

Dr. BRR GOVT DEGREE COLLEGE JADCHERLA

Department of English



A PROJECT REPORT

ON

“Indian English literature”

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DECLARATION

We are hereby declare that the study project : **“Indian English literature”** is a record of work done by us under the supervision of **P.SWAPNA RANI**, faculty of English, Government Degree College, Jadcherla, Mahabubnagar District and that the project has not been previously done by any others in this college and any other college/University.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Study project on : “**Indian English literature**” is a bonafide Project work done by MPCs I students listed below,

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Indian English literature

Indian English literature (IEL), also referred to as **Indian Writing in English** (IWE), is the body of work by writers in [India](#) who write in the [English language](#) and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous [languages of India](#). Its early history began with the works of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and [Michael Madhusudan Dutt](#) followed by [Rabindranath Tagore](#) and [Sri Aurobindo](#).^[*citation needed*] [R. K. Narayan](#), [Mulk Raj Anand](#) and [Raja Rao](#) contributed to the growth and popularity of Indian English fiction in the 1930s.^[1] It is also associated, in some cases, with the works of members of the [Indian diaspora](#) who subsequently compose works in English.

It is frequently referred to as **Indo-Anglian** literature. (*Indo-Anglian* is a specific term in the sole context of writing that should not be confused with *Anglo-Indian*). Although some Indo-Anglian works may be classified under the genre of [postcolonial literature](#), the repertoire of Indian English literature encompasses a wide variety of themes and ideologies, from the late eighteenth-century to the present day, and thereby eludes easy categorization.

History

IEL has a relatively recent history, being nearly two centuries old. The first book written by an Indian in English was *The Travels of Dean Mahomet*, a travel narrative by [Sake Dean Mahomed](#), published in England in 1794. In its early stages, IEL was influenced by the Western [novel](#). Early Indian writers used English unadulterated by Indian words to convey an experience which was essentially Indian. [Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay](#) (1838–1894) wrote *Rajmohan's Wife* and published it in 1864; it is the first Indian novel written in English. Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta or the History of a Bengali Raiyat* was published in 1874 and the same author's *Folk Tales of Bengal: Life's Secret* was published in 1912. *Bianca, or The Young Spanish Maiden* (1878) by [Toru Dutt](#) was the first novel written by an Indian woman. Both Toru Dutt and [Krupabai Satthianadhan](#), two promising Indian English writers of the nineteenth century died untimely in their early twenties and thirties respectively. Satthianadhan's autobiographical novel *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* was published serially in *The Madras Christian College Magazine* from 1887 to 1888. The only other novel by Satthianadhan is *Kamala: The Story of a Hindu Life* (1894).

The non-fictional body of prose-works, consisting of letters, diaries, political manifesto, articles, speeches, philosophical works etc. in Indian English literature of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, is rich and varied. The speeches of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Chittaranjan Das, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Chandra Bose, to name only a few, shaped the destiny of modern India and also the destiny of English language in India (Auddy, 9-10). Gandhi's *Indian Home Rule or Hind Swaraj* (1910) was written in an indigenised variety of the English language and challenged successfully 'the hegemony of Standard English' (Auddy, 169) even before R. K. Narayan, M. R. Anand and Raja Rao.

[Raja Rao](#) (1908–2006), Indian philosopher and writer, authored *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and the Rope*, which are Indian in terms of their storytelling qualities. [Kisari Mohan Ganguli](#) translated the [Mahabharata](#) into English, the only time the epic has ever been translated in its entirety into a European language. [Rabindranath Tagore](#) (1861–1941) wrote in Bengali and English and was responsible for the translations of his own work into English. [Dhan Gopal Mukerji](#) (1890–1936) was the first Indian author to win a literary award in the United States. [Nirad C. Chaudhuri](#) (1897–1999), a writer of non-fiction, is best known for his *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951), in which he relates his life experiences and influences. [P. Lal](#) (1929–2010), a poet, translator, publisher and essayist, founded a press in the 1950s for [Indian English](#) writing, [Writers Workshop](#). Ram Nath Kak (1917–1993), a Kashmiri [veterinarian](#), wrote his autobiography *Autumn Leaves*, which is one of the most vivid portraits of life in 20th century Kashmir and has become a sort of a classic.^[*who?*]

[R. K. Narayan](#) (1906–2001) contributed over many decades and continued to write till his death. He was discovered by [Graham Greene](#) in the sense that the latter helped him find a publisher in England. Greene and Narayan remained close friends till the end. Similar to the way [Thomas](#)

[Hardy](#) used [Wessex](#), Narayan created the fictitious town of [Malgudi](#) where he set his novels. Some criticise Narayan for the parochial, detached and closed world that he created in the face of the changing conditions in India at the times in which the stories are set. Others, such as Greene, however, feel that through Malgudi they could vividly understand the Indian experience. Narayan's evocation of small-town life and its experiences through the eyes of the endearing child protagonist Swaminathan in [Swami and Friends](#) is a good sample of his writing style. Simultaneous with Narayan's pastoral idylls, a very different writer, [Mulk Raj Anand](#) (1905–2004), was similarly gaining recognition for his writing set in rural India, but his stories were harsher, and engaged, sometimes brutally, with divisions of caste, class and religion. According to writer [Lakshmi Holmström](#), "The writers of the 1930s were fortunate because after many years of use, English had become an Indian language used widely and at different levels of society, and therefore they could experiment more boldly and from a more secure position."^[1] [Kamala Markandeya](#) is an early writer in IEL who has often grouped with the trinity of R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.^[2] The contributions of [Manoj Das](#) and [Manohar Malgankar](#) to growth of IEL largely remains unacknowledged.^[3]

Debates

One of the key issues raised in this context is the superiority/inferiority of IWE (Indian Writing in English) as opposed to the literary production in the various languages of India. Key polar concepts bandied in this context are superficial/authentic, imitative/creative, shallow/deep, critical/uncritical, elitist/parochial and so on.

The views of Salman Rushdie and [Amit Chaudhuri](#) expressed through their books *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing* and *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature* respectively essentialise this battle.

Rushdie's statement in his book – "the ironic proposition that India's best writing since independence may have been done in the language of the departed imperialists is simply too much for some folks to bear" – created a lot of resentment among many writers, including writers in English. In his book, Amit Chaudhuri questions – "Can it be true that Indian writing, that endlessly rich, complex and problematic entity, is to be represented by a handful of writers who write in English, who live in England or America and whom one might have met at a party?"

Chaudhuri feels that after Rushdie, IWE started employing magical realism, bagginess, non-linear narrative and hybrid language to sustain themes seen as microcosms of India and supposedly reflecting Indian conditions. He contrasts this with the works of earlier writers such as Narayan where the use of English is pure, but the deciphering of meaning needs cultural familiarity. He also feels that Indianness is a theme constructed only in IWE and does not articulate itself in the vernacular literatures. He further adds "the post-colonial novel, becomes a trope for an ideal hybridity by which the West celebrates not so much Indianness, whatever that infinitely complex thing is, but its own historical quest, its reinterpretation of itself".

Some of these arguments form an integral part of what is called [postcolonial theory](#). The very categorisation of IWE – as IWE or under post-colonial literature – is seen by some as limiting. [Amitav Ghosh](#) made his views on this very clear by refusing to accept the Eurasian [Commonwealth Writers Prize](#) for his book [The Glass Palace](#) in 2001 and withdrawing it from the subsequent stage.

The renowned writer V. S. Naipaul, a third generation Indian from [Trinidad and Tobago](#) and a [Nobel prize](#) laureate, is a person who belongs to the world and usually not classified under IWE. Naipaul evokes ideas of homeland, rootlessness and his own personal feelings towards India in many of his books.

[Jhumpa Lahiri](#), a [Pulitzer prize](#) winner from the [U.S.](#), is a writer uncomfortable under the label of IWE.

Poetry

Early notable poets in English include [Derozio](#), [Michael Madhusudan Dutt](#), [Toru Dutt](#), [Romesh Chunder Dutt](#), [Sri Aurobindo](#), [Sarojini Naidu](#), and her brother [Harindranath Chattopadhyay](#). Notable 20th Century authors of English poetry in India include [Dilip Chitre](#), [Kamala Das](#), [Eunice De Souza](#), [Nissim Ezekiel](#), [Kersy Katrak](#), [Shiv K. Kumar](#), [Arun Kolatkar](#), [P. Lal](#), [Jayanta Mahapatra](#), [Dom Moraes](#), [Gieve Patel](#), [A. K. Ramanujan](#), [Madan Gopal Gandhi](#), and [P C K Prem](#) among several others.

The younger generation of poets writing in English include [Abhay K](#), [Arundhati Subramaniam](#), [Anju Makhija](#), [Arnab Jan Deka](#), [Bibhu Padhi](#), [Ranjit Hoskote](#), [Sudeep Sen](#), [Smita Agarwal](#), [Makarand Paranjape](#), [Jeet Thayil](#), [Jaydeep Sarangi](#), [Mani Rao](#), [Jerry Pinto](#), [K. V. Dominic](#), [Meena Kandasamy](#), [Nalini Priyadarshni](#), [Gopi Kottoor](#), [Tapan Kumar Pradhan](#), [Rukmini Bhaya Nair](#), [Robin Ngangom](#), [Vihang A. Naik](#), [Anuradha Bhattacharyya](#), [K Srilata](#) and [Nandini Sahu](#).

Modern expatriate Indian poets writing in English include [Agha Shahid Ali](#), [Sujata Bhatt](#), [Richard Crasta](#), [Yuyutsu Sharma](#), [Tabish Khair](#) and [Vikram Seth](#).

Alternative writing

India's experimental and [avant garde counterculture](#) is symbolized in the Prakashana Movement. During the last four decades this bilingual [literary movement](#) has included [Richard Kostelanetz](#), [John M. Bennett](#), [Don Webb](#), [Sheila Murphy](#) and many others worldwide and their Indian counterparts. Vattacharja Chandan is a central figure who contrived the movement.^[6] Prakashana fiction is a fusion of prose, poetry, play, essay, and pictures. An example of a Prakashana work is Chandan's bilingual *Cosmosphere 1*