

INTRODUCTION

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Short story is one of the most popular literary forms today. In spite of the popularity of the short story, the Indian English short story has not attracted scholars' attention so far except C.V. Venugopal's *The Indian Short Story in English (A Survey)*,¹ Kamal Dhalla's *Indo English Short Story* ² and some stray critical articles and occasional M.Phil. dissertations in the theory of short story as well as the studies in Indian English short story writers. Usually an Indian English short story writer is a novelist. But the critics and scholars concentrate only on their novel-writing and neglected the critical assessment of their short stories. Jai Nimbkar is not an exception to this. She began her literary career first as a short story writer. She wrote continuously short stories for a longer period of time nearly from 1958 onwards and she wrote only three novels later on. However, the most of the critical articles and scholarly dissertations for M.Phil. in English have been written on her novels only. For Example : Prof. Miss Barvekar's "*Come Rain*" : *Explorations into the Feminist Consciousness* ³ and T.S. Borate's *Jai Nimbkar's Fiction* ⁴

But no such concentrated efforts have been made to assess the literary merits of her short stories, with the exception of some marginal critical remarks in stray articles by literary scholars. The present study exclusively concentrates on her selected short stories. For the convenience of the study, the short stories published in her first collection called *The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories*⁵ are selected as a corpus for this study. This is because :

- i) It is more convenient to analyse her stories in the anthology rather than to analyse her stray and scattered short stories published in different periodicals.
- ii) The selected anthology is published by P.Lal, 'Writers Workshop Culcutta' which encourages the new rising literary talents in Indian English.
- iii) The above anthology seems to be significant to research scholars e.g. T. S. Borate states *The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories* was an important contribution to Indian English short story".⁶

It may not be, therefore, an extensive but will be an intensive in- depth - study of the ten short stories included in the said collection. The present study does not include the other short stories written by Jai Nimbkar.

At the outset, it appears that some of the striking features of her short stories are : 1) Technical perfection in the art of story telling. 2) The themes related to Indian women's life. 3) The realistic portrayal of the middle class Maharashtrian women's life. 4) The post colonial socio-economic ethos of Indian Women's living. It is intended to study, therefore, critically the form and content of her selected short stories.

This will be a kind of literary analysis of the prevailing short story form and the recurring different themes in her selected short stories. For this purpose, the accepted parameters of short story form will be taken into consideration and the stories will be analysed in their light to decide whether they fulfill the parameters or deviate from them. Similarly, the stories focus on the realistic portrayal of the middle class women's life and the socio-economic ethos. The recurring themes and the real problems in Indian life will be analysed.

The present study adopts the following scheme of chapterisation :

Chapter I Theory of Short Story.

(A) Origin and Development of Short Story.

(B) Indian English Short Story.

(C) The Elements and the Parameters of
Short Story.

Chapter II Jai Nimbkar's Short Stories : The Form
and the Technique.

Chapter III Man-Woman Relationship.

Chapter IV The Other Themes.

Chapter V Conclusions.

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