



# INDIAN NOVELISTS



Aprajita Sharma



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Dr. Aprajita Sharma

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*Indian Novelists*

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of the posteotonlal totahty caled I ndia. However, the concept  
of Indian English novel or rather the concept of Indians wnBng  
in English came much later and it is with the coming of Raja  
Rao. R K. Narayan. Mulk Raj Anand. the journey ot Indian  
English Novel began. The early Indian novels which were  
merely patriotic gained a rather contemporary touch wh the  
coming ol Mulk Raj Anand. Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan. The  
book deepens the existing critical responses and explores many  
unseen dimensions of Indian Novelist

Dr. Aprajita Sharma, b 1964 MA. Ph 0 (English Literature) has been teaching the subject for last twenty years. She has throughout brilliant academic career and holdc of National scholarship. She has published twenty four papers She had authored three books such a% unspoken feelings, feeling of the heart and A semloOc Approach to H.O. Thrxi.ririV.Yjihk

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# Preface

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“Indian” novel is necessarily written in English. He writes that the qualificatory “in English” is unnecessary, as it is absurd to assume that any work in Kannada or Bengali might also be in some way “Indian”—they do not claim to participate in the fiction of the “postcolonial totality called India”.

The Indian English novel evolved as a subaltern consciousness; as a reaction to break away from the colonial literature. Hence the post colonial literature in India witnessed a revolution against the idiom which the colonial writers followed. Gradually the Indian English authors began employing the techniques of hybrid language, magic realism peppered with native themes. Thus from a post colonial era Indian literature ushered into the modern and then the post-modern era. The saga of the Indian English novel therefore stands as the tale of Changing tradition, the story of a changing India. The stories were there already in India steeped in folklores, myths, written in umpteen languages as India is always the land of stories.

The book deepens the existing critical responses and explores many unseen dimensions of Indian Novelist.

—*Editor*

1 : A

## ARAVIND ADIGA

Aravind Adiga (born 23 October 1974) is an Indian writer and journalist. His debut novel, *The White Tiger*, won the 2008 Man Booker Prize.

### *Biography*

#### *Early Life and Education*

Aravind Adiga was born in Madras (now Chennai) on 23 October 1974 to Dr. K. Madhava Adiga and Usha Adiga, both of whom hailed from Mangalore. His paternal grandfather was the late K. Suryanarayana Adiga, former chairman of Karnataka bank while his maternal great-grandfather, U. Rama Rao, was a popular medical practitioner and Congress politician from Madras.

Adiga grew up in Mangalore and studied at Cañara High School, then at St. Aloysius High School, where he completed his SSLC in 1990. He secured first rank in the state in SSLC. Incidentally his elder brother Anand Adiga secured 2nd rank in SSLC and first rank in PUC in the state.

After emigrating to Sydney, Australia, with his family, he studied at James Ruse Agricultural High School. He studied English literature at Columbia College, Columbia University, in New York, where he studied with Simon Schama and

graduated as salutatorian in 1997. He also studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, where one of his tutors was Hermione Lee.

## Career

Adiga began his journalistic career as a financial journalist, interning at the *Financial Times*. With pieces published in the *Financial Times* and *Money*, he covered the stock market and investment, interviewing, among others, Donald Trump. His review of previous Booker Prize winner Peter Carey's book, *Oscar and Lucinda*, appeared in *The Second Circle*, an online literary review. He was subsequently hired by *TIME*, where he remained a South Asia correspondent for three years before going freelance. During his freelance period, he wrote *The White Tiger*. He currently lives in Mumbai, India.

## Booker Prize

Aravind Adiga's debut novel, *The White Tiger*, won the 2008 Booker Prize. He is the fourth Indian-born author to win the prize, after Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai. (V. S. Naipaul, another winner, is of Indian origin, but was not born in India.) The five other authors on the shortlist included one other Indian writer (Amitav Ghosh) and another first-time writer (Steve Toltz). The novel studies the contrast between India's rise as a modern global economy and the lead character, Balram, who comes from crushing rural poverty.

"At a time when India is going through great changes and, with China, is likely to inherit the world from the West, it is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustices of society (Indian). That's what I'm trying to do - it is not an attack on the country, it's about the greater process of self-examination."

He explained that “the criticism by writers like Flaubert, Balzac and Dickens of the 19th century helped England and France become better societies”.

Shortly after winning the prize it was alleged that Adiga had, the previous year, sacked the agent that had secured his contract with Atlantic Books at the 2007 London Book Fair. In April 2009 it was announced that the novel would be adapted into a feature film. Propelled mainly by the Booker Prizer win, *The White Tiger*'s Indian hardcover edition has sold in excess of 200,000 copies.

## Other Works

Adiga's second book, *Between the Assassinations*, was released in India in November 2008 and in the US and UK in mid-2009. The book features 12 interlinked short stories. His second novel and third published book, *Last Man in Tower*, was published in the UK in 2011.

## ABHISHEK AGRAWAL

Abhishek Agrawal is a first-generation entrepreneur, columnist, speaker and an author. Born on 16 July 1991, in Bhilai, Chattisgarh, India, he did his schooling till class 10th from Rajkumar College, Raipur and completed his high schooling from Krishna Public School Bhilai. He did his graduation in B.com from St. Thomas College Bhilai. After completing his graduation he moved to Mumbai to become a scriptwriter and a film director and there he is pursuing his masters degree from Mithibai College, Mumbai.

Abhishek is the author of the best selling novels *Sorry For Loving You* (2011) and *ForGetting The Unforgettable* (2013). Both

the books have remained best sellers since their release. Abhishek writes op-ed columns for popular English and Hindi newspapers including Mahakhabar and others focusing on youth, career and issues based on national development.

Abhishek voices his opinion frequently at leading events. Both of his novels were inaugurated by Anurag Basu, Film Director of Barfi. His book occupied a space in the shelf of Asia's Largest Poem Library, "Vagarth" Bharat Bhawan, Bhopal (M.P.). On July 2013, he became the Associate member of Film Writers Association, Mumbai to dedicate his work towards Bollywood.

### *Early Days*

He was born in a Marwari (Agrawal) family in Bhilai where his father Mr. Ashok Agrawal is a businessman and his mother Mrs. Anita Agrawal is a housewife. He helps his father in his business and his day to day activities. He also helps his mother in various house hold works as well. He has one younger sister named Rishika.

### *List of Works*

#### *Columns*

Abhishek has his columns in Mahakhabar Newspaper and has written many journals for magazines and newspapers.

#### *Author*

In June 2011 his debut book, Sorry For Loving You (2011) chronicling his journey throughout the society, Love, Friendship and Betrayal was published by Mahaveer Publishers. His second Novel ForGetting The Unforgettable (2013) was a

dedication for all those who have lost their near and dear ones in Mumbai Bomb Blasts.

### *Speaker*

Among his other activities, Abhishek is known to deliver speeches at programs organised by newspapers and media houses. Mahakhabar and other conclaves apart from writing columns for the same.

### *Awards and Recognition*

- Jewel of Agrawal Samaj in the year 2012
- Nominated for Navlekhan Award in October 2012
- Honored by “Yuva Rachnakaar Samman” by Akhil Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad in February 2013

## AKILAN

Akilan was a Tamil author noted for his realistic and creative writing style. Akilan was a freedom -fighter, novelist, short-story writer, journalist, satirist, travel writer, playwright, scriptwriter, orator and critic. He is also a children’s novelist.

### *Early Life*

Akilan was the pen name of Akilandam, who was born on 27 June at Perungalore, Pudukkottai District. He spent his childhood in a small hamlet called Perungalore near Pudukkottai. His father Vaithiya Lingam Pillai was an accounts officer and adored his only son Akilan very much. Unfortunately, the boy lost his loving father at an early age. But his mother Amirthammal was a loving person, and being a creative person herself, she moulded her son into a writer.

The author was attracted by Gandhian philosophy during his school days and he discontinued his college education at Pudukotai to join the freedom struggle. Later, after Indian independence, he joined the Railway Mail Service, after which he joined the AIR (All India Radio) and became a full fledged writer. His stories began to appear mostly in small magazines.

### *Awards Won*

In 1975 the novel *Chitrapavai* won the prestigious Jnanpith Award. This work of his has been translated in all Indian languages. In 1963 his historical novel *Vengayin Mainthan* (வெங்கையின் மைந்தன்) was awarded by Sahitya academy of Govt of India. *Engepogirome* a peculiar socio-political novel of his, won the Raja sir annamalai award in 1975. His children's book *Kanana kannan* won the special prize given by Tamil Nadu educational department. The author has written about 45 titles, most of which have been translated in all Indian state languages. Apart from this his works has been translated in other foreign languages such as English, German, Czech, Russian, Polish, Chinese, and Malay.

### *Works*

#### *Historical Novels*

- *Vengayin maindan* This is one of the famous works of Akilan, read by thousands and thousands of Tamilian's all over the globe. This historical fiction captures the history of chola dynasty. This book was dramatized by Late.Mr.Shivaji Ganesan on stage and was a huge hit.

In this novel, Akilan gives insight about the life and achievement of the great Rajendra Chola who was a Vengaiyin Maindhan to the rest of the world. RajendraCholan is the son

of Rajaraja Cholan and his period can be referred as the height of Tamil empire in art, literature and administration. He captured many countries including Indonesia (Kadaaram), Sri Lanka, Malaysia, southern and eastern coastal parts of India. He lived around 1010 AD and his dynasty had many business relationships with foreign countries. This novel depicts his victory over Kadaaram and the building of new city Gangaikonda Cholapuram upon his victory over northern part of India. The newly built temple and the city internally had so many architectural designs for war-time and peace activities. Along conquering the nations, Ilango Vel conquered the hearts of beautiful girls Arulmozhi and Rohini. Their love and affection was depicted in simple yet powerful words by Akilan. Vandhiya Thevan appears in this novel as an elderly counselor, who guides Rajendra Cholan in war and administration. Because of the narration and depiction of historic facts during Chola period using proper language there is no wonder this novel received the Sakithya Academy Award from Government of India. (Sakithya Academy award winning novel) Chola's historical novel

- *Kayalvizhi*. Tamil Nadu government award - Pandiya's historical novel-Akilan's Kayalvizhi is a gripping saga set in the Pandiya kingdom background.-Filmed by M.G.R as Madurai meeta sundarapandian.
- *Vetrithirunagar*- (historical novel based on Vijayanagara Empire

## SAMINA ALI

Samina Ali is an Indian-American author. Her debut novel was *Madras on Rainy Days*.

## *Biography*

Ali was born in Hyderabad, India, and emigrated with her parents to America when she was six months old. She spent half of each year in India, where she attended school. In 1993 she graduated Summa cum laude from the University of Minnesota with a B.A. in English. She received an M.F.A. from the University of Oregon. She lives in San Francisco with her son, and is working on her second novel.

## *Literary Career*

*Madras on Rainy Days* was awarded the Prix du Premier Roman Etranger award in 2005, and was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award in fiction.

## ANURAG ANAND

Anurag Anand (born 2 November 1978) is an Indian author with eight published titles in the self-help, general fiction and historical fiction genres. He is a marketing professional with experience across sectors like pharmaceuticals, fast-moving consumer goods and financial services.

## *Education*

After obtaining his primary education from Kurseong in Darjeeling District, Anand moved to Delhi. He completed his schooling from Delhi Public School, Mathura Road, *New Delhi* in 1996. Thereafter he did his B. A. (Hons) in Economics from Delhi University before pursuing his PGDBM (Post Graduate Diploma in Management) from Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, Delhi (2000 -2002).

## *Career*

Anand's writing career began with the book *Pillars of Success* (2004), a self-help book that owes its genesis to Anand's association during his college days with the Delhi based NGO, UNES. As a part of *the Youth Development Program* of UNES, Anand delivered lectures on aspects of personality development to school students across the country and it is the learnings from these interactions that he summarized in his first book. Since then Anand has also written general fiction and historical fiction novels.

## MULK RAJ ANAND

Mulk Raj Anand (12 December 1905 - 28 September 2004) was an Indian writer in English, notable for his depiction of the lives of the poorer castes in traditional Indian society. One of the pioneers of Indo-Anglian fiction, he, together with R. K. Narayan, Ahmad Ali and Raja Rao, was one of the first India-based writers in English to gain an international readership.

### *Early Life and Education*

Born in Peshawar, he studied at Khalsa College, Amritsar, before moving to England where he attended University College London as an undergraduate and later Cambridge University, graduating with a PhD in 1929. During this time he forged friendships with members of the Bloomsbury Group. He spent some time in Geneva, lecturing at the League of Nations' School of Intellectual Cooperation.

### *Career*

Anand's literary career was launched by family tragedy, instigated by the rigidity of the caste system. His first prose essay was a response to the suicide of an aunt, who had been

excommunicated by her family for sharing a meal with a Muslim Woman. His first main novel, *Untouchable*, published in 1935, was a chilling exposé of the day-to-day life of a member of India's untouchable caste. It is the story of a single day in the life of Bakha, a toilet-cleaner, who accidentally bumps into a member of a higher caste.

Bakha searches for a salve to the tragedy of the destiny into which he was born, talking with a Christian missionary, listening to a speech about untouchability by Mahatma Gandhi and a subsequent conversation by two educated Indians, but by the end of the book Anand suggests that it is technology, in the form of the newly introduced flush toilet that may be his saviour by eliminating the need for a caste of toilet cleaners.

This simple book, which captured the puissance of the Punjabi and Hindi idiom in English was widely acclaimed and Anand won the reputation of being India's Charles Dickens. The introduction was written by his friend, E. M. Forster, whom he met while working on T. S. Eliot's magazine *Criterion*. In it Forster writes: "Avoiding rhetoric and circumlocution, it has gone straight to the heart of its subject and purified it"

Inevitably, Anand, who spent half his time in London and half in India, was drawn to the Indian independence movement. During his time in London, he wrote propaganda on behalf of the Indian cause alongside India's future Defence Minister V.K. Krishna Menon, while trying to make a living as a novelist and journalist. At the same time, he also supported freedom elsewhere around the globe and even travelled to Spain to volunteer in the Spanish Civil War, even though his role in the conflict was more journalistic than military. He spent World War II working as a scriptwriter for the BBC in London, where he became a friend of George Orwell. Orwell

penned a favourable review of Anand's novel *The Sword and the Sickle* and remarked that "although Mr. Anand's novel would still be interesting on its own merits if it had been written by an Englishman, it is impossible to read it without remembering every few pages that is also a cultural curiosity," adding that the growth "of an English-language Indian literature is a strange phenomenon". He was also a friend of Picasso and had Picasso paintings in his collection.

Anand returned to India in 1946, and continued with his prodigious literary output there. His work includes poetry and essays on a wide range of subjects, as well as autobiographies and novels. Prominent among his novels are *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1939), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), all written in England, and *Coolie* (1936), *The Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953), perhaps the most important of his works written in India. He also founded a literary magazine, *Marg*, and taught in various universities. During the 1970s, he worked with the International Progress Organization (I.P.O.) on the issue of cultural self-comprehension of nations. His contribution to the conference of the I.P.O. in Innsbruck (Austria) in 1974 had a special influence on debates that later became known under the phrase of 'Dialogue Among Civilizations'. Anand also delivered a series of lectures on eminent Indians such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore, commemorating their achievements and significance and paying special attention to their distinct brands of humanism.

*Private Life of an Indian Prince*, were more autobiographical in nature, and in 1950 Anand embarked on a project to write a seven-part autobiography, beginning with *Seven Summers*. One part, *Morning Face* (1968) won him the Sahitya Akademi Award.

Like much of his later work, it contains elements of his spiritual journey as he struggles to attain a higher sense of self-awareness.

He died in Pune on 28 September 2004 at the age of 98.

### *Literary Style*

Anand, who was associated with Communism, used his novels to make broad attacks on various elements of India's social structure and on British rule in India; they are considered important primarily for their social statement.

## RAM SARUP ANKHI

*Ram Sarup Ankhi* was a Sahitya Akademi Award winner Punjabi writer, novelist and poet of Punjab. He started as a poet but ended up as a fiction writer. He received *Sarb Shresht Sahitkaar* award in 2009.

### *Early Life*

Ankhi was born on 28 August 1932, to a Brahmin family, in the village of Dhaula in [[barnala district]] of Indian Punjab. He left his college-study and did agriculture and then got a job as a school teacher and got retired in 1990. He married thrice and survived by his widow, three daughters and two sons.

### *Career*

He started his career as a poet but ended as fiction writer. There are 15 novels, eight story-books and five poem collections to his credit. He mostly wrote about the village life of Punjab; about farmer suicide and indebtedness and drug

addiction etc. His well-known works includes *Kothe Kharhak Singh* (1985), *Partapi* (1993), *Dulie Di Dhab* (2003), *Salphas, Kanak Da Qatleam. Malhe Jharhian* (1988) and *Apni Mitti De Rukh* (2004) are the autobiographies.

### ***Awards***

He received the Sahitya Akademi Award given by Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters in 1987 for his novel *Kothe Kharhak Singh*. He received many more including, Kartar Singh Dhaliwal award of 1992 from Panjabi Sahit Akademi, Ludhiana and Sarb Shresht Sahitkaar award in 2009.

## TEMSULA AO

Temsula Ao is a poet, short story writer and ethnographer. She is a retired Professor of English in North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), where she has taught since 1975.

In 2013, she received the Sahitya Akademi Award for her short story collection, *Laburnum For My Head*, given by the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Literature.

### ***Biography***

Temsula Ao was born in October 1945 at Jorhat, Assam. She matriculated from Ridgeway Girls' High School, Golaghat, Assam.

She received her B.A with Distinction from Fazl Ali College, Mokokchung, Nagaland. She received her M.A in English from Gauhati University, Assam. From Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (presently English and Foreign Languages University,) Hyderabad she received her Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English and Ph.D from NEHU. From 1992-97 she served as Director, North East Zone

Cultural Centre, Dimapur on Deputation from NEHU, and was Fulbright Fellow to University of Minnesota 1985-86.

She received the honorary Padma Shri Award in 2007. She is the recipient of the Governor's Gold Medal 2009 from the government of Meghalaya. She is widely respected as one of the major literary voices in English to emerge from Northeast India along with Mitra Phukan and Mamang Dai.

Her works have been translated into German, French, Assamese, Bengali and Hindi.

### ***Poetry***

She has published five poetic works.

- *Songs that Tell* (1988),
- *Songs that Try to Say* (1992),
- *Songs of Many Moods* (1995),
- *Songs from Here and There* (2003),
- *Songs From The Other Life* (2007).

Her first two poetry collections were published from Writers Workshop, Kolkata. The third poetry collection was published by Kohima Sahitya Sabha and the fourth was published by North Eastern Hill University and the last one was by Grasswork Books, Pune.

### ***Ethnography***

When she was in the University of Minnesota as a Fulbright fellow, she came in contact with the Native Americans. She learned about their culture, heritage and especially their Oral tradition. This exposure inspired her to record the Oral tradition of her own community, Ao Naga.

After returning from the University of Minnesota, she worked on the Oral tradition for about twelve years. She collected the myths, folktales, folklore, rituals, law, custom, belief system. This ethnographic work was published in 1999 as the Ao-Naga Oral tradition from Bhasha Publications, Baroda. This book is the most authentic document about the Ao-Naga community.

### *Short Story*

Temsula Ao has published two short story collections. *These Hills Called Home: Stories from the War Zone*, Zubaan and *Laburnum for my Head*, Penguin India (2009).

The former short story collection consists of ten short stories and deals with insurgency in Nagaland fired by right to self-determination of the Naga people.

The later consists of eight short stories which have mythical as well as modern overtones. The stories are sensitive, evocative and also powerful.

### *Literary Criticism*

She published a book of literary criticism *Henry James' Quest for an Ideal Heroine*. It was published in 1989 from Writers Workshop.

## ANJANA APPACHANA

Anjana Appachana is a novelist of Indian origin who lives in the United States. She has written a book of short stories titled *Incantations* and a novel titled *Listening Now*.

## Early Life and Education

Anjana Appachana was born in India of Coorg (Karnataka) origin and educated at Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya, Gwalior, Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Pennsylvania State University.

## Career

Her first book *Incantations and Other Stories* was published in England by Virago in 1991 and in the US by Rutgers University Press in 1992.

The book was reissued in India by Penguin in 2006. The stories in it are set in the early eighties in India. One of her short stories titled “Sharmaji” was included in *Mirrorwork: Fifty Years of Indian Writing*, a collection edited by Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West.

Appachana received the O. Henry Festival Prize and a creative writing fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in the US. Her first novel and second book is titled *Listening Now*, and was published by Random House in 1997. In it, six women tell the story of two lovers, Padma and Karan, spanning sixteen years. The novel is set in Bangalore, Delhi and Lucknow.

Speaking about the perception of women writing in India, she has said “Writing is not deemed legitimate work by anyone. They assume that it can be put aside for anything and everything — for housework, for house guests, for cooking... Now tell me, how many people who work outside the house do you know who would take time off from their work to cook a meal or do groceries or laundry or look after house guests?”

None, right?...That's because they work outside the house and because they have a regular income which apparently legitimizes their work." In the same interview, Appachana adds that a writer's life is comparatively more comfortable in America than in India.

She lives in Tempe, Arizona, and has a young daughter.

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## 2 : B

### B. PUTTASWAMAYYA

B. Puttaswamayya (May 24, 1897-January 25, 1984) was a novelist, playwright and journalist in the kannada language. He was recipient of 1964 sahitya academy award for his novel *kranthi kalyana*.

### P. K. BALAKRISHNAN

P. K. Balakrishnan (1926-1991) was a Malayalam novelist, critic and historian. His multifaceted interests took him through politics, journalism, public speaking and creative writing. He was a patriot who gave up his studies for the freedom of the country.

### *Biography*

Balakrishnan was born to Panickasseri Kesavan and Mani in the small village of Edavanakkad in Eranakulam district in erstwhile Cochin state (Kerala), India, in a lower-middle-class family. He was the youngest of 4 children following 3 sisters. Though his father was bedridden with paralysis, his studies were not neglected. Bright in studies, he created a good impression on people around together with his mischievous cousins Kesavan, Chennan and Sekharan. The childhood flavours and the beautiful village where he lived can be caught in his novel 'Pluto'.

He joined Maharajas College, Ernakulam. However, academic studies were last in his agenda. It was the time when the freedom movement had gathered momentum and there was no way the energetic boy could keep himself out of it. He whole-heartedly jumped into it. The involvement in quit India movement ended in jail. Thus, his four eventful years in college ended without any qualification degree. Language was a gift he had and he had made prolific use of it throughout his college days and subsequently mostly for political purposes. Though not formally, he had proved his mettle and the first job offer as chief editor proved that the caliber of the man was recognized. He started his formal career in journalism as Chief Editor of the daily news paper Dinaprabha, at the age of 32 years which was published, from Kozhicode. He quit after a year due to differences with the management. His journalistic career spread through the Malayalam dailies Kerala Kaumudi, Kerala Bhooshanam and Madhyamam Daily.

### *The Author*

His studies on Chandu Menon (the first widely accepted Malayan' novelist), the art of poetry studied through Kumaran Asan (the doyen of Malayalam literature) Vyasa Bharath and Ezhuthachan (the father of Malayalam poetry) and the art of the novel are unparalleled works that enriched critical literature.

As a historian, he found that there was a disconnect between what the existing writings on history projected and what he saw of Kerala from the old literature, travelogues, and other first-hand sources that is used to study history. In his writings he first dealt with Kerala history in the anthology 'Narayana Guru' on the great social reformer of Kerala who

changed the face of its caste-ridden society. He brushes with Kerala history again to study why Tipu Sultan, an able ruler and administrator is perceived only as an aggressor and religious fanatic in our writings. The culmination of these studies over three decades resulted in his work on social history *Jaathivyavasthayum Kerala Charitavum* (The Caste System and Kerala History). It is a seminal work that deals with various aspects of Kerala's history including the development of the Malayalam language.

However what catapulted him as a popular writer was his second novel *Ini Njan Urangatte* (And Now Let Me Sleep), a novel that subsists on the Mahabharath. The book is unparalleled in its lofty language, imagery and depth and is considered one of the best classics in Indian literature. The novel is the story of Kama as seen through the eyes of Draupadi. It maintains the original story, epic atmosphere, events and characters which distinguish it from other works based on Mahabharatha. This novel was quite a departure from his first novel *Pluto*, the story of his dog set in the backdrop of his native village of Edavanakkad peopled by his friends and relatives.

While his extensive interests resulted in full-fledged books, his numerous other interests resulted in various articles. No serious attempts were made to preserve the articles he wrote. So, many of these were lost after their first publication. Some of these were compiled and published in his lifetime *Mayatha Sandhyakal* (Unfading Twilights) and *Nidra Sancharangal* (Sleep Walkings). These were combined and brought out as *Balakrishnante LekhanangaKArticles* of Balakrishnan) in 2004. A subsequent collection of articles was published as *Keraleeyathayum Mattum* (The Essence of Kerala etc.) A series

of articles he wrote as chief editor of Madhyamam Daily was published in 2011 titled “Veritta Chintakal” (Thoughts Apart)

## BALAKUMARAN

Balakumaran (born 5 July 1946) is a Tamil writer, author of over 150 novels, 100 short stories, and dialogue/screenplay writer for over 14 films. He has also contributed to Tamil periodicals such as *Kalkij^nanda Vikatan* and *Kumudam*.

## SAUMYA BALSARI

Saumya Balsari is a British Indian author. Balsari has been named one of Britain’s leading South Asian women by redhotcurry.com. She is currently researching her third novel as Writer-in-Residence at the University of Cambridge, Centre of Latin American Studies. Her second book is *Summer of Blue*, a novel for young adults. It was published in 2013 as an ebook (Arcadia Books) and paperback. Her first novel, “The Cambridge Curry Club”, is the 2010 winner of the first ever Cambridgeshire Book of the Decade. The book was selected at Cambridge Wordfest 2012 by Oxygen Books, City Picks, for a public reading of Cambridge’s finest writing. Cambridge Wordfest 2012 The title was also chosen for The National Year of Reading and by BBC Radio Cambridgeshire for its 2008 A Book a Day project in May. Balsari’s writing has been favourably compared by Alexander McCall Smith to that of Booker Prize Winners Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai. Reviewers of her work include the well-known actress and author Meera Syal and television comedy writer Ronald Wolfe (Writing Comedy).

## Biography

Saumya Balsari was born in Mumbai (previously Bombay), India. She has a PhD and received Double Masters degrees in English and German Literature from St. Xavier's College and the University of Bombay and acquired a First in Italian at the Department of Foreign Languages. Balsari has worked at the Max Mueller Bhavan (Goethe Institute), as a freelance translator for German and French and as a journalist contributing to publications such as The Indian Express, Femina, The Indian Post and The Free Press Journal early in her career.

Moving to Denmark in 1987, Balsari had a teaching stint at The International College (Elsinore) that included sabbaticals in Brazil and Australia. After relocating to the UK in 1996, she worked in London as a lifestyle columnist for the Bombay Times (Times of India) and humour columnist for The Hindustan Times (UK Edition) and Pravasi Today.

Balsari's play *The Curry Club* had a rehearsed reading by the Kali Theatre Company at the Soho Theatre in 2003. Her novel *The Cambridge Curry Club*, published in 2004 by Black Amber Publications and reprinted again in 2008 and 2011 by Arcadia, was based on the play. The book launch took place both at the Nehru Centre London and Heffers, Cambridge. *The Cambridge Curry Club* won the Cambridgeshire Book of the Decade award in 2010 and was longlisted for the Vodafone Crossword Book Award in India. Reviews and features have appeared in various international publications and websites such as India Today, The Telegraph, DNA, Mint, PopMatters, Zee and local magazines such as Cambridgeshire Journal, Agenda and Style.

The novel has been used as a postcolonial resource text at the University of Turku (Finland) and University of Bayreuth (Germany), and as a reference in other academic institutions around the world. It is also available as an Arcadia ebook title.

Balsari's short stories (E.g. The Cutpiece) have appeared in publications by Walden Writers. The Taj by Moonlight appears in Marlow Weaver's anthology *A Long and Winding Road* (USA).

An early version of *Summer of Blue* received a commendation from the Yeovil Literary Prize Committee, 2009/ Betty Bolingbroke-Kent Award.

Balsari is a member of Cambridge Writers, Walden Writers, East Anglian Writers and the Society of Authors.

### *Personal History*

Saumya Balsari lives in Cambridge, but travels widely. She is married to Sudhanshu Palsule and has two daughters Sanna Balsari-Palsule **and** Sáríca Balsari-Palsule who are at Cambridge University. She is on the 2013 Asian Power Couples Hot 100 list.

## BIBHUTIBHUSHAN BANDYOPADHYAY

Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay (September 12, 1894 - November 1, 1950) was an Indian Bengali author and one of the leading writers of modern Bengali literature. His best known work is the autobiographical novel, *Father Panchali (The Song of the Road)*, which was later adapted (along with *Aparajito*, the sequel) into the *Apu Trilogy* films, directed by Satyajit Ray. The 1951 Rabindra Puraskar, the most prestigious literary award in

the West Bengal state of India, was posthumously awarded to Bibhutibhushan for his novel, *Ichhamati*.

## *History*

### *Early Life*

The Bandyopadhyay family originated in the Panitar village near Basirhat, located in the North 24 Parganas district of modern-day Paschimbanga (West Bengal). Bibhutibhushan's great-grandfather, who was an Ayurvedic physician, eventually settled in the Barrakpur near ganja gali (mangal pandey sarani), North 24 Parganas (now in Kolkata). However, Bibhutibhushan was born in Muratipur near Kanchrapara-Halishahar, North 24 Parganas, at his maternal uncle's house. His father, Mahananda Bandyopadhyay, was a Sanskrit scholar and story-teller (*Kathak*) by profession. Mahananda and his wife Mrinalini had five children, of whom Bibhutibhushan was the eldest. Bibhutibhushan's childhood home was near Gopalnagar Police Station in Bongaon, North 24 Parganas (location 23'41+88'46).

### *Education*

The writer studied at Bongaon High School, one of the oldest institutions in British India and was considered a consistently talented student. Following a first division placement in the Entrance and Intermediate Arts examinations, Bibhutibhushan completed his undergraduate degree with Economics, History and Sanskrit at the Surendranath College (then Ripon College), Kolkata. He was admitted to the master's degree (MA) and Law classes, but could not afford to enroll for the postgraduate course at

the University of Calcutta and joined teaching profession in a school at Jangipara, Hooghli.

### *Career*

Prior to becoming a writer, Bibhutibhusan worked in a variety of jobs to support both himself and his family.

His first job was as a teacher, but Bibhutibhusan also served as a traveling publicist for Goraksini Sabha, and later as a secretary for Khelatchandra Ghosh, a role that included the management of his Bhagalpur estate. Bibhutibhusan became involved with Khelatchandra, a prominent name in music and charity, tutoring his family, and also taught at the Khelatchandra Memorial School. Bibhutibhusan eventually returned to the geographic area where he spent his childhood, accepting a job as teacher at the Gopalnagar School which he continued alongside his until his death.

### *Writing*

Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay's works are largely set in rural Bengal, with characters from that area. Many of his novels are set in the city of Bongaon, including *Pat her Panchali*, *Adarsha Hindu Hotel*, *Ichamati* and *Bipiner Sansar*.

In 1921, Bibhutibhusan's first published short story, "Upekshita," appeared in *Probashi*, at the time one of Bengal's leading literary magazines. However, it was not until 1928, when his first novel *Father Panchali* (also known in English as *Song of the Little Road*) was published, that Bibhutibhusan received critical attention. *Father Panchali* brought Bibhutibhusan to prominence in Bengali literature and the novel and its sequel *Aparajito*, were subsequently translated into numerous languages. Additionally, these two were made

into films by Satyajit Ray and, together with Apur Sansar, formed the highly successful *Apu Trilogy*.

Ray referred scriptwriting students to the author with the following line of praise for the author's skill with written dialogue: "His lines fit the characters so well, they are so revealing that even when the author provides no physical description, every character seems to present itself before us simply through the words it speaks."

## **Ichamati**

*Ichamati* reflects and documents a period of caste stratified culture, the life of rural society along the banks of the Ichamati River in undivided southern Bengal. The novel captures indigo planters, plantation life, and caste society in Bengal during the early part of the previous century in vivid detail. Relationships are sensitively portrayed in the narrative, with the author exploring the subtle nuances contained therein. Readers have praised the detailed descriptions of nature and the unselfconscious, but poetic, portrayal of the flora and fauna on the banks of the Ichamati River. *Ichamati* has also been described as a deeply spiritual piece of writing, with Advaita Vedanta holding particular relevance to the contained dialogue. The hypocrisy of the Brahminical order is addressed in the book through the portrayal of several characters, exposing readers to the social and religious life of rural Bengal under a deeply stratified caste system.

### ***Critical Reception***

Bibhutibhushan wrote 16 novels, and over two hundred short stories; his style as a Bengali novelist has been compared to Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay.

*Pather Panchetti* is considered Bibhutibhushan's masterpiece and is included in the CBSE syllabus for students choosing to study Bengali. Author Humayun Azad opined that the novel form of *Pather Panchali* is superior to its cinematic rendition. Azad's view is not necessarily a commonly held one in the West, though, as the *Apu Trilogy* is considered among the finest films in the history of cinema — the unavailability of a complete English translation of the novel means that English-speaking audiences have difficulty engaging with the debate (the available translation by T. W. Clark and Tarapada Mukherji is a truncated version). However, in the Bengali-speaking world, the stature of the novel is not contested.

Amit Chaudhuri has translated a few excerpts from the novel for inclusion in the anthology, *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature*. In his introduction to these excerpts, Chaudhuri writes: "Unique for its tenderness and poetry... *Pather Panchali* rejects both nineteenth-century realism and social realism (the social milieu described in it would have logically lent itself to the latter) for an inquiry into perception and memory." The complete text of *Aparajito* has been translated into English by Gopa Majumdar.

Martin Seymour-Smith, in his *Guide to Modern World Literature* (1973), describes Bibhutibhushan (he uses the form Banerji) as "perhaps the best of all modern Indian novelists", going on to write that "probably nothing in twentieth-century Indian literature, in prose or poetry, comes to the level of *Father Panchali*".

*Personal Life*

Bibhutibhushan's early days were spent in abject poverty and he subsequently supported his family financially, though the extent of his support is unknown.

Bibhutibhushan had a stout constitution and walked miles in the woods every day, usually taking his notebook for the purpose of writing whilst surrounded by the wilderness.

Gouri Devi was the writer's first wife, but she died in pneumonia a year after their marriage. Gouri's death and Bibhutibhushan's consequent loneliness led to a theme of tragedy that became a recurrent motif in his early writings. At the age of 46, Bibhutibhushan married Rama Chattopadhyay and the couple raised a son, Taradas, who was born in 1947.

## *Death*

Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay died on November 1, 1950, with the cause of death identified as a heart attack. Death occurred whilst the author was staying in Ghatshila.

## SHARADINDU BANDYOPADHYAY

Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay (30 March 1899 - 22 September 1970) was a well-known literary figure of Bengal. He was also actively involved with Bengali cinema as well as Bollywood. His most famous creation is the fictional detective Byomkesh Bakshi.

He wrote different forms of prose: novels, short stories, plays and screenplays. However, his forte was short stories and novels. He wrote historical fiction like *Kaler Mandira*, *GourMollar* (initially named as *Mouri Nodir Teere*), *Tumi Sandhyar Megh*, *Tungabhadrar Teere* (all novels), *Chuya-Chandan*,