

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Introduction

The review of literature is an important task of the researcher. It enables the researcher to understand the signification, background and the current position related to the subject chosen for the research. It also helps the researcher to find out the gaps in existing research and subsequently to formulate one's own research topic in order to bridge some of those research gaps at least partially. So it is necessary to review all kinds of literature related to the subject matter. John Best (2000:309) has asserted the importance and necessity of review of literature:

Practically all human knowledge can be found in books and libraries.

Unlike other animals that must start anew with each generation, human beings build upon the accumulated and recorded knowledge of the past generation. The research for the reference material is time consuming but fruitful. A familiarity with the literature in any problem area helps the students to discover what is already known, what others have attempted to find out, what methods of attack have been promising or disappointing and what problem remain to be solved.

The subject undertaken for the study is 'Gender Relations in The Collected Short Stories of Khushwant Singh'. So as a part of the study, it is necessary to consider the study of three things simultaneously. Firstly, as the study is related to Indian English literature and particularly short stories, the researcher has reviewed the literature related to the Indian short story and its development. Secondly, the researcher has reviewed the works related to Khushwant Singh and particularly his short stories. Thirdly, the researcher has reviewed the literature regarding gender and gender relations in literature.

Review of literature

A number of research students of Indian short stories in English have done thematic study of short stories for their research works. Some others have concentrated upon topics such as stylistic analysis, critical study, women in short

stories and so on. In the modern age, short story is becoming more and more popular with the writers and readers as well as researchers. The short story has emerged as a significant genre in Indian literature in general and in Indian English literature in particular. The impact of English on short story writing in India, both in Indian English and in Indian languages, has been considerable.

The form of the short story itself is important, and is located in a particular place in the literary market. The short story differs from the novel in several ways, most of which are related to length. It takes less time to read a short story, which has made the form popular with readers for the same reason that some readers prefer magazine articles to other forms of literature longer and possibly more demanding. An element of valuing comes in to play here as well: the status assigned to the short story will tend to be higher than that assigned to magazine articles depending upon the intended audience and relative fame or status of the authors. The norms for each writer are different. Therefore, the characters who deviate from those norms will tend to do so in different, culturally specific ways (Goodman 1992:83).

Indian English Short Story mirrors the contemporary society in our time. Stories are being written on various aspects of life and society such as love, death, and attitude to women, corruption in public life, human relationship, and above all, superstitions and rituals that are prevalent in the society. The change in our society in terms of urbanization and industrialization becomes a favourite theme with our writers. Some stories are rooted in our tradition and culture (Das 2003:96).

Short stories of D.H. Lawrence display many characteristics such as satire, irony, humour, wit and even cruelty. His many stories are written about friends and acquaintances of Lawrence himself. In other stories, satire is directed not so much against individuals as against types like the culture hungry American tourists in 'Thing'. Sex is often the theme, but sex without the mental complications of the novels. It is apparent that his stories are always the expression of a more direct, more controlled and more objective art (Shinde 2000:208).

All the stories of Doris Lessing are based on the African life, experienced and observed by the writer in early phase of her career as a novelist and short story writer. All the stories are bound together with the theme of Africanness which includes: the theme of individual's collision with an oppressive environment, the evils like: oppression, colonialism, racialism and poverty, natural superiority of the African natives, the exploited femininity and landscape. All the stories are set against the backdrop of beautiful but dangerous African landscape (Ghatage 1994:111).

The study of Joseph Conrad's short stories reveals the recurrence of certain themes which continued fascinating him through out his life. As Conrad's own life was related with sea, sea-life is depicted in some stories and in many stories nostalgically remembered. Most of Conrad's short stories belong to the genre of the masculine adventure story in which violence; physical peril and natural disaster dictate the course of events. But instead of laying his emphasis on the violence, Conrad is preeminently concerned with man's response to the hazards of circumstance or to the unexplored vulnerability of his own nature. In the short story genre, in his preoccupation with the moral ramifications of experience, Conrad steps away from most of his contemporaries and moves toward the psychological discoveries of D.H. Lawrence and James Joyce. Conrad's short stories foreshadow the characteristic Conradian technique in the spheres of themes, characters and narration, which reached its apex in excellence in his novels (Jadhav 2000:165-66).

John Updike has presented real life picture of men and women through his works. The new woman too was changed. She too had her concepts of an ideal man as well as an ideal feminine self. A kind of unrest reigned in this society. The rich could afford the luxuries of the sexual revolution. With poor it was unthinkable. So only the middle class remained who could not afford the paradise and also could not keep aside the thought of it. What characterized this middle class, which is of course at the center of Updike's fiction, is the tension between a drive for this 'sexual paradise' and at the same time an inability to reach it because of its relatedness to traditional ethical codes of behaviour (Bhatt 1985:18-

19). There are extra-marital affairs. The male is prominent in establishing these affairs. Sometimes the female partners too have extra-marital affairs. Whenever these characters in Updike's fiction feel unhappy, they try to find ways to happiness. They seek it from their beloveds. Not that they become satisfied there, some of them really become blissful and some become unhappier then before (Bhatt 1985:21).

Mansfield's short stories are divided into two groups. One deals with marital love and the second deals with premarital adolescent love. Marital love is full of bitterness, hatred, lack of understanding, because the social institution of marriage in many ways is responsible for the lack of communication between two partners. Compared to this, premarital adolescent love is honest and authentic. It is not corroded by institutional reality. But this adolescent love, however, free from institutional influence, is deeply rooted in dream and fantasy which the outer institutional world does not recognize. The naturalness of the human heart and passion as seen in the world of adolescence, dreams and fantasy ultimately succumbs to the inevitable pressures of reality (Magdum 1984:69). She does not project, like D.H. Lawrence, anything like an ideal man-woman relationship (Magdum 1984:73).

Most of the researchers have explored foreign authors. They have concentrated on only women characters in their studies. In Huxley's early novels, his female characters were types and had a puppet-like appearance. Most of them were pleasure-seekers who tried to escape into different illusion, but their attempts brought the theme more boredom and frustration as if they had pursued only the mirages and nothing else. In his later novels he once again returns to the satirical mode and gives a secondary functional role to women characters (Yadav 1984:63). All the women in O'Neill's plays are marked by certain common characteristics. Most of them are dreamers like Anna Christie, Margaret Brown, Able Putnam, and Mary Tyrme. The dreams may be different in type but what is common to them all is the fact that they were seen by the persons concerned. These women are the central characters; actions move round them, without such a

type of characters, the play would never have been a reality that they are (Patil 1987:65-66). It shows that the importance is given only to women characters.

The study of Scott's 'The Raj Quartet' has exclusive focus on women characters. There are interesting conclusions with regard to the inherent limitations of an Anglo-Indian writer and the role that women play in dramatizing the encounter between two cultures and throwing up the moral issues implicit in such encounter. Scott had an extremely limited contact with the Indian world and so his women characters are inevitably flat and typical, sometimes satirical. Scott's perception of the British world in India is most concretely and pathetically depicted in terms of the destinies of women characters, the men generally having gone to the war doing their last imperial duties. The Indian women characters are further marginalized because of Scott's inadequate knowledge of them. Though the study is related to women characters in Scott's, Ganapatye (1988) states that the greatness of his novel lies in the fact that it has the capacity to lend itself to many such micro studies. She hopes that her study has deepened our understanding of this complex and multi-dimensional novel of recent time (Ganapatye 1988:91).

In her stories Eudora Welty has recorded the whole life of women from childhood to young motherhood to old age. Her women are nearly always fully individualized people, 'always human' in the words of Joyce Carol Oates. In her fictional mothers one finds her strongest and richest characterization. She seems to be providing a rather modern view of woman, even moderately liberated view, although she has never identified her writing or her name with the feminist cause, as she says in her interview. (Kulkarni: 1995,p.35) As she has explained in an interview, she cares nothing about 'any kind of feminine repartee'. Thus, no study of feminism in the works of E. Welty can explicitly be expected (Kulkarni 1995:129)

In his study of Indian women characters as in the novels of Meadows Taylor, Chougale concludes that this study with an exclusive focus on Indian women characters in Meadows Taylor's novels yield some very interesting conclusion – with regard to the two important issues involved. They are: the

limitation of an Anglo-Indian writer in depicting the socio-political encounter between two cultures and posing moral issues implicit in such kind of encounter between the ruler and the ruled and the role that Indian women play in dramatizing the encounter between two cultures posing moral issues implicit in such kind of encounter. Here the researcher has focused his attention on only Indian women characters appeared in different novels of Taylor. He has highlighted women's social background, attitude to mixed marriage and various roles they play. But he has not focused on the gender relations as such (Chougale 1997:106).

The subordination of women in a patriarchal culture is symptomatic of hierarchization of socio-moral values between the sexes. It symbolizes the polarity between activity and passivity, between meek obedience and defiance. Women are often the symbols of passivity. Woman is thus reduced to matter, a mere object. This reduction of women to matter or a commodity is the main a phallogocentric pattern (Swain 2002:133).

Somerset Maugham followed the realistic method of writing. His writings reinforce the vitality and viability of the realist tradition in fiction. His women characters are often portrayed as amoral. They fail in their duties as faithful wives, good mothers and good housekeepers. Niyogi concludes that women characters by Maugham in fact represent the predicament of the modern contemporary woman. She wants to be happy and for this she is ready to sacrifice herself. But unfortunately she is trodding the path of loneliness and unhappiness (Niyogi 1996:63-64).

Patrick White never creates a stereotype of women protagonists, each of them being a unique person facing a unique situation, and this forbids generalization, except the most obvious one like, say all his women characters are flawed. (p.85) White's women protagonists are often the vehicles of his vision of human life, a vision not crystallized into something clear-cut and definite, but a vision with fuzzy contours. We may categorize the vision in Lawrentian terms of four kinds of relationship: Man and the Beyond, Man and Nature, Man and Society and Man and Woman (p.91) The man-woman relationship is not a story

point with Patrick White (p.97) White succeeds in creating women of vibrant individuality and unbounded energy who face their situations in a manner which we might call heroic, and attain maturity and wisdom to face further living or death. No one is a perfect human being, but they all learn to accept their flaws and limitations (Desai 1996:99).

Similarly, Shakespeare has depicted his women in various states, circumstances, classes and positions. There are queens, princesses, duchesses and women of the middle and the lower classes. There are wits, warriors, coquettes, shrews, bawds and monsters. But the great majority of them are gentle, patient and suffering. He does not hesitate to expose the purest of his heroines to the reek of the darker side of the world. Shakespeare's subtle and profound knowledge of the feminine mind and heart is beyond praise. His women are either good or bad. "The middle-region of character, where mixed motives predominate, belongs chiefly to the men" (Shintri 1984:4)

Some researchers have tried to show different relationships like mother-daughter relationship, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law or parent-child relationship and so on. Monika Gupta observes that mothers and daughters have a special relationship in Morrison's *Sula*. In each relationship the mother is passing a deep inherited feature of her own to her daughter. It is a generic and universal function of the female to extend some sense of survival to her offspring. Likewise these characters as women are also fulfilling the same function but catch the attention of the reader because of being a black woman, who are forced to fulfill it through absence, negligence, deprivation and sense of insecurity. The mother-daughter relationship is always non-verbal in Morrison's view. She is of the opinion that a mother always tries her best to extend and cherishes a child which she always has been deprived of. What is different in Morrison that her Mother-Daughter relationship is always damaged by racism and poverty (Gupta 1999:137).

Apart from the parent-child relationship, another important aspect of the family that this drama takes up is the relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. Normally, mother-in-laws are shown to have an attitude of

suspicion, intolerance, narrow-mindedness, prejudice, hostility, and even callousness. All this becomes apparent chiefly when there is an estrangement between their son and the daughter-in-law. Here, too, the amiable relationship has been explored in some of the plays by showing the mother-in-law generous and considerate (Pathak 1984:59).

There are some researchers who have explored Indian writers but the number is very small. While studying about women in Raja Rao, Desai concludes that Raja Rao has presented three different phases of Indian women in his novels namely the newly awakened women in villages, educated and self asserting women and the most emancipated women. She also claims that Raja Rao's attitude towards his women characters is contradictory and ambivalent. He sounds to be a 'male chauvinist' as he makes her ideal in her traditional role. The woman is subordinate and not equal to man; she neither determines her life nor defies the tradition as man does. His woman is fettered by domestic injustice and tyrannical customs. Raja Rao has not proposed any radical solution to women's dilemma (Desai 1986:118).

Vibha Jain has drawn a thoughtful conclusion that Kamala Markandaya has devised a method to idolize the image of women by showing them down-trodden to the extremity but still retaining the degree of confidence and forbearance to the extent where commonly the male character fails. She has looked outside the limitations of nationality and has tried to look towards the Western world also for guidance, but it is needless to comment that she had to come back to the same concept of Indian woman as nurtured by the Indian sociologist. Gayle, Greene, Coppelia and Kahn have made a significant comment about the versatility of the woman concept. "Actual behaviour is likely to be more varied than is suggested by social myths or stereotypes and the relation of the ideology of woman to social reality remains difficult to measure" (Jain 2002:310).

In Indian society, sex is supposed to be the most secret thing in the life. Nobody, neither husband nor wife, speaks openly and frankly about sex. Even to speak about sex is supposed to be sinful and immoral. In traditional views man holds superiority over woman. He expects that wife should be faithful to him and

neglects her identity. Man does not want woman to interfere in his affair (71). But Barvekar points out that Jai Nimbkar seems to create a very positive image of woman who dares to challenge patriarchy and offers an alternative system of life. She is not a 'super-woman'. She is a woman of flesh and blood. She gets over her depression and manages to think in a rational, self-respecting way (Barvekar 1997:63).

Swain has pointed out Uma Vasudev's views on sex and marriage. Sex as depicted in the novel, *Shreya of Sonagarh*, is related to Marxist Feminism. It is portrayed as a kind of domestic work that the wife discharges as a part of her obligation towards her husband. Male-female relations in marriage are as exploitative as the relation of a prostitute to a customer. Marriage, thus, becomes a kind of prostitution where the wife who has sex with her husband feels almost alienated from her own self. This the Marxists call a women's sex-specific oppression. The female here suffers as an oppressed wife. Shreya is a wife-prostitute who does not act but is acted upon, an object of passivity, of self-surrender in sex without any participation in it (Swain 2002:78).

The post-Independence Indian woman is caught in the flux of the opposite currents of tradition and modernity. She has to carry the burden of the past as well as feel the aspirations of the future. The role of a woman in Indian society has been regulated and determined by age-old conventions. Describing the traditional norms prevalent in Indian society, S.C. Dubey comments in his 'Indian Village' the traditional norms of the society expects a husband to be the authoritarian figure whose will should always dominate the domestic scene. The wife should regard him as her 'Master' and should serve him faithfully. The husband is 'superior', the wife is subordinate" (Dwivedi 2007:113).

Unlike other married women who have practically no choice left to them save what their husband wills and desires. Karuna has independent thoughts. She has her own say and is free to choose her ways and means. The husband interferes but it is only by way of guidance and advice. There is no superimposition on her thoughts. Karuna's is a life of instincts and urges. Unlike other married women slavishly tagged to tradition, she has her own say. She unveils and unfurls herself

to activate the creative urge stifled within herself and this act of unburdening herself is a compromise with her self (132). Shobha De's women suffer in an androgynous world for they do not cherish genuine passions but only plastic passions which make them passive without a sense of purpose living in a frustrating world of anxiety, guilt, hostility, bitterness, boredom and resentment. These women cast off the conventional sense of morality, the old, tired and repressive sexual moves and revel in the erotic celebration of the body (Swain 2002:137).

Jhabvala's novels confirm the feminist imperative that women in their struggle against social and psychological degradation do not have, by and large, the support, love or true friendship of other women. Jhabvala's female protagonists are isolated and victimized and in their quest for self actualization and they are unable, sometimes unwilling to draw strength from other women.

The women protagonists, in spite of their unbridled freedom, and economic affluence are ironically the sufferers and are made to experience the throes of morbidity. To get rid of their boredom and to achieve spiritual enlightenment they hand over themselves to some charismatic and enchanting male of self-proclaimed religiosity. But these mysterious guru's are motivated mostly by expediency of possession, class revenge or the narcissistic pleasure of collecting female admirers. These women and even homosexual men are victimized by lascivious men and are reduced to hopelessly doomed creatures. These later novels of Jhabvala present a mature vision of the novelist probing into the nature of the need of maladjusted women for a relationship with some strong, charismatic and mysteriously enchanting male (Singh 2007:79-80).

Still there are some researchers who have considered the man-woman relationship in their studies. Even Vrishali Magdum (1984) quotes the ideas of Jung regarding the man-woman relationship. Jung explains the man-woman relationship in psychological context: the mother image in a man's psychology is entirely different in character from a man's. For a woman the mother typifies her own conscious life as conditioned by her sex. But for a man the mother typifies something alien, which he has yet to experience and which is filled with the

imagery latent in the unconscious. Whereas for a woman the mother is ipso facto symbol, for a woman she becomes a symbol only in the course of her psychological development. (p.7) Though the study deals with the man-woman relationship, the main focus, however, is a thematic one definable in terms of existential and social categories. Whenever necessary, analysis of symbols and images is also undertaken in support of this thematic approach (Magdum 1984:24).

Pawar has pointed out in his research that gender differentiation becomes instrumental for different roles that are to be played by boys and girls. (p.96) Each couple projects different facets of the problems involved in man-women relationship particularly concerning the struggle for liberty, equality, self-reliance and so on. Traditionally, man has been regarded as protector, a master, and a guardian of women. The modern educated woman, however, resents this attitude. The fact is that a woman is basically a woman as well as a person. As woman she definitely needs man and vice versa. But, as a person, she can legitimately claim to be free and independent (Pawar 2004:104).

The study is related to women characters. Still Draxi (1994) points out that there are three types of men who respond to their women. The first two are 'gaudy seed-bearers'. The third type of men are 'sensitive young male' who betray an initial delicacy and recalcitrance that is afforded to the point of hatred by the inexorable fact of the female's organic functionalism. The male feels no such deep responsibility to organic process; he knows innately a sense of freedom and irresponsibility. (p.95-96) The views of male characters towards women are also considered (Draxi 1994:138-139).

Attar mentions that there are a large variety of roles of an individual in the Caribbean family. She has also presented the corresponding roles of man and woman diagrammatically (Attar 2002:352).

There are some researchers who have made a feminist reading of the writings of some writers. Review of such kind of literature is also taken into consideration. Yasmine Sarhrouny has made a feminist reading of Seven Wonder Tales. She states in her study that tales thus have a determining function in

constructing gender identities; they vehicle patriarchal values and reproduce modes of sexual behaviour better than other ideological apparatuses, mostly because they heavily rely on unconscious mechanisms to condition both men and women for their positioning within human culture. Because they are the product of the community at large, they obey the rules governing the said community and broadcast the dominant discourse; yet they allow marginal discourses enough space to emerge, provided the larger framework of the narratives espouses patriarchal standards. The advantage of critical theory for a study of tales lie mostly in the possibility of reaching several sliding levels of significance as different discourses clash with each other, besides the opportunity deconstructive readings opens up for the critic to isolate the ideological motives and drives behind the construction of each narrative. She also states that those tales are 'ambivalent texts' dealing with the ultra issue of gender difference that could be interpreted according to the political agenda of each reader. This study, according to her, is an attempt to validate the worth of tales for feminist criticism. A depiction of the sexual politics regulating male-female relationships, relationships based on binary structures of power and domination, silent subversion of male authority by the female presence are focused. (<http://www.usp.nus.edu.sg/post/morocco/literature/sarhrouny/1.html>).

Feminist reading of Kate Chopin's 'The Story of an Hour' is available from: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/virtualit/fiction/criticaldefine/femessay.pdf>. The writer has pointed out that there are many forms of oppression in the story. The central character suffers not only in her medical and marital conditions but she also poses a threat to herself. Her oppressive condition proves fatal to herself. Her medical condition is the narrative construct of a masculine world. Her marriage exemplifies the status of women in the early 20th century in that the woman is subject to the patriarch's 'powerful will bending hers'. The absence of children is considered as an unfruitful marriage – the failure of her feminine discourse. In fact her existence depended on a lack of self, since a woman was meant to live for others.

Similarly Lesley Higgins in 'Feminist Possibilities in Hopkins' Poetry' has pointed out the narrative generalization of patriarchy. Within patriarchal discourse, she states, 'female' and/or 'feminine' is ultimately defined as 'lack, negativity, absence of meaning, irrationality, chaos, darkness – in short, as non-being'. "For Hopkins, according to her, 'femininity' and 'masculinity' were not the products of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, whose complex historicity is inseparable from relations of discipline, regulation and punishment. Women were cultural ciphers in his society, eclipsed almost entirely by masculinist priorities, barred from what Eve Sedgwick terms 'the paths of male entitlement'. From Sedgwick's work we have the concept, and term, 'homosociality', which describes the importance and 'immanence of men's same-sex bonds' in nineteenth-century culture. Hopkins's path took him from one intensely homosocial situation to another." (www.gerardmanleyhopkins.org/studies/feminist.htm)

Thus, from the above reviews, it is clear that there are a number of studies related to short stories, women in short stories, women in plays, women in novels, feminist studies, etc. There is also ample work done on Khushwant Singh as a novelist for example *Critical Study: Khushwant Singh* by Shahane (1972), *Around the World with Khushwant Singh* by Rahul Singh (1978), *Khushwant Singh's Book of Unforgettable Women* by Mala Dayal (2000) *Khushwant Singh: An Icon of our Age* by Prasad Kaamna (2000), *Khushwant Singh: Reality and Myth* by R. Gupta (2001), *Khushwant Singh, the Man and the Writer* by R.K. Dhavan (2001), *Fictional World of Khushwant Singh* by Indira Bhatt (2002), *Khushwant Singh on Women, Love and Lust* compiled by N. Krishnamurthy (2002) and many more articles on his novels. However, no extensive research work is done on *The Collected Short Stories of Khushwant Singh* in general and particularly on Gender Relations in *The Collected Short Stories of Khushwant Singh*. So the researcher intends to explore this area with his selected short stories for the research undertaken. And there is still a lot of scope for research focuses on gender relations in literature. There are some more roles to be played by man and woman as far as family and society is considered. It may be woman-woman, woman-man ✓

and man-man. In other words, the study aims towards the gender studies in literature. So it is intended to probe into gender relations in short stories of veteran, versatile writer Khushwant Singh.

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Internet resources:

- i. <http://www.usp.nus.edu.sg/post/morocco/literature/sarhrouny/1.html>
- ii. <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/virtualit/fiction/criticaldefine/femessay.pdf>
- iii. www.gerardmanleyhopkins.org/studies/feminist.htm
