themes affecting the lives of women minutely, courageously and sensitively. Her novels are concerned with a woman’s quest for self; an exploration into the female psyche and an understanding of the mysteries of
life and the protagonist’s place in it. Her writings hold a universal appeal that clearly emanates from her rootedness in everyday India a society in which we breathe a culture to which we belong. The protagonists of her novels are women, the objects of cultural/social oppressions and they revolt against their family tradition, in search of freedom and quest for their ‘selves.’ She looks at the construction of womanhood particularly in the context of the social and cultural conditions that exist in India. She laments regarding this in the paper entitled “The Indian Woman-Myth, Stereotypes and Reality” as follow:

How we see ourselves collectively or individually depend greatly on myths. They are part of the human psyche, part of our cultural histories. The myths present role models and image that women are expected to adhere to: ‘to be as pure as it’s, as loyal as Draupadi, as beautiful as Laxmi … These examples are it seems held out only to women. It seems odd that it took us women so long to realize this truth, to understand why this is so. (Deshpande, 2000: p.85-95)

Deshpande’s delineation of women characters is essentially from a psychoanalytical point of view.

Deshpande’s literary corpus includes: The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980), If I Die Today (1982), Roots and Shadows (1983) and That long Silence (1988), The Binding Wine and Come up and Be Dead, both appeared in (1993), A Matter of Time (1996) and Small Remedies (2000). She has projected objectively a new female face with subjective experiences with a geocentric vision. Her feminism is particularly Indian in the sense that is borne out of the predicament of Indian women placed between contradictory identities. The women characters are with traditional approaches trying to tie family and profession to maintain the virtues of Indian culture. Her character wishes to discover their own selves.

Shashi Deshpande’s novel A Matter of Time is a continuation of her exploration in to the many facts of the feminine experience in writing. Here, she has displayed the themes of silence, gender differences, passive suffering and familiar relationships into much deeper realms. R.S. Pathak explores
Deshpande’s women characters have a strong of their own, and in spite of challenges and hostility, remain uncrushed.

(Pathak, 1998: p.16)

It is a story encompassing three generations of women coming to terms with their life. Arun is a protagonist of the novel, who suffers existential problems. Her sense of homelessness is too dominant in it. In her novels, three types of suffering women characters reoccur with subtle changes. The first type belongs to the protagonist’s mother or mother figure, the traditional woman, who believes that her place is with her husband and family. The second type woman is bolder more self-reliant and rebellious, as radical feminist, for example, Sarah’s friend Nathan in the Dark Holds No Terror. The last type of women characters are the women in between neither traditional nor radical in their ideas and practice, for example, Indu in Roots and Shadows.

Being a woman herself, she sympathizes with women. As Shashi Deshpande clarifies in one of the interviews about feminist approach in her writing:

If others see something feminist in my writings, I must say that it is not consciously done. It is because the world for women is like that and I am mirroring the world. The writer has presented the world as it is.

Shashi Deshpande’s The Dark Holds No Terror. It focuses on Sarita who is the protagonist and lost in the ignorant world and forgets about herself in submitting herself to the conservative Indian middle class social norms. The present novel is a saga of mental sexual sufferings of Saru. It explores the Indian woman’s life that has to accommodate herself in her father’s house and in her father in law’s house Kailash Barala comments:

Deshpande has applied a conscious strategy of embodying and embedding issues that are reflexive upon Feminism anti-patriarchal stance in the narrative. Among the various issues that novel focuses on, concepts of ‘bending’ and ‘bondage’ is considered not only in India but worldwide. (Barala, 2005: p. 3)
Sarita is thrown in the double jeopardy. All her wishes are victimized from her parental home and with her life mate. The writer has presented a very conflicting picture of the Indian woman through her protagonist. In the day time, she is a successful doctor but in the night she is a ‘trapped animal’ in the hands of husband Manohar, who is a frustrated man and jealous of his wife. He represents the patriarchal male psyche. The result is as if Sarita fights a battle with her own gender, class and the marginal treatment. It creates a cultural conflict in her life. She has announced a revolt not only against her husband or patriarchy system but also against gender discrimination in the matriarchy system. She breaks the walls of silence. She achieves it by self-realization, self-acknowledgement. Saru, who knows how to break the shell and come out from the dark of the terror. Her women face the adverse situation and moves towards optimism. Throughout the novel, she has presented how the protagonist trapped in the cultural and psychological conflicts. There are many conflicts which suppressed the Indian women’s throughout their lives.

Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani Parsi writer. Through her hilarious touching and illuminating novel about a young woman caught between Pakistani and American culture, she has presented various aspects of the cultural conflict. Feminism is teeming in the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa. Sidhwa reacts sharply against the exploitation of women. She expresses her deep concern over exploitation of prostitutes and poor women’s. She satirizes the double standards of Muslim Community, through the novel The Pakistani Bride. Sidhwa’s portrayal of the violence that accompanies the Partition is impartial and objective. She blames both the communities (the Hindu and Muslim) in the novel, Ice-Candy-Man. Sidhwa regards the Partition like a tearing apart a living human being with all the cruelty, barbarity and the inhumanity attached to it. Sidhwa presents Partition of the sub-continent as an undesirable, cruel and inhuman act. Such inhuman act has created cultural conflict on the name of caste, creed and gender. Sidhwa criticizes the dual standards of the Parsi culture for men and women in the novel, An American Bart. It is pointed out the conflict between the Jewish culture of David and the Parsi culture of the protagonist, Feroza, has raised various issues related with culture between them. The study has also shown that Sidhwa portrays various dimension of the cultural conflict, through the narration of Partition of the 1947.

Rushdie’s sprawling and richly complex novel *Midnight Children*, celebrated as his greatest work and winner of the Booker Prize in 1981. The writer has depicted a very dangerous situation of 1947. The particular year of 1947 marked a new era, in the millions of people. It was a year of destruction at one level and creation at the other side. He analyzes political, social, religious and cultural conflicts that occurred or happened because of the announcement of the partition of 1947. Saleem is a protagonist of the novel; he was born at the midnight of 15 August 1947. He is the narrator of midnight children, opens the novel by explaining that his birth, at the exact moment India gained its independence from British rule. He imagines that his miraculously timed birth ties him to the fate of the country. He later discovers that all children born in India between 12 am to 1 am on 15 August 1947 are gifted with special powers. The present novel depicts the events and experiences in the lives of three generations of the Sinai Family. In the novel, there is a frequent forward or backward shift in time that makes it difficult to trace the proper sequence of events in the life of the protagonist. Through this technique, he delves deep into the past only to return to the present and then to embark upon the future. In the words of Reena Mitra:

This marked-break in chronology in the novel reveals the author’s intention of giving not a record of events in order of their occurrence but of projecting the basic historical truth as interacting with and affecting the life of the individual, that is
chiefly, the author himself as represented by the protagonist. On the one side, we have Saleem’s personal life, and on the other, corresponding to this is the life and history of the nation. The story traces the various events in the life of the central character that synchronize with major happening in the recent history of India. The parallel that is worked out, though strained at times, is designed to allow an understanding of the individual’s life in terms of cultural and historical forces. (Mitra, 2006: p. 4)

Every major event in Saleem’s life is linked with some incident in the life of nation. He identifies himself with the fate of his country. He is a native alien and a hopeless and hapless victim of history. He and his family are reduced to fragments by war

Saleem, is highly self-conscious narrator, oscillate between the past and present, the historical and the personal.

Bharati Mukherjee is the Indian born novelist now an American citizen. She occupies a unique position among the foremost chronicler of the multicultural new America. She took Canadian citizenship but she always felt a resident alien. As she says:

> In Canada I feel isolated, separate in the vastness of this under populated country … I have not yet learned the words of national anthem … in Canada I am both too visible and too invisible. I am brown; I cannot disappear in a rush hour, Montreal crowd. (Blaise and Mukherjee, 1997: 169)


The novel *Jasmine* is a story of woman from Punjab, who takes her life into her own hands and makes herself an American. The novel is the summary of the writer’s own emotions. It comes out of her personal obsessions Jasmine, the protagonist, has lived through hundreds of years within one generation. In *Jasmine*, the immigrants are wily participants in the dominant culture. The writer has depicted an Indian culture as well as foreign culture here. She thought about her life after the prediction of an astrologer, in the different way. She was married to Prakash, the
ambitious city-dweller who rejected the customs and traditions. Her sense of belongingness awakens the cultural consciousness and self-respect. The potential of fluidity, which Mukherjee attributes to American culture, is epitomized in the main character’s metaphorsis. It goes from Jyoti, a Punjabi village girl to Jasmine. From Kali to Jase, a remade non-immigrant, to Jase a nanry in the home of a New York college professor to Jane etc. Her journey through life marked the changes; she went through many transformations personal, geographical as well as cultural. It was not easy to overcome her aloofness of expatriation. She was unable to save herself from the roots and tradition of the culture that she came from. Though she declared herself as an American in the immigrant tradition, she never alienated herself from Indianans. No doubt the liberated Jyoti, Jasmine, Jase and Jane, who made a life time for every name, looked like a possibility for every exuberant immigrant, ‘But in this flurry of change and action is the conflict and confusion of the whole cross-cultural business.’(Tandon, 2004:141).

Jasmine with an idea of being and becoming American tried to bury the feeling of home. Thus, it clearly shows when a person leaves his/her culture and enters another: his/her old values come into conflict with the new ones. Mukherjee has described a number of experiences of the cultural conflict through her protagonist.

Shobha De (1948) is an Indian columnist and modern novelist who is famous for portraying the sexual mania of the commercial world. In narration of incident, she is very frank and straight forward. Like Anita Desai, she has the grief of exploring the subdued depths of women psychology. In 1988, she shot in to literary limelight by writing her first novel Socialite Evening, Starry Nights (1989), Sisters (1992), Sultry Days (1994) and Strange Obsession, Second Thoughts (1996) and Speed Post (1999) and so on. She believes that a man’s personality can be judged in a true perspective only when one goes into his interior more than his exterior behaviour. She explored the lives of bored house wives and their loveless rich husband and family. Her novels mirror the life styles of the elite and the middle classes of urban culture. A thorough study of Shobha De’s novels shows the novelist’s portrayal of the secret depths of the human psyche. Shobha De has tried her best to expose the moral and spiritual breakdown of modern society in which a helpless and forsaken women long for pleasure and wants to fly freely in the sky of freedom.
Shobha De’s *Sister* is a story of an urban Indian woman confronted with a vicious under world culture. This new socio-urban culture is eating into the marrow of Indian tradition and ethos. It is a world where money has become a God and personal relations are shun as old and torn clothes. *Sister* is a novel that deals with this fast emerging urban culture and its evils. Her style of discussing woman’s issue in her novel is quite challenging and untraditional. According to B.J. Geetha, “Shobha De’s *Sister*’s is miniature of the messy life and moral chaos of the urban life and culture. *Sister* deals with the psychic conflict of, a woman protagonist who is caught between a personal self and a societal self. *Sister* is a story of the life of young men and women of the urban world where love and virtues are dead. The story of *Sister*’s revolves around Mikki, who returns from the USA to attend the funeral of her parents. She is least affected emotionally by her dead parents, because parental indifference which she felt in her childhood. Shobha De mirrors modern urban culture where family lost its all values. Shobha De always tries to give her female characters their own identity in the society. K.K. Sinha rightly states:

> Shobha De stands for equal and normal treatment to the woman in this hurly-burly worlds of ours … she stands for the new woman-casual looking but ambitious, professional focused and in control. (Sinha, 2000)

The novel moves around two sisters i.e. Mikki and Alisha. According to Mikki, blood relations are more valuable than wealth, whereas for Alisha, money gives identity. Mikki marries Binny. Binny does not allow Mikki to be an active partner both in life and business. Here, the writer satirizes the institution of marriage and patriarchal society. Shobha De has depicted the urban world where man and woman do not follow marriage institution accordingly. Mikki returns to her parents’ home and need a help from Alisha. The writer has criticizes the freedom of urban culture which paved the way to uncontrolled passion for sex and such lust destroys the lives of people. According to the writer, materialistic success of urban world has wiped out all human values. Her novel titled *Sisters* mirrors culture particularly, the urban culture where all human relationships have lost their values.

Amitav Ghosh is one among the post modernists. He is immensely influenced by the political and cultural milieu of post-Independent India. Being a social anthropologist and having the opportunity of visiting alien lands, he comments on the
present scenario the world is passing through his novels. Cultural fragmentation, colonial and neo-colonial power structures, cultural degeneration, the materialistic offshoots of modern civilization, dying human relationship and search for love and security, etc. are the major preoccupations in the writings of Ghosh. He has projected India’s heritage, tradition, and cultural past and moral values. His contribution to the literary world is a very remarkable. His works *The circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *Count Down* (1999), and *The Glass Palace* (2000), *An Antique Land* (1994). His novels centres on multiracial and multiethnic issues.

Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*, details the aftermaths of partition, riots and communal disturbances. The novel provides the readers with the glimpses of savagery, barbarity and change of mindset of people due to the partition of a nation into two. The novel depicts 1947 partition of India and Pakistan. The writer suggests that creating lines is easy but conforming to them is not, because memories do not leave you anywhere. It is not easy to divide one’s shared history and culture. Therefore, whole tragedy happened due to partition and whole humanity has experienced religious, social as well as cultural conflicts.

In *The Glass Palace*, it is the story of Rajkumar revolves around Burma, Myanmar and India. He travels around many places freely and gains profit. Unexpectedly, his happiness ends when his son is killed by Japanese bomb blast. The reason for this calamity is fighting for national boundaries. Ghosh is seen as “belonging to this international school of writing which successfully deals with the post-colonial ethos of the modern world without sacrificing the ancient histories of separate land”. (Desai, 1986: 149) He re-conceptualizes society, culture and history. In the same way, he has presented the cultural issues which created conflicts in the existence of humanity. *The Circle of Reason* is an allegory about the destruction of traditional village life by the Western culture. Here, he has continued to present East-West encounter. In Ghosh’s view, all borders – it may be political, cultural, racial, linguistic, communal, spatial or even temporal are constructs and for crossing. He mentions: “perception, imagination and articulation enable one to cross all such shadow lines, to colonize other space, to find one’s place in one’s story.” Amitav Ghosh has explained different complex issues related with culture through his novels. Novy Kapadia observes:
Amitav Ghosh shows how different cultures and communities are becoming antagonist to a point of no return. This is revealed as major issue in contemporary India. The author realize that with the dominant tradition slowly regarding itself as only legitimate source of India’s complex culture, communal antagonism will grow. (Kapadia, 1999: p.129)

Arundhati Roy (1961) is an Indian author and political activist who are best known for Man Booker prize for fiction The God of Small Things (1997) and for her involvement in human rights and environmental causes. Roy’s novel became the biggest, selling book by a non-expatriate Indian author. Her non-fiction books include The Cost of Living (1999), Power Politics (2002) and War Talk (2003). The world which Roy creates in her novel is of instability because the values of the so called patriarchal society are under threat due to new world which is finding its way through social equality. The novel is about double standards of morality in society regarding men and women relationship. The male dominated society often single handedly deals with the entire social, religious, cultural and family affairs.

Roy’s novel God of Small Things is set in a small town called Ayemenem in Kerala where caste system still exists. It gives the painful journey of the three generations of women who are the victims of the patriarchal society. They are Mammachi, Ammu, Rehaland, and Baby Kochamma. Ammu is a protagonist the novel who rebels against patriarchy. She represents the new generation. It is said that, Indian patriarchal culture does not recognize female identity, because of its age old traditional misconceptions about male-female relations. Chacko is a brother of the protagonist, who represents another voice in the Ayemenem house, enjoys all privileges, which are deliberately denied to his sister, Ammu. As Rama Kundu Says:

Ammu had been humiliated and cornered by her father, ill-treated and betrayed by her husband. insulted by the police, rendered destitute by her brother; each of them voiced the patriarchal ideology which commanded that ‘she’ should have no individuals rights anywhere as daughter/wife/citizen/sister-but should rather be an object, preferably submissive. (Kundu, 2001: p. 179)
Ammu’s insignificant presence in the family and society forces her to go against the dominant patriarchal culture. Her mental suffering increases day by day, because in the eyes of the members of family, she is a divorcee. Here, Ammu’s suffering does not end with her death. The church now plays its role by refusing to bury her. In brief, Ammu is not the victim of a single force, but forces like an old value system, patriarchy, caste/ class antagonism, gender discrimination, culture and religion, blood relatives. It can be observed, that Arundhati Roy has tried to give voice to the women who are suppressed and humiliated in this patriarchal set up and culture.

The present study survey or analyses Indo English Novel and may be seen as an attempt to explore historical development of the fiction form from the beginning to the contemporary context. It is not only present the origin of the novel but also it explains thematic change occurred according to the periods. The present study points out that, in the forms of literature, how the novel became a very complex as well as a social/ ideological form plays a vital role in the literary world. When the study analyses the thematic pattern of the writer like Bankimchandra Chatterjee, who is considered as the first Indian English novelist. He has also presented moral, patriotic and cultural picture of that period. It means that portrayal of culture is became part and parcel from the beginning of the novel.

1.3 The Conceptual Framework of the Study
1.3.1. Post-Colonialism

Post-Colonialism designates a broad, postmodern intellectual discourse that has renewed the perception and understanding of modern history. Cultural studies, political theories and literary criticism all these investigate what happens when two cultures clash and one of them with accompanying ideology empowers and deems itself superior to the other. The writers of Empire Writes Back use the term ‘post-colonial’ to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. Post-Colonialism marks the end of colonialism by giving the indigenous people the necessary authority and political and cultural freedom to take their place and gain independence by overcoming political and cultural imperialism. The origin of postcolonial aesthetics lays in Frantz Fanon’s, The Wretched of the Earth (1961) and its theory in Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978)

It seems that postcolonial theory emerged from the colonized peoples, their frustrations, their direct and personal cultural clashes with the conquering culture, and
their fears, hopes and dreams about their future and their own identities. Homi Bhabha’s work demonstrates the ambivalent attitude of the colonizer between hatred and longing for the natives, which needs to be challenged. Bhabha’s *Location of Culture* (1994), *Nation and Narration* (1990) are landmarks in the field of postcolonial theory. The themes of ‘hybridity’, ‘ambivalence’ and ‘contingency’ are supported by almost all the post-colonial theorists. Hence, the postcolonial theory is transnational in dimension, multicultural in approach and movement beyond the binary opposition of the power relations between the colonizers/ the colonized, and ‘the centre/ the periphery.’

1.3.2 Subaltern

‘Subaltern Studies’ is known as ‘History from below’. Different kinds of synonyms are used for the word. ‘Subaltern’ common people, lower class, underprivileged, exploited inferiors, minors, weak etc. Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramshi has used the word ‘Subaltern’ for minor, ‘poor’ downtrodden people. Subaltern means overlooked, neglected, disregarded, and treated with unconcern and indifference. In the thousands years of history-writing it is clearly seen that there existed two kinds of people: superiors and inferiors in the society. The superiors have been given more importance. Therefore, it is expected in the Subaltern Studies to write the history again, making it free. The trend of writing consists of the agony of exploited workers, labourers, oppressed caste, and women’s income beyond the world of thoughts. It is necessary to reach up to not only the ideological part but also the livelihood of common people i.e. poor framers, shepherds, workers, labourers, oppressed caste women. They are also human beings, they also think, take decisions, decide the way to live and grow in society.

The sources of Subaltern Studies, the social group on which the history has to be written, are not available in large quantity, because these groups at the low level of society are not capable of expressing their thoughts and opinions like the superiors or leading people. The trend of Subaltern Studies prevailed during India, during the last twenty years of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. This new trend gave a way to new challenges by crossing the traditional writing of history. It provided a new direction, new amplitude and helped to begin a new chapter. The history written till now is one-sided, partial and not showing true picture of low level group in society. True history is not of superior group but it is shaped from the group of common people.
1.3.3 Gynocriticism

A second approach used by American feminists is termed ‘gynocriticism.’ This method of inquiry takes as its subject the writings of women who have produced Elaine Showalter’s influential book *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977). It is through this book that she advanced a new form of feminist literary theory or what she calls ‘gynocriticism,’ ‘a literature of their own.’ A female literary tradition is examined to discover how women writers have historically perceived themselves and their cultures. It is a woman-centred way of approaching a literary work. Gynocriticism is also simply the study of women’s writing. It aims to highlight what makes a literary work a part of a distinct literary tradition of women’s writing. It is a form of feminist theory, but it is not synonymous with feminist theory. It assumes that women have a distinct experience, which requires separate analytical tools to understand. It is preoccupied with understanding how women’s literature both expresses and shapes this experience, gynocriticism focuses on the ‘history,’ themes, genres and structures of literature by women’, seeking to create a method of analyzing literature written by women and to develop models of interpretation based on female experience, rather than adapting male interpretive theories and models.

1.3.4 Cultural Conflict: A Key term of the study

Culture is one of the most stimulating and motivating subjects of study in academic circles. It includes anthropology, history, literary studies, sociology and politics. Culture is a slippery but a comprehensive and inclusive term. It is not born or created, but it evolves and grows. It is often used as a synonym for ‘the social’ ways/modes of behaviour because it is social in nature. It is a way of life, a set of values, beliefs and behaviours that make one particular way of life distinguishable from another. The meaning of culture in social science is broad enough to include all human traits and social structures which are learnt.

The term ‘culture’ has a complex, multifarious history and diverse range of meaning in contemporary discourses. Different anthropologists use it differently. E.B. Tylor was the first 19th century anthropologist to define and make extensive use of the term. According to Tylor, “culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (Tylor, 1890: 18) This definition emphasizes that culture is a
social heritage and is the gift of society to mankind. Culture encompasses all forms of art, recreation and language. It is plural and its plurality includes ideas, languages, forms of worship, architecture, dress and handicrafts, which contribute to its continuity and richness. It means culture does not include only art, music, dance and drama but a whole way of life. In the words of Gurveen Kaur:

The word ‘culture’ is used in two different ways. One could be called the ‘thin’ notion of culture and the other the ‘thick’ notion culture. The ‘thin’ notion refers to the style of dressing, cuisine, music, arts, dances and languages. The ‘thick’ notion is more comprehensive. It connotes a whole way of living the integrated web of ideas, values, traditions, customs and habits that give a society/community its distinctive life-style. (Kaur, 2003: 5)

While the ‘thin’ notion of culture involves material (visible) components, the ‘thick’ notion of culture involves non-material (invisible) components. The former related to physical objects like artifacts of the community but the latter to knowledge, beliefs, values, principles, ethics and the whole way of human life.

The term culture has attained larger dimensions of meaning over the years one of the early scholars of cultural studies in Britain, William Raymond defines culture as:

An individual habit of mind the state of intellectual
development of a whole society: the arts and the whole way
of life of a group or people. (Raymond, 1963: 16)

The aim of culture is to pursue perfection in all walks of life. It is capable of developing the faculties of man in a harmonious balanced manner. So, the cultural man perfects not only himself but also the world. Culture plays an important role in forming our identities, constructing our perceptions of the world around us and providing formats for social action that lead meaning to our activities. Today, with the passage of time, culture gained newer dimensions with respect to social, economic and political changes. There are many definitions of culture. Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952) in their book Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions published in 1952 listed over 150 definitions of culture. Kluckhohn defines culture as following:
The total way of life of people
The social legacy of the individual acquires from his group
A way of thinking, feeling and believing
An abstraction from behaviour
A theory on the part of anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave.
Learned behaviour
A set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other men.

Culture in this sense consists of the forms of thought, speech and action as well as the rituals, institutions and protocols of a particular community. They distinguish that community from others around it. In the following extract, Ralph Linton offers a clear definition of culture:

It (culture) refers to the total way of life of any society, not simple to those parts of this way which the society regards as higher or more desirable. Thus culture, when applied to our own way of life, has nothing to do with playing the piano or reading Browning. For the social scientist such activities are simply elements within the totality of our culture. This totality also includes such automobile and for the purposes of cultural studies these stand quite on a par with the finer things of life. (Linton, 1945: p.30)

It follows that for the social scientist there are no uncultured societies and even individuals. Every society has a culture, no matter how simple this culture may be and every human being is cultured, in the sense of participating in some culture or other. Culture, then, refers to innumerable aspects of life; culture encompasses the behaviours, beliefs and attitudes and also the products of human activity.

The 19th century British poet-critic, Mathew Arnold has defined culture in various ways. According to him: “It is sweetness and light, it is the best that has been thought and said, it is internal to the human mind and general to the whole community: it is a harmony of all the powers that make for the beauty and worth of human nature.” (Arnold, 1966: 48-49) These definitions underline culture’s dynamism and its presence in every aspect of social life. The individual who
internalizes culture, Arnold says it has the qualities of a real human being In T.S. Eliot’s opinion: “culture means the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. That culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs and in their language.” (Eliot, 1962:120)

However, each culture has its own distinctive flavour and characteristics, even in the individual representing that culture. The values, pleasures, pains and gestures of an individual bear the imprint of his culture. Culture has its own regulatory force which enables it to approve/disapprove of certain forms of behaviours and way of life. It can thus control the nature of human relations and stabilizes them. As Abidi Hussain says:

Culture is a sense of ultimate value possessed by a particular society as expressed in its collective institutions, by its individual members in their depositions, feelings, attitudes and manners as well as insignificant forms which they give to material objects. (Hussain, 1978: 3)

Culture can be imbibed directly from our social contacts. Thus, according to Laudin Harvey says “culture is for man what water is for fish and air is for birds.”

Raymond Williams, a well-known critic defines culture as ‘a whole way of life.’ He argues that contemporary definitions of culture fall into three possibilities.

- A general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development.
- A particular way of life, whether of a people, period or a group
- The works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity.

More recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2002) described culture as follow:

…culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, life styles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.
Thus, culture has been defined in terms of lived experiences of people, located in different material milieus and also going beyond it.

Conflict is a state of opposition, disagreement or incompatibility between two or more people or group of people. Although conflict is a very common term, in psychology it refers to anytime whenever opposing or incompatible actions, objectives or ideas conflicts can be between two people, countries, groups, or even within one person (an internal conflict) and which is sometimes characterized by physical violence. There are three types of external conflict. Man vs. Man- the most straightforward type of conflict pits the protagonist directly against another character with apparently opposing aims. Man vs. Nature-this type of conflict pits a story’s main characters against natural forces such as a flood, epidemic disease. Man vs. Society- In many novels, stories, the protagonist battles an unjust element of government or values, culture etc.

According to Randall Collins, there are certain goods that every group wants to pursue wealth, power and prestige; therefore, conflict is created in the lives of characters. Lewis Closer defined conflict as ‘a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to naturalize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Conflict is part of relationships and is not necessarily a sign of instability.

Culture and literature are mutually related. Literature is more than a realistic depiction of human life. It highlights the whole panorama of human life by subsuming in it the cultural traits, institutions, social stratifications and power structures of a society. Thus, literature enshrines in it all the cultural aspects of a society including its beliefs, knowledge, values and practices. Edward Said has acknowledged the interrelationship between Literature, Culture and Society thus:

Too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent; it has regularly seemed otherwise to me, and certainly my study of orientalism has convinced me that society and culture can only be understood and studied together. (Said, 1991: 27)

Further, Literature embodies social, cultural and universal values which can affect human life in various ways. As Terry Eagleton says: “Literary work itself comes to be seen as a mysterious organic unity in contrast to the fragmented individualism of the
capitalist market place: it is ‘spontaneous’ rather than rationally calculated, creative, rather than mechanical.” (Eagleton, 1996: 17)

Literary creation has its roots in various social spheres such as language, economics, politics, race, ethnicity, class, gender and culture. A text thus is an organic unity of socio-cultural relations, racial differences, religious ideologies, class conflicts, gender biases, etc. Though it one can view the web of human relations and values of a society. The study of literature of a country, therefore, can be enlightening. African literature, for instance, puts before the international audience of various cultural aspects pertaining to Africa. It is through the means of literature that the international audience becomes aware of the ‘life’ of various countries. Indeed history and the press can keep people informed of other cultures, but literature takes them closer to human life and hence it is more appealing. Thus, isolating culture from literature is impossible as literature depicts human life that is deeply embedded in a particular culture.

Of all forms of literature, the novel has greater scope in critiquing human life and social culture. The canvas of the novelist is vast and as a social being he can depict, at any length, the changing relations of life in their social and cultural contexts and transform them into art. It may therefore, be said that the success of the novelist depends on the intensity with which he depicts the cultural roots of the society, he presents in his work. In general, Literature shapes and changes social thinking and makes its audience more sensitive to his/others’ position in social culture.

So, to conclude, the present research aims at presenting the cultural conflict involving oppression of the one group over other; it is a clash or struggle between opposing forces at each stage of human life. The study brings out the cultural conflict in the selected novels of Bapsi Sidhwa Mahasweta Devi.
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