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Kanthapura: A Study

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Abstract:
Indo-Anglian Literature comprises the work of Indian writers in English. The contribution of Indian writers in English is known as 'Indo-Anglian Literature'. There is also the literature created by English men making India the theme of their subjects and it is known as 'Anglo-Indian Literature'. The Gandhian age (1920-1947) is one of the important periods in the History of Indian Writing in English. The Indian English Fiction of the 1930s is influenced by the Gandhian age. During this time, we see the appearance of the three great novelists - Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. Raja Rao's 'Kanthapura' is a famous political novel describing the impact of Gandhian satyagraha movement and ideals on the simple villagers of Kanthapura. Moola is the protagonist of the novel.

Keywords: Gandhian age, Gandhian ideals, Indo-Anglian Literature, Raja Rao, Kanthapura, Socialism

V. K. Gokak in his book 'English in India: Its present and future' (1964) interprets the term Indo-Anglian literature as comprising the work of Indian writers in English. There is also the literature created by English men who have made India the theme of their writing. This literature is called 'Anglo-Indian Literature.' There is the literature created by Indians in English and this unique contribution to English is known as 'Indo-Anglian Literature.' Like Bengali, or Marathi or Kannad or Tamil literatures, Indo-Anglian literature too is an Indian literature with a many folded achievement. Indo-Anglian literature is written in English and therefore appeals to the English reading people world-wide in addition to the Indian readers.

The entire period of near three decades (1920-1947) of the Gandhian age is one of the important periods in the History of Indian Writing in English. It brought for reaching - changes in political as well as in all areas of Indian life. Gandhiji fresh from his satyagraha triumph in South Africa returned to India in 1915. He launched the first country-wide Non-co-operation movement in 1920 which awakened nationalistic feelings among all and inspired them with a new confidence in their power to fight for freedom. He launched the Civil Disobedience movement in 1930 and his march from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi to break the salt law created a great impact on the entire world. He launched the last Satyagraha campaign in 1940 and 'Quit India' took place in 1942. In the end India got independence on 15th August, 1947.

In the political field we see the great mass awakening. In the social sphere, women responded whole heartedly to Gandhi's call. They showed a great enthusiasm in taking part in political mass movement. Along with these, we also see the rise of a strong youth movement, awakening among the depressed classes, the Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj plea for equal right to the untouchables. The congress, under Gandhi made the upliftment of the untouchables; an important part of its programme. The Indian English novel of the period was deeply influenced by the Gandhian movement and ideals. In Raja Rao's novel 'Kanthapura', we see the influence of Gandhian ideals and movements.