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**Chronicling Indian Fiction in English: Its Genesis to the Present**

Surajit Sen

ICFAI University, Meghalaya, Shillong Campus (Research Scholar, EFL University, Shillong Campus) India

**Abstract**

The Indian fiction in English is a recent development in the history of literature in India. Fiction writing began with the introduction of English as a medium of instruction in the schools and colleges of India with the acceptance of Macaulay's Minute. Western education revolutionized the Indian intelligentsia who brought about a renaissance in Indian literature, society and religion. The renaissance provoked many Indians to write in English which came to be initially known as Anglo-Indian literature. Making a small attempt with Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864), Indian fiction in English has made great strides to glory. The trinity of Indian English fiction: Anand, Narayan and Rao wove a scene of India never perceived before. They laid the foundation for the future of fiction writing in India. Today, Indian fiction writers in English have established themselves as authors of great calibre, ready to face all challenges as they come.

**Key Words:** Fiction, Indian Fiction in English, Anglo-Indian Literature, Trinity of Indian English Fiction, Women Writers, Diaspora Writers.

**Introduction**

"A mirror does not develop because an historical pageant passes in front it. It only develops when it gets fresh coat of quick-silver – in other words, when it acquires new sensitiveness; and the novel's success lies in its own sensitiveness, not in the success of its subject-matter." (E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*: 36)

True to what Forster states in *Aspects of the Novel* (2000), much of the novel's success lies in how it touches the psyche of the reader with its perceptive quality. The ability to connect with the lives of the people, who read it, makes the novel a much appreciated mode of literature. The novel is either fictional or non-fictional in nature. Fiction is seen as a complex term with many overlapping uses. As Forster puts, a mirror develops only "when it gets a fresh coat of quick-silver", in like manner, it may be stated that there has

always existed a moral and intellectual distrust of fiction. Critics of fiction do not shirk to say that fiction leads people to believe in things which are not true and which do not exist in nature. However, it is not in the art of fiction to state necessarily the facts as they are in reality, else a fiction would not be fiction but a biography. The sensitivity talked about would be lost.

The origin of fiction as it were is a thing of the past. Fiction is any literary narrative written in prose, either novel or short story, but which is invented instead of being an original account of events that in fact had happened. Fiction is, thus, seen as any narrative writing drawn from the imagination of the author. Though novels as a genre of literature did not exist in the Greco-Roman culture, yet the works of fiction in the form of stories did exist then. This proves the antiquity of fiction as a literary form.

Though the term fiction is generic and inclusive, yet it is often used synonymously with novel. Novel, as such, has a narrower historical and ideological content than fiction. Ralph Fox (1956) points out that the growth and development of the novel as a genre of fiction runs parallel to the industrial development and the growth of modern bourgeois society in Europe. He states:

...the novel is the most important gift of bourgeois; or capitalist, civilization to the world's imaginative culture. The novel is its great adventure, its discovery of man. (82)

Marking the difference that novel is a subset of fiction, Roger Fowler (1987) expresses:

...by virtue of this high level of generality, 'fiction' can be opposed to 'novel' by both writers and critics alike.

The two terms also diverge because 'novel' must refer to the product of imaginative activity, whereas 'fiction' can be used to describe the activity itself... Fiction thus has a transitive sense that implies a mental process; we speak of works of fiction – an ambiguous phrase which suggests either the category to which they belong or the activity by which they were produced. (94)

Fowler further opines that fiction is any "mental structure" as it "involves shaping material which is inherently shapeless" (95). Thus, interpretation gives shape to the "mental structure" providing meaning to fiction. Hudson (1979) feels that literary art form like that of drama is not "pure literature" as its literary element is bound by "stage setting and histrionic" (129). Fiction is independent of these secondary

interpretations. This gives fiction, says Hudson:

...a freedom of movement, a breadth, and a flexibility to which, even in its most romantic developments, the drama cannot possibly attain. What [the fiction] loses in actuality and vividness by its substitution of narrative for representation it thus amply makes up for in other ways. (129)

### **Birth of Indian English Fiction**

In Europe, fiction developed much later than the other two literary forms – poetry and drama. In India too, Indian English fiction was a late development. The earliest writings of Indians in English consisted of prose, translations, religious, social, political and cultural pieces. The introduction of the press in India contributed to journalistic writing, which found a worthy mentor in Raja Rammohan Roy. The works of Raja Rammohan Roy, Ram Gopal Ghose, Surendranath Bannerjee, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and some others pioneered the way for the Indian Renaissance, which in turn paved the way for the growth and development of Indian fiction in English.

The genesis of the Indian English Literature can be traced to the growth and development of English as a language in India. The English language was introduced into India by the then East India Company for several reasons, chief among which were communication problem and to get a ready brigade of workers to fill in the white collar jobs. This led Charles Grant, one of the directors of East India Company to implore for the implementation of English language in India in 1792. In 1835 the English language was finally accepted as the official language of India by Lord

William Bentinck, the then Governor General of India, after a brief resolution known as *Macaulay's Minute* was passed and accepted for the promotion of European literature and science among the Indians. This ushered in a new age of development for the Indian mind which in the long run brought about drastic changes in the way the India perceived the west and how the west looked at India. It also paved the way for social reforms, so much necessary at the time, and generated the urge of nationalism in India.

In the days to begin with, the Indian literature was a transliteration of the umpteen languages in which were the stories told orally through generations either as myths or folklores. This tradition of narrative was not unique to India than compared to the West as the concept of story-telling dates back to the days of Vedas and Upanishads. However, the significance of this is that these stories have a lot of social issues to convey which are so relevant even till today. Therefore, it would not be wrong to call the modern India writers as the heirs to the rich cultural and traditional past which has managed to amalgamate itself very well with the needs of today's scenario. Dorothy Spencer (1960) rightly regards the Indian English fiction as a major source for "a systematic study of cultural change, with Indian world view as the focus" which can increase the Western readers "knowledge of acculturation processes" (11).

### **The Reform Movement and the Indian English Fiction**

The social reform movements were initiated in India in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who was a staunch

supporter of the English language for disseminating the European knowledge, whether it is its culture, history or science, as was offered in the books published in Britain. Roy, who had an authority over many languages including Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit, was of the opinion that the European languages, especially the English language, had compiled within itself all forms of renaissance wisdom. It is through his initiative that many Indians began to look towards the English language with confidence. However, the process was not so easy. Initially, the Indians reacted strongly to the sudden imposition of European languages, especially the English language and viewed it with suspicion. It was much later that they welcomed the English language with conviction and provided it with a special place in the country. What was immediately required for Indian Writing in English to emerge was to have a band of writers who not only knew the language but were also able to express themselves in the same language which was not their own, but an adopted one. Several elements favoured the English language to be accepted by the mass and express itself in the same language. The starting of schools and colleges in India with English as the medium of education is considered as the foremost factor in spreading the awareness among the masses. This continued to encourage the Indians to foster and gain mastery over the English language even though it was seen with suspicion by many Indians who felt that the language was introduced to launch a group of clerks, typically known as 'Babus', and flatterers who would in the long run harm the finite social and cultural yarn of India. Nevertheless, with time more and more people began to learn not only the

language with zeal, but also began to read a lot of its literature and science. This opened a new window of thought among the Indians, especially the intellectuals of the 19th century, who began to question the conventional preconceptions, beliefs and superstitions which existed in India at that time. Thus, the introduction of western education favoured the rise and growth of Indian renaissance, which in the long run revolutionized the Indian society. As a result, India witnessed a social transformation with several evils ailing the nation being eliminated and new ideas brought into practice. The resurgence of ancient and classical learning in India coupled with the introduction of European arts and sciences heralded a new awareness among the Indians. This led to the emergence of a new middle class of intellectuals, who gave rise to nationalistic thoughts smearing the minds of the Indians to passionately express their thoughts and feelings through the medium of writing. It was the time when regional writers like Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, Dinabandhu Mitra and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, gripped in patriotic fervour, made attempts to invigorate the regional languages. However, the other writers of the same time pinned their belief on the English language and the English rulers. They studied the language and used it as a medium of communication and expression. This gave rise to the formation of a new type of English called the Indian English, originally called as Anglo-Indian English. The literature written in the language was termed as Anglo-Indian literature. G. S. Balarama Gupta (2003) writes:

The emergence of Anglo-Indian culture was the result of an accident

of history... So was the phenomenon of Anglo-Indian literature – it was the outcome of the impact which India had made on the Western creative imagination, particularly British writers... The British encounter with India, taking place as it did at the political, sociocultural and literary levels, generated new political ideas, a social reorientation, and new forms of literary expression in English – one being Indian literature in English, the other British writing on India. (4-5).

The Indian renaissance, however, cannot be only termed only in the sense of a revival of classical learning. There is no doubt that the works of foreign scholars generated some form of consciousness among the Indians about the Sanskrit language and the heritage of the Vedas and its other literature in the early 19th century. Nevertheless, the main impetus of the Indian renaissance was the attempt made to create a society based on the life style of the West. It is, therefore, said that the Indo-Anglican literature was an imitation of the Western literature, especially that of Britain. Hence, it is apparent to note the amount of similarity and influence the West cast on the early writers of Indian English literature. These writers were either directly or indirectly motivated by English writers, who failed not to replicate them either in their technique or the use of literary forms. It was western education imparted in English language through the various educational institutions that seemed to have had a great impact over all the advances and changes taking in the world of Indian literature. Satish Kumar (1996) states:

Early Indian English fiction was derivative and imitative of English models. Early fiction writers copied

their language from the works of English Romantics and Victorians. They obviously imitated Defoe, Fielding and Scott. They evinced little creative effort. (2)

The reformist measures adopted by the British Christian missionaries and the officials of the East India Company first and later British India Government, revamped the old education system of India with new aims, approaches, resources and devices. Western education, with its new tools of imparting knowledge, spun a new mind-set for the Indians. This new knowledge helped the Indians to set themselves free from all irrational thoughts and beliefs and instilled in them a fresh outlook towards society and its mores. It was through western education only that the Indians became aware of the modern scientific, social, economic and political theories and philosophies which brought them closer towards understanding such concepts like that of democracy with which they could reason out their situation and problems freely and independently. This awakened the Indians who took to writing in different literary forms, but chiefly by means of the novel, voicing their fears and concerns. The English language secured a place among the various vernaculars through the efforts put in by the British and the Indians who supported it. However, the fact remained that English continued to be considered a foreign language and hence, the first Indian writers in English did face some amount of criticism in the manner they wrote the language. This did not daunt the writers from writing. Since the time fiction began to be written in English in India, the writers have been preoccupied in describing social issues coupled with realistic innuendos which are of interest to

humans. In fact, all the novelists of India writing in English since the time of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay to those writing in the present day, have been true in depicting the real, even though it may at times be mixed with fantasy. C. Paul Verghese (1975) comments:

A novelist, it may be said, is in search of a unity in the diversity of life and civilization. He, therefore, cannot turn his back on the social realities of his time, but should carve man's image in his art with his social awareness and insight into life. (25)

It is believed that Indian fiction in English began as an outburst of the social and political purposes based on the then prevalent conditions in the Indian sub-continent. Economic backwardness of millions of Indians, social disparities and exploitation of women attracted the attention of social reformers, thinkers and writers. A crusade was vigorously launched against these evils and political awakening was correlated with social and economic amelioration of the Indians. The national awakening and the rise of political consciousness gave a great impetus to the growth and development of Indian English fiction in its seminal stage. Accounting for the popularity of fiction in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Harish Raizada (1978) says:

As the appeal for improving the condition of Indian people and the relationship between India and England was to be made to the English rulers, many of the Indian writers chose to write in English, and as novel was a literary genre most suited to the proper representation of life and its problems, they took to fiction for expressing their views. (22)

Satish Kumar (1996) notes that the 19<sup>th</sup> century period of national awakening was also the period for the introduction of various fictional genres in Indian English fiction – social and realistic novels, historical novel, romances, detective fiction and short story. However, P. P. Mehta (1968) remarks:

[The importance] of these novels is only historical as milestones on the path of achievements to come. (58)

### **The Tagore-Gandhi Wave and Indian English Fiction**

It was during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the Tagore-Gandhi wave swept the nation all together. Tagore's novels exercised great influence on the development of Indian English fiction. The exposition of socialism, stark realism, all-embracing humanism, psychological analysis of human characters and all-pervading poetical beauty which characterize Tagore's novels, influenced Anand, Narayan and many others. Mehta (1968), states that Tagore brought "psychological delineation" and "added depth and significance to the novel" (28).

Gandhi's influence on Indian literature of this period has been two-fold. First, as a writer, he evolved with a lucid and simple style influencing a lot of contemporary writers. Secondly, he influenced the thematic content of many works. Commenting on the treatment of Gandhi in Indian English fiction, Meenakshi Mukherjee (1971) writes:

Whether Gandhi would be treated as an idea or as a human being, as a symbol or tangible reality, is ultimately determined by the point of view of the novelist, and Gandhi's presence in the novel is justified

only if it fits into the internal pattern of events. In lesser novels... the Mahatma is used merely as a device to fit the novel in a particular time of history. (63)

Gandhi's influence was such that the Indian authors shifted their style of writing from romanticism to realism. The new form of realistic novels brought with it certain new aspects in the way novels were written during the time. It brought with it a renewed sense of motivation, a new method of writing and a foresighted vision.

### **Post-Independence Indian English Fiction**

The Indian English fiction writers of the period immediately after independence inherited the cosmopolitan character and permeated a new sensibility in their works which reflect their hopes and aspirations of an independent nation which had suffered long under callous foreign rule. There is also a note of melancholy, frustration and alienation which resulted when people saw their hopes and aspirations in free India discarded and ignored. K. R. S. Iyengar (2003) remarks:

After the advent of independence, the more serious novelist has shown how joy of freedom has been more than neutralized by tragedy of 'partition', how in spite of the freedom there is continuing (or even galloping) corruption, inefficiency, poverty and cumulative misery; how, after all the mere replacement of the white sahib cannot effect a radical cure for the besetting sins of India. When independence came, the serious novelist in a sense found his occupation gone, for the traditional villain of the piece – foreign rule – was no more in picture. Making a new start as it were, the novelist shifted his lantern this side and that,



made his probes, and found little to satisfy him. The old narrow loyalties were seen to wax as eloquent as ever. Communal, linguistic, casteist passions were seen to come into the open with accelerated frequency. While talk of 'emotional integration' filled the air, the *terra firma* only witnessed the agonizing spectacle of a divided house with a deceptive floor and a precarious roof. (319-20)

Post-independence, the Indian English fiction was preoccupied with inner life and individual problems of men and women passing through revolutionary changes. The gory incidents post partition and the displacement of people stirred the imaginations of the writers who explored dramatic and fictional potential in the theme of partition. With a view to expose the horrid evils eating into vitals of social and national life and to reform the existing order, novelists of the period began to focus their attention on the theme of human suffering.

The post-independence Indian English fiction also developed as a subaltern awareness to break away from the colonial literature. Hence, the postcolonial Indian literature witnessed a revolution against the idiom which the colonial writers followed. Eventually the Indian English writers started employing the techniques of mixed language, magic realism adorned with native themes. Thus, from a postcolonial era Indian English literature ushered into the contemporary and then the post-modern era. The story of the Indian English fiction therefore stands as a tale of changing tradition.

### **Torch-bearers of Indian English Fiction**

Though the Indian English fiction made a late start, yet the novel has gone far ahead of poetry and drama in quantity and

quality. The first Indian English fiction is credited to Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864). Others that followed were Lal Behari Dey's *Govind Samant* (1876), Raj Lakshmi Devi's *The Hindu Wife* (1876), Toru Dutt's *Bianca* (1878), Kali Krishna Lahiri's *Roshinara* (1881), H. Dutt's *Bijoy Chand* (1888) and Khetrapal Chakravarti's *Sarata and Hingana* (1895). Regarding these works, K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar remarks:

These novels, written in English, have for us today no more than an antiquarian or historical interest. (315).

With the coming of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, the journey of Indian English novel entered into a new phase of development. A whole new India was depicted in their novels. Anand's *Collie* showed how the Indian discrepancies and inconsistencies in the society. Narayan's sought to describe the essence of Indian rural life, its simple but fascinating realities in *Malgudi Days*. In his most acclaimed novel *Kanthapura*, Rao reignited the passion and zeal of Gandhi and his philosophy. With the entry of these three stalwarts in Indian Writing in English, there seemed to have started a new era of themes and topics. The requirement of having foreigners writing about India and her conditions was not felt necessary. All that Indians wanted is to picturize India through a language that was international but quintessentially Indian in feeling. That was seen as the beginning of the new journey and with time it gained maturity. If Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne and Tobias Smollett are credited to be the Four Wheels of the English fiction, then it would not be wrong to call Anand,

Narayan and Rao the Three Wheels or Triumvirates of Indian English fiction.

An important fact of Indian fiction in English is the emergence of women writers during this period. The women writers dawned a new era for the Indian women with promises for betterments galore. Writers like Toru Dutt, Swarnakumari Ghosal, Sorabji Cornelia and Krupabai Sathianathan undertook the task of emancipating the Indian women from the oppression of ages and from cruel and baseless customs of the olden times. Today, their legacy has been carried forward with confidence by such writers as Anita Desai, Ruth Pravar Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai and others, to name a few.

Noting the role of the different writes in the growth of Indian English fiction, Satish Kumar (1996) writes:

Novelists from all parts of India contributed their mite to the development of Indian English novel. The early attempts, though immature, artless and crude, are noticeable for synthesizing the old forms with new technical apparatus and for nativizing English. It also attempts at representing the cultural level of the people. Indian English novelists have given expression to the hopes, aspiration, dreams and culture of a nation from the very beginning. (3)

Though the efforts of the early novelists were genuine, they did contain certain drawbacks. One of the most difficult problems faced by them was language. They had to evolve a language flexible and varied enough to suit the different characters drawn from the multifarious

professions and strata of society. They also had to create an Indian atmosphere. Another problem faced by the early Indian English novelists was creating a sense of an Indian consciousness. Overcoming regional loyalties to suit the cosmopolitan readership without distorting the image of India and her culture, was a serious challenge for them.

Indian English fiction has had a separate literary entity since the times of Anand, Narayan and Rao. The writers before them always carved their writings in accordance to what they read, especially the British and American styles. That age of simply aping the western models is now over. Today the English language is a mixture of several vernacular languages too. It has very graciously accepted and incorporated words from other languages and India has earned for itself a distinct position in the English language. The literature written in the Indian English has also carved a niche for itself over the period of time. Until recent times, Indian English literature was limited to a few writers. This has over the period of time changed drastically. It is worth noting that by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the last few decades, several Indian writers have made a mark for themselves in the literary world. It is through their efforts that India has obtained for itself a place in world literature. About this new trend Salman Rushdie (1997) says:

On the map of world literature...India has been undersized for too long.... Fifty years after India's independence, however, that age of obscurity is coming to an end. India's writers have torn up the old map and are busily drawing their own. (61)

This Indian literary revolution is made possible through both the language and content. A thorough 'Indianization' process has become the hallmark of Indian English literature.

Postcolonial perspectives have also impacted the critical and the creative aspects of Indian English fiction. An important aspect of the postcolonial narrative has been the depiction of the image of how the colonizers have created a persona of their subjects, their hold on them and the effect of colonial rule over their subjects. Contemporary writers hailing from the previously colonized nations, particularly India, explore forms of life that existed during the British rule and expose the subtle strategies employed to make the colonized people take their subjugated position as something natural and transcendental. These writers also bring out the functioning of almost the same power politics that defines the relations between the power wielding people and the people kept at the margins even after the end of political imperialism. A number of contemporary writers fictionalize these aspects of life and the postcolonial critics analyze and expose the way colonialists propagated constructed reality about different societies and cultures as the reality.

In the past few years many prominent writers have also made a mark on the Indian Diaspora. In 1980, Salman Rushdie took the literary world by a storm with the publication of his seminal work *Midnight's Children*. He captivated the mind of the Indian literati with its simple but thorough understanding of the Indian History, and its union with a language which was terse and touched the heart of all. Perhaps, this would not be wrong to state that Rushdie

made it possible for the other writers to present India to the world depicting her splendour, custom, myths, culture and heritage very articulately. Perchance, this made Amitav Ghosh to experiment with the post-colonial realities of India and Vikram Seth to describe India in the light of Victorian aristocracy. The experience of cultural transplantation lends new perspectives and creative possibilities for these writers and they have fashioned astounding artistic patterns. Located in the metropolitan West they tend to recreate the contemporary social milieu and cultural crisis in their native land and attempt to redefine it in the emerging post-colonial context. They mix the past, the present, the future and the imperial and colonial cultures in their fiction, dislocating time and subverting the real purpose in the process. Thus, received history is tampered with, rewritten and realigned from the point of view of the victims of the past. These writers have been dabbling with efforts to delve into and reveal the outcomes of colonial rule, be it social, political or economic. The writings of Rushdie and Ghosh are preoccupied with the notions of colonialism, post colonialism, identity crisis, cultural disintegration and dispossession. This makes the Indian diaspora writers today a force to reckon with in the literary world. It is through their writings that Indian English has got an international readership. Their language speaks in unrestrained manner the plight of the displaced. However, many critics have pointed to reasons for worries as they feel that Indians writing from India and about India are not getting the proper opportunity to make a stride. Vidya R. Patil (2012) notes:

This brings us to a problem with contemporary Indian English writing. When you ponder on the subject very few Indian English writers in India have made it with their English writing. They inevitably have the odd degree from Oxford and Cambridge and their foundations are laid abroad. It seems to be a prerequisite to have a global perspective if one is to be successful in writing in English. The real need in India is more publishing houses that are willing to give aspiring writers in India a chance. Writers in India need more avenues to make themselves heard and as readers the Indian audience should not get too mesmerized by foreign publications.

The Indian Diaspora raised the curtain on the fantastic mythical realities that were part of domestic conversations in the villages. Salman Rushdie fascinates critics with his 'chutnification' of history and language as well. He opened the doors to a plethora of writers. Amitav Ghosh dabbles in postcolonial realities and Vikram Seth fuses poetry and prose with an air of Victorian grandeur. While Rohinton Mistry tries to decipher the Parsi world, Pico Iyer effortlessly walks the map in his writings. (3)

### **Contemporary Issues in Indian English Fiction**

In the contemporary world, Indian English fiction not just describes the daily lives, the various social issues and how to tackle with them, but has of late come of age. The writers today do not shy away from depicting the incongruous and bizarre realities of the country. In fact, they have opened new vistas for the ever increasing number of writers. Dating a journey long back in history, Indian English fiction has

been a witness to a lot of changes. It has traversed through several phases of highs and lows to reach the present position in enjoys today. Overall, the Indian English fiction has achieved for itself a totally new vigour in terms of its notion, presentation, marketing and impression on India and its people. One can easily notice a remarkable change in contemporary discourses on Indian English fiction. Today the author or novelist or dramatist has learnt to address himself/herself to the fundamental issues intrinsic to creative and critical activity in the Indian English situation. Now issues like postcoloniality, multiculturalism, indigenization, nativism, the social and political agenda of criticism and the like are being treated with great importance in preference to a variety of relatively inconsequential issues. The Indian English novelists have been bold enough to face the realities surrounding them and have taken unto themselves to fight the odds with courage and sincerity. There is no denial that they do tend to have a certain bourgeois consciousness which goes into defining their works and have also removed themselves from having a better vision and commitment to alter social conditions, yet they have been successful in narrating the stark realities of life with passion and authenticity, with philosophical acumen and artistic inventiveness. This is what which as to be appreciated without and diffidence. The Indian English novels have reached a stage of maturity. Strokes of genius like that of *Untouchable*, *Kanthapura*, *The Guide*, *Midnight's Children* and many more which have been acclaimed worldwide are proof enough to ascertain that fact. In his *Rise of the Indian Novel in English* (1987), K. S. Ramamurti persuasively points that the Indian English fiction has been a natural

product of the social, political and cultural events of the time. He further asserts that the Indian English fiction is continuously developing even in the face of several ups and downs by means of constant quests and experiments. Such writings are a proof that the major concern of the novelists writing in Indian English has been to not only reveal the realities of India but also to develop a novel which is Indian in every sense.

### **Indian English Fiction – the Legacy Continues**

Of late, a number of Indian English fiction writers have carved a niche for themselves by astounding the literary world with their works. Their works have been well appreciated and felicitated with several awards and, hence, it will not be wrong then to say that their works have augmented world literature. Critics opine that the development of Indian English fiction is the contribution of two kinds of writers. According to them, the first group of writers is the one who have unflinchingly devoted their energy to focus on various issues of social concern like poverty, casteism, superstitions, social and religious dogmas and many more, which seem to have an everlasting interest to the Western world. The second group, they say, belongs to those writers who can be called as global Indians. They live abroad but are Indians by birth. They are the ones who see beyond any myths associated with India. They objectify all realities pertaining to India. They have a flair for the English language and use it very effectively in enhancing their creativity. They are not mere imitators of the English or American writers, but rather use the language and the style of writing very deftly when it comes to portraying Indian

sensibility. There is a complete freshness in the way they use the English language so creatively, experimenting with it by incorporating an 'Indianness' in the English language. Bravely they have gone ahead in coining new words and expressions in English which has definitely enriched the language further. Words such as Rushdie's "chutnification" have gone on to be accepted today as English words much like those of "mantra" and "guru". The western world seems to be enjoying this blend with keenness and have provided them with an everlasting place in both language and literature.

The accolades with which Indian English fiction is showered today, however, had to go through a difficult phase at one time. The West always recognized the works of the writers of the orient with obligation. Those writers who painted a shabby picture of the East were the ones who were noticed and appreciated by the West. Those writers of Indian English fiction who presented India, its culture and people by demeaning them were sure to be considered for winning awards. This was perhaps because the West had created a notion for itself that the countries of the East were only filled with poverty, desolation, terrorism, lack of proper governance, and so on. But the contemporary writers have made their voice felt and are making the West realize that the East is not just about wretchedness in all fields. They have become the biggest instruments of bringing change in the Western outlook towards the East. In fact, the Indian English fiction writers are today a major contributor to English literature sharing with the world their frank

experiences without seeking sympathy from the West.

Fictions written in English by Indians have definitely traversed a long and arduous journey. The foundation of this was strongly laid down by the triumvirates of Indian English fiction in the thirties and carried on with élan by the recent fiction writers in English. Once being treated as a foreign language or a language of only the elite class of India, the English language has made a mark among the masses today. With increasing readership, the Indian English fiction writers have also improved their quality of writing. The language is used with such ease as if it is the first language of the writers expressing themselves with the greatest proficiency. They think and write in English only. They are cosmopolitan in nature having travelled to different places of the world and have much to write to create interest in their readers. Struggling through the indifferences of the West, Indian English fiction and its writers have certainly made a place for themselves in world literature today.

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What also differentiates the Indian fiction writers in English and gives them global recognition today is that they have been using an innovative style in experimenting this genre of literature. The writers have been testing with varied models be it in narrative techniques or in language. They are the ones who find that both form and style are equally important in story telling which they tend to use so creatively. There is also often a hint of autobiography in their writings. Today, they have reached such a position from where they are able to articulate their stories in a language suitable for all to understand and believe in.

#### Concluding Remark

Thus, from making a humble beginning, Indian English fiction has traversed a long distance. Writers today are more confident of what they express and their readership has considerably increased not just in India but in abroad too. They have created a niche for themselves and a certain amount of sensitivity, which is finely balanced in a thin line of east-west praxis.

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