CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Short stories are known as ‘the slices of life’ which in less time give complete satisfactory feeling to its reader. Short story writing is an art which demands a great deal from its writer to make the reader connected completely with the story, by having a full grip on the plot and characters. It’s an art which, very few have excelled in. To name a few writers like R. K. Narayan, Prem Chand, Amir Khusru, etc. who mastered this art, as till now readers read their stories and feel connected to its plot and characters. The art of short story writing is the gift from the English Literature and was developed and nourished in India in the middle of Twentieth century. Not completely sure, but Europe was the place from where this art of short story writings began. Washington Erwin, Edger Allen Poe and many more writers contributed towards the development of this art, with their thoughts, particular behaviour and sensitivity. After them English writers like Rudyard Kipling, Maupassant, etc. gave new trends and attitudes to the art and in the Twentieth century it became a popular art of writing. When the Urdu literature came in contact with this western art, it was welcomed with enthusiasm, by the writers and within a short time it became popular in the circle of the Indian writers and readers.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were the centuries of confusion, dispersion and disorder in India as well as in the world. People have experienced the violence, slavery, and world wars, etc. Old civilizations and arts were vanishing and new art, literature, social, political, economical ideas were advancing in India and the world. Indian writers also took up the new trend and took it to the great heights.

Though it is true that the form of short story writing in India is the gift of the European culture, but we cannot ignore our ancient literatures, which, in some extent are of the same technique. Those literatures include our holy Vedic literature, Upanishad, Mahabharata, Panch Tantra, tales and fables narrations are the excellent examples of short story writing. It was and it is still very common in our country to see an older member of the family, say the grandmother, narrating a story to her grandchildren, or a mother singing a story in the form of a lullaby to her child to make it sleep. At the same time we cannot overlook the literature of eighteenth and
nineteenth centuries which includes Mir Aman’s ‘Baug-o-Bhar’ (1804), Hyder Baksh Hydri’s ‘Tota Kahani’ (1801), Lallu Lalji’s ‘Betal Panchisi’, Rajab Ali Baig Sarwar’s ‘Fasane-e-Ajayab’ (1981), Tilasm-e-Hoshrubā’ (1883), etc. The basic aim of all those stories and literature was to develop the interest of the readers and to provide a way for entertainment. To satisfy the needs of the readers and listeners, the story writers also took up the same way and had included all the ingredients in their stories to make it entertaining and reader friendly. All those stories had their base in super-natural powers, prince, princess and their love stories, fairies, devils and their adventures in which situations and reality never meet each other and they became reader friendly books with exaggerated statements and facts.

The old art of storytelling got two different ways in the new era – novels and short stories. But the best part was that both these arts were different form the old pleasure reading, which included the demons, fairies, prince, princess or super natural powers to the real aspects of life, which included the common human beings and their experiences. Thus, this new art flourished in the hands of Nazeer Ahmed, Sharshar, Prem Chand and many more.

Nazeer Ahmed and Sharshar paid attention to detail and wrote novels, whereas Prem Chand gave rise to short story’s pattern. Nazeer Ahmed suggested through his literature and taught the readers to overthrow the imaginative work and to accept the reality of surroundings and situations. In the same manner Sarshar, as writing on the historical incidents produced the tentative novels and paved the way for the novel in Urdu literature. Waqar Ahmed, one of the famous critics, writes:

“Prem Chand kahani ko muhaz nashate khatir ka ek aryamajhne ke bajaye is se maashirati aur ikhlake islah ka aham kaam lliya. Sharshar ne islah ke is maksad ko aur jyada wazeh shakal de kar use wasitar qoomi maksad ke liye istemal kiya.”

(Rather than considering the short stories as a way for pleasure reading, Nazeer Ahmed took it as an important instrument to correct the societal and moral patterns. Even Sharshar took his literature on the broad canvas for national purpose.)
There is no doubt that these two writers never overlooked the traditional patterns of short story writing but on the way, paved a way for new writers to explore new types of topics and writings. According to Shaista Bano Suharwardy, in her book ‘A Critical Survey of Urdu Novel and Short Stories’ ‘Avadh Paanch’, 1877, gave rise and encourages the short stories among the readers. Though the form of short stories is the art much older than ‘Avadh Paanch’ but her comments on this art attracts the attention. She writes:

“The sketches of Munshi Sajjad Hasan and other writers of ‘Avadh Paanch’ paved the way to short stories . . . they had an interesting narration of festivals and parties. Even the climatic changes were used to be depicted in a very interesting manner. These sketches had all elements that founded the base for short stories and novels in Urdu language).

Munshi Prem Chand is considered as the founder of the art of short story writings in Urdu language. In his creative writings, along with the older temperament of the art, he experimented with the western pattern and technique of writing. He was the first writer as to bring the form of short story very close to the human life and culture and the fictional world got realistic issues instead of supernatural elements. The time, to which Munshi Prem Chand belonged, was full of political ups and downs. The beginning of twentieth century saw the flame of freedom struggle getting lighted up in force; changes in the written memoranda and the political zeal were on rise. After the First World War the total scenario of the world changed, which gave new topics and issues to the short stories. On the one hand industrial companies got located at some places and on the other hand the issue of the violence on the farmers over forced agriculture arouses. There were many issues which gave new topics to the tender hearted Prem Chand to write about. The elements of protest, against the
British Raj, and the social injustice, slowly get prominence in his short stories. He was an expert of the human psychology and it is the reason that we see the mixture of the life of common people in his short stories. His basic topics for the short stories were the psychology of Indian men and women, landlords, money lenders, farmers, labourers, village registrars, advocates, masters, clerks, low caste people, untouchables and their problems. He wrote against the narrow mindedness, blind beliefs and oppression. In the beginning of his career we could see the use of Farsi Language, in his short stories, written by him, the language, which is a very beautiful combination of Urdu and Hindi.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the European culture had got the strong hold over the Indian people and had changed their way of thinking, which gave rise to the study of English language and missionary schools played a great part in it. Because of which, many Indians came in contact with great works written in English and different, many other languages, which were translated in English, this gnawed at the way of thinking of the people and slowly this flash increased, which gave a new appearance to the art of short story. Newspapers and magazines gave rise to this form in Urdu reading communities and made it popular among the readers.

The form of short stories got very well nourished in Europe during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The writers from India also kept their tracks of writings well intact and many short stories from different foreign languages started getting published in Urdu. Niyaz Jalil Qadwai, Prof. Mujib Abdul Qader Sarwari, Manzoor Ahmed, Hamid Ali Khan and others had translated many short stories written in various foreign languages like English, Russian, French and Japanese. These translated versions of the short stories acquire a very important place in Urdu literature and especially for short stories because these translated stories paved new ways for writers, gave them new topics to write on and Urdu short stories became very strong in accordance with technique. There was a broad canvas of characters, topics, plots, scenes, which resulted in artistic expression by the writers in the language of Urdu.

The next era of short story writing started somewhere in the year 1930, when Europe was in complete recession. Countries were getting ready for the World War. The struggle to achieve freedom from the clutches of British had started in India.
Gandhiji was declared as a national leader for the independence struggle. Increased harassment by the British Raj and repression by the Indians left a remarkable impact on Indian literature and as a result social, political, psychological elements took over from the demons, fairies, prince and princess. All these national and international happenings have affected the literature at large. Even short stories were affected. Now the fancy and imagination were overtaken by social and political issues. ‘Angaree’ and ‘Himayun’ magazines played an important role by publishing these short stories and a new fictional element was presented to the readers.

By 1935, the literature and fiction in the language of Urdu, had reached to its peak, quite different from the poetry and couplets, new parameters and methods were welcomed in the language. Regarding this movement Sardar Jafri writes:

“Fascism aur doosri aalmi jung ka khatra badh chooka tha aur duniya ki tehzeeb Berlin ki sadkoo aur charaho par Jal rahi thi. Italy ke gali koochho me is ka khoon baha yaja raha tha. Spain me is per bombari ki ha raahi thi. Asia ke mulkoo me Hindustan aur China me beairooni samraj qoomi tehzeeboo ka gala ghot raha tha. Hitler fascism ne ye kah kar adbeeyoo aur danishwaroo ko apni apni simt ka intekhab karne par majboor kar diya tha ke jo koi Fascism ke saath nahi hai use Fascism ka dushman samjha jayega . . . 1935 me adbeeyoon ki ek banulaquami conference Paris me munakid hoi. Jis me saari duniya ke bade bade adeeb sharik ho. Is conference me Hindustan ka koi bada aadeeb shareek na ho saka. Lakin Sajjjad Zaheer aur Mulk Raj Anand ne joo us zamane me London me the is me shirkat ki.”

(The danger of fascism and the Second World War was on rise. The culture of the world was getting burnt on the streets and its circles of Berlin. It was getting killed in the narrow lanes of Italy. It was facing bombardment in Spain. The colonial powers
were suffocating the national cultures of India and China. With the declaration of Hitler’s Fascism, whoever not with fascism was considered as the enemy, the literary scholars were forced to turn their side. As for the protection of literature and culture, an international conference was being arranged in 1935 at Berlin. Different celebrated scholars and writers from all over the world attended that conference. There appears no celebrated writer’s name in the list from India. But Sajjad Zaheer and Mulk Raj Anand, were at that time in London, have attended that conference).

As per this quote one thing becomes very evident that Sajjad Zaheer and Mulk Raj Anand were well aware about the new movement and had already thought on creating a new banner to get different scholars under it. According to Sardar Jafri the first memorandum was drafted at the Knocking Hotel, London, later on which many writers had signed in agreement. Later on the agreement, in April 1936, the first conference was organized by the society and Munshi Prem Chand presides in the conference. The society was named ‘Taraqqi Pasand Musannafin’.

The formation of the society is one of very important events in the history of fiction writings. Very quickly it became strong and well managed society in all respects. This is the reason that this movement flourished and spread across India. The short story writings in Urdu got attracted by the movement; a long list of writers appeared on the canvas and joined the band wagon. The list includes names as Krishna Chandra, Saadat Hasan Manto, Upender Nath Ask, Rajendra Singh Bedi, Hayat -ullah- Ansari, Asmat Chughtai, Ahmed Ali, Suhail Azeem Abadi, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, Akhtar Ansari and many others. The pen of these writers, belonging to this movement, enjoyed the freedom of writings; on one side, they had the vast literature which spread in the past thirty years and on the other side, the worthfull fiction from west, so the art of short story climbed the ladder of success very quickly. The writers from the movement chose the topics which were related to class conflicts, hunger, and diseases, capitalist’s loots, farmers and labourers, their problems and issues.

On one side, the movement gave liberty to the writers for the choice of topics, on the other side writers get engaged into cheap fames and got addicted to hollow shouting. Even though there were many issues in this movement, but it became famous very quickly in the subcontinent. Prem Chand, Joosh Maliah Abadai, Hasrat
Mohani, Maulvi Abdul Haq, Qazi Abdul Gaffar, Doctor Aabid Hussain, Niyaz Fathe Puri, Ali Abbas Hussaini and others also got connected with the movement. Afterwards Rabindranath Tagore organized a second conference in 1938 at Calcutta.

This movement flourished in the circles of literature and the young writers got connected to the movement. Saadat Hasan Manto was known to the movement with his translation in fiction and works. He not only formed the ‘Roosi and Fransesi Adab Number’ for ‘Aalamgir and Himayun’ respectively but also he had published his translation work of ‘Ek Aseer ke Sargasht’ in 1934 and had contributed his collection of short stories named ‘Aatish Paree’ in 1936

Understanding and performing the role that the society assigns to writers and literature in India; the short stories became an efficient and handy tool for the representation of modern life, society, political and other happenings. The rise, decline and fall of the British Government, the freedom struggle, partition and its effects provide the intellectual settings for the special social ambiance in urban literature of India.

Colonialism, pre, during and post partition, in the subcontinents of the India was brutal, harsh and exploitative that brought a wide range of destruction and subjugation to India and its neighbours. Despite this exploitation and tidal rule of a foreign country, which was politically governing the natives in India, the Indian culture and heritage was not wiped out completely. Indian people and the oral tradition of literature were at rescue to preserve the rich Indian culture and literature of India and its sub continents. As per the oral tradition, the voice of the narrator had never been silent or paused.

Later, when the medium and pattern of story-telling or the oral narration change into the prose form, i.e. short stories, it continued and maintained its significant role in bringing the social and political awareness among the masses. In the present content of Indian urban literature, the short stories, with the ability to capture complex issues, emotions, experiences and thoughts retain the power to reach out to a large number of masses and to affect a society or a revolution. So, short stories are the suited and well managed medium to deal with a multiple number of issues and topics of individual or society as a whole. At the same time it gives a large and expressive elaboration of the history of a country or people. We could compare
the short stories as the building blocks, which have a binary identity. As each and every block in the game makes it complete or gives a clearer picture, it is the short story which forms the multiple blocks to understand the society as a whole. Images and picture, which emerge from short story reading, are sharp, true and quick. It is the short story which often depicts the phase or the process of action, time structure, and experience in a telescopic manner.

In India and its subcontinent’s societies, where freedom was denied and the writers were subjugated by the censorship and punishment, the mentioned feature of the short story, enables the people or the writer to overcome the restrictions.

The art of short story writing was a gift to Saadat Hasan Manto, from the European culture and past writers of India. In those catalytic time and tensions Saadat Hasan Manto, with his art of writing and deep consciousness about the society, political structure and happenings including psychology of human beings, came up as one of the new and shining star on the horizon of Urdu literature, which includes, many famous names of renowned writers like Mirza Asadullah Khan Galib, Amir Khusru, Allama Iqbal, and many more.

It is about fifty nine years since Saadat Hasan Manto left this world, still we read and interpret his short stories in many different facets. His writings are the source through which he is still alive in the minds of his followers, readers and critics. This long span of time is enough to justify the worth of a writer and his works. Today we could say that he is undoubtly on the top in a list of writers of Urdu fiction, where very few could reach and sustain for so long. The short stories by Saadat Hasan Manto proved to be successful not only in India but also in the sub-continents of Asia. He had a different way of writing, quite different from the writers like Tagore, Prem Chand, Ahmed Nadim Qasmi, etc. He, with his ability to deal with human psychology and the consciousness of the political and societal structure contributed a lot for the language of Urdu and has gifted new topics, art, patterns of writing. He gave rise to the writing which could make a reader think and justify the situations. He is really a great writer. Readers and critics had very different view regarding his writings. Few people considered him as an indecent writer, whereas few others considered him as the pinnacle of in the art of writing. He being writing about India and its people portrait very skillfully the social, psychological, and political scenario...
of the age he belonged to. He used words which made his readers stop, think and respond. Very few writers have this ability, which Saadat Hasan Manto possessed in abundance. He was a Kashmiri. His ancestors belonged to Kashmir, who migrated to Punjab. Though he belonged to Kashmir, he never lived there. Around 1930, he lived in Batot, a place in Kashmir, after being diagnosed with tuberculosis.

In the pre and post independence literature of India in various languages, Saadat Hasan Manto emerges as one of the most influential writers to write and speak about the subjugation, society, politics, humans, psychology, freedom struggle partition, riots and other happenings and issues in a bold and open narrative. Saadat Hasan Manto was well aware and conscious about the position of newly independent countries as well as the society and politics, which play an important role in forming the behaviour of the individuals in the social context.

Saadat Hasan Manto, was a writer in the midst of political turmoils, so the themes of his stories revolve around the political and social happenings and their effect on the personal life of the people in the society of India and its subcontinent. Saadat Hasan Manto considered and has confessed that he has written about the society in one of his writings, where he writes:

“If you cannot bear these stories than the society is unbearable. Who am I to remove the clothes of this society, which is itself naked. I don’t even try to cover it, because it is not my job that is the job of dressmaker.”

Though we cannot say very confidently from where he started his literary career but the translation of a French novel ‘Last Days of Condemned’ by Victor Hugo is thought to be considered as his first effort of writing which is being published under the title ‘Ek Asir ki Sargasth’. Before this large achievement he translated news and literary journals for the newspaper ‘Masavat’. Then he became a regular columnist in the newspaper. He considered Bari Alig as his mentor who moulded his personality, as a writer, which he himself speaks of in his writing:
“Aaj kal main jo kuch ho is ko banane mein bas se pehla hath Bari Sahabka tha. Agar Amritsar mein un se mulaqat na hoti aur mutvatiar teen mahine in ke suhbat me na guzare hote to yakinan main kisi our raste par hota.”

(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 continuously for three months I would be on a different path.)

For him fiction was a way to explore the available possibilities, which were present but hidden under many folds in the lives of each and every individual. Saadat Hasan Manto is a writer who endlessly explores these possibilities of change in the political and social life of the people of the country. Society and politics captured his attention, rather than the romantic or love themes. In spite of being a male member of the society, Saadat Hasan Manto depicts the pain and problems of the women belonging to India and its sub-continent, in pre and post partition times, very effectively. Being born and brought up in the political activity hub, Punjab, politics and society were clearly exposed to him; to understand, explore and write, therefore it is not surprising to note that many of his short stories rely on the social and political section of the time he belonged to.

The evolution of Saadat Hasan Manto can be easily traced effectively in his short stories, sketches, letters, etc. The wide mobility and space which is the basic of the genre of short stories, allows him to stretch the limits of his potential, as a writer.

Saadat Hasan Manto’s short stories and his character sketches, in short fiction actually have a different texture and large goals. They act as the snapshots, revealing the terrible, unspoken moments of truth, which many of us as being the members of the society try to overlook or ignore. This act of ignorance could be because of fear, unawareness or hypocrisy, which Saadat Hasan Manto rejects as a person and as a part of the society. The shortness of his stories is the life of his fiction making it intense. The fiction by Saadat Hasan Manto is remarkable for its swiftness, which enables him to pierce the aim or the target without any mistakes. His short stories are the creation of unbelievable quality of perfection which achieves its goal without any difficulty. To his credit there are around two hundred and fifty short stories, dozens of
essay, collection of dramas, character sketches and film scripts. His collections of fiction, specially the short stories, are often shuffled sometimes with the addition of few fake materials. Many publishers across the country and the border have published his fiction with certain additions or subtraction.

Saadat Hasan Manto being subjected to the court trials pre and post-independence writes on society and history which, he considers is responsible for the change in human behaviour. In this sense he selects his subject for the short story always being conscious and aware of the era and times he belonged to (1912-1955).

In Saadat Hasan Manto’s fiction, short stories occupy a prominent and important position; it could be because of the fact that the genre of short stories, provides an ideal platform to situations, characters and narration.

The compact and concentrated specialty of the genre of the short stories makes it an ideal literary form to represent the fast moments of societal changes. The groups of partial view, about the multiple emotions- the back and front movement between personal ego and or, society and public responsibility. The conflict between individual and masses are all accurately observed and felt by Saadat Hasan Manto in his short stories. The special feature of the genre, short story, demands tremendous work from its writer, who tries to pen down something that could be imaginative ‘in actuality or present sense.

Saadat Hasan Manto chooses the medium of short stories to depict multiple and different situations, which were a result of the political and social evils present in the society. It enabled him to portray sharp and focused depiction or illustration of the society in the scientific pattern of prose writings. There are few other features of the genre short story that made it an advantageous literary pattern, in the past and the present centuries, and one of them is its shortness, which enables a person to listen and remember it well in its entire form, for a long time. The short stories written by Saadat Hasan Manto hold importance in the literature produced in the language of Urdu. The shortness of the story is the life of the narration. Sometimes the stories, by Saadat Hasan Manto, will get over within two or three sentences but giving the complete understanding of the situation and happenings. Saadat Hasan Manto experimented a lot in his writing, regarding form and pattern of the short story. It is the fragmentary pattern of this genre, which bestowed it a unique and different role in
literature, after the partition of India. Saadat Hasan Manto, relying on this thin but sharp pattern reflects the nature of society to which he belonged. He is a very natural writer who made proper use of different structures in his short stories to pass on his thoughts and messages. Stories by Saadat Hasan Manto seem to be the barometer of the society. He gathers a handful of situations and then rearranges them to write a story that reveals the hidden message and gnaws at one’s consciousness. The picture of India and its subcontinents which, Saadat Hasan Manto portrays in his short stories, actually act as the bricks into rebuilding the nation’s history and the political structure. Saadat Hasan Manto has rightly chosen the genre of short stories as an effective tool to represent and portray the actual society in a sharp and acute manner.

As for the confused and disordered political issues of the country, he attempts to combine and bring together a sharp political view in his narration. ‘Letters to Uncle Sam’ are the evidence of his political awareness. As with the role of ‘a cultural worker’ Saadat Hasan Manto participates in the struggle of a nation’s attempt to become free, recording the truth of a society, confused by the colonial ruler, partition, migration and communal riots. In the political context or looking at the political environment, Saadat Hasan Manto acts as a reporter of situations and events and seeks justice; he rejects hypocrisy in almost all the situations, which he felt are not correct. His letters to Uncle Sam and around two and half dozen short stories are directly based on the political issues and it was the art of Saadat Hasan Manto, who draws a relation between individuals of society and those situations.

Saadat Hasan Manto is one of the most accurate recorders of the abnormal effects of partition of India and its subcontinents and the white domination. Saadat Hasan Manto being the witness to the political and social situation and happenings in India was aware about the hypocritic political structure and its effects on the life of people and society. In his essay ‘Hindustan ko Leedaron se Bachao’ Saadat Hasan Manto expressed the ills of politics and political leaders, he strongly considers them, as the cause for the India’s inability to achieve freedom. He writes:

“Hindustan ko sawraj is liye nahi mil raha kyon ki
yahan leader kum aur madari zyada hai.”

[India is unable to achieve freedom because it lacks true leadership; most of the leaders are more conjurers and less leaders].
Influence of politics into everyday life of the common people has left unrepairable scars on the Indian cultural essence. Skillfully politics achieves a dominant role, which stagnates the normal pattern of life and living, in the society. Saadat Hasan Manto expresses his great regret on the method of politics, which has corrupted Indian art, culture, philosophy, secular rituals and religious beliefs. His commitment to the people made his literature, one of the few attempts to clean the false, corruptive and hypocrite politics, and he tried to bring it into its rightful approach, which would be beneficial for society and the common people. At present, our society and the political system is something that resembles the society and politics of the time of Saadat Hasan Manto. In one of his essays on political people Saadat Hasan Manto commented on them as they are unable to control their own houses so how come they will manage the country and people. Mixing of culture and religion into politics is a modern trend that has been adopted by political parties especially after partition. In such a large mixed, multi coloured society, the inequalities and hypocrisy at different levels make the communication difficult and gives ways to feuds in the daily and common life of the common people. Saadat Hasan Manto was fully aware of the failure and the disadvantage with which the writers of his land were struggling, as trying to build a nation rid of all the prejudices.

The cultural diversity in India is one of the most rare and uncommon factor which formed the national identity in the world, among the other countries. But this diversity only proves to be an obstacle for the people of the country from being ‘equals’. A diverse culture invokes the inequality of opportunities to move within any of the activities. In Urdu literature, Saadat Hasan Manto talks about the problematic ‘cultural identity and the diversity’ in Indian society in many of his short stories.

In the process of rebuilding the social patterns and overthrowing infectious political morality, Saadat Hasan Manto sensed the need for a common cultural identity. The problematic question of individual freedom is closely connected with the pattern of individual identity, at the national level. Saadat Hasan Manto, Amitav Ghosh, Allma Iqbal, R. K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie and others try to capture the dilemma of the common man on the identity crisis, in their fiction. The literature produced by them explores the harshness of those basic situations. The fact remains that none of them could talk or write about the society as a fragment, because they considered it to be one and common to all. As Amitav Ghosh’s ‘Shadow Lines’, could
bring to our understanding the meaning of borders drawn into nations. Same as Saadat Hasan Manto writes in his story 'Toba Tek Singh' with the point of view of the character, a lunatic in a mental asylum. His fiction also joins the mainstream of sub-continent of India’s literature, which could be read as a voyage of discovery, towards colonial, post-colonial, partition and individual awareness, responsibility and guilt, without compromising with any thread or court trials, which were common in colonial India.

Saadat Hasan Manto is more of a realist, than a romantic in his literature, his short stories, essays, letters and sketches; the harsh and absolute accuracy of detail is almost a never changing factor, which is tied up to an emotional and intellectual appeal. In his capacity, Saadat Hasan Manto gets deep into the minds of the common people belonging to the society, but while doing so he never becomes aloof from maintaining the form and pattern of story writing. Saadat Hasan Manto explores questions such as ‘What is our societal role?’ ‘Where do common human beings stand in the society?’ ‘Whether the politics of our country is healthy?’ along with all these the much discussed and argumantative question of the sub-continent is ‘Partition?’ And by doing so he tries to raise the consciousness of people towards the need for a drastic change in the political pattern, which would suit the common people of the nation.

Saadat Hasan Manto thought of post-partition and post-colonialism was no different from the subjugation, which people experienced during colonialism, with acute accuracy and merciless verbal dexterity; he portrays the political and social system of the India as it really was and not as it should be. The truthfulness and bitter harshness, of social and political reality is starkly presented in his fiction, Saadat Hasan Manto writes and asks for political and social changes. Even though, his writings can be read as an attempt to understand the social and political happenings, his commitment to the genre remains and sustains till the end of his writings.

Political and social themes and issues are a trade mark to Sadat Hasan Manto but they never moulded his fiction away from the pattern. This thesis attempts a close reading of the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto to understand not just what happened, but to explore how it is related to the social awareness of the people.
Saadat Hasan Manto, an eminent writer of fiction has faced mixed responses from critics and readers. He is a writer, who suffered the wrath of both the government, colonial and independent, for writing something indecent or may be something not to be spoken of. He faced nearly around a dozen of court trials pre and post partition, for doing so. It seems that critics never let the art of Saadat Hasan Manto out from the triangles of ‘Boo’, ‘Hitak’, ‘Khol Do’, ‘New Constitution’, ‘Kahani Ka Khulas’ ‘Phundune’, etc. which holds the ability to embrace the complex nature of pre and post independent India, on a wide canvas. Social consciousness can be traced in his short stories to a great extend. But in his fiction of short stories, Saadat Hasan Manto, never aims to achieve a single concentrated impression, instead focuses on a vast range of social, political and ethical questions, as for example, in the story ‘Khol Do’ he depicts the agony and pain of Sakina, who was being raped multiple times by the members of the same beliefs, whereas the other story ‘Dekh Kabira Roya’ is about the tyrannical and selfish pattern of society, political system and the individuals belonging to it. As it is rightly said that short stories are, the slices of life, Saadat Hasan Manto captures almost all the ill doings of society and the political structure. He was accused of writing about indecent characters of society, such as the prostitutes and their business, Saadat Hasan Manto comments on the society in one of his short story ‘License’ where Niseeti was forced to prostitution as she was left with no other way of livelihood for herself and her child as her husband died and the committee members rejected her license to ride a tonga to earn money for a living. Saadat Hasan Manto, not only portrays reality as it is, but also adds his own conscious touch to it. With these representational short stories, that he wrote, help him in bringing out the social consciousness and political situations, from the perspective of a common human being.

Being a male writer, he was well aware of the ills and bad prevailing in society and probably, he imagines the private life of actual individuals, with problems that the society was facing. Sadat Hasan Manto’s writing is closely woven in the politics, yet, provides an explanation for the betterment. In his short stories he builds a personal view around quick, but sharp and focused moments of insight. His each story presents:
“A different shard with no pretense of wholeness beyond it”.7

In Saadat Hasan Manto’s skillful hands, the short story’s as a form became an effective medium to picture and portray, the complexity of social and political pressures, on every single human being and incident. Born as a son, in a well to do Lawyer’s family, in Punjab, Sadat Hasan Manto hardly had any reason to worry about the financial matters. But after the death of his father, and the unfaithfulness of his relatives Saadat Hasan Manto become disheartened and shifted to Bombay, and many critics consider the phase of his living in Bombay is his best and most productive. This migration gave him one more opportunity to see life and society closely. After Bombay it was Lahore which became home to Sadat Hasan Manto, after partition, which again left a reasonable impact on his writing. Saadat Hasan Manto has analyzed the social reality of India and its sub-continent in many different contexts, as he himself was living with different people and different societies, which gave him extra opportunities to see and understand the social and political happenings with different perspective and different locations.

Saadat Hasan Manto carefully chooses a political issue and subject, and places it in an everyday life situation, thus giving a comprehensive picture of India and its sub-continent, before his readers. Everything that he wrote, he tried to build the consciousness and awareness out of chaotic situations. Saadat Hasan Manto’s short stories include a wide range spectrum of subject and situations, events and happenings, with the help of characters using less words but an elaborate approach. Saadat Hasan Manto represents the whole of it. Often it seems that Saadat Hasan Manto has picked up the fragmentary happenings and moments of society and politics and illustrated them. But like a jigsaw puzzle- Saadat Hasan Manto’s fiction gathers humanity and truth in every single piece. This makes the picture clear, when viewed as a whole.

This thesis attempts to explore the writer and his fiction, which observes and experiences the making of the nation politically and socially. Even though throughout his life Saadat Hasan Manto rejected politics and was not connected with any political party, in India and its subcontinent, his writings include the masterpieces written on the politics in colonial and free India. As he gets deep into the political drama in the
country, he becomes more and more socially conscious in his short stories. In his writing one can see, the overlapping of private, public and political matters.

While focusing on the corrupt and hypocritical political system, Saadat Hasan Manto actually attempted to awaken political awareness, of the common people towards the need for change. Being a member of the society, Saadat Hasan Manto works to create an ideology, which demands support and propagates all as equal, without any political, social, cultural and religious bonds. Saadat Hasan Manto being a writer tries to bring to the forefronts, the falsehood and injustice in the colonial and independent India, which took over as the in charge to rule the society. In all his writings, (short stories, letters, essays, etc.) Saadat Hasan Manto has managed to keep himself away from the different political ideologies and emerges as a loyal member of the society, who actually supports truth and humanity.

This project attempts to define and understand the author’s importance and stand, both as a member of society and largely as the writer in terms of formal political system and society, which holds the power to disturb and command the individual in society. This thesis is actually a textual analysis of the short stories, essays, and letters, written by Saadat Hasan Manto to trace the social consciousness which is tied firmly with political awareness.

According to Eagleton, in the book ‘Ideology: An Introduction’ 1991, there is:

“A third way between thinking of ideology as disembodied idea on the one hand as nothing but the matter of certain behaviour patterns on the other. This is to regard ideology as a discursive or semiotic phenomenon.”

The entire concept of ideology is built on the frame work of power or authority. In the above cited lines we could see that the writer is emphasizing the ideology factor in literature. The writer clarifies that when any ideology tries to get over any social reality, the ‘semiotic contribution’ gets illuminated. But, this study has assumed the definition of ideology that has been suggested as:
“An ideology is a set of related beliefs about political theory and policy held by an individual, group of individuals or a particular class.”

Saadat Hasan Manto is far away, from the visionary projection of the society, politics and the different theories and concepts of ideology. He clearly envisioned and wrote about the desirable change in society and the political pattern of India. In the literature produced by Saadat Hasan Manto, political ideology surface in his attempt to bring to the forefront the social consciousness of the individual in society, of colonial and independent India. The ideological-struggle in his short stories becomes a part of the freedom struggle and it could be studied as, the ways to understand the freedom struggle attempted by an individual or a group in society. Subject of each short story written by Saadat Hasan Manto, holds importance as it introduces us to the hallucinatory individuals who are hypocrites of the political system.

In this thesis the elaboration of Saadat Hasan Manto’s social and political vision is undertaken to get a better understanding of the political statements and social order of the time to which he belonged. One could study the literature produced by Saadat Hasan Manto as an attempt to understand, in a better manner, the holocaust caused by the decision and happenings of partition, which is a very particular political decision, as common people were completely not in favor of it. Saadat Hasan Manto depicts the pain of partition, migration, loss of humanity, riots, people’s behaviour, general psychology, etc. of the event, in very simple but questionable manner. Through the medium of his short stories, letters, and essays he asks the owner of the decision, the need of doing so and expresses his annoyance and rejection of the issue, or the decision.

His masterpiece stories like, ‘Toba Tek Singh’, ‘It happened in 1919’, ‘Khol Do’, ‘Ram Khalawan’, ‘Tamasha’, ‘Matami Jalsa’, and many more, are related to or are based directly on the decision of partition, and at the same time the horrible effect that followed it. He depicts clearly in his short stories and brings to our consciousness the fact, that before partition India and its continent saw a two community issue, but now it has been turned as the issue of two countries which is now far away from the reach of any settlement. Saadat Hasan Manto reflected in his fiction and altogether rejected the ‘Two Nation Philosophy’. In the work of Saadat Hasan Manto the social
and political evils and ills are analyzed with microscopic details, through the several
different everyday situations and happenings. The observed text revolves around and
focuses in-depth study of the social and psychological impact of the partition and its
impairments on the life of a common individual and the society at large. In the
kaleidoscopic manner each of the short stories, written by Saadat Hasan Manto,
depicts the social and political reality as it is and not as it should be. Women, were the
worst hit gender of the decision of 1947 partition, Saadat Hasan Manto wrote much
on their issues and sufferings. He brings out the very nature of real women, in
different shades. He presented women in a different picture, in his short stories: some
times as a daughter, sister, wife, mother, etc. many of the short stories written by him,
gets the women characters in the role of a prostitute, because he believes that they are
an inseparable part of the society. He was called an indecent writer for doing so, but
he believed that it is the society which is responsible for the creation of brothels and
not the women. In every prostitute he sees a women who wants to live a respectable
life but is unable to do so, because of some or the other reason. Much has been spoken
and written on the female characters of Saadat Hasan Manto. Saadat Hasan Manto
gave the undying female characters, in his short stories like Mozail, Sughandhi,
Halakat, Kalwant Kaur, Nikki and others. Each of these characters was different from
the earlier one. Though Saadat Hasan Manto was not a feminist but the way he talks
about the psychology, behaviour, problems, pain and agony of the weak gender, of the
society is unmatchable in the literature of the sub-continent. While writing about the
above female characters Saadat Hasan Manto commented on the social system, which
depicts his social awareness.

Saadat Hasan Manto, is an important part of the intellectual group, of the sub-
continent of India, who in their harsh and inflexible manner bring out the things,
really happening in society and politics of the country to the world. He has emerged
as the holder of truth and justice into a corrupt colonial and post-colonial India, a
writer whose primary loyalty was to his society and the individuals belonging to it.
Saadat Hasan Manto in his role as a ‘spokes person of truth’ presents situations and
characters so as to bring out the influence of different ideology, or analyzing it in
different context. The predominant emotions in Saadat Hasan Manto’s characters
are fear, lust, love, boldness, hypocrisy, ruthlessness, etc. which gives a deeper insight
to the social awareness of Saadat Hasan Manto’s fiction. Saadat Hasan Manto has effectively portrayed the various shades of emotions ranging from positive or good to negative and bad.

The second chapter makes a comprehensive study of Saadat Hasan Manto as a person from his childhood to his death. The chapter serves as a biography to the life of Saadat Hasan Manto.

The third chapter, studies reality, which Saadat Hasan Manto has portrayed in his fiction, which, in turn becomes an example for his social awareness and consciousness of the society. Placed among the eminent writers in the language of Urdu, Saadat Hasan Manto can also be seen as a narrator of the unfruitful decision of Indian politics, which resulted adversely and negatively on the life of the common people of both newly independent countries. This chapter directly involves the social awareness of Saadat Hasan Manto, reflected from his short stories, which play a vital role in understanding the fallout values which were dominant in the Indian society. While writing on social awareness of his people, Saadat Hasan Manto tries to pay attention and obtain a large and needed thinking about the conditions of females of the subcontinents. The moral structure within the different strata of a society is dramatized in several of the short stories written by Saadat Hasan Manto.

Saadat Hasan Manto explores a whole range of ‘bad’ and ‘good’ individuals of the society. The variety of characters possesses a clear picture of the reality which juxtaposes the society. He has covered all different sectors of the society, could be listed as ‘good or bad individuals’, ‘pious and tyrant individuals’, ‘true and hypocrite individuals, ‘house wives and prostitutes’, ‘good and bad political pattern’, etc. and by doing so he gives his readers a clear understanding about his society and carefully explores the political intervention and its effect on it as whole. For example we could consider his story ‘The Price of Freedom’, originally written with the title ‘Sawraj Ke Liye’, where the central characters, Gulam Ali and Nigar, get entangled between the married life and the freedom movement, by doing so he illuminates the corrupt political order and society. The subject of his short stories and the characters in it become a vehicle to Saadat Hasan Manto to transport his vision about social and political corruptness.

The next chapter i.e. Chapter Five, discusses issues of partition. The realistic approach of Saadat Hasan Manto towards the riots creates a sad atmosphere where faults of human beings come alive automatically. Because the riots are unnatural, aroused out of human misunderstandings, but it never thinks of affection, love, morals, values or purity.

Chapter six, studies the women characters in the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto. The weak gender of the society, women, forms the central characters in the stories written by Saadat Hasan Manto. Saadat Hasan Manto has presented woman in different pictures and shades, such as a mother, a sister, a wife, a girl and yes even as a prostitutes. It is women who became the center of all ill justice, in the past as well as in the present too.

Saadat Hasan Manto wrote many stories having women as the central characters. Though he is not a feminist writer but the way he portrays the women characters in his stories is remarkable and unmatchable. If we want to discuss and understand the different aspects 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 Saadat Hasan Manto was not a feminist but the way he describes the problems faced by women in society is very lucid.

Saadat Hasan Manto was a keen observer of society, its traits, common human beings and their psychology, all this reflects in his writings, a common human
strengths, attitude, and behaviour pattern which could be universal in nature. As a participant in the freedom struggle, by any mode, his writings are significant in understanding the contemporary way. Critics and people read his short stories with different perspective, as a tool to understand the mayhem of the situation (partition 1947) society and political pattern of pre and post independent India and Pakistan. He migrated to Pakistan somewhere in the year 1950 or 1951 and died there experiencing all his anger, pain and agony, of getting uprooted from his motherland. Saadat Hasan Manto’s decision of migration to Pakistan lies with his family issue but the reason why he didn’t return is a mystery.

Saadat Hasan Manto wrote many film scripts, dialogues and plays while living in Mumbai. He worked for different film companies as the story writer or plot writer. He wrote film scripts which were made under the title ‘Chal Chal re Navjavan’, ‘Begum’ ‘Shikari’, ‘Aath Din’, ‘Ghamand’, etc.

It is an interesting thing to mark, that though Saadat Hasan Manto was a Muslim, he never followed religion strictly. He loved his religion but was not an extremist. That is why we don’t see religion as a plot in any of his stories. He talked about it but never propagated it. He loved his religion but never considered other religions and its followers as his enemy or a threat to his faith, whereas humanity is the basic factor of his stories. He has characters who were Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs or Christians but he never made one religion superior to another. He wrote on oppression, whether being done by a religious follower or a political or social person, or circumstances. He mostly wrote on the partition and the riots, which hurt him a lot. His humanity and intellect were being disturbed because of the happenings in the name of religion, which he never supported. Very few others, in the language of Urdu had produced so much literature as Saadat Hasan Manto did. He was a friendly person and considered human relationship important rather than religion. In one of his short stories he writes:

“Ye mat kaho k eek lakh Musalman aur ek lakh Hindu mare. Ye kaho k eek lakh insaan mare.”

(Don’t say that one lakh Muslims or one lakh Hindus were killed. Say that one lakh humans were killed).
Saadat Hasan Manto was born on 11th May, 1912, and died on 18th January, 1955. During his life span of forty two years eight months and four days, (which was very short) the literature and the volume of the literature he produces is in itself a very uncommon thing. Novels, character sketches, short stories, essays, dramas, translation work of foreign literature. Thus, Saadat Hasan Manto tried his hand on almost all types of literary forms. But the literature, for which he is still remembered, which gave him the uncustomary recognition is the short stories. These stories are uncommon in their form, subject and pattern.

The literary career of Saadat Hasan Manto began with the translation of the foreign literature, which polishes his art of writing, thinking and creative virtues. Western literature provided him a vast range of experiences, a strong power of conservation and discriminative insight, which in turn, helped him to form extraordinary characters, and the settings, and he became one of the well-acquainted person who excelled in the field of Urdu short story writing.

The home environment and the upbringing patterns, leave a long lasting impact on the development of the personality of a person. Home forms a very basic unit in the development of the views of a person about society. Saadat Hasan Manto was very unlucky in this respect, of this very factor he writes:

“Manto ke afsana nigari mutzad anasir ke tasadum ka natiya hai. Is ke walid, khuda unhe bakhsh, bhoat sakhtgir the aur is ke walida behad naram dil. In doono pato ke under pis kar ye dana-e-gandam kis shakal me bahar nikla ho ga iska andaza aap kar sakte hai.”

(The art of Saadat Hasan Manto and his short stories are a result of the clash of contradictory elements. His father, may Allah bless him, was very strict and the mother was too soft hearted. You could make out the plight of a grain which gets ground between these two extreme elements of nature).

There are two reasons for the disputed literary career of Saadat Hasan Manto; one was the topics which he chooses for his writings and the characters on which he wrote and both were unacceptable to society. The other reason was his velour and courage, as a result he never accepted the treacherous manners and morality of
society, thus reflecting the things in as it is manner. He unveiled the filth prevailing in the outwardly clean society. With his sharp sentences he made society to see its real picture, without any deceptive make up of humanity.

Writing a short story on a very common situation is one of the basic qualities of Saadat Hasan Manto’s writings. Any one incident, one person, a sentence, or sometimes just a word was able to get the pen of Saadat Hasan Manto in motion and within a short time a complete short story used to get ready. He possesses a very good hold over characterisation; a person walking on the road, different in any manner, attracts the attention of Manto, but writing on the common people’s psychology, is one of the basic topics, in the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto. Saadat Hasan Manto writes on his choice of characters and issues as:

“Aitaraaz kiya jata hai ke naye likhne walo ne aurat aur mard ke jisne taalukat ko hi apna moozoo banaya hai. Main sab ki taraf se jawab nahi dooga . . . apne mutaliq itna kahoga ke ye moozoo mujhe pasand hai . . . kyon hai? . . . Bas hai . . . samajh lijeye mujhe perversion hai.”

(Many a critics consider that the new writers have made the physical relationship between men and women as their topic for the fiction writing. I will not be giving answer from the side of all the writers . . . I will just speak in my regards. I like this topic . . . why? . . . Just I do . . . you could say that I have a perversion for it).

But this is not the only thing. While talking particularly about sexual relationships he attempted to deeply understand the psychology behind it. The emotional reactions of his characters towards different issues and situations, are the broad concept, behind his choice of characters. Though he chooses sexual issues, to write on, but he never tried to give or arouse any type of likeness among his readers. He tried to check different perspectives in every issue, because of which a reader never finds monotony in his short stories. Though he wrote dozens of stories on the same issue but each one of them is different in its experience. This leaves his readers astonished at the end and also while going through the different intellectual jerks.
Manto had talked about the double standards of society in a sarcastic tone, because he believed that basically all human beings are pure from its inner self but it is the society and it’s all false culture, and attitudes are the reason to pollute the innocence of humanity. Saadat Hasan Manto was very well aware of the class pattern, which was common in society, which had blocked the free flow of thoughts. Along with this he knew that people belonging to different classes have their different bigotry and preferences, regarding and related to their class. With this awareness about society he never left an opportunity to slap the face of society and thus tried to bring society to its consciousness.

He was not a political person. He did not belong to any political party. But at the same time we cannot say that he was not at all related to it. He showed his hatred for politics in his different stories and essays. He was a writer of humanity and has written about society in which he grew up.
OBJECTIVES:

The objective of my doing this research study has the following objectives:

1) To analyse and examine the social and political issues, related to the said time (Partition 1947).
2) To focus on the impact of Partition 1947, on human life and nation.
3) To project different women characters in Manto’s fiction that will throw light on the historical event of 1947.
4) To bring out the relevance of Saadat Hasan Manto’s fiction on day to day life and judgments.
5) To gain insight into the disastrous event that took place in the year 1947. i.e. the Partition of India.

SCOPE:

Partition is the most widely written issue and subject of India and Pakistan. The present study will throw light on the creative writings of Saadat Hasan Manto for which he is widely known as the new generation writer. So it will be beneficial to know his own views and experiences and the responses to his writing by other authors and critics.

PROBLEM ON HAND:

The unbalanced and subjugated society and political system are the much prevailing issues of India and its sub-continents. The work focuses on the social and political consciousness of the writer to understand the pre, during and post independent India.