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# Golden Research Thoughts

**GRT**

**INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION: A GLANCE STUDY**



**Prof. S. P. Jadhav**

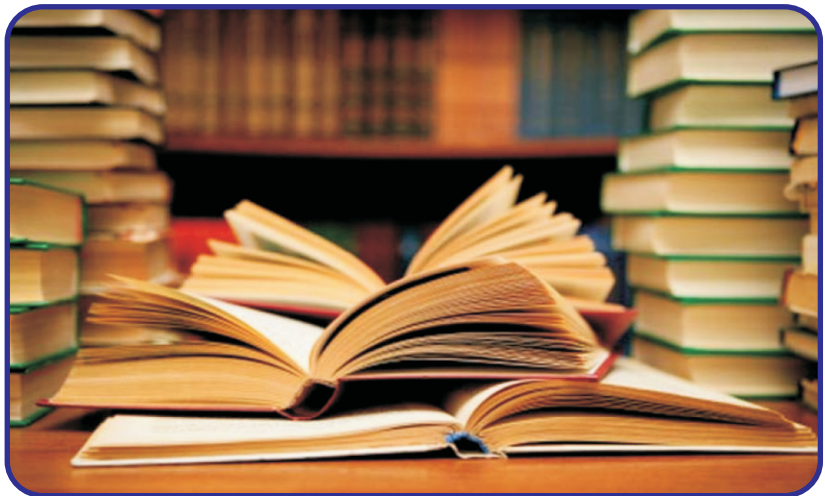
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## ABSTRACT

Post independence Indian novelists have been covered all the perspectives or all the aspects of Indian life. Fiction, the genre of literature is one of the best forms, has proved to be the most important and popular form peculiarly suited to the Indian sensibility. This contemporary Indian English fiction not only has provided an exclusive medium for number of writers but also the worldwide accomplishment to them.

The Era of Post Independence or Post Colonialism begins the later part of 1960 when the colonialism is over. Novelists belong to post independence literature still lingering on the old matters and its effects on the contemporary period and Colonialism is still ruling in the psychology of the people of the independent countries like India, Africa, West Indies, New Zealand and Canada. It

provides them the themes of neo-colonialism, resistance, subversion, reconstruction, search for identity, alienation, feminist, and conflict between traditional culture and modern culture, gender and class related issues, multiculturalism, social, economic and cultural marginality, social isolation, self-estrangement, rootlessness etc. Post independence Indian fiction dominated by the second generation



of the fiction writers after the great trio R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. There can be four distinct heads of post-colonial discourses such as Minority discourse, Diaspora discourse, Feminist discourse and political discourse.

The post independence Indian English fiction witnesses at least three generations of the Indian novelists in English, who have been greatly, contributed Indian fiction for national and international recognition. The first generation I have consisted here mainly the prominent figures like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao were the earliest Indian novelists writing in English who began to write in the early thirties and made concrete foundation for fiction in Indian English literature. Second

generation I would like to grouping is novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgaonkar, and Anita Desai. Kamala Markandaya, Narayantara Sahgal and others captured the spirit of an independent India, struggling to break away from British and traditional Indian cultures and established a distinct identity in Indian fiction in the post independence period. Finally, the third generation in the 1980 and 1990 on onwards, India emerged as a major literary nation. The Booker Prize winner novelist like Salman Rushdie for his *Midnight's Children* first Indian Diaspora Vikram Seth, entered the sphere of international writer due to his *The Golden Gate*, Arundhati Roy, whose *The God of Small Things* won the 1997 Booker Prize. Other novelists like Shobha De, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Amit Chaudhari, Pankaj Mishra etc. are renowned novelist of Indian origin established the fame in international arena. Now, we experience Indian English fiction succeeded to win almost every well-known literary prize in the world contributing post –independence Indian fiction in Indian literature.

**KEYWORDS** :Diaspora, Marginality, Discourse, Colonialism, Multiculturalism, Self-estrangement, Feminism, Sectarian animosity.

### INTRODUCTION:

Post Independence Indian literature in general and fiction in particular can be termed as the continual shaking off the old skin of western thought and the emergence of new consciousness and cognizance, critique and celebration. In addition, with this new awareness, comes the concept of self-expression. In country like India, prior to 1947, most people branded and recognized themselves as 'Indians' against the identity of their British tyrants and tormentors. There could be perceived a potential feeling of communal, national identity, nurtured by a shared antipathy and bitterness of the British colonial prowess.

However, post independence, after being granted autonomy, independence, the Republic of India's populace slowly fell to bits and crumbled into more and more divided fractions. The indefinite, confusing and variable nature of 'national identity' is vital and central to a discussion of post independence Indian English fiction writers, which leads to discrimination and segregation with others. The era of Post Colonialism begins the later part of 1960 when the colonialism is over. However, novelists belong to post independence literature still lingering on the old matters and its effects on the contemporary period. Colonialism is still ruling in the psychology of the people of the independent countries like India, Africa, West Indies, New Zealand and Canada. It provides them the theme of neo-colonialism, resistance, subversion, reconstruction, search for identity, alienation, feminist, and conflict between traditional culture and modern culture, gender and class related issues, multiculturalism, social, economic and cultural marginality, social isolation, self-estrangement, rootlessness etc. Post independence Indian fiction is dominated by the second generation of the fiction writers after the great trio R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. There can be four distinct heads of post-colonial or post independence discourses as : Minority discourse in which novelists like parsi writer Rohinton Mistry, Boman Desai and Dina Mehta who depicted the problems of not just being a parsi but being a parsi women. The second head of post- independence discourse is Diasporic discourse in which great novelists like Salman Rushdie who displays the themes as sense of loss, nostalgia and problems of identification with host country through *Midnights Children*, *Shame and Satanic Verses*. Vikarm Seth's *A Suitable Boy* is a post-independence novel in which he deals repossession of postcolonial history.

Third, Feminist discourse which deals with the plight of women in male dominated society. The contemporary Indian women novelists Shashi Deshpande, Nayantara Sahgal, Arundhati Roy, Shobha

De, Anita Desai, Manju Kapoor and so on, comment on the gender injustice and changing role of women in Indian society, the problems of adjustment of middle class educated women in the particular society through their novels. The last kind of discourse in Indian literature is political discourse in which novelists like Nayantara Sahgal and Upamanyu Chatterjee, who deal the political ideas, its domination and effects on the common people by the political due to the fact that they belong to the ruling class. *English August: An Indian Story, Situation in New Delhi, Rich Like Us* etc. are the political novels deal directly or indirectly some political discourse.

During late 1970, that a new breed of convent educated and elite class of novelists that started to emerge chalked out plan to alter the map of post Independence Indian English Fiction: The eminent Indian fiction writers like Salman Rushdie, Vikarm Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor set the Indian fiction world on fire. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* had won Booker prize in 1981 and in the mean time, a new team of novelists such as Pankaj Misra, Chetan Bhagat, Jhumpa Lahiri had already alighted on the international arena and their writings are very much appreciated and acclimatized round the globe. The worldwide accomplishment of Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate* made him the first writer of the Indian Diaspora to enter the field of international writers and leave an unforgettable mark on the global literary panorama.

Other novelists of repute of the post independence Indian English literature, comprise – Shobha De, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Chatterjee, Amit Choudhari, Raj Kama Jha, Pankaj Mishra, Vikram Chandra etc. have published great novels setting the concrete foundation of fiction in Indian literature. Then the latest Indian novelists who lifted up the world by a storm of fiction, was Arundhati Roy, whose *The God of Small Things* earned the 1997 Booker Prize and became an international best-seller overnight. Kiran Desai also won Man Booker Prize in the year 2006 for her writing. Great women novelists like Githa Hariharan's *Thousand Faces of Night*, Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*, Ruth Praver Thabvala's *Heat and Dust*, Anita Desai's prize winner novels like *Cry, The Peacock, Fire on the Mountain, Clear Light of the Day*, Nayantara Sahgal's political novels like *A Time to be Happy* and *Rich Like Us*, Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*, Rama Mahta's *Inside The Haveli* and Manju Kapoor's *Difficult Daylights* etc. are the notable novels by post-independence fiction writers who have been greatly contributed to the Indian fiction development in Indian English literature.

In this way, we are so deeply entrenched in contemporary reality that it is not easy for us to locate a vantage point from where to offer as assessment of our Indian fiction writing or make pronouncement or predictions that guide us to contemporary writing. Apart from the big trio novelists, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao with his metaphysical quest for a re-discovery of an ancient, not antiquated, rhythm in contemporary life, all of whom have continued to be productive in 1980 and 1990.

Eminent Indian novelists, like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh and women novelists like Ruth Praver Thabralla, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy and Shobha De etc. first of them. Booker Prizewinner novelist Salman Rushdie who won the prize which made him an international novelist by publishing his *Midnight's Children* in 1980. This novel is about India and everything Indian. The cities like Bombay, Srinagar, Amritsar, Delhi, Karachi, Dacca and others make their appearance in the most dynamic manner. Novel presents some aspects of India in a chronicle of three to four generations of Indian life, which encapsulates whole of India in the 20th century. Though it is a picture of India in parts, that picture gives the sense of wholeness. The struggle for Indian independence, the winning of it peacefully and passing through the disasters and crises, with the deaths of Gandhi and Nehru appear before our mental eyes, India with its achievements and losses, with its marches forward and backwards and that leaves a sense of loss. Thus, Rushdie has

been contributed much more showing that Indian youth is full of hope.

Second eminent post-independence novelists are Vikram Seth who has his roots in Indianess. *suitable Boy* in 1993, *The Golden Gate* are the well known novels written by him in which he presents the domestic drama of Indian mother's search for an appropriate husband for her marriageable Indian daughter against the background of the formative years of India after independence, the novel grew and he was to labour over it for almost a decade. He has presented true picture of India after the close post-independence Indian situation in his great novels.

Great Indian novelist Shashi Tharoor who has also contributed Indian fiction writing with his widely acclaimed novel *The Great Indian Novel* in 1993 in which he has masterfully recast the two thousand year old epic *The Mahabharata* with fictionalized but highly recognizable events and character from 20th century Indian politics. Blending history and myth to chronicle, the Indian struggle for freedom and independence, Tharoor directs his hilarious and often outrageous satire as much as against Indian foibles and failings as against the bumbling of the British rulers. Despite its regional setting, this novel is a great source to know the ancient history of country.

The major contemporary Indian women novelists included Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Despande, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy and so on. All novelists deal with the themes of love marriage, loneliness, search for identity, and with political, social and numerous themes. Kamala Markandaya is one of the most eminent Indian women novelists in the post independence era in Indian literature. She has published her novel *Pleasure City* in 1982, which deals the impact of the multinational corporation on village. The culture confrontation here is not just the usual east verses west but between the tradition and modernity. Another Indian prizewinner women novelist is Anita Desai who contributed Indian fiction publishing her great novels like *Clear Light of the Day*, *In Custody*, *Baumgartner's Bombay* and so on in the last three decades of 20th century. In her novels, the recurrent theme is the struggle of the individual for a possible realization of self-identity. She uses houses as the metaphor for the inner world of her main characters. Alienation, husband wife relation, man-women, family – society relations are the central themes of her novels. She also presents the current situation of human being how they are in emotional trauma and frustrated and existential despair mood of the lower and middle class people. Urbanization, industrialization, quest for she also carefully handles identity, multi-culturalism etc. Thus, through her novels she presents Indian rural and urban life.

Next Indian woman novelist is Nayantara Sahgal who introduces politics as the major concern as well as the central setting in Indian English novel for the first time in the postcolonial period. She has laid her emphasis on the political novels depicting history, nationalism and contemporary life. *Rich Like Us* in 1985 is a political novel written against the backdrop of emergency declared in 1975 when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India. In *Mistaken Identity*, Sahgal locates action in a small princely state, Vijay garh during 1920. Sahgal aware the people about the values of life, its aspects and how we should be conscious about the Indianess and its related issues, is handled with in well manner in most of her great novels.

Shobha De is known for her erotic novels considering main contributor to the Indian English language and her creation of new idioms adds to the charm of the Indian fiction especially post independence era. Her narrative holds our breath for sensuous opulence and subtlety of variation and the result is that the novel becomes a best seller. Social concern is the main thrust of her most of the novels, which depict the sub themes like love, sex, the new concept of marriage, life of middle and upper class of women etc. by her well-known great novels like *Snapshot and Sisters*. Last but not least, women novelist Arundhati Roy who has contributed Indian fiction after winning Booker Prize for her

novel *The God of Small Things* in 1997. Like Shobha De, she also fashioned a new language for misery of a lonesome mother, Ammu in an indifferent world as perceived through the eyes of her seven-year-old children, Rahel and Estha. It presents the pathetic situation of women in a male dominated country and so it is truly a feminist novel. Apart from feminism she contributes the changing political scene in Kerala, Caste taboo and lives of rudderless children of a broken home. Thus, Arundhati Roy, with this well known prizewinner novel, she has given the international status or recognition to the Indian fiction in the post independence period of Indian English literature.

Thus, the post independence Indian English fiction witnesses at least three generations of the Indian novelists in English, who have been greatly, contributed Indian fiction for national and international recognition. The first generation mainly the prominent figures like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao were the earliest Indian novelists writing in English who began to write in the early thirties and made concrete foundation for fiction in Indian English literature. Second-generation novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgaonkar, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Narayantara Sahgal and others captured the spirit of an independent India, struggling to break away from British and traditional Indian cultures and established a distinct identity in Indian fiction in the post independence period. And last, the third generation in the 1980 and 1990 onwards, India emerged as a major literary nation. The Booker Prize winner novelist like Salman Rushdie for his *Midnight's Children* first Indian Diaspora Vikram Seth, entered the sphere of international writer due to his *The Golden Gate*, Arundhati Roy, whose *The God of Small Things* won the 1997 Booker Prize and other like Shobha De, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Amit Chaudhari, Pankaj Mishra etc. are renowned novelist of Indian origin established the fame in international arena. And now, we experience Indian English fiction succeeded to win almost every well-known literary prize in the world contributing post-independence Indian fiction in Indian literature.

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