



## MODIFICATION IN INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL AFTER INDEPENDENCE

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### ABSTRACT:

The paper focuses on the history of Indian novels and modification in the themes of novels after independence. Indian English novels sketch the socio-political pictures of pre and post independent Indian era. The focus would be on how the Indian English novel began its journey, its growth and its modification. The themes of early novels were patriotism and nationalism. Indian English novel slowly unveiled the mystical realities of India and opened the window to an excessive number of writers. The Indian English novels experienced the literary work of trio-Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan and experienced the tremendous change by Salman Rusdie. Women characters took their shapes sketched by the women writers like Shshai Deshpande, Anita Desai, Jhumpa Laheri, Chitra Banrjee, Kiran Desai etc. The paper focuses on the major changes and modification in the Indian English novels.

**Key words:** - *Indian Novel, Theme, Modification, Social And Political Changes, Indian Novelists.*

### INTRODUCTION :

The Indian fiction in English is now nearly 150 years old. The paper will focus on growth and development, its modification, merits and shortcomings of Indian English Novels. The views expressed herein are based on a close reading of the novels, the approach is more textual than historical. Though it is hard to speak of periods in relation to the history of Indian novels in English, yet we may undertake the present study in terms of five periods: the first period from 1860 to 1920 covering a period of 60 years; the second period from 1920 to 1950; the third from 1950 to 1975; the fourth from 1975 to 2000 and the last period from 2001 to date. This period-wise division of Indian English novels may be historically convenient and valid, but in respect of trends, themes, technical variations, it may not be a very useful method for literature. The paper focuses on modification in Indian English novels specially after independence from traditional India to modern India. Novel is one of the oldest and ongoing literary form in Indian English

Literature. There is modification in the theme of modern novel like relations, culture, faith, money, isolation, identity, masculinity, femineity etc.

The novels of the first period are tales rather than novels which were digressive and melodramatic. They deal mostly with adventures and journey, with historical persons. They raise voices against socio-economic exploitation in some of the novels. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife*, published from 1865 onwards in a serialized form in a Calcutta weekly. The unrest of peasant depicted by Lal Behari Day in his novel '*Bengal Peasant Life*' (1874), or Raj Lakshmi Debi's '*The Hindoo Wife or The Enchanted Fruit*' (1876), or Sir Jogendra Singh's '*Nur Jahan: Romance of an Indian Queen*' (1909).

The second period (1920-1950), we have the triumph of Indian English novels with us: Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao.

Mulk Raj Anand uses his characteristic of realism to expose the dark reality of the country through his three novels *Coolie*, *Untouchable*

and *The Woman and The Cow*. We have to contend with his propagandist zeal, his flamboyance, and with the extravagant use of typical Indian swear-terms and expletives in his books. R. K. Narayan has portrayed the socioeconomic aspects of a common family using in simple language in his writings. His first novel *Swami and Friends* is based in the fictional town Malgudi and presented through the eyes and experiences of the character Swaminathan describing the Indian cultural identity and philosophy to the world. His other popular novels are *Bachelor of Art*, *The Financial Expert*, *The Guide*, *Waiting for Mahatma*. The reader clearly observed the influence of the Gandhian movement in the novel *Kantapura*(1938) by Raja Rao. The theme of East-West encounter has firmly entrenched itself in the novels of this period. *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) and *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965), even *Kanthapura* (1938), are novels philosophical disquisitions, mythical fables, or symbolical exercises presented through ramshackle stories.

In the next period (1950-1975), we come across a large number of novelists. The notable novelists among them are Bhabani Bhattacharya, Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar, G. V. Desani, Arun Joshi, Chaman Nahal, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and Attiah Hosain. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao keep on writing even beyond this span of time. Bhattacharya adopted a pedagogical approach to make novels out of ideas. He utilized satire and made his ideas more tangible through situational examples. He is a novelist for the casual, ordinary reader; his ready-made solutions are cheap and farcical; his theme of integration is mere contrivance only a mechanical mixture. Khushwant Singh explores social, political realities of contemporary Indian life. He has established himself as a distinguished writer of

social realism with the publication of his first novel, *Train to Pakistan*(1956). Even a cursory reading of two of his novels, *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959) and *Delhi* (1990), is enough to substantiate the themes. Manohar Malgonkar is a remarkable storyteller; his major novels are *Distant Drum* (1960), *Combat of Shadows* (1962), *The Princes* (1963) and *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) notable for his military thrillers and adventure and history. Kamala Markandaya's novels, *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), *A Handful of Rice* (1966), *The Coffey Dams* (1969), *The Nowhere Man* (1972) and *Two Virgins* (1973), deserve only hasty reading. Nayantara Sahgal's novels *A Time to be Happy* (1958), *This Time of Morning* (1968), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) and *Mistaken Identity* (1988) deal with the themes of extra-marital relationship and political affairs. Anita Desai portrayed the lives of the all classes of women in India in her novels like *Voices in the City* (1965), *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) and *Clear Light of the Day* (1980). Her name is an intense exploration of the human psyche, a projection of "the interior landscape of the mind". Attiah Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) is a novel depicting nostalgia for the lost Muslim aristocracy and culture of Lucknow because of Partition. Bharati Mukherji's two novels, *Tiger's Daughter* (1973) and *Wife* (1976), deal with the problem of multi-nationality and cross-culturalism. In this period, there is a deepening of the theme of East-West encounter which resulted in the psychic state of alienation, rootlessness and loss of identity.

In the next period (1975-2000), Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1980), Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate* (1986), a novel in verse, and *A Suitable Boy* (1993), a massive novel running into nearly 1400 pages, and Amitav Ghosh's *Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988) and *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995) are worth mentioning novels of this

period. Rama Mehta's Sahitya Akademi Award-winning novel, *Inside the Haveli* (1977) highlights the issue of lack of female education in Rajasthan. Rushdie is a pioneer in his use of the narrative art that came to be known as magic realism, in the novel on India in English. Rushdie's Booker Prize-winning novel *Midnight's Children* is a political allegory, a inquiring mix of myth and realism. Rushdie has signalled a fresh style in writing and giving influence to multicultural concerns. There is another Booker Prize-winning novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997) by Arundhati Roy which has an amazing kind of love-hate relationship. In this period, the term introduced in the novels as 'exile', 'immigrants', 'émigré', 'the outsider insider', 'the insider-outsider', 'loneliness', 'aleness', 'alienation', 'rootedness', 'uprootedness' and 'Diaspora'. However, at this point it is important to mention Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) which is a great novel indeed for its parallelistic structure.

In the last period (2001-2010), we are the witness of novels Booker Prize-winning novels like Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008), Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and *Sea of Poppies* (2008), Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* (2008) and *One Amazing Thing* (2010), Upamanyu Chatterjee's *Weight Loss* (2006), Amit Chaudhuri's *The Immortals* (2009), Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters* (2002), Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* (2002) and *Home* (2006), Shashi Deshpande's *Moving On* (2004) and *In a Country of Deceit* (2010), and Khushwant Singh's *The Sunset Club* (2010). We can also refer to Chetan Bhagat's novels- *Five point someone* (2004), *One night @ the call centre* (2005), *The 3 mistakes of my life* (2008) and *2 States* (2009)- are largely autobiographical and inconsequential. Some novels have added to the value, credibility and enduringness of Indian

novels in English. We accounted with new terms as Postmodernism, Post-colonialism, Post-structuralism, Post-feminism, Post Freudianism, New Historicism, Cross-culturalism, Multi-nationality, Semiotics and Deconstruction during this period.

#### CONCLUSION:

Thus, this quick look at the various periods of the contemporary Indian English novel. It shows a noticeable revolutionary change in its substance and texture. Patriotic exclusivism has grown into mixed identities and mythical and historical truths with postcolonial realities. In the first and second periods of Indian English novels, the themes revolve around patriotism, social exploitation, political issues, discrimination. As the time goes in the third period the themes of the Indian English novels modify into extra-marital relationship and political affairs, exploration of the human psyche, the problem of multi-nationality and cross-culturalism.

On the domestic front, failure of marriage, violence to the rights of women and children, honour killing and neglect of the elders, live in relationship are common themes in modern English Fiction. The impassioned narrations of domestic discord in the work of almost every current writer. Some novels excellently illustrate how that culture of troubled or broken home, of homelessness, and inhuman destitution is endemic today.

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