SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION:

Speaking, listening, writing and reading of short stories is the very old tradition in India and its subcontinents. It’s an art which demands a great deal of work to its writer or to the speaker as it is the task to keep the grip on the plot, characters, and happenings along with it, to keep the interest of the reader or the listener alive.

Though it is true that modern short story writing is a gift of European culture but we cannot ignore our old literature and traditions, which marks as one of the tradition and specialty of India. Even our holy Vedic Literatures like Upanishad, Mahabharata, Panch Tantras, and other seem to be the best and oldest form, example and technique of narration. The literature produced in the Nineteenth Century like: Mir Aman’s “Baug-o-Bhar”, Hyder Baksh Hydri’s “Tota Kahani”, Lallu Lalji’s “Betal Panchisi”, Rajab Ali Baig Sarwar’s “Fasane-e-Ajayab”, “Tilasme Hoshruba”, etc. are the examples and literature of India, which proves short stories as one of the basic form of narration of fiction of India and its subcontinent. One of the common factor in all those stories were the supernatural powers and elements which included fairies, devils, monsters, witches, kings, queens, princes, princesses and their supernatural adventures.

But, in the beginning of Twentieth Century the foreign culture got a strong hold over India which affected the literature of the nation too. During 1930, when countries in the world were getting ready for the World War, the struggle to achieve freedom from the clutches of the British Rule also started in India. Increased harassment by the British Raj and repression from Indian people, left a remarkable impact on Indian literature and because of it social, political, psychological elements took over the demons, fairies, prince and princess, in the literature and fiction. Thus, giving an opportunity to creative writers, like Saadat Hasan Manto, who narrates the happenings and incidents of that time in skillful approach.
WHO WAS SAADAT HASAN MANTO: A BIOGRAPHY:

Saadat Hasan Manto is a short story writer, who wrote on social, political and cultural happenings of pre, during and post partition of India. He was born on 11\textsuperscript{th} May, 1912, in Sambrala at Punjab. Manto considered himself as Kashmiri, which is evident by his writings too. He writes:

\begin{quote}
"Main Kashmiri hoon. Bahut arsa hua hamare aaba-o-ajdad Kashmir se Hijrat karke Punjab aai aur musalman ho gaye."\textsuperscript{355}
\end{quote}

(I am a Kashmiri. Quite a long time ago my forefathers migrated to Punjab from Kashmir and converted to Islam).

Though we cannot say very confidently about the time and period from when and where he started writing, but many of the critics consider his translation work of Victor Hugo’s novel “Last Day of A Condemned” with the title “Ek Aseer ki Sargasht”, as the first piece of wring by him. He wrote around 250 short stories which are spread in India and Pakistan. He considered Bari Alig as the mentor of his personality as a writer and mentioned in one of his writings as:

\begin{quote}
“Aaj kal main jo kuch hun is ko banane me sab se pehla hath Bari Sahab ka tha. Agar Amritsar me un se mulaqat nah hoti aur mutvatir teen mahine in ke suhbat me na guzare hote to yakinan main kisi our raste par hota.”\textsuperscript{356}
\end{quote}

(Today whatever I am the first credit goes to Mr. Bari. If I didn’t meet him at Amritsar and didn’t live with him for continuous three months I could be on a different path).

He was well aware with national and international issues and politics as he writes many of his short stories and the other literature like essays on it. Along with it his sharp consciousness was aware about the inter and intra conflicts, problems and issues of the society he belonged to. He was a writer who wrote on humanity all together including social, political, cultural, psychological and behavioural patterns. He produced the masterpieces like: “Toba Tek Singh”, “The Return”, “Mozail”, “Ram
“Khalawan”, “A Tale of 1919” etc. which gnaws at our psychology and asks questions to the humanity.

Saadat Hasan Manto is the name of a conqueror to whom many people see, related and connected with many different movements in the ideological and literary thoughts. That’s the reason why he is being called as a writer of the progressive group, sometimes as prejudiced or intolerant writer. People called him shallow and indecent writer. But as a reader if one go as through his literary work he can understand the worth of the writer, who wrote much without any hypocrisy. The way he sees towards the deeds and virtues of a common human being, is the specialty and different aspect of the writings of Saadat Hasan Manto. He describes the momentary truth that was happening at the time he belonged to. Manto was a pure short story writer who spoke about things as they appeared to him. He observed the political and social time and life of the people very closely and this is the reason why we see the internal and external conflicts along with it the real and reflection of thoughts in his short stories.

SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SHORT STORIES OF SAADAT HASAN MANTO:

The dramatic twist and turn of events in India in 1947, gave extra ordinary opportunity to creative writers like Manto who, much like a historian, wanted to capture something unusual, unseen but true and meaningful about life as it was, and not as it should be. In a stark comment on the unreasonableness of the event 1947, Manto wrote many short stories, which deal with society and people belonging to different communities, their problems and on-going madness. He, very craftily portrays the difficulties people were facing because of partition. He framed many stories on day to day difficulties and hardships of society. He was well aware about the facts that Hindus and Muslims, the two large communities of India, were ruthlessly thirsty for the blood of each others.

Saadat Hasan Manto was a keen observer of society and its conditions. In a story “Mozail” very painfully he described the after effects of partition on the life
of the people and community. The story shows about the situation was, when and where the riots were unmanageable. Even though Tarlochan wanted to go and pick up his fiancée from her parents’ home in a mohalla (locality), which was predominantly and ferociously Muslims, he couldn’t because of the forty eight hours curfew and he felt helpless.\textsuperscript{357}

People were concern about their own self and their family only. As Niranjan, Tarlochan’s brother - in - law, warned him in clear words:

\begin{quote}
“Forget about your business for the time being. We are passing through difficult times. You should stay with your family or, better still, move to my flat. I know there isn’t enough space, but these are not normal times. We’ll manage somehow.”\textsuperscript{358}
\end{quote}

Manto made creative use of his personal memories and experiences to give a detail and partial view into the collective cultural and social history of the subcontinent that have been kept aside by force of the selective nationalist re constructors of the nations. With his powers of keen and candid observation he wrote about individuals and events. As a result his writings evidence is more than any other historian.

Manto, being a writer of society, was clear to portray human feelings and selfishness. He was well aware about people, their conditions, psychology, hardship, and on-going disaster. In the story “The Return” he made the characters of Sirajuddin, father of Sakina- a very beautiful girl according to him, come true to life which could get us some drops of sweat on our body and a cry to humanity.

Sirajuddin, who wanted to search for his daughter Sakina, whom he lost in the mayhem, meet with some young volunteers, who were working by helping women and children left behind, on the other side by getting them to their relatives. One of the team of volunteers got Sakina, but they gave up their morals for the hunger inside them and kept her in their custody and after a week left her in a hospital. On getting the news of his daughter Sirajuddin reached hospital and found an unconscious Sakina lying on a stretcher. When the doctor enters he introduces himself as the father of the
girl, doctor checked for her pulse of and pointing at the window asked the old man:

“Open it.”

“The woman on the stretcher moved slightly. Her hands groped for the cord that kept her salwar tied round her waist, with painful slowness, she unfastened it, pulled the garment down and opened her thighs”.

“She is alive. My daughter is alive;” Sirajuddin shouted with joy. The doctor broke into a cold sweat.”

The reality brings sweat on our forehead and shame to humanity that what kind of humans we are? The worst hit gender of the partition was females, on which Manto wrote very skillfully on and brought out the sea of pain and clarity of partition in front of his readers.

Manto in his stories talked about the people, who were ignorant in the name of religion and will be ready to do anything or accept everything, in the name of religion. Religion was the driving force among the people pre and post-independence and still that is evident by the different riots that have taken place in India till now. People are blind following customs and faiths.

Blindness of people for faith is evident from the story of Manto “A Man of God”, in which Chaudhary Maujoo, a farmer, gave his beautiful daughter and then wife to a preventive, false, fraud and cunning Maulvi Sahib, just because he was uneducated and wanted to get his wife Phatan back in life, whom he gave divorce earlier. Taking advantage of his ignorance, the preventive maulve used his wife as well as daughter and left behind his false beard and hair pieces to which, Maujoo touches with his eyes and gave it to Jeena, his daughter, instructing her to keep it safely as he considers it as the grace of God, whereas on the other hand his wife remained silent. The story begins and ends with Maujoo and his decision, leaving Jeena and Pathan to suffer for it. In the story Manto, very clearly showed
helplessness of the women in society; they have to do everything and anything as instructed by their father, brother or husband, having no judgment and wish of herself.

Commonly Manto is famous for controversies regarding writing indecently and about prostitutes. For the same reason, he faced more than a dozen of court cases. On that issue Manto said defeating himself against the same that prostitutes are the very truth of our society. No woman is readily accepting this business. If we hate this type of woman and writing about them, so why do we create such a circumstance, which forces her to be a part of the flesh market. Why don’t we create opportunities so nobody will be forced to be a prostitute? When a husband denies his wife love with him, when the parents of the girl don’t want to accept her and when society with lusty eyes is waiting for her, then the dalals, just capture such innocent souls and sell them to somebody who owns the market of flesh for example: in the novel “Umrao Jaan Ada” 1905, by Mirza Hadi Ruswa, which is considered as the first novel on prostitutes in Urdu, a social person kidnaps an innocent girl and sells her to Khanam, who afterwards sells her for money.

Along with many evils in society he talked and wrote about prostitutes and prostitution boldly. In his writings he showed that as, like other people even prostitutes have good morals and beliefs. Even they want a real and truthful husband and the blessings of children but this; our society is not allowing them to achieve so. With his bold way of narration and attitude towards society, his awareness of the good and evil and his art in narrating the psychological twist, Manto’s writings became the mirror of society. The bitterness and the ugly picture of society are visible in his stories. The images of people and characters, which he describes, seem very true and a lot about the trends, customs, society and its going on became clearly visible in front of the eyes of his readers, forcing his readers to justify their attitude and behaviour towards self and society.
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN THE SHORT STORIES OF

SAADAT HASAN MANTO:

Saadat Hasan Manto (11th May 1912 to 18th January 1955) born in the happening century, but it is very strange and awkward to see that critics never took his stories out of the critical triangle of ‘Odours’, ‘A Women’s life’, ‘A Believer’s Version’, etc. If we see there are around 250 short stories he wrote which include the themes of social, political, sexual, psychological at the same time film industry (that was earlier known as Filmistan).


These stories are the evidence of his keen observation of Indian politics. Three stories, ‘It happened in 1919’, ‘Tamasha’, ‘Price of Freedom’ belonged and are based on the events that happened in Amritsar directly, where Manto had spent around twenty years of his life.

A free thinker by choice, he looked at issues in different ways, Manto wrote:

“I have never had any interest in politics and consider politicians and pharmacist to be one and the same.” Elaborating his points in his deep thoughts, he wrote: “Leadership and pharmacy are two professions whose practitioners use other people’s prescriptions. What I mean to say is that I have as much interest in politics as Gandhiji has in cinema. Gandhiji does not see cinema, and I do not read newspaper. Actually, both of us are wrong. Gandhiji should see films and I ought to tread newspapers.”

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Manto is impartial in this story. He has not taken the side of any country or political structure. In the story he talked about soldiers and common people, who were suffering out of it, their emotions and problems. In his stories Manto had not talked about limited national faithfulness, but about politicians and their politics that it could just divide the countries, lands, rivers and mountains and hills but cannot divide the love, faithfulness, sincerity and intimacy of people. In one of his story “Last Salute” he writes which Khalid Hasan translated as:

“They had been told: we are placing a gun in your hands so that you can go and fight for a country which you have yet to know, where you do not even have a roof over your head, where even the air and water are strange to you. Go and fight for it.”

Manto opposed politicians and their politics on the basis of religion for their own glorification. He firmly rejected hypocrisy and deception. He was not worried for the failures in his life, but was much concerned about the deteriorating communal relationship, between the two major communities of India. He writes:

“The Muslim League is a mosque; Congress is a temple”, he discovered. “This is what people think and that is what the newspaper says as well. The congress wanted Sawraj and so did the Muslim League. But both have separate ways and do not work together because temple and mosque have nothing in common.”

The injustice, humiliation, dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki sadden him. Fighting the court cases against obscenity were costing him emotionally as well as financially. With all these discussions it is evident that Saadat Hasan Manto hated slavery and wanted to achieve freedom from the Raj. At the same time he rejected the Gandhian philosophy and ideology to achieve freedom with “Ahimsa”. He was against Britishers, who captured India at the same time
rejected the hypocrisy and supported Bhagat Singh and his ideology to win freedom from the Britishers with war spirit and bang.

In short we could say that Manto wrote on political issues with the same commitment the way on the psychology, society, religion, etc., ironically and sarcastically commenting on politics and giving his judgments. With heavy heart he shifted to Pakistan and died over there on 18th January 1955, which clearly shows that he could not bear the sorrow of leaving his motherland and living in a new country.

PARTITION THE DISASTROUS EVENT REFLECTED IN
SAADAT HASAN MANTO’S SHORT STORIES:

At the midnight hour of 15th August, 1947, Indians won freedom and independence, marking the end of two centuries humiliation and slavery by the British Raj. Joy, sorrow, anger, bitterness for partition, people exploded with different emotions and levels which, in a manner gave way to a visceral rage against members of the other religion.

In India, people celebrated freedom by burning down homes of their neighbours. Before partition they were two communities living in one country with some ups and downs and misunderstandings, but after partition they were turned into two countries with their religion and beliefs standing in front, working hard to prove themselves true.

The Partition of India, 1947 is somehow considered as the greatest and biggest uprooting of people. Around fourteen and half a million people migrated, which is still the biggest number in history of the world. Out of these fourteen and a half million people perhaps two millions people suffered tragedy including, men, women and children of all ages, irrespective of their caste, culture and religion.

Far from solving the Hindu-Muslim problem in India, partition, the creation of Pakistan, has worsened the condition and the tensions of two split communities and countries is still the issue of post-colonial South Asia.
Memories of partition are ritually invoked by both sides of writers as being sometimes victims or observers, describing the brutal killing of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus, by the hands of their own counterparts, just on the verge of revenge and in the name of their religion.

A historical portrayal of human tragedy, an innovative exploration of stories, memories and sketches, written by Saadat Hasan Manto, we can easily trespass the time gap and feel history, with its full nakedness. He is internationally known for his short stories on partition especially “Toba Tek Singh”. He writes:

“Just before the sunrise, Bhushan Singh, the man who had stood on his legs for fifteen years, screamed and as officials from the two sides rushed towards him; he collapsed to the ground.”

With this story Manto sarcastically brings to the forefront, the reality of the common people, who were not ready to migrate and were unhappy because of the partition and few people who were doing or accepting it, just for their own aim and needs.

The realistic attitude of Manto towards riots creates a sad atmosphere, where the fault of the human beings comes alive automatically. Because the riots are unnaturally aroused because of human misunderstandings and never thinks of affection, love, morals, values or purity.

He wrote forcing our mind to think on the issue and realize it with its nakedness making the readers hair stands on end, asking for justice:

“When I thought about these abducted girls, I only saw their protruding bellies. What was going to happen to them and what they contained? Who would claim the end result? Pakistan or India?

“And who would pay the women the wages for carrying those children in their wombs for nine months? Pakistan or India? Or would it all
be put down in God’s great ledger that is if there
were still any pages left?”.364

Today, after sixty eight years of Independence we are still thinking of ways to have a healthy relationship with the neighbouring country. And the same thing Manto talked about much before any politician could think of.

DIFFERENT SHADES AND PICTURES OF WOMEN IN THE SHORT STORIES OF SAADAT HASAN MANTO

The weak gender of the society, women, form the central attraction of the stories written by Manto. Manto has presented woman in different shades, such as a mother, a sister, a wife, a girl and yes even as prostitute. It is women who became the centre of all ill justice in the past as well as now too.

Manto wrote many stories having females as his central characters. Though he is not a feminist’s writer but the way he portrays women characters in his stories are remarkable and unmatchable. If we want to discuss and understand a different pictures of women in his writings, first we have to understand certain issues which were closely related to his life. He lived a life with many ups and downs and till the end of his life; he was against traditions and its justice and paved new roads for himself.

Though Manto was not a feminist writer, but the way he describes the problems faced by women in society are in a very lucid manner. The social consciousness that we see in the work of Saadat Hasan Manto is somehow very similar to that of Munshi Prem Chand, who was a social writer, writing about society and its attitude in a very crucial manner. One of the stories called “Kafan” (shroud), by Prem Chand in Hindi, gnaws our humanity, when the father in law of Ghisu says to his son that, this society and people were not ready to give cloth to cover her body, when she was alive, but will sure arrange for the shroud for her death rituals.
There are many writers in many different languages, who are being talked of in India, but no one we could compare with Manto. The way Manto had portrayed women nobody else did. Manto wrote very different stories on women, for whom we cannot find examples in other languages and writers. Manto didn’t talk about the women of the royal families and with strong background. The centre of his stories, were the women of common life and down trodden. The prostitutes took a special place in the stories written by him.

Religion is a common factor in many of things happening in and around of our society. Common Indians have the most belief on religion as nothing will start without it and end without it. So how come it will be away from prostitutes and their homes. Sughandhi of “A Woman’s Life”, have pictures of the lord Ganesha in her room, which Manto describes as,

“He was her habit, after being paid to rub the money against the picture of the Hindu elephant god Ganesha, for good luck, before putting it away.”

In the character of Sugandhi, Manto narrated the sensitive shade of a woman. When the man in the car, after having a look on her face, leaves in dismay, she gets hurt with his behaviour. And afterwards leaves for her place and just to forget the incident and her insult, gets her dog, who was lying there on the floor, and sleeps soundly. She was a woman of kind heart, as she gives money to the other woman so that she could travel to her hometown, where her husband was not well and she was not having money to buy the ticket. Such was the nature of Sugandhi, but when being rejected she felt very heavy and tried to skip the situation by just avoiding it in despair.

The women’s portraits in the communal riots are also at some point where Manto brings his skills completely in front, to make people understand the status of woman in Indian society.

With different female characters and their emotional situations and abilities Manto very skillfully and beautifully wrote on the women of Filmistan, under the title such as Paro Devi, NurJahan, Naseem, etc and glorified them as the face of new woman. We could see different shades of women in his stories. Somewhere she is a
loving wife, a beloved, a mother, a sister, or a daughter. She could be like Sughandhi or Stella Jackson with motherly love for all. She could be Jeena, the daughter, taking her father’s words as last. At the same time, like Halakat or Kalwant Kaur, taking revenge for being dishonest in love or relationships. Manto’s women did also like Mozail, ready to help at the cost of her own life, not believing in the customs and religion or it could be Sultana, who was quarrelsome on one side, but wanted to wear a black garment on Muharram.

Manto wrote much on women and the way he described men women relationships, the psychology of people and their behaviour is unmatchable in the language of Urdu, till now. He was being read and criticized widely by people in India and abroad. He faced more than one dozen court cases and trials, on the same issue. Towards the end, when he died, around one dozen of his cases were pending for hearing. He was frustrated with all the ups and downs of his life. He was disheartened when he left his beloved city Mumbai and many more reasons. To sum up his disappointments we could conclude with a couplet written by Dr. Allama Iqbal:

“Kya faida kuch keh ke bano aur bhi mayub
Pehle hi khafa mujh se hai tahzeeb ke farzand.”

(What is the benefit of speaking something more and becoming more vicious, already the children of the civilisation are angry with me).

CONCLUSION:

In brief Saadat Hasan Manto is a special name in Urdu fiction, for the readers of short stories. We could compare the popularity of Saadat Hasan Manto to the heights, where Maupassant reached in English fiction. He is one of the few lucky literary writers, whose work got the recognition during his life time. He is one of those writers on whom much is being written, discussed and spoken, after his death. Writings were a non separable part of the life of Saadat Hasan Manto. He writes regarding this in one of his essays as:
“Now if I were to be asked “Why is it that I write, I have an answer for that too.

The most important reason is that I’m addicted to writing, just as I am to drinking. When I don’t write, it feels like I’m unclothed, like I haven’t had a bath. Like I haven’t had my first drink.”

Short stories seem to be the house pet of Saadat Hasan Manto, which comes out of his pen as swiftly as a pet comes to its master whenever called. From his first writing, which is considered as “Ek Aseer ki Sargasht” (1933) till the last published work “Bagair Ijazat”, (1956) he experimented with different forms and patterns in short stories and thus is considered a Modern writer by the critics.

As we read short stories by Saadat Hasan Manto, we could experience his hold over it, which mesmerizes the readers and force him to read them completely. The creative skill of Saadat Hasan Manto, is that he grabs the attention of the reader from the beginning of the story. For example:

“From the moment we meet, we were friend. All I knew about him was that he was a Syed and even a distant relation, although it seems illogical.”

He was completely opposing the British Raj and “Khuni Thook”, “New Constitution” etc. are the best examples stories of it. Though his work was extraordinary, he was living an ordinary life in Pakistan. His short stories are a canvas for him on which he painted different shades of the social and political life of the people and happenings, along with the memories of partition, commenting on the faiths, believes and talking about the negatively social elements like prostitutes, mediators, etc. bringing out the real picture of the time he belonged.
UTILITY:

Literary studies are not generally measured in terms of material or scientific gain. The study of Saadat Hasan Manto’s work will make us understand and live the pain of partition from different perspectives. My research work is not the end of the work produced by Saadat Hasan Manto. It will inspire the researchers further to go deeper and dig out the issues that confront Indian society.

LIMITATIONS:

This is the study based on the work written by Saadat Hasan Manto and translated by different writers; at the same time, the critical work by different scholars, so there are possibilities of different opinions, as each one of us have different perspectives, creativeness, imagination and feelings. My research work is mainly based on the literature produced by Manto only and not others. Therefore it is based on desk research and not on field work or any survey or interviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

For future studies a researcher can take into consideration the translated literature available in different languages. It will be beneficial to understand the worth of the literature produce by Saadat Hasan Manto by the views of different critics of India and its sub - continents. I further recommend that religion, customs and tradition should come in the overall development of our country: India. Justice is necessary, which everyone, in the country, should get as the basic fundamental right.