Chapter I

Introduction
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"To err is Human, to forgive is Divine". This dictum is a universally accepted one. Yet there are exceptions. What will be the consequence if one goes on committing mistakes throughout? Can he be forgiven forever? Though not punished severely, at least he should be informed of his follies. One of the best ways to make him aware of his frailties is to ridicule and laugh at him. This approach is termed as satire. It is generally agreed that people laugh when they see or hear something funny. But all will not find as such things equally funny. Things which strike one group as humorous may not strike the same to the other. Humorous responses vary widely and people tend to find different things funny and exercise this ability in varying degrees. Therefore to amuse and delight and to bring a reform is indeed a difficult task for a satirist. However a detailed description of satire and its relevance will be discussed elaborately.

Satire Defined

Universal Deluxe Dictionary defines Satire as, “a mode of writing which ridicules a person or society bringing out the absurdity of customs or manners, vices of people, etc.” Webster’s New Encyclopedic Dictionary defines Satire as, “1: a literary work holding up human vices and follies to ridicule or scorn. 2: biting wit, irony, or sarcasm used to expose and discredit vice or folly.” Oxford Reference Dictionary defines Satire as, “the use of humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule to reveal and criticize people’s bad points.” The Great Lifco Dictionary defines Satire as, “a mode of writing essays, poems which makes the subject ridiculous.”
Literary Discussion: Satire

Satire, according to Dr. Johnson, is ‘a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured’. It has both a negative and a positive side. On the negative side it may employ irony, mockery, invective, raillery, understatement, sarcasm, exaggeration, etc, in order to ridicule or abhor. Its positive side is its appeal to rationality and virtue and is either implicit or explicit in poetical works, for instance. Satire attacks folly or vice in a society or an individual with an implicit or explicit view to correcting the individual or the society. Mockery, ridicule and laughter are all employed to add weight to the satire. This device is employed in poetry, prose, novel and drama. Personal reasons may motivate a satirical attack but one cannot easily distinguish it from the other forms of attack, the public motivation. In satire the author presumes to reform the society. The presence of mock-heroic genre shows the widespread popularity of satire.

Long defines Satire as, “a literary work which searches out the fault of men or institution in order to hold them up to ridicule”. According to Dryden, “the true end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction”. In Defoe’s words, “the end of satire is Reformation: and the Author, tho’ he doubts the work of Conversion is at a general stop, has put his Hand to the Plow”. Both Dryden and Defoe believed that satire can heal and restore. ‘Satire’, says Ian Jack, “is born of the instinct to protest; it is protest that becomes art”. With his characteristic pessimism Swift had fewer doubts. In the preface to The Battle of the Books (1704) he wrote: ‘Satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody’s face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it.’ And at a
later date (1728) he saw satire at best as a kind of moral policeman restraining the righteous but helpless against the wicked, assisting to help those who were virtuous of virtue but never rescuing the vicious.

**Kinds of Satire**

Satire may be of two kinds: a) Personal, and b) Impersonal.

Personal satire is aimed at some individual. It can be very effective in the hands of a master, but generally it has a tendency to degenerate into vituperation and personal invectives. It is also ephemeral and short-lived. In impersonal or genuine satire, the satirist passes from the individual to the type, from the ephemeral to the eternal and from the local to the universal. These types are among the finest achievements of impersonal satire. It has a wider sweep; individuals are used as examples of vices and follies that infect the age.

**Understanding of Satire**

Satire is the literary art of contracting a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt, indignation, or scorn. It differs from the comic, in that comedy evokes laughter as an end in itself, while satire derides. The distinction between the comic and the satiric, however, is a sharp one only at its extremes.

Nearly everybody is a satirist by nature. The school boy who writes rude words about his teacher; the comedian on television who does a life-like imitation of the Prime Minister; anyone sitting in the pub or coffee bar and complaining about the wickedness of the world or the stupidity of leaders. The real satirist, however, differs from most, both in the strength of his feeling and in having the wit and genius to express it in some literary
mode. He must have some of the qualities of the moralist or the preacher, and some of the qualities of the clown – because the best way of attacking wickedness and foolishness is by laughing at them.

Dryden, Pope, Swift. Peacock, Aldous Huxley and George Orwell might be called primary satirists in the sense that their chief purpose was clearly satirical. One must remember however, that other literature also contain elements of satire, even when the writer’s chief purpose was non-satirical.

Chaucer was too gentle and humane a man to be a great satirist. In the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales there are not less than seven characters belonging to the church, and only one of them, the poor country Parson, is truly good and spiritual. The rest are either worldly, like the Prioress and the Monk, or criminal like the Summoner and the Pardoner. Even these however are described in a good tempered way by Chaucer. He does not invite the readers’ hate, but provokes their laughter.

Shakespeare, like Chaucer, is not usually thought of as a satirist, yet there are often satirical touches in his works, and some of the plays are almost wholly satirical. Love’s Labour’s Lost is an amusing satire on what is now called ‘the sex war’. As You Like It satirizes various fashionable features of the 1590s.

Most of Shakespeare’s satire is like Chaucer’s – amusing and good-tempered. Troilus and Cressida however is a bitter attack on the wickedness of human nature. Dickens was another great writer who, although not generally thought of as a satirist, often used his influence as a novelist to attack and criticize the social injustices of his time. Poverty, bad education, inefficiency of government and the law, shocking inequalities of wealth, are some of the subjects often dealt with.
Essentials of a Good Satire

Satire may be inspired by either a personal grievance or a passion for reform. It is an attack on a person or group of persons or on a social evil or folly. It is primarily light literature, hovering at times on the confines of burlesque.

It is, in the next place, intended to ridicule, not to abuse, though it may often be bitter. In general, it hates the sin and not the sinner, and is more playful than hurtful. Pope, however, often erred in this respect, for in much of his work he showed himself to be venomous and malignant.

This does not mean that the artist should mince matters. No satire can be great which is not forceful and outspoken, and some have been crushing. As Shelley said, Byron takes an aim that tempts no second blow. Dryden, perhaps, hits the hardest, without degenerating into coarseness and violence.

Satire, like an arrow, has to take the shortest route to its target. It must be terse and concise so as to say a great deal in a brief space. Prolixity destroys its effect.

Subjects of the Satire

The main object of satire is to ridicule vices and follies of society. While scorning at these vices and follies its attitude remains amusing. In fact, satire is a literary achievement. Richard Garnett is of the view that satire is, “the expression in adequate terms of the sense of amusement or disgust excited by the ridiculous or unseemingly, provided that humour is a distinctly recognized element, and that the utterance is invested with literary form. Without humour, satire is invective; without literary form, it is mere clownish jeering.” (Birjadish, 47) The main characteristics of satire are literariness; disgust at the ridiculous, the ugly and the foolish; humour and a sincere desire to correct
or reform. And the main weapons of a satirist are wit, humour, irony and paradox. Satire exists in literature since the time of Chaucer. Chaucer has been regarded as the father of this form. Among many remarkable works, some could get their fame because of the element of satire. *Gulliver's Travels* is one such satirical product. Chaucer, Pope and Swift are the satirists who continued the line of Aristophanes, Juvenal, Horace and Petronius.

The satirist's trade is to censure. He condemns whatever he does not approve, and each age has had its own set of vices to ridicule. Satire, like the drama, holds the mirror up to nature, and lashes out at contemporary follies and foibles. Chaucer and Langland attacked corruption in the Church and other vices such as dishonesty on the part of traders and men of law. The Elizabethans had their own subjects of satire: the courtier, the Puritan, the woman, the affected traveller, the dishonest tailor, etc. The satires of Dryden and Pope are more personal, directed rather against men than manners, but the age in which they lived is reflected faithfully in Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, the works of Swift and the essays of Addison.

The Victorian era was not a great period of verse satire, but there was in fact much effective work in that form, as it appeared in newspapers and periodicals. However, in the present century, though lengthy works in verse are rare, satire expresses itself in the contemporary novel and drama. Personal attacks are gone out of fashion, but social conditions and problems, and every aspect of modern civilization, offer countless subjects to the satirist, and the plays of George Bernard Shaw are an example of how widely and effectively a gifted writer in this vein can range. Modern era is marked by the development of keen political awareness with an emphasis on democracy. So the political
ups and downs affected the life of common man. Now it is the responsibility of every writer to be aware of political happenings. This period is also very remarkable for the double standards of morality.

The iconoclastic stance or the satirical mode is only one aspect of Singh’s creative art; certainly, it is the most important one. He, of course, holds the mirror to India’s and the world’s, “Monsters and Monstrosities”; but he also knows that the world is not monopolized by monsters only. There are also angels. As a realist, he faces the monsters, exposes them, ridicules them, and makes them the targets of his rapier thrusts and biting irony. As a humanist, he realizes and acknowledges the principle that man will supersede all the monsters and establish the supremacy of the moral law. Man is the crowning glory of creation, and, though he is partly beast, he is also partly angel. In moments of crisis, the angelic in man will triumph over the beastly element in him. This is indeed the moral triumph of man so forcefully demonstrated in Train to Pakistan. (Shahane, Mind, 150-151)

Khushwant Singh is a social critic because the purpose of his writing was to present social problems. He is one of the leading novelists of the modern age. His novels express a powerful satire on the political and social hypocrisies. By the quality of his writing, he has achieved international fame and recognition. Like G.B. Shaw, his purpose of writing was to present the shortcomings of society in a humorous manner. But the element of humour did not affect the truth that he wanted to convey. As a patriot, he loved his country with its customs and traditions but at the slightest opportunity he did not hesitate to condemn those customs and traditions which are responsible for the
miseries of common people. Due to his attempt at analyzing social and political problems of his era, his idealism has been well blended with realism. Like other literary figures, he too believed that materialism is an obstacle towards achieving peace of mind. Dr. Shahane Vasant is of the opinion that:

He is a humourist and a realist in one, and his stories reveal this dual artistic power. The stories exemplify his gentle irony and his faculty of being ironical at the expense of his own countrymen. (Shahane, Comic, 33)

A reviewer in the *News Chronicle* in an article has very aptly assessed the substance and significance of Khushwant Singh’s stories: “Plenty of sardonic wit and knowledge of people and their circumstances: no Nonsense.” (Shahane, Comic, 33)

Satire was the established hallmark of his fictional works. He firmly believed that the basis of true satire lies not merely in the fun arising out of the incongruity of words or situation or character, but in the deeper contrasts and incongruities of life itself.

The predominant quality of Khushwant Singh is his comic spirit, informed by the sense of incongruity and by the bewildering phenomena of contradictions in life. Modern man is up against .... He is primarily preoccupied with the incongruities of life in a lighter vein and with the comic spirit that is generated from the schism between what men are and what they seem – by the gulf that divides appearance from reality. (Shahane, Comic, 67)

This finds its clearest expression in the works of Khushwant Singh, which brings out his tolerant, humane and sympathetic understanding of human weaknesses and oddities.
In the Indian context, the ideas of literature and social criticism have always intimately connected. Scholars have long been interested in the ties between the writer and the social milieu and often their studies contain judgements based on these associations. But the associations are not simple. Harry Levin has stated that, “the relations between literature and society are reciprocal. Literature is not only the effect of social causes; it is also the cause of social effects.” (Scott, 126) Even the greatest genius is necessarily moulded by the culture, ideals and mental and moral tendencies of the world into which the writer is born and the character of what he produces is therefore to a larger extent determined by these. In this sense we have to regard every writer as a ‘product’ of his time. Art is not created in a vacuum. It is not simply the work of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space, answering to a community of which he is an important articulate part. The sociological critic is, therefore, interested in fathoming the social milieu and the extent and manner in which the artist responds to it.

For one thing, it is usually true in works of the highest order that the purport is not a simple message, but a complex vision of things, which itself is not explicit, but implicit; and the reader who does not grasp them artistically, but is merely looking for simple social morals, is certain to be hopelessly confused. (Wilson, 247)

Social criticism need not necessarily be explicit. It is rather not difficult to think of Khushwant Singh’s criticism as we might do of Shaw’s attack on social evils of the 20th century or of Dickens exposing the evil institutions of Victorian England. Though he happens to be concerned with the predicament of an individual, his portrayals very often tend to be representative of the predicament of the universal modern man.
Khushwant Singh has never ceased to be a highly controversial writer, ever since he started his literary career. His wide experience in civilization, culture and histories across the world, has earned him a coveted place along with the most celebrated post-modern writers in exploring and interrogating the post-colonial and post-imperial issues and realities that have shaped the contemporary societies and their politics. He has charted his speculative and skeptical journey across historical, geographical and cultural space to include virtually every possible facet of man's relationship with power, authority and oppression.

Khushwant Singh's vision of the world is very much of the twentieth century. The burden of his writings encompass all important aspects of Indian life: religion, morality, the characteristics of a Hindu, love of wealth and power, corruption, flattery, women, sex in Indian life, and relationship with the British and the Americans. His novels portray particular situations to highlight the prevalent follies and foibles in contemporary life.

His vision emanates from a fundamentally existential position. He traces the links between the actual and the artistic world. His act of writing is not merely a matter of self-expression, but also an instrument of awareness seeking to modify social reality. He does not use fiction as a tool of revenge against the malefactors of freedom and individuality. His essential greatness as a writer, rests on his originality. His novels are not regional and narrow but embrace the entire race of mankind.

Corruption is a universal trait which exists in every culture, transcending social, linguistic and geographical barriers. It characterizes man and reflects the life of a nation. Even though there has always been a less serious attitude towards satire and satirists, a sense of humour has always accompanied this genre. It is this element that provides a powerful aesthetic experience to the reader.
One can directly satirize an individual verbally or through other means. But what if a community or the society commits the same? If forgiven, who can draw out the frailty of a society with an aim to reform it? A well-informed leader can do that. But the task demands a man who is daring enough to expose the follies and foibles of the human society.

Satire as a genre, found its way into various literatures. On Indian literature too it has made a sharp imprint. This mode of writing has manifested itself conspicuously in Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Kanada, Tamil, Malayalam, etc., even from a very early period.

Indian literature can also be divided into various periods. In Hindi literature the ages are classified as Harish Chandra Yug, Dwiwedi Yug, Premchand Yug and finally comes the modern age.

Great writers like Bharathaendhu Harish Chandra, Premchand and Jayashankar Prasad have made an indelible mark in Hindi Literature. All these writers in their works have shown a great and sincere concern for the reformation of the society in which they lived. Like Chaucer’s Prologue to the Canterbury Tales not a single character escaped them. In their works they have satirised politics, religion, sati, dowry system, child infanticide, caste system, racial discrimination and many other issues. Even modern writers like Harisankar Parsayee and Dhunil have criticized many of the major issues of contemporary society. Dhunil in his poetical work, “Sansadh Se Sadak Thak’ which means “From the Parliament to the Road” has very strongly satirized the political aspects of the contemporary society.
Likewise Tamil literature too has brought out reformative literary works. Eminent writers like Madhavayya, Pudhumai Pithan, Deva alias Mahadevan and Arignar Anna are some of those who through their works, totally tried to eradicate the social evils. Modern writers like Cho Ramasamy and Chinna Kuthusi are the ones who very candidly and fearlessly express their views on the existing social evils.

Indian satire found its literary expression in classical drama as it broke out from the ritualistic cult, and its entertainment value began to be appreciated. In Sanskrit literature, laughter is often provided by the court jester or the clown. If the play does not have a clown, humour is often provided by minor characters like servants and attendants.

The popular folk wits like Birbal in Hindi, Mulla Do Piaza in Urdu, Tenali Rama in Telugu, Gopal Bhandu in Bengali, and Tunchan in Malayalam are all the counterparts of this court jester who combined commonsense with extraordinary capacity for pert repartee. (Machwe, 144)

The satirical and humour of the jester in literature is very remarkable. For example Tenali Rama outwits dupes as well as kings. His method is always not gentle and contains an element of derision or superiority as well as "sudden glory". He also indulges in practical jokes. Birbal, on the other hand has been given the licence to laugh at the king or even make a fool of the king.

The relationship between the king and his jester, the authority figure and the trickster, is that of players in a game ... As long as he observes the rules of the game, the jester can make a fool of the king – it's just a fun, just a game, just a play. (Seigel, 303)
The narrative tale in classical Sanskrit begins with the Vedas, the earliest existing literature. The ancient Indian tale took broadly two forms – the fable and the popular folk tale. The fable form is best exemplified in the Panchatantra and Jataka Tales. These fables satirize greedy Brahmans, lustful women, the power of wealth and the hypocrisy of men. They are epigrammatical in structure and frequently end with a significant utterance by one of the characters. There are also a number of animal fables in which the characters are animals personifying human abstractions. Kathasarit Sagara (Ocean of Tales) and Dasakumara Charitra are well known popular tales. The former, in particular, has universal acclaim and has inspired many story tellers. It comprises of hundreds of stories replete with satire, humour and fun.

The ancient tale form was revived and preserved in literatures of the various Indian languages. It was only by the middle of the nineteenth century, with the introduction of English education, that literature in India started to gradually flourish on its own. With the English language gaining an official status in India came an awareness of western culture and thought among the educated Indians. This was further accelerated by the birth and growth of English journalism in India. It opened up new vistas to Indian writers both in English and the vernacular languages. Translations of world masterpieces as well as Indian vernacular classics also influenced the writers in English. Translations of the books of Bankim Chandra Chatterji, R.C. Dutta and Rabindranath Tagore influenced writers all over India. With the emergence of prose, the Indian writers in English realized that it was possible to write about Indian life and to describe Indian scenes in a foreign language without being imitative. Though the early Indo-English poets have imitated English themes and forms, writers of early Indo-English fiction strictly abstained from this, thereby to evolve a new style of expression. Bankim Chandra, was the first among them, to show the way.
The early novelists were fully alive to the problems involved in writing an Indian novel in English. In fact even today the Indian writer of fiction in English is still confronted with this problem and many of the writers are judged by the degree of their awareness of the need to adjust their medium to a sensibility that is essentially Indian, and by the extent to which they have carried forward their experiments in this direction. Lal Behari Day has done his best to neutralize the English language in a situation purely Indian.

Most of the early writings were in the form of sketches and romances, and sometimes legends and tales. Behramji Malabari (1853-1912) was a pioneer in the field of journalism and his prose satires remind us of the essays of Addison and Steele and Goldsmith. He also wrote periodical essays and sought to portray life as he saw it in the style of a neutral observer. He made an equally effective use of irony and humour in his writings, and above all presented his essays in a fictional manner.

Against this background the researcher intends to make an analytical study of Khushwant Singh and his novels. Singh is a great writer of the modern era who has served as a distinguished journalist. All the novels of Singh are closely related to the current happenings of contemporary society. He himself is a product of an inhuman and insensitive social structure, and had to undergo numerous deprivations and hardships in his life. There could not have been a better equipped person than him to break open the reservoir of the silent sufferings of the members of the social order. He criticized remorselessly what he saw around him and acquainted the educated sections, who necessarily belonged to the upper echelons of the society. He is of the opinion that human life is poor, nasty, brutish and short, and by this implication, exhorted them to improve their conditions.
Khushwant Singh represents India’s rich and ancient heritage. Apart from the regional and ethnic tensions, he found himself swayed by the pull of the colonial tie of Great Britain. It was only towards the later part of his life that Khushwant Singh found India emerging slowly as a nation both in the political and the literary sense.

Indian creative writing in English in its early stages was influenced by western models. Poetry prevailed over other genres. Prose fiction was attempted at a lesser degree. By the turn of the century strong echoes of the national movement began to find expression in literature. Khushwant Singh’s career begins during the years of the great upheavals of the freedom struggle. He began to write, wholly affected by what was going on around him. His novels and stories reflect the life of the South Indian upper middle-class people.

An extremely interesting aspect of Khushwant Singh’s achievement as an author of fictional and non-fictional prose, is his use of the English language. This use of English provides numerous illustrations of the “Indianness” of Indian English, the kind of English used by Indians in a non-British cultural context. Singh with pride says, “I call English my mother tongue because I am more familiar with it than any other language .... Most of what I read is in English. All my work is done in English. I write it better than my three Indian languages Punjabi, Hindi, and Urdu.” (Khushwant, We Indians, 115)

The influence of mother tongue on authors who use English as a second language of choice for their creative endeavor is considerable, particularly in India, where the influence of ancient culture, religion, and tradition on the intelligentsia is great. The language and style of Singh, who hails from the Punjabi-Urdu-Hindi region, for instance, is decidedly different, in tone and structure, from that of Raja Rao, who belongs to the
south, and more specifically to the Kanada speaking region. Although both, Khushwant Singh and Raja Rao use English for their creative expression a visible, gulf divides them. Of course, this gulf is not a matter of mere linguistic diversity. It springs from widely divergent attitudes. Thus, even the “Indianness” of Indian English is marked by great variety.

Another remarkable aspect of Khushwant Singh’s use of language and style is his realistic, down-to-earth idiom, transposed from Punjabi to English, which is a pronounced expression of the quality of his mind and his view of life. He unconsciously, almost inevitably, revolts against the deceptively soft and sweet style of the Romantics. His language is lucid and simple. His expressions are never incomprehensible and his style is not ornate. Khushwant Singh expresses in one of his interviews his fondness for simplicity: “I don’t claim any quality in my writing. I think I am able to communicate with my readers. I can write simple language. I think that is the only strength I have.” (Jacob, 31)

A man of classical learning, a humanist, an important intellectual, a perceptive social critic, an educator, a political scientist, and an authority on Indian history, Khushwant Singh is a man who distrusted large institutions and never kept pace with the changing world. He enjoyed immense popularity as a novelist and short story writer and has attracted an international readership. A master of the ludicrous, entertainment is the keynote of his works. Staying within the range of his imaginative inspiration, Khushwant Singh has produced his works like the modern fables which portray the absurdities and incongruities of life in a fictional mode that is simultaneously fabulous and ironic.
Khushwant Singh – novelist, short story writer, historian, autobiographer, editor, essayist, journalist, Member of Parliament, politician, political writer and translator was born in 1915 into a Sikh family in a small village in Hadali (now a part of Pakistan). He was brought to Delhi at the age of five by his father, Sobha Singh (later Sir Sobha), who was then one of the contractors engaged in the building of New Delhi, the city that replaced Calcutta as the capital of British India in 1911. After his early schooling in Delhi, he graduated with a B. A. degree from Government College, Lahore in 1934 and went to King's College, London and eventually, in 1939, qualified as a barrister from the Inner Temple. Returning to India that year, he married Kaval Malik and began practicing law in Lahore. When Lahore was given to Pakistan as a result of the independence and partition of British India in 1947, he moved to Delhi and joined the Indian Foreign Service. After spending some three years at diplomatic postings in London and Ottawa he gave up his post and returned to Delhi where he soon found work in the External Service of All-India Radio as a producer of English programmes.

Khushwant Singh published his first volume of short fiction in 1950, three years after India's independence, and since then has become one of the country's best known writers in English. Like R. K. Narayan before him, and unlike some of his younger contemporaries, he never permanently left his country to become an expatriate. He continued to reside and work in India, principally in Delhi, the city in which he grew up and which (including his native Punjab province) has figured in much of his writing.

Beginning as a writer of fiction, he went on to gain distinction as a historian, translator and journalist. In India, today he is known as a professional writer whose name appears on the covers of over eighty books encompassing a wide variety of subjects. He is a public personality, and very often an out-spoken and controversial one.
Khushwant Singh published his first novel in 1956 named *Mano Majra* which is presently known as *Train to Pakistan*. It has been acclaimed as his best work of fiction and the one upon which his reputation as a novelist stands. Back in India from Paris, Khushwant Singh took up the editorship of Yojana, a government journal. In 1957 his second collection of short fiction, *The Voice of God and Other Stories*, was published in India. This was followed by a translation from Punjabi of *Jupji: The Sikh Morning Prayer*. The same year saw the publication of the second novel, *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* which was not a critical success and is not numbered among his best work. The Rockfeller Foundation, in the same year, providing a grant enabled Khushwant Singh to embark on a project that he had planned for some time a definitive history of the Sikhs. The first volume of this comprehensive work was eventually published in 1963 by Princeton University Press as *The History of the Sikhs*, while the second was published Oxford University Press three years later. Over this period Singh had also produced other studies of Sikh history such as the *The Sikhs Today* (1959) and *The Fall of the Kingdom of Punjab* (1962) which was followed by *Ranjit Singh: The Maharajah of the Punjab* (1963). These works of his, especially the critical success of his *History of the Sikhs*, established his reputation as the first major historian of his community in English and indeed he has himself considered these works as the most important part of his career.

His rising reputation as a historian brought him attention from academic circles and was invited to teach at American universities. Between 1965 and 1969 he lectured on Indian religions and contemporary history and politics at the University of Rochester, New York, at Princeton University, The University of Hawai and at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. In 1967, while he was in the United States, his third collection of short
stories, *A Bride for the Sahib and Other Stories*, was published in India. As he was about to end his appointment at Swarthmore in 1969, he was offered the editorship of *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. *The Weekly*, was a society journal dating from British times, but since independence, had begun to wane in importance and circulation. Changing editorial policies radically, he transformed it into India’s best-known English magazine with a manifold increase in circulation. His ‘Editor’s Page’, in which he took up outspokenly controversial positions on social and political issues, became one of India’s most widely sought after editorials.

He published his fourth collection of short stories, *Black Jasmine* in 1971. His name appeared on the title pages of many books and journals. He is also credited with collaborative pieces on various topics and translations from the Sikh scriptures like *The Hymns of Guru Nanak* (1969) and *Sacred Writings of the Sikhs* (1974). In recognition of his contribution to Indian letters in several fields he was awarded the Padma Bhushan, one of India’s highest civilian honours, in 1974. In 1975 *The Weekly* survived a crisis and due to some political reasons Khushwant Singh brought about an end to his editorship. His contract was not renewed, and he left Bombay in 1978.

Back in Delhi Khushwant Singh was appointed as the editor of a small newspaper, *The National Herald*, from where he went on yet to another similar position for a magazine called *New Delhi*. Later he was given the editorship of *The Hindustan Times*, Delhi’s largest and most popular newspaper, where he served till 1983. Before he left, however, he entitled his personal column in the paper, mischievously as ‘With Malice Towards One and All’ which continued to treat controversial topics in unconventional and irreverent manner much on the same lines like the ‘Editor’s Page’ in *The Weekly*. 
At about the same time he became the editor of *The Times*, and was nominated to a seat in the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of India’s parliament, and continued to hold his seat until the end of his term in 1986.

The reflection of the Golden Temple issue in Amritsar, the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the subsequent riots that victimized his community could well be seen in his two other publications: *Punjab Tragedy: Operation Blue Star and After* (1984) and *My Bleeding Punjab* (1992).

In 1990 came the publication of his third novel *Delhi: A Novel*, which not only pays tribute in fiction to the city he loves, but also reflects his interest in history. In the next few years he continued to publish editions and collections on a variety of topics, often in collaboration with others, as well as translations from Punjabi and Urdu. Some notable titles of his essays include *Sex, Scotch and Scholarship: Selected Writings* (1992), *Uncertain Liaisons: Sex, Strife and Togetherness in Urban India* (1993) and *Not a Nice Man to Know: The Best of Khushwant Singh* (1993). *Women and Men in My Life* (1995), a Memoir, aroused some controversy because of his unflattering portrayal of a number of his contemporaries and personal acquaintances. Two years later he published his fourth novel, *The Company of Women* (1997).

At the age of eighty-seven Khushwant Singh’s most substantial work, *Truth, Love and a little Malice* was published. It presents a very crowded picture beginning with the early years in Hadali down to the death of his wife Kaval in 2001, replete with his usual frank portrayal of people, places and events. Memorially reconstructed, more descriptive and factual than confessional, this account of his long,
and eventful life in his typically robust prose is enjoyable reading and is a very useful resource for critics of his work. After this significant work Khushwant Singh’s fifth novel Burial at Sea was published in 2004.

Khushwant Singh has thus been a prominent figure on his country’s literary landscape for over fifty years.

He has mixed popular writing with scholarly work; deliberately placed humour – his native, practical Punjab wit – above the gravitas of the conscious artist; combined the life of a socialite with a journalist’s activism on issues of moment; elicited admiration from his audiences and shocked, entertained and bullied them; and through it and in spite of it all has retained a voice and stature for himself that is distinctively and unforgettably Indian at the same time as it is flamboyantly cosmopolitan. (Behal, xiv)

All the works of Khushwant Singh are critical. There runs a vein of social, political and religious criticism in most of his works. Khushwant Singh is eminently a critic in a triple sense – a critic of politics, a critic of society, and a critic of religion. It seems impossible that no one would have ever surpassed in this type of mild ironic handling which implies no annoyance and not much serious contempt, but a great deal of amused disapproval, which resembles a shrug rather than a frown or even a sneer.

This critical temper naturally gave Khushwant Singh a touch of mild satire and sarcasm. In this respect he closely resembles Chaucer and Addison, and yet is essentially different from either of them. He mildly ridicules the contemporary social, economic, political and religious follies and malpractices. Sarcasm is the dominant tone of all his writings. He ridicules, in another novel, the economic maladjustment and the vain efforts
of the legislators and social reformers to help the poor. He also mocks at the Englishmen in their frail attempts to prepare themselves by the study of modern languages to fight the battle of life.

Besides his novels, Khushwant Singh has a considerable body of writings, both creative as well as critical, to his credit. At present, he is perhaps India’s most controversial and widely read journalist. Even when he has retired from active association with any particular paper or periodical, his columns continue to appear in several of them. His son Rahul Singh has edited some of his newspaper writings under a title which perhaps offers a clue to the imagination of Khushwant Singh. He calls one such collection *Khushwant Singh’s India*. As this suggests, Khushwant Singh has a specific point of view about the Indian culture. This is corroborated by his *History of Sikhs*, a massive work in the field of Sikh history and biography.

Khushwant Singh has had a hectic life and met and interacted with a large number of people. He does not believe in the traditional religion. He wished to evolve a religion of his own. His parents were traditional orthodox Sikhs. All religious rituals were observed in their home. As a child of five, Khushwant Singh was initiated into reading the scriptures and at seventeen he underwent a baptismal ceremony which symbolized that he had joined the Khalsa fraternity. At St. Stephen’s College, he attended the Bible classes where he was greatly drawn to *Old Testament* and *Book of Job*. And when he was working on the translations of the Sikh scriptures, he found so many references to the Vedas, Upanishads and the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Thus, he became fully acquainted with various religions and developed a cosmopolitan outlook. By the time he was forty, he was equidistant from all religions as none of these evoked any
enthusiasm in him. He does not have any soft comer for religions that preach outdated 
concepts and encourage fanaticism. He feels that what is required today is basic and 

rational in the religion.

Khushwant Singh is not only a great writer of Indian English, but also an ardent 
lover of Urdu language. He is indeed among the very few who, unmoved by the linguistic 
claptrap, has introduced the richness and bewildering variety of Urdu to English-speaking 
readers. He is best known for his translations. The fact that Khushwant Singh has deep 
love for Urdu and that he comes from West Punjab (now in Pakistan) has a great deal to 
do with his constant support to the cause of Indo-Pakistan relations. He generally believes 
that literary and cultural exchange between the two countries can be of utmost use to the 
betterment of Indo-Pakistan ties. Again, he strongly upholds the Lahore-Delhi bus 
service, launched by the former Prime Minister Atal Behari. In the Indian Express 
Magazine of 14th May 2000 he says:

Yes. People come and go, they meet each other. And I feel this is a good 
thing. At least it is doing good for relatives and friends who have been 
separated after Partition. It may do little or nothing for both the countries but 
it definitely serves as a lifeline for people whose relatives live on both sides of 
the border. I am even hopeful that there can be some sort of trade between the 
two countries in future though it may not be possible right now. (8)

Khushwant Singh's periodic visits to Pakistan have been instrumental in bridging 
the cultural gap and cementing the political frictions between the two countries. With his 

excellent command on Urdu language and poetry, and his easy acceptability as a scholar 

and elder man, he has been a great draw in Pakistan.
Khushwant Singh’s views on writing in Indian languages certainly raised heat and controversy on the literatures written in various Indian languages. In the writing of creative works, Khushwant Singh finds any Indian language a poor substitute for English. He wonders if any Indian language dares match the vocabulary of the English language. English, he argues: “is a hybrid language, enriched by every language it came into contact with, including some ten thousand words from Indian languages. Indian languages, he says, do not distinguish between a mouse and a rat or between yesterday and tomorrow.” *(India Today, 1.08.1999)*

They essentially lack a technical, political and commercial lexicon too. Khushwant Singh does not favour a blind bondage to the English language. He advocates a free adoption of this language for our own purposes. He puts a question, “What is the harm in taking over and mauling it as we wish and pronouncing it as we want?” This not merely suits the Indian condition but will be quite worthwhile doing it in terms of the international importance of the language. Remarks as these are bound to become controversial, given the Indian situation and the chauvinists of the regional literatures. Such bold assertions, not withstanding the onslaught of the detractors, can be made only by a Khushwant Singh.

Though in his mid-eighties, Khushwant Singh has not lost his zest and fervour for life. He is neither cynical nor disillusioned. He is a rationalist at heart and carries a strong conviction for each statement that he makes. There is not a thing on earth he is not interested in. His approach towards life in all matters is essentially liberal. He is tolerant, eclectic and intellectually committed to pluralism and multiculturalism. Khushwant Singh’s contribution to India’s multicultural ethos is so significant that one cannot but agree with the renowned historical Mushirul Hasan when he says: “Some people may
have complaints about Khushwant Singh. Yet, they would find it difficult to deny that this man has done so much to enrich our cultural and intellectual life for well over three decades. As an outsider to the capital of India, it is hard for me to think of Delhi without him.” (Importance, 8) One wonders if one can think of an India without Khushwant Singh.

Khushwant Singh’s terse fable suggests a profound disillusionment with the power of law, reason and intellect in the face of elemental human passions. He is a brilliant sardonic observer of a world undergoing convulsive changes; and his novels provide a unique insight into one of the major political catastrophes of this century.

Not only in his novels, but also in many of his short stories, Singh exposes the so-called religious and superstitious beliefs, expressing disillusionment about man’s rationality.

To a question put by Malashri Lai in an interview with Khushwant Singh “In a recent article, you said that during partition you lost faith not only in humanity but also in religion and that you have been an agnostic ever since and how is it reflected in your literary work?” Singh replies so: “I continued to write stories that are anti-belief and that mock superstition. I have a story called ‘Agnostic’ and my much anthologized story ‘The Mark of Vishnu’ is rather well-known since it appears in a number of school text books.”

And to a question put by Vijay K. Sharma following the above statement that, “Yes, you are known for that kind of stance, but whenever the subject of Operation Blue Star is discussed, you seem to express strong sentiments against it and tend to favour the Sikh religion.” Khushwant Singh says:

That’s not quite true. Operation Blue Star has now been acknowledged as a blunder. I had made several statements about the Punjab situation to Mrs. Indira Gandhi and also in Parliament. I told Mrs. Gandhi: ‘You don’t
know my community. It is like a nest of hornets.” She said that there was no intention to send in the army but then she did. I am not a believer, but I have a sense of belonging and am concerned about what happens to my community. I do not have religious belief in God and scriptures. On this account, I have often been called a hypocrite, a person who observes symbols of Sikhism. But, despite these outward symbols, I have never compromised my position. I have written on Sikh history and translated the scriptures. The more I read about religion, the more I was convinced that I should be a non-believer.

Organization of Chapters

The introductory chapter, as has been seen, begins with a brief study of satire, its significance, definitions, issues and problems, and shows how the satire of Khushwant Singh is based on the general principle of the follies and foibles of the society blended with a sympathetic understanding of life. The chapter has examined the beginnings of satire, the use of it by various classicists and eminent writers of diverse literatures, its progress through important writers and introduces Khushwant Singh, his mind and art. Besides giving an account of the significance of the title and some necessary relevant ideas in this area, the researcher has analysed the aims and objectives of the present study in terms of the novelist’s art and vision.

The second chapter entitled Train to Pakistan, traces the fortunes of the Muslim and Sikh inhabitants of the tiny, fictional village of Mano Majra whose traditionally harmonious relations are disrupted by the political forces accompanying Independence, forcing them to choose between Muslim Pakistan and secular India. The chapter begins with a brief study of the postcolonial issues of India, its partition into two different
countries and the response of the Indian novelists in English to this. The reason for the author to choose partition as a subject is brought out. The satirical aspects intended by the writer, his aim and objective to reveal the same is analysed. The autobiographical elements with the content of the novel is analysed in a detailed manner.

The third chapter *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* allows the writer to explore moral questions of family ties, faith, loyalty and betrayal within the context of the relationship between the British colonizers and their independence-seeking-subjects. The writer gives the typical products of the modern world, which represent its culture-sophistication, divided loyalties, self-centeredness, opportunism, servility and sex hunger. The above furnished satirical aspects depicted in the novel are vividly brought out and studied and analysed.

The fourth chapter *Delhi: A Novel*, goes on to reveal Khushwant Singh’s employment of fictive structure to tell historical facts of Indian history in an ironic mode. He employs history as a satire. He presents by rendering all the spine-chilling and blood-curdling acts of horror that have been committed in history. The conquistadores of Delhi were bloodthirsty debauchers. And there is no getting away from that truth says Khushwant Singh’s history. Likewise, Khushwant Singh satirizes the human frailties and weaknesses and many other aspects of human foibles. His attitude to historical institutions is iconoclastic and irreverent. He highlights the sorry aspects of history rather than the glorious, the sordidness of monarchy and not its romance. In his approach therefore, he is Horatian and like the great disciple of the Roman master, Pope, he inflates only to deflate. In this novel also the autobiographical elements come to the forefront. A detailed analysis of the novel is done and the issues and matters satirized is clearly brought to light, to comprehend the novelist’s idea.
The fifth chapter *The Company of Women*, goes around an uninhibited, erotic and endlessly entertaining celebration of love, sex and passion. The novel relates the life-history of Mohan Kumar and his sexual exploits. Through this novel Khushwant Singh brings out the life of a man who disregards social norms and correctness and pursues the philosophy of eat, drink and be merry but never gets tied down by the bonds of marriage. The novelist is conscious of the best things that life offers but he restricts himself to the realistic portrayal of an earthly man who does not want any aesthetic or artistic things in life. This realistic and truthful presentation of the writer on sex and social morals is analysed in a detailed manner and the essence of satire therein is clearly presented.

The sixth chapter *Burial at Sea*, mainly concentrates on the main subjects like Indian history, bogus religion, sexuality, man’s greed, lust for power and wealth, madness of western culture, and inhumanity. An analytical study of the novel reveals Khushwant Singh’s view on each of the above mentioned aspects as well as the type of satire employed by the author. Khushwant Singh as a columnist and social commentator makes a sturdy effort to satirize the predominating social evil that exists in India through this novel.

The concluding chapter sums up the achievements of Khushwant Singh in terms of his art and vision. In his works satire is seen to arise from the application of fictional imagination to life-situations. The writer has also highlighted his satirical vision in terms of its highest form whereas satire becomes the contemplation and interpretation of life itself. The study ends with a note of appreciation of the universal appeal of his novels and his successful portrayal of the topical situation through satire.

The methodology followed in this dissertation is as per norms suggested by *MLA Handbook, Sixth Edition*, edited by Joseph Gibaldi.