SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR
CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

(Group-3, Elective Paper-IV)
Indian English Novel

For

M. A. Part-I
Centre for Distance Education
Shivaji University, Kolhapur

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Preface

Dear students,

This book is in the form of Self Instructional Material for M. A. Part-I Group-3, Elective Paper-IV Indian English Novel which is prepared by a team of eminent professors.

The syllabus of this paper has already been made available on the University website and in the print form. The paper deals with general topics on Indian English Novel and eight novels written by the Indians which very much reflect Indian life in literature.

Unit No. 1 deals with the history and survey of Indian English Novel. Unit Nos. 2-9 deal with eight novels which highlight the life and works of the novelists and the aspects of the novels: summary, plot, themes, characterization and technique.

This book includes objective type questions with their answers, exercises and references for further reading. You are advised to read the original texts and critical material available on them in print and on line.

Good Luck.

Editors
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Each Unit begins with the section objectives -

Objectives are directive and indicative of:

1. what has been presented in the unit and
2. what is expected from you
3. what you are expected to know pertaining to the specific unit, once you have completed working on the unit.

The self check exercises with possible answers will help you to understand the unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answer only after you write your answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as study tools to keep you in the right track as you study the unit.
Unit-I

General Topics

1) Rise & Development of Indian English Novel
2) Indian Political and Historical Novel in English
3) Indian English Novel with Social Purpose
4) Indian Women Novelists in English

Index:
1.1.0 Objectives
1.1.1 A Brief Outline of Indian English literature
1.1.2 The Place of Novel in Indian English literature
1.1.3 Rise & Development of Novel and Formative Elements
1.1.4 Development of Novel in Pre-Independence Period
1.1.5 Development of Novel in Post-Independence Period
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1.1.7 Conclusion
1.1.8 Check Your Progress
1.1.9 Key to Check Your Progress
1.1.10 Exercises.
1.1.0 Objectives:
After studying this unit you will be able to:

- acquaint students with rise and development, growth, major themes and types of Indian English novel.
- make students understand features of political and historical novel, major novelists and their contribution.
- acquaint the students with characteristics of Indian novel with social purpose, major novelists and their contribution.
- acquaint students with Indian women novelists, features of their novels and their contribution.

1.1 Rise and Development of Indian English Novel

1.1.1 A Brief Survey of Indian English Literature:
Indian English literature is an endeavour of showcasing the rare gems of Indian writing in English. At the initiative stage, Indian English literature became a new form of Indian culture and voice in which India spoke. While Indian authors – poets, novelists, essayists, dramatists have made significant contribution to world literature since the pre-Independence era, the past few years have seen a massive flourishing of Indian English writing in the international market. Indian writers writing in English have conquered the world. These eminent writers have won national and international literary awards, attracted vast media’s attention and made the publishing history breath afresh. With a rising readership, they are the centre of critical attention, scholarly works and research activities of international academia.

1.1.2 The Place of Novel in Indian English Literature:
There have been different forms of writing developed in Indian English Literature like poetry, prose and drama, but only possible literary form through which a writer can hope to keep himself in constant touch with the common readers is fiction. Usually writers get themselves established through this genre. The bulk of Indian English Literature is in the novel form. Though its growth in later years far exceeded that of most other forms, fiction was actually last to arrive on the Indian English literary scene.
1.1.3 Rise and Development of Indian English Novel

The first Indian novel published in English was *Rajmohan’s Wife* in 1864 written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. In the beginning the novel established itself both in quality and quantity with a direct impact on the social and religious aspects of life. In the 19th century fiction writing was rather limited. The second attempt of writing fiction was done by Toru Dutt in the form of Bianca or *The Young Spanish Maiden* which was of course of posthumous publication. Ramesh Chandra Dutt translated two of his novels into English from Bengali namely *The Slave Girl of Agra* and *The Lake of Palms*. Dr. (Mrs.) Meenakshi Mukharjee observes, “The novel, the genre of imaginative literature which gives artistic form to the relationship of man and society was conspicuously absent until the nineteen twenties.” The earliest Indian novels were written in Bengali as Bengal was the first region to come under the domineering influence of the British. A novel by an Indian writer demands a sense of belonging and direct involvement in values and experiences which are valid in the Indian context. Thus the Indian English novel made appearance in the nineteen twenties, then gradually gathered confidence and established itself in the next two decades. Regarding formative stages of Indian novel in English it is both imitative and derivative, realistic and symbotic, modernistic and post-modernistic. The whole corpus of Indian fiction in English can be divided into three groups: 1) A traditional novel of Social Realism before Independence, 2) The modern novel of Experimentation after Independence and 3) The New Contemporary novel since 1981. The first phase is of “Nativity” from 1864 to 1930, The second phase is of “Confluxion” 1930 to 1980 and the third phase is of culmination” since 1981.

1.1.4 Development of Novel in Pre-Independence Period:

The novel written is pre-Independence period was in search of tradition. It was well made realistic novel. It was the novel of social realism. It was also consisted of Indianess, Indian sensibility, spirit of patriotism and sense of brotherhood. The earliest fictional efforts were tales rather than novels proper appeared in journals. Kailash Chunder Dutt’s ‘A Journal of 48 Hours of the Year 1945’ was published in the Calcutta literary Gazette on 6 June, 1935. In this period S. C. Dutt’s ‘Republic of Orissa’, Annals from the pages of the 20th century appeared in the Saturday evening Hurkara on 25 May, 1845. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s first and only novel in
English, Rajmohan’s Wife was serialized in the Calcutta weekly, ‘The Indian Field’ in 1864.

From the 1860 upto the end of the 19th century, stray novels continued to appear mostly by writers from the Bengal and Madras region. Some of these novels were, however, published in London and these are no novelists with a sizeable output to their credit. A majority of these novels are social and a few historical, and their models are obviously the eighteenth and the nineteenth century British fiction, particularly Defoe, Fielding and Scott. An interesting development is the surprisingly early appearance of women novelists, though female education took a long time to spread. Novels by three women novelists appeared before the turn of the century, Toru Dutt’s unfinished novel Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden, Krupabai Satthianadhan’s Kamala : A Story of Hindu Life and Shevantibai Nikambe’s ‘Ratnabai’ : A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young life.

Among other novels published during this period were Ram Krishna Pant’s The Boy of Bengal (1866), Tarachand Mookerjee’s The Scorpions or Eastern Thoughts (1868), Lal Behari Day’s Govinda Samanta Ananda Prasad Dutt’s The Young Zamindar (1863), Mirza Beg’s The Battle of Panipat, M. Dutt’s Bijay Chand : An Indian Tale, (1888), Suresh Biswas’s His Wife and Adventures (1900).

With the turn of the century, novelists with a somewhat more substantial output began to appear. Ramesh Chunder Dutt translated two of his own Bengali novels into English. The Lake of Psalms: A Story of Indian Domestic life (1902) is a realistic novel of social reform with widow re-marriage as one of its themes while The Slave Girl of Agra, an Indian Historical Romance (1909) is set in the Mughal period. Sarath Kumar Ghosh wrote a novel called The Prince of Destiny : The New Krishna (1909) which is about an enlightened Rajput Prince of the later nineteenth century. It is one of the earliest fictional attempts to deal with East-West relationship, an off-repeated theme in the Indian English novel. Although they cannot be termed good attempts of fiction–writing, Miss Sorabji’s Love and Life Behind the Purdah (1901) S. B. Bannerjee’s Tales of Bengal (1910) and A. Madhaviash’s Thillai Govindan (1916) provide invaluable scope for the students of sociology. Most of these novels deal with historical romance, social or political realism and psychological aspect showing an introspective concern with the individual. The early historical fiction refers to S. K. Ghosh’s The Prince of Destiny and S. K. Mitra’s Hindupur published in (1909). After considerable long gap appeared Baladitya (1930), Umran Baliadur’s
The Unveiled Court (1933). Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee have earned a distinction for themselves although their levels of artistic achievement differ much.

The Gandhian movement made a definite impact on the writers and gave them a special impetus. Among the novels written under the influence of Gandhian philosophy was K. S. Venkatramani’s Murugan the Tiller (1927) which was followed by Kandan the Patriot (1932) dedicated to the unknown volunteer of India’s fight for freedom and they reveal the ideal politics of the day. They were later followed by Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable (1935) and Coolie (1936) Raja Rao’s Kanthapura (1938) having for their theme the Gandhian philosophy. Among the writers of fiction, R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao are known as the Big Three. K. S. Venkataramani, Bhattacharya, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Anita Desai have also achieved considerable name.

Amongst these novelists, R. K. Narayan has distinguished position with his major novels like The Guide Swami and Friends, The Bachelor of Arts and The Vendor of Sweets having the background of Malgudi. Malgudi is Narayan’s Casterbridge. The novel The Guide is adopted to the screen into English and Hindi. Raja Rao is a child of the Gandhian Age. He has written novels like Kanthapura, The Serpent and the Rope and The Cat and Shakespeare. His novel Kanthapura is the most satisfying of modern Indian novels which is described as ‘the gamut of the whole of the Gandhian resolution by Dr. L. S. R. Krishna Shastry. Mulk Raj Anand is another popular novelist with two novels Untouchable and Coolie. Both are typical novels depicting social reality of oppressed class.

Apart from these novelists, Ahmad Ali, Aamir Ali and K. A. Abbas have written about both Muslim and Hindu family. K. A. Abbas’s ‘InquiLab: A Novel of Indian Revolution (1955) is a more ambitious work, offering a panorama of the Indian political scene during the nineteen twenties and thirties. Among the remaining novelists, special mention must be made of D. G. Mukherji whose novels of jungle and rustic life won great popularly in the west with examples like Kari, the Elephant, (1922), Hari, the Jungle Lord (1924) and Ghond the Hunter (1929).

Other novels of the period include C. S. Rau’s The Confessions of a Bogus Patriot (1923), Ram Narain’s Tigress of the Harem (1930), V. V. Chitamani’s Vedantam (1938) and D. F. Karaka’s Just Flesh (1941)
1.1.5 Development of Novel in Post-Independence Period:

Novels written in post-Independence period are a study of values and a search for suitable art form. The Post-Independent Indian English fiction retains the momentum the novel had gained during the Gandhian age. The tradition of social realism established earlier on a sound footing by Mulk Raj Anand is continued by Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar and Kushwant Singh who made their appearance during the nineteen fifties and the early sixties. The experimental novel with a specific Indian orientation of which Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* was an early example, also flourished though with inevitable individual variations, in the hands of Sudhin Ghose, G. V. Desani and M. Anantanarayanam. And the fiction of B. Rajan illustrates the strains of both realism and fantasy. A notable development is the emergence of an entire school of women novelists among whom the leading figures are Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sangal and Anita Desai. By the end of the sixties and in the early seventies newer voices are heard; the most striking of them being Arun Joshi and Anita Desai.

Bhabhani Bhattacharya is the social realist of this period strongly influenced by Tagore and Gandhi and his fictional theory as well as practice show affinity with Anand. His novel *Goddess Named Gold* (1960) is a slow moving allegorical exercise in which a fake magic talisman raises great expectations which are finally frustrated. Manohar Malgonkar is a realist who believes that art has no purpose to serve except pure entertainment. His novel *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) is an ambitious novel with the setting of partition. The realism of Khushwant Singh is of an earlier variety. His first novel, *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is the story of the impact of partition on a small village on the Indo-Pakistan border with pitiless real description and the swift tempo of the narrative technique. The realism of S. Menon is as securely rooted in the soil of his native Kerala is exposed in his two novels *Wound of Spring* (1960) and *The Sale of an Island* (1968). Balchandra Rajan illustrates both the strains of realism and fantasy. His realism is more psychological than social expressed in his first novel *The Dark Dancer* (1989). His other novel *Too Long in the West* is totally different in theme and story. The novels of Sudhindra Nath Ghose are an exciting experiment in expression of the Indian ethos. His novels *Cradle of the Clouds* and *The Vermillion Boat* are narrator’s description of boyhood and student life respectively. G. V. Desani’s *All About H. Hatterr* (1948) is the most experimental novel. Arun Joshi is popular as the novelist of early seventies with his novel *The*
Foreigner and Chaman Nahal is novelist of partition theme in his novel Azadi (1975).

Among women novelists, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala has dealt with east-west encounter in Hindu family in her novels The House Holder, A Backward Place, and Heat and Dust. Kamala Markandaya has also handled theme of east-west encounter in her first novel Nectar in a Sieve (1954). Nayantara Sahgal is regarded as an exponent of the political novel. She has written five novels and the first is A Time To be Happy (1958) dealing with the last stages of the freedom struggle and the arrival of Independence. In contrast with Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, the youngest of the major women novelists, is more interested in the interior landscape of the mind than in political and social realities. She has written novels like Cry, The Peacock (1963), Bye-bye Blackbird (1971), Where Shall We Go This Summer (1975), Fire on the Mountain (1977), and Clear Light of Day (1980). In her novel Cry, the Peacock, She narrates the isolation of Maya symbolically presented through peacock.


Minor women fiction writers are Venu Chitale, Zeenuth Futehally, Attian Husain and Perin Bharucha who have written about Hindu, Muslim and Parsi life. Vimala Raina and Manorama Modak have written prominent historical fiction. Shankuntala Shrinagesh has written a psychological novel called The Little Black Boy (1955). It is an interesting though not wholly successful experiment in psychological fiction depicting the thought processes of Sarala, an embittered rich woman who lies dying in a hospital with her money bag under her bed. Among novels published by women during the nineteen seventies may be mentioned Raji Narasimhan’s The Heart of Standing is You Cannot Fry (1973) and Forever Free (1979) Bharati Mukherjee’s Tigers’s Daughter (1973) and Wife ( 1976), Veena Nagpal’s Karmayogi (1974) and Compulsion (1975), Jai Nimbkar’s Temporary Answers (1974), Shanta Rameshwar Rao’s Children of God (1976), and Rama Mahta’s Inside the Havelli (1977).
Apart from other major novelists, these are few writers of fiction with a substantial corpus to their credit in the post-Independence period. They are Anand Lall, M. V. Rama Sarma, Ruskin Bond, J. M. Ganguli and Romen Basu. Among minor novels of interest were published during the first two decades after Independence are Dilip Kumar Roy’s *The Upward Spiral* (1949), Huthi Singh’s *Maura* (1957) and Aubrey Menon’s *Satirical Fantasy, The Prevalence of Witches* (1955), R. K. Laxman’s *Sorry, No Room* (1969) and Dilip Hiro’s *A Tringular View* (1969), Saros Cowasjee, *Good bye to Elsa* (1975), V. K. Gokak’s *Narahari Prophet of India*, Vikram Kapur’s *The Traumatic Bite* (1978) and Shiv K. Kumar’s *The Bone’s Prayer* (1979).

1.1.6 The New Novel of Experimentation:

Fiction in recent times has become introspective and individual quest for the meaning in life has become a major theme. New talented writers are like Salman Rushdie and Post-Rushdian novelists like Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry, Amit Chaudhari, Anurag Mathur, Manil Suri, Ajay Sahgal, Farukh Dhondy, Pratap Sharma, Vikram Chandra, Makarand Paranjape, Kiran Nagarkar and Rajkamal Jha. Salman Rushdie’s *The Midnight’s Children* Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence* and Upamanyu Chatterjee *The Last Burden* are popular novels.

Among women novelists Arundhati Roy, Meena Alexander, Suniti Namjoshi, Kiran Desai, Anita Rao Badami, Jhumpa Lahiri, Radhika Jha and Anita Nair are successful writers. Arundhati Roy’s *A God of Small Things*, Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*, and Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* have appealed to readers of recent times. Novels of these women writers have dealt with thematic areas of global culture, multi-culturalism, nationalism, internationalism, interpretation of history and polities, religions, philosophy and existential angst.

1.1.7 Conclusion:

It is seen that Indian English literature is fast developing and fiction has played a major role in it. Novel has achieved an important place in pre-Independent literature, post-Independent literature and in recent times also. We see that male and female writers have excelled in their contribution towards fiction writings. They have touched various kinds of themes and have impressed upon readers.
1.1.8 Check your progress:

Fill in the blanks.

a) Indian English literature has become a new form of Indian ................
   1) society   2) culture   3) politics   4) history.

b) The bulk of Indian English literature is in the ................ form.
   1) poetry   2) drama   3) novel   4) essay.

c) ..................... wrote the first novel Rajmohan’s Wife.

d) ..................... wrote Untouchable in 1935

e) ..................... is the novel of Chaman Nahal.
   1) Azadi  2) The Foreigner  3) Train to Pakistan  4) The long Silence.

1.1.9 Key to check your progress

a) 2  b) 3  c) 1  d) 1  e) 1

1.1.10 Exercises:

1) Assess the development of novel in Indian English literature of pre-Independent period.

2) How does novel begin in Indian English literature? What are the development stages of Indian English novel?

3) Estimate the development of novel in Indian English literature of Post-Independent period.
1.2 Indian Political and Historical Novel in English

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1.2.2 Chief features of Political & Historical Novel
1.2.3 Indian Political & Historical Novel (Before & After Independence)
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1.2.5 Check Your Progress
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1.2.7 Exercises.

1.2.1 Introduction:

Indian English literature is emerging as New literature in English and as a national literature in an acquired language. Novel is a major form attempted in three phases. Novels are classified into the following groups:

1) Traditional Novel of Social Realism before Independence.
3) A New Contemporary Novel since 1981.

Novels written in the first phase from 1864 to 1930 are entitled as the novel of nativity. The novels written in the second phase from 1931 to 1980 are called as novel of confluxion and novels written in the third phase from 1981 are known as the novel of culmination. During the first phase, novelists had concentrated on realistic and social realism, Indianness, Indian political movement, Indian Freedom Struggle, Indian History and Gandhian philosophy.

1.2.2 Chief Features of Indian Political & Historical Novel:

Indian political and historical novels are written before and after Independence. These novels are set in situation of freedom struggle, Gandhian movement, British rule, historical stories of prince and princess, Kings and Queens. Themes are appropriately adjusted to the location and setting both in political and historical
novels. Character-sketches are well – chosen and lively in the most of political and historical novels.

1.2.3 Indian Political and Historical Novel (Before and After Independence):

Though the growth of novel in later years far exceeded that of most other forms, fiction was actually the last to arrive on the Indian English literary scene. Kailash Chunder Dutt’s *A Journal of 48 Hours of the Year* (1945) was published in Culcutta literary Gazette on 6th June, 1835. In this literary fantasy, the author narrates the story of an imaginary unsuccessful revolt against the British rule a hundred years later. Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s *Republic of Orissa* appeared in the Saturday Evening Hurkaru on 25th May, 1845 which depicts a British defeat leading to the establishment of a democratic republic in Orrissa.

The novels published after 1864 are political and historical in theme and the examples are Lal Behari Day’s *The History of a Bengal Raiyat* (1874) Mirza Moosad Alec Beg’s *The Battle of Panipat* (1884). Romesh Chunder Dutt’s *The Slave Girl of Agra: an Indian Historical Romance* (1909) is set in the Mughal period. And Sarath Kumar Ghosh’s *The Prince of Destiny* (1909), a novel about on enlightened Rajput – Prince of the later nineteenth century which is of interest as one of the earliest fictional attempts to deal with East-West relationship. Madhaviash’s *Clarinda* (1915) is a historical romance dealing with the career of a woman Christian convert of Tanjore, T. Rama Krishna Pillai wrote two historical romances, *Padmini* (1903), a love-story in which the heroine, a village maiden, prefers a poor but high soiled lover to an aristocratic usurper. In *A Dive for Death* (1511) the chivalrous hero, a poor obscure youth loved by a princess, survives to be united to the princess and is finally discovered to be a long lost-prince. Of four novels of Sirdar Jogendra Singh. *The Romance of an Indian Queen* (1909 is a historical novel of the Mughal age.

The Indian English novel afte1920 was deeply influenced by the epoch-making political, social and ideological ferment caused by the Gandhian movement. The impression of Gandhism is witnessed strongly on Venkataramani’s second novel, *Kandan, the Patriot : A Novel of New India in the Making* (1932) which is set against the background of the Civil Disobedience Movement of the nineteen thirties.
and it tells the story of Kandan, an Oxford-educated Indian youth who resigns from the Indian Civil Service to plunge into the freedom struggle and finally succumbs to a police bullet. A. S. P. Ayyar’s both novels *Baladitya* (1930) and *These Men of Destiny* are set in ancient historical background of India. Both of Mulk Raj Anand’s novels *Untouchable* and *Coolie* are under the influence of industrialism, capitalism, communalism and colonialism. Many of Anand’s novels written before Independence are influenced by the freedom struggle.

R. K. Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) is a novel dealing with the Gandhian freedom struggle and *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) also continues the Gandhian motif. Jagan, the sweet-vendor who is a Gandhian finds his only son Mali spoiled by western addiction. His novel *The Guide* which won Sahitya Akademi Award in 1960 is the finest novel of 1958, which deals with human motives and actions that turns ultimately into philosophical end of Raju as a Guide and a philosophical Guru.

Raja Rao has written last four novels beginning with *Kanthapura* (1938) which is the story of a small South Indian village caught in the freedom struggle of the nineteen thirties and transformed completely in the end that there is neither man not mosquito left in it. It is only novel written before Independence, His *The Serpent and the Rope* which won Sahitya Academy Award of 1963, is published in 1960. His *Comrade Kirillov* is the most recent novel that deals with communism, the British, the War, and the Indian freedom Struggle.

K. A. Abbas the novelist, too busy maintaining his leftist stance, allows the action to be cluttered up with the conventional twists and turns. His *Inquilab : A Novel of the Indian Revolution* is a more ambiguus work offering a panorama of Indian political scene during nineteen twenties and thirties. N. S. Phadake’s own translations from Marathi *Leaves in the August Wind* (1947) and *The Whirlwind* (1956) are set against the background of the Quit India Movement of 1942.

The post-Independence Indian English fiction retains the momentum the novel had gained during the Gandhian age. Bhabhani Bhattacharya’s first novel, *So Many Hungers* (1947) published within a few months of Independence, is set against the background of the ‘Quit India’ Movement and the Bengal famine of the early forties. The novel deals with the theme of exploitation of political, economic and social kind. His *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960) is a slow moving allegorical exercise, in which a
fake magic talisman raises great expectations which are finally frustrated. The demands of the crudely presented parable have also humstrung Bhattacharya’s talent for realism. A topical novel of Bhattacharya set against the background of the Chinese invasion of 1962 is ‘Shadow from Ladakh’ which contrasts the Gandhism of Satyajit Sen of Gandhigram with the scientific attitude of Bhashkar, Chief Engineer of Steelforon. Manohar Malgonkar is a realist who believes that art has no purpose to serve except pure entertainment. Malgonkar’s ‘The Princes’ (1963) is depiction of the feudal way of life in which his awareness of the issues at stake gives his narrative a larger dimension and makes it a successful political novel. His ‘A Bend in the Ganges’ (1964) is an ambitious novel, the setting for which is partition. The title and the epigraph are drawn from the Ramayana: At a bend the in Ganges, they passed to take a look at the land they were leaving’. His novel, ‘The Devil’s Wind’ (1972) deals with the great revolt of 1857 for the shaping power of the historical imagination. Khushwant Singh’s first novel, ‘Train to Pakistan’ (1956) illustrates the impact of partition on a small village on the Indo-Pakistan border. It is shown here with pitiless realism of description and the swift tempo of narrative carries the reader along. His another novel, “I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale” (1959) presents an ironic picture of a Sikh joint family, illustrative of different reactions to the freedom movement of the forties including double dealing, posing and treachery. Menon Maratha’s, ‘Wound of Spring’ is ironical picture of the Gandhian movement here.

Chaman Nahal’s Azadi’ (1975) which won the Sahitya Akademy Award for the year (1977), is a much more ambitious undertaking. It is novel about partition between Hindu and Muslim after Independence. The longest and the most ambitious of Markandaya’s novels ‘The Golden Honeycomb’ (1977) is her first attempt at historical fiction. This is a chronicle of three generations of the princely family of Devapur. Covering a period of about a century from 1850 to Independence, Nayantara Sahgal’s ‘A Time to be Happy’ (1958) deals with two North Indian families during the last stages of the freedom struggle and the arrival of Independence. Her ‘This Time of Morning’ (1968) contains one of Sahgal’s best realized political portraits expressed through Kalyan Sinha and Rashmi. Her ‘Storm in Chandigrah’ (1969) portrays the political background which is of the division of the Punjab into two states of Punjab and Haryana. Desai’s, ‘Bye-bye Blackbird’ (1974) is the only novel in which social and political realities take precedence over probing of the mind. Prominent examples of historical fiction are Vimala Raina’s
Ambapali (1962) which takes to the India of Budha’s time and more recently Manorama Madak’s ‘Single in the Wheel’ (1978), a novel set against the fall of the last Peshwa in the early nineteenth century.

1.2.4 Conclusion :

Indian political and historical novels are influenced by political and Independent movement of Gandhi against the British rule. This kind of novel has also depicted history of Mughal and Maratha Empire during the British rule. In addition, these novels have focused on the theme of Partition of Hindu and Muslim after Independence.

1.2.5 Check your progress :

Fill in the blanks.

1. ___________ wrote ‘The Romance of an Indian Queen’ as a historical novel of the Mughal age.
   a) Sardar Jogender Singh,  b) T. Ramkrishna Pillai,  
   c) Madhaviah  d) Sarorth Kumar Ghosh.

2. A. S. P. Ayyar wrote the novel called as ______________

   a) Sahitya Akademy  b) Nobel  
   c) Commonwealth  d) Pultizer.

4. Bhabhani Bhattacharya has set his first novel ‘So Many Hungers’ against the ________ Movement.
   a) Quit India  b) Freedom  c) Dandi March d) Non-Cooperation.

5. Khushwant Singh has written his novel ‘Train to Pakistan’ in __________
   a) 1952  b) 1954  c) 1956  d) 1958.
1.2.6 Key to check your progress

a) T. Ramkrishna Pillai.
b) Baladitya
c) Sahitya Akademi
d) Quit India
e) 1956

1.2.7 Exercise :

1) What are chief features of Indian political and historical novel? Who are the major novelists?
2) Assess the contribution of main novelists to Indian political and historical novel by its main features.

1.3 Indian English Novel with Social Purpose

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1.3.1 Introduction:

Fiction in Indian English literature has achieved a prominent place in later years of its development. In the beginning it is slow but surely developing and making its place in the literature with the earliest fictional efforts of Kailash Chunder Dutt and Shoshee Chunder Dutt. Fiction written in post Independent period concentrated on
social, political and historical aspects and it continued even after Independence. Novel with social purpose acquires a major place during pre-Independent and post-Independent times due to the reason that India has been facing a number of social problems related to caste, class and social discrimination within family and in social situations also. In 1930’s Sirdar Jogender Singh attempts ‘Kamala’ (1925) and ‘Kamini’ (1931) as social novels and it is continued then afterwards in the World War I and World War II.

1.3.2 Chief Features of Indian English Novel with Social Purpose:

Indian English Novel written before and after Independence have dealt with social issues, problems and evils prevailed in Indian family system. India is a nation of different castes, creeds and classes and the problems related with castes and classess are serious. They are all treated in proper way by Indian novelists of all times. Plots, settings and character sketches are properly chosen for fiction writing and they have helped to produce positive effects of themes involved in novels. Novels have portrayed social realities with human touch and have attracted readers towards better society in future. Indian English novel has successfully depicted social pictures of past and present life of India.

1.3.3 Indian English Novel with Social Purpose (Before & After Independence):

The winds of change blowing steadily across the Indian subcontinent during more than a half century after the Great Revolt of 1857 had left tell-tale marks on the political and social geography of the country. In social sphere, the Gandhian movement reached to all corners of India and even to women. Social reform for Gandhi was only an inevitable part of the struggle for true Swaraj. He believed that ‘Social-reordering and political Swaraj must go hand in hand.’ This social ideal was an equalization of status with class distinction being abolished. He championed the cause of women’s freedom, denouncing child-marriage, the dowry system and enforced widowhood as major social evils. He also advocated free, compulsory and self-supporting education through the Mother-tongue.

As already stated the Indian English novel of the period was deeply influenced by the epoch-making political, social and ideological ferment that was caused by the
Gandhian movement. K. A. Venkatsamani’s first novel ‘Murugan, The Tiller’ (1927) deals with social theme of establishing an ideal colony by advocating Gandhian principles by Ramu as the central Character in the novel. Krishnaswamy Nagarajan’s ‘Athavar’ (1937) deals with an authentic picture drawn with great understanding and sympathy of a social phenomenon which is now fast vanishing from the Indian scene. The joint family system is one of the best of its kind in Indian English fiction.

The most significant event in the history of Indian English fiction in the nineteen thirties was the appearance on the scene of its major writers Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao. Anand’s first novel ‘Untoucheable’ deals with the life of Bakha, a young sweeper from the outcasts and Bakha fights for low classed treatment given by high classed society turning into one of social evils resulted out of conflict of classes and castes. His another novel ‘Coolie’ (1936) is an indignant comment on the tragic denial to a simple peasant of the fundamental right to happiness as the novel deals with social problem. R. K. Narayan’s novels are ‘Swami & Friends’, ‘The Dark Room’, ‘The English Teacher’ before independence and ‘The Financial Expert’, ‘The Man-Eater of Malgudi’, and ‘The Guide’ after Independence. Both these novels ‘The Financial Expert’ and ‘The Guide’ deal with social problem of money-minded Maragayya and Raju seen rising top but finally fall down. Both teach moral that too much love for money ruins the peace of life. Raja Rao’s ‘The Serpent and the Rope’ (1960) which has strong autobiographic colouring is the story of Ramaswamy, a young Hindu who goes to France to do research in history, meets and marries Madeleine, a teacher in history but soon drift apart due to gulf between Indian and Western system of love, marriage and family. The theme of love and marriage then lead to the larger theme of the quest for self knowledge as being one of social themes.

Ahmed Ali’s ‘Twilight in Delhi’ (1940) and ‘Ocean of Night’ (1964) are depicting middle class muslim family and loss of culture in their society. Humayan Kabir’s ‘Men and Rivers’ deals with a love triangle making the bosom friends enemies and their sudden discovery that they are children of the same mother. Aamir Ali’s ‘Conflict’ is the entire action concerned with a Hindu family, showing how Shankar, a village boy, comes to Bombay for higher education and gets caught in the agitation of 1942.
The post-Independence Indian English novel continues the same trend of writings in Manohar Malgonkar, Bhabhani Bhattacharya and Khushwant Singh. Bhattacharya’s ‘Music for Mohini’ (1952) is the story of Mohini, a city bred, village wed girl and her adjustment to her new life style on the personal level and the narrative presents an attempt to connect ‘Culture with Culture’ on the social level. His another novel ‘He who Rides a Tiger’ (1952) tells the story of Kalo, a poor blacksmith, who, jailed for stealing a bunch of bananas vows revenge on society. Manohar Malgonkar’s ‘Distant Drum’ (1960) is the story of a retired army officer of Indian known as Kiran who marries Bina, much against the wishes of her father and creates social problem of conventional kind of the generation gap. Khushwant Singh’s ‘I Shall not Hear the Nightingale’ (1959) presents an ironic picture of a Skikh joint-family illustrative of different Indian reactions to the freedom movement of the forties including double dealing, posing and treachery. S Menon Maratha ‘Wound of Spring’ (1960) describes the disintegration of traditional matriarchal Nayar family in Kerala during the second decade of the twentieth century. Bhalachandra Rajan’s ‘Too Long in the West’ (1961) is a comic story in which the central figure is Nalini, a South Indian girl, who returns from an American University to face the problem of a choosing a suitable husband and an ironic picture of Swayavara is described in the novel. The novels of Sudhindra Nath Ghose are an exciting experiment in the expression of the Indian ethos in a form firmly grounded in the ancient native tradition of story telling. ‘In this Cradle of the Clouds’, the narrator’s boyhood in a small Santal village is described. And his another novel, ‘The Vermillian Boat’ shows the narrator first as University student and then a job-seekar in Culcutta which worships ‘Corruption and the Bitch Goddess’ which becomes the novel with social problem. Arun Joshi’s ‘The Strange Case of Billy Biswas’ (1971) presents a protagonist alienated from the higher middle class society in which he is born and brought up and in which he is compelled to live, though he finds in himself an over-powering urge to march to a different drum together Chaman Mahal’s ‘The English Queen’ (1979) appears to be trying to do too many things which is the tale of love of Rekha, an army officer’s daughter living in a select colony for a poor musician from an adjoining slum that becomes a realistic social satire.

Like the women poets of the post-Independence period, the women novelists too, form a sizable and significant school. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala reveals such
inwardness in her picture of certain segments of Indian social life. Both of her novels ‘The House Holder’ and ‘A Backward Place’ focus on middle class Indian life in contrast with Western life. Kamala Markandaya’s first novel, ‘Nectar in a Sieve’ (1954) illustrates the story of the narrator and the central figure known as Rukmani, a rustic woman. The story of her hard peasant life illustrates the truth of Coleridge’s line ‘Work without hope draw necter in a sieve. Most of other novels of Markandaya deal with social issues in one or other way. Narayantara Sahgal is regarded as an exponent of the political novel but she has also touched social issues through her political novel like ‘A Situation in New Delhi’ (1975). Anita Desai in her novel ‘Cry, the Peacock’ (1963) tries to show typical feminine sensibility which is almost concerned with the terrors of existence and it is the story of husband and wife without effective communication between them.

Venu Chitale wrote a novel ‘In Transit’ (1950) which is an evocative picture of three generations of a Poona Brahmin Joint-family between the two World wars. Bharati Mukherjee, Shanta Rao,Kamala Das, Shashi Deshpande, Jai Nimbkar and Rama Mehta have made contribution to the novel with social themes.

In the recent fiction writing on social issues, Salman Rushdie, Upamanyu Chattarjee, Kiran Nargarkar, Arundhati Roy and Jhumpa Lahiri have made a great contribution. Mention must be made of Shashi Deshpande’s ‘That Long Silence’ that presents the condition of the woman in Indian society and of Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of Small Things’ deals with pathetic story of woman becoming a victim of gender discrimination. Upamanyu Chuttarjee deserves a mention. He is one of the first Indian authors who found success outside India with his 1988 debut novel, ‘English August’ : An Indian Story, His novel ‘The Last Burden’ also brings him credit. In addition Rajkamal Jha, Ramesh Menon, Makarand Parajape and Vikram Seth have contributed to novel writing.

1.3.4 Conclusion:

Indian English novel with social purpose has typically affected readers of both pre-Independent and post-Independent times. Major novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Ahmed Ali, Manohar Malgonkar, Bhahani Bhattacharya and Khushwant Singh have made remarkable contribution to this genre. Even women novelists such as Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and Jhunpa Lahiri have exposed feminine sensibility and pathetic reality of women’s life in their fictional world.
1.3.5 Check Your Progress :

Answer the following question in one word/phase/sentence each.

2) Which novel of Bhattacharya’s does explain the story of Mohini?
3) Which is the first novel of Kamala Markandeya?
4) When was the novel ‘Cry, The Peacock’ written?
5) Which novel of Shashi Deshpande is about Indian women?

1.3.6 Key Answers :

1) R. K. Narayan
2) Music for Mohini
3) Nectar in a Sieve
4) 1963
5) That Long Silence.

1.3.7 Exercises :

1) How does Indian English novel portray social issues in Indian Society?
2) In what way does Indian English novel develop social theme through it?
3) Who are major novelists of social purpose in pre and post-Independent period?
1.4 Indian Women Novelists

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1.4.1 Introduction:
Like the women poets of the post-Independence period, the women novelists too form a sizable and significant school. Even more than men, women writers gifted with extra-ordinary talents, have made Indo-English literature a matter of pride to us and a source of admiration to the foreigners. In the field of poetry, Toru Dutt, the inheritor of unfulfilled renown has made an indelible mark in the minds of Indians as well as of the foreigners with her poetry of supreme excellence and poetic cadence and sweet expression. Sarojani Naidu, the nightingale of India, whose poetry enchants the young and old alike, casts a spell over the readers and raises their spirits with her musical masterpieces. But while their genius flourished in the field of poetry, fiction writing has reached the pinnacle of its glory with the writings of established women. Writers of fiction are Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shanta Rama Rao, Atiiah Hussain, Arundhati Roy, Suniti Namjoshi, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri and Anita Nair.

1.4.2 Chief Features:
Indian women novelists have made a remarkable contribution to Indian English novel. Their novels have portrayed women problems with a great deal of feminine sensibility. They have handled themes like globalization, global culture, multiculturalism, power-politics, gender-discrimination, women suppresion and persecution. These facets of Indian reality are rightly exposed in their novels with
proper setting and atmosphere. Plots and Character-sketches are neatly woven into each other in order to produce a live effect on readers. Jhabvala, Markandaya, Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shanta Rama Rau, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai and Anita Nair have reflected all these features in their novels.

1.4.3 Indian Women Novelists:

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is one of the most liveliest and most urban fiction writers. She was born of Polish parents in Germany though her parents finally migrated to England in the 1959. She was educated in London University from where she took her master degree in English. She married an Indian architect and now lives in Delhi with her three daughters. She is indeed the Jane Austen of India. Her fiction delights in the clashes between the traditional codes of conduct and modern aspirations. ‘A Backward Place’ (1965) is a great new novel of Modern India. It describes the struggles and sufferings of an English girl, Judy, married to an Indian doctor, Bal. The Author’s handling of the clash of backgrounds and her satire, sharp yet never dreary, make it a brilliant picture of life in Delhi. Among interesting characters are after a middle aged Hungarian beauty, who has a number of Indian husbands and lovers and Clarissa, another English woman who is a great devotee of Indian spiritualism. Even her other novels ‘The Nature of Passion’ (1956), ‘The House Holder’ (1960), ‘To Whom She Will’ (1955) became the centre of attention of readers.

Born in South India, educated at Madras University and travelled all over India and Europe, Kamala Markandaya is the most outstanding novelist and has almost six novels to her credit. According to John Masters, ‘She is the best writer now writing who generally uses Indian backgrounds’. Her novels merit special attention. Her ‘Nectar in a Sieve’ (1954) recounts the touching tale of sorrow and misery of Rukmini, the narrator heroine of the novel. It is a moving novel of a farmer’s wife in India who has the courage to triumph over disaster. It also deals with the incursions made by industry and modern technology and their sinister consequences. In her other novel ‘Some Inner Fury’ (1955) which is a superb success and it has made Markandaya major fiction writer that India has produced. Mira is a beautiful Hindu girl. Richard is an official in British Government of India. They are worlds apart, yet they met and fell in love. This is a compelling novel of two young people whose love cut across the boundaries of hatred and survived the terror of war. Her other novels

Nayantara Sahgal has established herself as the most remarkable woman writer at work in India today. She has been widely acclaimed for her autobiographies – ‘From Fear Set Free’ ‘Prison and Chocolate Cake’ and ‘A Time to be Happy’. Her famous novel ‘This Time of Morning’ (1968) deals with the change of ears and class of values that have created a melodrama of high intensity as they affected the private lives of bureaucrats and politicians alike. The fictional characters suddenly change into flesh and blood and startle the reader by creating a sense of realistic atmosphere. Her latest novel ‘Stories in Chandigrah’ (1969) deals with the realities of the situation and makes a sincere exposure of the events of life. Her other novels ‘The Day in Shadow’ (1971) and ‘A Situation in a New Delhi’ (1977) portray the political situations of India and current political discontent.

Anita Desai occupies a distinguished place among women writers whose maiden novel ‘Cry, the Peacock’ (1963) put her in the front rank of contemporary novelists. It is the story of Maya, the story of her married life with Gautama. The action of novel takes place in Delhi. The brooding darkness is more potent than the other forms and noises. It deals with Maya’s pet dog, ‘Toto’ and it has its effects on Maya and leads her to despair. Her second novel ‘Voices in City’ (1965) is less satisfying than the previous one, although the canvas here is larger and the detail is fuller and the diction is richer. It lacks such controlling forces as the Maya-Gautama combination. There is a sense of incompleteness in action and characterization, idea and symbol. But still, it is a novel with greater amplitude than its predecessors and is quite characteristic of Anita Desai’s specific talents. Her other novels ‘Bye-Bye Blackbird’ (1971) ‘Where Shall We Go This Summer’ (1975) and ‘Fire on the Mountain’ (1977) have appealed to readers.

Shanta Rama Rau’s ‘Remember the House’ (1956) and ‘The Adventures’ (1970) deal with East-West encounter with proper setting. Nergis Dalal’s experience of journalism has hardly proved any influence in her fiction ‘Minari’ (1967) which is an account of high class life at a hill station with conventional characters in stock situations. Her other two novel, ‘Two Sisters’ (1973) and ‘The Inner Door’ (1976) retain importance in her fictional world.
Minor fiction writing before nineteen fifties and sixties witnessed women writers like Venu Chitale and Zeenuth Futehally. Vimala Raina and Manorama Modal have written historical fiction. Shakuntala Shrinagesh has made successful experiment in psychological fiction through ‘The Little Black Boy’ (1955).

The recent fiction has become introspective and has concentrated on a major theme of individual quest for the meaning of life. Among women novelists, mention must be made of Arundhati Roy, Suniti Namjoshi, Shashi Deshpande, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Radhika Jha, Anita Nair and Shobha De. Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of Small Things’ (1997) has won Booker Prize which depicts social reality of discrimination between man and woman. The theme of gender discrimination is realistically portrayed by Arundhati Roy so that reader should understand how status is denied to women by men in male-dominated society. Kiran Desai’s ‘The Inheritance of Loss’ has won the Men Booker prize for literature in 2006. Though she lives in US, her work has focused on the tumult of 21st Century India, migration, globalization and the effect of the country’s rapid progress on all social classes. Shashi Deshpande is the critically acclaimed writer of nine novels. Her novel, ‘That Long Silence’ won Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990. Her work focuses on the reality and truth of the lives of Indian women. She received the Padmashri Award in 2009. Her latest book is the novel, ‘In the Country of Deceit’ (2008).

Jhumpa Lahiri’s ‘The Namesake’ is apart from other novels of the same genre. Perhaps it is the narration, it is the matter of fact, it is the vivid characterization or perhaps it is the story itself about an American-Indian who is so unhappy with his given name that it threatens to doubt his entire existence. She has won the prestigious Pulitzer prize in 2000 for her debut book, ‘The Interpreter of Maladies’. In addition Leena Dhingra, Anita Rao Badami, Kavita Dsaswani, Meena Alexander and Sunetra Gupta have contributed to novel writing.

1.4.4 Conclusion:

Indian women novelists have achieved a significant place in the genre of Indian English Novel. They have become successful in portraying social realities like class-distinction, male-domination, women exploitation and their struggle for existence. Their novels reflect real picture and living images from day to day of Indian society. It shows that Indian women novelists will develop this genre and there will be bright future for Indian English Novel.
1.4.5 Check your progress:
Write answers of the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence.
1) Who wrote a novel ‘A Backward Place’?
2) Which is touching novel of Kamala Markandaya?
3) Which is psychological novel by Shakutala Shrinagesh?
4) Who wrote a novel ‘The Inheritance of Loss’?
5) Which prize does Jhumpa Lahiri win for her debut book ‘The Interpreter of Maladies’?

1.4.6 Key to check your progress
1) Ruth Prawer Jhabvala.
2) Necter in a Sieve.
3) The Little Black Boy.
4) Kiran Desai
5) Pulitzer Prize

4.7 Exercises:
1) Who are major women novelists? What are their contributions?
2) Assess the contribution of major women novelists to Indian English novel by giving focus on features.

Further Reading:
a) Iyengar K. R. S., “Indian Writing in English’
b) Naik M. K., ‘Indian English Literature’.
c) Naik M. K., ‘Studies in Indian English Literature’.
d) Sharma B. D. & Sharma S. K., ‘Contemparary Indian English Novel’.
Unit-2

R. K. Narayan’s *The Guide*

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2.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- understand the remarkable features of R K Narayan as an Indian novelist in English.
- explain the outline and plot construction in *The Guide*.
- find relationship between the major themes and the author’s point of view.
- know about R. K Narayan’s art of characterization and narrative technique.
- learn about Indianness and R.K.Narayan’s devices of humour, pathos, irony and admirably plain English.
2.1 Introduction

This unit acquaints the students with one of the most celebrated and prolific Indian writers in English known as R. K. Narayan and his Sahitya Akademi winner novel *The Guide*. In the detail study of this novel they will learn about R. K. Narayan as a ‘pure artist’, his art of characterization, narrative technique, style, use of realism, humour, irony and satire and his preoccupation with south Indian middle class life in his Malgudi novels.

2.2 Subject Matter

2.2.1 Life and Works of R. K. Narayan:

R.K. Narayan (1906-2001) is one of the prominent Indian novelists in English along with the First generation Novelists of the mid 30’s such as Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. He belongs to a part of a middle class Brahmin family of Second-generation emigrants from rural Madras. His full name is Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan. R. stands for his village Rasipuram, K stands for his father Krishnaswamy and Narayan stands for Narayanswamy. Narayan’s father was the Head Master in Mysore. He was the stern and disciplined head master and R.K Narayan grew up in a small-town-like suburb of Madras and the province of Mysore. He was haunted by his childhood memories. Before becoming the pioneer Indian writer in English, R.K. Narayan made a hard struggle to make a living by doing odd jobs such as a journalist for an anti-Brahmin newspaper, a reviewer of books like Development of Maritime Laws in Seventeenth Century England for the *Madras daily* and *The Hindu*. Narayan had taken up Teaching without much success or joy. Then he gave his attempts of becoming a Railway Officer and a Bank officer. He was wasting his time trying to make a living as a writer. Thus R.K. Narayan had considerable personal problems. However, Graham Greene, a reputed British novelist inspired him and introduced his first novel *Swami and Friends* to Western readers in 1935. Then he became famous as a pure artist, writing in ‘admirably plain English’ for the sake of ‘Art for Art Sake’. He is famous as a novelist, short-story, writer and the writer of retold stories, memoirs, travelogues and essays. His writing consists of:

a) **Novels of Malgudi:**

*Swami and Friends* (1935)
The Bachelor of Arts (1937)
The Dark Room (1938)
The English Teacher (1945)
Mr. Sampath: The Printer of Malgudi (1949)
The Financial Expert (1952)
The Waiting for the Mahatma (1955)
The Guide (1958)
The Man-eater of Malgudi (1961)
The Vendor of Sweets (1967)
The painter of Signs (1977)
A Tiger for Malgudi (1980)
Talkative Man (1985)
The World of Nagaraj (1990)

B) Re-told Legends
Gods, Demons and Others
The Ramayana
The Mahabharata

C) Short Stories:
Grandmother’s Tales
A Horse and two Goats
An Astrologer’s Day and Other Stories
Lowley Road
Malgudi Days
Under a Bunyan Tree and Other Stories

D) Memoirs
My Days (1975)
E) **Travelogues:**

*My Dateless Dairy* (1964)

*The Emerald Route*

F) **Essays:**

*Next Sunday*

*Reluctant Guru*

*A writer’s Nightmare*

*The World of the Story-teller*

R.K Narayan dedicated himself to the task of writing and became one of the eminent popular Indian Novelists in English. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his experimental novel the Guide. In 1960 and won the Padmabhusahn Award in 1964. The Delhi University conferred on him the honorary D.Litt. in 1973. All his novels are known as ‘Malgudi Novels’. Narayan’s little dramas of middle-class life are enacted in an imaginary small town Malgudi in South India.

R. K Narayan is essentially a true artist in story-telling, a serious comedian like George Bernard Shaw and a realist and a satirist. All his novels are social comedies with a fusion of the comic and the serious. As a story-teller, Narayan’s belief is that the novel is not fit to deal with the social ills, and this point of view explains his detachment from the socio-political and economic problems. However, he is not an aloof observer of Indian society. He presents the Indian social concerns from the universal point of view. Compared to Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekov, Dostoevosky or Henry James, R.K. Narayan is a readable novelist due to his simple style and plain language. Like Jane Austin, his fictional world, restricted to Malgudi and peopled with the middle class life, is the world of comedy.

★ **Check Your Progress**

1. Mention the names of the first generation novelists in Indian English novel.
2. Which award did R. K. Narayan receive for The Guide?

★ **Key to Check Your Progress**

2. The Sahitya Akademi Award.
2.2.2 Chapter wise Summary

Chapter 1

Raju, the tourist guide has just been released from the jail. He sits cross-legged beside an ancient shrine near the village Mangal. The shrine is on the banks of the river Sarayu. The villager named Velan comes there after seeing his married daughter. Raju has his last shave only two days before after his release from the jail. The talkative barber says, “You look like a maharaja now”. The barber is a master and wise man. He guesses rightly that Raju has been released from the jail. Raju repeats, “Not a bad place”.

Velan looks at Raju with a great devotion and Raju tells him, “I am not so great as you imagine. I am just ordinary”. But Velan has his own problem to be solved. Then Raju recalls his own past. He thought that Rosie has not come from a foreign land. She was just an Indian like Devi, Meena, Lalitha or any one of the thousand names in India. Rosie was a great classical but an orthodox dancer. Raju was the first man to appreciate her art of dancing but her husband was a grotesque creature in his life. He looked like a space traveler and was dressed like a permanent tourist.

Raju thought about his past life as a tourist guide. He lived in a small house opposite to Malgudi Railway Station. His father had a small shop and all day he sat there selling peppermint, fruit, tobacco, betel leaf, parched gram, and whatever else the wayfarers on the Trunk Road demanded. It was known as the ‘hut-shop’. Raju recalled his childhood memories of his own life, his father, mother and his trips to the town.

When Velan raises his own problem about his father’s last wife’s youngest daughter, Raju talks magnificently like a holy man of Lord Buddha and the dead child. Raju then tells him that everyone has a problem. Velan’s problem is that the girl shows no gratitude and is unwilling to accept his plans for her marriage with his cousin’s son. Raju asks Velan to bring her there and he would talk to her. When Velan goes away, Raju is left alone. He says himself, ‘I shall be rewarded for this profound service to humanity. People will say, “Here is the man who knows the exact number of stars in the sky. If you have any trouble on that account, you had better consult him. He will be your right guide for the skies”’. While counting the stars in the sky, he fell asleep under the open sky.
Next morning Velan comes to Raju with his cousin sister of fourteen years old. Velan has brought a basket filled with bananas, cucumbers, pieces of sugar-cane, fried nuts, and copper vessel brimming with milk. Raju sat in silence, eyeing the gift for a while and then picked up the basket and went into an inner sanctum. He placed the basket of edibles at the feet of the image and said, “It’s His first. Let the offering go to Him, first; and we will eat the remnant.” Then he began narrating the story of Devaka, a man of ancient times who begged alms at the temple gate every day and would not use any of his collections without first putting them at the feet of the god. This story was told him by his mother but he couldn’t remember the whole story.

Suddenly Raju said to Velan, “I am not going to think of your problem, Velan, not now.” Velan retorts ‘why’. Raju says, “When the time is ripe for it”. He also tells Velan that he should think over the problem and further adds, “Whatever is written here will happen-------.We may not change it, but we may understand it”-------- ‘And to arrive at a proper understanding, time is needed’. Velan understands and appreciates his wisdom. Raju looks at Velan’s difficult sister and says, ‘What must happen must happen; no power on earth or in heaven can change its course, just as no one can change the course of that river’.

Chapter 2

Raju as a child is now growing fast. Very soon the train is to be introduced in Malgudi. He sees the men busy in the track outlines of Mempi Hills. Then Raju’s father does not send him to Albert Mission School but to a Pyol School in Kabir Lane. Raju begins to learn the alphabet and numbers there. Thus Raju’s education begins. The school master gets one rupee a month and some gifts by the students’ guardians or parents. Raju then is sent in Board High School for the first standard.

Velan comes near Raju with the news of a miracle and tells him that his sister’s problem is over and she is ready to marry her cousin. Before The assembled family she said, “I have been a bother to you all these days. Forgive me, all of you. I shall do whatever my elders order me to do”.

One day Velan comes back and invites Raju to his sister’s marriage but Raju avoids the wedding ceremony. After wedding the girl regards Raju as her saviour and tells everyone, “He doesn’t speak to anyone, but if he looks at you, you are changed”.

Very soon a huge mob begins to gather in the evening at the temple on the river bank of Sarayu and takes him as a saint. But Raju felt that he himself was an intruder. After release from the jail he tried very hard to think where he should go next and what to do.

One of the villagers said, “He is a big man, he may go anywhere, he may have a thousand things to do”. Another man said, “Yogis can travel to the Himalayas just by a thought”. Next morning Raju realized that he had no alternative. He has to play the role Velan had given to him. Raju begins to play the role of a saint. He calls Velan’s nephew and asks him to tell his uncle that he has come again.

Chapter 3

One day, the Railway station building at Malgudi is ready. The Stationmaster and a porter began to stay in stone house at the back of the station. Raju’s father became a prosperous businessman. He acquires a jutka and a horse in order to go to the town and do his shopping. He uttered the word ‘bank’. As a shopkeeper he runs a shop at the Railway station. Because of Raju’s mother’s opposition, he sells the horse and converts the carriage into a single bullock-cart.

The stationmaster and the porter named Karia came to observe Raju’s father’s shop. As per the suggestions of the stationmaster, the shop is filled in with bananas, Mempi oranges, fried stuff, colourful papermints and sweets, loaves of bread, buns and cigarettes. Occasionally Raju is made the in-charge of this hut-shop and the customers found in him a good companion for them. Very soon, Raju’s father asks him to handle the business in the new shop at Malgudi Railway Station and it stopped his schooling.

Chapter 4

The banana which Raju gave to Velan’s nephew worked a miracle. The nephew told everyone that the saint is back at his post. Naturally, men, women, and children assembled there in a large number. Raju advised them about education. Next day, the schoolteacher visits Raju and Raju tells him the importance of education. He advises the teacher, “After all self-help is the best help”, and “It is our duty to make everyone happy and wise”. The teacher responds him that he will do anything under his guidance.
The result is that the teacher went back to the village as a changed man. The students came there and Raju spoke to them on godliness, cleanliness, and the Ramayana. Raju gets hypnotized by his own voice.

Raju’s father dies and his mother becomes a widow. Raju closed down his father’s hut-shop and set the new shop at Malgudi Railway Station. He felt like an actor who had come on the stage.

Velan comes there and asks Raju, “Give a discourse, Sir”. The only topic on which he could speak with any authority was his own jail life and its benefits for one mistaken for a saint. He says, “All things have to wait their hour”.

Raju soon realized that his spiritual status would be enhanced if he grew a beard and long hair to fall upon his nape. His prestige as a saint had grown beyond his wildest dreams. His influence on the mob was unlimited. He not only chanted holy verses but also discoursed on philosophy. He began to prescribe medicines to children who would not go to sleep. Even he settled the disputes and quarrels over the division of ancestral property.

Chapter 5

Raju became famous as ‘Railway Raju’. Perfect strangers began to ask him about the famous spots around Malgudi. His friend, the old shark is Gaffur, the taxi-driver. Gaffur takes the tourists in his car to various places. Within a few days Raju became a full-blown tourist guide. Occasionally, he asks the porter’s son to look after his shop and he goes with tourists in Gaffur’s taxi. At home, Raju’s mother asks him to accept the proposal of Lalitha, the young daughter of her brother.

In a few months Raju became a seasoned guide. He became a part-time shopkeeper and a full time tourist guide. Malgudi and its surroundings were his special show. His tourists are of many kinds and types and he tries to please them of all. One day a very strange tourist named Marco came to Malgudi along with his wife named Rosie from Madras. Raju made their lodging provision at the Anand Bhavan Hotel. Rosie had a figure. A slight and slender one beautifully fashioned with sparkled eyes and dusky complexion. As soon as she set foot in Malgudi, she asked Raju, ‘Can you show me a cobra- a King Cobra it must be- which can dance to the music of a flute’.
While Marco is engaged in investigating carving episodes from the Ramayana on the stone wall in Iswara Temple in North Extension, Raju took Rosie in Gaffur’s taxi to watch a cobra dance at Nallappa’s grove on the other side of the river. Rosie swayed her body in a dance giving the snake-girl performance. Rosie appears to be the greatest dancer of the century to Raju.

Rosie’s husband, Marco is an extraordinary hateful fellow. When Raju tells his mother about their visit to a snake charmer, she doubts about the girl as a snake-dancer. Thereupon Raju says, ‘Mother, she is a good girl, not a snake-worshipper. She is a dancer’.

Next day, Raju went upstairs to Room 28 on the second floor of the hotel. Marco, the strange man wanted to study the friezes. He also wanted to study the cave-paintings. Rosie is not willing to come with Marco to see caves. But Raju goes back to Room no. 28 and persuades Rosie to come along with them. He appreciates her dance, form and figure and introduces himself in these words, ‘My name is Raju’. Then he asks her to be ready and remarks, ‘Who would decorate a rainbow?’ Yet she is not willing to join them but Raju says, ‘Because life is so blank without your presence’. She responds, ‘Wait a minute, then’.

Now Rosie, Raju and Marco go to the Peak House in Gaffur’s car. The Peak House is situated on the topmost cliff on Mempi Hills. The river Sarayu is seen sparkling at a distance. Joseph is their caretaker. He is nearly sixty years old man. He was converted into a Christian by the missionaries. They have to stay there for a night. Joseph gave them some useful suggestions and said to Rosie,’ If you sit up on that veranda, you can watch tigers and other animals prowling about. But you must not make any noise; that is the secret of it’.

At seven-thirty in the evening, Raju tried to serve the dinner. At that time Rosie said, ‘No, no. Let me serve you both, and I will be the last to eat, like a good housewife’. When Raju tries to serve a dish to Marco, Rosie snatches it from his hands and it is her golden touch on which his memory lingers on. The soul of Raju is crying to say her that won’t she be his sweetheart. After the dinner Raju and Rosie went to the glass veranda to watch animals and Marco was lost in his papers.

Next day, Marco and Raju went to the valley to study caves keeping Rosie in the Guest House. Marco is engaged in his ruin collecting activities. Immediately, Raju went back to the Guest House where Rosie was alone. Rosie surprisingly said,
‘Looking for me?’ Raju learnt from Rosie that they had quarrels every night. But Raju said ‘Being with you must be such a bliss’. Then Raju praised her dancing and spoke out his love for her. He spoke of her as ‘an artist……World’s artist number one’. Then she said, ‘You are a brother to me’ and gave all details of their married life. She told him that she belonged to a family traditionally dedicated to the temples as dancers. The women in her family are considered as public women and are not considered respectable. She has taken her master’s degree in Economics. Hers is a registered marriage with Marco and he is a man of high social standing; He has a house outside Madras. But he is interested in painting and old arts. Raju overcame with the sadness in her life and said, ‘In his place, I would have made you a queen of the world’ and put his hand on her shoulder.

Marco’s car didn’t come back because of breakdown, so they stayed there for another night. When Gaffur’s car came there, Marco asked Raju to bring his black trunk from the hotel. At that time Rosie seeks his permission to go back to hotel and says, ‘We may not be able to return tonight’. After coming back to Malgudi, Raju goes to his home to change. His mother comments, ‘Becoming a dandy’ Gaffur, too, warned him, ‘She is a married woman, remember’. Thereupon Raju said, ‘She is like a sister to me’. At night Raju and Rosie went to see a movie and returned to the hotel after the picture. At midnight, he stepped in Room No. 28 and locked the door on the world.

Chapter 6

Several years have passed. Men and women are busy worshipping Raju as a saint. His disciples brought him special gifts according to seasons and festivals of the year. So he did not require a calendar. His beard now caressed his chest and his hair covered his back. He wore a necklace of prayer-beads around his neck. His eyes were filled with the light of wisdom. Whatever gifts his disciples brought him, he gave them all back to the women and children at the end of each day. He protested to Velan and said, ‘I am a poor man and you are poor men; why do you give me all this? You must stop it.’ But people called him Swami.

In the first half of the year there were rains; but in the second half of the year there were no rains. The summer seemed to continue. Raju asked, ‘Where are the rains?’ The millet crop is all scorched on the stalks. A thousand banana seedlings are dead. Raju’s reaction is, ‘Such things are common; don’t worry too much about
them. Let us hope for the best.’ However, the cattle do not get grass to eat. The river Sarayu became dry. Sugar-canes were wilted. The villagers always talked about the scarcity of the rains. Raju decreed, ‘You must not think too much of it. The rain god sometimes teases those who are obsessed with thoughts of him.’ Yet it was reality that cattle stopped giving milk and flocks of sheep became dry. The wells in the villages were drying up. The earth was fast drying up. A buffalo was found dead on a foot track. Velan took the Swami to observe the scene in the village. The Swami raised his hand and said, ‘Be peaceful; I will fix it with gods.’ He gave several explanations of the losses and pleased the villagers.

More cattle were found dead here and there. The village shopman started charging high prices. As a matter of fact, there was a battle between the shopman’s relatives and sympathizers and Velan and his men. Next morning Velan’s brother came to Raju with sad news that several villagers and Velan got injured skulls and burns. After listening to the story of the village quarrel from Velan’s twenty-one years old brother; a semi-moron, Raju said to him, ‘Tell your brother, immediately, wherever he may be, that unless they are good I will never eat.’ Raju has given the message that he will not eat till they are good. Velan’s brother of the lesser intelligences ran into the assembly of his village elders and said, ‘The Swami, Swami, doesn’t food anymore. Don’t take any food to him.’ When asked ‘Why’, the boy replied that it doesn’t rain and there should be no fight. Then all the villagers declared, ‘Let us all go and pay our respects to Swami, our saviour.’

Raju was waiting for his usual gifts and food. He had suggested them to bring him wheat flour, rice flour and spices so that he can prepare something new. He has liking for bonda, which he used to eat in the railway station stall. It was composed of flour, potato, a slice of onion, a coriander leaf and a green chili. Now he sees a crowd coming to him. They called him Mahatma. They touched his feet. Velan said, ‘Your penance is similar to Mahatma Gandhi’s. He has left us a disciple in you to save us.’ Velan remains there to look after him. When Raju says that the next day he will take his usual food, Velan asked him, ‘Do you expect it to rain tomorrow, Sir? Velan expected him to stand in knee-deep water, look to the skies, and utter the prayer lines for two weeks, completely fasting during the period- and so the rains would come down, provided the man who performed it was a pure soul, was a great soul. Raju had told them, ‘When the time comes, everything will be all right. Even the man who
would bring you rain will appear, all of a sudden’. Then he asked Velan to live him alone that night and come to see tomorrow night. Velan agreed to do so.

Now Raju suddenly thinks of leaving the place for good or he might be in trouble. If he left the place, people will conclude that he had gone to Himalayas. He cooked his food and kept a reserve of food for a second meal at night.

Finally, Raju tells Velan that he is not a saint; he is an ordinary man like anyone else. He tells his life story to Velan. Velan listened to him without uttering a word of surprise or interjection in all humility.

Chapter 7

Marco accepted Rosie as a member of the family. He was just an impractical and absolutely helpless man. He married Rosie out of desire to have someone care for his practical life but his choice was wrong. The girl herself was a dreamer. However, Raju gave up all his routine jobs in order to be of service to them. At Peak House he was in entire charge of Marco’s all affairs. Gaffur’s car was permanently engaged for Marco. Joseph looked after Marco’s needs at the hotel and Raju spends much of his time looking after Marco and Rosie. Marco paid him his daily rate also allowed to look after his ‘routine jobs’.

Raju is more interested in Rosie than her husband. Gaffur is not happy with Raju because he does not like that he should get involved wit her. While going back to the hotel, Gaffur says to Raju that an old, uneducated wife is better than the new type of girl. Raju is obsessed with thoughts of Rosie. He is now spending more money on being looking very smart. His shop is being managed by the boy. Raju’s mother always warns him to keep eye on that boy. Then Raju went over to the shop and checked the accounts. The boy informed him that the two tourists who were interested in sightseeing went away disappointed. The boy always called him ‘Raju sir’. Raju did not care for his own mother, the shop and his bank balance. The only reality in his life and consciousness is Rosie. The man at the desk and the boys at the hotel were watchful about Raju’s arrival and departure in Room No. 28.

It is difficult to Raju to understand Rosie’s mind. She allowed him to make love to her husband on the hill. She would say, ‘After all, he is my husband. I have to respect him. I cannot leave him there’. Furthermore she cries, ‘Is this right what I am doing After all; he has been so good to me, given me comfort and freedom. What husband in the world would let his wife go and live in a hotel room by herself, a
hundred miles away?’ Again she says, ‘As a good man he may not mind, but is it not a wife’s duty to guard and help her husband, whatever the way in which he deals with her?’ Raju is now in a confused mood. He feels that Marco would come down the hills and take her away. He asks Rosie, ‘Why don’t you stay up with him, then?’ She tells that he sits up all night writing and all day he is in the cave.

Rosie asks him whether he is also like her husband not interested in her dancing. Raju replies, ‘I will do anything for you. I will give my life to see you dance. Tell me what to do. I will do it for you’. This remark delighted her. She gets a bronze image of Nataraja, the god of dancers. At five in the morning she would start her practice and continue for three hours. She would then spend an hour or two in studying the Natyashastra of Bharatmuni. Raju is not really interested in her music and dancing but keep up the false face. Rosie tells him so many things about the dance and says, ‘What a darling. You are giving a new lease of life’.

Rosie along with Raju goes to the hill to see her husband. Marco talks about a wonderful third cave. Then he showed him some marvelous cave paintings But Raju is ignorant about them. But still he went through them with a show of interest. Marco told him, ‘When this is published, it’ll change all our present ideas of the history of civilization. I shall surely mention in the book my debt to you in discovering this place.’

Two days later Raju went back to the hill and Joseph told him that Marco and Rosie had gone down and didn’t return yet. After some time Marco returned and Rosie followed him silently. Suddenly Marco said, ‘It’ll not be necessary for either of you to come in’ and shut the door of his room. Rosie then passed up the steps without a word, opened the door of his room and went into the room. This behaviour baffled Raju. Meanwhile, Gaffur came round to ask, ‘What time are we going down?’ Marco said, ‘Why are you in a hurry, Gaffur?’ Gaffur came close to Raju and said, ‘Raju, this in not at all good. Let us get away. Leave them alone. After all, they are husband and wife; they’ll know how to make it up. Come on. Go back to your normal work. You are so interested and carefree and happy then.’

Raju thought over Gaffur’s advice for a while and asked him to wait near the car. Then he heard Marco calling Gaffur, ‘Driver, are you ready to go?’ Marco picked up his bundle and started walking to the car. It puzzled Raju. He tried to cross the hall and open the door but it was bolted. Then Raju went near the car. Marco had
already taken his seat. Raju asked Marco with courage, ‘Where are you going?’ Marco replied, ‘I’m going down to the hotel to close my accounts there.’ Then Raju said, ‘Take that man wherever he may want to go and bring me back the car tomorrow- and you will make complete settlement of all your bills with him. Keep a separate account for my own trips.’

There is a quarrel between Raju and Marco. Raju opened the door of the car and pulled Marco out of it and said, ‘You can’t abandon a wife in this place and go away.’ Marco asked, ‘Who are you? What is your business?’ and said, ‘And I dispense with your service from this minute. Give me your bill and be done with it.’ Again, he said, ‘Let us be done with everything, and then you get out of my sight.’ Raju asked Joseph to open the other suite and account it to him. Raju entered in this new suite and left the door open. Marco had gone and bolted himself in his own room.

Half an hour passed without any speech or movement. Raju was worried about Rosie’s food. So he himself put the food on plates, put them on a tray and walked to their room. Rosie was lying on her bed with eyes shut and Marco was sitting in his chair. Raju placed the tray before Marco. Rosie opened her eyes and said, ‘Don’t waste any more of your time with us. You go back. That’s all I have to say.’ Raju said, ‘First, you must have your food. For what reason are you fasting? She repeated, ‘I want you to go.’ Raju became weak and cowardly at her tone and thought that she had been in his arms forty-eight hours ago and was asking him to leave. Raju came back to Gaffur and left the place. Gaffur said, ‘It’s time your elders found a bride for you. Raju I’m senior in years. I think this is the best thing you have done. You will be more happy hereafter.’

Then a more miserable period of his life started. He had no taste for food, no sound sleep, no stability, no peace of mind, no sweetness of temper or speech- no. no. no. a number of no’s. Everything looked so unreal. He relieved the boy and began to look after the shop. He started to work as ‘Railway Raju’, the guide. However, he did not forget Rosie. Thirty days passed and one day his mother said to him, ‘Someone is asking for you.’ There stood Rosie on the threshold, with a trunk at her feet and a bag under her arm. Raju welcomed her and told his mother that Rosie is their guest now. There is a discussion between Raju’s mother and Rosie about whereabouts.
Raju asks Rosie to tell him everything from beginning to end. Rosie asked Marco for his permission to dance but he regarded dancing as street-acrobatics. Rosie said, ‘Everyone except you likes it.’ And it was her blunder. Then Marco worked as an examining doctor and subjected to a close questioning. He asked details of their movements. Finally he said, ‘I didn’t know that that hotel catered to ‘such fervid art-lovers! I was a fool to have taken too much decency for granted.’ Rosie felt that she had made the capital blunder of her life. She realized that she had committed a sin. She was terrified and pitied her husband. Marco felt as if he was alone in the world. He would not eat his food. He did not look at her and speak to her. He told, ‘This is my last word to you. Don’t talk to me. You can go where you please or do what you please.’ Rosie asked for pardon and said, “I want to be with you. I want you to forget everything. I want to forgive me.” He said, ‘You are not my wife. You are a woman who will go to bed with anyone that flatters your antics. That’s all. I don’t want you here, but if you are going to be here, don’t talk. That is all.’ The Othello was kindlier to Desdemona.

One day Marco started packing his luggage in Room No. 28 as he alone was going back to Madras. She also picked up her trunk and followed him. Marco said, ‘I have no ticket for you.’ Then Rosie came to Raju’s home. Raju comforted her and said, ‘You are in the right place. Forget all your past. We will teach that cad a lesson by and by.’ He tells her that he will make her the greatest dancer. Raju’s mother objected to Rosie’s presence at her home but Raju says, ‘I am an adult. I know what I am doing’.

Now Raju has given his shop to a new contractor. Raju slaps the previous boy as he neglected the shop. Then the boy’s father who is a porter remarked, ‘It is not he who has ruined you but the saithan inside. He meant Rosie. There is a quarrel between the porter and Raju and Raju is saved due to his mother.

Chapter 8

Raju’s creditor was the Sait, a wholesale merchant in Market Road. He was a prosperous businessman. He was Raju’s good friend. One day the Sait called on Raju and he personally came to see Raju. He opened his notebook and told Raju the figure of dues nearly eight thousand rupee. There is a hot argument between Raju and Sait and within a week or ten days there is a criminal suit against Raju. He looks out for a lawyer to fight out the case. With the help of Gaffur he finds an adjournment expert.
Raju thinks of starting a new life with Rosie as a public dancer. He needed five hundred rupees to start the new business. He thought of Rosie as a gold mine as the Bharat Natyam is really the greatest art business. He asks Gaffur to help him. Gaffur was essentially a man of heart but he had no money. He advised Raju to send Rosie away and start an ordinary real life. He prayed God to give him better sense and went away.

Sait is bringing a criminal motive to quicken the procedure. Raju had a small lawyer to plead his case. Raju gives him five rupees. He manages to get an adjournment for Raju. Rosie is not interested in this case. Now it is Raju’s mother’s turn. She had adjusted to Raju’s behaviour as a loafer. One day Raju’s maternal uncle dropped in like a bolt from the blue. He was a general advisor and director of all family matters in Raju’s household. Raju’s mother wanted him to marry her elder brother’s daughter. Raju’s maternal uncle took him to task and asked Rosie to go away by the next train. Raju’s mother called her a serpent and a viper. Now, out of anger, Raju’s mother prepares to leave the house. Raju and Rosie pleaded her not to go. But Raju’s mother went away with her brother after the quarrel.

Now Rosie starts a new phase of her career. As a public dancer she has been christened as Nalini, a name that could have significance, poetry, and universality. Raju becomes a man with a mission. He is on the road to become an impresario. He ceases to be the old Railway Raju. When the two men Management Committee of the Secretary and the Treasurer came to Raju’s house to watch Rosie’s Bharat Natyam dancing. Rosie welcomes them with a smile.

Chapter 9

The Union function started and Rosie soared Rocket-like. Her name became a public property. She had the genius in her, and the public had to take its notice. Raju adapts himself into a businesslike impresario. He is now conferring favour on them by permitting the dancing programmes. The people try to catch a glimpse of Rosie. She is so grateful to Raju for her success.

Now Raju is unwilling to stay in his old house. He rents one at New Extension in keeping with their status. Now Rosie had a ‘dance master’, a man from Koppal. Raju has appointed a large staff of servants- a car driver, two gardeners, a Gurakha sentry and two cooks. Raju’s office was on the ground floor with a secretary in-waiting, a young graduate from a local college.
There were several visitors to them. There were musicians who wanted a chance to accompany Nalini. There were others with genuine offers of engagement. But Raju had a monopoly of her and told the visitors that she was busy. However, there was Raju’s inner circle of friends consisting of two judges, four eminent politicians, two big textile mill-owners, a banker, a municipal councilor, and the editor of The Truth, a weekly. Sometimes there were musicians or actors around Nalini. Raju wanted her to be happy but only in his company.

Now there engagements took them to all corners of South India, with Cape Comorin at one end and the border of Bombay at the other. Raju’s philosophy was centred upon all the money in the world. Raju obtained a medical certificate to say that he needed alcohol for his welfare and became a ‘permit-holder’. Raju played Three-Cards with some men. He now became a man of status.

One day the book entitled *The Cultural History of South India* arrived by post. Marco was its author who had acknowledged his debt to Sri Raju of Malgudi Railway Station. Raju did not show that book to Rosie and it was his horrible mistake. If he had shown the book to Rosie, everything would have been well. Raju had committed an act of treachery and betrayal.

Three days later Marco’s photograph appeared *The Illustrated Weekly of Bombay*. Marco’s photograph was published along with a review of his book, and the book was called, ‘An epoch-making discovery in Indian cultural history’.

Rosie wanted to see Marco’s book. She called Raju’s secretary, Mani and asked him for the book. Meanwhile Rosie had cut out Marco’s photo and placed it on her dressing mirror. Rosie asked Raju, ‘Where have you kept the book?’ Raju said, ‘All right, I will show it to you tomorrow’. Raju explained her that Mani was responsible for that mistake. At night, Rosie said, ‘After all, after all, he is my husband.’ But Raju takes everything lightly and talks about his role in making Rosie the great classical dancer, the figure of name and fame.

Suddenly a letter arrives from Marco’s lawyer in Madras. A letter was addressed to ‘Rosie alias Nalini’. The content in the letter was ‘Madam, under instruction from our client, we are enclosing an application for your signature, for the release of a box of jewellery left in safe custody at the Bank of --------, in the marked place’. Raju did not show this letter to Rosie. He put that letter to his drink casket and locked it up. He thought over the letter for sometime. He was in a dilemma whether to show the
letter to Rosie or not. She also never asked for it. He thought about the quantity of jewellery in the box. At midnight, he once again saw the letter, and made a careful trial of Rosie’s signature and forged this letter after some struggle in his mind and posted it at seven-thirty in the morning. He now waits for the insured packet to come in return of the letter.

Their programme was going on at Kalipet, a small town sixty miles away. Two hours passed and Rosie was doing her fifth item- a snake dance that lasted for forty-five minutes. When the dance was going on, there came the District Superintendent of Police asking for Raju. He is there with a warrant of Raju’s arrest on the act of forgery. Rosie blamed for ‘karma’ and said, ‘He was no longer my friend, but a frightful technician’.

Chapter 10

Raju has to spend a couple of days in the lock up. Rosie spent much money to save Raju but in vain. Then Raju got the bail. But finally, the case is lost by him and he is in jail. In jail, he becomes a model prisoner. Mani came to visit him. Raju told him that the Central jail is not a bad place. Mani gave him the news that Nalini had cleared out all the financial transaction of the town, bag and baggage. She had settled down at Madras and was looking after herself quite well. She had given Mani a gift one thousand rupees on the day of her departure. Before her departure, she had paid all the debts. She had sold all the furniture and other possessions to an auctioneer. She carried with her only Marco’s book and went away into the car. Mani also told Raju that his mother is keeping well in the village.

Chapter 11

Raju’s narration of his past to Velan was over at the dawn. Raju had mentioned every detail of his career from his birth to his release from the jail. Velan questioned Raju, ‘I don’t know why you tell me this, entire Swami’. However, he assured Swami that he will keep it all a secret and went away to the village.

A wandering newspaper correspondent who had come to the village to observe the draught situations sent off a wire to his paper at Madras to circulate the news in all towns of India. The heading was ‘Holy man’s penance to end the draught’. He sent a second telegram to say, ‘Fifth day of fast.’ He described how the swami came to the river’s edge, faced its source, and stood knee-deep in water from six to eight in the morning, uttering some prayer. Then the holy man would go back to the pillared
hall of the temple. There was a big crowd around him. He fasted totally. After meditation, he would go to sleep and his devotees remain there, guarding him.

It was the fourth day of his fast. At the end of the first day, late at night, he went into his inner sanctum and ate the remaining food hastily. After that the vessel was empty. Raju felt that Velan was responsible for his present plight. The villagers have killed the crocodile and found in it the jewellery worth Rs.10000/-.

Raju made the resolution that he would give up all his thoughts of food for the next ten days. For the first time in his life he was making an earnest effort. For the first time he was learning the thrill of full application, outside money and love. It gave him a new strength to go through with the ordeal. He had been fasting to save humanity from draught. He almost lost all sensations.

The special trains for the crowds were going to Malgudi. The journalist had done their work. Gaffur’s taxi drove up and down a dozen times a day. The crowd gathered near the river Sarayu at Malgudi. The public swarmed their life flies. The Health Department came there to prevent some epidemics of Cholera, Malaria and so on. A large crowd always stood around and watched the Saint with profound awe. They touched the water at his feet and sprinkled it over their heads. Velan asked them to go away. The school master took charge of all telegrams and letters from all over the country wishing the swami success. The pressmen were busy with their daily business. The American visitor arrived in a jeep. He said, ‘Namaste’ to Swamiji. His name is James J Malone from California and his business is production and T.V. shows. Raju gave his consent. James J Malone asked him some questions regarding his fast and Raju answered them just like a wise man.

The Government appointed some doctors to look after Raju. American asked some questions to the doctors regarding Raju’s health but they had no permission to answer. Then the American asked the school teacher about Raju’s daily routine and the school master explained him in detail and asked him to see tomorrow morning.

It was the eleventh day of fast. At five thirty in the morning, the doctors declared the condition of Swami. The government gave a top priority to save the life of Swami. Velan sat very close to Swami. Raju asked him ‘help me to my feet’. Then he got up to his feet. He went down the steps of the river. He stepped into his basin of water, shut his eyes, and turned towards the mountains, muttering the prayer. He
opened his eyes, looked around and said, ‘Velan, it is raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs’, and with that he sagged down.

2.2.3 Synoptic Summary:

Raju, the hero of the novel, tells us about his childhood days, his mother, his father’s town shop in Malgudi, his schooling in Pyol School and Malgudi railway station. After the death of his father, Raju becomes the proprietor of railway station shop. Raju becomes famous as the ‘Railway Raju, the tourist guide’. One day, the scholar named Marco along with his wife, Rosy, from Madras came there to study cave paintings and sculptures. Raju falls in love with Rosy who is interested in Bharat Natyam.

Raju succeeds in tempting the beautiful Rosy towards him because he realizes disharmony in the marital relationship between the eccentric Marco and moody Rosy. Soon, the frustrated and disappointed Rosie finds herself deeply involved with Raju and eventually betrays her husband. When Marco realizes the truth in Anand Bhavan Hotel Room No. 28, he is shocked. Despite Rosie’s request for forgiveness, Marco abandons her and leaves alone for Madras.

Frustrated Rosie has no other way but to go to Raju. Raju’s mother often advises her son to send back Rosie to her husband. The taxi driver Gaffur also warned him about Rosie. When Raju doesn’t listen to her advice, Raju’s mother leaves her house and goes with her brother to a village. Then Raju and Rosie began to stay at Raju’s home. Raju helps Rosie in her dancing and succeeds in fulfilling her dream of an accomplished Bharatnatyam dancer.

Rosie becomes famous as the greatest classical dancer all over India. Raju manages her programmes and now he becomes her proprietor-cum-manager. As Rosie soars in her career, Raju becomes wealthy and prosperous man of name and fame. Very soon Rosie becomes tired and disappointed due to her mechanical and hectic schedule of her dancing tours. Then comes a letter from Marco’s lawyer for Rosie alias Nalini, requesting her to send it back to Madras duly signed to obtain a box of her jewellery. Raju suspects Marco’s evil intention behind the letter. So he didn’t show that letter to Rosie and he himself forged Rosie’s signature. Needless to say, because of his act of forgery, he is arrested and sentenced to two years imprisonment.
After his release from the jail, Raju accidentally takes shelter in an ancient shrine of a village named Mangal. The headman of the village is Velan who regards Raju as a saint. All the villagers believed in Velan and Raju becomes ‘Swami’ for them. Then there is a severe drought. When there is a quarrel among the villagers, Raju sends a message through a semi-moron cousin of Velan to the quarrelling groups. The cousin twists the message and finally Raju is compelled to observe a twelve-day fast. On the eleventh day, during his ritual, he whispers to Velan that he feels the incoming of rains and he sags down.

★ Check Your Progress

A. Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence each.

1. Whom did Raju first meet beside an ancient shrine in the village Mangal?
2. Who says Raju that he looks like a maharaja?
3. Who had told Raju the story of Devaka?
4. What gift Rosie had given to Mani at the time of her departure to Madras?
5. Who was considered a model prisoner?
6. Who arrested Raju for his act of forgery?
7. What is Rosie’s nickname?
8. What is the name of Marco’s book?
9. How much amount Raju has to pay to the Sait, a wholesale merchant?
10. Who is the caretaker of Marco and Rosie at the Peak House?
11. Who are the major characters in The Guide?
12. What is the full name of Marco?
13. Who gives the roles of a ‘lover’ and a ‘saint’ to Raju?

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. The name of the porter at Malgudi Railway Station is …………
2. Velan is a villager from the village named …………..
3. ………….. is the name of the daughter of Raju’s mother’s brother.
4. The source of the Sarayu river is on …………..
5. Rosie is an M. A. in …………

6. The name of the producer of films and T.V. shows from California is …

7. The novel *The Guide* was published in …………

C. **Rewrite the following by choosing the correct option.**

1. Raju’s father first sent him to …………. for schooling.
   a) Albert Mission School       b) Malgudi School
   c) Pyol School               d) Board High School

2. Raju was arrested on the charge of………..
   a) forgery   b) theft     c) deception    d) falsehood

3) …………is the protagonist of the novel *The Guide*.
   a) Marco   b) Rosie    c) Raju   d) Velan

4) Raju’s mother leaves him and goes away with her brother because………..
   a) her brother invites her       b) she wants a change of place
   c) Raju is not ready to give up Rosie    d) Rosie goes away.

★ **Key to Check Your Progress**

**A.**

1. Velan               2. The barber         3. Raju’s mother
   4. One Thousand rupees 5. Raju
   6. The District Superintendent of Police 7. Nalini
   8. The Cultural History of South India 9. Eight Thousand rupees
   13. Rosie and Velan

**B.**


**C.**

1. Raju’s father first sent him to Pyol School for schooling.
2. Raju was arrested on the charge of forgery.
3. Raju is the protagonist of the novel *The Guide*.
4. Raju’s mother leaves him and goes away with her brother because Raju is not ready to leave Rosie.

**Glossary and Notes:**
- **talkative** - liking to talk a lot
- **grotesque** - strange in a way that is unpleasant or offensive
- **wayfarer** - a person who travels from one place to another, usually on foot
- **cucumber** - a long vegetable with dark green skin and light green flesh, that is usually eaten raw
- **sanctum** - a private room where sb can go and not be disturbed: a holy place
- **edible** - fit or suitable to be eaten; not poisonous
- **Jaggery**: coarse dark sugar
- **Quip**: a witty or sarcastic remark
- **Loquacious**: talking a lot
- **Friezes**: a border that goes around the top of a room or building with pictures or carvings on it
- **Taciturn**: tending not to say very much, in a way that seems unfriendly
- **Procure**: to obtain sth, especially with difficulty:
- **Dandy**: man who cares a lot about his clothes and appearance
- **Soothsayer**: a person who is believed to be able to tell what will happen in the future
- **Coriander**: a plant whose leaves are used in cooking as a herb and whose seeds are used in cooking as a spice
- **Obeisance**: respect for sb/sth or willingness to obey sb.
- **Manhandle**: respect for sb/sth or willingness to obey sb.
- **Acrobatics**: acrobatic acts and movements.
- **Gong**: a round piece of metal that hangs in a frame and makes a loud deep sound when it is hit with a stick. Gongs are used as musical instruments or to give signals, for example that a meal is ready.
- **Niche**: a comfortable or suitable role, job, way of life, etc.
- **Anecdote**: a short, interesting or amusing story about a real person or event
- **Adjournment**: to stop a meeting or an official process, especially a trial, for a period of time:
- **A bolt from the blue**: an event or a piece of news which is sudden and unexpected; a complete surprise:
- **Akimbo**: with your hands on your hips and your elbows pointing away from your body
- **Cajole**: cajole sb (into sth / into doing sth) | cajole sth out of sb to make sb do sth by talking to them and being very nice to them
- **Throttle**: to attack or kill sb by squeezing their throat in order to stop them from breathing
- **Imbecile**: a rude way to describe a person that you think is very stupid
- **Morose**: unhappy, bad-tempered and not talking very much
- **Eradicate**: eradicate sth (from sth) to destroy or get rid of sth completely, especially sth bad

**2.2.4 Major Themes in the Novel**

*The Guide* was published in 1959. By then R.K. Narayan had become better known in India and abroad and was on the way of becoming the country’s best-known novelist. *The Guide* attained a certain degree of popularity, which, though pleasant in itself, brought in its wake involvements that turned out to be ludicrous and even tragic.

A central theme of the novel is the transformation of Raju from his role as a tourist guide to that of a spiritual guide. The title of the novel, *The Guide*, has a double meaning, and Raju is in a sense a double character. As a tourist guide and
lover, he is impulsive, unprincipled, and self-indulgent. After his imprisonment, and after his transformation as a holy man, he is careful, thoughtful, and self-disciplined.

The novel also tells two stories, that of Raju’s relationship with Rosie, and Raju’s relationship with the villagers as a holy man. The novel begins with Raju sitting beside the temple and meeting the villager named Velan, who mistakes him for a holy man. The novel then alternates between an account of Raju’s career as a holy man, which is told in the third-person, and Raju’s account to Velan of his previous career as a tourist guide and lover, which is told in the first-person. This dualism reflects the dualism in Raju’s character. He is transformed from a sinner to a saint, though he is never truly a sinner, and never truly a saint. Because of his capacity for empathy, Raju is a sympathetic character throughout the novel.

Thus crime and punishment or the theme of a sinner becoming a saint becomes a major theme in the novel. Raju’s crimes are of adultery and forgery. For his act of forgery he is punished and imprisoned. Raju’s story of crime or sin has a deeper meaning. Apart from his unethical and immoral relationship with Rosie, Raju disregarded his mother and close friend Gaffur, betrayed the trust of the gentleman Marco. The story of cheating does not end even after his release from the jail. By coincidence, he landed in the village called Mangal and the villagers took him as a saint. He deceives the innocent rustics of Mangal.

In his affair with a married woman, Raju earned the name of a ‘sinner’. When Raju cheated the entire village community by adopting the role of a ‘Mahatma’, he committed a bigger crime, a crime against innocence, faith and goodness. This shows that under the garb of a saint, a great swindler was living like a parasite.

This novel has another theme of art and immorality. The theme of art is seen in Rosie’s classical dancing and the theme of immorality is seen in Raju’s illicit relationship with her. Even there is a compromise between didactic and aesthetic art. The morals have not been exposed with blatant directness but with suggestiveness.

Human relationship and the roles of sex and money are the correlated themes in the novel. Basically these are Indian themes in the novel. Much emphasis is given on family relations, Indian rustic life and superstitions. The Indian life is depicted realistically in the novel.
2.2.5 R.K. Narayan’s Art of Characterisation

Characters are the people in the world of the novel. They can be understood either as types or individuals. E. M. Forster has broadly classified the characters as flat and round. According to him the flat character is developed round a single idea. The flat character does not have a psychological depth, individuality and is mostly considered as a ‘type’. For instance, the characters in the folk-tales are flat. They remain types, representing the virtues and vices. These characters do not change in the course of time and remain the same at the end. The flat characters are valuable within other value system.

The round character is one that changes in time and is capable of surprising the reader by unexpected behaviour. The round character has a psychological depth and individuality. Most of the great characters in the novel are round characters. They are thought great in certain value-system.

In the method of characterization, the reader has an access to the mind of the characters. As a matter of fact, there are two major methods of characterization: the Internal and the External. The Internal characterization focuses on the individuals and their individualities. The reader gets a direct access to the characters’ mind. The External characterization focuses on the social organization in the form of social ethos.

R. K. Narayan’s art of characterization in The Guide is very mature and perfect, in the sense that Raju, Rosie and Marco are portrayed as mature characters. Raju, Rosie, and Marco have been drawn with gusto keeping the inner and outer facts of human personality in their portrayal. They breathe the modern air. The characters have been set both in the traditional and conservative mould, but in their matrix they shine with definite individuality. They surprise us by their action and not by the turn of the trait which is seen in modern novels.

Raju is drawn from the lower section of society. When he becomes a false Swami, he emits a different type of odour. Rosie is a vivacious character with a pathological aura in her background. The protagonist is present in the novel from the beginning to the end. He gains prominence by virtue of his idiosyncrasy. The change in the destiny of the hero is predetermined. The character of Rosie is mould in such a way as to keep pace with the hero. The traditional or the modern film villain is
missing from the novels of R. K. Narayan. The characters move on the canvas with their individual foibles and problems.

R. K. Narayan has the faculty to portray the flesh and bloodlike characters in his novels. The objectivity with which he has painted the characters in this novel has enabled him to differentiate one character from another with distinct points. Raju’s character is as flat as it can be, but Rosie is depicted as a subtle soul. A few characters have been drawn cursorily. Psychological realism is not seen in the characterization of *The Guide*.

R. K. Narayan has not drawn three dimensional characters in the novel. He has portrayed two dimensional character in Rosie. His characters on the whole are of single dimensional, yet they are not wooden. They are very convincing and life-like. After all, the characters in this novel are not types but individuals. Rosie and Marco are the memorable characters with their peculiar traits. Marco and Rosie suffer from their maladjustment. Raju is materialistic. His materialism is seen in his excessive love for money even at the cost of true love for Rosie. Velan is superstitious and Gaffur and Joseph have the dryness of life. Raju’s mother and maternal uncle are tradition-bound and the District Superintendent of Police is a mere mechanical force.

**Sketches of Characters**

### 1. Raju

Raju is the protagonist of the novel *The Guide* as he is the central leading character. In the course of action taken against the two social settings of Malgudi and the village Mangal, he plays a variety of roles ranging from a Railway Raju, a tourist guide, a shopkeeper, Rosie’s lover and later, an impresario, a teacher, a swami and a martyr saint. It is also observed that like an accomplished actor, Raju performs each role with great intensity that one would feel that he lives the role.

*The Guide* is essentially the story of Raju. He is present in the novel from beginning to the end performing different roles assigned to him by his destiny. As a child Raju loves to play with his friends and enjoys the bullock-cart ride to the Taluka place with his father. He used to listen to the Devaka stories from his mother. The arrival of the train at Malgudi Railway Station marks the closing of his happy-go-lucky childhood.
Raju becomes the shopkeeper at the railway station after his father’s death. Then he begins to play the role of the tourist guide for the sake of the tourists. Very soon, he becomes the ‘The Railway Raju’ and the most popular guide. Gaffur, a close friend and the taxi driver, helps him conducting trips for the tourists. During his tenure as a tourist guide he meets an archeologist named Marco and his wife Rosie. Raju is fascinated by Rosie and falls in love with her. Afterwards he gets deeply involved with Rosie’s career as a dancer. When Marco is away, examining cave paintings, the relationship between Raju and Rosie grows mentally as well as physically. Later on Marco comes to know about their affair and finally he abandons Rosie and leaves for Madras alone.

Rosie has no alternative but to take shelter in Raju’s house. Because of Raju’s affair with the married woman, he is in great trouble. First, he loses his railway station shop. Then he loses his bosom friend Gaffur and finally his mother too leaves the home goes away with her brother. Then Rosie starts practising dancing and Raju becomes her champion and helps her to start her career as a dancer. Rosie became a great performer of Bharatnatyam. As she soars high, Raju becomes her impresario and soon he becomes a rich and powerful man. He shifts with Rosie alias Nalini to a new extension, a fashionable and modern society in Malgudi and stays there. But then Raju forges Rosie’s signature on the letter sent by Marco’s lawyer. Thus as an impresario, Raju involves in the act of forgery and is sentenced two years’ imprisonment. However, he enjoys prison life and becomes everybody’s favourite.

After his release from the jail, Raju takes shelter in an ancient shrine at the village, Mangal. The headman of the village, Velan takes him as a saint and all the villagers accept him as a saint and swami. When there was a famine, Raju is enforced to undergo a total fast for twelve days. He tries his best to escape the fast but becomes helpless. Naturally there is a spiritual transformation in Raju and he performs his everyday prayers honestly. On the eleventh day he becomes weak and feeble but undergoes the ritual of prayers. He whispers to Velan that he feels the coming of rains and he sags down.

Raju is an absolutely flat character. He is presented as a man of surface emotions and a rank materialist. He acts rather than lives and there is a blend of realism and romance in his character. His character exposes the hypocrisy of fake Sadhus or the pseudo-saints. Raju is a splendidly realized character. Not given to thought, drifting in and out of situations, and until the last stage of his life ruled by an
individualistic spirit which carries him away from family, friends, and morality, he will ultimately learn what it is to act responsibly. But even when he is selfish and full of guile, he is immensely likable, especially because he wants to please other people as much as he can. Except for forging Rosie's signature on a truly reprehensible impulse, he never strikes readers as a wicked character.

2. Rosie

Rosie is one of the main characters of the novel *The Guide* by R.K. Narayan. She is presented in the novel as a beautiful dancer, from the family of the Devadasis, the temple dancers, and the wife of Marco. She is an M.A. in Economics. She responds a matrimonial advertisement and marries Marco. Her marriage has been like a curse in disguise to her as Marco is totally engrossed in his career and is totally apathetic and unemotional to her. She is very passionate about dancing but her husband does not allow her to dance. Marco calls her dancing as ‘street acrobatics’ and she calls his archaeological studies as a ‘ruin collecting activity’. She finds no passion human love in her husband. In short, Rosie remains emotionally hungry. She tries to persuade her husband and bears all the insults by him just for the sake that she will be able to get permission to dance. When she was left by Marco in Malgudi and was living with Raju, she devoted herself completely to dancing. At this stage Raju does everything for her. He even supports her emotionally and physically. And finally she surrenders and falls in love with Raju. Thus Rosie’s marriage with Marco turns disasterous having nothing in common with Marco. But after her betrayal to her husband, she woke early in the morning and practised hard for three hours regularly. She is always willing to talk about dance and even tries to teach Raju some tips of it. She is religious by nature as she believes in Goddess Saraswati and has the bronze image of Nataraja in her office. She doesn’t discriminate people on the basis of their financial status. On one hand, when Raju prefers to meet people who are very rich and influential in the society Rosie doesn’t care much about these people. Being herself an artist she respects art and likes to be in the company of artist and other music lovers.

Her success doesn’t get to her head as she remains a down to earth person even after becoming very successful in her dancing career. Once Raju became very upset on account of Rosie’ spending a lot of time with different artists and not with him. He came to her and said that these artists come to her because they are inferior to her.
Then she replies to him that she is tired of all the talk of superior and inferior and doesn’t believe in all these things.

She is also like a traditional Indian wife. Her husband is like God to her. Marco calls her dancing skills as street acrobatics and compares it to monkey dance. Despite all these insults she continues to be his wife. When Marco came to know about the intimacy between her and Raju, he became very upset and didn’t talk to her and completely ignored her presence. She apologized to him and kept on following him like a dog hoping that his mind would change one day but that did not happen. This incident shows her tremendous tolerance and her optimistic attitude. When her adultery is detected, Marco leaves her to her own miseries and goes back to Madras. Rosie has no other way but to go and live with Raju. Rosie and Raju continue to live together as husband and wife. As soon with Raju’s help she becomes Rosie alias Nalini, a national star of Bharatnatyam. Even after she became very successful in her career and independent of her husband Marco, she still had his photo which meant that she still considered Marco to be her husband and highlights her traditional Indian character.

But despite her widespread reputation as a classical dancer, she lost her interest in it. The mechanical and tight schedule of her dancing tours becomes unbearable to her. She compares herself with a performing monkey. At times she remembers Marco and feels guilty for her disloyalty to Marco. The real shock comes to her after hearing about Raju’s act of forgery and his imprisonment. Yet she remains calm and blames her Karma for the calamity. Like a true friend, Rosie tries her best to save Raju and after Raju’s imprisonment she leaves Malgudi.

3. Marco

Marco is a shortened version of Marco Polo who is an archeologist. He marries Rosie through a matrimonial advertisement. Marco has nothing to share with his wife. He has neither love nor care for his wife. He has a very low opinion of her art which he calls a ‘street acrobatics’. He has nothing to share with Rosie either as a husband or as a human being. He is very self-centred and appears extremely inhuman to Rosie. When he comes to know about Rosie’s adultery, he is shocked. Finally, he abandons Rosie and departs alone to Madras. He is a man of a few words. He never forgets to acknowledge Raju’s help in finding the Mempi Caves in his book named The Cultural History of India.
4. **Velan**

Velan is the village headman of the village Mangal who takes Raju as a saint or Mahatma. Velan is the first rustic Raju meets when he takes a shelter in an ancient shrine. Velan takes Raju as a wandering Sadhu at first, but when his obstinate sister becomes ready to marry a man of his choice due to Raju’s mere look at her, he is fully convinced about Raju’s spiritual powers. He remains a sincere and honest disciple of Raju until the end of the novel. Raju discloses his own secrets to Velan but he never changes his attitude towards Raju. Velan is chiefly responsible for Raju’s role of a saint. When his half-moron cousin twists Raju’s message and says that the Swami will not eat unless they stop quarrelling. Velan believes in the message and Raju’s qualities of sainthood. He attends on ‘fasting saint’ personally with full dedication. It is Velan at the end of the novel who receives the Swami’s message that the rains are coming.

5. **Gaffur**

Gaffur is a taxi driver who is mostly employed by Raju to take the tourists for sight-seeing in and around Malgudi. He is clever in his profession. He is called ‘a shark waiting for his victim’, a passenger. Raju employs Gaffur only for Marco and Rosie. It is Gaffur who notices a change in Raju’s behaviour and his intimate relations with Rosie. He warns Raju about his illicit relations with Rosie. When he finds Raju deeply involved in Rosie, he advises him not to disregard the moral codes. He becomes very happy when Raju tells him that he will keep himself away from Marco and Rosie. Gaffur even advises him to get married. He does not like Raju’s act of giving shelter to Rosie in his house. He also advises him to send Rosie away and forget her and return to the ordinary and real life. Raju does not follow Gaffur’s advice and loses a true friend and well-wisher in Gaffur.

6. **Raju’s Mother**

Raju’s mother is a symbol of Indian womanhood. She represents the ideals of Sita and Savitri. After the death of her husband, she remains within the four walls of her house. Later when Raju tells her about Rosie’s visit to the snake charmer, she tells him that Rosie must be from Burma, known for snake-women. In her first meeting with Rosie, Raju’s mother admires her for travelling alone and for her education. She also shows sympathy for her as a parentless girl. But when she comes to know about the reality, she becomes angry with her erring son and advises him to
send Rosie back to her husband. She loathes Rosie and feels hatred for her. When Raju is not ready to send Rosie away, she goes with her brother to the village.

7. Raju’s Father

Raju’s father is a symbol an Indian shop keeper. He is a member of the low middle class family. He earns money for his family. He upbrings Raju in the fashion of any Indian child. This character is not involved in the main plot of the novel.

8. Joseph

Joseph is a caretaker of Marco. He forms the central ethical place in the gallery of R.K Narayan. He is a puritan in the sense that he is no procurer of girls, for which he is threatened by some visitors. He is fearless because of his moral soundness and conscience. He is indeed a good character in the novel.

9. Raju’s Maternal Uncle

The maternal uncle of Raju is tradition bound like his sister. He has the capacity to revolt against the new ideas. He cannot understand the emotional relationship of Raju and Rosie. He quarrels with Raju and goes away angrily taking his sister to his village.

2.2.6 Plot Construction

The plot construction of The Guide has been designed after the fashion of the fictitious biography. This is a life history of the hero who grows up into manhood and gets involved in a love-affair with another man’s wife. Raju, the central character, grows up near a railway station, and becomes a shopkeeper, and then a resourceful tourist guide. He meets Rosie, a beautiful dancer, and her husband, whom Raju nicknames Marco, because the man dresses in a thick jacket and helmet as if undertaking an expedition, like Marco Polo. Marco is a scholar and an archeologist, who is more interested in his research than in his young wife Rosie.

Rosie and Marco engage Raju’s services as a tourist guide, and he takes them to sightseeing. She wants to see a king cobra dancing; Marco wants to study cave paintings. Rosie and Marco quarrel constantly, and Marco remains cold and aloof toward Rosie. While Marco is away studying cave paintings, Raju falls in love with Rosie. When Marco discovers that Raju and Rosie have become lovers, Marco abandons her and returns to Madras.
Raju becomes infatuated with Rosie. He is so obsessed with Rosie that he forgets his business, falls into debt, and loses his shop at the railway station. He also loses his mother’s respect because he is living with a married woman. Raju’s mother moves out of their house, and the house is claimed to pay off his debts.

Raju encourages Rosie to resume her career as a dancer, and becomes her manager, launching her on a successful career as an interpreter of Bharat Natya, the classical dance of India. But he spends money extravagantly, and is tricked by Marco into forging Rosie’s signature for a package of her jewels, a mistake that earns him a two-year prison sentence.

On his release from prison, Raju stops to rest near an abandoned temple, where a villager named Velan mistakes him for a holy man. Raju does not want to return in disgrace to his friends in Malgudi, and reluctantly decides to play the part of a holy man. He is happy to accept the daily offering of food which the villagers bring him. Gradually he accepts the role which has been thrust upon him, and he acts as a spiritual adviser to the village community.

Raju is content with the arrangement, until a drought occurs, and, to save face, he has to take up a 12-day fast. As a great crowd gathers to watch him during his ordeal, he begins to believe in the role he has played. He has taken on an unselfish task, not for love or money, for the first time in his life. Despite grave danger to his health, he continues to fast until he collapses. His legs sag down as he feels that the rain is falling in the hills. The ending of the novel leaves the unanswered question of whether he dies, or whether the drought has really ended.

However, the plot has organic unity. It is closely knit. The size of the canvas is as small as it can be, but the welding of the events is dramatic. There is no looseness in the plot. The events move in a direction as to speed up the victim to social perdition. The novel is packed up with so many events of the present as well as of the past. Yet there is a logical order in the plot. Panoramic views of the Indian scenes have been inserted in the plot and it receives the flow of the realistic genius of the novelist. No thread in the novel remained unravelled. The presence of the hero is indispensable in all the spots of the novel. He is the central force in the novel. Raju’s affair with Rosie and his imprisonment are the central threads in the plot.
2.2.7 Narrative Technique

_The Guide_ was published in 1959. By then R. K. Narayan had become better known in India and abroad and was on the way of becoming the country’s best-known novelist. R. K. Narayan’s fiction, deceptively simple and elusive in terms of literary theory and technique, is distinctive for its voice, its fusion of the comic with the sad, and its philosophical depth. He is famed for his lightness of touch and a style that is lean, lucid, undecorated, but wonderfully expressive and full of understated surprises. Narayan was a master of the ‘clear glass’ style long before that term of art was invented. "Since the death of Evelyn Waugh," declared Greene, "Narayan is the novelist I most admire in the English language." It was no small praise from one of the great writers of the twentieth century. For John Updike, Narayan's ability to convey the "colourful teeming" of his fictional town places him in the Dickensian tradition.

Narayan was not yet a celebrity. Narayan adopted the narrative technique of the _katha_ tradition to build up the human interest of characters and situations and left an element of suspense, built up one’s curiosity, so that the listener would be impatient to find out what happened next. His prose does not dazzle the reader. It forges a bond between him and the reader. The genial, malice-free, infectious humour and readability is the essence of Narayan’s writings that endear him to his readers. As a novelist he wanted his stories to be read. As an essayist, he was content to chat. He read widely and had clear views on the quality of the writings of the younger generation.

His narrative is simple and adds to this his twinkle in his eyes of recalling with such micro details that even long past several decades it leaves you spellbound. He is a story teller par excellence. He is a fastidious chooser of words and spurned adjectives. He reads and rereads his manuscripts. Brevity is his strong point. In his conversations he does away with words and often responds with a flicker of the mouth. Perhaps the novelist has an eye on the possibility of its being filmed which has come true. The selection of the facts, the intensity of the dramatic situations and the romantic set of characters are its strong points.

The novel has an exposition, the middle and the end. The technique of narration is unique in _The Guide_ for Narayan has adopted the present-past method. The novel begins with the present event and after a while it switches over to the past, the
background life of the hero. The current is in the flux of the present and the past tends to pave the background building of the personality of the hero. This can be termed as the flashback method of narration. Thus R. K. Narayan has used the bi-polar narrative technique in the novel. He has also used the third person point of view in the novel. The bi-polar structuring of the narrative and the shifts between the first and the third person perspective have become the strategy for the depiction of the two aspects of Raju’s character as the exploiter and the exploited. Raju’s past vividly mirrors his social, ethical and moral deviation from the time honoured norms and codes of behaviour. The end of the novel has ample reason to suggest that the deviator is seen marching towards spiritual realization. It is to be noted that the change in the protagonist is very slow but it has become possible only because of Raju’s past. In part the novelist makes the novel a sort of fictional biography of the hero. The novel begins with the holyman’s phase of the life of Raju and also ends with it. The middle is packed up with the life of Raju and Rosie and their sailing on the ocean of society. The hero gets wrecked by his own fault. It can be said that the theme and narrative technique shape and control each other.

2.2.8 The Setting

The setting of R.K. Narayan’s novel, *The Guide*, as in most of his novels, is Malgudi, a fictional town in Southern India. The novel is told through a series of flashbacks. It gives the impression that he was a better teller of tales than a writer. “I am a storyteller and not a commentator,” he would say. In fact his writing is less fiction and more life-like as he relied upon the living characters rather than imagined ones. He strongly objected when some academics, especially in the West, said that Malgudi was populated by caricatures. “They are not caricatures,” he insisted and went on to say that they are “very real. Perhaps those academics have simply not seen India.” It can be said that Raju is part and parcel of the setting of the novel. *The Guide* is basically his story and the plot revolves round him. It is a story of a cheat who is ultimately forced to obey the rustics who represent the socio-cultural setting. The novelist presents the socio-cultural setting and thereby the ethos of South India. The social organization of the villagers from Mangal represent a distinct culture. The villagers took Raju as a ‘yogi’ Thus the social setting in the form of the over all culture and the collective unconscious controls the destiny of the hero. Malgudi is not only a topographic background but it is a living phenomenon. Malgudi in *The Guide* is the urbanised and modernised city with its railway, hotel, the permit card.
and game of cards. It suggests not only a departure from the timeless tradition but also the corruption in the value system. It is here that the spirit of modern India comes vibrantly alive in the village Mangal. The spirit of this place enforces the “sinner” to undergo a penance. The interdependence of setting and character distinguishes *The Guide* as a novel from the folk tale.

### 2.3 Exercises:

#### A. Essay type Questions:

1. What are the major themes in the novel *The Guide*?
2. Draw a character sketch of Raju as the hero of the novel.
3. Write a note on Rosie’s role as the heroine in *The Guide*.
4. What is the significance of the bi-polar narrative technique as used in *The Guide*?
5. Comment on R. K. Narayan’s use of the Third Person point of view in *The Guide*?
6. How did Raju succeed in winning over the heart of Rosie?
7. Describe in brief Raju- Rosie relationship.
8. Write a brief note on the significance of Raju’s meeting with Velan.

#### B. Topics for Short Notes:

1. The setting of the novel *The Guide*
2. The title of the novel *The Guide*
3. The role of Gaffur as a taxi driver
4. Velan
5. Raju’s fast
6. Marco
7. Raju’s mother
8. The ending of the novel *The Guide*
9. Raju’s first encounter with Velan
2.4 Books for Reference


RAJA RAO’S KANTHAPURA

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3.0 Objectives

In this unit you are going to

- learn the term Indo-Anglian Literature
- Raja Rao as a novelist
- Contribution of Raja Rao to Indian-English Novel
- Influence of Gandhiji on society and literature
- Kanthapura as a Gandhian novel
- Various aspects of the novel

3.1 Introduction

What is Indo-Anglian?

The term ‘Indo-Anglian’ is used to denote original creation in the English Language by Indian. A large number of elite Indians use English language for the creative writing and expressing their experience of life. Their writing is referred to as Indian-Anglian Literature.

The word Indo-Anglian Literature was first coined in 1983 when a book published in Calcutta to it was given by Prof. K.R. S. Iyengar. We find that the Indian patriots desired avidly to have English so the countrymen could learn the Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful sciences. Lord William Bentick set the vehicle rolling on the road by his announcement on March 7, 1735:
“English Education alone, a knowledge of English Literature and Science through he medium of the English Language”

The Background of Indo-Anglian Literature:

The Indian patriots, Macaulay and William Bentic gave rise to Indian English literature. Some Christian Missionaries took a keen interest in spreading the gospel of Christ in the country. They started Serampore College in 1818 and set up the presses for dissemination of their religious propaganda. The presses contribute to the cause of English in India. English journalism started with the founding of Hicky’s Bengal Gazette by James Augusts Hicky in 1780. We find here the first sprouts of Indo-Anglian literature in India because journalism provided a real incentive to creative writing. They get further incentive for reading and writing English from Lord Hardinge’s resolution of 1844 which put a premium on the efficiency in English for government service. English is introduced as medium in schools and colleges. The universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were established by the Wood Despatch of 1859. Now English in India got a fillip as the language of the educated. It did not remain confined to Bengal but spread to other parts of India. It brought into focus the facts of its ramifications. The facts brought Indo-Anglian Literature into picture. The new language and literature was gladly accepted by the new intellectuals. It has to be noted that the Indo-Anglian literature began to develop in India when eminent fiction writers in England and Russia did outstanding work in their country, Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott became classics and Dickens wrote his novels in England, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy published their novels in Russia. Thus it is the fact that the Indo-Anglian fiction and literature appeared in India very late.

The Reason for the Development of Literature:

For this reason of incentive it grew and developed rapidly but not as solidly as literature did in the European countries. Indo-Anglian writers were attracted by journalism. Their authorship grew out of it. They were tempted to have a wider public across the oceans and some of them wanted to be recognised by the British readers. Some of them felt that in India, the British officers would be pleased at their knowing English. Further, they could make their voice reach the different peoples who live in the various provinces in India. English had an aura of glory. It made the vernaculars look mediocre. Writers were tempted to write in English and their writing gave them a certain status. Thus English became the lingua franca of the
Indians which provided opportunities to them to exchange their thoughts between one province and other.

Weakness of Indo-Anglian Novel:

It is the fact that the Indo-Anglian fiction writers were handicapped due to they could not express themselves as freely as they did in their own mother-tongue. It is a true that a foreign language cannot allow a true impulse to convey itself with as easily as it is done in the regional language. Some of them wrote in English which looked artificial. Some were mistaken by the nation that the highsounding words gave a sort of glory to the style. They emphasized on the choice of big words and long sentences which could not make their style attractive. They become verbose in their expression. They learnt English from the books and did not live that life which shaped the language. They lacked proper idiom and became too bookish. In the calendar of Indo-Anglian literature the novel came late.

The Indo-Anglian writers felt the Indian vernaculars were not the suitable medium for their work. They thought that English was a quite a ‘universal language’ and they would broaden the horizon of their literary work. Some were inspired by some English writers and took Indian material as their theme and scope of work. Some were thought that the culture of India could best be interpreted in English. They wanted to show that India was not merely a place of Rajas, beggars and snake charmers etc. but something nice resided in the country.

The writers transplanted modern scientific and sociological ideas in India. The Indo-Anglian writers succeeded in some respect in their efforts and some did not because of their artificiality and verbosity.

An Indian theme is taken by an Indian writer in writing in English and he tries to render it in English. He has to come out of a certain psychological conflict. For this, some notable translations have done of works written originally in Indian regional language. Many Indian writers were influenced by the translations of the books of Rabindranath, Tagore, an All India classic.

In short, Indo-Anglian writing is a separate genre which is distinguished from Anglo-Indian Writing and Indo-English Writing. This genre has been enriched by internationally recognized figures as Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru, Aurobindo, Ghosh and Mahatma Gandhi. A number of eminent Indians such as R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao continue to write in English and the
genre grows and flourish and attain higher and higher peaks of excellence. Today the Indian novelists writing in English are large in number. Besides Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan, the three foremost Indian writers of fiction in English, there are also K. Nagarajan, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, Bhalchandra Rajan, Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai. All these novelists and many more, have enriched Indo-Anglian fiction considerably.

The Themes: Today, themes of Indo-Anglian novels are many and varied. The novels depict themes such as portrayal of poverty, hunger and disease, portrayal of widespread social evils, and tensions, examination of the survivals of the past, exploration of the hybrid culture of the dislocations and conflicts in a tradition-ridden society, under the impact of an incipient, half hearted industrialization, inter-racial relations, the Indian National Movement and the Struggle for Freedom, Partition of India and the death, destruction and suffering caused by it; Indian rural life, depiction of hunger and poverty of Indians, conflict between tradition and modernity, the confrontation of the East and the West, of loneliness, of rootlessness, the exploration of the psyche and inner mind of man. Thus the Indian novel in English is characterised by a variety of themes and techniques. In continues to change and grow and adapt itself to the changing Indian environment.

In short, Indo-Anglian literature grows and flourishes despite of politically motivated campaign against English as a foreign language, a language which comes in the way of its growth. Many Indians writing in English enjoy a much wider market and they have a bright future.

3.2 The Text:

3.2.1 Life and works of Raja Rao:

For the sheer weight of wisdom and adroit concealment in the realm of art there is hardly any one equal to Raja Rao in the whole range of Indo-Anglian fiction. He was born in orthodox Brahmin’s family in Hassana, Karnataka on November 5, 1908. His father was a Professor of Canaresse in Hyderabad. He matriculated from Hyderabad. He went over to Aligarh for his higher education. Prof. Dickinson encouraged him to study French Literature. After getting B.A. degree from Nizam College, Hyderabad and being a recipient of government scholarship, he went to France and did his research work at the University of Montpellier, and University of Sorborne. Prof. Cazamin was his Ph.D. supervisor there. After his stay in France
from 1928 to 1939, he returned to India on the out-break of World War II, in 1940; again he went to France in 1946 and lived there till 1956. There he married an American actress Katherine, he has a son by her. In France he wrote his first novel Kanthapura (1938). He published his collection of stories entitled ‘The Cow of the Barricades’ in 1947 in France. His second novel The Serpent and the Rope was published after a gap of twenty two years. He was absorbed and assimilated in the culture of the West. But he wrote a couple of essays expressing his love for motherland and his passion for Indian Vedic culture and Vedantic philosophy. The Serpent and the Rope is reflection of the Indian culture and philosophy. He accepted Swami Atmanand, the great Vedantic secular as his Guru, quest for a ‘Guru’ is an ever-recurring theme in his novels.

He started to write on philosophy. He was invited by the University of Texas to teach Philosophy there. He went to America in 1950 and got interested in it. He found Americans were materialistic, energetic and enterprising. He felt that they could transform life on the earth. He studied and admired works of Ralpho Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman’s. He visited American Universities and delivered his lectures on Hindu philosophy. At present he is settled in the U.S.A. and teaches Vedantic and Buddhist philosophy at the University of Texas. He got name and fame. He received national and international recognition for his The Serpent and the Rope, he won the Sahitya Academi Award, and Government of India honoured him with the Padma Bhushan

**Raja Rao’s Personality** : He is a short stature. He is hardly five feet tall. His head is large and he has thick grey hair. His features are aristocratic which convey his attentive mood. He is the pride of India. He is better known and appreciated abroad than in India.

**His works** : He is not prolific in his writing. He takes time to write but he writes well. His works as follow :

1) *Kanthapura* (1938)
2) *The Cow of the Barricades and Other Stories* (1947)
3) *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960)
4) *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965)
5) *Comrade Kirillove* (1976)
6) The Policeman and the Rose and Other Stories (1978)

3.2.2 Check your progress.

A) Answer the following questions in one word/ sentence/ phrase.
1. The term Indo-Anglian is used in which context?
2. When was the word Indo-Anglian coined first?
3. Who started Serampore College?
4. Who is a founder of Bengal Gazette?
5. When the Universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were established?

B) Complete the following sentences by choosing correct alternatives given below:
1. Indo-Anglian writers were attracted by ________.
   a) journalism  b) British writers  
   c) Vedantic philosophy  d) Buddhist philosophy
2. Raja Rao was born in _______ family.
   a) rich  b) an orthodox Brahmin  c) a poor  d) educated
3. Raja Rao went to _____ University in India for his higher studies.
   a) Mumbai  b) Calcutta  c) Aligarh  d) Delhi
4. _____ was the Ph.D. supervisor of Raja Rao.
   a) K.R.S. Iyengar  b) Dickinson  c) Emerson  d) Prof.Cazamin
5. Raja Rao married _____ actress.
   a) a French  b) an American  c) a Bengali  d) a Bollywood

3.2.3 Key to check your progress.
A) 1) To denote original creation in the English literature by Indians
2) in 1883
3) Christian Missionaries
4) James Augusts Hicky
3.3 Summary of the novel:

While introducing Kanthapura, the earliest novel of Raja Rao who achieves maturity in his later novels such as *The Serpent and the Rope* and *The Cat and Shakespeare*. The novel begins with the graphic details of the place, which is just a village of South India and the people inhabiting the same. The social climate of the village is roughly divided between the two major castes; the Brahmins and the Pariahs. Being a traditional village in India, it becomes the microcosm of the universal, rural condition all over India.

The novel represents the Freedom Movement in India. The village Kanthapura is in province of Kara. The crops like the cardamom, coffee, rice and sugarcanes are raised. The ghats, high up the steep mountains are the surrounding places which face the cool Arabian seas. The village roads are narrow and dusty. The cardamoms and coffee are exported to the foreign countries. The Red men take the crops away to England. The cartmen drive across the town through the streets. The dwellers of the town load their merchandise of the carts. They go across the Tippur Hill.

Kenchamma is the goddess of the village people. She killed a demon who asked for the young sons as food and young women as wives. To bring down such a goddess in the place, a sage Tripura underwent penances. The battle between Kenchamma and the demon took place on the hill and there was bloodshed. The villagers have unflinching faith in Kenchamma who never let them down. At the hill of Kenchamma, the rain come down there. The people of the village are saved from diseases like smallpox. They offer saree and a gold trinket to her. Kenchamma is a mighty protective goddess.

Kanthapura has twenty four houses. Some are double storeyed. There is a house of postmaster Suryanarayana, a house of patwari Nanjundia, a house of Venkamma, of Rangemma. Venkamma is most talkative woman, on earth. She calls Rangemma a shaven widow out of sheer spite. During the vacation the younger brothers and the children of elder brothers from Bombay visited Rangemma. Venkamma taunts them by calling city bred-fashionable idiots. Ramayya, the coffee planter often visits Akkamma on his way to Karwar. He is the cousin of her sister-in-law. There is a
dinner in his honour and guests are invited to enjoy the meals. Dore calls himself a Gandhian. He has read upto Inter. He picks up the city fashions. He brags too much about himself. He differs from Moorthy who lives in the corner House. Moorthy is a noble cow, quiet, generous, serene, deferent and Brahminic, a very prince. The narrator says that she would have offered her granddaughter to Moorthy, Ramayya, the coffee planter offers his own daughter to Moorthy but the horoscope does not match.

Until now the novelist says something about the Brahmin quarters and gives the details of the pariah quarters. There are many huts in the locality. There is the Breadsle Timmaya’s hut. The pox-marked Sidda has a nice house. Lastly Sidda’s wife goes mad. Bhatta gives money on interest and purchases more land. He walks on the street by wearing only a loincloth on his body. The Potter’s street has only five houses Lingayya, Ramayya, Subbayya and Chandrayya own four big houses. The old Kamalamma has a broken house. Chandrayya makes the festival pots. The rest of them tilt their lands. Across the temple square there is the house of Date Range Gowda, the tiger of the village.

Kanthapurishwari’s temple is in the village. Moorthy found a half-sunk linga and it is due to this the temple got built. The other villagers contributed to build the temple. The old father of Rangemma used to read out the Sankara Vijaya there. The villagers discuss Vedanta with him. Bhajanas and other things held in the temple. Sastri tells Harikathas. Villagers celebrate Rama, Krishna and Ganesh festivals and give remuneration or dakshina to the man who tells the kathas. The old people of the place have an aversion for a Gandhiman like the narrator who do not like class and caste distinctions. They now invite Jayaramachar, the Harikatha-man. He recites it before the Mahatma. He talks about the self purification, Hindu-Muslim unity and Khaddar. He appreciates Mahatma Gandhi which the old folks do not like. There is a tale of Brahma. In the middle of the story, he introduced Mahatma Gandhi who will kill the British rule as Krishna killed the serpent Kali. He holds that all are before God. He advocates the spinning wheel. They all love Mahatma Gandhi for his views and goodness. Even the ferocious Pathan surrenders to Gandhiji. Jayaramacha runs away. He spits on seeking Sankar police Jamadar. Two days later Bade Khan, the policeman comes to live there. Being a Mohameddan he cannot get a house to live there. Patel Range Gowda treats him indifferently. Bade Khan finds a house at the Skeffington Coffee Estate. He keeps a pariah woman. The villagers
talk about the character of Bade Khan and his illicit relationship with a Pariah woman.

Waterfall Venkamma thinks that the policeman has been sent to the village due to Moorthy and all his Gandhi affairs there. She opposes Moorthy due to he refused her second daughter’s marriage proposal. She charges him with loose morals. She resents that Rangemma’s house should become a Congress house, with the books and literature of the movement. It is the policy of the party to distribute the free spinning wheels to all even to the Sudras. In the Brahmin street Moorthy persuades nosescratching Nanjamma to spin, and in the first month cotton is supplied freely to the spinner. Work is given to the workless and Nanjamma objects to it because spinning is not the work of a Brahmin. Moorthy tells her that money which goes to England will be stopped if the work is given to Brahmins also.

Suryanarayana, the post-master is a Gandhist. Bhatta has nothing to do with Gandhi business. He feels village is facing money problems and he would have nothing to do with it. For some time he got interested in Gandhi’s My Experiment With Truth. He asks Sonu to explain it but when he returns from to city he gets transformed to his original self. He becomes a harder usurer, lends money to the people at very high rates. They ask him the auspicious dates for certain occasions. He is the first Brahmin and the second is Ravana. Bhatta eats a lots at a dinner party in the village. Lingayya’s money is not paid. The Revenue Inspector brings the race warrant in race. Some of them are illiterate hence they put thumb-marks on the papers. When Bhatta’s wife dies, he receives different offers from quarters for marriage. He marries Purnayya’s daughter. He becomes richer and richer everyday. His capital with the fresh interest goes on increasing. Timma sees the advocate Seenappa whom Bhatta introduces to him. Bhatta has become a kind of brother to lawyers. Almost every one owed money to Bhatta.

Bhatta meets the old Ramkrishnayya. There he meets Rangemma. Ramkrishnayya tells him that it is very difficult to find a bridegroom for his daughter due to dowry. Bhatta criticises Moorthy and his Gandhi business. It is sickening to see that the pariahs demand for admission in the colleges and the universities. Advocate Rama Sastri decides to throw open his temple for them. It is very odd. The public temples are under the government’s supervision. The girls fit enough to be mothers of two or three issues go for study in the universities. It is very very odd. And one of the girls marries a Mohammedan. What is an age! Satamma feels
unhappy to note the drastic change in the society. She calls it as a sheer pollution. Mahatma has adopted a pariah girl as a daughter. The Swami is worried about the changes in the society. They ask Bhatta to oppose these things in the society by a party. Swami threatens that he will excommunicate the erring Brahmins. Rangemma is warned not to indulge with Gandhi business of Moorthy but she being a modern woman does not pay attention to the warning. By reading the paper she comes to about the changes in the society and the world and she tells about many marvellous things to the villagers. Bhatta is eager to see that Moorthy is excommunicated. To others Moorthy is a gentle man who does not smoke or behaves like a city man by wearing hat or boots. Bhatta calls himself a well wisher of cows and men.

Rangemma’s sister comes along with her widowed daughter Ratna. When they come, Bhatta rises to leave the place. Ratna as a widow does not confirm to the required social standards. She wanders on the street like a boy. She wears hair like a concubine and wears her bangles and nose rings etc. like a married woman. The villagers do not approve of her as an Indian widow. She resents that a widow should live as if on a penance, particularly when she was married when barely ten years of age. Bhatta thinks that she cannot malign the name of the family which is of the Chanderhalli origin. Ratna’s father is his second cousin. But he does not like her modern way while going he meets Bade Khan, the policeman in the village.

Temple Lakshama does not like Moorthy’s meddling with the life of pariahs. But other villagers think Moorthy to be an ideal young man of the villages Narsamma, is the mother of Moorthy who is pious old woman of sixty five. She conceived eleven issues and Moorthy is the only son of her whom she loves most and rest are the daughters. As he is a brilliant student, she hopes him to be sub-collector at least.

It is a vision of Moorthy that he will be the follower of Mahatma, who preaches Truth and Non-violence. Moorthy returns to home from studies to do Gandhi work there in the village. His mother feels sorry for it. He does not have land to cultivate. He would not accept any proposal of marriage. Venkamma hates Moorthy and tells his mother that the great Swami is going to excommunicate him, hence Moorthy’s mother laments. One fine morning Moorthy carries a bundle of khadi on his back and a bundle of books in his arms. He finds his mother is worried about his excommunication so he is going to be polluted. His mother rushes in the street and would even spit at the pariah Bedayya, he would not get aside to see a Brahmin like
her coming the way. Bhatta tells her that her son does not care for the Swami and let him do whatever he likes. He does not want his community to get polluted. It happens with those who go to a university. Moorthy’s mother weeps at her sad plight. Moorthy is served his food, the leaf is laid. His mother wishes that Gandhi should be destroyed. She goes on the street and spits at some of the huts of pariah. The dogs howl hence she runs over the fig tree field bund and dies ultimately. Her ashes are thrown into the river. Bhatta refuses to conduct the obsequies of Narasamma. Moorthy goes but comes back soon to live in the house of Rangemma. He offers cotton to the villagers to weave as usual. He teaches the boys in the village, alphabets, grammar, arithmetic and Hindi. The son of the narrator Seenu is with him.

Now the descriptions that follow are of the Skeffington Coffee Estate which rises beyond the Bebbur Mound over the Bear’s Hill. From the Ghats, the coolies come to work along with their old men, children and widowed women. They are half-naked, starving, spitting, weeping, vomiting, coughing and shivering. They are walking and passing the Kenchamma temple. The maistri of the establishment is before them. A man gets four anna, a woman gets two anna and rice is supplied to them. They come in numbers and the maistri buys the popped rice for them. Life and saheb are nice. From Karwar the coolies come and much on from there to the Estate. They all pass by the Kanchamma Hill. The saheb is a tall and fat man with golden hair. He looks at the Pariahs there. He tells them that if they work well they will get the sweets but if they donot they will get beaten. The coolies reply in a servile manner; “You are a dispenser of good, O Maharaja, we are the lickers of your feet”. The children get peppermints from the Saheb. The coolies rise with the sun next day and dig pits, hew wood, and women pluck weeds. They face the cobras in the woods but are not afraid of the reptile because it does not harm any one unless he is hurt by one. Siddaya tells them of the harmlessness of a watersnake. The coolies work in the afternoon when the sun is hard and piercing. Nearby the smoke of Kanthapura is seen. They work in rain and gets chills. They suffer from the fever, malaria. Their heads become dizzy and their stomachs nauseate. They get the bitter pills to cure of the disease. When they recover from their illness they feel it is because of the grace of the Goddess Kenchamma. Those who do not take pills they suffer a lot. They get seven rupees and eight annas as salary for a month. There is the tody-booth. Despite of taking a vow not to touch toddy they take it. There are marriages, death etc. and
their money is spent. Those who come from Godavary, they do not go back to their homes.

But how the big change come over the Skeffington Coffee Estate. The new saheb is not a bad man. But he likes to somebody wife, or daughter or sister. He changes a woman every week. He with his cane, pipe and puppy wanders in the plantation. He smiles at women and handles them physically. He offers a five rupee note to them. Occasionally the women resent it saying that they belong to Brahmins and do not like that sort of things. Through the belly of Seetharam a pistol shot bangs. Everything subsides with the connivance of the DSP. The saheb offers them one thousand five hundred rupees. Widows and children get two thousand rupees as damages. But now saheb knows that he is not going to touch a girl of Brahmin. The Redman’s court forgives him. The policeman Bade Khan is harbourd there, for he might assist him in emergency. But he is not cared by the Brahmins.

Moorthy teaches the villagers to read and write and ask the saheb for their rights, for instance for holidays. Policeman is nothing before a Gandhi man. The villagers wait for Moorthy who is seen in the Skeffington Coffee Estate. He tells the policeman none can own a human being as it is happening in the Estate. The policeman prevents him to enter the Estate. There is a battle of dirty oaths. Bade Khan charges lathi on Moorthy. The workers do not like their leader is being beaten so they trash the policeman. Women are angry and they want to tear his beard. The maistri whips the coolies. Moorthy goes to Kanthapura and stays there in the night. He starts a campaign called “Don’t touch the government campaign”.

Now Moorthy thinks to observe fast like Mahatma. He repents for the fact that much violence is there on account of him. He is full of the radiance of Ahimsa. The fault of others is the result of one’s own disharmony. Now he is to drink, three cups of salted water. Ramakrishnayya says that he might get purified by his action, and might rise lovingly to God and burn the dross of the flesh through vows. Moorthy recites the Gayatri Mantra for a thousand and eight times. He bathes and mediates. Waterfall Venkamma feels the act of Moorthy is nothing but a false show and a dirty trick. She might beat her with broomsticks. Moorthy says he does not have ill-will for his enemies. He loves his enemies too.

Moorthy feels such ‘exaltation in his limbs’. He gets some mystical satisfaction out of fasting. He seems to have communed with Hari. He goes a sort of primordial
radiance. When Ratna comes to meet him he feels something different for her. There is a sea-change in him due to love. She asks him what to do for him, he tells her that she must pray with him in order to purify the sins of others. Dore laughs at him that it does not benefit a university graduate. He feels that even Bade Khan should also be loved by all: Love for humanity grows in Moorthy as he keeps fasting. He feels that even nature would bend in a benign manner to his wish. But his eyes dimmed to due hunger. The Brahmins and the Pariahs stand by his side and feel a sense of equality of caste. Moorthy wants bhajan to be sung there. Even Bade Khan joins them all.

The things go wrong in the village. He says to Range Gowda about it. There are fewer bhajan programmes. There is a threat of excommunication at the hand of Swami. Range Gowda tells Bhatta that he is with the deer, the Gandhi-wallahs and not with the jackals. They wish to start a Congress group in the village which is affiliated with the city, Congress of All India. For a membership a four anna is required. One must speak truth and wear khadi. Moorthy tells Range Gowda to love Bade Khan but Range Gowda rejects and calls him a filth eater. Moorthy advocates to weed out the enmity from the society. He adds that ahimsa in word and action must be practised by all and one must spin two thousand yards of yarn per annum. This is the condition for being a member of Congress. The vow is made as sacred as the vow before Mahatma Gandhi and God. The membership of the Panchayat of All India is offered to Ramayya. The pariah haves offer things lovingly to Moorthy. Rachanna’s wife offers him a little milk. Every village should have a Congress Panchayat and women should also are all this. They have to spin hundred yards of yarn per day. But women are reluctant. Moorthy starts a Pariah night school in the village. Ratna takes interest in the new work started in the village. Range Gowda follows Moorthy and obeys Moorthy. The Committee election are declared. Moorthy and Range Gowda decide to have god’s procession and then bhajan. Moorthy gets a status of Mahatma from Range Gowda, Moorthy is now more than the Maharaja of Mysore. Moorthy elicits vows of the Congress from the villagers Range Gowda becomes their super-president and protector. Rachanna becomes the member of the Committee. Seenu becomes the fifth member. Thus the Congress Panchayat Committee is formed and organised by Moorthy in the village.

Bhatta does not like Moorthy’s influence over the people. He feels that Temple Rangemma, Patwari Nanjundia and Subha Chetty and Venkamma are his supporters. He tries to find a bridegroom for Venkamma’s daughter. He brings the proposal of
advocate Seenappa who is a widower of thirty four and has three children. Venkamma agrees to the proposal. Bhatta is so overjoyous so much with the scheme that his wife owned that he had loved her marvellously that might as he never did before. Now the village talks about the trivial things of marriage i.e. laddus. Venkamma will have a rich son-in-law shortly. Ratna shall sing the English song which Satamma does not like. Venkamma, lies about the age of bridegroom. The village talk about his income which is three hundred and his landed property. He is a middle aged person who has lost his two teeth and he has a big twisted moustache.

Now the month Kartik arrives. There are lights every where. Moorthy is with the police inspector who notes something in his diary. He asks Bade Khan to bind him. Mada, Range Gowda, Rachanna, Madanna, Lingayya, the villagers resent the act. There is a good scuffle about the whole thing. All start to shout ‘Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai’. Moorthy requests them be calm. He desires to be arrested. The police misbehave with a lady. The police men beat the Brahmins. Ramanna and Dore go forward to get arrested and march toward the Santur Police Station. The atrocities of the policemen are terrible in the area. Moorthy will be driven away to Karwar. The advocates would plead his case in the court. The students would organise themselves to defend him. But there is a strange justice in the country. Judges do not practice truth but side with law. The English are not for the Indians but for the Europeans. Moorthy alone is truth. Sadhu Narayan supports truth and Moorthy. He will plead his case as Gandhi told his Satyagrahis.

The Gandhi Maidan is crowded with people. Sankar reaches the platform and the air resounds with ‘Mahatma Gandhi ki Jay’. He delivers a speech. He says something unexpected. He says that after the departure of the British there will not be Ram Rajya but Ravana Rajya. Before the advent of the Britishers there was such chaos in the country and it were they who protected the Indians against the internal state of affairs. Somebody points out that Sankar must be the stooge of the notorious Swami, who just received twelve acres of land from the government. The victorious Swami excommunicates Moorthy. He opposes the upliftment of the untouchables. Advocate Rangemma is arrested. Bhatta is accused of the conspiracy in all matters of Rangemma. ‘Blue Paper’ reports about the outside world’s great movement and happenings Rangemma wish to offer a Kanchi sari to Kanchamma if Moorthy is released by the government. Ratna would celebrate the news by lightening flames. The police allege that Moorthy is at the back of all troubles. Range Gowda’s
Patelship is withdrawn by the government. Now Rangemma is accused by Venkamma for mixing with the man publically. A new advocate, Sankara puts up his signboard. He might buy a cap one day like Advocate Rangemma. He follows the Gandhian principle and cares that the case which he undertakes may not be false. People are wary to go to him for their cases. He would not join the wedding in which people do not wear *khadi*. He keeps fast and tells others to follow him.

Rangemma brings a shocking news from Karwar that Moorthy is convicted and must go under three month’s rigorous imprisonment. They all keep a fast on this day. It rains badly. Ramakrishnaya dies and they dispose off the body. After the death of Ramakrishna, Ratna explains the texts of *Vedas* and clears the doubts of the listeners satisfactorily. They set up a women’s corps of volunteers. It is the proper time to oppose the British. The martyrdom of Rajput women is recalled. Rajput women fought along with their men and when the time came they burnt themselves on the flaming pyre. Some women object this. It is sheer vagabondage of women to them. They look down upon the Sena business. Some of the husbands would not talk to their wives because of this new approach taken up by them. But they promise not to forget their children or husbands. It is a tough job to face the police. They will fight the police by the grace of Kanchamma. The children like Seenu of Vasudeo are afraid of the atrocities. Everybody knows how cruel and callous Bade Khan is who spits out and beats everyone.

The rain pours in the fields and it is time for cultivating the soil. The sun may bless them by offering the fine harvest this year. The Goddess is going to show her face. The villagers are thrilled by the idea and they talk about the tilling of the land. It is a ceremonial occasion in the village. The river rises. They ask for rains for three days and dry weather for two days. Moorthy is released now and the villagers feel happy. Venkamma worries about her marriageable daughter. When Moorthy was in prison, people forget about his excommunication. They wish to receive him warmly. The slogans “*Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai*” reach the sky. The views of Mahatma Gandhi are preached by Moorthy. The villagers are mesmerised by his speech and philosophy. The villagers get great force. The British will quit India only if villagers will determine and unite.

Mahatma Gandhi launches the salt movement and everyone goes to the sea to prepare it from its brackish waters. Moorthy decides to start the movement in the village as soon as he gets order from the Karwar Congress. Rangemma looks after
the drill of the women. Women move to face the police. Sundari, Dore’s wife is afraid of the police.

When Mahatma Gandhi is arrested, the villagers wish to observe fast in his honour. They wish to launch the ‘Don’t touch the government campaign’. The toddy booths shall be picketed by them. They plan to establish a parallel government. The motto is “obey the chief and love the enemy”. It is the path of the truth, non-violence and spirit.

They trot out to picket Boranna’s toddy grove. Men come from Tippur and Subbur. They have chosen the auspicious day for the movement of picketing the toddy booth. The Police Inspector prevents them from going onward. Police surround them and push them backward. The cartmen shout ‘Vande Mataram’. The police charge a lathi on them. They are in a mess. They drive out people in the lorries and leave them in the middle of the jungle. Humanity rises with great ovation in such a crisis. They place the trophies, two toddy pots and twigs before the gods. The men and women of the Mahatma are garlanded and honoured. They reach the Skeffington Road and wait for the coolies for their drinks. At the bridge Moorthy stops Bhatta goes to the pilgrimage, Kashi on the toddy contract money. At the time of rain the police blow lathi on the agitators. The squat is in front of the Bonanna’s toddy booth. The policemen tighten round the booth. ‘Vande Mataram’ and ‘Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai’ reach the atmosphere of the place. The agitators protest the coolies who take toddy there. They ask people not to drink in the name of Mahatma. Moorthy prevents his men and women from swearing. The army of the Mahatma increases everywhere. The men of Moorthy picket the toddy booths at Rampur and Siddapur tea estate. The government profits by their addiction. They wades across the Kanchamma Hill where they will not be caught by the police. In every home picture of Moorthy is displayed. People are proud of Moorthy. The jailors would bang the door behind them. Chandrayya is proud of Moorthy who is a Brahmin but eats with the Pariahs.

The villagers call Moorthy as the hammer and sickle boy because he talks about the country. Seetharam releases from the jail and narrates the ill-treatment given to him in the jail. He is treated like a bull in the jail. Boranna closes the toddy shop because the consumption of the drink is negligible. Moreover he feels that men and women should not be beaten on account of toddy. Moorthy is beaten but he is still alive.
The villagers decide not to pay the revenue to the government. A new Patel arrives with the policeman. Puttamma’s father is beaten by police because he spits at the new Patel. The priest Rangeppa pays for Bhatta and Waterfall Venkamma. Moorthy is certain the villagers would win the battle now. They would have the sanctum bell and the logs at the doors.

The police atrocities are at the peak now. They search for Moorthy but fail to arrest him. The children pelt stones at police. Women yell. Rachanna, Rachanna’s grandson and Moorthy are gone, When Puttama curses the police, one of the police molests and rapes her. The shrieks of the Pariah women is heard on the agony and pain of the people involved in the fray. They run to take refuge here and there. An elephant is brought to open the doors. The policemen begin to whip everybody. Ratna is badly mauled by them. Radhamma conceives a child in such an atmosphere. Bhatta’s house has been set on fire. There is a new attack now. The Satyagrahis are patient. The ladies readorn the gods in the temple. The white dhoties are squashed by khaki clothes and shouts are heard. The crunch of the military boots is heard. The people talk of the movements in the cities. The villagers are in travail. Karwar Road in Kanthapura looks empty. Puttamma gives birth to a child. She disowns the child. Pariah Siddayya knows the policeman who raped her. He beats the policeman harshly.

Soon there is resting of things in the village. The soldiers and the open cars come. The chief of the women is Ratna. The drummer says that the village would be sacked again by the government. Satamma is not happy with the leadership of Ratna, for she will surely lead them to prostitution – whosoever heard of the bangled widow like her. The city boys come to the relief of the village. They come to save the land which might have been auctioned by the government. The courts get closed in Karwar. Now the government is wilting and afraid of the agitators and rebels. The Collector never leaves the headquarter. There is a bonfire of the goods and only khadi sells at places. Prayers prove useless, only work pays. The villagers lose faith in it and lead a Satyanarayan procession. For the auction of the land more buses come. The women have come back. Sankara has come to the village. Through the Brahmin and Potter’s streets the procession passes. Comphore is lit and coconuts are broken. Ratna blows conch. The police do not disturb the religious procession but a Police Inspector stop it. Soon the slogan “Satyanarayan Ki Jai” stops and instead they hear ‘Vande Mataram’, Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai, and ‘Inquilab Zindabad’. The
policeman’s curses could not be heard in the atmosphere. The boys take the flag which flutters and leaps from hand to hand. A first shot is shot into the air and silence prevails. The soldiers claim the fields and they cannot march on to the places now. The villagers argue that the earth is theirs. Ratna leads men to the places. The firing seems to be a false alarm. The Skeffington coolies shouts ‘Inquilab Zindabad’ and they are with the villagers. The Mound soldiers open fire. Vedamma’s leg is injured in firing. The wounded are taken to the hospital in the Congress Ambulance. There is a rush of more coolies. Soon there will be a new attack against the villagers reclaiming land. Now it is the turn of the villagers to attack the enemy. A British officer asks them about their loyalty to the British government but the boys reply negatively and declare they know only the government of Mahatma Gandhi. New trouble arises due to the flag. The gas-light boxes are holded. The bayonets are thrust against the villagers and their beloved Mooorthappa is gone. Gandhi flag flies over the Bebbur Mound.

Rachanna’s wife Rachi says that it is better to burn the village. In Maddur, police force is there still. The talks about marriage and prayers take place again. Now Temple Vishwanath’s son Shammu reads prayers. Rangemma is to release soon. Many prisoners shall be released soon, due to the pact with the Viceroy. Swaraj is the goal of the people now. When is Moorthy to be released? the question is asked and Ratna says she does not know. They talk about Jawahar Lal Nehru, a Bharata to the Mahatma. He is “an equal distributionist’. Range Gowda comes back to them too. Waterfall Venkamma goes to stay with her new son-in-law. So this is the struggle of the people against the tyrant British rule. Raja Rao does not take prejudicial sides.

Range Gowda visits Kanthapura. He finds everything is changed in the village. New houses are built on the hills around the city – coolies but village itself is in ruins. Even Bhatta sells his house and goes away. Range Gowda settles in Kashipur and lives there.

3.3.1 Check your progress.

A) Say following statements are true or false.

1. Kanthapura is a South Indian village.

2. The village Kanthapura is divided between the two major castes – Brahmins and Pariahs.
3. Kenchamma is a name of a woman.

4. Kenchamma saves people from diseases.

5. Dore calls himself as a Gandhian.

3.3.2 Key to check your progress.

1) True  2) True  3) False  4) True  5) True

3.4 THEMES OF THE NOVEL

Kanthapura is Indian both in theme and treatment. To put it simply the novel is about Gandhi and our village. Kanthapura is a typical Indian village. The novelist describes it minutely with great realism. The village, its location, its crops, poverty, illiteracy and superstition are described superbly. The novelist highlights the Gandhian movement, the rivalries, jealousies among the villagers and the rigidities of the caste system. There is a realistic presentation of the villagers. Their names are descriptive in a typically rural way. They live in close contact with nature and are part of it. They treat nature as a living being. The hills, rivers, fields and animals have their distinct existence and personality. They are enchanted by nature.

Indian sensibility is essentially religious. Politics is spiritualized. The Indian political leaders and social reformers have been great religious figures. Social and political ends are achieved through the guise of religion, for example Gandhi and his non-co-operation, and non-violent movement. Kenchamma is a village goddess who is benign and bounteous. The outlook of the villagers is very religious. Gandhian faith is initiated into Moorthy. He becomes a dynamic force in the village. He becomes a Gandhiman slowly and steadily. He has mysterious power to move the villagers. The story of the novel blends with the religious social and political issues. Moorthy is considered as the Small Mountain. It must be remembered that Big Mountain is Shiva, their protector. We find the religious spirit and the Gandhian ideal merge together. The religious elements, social and political issues are becoming one entity. It is natural that prayers and national songs are sung side by side. To attain independence is the objective. Means like harikathas, bhajans, fasts, prayers and non-violent resistance are religious which are adopted by the villagers.

Women play very important role in the Freedom Struggle. The novelist calls them shakti. Indian woman is coy, delicate and submissive. She is firm as a rock and great in suffering. Shakti rises in women. Each of them is enthused at the proper
time. They propose for the titanic encounter. They are inspired by other’s examples. In the end of the novels, Ratna takes over from Moorthy and leads the *Satyagrahis*. *Shakti*-worship is an essentially Indian theme which runs through the village. The powerful *shakti* rises in every woman at certain period and of points of life. *Shakti*’s indomitable spirit is found in the women in their *satyagraha* against the British government. Through the women of the village different forms of *shakti* are manifested. When police use sticks and boots, the women react strongly. Woman is the Eternal Devotee of Shiva. Jayaramachar retells epic stories and Ramakrishnayya reads passages from the scriptures. The most touching example of woman’s edifying faith is the narrator’s musing on the relics of Kanthapura. She dreams as the modern *Ramayana* ends happily where Rama (Gandhi) returns from his exile (visit to England) with Sita (India who had been abducted by Ravana (the British) as Gandhi returns to Ayodhya (Delhi). Bharata (Nehru) who reigns as regent welcomes Rama (Gandhi) and there is celestial flowers showered upon his aerial chariot.

The theme is Indian and the treatment of the theme is also typically Indian. The novelist adopts the method of narration which is typically Indian. The Indian grandmother is the most ancient and typical story tellers. Achakka is such a grandmother who is narrator of the story of the novel. She is more articulate than her predecessors. Her garrulity is ear-splitting. Her style of narration is charming and superb. A person who is familiar with vernacular and habit of listening speech will be delighted with Achakka’s narrative style and its wonderful gossips and digressions. It is an ancient way of narration which is a breathless story that illustrates the age old Indian tradition of story telling. Achakka uses long, meandering sentences. She uses blanks and digressions. The reader can almost hear Achakka talking. Episode follows episode. Each one is integral to the story. Sankar’s, Rangemma’s and Bhatta’s detailed accounts are revealing and essential for the narrative. It is a long interminable tale whose essentially Indian is found in its long interminable sentences, long paragraphs and the absence of division into chapters.

Gandhi and our village is the major theme of the novel. The novelist presents the Gandhian Freedom Struggle in the village Kanthapura. The novel is a great village novel, which depicts the impact of the Gandhian Freedom Struggle on the life of a remote and obscure Indian village. What happens in Kanthapura was happening all over India in many villages during 1919-1930. Gandhi transforms the entire
nation in a single life time into an army of disciplined and non-violent freedom fighters. The political, the religious and the social strands are woven into the complex story inextricably. It is a story of regeneration of Kanthapura due to the Freedom Struggle. It is not merely a political novel but a novel which is concerned with socio-religious and economic transformation of the people at the time of Struggle for Political Freedom. Kanthapura is an obscure, out-dated and slumbering South Indian village which comes suddenly to life due to Gandhian Movement in the twenties. The handling of theme gives us a picture of social conditions of the Indian villages.

No other book of this scope and size on this theme pictures so vividly, truthfully and touchingly as *Kanthapura* does. The story of the novel is of the resurgence of India under Gandhi’s leadership. Gandhi influences the masses and everybody feels as if he/she is Gandhi who wants to free India from the clutches of the British rulers. It is Gandhi’s greatness that he produces hundreds and thousands of little Gandhi throughout the country. Moorthy a young man becomes Gandhian and stirs the whole village, Kanthapura. He gives up his studies and courts arrest and desires to meet Gandhiji personally.

Moorthy organises the Gandhi work in the village. He forms the Congress Committee in the village. He keeps the people constantly in touch with national events through newspapers and other publicity materials. He invites Harikatha man, mixes religion with politics. He equates Gandhi to Rama, Redman (British) to Ravan and calls Swaraj the three eyed. He preaches Swadeshi Movement, use of khadi, spinning of Charakha and eradication of the untouchability in the village by mixing and dinning with the Pariahs. He goes from door to door and explains the economics of the charakha and Swadeshi. He inspires women to take to charakha spinning. He organises the women voluntary corps. He faces opposition courageously from ignorant and the conservative people. He highly charges the atmosphere and awakens the people from slavery, slumber and ignorance. The news of the *Dandi March* reaches the village Kanthapura, which creates enthusiasm among the villagers.

The novelist describes successfully the national upheaval under the impact of a single personality – Gandhi. There are dharanas, picketings and satyagraha. People including children and old men are injured and wounded in a large numbers. Women like Ratna, are beaten up and dishonoured but their spirit is not crushed. Shouts of ‘Gandhi Ki Jai’, ‘Vande Mataram’ and ‘Inquilab Zindabad’ resound in the air and
boost the morale of the people. There is a mass arrest and people are sent to jail. When Moorthy is arrested, Ratna continues his work so the movement continues. There is no tax. Campaign people refuse to pay the revenue. Their lands are laid waste and they are forced to leave the village. The villagers of all castes and professions and the labourers of the Coffee Estate readily meet the onslaught of the police and government. Satyagrahis are maimed; broken and scattered. Some face trials and some leave their native place Kanthapura and settle down in another village like Kashipura. Rangemma, Ratna, Moorthy etc. spend an allotted span in jail but the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the political truce release the Satyagrahis. Young men like Moorthy doubt the wisdom of truce and decide to follow Nehru.

The novel can be called a Gandhi-epic. It conveys Gandhis influence on the Indian masses. Gandhi’s charismatic personality is felt even though Gandhi does not appear in the novel publically and privately. He remains in the background.

The novelist presents the Gandhian Movement impartially and objectively. There is no idealization: both the dark and bright sides of pictures are presented. The novel is a great work of art which presents the impact of the Gandhian movement on the masses of India realistically and artistically. It is a great classic of the India’s Freedom Struggle. It gives more essential truth about the Gandhian period than any official records or books of history. It is a valuable social document which is interesting and significant. It is concerned with the total regeneration and resurgence of the Indian masses. It is not a mere political novel.

3.4.1 Check your progress.

A) Complete the following statements by choosing the correct alternative given below them:

1. Kanthapura is a typical ____ village.
   a) South Indian  b) North Indian  c) East Indian  d) West Indian

2. Women are called as ____.
   a) devis  b) shakti  c) destroyer  d) creator

3. When Moorthy is arrested ____ takes over Moorthy’s work.
   a) Waterfall Venkamma  b) Ratna  c) Bhatta  d) Sankar
4. ____ is the narrator of the novel.
   a) Rangemma  b) Narasimma  c) Achakka  d) Ratna

5. Jayaramachar is a ____.
   a) Harikathaman  b) priest  c) freedom fighter  d) an old man

3.4.2 Key to check your progress.
   1) a  2) b  3) b  4) c  5) a

3.5 CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

Raja Rao creates living, concrete characters. The characterization in the novel has been done on the ordinary lines due to the theme which restricts its scope considerably. He tries to design his characters with a liveliness. His characters lack the depth which is compensated by their outer warmth. They carry the vestiges of their environment and heredity. The characters in the novel are the sons of the soil and they have typical folk smell. Their personality is expressed through their typical conversation and limited aspirations. We find their exterior. Their previous life is full of limited ideas, actions and reactions when the new ideas are introduced by the hero, Moorthy; they begin to transform. They do not expand or develop. Their strange quirks of nature remain the same from the beginning to the end. The personality-making of the characters is just ordinary. It is of a single-dimension and not multi-dimensional. In the novel we find mostly types and not the individuals of kind. They lack the personality roots. The outer foliages are enough. The novel lacks the high voltage characters as their destiny is limited. They have nothing revealing, they are not portrayed intensity. They don’t vibrate. The novel has been designed primarily for action and not for the development of characters. The greater field in the novel get occupied with action marching to its destined goal.

Among the characters of the novel there is no villain proper. Bhatta or Waterfall Venkatamma though they oppose the movement in the village, do not fall under the category of villain. The villain in them is in the mild form which is almost negligible. The villain is almost non-existent in the novel. The characters also do not play the theatrical novel. They live and seldom act. The historic element misses in them. Through the passage of time they do not develop. There is hardly any magnetism in them. There is doubt that Moorthy has it but he has not actually magnetism. The simple characters move and live with the framework of their simple nature.
simplicity prevents them from developing into the complex mould of life. There are 
types of characters. They are not individuals. Waterfall Venkamma, Range Gowda 
Swami etc. are all the types. Moorthy is also a type because he follows a typical 
pattern of a Gandhian. He is of a typical mould as a Gandhi. Bhatta is the typical 
usurer of the village is both a type and an individual. He is a type to the extent the 
village Mahajan-money lender. The characters in the novel are not elites or 
intellectuals. They are picked from the spare of life where there is no education, 
Bhajanias, and rituals are enough for them. There is no single academician among 
them. They are of the masses and driven by the propelling forces from without. 
Emotionalism is dominant motif in the novel. Moorthy emotionally appeals to the 
villagers only. That works with characters where emotions dominate. Emotion-
ignites the movement in the village. Its appeal is much more powerful than 
intellectualism.

The characters in action are badly dynamic. They remain stupidly static and they 
do not grow to a personality-size. They understand only the ritualistic value of 
religion. Diseases like malaria, small pox etc. are attributed to the displeasure of the 
divine deities. The sorrows of the people of the village are of the economic roots and 
not of the personality roots. They are poor. Waterfall Venkamma is jealous of 
Rangemma because of economic reasons. The sorrows of Bhatta spring from the 
reason of the moral buffetings he gets from the villagers.

The grouping and regrouping of characters have been done nicely. The 
characters part for a while but soon get to reassembling as they do in life. Some 
characters appear after certain phases in the novel. Ratna is designed on the lines of 
as heroine. She appears when we have exhausted at the beginning of the novel. She 
does not come off with the prominence which she must have on the canvas of the 
novel. The novel is a heroineless novel. The hero comes off with a sort of bang but 
the heroine does not. Ratna is a faded figure. She gets only some limited prominence 
and she looks like an artificial.

The novelist does not pay attention to the instincts of the characters, but the 
novelist pays attention only to the acquisitive instinct of Bhatta. The biological 
instinct of the characters are pushed to the hinterland. Thus the characters gain only 
outer appearance and not inner one. However, there is good social setting of the 
characters in the novel. The novel comes off on the scene as a socio-political novel. 
The social factor is just useful to the political movement. Thus the characters in the
novel have more of social solidarity than anything else. On the whole the characters are drawn simply. The novelist is content with the outer wrapping of the characters. He has done a little personality probing. In handling of characters, there is ordinariness. Some of the characters like Bhatta, Range Gowda and Waterfall Venkamma gain strength because they have the inherent stuff of their own that helps them to gain prominence. The characters lack depth and are sketched and not portrayed. *Kanthapura* is just like a sketchbook whereas the novel *The Serpent and the Rope* has the portrait-gallery. In *Kanthapura* the characters are mostly of the surface. They are the sons of the soil, the product of the illiterate society. The advantage of intellectualism is denied to them. However, the folk-colour in them comes off with a fineness. The folk-colour is thing that befits the individuals by the novelist. The soil of the place sticks to them. The crafty characters do not exist in the novel thus the novel is a story of the simple people set against the exploiting agencies, the self-increasing in power, rank, wealth and importance of humans.

3.5.1 Check your progress.

A) Say the following statements are true or false.

1. There is no proper villain in the novel.
2. Bhatta and Waterfall Venkamma do not oppose the Gandhian movement.
3. The characters in the novel are elites.
4. The novel is designed for the development of characters.
5. There is no a heroine in the novel.

3.5.2 Answer – check your progress.

1) True  2) False  3) False  4) False  5) True

3.6 Major/Minor Characters:

3.6.1 Moorthy:

Moorthy is the protagonist of the novel. He is called as the village Gandhi. He is an educated young men of Kanthapura who organises the work of the Congress in the village hence he becomes the central figure in the novel. The fact is that there is nothing heroic about him hence he cannot be called as the hero of the novel. He is ordinary man having common human weaknesses. He is one of the thousands of
young men who are inspired by Mahatma Gandhi who gives up their studies for the national cause and invite the wrath of the government. He stands for the freedom fighters who fought for the motherland in order to liberate it under the leadership of Gandhiji.

He is considerate, respectful and affectionate person whom the people of Kanthapura love and like. He is called “Corner-house Moorthy and our Moorthy”. He is treated as a noble cow, quiet, generous, deferent, Brahminic, a very prince. He is very honest like an elephant and he is called as a carbon-copy of Mahatma Gandhi and the saint of the village. He is a small mountain, while Gandhi is the ‘big mountain’. Through the novel we see him as inspiring love and respect who wins the confidence of the villagers. He has an immense impact of Gandhiji. Gandhi’s personality has transformed him from a common village boy into a young man who has leadership qualities. He has self-sacrificial nature and he is devoted to the upliftment of the village. Of course, he never met Gandhi. He is in the college when he feels the full force of Gandhi and leaves the college for the cause of nation. He is one of the thousands of young men who give up their studies and court arrest. He has vision of Gandhi who addresses a public. He feels that he meets Gandhi and gets inspired by his charismatic personality.

The novelist has gifted him with a number of many good qualities of head and heart. He inspires the people. On his return from the city at once organises the Gandhi work in the village. The three strands of Gandhian Freedom Struggle – political, religious and social, are found in him. He works on these three levels. The most potent force in Kanthapura is religion so action of Kanthapura begins with religion. There is tremendous religious activity before introduction of Gandhi of Swaraj starting from an invocation to the village Goddess Kanchamma, to the end of the novel, religion sustains the spirit of the people of Kanthapura. The action begins with the unearthing of a half sunken linga by Moorthy and its consecration. The villagers celebrate the occasion by organising a feast. One thing leads to another. They observe Sankara Jayanthi, Sankara Vijaya etc. Everybody wish to offer a dinner. Jayaramachar, the Harikatha man is invited to the village, Harikathas are held every evening, and they serve as a means for Gandhian propaganda. The Harikatha man is arrested and taken away and so the Gandhian movement comes to the village. Moorthy organises the Gandhian work in the village. He shows a rare devotion and insight for the village youth. He carries the message of the Mahatma
Gandhi from door to door and explains the economy of the *khadi* and the importance of the *charakha* to the ignorant and superstitious women of the village. He persuades them to take to spinning despite strong opposition from all quarters. He forms the Congress Committee in the village and gets elected unanimously as the president. Even Range Gowda, the Patel, the Tiger of the village is deferential to him, calls him ‘Learned Master’. He has full confidence in him. He uses all his authority and prestige in Moorthy’s favour. He permits him to have his way in everything. Moorthy enthuses women and organises them. A Women Volunteer Corps is formed and Ratna becomes the head of the organisation of *swayam sevikas*. Like Gandhi, Moorthy too, undertakes a fast, organises picketing and *satyagrahas*, courts arrest and is sent to jail. Throughout the novel he is shown as the ideal Gandhian.

Moorthy implements the programme of the eradication of untouchability. He goes in the pariah quarter from one village to another inspiring the women to take to spinning in their time. The Swami excommunicates him for his mission still Moorthy persists in his mission. Being a human, he has weaknesses. Pariah business is too much ever for him. He hesitates and wavers and thus shows that he is made of the same common clay. He is an ordinary man of flesh and blood who has human weaknesses. He is not hero but an average young man who like thousands others in those days were enthused and inspired by Gandhi who come out of their shells and contribute to the cause of the country.

### 3.6.2 Ratna:

Ratna is the widowed daughter of Kamalamma, and sister of Rangemma. In appearance, she is deceptive because of her hair-style which is like a concubine. She in fact has been shown virtuous. She becomes a widow when hardly fifteen years of age. At a stage she has an emotional entanglement with Moorthy. She is attractive and charming. Moorthy pays attention to her. There is just a hint of a love-affair between them. However, their love and liking for each other has not been properly developed. Ratna is a young educated and progressive women. Though she is a widow she does not dress and live in the conventional style of a widow. She wears bangles, coloured sarees and uses *kumkum* mark on her forehead and parts her hair. She is a rebel and defiant. She sees her husband only for a day and on this ground she does not consider herself actually married. Her case poses a social problem. She is the sponsor of a new ideas which liberate the Hindu widows from the shackles of wrong social obligations. She is also bold and witty in conversation and can hold her
own against heavy odds. She is much criticised for her unconventional ways but she pays no attention to such criticism. She chooses the path, treads it with confidence, firmness and determination.

She takes keen interest in the Gandhian movement. She is a source of inspiration and help to Moorthy. When Jayamachar, the Harikatha man is arrested, she conducts the Harikathas. After the death of Rangemma, she reads out the newspaper and other publicity material of the Congress for the benefit of the villagers. When Moorthy is arrested, she continues his work and serves as a leader. She imparts to the sevikas the necessary training. She displays great courage and resourcefulness in the face of government repression and police action. As a consequence she is dishonoured, beaten upon and sent to jail. But she suffers all patiently and unflinchingly. She comes out of the jail as a changed person. She becomes more humble and courteous to her elders but she is more matured and determined. When Gandhi goes to England for the Round Table Conference, Ratna is disappointed. She goes over to Bombay. Her letters reveal her admiration for Nehru, “The equal distributionist”.

She has the traits of leadership. She is noble, reasonably defiant, literate and forward. She has a certain dignity. But as a work of art her portrait is weak. It is not drawn at length. She has not drawn powerfully, not with a pervasive intensity. She has not been painted consummately by the novelist. She has been neglected for a long time in the novel and resumed only after an awkward interval. It would be difficult to call her a heroine. She is an occasional breeze in the hot house atmosphere in the novel. She is pure enough in her personal character. Even her character is thin, she catches our attention.

There are other major and minor characters in the novels as Patel Range Gowda, Bhatta, Narsamma, Rangemma, the Swami, the white owner of Skeffington Coffee Estate, Advocate Sankar, Badekhan, Waterfall Venkamma and Sahib, etc.

3.6.3 Check your progress.

A) Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. Who is the protagonist of the novel?
2. By whom Moorthy is inspired?
3. Does Moorthy meet Gandhiji personally or publically.
4. What type of person is Ratna?
5. Whose daughter is Ratna?

3.6.4 Answer to check your progress.

1) Moorthy  2) Mahatma Gandhiji  3) No
4) Very progressive widow  5) Kamalamma

3.7 PLOT CONSTRUCTION

*Kanthapura* is a novel in the Indian traditional way and it is not to be judged by western standards. The plot of the novel is made of a main plot and a sub-plot. The main plot deals with the impact of Gandhian movement on a remote south Indian village, Kanthapura. It is a village which is a microcosm of the macrocosm, for what happens in the remote village was happening all over India in those stirring decades.

The sub-plot deals with the happening on the Skeffington Coffee Estate in the neighbourhood. It turns a light on the exploitation and brutality to which the Indians were subjected by the foreign rulers. The two plots are fused into a single whole. Both expose the brutality of the Englishmen and the various ways in which they exploited the Indians. Later in the novel, the coolies of the coffee plantation join the *Satyagrahis* from Kanthapura in their *Satyagraha* outside the Toddy booth.

The plot has a beginning, a middle and an end. It begins with an account of the small south Indian village, Kanthapura, its locale, its crops, its poverty and the ignorant and superstitious nature of the villagers. The village is small but it is divided into a number of quarters – the Brahmin quarter, the Potters quarters, the *Sudra* quarter and the Pariah quarter. The society is caste-ridden and has its own local legends. Kanchamma is the village goddess. The characters in the novel play significant roles in action of the novel. The petty rivalries and jealousies of the villagers are shown powerfully. There is development of action with the arrival of Moorthy from the city. The action is centred round Moorthy. The action develops through conflict.

The plot of the novel is without any twist or trick. It is grounded on a plain level. There is hardly any suspense in it. The things inside the plot happen no doubt with a design. The singleness of locale makes the task of the novelist easier. The unity of action is well-linked. There is the rounded wholeness about it. It is one single mission that ignites the action and once generated it goes on unhampered. The Gandhian Movement is the spinal cord of the plot. The novel has the sketchy plot...
without any kind of frills. The hero once comes on the scene does not leave it till he
is arrested by police. He has to be there. He must be there because of the limited
scope of the novel. He causes action which catches others in its conflagration. The
action depends on the nature of the programme.

The entire plot is very simple. It has least complexity. It is by virtue of the
characters and their individuality that the novel prospers. To be frank, there is hardly
the plot of significance. Here are some dividing lines demarcating the incidents and
things happen in the middle of the novel. The plot does not disconnect it only fixes
the dividing poles in it. The plot is threadbare and thin. Plot loses its importance and
what counts is the picture of roused national consciousness presented through the
struggle in the village.

3.7.1 Check your progress.

A) Say the following statements are true or false.
   1. *Kanthapura* is a novel in the western traditional way.
   2. There are two plots in the novel.
   3. The main plot has a beginning, a middle and an end.
   4. The plot of *Kanthapura* is with a trick or twist.
   5. Gandhian movement is the spinal cord of the plot.

3.7.2 Key to check your progress.
   1) False   2) True   3) True   4) False   5) True

3.8 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* is a triumph of narrative art. It is perfectly suited to the
ends the novelist wanted to achieve. He admits in the beginning in his preface that
the telling has not been easy. This is so because he had to capture in English the
tempo of Indian life. The narration of the novel is straightforward and chronological.
There is no backward and forward movement as in a stream of consciousness novel.

The tale of the novel is not narrated by the novelist himself but by a persona
called Achakka. Achakka is an old grandmother, that most ancient of story tellers.
She is involved personally in the events which form the substance of the novel. She
narrated them years later for the benefit of a new comer. Thus the substance of the
novel is made of the stream of her members. She is a balanced women who has a sound common sense, she has a gift of shrewd and intelligent observation. Her personality colours the whole-non-co-operation movement, the brave resistance of the people and their consequent suffering. All is recollected and narrated by a naïveté which is not the novelist’s but the narrator’s.

Making the old woman the narrator enables the novelist to mingle fact and myth in an effective manner. For the old woman Jawaharlal is a Bharata to the Mahatma, the Mahatma who will slay Ravana so that Sita may be freed. For her Gandhi attains status of God and Moorthy is regarded as his *avatar*.

The second advantage derived by the choice of the narrator is that the language used by her which is of an elemental quality. Her reaction to things is direct and vivid. In the novel the constant shuttling back and forth in time is easily justified as an old woman’s leisurely manner of story-telling. The narrator provides a convenient point of view, though she is never sharply individualized. We know nothing about her beyond the fact that she is a widow and she has only son called Seenu. Seenu has given acres of wet land and twelve acres of wet land. This conveys the simplicity of the way of life where one’s property is measured not in terms of money but in terms of cattle and land. She is just one of the many women of the village who responded the call of Mahatma. She has unflinching faith in Kanchamma, she has respect for Rangemma and she has unquestioned affection for Moorthy and trust in him.

Achakka is both the narrator and the commentator. Her manner of telling the tale is characteristically Indian. It is feminine. It has spontaneity, swiftness, raciness and native vigour. Her telling a story has a puranic dignity. It is historical. The narrative is hardly very straightforward. There are involutions and digressions. There are meaningful backward glances. There are rheumatic chains of proper names, there are hypnotic repetitions, and refrains. There are also sheer poetic iridescences. Description of Kanthapura, its people and life makes us feel it as a tour de force, Achakka narrates and comments – her comments are shrewd and balanced which serve to place both character and incident in a correct perspective. Her comments are a constant check on over-idealization. They import realism and authenticity to the narrative i.e. “Rangemma did not understand all this, neither, to tell you the truth, did any of us”.
The story is narrated simultaneously on two levels. It acquires a dramatic character. Narration and description go hand in hand with a chorus like evaluation of character and action. Achakka’s evolutions are those of the novelist’s himself. They increase the readers understanding of events and characters. They serve as a unifying force in the novel. The narration is dramatic. It varies according to the requirements of the action and situations. The language, the accent, the tone, the tempo constantly keeps changing. Achakka is garrulous as a grandmother usual is. Words flow out of her mouth in quick succession. The sense of the largeness of their numbers is conveyed through a multiplicity of images and epithets.

There is a mingling of fact and fancy and sheer poetry comes out of the narrator’s lips in the following rhythmic account of the coming of Kartik, the month of the festival of lights. There is use of suspense in the narration, Moorthy is released from jail and the villagers wait eagerly for his arrival. Their suspense and their anxiety is adequately conveyed through the use of a repetitive language replete with a sense of urgency.

The narrative art of the novelist is the novel’s crowning charm. Achakka’s gossipy digressions and circumlocutions are in the old Indian tradition of storytelling. The novel acquires the epic dimensions. It is the epic of Indian Freedom Struggle.

3.8.1 Check your progress.

Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence:

1. Who is the narrator of the novel?
2. How is the narration of the novel?
3. What is mingled with the narration?
4. What role Achakka plays in the novel?
5. What is novel’s crowning charm?

3.8.2 Key to check your progress.

1. Achakka, the novelist’s persona.
2. Straight forward and chronological
3. Fact and myth
4. The narrator and commentator
5. The narrative art of the novelist.

3.9 SETTING OF THE NOVEL

The title of a novel should be apt and suggestive. *Kanthapura* is no exception to it. It is about a south Indian village named Kanthapura. Kanthapura is a village with all its living topography and the people are divided on the caste basis. The novel has a romantic setting with the classical ruggedness of the places surrounded it. It is a village in Mysore in the Province of Kera. It is situated in the valley of Himarathy. There is the cool Arabian, sea, up the Malabar coast. It is the agrarian village. The forests about the place add to the romantic tone of the village. Forests of teak and jack, of sandal and of sal. The passes and gorges are there. The romantic topography has the tragic centre in the peoples of various shades. The typical characters of the village express themselves on the scene. The streets in the village of the southern province have typical names based on the situation like the Main Street and on the vocation like the potter’s lane. The river Himarathy is of significance in the sense that it has been invested with the sacred grandeur by the locals of the village.

The topography of the village has the notable establishment in the name of Skeffington Coffee Estate which runs around to any distance. It rises beyond the Bebbur Mound over the Bear’s Hill. It is an accidental spot in the oriental setting of the novel. It is because of the presence of the European owner who is replaced by the lecherous nephew. The Estate swings round the Elephant Valley and rising to the Snow Mountains and the Beda Ghats. It follows on from the Balepur Tollgate Corner to the Kenchamma Hill, where it turns again and skirts Bhatta’s Devil’s fields and rises again and it lost amidst the jungle grown on the Horsehead Hill. Roughly one may say that it is at least ten thousand acres wide.

After giving the topography the novelist comes to the village itself. It has a complex structure. It has four and twenty houses in the Brahmin quarter. It has a *Pariah* quarter, a Potters quarter, a weavers quarter and a *Sudra* quarter. Hence the outlook on life too has been divided into two based on the caste division. Men and women of the *Brahmin* quarter maltreat and look down upon the *Sudras*, the persons of the Pariah quarters. The *Pariahs* are not allowed to worship in the temple of the *Brahmins*. 
The village and yokels of the village represent the mass mentality of the villagers everywhere. Range Gowda, Lingayya, Chandrayya, Ramayya and others are symbolic and characters who are simple and who have raw emotions. They are illiterate and hard working.

The village Kanthapura is shown as a model village which represents rural India in the political ferment. The social reforms occurs with are its pros and cons. The dynamism of Gandhi inculcates the spirit of righteous fight against the wrong. Their leader Moorthy is a sort of miniature Gandhi. He influences their aspirations for freedom of self and the country. Even he frees them from the bondage of Brahmanical tyranny. The element of social reform in the novel is strong and slow but steady.

Kanthapura is a model village which represents the social, domestic, agricultural and political attitudes. It is a socio-political and historical document during the Freedom Struggle of Mahatma Gandhi. Thus Kanthapura is not a novel dealing with the life and doings of Moorthy. It is a story of the masses of the village, of their suffering, of their exile, of their momentary defeat and the final victory. It ends with an account of their life in Kashipura. It gives us a sense of abiding fulfilment which they attain. Hence if there is any hero in the novel, it is Kanthapura itself and its people.

3.9.1 Check your progress.

Complete the following statements by choosing the correct alternative given below them.

1. Kanthapura is a village in _____.
   a) Mysore       b) Pune       c) Madras       d) Bangalore

2. Kanthapura is _____.
   a) an industrial b) agrarian       c) imaginary       d) an old

3. There are forests of _____.
   a) teak, jack, sal, sandal b) mango   c) apple       d) various woods

4. The river _____.
   a) Ganges       b) Kavery       c) Himarathy       d) Saraya
5. _____ is the name of the Coffee Estate.
   a) Tata  b) Skeffington  c) Madras  d) Red Label

3.9.1 Key to check your progress.
   1) a  2) b  3) a  4) c  5) b

3.10 Questions.
   1. Discuss Kanthapura as a regional novel.
   2. Do you consider Kanthapura as the microcosm of the Indian Freedom Struggle. If so why?
   3. Write a note on the depiction of women characters in Kanthapura.
   4. Write a short essay on use of myths by Raja Rao in Kanthapura.
   5. Discuss Kanthapura as a Gandhian Novel.

3.11 Further Reading:
Unit-4

K. A. ABBAS’s

Inquilab : A novel of the Indian Revolution

Contents
4.0 Objectives
4.1 Introduction
4.2 Vision of K. A. Abbas
4.3 Subject matter of the novel
4.4 The characters in the novel
4.5 Summary of the novel
4.6 Self – assessment questions
4.7 Glossary
4.8 Exercises
4.9 Activities/ Field work
4.10 Further Reading

4.0 Objectives :

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- understand Indian novelists in English
- understand the politics of the twenties
- know K.A. Abbas’s priorities as a writer
- focus on unity of cultures
- know communal issues
- know term ‘Indianization.’
- know that Abbas a writer for ‘Arts for life sake’.
- know Abbas as a leftist progressive writer
- know theme of Indian Freedom Struggle in Indian English Novel.
4.1 Introduction:

It is said that the great social, political or moral movements are sure to be mirrored in the literature of the nation. For example, Mahatma Gandhi’s struggle has important milestones like the Khilafat Movement (1920-21), the Satyagraha against the salt law (1930-31), the Quit India Movement (1942) and others till independence was achieved in 1947, and till the last evening when the bullet of an assassin cut short the life of the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

On the other hand a similar struggle for freedom was fought on a social plane also. That was a fight against superstitions, the caste system and untouchability, which have been shaping the very vitality of our society.

It would be futile to believe that this movement, this struggle which had caught the imagination of the entire nation should fail to inspire the Indian English writers.

The Indian English writers were and are educated on Western lines. Some of them had the benefit of education in England as well. Among the significant works inspired by Indion Freedom Struggle are the novels like, Inquilab by Khwaja Ahamad Abbas, Waiting for the Mahatma by R.K. Narayan, Kanthapura by Raja Rao, Mother Land by C.N. Zutshi, and novels of social injustice like Untouchable by Mulk Raj Anand and Into the Sun by Frieda H. Das, We Never Die by D.F. Karaka etc. The intention of writing in the introduction is to see how the national struggle is reflected in the significant works of K.A. Abbas. Apart from him there are a number of novelists who have produced the trend of patriotism in their novels. With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see his works and vision of writing.

Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, popularly known as K.A. Abbas, was born on 7th June, 1914 in Panipat (Harayana) and died on 1 June 1987. He hailed from a prestigious family. He was graduated from Allgarh Mulsim University. In his seventy two years life, he played a number of roles. director, screen writer, novelist, journalist and columnist. Throughout his life from 1935 to 1987, he was very active. In every facet of his career, he was very dynamic a prolific writer, and novelist. During his career of five decades, he wrote over 73 books in English, Hindi and Urdu. He was considered a leading light of the Urdu short story. His best known fictional work remains 'Inquilab', which is based communal violence, that made him a household name in Indian literature. The novel is written on the lines of Upton Sinclair. Like Inquilab, many of his works for were translated into many Indian and foreign languages such as Russian, German, Italian, French and Arabic.
Abbas interviewed several renowned personalities in literary and non-literary fields, including the Russian Prime Minister Khrushchov, American President Roosevelt, Charlie Chaplin, Mao Tse Tung and Yuri Gagarin. He went on to write scripts for ‘Jagte Raho’, and most prominent Rajkspoor films including Awaara, Shri 420, Mera Naam Joker, Bobby and Heena His autobiography, ‘I am not an Island: An Experiment in Autobiography’, was first published in 1977 and later released in 2010. He was recepient of many award and honours for his films and literary works. In 1969 ‘Padmashri’ was awarded to him. He was recipient of Urdu Academy Delhi Special Award in 1984, and Padmashri Award in 1969. He was honoured for his films and literary works.

Amir Ali and K.A. Abbas, the two Muslim novelists choose their characters in their works are from both Muslim and Hindus communities. Abbas’s numerous novels include popular film scripts. Among his less insubstantial books, Tomorrow is Ours: A Novel of the India of Today (1943) espouses several causes, including nationalism, Leftism, and denunciation of Fascism and untouchability. The protagonist Parvati devotes her dancing talents to the Indian People's Theatre and her doctor- husband goes off to China to tend the war-wounded. The novelist, too busy maintaining his Leftist stance, allows the action to be cluttered up with conventional twists and turns. Inquilab: A Novel of the Indian Revolution (1955) is a more ambitious work, offering a panorama of the Indian political scene during the nineteen twenties and thirties. The plethora of character and incidents allows little more than reportage, the realism of which is severely jolted by the unnecessarily romantic ending, where the protagonist Anwar is suddenly discovered to be the illegitimate son of a Hindu merchant. Inquilab is a urdu word.

In addition to his novels, he also wrote a number of short stories. He published three collections of short stories. The first collection appeared in the year of Indian Independence: “Rice and Other Stories” (1947). It is a collection of ten stories: ‘Rice’, Sparrows, Three Women, Sylvia ‘The Mark of Indian’, ‘Flowers for her feet, Reflection in a Mirror’, ‘Twelve Hours’, ‘The Umbrella and Saffron Blossoms’. Most of these stories can easily be called “progressive” though stories such as “Sparrows and Flowers For Her Feet” may require a different defining terms. This anthology was followed by ‘Cages of Freedom and Other Stories’ (1952). In it too, there are ten short stories: ‘The Sword of Shiva’, ‘The Madness of Man’, ‘The Lamp that Burns All Night’, ‘The Flag’, ‘Cages of Freedom’, ‘Father and Sons’, ‘The Miracle of Prajapur’, ‘The Man Who did not Want to Remember’, ‘Revenge and
Letter from a Child to Mahatma Gandhi’. Some of the stories are unmistakably didactic; some are love stories, while some deal with contemporary social problems. He published his third collection of stories in 1957 and called it ‘One Thousand Nights on a Bed of Stones and Other Stories’. This book too, has ten short stories: ‘One Thousand Nights on a Bed of Stones’, ‘Wheat and Roses’, ‘Maharaja’s Elephant’, ‘Cartoon’, ‘Evening in Paris’, ‘Dead Letter’, ‘Sparrows’, ‘The Mark of an Indian’, ‘Ajanta’, ‘Five Faces of Mother India’. There are eight stories in his ‘The Black Sun and Other Stories’ (1963). In this anthology, there are many stories which show him as a humanist and as a writer with a social conscience. In many of his stories he tries to suggest the shockingly wide chasm that exists between the rich and the poor in India. He was a regular writer of Blitz, one of the great journals of India. Articles such as “Art, Literature and the People” reflect upon his vision of life.

4.2 Abbas’s vision:

Being a leftist, Abbas did not believe in Art for Art’s sake. Being a journalist, he was much critical of the politics of his time. He was a committed writer. What he wrote in ‘Blitz’ (March 19, 1977) for his friend Krishna Chander, can be applied to Abbas himself. He parts:

I reminded him of the two windows in his hotel from where he wrote the story. One window framed the incomparable natural beauty of Kashmir and other window looked out on the backyard of the hotel with its accumulation of dirt, refuse and an unlovely display of poverty and destitution. He kept both windows of his room and his mind open at all times... but he was a lover – lover of nature, lover of his country and his people, lover of life and all its beauties and all its mysteries, lover of literature and language, lover of art and everything beautiful and artistic in life.

Abbas was peculiarly qualified to provide a convincing experimental texture to what he wrote. He lived through times of turbulence and momentous changes. Although it has often been alleged that he looked at life through the so-called progressive or leftist glasses, it should not mean that his literature belongs to the level of mere propaganda. Admittedly, his world view had a particular orientation, but it will be nearer the truth to place him in the humanist tradition rather than in the narrow tradition of Marxism. He did not write his novels and short stories to serve as artistic equivalents of Marxist theory. He felt for the underdog because he was a committed writer, committed in the sense that he believed that a writer must have a sense of social responsibility. In ‘I am not an Island’, he opines:
a literary career, unless one belongs to the class of ivory tower escapist, can be quite as thrilling and dangerous as that of a revolutionary or a professional soldier. And hazards of progressive literature are or were even greater in India than anywhere else in the world.

Despite its obviously flippant tone, the passage clearly underlines Abbas' priorities as a writer, he can not be an ivory tower escapist. In his novels and short stories, he does look through both the windows, but it is the “other” window opening on squalor and poverty on injustice and exploitation and on stupidity and madness that claims his attention the most.

The dividing line between a “progressive” writer and a propagandist is indeed very thin. Both Abbas and Mulk Raj Anand feel that a writer must not escape from the inconvenient realities of life. Abbas observes:

a leftward push made the writers socially conscious, made their writing more purposive and dynamic, integrally related to life and problems of the people under its influence. The archaic and reactionary theory of “Art for Art’s Sake” was totally rejected. The writers and the artists are being told that they have no social responsibility except to their own artistic egos and of course to the doctrine of Free Enterprise.

### 4.3 Subject – Matter of the novel:

‘Inquilab: A Novel of the Indian Revolution’ (1955) deals with the drama of the Indian Freedom Struggle. Venu Chitale’s In Transit (1950) and Khwaja Ahmad Abbas’s Inquilab are both heavily loaded with ore, but the art that transforms the raw material into the finished product is not fully in evidence. The action of Chitale’s novel spreads over the whole area of the Gandhian revolution, while Abbas’s confines itself to the twenties and the early thirties, the climactic event being the Gandhi Irwin Pact (1931). Chitale takes us to the heart of a Maharashtrian family caught in the revolutionary whirlwind; Abbas takes us to Delhi, Aligarh and the North, and concentrates mainly on the destinies of a group of Muslims.

Anwar, the Muslim hero, is a young student, is brought up in a Muslim family of Akbar Ali. He develops national consciousness and finds to his disgust that even his father is fanatical. Ultimately he discovers that he is born of a Hindu prostitute named Chhamia, and is fostered by his Muslim father to be “a strange symbol of unity, a human sangam in which such diverse streams of blood and cultures unite.”
4.4 The Characters in the Novel:

As this novel is more or less a historical chronicle, a host of characters have an entry in their own right. We can not expect, therefore, the well etched characters:

1) **Anwar**: the hero of the novel, son of Kaka Rameshwar and the prostitute, Chhamia Bai
2) **Kaka Rameshwar**: father of Anwar, a merchant
3) **Chhamia Bai**: the prostitute, mother of Anwar
4) **Phoophi Amma**: phoophi amma of Anwar
5) **Gulab**: the servant of poophi Amma’s family
6) **Sikh Jamadar**: a neighbour
7) **Akbar Ali**: Anwar’s godfather
8) **Dr. Ansari**: Doctor of Lahore, Anwar meets him at Lahore
9) **Anjum**: Anwar’s sister dies in her pregnancy
10) **Prof. Saleem**: Professor at Aligarh University.
11) **Salmah**: Prof. Saleem’s daughter
12) **Manzoor Ahmad**: Deputy Superintendent of Police, Guest of Prof. Saleem
13) **Rober Bills**: American Journalist
14) **Asha – Shah**: a Gujrati girl to whom Anwar saves
15) **Taya Amjad Ali**: uncle of Manzoor Ahmad
16) **Ratan**: anarchist, friend of Anwar
17) Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Motilal, Subhas Chandra Bose, Khan Abdul Gafarkhan, Bhagat Singh and a host of others make their debut in the novel.

4.5 Summary of the novel:

*Inquilab* is one of the popular novels of Khwaja Ahamad Abbas. The writing of the novel was started in May, 1942 at Bombay and was finished in May, 1949 at Cape-Camorin. It is a novel on the lines of Upton Sinclair’s World’s End. The novel vividly brings forth before our eyes dozens of momentous incidents that have been
engulfed by history. It is a novel of the Indian Revolution which started with the Khilafat movement and which ultimately brought Independence to India.

This political novel chronicles Indian Struggle For Freedom. The story starts with the year 1933. It describes a typical, Muslim upper middle-class home in Delhi. Anwar, the hero, is a young boy then. The description of Anwar’s household is very realistic. Phoophi Amma worrying about the boy’s health and Gulabo the servant telling the stories of houries to lull the boy to sleep are all wonderfully realistic.

In that household politics of the day his discussed by Anwar’s father and his friends. Anwar goes with his father to Lahore. Then we find a wonderfully realistic and vivid description of the massacre of Jalianwala Baag. The novelist describes the effect of the tragedy on Anwar:

“But some how the cry made him burn with fierce excitement, the hair on his body seemed to be pulled out of their boots, there was rush of blood his face and his head reeled as it had once reeled when he had got a sunstroke” (Inquilab, 37).

Anwar was completely disturbed. The incidents of Jalianwala Baag left deep wound in his heart. The novelist describes very vividly:

“It was a nightmarish experience for Anwar as he lay on the ground and watched the bloody drama. The rifles kept barking, the bullets came flying in an uninterrupted stream, men and women and children fell, there were screams and moans and groans. In their mad rush to the narrow exists people had left behind their shoes and turbans and even their dhoties, those who lay on the ground where running, and once Anwar’s leg was almost fractured as a heavy boot landed on it. Even for those who were able to reach the exists there was no escape. The Red-face ordered the rifles to be directed at them and they were mown down before they could pass through a safety” (P. 40).

The death of the Sikh Jamadar dying with his hands raised in salute puts a dramatic finish to that tragedy. Years passed by and Anwar becomes more and more nationalist minded.

Then comes the Khilafat Movement and Anwar’s father Akbar Ali is arrested. Time passes by and we are shown how Anwar sees the split between the Hindus and the Muslims growing wider. Then he sees Mahatma Gandhi at the house of Dr. Ansari. Anwar wants to express his feeling about khadi dress, Hindu-Muslim relationships, about the riots, and impact of atmosphere on friendship. The novelist
describes vividly:

“Nothing Anwar’s khaddar trousers and sherwani, Mahatma Gandhi was pleased and started talking of the importance of every one using hand–spun and hand-woven cloth—a subject on which he could talk for hours together! But what Anwar had come to talk about was the riots, only he did not know how to begin. As he listened to the talk on the importance of khadi, his mind wandered. He was thinking of all the horrible thongs he had heard about setting fire to each other’s houses and defiling each other’s places of worship. And above the low monotone of the Mahatma and the reen-reen-reen of the creaking spinning wheel, he heard again those fearful cries—“Maro! Maro!” and “Mardala! Mardala!” how could he convey the anguish of his Soul to the Mahatma? How could he tell him that he had a Muslim father whom he adored and a Hindu Kaka whom he had always been taught to love and respect as an uncle—and that the two were no longer friends as they had been all their lives up till now? How could he tell him about Gopal who, in spite of his faults was a good friend whom he did not want to lose and about Ratan and what his friendship with the Sikh boy had meant in his life? And now all these beautiful friendship were being poisoned by communal hatred. If only he could explain all this to the Mahatma! If only! But words failed him, his voice was choked, he felt helpless and miserable. He burst into tears.”

Then Anwar passes matriculation. At the same time his sister Anjum who is married young dies in her pregnancy. He takes her death as follows:

"If god so wills That was then the ultimate court of appeal. That was why his father spent so much time on the prayer-rug imploring the Almighty to spare his daughter's life. That was why Phoopi Amma even then, was tearfully mumbling the one thousand names of Allah, or her rosary of beads. Ya Qahar; ya Jabbar! ya Ghaffar! but God was benevolent and beneficent. He would never, never take away an innocent life like Anjum’s. At any rate, it was best for Anwar, to augment his father’s and aunt’s prayer with his own. Was he not told that Gods grant children’s prayers promptly because children are so innocent? So, thought he, his prayer will be granted the moment it is made!” (P.138).

Anwar joins the Aligarh University and there he falls in love with the daughter of Prof. Saleem. Salmah. Prof. Saleem hopes his son-in-law to be an I.C.S. Officer. But Anwar is too a nationalist minded refuses to become an officer of the British Government. On one occasion he meets Jawaharlal Nehru in the train. The novelist describes the meeting in following words:
“Our Jawahar! All over the country as in Aligarh young men spoke by him with a peculiarly possessive affection. He belonged to them, he was theirs! Anwar remembered seeing him that time in Doctor Ansari’s bungalow. He accompanied his grand old father, the silverhaired Motilal and the handsome and rather quiet young man’s personality on that occasion was somewhat eclipsed by the grandeur and brilliance of the elder Nehru. And yet Anwar had a fleeting impression of great power in that strong handsome face and the lean athletic body. Anwar regretted that he has missed that opportunity of cultivating the acquaintance of the younger Nehru, for since then he had become the idol of the young and the old”. (P. 200).

Ratan, Anwar’s anarchist friend, takes shelter at Aligarh and so the authorities debarr him from the college. Then Anwar gets a pass for Ratan to enter the Assembly Chamber at Delhi. With the help of that pass Bhagat Sing and his companions enter the Assembly building. The novelist describes the historic scene of Assembly with biting irony.

“Trades Disputes Bill under Fire,” but here there was neither fire nor, only a never ending, sleep inducing repetition of words, words and worlds. The only bright interlude was the spirited speech of the Opposition leader Pandit Motilal Neharu who looked an impressive figure in his tight fitting khadi silk sherwani and Gandhi cap. And then, the sleepy atmosphere, descended once more and Anwar was amazed to see that a member on the Treasury Benches, a fat red - faced English man, was actually snoring, while another English man sitting next to him was solving a crossword puzzle! And, behind them, in a solid phalanx sat the Nominated Members, those obedient souls who, on bill after bill, voted for the Government with robot regularity. They restively shifted from side to side waiting for the Division bell to ring when they would automatically walk into the 'Ayes' lobby and thus give an illusion of popular sanction to a law that was being imposed on the country to stifle all forms of agitation by the working class. And the only thing the representative of the people the Opposition could do to check this fraud, this tyranny masquerading as democracy, was to talk------ talk --- talk ---while no one listened!” (P. 232).

Bhagat Snigh throws a bomb in the assembly and courts arrest. Then comes the Lahore Congress where Nehru unfolds the flag and says:

“We have now an open conspiracy to free this country from foreign rule, and you comrades, our countrymen and countrywomen are invited to join it. But the rewards that are in store for you are suffering, imprisonment and, may even be death. But you shall also have the satisfaction that you have done your little bit for India,
and have helped a little in the liberation of humanity from its present bondage” (P. 238).

Subhas Chandra Bose, Khan Abdul Gafarkhan and other leaders also figure in the novel. The trial of Bhagat Singh is vividly narrated. Anwar almost quarrels with Manzoor who is Prof. Saleem’s guest, a police officer on the question of national movement. He differs with Salmah and both are separated from each other.

Anwar’s father believes in the Muslim League as Anwar believes in the Congress. Anwar is sick. When he recovers, Dr. Ansari recommends him to work as an interpreter for an American Journalist, Robert Bills. Both of them participate in the memorable Dandi March. The Dandi March is described as follows:

“They arrived just in time as the Mahatma was expected to start on his march that very night and the whole city was in a turmoil. The programme had been announced in advance and made known to the “enemy”. The police knew the number and names of the satyagrahis who would be in the Gandhi Army, the 200 mile route of their March to Dandi on the sea and the village where they would halt on the way! This was a new kind of army waging a new kind of war and their was no precedent in military history for these tactics and strategy. A new word was required to describe it – Satyagrah! Insistence on Truth! It was in fact the “Battle of Truth” (P. 238).

In Bombay Anwar sees a lathi charge and saves a Gujarati girl: The novelist postrays the inhuman and cruel act of the British in following words:

“Anwar had heard and read about lathi charges but, to him, they had been a mechanical objective phenomenon – evil but impersonal. What he saw now with his own eyes he could no longer regard as impersonal. Every blow fell on the head or chest or back or legs of someone who was a son and a brother, a friend and a comrade, a husband or a sweetheart of someone. There was a story in every blow that fell, a story of suffering and heroism! What kind of stuff were these volunteers made of – these Akalis and Pathans Gujaratis and Maharashtrians that they could stand this merciless beating without running away, without flinching, without even turning their faces? They were common, humble men – clerks and students and shopkeepers and mill hands – but they were proving that they could be heroes” (P. 299).

The Gujarati girl Asha Shah takes Anwar to her home. Where Anwar meets her mother and thereafter others who are all engaged in the struggle for nation. He also
meets her father, a calculating capitalist. Anwar hears the news that Salmah is married to Manzoor Ahmad, Deputy Superintendent of Police. The political atmosphere is full of despair. His uncle Taya Amjad Ali accompanies his father, addresses a fiery public meeting and stirs up communalism.

Anwar delivers a speech which is contradictory to his uncle. When they go to home, his uncle angrily criticises that Anwar after all has proved his kafir’s blood. He announces at last that he is a son of Kaka Rameshwar and Chhamia Bai a prostitute. Anwar rushes out of his home and goes to that the prostitute’s house. But he is shy and she tells him:

“Go home son”. “That is what she had called him. He had been called that by many affectionate people, by Akbar Ali who, till an hour ago, had been his father, by Rameshwar who had known him all along to be his son, and by Ma – ji in Bombay. But the word has never sounded so sweet, so tender, so full of life’s most elemental emotion, as when it was uttered by this degraded woman, this agent of Satan, this daughter of sin and this mother of his! (P. 332)

Then he returns to Akbar Ali and rushes into the waiting arm of Akbar Ali! The historical novel ends thus; The publisher’s blurb rightly points out:

“Inquilab is the story of the great revolution that ultimately brought Independence to India. It contains several soul – stirring characters young in mind and spirit who poured their bubbling youth to twist and break the heavy chains of imperialism. It represents a magnificent cross – section of the entire Indian- nation during its most critical period”.

4.6 Self Assessment Questions

A) Answer the following questions in one word /phrase /Sentence each:

1) What is the full name of K.A. Abbas?

2) What is the meaning of Inquilab?

3) For which films of Rajkaoor K.A. Abbas wrote scripts?

4) When K.A. Abbas was died?

5) Give the title of the autobiography of K.A. Abbas?

6) How does Anjum die?

7) Who is Robert Bills?
8) What is the name of Prof. Saleem`s daughter?

9) Why is Bhagat Singh arrested?

10) Why does Anwar quarrel with Manzoor?

11) Who gives a light work of journalism to Anwar?

12) Who are the real parents of Anwar?

13) Who is Gulabo?

(B) Choose the correct alternative:

1) Padmashri was awarded to K. A. Abbas in ..............
   (a) 1969 (b) 1986 (c) 1980 (d) 1965

2) `I am not an Island : An Experiment in Autobiography` was published in
   (a) 1977 (b) 1987 (c) 1965 (d) 1982

3) K.A Abbas received Urdu Akademi Delhi Special Award in.
   (a) 1984 (b) 1985 (c) 1983 (d) 1965

4) Anwar falls in love with -----
   (a) Salma (b) Ashu Shah (c) Anjum (d) Mumtaz

5) The title of the novel, *Inquilab* is a ________
   (a) urdu word (b) Persian word (c) Hindi word (d) Arabic word

(C) Fill up the blanks:

1) K.A Abbas was born in ---------
   (a) 1914 (b) 1987 (c) 1913 (d) 1915

2) K.A Abbas was born in ---------
   (a) Lahore (b) New Delhi (c) Aligarh (d) Panipat

3) K.A Abbas did his B.A. from -------
   (a) Delhi University (b) University of Lahore
   (c) University of Agra (d) Aligarh Muslim University

4) The novel, *Inquilab*, is written on the lines of -------
   (a) Hemingway (b) Faulkner
   (c) Upton Sinclair (d) Fitzgerald

5) The hero, Anwar, and his household comes from -------
(a) a down trodden class       (b) An aristocrat Class
(c) Upper – middle class       (d ) a backward class

Model Answers of Self Assessment Questions:

(A) 1. The full name is Khwaja Ahmad Abbas.
2. Inquilab means a revolution, a struggle for freedom
3. *Awaara, Shri 420, Mera Naam Joker, Bobby* and *Heena*.
4. 1st June, 1987
5. ‘I am not an Island : As Experiment in Autobiography.’
6. Anjum dies in her pregnancy.
7. An American journalist
8. Salmah
9. Bhagat Singh throws a bomb in Assembly
10. Manzoor,
11. Dr. Ansari
12. Kaka Rameshwar and Chhamia Bai
13. Gulabo, a servant at Anwar’s home.

(B) 1) a,        2) a,      3) a,        4) a,  5) a
(C) 1) a,        2) d,      3) d,        4) c,  5) c

4.7 Glossary:

- **To reel**: whirl round and round
- **trample**: tread heavily or ruthlessly on
- **fracture**: the act of breaking or the state of being broken
- **Implore**: beseech; entreat, pray for
- **To augment**: make or become greater
- **Eclipse**: to dim or obscure, hide, conceal
- **Phalanx**: a dense formation of heavy infantry.
● **Illusion:** a false or misleading idea
● **Bondage:** compulsory servitude
● **Turmoil:** confused motion, disturbance
● **Brandish:** wave or flourish triumphantly
● **Prostitute:** a woman who engages in sexual intercourse for money.
● **Pour:** move in great numbers
● **Bubbling:** form or rise in bubbles
● **Imperialism:** A policy that aims at creating an impire comprising other nations, all controlled by a central Government.

4.8 **Exercises:**

1. What is the significance of the title ‘Inquilab’?
2. What is Khilafat Movement?
3. What do you know the massacre of Jalianwala Baag tragedy?
4. What is the effect of Jalianwala baag massacre on Anwar?
5. What did Anwar want to say about friendship to Mahatma Gandhi?
6. Why does Anwar weep when he wants to speak about communal harmony?
7. What does Anwar want say about the friendship with Gopal and Ratan?
8. What is the reaction of Anwar in regard to communal hatred?
9. How does Anwar react the death of his sister, Anjum?
10. What is the impression of Anwar about Nehru?
11. Why is Ratan debarred from Aligarh University?
12. Why is Bhagat Singh arrested?
13. Why does Anwar quarrel with Manzoor?
14. Why does Anwar break his relation with Salmah?
15. What do you know about Dandi March?
16. What is the reaction of Anwar about the lathi-charge?
17 What is the reaction of Anwar in regard to his uncle’s speech?

18 How does Anwar react when he learns that he is the son of Rameshwar and Chhamia Bai?

19 Make a list of Indian words used in the novel.

4.8.1 Broad Questions with Answers:

1. Discuss ‘Inquilab’ as the story of the great revolution that ultimately brings Independence to India

   **OR**

   Discuss *Inquilab* as a political novel

   **Ans.:** The entire fight for freedom is the plot, a kaleidoscopic panorama of fast moving events each one episodic in nature and yet properly adjusted and “composed” in the general pattern of the Indian Freedom Movement! In selecting the story of the Indian National Struggle for Freedom Abbas seems to have well kept in mind the advice of Henry James: “Do not let any one persuade you --- that strenuous selection and comparison are not the very essence of art, and that Form is (not) substance to that degree that there is absolutely no substance without it. From alone takes, and hold and preserves, substance saves it from the welter of helpless verbiage that we swim in as in a sea tasteless tepid pudding, and that makes one ashamed of an art capable of such degradations ---There is nothing so deplorable as a work of art with a leak in its interest; and there is no such leak of interest as through commonness of form.” And as we read *Inquilab* we known that there is no ‘leak’ in its interest.

As the freedom movement gained momentum in the Indian sub – continent, politics became an important feature of literary works in the early decades of the 20th century. After World War I Indian English fiction emerged as a distinct literary type with politics as a staple in its content. It reflects the socio – political ferment in all its dimensions. The National Freedom Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi called up a sensitive response in the novelists of period. From the twenties onwards, therefore, the Indian English fiction shows a marked impress of Gandhi’s philosophy and personality. The novels of the late thirties and forties reflect the influence of political parties on Indian ethos and the role of Indian National Congress under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

The critical years between 1935 and 1947 constitute a significant phase in the
development of Indian fiction. Some of the best known political novels or novels with political undertones are: Mulk Raj Anand’s *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938), Ahmad Ali’s *Twilight in Deihi* (1940), Sir Firoz Khan Noon’s *Scented Dust* (1942), Khwaja Ahmad Abbas’s *Tomorrow is Ours*, Bhabani Bhattachary’s *So Many Hungers* (1947), Amir Ali’s *Conflict* (1947).

With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see *Inquilab* as a political novel. *Inquilab* is one of the political novels which reflect on the political movement of twenties and thirties. The very blurb of the novel points out the leading theme of the novel:

“Inquilab is the story of the great revolution that ultimately brought independence to India. It contains several soul-stirring characters young in mind and spirit who poured their bubbling youth to twist and break the heavy chains of imperialism. It represents a magnificent cross-section of the entire Indian nation during its most critical period.”

The blurb makes it clear that the novel is not merely a political novel. It has different layers of meaning. The novel contains a gallery of pen-portraits. *Inquilab* turns out to be a powerful novel so realistic that several of the elder readers may perhaps find a reflection of their own aspiration of those glorious days.

On the surface level, it is the story of Anwar and his love for Salmah, the daughter of Prof. Saleem at Aligarh University. Since Anwar has his own principles, he does not compromise with Prof. Saleem and Salmah marries Manzoor Ahmad, Deputy Superintendent of Police. On the deeper level, it is the story of Struggle for Freedom.

First, it is to be noted the whole novel speaks of the great departed leaders. Lokmanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Motilal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Patel brothers and many others that are living today. Each one of these leaders is represented in his own ideological setting ultimately indicating how the course of the National Movement was influenced by each of them at different times.

Secondly, the struggle for Independence had its own landmarks. The impact of Gandhiji’s personality may be felt in passive Resistance Movement against the Rawlett Act in 1919, the Khilafat and non-violent, non-cooperation Movement of 1920-21, Salt *Satyagrah* and Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930. All the movements propelled by Gandhian philosophy of truth and non-violence found expression in the works of contemporary Indian novelists. The rise of Muslim League as a political
party representing Muslims of the sub-continent added a new dimension to our Freedom Movement. In addition to these movements propelled by Gandhi, there are The Jallianwalla Baag incident, the No - tax Campaign in Gujarat, the mammoth processions, the innumerable lathi charges and heroic sufferings that are all so vividly portrayed that Inquilab becomes a living monument to the great fight for Independence. Thirdly, in a lucid and picturesque style and with an unusual warmth and sympathy, Abbas proceeds with the narrative from which emerge more than a dozen of powerful and unforgettable characters – Anwar and Ratan, Akbar Ali and Kaka Rameshwar Dayal, Amjad Ali and Rauof, Salmah, Raaz, Osman, Subban, Roy, Yeshwant, Asha Shah, Prof. Saleem, Mazoor Ahmad, Dr. Ansari, Anjum and, many more.

To sum up, it is to be noted that the theme of Struggle for Independence has become obsolete. Yet the novel is still remarkable for its lucidity of style, and vivid characterization.

2. Write short notes on:
   1. The Significance of the title Inquilab
   2. Anwar

   1. Inquilab : K.A. Abbas was fond of using urdu words in English just like Mulk Raj Anand using Hindi words. Inquilab is a word that means a revolution, a political revolution, people struggling for their independence.

   The novel has three important themes - the political theme, the historical theme, and the love story of Anwar and his Salmah, the daughter of Prof. Saleem of Aligarh University. The very blurb of the novel points out the theme of the novel.

   The struggle for Independence had its own landmarks. The Jallinwalla Baag incident, the No - tax Campaign in Gujarat, the Dandi March, the Civil Disobedience Movement, the mammoth processions, the innumerable lathi charges and heroic sufferings are all so vividly portrayed that Inquilab becomes a living monument to the great fight for Independence. Abbas describes vividly the scene of the young and old fighting for their independence:

   “The hundreds of thousands of souls, young and old alike that jumped in this all - enveloping sea had a ravishing feeling. None was quite sure of the duration of the fight. The resurgent waves of storm subsided and the sea would be clam. The momentary vanishing feeding was gone and the lives that had thrown themselves in
the rushing torrent were floating helter – skelter. The ideal is always so near yet so far! Anwar and Ratan, Akbar Ali and Kaka Rameshwar Dayal, Amjad Ali and Rauof, Salmah, Raaz, Osman, Subban, Roy, Yeshwant, And Asha – these are the souls, young and old whose lives are moulded by the great force and when the resurgent waves subsides they float on the calm ripples, undirected and unguided, being led by a dizzy current to a destination unknown. In a lucid and picturesque style and with an unusual warmth and sympathy Abbas proceeds with the narrative from which emerge more than a dozen of powerful and unforgettable characters. The political theme of the novel reminds us more than a dozen novels.

(2) **Anwar:**

The story is very well told although the author’s aim is to link up the memorable pages of the Indian Struggle for Independence round the figure of an imaginary, nationalist Muslim youth, Anwar. As we read the novel we know that Anwar has his parents and a sister, Anjum, who dies in her pregnancy. After his matriculation, he joins Aligarh University for his further study. At Aligarh University, he falls in love with Salmah, the daughter of Prof. Saleem. Prof. Saleem desires his son – in – law to be an I.C.S. Officer. Anwar is more interested in politics than to become an officer of the British Government. Anwar meets a number of political stalwarts like Nehru, Motilal, Gandhi, etc. Anwar almost quarrelles with Manzoor Prof. Saleem’s guest and a police officer, on the question of national movement. He breaks his relationship with Salmah. In Delhi, his father in the Muslim League as Anwar sides with the Congress. Anwar is sick and so when he covers Dr. Ansari recommends him as an interpreter to an American Journalist, Robert Bills. Both of them take part in the memorable Dandi March. In Bombay Anwar sees a lathi charge on the people and saves a Gujaratil girl, Asha Shah. The girl takes Anwar to her home. Then he meets her mother and thereafter others who are all engaged in national cause. He also meets her father, a calculating capitalist. Anwar hears the news that Salmah is married to Manzoor. The political atmosphere is full of despair. His uncle Taya Amajad Ali accompanies his father, addresses a fiery public meeting and stirs up communalism. Anwar delivers a speech that contracticts his uncle. When they go to home his uncle angrily criticises Anwar a *kafir*. He announces that he is the son of Kaka Rameshwar and a Chhamin Bai prostitute. Anwar rushes out of his house and goes to the prostitute's house. But he is shy and she tells him “Go home son”. Then he returns to Akbar Ali and embræees him.
4.9 Activities / Field Work:

1. Try to collect the novels written on the Indian Freedom struggle.
2. Make a brief review of Indo-Pak Partition Novels?
3. Interview a Freedom Fighter, about the national heroes and Indian Freedom Struggle.

4.10 Further Reading:

Unit-5

Bhabani Bhattacharya’s A Goddess Named Gold

Index
5.0 Objectives
5.1 Introduction
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  5.2.1 Life and Works of Bhabani Bhattacharya
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5.0 Objectives
After studying this unit you will be able to:
understand the features of Bhabani Bhattacharya as an Indian novelist in English
• explain plot construction of ‘A Goddess Named Gold’
• find relationship between major themes and the author’s point of view
• know about Bhattacharya’s art of characterization and narrative technique
• learn about Indianness and Bhattacharya’s devices of allegory, symbolism, irony etc
• list the various aspects of the novel.
5.1 Introduction

This unit acquaints the students with one of the most celebrated, prolific Indian writers in English known as Bhabani Bhattacharya and his novel ‘A Goddess Named Gold’ (1960). In the detailed study of this novel, they will learn about Bhabani Bhattacharya as an artist, his art of characterization, narrative technique, style, use of imagery, allagory, symbolism, irony etc.

5.2 Subject Matter

5.2.1 Life and works of Bhabani Bhattacharya:

Bhabani Bhattacharya was born on 10th Nov. 1906 in Bhagalpur, Bihar. At an early age of 12, he wrote his first article in a Bengali magazine ‘Mouchak’. His father was a District and Session Judge who wanted Bhabani to prepare himself for government service. Bhabani was educated at Patna university and took his BA degree in 1927. He then prosecuted his advanced studies in the University of London (1929-1934). After his BA degree from the London University in 1931, he was awarded Ph.D. degree on historical research in 1934. He married Salila Mukherji in 1935 and was blessed with three children, a son and two daughters. He acted as secretary, Tagore Commemorative Society, New Delhi, in 1959-60. He received the Sahitya Akademi award in 1967 for his novel ‘Shadow from Ladakh’.

Bhattacharya is an outstanding Indo-Anglian novelist of the present times. His works include Tagore’s translations entitled ‘The Golden Boat’, ‘Towards Universal Man’ a commemoration volume published on the eve of the birth centenary of Tagore. His famous novels are – So Many Hungers (1947), Music for Mohini (1952), He who Rides a Tiger (1954), A Goddess Named Gold (1960), Shadow from Ladakh (1967), A Dream in Hawaii (1999). His wide range of experience in and around the world and his close association with men, manners and their personalities have enabled him to grasp the innate significance of humanity and all this finds expression in the characters of his novels and short stories.

‘A Goddess Named Gold’, his 4th novel, written in 1960, is the best novel on Indian village life and makes a most illuminating and satisfying reading experience. It is a masterly satire on those who live by the lure of gold. It tells how high spiritual values like spontaneous kindness are sought to be prostituted for purpose of gold. It
is a modern fable of rural India and close-textured fabric of its life on the eve of independence in 1947.

★ Check your progress

I. Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. Where was Bhattacharya born?
2. What was his father?
3. When did he obtain Ph.D. degree?
4. What is the name of Bhattacharya’s wife?
5. When did he receive Sahitya Akademi Award?

II. Fill in the blanks

1. He wrote his first article in a _____________ magazine.
2. He took his BA degree from Patna University in _________.
3. ‘A Goddess Named Gold’ is written in ________.

★ Key to check your progress

I

1. in Bhagalpur, Bihar
2. a District and sessions judge
3. 1934
4. Salila Mukherji
5. 1967

II

1. Mouchak
2. 1927
3. 1960

★ Glossary and Notes

- **Illuminating**- lucid, clear
- **Inferior**- lower in rank.
- **Remote**- distant, far away.
- **Profile**- brief biography.
5.2.2 Chapter-wise summary

Chapters 1 to 10

I. The opening chapter describes a certain mood and atmosphere. Lakshmi peered out of the door, cautioning her son Nago, flying a kite, to keep himself away from the well. She found five young woman came there seeking her cooperation. But she expressed her inability stating that a woman had no strength to defy the house-hold king. There were protests and suggestions Meera, the youngest of the battle group suggested that Lakshmi should mix chilli powder in his bath-oil so that it would smart him. Lakshmi reminded them of her part played in the Independence struggle when Gandhiji touched and awakened their spirits. They participated in the Quit India movement then. Lakshmi, pregnant at that time, marched with Nago in her womb, The women recalled to their memory.

In the beginning Lakshmi, the rich man’s wife, was away from them. But she became the true friend and sister in the prison. In the prison, she yielded herself to the spell of Meera’s Grandma. Then she became close to the Cartman’s wife Sohagi. She had gone to prison with two hundred others except her husband. Though it was declared that he was away on a business trip, people of Sonamitti were certain that he was in hiding. Lakshmi knew that the scarcity of the clothes was because of her husband who stored the cloth. Making use of the sari shortage, he had cornered the supply and pushed up prices. Lakshmi stated that the price was abnormal, five times more than the original price. The Sethji was adamant. She couldn’t resist him. He married her because of her beauty and because of a rare star-conjunction in her horoscope. She was one at heart with those village women after her release from the prison. Her home was their meeting place. There was a patch of land between the house and the shed. It was because of the shed that they gave themselves the name ‘Cow-house Five’ though there were six of them including Lakshmi. Bulaki Rao, the assistant at the cloth store had given peeled off saris, and dhotis to Lakshmi, at her bidding. The women of the village were ready to fight for it. They had decided to take Lakshmi with them. As she tried to open her mouth, they heard a cry from the yard. They came to know that Nago had fallen into the well, while flying the kite.

II. Lakshmi became panic stricken. Meera jumped into action. She brought the child on her back. The women wept in their relief. Lakshmi, with Nago in her arms,
staggered off toward the house. Lakshmi had brought a saree and asked Meera to wear it by changing her wet clothes. But Meera preferred to get dried up in the sun. At midday, all women lifted banners and started shouting slogans that they demand cloth to wear. The village constable Hoosiar Singh barred their way, asking them whether they had a permit. But they were all united. Meera with the banner in hand, repeated the slogan “we demand cloth to wear” four or five times. The Seth came out and asked one of them to step into his shop to have a talk. Meera stepped inside. The Seth was not rude and angry. He had already heard about his son’s rescue. He praised her as the pride of the village. But his manner changed as soon as the subject of cloth came up. He said that business was business. Then Meera used her weapon that a hundred women would strip themselves bare. Lakshmi requested Meera to permit her to be one with them. The Seth saw her in their company and asked his wife not to plead on their behalf. He was amazed to find her dressed in tatters. He ordered her to go home but she emphasized that unless he had sold the cloth at a fair price she would strip herself naked. But he would not yield. He gaped at his half-naked wife. He asked his assistant Bulaki Rao to give away the saris.

III. Seth's spirit was sunk in gloom. He thought that glory was also a solid investment. Elections to the District Boards after freedom were to take place shortly. Sonamitti would exclusively elect a member. He had several shops in the country side, but his crowning achievement was Gay-peacock-House in town. He continued the father's business of money lending too. Even Meera's grandma borrowed money from him. He was a diplomat. He announced that the women would not be admitted to the picture-play.

IV. The anger of the cow-house five was mixed with despair. They felt that it would be matter of success for them even if ten women attend the picture show. Lakshmi told them that her husband was a monster. There was a letter from grandpapa informing his arrival on Thursday the 23rd of that month. He visited them 3 years ago. Grandma was away because of the gout from which she was suffering. Meera lost her parents and was reared up by Grandma. The Grandma was busy making preparations on the eve of the arrival of her husband. Meanwhile they heard cries of children shouting vote for Samsundarji. They were asked at school to do like this with the promise of a feast for them on the coming sunday. She came to know that Samsundarji was no other than Nago's father, popularly called the sethji. The Halwai,
selling sweetmeats, was leading a lonely life after the death of his wife. His two daughters Tuti and kuti were married off. Meera playfully spoke to the Halwai that the Grandpapa will do a miracle for him by converting his sweetmeats into silver.

V. The Minstrel will sing a bhajan. Atmaram, the minstrel entered the village in the early hours wandering around, his voice beating on every house-door. He called Meera ‘beta’ (son) & not ‘beti’ (daughter). They began to cut jokes at him. Later, Meera said that the Bhajan and picture-play would take place in the same hour. He moved into the fields. He observed the various plants and appreciated Meera for her Part as a farmer.

VI. Raghuvir was the childhood companion of Meera. The minstrel announced that he had a wonderful gift, to be offered to Meera, which would bring her great power.

VII. He tied the red string of the taveez to her upper arm informing her that the taveez had a powerful touch-stone. If she does an act of real kindness, all copper on her body will turn to gold.

VIII. He made her understand that if it was parted from her arm, the touch-stone would be dead and become a worthless pebble. Moreover, the minstrel made it clear to the seth that he would got it at the appropriate time.

IX. One day he met in the bus Bajoria, a tradesman who had several toddy shops in the countryside. In the course of the conversation Bajoria referred to the taveez or the touchstone. But he tried to divert the topic & felt asleep. At the tea-shop he observed an idol, the gold goddess. It was a metallic one. He thought that its appearance was the shadow of his dream to be realised.

X. He went to automobile dealer & took the moter-cycle and drove on it with the help of the driver named Sohanlal, 23 years old & unmarried. Meera was named after Meera Bai, the great poetess of the old-time.

★★ Check your Progress

I. Answer the following questions in one word, phrase, sentence each.

1) Who is Lakshmi?
2) Who is Bulaki Rao?
3) What is announced by the Minstrel?
4) What is the profession of Hoosiar singh?

II. Choose the correct alternative
1) The Minstrel called Meera ____________.
   (a) beta     (b) beti     (c) Ladli     (d) Ladla
2) Bajoria had several ____________ in the countryside.
   (a) rice shops  (b) toddy-shops  (c) grain-shops  (d) vegetable shops
3) Sohanlal is ________ old driver.
   (a) 21 yrs.  (b) 20 yrs.  (c) 23 yrs.  (d) 27 yrs.
4) ________________ was the childhood companion of Meera.
   (a) Raghuvir  (b) Sethji  (c) Sohanlal  (d) Bulaki Rao

★ Key to check your progress
I. 1. Wife of Seth Samsundar
   2. The assistant of Seth Samsunder
   3. That he had offered a wonderful gift, to be offered to Meera, which would bring her great power.
   4. The village constable.
II. 1. (a) Beta
   2. (b) Toddy-shops
   3. (c) 23 yrs.
   4. (a) Raghuvir

★ Glossary & Notes
- **tatters** – to tear into pieces.
- **monster** - a huge creature.
- **panic** - over powering fright
- **stagger** - to make helpless
- **horoscope** - appearance of heavens at the hour of one's birth
- **pebble** - a small water-worn stone
**Chapters 11 to 20**

**XI.** The entire village had come to know that Meera's grandma had a ride on Sohanlal’s vehicle. His father also was a motor driver. But he became a victim to an earthquake in Bihar. Sohanlal was wounded in the war. He began to recollect his experiences in the war. There was the fear of gangrene. His mother was ailing from tuberculosis. Luckily the penicillin, a drug arrived and sohanlal was saved.

**XII.** The Seth threw his bait to the villagers that three month's remission of interest would be granted to them if he was elected to the Board. Grandma suggested that they should have their own man on the board.

**XIII.** The biographical sketch of each borrower was written in the red ledger of the Seth and their chapters would be closed, when they lost their assets. Grandma's position was miserable. The Seth looked at the gold ring on Meera's finger & snatched it. He was amazed to find that the copper had turned into gold on her finger and that it was a miracle.

**XIV.** The Seth began to discuss within himself about the pros & cons of the amulet and he knew for certain that an act of real kindness was the key to the great mystery. He talked about the deal of the taveez and Meera would get share of fifty-fifty basis as profit. Then he referred to the secret or and the touch stone. She repeated that it was 'kindness'.

**XV.** This chapter describes the encounter between Meera & the Seth. She was put a question as to what she would do if she got ten thousand rupees. She answered that she would buy a motorcycle & go to Bombay, pay off the debts, buy also land. All her problems were solved.

**XVI.** Different opinions were expressed about the Seth. Meera made it clear that there would be no trouble for their land as the Seth had already signed a bond with them.

**XVII.** The Halwai wanted the Seth to enter into a contract with him and that he would get his ten percent share. The Sethji was resentful but kept quiet as Meera would perform the miracle. All the people of Sonamitti would be anxious to see the transmutation of copper into gold.
XVIII. When sohanlal asked Meera as to what she would do if her whole body was converted into gold ornaments. She began to explain that there was no headache as bad as money. She gave ex. of Buddhu, who was nibbling the puri slowly. He saved as his portion of food for his mother. This was indeed a kind act on the part of Meera. She made it clear that one should earn money by sweat of labour.

XIX. The taveez on Meera’s hands would speak for every one of them in Sonamitti. Different persons with different needs looked upon Meera for timely help. Meera has just to perform an act of kindness.

XX. This Chapter describes a deal between the Seth and Janardan Jain. The Seth was not willing to have a partner. Then Jain requested the Seth to permit him to make some investment in the venture. But the Seth would not yield.

★ Check your progress

I. Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence each.

1. What was Schanlal’s father?
2. What is a miracle seen by the Seth?
3. What was the secret of the touchstone?

II. Choose the correct alternative

1) Schanlal’s mother was ailing from --------
(a) Tuberculosis, (b) gangrene, (c) fever, (d) Heart attack.

2) Schanlal’s father became a victim to an earth-quake in --------
(a) Delhi, (b) Bihar, (c) Sonamitti, (d) Mumbai.

3) The Seth talked about the deal of the --------
(a) Gol ring, (b) copper ring, (c) Taveez, (d) string.
II. 1. tuberculosis
2. b. Bihar
3. c. taveez

★ Glossary & Notes

- **Anxious** – weary in mind
- **Miracle** – a marvel, a wonderful event.
- **Resentful** – easily angered
- **Nibbling** – to bite gently
- **Transmutation** – Changing into a different form.

**Chapters 21 to 34**

**XXI.** This chapter describes the gossip which is spread by the village barber. He informed grandma that Meera was going to be married with the sweet meat owner Halwai. But Meera simply listened to what all was said & remained a silent spectator to the happenings there.

**XXII.** One after another came to Meera & asked her to wear the coin on her body offering it to her. She should place them in contact with her body. When they were turned to gold, they would be divided equitably among all the households. People wouldn’t mind Meera buying land, houses & property. She might wear jewels & even might go in for a motorbus. They only wished for the miracle to happen.

**XXIII.** This chapter describes real kindness. Kindness should have a natural impulse. If it is planned and intentional, it loses its value. A self-less and spontaneous act of kindness should be done. Meera helped the old father & his wife who were in misery.

**XXIV.** Subhadri demanded Meera to give her piece back. She didn’t want her piece to be turned to gold. Meera became angry. She met the rag-woman on the way. She felt pity for her. She should be shown kindness. But that would not happen. The old woman simply moved away from the spot.

**XXV.** Only five paise were left on Meera’s body. Meera was not the maker of circumstances, but its victim. Meera regretted much for having worn the taveez which brought her scorn & resentment. But Sohanlal gave her all encouragement.
She has no hunger for riches. According to her, the touchstone belongs to everyone in the village.

XXVI. Bulaki Rao made a funny conversation with his friend Sohanlal about the possible spouse, the pipli-woman. The Seth gave Sohanlal a month’s notice to leave his service. Sohanlal slowly moved away.

XXVII. This Chapter describes the incident regarding the boy, little Buddhu who had fallen into the well. Meera, Sohanlal, Bulaki Rao etc. tried their best & finally Buddhu was saved. But it was all contrived and not real act of kindness. Meera felt unhappy about the way things were being tackled.

XXVIII. The Seth was mad about the touchstone. He began to admire Lakshmi for her fairness. Lakshmi had already heard the story of the partnership of Meera & the Sethji & that Meera would give away the gold to the people.

XXIX. Lakshmi saw Meera heavily adorned with ornaments. Meera asked Lakshmi about real kindness. But she said that Meera had the great man (the sethji) to help her.

XXX. Lakshmi saw her only hope in the Cow-house Five. They wouldn’t tolerate the effigy of Meera to be burnt. They wanted to tackle the Halwai. They thought of wearing masks & eating his sweet-meats. They were sore at him because he was about to burn the effigy of the young girl as he could not marry her. They would go there secretly & catch the effigy. Grandma’s reaction to the effigy took an unexpected turn. She came forward & began to narrate the story of Meera. An old man pleaded on behalf of Meera and Grandma dropped the effigy. Thus she was saved.

XXXI. The Seth had been losing heart. He was worried that nothing was happening. The minstrel made it clear that one specific act of kindness would bring about the miracle. It was to be real kindness. The minstrel was waiting for the result. Grandma wanted them to write back a reply that the touch-stone had acted and the copper ring on the Meera’s finger had turned into gold.

XXXII. The Seth had good reason to be pleased with himself. Meera had at first flared up at the Drunk marriage proposal. The Bad woman of pipali & the Drunk were to be married. It was to be an act of mercy and the minstrel would endorse it.
XXXIII. The minstrel arrived early at dawn. Meera wore no other ornaments except a ring. It had to be turned into gold. According to the instructions of the minstrel Lakshmi was asked to give a gold ring to Meera slip it on to her finger, as she lay asleep. She had been longing to see Meera wear gold. Grandma was very serious. Meera gave up fighting the Seth. She became friendly with the tyrant. She thought that there would be no need of the District Board when once the gold was won. The village people developed only hate & anger & her effigy was about to be burnt. Meera was firm in her belief. She came home without ornaments. She remaind a simple girl with her simple needs. But the taveez was still on her arm. The minstrel’s voice throbbed with feeling and the girl (Meera) shivered a little. The strong moonlight caught her body and illuminated her face. With a sudden jerk of her hand, she bared her right arm, pulled at the red string of her taveez until it snapped. The same moment she flung the taveez far into the river. The minstrel, who watched all this, nodded his head contentedly.

XXXIV. The news electrified the village. In the hour of fulfilment, the touchstone had gone. Meera’s friends wished that she should be theirs again. Grandma & the members of the Cow - house Five were ready to listen to the song that the minstrel would do to the village about freedom. The Seth came to know that the taveez was gone. Although he had lost the battle for gold, the battle for power could still be won. He would give Grandma’s fields back to her and a half - year's remission of all debts in order to get the support of the minstrel. The minstrel began to announce that freedom was the touchstone for everyone. He made it clear that since they got freedom, they should do acts of faith. Then only their lives would be turned into gold. He further said that miracles would not drop upon us. It should be created with love and with sweat. Freedom is the means to that end. The people demanded the minstrel should stay on but he said that he was a wandering man. Meera looked at the Seth. The Seth too sat in calm splendour.

★ Check Your Progress

1) Answer the following questions in one word, phrase or sentence each?

1) Who has spread the gossip regarding Meera’s marriage?

2) What is the announcement by the minstrel at the end of the novel?

3) Who flung the taveez far into the river?
II) Choose the correct alternative.

1) """" should have a natural impulse.
   a) Kindness  b) Positiveness  c) Nervousness  d) Forgetfulness

2) """" has no hunger for riches.
   a) Grandma. b) Subhadri c) Meera.  d) Janaki.

3) """" had fallen into the well.
   a) Ram  b) Buddhu  c) Sohanlal  d) Bulaki Rao

4) Freedom was the """" for every one.
   a) touchstone  b) amulet  c) taveez  d) string

★ Key to check you progress

I) 1. The village barber.
   2. Since they got freedom, they should do acts of faith. Then only their lives would be turned into gold.
   3. Meera

II) 1) a. Kindness
    2) c. Meera.
    3) b. Buddhu.
    4) a. touchstone

★ Glossary & Notes

- Ef**f**gy - an image
- Nodded - to make a slight bow
- Remission - lessening
- Flung - to throw
- Shivered - to shake with cold or fear.
- Impulse - a thrust
- Splendour - glory, great brightness
5.2.3 Summary (The Story in Brief)

B. Bhattacharya's fourth novel 'A Goddess Named Gold', written in 1960, is the best novel on Indian village life and makes a most illuminating and satisfying reading experience. It is a masterly satire on those who live by the lure of gold. It tells how high spiritual values like spontaneous kindness are sought to be prostituted for purposes of gold. It is a modern fable of rural India and the close-textured fabric of its life on the eve of Independence in 1947.

Meera's grandfather, a wandering Minstrel gives her an amulet and tells her that it will acquire the power to turn base metals into gold, if she does an act of real kindness. She rescues a child. Seth Samsunderji seeks to profit out of India's new found freedom and enters into a business deal with Meera on a fifty-fifty basis. Meera gets disgusted with it finally and throws the amulet into the river. The Minstrel returns soon and explains that freedom is the real touchstone.

5.2.4 Major Themes

1. The theme of man's quest for gold:

Apparently, as the title denotes, the novel 'A Goddess Named Gold', deals with man's lust for gold, power and possessions. Throughout the novel, man's quest for gold is repeatedly brought out, though at the same time it is frequently satirized.

The Seth, a great merchant of the village of Sonamitti, is an incarnation of love for gold. Ironically and symbolically, he is the husband of a lady named Lakshmi who never bothers about gold even as much as an ordinary woman does. She is an embodiment of love for all and that is why Grandpapa observes: "Lakshmi, there is no gift as precious as your love". But her husband, the Seth is always mad after gold and wealth. He is tirelessly busy with increasing his margin of profit and amassing wealth in every possible manner. Business is business for him, and there is no place for soft sentiments in his world. When he comes to know that Meera is endowed with the power of turning copper on her body into gold with the help of the amulet given to her by her grandpapa, the Minstrel, he spends a lot of money on her in order to possess more and more gold. Knowing that "gold has the last word" in this world, he watches Meera "with his enormous hunger" & does his best to get as much gold as possible through her magic amulet. But the truth is that innumerable people are
possessed with the hunger for gold. However the novelist shows that there are men and women like Meera Bai and Lakshmi who crave for love & not for wealth.

The novelist reveals his belief that man's hunger for gold is not an end in itself and therefore, should not be considered all important.

2. The theme of Indian village life:

The novelist has truly depicted the caste differences and superstitions, evils of dowry, bribery etc. prevailing in Indian villages.

The Halwai, a middle-aged man of the village Sonamitti, longs to marry young Meera, but the caste system is in the way. Though he knows that their castes differ and so the village will not sanction their marriage, yet he believes that his wealth can enable him to overcome the caste barrier. Therefore, he tells Meera that there is a way to get themselves married, he can make the five elders overlook their caste difference by paying them money. The Seth also knows well the power of gold to enable man to work a miracle and attain to great heights.

Superstitions oppress the villagers as much as casteism. They are obsessed by the fear of apparitions visible at certain places in the night. The Seth, who is more enlightened than most of the illiterate villagers, is terribly frightened when one night he has to pass by a neem tree supposed to be haunted by the bhootni, a female apparition. There are numerous other references to the apparitions in the novel. We read how the villagers utter the sacred name 'Ram - Ram' not only to greet each other but also to hold evil spirits at bay. It is their superstitious ideas which lead them to believe in the miraculous power of the taveez given to Meera by her grandfather. The villagers’ faith in the horoscope is also brought out in the novel. Then there is the description of the marvelous legend of the talking goat.

The novelist artistically touches on the evils of dowry and bribery. There is a reference to an unfortunate old woman who has to suffer excessively because she cannot manage dowry for a daughter. We read in the novel of the building contractors' dishonesty resulting in substandard buildings and bridges.
Check your progress

I. Answer in a word / phrase /sentence:
1. What is the main theme of the novel?
2. What are the evil things which cause a lot of misery & hardship to Indian families?
3. Who knows well the power of gold?
4. Which thing oppresses the villagers as much as caste?

II. Choose the correct alternative:
1. There is the description of the marvellous legend of the --------
   a. talking goat  b. talking tiger  c. talking horse  d. talking elephant
2. The villagers utter the sacred name ------------
3. A ------------------ supposed to be haunted.
   a. mango-tree  b. mango-grove  c. banyan tree  d. neem tree
4. The villagers faith in the ----------- is also brought out in the novel.
   a. horoscope  b. taveez  c. ghost  d. amulet

Key to check your progress

I. 1. man's quest for gold
    2. dowry and bribery
    3. The Seth.
    4. superstition

II. 1. talking - goat
    2. Ram - Ram
    3. Neem tree
    4. horoscope.
5.2.5 B. Bhattacharya's Art of characterization and sketches of characters.

1. Bhattacharya's Art of Characterization:-

The characters presented by Bhattacharya are a cross-section of the rural and urban setting. He has a keen eye for situations and characters and he takes up varied aspects and themes. He is not just satisfied with presenting a superficial view of life, but he goes into the depths of the stark realities of life, and it is this realism that lends a special significance to the political and the social background of his novels. He is mainly concerned with the history of not one man but with the destiny of the society as a whole and man's relation to other individuals in the society and the sense of adjustment and reconciliation.

Bhattacharya's art of characterization again is seriously affected by the novelist's didactic intention. Meera herself is a breath-taking combination of intelligence, generosity, patriotism - and stupidity. She is a heroine only up to the moment that she goes to the Seth in response to his summons in order to discuss their mortgaged land, but a mere stuffed puppet after she enters into the strange contract with the cormorant and begins playing the fool. The reader shares the sorrow and disappointment of Sohanlal at the spectacle of her folly. The old Minstrel himself is a bundle of contradictions. Samsunder, the Seth, is nothing but a caricature of the greedy exploiter. The life of Lakshmi, another female character in the novel is dedicated to the same aim like Meera's scarification for the sake of the people. In the gallery of female characters created by Bhattacharya, Lakshmi distinguishes herself with a strong consistent character. While portraying Lakshmi, the novelist strove to create not so much a realistic character of a woman of new India, as to enshrine in its his
own ideal. There are major and minor characters in the novel. Samsundar, Meera, Lakshmi, Minstrel (Atmaram), Grandma, the Halwai, Bulaki Rao, Sohanlal, Janardan, the barber, the members of the Cow - House Five etc. Meera is the protagonist of the novel. The major characters are Samsundar, Meera, Lakshmi, Minstrel. The remaining other characters are minor characters.

2. Sketches of Characters

1. **Meera:** Meera is the protagonist of the novel. She is ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of the people. She has a kind soul and a brave heart. From her grandfather she has got a talisman as a present which possesses a miraculous quality; at the time of every good act, the brass ornaments which Meera wears, are converted into the gold ones. And brass ring on her finger becomes golden. Meera desires to bring happiness to everybody. People bring brass ornaments to her and she herself wears them on her body, being exhausted with weight. But this does not bring happiness to the inhabitants of the village. The very thought of gold makes the former friends enemies. All her friends begin to misunderstand her as all her activities are towards the possession of that precious metal & Meera becomes the 'Gold - goddess'. But it turns out that there was no miracle whatsoever. It was the grand-father of Meera who had put on her finger the golden ring while she was sleeping. The ring was given by Lakshmi, the mother of the child whom Meera had saved. The story of the grand-father sets Meera free from fallacy and she decides to dedicate her life to struggle for real happiness of the people for freedom.

   Meera embodies the goddess Annapurna to whom all the poverty-stricken people look for sustenance. The real goddess fighting against the powers of gold had to join hands with the devotee of the Gold - goddess and that is what produces a dichotomy in Meera's character. She was not a maker of circumstances but its victim.

   Meera, the heroine of the novel, had to live amid tragic circumstances of life. Her father died of snake-bite and the mother died of grief before the child had learnt to set up. Her grandfather was a minstrel & she lived with her old grandmother. Yet she was not depressed and gloomy and had an affirmative attitude towards life. It is the courage of the women of Sonamitti under the leadership of Meera that helps them to liberate themselves from Seth Samsundarji.
2. **Lakshmi**: Lakshmi, another female character in the novel, plays a very significant role. She presents a contrast to her husband in her dealings with men & matters. Her home "Cow - house Five" is a respite from toil and she becomes a true friend and sister in the prison. It is really a critical situation for Lakshmi to deal with delicate matters between her husband on the one side and her intimate friends on the other. She finds herself placed between the devil and the deep sea, between Scylla and charybdis. But whenever the situation warrants, she does not hesitate to defy the will of her own husband. She joins hands with her associates and impresses upon her husband not to add further disgrace but sell clothes at a fair price. She joins the procession crying ‘vote for Grandma, vote!’ This rebel woman bends Samsunder under her stubborn will. Lakshmi’s case is unusual because she and her husband are poles apart in temperament and outlook.

Lakshmi distinguishes herself with a strong and consistert character. She never bothers about gold even as much as an ordinary woman does. She is an embodiment of love for all and that is why Grandpapa observes: "Lakshmi, there is no gift as precious as your love". But her husband, the seth is always mad after gold and wealth. She craves for love and fellow – feeling. She is a noble woman respected by everyone in the village. She is devoted to the welfare of the common folk of Sonamitti and is ever busy in doing something or other for the people. Right from the day of the freedom movement, she is essentially good and a great nationalist, while her husband, the Sethji is wicked and unpatriotic. Yet they live together under the same roof, thus bringing about the novelist’s belief in the importance of adjustment in life. Lakshmi is ever grateful to Meera for rescuing her son Nago, without getting drowned in the well. She gives a gold ring to Meera, without her knowledge, by tying it to her arm. She is thus grateful and liberal to Meera in particular and to the people in general.

3. **Samsundar**: Samsundar, the Seth, is nothing but a caricature of the greedy exploiter. Samsundar, who is known as the seth or sethji, is a cloth merchant and money-lender. He is a worshipper of Mammon and has avoided taking part in the nationalistic movement. Having a monopoly of the cloth -trade in the group of five villages to which Sonamitti belongs, the Seth controls the market so efficiently that no ordinary villager can afford to buy his requirements of cloth. The procession and
the slogan-shouting have no effect on the Seth. Even Meera's threat to strip herself
doesn't intimidate him.

When Meera is at the shop, the Seth makes the discovery by chance that the ring
on her finger is gold. The Seth's fertile brain begins to work and he formulates a plan
to explore Meera's possession of the amulet. The Seth makes experiments to know
what is meant by acts of kindness. Among the calculated and elaborately staged acts
of kindness arranged by the seth, is the distribution of sweets to all the urchins
employed by him for his election campaign. Typical of the Seth's Machiavellian
approach is his attempt to create the right atmosphere for an act of kindness by
Meera, by threatening to erect old father and his family from their ancestral home.

The Seth confuses it with planned acts of charity and goodness. According to
him, two things are needed for the materialization of the profitable plan of turning
copper into gold-first the raw material and second a power source- respectively the
copper and the act of kindness. He finally comes to the conclusion that kindness has
to be a natural impulse & that is why he devises plan after plan for moving Meera to
a spontaneous impulse of kindness. At the end, his various plans of charity and
compassion prove to be sheer mockery of real acts of kindness. Lakshmi, his own
wife who knew him more than anyone else, says of him that "He is a monster". The
Seth wanted ‘the new wealth out of habit, the habit of getting rich, richer’ and
making money was his duty as it were which ‘alone gives his life its meaning and
value’. His deeds and thoughts symbolize the blind principle of capitalism which is
at the root of all exploitation.

4. Minstrel: Atmaram, the Minstrel is an unusual character and he plays a
vital role in this novel, which deals with India's freedom. He, the wandering Minstrel
gives his granddaughter, Meera an amulet which will have the power to transmute
base metal into gold provided. She also does an act of kindness. But to the
disappointment of Meera and the Seth the amulet does not produce the desired result
because she enters into a profit contract with the seth on a fifty- fifty basis. Naturally
Meera throws the taveez into a river in utter disgust. At this moment, the Minstrel
appears in the village of Sonamitti and interprets the symbolism of the amulet. The
Minstrel is the mouth piece of the writer.
In Atmaram, the Minstrel, we see the synthesis of the tragic and the comic, dream elements and practical wisdom and social and unsocial elements. His life is both happy and unhappy, and he composes and sings tragic as well as comic songs. His giving Meera the amulet is an act of practical wisdom. Escaping from life, he would live on the mountains for months together. However, he takes an active part in the Freedom Movement. He emphasizes the fact that freedom is the touchstone and it is a touchstone for everyone. To him, freedom means something having spiritual content. Towards the end of the novel, the minstrel explains the symbolism of the taveez that the freedom which they are celebrating is the real touchstone.

5. Minor Characters: There are several minor characters like Grandma, the Cow-house Five, the Halwai, Bulaki Rao, Sohanlal, Tanaradan, the barber etc. They play a major and significant role in the development of the novel. Thus, the novelist makes the novel highly readable with the introduction of the minor characters who do well in shaping the events.

★ Check your progress

I. Answer in one word/phrase/sentence:
1. Who is the protagonist of the novel?
2. What is the profession of Samsundar?
3. Who is Lakshmi?
4. From whom Meera got a talisman?

II. Choose the correct alternative:
1. Meera has rescued Lakshmi’s son-----------
2. Samsunder is known as -----------
   a. the sahib  b. the seth  c. the Halwai  d. the spokesman
3. ----------- is the mouthpiece of the writer.
4. ----------- is a minor character in the novel.
5. Lakshmi says of her husband that, ‘he is a -----------------------’.
   a. good man     b. monster     c. gentleman     d. foolish.

★ Key to check your progress

I. 1. Meera
   2. A cloth - merchant, money lender
   3. Wife of Samsunder, the seth
   4. Her grandfather.

II. 1. a. Nago
   2. b. The seth
   3. c. The minstrel
   4. a. Bulaki Rao
   5. b. Monster

★ Glossary & Notes

- **Protagonist** - Chief person in a story and a factual event.
- **amulet** - a talisman, a charm
- **Mockery** - a false show, a bad imitation
- **Urchins** - a small boy
- **impose** – a thrust

5.2.6 Technique & Symbolism used in the novel

1. **Narrative Technique in the novel:**

   The narrative technique used is the same as employed in the other novels. The point of view is that of the omniscient author. The structure of this novel is no doubt, compact. It is a novel of multiple themes. A synthesis of several themes has been achieved so as to produce an artistic unity. The action takes place at Sonamitti.

   There are thirty-four chapters in the novel and each chapter is an entity in itself. Except for the continuity maintained from chapter 19 to 28 dealing with a series of
incidents in finding the nature of real kindness, the remaining chapters are disjointed. The novel is steeped in realistic atmosphere and the characters are full-blooded and we come across most of them in our day-to-day lives. The sethjis are not uncommon, although such Meeras are rare and such Lakshmis are rarer still. But the atmosphere acts in unison with other narrative elements which help the author to present a personal vision of life. There are only a few descriptive passages which are hardly vivid and graphic. The novel starts with Meera's rescuing Lakshmi’s son and Lakshmi’s gratitude.

The readers’ attention is focused on the trinity -Seth Samsundar, his wife Lakshmi & Meera. In the sub-plot, Meera and Sohanlal have a pretty part to play. The minstrel, absent or present, has a pervasive influence on the events of the novel. To him, freedom means something having spiritual content. It is not an escape form responsibilities.

Dialogue is amply and justifiably used in this novel, especially in the conversation of the villagers and the members of the Cow-house Five. It is through this vehicle of expression that the characters are realized. The novelist shows skill in drawing the portrait of Seth who reminds us of Shakespeare's shylock.

Bhattacharya shows special art in naming his novels. There is always deep significance besides its surface meaning. ‘A Goddess Named Gold’, is not exceptional in this sense. Sonamitti means golden soil or the land of gold. He declared the underlying truth of the title through the mouth of Meera. Gold has material & spiritual implication. On the material Plane, it means both power & possessions. On the spiritual plane it stands for purity, integrity and dignity. It is in the later plane that the inner significance of the title ‘A Goddess Named Gold’ is to be carefully understood.

The theme of the Indian life and man's quest for gold is not the only theme of this novel. Several themes are interwoven in this novel. The theme of freedom to be free. Woman's search for identity, contrast between reality and fantasy, the theme of synthesis etc. are some of the themes of the novel. To bind all these themes together Bhattacharya has used a very effective narrative technique. The story moves at two levels simultaneously, sometimes at the level of allegorical, fantasy and sometimes at
that of realism. The fantastic events in a village named Sonamitti, a little before Independence day, artistically reflect the novelist's resplendent vision of life.

2. **Symbolism in the novel:**

   As the novelist has chosen an oblique way of conveying meanings in ‘A Goddess Named God,’ he makes considerable use of symbols. The amulet itself is the most prominent of the symbols and its symbolism is explained by the Minstrel at the end. Gold is a symbol at two levels - the material and the spiritual. At the material level, it stands for both power & possessions. At the spiritual level, it stands for purity, dignity & goodness. The gold that the Minstrel wants Meera to own is of this kind.

   There are a few other symbols employed in the novel and two of them refer to the exploiters of society greedily wanting to devour whatever they could seize. One of these is a spider that the Seth watches in the act of ensnaring a red ant. The Seth is fascinated by it ostensibly because he feels a secret sympathy with it. Another symbol which, incidentally, is more effective because the symbolism is left unexplained is a snake which has half devoured a frog. This occurs in the very appropriating context of the expulsion of old Father from his house by the Seth.

   The act of real kindness related to the enactment of the miracle of the touchstone, is another symbolic idea which embodies the employment of freedom in the cause of human welfare. The touchstone symbolizes the hopes of Meera, the villagers on the one hand and the selfish designs of the greedy seth, on the other. Hopes of all are tied to the touchstone, Meera's grandfather the minstrel, too, is more a symbolic voice than a flesh & blood character. The agreement between meera & the seth symbolizes the reconciliation between the wellmeaning idealist and the evilminded selfish materialist.

   Some symbolic situations & experiences have also been employed in the novel to strengthen its allegorical pattern. The piling of copper ornaments & coins on the person of Meera which adds an element of extravaganza to an allegorical plot, is also highly symbolic.
★ Check your progress.

I. **Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.**
   1. How many chapters are in the novel ‘A Goddess Named Gold’?
   2. On which trinity, the reader’s attention is focused?
   3. What is the material symbol of gold?
   4. Where does the action of the novel take place?

II. **Choose the correct alternative.**
   1. The novel, ‘A Goddess Named Gold,’ starts with ………
      a. Grandma's rescuing Lakshmi's son.
      b. Meera's rescuing Lakshmi's son & Lakshmi's qratirude.
      c. Sohanlal's rescuing Lakshmi's son
      d. The barber's rescuing Lakshmi's son.
   2. The touchstone symbolizes --------
      a. The hopes of meera & the selfishness of seth.
      b. Selflessness of seth
      c. Selfishness of grandfather
      d. Selflessness of Lakshmi
   3. At the spiritual level, gold symbolizes-----
      a. power & possessions
      b. power & purity
      c. purity, dignity & goodness
      d. dignity & power

★ **Key to check your progress**

1. Thirty-four
2. Seth samsunder, his wife Lakshmi & Meera.
3. power & possessions.
4. Sonamitti.

II. 1. b. Meera's rescuing Lakshmi's son & Lakshmi's gratitude
2. a. the hopes fo Meera & selfishness of seth.
3. c. purity, dignity & goodness.

★ Glossary & Notes.
- enactment - The passing of a law.
- greedy - wishing more than one's share.
- interwoven - mingled.

5.3 Exercises

A) Broad Questions
1. Write a note on Bhattacharya's use of allegory in ‘A Goddess Named Gold’?
2. ‘Bhattacharya has interwoven various themes in the novel ‘A Goddess Named Gold’ with one another to create a single design’, explain it.
3. Bring out the significance of the title of the novel.
4. Bring out the principal traits of the character of Lakshmi in ‘A Goddess Named Gold’.
5. Discuss the structure of the novel ‘A Goddess Named Gold’

B) Short notes
1. The end of the novel
2. The character of Minstrel [Atmaram]
3. Symbolism in the novel
4. The character of Grandma
5.4 Books for Reference


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6.0 Objectives

After completing the study of this unit you will be able to-

- know about the life and works of Manohar Malgonkar
- know about the aspects of Malgonkar’s novel *A Bend in the Ganges*
- understand novel type or the novel
- know what is non-violence and violence.
- know about the conflict between the non-violence and violence real and unreal.

6.1 Introduction

This unit discusses the life and works of Manohar Malgonkar, one of India’s first writers of fiction. He was a retired colonel in the Army. His romantic adventure novels have few equals in Indo-English literature. He is a prominent Indo-English novelist and is known as ‘down-to-earth teller of tales’. He has written several books in English which include novels, collection of short stories, histories, works of non-fiction and a play. The present unit offers a detailed summary of the novel ‘*A Bend in the Ganges.*’ (1964). This will help you to understand the plot, the story and various themes handled in it. The ‘reading of this unit will assist you to read the original novel.
6.2 Life and Works of Manohar Malgaonkar

Manohar Malgaonkar is one of the better known Indo-Anglian novelists of the Post-Independence period. His novels mark a reaction against work-a-day social realism. Romanticism is their key-note, however they are rooted in authenticity and sound historical sense. According to Malgonkar they are close enough to pass for straight history. He is not only a novelist of Indian life and history but also a novelist with a concern for universal value. He worries about the decline of old values, the destructive forces in human nature, violence and revenge.


Though Malgonkar’s literary output is limited, his achievement in the fictional and the empirical modes of creation is superb. He successfully transmitted ‘felt experience’ into art. So as his work appears to be authentic. His own diverse experiences in the fields of big-game hunting, civil service, army, business and politics helped him catch the ‘color of life’ especially of the upper strata. Now we will take a brief review of his selected novels.
1.  **Distant Drum (1960)**

Malgonkar’s first novel *Distant Drum* derives from his personal experience as an army officer. It is thematically based on the partition of India in 1947 and its repercussion on the society of India and Pakistan. It deals with the story of two friends Kiran and Abdul who prefers to be settled in Pakistan. But co-incidentally they are posted against each other on their respective borders during Indo-Pakistan war. After cease fire they meet each other for a while and soon separate from each other to discharge their duties and it is the most touching scene in the novel. The novel is rendered in two movements. The first movement covers Kiran’s relationship with Bina Sonal, his service at the procedure-bound D.W.P office, and his active service in the Kashmir front which ends up in cease-fire before fire broke out. The second movement gives an account of Kiran’s growth as a soldier and his moral maturity. The movement includes the incidents like Manners episode, Margot Hedley affair, Kiran’s training at the Dehradun school, the Twin Pagoda Hill attack, the Burma War, the Delhi riots – all reflecting in many ways Kiran’s growth as a soldier and his moral maturity. The novel is autobiographical, as he has presented his own experiences through Kiran.

The novel is an epitaph for the Britisher’s Indian Army and symbolic presentation of existing politics in British Army and the life of Indians serving in it. The novel also has the cultural clash between two cultures i.e. Hindu and Muslim in it.

2.  **Combat of Shadows (1964)**

*Combat of Shadows* presents lively pictures of pathetic life of the labourers of tea-plantations of Assam. It is a sensitive portrayal of an Anglo-Indian girl’s search for indentity in the rapidly crumbling British India. It is also a saga of the moral disintegration of a European on Foreign soil. The novel is also the story of the woman of self-respect and Independence. The theme of the novel is fulfilment through revenge. The novel throws light on conflicts of master and labourers in lively manner. The woman protagonist in the novel Ruby Miranda gives up her Anglo-Indian lover Eddie Trevor to fulfil her longing to become a memsahib in the world of the British, but when she learns that Henry Winton has cheated her, she plots to take revenge on Henry Winton for his ruthless betrayal and duplicity. In the
development of her character finally she appears as a woman independent and stubborn character.

3. **The Princes (1943)**

   ‘The Princes’ is an absorbing account of the princely life in India. It is regarded as the most authentic record of the predicament of the princes, it is probably the most widely-read novel abroad. It exposes the princely ways, their vanities and peculiarities. It thrown light on the ills of princely courts degenerated into centres of intrigues and luxuries. Malgonkar encounters the problem of fusion of art and history in fiction. A character of the novel, Kanakchand describes those people who lead reformist movements against monopoly of powers and corruption in politics existing in those days. The hero of the novel is Prince Abhay Raj of Begwad state whose father Moharaja Hiroji is maghanimous and *annadata* (food-figer) of the *Praja* of Begwad. The theme of the novel is fulfilment of desire in various forms that makes life tragic and human.

4. **The Devil’s Wind (1971)**

   The Devil’s Wind is a historical novel based on the life of Nanasahib, the controversial figure of the historic Sepoy Revolt of 1857. The novel records the conflicting feelings of its characters like Aji Mullah Khan, Zeenal Mahal Azizan, Hussini Begum, Ms. Silvia Boltin, Nanak Chand and Jung Bahadur. It also throws light on the private life of Nansahib. It is a record of religions and cultural conflicts in existing communities – Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians.

5. **Open Season (1978)**

   Open Season was written originally as film story. Later on it was made into a novel. It is a novel depicting the manners and mentality of an orthodox Brahman family. The hero Jaikumar, while living in America for higher studies forgets his traditional cultural backgrounds for some days. The novel depicts the cultural encounters between the East and the West. Vegetarian Brahmin boy becomes a non-vegetarian and is addicted to drinking and loves an American lady. His father is shocked at his son’s behaviour and expresses his anguish.

6. **Sea-Hawk (1969)**

   Sea-Hawk is more a biography than a novel. It is about glory of military services in India. It describes the fascinating life and battle of Kanhoji Angrey, an
Admiral, who offered formidable opposition to his enemies. It is a historical novel highlighting the glorious past of India and the Freedom Fighters who fought against Britishers for liberation of India.


*The Men who killed Gandhi* is one of the best novels of Malgonkar which investigates the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. It gives details about the conspiracy of Nathuram Godsey and his fellowmen to kill Gandhi and actual murder of Gandhi. The story is authentic and exciting.


*The Garland Keepers* is Malgonkar’s latest novel. It is based on the Emergency during the period of Late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi. So far as his historical works is concerned: *Kanhoji Angrey*, *Puarus of Dewas* and *Chattrapatis of Kolhapur* authentic historical works and reveal Malgonkar’s keen and powerful sense of history. He successfully creates the the real life of the past through his knowledge of various princes, soldiers, British Officers and Anglo-Indians. He analyses characters and events in a detached manner.

### 6.2.1 Check Your Progress

**A. Answer in a word / phrase / sentence**

1. Where was Manohar Malgonkar born?
2. When did Malgonkar join Indian Armed Force?
3. Which post did Malgonkar held at the time of his retirement from Army?
4. Which is the only detective story written by Malgokar?
5. Which is the first novel of Malgonkar?

**B. Match ‘A’ with ‘B’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>Distant Drum</em></td>
<td>a) account of the princely life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>The Princes</em></td>
<td>b) a screen play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>A Bend in the Ganges</em></td>
<td>c) historical novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <em>The Devil’s Wind</em></td>
<td>d) autobiographical novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <em>Shalimar</em></td>
<td>e) the best book of the year 1964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Key to check your progress.
A) 1. The princely Jagalbet Tal. Joyda, Dist. Karwar
2. 1942
3. Lieutenant Colonel
4. Bandicoot Rum (1977)
5. Distant Drum (1960)
B) 1-d, 2-a, 3-e, 4-c, 5-b,

6.2.3 Glossary
- **Princely State** – a small state ruled by a member of royal family or a king.
- **Conspiracy** – plot

6.3 A Brief Introduction of the novel.

*A Bend in the Ganges* attains universality and epic grandeur. Malgonkar explores the deeper issues of human nature. The novel is illustrative of his art. In it he explores non-violence, violence and affirmative vision through the resources of a romantic novel. It is an illustration of his vision of human nature. The other recurrent element in the novel is theme of revenge. Theme of violence is another theme.

It is forth novel published in 1964. E.M. Forster chooses it as the best book of the year 1964. It stands out as an example of Malgonkar’s insight into life. It is a domestic story of three characters against the background of the tense years of the Freedom Struggle. The novelist depicts the horror and futility of the partition riots in the novel. He also attempts to pinpoint the inadmissibility of any ideology being valid for the many unpredictable and inexplicable situation of life. It deals with the developed ideologies – i.e. non-violence and violence as the ways of life of Gian and Debi-dayal respectively. But finally they learn the inevitable reality of life. They realise the uselessness of such ideologies and they find real fulfilment in the humanizing power of love. A group of people in the novel believes Gandhi’s message of non-violence as a mere political expediment.

However, Malgonkar never uphold violence as a way of life. He affirms the value of love as transcending all barriers against the background of horrid communal riots. Love transcends violence and non-violence – the real and the unreal. Love
brings about freedom and fulfilment to the individuals. The novel is quite authentic in the description of the historic background of the Indian Freedom Struggle. It also examines the corruption of the idealist freedom fighters in the context of communal loyalties. The novel is primarily concerned with the theme of individual’s quest for fulfilment in moral identity. Realization of the meaning of life through an act of unselfish love born of deep understanding suggest the positive attitude of the author. There are several characters in the novel which are used to reveal the richness of life. They are realistic and complex but can’t be catagorized as good and bad. They represent the complexity of life and they have intense quest for identity or self-discovery.

6.3.1 Check your Progress. II

A) Answer in a word / phrase/ sentence-
1. In which year *A Bend in the Ganges* was published?
2. Who chooses *A Bend in the Ganges* as the best book of the year?
3. Name the two ideologies depicted in the novel.
4. Who represents the ideology of non-violence in the novel?
5. Who represents the ideology of violence in the novel?

B) Fill in the Blanks:
1. ‘*A Bend in the Ganges*’ is Malgonkar’s _________th novel.
2. The recurrent element in the novel is the theme of __________.
3. The novel is an illustration of Malgonkar’s vision of ________________.
4. The novel is written against the background of ________________.
5. Gian and Debi-Dayal are ________________.

6.3.2 Key to check your progress.

A) 1. 1964
2. E.M. Forster
3. Non-violence, Violence
4. Gian
5. Debi-Dayal
B) 1. 4th
2. Revenge
3. Human nature
4. Freedom struggle
5. Friends

6.4 Detailed Summary of ‘A Bend in the Ganges’.

‘A Bend in the Ganges’ is the story of three friends named Gian Talwar, Debi-dayal and Shafi Usman who represent two different ideologies of non-violence and violence respectively. Gian Talwar is a college student. He is impressed by Gandhiji’s principles and becomes a follower of Gandhi. He believes in the principles of non-violence. He is at least in the beginning of Gandhian character. But he subsequently realizes that his ideology of non-violence is almost impossible in real life. On the contract, Debi is an ardent nationalist terrorist. He and Shafi Usman are wedded to violence. They are terrorists. They work against the British. Debi courts disillusionment whereas Shafi becomes an ardent communist. These characters are earlier freedom fighters but later on become the fanatics. In the course of time Gian and Debi-Dayal find themselves in the Andamans for life imprisonment. Gian, the Gandhite murders his cousin Vishnu Dutt in a family feud and is arrested. Debi is arrested due to his betrayal by his fellow terrorist, Shafi Usman. In prison, Gian collaborates with the authority and brings Debi in difficulty and torture. Once Debi tries to escape but Gian informs the authority.

Japanese win Andamans. Both Gian and Debi are released and they come to India. But India is changed. The poison of communalism spread everywhere. People couldn’t believe in anyone. Everywhere the atmosphere of violence, anger, revenge and fear dominated. The novelist’s success lies in the vivid and authentic presentation of the scene.

Structurally the novel is divided into thirty six chapters which forms three clear and neat parts informally viz- Chapters one to thirteen is the first part covers the period between 1937 to 1939. Its setting is the West Punjab. The second part covers the chapters fourteen to twenty three, it covers the period between 1939 to 1942 and
it is set in Andamans. Chapters twenty four to thirty four comes in the third and the last section, which is about the Independence and Partition. As Malgonkar is a gifted story teller he has woven all the incidents successfully and presented them into an authentic narrative.

The novel open with Gandhi’s Struggle for freedom and ends with the Partition. Violence and bloodshed mark the sunrise of India’s Freedom in 1947. A protagonist of the novel is Gian Talwar, a young man from a poor peasant family. He comes to Duriabad in the West Punjab for college education. Being influenced by Gandhiji’s philosophy, he becomes the follower of Mahatma Gandhi. He has a friend, named Debi-Dayal who belongs to a rich aristocratic Kerward family of Duriabad. Debi-Dayal has followed the terrorist movement directed against the British. Shafi and Basu are also the members of terrorist’s group. Gian appears to be a stranger in a group. Once Gian goes out for a picnic along with Debi-Dayal, his sister Sundari, Shafi Usman and Basu. He is attracted towards Sundari. Gian has been invited so that he could be inducted in the group. Shafi makes fun of Gandhiji’s ideology of non-violence, calling it as a ‘creed for cowards’. He believes that freedom can be won by ‘sacrifice’ and not by ‘ahimsa’.

Gian’s faith in non-violence is put on trial when he goes back to his village Konshet. His elder brother Hari lives in Konshet. Hari has made great financial sacrifice to send Gian to college in the city. Also he has spent a lot of money in winning the case of Piploda land which was offered by the Big House to his grand father, Dada Talwar. Both Gian and Hari make a lot of effort to take possession of that disputed land. Hari, the brother of Gian is killed by Vishnu Dutt. Gian is disturbed badly. He looses his belief in non-violence and pursues the family feud and commits the vengeful murder of Vishnu Dutta. Then he confesses his guilt to the police. He is sentenced to life and is sent to the Andamans.

Debi-Dayal, follows violence as his way of life. He is the only son of Tekchand Kerward, a rich businessman in Duriabad. Teckchand has favours towards the British where as Debi hates the British. He joins anti-British movement. He is a revolutionary. He belongs to the group of Shafi Usman. Inspite of communal differences Hindus and Muslims together head the Indian Freedom Struggle against the British rule. The winds of religious fanaticism sweep all over the country but Shafi Usman has successfully united Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs under his
leadership. Hanuman Physical Culture Club is being established by the group for holding secret meetings and making plots. Once Debi Dayal and Shafi Usman burn a military plane and then onward CID has kept a strict watch on the club. In it Debi-Dayal and other Hindu members are arrested where as Shafi Usman escapes from Duriabad. Debi Dayal is sent to the Andamans when Sundari’s marriage plans are under way. Her marriage takes place with Gopal Chandidhar, a British firm’s executive of Bombay. (Gian and Debi-Dayal once again meet in the Andamans. Gian is shocked to see Debi there but he is as usual proud, straight and haughty. There is another lifer- Ramoshi Ghasita, a murderer of his betrayal).

In the penal colony Gian Talwar soon becomes a favourite of Patrick Mulligon. He works as a clerk in the jail also he sorts out letters for prisoners. One day he delivers a letter to Debi-Dayal who throws it without reading it. Gian collects it and finds some photographs and some currency in it. He keeps photographs with him and hides currency in the hollow of Jackfruit tree. When Mulligan is suspicious about anti-British activities there he becomes strict. He offers a whistle to Gian for some emergency use however he is called as ‘administrative spy’ ‘pigeon of the sahib’. Debi still follows violence in the colony, he attacks Bal Bahadur a Gurkha security. Gian uses his whistle and Debi is caught. Then Debi becomes a hero and Gian earns hatred.

During the World War II the Japanese stand poised to liberate their Indian brothers. Japanese army plans to attack Andaman. Mulligan plans to take Gian and Ramoshi out of the Andamans but fails as he is captured by the Japanese, Ramoshi is killed and Gian escapes to India. Debi co-operates the Japanese and is sent to India. He sets up a new terrorist movement.

After arriving in India, Debi takes a job in a tea-plantation at Silent Hill in Assam, Gian Talwar takes a job as Shipment Supervisor for the company of Tekchand. Then he is posted at Bombay. There he meets Sundari, and loves her. She saves him during Bombay Dock explosion. She provides shelter to him.

Debi-Dayal is busy with his terrorist movement. He goes to Calcutta, to meet Basu who is on parole at the time, Debi asks him about Shafi stays in a brothel at Lahore. Debi wishes to go Lahore. He requests Basu to accompany him to Lahore but Basu doesn’t wish to go with him due to his family and children. He doesn’t wish to involve in any terrorist activities then. But Debi assures him about safety at
Lahore. Then both of them go to Shafi. However Shafi is completely changed. He has made Hindu Community his target. He has a fiancee there in the brothel i.e. Mumtaz, He doesn’t have money to buy her.

Basu and Debi visit a brothel. Debi meets Shafi. He stays with Shafi there. On that night police raid the lodge where Basu and Debi stay. When Debi finds Shafi’s plot he revisits the brothel and buys Mumtaz from the brothel to hurt Shafi. Shafi gets hurt. He throws acid bulb at the face of Mumtaz but Debi saves her, and his hand is burnt. Actually Debi has no any special interest in Mumtaz. But when they both stay at Karnal he gradually starts loving her finally accepts her as his wife. Then they visit his sister Sundari at Bombay.

Sundari’s life after marriage is not happy one. She co-operates her husband Gopal but she doesn’t love him. Gopal has Extra-marital relations. There is no love or faith in their marital life. Sundari learns about Gopal’s extramarital relations with Malini but she doesn’t give any impression about it. Gopal goes to his duty and return at the end of the war but as a quite changed person. Sundari feels that her married life is about to break. Debi and Mumtaz meet her. Then Sundari decides to take revenge on her husband with the help of Gian. She appears quite revengeful in her treatment to her husband. Then she exposes Gian by calling him a common thief and liar as he has told her father about her friendship with Debi.

Partition riots break out in Duriabad and rest of the Punjab on the eve of Independence day. Tekchand feels lonely as he has no friends to accompany. His driver Dhan Singh is also dead. He has to care for his wife and daughter Sundari, who has left her husband and has come to her parents. Meanwhile she informs her father about Debi and his Muslim wife, Mumtaz. Gian also comes to stay with them and help them.

Debi-Dayal and Mumtaz are also coming from Karnal to Duriabad by a train. Debi is shocked to see the scenes of carnage while crossing the borders of West Punjab. Unfortunately Debi becomes the victim of communal riots on his way to Duriabad. He is killed by the muslim rioters.

At Duriabad, Gian, Tekchand, Sundari and Radha wait till noon for Debi. Gian goes twice to the police station to get a news of Debi. But he is shocked by the news of his killing. When he is discussing with Tekchand and Sundari about the incident, Shafi comes there by a motorcar at their house. He wants to kindnap Sundari. Gian,
Sundari and her parents hide themselves somewhere in the house. But soon Shafi catches hold of Sundari. Gian appears there to save Sundari. He succeeds in his efforts but her mother is killed by Shafi. Shafi is also beaten to death by Sundari. Finally, Gian and Sundari continue their journey of freedom.

6.4.1 Check your progress III

A) 1. How many chapters are there in the novel?
   2. Who is Shafi Usman?
   3. Where does Shafi hold meeting with his followers?
   4. What is the name of Sundari’s husband?
   5. Why does Debi buy Mumtaz?

B) Say the following sentences whether True / False
   1. *A Bend in the Ganges* is a record of fanaticism.
   2. Debi-Dayal is wedded to violence as a way of life.
   3. Gian and Debi-Dayal meet in Mahabaleshwar.
   4. Debi-Dayal works as a clerk in a jail.
   5. Gian marries Mumtaz at the end of the novel.

6.4.2 Key to check your progress-

A) 1. 36
   2. A leader of terrorist group.
   3. Hanuman Physical Culture Club.
   4. Gopal Chandidhar
   5. To hurt Shafi.


6.5 Themes in the novel

Manohar Malgonkar is known for his bold and challenging themes. ‘A Bend in the Ganges’ is known for its different themes – i.e. political, partition, ideology of non-violence and violence-non revenge and love, love and sex, quest for fulfilment
disintegration, communal disharmony. All the themes are presented against the background of India’s Freedom Struggle and tragedy of Partition riots. The novelist explores the themes in relation to human nature. The ideology of ‘Ahimsa’ – (non-violence) and truth which the Mahatma offered to the world not only as a political expedient but as a philosophy and a way of life.

**Ideology of non-violence** The novelist probes that the ideology of Ahimsa-non-violence, truth is not only a political expedient but a philosophy and a way of life. Here non-violence is the major theme. Gian Talwar, a young student comes from Konshet village to the city for his higher education. He learns the ideology of Mahatma Gandhi -non-violence. He becomes the follower of Gandhiji and wears a Gandhian dress and a sacred thread. He believes that truth and non-violence are the ways of life. ‘Non-violence is the non-violence of the brave; arising not from cowardice but from courage demanding better sacrifices than ordinary fighting men are call upon to make’. Gian has friendship with Debi-Dayal, Shafi Usman and Basu but all of them belong to a terrorist group. They make fun of Gian and his creed of non-violence. Shafi comments –

“Gandhi, by weakening the spirit of men, making us all into sheep and cattle, will only multiply the sacrifice. A million shall die, I tell you – a million! For each mad who should have died in the cause of freedom, Gandhi will sacrifice ten. That is what non-violence will do to this country.’

Initially Gian follows Gandhiji and non-violence but during the family feud he learns its futility. Then he turns to be violent and revengeful. The family feud between ‘The Little House’ and ‘The Big House’ results in the tragic murder of Hari at the hands of Vishnu Dutt. In return Gian murders Vishnu Dutt as a revenge. He realises that creed of non-violence is just a political expedience. It can’t be a philosophy of life. Similarly Tekchand, Debi-Dayal’s father views the creed of non-violence is only a political expedience. ‘Gandhiji’s message is merely a political expedient that for the bulk of them it has no deeper significance’.

**Violence and Revenge** Violence and revenge are the dominant themes in the novel. Each episode in the novel is structured on the idea of revenge and violence. They are the central motives. Every individual nurses a seed of violence and revenge in his heart and in the course of time uses it as his weapon. These motives overcome the principles and any bonds of relationship. In family feud Hari realises only
violence alone can retrieve human dignity. He sacrifices his own life for the land. Then Gian also desires to take revenge of Hari’s murder by killing Vishnu Dutt, the murderer of Hari.

All the major characters in the novel Debi-Dayal, Ramoshi Ghasita, Sundari, Shafi Usman nurse revenge motive in their heart and when opportunity occurs they use violence to seek fulfilment. Sundari takes revenge on her husband by doing the same what her husband has done to her. Debi-Dayal buys and later on loves and marries Mumtaz only to hurt Shafi. As a result Shafi throws acid on the face of Mumtaz but instead of Mumtaz, Debi burns. Then Shafi spreads the poison of communalism in the society and plans to revenge Debi by kidnapping Sundari but fails as Sundari throws the statue of Shiva towards him and Shafi is killed. In this way idealism and creed of non-violence become meaningless before human instinct and human behaviour. The action of the novel moves from personal vendetta to national bloodshed which illustrates unreality of non-violence. The reality of violence reaches its climax in the Partition holocaust.

Partition The novel treats the problem of Indian nationalism against British Colonialism. But soon the conflict between Hindus and Muslims becomes severe. Communal disharmony becomes the cause of violence. The joy of freedom is overshadowed by the tragedy of Partition. The locale of the story in Punjab. Debi-Dayal, the protagonist, takes a train to Pakistan to evacuate his parents. Through him the most horrifying accounts of communal riots are portrayed:

“............. how the sunrise of our freedom found millions done to death mutilated or shamed, and tens of millions disposed of all that they had owned and cherished and brutally tossed on the other side of the new artificial border India and Pakistan.”

The face of humanity is blackened by the mutilation, mass murder and moral degradation. Events of violence, carnage and bloodshed are the outcome of the Partition. The officials and technicians are busy in the migration. Mobs rule the streets, burning, looting, killing, dishonouring women and mutilating children, even animals sacred to the other community became the legitimate targets of reprisals. The entire land is being spattered by the blood of the victims. The roads are gutted with dead bodies. Gian Talwar, Debi-dayal, Sundari, Shafi Usman, Mumtaz, Tek Chand, his wife Radha- all of them are caught up in the communal holocaust. The Partition
brings the massive exchange of Muslim and Hindu populations. Freedom Fighters of Pre Independence India such as Debi, Shafi, Basu are converted into the fanatics. Ironically they cause their own destruction. The Partition has raised many questions which have no answers. Debi-Dayal is cruelly killed by the Muslim rioters. His wife Mumtaz is separated from him. Thus communal violence follows Freedom as its Fellow-traveller.

In another incident the face of Basu’s wife is burnt with sulphuric acid filled in an electric bulb which is the notorious weapon of Hindu-Muslim feud in those days. Basu’s wife’s face is symbolic of what has happened to India. The cause behind the attack is Muslim fanatics believe Basu has joined Hindu Mahasabha. Thus the novel is the objective observation of history especially of Partition of India. The title of the novel itself signifies separation from something or somebody, to drawn from the Ramayana. “At a bend in the Ganges, they paused to have a look at the land they were leaving”. It symbolizes separation, partition and sufferings that follow.

**Quest for fulfilment** The novel is concerned with the theme of individuals quest for fulfilment in moral identity. It is a political and philosophical allegory. Gian and Debi-Dayal represent two different ideologies of life. Gian accepts the path of non-violence and truth. But in his interaction with a crucial event in life, he discards his principles and kills Vishnudutta, the murderer of his brother. The incident changes his life and principles totally. For example, while in the Andamans and subsequently outside the jail he leads a cunning and deceitful life full of lies to get himself to a comfortable position. Towards the end he affirms the meaning of his life through an act of unselfish love born of deep understanding.

Debi-Dayal follows the path of violence. He betrayed by his friend Shafi Usman. He is suffered and humiliated at the hands of the British authorities in the Andamans. There he collaborates with the Japanese and comes back to India. His compassion for Mumtaz transforms him and compels him to review the philosophy of his life. Though Debi-dayal and Gian have their contrasting natures and conflicting ways come to realise the same factor- affirmation through love. In this course of time Gian survives and continues to grow while Debi-Dayal becomes a victim of the Hindu-Muslim riots. Gian is ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of his Sundari similarly Debi sacrifices his life for the sake of his love for Mumtaz. They realize the value of love at the end.
Sundari, the another important character in the novel achieves fulfilment in revenge. She is a woman with her ideas. She can’t stand hypocrisy and falsity. Her admiration for her brother Debi-Dayal distances her away from her spouse, Gopal who despises Debi’s indulgence in terrorist activities as shameful acts. She doesn’t like his flippant attitude to marriage. She uses Gian in seeking fulfilment in revenge on her spouse by laying down with Gian at the beach and calls her husband to see. It is a death-blow to their marriage. She is fierce in her act of killing Shafi with the idol of Shiva. She is uncompromising in her quest for fulfilment in revenge.

6.5.1 Check your progress

A) Answer in a word / phrase / sentence –

1. Name the ideology offered by Mahatma Gandhi to the world.
2. Who murders Hari, the brother of Gian?
3. Who is Basu?
4. Where is Debi-Dayal killed?
5. Who killed Shafi?

B. Say the following statements are True / False.

1. Hari is Debi-Dayal’s brother.
2. Radha is the wife of Tekchand.
3. Shafi kills Sundari.
4. ‘A Bend in the Ganges’ signifies separation from something or somebody.
5. Gian becomes a victim of Hindu Muslim riots.

6.5.2 Key to check your progress

A) 1. Non-violence
2. Vishnu Dutt
3. A Member of Hindu Mahasabha
4. On his way to Duriabad
5. Sundari

6.6 Characters in the novel

Malgonkar introduces several characters in the novel to reveal the richness of life from many points of view and provide valuable background for the violent action of the novel. His characters are realistic and complex. They can’t be categorized as good or bad. His characters have the force of life. They represent the complexity of life. They compel the reader’s attention with their intense quest for identity or self discovery. Let us know the major characters in detail:

**Gian:** Gian is one of the major characters in the novel. He is a Gandhian character, believes in the principles of non-violence and truth. In interaction with a crucial event in life jettisons his principles. He kills Vishnu Dutt, the murderer of his brother. The murder changes his life and principles totally. He is sentenced to life and sent to Andamans. There and outside he leads a cunning and deceitful life full of lies to get himself comfortable position. His life in the Andamans and later in India is a bundle of lies and series of deceitful deeds.

In the family feud he realizes the sterility the principle non-violence. He is conscious that his non-violence has deserted him at the very moment. He appears to be typical of the youth of India, vacillating, always seeking new anchors, new direction, devoid of any basic convictions. His only ambition is to live life comfortable. He gains favours of Mulligan and earns a paid job as well. He also acts as an administrative spy for Mulligan. Once he offers his help to Debi to escape from the Andamans. But Debi damns him calling him ‘scum’ and ‘a slave working for master’.

When Japanese seize the Andamans he escapes to India with the help of Mulligan. He begins to search his new identity in India. He changes his different roles as his prison life becomes a curse to his new life. On the pretext of selling the idol of Shiva, Gian goes to Tekchand and gets a job in the Kerwad construction company in Bombay. Sundari, Debi’s sister get attracted to him, Gian also feels ‘a sense of contentment’ in her association. Sundari rescues him during the bombardment of the Docks. They become more intimate. He expresses his love to her but once Sundari rejects him when she learns his perfidy to Debi-Dayal in the Andamans. She calls him ‘male whore’ and insults his love. Yet he tries to be pure and selfless in his love to Sundari, Tekchand and his wife held up in riots. Finally he saves Sundari only. There is the regeneration of Gian as an individual. In this way
the character of Gian is developed fully. He grows through his diverse experiences in many areas: his formal schooling, religion, sex, marriage, work, social relationship and travel. He is a man of conflict. He is aware of his weakness and struggles to seek fulfilment in life and finally achieves what he has desired.

**Debi-Dayal:** Debi-Dayal is another important character in the novel. He is a protagonist. He is a man of his own principles. He represents the ideology of violence. He is an ardent nationalist terrorist. He is betrayed by his friend Shafi Usman. He undergoes suffering and humiliation at the hands of the British authorities in the Andamans, collaborates with the Japanese and comes back to India. He is the only son of Diwan Tekchand of Kerwad family. He becomes a terrorist. His choice of violence is deliberate. He trains himself in the art of fighting. When he was a boy saw seen two Scottish soldiers trying to rape his mother. His personal emotion of revenge turns into the ideology of nationalist terrorism against the British. He is parallel character to Gian. He emerges as a satisfying symbol of violence. Though born of wealthy parents, he opts out of the easy way of life to become a fierce revolutionary. He seeks fulfilment in terrorist activities. His nationalism is firm. In the Andamans he raises his heroic stature in the eyes of the fellow convicts. He becomes an agent for the Japanese and prepares grounds for the Japanese March in India.

After coming back to India he joins a Tea Company in Assam as Kaluram and leads a passive life withdrawn from politics. His journey of life is from violence to non-violence. Innocent love of Mumtaz transforms him. His compassion for Mumtaz transforms him and compels him to review the philosophy of his life. After coming to India, he searches of Shafi Usman. He goes to Lahore and finds him in a brothel in order to settle his account with Shafi. He buys Shafi’s keep Mumtaz and desires to marry her. But there arises the communal hitch in their marriage. The frenzy of communalism breaks out and while on their way to Duriabad, both Debi and Mumtaz are killed by the fanatic Muslim rioters.

**Shafi Usman:** Shafi is the most violent character in the novel. He is born in a Muslim family but he dresses himself as a Sikh which adds a new significance to his Personality. The nature of his violence is self-consuming. He has witnessed the death of his innocent father in the Jallianwal Bagh massacre and he chooses the violent path. Very soon he becomes the most ‘wanted’ revolutionary. He leads Hanuman
Physical Club, actually it is a freedom fighter’s cell. Both the Hindus and the Muslims are the members of the club. They eat curry made of equal parts of beef and pork. It symbolizes unity irrespective of their caste. Shafi stands as a symbol of secular culture of India.

Hafiz Khan the top Muslim leader instigates him to turn his back on the Hindus. He dissents his advice but Hafiz Khan has unconscious influence on his mind and Shafi finally succumbs. When he learns about the police raid he gives a hint to a few muslim members. He does to save them. The Police raid on the club and Hindu members are attested. Though it may be coincidence, Shafi indulges in senseless violence towards the end and dies as Sundari hits him magnificently with the statue of Shiva, the God of destruction. Shafi lives and dies in total futility without a sense of fulfilment as a victim of self-defeating violence. A true nationalist turns a communal whom Sundari kills as a revenge.

Sundari : Sundari is Debi-Dayal’s sister and the only daughter of Tekchand. She is a grown up character and has her own ideas and principles. She nurses the desire for revenge in her heart. But her method is sophisticated. Where law fails and nature prevails Sundari follows her instincts. She marries Gopal Chandidhar. She learns her husband’s flirting with Malini. She feels unhappy and plans a very sophisticated kind of revenge against he spouse. She employs the same telescope that reveals her husband’s infidelity to her, six years later to humiliate him. Then she leaves her husband and goes to her parents.

She is attracted towards Gian. Gian tells his past to her. To some extent she develops a love-hate relation with Gian. Gradually she feels contentment in his association. During the bombardment of the Docks, she rescues him and they become more intimate Gian expresses his love to her but she rejects Gian when she learns his perfidy to Debi-Dayal in the Andamans she insults his love. But he values his genuine love. For her, though she calls it as ‘selfish motive’. Sundari achieves fulfilment in revenge. She can’t stand hypocrisy and falsity. She is bold and fierce in her act. Her fierceness is evident in her act of killing Shafi. Thus Sundari is uncompromising in her quest for fulfilment in revenge. Finally she accepts Gian’s love.

Mumtaz : Mumtaz is an innocent character in the novel. Earlier she has been Shafi’s favourite. She lives in a brothel. Shafi loves her but he has no money to buy
her. To hurt and humiliate Shafi Debi-Dayal buys her from the brothel and takes her away with him. Shafi enrages and throws acid bulb at Mumtaz but she is saved by Debi who gets injured in the attack. She nurses him innocently and wins his heart. Mumtaz lives with him. Debi desires to meet his parents. So both of them decide to go to Duriabad on a train. But as soon as train enters Pakistan, Muslim fanatics attack on it and kill inhumanly the both Debi and Mumtaz.

**Gopal Chandidhar**: Gopal Chandidhar is an executive in a British firm in Bombay. He is Sundari’s husband who is a hypocrat. He doesn’t like Debi’s indulgence in terrorists activities. He insults Sundari. His attitude towards marriage is flippant. Even after his marriage he flirts with his girlfriend. Sundari keeps silence but takes a sophisticated revenge on him. Finally their married life ends with separation.

### 6.6.1 Check your progress

**A)** **Answer in a word / phrase / sentence.**

1. Who seize the Andamans?
2. Where does Gian get a job in Bombay?
3. Who is a protagonist in the novel?
4. Who pollutes the mind of Shafi?
5. Who leads Hanuman Physical Club?

**B)** **Match A with B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Debi-Dayal</td>
<td>a. Sundari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hafiz Khan</td>
<td>b. Mumtaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gian</td>
<td>c. a member Hindu Mahasabha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gopal</td>
<td>d. a fanatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Basu</td>
<td>e. an executive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.6.2 Key to check your progress

A. 1. Japanese
    2. Kerwad Construction Company
    3. Debidayal
    4. Hafiz Khan
    5. Shafi Usman

B. 1 – b, 2 – d, 3 – a, 4 – e, 5 – d,

6.7 Plot of the novel

The novel is divided into thirty six chapters which form three informal parts. These parts cover the events and incidents from 1937 to 1947. The novel portrays the history of Indian Freedom Struggle. The journey from the nationalist movement to Communal riots at the time of the Independence and Partition of the country. The novel is full of action and adventure, revenge and violence. The action has wide range and it remains epical and authentic throughout. It is brilliant narration of the story. It is vigourous, dramatic yet realistic. The novel opens with the Gandhian Programme of bonfire of the British cloth and ends with the Partition, violence and bloodshed. The novel moves ahead rapidly. The novelist uses the device of two heroes or ‘an antithetical pair of anti-heroes’. Gian Talwar, a young boy from a poor peasant family, has come to Duriabad for college studies. He becomes the follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Debi-Dayal is his collegemate belongs to a rich aristocratic family of Duriabad. He joins the terrorist movement against the British.

Gian and Debi-Dayal are sentenced to life and sent to the Andamans for two different reasons. Gian realizes futility of his ideology of non-violence and kills a murderer of his brother, Hari. Debi is betrayed by Shafi and is caught by the police and sent to the Andamans. In the Andamans, Gian seems to be changed a lot. He is deceitful and lies for the comfort of his life. He works for Mulligan and develops enmity with Debi. Debi is straightforward and devoted to his principles, whereas Gian changes very frequently for comforts.

As Japanese seize the Andamans both Debi and Gian returns to India. Gian wants to live comfortable life. He takes a job with Debi’s father’s company; loves Debi’s sister also wins her love and finally leads the life as he desires. On the contrary
Debi after coming to India first searches Shafi and takes revenge by buying Shafi’s favourite Mumtaz against his betrayal. Actually he doesn’t love her but Mumtaz’s innocent love and care for Debi weakens him so he marries her. Unfortunately both Debi and Mumtaz are killed by the Muslim rioters while returning to Debi’s parents at Duriabad. The novel develops a revenge motive throughout. The actions in the novel discredit non-violence, they demonstrate its ineffectiveness in context of a life situation. The novel concedes the reality of violence but shows it self-consuming and destructive. The novelist explores the world of violence and revenge. He makes the violence bearable by emerging the vision of love.

6.7.1 Check your progress.

1. Debi and Gian become the best friends in the Andamans.
2. The novelist uses the device of double hero in the novel.
3. Gian belongs to an aristocratic family.
4. Gian is a man of principle.
5. Debi-Dayal is a real hero of the novel.

6.7.2 Key to check your progress


6.8 Narrative Technique in the novel

The novelist is a brilliant narrator of the story in *A Bend in the Ganges*. He is an observer of the historical events of the time. Therefore the narration is authentic. He narrates the events so superbly that the novel has become an excellent piece of storytelling. He uses a swiftly moving narrative for an epic portrayal of the complex forces which lead to the Partition tragedy. He mirrors the deeply rooted caste prejudices in the Indian Society. He uses the third person narrative technique. No doubt the narrator of the story is the novelist himself. He presents the authentic rural world. He is also keen in the observation of the human nature and presents changing trends in the society. The action moves forward quite rapidly.
6.9 Setting of the novel

The action of the novel is set at different places. Most of the action takes place at Duriabad in West Punjab, the most sensitive part of the country during the time of Indian Freedom Struggle. It is the place where Gian comes for education, the plots are made and implemented against the British but during the communal riots after Partition it becomes the land of death. It is the place where Debi works for the Freedom of Nation and is killed mercilessly. Andamans is another place where the action takes place. Similarly the setting changes from the Andamans to Bombay, to Duriabad – some part is set in Lahore. Thus the novelist makes the action to move from village to the city and to village. The novelist portrays the rural India brilliantly.

6.9.1 Check your progress

Say the following statements are True / False.

1. The narrator of the novel is Shafi.
2. The major part of the novel happens in Bombay.
3. Duriabad is in West Punjab.

6.9.2 Key to check your progress.

1. False   2. False  3. True

6.10 Exercise

A) 1. Bring out the major themes of the novel *A Bend in the Ganges*.
2. Gian Talwar is an anti hero.
3. Discuss Shafi Usman as a villain in the novel.
4. Compare and contrast the character of Mumtaz and Sundari.

B) Write short notes on –

1. Radha
2. Theme of revenge and violence.
3. Theme of partition
6.11 Book for further studies

1. Author’s Note to *A Bend in the Ganges*.


Unit-7
Anita Desai’s CRY, THE PEACOCK

Index

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7.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- understand the features of Anita Desai as an Indian novelist in English
- explain the plot and plot–construction in *Cry, The Peacock*
- find the relationship between major themes and the author’s point of view
- know about Anita Desai’s art of characterization and narrative technique
- learn about Indianness and Anita Desai’s devices of humour, pathos and irony.
7.1 Introduction

This unit acquaints the students with the most celebrated and prolific Indian writer in English known as Anita Desai and her debut novel *Cry, The Peacock*. In the detail study of this novel they will learn about Desai’s art of characterization, narrative technique, style and her ability to inscape the psychological aspect of her characters.

7.2 Subject Matter

7.2.1 Life and Works of Anita Desai

Anita Desai is a dominant figure in the twentieth century Indian English Fiction. She stands ahead of all contemporary writers. She has given new dimension to Indian English Fiction. She officially launched her career as a novelist in 1963 with the publication of *Cry, The Peacock*. Desai has written exclusively since she debuted in mid-1960s. There are number of novels, short stories, articles to her account of writing. Throughout her novels Desai focuses on the personal struggle of middle class women in contemporary India as they attempt to overcome the societal limitations imposed by a tradition bound patriarchal culture. Most of Desai’s novels validate the importance of familial bonds and explore the tensions that exist between different generations. Desai has identified a new literary tradition which is stylistically different and less conservative such issues as hybridity, shifting identity and imaginary homelands.

Anita Desai is born on June 24, 1937 in Mussorie in India. Her mother Toni Nime was a German, and father D.N Majumdar, a Bengali businessmen. She has two sisters and a brother. Desai was formally educated in English but she grew up speaking German at home and Bengali, Urdu, Hindi and English outside the house. She was a student at Queen Mary’s Higher Secondary School in Delhi and received her B.A in English Literature in 1957 from the Miranda House of the University of Delhi. She married Ashvin Desai, a businessmen in 1958. They have four children; sons – Rahul and Arjun, daughters-Tani and Kiran.


AWARDS:

1978 : National Academy of Letters Award—Fire on the Mountain
1978 : Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize—Fire on the Mountain
1978 : Sahitya Academy Award—Fire on the Mountain
1980 : Shortlisted Booker Prize for Fiction—Clear Light of Day
1983 : Guardian Children’s Fiction Prize—The Village by the Sea
1984 : Shortlisted Booker Prize for Fiction: In Custody
1993 : Niel Gunn Prize
1999 : Shortlisted Booker Prize for Fiction: Fasting, Feasting
2000 : Alberto Moravia Prize for Literature (Italy)
2003 : Benson Medal of Royal Society of Literature

★ Check Your Progress

A) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence each:

1. When and where was Anita Desai born at?
2. Whom did Anita Desai marry?
3. Name Anita Desai’s debut novel.
4. Name the languages spoken by Anita Desai.
5. Who was Anita Desai’s father?

B) Choose the correct alternative:

1. Anita Desai’s mother was----------
   a) American   b) Indian   c) English   d) German
2. Anita Desai obtained her B.A degree in----------
   a) English Literature   b) Hindi Literature
3. Anita Desai was formally educated in--------
   a) English   b) Urdu   c) Hindi   d) German

4. Anita Desai’s novel “Fire on the Mountain” received Sahitya Akademy Award in--------
   a) 1978   b) 1977   c) 1984   d) 1980

5. Anita Desai’s novels focus on the struggle of the women of ----------------
   a) middle class   b) upper class
   c) lower middle class   d) higher upper class.

★ Key to Check your Progress:

A) 1.  June 24, 1937 in Mussorie
    2.  Ashvin Desai, a businessman
    3.  Cry, The Peacock
    4.  English, German, Bengali, Urdu, Hindi
    5.  D. N. Majumdar, a Bengali businessman

B) 1)  German  2) English Literature  3) English  4) 1978  5) middle class

★ Glossary and Notes:

- **Conservative**: someone who does not like changes
- **prolific**: produces many works of art, books etc.
- **debut**: first public appearance
- **patriarchal**: ruled or controlled only by men
- **hybridity**: something that consists of or comes from a mixture of two or more other things
- **acquaint**: to know someone
7.2.2 Chapterwise Summary

Part I and chapters 1 and 2 from Part II

The novel opens with the death of Maya’s pet dog Toto. Maya is a childless woman. So she is very much attached to Toto. She considered Toto more than her own child. Throughout the day, Maya was all alone with the dead body of Toto. She had glimpses of her pet. She could not control herself, she ran to the garden tap to wash the vision of Toto. All this made Maya hysterical. That day Gautama arrived very late. But as soon as he arrived he made the arrangements for the disposal of Toto’s corpse. Maya was very much disturbed, but Gautama remained indifferent to the incident. Sentimental Maya was immersed in the sorrow of her pet. Gautama wanted to normalise Maya, so he asked her to pour tea for both of them. Maya, unable to concentrate, split tea into the sugar pot, the tea-strainer toppled into a cup, the lemons slipped on to the floor and there was chaos.

Just then the servant announced a visitor had come to see Gautama. Gautama ordered tea to be sent to the study and left Maya alone forgetting her and her woes. Maya became more nervous, she rushed to the bedroom and flung herself into the bed and started crying.

Toto’s death made Maya fill with certain unease. Gautama had prohibited her from crying. It was her healing passion. It becalmed her mind. Maya realized that it was not only Toto’s death she mourned of but something else, something more had filled her in despair.

Thoughts prevailed in her mind. She became aware of Gautama’s indifferent behaviour. He did not realize her inner feelings. He was least concerned of her misery. She was filled with desolation. Gautama did not share her melancholy but wanted to relieve her superficially. He never went beyond to peep into her mind nor was bothered about her requirements, neither of mind nor of body. His cold attitude made her feel isolated. She realized her loneliness and so gave herself to a fit of furious pillow – beating, kicking and everything but crying. It was her usual way to drive away her loneliness. She allowed herself to be carried away by thoughts of the recent past. She had developed a frantic attachments to the pet as particularly childless women do. In fact, the pet is like their child no less worthy of reverence. On the contrary, Gautama was rationalist very practical and did not like to follow his wife. When Gautama arrived, he was moved at the sight of Maya’s condition. He
tried to console her, caressed her. His soft attitude and loving nature made her feel that Gautama was her guardian and her protector. Maya missed Toto and tears rolled her eyes.

As it was very hot, servants had prepared beds for them in the verandah. Gautama led her outside and helped to occupy a place in one of the chairs placed on the lawn. The atmosphere was quite pleasant. The scent of the flowers in the garden was intoxicating. Maya didn’t know what troubled her exactly. She was experiencing indefinable ease; an uncertain fear hovered over her mind. Now and then she had hallucinations that startled her as well as others. For instance, she jumped out of the chair and cried that she had seen a snake. This made everyone in the garden run and created chaos.

Then she accompanied Gautama to walk in the garden. She always enjoyed walking beside him. Gautama confessed his inability to be with her and she had to suffer all alone with the dead body of Toto. He also talked of some other things in life but Maya hardly paid attention to Gautama’s philosophical speech. He told Maya not to get involved in such matters, but Maya was lost in her own world. Gautama’s companionship helped her a lot. Later on she conversed with Gautama. She wanted to know why the cases filed in the courts were for money, property and never for love, life etc. It was a starlit sky but Gautama was far from being romantic instead he liked to engross himself in his work. Maya felt lonely, tear rolled in her eyes. Gautama recited an Urdu couplet.

That night Maya insisted to have dinner in meagre light and wanted to watch the stars. His Urdu couplet had influenced her. Gautama had long forgotten the couplet which Maya had held into her heart. Both of them lacked appetite and were not in a mood to enjoy food. Finally a moth fell into Gautama’s plate and Maya had to switch on the lights. As usual Gautama worked till late in the night and Maya had to go to bed all alone. The line of thought made her restless and disturbed the calmness of her mind. Maya recited the Urdu couplet to let her mind away from the thought of loneliness. But the couplet failed to help Maya. She watched Gautama at his table but dare not to beg him for comfort.

Maya again became restless and aware of some disaster. She recalled the incident that launched this persistent danger in her life. It was her Ayah who had once taken her to an astrologer. He was sitting in a dark room at the temple gates. He
examined Maya and her horoscope. He predicted that Maya would be married young and after four years of marriage, death was certain to one of them, either Maya or Gautama. More over he advised Maya to worship God, to make sacrifices, and pray to God for it was God only who could save her from the disaster. The words of the astrologer had a long lasting effect on her. It was the fear of ‘death’ that always haunted her mind. Meanwhile Gautama returned but Maya pretended to sleep.

Gautama gave a cat to Maya. The cat was white, it had hair like tassels of silk and large almond eyes that were like topaz with undertones of grey and overtones of green. The cat became a good companion to Maya. It followed her everywhere in the house and the garden etc. Maya was happy that she had found a friend in her. Maya had found a new toy and was happy to play with it.

By the time the spring arrived with the long call of the brain fever bird. Maya called it an untidy season as it was mixed with the qualities of autumn. It made the trees leafless and the nests hidden on the trees became visible to the little boys on the streets. These boys loved to play stones at it. Maya observed the changes brought by the season, especially the bursting of the silk cotton releasing soft feathered birds that children picked them, blew them, while the old women gathered it and sold to the manufacturers of pillows and babies’ quilts. Maya enjoyed watching the pigeon nests filled with their babies but was disturbed by their cooing. She considered the cooing as omens of ill fortune or separation because the coo was a tedious repetition of fatal words “go away”. Maya compared her restlessness to the restlessness of the Nature.

Maya was disturbed by the shrill of brain fever bird. It was suggesting the arrival of the spring. Spring made Maya nostalgic and she remembered the spring season when she was accompanied by her father. Her father was a symbol of warm-heartedness. He was very much fond of Maya. He had brought up Maya with a tender and caring hand. People commented Maya to be a pampered, spoilt child of her father. He was both mother and father to her. He fulfilled all her desires. Gautama criticized Maya’s father for pampering Maya. Maya longed to meet her father or to be with him in the summer. In fact, Gautama was her father’s friend. Gautama was twice of her age. It was Maya’s father, who had insisted her to marry his intellectual friend. Maya’s marriage was grounded upon the friendship of these two. Gautama showed no interest in Maya’s plan. In fact, he was never used to such concept as going away for summer. He was a hard worker, a busy lawyer, and hardly could spare time for such frivolities. Maya was hurt by his indifferent behaviour.
She requested him for a short holiday. Maya desired to go to South to watch the Kathkali dance. Gautama appreciated her wish but advised her to wait till Kathkali dancing troop arrives in Delhi. It would be comparatively less costly.

Maya was never used to such things. Her father took the utmost care to fulfill her wish. She considered herself a princess and had grown up with the same mentality. The fairy tales were true to her and she lost herself in the imaginary world. Her father shared every moment with her. He was very much concerned about her trivial demands. He tolerated everything for her sake.

Maya used fresh oranges to play and her father watched it with pride. Gautama was exactly an opposite of her father Raisaheb. Gautama wanted Maya to become aware of real life to develop a practical attitude. But Maya was in search of peace which arose from companion life only: she wanted connection, relationship and close association for her restless soul. Gautama’s family was also far away from love and affection. Other than love they were interested in worldly matters. Gautama’s mother worked hard, she was active but an untidy lady. Her voice was at once soft and broken that it confused the listener. Maya was considered as a media of financial help by her. She was more close to the stray pups collected from the street. Gautama also hardly spoke with Maya. He discussed matters with his brothers. Maya was considered liable only of doing typical household works such as looking after babies, meals, shopping, marriages and nothing more. Her world of luxury was a crime to them. Maya was placed in a contrary world to which she was never used to. Many times Maya refused to go back to her in-laws, every time her father assured and convinced her of everything becoming right. Maya had an intense desire to meet her father. Gautama was never interested in it but for the sake of Maya’s health he showed his willingness.

Maya was lost in her own thoughts. Gautama’s reference to the dinner at Lals transported her to the time when dinner parties were arranged at her father’s house and her life was peopled with friends. Leila was one of them. She had married a man suffering from tuberculosis. She believed in fate so she had adjusted herself in life. Her admittance to fate disturbed Maya. Naturally after Leila a line of friends rushed to Maya’s mind. Next was Pom. The pink, plump pretty Pom. She disbelieved in fate. She was an active lively personality having lust for newness and brightness in life. She was good humoured. There was not a single friend who could act as a support anymore and to whomsoever she turned to comfort deceived her. Where ever
she rested, the thought of albino always haunted Maya’s mind.

★ Check Your Progress

A] Answer in one word / phrase / sentence each:

1. Which event is described in the beginning of the novel?
2. What did Maya do to forget Toto?
3. What did Maya do to drive away loneliness?
4. Whom was Maya very much attached to?
5. What is generally noticed in childless women?

B] Choose the correct alternative.

1. Name of Maya’s pet was ----

2. Maya was startled at the sight of a ----
   a. lizard   b. snake   c. bear   d. squirrel

3. Gautama recited an ---- couplet.
   A. Urdu   b. Hindi   c. English   d. Punjabi

4. ---- was a healing passion to Maya.
   a. Crying   b. Laughing   c. Reading   d. Talking

5. ------ encircled on the tree were waiting to pounce upon the corpse.

★ Key to Check Your Progress

A. 1. Death of the pet dog Toto.
    2. Rushed to the garden tap to wash the vision from her eyes.
    3. Maya gave to a fit of furious pillow-beating.
    4. Toto
    5. Frantic attachment to the pet.

5. Crows

★ Glossary and Notes

- **Hysterical**: behaving in a wild uncomfortable way.
- **immersed**: to become completely involved in an activity
- **corpse**: dead body
- **despair**: to feel that there is no hope that a situation will improve
- **meager**: too small and is much less than you need.
- **hallucination**: the experience of seeing or feeling something that is not really there.
- **translucent**: not transparent, but clear enough to allow light pass through it.
- **frantic**: extremely worried and frightened about a situation

Chapter Three

Gautama was rather confused by the frantic behaviour of Maya. Her screams, allegations and indisciplined behaviour startled him. He was a practical headed man. He tried to convince Maya to accept the facts and not to weep over it. Sometimes Maya also realized that Gautama was not to be blamed, because her behaviour was wayward and childish. Gautama spoke to Maya in a soft voice. He made her understand that she was no more a little girl. Her extra involvement would ruin her. Maya agreed that Gautama was right on his part.

Maya and Gautama attended the dinner party at the Lals. They experienced relaxation at the Lal’s house. The party was well organized. A Sikh fellow introduced himself as one of Gautama’s friends of the college days. He admitted he was least serious of studies and career on the contrary Gautama was very sincere, obedient, of serious nature, and always engaged in books and the library. At a point they came to the subject of fate, astrology, palmistry. The Sikh believed in all those things and he had a habit of reading palms in college days. Maya was born in a traditional Brahmin family but the word ‘fate’ was banned from the house by her father. Gautama too being a rationalist least believed in such matters. Maya was
disturbed by that subject. When Maya was asked to show her palm, she hid herself behind Gautama. Cabaret dancers were the attraction of the party. When they arrived all the party members focused their attention towards them. But in middle of the crowd also Maya remained haunted and wished to go home.

Maya had the habit of becoming nostalgic. She recalled the incident of a street bear dance which she had witnessed. Maya along with the gardener’s five children enjoyed the sight of this magnificent beast. She offered him two golden bananas. The gardener’s children also offered fruits to the animals. The trainer of the bear was rather angry as the children fed the animal and he was left starving. Maya could not hold the trainer’s arguments. She brought some more bananas from the house and handed it over to the trainer. Overall she became upset at the thought the bear would not get much of his earnings. She told everything to her father. Her father narrated a funny tale of a bear who loved honey to Maya. The purpose of the tale was to make Maya sleep without any anxiety. But as soon as she slept her dreams turned into nightmare and troubled her. The doctor had to give morphine to make her sleep in peace.

After the dinner party Maya was disturbed by the life led by the cabaret dancers. She criticized their exhibitionism and life of half-way prostitution. Gautama kept himself aloof and smiled indulgently. His indulgent smile was enough to hold them away from each other. Maya loved to be in the company of Nature, and its beauty etc. Gautama had no time to get involved in such pretty conversations. He hardly admired things. But Maya was not annoyed by his gesture. She realized her speechless need to him. She admired his hard work, refusal to concede, and to compromise etc. This raised a desire in her to be with him. She decided to change and accompany him for a walk in the garden. But when she went near Gautama, he was fast asleep. This made Maya sad and silently she went to change. On the dressing table there were flowers that had turned lifeless. Maya compared herself to those flowers and lost herself in the thoughts of reminiscence.

Chapter Four

This chapter is concerned with Maya’s nostalgic attitude. Maya is hardly aware of the world around. She is found lingering in her own thoughts. She heard some sounds and realized that the voices heard were of Gautama’s friends assembled in the garden. She longed to go out and listen to them. But she could not do so. She found
herself caged in the room. The bedroom now seemed to be a cage. Some voices sounded familiar and they reminded her of the parties arranged by her father and her presence in between them. She went to the door to look into the purple twilights where Gautama and his friends were engrossed in talking and laughing, refilling the empty glasses, and making fun of each other. She overheard their conversations, their charges made over each other but feared Gautama’s wrath and withdrew heavily from the door. She felt disgusted of having deprived the chance of hearing long-loved poetry quoted by the male voices. She felt as if she was confined in hell i.e. torture, guilt, dread imprisonment in these four walls where Death was certain. Suddenly thoughts raised in her mind, according to the prophecy of the Albino it was Gautama who would live and she would perish. This made her very upset and unstable. She was too much agitated and thus in foolishness she rushed amidst the gentlemen assembled in the garden. The gentlemen were rather shocked and politely rose to their feet and vacated a seat for her.

But Gautama was unable to bear audacity of his wife and turned her out. It made her unhappy. She felt dejected for being knocked out. She felt as if she was deprived of human companionship. She became aware of Gautama’s scant understanding and meager love.

Thus Maya descended into silence all alone longing for the company of her practical busy husband. She realized a new emotion of hate and searched in herself the reason of Gautama’s hatred for herself. The very thoughts terrorized her and increased her frantic behaviour of throwing the jasmine buds over the mirror and all over the room.

Then she went and sat on the back steps leading to the garden. There she realized she was moving further and further towards madness. She thought of herself and Gautama. She brooded over phrases from Gita to calm her mind and set it at peace. Her mind was now occupied by the gentle raga played on a learner’s sitar from the neighbouring house.

Gautama after the party came in search of her. She accused him of his negligence towards her. She blamed him for his indifference and not knowing anything, understanding nothing, and how much she loved him or how much she wanted him. He was quite surprised at her talk. He posed himself like a mediator under the Bo tree. But Maya had decided not to admire his superiority. Whenever
Maya tried to speak out her wants, he elevated himself. But Maya was not in a position to listen and at last she bitterly laughed and said to Gautama that she was quite afraid of perishing and so never come near her. He tried to convince Maya, but she was beyond it. She remarked that neither she will be able to tell him not he will be able to help. It is all that one of them will win and other might lose.

Maya blamed herself of becoming mad and threw up the fists to thrust him. She called him traitor, who had betrayed her. Now Gautama was outraged and he called her neurotic, a spoilt baby and blamed her father who was responsible for raising his daughter in a fairy land, and toy world. He said it were not the happiest moments but delusions. Even then Maya did not leave her habit of getting involved in an imaginary world.

He wanted her to decide and realize the important things in life and the true values. They had a long discussion. At last Gautama offered her a flower from the bush, which gave her such a satisfaction that she was ready to die at that moment. But Gautama’s voice was once more distant and styptic. Maya hated changes as it occurred losses. Gautama called her occidental. Gautama held her by wrist and found it damp and hot. He suspected of having temperature but she refused and went inside.

**Chapter Five**

Maya in her dream uttered words like, perish, death, etc. that awoke Gautama but Maya couldn’t answer. He brought a glass of cold water for Maya and then wiped her face with damp cloth. Maya couldn’t sleep as she was haunted by the nightmare.

The incident of Albino’s prophecy troubled Maya. All the time she was engaged in the thought of death. She thought of animals like lizards, snakes, alligators, Iguanas etc. Gautama was puzzled and confused at her strange utterance and behaviour too. She was waiting for the postman to arrive with a letter from her father about his plans for the summer. But a strange letter with American stamp arrived. It was Arjuna’s letter. He was Maya’s brother from New York. Arjuna’s letter made Maya nostalgic about her childhood days. Arjuna had developed strained relationship with his father. His father opposed his certain activities like making friends with low caste people. He often stayed away from home. He disliked the life his father led. He didn’t want to follow his father’s steps and so one day he left the house and since it
was then nothing was heard of him.

Now he was in New York working in a canning factory on meager wages. He had denounced a joyous prosperous life to which he had been born and was working like a worker in a canning factory. In the concluding part of the letter he asked Maya if she had changed about the horoscope incident that had cast trouble for her.

That day when Gautama returned he found Maya in the same chair he had left her. He saw the letter and guessed it must be of her father. Maya complained that her father was too busy to write her. Maya was disappointed and somewhat sad. Gautama poured the tea himself. This made Maya think that one of them would be left alone to always pour out his or her tea in loneliness. Arjuna was unknown to Gautama. Gautama felt rather shocked to know that Maya had a brother. The reason was that long before Maya’s marriage, Arjuna was disowned by her father. Gautama read the letter and was amused to learn about Arjuna’s anti-Brahminical beliefs and his courage to go against the stream. Gautama went through the letter. He told Maya to send a reply but Gautama also wanted to know about the horoscope that Arjuna had mentioned in the letter. Maya dared not to explain it to him. Instead she made an excuse of forgetting it.

Maya experienced fierce headaches, and began frightening in their intensity. She heard beating of drums, it made her aware of the presence of death, she cried to stop them. Gautama didn’t understand her talk but realized that she needed a change, perhaps a holiday. Gautama suggested, they would go for a holiday that too along with her father. But Gautama’s tone was unrelated and disconnected. Maya felt strange and lost in thoughts of her father and then of the astrology.

Eventually her father’s letter came. It said that the heat was unbearable, her father was sailing for Europe. Maya became upset and thought she was feeling ill. Something wrong had happened but she didn’t have the courage to speak out to Gautama.

★ Check your Progress

A. Answer in one word / phrase / sentence each.

1. Why was Gautama not to be blamed for his behaviour towards Maya?

2. Who introduced himself as Gautama’s friend of college days?

3. What was the prophecy of Albino?
4. Which is the new emotion that Maya became aware of?
5. Why was Maya waiting for postman?

B. **Choose the correct alternative.**

1. Maya had received a letter from her ----- in New York.
   a. father   b. brother   c. husband   d. mother
2. Maya’s father was sailing for -----.
   a. America   b. Australia   c. Germany   d. Europe
3. Maya and Gautama attended a dinner party at the -----.
   a. Sharma   b. Lals   c. Desai   d. Somans
4. Maya wanted to remain away from the subject of -----.
5. The Doctor gave ----- to make Maya sleep without anxiety.
   a. Morphine   b. Sleeping pills   c. Calcium   d. Anacin

★ **Key to check your Progress**

A. 1. Because of Maya’s wayward and childish behavior
2. A Sikh fellow
3. Albino prophesied that Maya would be married young and after 4 years of marriage of one of the two would certainly meet death
4. Emotion of hate
5. for a letter from her father.


★ **Glossary and Notes**

- **denounced:** To express strong disapproval
- **prophecy:** Statement that something will happen in future
- **Occidental:** From the Western part of the world
- **Bo tree:** A sacred tree
Chapter 6 and 7

Chapter Six

Maya and Gautama went to the Railway station to receive his mother and sister Nila. Maya was moved when she saw cages of monkeys one upon another waiting for the Bombay train. They were laboratory monkeys to be loaded into the ships for the States. Maya became upset at the sight of helpless monkeys. The monkeys were hungry and thirsty. She became panic and started crying. Gautama was embarrassed by her behaviour. Maya ran to study the name of the passenger who was to open the cages. Gautama took her by arm and bolted her in one of the cages. Maya cried for help. Gautama took her out. Gautama was irritated by her behaviour.

The next day Maya woke up when her mother-in-law entered her room with a cup of hot milk. Maya observed love and understanding between her mother-in-law and Nila. Nila was an unhappily married daughter. She had come there to visit her lawyer. Maya’s mother-in-law suggested they would go for shopping and then visit the lawyer. Maya unwillingly accompanied them but enjoyed marketing with these ladies. She also enjoyed eating by the roadside perhaps that her father would have never permitted.

But among all this she was always haunted by maniac Albino’s presence. Nila wanted to consult Gautama of her divorce case but he had refused to help. Even his mother was against the matter of divorce and children going fatherless. Maya felt miserable at the thought of the departure of her mother-in-law and Nila. She feared to live all alone in the empty house. She begged them to stay just a week more. But being helpless they could not fulfill her desire. As Maya was left all alone, she was occupied by a new thought. She anticipated Gautama’s death, as the Albino’s statement was one of the two would meet death after four years of marriage. Maya
had loaded herself with such evil secrets that she wanted them to conceal away from Gautama. Gautama was least aware of such things. He had immersed himself in work and nothing else bothered him. Maya talked with Gautama on strange things such as death, and life after death. Gautama was startled by her thoughts. He scolded her to stop thinking absurdly. Maya shouted back at him. Gautama observed that Arjuna’s letter had disturbed Maya. He was also serious to know about the horoscope fuss. Maya’s frantic behaviour had increased. She didn’t understand why she behaved insanely. When Gautama went to fetch a drink for her she bolted the bedroom door from inside and refused to open it.

Gautama was harassed by Maya’s childish behaviour and absurd questions dealing with Christian Hell or Muslim Paradise. Gautama once more tried to know about the horoscope. Maya said she had forgotten about it. In fact she feared to disclose the matter to Gautama. She clearly remembered every word, every line of that incident.

Chapter Seven

The heat had reached its climax. Maya was also irritated by this unbearable heat and empty house. All seemed meaningless to her. She had lost interest in everything. The heat made her suffocate. She felt as if she was waiting for her final ultimate end. Suddenly the atmosphere changed and the north summer wind started blowing. Every one ran outside widely excited at the arrival of the dust-storm. Maya thought it to be carnival of enjoyment. She rushed from window to window till the house and furniture lay under the fine dust that reeked inside the house through bare cracks.

After a while cool fresh air started blowing. Birds like canary, myna, shrieked across the garden. That day Gautama came home early. Maya was lost in her thoughts. She thought about Arjuna and his farewell. But Maya had not answered Arjuna’s letter. She thought Gautama would do it for her.

Late in the evening Maya offered tea to Gautama and talked about the storm and few drops of water. He thought perhaps engrossed in work he failed to realize it. Maya missed Toto but Gautama had forgotten him. His words, ‘who Toto was?’ gave a big shock to Maya.

Maya was hurt, the words were as grim as any death sentence absolute and unredeemable. Maya had been tortured by the humiliating sense of neglect of loneliness of desperation. She thought with regret about the past.
Gautama suggested of walking in the garden or sitting on the chair in the lawn. Maya refused and suggested to go up on the roof. Gautama immediately agreed just as one does to keep a child quiet. Passing through the verandah Maya gazed at the bronze Shiva and then led Gautama by hand up the steps. Just as they mounted up her cat passed them symbolizing like a beast of the night-time jungle. Then as usual they decided to stroll on the roof but didn’t go close to the parapet. Maya felt sorry for him. He was unable to understand the odour of limes, melancholy of voice singing etc. Gautama and Maya paced up and down the roof. Gautama was silent. When he held his silence too long, Maya drew him out crying why he remained silent.

Gautama was startled at her sudden behaviour. Gautama spoke out his thoughts and as they reached the edge Gautama turned and stood in front of Maya. It was then Maya gave him a push and saw him fall, pass through an immensity of air down to the very bottom.

**Part - 3**

**The concluding part of the novel**

Perhaps after the mysterious death of Gautama, Maya was taken to an asylum. The chapter opens with her returning home, to the house in Lucknow. Her mother-in-law and Nila are accompanying her. Gautama’s mother and Nila talk about the house and its members. Maya is under treatment. Gautama’s mother and Nila are worried about Maya. It was late night they observe Maya was not yet asleep. But slowly she came out of the room and went upstairs. Mother-in-law and Nila followed her into the darkness. They heard she climbing the steps. They hurried but she disappeared in the darkness following the path of Gautama.

★ **Check Your Progress**

A] **Answer in a word / phrase / Sentence**

1. Why was Maya upset at the Railway station?
2. Where did Maya accompany the ladies unwillingly?
3. Why was Maya shocked?
4. Where was Maya sent after Gautama’s death?
5. What happened in the end?
B] Choose the correct alternative

1. North Summer wind is called -----
   a. loo   b. breeze   c. wave   d. cool wind
2. Monkeys in the cages were waiting for the -----
   a. Calcutta Express   b. Rajdhani Express
   c. Bombay Train   d. Jhelum Express
3. Maya suggested to walk on the -----
   a. garden   b. play ground   c. roof   d. road
4. Gautama was curious to know about ----- mentioned in the letter by Arjuna.
   a. telescope   b. horoscope   c. sthetescope   d. bioscope
5. Nila had filed a case of ----- against her husband.
   a. crime   b. robbery   c. divorce   d. kidnapping

★ Key to check your progress
A] 1. Because of the sight of helpless monkeys
   2. for shopping
   3. As Gautama had completely forgotten Toto within a short Period
   4. In a asylum.
   5. Maya followed the path of Gautama.
B] 1. loo
   2. Bombay Train
   3. roof
   4. horoscope
   5. divorce

★ Glossary and notes
  - Embarrassed: to make someone feel anxious, ashamed
  - Panic: to suddenly become so frightened that you cannot think clearly or
behave sensibly

- **Horoscope**: description of your character and the things that will happen to you
- **Shrieked**: make a very high, loud sound
- **Melancholy**: sad or making you feel sad.
- **Miserable**: extremely unhappy
- **Anticipate**: to expect thing will happen and be ready for.
- **Asylum**: mental hospital
- **Mysterious**: events, behavior or situations are difficult to explain
- **Absurd**: completely stupid or unreasonable.

### 7.2.3 Synoptic Summary

Anita Desai’s *Cry, The Peacock* is concerned with dissonance and disharmony that disrupts the marital relationship between Maya and Gautama. Maya is the protagonist of the novel. She is married to Gautama. He was twice of her age. He was her father’s friend. He was a man of intellect, sincere, hard worker, a busy lawyer and very practical in attitude. Maya was a traditional, sensitive woman who had been brought up with utmost care and love. She was the centre of her father’s attraction. He never let her any wish down. She was considered a pampered child. Moreover, she dwelt in her toy world, considered herself to be the princess of her father’s kingdom. Her father Raisaheb thought Gautama to be a perfect match for Maya and so insisted Maya to marry Gautama irrespective of his age. The novel begins with an apparently trivial incident of death of the pet dog Toto. After four years of marriage Maya was childless. She was very much attached to her pet. She did not consider him a mere pet but more than her own child. Gautama, a rationalist, practical headed man took the incident very casually. His indifferent attitude hurts Maya.

He was always busy in his books and court cases. He did not spare time for familial things. He was not unfaithful to Maya but did not fulfill her desires. She was very sensitive; she was always haunted by the Albino’s prophecy. She could not share her feelings, emotions with Gautama. Thus they lived together but found their temperaments irreconcilable and their sensibilities marked by diversions. Maya felt
isolated and was lost in recurrence of events happened in the past.

Gautama failed to fulfill the desire, the intimacy yearned by every wife. Maya remained sexually unsatisfied. She felt isolated and lonely. She yearned to be loved by Gautama’s family members but their cold behaviour and indifference disappointed her.

Maya’s loneliness, obsession, seclusion, unfulfilled womanhood resulted in making her the victim of neurosis. She grew more and more insane. Her growing insanity and neurotic behavior developed into full bloomed madness, under the influence of which she threw Gautama off the parapet and afterwards followed the same path.

7.2.4 Themes In “Cry, The Peacock”

In Desai’s novels action is subordinated to psychology. The central themes revolve round the mental and spiritual developments of the characters or the protagonist. The major themes revealed in the novel are:

1. Theme of Marital Disharmony

In the novel the author tries to inscape the turbulent inner world of the protagonist Maya, whose neurotic condition is brought about by a variety of factors including marital discord and barrenness and psychic disorder.

Maya is a young woman married to Gautama, her father’s friend, twice of her age. Maya had already destroyed the chances of perfect husband-wife relationship by marrying a person, double of her age. Maya was highly sensitive and emotional. She was brought up with tender care. Her father had fulfilled each and every desire of Maya and also tolerated every thing of her. Thus Maya grew up with the tales of fairies and fairy land. She considered herself as the princess of her father’s kingdom. She was a pampered child of Raisaheb and brought up in an atmosphere of luxury. She lived to use her words like “a toy prince in a toy world.” She got married to a promising, prosperous and overbusy practitioner of law. Gautama was practical headed man too rough to suit Maya. Instead, Maya’s involvement is strictly opposed to Gautama’s philosophy of detachment.

In fact Gautama was a faithful husband. He took care of her in his own way. Yet they find their temperaments irreconcilable and their sensibilities marked by divergence. Maya had a notion in her mind that Gautama did not take care of her
and he neglected her.

The novel gives us an impression of a marital incompatibility and unhappy conjugal life. The novel begins with the death of Maya’s pet dog Toto. She was very much disturbed. Maya, after four years of marriage, was childless. So she considered Toto not merely a dog but as her own child and so she was very much attached to it. But Gautama a practical man took this event casually and made arrangement for the burial. He consoled Maya in his own way and says that he would get another dog for her. Gautama’s indifferent attitude hurtss her and formed the rift between the two. Toto’s death for a practical man was a trivial incident but for Maya it was as equal to as her own child.

Gautama and Maya were living together. But he failed to understand her emotions. He was highly cogent and unemotional. His succinct, curt reactions to the death of the pet dog portray his inability to comprehend his wife. Moreover Maya is preoccupied with prophecy of disaster and longs for the company of her husband.

Considering her timidity, child-like dependence and her inability to master life, Maya felt lost without the protection of love around her. She was grown up in her father’s protective embrace. This security, flow of love, admiration and sympathy was suddenly interrupted when Gautama shows an aversion to too much physical contact. She felt neglected, rejected and unwanted. Maya complained about Gautama’s callousness. He remained unconcerned about her misery, her physical and psychological demands.

Maya wished to escape her fate and be happy with her lover Gautama. But he remained at a great distance from her world of dreams and illusions. The concept of love according to Gautama was totally different from that of Maya’s. There were repeated arguments and counter arguments between Maya and Gautama on the concept of love of attachment to life and of growing too. For him, love was not to be confused with other notion which Maya stood for. He was not a romantic dreamer. His mind was one of trained intellect and not of passionate feeling like Maya’s. Contrary to Maya’s expectations Gautama has a mechanical attitude towards life. Because of different mental make-ups, they do not share anything on emotional level. Both lived in a loveless cage of marriage, wherein Maya’s emotional impulses got defeated by Gautama’s philosophical nonsense. Their diversity disjointed them and condemned them to a loveless relationship and life. To Maya,
life is an effersevent excruciating possibility while for Gautama it is a clear exact and tangible truth.

Lack of proper response on the part of her husband, non-reciprocation of feeling between the husband and wife and childlessness result in marital disharmony and that in turn proves disastrous to both Gautama’s as well as Maya’s life. Maya was haunted by a certain fear that was of the astrologer’s prediction, but lack of communication and mutual understanding, that is supposed to be in a husband and wife forces her to conceal the fact. She never finds herself close to Gautama to reveal her mind, her wants, her cares and requirements. Thus they fail to stand for each other. Cumulative effect of the above factors create disharmony between them and it results in the end of the marital harmony.

2. **Theme of Self-alienation**

*Cry, The Peacock* deals with the life of its protagonist Maya. Maya, a young woman is married to Gautama. Both of them come from diverse backgrounds as well as differ in temperaments and compatibilities. Every wife yearns for the intense intimacy with her husband. But Gautama remains unaware of Maya’s desires. He is a practical man and discards his wife’s sentimental attitude. Maya belonged to a traditional Brahmin family. Her father was very much conscious of her needs and desires. He never let her become nervous or unhappy. Gautama is from rationalist family. He himself has developed the same attitude towards life. Anita Desai through symbols and images explores the hidden and dormant impulses of Maya’s psyche. She loved Gautama and desired to be loved by him. But Gautama’s coldness disappointed her. Moreover, Maya was haunted by the fear of the astrologer’s prophecy. The prophecy of an albino had created a fear about psychosis in the mind of Maya. Gautama as a rationalist failed to understand Maya’s emotional, mental state. She was afraid of revealing the truth to him. After four years of marriage Maya was childless. So as childless women develop attachments for pets so did Maya. But unfortunately the pet Toto died. The death of Toto influenced Maya. She felt alienated due to the death of Toto. She became lonely because he was a friend to her. But what made her more abandoned was her husband’s practical outlook he least bothered of Toto’s death. Along with it he was always immersed in his books and cases. Gautama’s carelessness is revealed through his indifferent attitude towards the death of Toto
He hardly spares time for Maya except at night when they take stroll in the garden. They walk side by side but remain always parallel with no way of intersecting or meeting each other at any point. They have different approaches towards life. Gautama thought death to be a normal event while Maya was disturbed by it. In his family, one did not speak about love and affection and discussed parliament, cases of bribery and corruption revealed in government. While Maya’s family champions human values and rights. Maya wanted her fulfillment as a woman and as a wife. But her father –like husband did not soothe her burning heart.

Thus Gautama also failed to satisfy Maya’s urge for sexual intimacy. This also made her lonely, isolated and deserted. Gautama was a self controlled reasonable dutiful and worldly wise man. He did not try to soothe her. Maya knew about the insensitive and indifferent nature of her husband. Maya aspired for human love. She yearned to be loved by Gautama’s family members where she was treated as media of passing cheques. The cold behavior of Gautama’s family members also disappointed her. She is now love-torn lady. She wishes that her mother-in-law should stay with her. The word ‘please’ reflects the pangs of a modern sensitive lady and her helplessness in the human world. The constant anxiety and loneliness bred in her delusion. The hallucination, born out of her isolation and lonely temperament made her a psychic patient.

She finally took her husband to walk on the top of the roof. In a fit of maddening fury thrusted him down the roof. He fell down and died. The alienation made her a neurotic patient with full bloom madness. In that madness she also killed herself.

Thus this alienation and solitude between husband-wife relationship brought out their deaths. The novel Cry, The Peacock describes the reasons and consequences of alienation in the relationship between Gautama and Maya. Maya’s neurotic behaviour is due to her intense alienation. Both husband and wife have different attitude towards life. This attitude alienates them from each other. It is alienation which brings a disastrous end of Maya’s and Gautama’s life.

★ Check your progress

A] Answer in one word/phrase/sentence each

1. What does Maya consider herself to?
2. Who is Gautama?
3. What makes Maya hurt?
4. What does every wife yearn for?
5. What makes Maya feel more lonely?

B] Choose the correct alternative.
1. Maya was very much close to her ----
   a. father  b. brother  c. friend  d. husband
2. ‘Cry, The Peacock’ deals with the life of protagonist ----
   a. Gautama  b. Pom  c. Maya  d. Arjuna
3. Gautama is always immersed in ----
   a. friends  b. books  c. wife  d. games
4. Maya’s neurotic behavior is due to her ----
   a. friendship  b. alienation  c. Toto  d. husband
5. Toto was Maya’s ----
   a. friend  b. pet dog  c. servant  d. toy

★ Key to check your Progress
A] 1. Maya considered herself to be a princess in her father’s kingdom
2. Gautama is a busy practitioner of law.
3. Gautama’s different attitude hurt Maya.
4. Every wife yearns for intimacy with her husband.
5. Toto’s death.


★ Glossary and Notes
- Discord: disagreement, quarreling, lack of harmony
- Divergence: in different ways
7.2.5 Narrative Technique

Narrative technique in fiction includes almost every thing that goes into making the novel. In simple way every thing a writer uses to narrate her story is included in the technique. It includes imagery symbolism, point of view, chronological order of events, stream of consciousness, schematization of chapter division etc. Dialogue, language characterization and plot are also the important aspects of fictional technique.

*Cry, The Peacock* is a tale of young woman who becomes a victim of neurosis. Gautama, unsympathetic and insensitive husband turns Maya into a neurotic woman. As childless, she lives a life of perpetual emotional strain. Maya shows exaggerated emotional response to seemingly mundane incident in her environment. Gautama is a hard-headed and practical lawyer. He is too busy with his practice so he cannot pay attention to his wife’s neurotic ramblings. The novel ends with Maya’s neurosis developing into full-bloom madness. Under the influence of such madness she throws Gautama off the parapet, just like a peacock who kills its partner after mating. The novel is a brilliant study of abnormal psychology of its neurotic central character.

This novel is divided into three parts dealing with origin, development and the end of her neurosis. Part II and III are very brief and part II forms the core of the novel. The opening ad the concluding parts describe Maya’s excited conditions and are rendered in third person narration. In part I she is overwhelmed with sorrow of her pet dog Toto. In part II she is lost in her own thoughts and is not able to tell her story. Through stream of consciousness in Part II, she discloses the origin and development of her miseries in first person narrative. The story of the novel is not narrated in straight chronological order. Third person narration is also used to narrate the story. The story is mixture of the events taking place in the past and present in the narrative. The narrative moves backward and forward. The past and present are so mixed up that it shows temperamental incompatibility of the couple. The couple’s alienation is at the root cause of the tragedy which is indicative in the opening section.
The narrative is unfurled by the protagonist Maya. While narrating the present she goes into the past. For dealing with the past, Desai has used technique of flashback or stream of consciousness. Technique of fantasy is used to describe the inner loneliness of Maya. It has helped the author to bring forth the problematic labyrinth of the protagonist mind. Flash back narrative technique is used to move the past and present. Maya becomes nostalgic, now and then, she is found immersed in her thoughts, the past incidents are revealed through flashback technique. Most of her childhood memories are recalled through flashback technique. She grew up in the tender care and love of her father. When there is something wrong, her father used to soothe her with love and care. The same she expects in Gautama.

But Gautama, a rationalist person lacks the tenderness, Maya is used to. Many a times Maya is left alone in her world of thoughts. The writer reveals the world through the thoughts that occur in Maya’s mind.

At some parts of novel the characters are in direct dialogue with each other but most of the novel is revealed through the thoughts prevailing in the mind of Maya, the protagonist.

The reader is taken to Maya’s childhood experience. The prophecy plays an important part in the novel and haunts Maya’s mind every now and then. So it is repeatedly found in the novel. The recurrence of memory of the incident is a device to show Maya’s preoccupation with the prophecy. Since she belongs to a traditional Brahmin family her faith in astrology is but natural. In traditional Brahmin families marriage is fixed only after tallying the horoscope. Ascetics may call astrology pseudo science. Yet in the novel it plays an important role in Maya’s character.

Anita Desai creates contrasting characters to highlight the main character. Pom is foil to Maya’s character. If Maya is traditional sensitive, refined, Pom lacks all those qualities. Similarly Gautama’s character is also a foil to Maya as he also lacks the qualities Maya has. Leila, Maya’s friend is somewhat like Maya accepting and believing in fate. Closely studied one admires the writer’s skill in capturing the psychic states of woman haunted by an awareness of death. Thus Anita Desai’s novel, *Cry The Peacock* is a technically well written novel.

The title of the novel itself is symbolic. Anita Desai makes use of symbol to enhance the novel as it symbolizes ‘the central symbol to feminine psyche’ having cultural roots that enrich the meaning by providing undertones to the symbol. It
explores the inner world of human beings and demonstrates the causes of their strange behaviour and fear. The novel is rich in symbolic situations, episodes, characters and scenes. These symbols are drawn from human life and nature, specifically from trees, animals, birds etc. In the last part of the novel the symbol of Shiva symbolizes liberation and as a symbol of supreme aliveness. Through this symbol Anita Desai throws light on the perennial cycle of life and death. The peacocks and their cries are highly symbolic. The peacock is the only animal who knows about its death beforehand. It is used for Maya who also knows about her imminent death.

Similarly the novel has dense imagery. The repeated use of images of dark against white shadows, moon dance and drums— all act as symbols used repeatedly to remind about the prophecy and with it, the approaching death. The descriptions are poetic. Maya along with being emotionally starved, remains sexually unsatisfied. Her frustration is due to being deprived of physical pleasure. The same she reveals in the act of violence. She exercises on jasmine flowers. Desai uses animal imagery to depict Maya’s changed sensibilities. On one hand, there is the majestic image of the peacock and on the other the grotesque.

Thus the novel is rich in technique using language in poetic manner and thus the novelist is able to explore and portray the psyche of Maya who after killing her husband goes back to her father’s house and retrogress to her childhood days, lost in toys.

Desai has successfully picturised, rather than she makes the reader to plunge into the depth of the queer psyche of Maya.

★ Check your Progress

A] Answer in one word / phrase / sentence each.

1. Who narrates the novel ‘Cry The Peacock’
2. Name the characters that are foils to Maya.
3. Name the symbols used in the novel.
4. Why is animal imagery used in the novel?
5. What does the peacock symbolize?
Choose the correct alternative.

1. The novel ends with ----
   a. Maya’s neurosis developing into full-bloom madness
   b. Maya and Gautama living happily thereafter.
   c. Maya going to South for summer vacation
   d. Gautama taking Maya to her father’s house.

2. The childhood memories reoccur to show ----- 
   a. Maya’s happy moments
   b. Maya’s attachment towards her father
   c. Maya’s preoccupation with the prophecy
   d. Luxurious states enjoyed by Maya

3. ‘Cry the Peacock’ is a --------
   a. Romantic novel  b. Psychological novel
   c. Realistic novel  d. Regional novel

Key to Check your Progress

A) 1. Maya
    2. Pom and Gautama
    3. Peacock, Shiva etc.
    4. To depict Maya’s overcharged sensibility
    5. Dance of death and dance of life

B) 1) a.     2) c     3) b

Glossary and Notes

- Exaggerated: to say or believe more than the truth
- Mundane: ordinary and uninteresting
- Astrology: an art of understanding the supposed influence of sun.
7.2.6 Plot Construction

*Cry, the Peacock* is the story of a sensitive, introvert, childless woman haunted by a prophecy made to her during her childhood. The novel opens with a trivial incident of the death of the protagonist’s pet dog, Toto. Maya is very much disturbed by Toto’s death while Gautama remains unmoved. Gautama’s unsympathetic and insensitive attitude results in making Maya a victim of neurosis. Gautama is a busy practitioner of law, he cannot spare time for Maya. Thus Maya remains isolated. After four years of marriage Maya is childless. She is hyper-sensitive. All through the novel the reader finds Maya lost in the world of thoughts, at times she becomes nostalgic and recall the bygone moments.

*Cry, the Peacock* can be categorized as a psychological fiction where action takes place in the mind of the protagonist. The novel is divided into three parts. Part I and III are brief and part II forms the core of the novel. Anita Desai, a skillful writer, has developed the plot with the advancement of the story. Her forte is the psychic presentation of individual human beings. The narrative is rightly allowed to move freely and not clogged by blocks and patterns artificially imposed from outside. The plot is simple and neat enough to impede the psychological revelation, and it is well defined enough to present the vision clearly. Desai’s plot structure shows a splendid fusion of from and expression contrivance and spontaneity.

The novel depicts reality, it is not merely a story told to amuse the readers. Real life incidents are revealed in the novel. The life of Maya and her desires is revealed through her thoughts. The novel probes the workings of Maya’s psyche. We observe a constant to and fro movement of the past and the present in the mind of Maya. The plot does not have a traditional beginning middle and end. Instead the story moves according to the thoughts in the mind of the protagonist. In between the present happenings, the protagonist gets lost in the past world. Thus events are juxtaposed between the present and the past.

This plot construction has enhanced the effect of the narration making the novel or Maya’s psyche more appealing to the readers. There is no such story that develops through the plot. In fact, the every day incidents are woven in such a fantastic way that it merely seem to be a fiction. Psychological conflict prevails through out the novel right from the beginning to the end of the novel. Most of the conflict is going in the mind of the protagonist Maya. The action takes place in two cities, Delhi and
Lucknow. There are references to other places, localities, but the inner space preoccupies the novelist’s attention.

★ Check your Progress

A] Answer in one word / phrase / sentence each.

1. What has enhanced the effect of narration?
2. Which conflict prevails throughout the novel?
3. When was the prophecy made?
4. What does the plot structure reveal?
5. Where does the action take place?

B] Choose correct alternative.

1. Gautama’s unsympathetic attitude to result in making Maya a victim of ----
   a. psychosis b. soraisis c. neurosis d. mitosis

2. The novel probes working of ----
   a. Gautama’s psyche b. writer’s psyche
c. Maya’s psyche d. Leila’s psyche

3. The plot is not ----
   a. experimental b. occidental c. traditional d. western

★ Key to check your progress

A. 1. plot construction
2. psychological conflict.
3. During the childhood.
4. splendid fusion of form and expression
5. in the mind of the protagonist

B. 1. Neurosis
2. Maya’s psyche
3. traditional
**Glossary and Notes**

- **Trivial**: of little worth or importance
- **Contrivance**: something contrived i.e. to happen to accordance with one’s plans or in spite of difficulty.
- **Spontaneity**: the quality of being spontaneous.
- **Juxtapose**: place side or close together
- **Enhance**: to increase in strength or amount

### 7.2.7 Anita Desai’s Art of Characterization and Characters in the novel

#### 1. Anita Desai’s Art of characterization

Anita Desai’s work is a haunting exploration of the psychic self. Her characters are generally neurotic females highly sensitive but sequestered in a world of dream and imagination and alienated from their surroundings as a consequence of their failure of unwillingness to adjust with the reality. Her characters build a large spectrum. They are individuals having multi dimensional facets. Her characters are usually those who keep themselves away from others. They resist the demand of the society and turn out to be rebels.

Anita Desai creates contrasting characters to highlight the main character.

In one of her interviews Anita Desai accepts: “I am interested in characters who are not average but have retreated, or have been driven into some extremity of despair and to turn against, or made a stand against the general current. It is easy to flow with the current. It makes no demands, it cost no efforts, but those who cannot follow it, whose heart cries out, ‘the great no!’ who fight the current and struggle against it, they know what the demands are and what it costs to meet them.”

Anita Desai is interested in analysis and portrayal of human relationship. Anita Desai with a skilful hand delineates the psyche of her protagonists. She reveals us it through the interaction of the characters emotionally related on the basis of kinship. With a fine art of characterization, Desai succeeds in focusing on the inner climate, the climate of sensibility. Maya, the protagonist suffers from a sense of isolation that is not merely physical but also psychic. She has portrayed the personality traits and attitudes of the characters to determine the mental and emotional effect on their isolation.
Maya, the protagonist and her husband Gautama are the main characters of the novel around whom the story of the novel revolves. Besides them Maya’s father Raisaheb, brother Arjuna, Gautama’s mother and sister Nila, Maya’s friends Liala and Pom are some minor characters whom we meet through Maya.

2. Maya: The major character of the novel

In fact the novel is the story of Maya and her unhappy married life. Maya is pampered child of Raisaheb. She is brought up in an atmosphere of luxury. She lives, to use her own words like “a toy prince in a toy world.” Her father, Raisaheb is very much fond of Maya. Maya has been brought up with utmost care and love. Her world is quite similar to a fairy world and this makes her difficult to cope up with the real world. As a child she had enjoyed princess like status. Her father tolerated each and every thing for her. In Maya’s reminiscence it becomes clear that her father played the role of both mother and father. He was very particular about Maya’s wants and needs. He seemed to be like a silver oak to Maya. He participated and shared every small thing with Maya. He used to spare time for Maya and spend every moment with her.

It was her father’s wish that Maya should marry Gautama, a man twice her age. Gautama was a friend of Maya’s father. He felt that this knowledgeable friend would be a perfect life partner for Maya.

But Maya remains haunted constantly by the rationalistic approach of her husband to the affairs of life. Maya loves Gautama passionately and desires to be loved in return; but Gautama’s coldness disappoints her. They are different with each other in tradition and modernity.

The prophecy of albino astrologer has created a fear of psychosis in her mind. It had happened before her marriage. But Maya remains haunted by the prophecy. All the time she seems to be hovered by death. Gautama is a rationalist and does not believe in such matters. Thus it becomes difficult for Maya to speak out her feelings and emotions. Gautama fails to understand Maya’s mental state.

Maya wants her fulfillment as a woman and as a wife. But Gautama fails to satisfy her urge. From the beginning of the novel Maya is seen under the pressure of her marriage with Gautama, an elderly man with super intellectual sensitivity. Gautama’s rational approach leads Maya towards isolation. Maya is an over sensitive. She yearns for a companion. She remains physically starved. She never
gets sexual satisfaction from her husband. One day, when they returned from party, Maya goes to Gautama in a happy mood. But she finds him asleep. She is very much disappointed. She urges for love making. Her husband does not take care of her wish. She becomes frustrated for not achieving him. Instead, he discusses matters about Yogis, Gita and ridicules her desire of making love. He mocks at her without realizing her passion and demand for love. Moreover, Maya is childless. After four years of marriage she doesn’t have a child. This factor makes her loneliness more worse. So she gets attached to her pet dog Toto. She considers it not a mere pet but her child worthy of reverence.

Maya aspires for human love. She yearns to be loved by Gautama’s family members. But they too are cold and indifferent. Her mother-in-law visits her. Maya wants her mother-in-law to stay with her. She insists her to stay just a week more. But Maya’s mother-in-law puts forth varied excuses. She is a social worker. She is engaged in various social activities. Therefore she cannot fulfill Maya’s desire. Maya a mother-less wants mother-in-law to accompany her and help her driving away the loneliness. Maya craves of maternal tenderness but unfortunately it remains unfulfilled.

Gautama’s practical behaviour hurts Maya. He is not at all moved by Toto’s death, instead he consoles Maya in his own way and promises to bring another dog for Maya. Toto’s death matters a lot to Maya. Her busy husband is not interested in her feelings and emotions. She is totally out of tune with the surroundings. Being childless she is in direct need of cosy refuge of familial relationship but unfortunately everyone is too preoccupied to spare time for her.

To sum up Maya’s tragedy is mainly caused by her loneliness, lack of proper response from her husband, non-reciprocation of feeling between the husband and wife, her childlessness and her hypersensitivity. Being unoccupied, lovelorn and instinctive, Maya became hysterical, she started hallucinating things. She grew insane.

Thus Maya’s loneliness, obsession, seclusion unfulfilled womanhood, emotional stimuli inertness debilitative husband and over-ridden death phobia made her neurotic in her behavior. Her insanity grew more and more till it became so worse that it led to a disastrous end of not only Gautama’s life but her too.

Anita Desai traces Maya’s gradual descent into a state of madness, impelled by
her responses to the developments in her outer life, as it were.

3. Gautama

He is also a major character in the novel. Husband of Maya is the identity he has been given by the novelist. He is middle aged man of serious and reserved disposition. He is a promising, prosperous and over busy practitioner of law. He is a person who is proud about his devotion and sincerity for work. Gautama’s sensibilities are too rough and practical to suit Maya’s. He is a man of practical attitude and takes the event of Toto’s death casually. He makes arrangements for its burial but is not at all emotionally involved.

It is his indifference that hurts Maya. Gautama neglects emotional yearnings of Maya. He fails to understand her desires as a wife. Instead, whenever Maya tried to talk about matter of love – he discussed about yogis and Gita and ridicules her desire of making love. Love is not to be mistaken for attachment. Of course, Gautama loves Maya but conception of love for both is contradictory.

Gautama keeps himself away from the beauty of natural world. It happens so when Gautama is unable to differentiate between the smell of lemons and petunias. Along with his ignorance towards beauty of natural world his unresponsiveness to her feelings are noticed. The temperamental incompatibility that characterizes their relationship creates an unbridgeable gulf in between the two. Maya and Gautama have different approaches towards life. Gautama’s family never spoke about love and affection. They always talked about parliament cases of bribery and corruption revealed in government while Maya’s family was concerned of human values and rights.

The intensive behaviour of Gautama makes her feel neglected. This increased the sense of humiliation in her mind and it crushes her spirit. Every simple wish of Maya is pointed as foolish by Gautama. Gautama ridicules her concept of going on a holiday in summer. He makes fun of her desire to go to South to watch Kathakali dances.

Gautama’s indifferent and quite egoist attitude is reflected when he refuses to help his own sister. She wants to seek divorce from her husband and that is why she has come to her brother Gautama, who is a lawyer. But sticking to the old values Gautama does not approve of the idea of divorce and feels, filing a divorce petition is too low for him. Gautama’s unimaginative, pragmatic and unsentimental attitude - a
contrast accentuated by communication gap on account of his being wrapped up in his professional preoccupations results in Maya’s insanity which drives her to murder her husband. Thus Gautama’s detachment and indifference to what makes life livable costs him his life.

4. **Raisaheb – Maya’s Father**

He is revealed through Maya’s thoughts when she compares Gautama to her father and the present to the past. He seems to be a man of discipline. He was a traditional Brahmin. He was very much fond of Maya. After the astrologer incident he had banned the word ‘fate’ from his house. He took care that no anxiety troubled Maya, particularly before sleeping. He was a philosopher, guide and friend and everything to Maya. She grew up secured in his arms; every time when Maya was upset he would console her by his mesmerizing words. He asked Maya to accept what ever happens.

He believed every thing happened for the best. He is very particular about the garden and does not tolerate a dead branch on one of silver oaks. He looked after Maya all alone. She grew up especially in his tender and special attention. She thinks him like a silver oak with his fine, silver-white-hair brushed smoothly across his bronzed cap. Maya always remembers his warm heartedness and it reminds her always of this man’s open love for her. People said he had spoiled his daughter. She was too much pampered by him.

But as Raisaheb was on very good terms with his daughter the opposite was seen in the case of his son Arjuna. Arjuna was a rebelled natured boy. Raisaheb did not approve his below dignity behaviour. He opposed his friendship with boys of low caste or servants’ children. He never liked his son wearing rags or going on a bicycle. He wanted everything to be done that suited their prestige and position. As Arjuna rebelled against his father, Raisaheb disowned him.

Lastly, Maya awaited for his letter. The letter she thought would come with plans for summer. Eventually the letter came but it said that Raisaheb was on his journey to Europe. The heat here had been unbearable so he decided to go to Europe to feel much better than here. Thus he forms to be one of major characters in the novel.
★ Check your Progress

A] Answer in one word / phrase / sentence each.
1. Who is the protagonist of the novel?
2. What is the profession of Gautama?
3. Who is Maya’s father?
4. Why was Arjuna disowned by his father?
5. Why did Maya want to go to south?

B] Choose the correct alternatives.
1. Gautama refused to file case for his -----  
   a. wife b. father-in-law c. sikh friend d. sister Nila
2. Raisaheb did not approve Arjuna’s -----  
   a. being very active b. below dignity behavior  
   c. relationship with Maya d. going on bicycle
3. Letter from Raisaheb came with the news of his -----  
   a. visiting Maya b. accompanying Maya to Dargeeling  
   c. discussing plans for summer d. journey to Europe
4. Maya’s neurotic and insane behavior led to -----  
   a. happy end of the novel.  
   b. fighting with her in-laws  
   c. disastrous end of Gautama’s life and her life too  
   d. neglecting her father
5. Gautama discussed matters of -----  
   a. Yogis and Gita b. long-loved poetry  
   c. love between the two d. court cases

★ Key to check your progress
A] 1. Maya
2. a practitioner of law
3. Raisaheb
4. for his below dignity behaviour and rebellious nature
5. to watch Kathakali dances

B] 1. sister Nila
2. below dignity behaviour
3. journey to Europe
4. disastrous end of Gautama and her life too
5. Yogis and Gita

★ Glossary and Notes
  ● Seclusion: quietness and privateness
  ● Bribeery: giving and taking of bribes
  ● Pragmatic: ideas which are sometimes different from the actual meaning of the words used
  ● gulf: an area of serious difference or separation
  ● disown: to refuse to accept as one’s own.

7.3 Exercises
A] Long Answer type questions:
  1. Discuss *Cry, the Peacock* as a novel of marital disharmony.
  2. Discuss the theme of alienation in the novel
  3. Comment on the narrative technique and plot construction in the novel.

B] Short notes:
  1. Character sketch of Maya
  2. Maya’s relationship with her father.

7.4 Books For Reference
  1. R.K.Dhawan: Indian Women Novelist
  3. Devendra Kohli & M. M. Just (eds.) Anita Desai: Critical Perspectives.
8.0 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- understand the remarkable features of Jhumpa Lahiri as a diasporic Indian English novelist.
- explain the outline and plot construction in *The Namesake*.
- find relation between major themes and the author’s point of view.
- know about Jhumpa Lahiri’s art of characterization and narrative technique.
- learn about Diaspora and Indianness, and Jhumpa Lahiri’s style.
8.1 Introduction

This unit acquaints the students with one of the most celebrated young diasporic Indian-American English novelist and her best novel *The Namesake*. In the detail study of this novel the student will learn about Jhumpa Lahiri as a pure artist, her art of characterization and narrative technique, style, use of realism and her preoccupation with Indian-American middle class life in her diasporic Indian English novel.

8.2 Subject Matter

8.2.1 Life and Works of Jhumpa Lahiri

Jhumpa Lahiri (1967), a major contemporary diasporic Indian-American writer, whose real name is Nilanjana Sudeshna, was born in London. She is the daughter of Bengali Indian immigrants. Her family moved to the United States when she was three. She was brought in South Kingston, Rhode Island, where her father Amar Lahiri works as a librarian at the University of Rhode Island. When she began kindergarten in Kingston, Rhode Island, Lahiri's teacher decided to call her by her pet name, Jhumpa, because it was easier to pronounce than her "good name".

After completing her B. A. in English literature from Barnard College in 1989, she received many degrees- M. A. in English, M. A. in Comparative literature, M.A. in Creative Writing, and Ph. D. in Renaissance Studies from Boston University. She got a fellowship for two years at Provincetown's Fine Arts Work Centre. Lahiri also has taught creative writing at Boston University and the Rhode Island School of Design.

In 2001, Lahiri married Alberto Vourvoulias-Bush, a journalist who was then Deputy Editor of TIME Latin America (and now Executive Editor of El Diario/La Prensa, New York's largest Spanish daily and America's fastest growing newspaper). She lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband and two children, Octavio (b. 2002) and Noor (b. 2005). Though Lahiri’s mother wanted her children to grow up knowing their Bengali heritage and her family often visited relatives in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Lahiri considers herself an American.

Though Lahiri's early short stories were rejected by publishers for years, her debut short story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies* was finally released in 1999.
The stories address sensitive dilemmas in the lives of Indians or Indian immigrants, with themes such as marital difficulties, miscarriages, and the disconnection between first and second generation United States immigrants. The collection was praised by American critics, but received mixed reviews in India. *Interpreter of Maladies* sold 600,000 copies and received the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (only the seventh time a story collection had won the award).


Lahiri has also had a distinguished relationship with The New Yorker Magazine in which she has published a number of her short stories, mostly fiction, and a few non-fiction including *The Long Way Home: Cooking Lessons*, a story about the importance of food in Lahiri's relationship with her mother.

Since 2005, Lahiri has been a Vice President of the PEN American Centre, an organization designed to promote friendship and intellectual cooperation among writers. In February 2010, she was appointed as a member of the Committee on the Arts and Humanities, along with five others.

Lahiri received many awards for her short story collections. In 1991 *The Interpreter of Maladies* got O. Henry Award and PEN/ Hemingway Award (Best Fiction Debut of the Year) for short story. Her second collection of short stories, *Unaccustomed Earth* received Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award in 2008 and Asian American Literary Award in 2009.

★ Check your Progress

I. Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence each.

1. What is the real name of Jhumpa Lahiri?
2. Who directed the film adaptation of *The Namesake*?
3. Where did Jhumpa Lahiri teach creative writing?

II. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.

1. *The Interpreter of Maladies* received the 2000-------- Prize for fiction.
2. Jhumpa Lahiri married to -------------- .

★ Key to Check your Progress


★ Glossary and Notes

- **Diaspora**: a movement in literature by South Indian writers in U S A Canada and U K.
- **Immigrant**: a person who has to come to live permanently in a country that is not his own.
- **Malady**: a serious problem.
- **Adaptation**: a film that is based on a particular piece of work but that has been changed for a new situation.

8.2.2 Chapter wise Summary

**Chapters 1 to 3**

Chapter - 1

Jhumpa Lahiri’s debut novel *The Namesake* depicts the life of Gogol Ganguli from birth until middle age, chronicling his struggle to discover who he is as a second-generation immigrant. Gogol struggles, first with his unusual name and later with the traditions his parents insist on upholding. However, as Gogol grows older, he appreciates what his parents have gone through when moving to this country and how hard it was for them to adapt to their adopted country. Gogol eventually finds some solid ground between his parents and the world they live in, bringing him some peace. *The Namesake* is a novel of self-discovery that is an emotional journey which its readers will not soon forget.
The story begins in 1968. Ashima Ganguli is making herself a midnight snack. Ashima, a recent immigrant from Calcutta, suffers from a cultural clash when she arrives at the hospital and is forced to labour in solitude. At home, Ashima would have been surrounded by her female relatives, getting advice from those who have been through this before. In America, Ashima is left alone and is afraid, unsure about what exactly is happening to her. A kind nurse named Patty befriends Ashima, helping her through the labour as best as she can.

During her labour, Ashima thinks of the first time she met her husband. Ashima's parents had begun inviting men to their home to meet Ashima over a period of several months, but none of the other men had accepted Ashima as their bride, a fact that left Ashima relieved. However, when Ashima arrived home from school one particular day, she was ushered quickly to her bedroom in order to change. When Ashima came back downstairs, she found strange shoes sitting in the family's entryway. Ashima stared at the American made shoes, then slipped her own feet into them to see what it was like. Ashima was ashamed of her actions, knowing what she was doing was shameful, but unable to stop herself. Ashima's mother called her into the sitting room then. Ashima slipped out of the shoes and laid eyes for the first time on Ashoke, a young man who had been studying abroad in America. Ashoke would not look Ashima in the eye, as was their tradition, but Ashima could sense his curiosity. It would not be until their wedding that Ashoke would finally gaze into Ashima's face.

On another floor, Ashoke waits for word of his child's birth. Ashoke thinks how fast time has passed since Ashima first learned she was pregnant. Ashoke paces the waiting room, and then picks up a magazine to read while still pacing. Ashoke begins to think of another time when he was reading and it saved his life. Ashoke took a train to visit his grandfather. Ashoke's grandfather was a fan of Russian literature and shared his love with Ashoke. Ashoke was on his way to accept his grandfather's Russian books as it seemed his grandfather was near the end of his life and ready to part with his beloved belongings. On the way, Ashoke met a man who had travelled to London and America and who made Ashoke promise if he ever had the chance to travel he would not allow anyone, not even his wife. Afterward, the man climbed into the bunk Ashoke was to have slept in while Ashoke read a short story by Russian author Nikolai Gogol. In the middle of the night, while Ashoke was still reading, the train derailed and crashed. Ashoke was saved when rescuers caught sight
of pages of his book flying from his slowly released fist. During his long recovery from his injuries, Ashoke swore he would one day travel the world and he would not let anyone stop him.

**Chapter- 2**

The boy baby is born early the next morning. A name must be chosen for the child, but Ashoke and Ashima have decided to give this honour to Ashima's grandmother who has named all the children in her family. They have not received the letter the grandmother had mailed a month ago, because in the tradition of Calcutta, they believe they have several months to wait. However, they soon learn that the child must have a name for his birth certificate before he leaves the hospital. Accordingly they decide to give the child a nickname that will work for the birth certificate and then change his legal name when the letter arrives from the grandmother. Ashoke decides the nickname should be Gogol, after the author of the story he was reading the night of the train wreck. Ashima agrees.

Ashima and Ashoke take the baby home in the company of their few Indian friends, a young couple of their own age and a professor from MIT. Their landlords, a hippie couple named Judy and Alan Montgomery, come down to see the baby. The Montgomerys give Ashima and Ashoke some baby clothes and furniture for Gogol. After everyone leaves, Ashima tells Ashoke she cannot handle raising this baby in America. Ashima desperately wants to go home to Calcutta where her family would help her. However, Ashoke likes living in America and does not intend to return to Calcutta soon. After a few days, Ashima falls into a routine with the baby and finds that she actually enjoys taking him out for walks, where people stop her and ask about him.

Letters begin to arrive from family and friends in Calcutta, congratulating them on the birth of their son. However, the letter from Ashima's grandmother does not come. By the time Ashima thinks that the letter is lost and sends a request that it be sent again. They receive news that Ashima's grandmother has suffered a stroke and no longer remembers most of her relatives, and the names she picked for Gogol. Ashima is saddened by this news. However, Ashima and Ashoke begin making many Indian friends who become like an adopted family, making it easier for Ashima to adjust to her new country and the absence of her family. When Gogol is six months old, it is time for his traditional rice ceremony, she and Ashoke invite these Indian
friends to stand in for their family. It is a festive ceremony and Gogol eats everything he is offered. However, Gogol refuses to choose a profession by picking from the assortment of symbolic items he is offered, already rejecting his destiny.

After Gogol turns a year old, Ashima and Ashoke decide to visit Calcutta. Ashima spends several months preparing for the trip, making a sweater for her father and buying souvenirs for her other relatives. However, a few weeks before the trip is to take place, Ashima and Ashoke receive a phone call from Ashima's brother giving a news that Ashima's father has died of a massive heart attack. Ashoke arranges an emergency passport for Gogol, forced to use his nickname rather than a proper name due to the rush. The Ganguli family flies to Calcutta six weeks earlier than planned, Ashima is reluctant rather than excited because she is afraid to see her family in the grips of grief.

Chapter- 3

In the year 1971, Ashoke has finished his studies at MIT and is offered a professorship at a college outside Boston, where the Ganguli family moves. At first, they live in university housing, but soon decide to buy a home of their own. Ashima and Ashoke decide to stay on a two-storey colonial in a new subdivision. Gogol will have great memories of playing in the mud of the unfinished yard and chasing salamanders around the rocks. When Gogol is five, it is time to enroll him in kindergarten. Gogol is sick during the first week because he does not want to go to school. Gogol's father has told him that he will be called by a new name at school. Since the grandmother's letter was lost, Ashoke finally took it upon himself to pick a name for his son. Ashoke picked Nikhil because it is a traditional Indian name and because it sounds similar to Nikolai, the author Gogol's first name. When Ashoke takes Gogol to enroll in school, he instructs to the principal and teachers about Gogol's new name. However, the principal discovers that Gogol does not respond well to this name. Since Gogol is his legal name, the principal decides this is what they will call him.

In the next May Ashima gives birth to a daughter. This time Ashima and Ashoke are prepared with a proper name already chosen for their child. They will call this child Sonali, which will eventually be abbreviated to Sonia. Gogol is thrilled to be a big brother and delights in playing with his small sister. Ashima and Ashoke, again making a great deal of friends from the growing Indian population in Boston,
begin to socialize with these friends, sharing Sonia’s rice ceremony with their friends.

Already Gogol begins to rebel against his parents' insistence on keeping their home traditional. Gogol insists on having an American meal twice a week and asks his mother to make him bologna sandwiches for his lunch. In exchange, Gogol attends Bengali lessons twice a month to learn how to write in his parents' language. Gogol has also begun to notice the oddity that is in his name. At first, Gogol loved his name. However, Gogol becomes older and the more people have trouble in pronouncing the name or commenting on its origin. Gogol begins to notice how different his name is from that of the other children. During a field trip to visit the home of a poet, Gogol is taken to a cemetery where the children are allowed to make rubbings of the names. Gogol finds as many odd names as he can, finding some recognition in these odd names. Ashima is not impressed with Gogol's rubbings, but to Gogol they are of utmost importance and he insists on keeping them for many years to come.

★ Check your Progress

I. Answer the following questions in one word /phrase / sentence each.

1. What is the nick name of Ashoke and Ashima’s baby?
2. Whose story book Ashoke was reading in a train that derailed?
3. Who has named all the children in Ashima’s family?
4. At what age Gogol’s name is enrolled in Kindergarten?
5. What is the religion of Judy and Alan?

II. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.

1. A kind nurse named ------- helped Ashima through the labour.
2. -------------- give some baby clothes and furniture for Gogol.
3. -------------- is the new name Ashoke picked for Gogol.
4. After finishing his studies at --------- Ashoke gets Professorship.
5. Ashima had been compared to the actress---------. 
III. Complete the following sentences by marking the correct option given below:

1. Ashoke’s grandfather was a fan of ............ literature.
   a) American    b) British    c) Russian    d) Indian
2. Ashoke and Ashima decide to visit Calcutta after Gogol becomes ............ year old.
   a) three    b) four    c) two    d) one
3. Ashima’s pet name is ............
   a) Monu    b) Mithu    c) Sonu    d) Gogol
4. The name of Ashima’s brother is ............
   a) Ranjeet    b) Ranveer    c) Rana    d) Rama
5. Gogol insists on having American meals ............ a week
   a) three times    b) four times    c) twice    d) once

★ Key to Check your Progress
    4. Five    5. Buddhism
    4. M I T    5. Madhavi Mukherjee

★ Glossary and Notes
- **Embarrass**: feel awkward or ashamed in a social situation
- **Nickname**: an informal name for a person
- **Assortment**: a collection of different things
- **Souvenirs**: Things taken bought as a gift for other people when you have been on holiday
- **Salamanders**: an animal like lizard with short legs and long tail
Chapters 4 to 8

Chapter-4

In the year 1982 when Gogol turns fourteen, his parents arrange a large birthday party for him that includes all their Indian friends. Gogol does not enjoy the party. After the party, Gogol is in his room when his father brings him one last gift. Gogol is surprised since his father has never given him a gift without his mother's help before. However, Gogol is disappointed to find it is a book of short stories by Nikolai Gogol, his namesake. Gogol does not know why his father named him Gogol except that he liked his writings. Now Gogol discovers that Gogol is not even the writer's first name, making Gogol's name even more ludicrous than he had first believed. Despite the fact that the book appears to be important to his father, Gogol puts the book on a shelf and quickly forgets about it.

The following year, Ashoke gets a sabbatical from his university and the family arranges for an eight month visit to Calcutta. Gogol is not happy about this and protests as much as he can, but is still forced to go. The family stays with relatives, moving from home to home every few weeks, rather than getting an apartment of their own. There is little for Gogol and Sonia to do during the day, so they spend a great deal of time alone together, listening to mixed tapes on their Walkman. As a surprise, during the summer, Ashoke arranges for the family to visit Delhi and the Taj Mahal. For once, they are on a real vacation, using credit cards, staying in hotels, and relying on translators to get along. However, upon returning to Calcutta, Gogol and Sonia get sick and spend several weeks recuperating. Soon the family returns to America, and Gogol is relieved to return to normalcy.

The following year, Gogol takes an English class in which the teacher is aware of the origin of his name. During a lesson on short stories, the teacher introduces Nikolai Gogol. Gogol learns that Nikolai Gogol was depressed most of his life and killed himself by refusing to eat. Gogol is even more embarrassed of his name upon learning these facts and refuses to read the Nikolai Gogol story assigned to the class.

Gogol does not date in school and does not do much socializing, both things that do not seem to concern his parents. Gogol does sneak out one night, however, to attend a college party with some of his friends. On this night, Gogol meets a young lady to whom he claims his name is Nikhil. Gogol feels like a totally different person when he uses this name, a person who is confident. Gogol gives his first kiss to a girl that night and feels accepted, like a new man.
Chapter- 5

When Gogol turns eighteen, he decides to change his name legally. Ashima and Ashoke do not think as a necessity, but they do nothing to stop him. Gogol thinks it is very anticlimactic when the judge signs the papers, forever changing his name to Nikhil. It is not until Gogol moves into the dorms at Yale that the change begins to show itself, however, since his parents, his sister, and all their friends will forever call him Gogol. At college, Gogol is known as Nikhil. Gogol feels like a different person, though he suffers a small amount of guilt for changing his name. Nikhil is a man who is more confident, more American, and a man who fits in with his fellow students.

All through his freshman year, Gogol returns home every other weekend. However, the more time passes, the less he feels as though he fits in. Not only this, but Gogol has decided to go against his father's wishes that he should study engineering and adds art classes to his schedule. During his sophomore year, Gogol meets a young lady on the train ride to Boston. This girl, Ruth, also attends classes at Yale. Ruth and Gogol hit it off and all weekend Gogol can hardly wait to return to school in order to call Ruth again. When they meet the second time, there is some awkwardness between them at first that quickly vanishes. Ruth and Gogol begin to spend a great deal of time together and before long become intimate. Gogol can think of nothing but Ruth when they are separated. Over the Christmas holiday, Gogol would like to see Ruth, but he has not told his parents about her and is afraid to do so because he knows they will not approve. Instead, Gogol arranges a clandestine meeting in Boston for a day.

When Gogol's parents’ finally learn of Ruth, they are not impressed. They feel marrying an American would be a mistake for Gogol and warn him not to become too serious. A short time later, Ruth spends a semester studying at Oxford. Gogol misses her dearly, but when she returns, things have changed between them. Soon Gogol and Ruth are fighting so much that they decide to split up. The thanksgiving of Gogol's senior year he is travelling by train to see his father, who is alone for the holiday because Ashima and Sonia went to Calcutta for a wedding. The train is delayed several hours because of an accident on the tracks. When Gogol finally arrives, he finds his father has been waiting for him for several hours. Gogol feels bad and tells his father he should not have waited so long. In the car on their way home, Ashoke finally tells Gogol about the train wreck that almost ended his life and
the reason why he chose Gogol for his son's name. Gogol feels shock and surprise at this admission, and guilt for having changed his name.

Chapter- 6

In 1994, Gogol moves to New York City after college to attend a graduate programme in architecture at Columbia, despite his parents' desire he attend a similar programme at MIT. Gogol is now an apprentice in a large architecture firm. One night a friend from the firm takes Gogol to a party at someone's home. There, Gogol meets a girl named Maxine with whom he has a nice conversation. Early the next morning, Maxine calls Gogol and invites him to dinner at her parents' home. Gogol agrees, amused to be pursued by a girl rather than the other way around. When Gogol arrives at the Ratliff home, he finds it to be a Greek Revival, a piece of architecture he deeply admires. Gogol meets Maxine's parents and likes how normal they are, how different from his own parents.

Gogol finds himself quickly accepted in Maxine's life, spending more time with her and her parents than he has with his own family in several years. Gogol learns about cooking with Lydia, Maxine's mother, and culture from Gerald, Maxine's father. Soon Gogol informally moves into the Ratliff home. That summer, Gerald and Lydia go to their summer home in New Hampshire, leaving Gogol and Maxine at home alone. Gogol enjoys this despite the lack of air conditioning in the old home. A few days before Gogol and Maxine plan to join Gerald and Lydia in New Hampshire for a week. Ashima calls and asks Gogol to come to visit her and Ashoke for the weekend. Ashoke has received a grant to direct research in Ohio and Ashima would like Gogol to spend some time with him before he leaves. Ashoke will be going by himself, leaving Ashima alone for the first time in their life. Gogol reluctantly agrees to lunch on the way to New Hampshire.

Gogol is nervous when he arrives with Maxine, refusing to remove his shoes at the front door, as is tradition in his parents' home. Gogol is embarrassed later when his mother fusses over them, serving a dinner that clearly took a lot of preparation and refusing to sit down to eat herself until everyone else is finished. Gogol cannot get out of the house quickly enough, not bothering to respond to his mother's request.

In New Hampshire, Gogol finds relaxation, a joy he's never truly known before. With nothing to do all day, he and Maxine find plenty to keep themselves busy. On his birthday, toward the end of their visit, the Ratliff's throw Gogol a party.
Despite being grilled by guests about his ethnicity and his visits to Calcutta, Gogol finds the entire week exciting, just the kind of life he always imagined for himself. Gogol never bothers to call home to make sure his father got to Ohio okay or to make sure his mother is all right alone.

Chapter - 7

Ashima has decided to make Christmas cards herself this year. Ever since Gogol and Sonia insisted the family to celebrate the holiday, Ashima had been hard pressed to find cards that did not mention Christianity or religion, so this year she has decided to create her own cards with a drawing from one of her father's letters she saved long ago. Ashima has adjusted to living alone over the past few months, though she misses the noise of her children and the company of her husband. Ashima does not understand why her children felt the need to move so far away, Gogol in New York and Sonia in California, but she knows it is important for them to find their own identity, so she tries not to fight their choices. Ashima has begun to make a few changes in her own life. Ashima has a job now, working part time in the local library. Ashima has even made friends among the other ladies working there, her first real American friends in twenty years of living in this country.

While working on the cards, Ashima gets a phone call from Ashoke. Ashoke is in the hospital because of stomachache that will not go away. Ashoke assures Ashima that it is nothing serious, but asks her to make an appointment with their family doctor for the following weekend when he expects to be home. Ashima returns to her work, only mildly concerned. However, when Ashoke does not call again several hours later, Ashima becomes concerned. Ashima calls his apartment, regretting that Ashoke does not have a cell phone. Ashima then tries the hospital when the phone at the apartment is not answered. After a short time, Ashima speaks to a woman who claims to have been an intern who worked on Ashoke. The doctor tells Ashima that Ashoke has passed away of a massive heart attack.

Gogol is getting in late at the Ratliff home when he learns that his mother has called several times. Annoyed, Gogol does not rush to call her back. However, the phone rings again and this time it is Sonia. Gogol takes the first flight to Ohio in order to identify his father's body. After leaving the hospital, Gogol goes to his father's apartment and empties it out before returning to Boston. Gogol stays with his mother and sister for several weeks, ignoring Maxine's pleas to allow her to come be
with him and to encourage him to return to New York. Gogol embraces his family's traditions; eating a mourner's diet and helping his mother and sister pick out a funeral picture of his father. The body is cremated in Ohio as is their tradition and the ashes are aside to be scattered in India. Finally, Gogol is forced to return to work in New York. On the train ride he thinks of his father and of a special time they spent together when he was a child, full of regrets for missed opportunities the past few years.

Chapter- 8

A year later, Gogol is still in New York, but his relationship with Maxine has ended. Gogol's mother begins to call him, suggesting he should call a family friend's daughter, Moushumi. Gogol is not interested, in part because he knows his mother is trying to marry him off and partly because he is preparing to take his board exams in architecture and he is busy with that. However, Ashima pressures him so much that Gogol finally relents. On the first meeting, Gogol is surprised to find himself attracted to this woman and wanting to spend more time with her. Over the next week, Gogol begins to remember all the times he met Moushumi at family parties. When they meet for lunch, Gogol shares these memories, and once more finds himself wishing he could spend more time with Moushumi. In fact, after Moushumi picks out a hat at a local store, Gogol finds himself returning to buy it, despite its incredible price, and putting it away for Moushumi's birthday.

The following weekend, Moushumi invites Gogol to have dinner at her apartment. Moushumi is attempted to make a meal that she should have prepared ahead of time and it burns when Gogol whisks her off to the bedroom instead. Within a few months, they move belongings into each other's apartments. Over this time, Gogol learns that Moushumi moved to Paris after college in order to escape her parents' need to make a good marriage for her. There, Moushumi fell in love and became engaged. They returned to New York for the wedding. However, Moushumi learned one night of her fiancé’s unhappiness with the cultural traditions surrounding their nuptials and a resulting fight ended their relationship. Moushumi was grief stricken and humiliated, hiding out at a friends until she could get on her feet again. Now Moushumi finds a second chance with Gogol.
★ Check your Progress

I. Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.

1. What is the name of Gogol’s first American girlfriend?
2. Where did Gogol go to attend a graduate programme in architecture?
3. Who invites Gogol to dinner at her parents home?
4. Where did Moushumi fall in love and become engaged?
5. What is the name of Maxine’s father?

II. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.

1. Ashoke arranges a family trip to -------.
2. Ashoke has received a grant to direct research in ----------.
3. Ashoke died of ----------.
4. In--------class Gogol learns about Nikolai Gogol’s unhappy life.
5. Maxine works as an assistant ---------- for a publisher of art book.

III. Complete the following sentences by marking the correct option given below:

1. On his fourteenth birthday Gogol’s father gives him a book of short stories by ……….
   a) Nikolai Gogol   b) Anton Chekov
   c) Leo Tolstoy     d) Maxim Gorky
2. Ashima accepted a part time job in the local…….
   a) college   b) bank       c) library   d) school
3. The Ganguli family goes to Calcutta for ………. months.
   a) four   b) five        c) six     d) eight
4. In ………. Ruth presents Gogol a small used book of drawings by Goya.
   a) New York   b) Boston    c) Los Angeles d) Columbia
5. Moushumi’s father is a ……….
   a) Chemist   b) Teacher    c) Doctor   d) Professor
★ Key to Check your Progress


II) 1. Delhi and the Taj Mahal. 2. Ohio. 3. heart Attack. 4. Mr. Lawson’s. 5. editor

III) 1. Nikolai Gogol. 2. library. 3. eight. 4. Boston. 5. chemist.

★ Glossary and Notes

- **Sabbatical**: period time when a teacher is allowed to stop work and travel
- **Recovering**: getting back health, energy after being ill
- **Sophomore**: student in the second year of a course of a study
- **Ethnicity**: the fact of belonging to a particular race
- **Intern**: an advanced student of medicine who is working in a hospital to get practical experience

Chapters 9 to 12

Chapter -9

Gogol and Moushumi marry within a year in a traditional wedding at the Double Tree hotel in New Jersey. The ceremony itself is highly traditional, but Moushumi refuses to wear the traditional clothing for the reception, putting her own spin on things. Gogol and Moushumi are not allowed to be alone until late in the night, finally given the space to share a hotel room alone. After Moushumi has a shower, they open their cards and total up the large amount of money they have been given in checks. Gogol and Moushumi use the money to put a down payment on a small apartment in the city.

In March, they travel to Paris where Moushumi has been invited to deliver a lecture. In the first few days, Gogol feels as though he is in the way with Moushumi and her friends. Finally, Gogol decides to spend his days alone, visiting sights in the city. However, this leaves him feeling left out of Moushumi's life. When they return to New York, Gogol and Moushumi attend a party at the home of a friend. Gogol is bored and feels lonely during this party, not fitting in with Moushumi's friends. The conversation surrounds baby names since the host is expecting her first child. This bores Gogol, despite his own drama over his name. Gogol escapes the party and
finds the hostess’s husband in the kitchen cooking. While discussing whether or not Gogol and Moushumi should move to Brooklyn, Gogol learns that it was in this house that Moushumi lived while grieving the loss of her fiancé. This leaves Gogol feeling out of place in his wife's life.

**Chapters -10-11**

Moushumi won a fellowship to Paris but turned it down without telling Gogol about it. Moushumi is discontented as a result. When Gogol and Moushumi celebrate their first wedding anniversary, Moushumi is unhappy with the entire evening, beginning with the gift Gogol gave her, the restaurant where they dine, and the time they spend alone. One morning at the university where she works as a teacher's assistant in the French department, Moushumi is sorting the mail for a secretary who mysteriously passed away and finds a resume from a man she once knew. This man, Dimitri, is a friend she knew in high school whom she had an unsatisfied crush on. Moushumi writes down his number, unsure what she intends to do with it.

Moushumi goes home that night and searches for a book Dimitri once gave her. The next day, Moushumi calls Dimitri. They begin seeing each other several times a week, at first as friends but quickly becoming lovers. At first Moushumi is ashamed and filled with guilt, but after a while, the guilt fades. Moushumi increases the amount of time she spends with Dimitri.

Moushumi has gone out of town and Gogol is left alone in their apartment. The heat is off, so Gogol goes into the office to work on a drawing that is due soon. On the way home, Gogol decides to buy a Christmas gift for Moushumi, but he does not know what to get. Gogol looks in several stores but finds nothing that suits his needs until he sees a travel book in a bookstore. Gogol decides a trip to Italy would be the perfect gift for both he and Moushumi. Then Gogol heads home, stopping to get some groceries because he knows Moushumi will be hungry when she gets home.

**Chapter- 12**

In the year 2000, Ashima has decided to sell the house now that her daughter is engaged to be married. Ashima will live in Calcutta with her brother for six months out of the year and return to America to spend six months between the homes of her children. Ashima feels free for the first time in her life, though leaving the house makes her feel as though she is leaving Ashoke behind for the last time. Ashima is throwing a Christmas party one last time in her home and her children will soon be
there to help. Ashima is happy about this, feeling as though her life has finally settled into a happy pattern she can live with.

Gogol arrives in Boston in time for his mother's party. Gogol is happy to be home, despite the rocky year he has just survived. Gogol and Moushumi were on their way to Boston for Christmas the year before when Moushumi accidentally let Dimitri's name slip into their conversation. The truth about the affair came out and Moushumi moved out of the apartment. A few months later, after signing the divorce papers, Moushumi told Gogol she would be moving back to Paris. Gogol was heartbroken over the end of the marriage, and embarrassed and feeling inadequate as well. Being home now is like a salve on the wound. During the party, Gogol goes upstairs to find his father's camera and wanders into his own childhood bedroom. Among a group of books, Gogol finds the Nikolai Gogol’s book his father gave him on his fourteenth birthday. For the first time, Gogol opens the book and begins to read 'The Overcoat', the same story his father was reading the night of his near fatal train crash.

★ Check your Progress :

I. Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.
   1. What is the name of Moushumi’s lover?
   2. Where did Gogol and Moushumi marry?
   3. What is the title of the story which Gogol begins to read at the end of the novel?

II. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.
   1. Moushumi worked as a --------in the French Department.
   2. Gogol thinks that ----------- would be a Christmas gift to Moushumi.
   3. The name of Sonia’s new boyfriend is -----------.

III. Complete the following sentences by marking the correct option given below:
   1. At the time of marriage Moushumi has put on ........... necklaces.
      a) nine    b) eleven    c) ten      d) thirteen
2. The name of Moushumi’s father is……..
a) Rana     b) Samrat     c) Shubir     d) Ashoke

3. The Picasso Museum is in ………… .

★ Key to Check your Progress
I) 1. Dimitri.  2. Double Tree Hotel .  3. ‘The Overcoat’
II) 1. Teacher’s Assistant .  2. a trip to Italy.   3. Ben.

★ Glossary and Notes :
- Checks : cheques, bills
- Divorce : legal ending of a marriage
- Inadequate : not confident enough to deal with a situation

8.2.3 Synoptic Summary

The novel *The Namesake* is written by Pulitzer Prize winning author Jhumpa Lahiri. It depicts the life of Gogol Ganguli from birth until middle age, recording his struggle to discover who he is as a second-generation immigrant. Gogol struggles, first with his unusual name and later with the traditions his parents insist on upholding that embarrass Gogol in front of his American friends. However, as Gogol grows older, he comes to appreciate what his parents went through when moving to this country and how hard it was for them to adapt to their adopted country. Gogol eventually finds some solid ground between his parents and the world they live in, bringing him some peace. *The Namesake* is a novel of self-discovery, and emotional journey.

When Ashima Ganguli becomes pregnant for the first time, she has only lived in America for a short time and is still getting used to the unusual culture. Ashima's marriage is an arranged one and therefore is lacking in the strong emotions of an American marriage, leaving Ashima feeling isolated when she goes into labour. Ashima would have been surrounded by family members if she had been still in Calcutta, but in America, she is left to labour alone. Ashima gives birth to a little boy
while her husband waits in the waiting room, thinking about his life and the train accident that nearly took his life a few short years before. It is the memory of this train accident that comes back to Ashoke when the hospital insists Ashima and Ashoke name their baby before taking him from the hospital.

In Calcutta, it is traditional for a new baby to be called by a nickname until a good name can be chosen. Ashima and Ashoke have given the right to name their child to Ashima's grandmother. The name has been sent in a letter, but has not yet arrived. By the time Ashima and the baby are ready to leave the hospital. Under pressure to give the child a name, Ashoke decides on Gogol, the name of a Russian author he admired and the author of the book he credits with saving his life the night of the train wreck. This will remain Gogol's legal name until the grandmother's letter arrives and they are able to give their child a proper name. However, the letter is lost in the mail and Ashima and Ashoke will never learn the name Ashima's grandmother chose for their child.

When Gogol is old enough to enter school, Ashoke picks a proper name for his son, Nikhil, and instructs the school to use this more formal name. However, the school principal becomes aware of Gogol's reluctance to respond to this name and refuses to allow him to be addressed by any name other than his legal name, Gogol. The issue of Gogol's proper name as opposed to his nickname is forgotten. However, Gogol begins to dislike his name. In an English class, Gogol learns of his namesake's complicated life and becomes embarrassed to be linked to such a man. Gogol resolves to get rid of his name, taking steps once he turns eighteen to have his name legally changed to Nikhil. At first, Gogol is pleased with his name change, and is excited to hear himself addressed by this more Americanized name. However, when Gogol's father tells him about the train wreck that led to his name, Gogol feels guilty for shunning his father's first gift to him.

Away at college, Gogol experiences freedom for the first time. Gogol meets his first girlfriend, an American of whom his parents disapprove. Gogol also picks a career as an architect, despite his father's hopes he will follow him into engineering. When it comes time to pick a graduate programme, Gogol elects to move to New York rather than accept a programme close to his parents in Cambridge. Gogol embraces American culture, falling in love again with a young lady whose family is so normal, so American, that he is embarrassed to take his girlfriend home to see how different his own parents are. Gogol wants to be American, wants to embrace all
that is American. However, when Gogol's father dies suddenly, he finds himself filled with shame for turning his back on his family. Gogol breaks up with his girlfriend and does all he can to help his mother and sister through this difficult time.

When Gogol's mother suggests that he should meet the child of a family friend, Gogol resists at first, and becomes aware that his mother is attempting to get him to settle down with a good Indian girl. However, the girl turns out to be someone with whom he has a great deal in common. Within a year, Gogol is married to this girl, settling down to make a life. However, the marriage starts on the wrong foot and it is not long before trouble begins to separate them. Gogol's wife has an affair, and they divorce before the marriage is two years old. This divorce is devastating for Gogol, but it brings him back home to where he begins to find the common ground between the world his parents came from and the world in which he lives. Gogol finds peace with himself and his name, accepting once and for all who he is.

8.2.4 Major Themes

1. Quest for Identity

Gogol’s search for personal identity is the major theme of the novel, *The Namesake*. Gogol grows up with an unusual name. Gogol is the only Indian in a group of children, of standing out in a crowd. However, Gogol feels as though his name only makes this worse. No one else in the world has a name like Gogol. Even, the Russian writer, his namesake, does not have Gogol as his first name; it is his last. Gogol is not teased over his name and the only trouble he gets from other people is mispronunciations and the occasional questions. However, Gogol feels that the strange name makes him stick out like sore thumb. Gogol decides to change his name when he turns eighteen, picking a name his father has once picked for him in the tradition of Indian society. At first, Gogol is ecstatic at his change of name. However, when Gogol finally learns the truth as to why his father gave him such a unique name, Gogol begins to feel guilty over his antipathy toward the name.

Gogol's name is not the only part of his family's identity that he objects to. Gogol feels that his parents' strict adherence to the traditions of Bengali ways is an embarrassment. Gogol dislikes the effort his mother goes to when cooking meals for guests, her insistence that the guest eat heartily, and her refusal to sit down to her own meal before her guests are done. Gogol also dislikes that his parents only socialize with other Bengalis and refuse to adapt to the traditions of America. As
Gogol grows, he rejects many of the Bengali traditions, resents his family's frequent trips to Calcutta, and cuts himself off from his parents as quickly as he can. Gogol embraces the affections of other families, American families that are drastically different from his own, searching for himself in their ways rather than those of his mother and father. However, after his father dies, Gogol feels differently, turning to his family's traditions with more gusto than he ever embraced them before. As a result, Gogol ends up in a bad marriage that ends before it’s even two years old.

Gogol's search for his personal identity among his parents' traditional style of living is a major theme of this novel. The first sign of Gogol's unhappiness is his dissatisfaction with his name. However, it soon becomes clear to the reader that this is just a symptom of Gogol's difficulties with living in a Western civilization with parents who still practice the traditions of the Eastern world. Gogol is an American, a second-generation immigrant, who has no guidance as to how he should behave in his adopted country. At first, Gogol rejects his parents and embraces the culture of the American people around him. However, Gogol feels guilty for this after his father's death and goes the other direction, embracing the Indian world by marrying an Indian woman. This does not work out for him, either, as the woman he marries does not love him, but marries him out of a sense of obligation to her own parents. Finally, however, Gogol discovers himself, a man who is both Indian and American, and in this way solves the struggle of his search for an identity.

2. Culture Shock

Culture shock is another major theme of the novel. Where Gogol finds himself forced to search for his personal identity, his parents know who they are. However, who his parents are does not mesh well with the world they have chosen to live in. Ashima and Ashoke move to America so that Ashoke will have the opportunities of education and the experience of seeing a world his parents only read about. Ashima is not happy from the start, afraid of being in a new place without anyone she knows nearby. Ashima does not even know her husband well since the first time they looked each other in the face. When Ashima has a baby, the homesickness becomes even more intense, as it is a tradition in her country to have family around during the birth and the first year of the child's life. Ashima confesses to her husband that she cannot do this and wants to go home. However, Ashoke refuses.

Soon, Ashima becomes involved in the day-to-day activities of her child's life
and finds enjoyment in this routine. Shortly after, through her husband's work, they begin to meet other Indians also living in Cambridge. As a way to comfort herself and to bring home to her, Ashima surrounds herself with other immigrants from India. Ashima brings India to her, throwing parties where she only invites other Indians and following the traditions of home with these new friends. This habit continues through her children's childhoods, causing them frustration with their mother's refusal to accept the traditions of American culture. Slowly, Ashima begins to accept small pieces of American culture, celebrating Christmas and Thanksgiving, as well as making her children traditional American meals such as Hamburger Helper. However, it is not until her children have grown up and left home that Ashima begins to make friends with people of all races when she takes a part-time job at the local library.

3. Death

Death is one of the themes of this novel because it is Ashoke's near death experience that led him to name his son Gogol, and it is his death by a heart attack that causes Gogol to begin to accept his heritage, an acceptance that eventually leads to him finding his true identity. When Ashoke is a young man in his early twenties, he is journeying on a train to visit his grandfather when the train derails, crushing many of the sleeping cars and killing many of the passengers. Ashoke should have been asleep in one of the bunks of his sleeping car, but instead he stayed up late reading a short story by Gogol. After the crash, Ashoke lay in the dirt with pages of the book clutched in his hands. Later, when Ashoke is found, it is the movement that these pages make when he flexes his hand that catches the attention of his rescuers. Ashoke remembers this moment while waiting for the birth of his first child. When the moment comes to name his son, it is the name of the author that first comes to his mind. Ashoke does not tell Gogol this story until a few years after he changes his name. When Gogol learns the truth, he feels guilty about his unhappiness with his name and his insistence on changing it. However, he does not feel guilty enough to adopt the name Gogol once more. It is not until his father unexpectedly dies that Gogol begins to regret his choices. Gogol embraces his family once more after his father's death, rejecting his American girlfriend and her family over his own. This leads Gogol to a relationship with the daughter of one of his mother's many Indian friends. Gogol and this girl marry, pleasing their parents and embracing to a certain degree the traditions of their parents' homeland. However, the marriage is not based
on love and trust. The marriage quickly falls apart and Gogol finds himself alone again. This event is embarrassing and shocking for Gogol, but it allows him to finally find an identity that is somewhere between the traditions of his parents and the American culture.

8.2.5 Jhumpa Lahiri’s Art of Characterization and Sketches of Characters

1. Jhumpa Lahiri’s Art of Characterization

Characters in a novel are the vehicles by which the author conveys to us his/her views of the world. There are flat characters and round characters. Flat characters are built around a single idea or quality. They lack individuality and can be described in a single phrase or sentence. Normally, minor characters are flat characters. Round characters, on the contrary, are complex, dynamic and intricate. They are represented with subtle particularity, originality, precision and individuality. We learn about individual characters from their own words and actions. Sometimes, we learn about them from what other characters say about them and the way others act towards them. Both major and minor characters help to advance the plot of the novel. As the novel develops, characters must grow and change in response to their experiences in the novel.

Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake is characterized by her plain language and her convincing characters. Her majority characters are Indian immigrants to America who must navigate between the cultural values of their birthplace and their adopted home. Her fiction is autobiographical and frequently the stories are based upon her own experiences as well as those of her parents, friends, acquaintances, and others in the Bengali communities with which she is familiar. Lahiri examines her characters' struggles, anxieties, and biases to record the nuances and details of immigrant psychology and behaviour. All her characters are round and capable of rotundity. They have all their proper places. All of them are organically related to their environment and to each other.

2. Sketches of Characters

- Nikhil alias Gogol Ganguli

Nikhil, the son of Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli, is the protagonist of the novel. He is a second-generation immigrant from India. Nikhil's parents are very traditional,
continuing to live in America how they would have lived in India with a few adjustments. Nikhil grew up with the name Gogol, which was intended only to be a nickname, or pet name, until a good, proper name could be obtained from his great-grandmother. However, the letter with Gogol's good name in it is lost somewhere between India and America and the great-grandmother became incapacitated before anyone could ask for a new letter. This left Gogol without a good name the first five years of his life, which is not unusual in the Indian tradition. However, when Ashoke registered Gogol in school and insisted the school officials to call him Nikhil, the principal refused to enforce this wish because Gogol did not want to answer to a strange new name. Gogol would come to regret this decision some years later, however, when it occurred to him how unusual his name was and how he would have preferred a more anglicized name.

Gogol grew up stuck in a world that was full of constant contradictions. Gogol went to school with children who celebrated Christmas and Thanksgiving, who rode bikes and played video games and had freedom. Gogol's home life was full of traditions and strict rules. Gogol's family often celebrated holidays and traditions that none of his school friends had heard of or understood. Gogol feels his parents are unusual and backward, an embarrassment to him. When Gogol goes off to college, he cuts himself off from his parents, and is afraid to introduce his friends to them for fear of what his friends will think. Gogol hides the fact that he has a girlfriend from them.

When Gogol's father dies suddenly, he has a change of heart with regard to his family. Gogol had cut himself off from his parents to the point that he only saw them once or twice a year. Gogol was living with a girl whose parents were everything Gogol had always wanted in a family. However, after his father's death, Gogol realizes how precious his family is to him. Gogol once again embraces his family and cuts himself off from his girlfriend and her family. As a result, when handed the opportunity to date an Indian girl, Gogol jumps in headfirst, and quickly finds himself married to a family friend. However, the marriage is not based on love and trust. Gogol's wife is unfaithful and the marriage ends within two years after it began. This disaster leaves Gogol devastated, but it also leads him back to his family and helps him to find an identity of himself that includes both his family traditions and the culture of his adopted country.
• **Ashima Ganguli**

Ashima Ganguli, the mother of the protagonist, is a twenty year old young woman when she marries a man she barely knows and moves from her home in Calcutta to Cambridge, Massachusetts. This move is a culture shock to young Ashima and she finds herself confined to her home because she is frightened to explore her new world. Ashima becomes pregnant and the pregnancy makes her even more homesick than before. Ashima longs for her family during this time of change in her life. After the baby is born, Ashima is convinced she will not be able to handle carrying for her child alone in a strange country. However, Ashima becomes so deeply engrossed in her son's care that she begins to explore her world and make friends among other Indian immigrants nearby.

Ashima surrounds herself with surrogate family members, other immigrants in the area, creating a family and a social circle that allows her to continue to live in the traditions of her home country. Even after moving to a suburb of Boston, Ashima continues to live in this way, isolating herself from the culture of America as much as possible. This isolation makes Ashima feel safe, but leaves her children feeling like aliens among their American friends. It is not until her children are grown and gone that Ashima finally begins to make friends with Americans, taking a job in the local library and befriending her co-workers. After more than twenty years in America, Ashima is finally beginning to assimilate, although she continues to wear a sari and celebrate Indian holidays. Ashima has adjusted to her adopted country. However, after Sonali’s engagement Ashima decides to sell her home and move back temporarily to Calcutta to live with her brother.

• **Ashoke Ganguli**

Ashoke Ganguli, Ashima's husband and Gogol’s father, is a graduate student at MIT. Before deciding to move to America, while still in college, Ashoke was caught in a train accident that nearly took his life. Before the accident, Ashoke met a man who encouraged him to see the world rather than only reading about it in books. Ashoke made this promise to himself while recuperating from his injuries. Even Ashima's unhappiness after the birth of their son does little to shake Ashoke's desire to continue living in America. Ashoke is strong and determined, despite the fact that he misses his family as much as Ashima misses her own.

Ashoke becomes a professor at a college in Boston where his family will live for
the next twenty years. Ashoke is a successful professor who later in life gets a grant to conduct work in Ohio. When Ashoke takes the grant with another professor he moves by himself to Ohio, leaving Ashima alone in Boston. Ashoke makes a trip home every few weekends to see Ashima, but otherwise lives in a small apartment in Ohio. One day Ashoke calls Ashima and tells her that he has gone to hospital because of a stomachache. Several hours later Ashima learns that Ashoke has died of a sudden massive heart attack. Ashoke's death devastates Gogol and causes him to embrace his family in a way he has not done since he was a small child.

- **Sonia Ganguli**

  Sonia is the youngest daughter of Ashima and Ashoke. When Sonia was born, her parents had a traditional Indian name ready for her, afraid of making the same mistake they had made with Gogol. However, this traditional name becomes abbreviated to Sonia when she is still a small child. Sonia is five years younger than Gogol. Sonia becomes more important when Gogol and his family spend eight months in Calcutta, as she becomes Gogol's only friend. Later, after the death of their father, Sonia moves in with her mother and takes care of her for several years. It is not until Sonia becomes engaged that Ashima finally decides to sell her home and move to Calcutta to live with her brother and his family.

- **Ruth**

  Ruth is Gogol's first serious girlfriend. Ruth and Gogol meet on a train to Boston. Ruth goes to the same school as Gogol, but they never met until that night on the train. Ruth and Gogol have a lot in common and began to talk in a way that Gogol has never experienced with a woman before. After returning to school, Gogol looks Ruth up and they begin to see each other on a regular basis. Gogol and Ruth become a couple. However, Ruth takes off for a semester in Europe and when she returns, things have changed between them. Ruth has grown up and is no longer the same person Gogol once loved. At one time, Gogol could do little all day but think about Ruth. Now Ruth is gone and Gogol is almost relieved. Ruth is Gogol's first love and his first long time relationship, teaching him things that will help him in later relationships.

- **Maxine Ratliff**

  Maxine is another girlfriend of Gogol. He meets Maxine at a party after he moves to New York to join an architecture firm there. Maxine is bold and different
from any woman Gogol has ever known before. Gogol is instantly attracted to her and is not put off by her forward behaviour. Gogol goes to Maxine’s home for dinner and meets her family, finding himself drawn to their normalcy, their American ways. Gogol embraces this life, embraces this family. Before long, Gogol is living in Maxine’s home, though he keeps his apartment so his parents will not know about his change in address. Gogol spends his nights learning from Maxine and her family. During this time, Gogol avoids his family and keeps Maxine away from them, taking her to meet his parents only once. Gogol is embarrassed by how backward his family appears as compared to the Ratliff’s and does not want to show Maxine the world he came from. Maxine is Gogol’s second serious girlfriend. This relationship continues for more than a year until Gogol’s father dies and he finds himself embracing his family once more.

- **Gerald and Lydia Ratliff**

  Gerald and Lydia Ratliff are Maxine’s parents. Gogol loves the Ratliff’s because they are everything that America stands for to Gogol. Lydia works with textiles in the Met. Lydia knows a great deal about art; on this subject, she and Gogol have a lot in common. Lydia is also an amateur gourmet cook. Gogol learns a great deal about cooking from Lydia. Gerald is a lawyer. Gogol admires his work ethics and his money, as well as his character. Gogol wants to be like the Ratliff’s. However, the reader is given insight into the Ratliff’s when Lydia asks Gogol if he was born in America, suggesting this has something to do with her desire to accept him into her family. The Ratliff’s are important to the plot and therefore important characters because they symbolize the American culture that Gogol wants to embrace as his own.

- **Moushumi Mazoomdar**

  Moushumi is the daughter of a family friend of the Gangulis. Moushumi spent the first thirteen years of her life in London and arrived in America with an English accent. This set Moushumi apart even among the Indian friends of her parents. Gogol barely remembers her when his mother suggests that he should give Moushumi a call. However, Gogol begins to remember Moushumi once they meet again. Moushumi and Gogol are surprised to find themselves attracted to each other, but are not terribly surprised when they find themselves getting married barely a year after they begin to date. It seems their marriage was ordained by their family.
Gogol and Moushumi start their marriage on rocky feet. Moushumi takes Gogol to Paris only to leave him feeling left out while she spends time with her friends as he tours the landmarks of the historic city. When Moushumi and Gogol return home, they spend time with some of Moushumi's friends, and again Gogol feels left out. Moushumi too is feeling the difficulties of marriage and begins to search outside her marriage for happiness. Moushumi has an affair with an old boyfriend. When Gogol learns the truth, the marriage ends, and Moushumi returns to Paris.

- **Nikolai Gogol**

  Nikolai Gogol was a Russian writer. Ashoke is a fan of Nikolai Gogol and is reading one of his short stories when the train on which he is riding crashes, nearly ending his life. Because of this episode, Ashoke names his son Gogol. Gogol begins to dislike his name in his teen years. This dislike only grows when Gogol takes an English class in high school where he learns about Nikolai Gogol's history. Nikolai Gogol was a man who was prone to depression. Nikolai Gogol would become so depressed in middle age that he would stop eating. Nikolai Gogol would die from starvation despite the attempts of friends and family members to save his life. Gogol finds this history embarrassing and it is not until he learns of his father's train wreck that he begins to understand why his father named him after this odd man.

★ **Check your Progress**

I. **Answer the following questions in one word /phrase / sentence each.**

   1. What are the two types of characters in a novel?
   2. Where did Gogol meet Maxine?
   3. Who takes care of Ashima after Ashoke’s death?
   4. Where did Moushumi spend the first thirteen years of her life?
   5. What makes Asima more homesick?

★ **Key to Check your Progress**

   1. flat and round  
   2. At a party  
   3. Sonia  
   4. London  
   5. Her pregnancy
8.2.6 Plot Construction

1. Introduction

Plot is what happens in the novel. It refers to the author’s artistic arrangement of the story. Events and actions are artistically rendered and ordered to achieve particular emotional and artistic effect. There can be logical development of events with a careful linking of scenes. There should be a beginning, a middle and an end. The plot should be plausible, but there can still be a room for the element of surprise. There should be conflict- either within the central characters or between characters and their environment. The climax of the story is the highest point of interest in the plot. The moment when the conflict is most tense, the time when the consequences of a character’s actions become inevitable, all the main points of the plot merge. There is denouement, when all the little mysteries in the plot are revealed and all the loose ends are tidied up and the pace of the novel slows with denouement.

The plot of the novel *The Namesake* is realistic. It represents both the inner and the outer realities. It is based on the real life experiences of Jhumpa Lahiri herself as well as those of her parents, friends, acquaintances, and others in the Bengali communities with which she is familiar. She has very skillfully handled the plot to create atmosphere and to give a sense of depth and reality to the characters.

2. The Structure of the Plot

Plot is said to be an “artistic whole”, if it is complete and has ordered structure of actions directed toward the intended effect. The plot of the novel *The Namesake* is organic and artistic and has a complete and ordered structure. It can be called a successful structure. By successful structure we mean that the plot of the novel moves forward without any interruptions, digressions and inclusions of irrelevant matter. The novel is divided into twelve chapters that are each about twenty to thirty pages long. The chapters are not titled and they are not divided into parts. A few of the chapters begin with a year marker, letting the reader know when a large amount of time has been passed between chapters. Time passes very quickly in this novel; therefore, these markers are quite helpful in keeping the reader up to date. The chapters are written mostly in exposition or descriptive passages, leaving little room for dramatic scenes or dialogue. This technique also allows for the great amount of time that passes throughout the novel.
The novel follows two story lines. The first is that of Ashima and her difficult adjustment to living in America after spending the first twenty years of her life in Calcutta. Ashima has a difficult time in adjusting to the more relaxed culture of America after living with strict traditions in India. Ashima surrounds herself with Indian friends and adheres to the traditions of her home country for most of her life, despite the objections of her children and the amount of time that she lives in America. The second story line follows the birth and first thirty-three years in the life of Ashima's son, Gogol. Gogol is a second-generation immigrant who has difficulty in finding his own identity in the two worlds in which he lives. Gogol lives in the Western world, in a culture that allows a man to wear blue jeans and eat pork. However, Gogol's family lives with the traditions of India in which a woman does not call her husband by his formal name and wears flip flops inside their home. These two story lines intersect many times throughout the novel, both coming to their conclusion simultaneously as the novel reaches its climactic end.

★ Check your Progress

I. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.

1. Plot is the author's arrangement of a ________.
2. The plot of the novel *The Namesake* is ________.
3. The novel is divided into ________ chapters.
4. There are ________ story lines in the novel *The Namesake*.
5. Gogol lives in the ________ world.

★ Key to Check your Progress:

1. story  2. realistic  3. twelve  4. two  5. Western

8.2.7 Narrative Technique

1. Introduction

Characters, dialogue, actions, setting and events constitute the narrative in a work of fiction. Point of view signifies the way a story gets told. It is the mode by means of which the characters and actions are narrated to the reader. There are two types of narration, that is, two different ways of presenting a story. The first is ‘the
first person narration’ and the second is ‘the third person narration’. The novel gains a realistic effect by the presence of the character, if it is told in a first person narration. In this mode the narrator speaks as ‘I’ and is himself a participant in the story. In a third person narration, the narrator is someone outside the story proper who refers to all the characters in the story by name or by using the third person pronouns ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘they’. ‘The third person narration’ is divided into two sub classes, ‘the omniscient point of view’ and ‘the limited point of view’, according to the degree and kind of freedom or limitation which the author assumes in telling the story to the readers.

2. Point of View

The point of view of the novel The Namesake is third person omniscient. The author uses Gogol and Ashima as narrative characters most often. However, the novel is written heavily in exposition, or descriptive passages, which allows the author's own voice to come through almost as often as those of her characters. The author uses this technique in order to cover a great deal of time in a short number of pages. This technique also allows her to tell her story tightly and with great control without the added richness of dialogue and a multitude of dramatic scenes.

The point of view works well because the author is careful to denote changes in narrator with chapter breaks or paragraph breaks. The author is also cautious when allowing her own voice to shine through, rarely making outright statements. This keeps down the confusion that can happen with such a narrative style. The point of view is engrossing and allows the reader to become emotionally attached to the characters in a way that makes the reader care how the plot develops and where the characters will end up at the end of the novel. The point of view is clear and concise, easy to read and appropriate to the plot development.

3. Language

The language of this novel is precise. The use of more formalized English lends authenticity to the fact that many of the characters of the novel speak another language as their first language. There are also phrases within the narration that are in Bengali, an Indian dialect that is spoken as the primary language of the elder Gangulis and their friends. Some of these phrases are explained within the text but not in such a way that it interrupts the flow of the narration. The phrases are used in such a way as to further enrich the sense of authenticity to the background of the
Ganguli family.

The novel is easy to read despite the foreign phrases used throughout. It is written simply in descriptive phrases with very few dramatic scenes and a small amount of dialogue used throughout. The language makes this technique richer and allows the reader to get to know the characters despite the lack of scenes. It is important to the plot development that the reader relate to and care about the characters, because it is the characters that drive the story. Since such a large amount of time passes in this short novel, the exposition helps to get in all the important events. The language enriches the character development, achieving what the author needed to achieve without leaving the reader wishing there had been more scenes or more dialogue to further show the characterization of the important people driving the plot.

★ Check your Progress

I. Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.

1. What are the two types of narration?
2. What is the point of view of the novel *The Namesake*?
3. Which pronouns are used in the third person narration?
4. How many modes of narration are there in a novel?
5. What is dialect?

★ Key to Check your Progress :

1. the first person and the third person  2. the third person omniscient
3. ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘they’  4. Two
5. The form of a language spoken in one area

8.2.8 Setting

1. Introduction

Setting is an important element of a novel. Setting means background of the novel. It is the place of action. The plot in a novel must take place somewhere. Most of the times it is suitable, desirable, and effective. The setting of the novel includes number of different but linked elements, such as, place, time, situation, conditions
and atmosphere. Time can be day or night, summer or winter, the historical period. Place can be inside or outside country or city, specific real town or country or imaginary. Situation, conditions and atmosphere can be strange, mysterious, dangerous, menacing, tense, threatening, relaxing, nostalgic, happy, lighthearted, etc. However it may broadly be used in the context of social setting, the historical period or the natural or physical location against which the novelist sets his novel. Setting may further be divided into two types: the concrete setting and the abstract setting. The concrete setting refers to the actual locale, where as the abstract setting refers to the ethos of community. The novelist may chose either of these two or both simultaneously. In the picaresque narrative, the setting changes frequently as the main character travels from one place to another, where as in the stream of consciousness novel the setting may not change at all. Though there are novels in which there is less importance given to sociological or naturalistic background, the setting plays important role in the social or domestic novels. The setting of the novel does contribute to the development of the story and characters in the novel.

2. Social Setting of the Novel

Jhumpa Lahir’s novel *The Namesake* is set in America (mainly in Boston) and India (particularly in Calcutta). The Ganguli family first lives in Cambridge and then moves to Boston where they buy a house. The house is a common American two storey colonial, like any other house on the block. The Ganguli’s plant a lawn and lay a flagstone path to the front door. The inside sports wall-to-wall carpeting and the typical accoutrements of any American household. It is a home that is a complete contrast to the family who lives inside. The elder Gangulis are immigrants from India who refuse to accept the culture of their adopted country. They surround themselves with other Indian immigrants, socializing only with these other immigrants. They live in America but their hearts still belong to India. Calcutta is the true setting to the elder Gangulis and is a setting the family visits several times in the first half of the novel. Calcutta is a crowded, hot city that the Ganguli children dislike despite their hereditary connection to it. However, it is home to their parents and it will forever be home.

Other settings in the novel are the places Gogol lives while in college and afterward. Gogol lives in the dorms while attending Yale. Gogol spends little time here and the room is not described in great detail. After the dorms, Gogol shares several apartments with fellow students, but again these places are not described.
When Gogol moves in with Maxine, her home is described in detail due to the spectacular architecture and Gogol's chosen profession of architecture. The house is large and as different from his parents' home as Maxine's parents are from his own. The settings within this novel are highly symbolic without playing a part in the story beyond that. This works because it keeps the story on the characters and does not distract from the plot.

★ Check your Progress

1. Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.
   1. What do we mean by setting?
   2. Why does the setting of the picaresque novel change frequently?
   3. What is the setting of the novel The Namesake?
   4. Why do Ganguli children dislike Calcutta?
   5. What are the two types of settings?

★ Key to Check your Progress

1. background
2. the main character travels from one place to another
3. Boston and Calcutta
4. Calcutta is a crowded and hot city.
5. the concrete setting and the abstract setting

8. 3 Exercises

A) Broad / Essay Type Questions

1. How did arranged marriage affect Ashima’s life?
2. How does Jhumpa Lahiri depict the culture crises in the novel The Namesake?
3. What makes Moushumi to divorce her husband?
4. Draw a character sketch of Gogol.
5. What makes Ashima to take decision to return to Calcutta?
B) Short Notes:

1. Suitability of the title *The Namesake*.
2. Relationship between Gogol and Ruth.
3. Gogol’s attachment to Maxine’s parents.
5. Language and style in the novel *The Namesake*.

8.4 Books for Reference

Unit-9

Upamanayu Chatterjee’s The Last Burden

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9.0 Objective

After studying this unit you will able to

- know about the life and the works of Upamanuyu Chatterjee
- know about the plot of novel *The Last Burden*
- know the summary of the novel
- know about various themes and characters in the novel
- know about the technique in the novel
- answer the questions in this unit.
9.1 Introduction

This unit discusses the life and works of one of the famous Indian English novelists, Upamanayu Chatterjee. He is a powerful emergent voice in Indian post-colonial literature. He has written a handful of short stories and novels. His *English, August: An Indian story* was first published in 1988 and reprinted in 2006. This is one of the significant urban Indian coming-of-age novel. His other novels include *The Last Burden* (1994), *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* (2000)- a sequel to *The English August, Weight Loss* (2006) , and *Way to Go* (2010)-a sequel to *The Last Burden*. This unit further offers the chapter-wise detailed summary of the novel. This will help you to understand the plot and the story of the novel. Reading of the unit will assist you to read the original novel.

9.2 Life and Works of Upamanayu Chatterjee

9.2.1 His Life :

Upamanayu Chatterjee is born in 1959 at Patna, Bihar. He is one of the new talented Indian writers of the contemporary generation. He was educated at St. Xavier's School and St. Stephen's College, in Delhi. After studying English literature at Delhi University, he joined the ‘Indian Administrative Services’ in 1983. In 1990, he lived as Writer in Residence, at the University of Kent, U.K. In 1998, he was appointed Director (Languages) in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

9.2.2 His Works :

**English, August : An Indian story** : This is Upamanyu Chatterjee’s first novel published in 1988. It was adapted into a film of the same name in 1994. The book chronicles one year in the life of a trainee civil servant, Agastya Sen, on his first posting-cum-training session to Madna. The novel depicts very well the realistic trends in what may be called as grass root administration of a welfare state that is India, the comedy of errors, the paradoxes involved therein. The protagonist of the novel is surely out of place, but in due course of time, though reluctantly, fits in the scheme of things, initiating him in the vast community of 'brown sahibs' who rule India. The experience at the place of training gives a tremendous culture shock for Agastya, a city boy. However, it eventually becomes one long philosophical journey and a process of self-discovery for Agastya. Written by a civil servant, the novel captures the essence of an entire generation of Indians, whose urban realities are in sharp contrast to that of rural India.

Agastya Sen's sense of dislocation is only compounded by his extreme lack of interest in the bizarre ways of government and administration. While his mind is dominated by perversions and the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, images from his previous profoundly urban life. His work in Madna would ideally require him to be a devoted servant of the people.

**The Last Burden (1993) :** The Last Burden is a portrayal of life in an Indian middle-class family by the novelist. In the novel, he traces the lives of different people constituting a joint family, superbly portraying their emotions, needs, desires and frustrations. The novel portrays the financial, social and emotional issues that make people favour a nuclear family in contrast to a joint family.

The novelist employs somewhat strong language but definitely makes the readers aware of the actual frictions that exist within the joint family structure. It elegantly portrays the decisions and sacrifices made by different people in a family and the frictions and the frustrations thereby. It also portrays the struggle of the newer generation in order to move into a nuclear family structure from a strictly hierarchical joint family structure where even the elders have an even more elderly person who dictate the terms, having two fold structure of patriarchy of the Indian society, of the State and family. The novel tells about Jamun, a work less young man
and his old father, Shyamanand, his dying mother, Urmila. The novel opens at the
dead bed of Urmila and takes us through the story of this middle-class family. The
emotions and seriousness bind the readers to the story and keep him engrossed till he
is through it.

State is the sequel to Upamanyu Chatterjee’s debut novel, English August. It won the
‘Sahitya Akademi Award’ (English) in 2004. The Mammaries of the Welfare State
picks up some seven or eight years after the time of English August. Compared to
English August (and one can’t help the comparison of a sequel to a prequel) The
Mammaries of the Welfare State has a greater breadth, a broader sweep, a far bigger
mélange of unforgettable characters. It is also often dark, brooding, even scary. The
humour is sometimes seems to be the black humor in the novel.

Weight Loss (2006): Weight Loss is about the strange life (from age 11 to age
37) of a sexual deviant named Bhola, whose attitude to most of the people around
him depends on their lust worthiness. Bhola’s tastes are not conventional. Sex is a
form of depravity for him and he has fetishes about everyone from teachers to
roadside Sadhus to servants; he progresses from fantasizing about the portly family
cook Gopinath to falling “madly in love” with a vegetable-vendor and her husband.
This last obsession spans the entire length of the book and most of Bhola’s life. He
even ends up studying at a college in an obscure hill-station hundreds of miles from
his home because he wants to be near the couple. At various other stages in his life
he gets expelled from school for defecating in a teacher’s office, participates in an
inexpertly carried out circumcision (one of the book’s many manifestations of the
“weight loss” motif) and engages in all forms of debauchery.

Way to Go (2010): Way to Go begins brilliantly, with an opening chapter (aptly
titled “Missing Person”) that is a minor master-class in the building of a certain kind
of dry humour. It takes place in a police station, where the middle-aged Jamun
(whom you might recall from Chatterjee's The Last Burden) has come to report that
his 85-year-old father Shyamanand has vanished from his bed overnight. Sitting
across the table is an obtuse police constable who mechanically asks him questions
pertaining to the disappearance. Eighty-five and half paralyzed, Shyamnand is on his
deathbed when he goes missing. His apparent refusal to meet death in the expected way calm and accepting and lying down is a cause for great anguish to his son Jamun, who leads a life of quiet desperation, trying to balance feelings of despair and resignation since the suicide of his friend and neighbour Dr. Mukherjee.

After their father disappears, Jamun and his brother Burfi reconnect in their old home that builder Lobhesh Monga has his eyes on. In their quest to find out what happened to Shyamanand, they find a path out of desolation, even as TV executive Kasturi, Jamun’s former lover and mother of his only child, is busy recycling the more melodramatic moments of Jamun's life for the blockbuster Hindi soap Cheers Zindagi. In powerful, austere prose shot through with black humour, The novelist has produced an intensely moving examination of family ties and the redemptive power of love, however imperfect, in the midst of death and degeneration.

9.2.3 Check your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternative:

1) When was Chatterjee’s *English August* adopted into a film version?
   A) 1988  B) 1989  C) 1999  D) 1944

2) Where was Agastya Sen completed his training session?
   A) Patna  B) Calcutta  C) Madna  D) Bihar

3) What is the name of family cook in Chatterjee’s *Weight Loss*?
   A) Bhola  B) Gopinath  C) Burfi  D) Agastya

4) Who falls ‘madly in love with’ vegetable vendor and her husband?
   A) Gopinath  B) Bhola  C) Agastya  D) Shyamnand

5) When did Upamanayu Chatterjee join the ‘Indian Administrative Services’?
   A) 1990  B) 1989  C) 1998  D) 1996
B) **Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:**

1) Who is the narrator of *The Last Burden*?

2) Who is interested in seizing the old home of Shyamnand?

3) What was Kasturi’s profession in *Way to Go*?

4) What is the title of opening chapter of *Way to Go*?

5) Which novel of Chatterjee won the ‘Sahitya Akademy Award’ in 2004?

9.2.4 **Glossary and Notes:**

- **Paradox**: A statement or proposition that seems self-contradictory or absurd but in reality expresses a possible truth.

- **Bizarre**: Markedly unusual in appearance, style, or general character and often involving incongruous or unexpected elements; outrageously or whimsically strange; odd.

- **Hierarchical**: of, belonging to, or characteristic of a hierarchy.

- **Engross**: to occupy completely, as the mind or attention.

- **Depravity**: The state of being depraved

- **Debauchery**: Excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures; intemperance.

9.3 **Introduction to the Novel *The Last Burden***

The story moves forward describing the slow sequence of events that follow Urmila’s heart attack and Jamun’s journey to his house to see his mother on deathbed. The narration goes back into Jamun’s childhood memories, tracing the path that has brought the family its present state.

The novel opens with Jamun preparing to go home after hearing that his mother has had a heart attack and ends with Urmila’s death and Shyamnand’s decision to live with Jamun presumably as the latter’s “last burden.” The novel narrates Jamun’s memories of an habitual derisiveness and Urmila’s tired sobs filtered though the English language and the world of “hamburgers and levis, blues and heavy metals.”
It depicts the world full of abstract existential gloom. Jamun’s family which is constituted by the terrible tensions of the society creates the atmosphere of grimness. The exploitation and meanness of the outside world become entangled with the demands and resentments of the domestic life here. And the relationships that stretches but never breaks in the family. It is a typical Indian family where Urmila and her husband, Shyamnand, share little in common, but they continue to live competing bitter by to their sons’ allegiance.

The great deal of action of novel revolves around the experience of the family members, their familiar interactions and Shyamnand’s deeply felt anger at the destructive power that is institutionally invested on him as the family head of Urmila from her childhood had witness the powerful role of the patriarch in her father’s family. As a child she had watched her father beat her favorite brother Belu because he expressed his desire to marry outside his caste. Unable to bear the humiliation Belu had wallowed rot poison but contrary to survive.

As the novelist’s central subject is the family interactions among its members their everyday conversation includes the novel in to the domain of the realistic novel. Urmila’s illness, brings the family together. Her piles erupted into rectal cancer and Jamun in order to fulfill his familial obligations takes leave of his civil service job and goes to his house and is obliged to hang around. In the ensuring months his mother undergoes heart surgery, recovers, relapses and finally dies. Thus the novel depicts growing up years of Jamun and Urmila’s ‘catastrophic marriage’. Although Jamun, like the hero of the classical bildungsroman, grows from boyhood to maturity, in fact this process of maturity turns out to be illusory at the end of the novel. The Last Burden presents Jamun’s struggle and the distinctive relationships within an Indian family. The destructive relationship between father and mother, between the mother and two sons, between the father and the sons and the elder sons’ wife and finally between the elder son and his wife. It covers the life and times of Shyamnand and Urmila, two sons Burfi and Jamun and Burfi’s Christian wife, Joyce and their two sons Pista and Doom.

The plot of the novel is simple one, two pettifogging govt. servants who have an unhappy marriage, two sons and two impudent grandsons and a house their own and
after Urmila’s death the head of the joint family and Shyamnand sells it after the death of Urmila his wife and decides to live with his son Jamun who is more considerate than Burfi his another son. The ‘burden’ of love, possession and ties is the most evident in the relationship between Shyamanand and Urmila. Even 40 years of married life, they have not been able to establish and meaningful relationship and live in a destructive atmosphere of squabbling, bickering and accusations. In Shyamnand and Urmila we find classic case of a husband and wife falling out but not separating. The novelist vivifies the corrosive relationship through different images and Jamun’s pity would see-saw between Urmilas crumpled face and Shyamhand’s jagged silence. Urmila is harrowed by her catastrophic marriage. It is only when Urmila suffers a stroke and lies dying in the hospital at last Shyamnand shows some concern and Burfi loves her only when she is absent and dying. The loneliness of Shyamnand after his retirement affects his health, he develops friendship with his neighbor, Chandrakant Mohanty. Shyamnand’s paralytic stroke fills Urmila with terror. The family splinters with Urmilas passing away and Shyamnand feels that he is abandoned by his sons.

The novelist depicts the vicious and tragic nature of financial tensions and psychological burden is nowhere most apparatus than in the relationship between the parents and the two sons and the elders sons’ wife. Displaced from Calcutta, their cultural roots, Burfi and Jamun, have grown up into westernized rootless individuals. And because of bicultural ethos each member of the family in his own way unable to form lasting relationships and they fail to define themselves in terms of their culture and religion also. Both the brothers wait eagerly for the death of at least one of the parents amid a destructive atmosphere of squabbling, bickering and accusations. The novelist shows the incongruity between the two generations parents and sons. Joyce goes one step ahead during the five days which Urmila has spent in the ICU. Joyce hasn’t visited the Nursing Home even once and she justifies her action saying that, she is not a fraud to bob about her mother-in-law’s bed looking pathetic, while speculating every second when it be okay to glide away. After their mother’s death Burfi and Jamun participate in the rituals but their ambivalent attitude about these superstitions is clear. While it is Aya, who reminds them that for the days of mourning they have to eat plain vegetarian food, and to stave off Urmila’s spirit. The
novel presents, the destructive aspects of parent and children relationships and burden of human failure.

9.3.1 Check your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternative:

1) What is the name of Urmila’s favourite brother?
   a) Gopinath   b) Belu   c) Hegishte   d) Kuki

2) What is the type of the novel, *The Last Burden*?
   a) Realistic   b) Historical   c) Romantic   d) Psychological

3) With whom Shyamnand prefers to live after Urmila’s death?
   a) Jamun   b) Burfi   c) Chhana   d) Kasturi

4) How many days Urmila has spent in ICU?
   a) 15 days   b) 5 days   c) 10 days   d) 30 days

5) Who reminds about the vegetarian diet in the mourning days of Urmila?
   a) Aya   b) Kasturi   c) Chhana   d) Joyce

B) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:

1) Why does Belu take poison?

2) When did Shyamnand get paralytic stroke?

3) What is the name of a neighbourhood friend?

4) What is the name of Jamun’s childhood friend?

5) What is the religion of Joyce?

9.3.2 Glossary and Notes:

- **Derisive**: characterized by or expressing derision; contemptuous; mocking.
- **Wallow**: To roll about or lie in water, snow, mud, dust, or the like, as for refreshment
- **Squabble**: to engage in a petty quarrel.
Ambivalence: Uncertainty or fluctuation, esp. when caused by inability to make a choice or by a simultaneous desire to say or do two opposite or conflicting things.

Catastrophe: A sudden and widespread disaster.

Bildungsroman: ("novel of education") is a coming-of-age novel. In it, the author presents the psychological, moral and social shaping of the personality of a character, usually the protagonist. The genre arose during the German Enlightenment ...

9.4 Detailed Summary of The Last Burden

Upamanyu Chatterjee’s The Last Burden is a brilliant depiction of life in an Indian middle-class family at the end of 20th century. The story is narrated through Jamun, a bachelor, the son of Urmila and Shyamnad. His elder brother Burfi, has married to Christian girl, Joyce. Burfi has two children Pista and Doom aged 10 years and 4 years respectively. Jamun has a true friendship with Kasturi who afterwards marries to Agastya. Satyavan Hegiste, a Marathi fellow Jamun’s childhood friend, Kuki, Jamun’s maid Kasibai and her son, Vaman, Shyamnad’s niece, Chhana, Urmila’s Cardiologist Dr. Haldia are few other characters in the novel.

The novel is divided into seven parts entitled as: 1) August 2) A Maroon Cinema Hall And Aya’s Passing 3) Closeness Dies 4) A Walk to the Beach 5) The Cold Sweat Years 4) The Most Fateful Event and 7) So.

The novelist gives sharp insight into middle class Indian family life and explains why there is change from the traditional joint family structure to the nuclear one. It focuses the familial quarrels, financial pressures, loss of faith and unwanted but unavoidable pressures.

Chapter I – August :

When the novel opens we find Jamun, is reading Robert Payne’s Life of Mahatma Gandhi. He is intimated about the heart attack of his mother, Urmila. The
section introduces the different cast of characters from contemporary Indian family. Although the section is named as ‘August’ the reference is only to the month. As the novel begins, Urmila, the mother of Jamun is ill perhaps on her deathbed. The family comes together to see her through the days and lingering then as she slowly recovers. Already there are other family members like his father Shyamnand, his older brother Burfi, with his wife and two sons attending Urmila in her illness. It is not a happy family union. The strong undercurrents of depression are observed in the family. The numerous squabbles in the family, the characters and their decadence, Jamun’s recollections and various other situations like Dr. Haldia’s treatment to Urmila, description of Opthamologist, Jamun’s problem of low vision here lightens the novel’s poignancy. Burfi’s attitude to his parents seems to be utterly callous. The cruel relationship between sons and parents is revealed early in the novel in the statements such as, “They’ve never threshed about their parents with any remotely comparable strain. Yet parents can lacerate with equal violence” (The Last Burden, 26).

Chapter II - A Maroon Cinema Hall and Aya’s Passing

This chapter begins with Jamun’s friend; Kasturi’s arrival at the airport and introduction of Chhana, Shyamnand’s niece, who comes to see Urmila in the Nursing Home. The symbol of Maroon Hall becomes the objective co-relative of the protagonist’s essential loneliness in the family which is torn by the conflicts and tensions. Urmila’s illness, her long stay in the Nursing Home creates financial tensions in the family. Shyamnand and Burfi discuss about their apportioning of the cost of Urmila’s hospitalization and treatment. Only Jamun is devoted enough to volunteer his own share. For him it is not an issue he says,

“Who bears the expenses of Ma’s medical care is definitely not the issue” But Burfi who is against it says to his father, “it shouldn’t be an issue at all! She’s your wife. You hatched her maladies. You should pay for them.”

This section also depicts the worst condition of half-dead mother, Urmila and callousness of Burfi and his wife Joyce. It further focuses on boisterous family prattle, and Shyamnand’s frustration. His apprehension of the future of the family is clear from his words, “your gaiety will fade when your mother and I are dead. This
roof itself will moulder. Strangers to one another, with nothing in common, congregate once a decade, then how will you giggle? (P. 45). For Urmila money is not vital. There is no longer anguish for money in her later years.

The novelist presents the character of Aya as one of the unit of the family. Pista’s Aya taking care of Pista reminds Jamun about his relationship with his Aya since his childhood. For him Aya is Shakti, the celestial mother of the cosmos. The narration of Aya’s hospitalization, Urmila’s concern for Aya reflects Chatterjee’s attitude towards the social commitments of the family institution in Indian society.

Chapter - III - Closeness Dies

This chapter presents Urmila’s homecoming from the Nursing Home. Chhana returns to Calcutta four days after Urmila’s homecoming. Chhana is some sort of assistant in the Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library. She also studies Rabindra Sangeet for decades. She is the only one of their relatives whom Burfi and Jamun meet once in a way, about once every three years. Chhana and her Bihari manservant inhabit the first floor of a drab house in Baliganj. At Urmila’s heart attack Shyamnand entreats Chhana to come because, he is not certain of his sons. He has full faith that Chhana will handle everything their meals, the kitchen, and the household.

Ever since Burfi has returned to his family house he and his wife, Joyce and the kids and their Aya has occupied larger portion of the house and they least bother about the crises in the family. Burfi comes home and glumly switches substandard gin for tea. Pista and Doom do their homework in front of the T.V., Refrigerator becomes a store for gins and cold drinks, spicy mutton dishes. Joyce and Burfi’s marriage which is in the glow of infatuations at the beginning gradually deteriorates at the end. This is because of the futile attempts of both to stretch the westernized manners. So in the family they occupy three different corners of the house like three isolated angles. It also reveals Kasturi’s intention of the renewal of the radiant friendship. So the chapter describes the deteriorations of the family. So the closeness of relationships dies between parent and seed. Shyamnand is helpless in front of his callous son Burfi and daughter-in-law. And for Jamun, his mother is dying, his Aya is dead and the situation is becoming grotesque.
Chapter IV A Walk to the Beach:

This chapter goes back to the celebration of Urmila and Shyamnad’s wedding anniversary. It is the 37th wedding anniversary. All family members including Aya witnessing the family ceremony. Kuki, Jamun’s childhood friend is also there. Only Jamun knows that his parents share several ugly attributes of their marriage with millions of others in Indian society. The chapter also discusses other couples in the Indian society who despite of the bitterness of relationship surviving the relations for the sake of family. It refers to Kasturi’s parents relationship and Kuki’s parents relationship also. The chapter depicts Shyamnad and Urmila’s relationship. With his wife Shyamanand is never inarticulate, and Urmila, with her unfailing expression of harassed grief performing her duties of wife and mother.

Chapter V- The cold sweat years:

The chapter opens with the description of the beginning of cold sweat years for the family, when Jamun is 17 years old. In this period of 15 months there is befall in Shyamnad’s family. Shyamnad retires from Government services. Shyamanand’s suffering from stroke of paralysis soon after his retirement creates a grotesque picture. The globules of sweat on Shyamnad’s brow, the dribbles of spittle, and medical histories create the serious scene in the family.

After his retirement Shyamnad becomes the watchdog of his newly built own house. He has to wait for Jamun who studies in the University and his wife, Urmila who is working in the private office. He feels as if he is spying on the gate. He makes acquaintance with Chandrakant Mohanty a retired Health Officer. Due to loneliness Shyamnad gets frustrated that leads to his carelessness and he swallows two calmposes before the dinner and suddenly globes of cold sweat marshalled on Shyamnad’s forehead. Urmila has fear that Shyamnad will die on her hands, when she’s alone in the house and floundering in a cold sweat. Jamun is menaced too, in those years of cold sweat. The house itself appears cold storage. The whole chapter discusses the Shyamnad’s stroke of paralysis, his fear, his nightmare at the end. He dreams that he could not stir because he is wholly paralysed.
Chapter VI - The Most Fateful Event:

In the chapter Urmila remains a powerful presence. She is struggling through her illness. It further describes the generation gaps in the familial relations and the loss of love, affection among the members. The readers watch Urmila tottering around in her old age and is mimicked by her two young grandchildren. Shyamnand utters, “you behave with us in this manner only because your parents treat us so dismissively.” (P. 221) Another important site of the controversy in the family is the dining table. The family seemingly believes that the dining table is a sort at Hobbesial world in miniature. Urmila is hospitalized again because of her worst health condition and problem in the pacemaker. Chapter depicts the death of Urmila, her journey to crematorium, and emmersing of her ashes into Ganga which create a tragic pathos in the novel.

Chapter VII - SO

The chapter is devoted to the character of Urmila, and her unremarkable death. It is the death of 60 years old woman, and a weepy wife and a proud mother. It further defenses death as the cyclical notion and provides philosophical discussion of death. According to the novelist, the world is indeed composed of these cyclical well known tracks that every generation shambles about on, age upon age, that nothing that falls to one’s lot is new, that maturing and growing old really signifies encountering, in the particular, what has already occurred numberless times in the universal (P. 264).

The family splinters with Urmila’s death. After returning from Haridwar, Shymnand, Burfi and Jamun feel becalmed and restful as after some convulsions. Jamun returns to his workplace and Shyamnand takes decision to sell his house and prefers to stay with Jamun than his elder son, Burfi. In the end, we find underneath all these tangled relationships there is hidden factor that is the casual lust that makes up for the lack of love.
9.4.1 Check your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternative:

1) What is the title of beginning section of *The Last Burden*?
   A) August          B) Closeness Dies
   C) A Walk to Beach D) The Cold Sweat Year’s

2) What is the name of Jamun’s Marathi friend?
   A) Kuki     B) Satyavan       C) Shyam    D) Gopinath

3) Whom does Kasturi marry?
   A) Jamun    B) Agastya        C) Bhola    D) Gopinath

4) Where does Chhana stay?
   A) Patana   B) Baligaj        C) Bombay   D) Bihar

5) How many sections are in the novel?
   A) Seven    B) Five           C) Six      D) Eight

B) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:

1) What is the name of Kasibai’s son?

2) Give the names of Burfi’s Children?

3) What is a profession of Chhana?

4) Who makes a mimicry of Urmila?

5) Who is a cardiologist of Urmila?

9.4.2 Glossary and Notes:

- **Linger:** To remain or stay on in a place longer than is usual or expected, as if from reluctance to leave

- **Poignant:** Strong appeal, affecting in moving the emotions.

- **Callous:** Insensitive, indifference, unsympathetic
**Infatuation**: Foolish or all absorbing passion or an instance of this.

**Dribble**: To fall or flow in drops or small quantities, trick.

**Menace**: Something that threatens to cause harm, injury

**Mimick**: to imitate or copy in action (often playfully or derisively)

### 9.5 Characters in the novel:

The novelist presents the realistic characters who represent the certain foibles and virtues of the modern man. The characters share little in common but live together in mutual resentment. The brutal verbal welfare of the characters who live, speak ugliness bring out the novelist's gloomy vision and also the brutalities of the ordinary family life realistically.

#### 9.5.1 Jamun

Jamun, the protagonist of the novel experiences that the emotional bonds are very tiring yet life-sustaining in a joint Hindu family. He responds to basic emotions and filial relationships in a changing socio-economic structure of the society. As a matter of fact, an individual with an urbanized sensibility cannot maintain his individual identity. He becomes an anti-hero, sensitive to the human situation and oppressive family burdens. He just drifts with no apparent purpose in life. He struggles hard to get rid of the burdens and relationships resulting in emotional turbulence and takes shelter into the warmth of Kasturi and Kasibai temporarily.

He does not find a truly happy relationship. His early love Kasturi remains a friend occasionally and a very close indeed. But she marries afterwards to some one. His brother, Burfi's marriage is also not a particularly happy one. He has yet to really settle down. Even as a teenager he "feels for his parent’s love that is only the tenderness of remorse, just a sorrow, a shame at their unhappiness." The family gets by, but much that is familial and warmth is missing. As he eventually learns, there are also things about his parents that he is unaware of cultures clash too. As pointed out by M.S. Hema, "Jamun deliberately alienates himself from anything that would bind him emotionally, be it a home or a wife or even a sense of duty to his servant”. Jamun, the tentative hero is trapped in a hiccup of time as he is called back to the
bedside of his mother Urmila, who has had a heart attack.

9.5.2 Shyamnand:

Shyamnand is a cantankerous retired old man of the hard pressed middle class family. He is a typical Indian husband. In Shyamnand and Urmila we have the classic case of husband and wife falling out but not separating. He is frustrated father who after the death of Urmila sells his own house and chooses to live with Jamun. Jamun is more considerate than Burfi. It becomes very painful after Urmila’s death to take the decision of living with their children. The narration of the novel centers around the life and times of Shyamnand and Urmila and their two sons and grand children.

After his retirement he feels lonely. He remains at home waiting for his working wife and son Jamun. He then suffers from a paralytic stroke. Shyamnand’s paralytic stroke fills Urmila with terror that gnaws her heart and it is also the time of Urmila’s heart attack. Shyamnand shows concern to Urmila. The novel highlights Shyamnand’s role a father and head of the modern family which is influenced by the westernized ways. After his retirement at the age 58 he has suffered a stroke and has only one operative arm and leg. But he has a dreamt that he could not stir because he is totally paralysed. So the paralytical physical condition is very symbolically presented by the novelist which signifies the condition of dependent parents in the modern family. But he is selfish and all the time obsessively calculates the tiny returns on his hoard of fixed interest accounts.

9.5.3 Urmila:

Urmila is a powerful character in the novel. She is trapped in a lifelong struggle with her husband Shyamnand. As a wife and mother Urmila is ruthless victim at home and outside. Though she strives hard to maintain the fine family balance in the modern joint family, her rewardless life ends with her sad death by heart attack. She represents a true Hindu spirit of womanhood in spite of her catastrophic marriage. She is at the centre of the family. The novel begins and ends with image of Urmila. We see her through the uncertain eyes of her two sons. We observe her tottering around in her old age and is mimicked by two young grandchildren. She plays a role of responsible mother and wife. She is religious and she differs little from her
Americanized sons. In her old ages she has no concern for the money.

9.5.4 Burfi

Burfi is Jamun’s elder brother. He is a typical person who never cares for the past. He is a selfish, self-centered and money-minded fellow. He is an egoist who wishes to be financially sound and independent and never shares the medical expenses of his mother on this or that pretext. Furthermore, his relations with his parents and brother are intolerable. He never extends financial assistance for the domestic needs of his parents. Being a sycophant he advises his father to pay the medical bills of his mother and reminds him of his duties as a husband: “It shouldn’t be an issue at all she is your wife. You hatched he maladies. You should pay for them”.

9.5.5 Kasturi:

Kasturi, a friend of Jamun, who marries to Agastya has a daughter from Jamun. Kasturi presents the image of new, liberated woman who develops the free relationship with Jamun and after her marriage with Agastya she carries the child of Jamun. The novelist of though focuses on a fellowship of blood as last burden, he is quick enough to point out that these blood relations are not the burdens through Kasturi’s relationship with Jamun and the child she bears.

9.5.6 Joyce:

Joyce is a Christian wife of Burfi. Her relationship with her husband at the beginning of their marriage is based on the romantic ideals. Over the years, it starts deteriorating. Throughout the novel we find her failure as wife and daughter-in-law. She follows anglicized manners which lead to a domestic tragedy.

9.5.7 Pista:

He is elder son of Burfi. There is tremendous influence of the anglicized manners of his parents on him. He is a naughty and sometimes makes mischief’s with his grandparents.
9.5.8 Doom:

He is younger son of Burfi. Doom has friendly relationships with his uncle Jamun. He mimicries his grandmother Urmila. He is also anglicized like his parents.

9.5.9 Chhana:

Chhana, Shyamnand’s niece, returns to Calcutta four days after Urmila’s homecoming. She is a sort of assistant in the Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library. She studies Rabindra Sangeet for decades. She is the only one of their relatives whom Burfi and Jamun meet once in a way, about once every three years. Chhana and her Bihari man servant inhabit the first floor of a drab house in Baliganj. At Urmila’s heart attack Shyamnand entreats Chhana to come because, he is not certain of his sons. He has full faith that Chhana will handle everything their meals, the kitchen, and the household.

9.6 Themes in the novel

9.6.1 Familial Discord:

The novel presents malevolent familial discord. All the characters in the novel are totally capricious and their arbitrary conduct towards their kins creates tensions in the family. He tries to present social values which are present in traditional joint family structures and are rare things in modern times. Self interest has been becoming the prime motif of the younger generation. Negligence and ingratitude to the elders has become the fashion. The novel depicts the conflict and clashes of the three generations of middle class Indian family of the 20th century.

The novelist depicts the burden of family ties. The destructive relationship between the father and mother, between the mother and the two sons, between the father and the sons and elder son’s wife and finally between the elder son and his wife. Apparently commonplace events of Shyamnand’s family are more complex. It has confused motivations and circumstances beneath the familial relations.

The novel is about the life and times of Shyamnand and Urmila and their two sons Burfi and Jamun, Burfi’s Christian wife Joyce and their two sons Pista and Doom. It is a family that is peopled with human beings deeply despairing, cynical
and lacking in warmth. Shyamnand and Urmila have not been able to establish a meaningful relationship even after their fourth years martial life. Their marriage is not happy. The novelist depicts the corrosive relationship of husband and wife through two significant images. One is image of Urmila’s pulped face and other is an image of home as their diminutive unkept garden.

The burden of love and possession is evident in the relationships of the family members. The novelist presents the nasty relationship of Shyamnand with his wife. Once Shyamnand mistook his wife for one Shireen Raizada of his office and by that stage of their marriage, husband and wife has forgotten their sexual life and bedded down in separate rooms. So actually they are away from each other but straining to demonstrate their relationship in a different oblique ways. It tries to debunk the myth of family togetherness in Indian society.

9.6.2 Collision between East and West:

Burfi and Jamun have grown up into westernized rootless individuals each in his own way unable to form lasting relationship. Neither they are able to define themselves in terms of their culture or religion. The collision between East and West is causing orthodoxies of flounder. One of the most touching scene when the family carries Urmila’s ashes to Haridwar, none of them know what the obsequies are of how they are to be performed. After their mothers’ death Burfi and Jamun participate in the rituals but their ambivalent attitude about these superstitions is clear. Burfi is worried whether the traditional outfit traditional handloom dhoti will suit him? He refuses to shave his head.

Shyamnand who is also anglicized makes the futile attempts to retain the native culture. He thinks Urmila is responsible for the present future of their children Shyamnand corn. ‘You have good fed everything. You’ve not fostered your children rightly. They have discounted their traditions, culture, and parents because of you. As a mother, as a mortal, you’ve a disaster.’ (74-75)

Urmila thinks they have been fortunate in their sons. She further has proud of the togetherness of family. She reacts that in most of the houses there are quarrels, squabbling among the members of the family and it is very rare to find three generations of the family living together in modern times. Shyamnand is not certain
of his son who belongs to an entirely different culture. Every family member including Burfi’s young sons speak fluent English. The parents are secularized Hindus. The son’s jokes bounce off Freud, Genesis, Carl Sagan. Burfi and his Christian wife are at ease in New York, Amsterdam and in Dubai duty, free shops.

Burfi’s marriage with Joyce is the result of the collision of two cultures. Joyce, who is an outsider, goes one step ahead in her relationship with her mother-in-law. Joyce and her sons Pista and Doom interested in lavish living. They do not bother about the other members in the family even Urmila’s illness and death. They are calculated and money-minded people. This materialistic attitude is developed with the technological advancement in postcolonial situation is significantly presented by the novelist.

9.6.3 Post-colonial situation:

The novel can be analyzed from the postcolonial perspective. It present the hybridization of culture and language on the larger scale. We find the novelist experimentation with the language. He uses Bengali, Hindi and Marathi words which are the result of postcolonial scenario in India. The experimentation with language is one of the attempts to create Indianness and authenticity of work. On thematic level family of Shyamnand is at the centre of the novel. It represents the typical middle class family in India after Independence. The socio-cultural and economic factors have changed the traditional joint family structure of the family creating so many problems for the individuals.

9.7 Technique in the novel:

9.7.1 Narrative Technique and Style:

The language is very powerful dense. There is indigestible burden of language. The novel focuses of the familial relationships and uses unusual gastronomic names like Jamun, Burfi, Pista, Chhana. We are told from the beginning of the novel Jamun’s journey to be at his dying mother, Urmila’s bed side who is suffering among major ailments from ‘hypertension, piles, corns, arthritis, heart, marriage and her ‘mind’ using a series of flashbacks. The novelist points out Jamun’s relationships with his mother, father and his selfish brother.
In some ways, we find through the novel pursues the major theme of family ties, the content of the novel takes second place to its inflamed form. The very first page builds an atmosphere “of and somehow full of blood”, aided grotesquely by the sight at a “crushed dog on the road.” Later on we read, so many descriptions like, the woman ophthalmologist has “bull lips that will not bestride her teeth, Kuki’s” blowzy, stretched skin look about to slit, like a mouth for a yawn” the cook is seen as “a mosaic of vulgarity, un enlightenment, slumminess, tunnel vision, ill-bred voice ….” The word ‘mosaic’ chips off the entire sentence and dissolves the meaning.

Reader also find the omission of letters throughout the novel baffling–baba’d (baba would) sons’ve (Sons have), wives’re (wifes are) we’d’ have (we would have) and so on in order to make the text more colloquial his descriptive prose vents itself into the dialogue, lacking completely in discipline. He overwrites everyone, like religious Urmila differs little from her Americanized sons. Though his playing with the words sometimes creates the comic situation he is not writing in a extravagant comic mode of writing. The novelist’s nebulous humour does not contain the sharpness that is required in comedy. However, the novel takes the readers away from the routine expressions of the other Indian novelists into a relatively unexplored domain of lower middle class materiality, meanness and avarice. The novelist has a poet’s talent for transforming known words into new parts of speech. He introduces few words from Hindi, Bengali is other Indian languages. One however ‘ratnagarbha’ will fill a significant vacancy in English dustiness.

It is not only the behaviour of the characters but the novelist’s skillful use of the English language that creates the sense of an ugly tension ridden, world. He mixes slang, abuses and unusual ugly sounding words such as ‘crabbedly’ or ‘paiokily’

**Point of View of the novel:**

Flitting back and forth in time and space and writing in a language of unsurpassed richness and power the novelist presents a funny, bitterly accurate and vivid portrait of the awesome burden of family ties. The story opens with the events in of Jamun’s mother illness, the events in the present that follows his visit to his family house in the complete web of reactions between him, his mother Urmila, father Shyamnand and his brother Burfi, and his mother’s death and the throwing of
ashes into Ganges. All these events are interlaced with Jamun’s memories of childhood, the death of childhood Aya, Shyamnand’s stroke and so forth. Around the central character are the secondary characters Burfi’s wife, Joyce and their sons Pista and Doom, Shyamnand’s niece Chhana, Jamun’s friend Kasturi etc. through these characters a history of the family is filtered through Jamun’s often limited and unreliable perspective. Jamun is far from omniscient the family members probe each other for different reasons. The story is narrated from Jamun’s witty, knowing and merciless point of view. From quicksilver observations about death, bittersweet memories of walls, Jamun’s stream of consciousness flows consistently enough from the unrestrained bickering in his family.

9.7.2 Images and Symbols in the novel:

The novel is strewn with examples of conscious writing and is overburdened with imagery and symbols. The novelist believes that he must use imagery in every line but since he is striving for effect the images have a cloying affect on us. For example the depiction of Mrs.Jeremiah nuns as she bawls and struts up to him, udders and hams jouncing like ill congealed pudding. The woman ophthalmologist has been described with her “. . . Bull lips that will not bestride her teeth . . . (p.23) the palms fringe the ourpert like spellbound women votanes with hauneh length hair (p.35)

The dialogues in the novel seem unreal and stilted the free flow of the dialogues gets impeded by the inclusion of difficult words. He has deliberately used some proper names with associative reverberations Shyamnand, Joyee (ironical), Kasturi, Jamun.

Even though the novel is overburdened with imagery, it has three effective symbols one is ‘Aya’s passing away’ which becomes the symbol of the death of closeness in the family, the other is ‘the maroon cinema hall’ which becomes the objective correlative of the protagonist’s essential loneliness in the family torn apart by conflict dissension. There is of course the cactus plant which has to be clopped off to be replanted in the new house, suggesting the essential rootlessness of the characters.
9.7.3 Check your Progress

A) Choose the correct alternative:

1. What is the name of Jamun’s maid?
   a) Mrs. Raizada  b) Kasibai  c) Chhana  d) Meenabai

2. Who is the father of Kasturi’s daughter?
   a) Agastya  b) Jamun  c) Burfi  d) Hegiste

3. Who represents a true Hindu spirit of womanhood?
   a) Kasturi  b) Chhana  c) Urmila  d) Joyce

4. Whom does Shyamnand mistake his wife?
   a) Shireen Raizada  b) Kasturi’s mother  c) Mrs.Naidu  d) Parvati

5. How many generations of the family are depicted in the novel?
   a) Three  b) Two  c) Five  d) Four

B) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:

1. Why does Jamun call back at his family house at the beginning of the novel?

2. Why does Shyamnand entreat Chhana after Urmila’s homecoming?

3. What does ‘the maroon cinema hall’ signify?

4. What does the image of ‘Aya’s passing away’ signify?

5. Where do Urmila’s ashes finally emmerse?

9.7.4 Glossary and Notes:

- **Awesome**: showing or characterized by awe.
- **Extravagant**: spending much more than is necessary or wise; wasteful
- **Avarice**: greed for riches
- **Secular**: not pertaining to or connected with religion
- **Collision**: a clash; conflict
- **Corrosive**: harmful or destructive
- **Malevolent**: evil; harmful; injurious

### 9.8 Answers to Check your Progress:

#### 9.2.3 Check your Progress:

**A) Choose the correct alternative:**

1. 1944
2. Madna
3. Gopinath
4. Gopinath
5. 1989

**B) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:**

1. Jamun
2. Builder Lobesh Monga
3. T. V. Executive
4. Missing Person
5. The mammaries of the welfare state

#### 9.3.1 Check your Progress:

**A) Choose the correct alternative:**

1. Belu
2. Realistic
3. Jamun
4. 5 days
5. Aya

**B) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:**

1. because he is unable to bear humiliation.
2. after his retirement.
3. Chandrakanta Mohanthy
4. Kuki
5. Christian

9.4.1 Check your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternative:
1. August
2. Satyavan
3. Agastya
4. Baligaj
5. Seven

B) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:
1. Vaman
2. Pista and Doom
3. Assistant in the Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library
4. Doom
5. Dr. Haldia

9.7.3 Check your Progress

A) Choose the correct alternative:
1. Kasibai
2. Jamun
3. Urmila
4. Shireen Raizada
5. Three

B) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:
1. because his mother was on deathbed
2. because he was not certain of his sons and has faith in Chhana
3. solitude of the protagonist
4. essential loneliness in the family
5. in Ganga river, at Haridwar

9.9 Exercises:

A) Descriptive Questions:
1. Discuss Upamanayu Chatterjee’s *The Last Burden* as the story of human bonds and bondages.
2. Attempt a detailed note on the narrative structure of Upamanayu Chatterjee’s *The Last Burden*.
3. Critically examine the theme of collisions of the East-West as reflected in Upamanayu Chatterjee’s *The Last Burden*.
4. Comment the art of on characterization in *The Last Burden*.
5. Critically evaluate Upamanayu Chatterjee’s *The Last Burden* as Jamun’s search for identity.

B) Short Notes:
1. Character sketch of Urmila
2. Image of Maroon Hall
3. Linguistic experimentations in the *The Last Burden*.
4. Significance of the title *The Last Burden*.
5. Element of multiculturalism in *The Last Burden*.
9.10 Reference for Further Study:


