



HISTORY, TRENDS AND ISSUES OF INDIAN ENGLISH NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

The novel is an impeccable creation of Indian English literature. English novels rewritten in India before pre-independence. Indian English Novel is a change in Indian culture, tradition. The English language has come quite a long way from mere use to the authentic tool for expressing one's ideas, thoughts, concepts, and imagination. Indian English Novel has had phases of development. There were already three parts in the myths, in the folklore, and the umpteen languages and cultures. The novel has always been modern – always concerned mainly with contemporary life, and, as the name suggests, always after the new thing. But sometime around 1900 (or 1910, or 1922), to be modern meant something more, because suddenly modernity meant everything. This paper shall study and unfold the major changes in Indian English novels thereby bringing in to focus the recent trends in Indian English novels.

Keywords:Trends, English, Modern, Novels, Literature.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indian novel in English has grown by leaps and bounds in respect of thematic variety and linguistic maturity. Both of them have used an acquired language to comment on the Indian social context. But compared to the recent output most of the early novels in English were almost imitative and faulty. It is assumed that Indian novel in English has its roots in the nineteenth century realistic tradition of English novel. [1] The impact of English education, national awakening and the influence of European models are the chief factors responsible for the rise and development of Indian novel in English. But with the passage of time, the Indian novel in English has become thoroughly Indian in terms of the themes, techniques and the human values. The Indian literary tradition goes back to the writings of the two epics – The Ramayana and The Mahabharata influencing the writers in India who looked the outside world soaking their minds and thinking process in them. No wonder then, the early Indian novels in English were modeled in the Sanscritised consciousness and later continued but questioned in the recent times.

There is a shift in the voices of modern Indian writers in English painting India dynamic in an attempt to transform traditional India to modern India. Novel in English is the oldest and ongoing literary genre in India. Modern novel has facilitated the reader to receive life positively balancing personal and professional life. Family, society, religion, caste, politics, education, gender, marginality, outcaste, dowry, child labor, ragging are dealt. Relations, culture, faith, money, opinions, instruction, isolation, identity, masculinity, femininity, idiosyncrasy are the most discussed themes. The human mind has been probed. Everything is viewed differently.



Every angle of man's life is experimented. Technology is integrated. Civilization is questioned. Emotions are put to acid test. Culture is imbibed. Rat racing is challenged. Modern man is carved in the leaves of Novel – world by eminent writers in English resulting into Indian English. Definitions of Indian literature are bound up with historical shifts of Indian identity. Territories in which Indian literature have been written have never been subject to a single statehood, nor been defined by a single language. The historical spread of the English language brought about a label – „Indo - English literature“ now considered anachronistic. Changing perceptions of English identity, national identity, regional identity, nationalism, and the effects of British imperialism have altered construal of how the literatures of Indian subcontinent have interacted.

The impact of English education, national awakening and the influence of European models are the chief factors responsible for the rise and development of Indian novel in English. But with the passage of time the Indian novel in English has become thoroughly Indian in terms of the themes, techniques and the human values. In this regard, Meenakshi Mukherjee (1985: viii) observes that: „The novel in India can be seen as the product of configurations in philosophical, aesthetic, economic and political forces in the larger life of the country“. “Despite obvious, regional variations, a basic pattern seems to emerge from shared factors like the Puranic heritage, hierarchical social structure, colonial education, disjunction of agrarian life and many others that affect the form of novel as well as its content.”

II. DEVELOPMENT OF NOVELS IN INDIAN HISTORY PERIOD

• Pre-independence period

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's (1838 -189 4) first and only novel in English, *Rajmohan's wife* (1864) was serialized in the Calcutta weekly, *The Indian Field* (1864) (Naik, M.K, 1982). Earlier short fiction in English, *A Journal of 48 Hours of the Year* 1945(1835) by KylasChundarDutt and *The Republic of Orissa: A Page from the Annals of the Twentieth century* (1845) by ShosheeChundarDutt. Peary Chand Mitra's *AlalerGharerDulal* (*The Split Son of aRich Family*, 1855-57, Bengali), and anticipates some of the major developments of the novel as a genre (Anjaria&Ulka, 2015).

From 1860 up to the end of the 19th century, story novels continued to appear mostly bywriters from the Bengal and Madras. Novels by as many as three women novelists appeared before the turn of the century. Toru Dutt's unfinished novel, *Bianca or The Young SpanishMaiden*, a romantic love story set in England (Calcutta, 1878); among the novels published between 1864 and 1900. TarachandMookerjee's *The Scorpions or Eastern Thoughts*(Allahabad, 1868); LalBahari Day's *GovindaSamanta or The History of a Bengal Raiyat*(London,1874)- revised and enlarged version published under the title *Bengal Peasant Life* (London,1908); M. Dutt's *Bijoy Chand: An Indian Tale* (Calcutta,1888) and B. R. RanjanIyer's fragment of a religious novel, *True Greatness or VasudevaShastri* (1925) (Naik, M.K 1982). Ramesh ChanderDutt is the greater renowned as an administrator and as a Bengali andEnglish writer. Two of his Bengali novels into English: *The Lake of PaPalms: A story of IndianDomestic Life* (London, 1902) and *The Slave Girl of Agra, an Indian Historical Romance*(London, 1909) is set in the Mughal period. He is the measure of his greatness as an Indo-Anglican poet. (Iyengar, K. R Srinivasa, 1945).



When what Naik calls the Gandhian whirlwind struck India, many things changed including the novel. What we are talking about is the intensification of the sense of nationalism and the attempts to use all means to construct the idea of a modern India. Once again we begin with a novelist who was also a poet. This is K.S. Venkataramani (1891-1951). He has two novels - *Murugan, the Tiller* (1927), and *Kandan, the Patriot: A Novel of New India in the Making* (1932). *Murugan* contrasts the life of two friends, Kedari and Ramu, the former a materialist and the latter a Gandhian. A Gandhian colony is established at the end of the novel and the two friends settle down there. *Kandan* is set during the period of the Civil Disobedience movement. *Kandan*, an ICS officer who has been educated in England, resigns from government service and joins the freedom movement only to be killed at the end.

The problem with Venkataramani's novels is that their narrative style leaves a lot to be desired. Venkataramani doesn't seem to have been impressed by any contemporary narrative models. This is true of his contemporary A.S.P. Ayyar as well. Ayyar, an ICS officer, was a dramatist as well. He couldn't write novels about contemporary politics because of his official position. So like nineteenth century poets, he resorts to Indian history to construct his idea of India. His novels are *Baladitya* (1930), and *Three Men of Destiny* (1939). He split the latter novel into two parts and published them separately as *The Legions Thunder Past* (1947), and *Chanakya and Chandragupta* (1951). *Baladitya* is set in the 5th century and is *A History of the Indian English Novel* is about the aftermath of Alexander's invasion of India. The three novels are *Alexander's Invasion of India*, *Chanakya and Chandragupta*, and *Chandragupta*.

- **Post-independence period**

The Indian English novel of the period was deeply influenced by the epoch-making political, social and ideological ferment caused by the Gandhian movement. K. S. Venkataramani (1891-1951) of the earliest novelists of this period, his first novel, *Murugan, The Tiller* (1927), contrasts the careers of two young South Indian friends Kedari, a flashy materialist finally ruined by his chicanery and Ramu, an introvert, whose spirit of public service brings him spectacular rewards after an unpromising beginning. English with Ramu's ideal on Gandhian principles to which he retires with his repentant friend. His second novel, *Kandan, the Patriot: A Novel of New India in the Making* (1932) is set against the background of the civil Disobedience movement, tells the story of *Kandan* (Naik, M.K, 1982).

The most significant of Indian English Fiction in the 1930s was the appearance on the scene of its major trio: Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao (Naik, M. K, 1982). Anand's early novels, *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), *Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) and *The Big Heart* (1942). Anand's first novel *Untouchable* (1935) is classic experimentation in respect of theme and technique. Ending this novel, Bakha's thinking of everything he had heard, though he could not understand it all.

THE TRENDSETTERS

The major novelist and a trendsetter is Salman Rushdie who was not only a highly successful novelist, but the best and distinct influence on fiction in modern times. Rushdie, with his Pidgin English, has signaled a fresh style in writing as well as giving influence to multicultural concerns. The writers followed the path



and established the genre. Besides his popular works, *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *Fury*, and *Shalimar the Clown*, the work that propelled him into the limelight was his *Satanic Verses*. However, he is today widely read and the source for future writers, while the trio was neglected. The novels of Rohinton Mistry, V.S. Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Tharoor, and Upamanyu Chatterjee are also significant, as well as being an example of post colonial fiction. It was in the modern contemporary times that the novel became the leading genre in Indian literature in English. It saw the rise of social novel that arose out of the social and political upheavals. This was in many ways a reaction to rapid progress, and the social, political and economic issues associated with it, and were a means of commenting on abuses of government and industry and the suffering of the poor, who were not profiting from nation's economic prosperity. Stories of the working class poor were directed toward middle class readers to help create sympathy and promote change. The writers are most admired, much read and known exclusively. There are other significant novelists - Chetan Bhagat, Shobha De, Chitra Banerjee, and Sudha Murthy whose novels caused a sensation when they were first published but was subsequently accepted as classics. Among them, Chetan Bhagat has been a successful writer who contrasts the lifestyle and usually frames his stories as critiques of contemporary attitudes. He has always emphasised the role of man, with complex narratives and dynamic characters.

III. NEW ENGLISH MODERN TRENDS

A main progress in modern Indian fiction has been the augmentation of a feminist centered approach. Writers, especially women writers question sincerely and scientifically, and sometimes refuse long-established interpretations of women's role and position in society.

Relationship between man and woman

The psychic human state and quality of life

College and corporate settings

The grass-root details of the sociological, cultural, economic and political history of India

A subaltern consciousness

The techniques of hybrid language, magic realism peppered with native themes

Reflect the history, society, political domain, economic status and tradition of Indian subcontinent

IV. ISSUES IN INDIAN ENGLISH NOVELS

The concerned novel deals with various issues like criminalization of politics, selfishness of the leaders for vote bank, terrorist activities in the name of Jihad, destabilization of secularism, atrocities on women, paralytic administration corrupt judiciary and the like. Among all these disparities the love relation of Jahan Shah and Parvati blossoms. The writer being an civil servant himself shows Jahan Shah as an I.P.S. Jahan Shah is an ideal brother and a secular being the story line rotates around negativism



with Jahan Shah. The positive point in the centre of the circle. The great demolition of ‘Ayodhya’ is used by Jagannmohan not only a singular case but also as a symbolic image of the ruin of all positivity of Indian society.

Literature is the mirror of society. Literature reflects the social, cultural, economical and historical life of human beings. Literature no longer remains limited to particular geographical, national or cultural circumstances. The global concerns and shifting paradigms informing different art forms have transformed the nature and the understanding of literature. The diversity of the reading material available in the market has changed the desires and expectations of the readers also. There has been a spurt of writings that not only mark interdisciplinary nature of literature but also provide an impetus for competition under unreasonable pressures to innovate. It has resulted in a form of writings that contests categorization based on traditionally accepted literary canons.

V. CONTEMPORARY INDIAN NOVEL IN ENGLISH

Indian English Novel after Independence has carved a new track, a new vision both in theme and spirit. It has now emerged as one of the major genres in the New Literatures in English, an outcome of commercial, cultural and literary history of an encounter between India and Britain. The spectrum history of Indian fiction from the first generation novelists to the recent novelists after 2000 has passed through 'Adopt Phase' of colonial literature, the 'Adapt Phase' and 'Adept Phase'. In the first Phase, the Indian novel in English is in search of medium and form from 1864 to 1930. This is a pre-Independence novel in search of tradition, known to use MeenakshiMukhejee's term, a 'twice bom fiction.' It is imitative in nature but expressed the Indian sensibility and is rooted in the Indian soil. The novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and others popularized the Indian English fiction in their own ways, depicting social reality in India.

The novelists of second generation Bhabhani Bhattacharya, B. Rajan, ManoharMalgonkar, Khushwant Singh, ChamanNahal, Amn Joshi, Kamala Markandaya, R.P.Jhabhvala, NayantaraSahgal, Anita Desai, and Shashi Deshpande lifted Indian English novel to a considerable height and created a space in the literature of the world. Since then the Indian English Literature appeared on Global screen. The novelists try to present the truthful reality. MakarandParanjape (1991:25) says “The novel interprets or creates reality. But the novel cannot be realistic or cannot deny social reality. It has to bridge a balance between personal and social.” A gradual rise in this direction is seen in the development of the novel. Slowly from Freedom - straggle and Partition, the novelists shifted their emphasis from the social to the personal world and their themes changed accordingly. As observed by MeenakshiMukhejee (1971:198), “Recent fiction has turned introspective and the individual's quest for a personal meaning in life has become a theme of urgent interest for the Indo-Anglian writer.” Many of the novelists of the second generation with their interest and eagerness to find new themes, as said by C. Paul Verghese (1971:25), “renounced the larger world in favor of the inner man” and continued “a search for the essence of human living”. The novel has always been a modem. It is always concerned with the contemporary life. In other words, the novel mirrors the contemporary society. As the name suggests, a 'novel' is always in search of new things. Modernism is a comprehensive but a vague term for a movement which emerged to get significance in the



closing years of the 19th century and which has had a wide influence internationally during the march of the 20th century. As far as fiction is concerned, modernism reveals a breaking away from established rules, tradition and conventions of the Victorian well-made novel. Modernism indicates the tradition of rebellion against traditions. It provides fresh ways of looking at life and reality, man's position and function in the universe and many experiments in the form and style. It is particularly concerned with language and how to use it with the craft of writing itself. "Putting reality in question, and falling in fragments," automatic sentences and 'subjective' voices, these are a few of the things that made the novel modern, 'observes Jesse Matz (2004: 6). As to the nature and purpose of the modern novel, modern novelist started with the belief that modernization has changed the very nature of reality, and that fiction also has to change its very nature in order to survive. Modern novels treat things differently. They go against the established literary norms and conventions. Experimentation, innovation and improvisation are the hallmarks of a typical modern novel. New styles and structures are the result and these are often shocking, surprising and difficult. But the difficulty has its reasons; often it makes fiction more life-like or makes the modern reality more subjective to awareness, scrutiny and understanding. Or it aims at making fiction itself as strange as modern experience. These are some of the fundamental tendencies of the modern experience. Some of the fundamental tendencies of the modern novel are discerned in an avant-garde in its radical formal innovation. In short, modern fiction refers to a new approach to fiction in terms of new technique, new theories, new philosophies and new styles.

Post-modern fiction refers to changes, developments, and tendencies which have taken place or are taking place in fiction since 1965. If modern fiction aimed at mimesis, earnest redress, reality, spotlessness, immediacy, it is marked by digenesis, seriousness, fantasy, magic realism, metafiction, and mediation and plotting. Post-modernism invigorated the styles and features of the modern novel such as DE familiarization, consciousness, fragmentation etc. It also solved many modern novels' key problems with its radical experimentations, with theme, narratology and style.

VI. CONCLUSION

R.K. Narayan approaches the situation with a certain level of understanding and objectivity while avoiding easy fixes or moral judgments. Nevertheless, we sense that a spark of optimism for a change for the better has been lit. There is a resurgence of trust in the impending emancipation of women through higher education, as well as an awakening of the spirit. In this regard, R.K. Narayan deserves praise for the way he handled the debate between conservatism and reform.

The concluding chapter shall sum up the ideas that image in proceeding chapters it shall highlight how recent Indian novels deals with the major problems of Indian society. There by continuing the legacy of their forefathers who to engaged in focusing the major disorders of their time that is BRITISH RAAJ and its atrocities but this carry forward of tradition is similar yet dissimilarity for the three novels that the research work shall study deals with different problems of the society.



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