

UGC Minor Research Project (XII th Plan).

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Executive Summary

The New Age Popular Fiction in Indian Writing in English: Readership, Appeal, Influences & Adaptability to Visual Media.

The researcher has analysed this topic critically. This topic has been of great interest to this researcher since contemporary popular fiction in Indian Writing in English has garnered a lot of readers, especially amongst the young.

The researcher has first looked at the proliferation of New Age popular fiction due to the ushering in of post-liberalization, which has led to the opening up of the market. The coordination between publishers, publishing houses and authors has all contributed to the popularity of this fiction.

The profile of the authors has also been examined and it has been seen that the most popular authors today are professionals who are very media savvy and know how to keep in contact with the reader through their presence at popular events and through their blogs.

Different genres of novels have been examined. Mythological fiction, campus novel, chick-lit, romantic novels, thrillers and crime fiction have been studied and the language used by the writers as well as their writing styles have been analysed. Surveys have been taken especially of the youth and of the readers at popular book shops in different parts of the country, to find out who exactly are the readers of these novels and why do they find them appealing. This researcher has travelled to Delhi, Pune, Vadodara, Bangalore and Mysore apart from travelling all over Mumbai to seek readers' opinions. Some colleges as well as famous bookshops at these cities were visited to get sales data of these books from the bookshops and to talk to the buyers of these novels.

Several of the authors of popular fiction are based in Mumbai and readily interact with their readers at different literary festivals and college festivals and hence this researcher got several opportunities to listen to a few of the authors. A lot of views of the authors are available on their blogs too and they readily answer readers' queries. Hence the authors' perspective could be gauged comprehensively.

This researcher has also examined the films that are being made on these novels and observed the ways in which such fiction can be made adaptable to the screen. This aspect was studied since in contemporary society, it is important to see how cultures change and develop through written texts and media.

In the final analysis, this researcher has looked at how such writing has made a huge impact upon the language, reading tastes and views and opinions of society, especially the upwardly mobile and urban youth, who might take inspiration from the west, yet wish to read stories of themselves, their problems and lives. The way a reader reads a popular text has a lot to do with the reader's own social circumstances. Texts become bestsellers when urban readers belonging to the masses can relate to it.

Whether New Age popular fiction is going to be remembered for long or not is a question that only time can answer. Popular fiction is genre writing and generally follows a particular template to which the author adheres time and again. While this may not be altogether a bad idea, yet it cannot be sustained for long successfully. Any literature needs to evolve to sustain its readability. As more and more writers are writing, there is bound to be an improvement in quality of literature. 'Good' literature and 'Bad' literature are very subjective terms that mean different things to different people, but to help New Age popular fiction evolve, writers have to develop interesting plot lines and have to build it to the end in an organically structured manner.