Review of Literature:-

The Indian English novel of before independence period deals directly with national experience as the central theme. The various momentous events of this turbulent period-Mahatma Gandhi’s passive resistance movement against the Black Rowalt Act, the inhuman massacre in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, the khilafat Movement, the boycott of Simon Commission, the prohibition and the boycott of the foreign goods, the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, the famous Dandi March, the Government of India Act of 1935, the emancipation of women, the Quit India Movement of 1942 and many other written during pre-independence period.

Modern Indian English novel is, thus, preoccupied with the inner life and individual problems of men and women passing through revolutionary changes. The novel in the previous era was mainly concerned with the external aspects of society and little with the exteriorization of the inner landscape of the human psyche. It has become more subtle, philosophical and psychological. This change in the content of the novel has necessitated the use of new technical devices.

Anand deftly uses the device of the stream of consciousness in his first novel untouchable. Myth too has been used a technique to illustrate the novelist’s vision or point of view. Raja Rao’s Kanthapura presents the collisions of two rival forces as is formed in a myth.

The serpent and the Rope is a truly philosophical novel in that in it the philosophy is not in the story-the philosophy is the story. “It is one of the finest novels in Indian English Literature.” Its philosophical profundity and symbolic richness, its lyrical beauty and descriptive power, and its daring experimentation with form and style make it a major achievement.

In ‘A Bend in the Ganges’ Malgonkar underlines the role of the second world war in effecting radical changes in the affairs of men and nations, the attainment of independence and the partition of the country.

History of English language and literature in India starts with the advent of East India Company in India. It all started in the summers of 1608 when emperor Jahangir, in the courts of moguls, welcomed captain William Hawking, Commander of British Naval Expedition Hector.

The East India Company was formed in 1599, at a meeting participated by leading London merchants and after more than 150 years, the company held the key to the domination of Bengal and India in general. The Battle of Plassey was fought in 1757, but Lord
Clive had refused the liability of Diwani or revenue administration and it was in 1722 that the East India Company took over its duty.

As East India Company spread its wing in southern peninsula, English language started to get newer pockets of influence. But it was still time for the first English book to capitalize.

Late 17th century saw the coming of printing press in India but the publication were largely confined to either printing Bible or government decrees. Then came newspapers. The first English newspaper named Hicky’s Bengal Gazette was published in 1779 in India. The breakthrough in Indian English literature came in 1793 A.D. the first book written by Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled Travels of Dean Mahomet’ published in London. This was essentially Mahomet’s travel narrative that can be put somewhere between a Nonfiction and a Travelogue. (1)

By the commencement of the 19th century, Britain - or East India company- was more or less the master of the situation in India. In 1813, the commercial monopoly of the company was ended and the British in India assumed, beside police function, educating and civilizing mission as well.

History of English literature in India, had by this time, taken much gigantic proportions, with the nascent buds beginning to bloom in a yet unsure direction. However, in such a context, a token grant of rupees one lakh per year was granted for education and the proposal was to promote only oriental education.

Since the beginning of the 18h century printing presses in different parts of the country and books in the vernacular language as well as in English were begun to be issued. The first ever newspaper - James Augustus Hickey’s Bengal Gazette (1780) and others came after in due course. Last to arrive in the illustrious history of Indian English literature were the private schools that imparted English education. Such schools had been started as early as 1717 at Cuddalore near Madras, 1718 in Bombay and 1720 in Calcutta, endowed by the Thomlinsons, closing in the establishment of Hindu college in 1817.

Raja Rammohan Roy and his friends David Hare and Sir Edward Hyde East, the Hindu college had become the Presidency College in 1855 still recognized as one of the most premier educational institutes in Kolkata. Western education was fast being circulated in different parts of India and was performing much better than the institutions imparting oriental and indigenous education. The orientalists and the Anglicists continued to bicker and squabble still, but it was quite apparent that the former were steadily loosing ground and Lord Macaulay’s celebrated ‘Minute’ decided the issue at last.
History of English literature in India was thus gaining its higher grounds by being uplifted and rejuvenated under the still good-hearted Britishers, striving for excellence in the Indian native scenario.

A) The Renaissance In Indian English literature :-

The renaissance in modern Indian literature begins with Raja Rammohan Roy who born in a village Radhanagore in Bengal on 22 May 1772, he died at Bristol on 27 September 1883; a singular concatenation a preordained sequence of events in the life of a man who was destined to act as a bridge between India and England.

Leaving Company service at last, Rammohan returned to Calcutta in 1814, started the Atmiya sabha, and so launched himself on the consciousness of Calcutta society. The next few years were a period of hectic activity, tire less endeavor, and often acrimonious controversy with Christians and Hindus alike.

The plight of the widows, the darkness of superstition, the miasma of ignorance, the general backwardness of the country, all stirred him to action.

In his time Rammohan stood almost alone, while the storms of detraction blew around him. With a few select friends he held counsel from time to time on the perennial truths of all-religions, and so the Brahma sabha or Brahma samaj was founded in 1828. A great event in the history of the Brahma samaj was the meeting of Debendranath and Keshub Chunder Sen in 1857, For the next 10 years they two worked together, and the Brahma samaj was a power in Bengal, the meeting point of both the religious and the cultural renaissance. (2)

Renaissance in Indian literature includes several significant creative works of renowned authors. Indian literature as a whole experienced a new beginning of mid 19th century. It was mostly centred around the Bengal province. Great authors like Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee Contributed significantly in the renaissance in Indian literature by establishing a literary genre.

Renaissance is basically considered as an inspiration from the past and planning to rebuild the future. Thus, in this respect the renaissance in the life, “a nation is like the coming of a new age” It is adolescence turning, into adulthood: romanticism and revolution replaced by reason, narcissism followed by disillusionment.

The ‘Renaissance’ signifying ‘rebirth’ originated in Italy thoroughly between 14th and 17th century, was primarily a cultural uprising. But in India, renaissance originates as a
social reform movement, probably in the nineteenth century, when the British were the
domineering body of the Indian politics.

Renaissance in India, materialized as a concept imitated from the west, punctuate
a social reshuffling. Indian renaissance appears as a reawakening of the latent society, quivering
with the threats of orthodoxy, dowry and narrow caste system. Moreover foreign colonialism at
that time was an intense blight over India. Several social uprising and organizations were
developed to liberate the society from the shackles of superstition. Quite visibly, literature
composed during this period is the clear specimen of the socio-political ethos of the era.

Renaissance in Indian literature introduced a different style of Indian writing in
different regional languages which is regarded as worthwhile and meaningful, writings of young
writer’s new experiments and exploration of new forms and ideas, Indian literary works started
to depict the life of the poor and depressed. (3)

B) Impact of English literature on India :-

English literature thus affected the Indian cultural, religious and literary traditions in such
a way that there was a great awakening transforming Indian ways and tradition. This awakening
yielded beneficial results in the realms of literature, for there was a rejuvenation of Indian
literatures through the adoption of new literary forms and genres from the west. Apart from this
rejuvenation there was also the beginning of Indian creative effort in English. The evolution of a
prose style and its development encouraged the Indian writers to adopt modern forms of
literature such as the novel drama and short story.

The British arrived in India almost as an afterthought. Founded by royal charter
in 1600, the East India Company had as its primary aim a share of the valuable spice trade with
Indonesia. Finding the Dutch firmly in control, it turned its attention to a secondary market
India.

Frustrated in its attempts to enter the lucrative Indonesian spice trade, the East
India Company turned to India, where the Mughal was only too happy to have the British rid it
of the last unwelcome vestiges of Portuguese naval power. In return, the British were given
trading rights and allowed to establish factories.

The 17th century was one of slow but steady consolidation France and other
European countries also obtained similar land and trading rights, but the sheer size of the market,
and the relatively small scale of the enterprises, did not lead to any real competition.

In 1742 England and France found themselves at war with each other, and this
purely European conflict sparked a period of parallel military and political confrontation in
India. Both sides made full use of political intrigue and machination entering into fragile alliances with local Indian rulers, backing rival claimants to vacant thrones, and generally manipulating the confused domestic Indian situation of the time to their own advantage.

The most important gain of this period of Anglo-French conflict was the establishment of undisputed British power in Bengal. The ultimate aim of the East India company, however, was trade and profit, not territorial expansion using its position of military superiority, the company wrested numerous commercial concessions from the local ruler.

The most important of these was a total exemption from the tax levied on private trade by members of the Company. The gross excesses of the next twenty years prompted the passage of William Pitt’s India Act of 1784, which set up dual control of commerce and administration. Ultimate political power was taken from the hands of the East India Company, and the British government accepted a share of responsibility for its involvement in India.

The new century swarthier changes in the pattern of British expansion in India. By the middle of the 19th century many of these goals had been achieved. Almost all of India was either under direct British control, or under the rule of pliable native kings rendered impotent by the British monopoly of foreign affairs and military power.

For the first time in Indian history, the historical claims of Indian peasants to their own land were recognized in law, and an end was put to the corruption of the old tax-gathering systems. Unfortunately for the peasants, most of the tax assessments were unrealistically high, and wholesale forfeiture of land led to the creation of a new wealthy Indian land-owning class.

In 1857 the apparent tranquility of the Indian sub-continent was shattered by the revolt of a handful of Indian soldiers in Meerut. The revolt quickly spread to Delhi, where the renegade soldiers proclaimed the decrepit titular Mughal as their leader. The Indian Mutiny lasted for only a few months. The last pockets of resistance were finally put down in 1859, but not before two new names had been etched irrevocably on the psyche of the British nation: Lucknow and Cawnpore, the first a synonym for British courage, and second the apotheosis of Indian perfidy. The cause of the Mutiny will, perhaps, remain forever a matter of controversy and conjecture.

The Government of India Act of 1858 transferred the remnants of the power of the East India Company to the crown, and in the same year a royal proclamation changed the direction British policy in India.

The end of the war and the election of a new labour government in Britain, however produced a new political climate, and the rush to independence began. Attempts to
hand over the reins of power to a united and peaceful India proved fruitless and on the 15th of August 1947, the two new states of India & Pakistan were born. (4)

A) Influencing Factors on Indian Literature :-

The whole course of Indian literature and in a broader sense the course of Indian civilization was influenced largely by the concept of devotional worship of a personal deity. This very influencing factor to a great extent structured a cult era in Indian literature whilst giving rise to the historical development of the Bhakti movement. The influencing factors on Indian literature since ages have molded and reshaped Indian literature.

1) Factors which influenced literature in Ancient India.
2) Factors which Influenced literature in Medieval India.
3) Factors which Influenced Literature in colonial and post colonial India.

B) Spread of Indian English Literature :-

Indian English is used mainly by Indians whose native language it is not. It is a minority language, but yet a language of national affairs, and its status is often called into question by, as Bailey puts it “not only by foreigners with their ideas of proper English but also by Indians who remain ambivalent about its distinctive features and uncertain about its future.

C) Contribution of pre - Independence Indian Novelists :-

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was followed in the early 19th century in Bengal by the poets Henry Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Dutt started out writing epic verse in English but returned to his native Bengali later in life.

The poems of Toru Dutt (1857- 1876), who died at a tender age of 21, and the novel ‘Rajmohan’s wife’ by Bankimchandra chatterjee have received academic acceptance as the earliest examples of Indian literature Written in English.

Toru Dutt not composed poetry in English, But more interestingly, translated French poetry as well . Her best works include ‘Ancient Ballads’ and Legends of ‘Hindustan.’ However, the most famous literary figure of this era was Rabindranath Tagore (1861 - 1941) who won the Nobel prize of literature in 1913 for his book Gitanjali, which is a free rendering of his poems in Bengali.

Sarojini Naidu ( 1879 - 1949) was a great poetess whose romanticism charmed readers in India and Europe. Her ‘Golden Threshold (1905)” and ‘The Broken wing 1917)” are works of great literary merit.

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950) was a poet, philosopher and sage, for whom poetry was akin to a form of mediation. His epic, Savitri and Life Divine ( 2 vols) are
outstanding works in English literature. It maybe mentioned that most Indian writers in English from the early period hailed from calcutta, the first stronghold of the British, than other places in the country.

The freedom struggle resulted in a revolutionary brand of writing that voiced sentiments against the British Empire. Several political leaders from different parts of the country emerged as literary figures such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpath Rai, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and T. prakasham. The English language became a sharp and strong instrument in the hands of Gandhiji, who edited and wrote of papers like ‘young India’ and ‘Harijan’. He also wrote his autobiography, ‘My Experiments with Truth’, which is known for its literary flair.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889 - 1964) stands out as another prominent leader who excelled in writing prose. He is particularly remembered for his ‘Glimpses of world History’, ‘Discovery of India’ and ‘An Autobiography (1936)’

i) **Mulk Raj Anand’s in ‘Untouchable’:**

The social hierarchy, private family and private property formed a strong nexus. The nexus has evolved an exploitative and oppressive society where the minority, through the juggling of civilization, enjoys the wealth produced by the hard labour of the majority. Exploitation and oppression have deformed the human society greatly.

The social deformity has taken the form of cast system in the Hindu society. There are four recognized classes called ‘Varnas’ and one unrecognised class called ‘avarnas’. They are Brahmins (priests, teachers and ministers), kshatriyas ( kings and warriors ) Vyshyas (tradesman), Shudras (Craftesman) and panchamas (menial workers).

Shudras and panchmas are again divided into various castes and the castes are hierarchized.

Ambedkar therefore aptly points out, ‘Caste system is not merely a division of laborers - which is quite different from division of labour- it is an hierarchy in which the divisions of laborers prevents them from being united and makes them exploitable.

Moreover Manu, the Hindu law giver, Say’s A Brahmana may campel a Shudra, Whether bought or unbought, to do servile work for he is created by the creator to be the slave of a Brahmana.’ He prescribed draconian punishment to shudras for reading the vedas and for insulting higher caste people.

Panchamas whom even Shudras consider inferior have been ill-treated, oppressed and exploited more than shudras for ages. They are considered untouchables and forced to live far away from caste Hindus.
Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable depicts graphically the hardships and humiliations that panchamas suffer. It exposes the ugly deformity of the Hindu Society. The novelist does it just by narrating the life of Bakha, an untouchable boy during one day. Bakha, is a son of Lakha, the Jemadar of the sweepers of the town and cantonment. He is 18 yrs old. He gets up early in the morning and goes to work at dawn. He cleans three rows of latrines several times single-handedly. Yet he remains comparatively clean. In spite of the reveries hat he indulges in, he does his work efficiently and the hard toil makes him very strong.

Anand Says:
“Each muscle of his body, hard as rock when it came to play, seemed to shine forth like glass, ‘what a dexterous workman!’ the onlooker world have said. And though his job was dirty ,he remained comparatively clean (P.16).”(6)

He is a devoted doctor of the society, he prevents several infectious diseases from attacking the caste- Hindus by cleaning their latrines and sweeping their roads. Yet the people who enjoy his services never treat him with a little compassion. On the other hand, some of them humiliate and hurt him.

ii) Raja Rao’s Kanthapura :-

Raja Rao’s first novel, kanthapura published in 1938, mainly portrays the freedom Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in the 1920’s to liberate India from the imperialistic hegemony of the British. India’s struggle for independence with its powerful impact on Indian sensibility forms the nucleus of the novel. Some critics opine that the novel is predominantly political in inspiration and does not reveal the author’s characteristic metaphysical preoccupations, except in a general way.

Raja Rao, who developed an immense love for India after his first visit to france in his twenties, kept himself abreast with the political happenings that were shaping the destiny of India in the pre-independence period. When the Quit India movement was started by Gandhi in 1942, Raja Rao was associated with the underground activities of the young socialist leaders.”

In ‘Kanthapura’ Mahatma Gandhi is portrayed as a symbol of divine power as well as a tangible reality. He is an incarnation of krishna and, therefore, he will remove the suffering of the Indians. Gandhi would slay the serpent of the foreign rule as krishna had killed the serpent kaliya. As a statesman, Gandhi preaches the spinning of yarn to his countrymen for if they spin, the money that goes to the Britain will be retained in India to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.
Since the theme of the novel is “Gandhi and our village” and the village has a legendary significance, it is natural that the past blends with the present. The traditional belief of the villagers that the gods walk by lighted streets of kanthapura during the month of kartik suggests that the myth Co-exists with the contemporary reality.

As the gods pass by the potters’ street and the weavers, street, lights are lit to see them pass by; This description affirms the peasants abiding faith in gods - a belief shared by the author with his characters.

Raja Rao emphasizes the role of religion in the struggle for freedom. That is why religion and politics are often intermingled in the novel. The significance of independence is expressed in a religious metaphor. The political activity of the citizens of ‘Kanthapura’ gathers strength from their religious faith.

Thus ‘Kanthapura’ remains primarily a novel about the freedom movement. It propounds the political beliefs of Mahatma Gandhi, and Gandhism forms the basis of the book. The novel expounds the Gandhian values of non-violence and abolition of Untouchability. The tremendous religious activity the Mythicising of Gandhi and mother India and the spiritualization of the Freedom Movement within the framework of Indian cultural tradition suggest Raja Rao’s Zeal for Indian philosophy.\(^7\)

A European naturalism is often present; a concern to posit India as an arena within which western readers can identify realities is inherent within much of this writing. Indian literature in English which is accessible to us in the west still has its roots in colonial literature and the tensions between East and West. The following are three examples of the progression of Post-Independence literature.

20 years after Independence, R.K. Narayan was still tackling issues of colonialism. ‘The vendor of sweets (1967)’ takes us through the tensions integral to a family in which two generations belong to two different cultures. Ascetic Jagan belongs to an old India of family and history; his son to an India increasingly subject to the foregrounding of the commodity and a dramatic industrialization.

Narayan explores the inevitable class of what is, in many ways both a colonial and a post-colonial encounter: Jagan, a follower of Gandhi and a veteran of the wars against British Imperialism, must attempt a negotiation of an ethos invasive to his own definitions of nationality; Mali, without this structure, must reconcile an American capitalism with India’s own sense of what constitutes a modern nation.

This theme is continued in Ruth praver Jhabvala’s ‘Heat and Dust’ (1975). Again two generations, this time British, must come to terms with an romanticised, Jhabvala attempts to
explore in a more sophisticated manner the social outlay of Anglo-Indian relations with the higher Muslim classes and Olivia’s step-grand-daughter is confronted with an India that remains hidden in the works of kipling, forster or Narayan.

A) Themes In Indian Literature :

    Indian literature virtually encompasses the whole of India and its every single aspect, both symbolically as well as realistically. And this certainly is not an overstatement or hyperbole, as writers beginning from the prehistoric age have tried to mirror their society, their times at large, a work to which they have also been successful. Indeed the thought themes in Indian Literature broadly hold within itself a magnificent yet clandestine vision, if viewed in an open angle.

    Before beginning with a novel, poetry, short story or play, a writer always has to bear in mind the previous happening in his community and consequences that might occur after the work is published.

    It is generally seen that writers are of the habit to leave their peace of work with an open ending i.e., leaving his/ her readers to judge the conclusion according to their own wish and understanding. Hence, the writer never as such can more out from his society and publish an out-of-this-world creation; if such phenomenon ever comes into being, the writer, most likely is to be branded a ‘social out caste’ or made ‘ in communicator’. Thus, themes in Indian literature always have to be created keeping in mind the ongoing Indian society or the people associated with it.

    Indian literature and its predominating themes are as follows:

    i) Mythological themes in Indian Literature.
    ii) Epic themes in Indian literature.
    iii) Romantic Themes in Indian Literature
    iv) Social Themes in Indian Literature.

B) Indian Novel with a Social Purpose :-

    The Indian novel, has emerged not simply as a pure literary exercise, but as an artistic response to the socio-political situation existing in the country, for, the factors that shaped and moulded the growth of the Indian novel, since the mid-nineteenth century, arose as much from the political and social problems of a colonized country as from indigenous narrative traditions of novels of Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, and Rabindranath Tagore in which “the socio-political situation existing in the country is faithfully mirrored right
from the early phase of reformist exuberance to the growth of a revolutionary consciousness among the common masses of India”.

If R.C. Dutt brought realism and reform to the Indian novel (sansar), if B.C. chatterji invested the Indian novel with a feeling of patriotism and revolution (Anandmath), Tagore had breathed into the Indian novel social relevance and psychological depth (Gora and the wreck).

The struggle for Independence in India was not merely a political one, but an all pervasive experience that became a part of the life of almost all the sensitive and enlightened Indians. Parallel to this struggle for political freedom was a social struggle a fight against superstition, Casteism, poverty, illiteracy, and many other social evils that were eating into the vitals of Indian society.

The socio-political movement that had caught the imagination of the entire nation also inspired the Indian novelists in English who rightly realized that novel too had a vital role to play in it. If the Indian novelists in English, right from the end of the 1920s, started turning away from the romantic phase focusing their attention on contemporary problems.

Motivated by the political and social questions arising from the changed historical situation they began to conceive of the relationship of man and his surroundings in a new and realistic manner. Though they did not completely break away from the central concern of man’s gust for self-realization, they modified it by no longer emphasizing only its spiritual nature.

Raja Rao emphasizes the role of religion in the struggle for freedom That is why religion and politics are often intermingled in the novel. The significance of independence is expressed in a religious metaphor. The political activity of the citizens of kanthapura gathers strength from their religious faith.(9).

C) Contribution of post - Independence Indian English novelist:-

Novel have been, and are being published in a dozen Indian languages, and also in English ; and the reciprocal influence between the novel in English and the novel in the regional languages has been rather more intimate and purposive than such influence in the fields of poetry or drama. And this has, of course, been facilitated by the comparative ease with which a novel can be translated from one to another of the many languages current in the country. While a truly comprehensive and reliable literary history of modern India is yet to be undertaken, the main sign-posts seem to be clear enough.

Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao were among the earliest Indian novelist writing in English, who began write in the early thirties.
The nineteen thirties were the seed-time of modern independent India; the Gandhian salt satyagraha movements of 1930 and 1932, the three Round table conferences, the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935, the introduction of provincial Autonomy in 1937, the Gandhian movements for Harijan uplift and Basic Education, the organization of Marxist parties of diverse hues, the involvement in the war in 1939, the schism in the congress leading to the expulsion of Subhas chandra Bose and his eventual escape to Germany and Japan—it was a packed decade indeed.

Although normally resident in England, Anand too could not but respond to the impact of events in India.

Mulk Raj Anand, best known for his short story ‘The lost child’, has written numerous works of prose, poetry and drama. His novels ‘Coolie’ (1933), ‘Untouchable’ (1935) reveal his concern for the downtrodden and underprivileged in India.

R.K. Narayan is another prolific figure in Indian English Writing. Most of his work, starting from his first novel ‘swami and friends (1935)’ is set in the fictional town of Malgudi, which captures the Indian ethos in its entirety while having a unique identity of its own. Malgudi is perhaps the single most endearing “character.” R.K. Narayan has ever created. Bachelor of Arts (1937), The financial expert (1952), The Guide (1959) and waiting for the Mahatma (1955) are his other popular novels.

The last of the harbingers of Indian English literature is Raja Rao (1909) whose novel Kanthapura (1938), set in rural India, established him as a major figure on the Indian literary Scene Raja Rao’s other three novels are ‘The serpent and the Rope (1960) and ‘The cat and Shakespeare’ (1965).

Nirad C. Chaudhari (1897-1999) was another internationally renowned Indian writer whose autobiography ‘An unknown Indian’ (1951) catapulted him into a celebrated international author.

i) The Serpent and the Rope :

The type of religion of the Hindus in India is of oriental conditions. It appears to be a little odd to the westerners. The society of Benares is different from that of Allahabad. The traditional characteristic the old Hindu religion exit in the form of the rituals at the hands of the ghat - pandas and the priests in the former. The roaming bulls, the sadhus the beggars and the visitors coming from the remote provinces of India constitute the typicalities of the city. The religious affinities exist in different forms in different places.
The traditional Hindu marriage has been shown in the wedding of Saroja in the novel. Here is superstition ritual, formalism, grandeur etc. Here is the traditional atmosphere of a typical south Indian marriage. It is also noticed that in society in our country how the personal interest of a bride, are sacrificed to the expediency of the institution.

In India the Hindus View cows with most sentimental concern. Their foreheads are decorated and odd name of endearment are given to them. They are kept and fed in the temples. But it is also noticed that in most of the places they are not fed properly and starved.

**ii) Malgonkar’s ‘A Bend in the Ganges’:-**

Indian writers of fiction adapted the western form and medium to their own tradition of story-telling. This was able to attract attention as a novel experiment in creative mutation. Though there were such stray experiments, no novelist with a “substantial output” appeared on the Indian literary scene till the early 1930s.

Before this, Indo-English novels were devoid of the contemporary social and political realities. With the advent of Gandhiji on the Indian political scene, some writers came to be inspired by his principles which made them acutely conscious of these realities.

As Rama Jha said, the Gandhian whirlwind supplied them not only with their themes, but also with their style. Thus it is no accident that the Big Three of Indo-English fiction-Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, and Raja Rao—appeared with their first novels, the first two in 1935 and the third in 1938. These writers continued to creatively express the social, political and spiritual aspects of India.

Along with these three, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Manohar Malgonkar came up. But Malgonkar, unlike the others, often dealt with historical themes. He has written novels, thrillers, biographies, travelogues, books on history, a period play, and a large number of short stories.

He has been accused of concentrating his attention “more on the exotic and melodramatic than on the worth while aspects of Indian life.”

The aspect of Indian life he portrays in his major novels are Indo-British encounter especially in the army, the disintegration of princely India, the freedom movement the Gandhian struggle, the terrorist movement and the Sepoy Revolt and life in the Assam Tea Gardens. Though these are the themes in his novels, they are so only superficially.

What he is chiefly concerned with is the portrayal of man’s predicament in a world where values are changing too fast for his comprehension and adjustment, as N.S. Pradhan perceptively
observed. What he exposes is the crisis in Indian life brought on by the winds of change in the
traditional Indian society. What he argues for is a sincere adherence to our traditional values like
honesty, integrity, and a sense of justice.

Malgonkar’s sense of history finds exemplification in the portrayal of the two forms of
India’s struggle for freedom the great Revolt of 1857 in the Devil’s Wind, and the Violent and
non-violent struggle in a Bend in the Ganges. In the latter novel he makes a reference to the INA
also.

Contrary to the monolithic approach of the pre-Independence novels, his novels show “a
pluralistic method of depiction of politics.” He gives importance to the Terrorist Movement of
the 1930s.

While he concedes that Gandhiji won freedom for India, there is a thorough questioning
of the validity of ‘ahimsa.’ His deviation in his depiction of the diverse movement for freedom is
his unique distinction.

The partition of India, and the riots before and after it, figure prominently in three of his
novels Distant Drum, princes and Bend. He portrays the growth of communalism, and the reader
is given to understand that the assailants at first were the Muslims. The second world war and its
effects on the Indians are referred to in all the novels.

Literature in India, as any textbook history of Indian culture would tell us, is as old as its
painting or its sculpture, perhaps a little less old than its community life. In fact the first histories
of most regional languages too get written only during this time. It is around this time, again,
that Indian literature gets constituted as a self validating body of knowledge.

Early Indian writers used English unadulterated by Indian words to convey an experience
which was essentially Indian. Raja Rao’s ‘Kanthapura’ is Indian in terms of its story telling
qualities.

The techniques adopted in Indian English poetry before 1960 were to a large extent, to
say the least imitative and derivative. That was in a way, a historical imperative. Paradoxically
enough more and more Indians began writing poetry in English freely and with some confidence
only after they got rid of the native speakers of English.

A survey of Indian Drama in English reveals that there has been a consistent attempt to
produce drama right from the beginning of Indian literature in English. But only very few of
them could make a mark. Thus success in this field became an exception and failure a rule.
Indian English novel is a part of truly Indian novel and not a tenuous extension of English fiction. It has now reached a youthful stage, and its movement as expected is being evaluated in terms of current trends in the world stream of fiction and criticism. Eminent novelists Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Arun Joshi, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Salman Rushadie, Vikram Seth, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal and many others enjoy a prerogative place as novelist of the front rank in the comity of nations.

The critical analysis of the works of major novelists clearly shows that the majority of writers since 1947 evince little interest to recapture a recent historical past and have turned inwards to more private and personal concerns. These novels turn upon East West encounter and the conflict between the old and the new.

Mulk Raj Anand is the Indian version of Charles Dickens as far as the treatment of social theme is concerned. He is a messiah of the downtrodden, with “understanding compassion for the waifs, the disinherited, the lowly, the lost.” Minutely features almost all the events of a single day in the life of the low-caste boy, Bakha.

Thus, the author intends that a radical change in relation to Indian social fabric is quite at hand, and it would by and large dispel the pall of gloom and usher in a casteless and classless society.

‘Kanthapura’ by Raja Rao is widely acknowledged as “perhaps the finest evocation of the Gandhian age in Indian English fiction.” It is the story of the struggle of a south Indian village influenced for the first time by the Gandhian principle of freedom. The story told by an old woman, Rangamma highlights the Gandhian agitation launched by Moorthy in the village. What gives this novel an eternal Indian appeal is its narrative technique of the Indian puranas or the Harikathas, mixing freely narration, description, reflection, religious discourse, folk-lore, etc.

‘The serpent and the Rope’ is Raja Rao’s first attempt in making Indian mysticism and vedant philosophy a subject of a regular novel. The ‘serpent’ and the ‘Rope’ are the symbols of ‘Illusion’ and ‘reality’ in Indian tradition, and it is Raja Rao’s found hope to weave into his novel his ideas regarding illusion and reality.

The category branded as Indians literature virtually encompasses the whole of India and its every single aspect, both symbolically as well as realistically. And this certainly is not an overstatement or hyper bole, as writers beginning from the pre historic age have tried to mirror their society, their times at large, as work to which they have also been successful.

Indeed the thought themes in Indian literature broadly hold within itself a magnificent yet clandestine vision, if viewed in an open angle.
Before beginning with a novel, poetry, short story or play, a writer always has to bear in mind the previous happening in his community and consequences that might occur after the work is published.

Hence, the writer never as such can move out from his society never as such can move out from his society and publish an out of this world creation; if such phenomenon ever comes into being, the writer, most likely is to be branded a social outcaste, or made ‘incommunicado’, Thus, themes in Indian literature always have to be created keeping in mind the ongoing Indian society or the people associated with it.

Manohar Malgonkar’s protagonists suffer from cross-cultural conflicts. The quest of the self and identity, despair and despondence caused by the feeling of rootlessness and the solution of existential problems characterize.

Indian English novel is a major source for “a systematic study of culture contact and culture change, with Indian world view as the focus.” With the departure of the British rule the compulsory necessity of learning English is partially gone. But there has dawned upon Indians a greater awareness of the excellence of English literature, the importance of English for international cultural contact and as a decisive vehicle of economic and scientific progress of our nation.