Introduction

Indian English literature is one and a half centuries old. Indian English literature refers to a part of work written by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous language of India. The first book written in India by an Indian in English language was by sake Dean Mahomet, titled ‘Travels’ of Dean Mahomet; it was published in 1793 in England.

The history of English language and literature in India all starts with the advent of the East India Company in India. The East India company (an English company established and formed to develop trade with the new British colonies in India and south Eastern Asia was formed in 1599, leading London merchants participated a meeting and after more than 150 years, the company held the key to the domination of Bengal and India in general.

First there were the educational reforms called forth by both the charter Act of 1813 and the 1835 English Educational Act of William Bentinck. In an Endeavour to rectify and equalize some of the materialistic and ravenous, hence compromising, practices of the East India Company Servants, the English Parliament had approved the charter Act, which had made England responsible for the educational betterment of the natives. The subsequent English education act, prompted by Thomas Babington Macaulay’s ill-famed “minute” on Indian education, made English the medium of Indian education and English literature a disciplinary subject in Indian educational institutions.

The basic historical perspective of Indian English literature is an effort to contextualize the growth and rise of this genre-from its inception to its present day glory. However Indian literature in English possesses a relatively recent history; it is actually only one and a half centuries old.

India’s association with the British and hence English is even older. It is now a universally acknowledged fact that Mughal Emperor Jahangir had granted William Hawkins license to trade in India in the year 1608 and that was when the English had placed its first step upon the oriental soil. In the due course of history, British concluded their conquest of India in a triumphant and scheming manner.

Thus, the distribution of English language along with the Empire in India was not quite a bolt from blue, but rather a much expected aspect, English replaced Persian as the court language in early 19th century and interpreting and relating to English became a matter of survival for the urban Class rather than a matter of conceit. As a new block of population began to emerge from the grass-roots,
English language spread its wings and together with it, English literature in India also began to gather its gradual historical ripening.

In the year 1781 Hicky’s Bengal Gazette was forced to close down after Hicky published a scandalous story about Warren Hastings, then Governor – General and his wife. Another type of newspaper emerged Indo-Anglian papers. They were English newspapers run by Indians primarily for English educated elite Indians. The first newspaper of this type was Bengal Gazette, started in 1816 by Gangadhar BhatiaCharya, a disciple of Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

Ram Mohan Roy also began his famous Brahmancial Magazine, English. Fortnightly. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his friends David Hare and Sir Edward Hyde East, it became the presidency college in 1855, still recognized as one off the premier educational institutes.

The independence movement in India, “was not merely a political struggle, but an all pervasive emotional experience for all Indians in the nineteen twenties and thirties ………….. That was an experience that was national in nature.”