

## CHAPTER – I

### **A Brief Account of the Development of Short Story**

Short story is the narrative prose fiction that is shorter than a novel. Short stories vary in length. Some are no longer than five hundred words; others run to forty-fifty thousand words. The major difference between short story and longer fiction (such as novel) is that the main literary elements-plot, setting, characterization-are used with greater compression in the short story than the longer fiction. Short story generally concentrates on either the presentation of a character, a cleverly devised plot or the development of an idea or theme. Normally short story deals with the fewer characters and less action. It usually depicts a single incident. Unity or singleness of effect, economy (of words\dialogue), and brevity are some characteristics of short story. It seems that theme is the most important element of short story. The theme differs from subject. Motive of writer or what writer wants to tell is the 'theme'.

There are many definitions of short story:

*Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary* defines short story as,

“Short story is a piece of fiction that is shorter than a novel, especially one that deals with a single event or theme.”<sup>1</sup>

As per *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Short story is,

“A kind of prose fiction distinguished from the novel (roman) and the novelette (nouvelle or novella) by its

compression and intensity of effect.”<sup>2</sup>

*New Webster's Dictionary* gives the definition as,

“A short prose narrative usually less than ten thousand words.”<sup>3</sup>

Edger Allan Poe defines short story as,

“ The short story is a piece of fiction dealing with a single incident material or spiritual, that can be read at one sitting; it is original; it must sparkle, excite or impress; and it must have a unity of effect or impression. It must move in an even line from its exposition to its close.”<sup>4</sup>

As Mr. Molekar M.Y. points out that Sir Hugh Walpole's definition is more comprehensive which is,

“A short story should be a story: a record of things happening, full of incident, swift movement, unexpected development, leading through suspense to a climax and a satisfying denouement.”<sup>5</sup>

It is always a delighting task to tell and to listen stories. Tales, fables, parables, folk-tales, anecdotes are different types of stories. But short story is different from all these types.

A legacy of a short story may be traced into the past. Some of these stories were occurred in *The Old Testament* and *The New Testament*. Most of the early stories were written in verse. P.P. Mehta thinks that short story is not a very new form. According to him,

“Crude and elementary but highly effective short stories (and anecdotes) are found in *The Old Testament*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Aesop’s Fables*, *Panchtantra* (5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.), *Katha Sarit Sagara* (11<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) and other books. Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* contains a number of short stories in verse. Boccaccio’s *The Decameron* (1349-1351) contains a number of good short stories.”<sup>6</sup>

The modern short story originated in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in America. Comparatively, the short story is a new literary fictional prose form. It is just one hundred and fifty years old. The American writer Edger Allan Poe is regarded as the father of the modern short story. His *Ms Found in a Bottle* in 1833 is the first modern short story.<sup>7</sup> Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and Boccaccio’s *The Decameron* (1349.1351) contain a number of good short stories. Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne are some other great short story writers. Ambrose

Bierce, O Bierce, Bret Hart and Henry James are some other famous short story writers in America.

The wind of the short story blew from America to Europe. Guy-De-Maupassant, Balzac from France, Anton Chekhov and Leo Tolstoy from Russia, Sir Walter Scott and Mrs. Gaskell from England are some famous European short story writers. Some Indian writers also have left the great imprint by writing short stories. R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Khushwant Singh, Arun Joshi are some of them.

The rise of the magazines and periodicals is the prominent cause of the popularity of short story among the readers. Today in every magazine there are number of short stories. Short stories in periodicals entertain the readers.

Indian-English literature has created its own place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. Contribution of short story writers is very important to the Indian-English literature. Indian-English short story has only a hundred years history. In India there is a rich and prosperous tradition of stories. *Panchatantra*, *Hitopadesh*, *Katha Sarit Sagar*, *Baital Pachisi* are some of the famous ancient story books till now. In the great epics viz *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* there are various stories. In Maharashtra there is a great tradition of 'Kirtan'. Kirtan is nothing but the stories woven artistically. The tradition of story telling is not new to Indians.

Early short stories were just well told stories. There were stories almost on each and every subject. In Indian-English literature the short story has remained a by-product of the novel workshop from its beginning. C.V. Venugopal points out,

“earlier stories as is to be expected,  
were simple, narratives, extended  
anecdotes and tales based on

legends and history as more often than not the titles of the collections themselves suggest: *Indian folk Tales* ( S.M.Natesa Sastri) or *The Beautiful Moghul Princesses* and *The Rajput Princesses* (Sunity Devi)”<sup>8</sup>

The first collections of short stories written by Indians in English appeared in London in 1885. As Mary Conde says,

“The first short story collections in English by Indian writers as M.K.Naik has pointed out, appeared well over a hundred years ago(Naik 13): *Realities of Indian Life: stories collected from the criminal Reports Of India* by Shoshee Chunder Dutt and *The Times of Yore* by Shoshee Chunder Dutt and Sourindra Mohan Tagore were both published in 1885. Their titles and their publication in London strongly suggest that they targeted an exclusively English audience which regarded India as ‘other’ and exotic”.<sup>9</sup>

The credit of the first Indian English short story collection goes to Kamala Sathianandhan’s *Stories from Indian Christian life*

published in 1898. Short story in its present form emerged in the nineteenth century perhaps it seems that nineteenth century was an age of short stories. At the beginning of the twentieth century there published four short story collections of Cornelia Sorabji viz *Love and Life Behind the Purdan* (1901); *Sunbabies : studies in the child life of India* (1904); *Between the Twilights : Being studied of Indian women by one of themselves* (1908); and *Indian tails of the Great ones among men, women and Bird people* (1916). According to M.K.Naik Cornelia Sorabji is the first woman English short story writer.<sup>10</sup> S.S.Bose, S.M.Natisa Sastri, S.B.Banerji, Prabhat Chandra Mukharji, Shovona Devi, Dwijiendra Nath Neogi, A Madhaviah and Sunity Deveen are some of the other short story writers of this age.

As stated above earlier short stories were only well told stories and based on legends, history. In the late 1920s and early 1930s short story writers concerned more with moral and social issues. Shankar Ram's *Children of Kaveri* and *Creature All* are good examples of it. R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand are prominent short story writers of the mid-thirties. Their short stories have more dealt with technique, form, structure and style which the earlier writers lacked. Mulk Raj Anand deals with the critical and unpleasant situation of the lower classes, hypocrisy of the society. He has written more about everyday happenings. *The Liar, The lost Child, Boots, Lajwanti, The Tractor and The Corn Goddess* are some of his famous short stories. R.K.Narayan's short stories seem humorous and satiric. He has a powerful comic vision and a fantastic dialogue presentation. *Swami and Friends, An Astrologers Day, A Horse and Two Goats, The Snake Song, Lawley Road* are some of his famous short stories. Raja Rao is a famous short story writer. His works are more serious. "His stories broadly fall under four categories: social and moral realism, political resurgence,

metaphysical overtones and fantastic realism.”<sup>11</sup> *Akkaya, Javni, A Client, Narsiga, The Cow of Barricades* are some of his famous short stories. According to C.V.Venugopal, there was a striking change in subjects or themes of short stories in thirties and forties. One can see the “Indian ness” in these short stories. C.V.Venugopal points out,

“with their stories, the reformist and the realistic narration acquired new dimensions. For the first time could be seen attempts at probing states of mind both individual and social. Art and social commitment and human study went hand in hand.”<sup>12</sup>

The theme of short story has changed from time to time. The Indian English short story flourished fully during the Gandhian age. T.L.Natesan, A.S.P.Ayyar, K.S.Venkatramani are some prominent contributors of short story during this age. The Indian English short story took a new turn after the independence.<sup>13</sup> The short story writers of independent India write on issues like partition, struggle for freedom, political events, questions of women, change in social values and their effect on the society. Khushwant Singh is the best example of this. He is a writer of new India. *The Mark of Vishnu, The Voice of God, Karma, A Bride for the Sahib* are his some famous short stories.

In the 1950s and 1960s there were rapid changes in the country. Industrialization has given rise to urban middle class. Changes in life have provided various themes for short stories. Changed attitude towards love, breakdown of moral and social values, man-woman relationship, free discussion of sex, marriage system, women’s search for

self identity and one more important theme-theme of alienation has reflected in the short stories during this age.<sup>14</sup> Manohar Malgoankar, Arun Joshi, Ruskin Bond, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Chaman Nahal, Manoj Das are some notable names in the field of short story writing.

Women writers have also contributed equally to the short story. This form has been enriched by various talented women writers. Education and economic independence have given the women the power and self confidence. Contemporary women short story writers see their women as individuals not types. Education and economic independence have given rise to a kind of conflict. The conflict of women as well as society between the traditional values and new\modern values, thoughts. The picture of new woman emerges from the woman trying to find her 'self'. She has become a conscious agent of change. In the early years after independence the writers have written about woman's powerlessness, uneducated woman-her problems. Self-confidence, economic independence and power have given rise to the consciousness. The female characters described by women short story writers want to change the critical situation of woman but they do not reject or rebel patriarchal structure. According to Usha Bande,

“The result is that the authors eulogies the stereotypes, advocate self sacrifice, meekness and such other virtues and focus on the problem of women. Since these stories are written obvious message to the exiting society, many of them have contrived plots and unconvincing situations.”<sup>15</sup>



The new, educated, independent woman emerged after the sixties. In the later half of 1960 and the decade of 1970 one can see totally contradictory roles of women; the educated, intellectual, economically independent, on the other hand an unattractive, dominating male. So far position of woman was secondary and position of man was the primary. Because of her new identity as an earning member of family she wanted to be treated equally. This woman became aware of her own likes and dislikes, her own wishes, her ambitions. The modern woman has become more aware of her ambitions and career. But the society was not ready to give her equal status. Woman of this age started writing freely about love, sex, marriage, extra marital affairs. The portrayal of woman in the post-independent era was totally changed. Because of the woman's education various women writers started writing. "With women's education spreading fast, more and more women writers came into arena. They saw the plight of their less fortunate sisters and realized the enormity of the social bias against women. Women started becoming economically independent and strove for the realization of their own aspirations. Later, feminism made a big dent in the social structure and intellectual woman felt its ideological impact. When she tried to incorporate it in life she came into conflict with the conventional moral code. Infact, a set of new paradigms related to a woman's life came into existence; tradition and modernity, self assertion and self effacement, economic independence and psychological dependence made contrary demands. Post independence literature in India portrays all these trends and gives voice to women for a new and just order of society."<sup>16</sup> Women in India are still caught between traditional values and modern/new values of life. Today's woman is facing the problems like workload at home as well as at workplace, child bearing, struggling with

conventions. Usha Bande says,

“Shuttling between the burden of home and workplace, childbearing, mothering, struggling with conventions women have first to survive. The question of equality arises afterwards.”<sup>17</sup>

As stated above various talented women writers have enriched the short story. Ruth Praver Jhabwala is the most important name in this field. There are four short story collections on her credit viz. *Like Birds, Like Fishes and Other Stories* (1965), *An Experience of India* (1966), *A Stronger Climate* (1968) and *How I Become A Holy Mother* (1976). She has sincerely presented the Indian life, mentality of Indian people, their problems, and their beliefs. Some of her short story volumes contain a principal theme of experience of the westerners in India.

Jai Nimbkar is one of the leading Indian English women short story writers. She has written two short story collections: *The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories* (1971) and *The Phantom Bird and Other Stories* (1993). In her short stories she deals with the middleclass Maharashtrian life as well as social issues related to Indian women's lives.

Gouri Deshpande has written sixteen volumes of Arabian Nights: Marathi version of Richard Burton's. *The Lackadaisical Sweeper and Other stories* (1997) is her a short story collection.

Nargis Dalal has only one short story collection on her credit i.e. *The Nude* (1977). There is a struggle of upper class women to search for self-identity, self and life.

Anita Desai writes quite in a different way. There is a psychological tone in her short stories. *Games At Twilight and Other Stories* (1978) and *Diamond Dust and Other Stories* are her short story collections.

There is a precious contribution of Shashi Deshpande to the short story. Her short story collections are: *The Legacy and Other Stories* (1971), *The Miracle and Other Stories* (1986), *It Was Dark* (1986), *It Was The Nightingale* (1986), *The Intrusion and Other Stories* (1993) and *Collected Stories, Volume 1* (2003) and *Volume 2* (2004). Her writing deals with the problems of women and the struggle of women in the context of modern Indian society.

The other notable women short story writers are Sujata Balasubramanian *The House In The Hills and Other Stories* (1973), Dina Mehta *The Other Women and Other Stories*, Rajkumari Singh *A Garland Of Stories* (1960), Padma Hejmadi *Coigns of Vantage* (1972), and Juliette Banerjee *The Boyfriend*.<sup>18</sup>

The present dissertation deals with three themes-the theme of Mother-Daughter relationship, Man-Woman relationship and Woman's Search for Self-Identity, found in the selected twenty one short stories. These stories are taken from *Collected Stories*, of Shashi Deshpande, Volume 1, New Delhi: Penguin Books, (2003) and *Collected Stories*, of Shashi Deshpande, Volume 2, New Delhi: Penguin Books, (2004).

The dissertation is divided into six chapters-

Chapter I : A Brief Account of the Development of Short Story.

Chapter II : Shashi Deshpande: Life and Career.

Chapter III : The Theme of Mother-Daughter Relationship.

Chapter IV: The Theme of Man-Woman Relationship.

Chapter V : The Theme of Woman's Search for Self-Identity.

Chapter VI : Conclusion.

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