The term Indian English literature means the writings of the authors residing either in India or the authors of Indian origin settled abroad whose native or co-native language is one of many Indian regional languages. It has come a long way from colonial times and has established a place of its own in English Canon. It started way back in 18th century but came of age with great writers of colonial times, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. The three had different temperaments. While R.K. Narayan portrayed small town life by creating an imaginary town Malgudi with such a realistic touch that readers consider it to be an actual place, Mulk Raj Anand portrayed rural life with its problems, Raja Rao explored the ancient Vedantic philosophy in his novels. When India become free the writers portrayed in their novels the plight of migrants of both sides Raja Rao was philosopher as well as writer while R.K. Narayan was a great story narrator who created Magludi to convey Indian experience vividly. Mulk Raj Anand deals with divisions of caste, class and religion in his fiction. The novelists of this era dealt with contemporary problems in their novels and the subjects included nationalism, social problems and contemporary issues along with a touch of striving for the absolute, the ultimate truth.

Their fiction is evaluated on the basis of delineation of real life in their fiction with utmost conviction. The national issues are discussed in the novel Kanthapura by Raja Rao Waiting for the Mahatma by R.K. Narayan. Social problems like untouchability, in the novel of Mulk Raj Anand The Untouchable are the examples of such fiction. With freedom of India and after communication revolution the writers came in contact with global issues. The post colonial Indian English writing was changed; it was hardly any different from the English writing outside India. The subject matter now included the problems of Indians settled abroad and the writers of Indian origin who migrated to other countries in search of greener pastures also contributed to Indian English fiction. This new class of writers came to be known as diasporic writers. Before independence the migration was not by choice but gradually the educated people chose to migrate to foreign countries by choice to earn more. The diasporic writers focused their attention on cultural stock and identity crisis in a foreign land. These writers however confined themselves
to the individual problems of the migrants. They do not touch the subject of the discrimination faced by the migrants in an alien land including racial discrimination. Racial discrimination as well as marginalization of migrants by the natives of the adopted countries has been left untouched e.g. *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. In the long journey from colonial to post and modern writing the Indian English literature has passed from many stages as regards the subject matter and the writing techniques. The Indian writers including women have written on the problems of marginalized sections of society including women. Women related issues have been given importance in 20th century and modern writing has given the issue of women emancipation upmost priority.

Let us first discuss the English literature in India during colonial time. The language used by these writers is pure but its comprehension is possible only by cultural familiarity. Slowly and gradually the Indian writers started including Indian words in their writings to give it a particular Indian flavor while the writers like Raja Rao tried to use pure English unadulterated by large number of Indian words. The struggle for freedom found expression in many contemporary novels examples of which have been already included. The leader who influenced the Indian minds at that time the most was Gandhi. The Gandhian influence is clearly visible in the works of R.K. Narayan e.g. *Waiting for the Mahatma, Vendor of Sweets* etc and Raja Rao’s *Knathapura*. One cannot deny the influence of Gandhiji on M.R. Anand’s novel *The Untouchable* where he explores the problem of untouchability—a burning issue of colonial India. After independence, the writers focused their attention towards the problems faced by people during partition. *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh and the story *The parrot in the Cage* by Mulk Raj Anand are the examples of this type of writing.

Raj Rao in *Knathpura* portrayed white Sahib as a symbol of violence and terror. The Maistri, the foreman said, “the Sahib says that if you work well you will get sweets, if you work badly, you will get beaten that is law of state” (*Kanthapura* p. 50).

The police are also a symbol of violence and repression. They torture women also “And when Rangamma was made sit the police inspector gave her such a kick in the back that she fell down unconscious” (*Kanthapura* p. 145).
The people of Kanthapura try to counter this violence by non-violent means. They follow the path of Gandhiji. Moorthy preached Gandhiji’s philosophy to people of Kanthapura.

In Waiting for the Mahatma R.K. Narayan also delineated the influence of Gandhian ideals in common people. Sri Ram who is shown irresponsible in the beginning and embraces Gandhian ideals only to influence his beloved is a changed man towards the end; he is genuinely influenced by Gandhi and is transformed inwardly. This is clearly delineated when he advices a shopkeeper to respect Khadi and Gandhi.

In The Untouchable Mulk Raj Anand shows concern with another problem i.e. caste system and the maltreatment of lower castes by the upper castes. Gandhiji wanted the caste based discrimination to be ended. He called the lower castes ‘Harijans’ mean the people of God. He worked for their uplift. After independence the writers based their fiction on the plight of people during partition of India.

“Muslim said the Hindus had planned and started the killing. According to the Hindu the Muslims were to blame. The fact is both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured, both raped.” (I)

The above quoted lines from Train to Pakistan reveal the horror of partition. It was the hell which broke loose. The plight of refugees waiting for govt. relief and the apathy of officials comes alive when hw read the following excerpt from M.R. Anand’s story The Parrot In The Cage.

Only, in a moment, the dust storm which was proceeding towards the court was turned back by furious whirlwind from the opposite direction. A posse of policemen charged the refugees with lathis and angry shouts which drowned the chorus of voices of which Rukmani’s sighs and her parrot’s cries had been a part.(47)

The endless wait for relief with no hope had become the destiny of the poor refugees. The stories and novels depicting the scenario are many. The issues of these times were dealt with differently this time. The focus gradually shifted more towards the marginalized sections of the society including the labor class, the downtrodden and underprivileged sections of society and women
related issues. Now the women related issues are more in focus along with other areas of life. The approaches towards the problems and the techniques to delineate these problems have become different with time. The direct and louder approach is discarded in favour of indirect and ironic depiction. The inner subversion has made authors look at the problems of the past with new attitude and new outlook. They are looking at the past in modern perspective and explaining its contemporary relevance. The language is discarding its patriarchal bias and gender issues are gaining prominence. The contribution of women novelist to bring problems of women into focus is not to be overlooked but it is not only the women who are concerned with gender related issues. The writings of Arudhati Roy, Manju Kapoor, Jhumpa Lahiri, C. B. Divakarni have contributed a lot to English Fiction. The writings of V.S. Naipal (A House For Mr. Biswas), Salman Rashdi, Vikarm Seth etc. have made Indian English literature. The conflict of eastern and western values is the theme of various novels written in post colonial literature especially in the novels of diasporic writers. The gender related issues with this conflict form the core of various novels by Indian women novelist and diasporic women writers. In the words of Mary Ann Fergusson…

In early age woman has been seen primarily as mother, wife, mistress and as sex object in their roles in relationship to man (p.p. 4-5)

The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri depicts the identity crisis faced by an Indian migrant in an alien land. The conflict of eastern and western values can be seen in novels of C.B. Divakarni for example The Mistress of Spices. The eastern culture is represented by the granddaughter. The conflict is the essence of literature and literature is born out of fissions, fusions, confusion and exploration for the problems of life. The resultant pressure and need of expression is the main cause of new genres of nature coming into being. The western ideology, new theories of criticism and the communication revolution has made it very rich experience.

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