

Introduction

The researcher proposes to make a thematic study of Jim Corbett's collections of shikar stories. The stories in his collection are very interesting and fascinating. The short story as a minor form of literature is pretty old. It is almost as old as the human race. In good old days, people used to tell simple tales in order to teach moral lessons as well as to provide delight and pleasure which is the main aim of any type of literature. There are various types of short stories such as child stories, horror tales, romantic tales, adventure stories, murder mysteries and shikar stories and so on. Though the main feature of short story is brevity, the nature and form of a short story have changed over a period of time. Still the function of story has remained the same and its importance is of great value. A short story is defined as a piece of prose fiction which can be read at a single sitting. It presents an artistic and unified impression of life through many devices, especially, theme, characters and actions.

Features of short story:

The short story as a form is very important because it is the most flexible form of literature and thus eminently suited to portray the variety of characters, their adventures and lives. In modern period, the short story plays the role of infotainment. Literature has always been recognized as an important vehicle for inter-cultural understanding. A reader can explore the jungles of North India through the works of Jim Corbett almost as easily as entering the streets of Dublin through the pages of James Joyce's novels and stories. Most of the people like to read short stories and novels because of the brevity of the former, for example, Aesop's tales, *Panchatantra*, tales

from the *Bible* and *Delightful Gardiner*. Even people like to read horror and terror stories of Edgar Allan Poe. Freud has written psychological stories while Marx wrote of the underdog and the dregs of society. The short story in any language has remained popular since time immemorial because it is the base of all major forms of literature such as epic, novel, drama and poetry. Though the plot of the short story is very thin, it is compact. It covers only a small span in the life of any character. Details are deliberately avoided in a short story in order to attract the readers. As one-act play is to full-length play; so story is to novel. The short story is used variedly for different purposes by creative writers, political readers, social workers, industrialists, teachers, students and the like. All use different tales to prove their point of view.

Literature has a crucial significance in human life as its main function is to 'teach and instruct'. At the same time, literature gives us delightful pleasure. It is also supposed to be the mirror of a society. As short story is part and parcel of literature, the researcher has intended to study Jim Corbett's shikar stories. The researcher intends to consider the specific collections of short stories by Jim Corbett such as '*Man-Eaters of Kumaon*', '*The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*' and '*The Temple Tiger*'.

Significance of the study:

Population has increased and Man has invaded forests. At the same time, hunting has increased in large number for different reasons such as food, drugs, decorative purposes and so on. In China, every part of a tiger, from blood to claws is used to prepare various medicines. Prices of these parts are in many thousands and lacs. Naturally, whatever provisions are

made against poachers, they do their business at all costs. The result is wild denizens becoming rare. Today, tiger has been included in the list of decreasing species. This is very alarming matter. Corbett also had pointed out this fear to the then viceroy of India, Lord Wavell that tigers would possibly be vanished in the upcoming ten years. Though this fear has not come true, their number has been decreased to a great extent. According to the recent report of Wild-life Institute of India (WII), tigers in India are less than one thousand and fifteen hundred. The condition in other countries worldwide is not different than in India. The late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has done important work for the conservation and protection of wild life such as '*Project Tiger*' of a nineteen hundred seventy three. Now-a-days Government has banned 'shikar' and strict actions are taken against shikaris.

In the old days of kings and knights shikar had been a grand deed and a sign of courage. Today also some people eager to do such kind of shikar. But, there is much difference in those days and the world of today. In the coming years, the word 'shikar' would vanish and become a legend as possibly there will be no animals to hunt down in the forests or there will not be even forests to hunt in. Wild animals would be seen only in the zoos or pictures instead of the jungles. But, shikar literature would not be forgotten because of adventure, thrill, photographic descriptions of wild life and hunting in it. Those thrilling adventures experienced by many hunters like Kenneth Anderson, J. A. Taylor, Hunter, John Burger, Jim Corbett and many like these will be remembered by everyone. These experiences will always be exciting and alive through their writings. Shikar literature has created important place in English literature. Corbett also points out the popularity of

shikar stories by saying that '*shikar yarns, as everyone knows, never lose anything in repetition.*' (P.8, *M. K.*) Shikar literature is plenty in number. J. A. Taylor depicts his hunting experiences of African jungles in *Man-Eaters and Marauders*. Kenneth Anderson gives accounts of hunting in South India while Jim Corbett narrates his adventures in North Indian jungles.

In the genre of shikar literature, Jim Corbett is a noteworthy personality and much appreciated for his story-telling skill, especially in India. His stories are based on personal experiences and observations of his stay in India. He is a familiar name for Indians and one of the best gifts that Britain gave to India and her people. Corbett's contribution to the genre of shikar stories is very significant as he takes the readers along with himself and the beasts into a wide horizon of Indian wild life. His stories are saturated with various adventures, horrors, thrills, excitements and suspense. As a matter of fact, it is fascinating to penetrate and explore various themes in his shikar stories.

Objectives of the study:

The researcher has explored various themes in Corbett's shikar stories. The objectives of this study are:

1. To study wild life in North India as reflected in Corbett's shikar stories.
2. To study various aspects of human life in North Indian hills such as poverty, religion, superstitions, hospitality, courage and the like with the help of selected collections.
3. To study biographical account as reflected in the stories by Jim Corbett.
4. To study the bondage between human beings and animals with special reference to the selected stories.

Sources of Data Collection:

For data collection, the researcher has visited several libraries such as:

Barr. Balasaheb Khardekar Library, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

Barr. Jayakar Library, Pune University, Pune.

Nagarpalika Nagar-vachanalaya, Karad.

Keshavrao Pawar Library, S. G. M. College, Karad.

In order to find out secondary sources, the researcher has tried to use internet resources. For biographical details of the author, the researcher has used the relevant articles, journals, newspapers and various biographies.

Limitations of the study:

The study is restricted only to the thematic concerns of his shikar stories. Corbett's shikar experiences are scattered in his other books also, however this study is strictly limited to the above three books. Whenever it is essential and relevant, there will be some passing references to his other works.

Scope of the study:

The present dissertation seeks to provide a comprehensive statement on Jim Corbett's stories from thematic point of view with special reference to his hunting adventures with man-eating marauders portrayed in his writings. Out of six books by him, the researcher has chosen only three; two of which are the collections of stories-*Man-eaters of Kumaon* and *The Temple Tiger*. The third book of the selection is *The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*.

The stories by Jim Corbett are mainly shikar stories dealing with his adventures. They are thrilling and exciting stories about the carnivores especially man-eaters. Yet, he is not an antagonist of these creatures. He

doesn't want to kill them for seeking self-pleasure. On the other hand, his mind is filled with the noble purpose of universal compassion. He wants to save wild-life as well as human life. Therefore, the researcher intends to make an in depth study of the selected shikar stories in order to explore the major thematic preoccupations. Furthermore, the life and works of Jim Corbett and the shaping influences on his writings are considered to unravel the relevant importance of his shikar stories

Chapter Scheme:

The dissertation is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I : The Life and Works of Jim Corbett

Chapter II : *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*

Chapter III : *The Temple Tiger*

Chapter IV : *Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*

Chapter V : Conclusions

Chapter I provides a brief study of Jim Corbett's life and his literary works. The main ground covered in this section is the survey of his literary work and critical reviews. This study is based mainly on different articles published online. However, different views reflected by his contemporaries while introducing his books are also taken into account. This part of dissertation is meant for a brief biographical account of Corbett and discussion regarding his other works. The chapter also provides a review of the criticism of Corbett and his work with the view to look into the opinion of the critics.

Chapter II, III and IV provide a detailed textual and thematic analysis of the three collections dealing with various experiences presented in it. Th

study also discusses the socio-economical, religious and geographical perspectives reflected in it. Corbett uses his acute sense of the Indian social class, caste and their religious beliefs in religion and superstitions along with its relation with wild life and its impact on them. Various themes such as poverty, socio-economic life of people living in the jungles, normal Hindu way of life, natural disasters and such others are discussed in these three chapters with the help of selected collections. The study in these chapters is strictly limited to the primary sources only. However, major reviews related with the study are given notice too.

Chapter V is the last chapter of the dissertation which sums up the entire argument of the thesis by accentuating its findings. The last chapter is followed by the bibliography.
