CHAPTER 2
A Critical Introduction
to the Select Short Stories of
Ramnarayan Pathak
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The second chapter of the research work focuses on the features of Pathak’s short stories in general and its critical evaluation in particular. The principal reasons for selecting twenty stories for translation are on account of their notable features like common philosophical and psychological outlook; influence of Gandhian ideology; variety in themes; well-organized plot structure; sharp irony and humour.

2.1. Characteristics of Pathak’s and Joshi’s Short Stories:
A comparative perspective

In order to understand the characteristics and the art of Pathak’s short story, it is necessary to look at both Joshi’s and Pathak’s art of short story as both are not only contemporary but also complementary. Joshi has formulated his concepts on the art of short story writing first and then he has formalized his concepts of short story. But his very concepts are not applicable to his short stories. Pathak is a great critic of short story as well. The concept of Pathak’s short story is more classical and insightful. The critique of Pathak’s short story is thorough as well as radical. This radical criticism of short story by Pathak has become useful not only to his contemporary writers but also to the writers and critics of the succeeding generation. In addition, his concept of short story has enriched the short stories of Pathak as well. The critic Pathak has contributed to a great extent in making the art of short story more comprehensive. In fact, Joshi is a short story writer first and then its critic. Pathak is a critic first and then a short story writer. This aspect has highly influenced Pathak’s story writing.

Pathak’s stories embody the values of Gandhiyug. Pathak is directly more influenced by Gandhian ideology than Joshi. Pathak describes the life of poor and Dalit people. The people from lower caste may be considered untouchable; but they possess human feelings and sentiments too. This change is brought about by the influence of Gandhian ideology. This is the central idea of the story Khemi. The influence of Gandhiyug inspired the writers to cull the characters from Dalit
society and *Khemi* is a beautiful example of it. Pathak has shown that the backward class people also possess virtues like sacrifice, affection, tolerance, love, mercy etc. with the help of different stories.

Joshi favours rural life and dislikes urban life, whereas Pathak keeps his attitude balanced for rural as well as urban life in his stories.

The delineation of psychological and sexual aspects of man-woman relationship is a valuable contribution in the development of short story writing in Gujarati. The predecessors of Pathak did not talk about these two subjects clearly. Dhansukhlal, Munshi, Joshi et al. wrote about such subjects to some extent but Pathak has penned many stories that fully address these two subjects. Pathak has written many stories describing the sexual element and has also succeeded in this regard. That is why we can put Pathak’s name in the first cadre as a pioneer in making the stories on sexual element popular and artistic even at the cost of facing criticism. In the second and the third part of *Dwiref ni Vato*, Pathak describes the issues of sexual desires very frankly, objectively and without dislike and without considering the so called standards of morality and immorality. He explains the questions of sex minutely and deftly. *The Loss of Uttermarg, The Last Dandakya Bhoj* and *The Most Fortunate Wife* are the finest instances of it.

Joshi gets carried away by emotions and sentiments of the characters. He becomes subjective at times and gets influenced by the characters while contriving events. As a result, he loses control over the plot construction of the story. Pathak is a conscious story teller. Unlike Joshi, with regard to the art of storytelling, Pathak has an aim to tell the story and that brings style, wit and tone in the story. Even while contriving the events or developing characterization, Pathak manages to sustain the flow of the narrative. Therefore, nothing irrelevant creeps into the story and its plot remains well-organized.

Pathak is the first to introduce the lonely voice as Frank O’Connor says - which is a unique mysterious characteristic of the modern Gujarati short story (Thaker 113).

Joshi’s stories are sentimental whereas Pathak’s stories are sensible. Jyotindra Dave aptly considers him “a cold blooded logician” (Modi 25). His training and scholarship in Indian schools of logic is reflected in his arguments,
choice of conflict and composition. An overall rational treatment of theme and technique make his stories realistic and reliable.

Joshi focuses on the interpretation of the story whereas Pathak focuses on the clarity and form of the story. His events seem to be realistic and probable. The selection and order of the event is arranged in such a way that our curiosity is maintained till the end.

The progress of Pathak’s stories is straightforward and poignant. Like Maupassant’s stories, his stories also have a well-organized beginning, middle and end. It does not begin from anywhere like modern stories. The interpretation spontaneously emerges from the plot of the stories. He experiments with various ways of story depiction that makes his stories ever new, fresh and interesting. He can express deep sorrow coldly. In the art of description, he possesses the talent of producing tragic elements even being realistic. Thus, he gives us remarkable stories like Mukundray, Khemi and Kodar.

The psychoanalytical description makes the stories realistic and natural. Several stories of Pathak have touched the different psychological layers and aspects of human mind. The delineation of the negative emotions like human ego, self-indulgence, greed, ambitiousness et al. and difference of human nature and conflict resulting out of it and its tragedy is a successful result of a detailed study of psychology. Pathak has exhibited envy, attachment, self-indulgence, man’s greed for fame, sexual desire, and hypocrisy of human mind in many of his stories. Pathak is the first short story writer to bring psychology of the character in Gujarati short stories. Kodar, Surdas, Kapilray are the fine examples of the description of psychological aspects in the story. Pathak is good at describing the psychological complexity and psychoanalytic reflection.

Thus, the most of the stories of Pathak touch the layers of human mind. The main aim of Pathak is to demonstrate characters’ emotions. This is the reason why his stories inspire and direct the development of short story literature in Gujarati.

The next specialty of his stories is its sharp irony and humour. He demonstrates the obstinacy and imperfectness of a person or a society with the help of poignant irony or humour. Mostly, humour in Pathak’s stories is inspired
by philosophy. *The Secret of Success in Government Job* is a perfect blend of sharp iron and humour.

The subject matter of his stories ranges from historical, political, social to cultural aspects and from folklore, detective story, psychological story to dream story and from tragic, humor, love, wonder to all other poetic sentiments. Thus, variety of subjects and experimentation are significant characteristics of his stories.

The world of Pathak’s characters is large, full of variety and larger-than-life. He has culled characters from different strata of the society. We find rural and urban life and places like court and jail. People from a wide spectrum of caste are depicted in the stories from Brahmin to Parsi. Kapilray, Mukundray, Khemi, Kodar, Surdas, Raghnath Bhatt, Vinayak, Kanku, Kanaiya, Aruna and Trivikram are some of the fine examples. It also includes the characters influenced by Gandhiji’s thoughts.

The characters of the stories seem to be living in the questions raised due to marriage, lust, hypocrisy, ego, obstinacy, improper ambition. A great number of characters like Mukundray, Kapilram, Kapilray, Khemi, Kodar, Jamna, Jivi, Zamkukaki, Raghunath, Buddhivijay, Jivaram are depicted in a unique manner. In fact, he gets into the very skin of his characters and delineates their qualities.

The beginnings of Pathak’s stories are simple, short and logical. But it seems that he is not much careful about the ends of the stories. We find loose ends in most of the stories except a few. Sometimes, the central idea of the story is the complexity of character’s mind, envy, love, malice, reproach etc.. He makes the ends loose in order to manifest these instincts. The ends of *Surdas, The most fortunate wife, Kodar, The Secret of Success in Government Job, First prize, New birth, Keshavram, Two brothers* have become unnecessarily lengthy. No doubt, Pathak has done innovative experiments in the field of short story. *Dwiref ni Vaato* are not so heart touching as *Tankha* by Joshi. The pathos observed in Joshi’s stories is not seen in Pathak’s stories. Moreover, some stories appear to be mere conversation or prosaic. Too much of detachment makes his stories cold and logical. Even some of Pathak’s characters seem to be lifeless and emotionless.
Some stories make us feel that he is a mere critic and a historian than a short story writer.

Thus, Pathak is considered a pioneer in depicting reality and psychological aspect, articulation of sensuous desire and dealing with the theme of man-woman relationship in Gujarati short story. He has made innovative experiments in the field of short story. He employs various methods of depiction. He takes out Gujarati short story from Joshi’s varied shades of sentiments and indeed turns it to a new direction and thus gives remarkable and unforgettable stories. It can therefore be stated that the reality, simplicity, psychoanalytical outlook, inclination towards experiment seen in the writings of succeeding short story writers is to a great extent indebted to Pathak.

2.2. A Critical Appreciation of Pathak’s Short Stories:

It shall be worthwhile to discuss the thematic concerns, art of characterization, plot-structure, style and technique that Pathak has employed specifically in the stories that have been selected for translation from the three collections entitled Dwiref ni Vato. Each short story deserves a special critical appreciation as each one has distinctive features in it.

2.2.1. Flood of Jamuna:

The short stories from the first part of his collection Dwiref ni Vato seems to be experimental in nature. The story Flood of Jamuna was penned in 1922 and it was published in 1980. This story has attracted attention of four to five generations of critics beginning with Rasiklal Parikh and Kaka Kalelkar.

The present story is not a story; it is a lyric. The form is of a short story but the description runs like a poem. The story runs at two levels – literal and metaphorical. At a literal level, we find that a woman comes on the shore of the river Jamuna to float her lamp. It was her desire to see her lamp go the farthest and burn for the longest duration. As her lamp floats on water, she tries to find the vantage point to be able to see her lamp and meets her death.

At a metaphorical level, the story shows the ill effect of ego leading to death of the main character in the story. The river Jamuna saves Lord Krishna, tortoises, fish and the lamps of faith. It even drowns many evils in her flow simply because they do not have ego, whereas the woman, in the story, is an egoist. Her
ego is clearly visible when she thinks that “My lamp will go farthest and astonish all!” (19) But her very desire does not get fulfilled due to her ego.

Our ego leads us towards destruction and the same thing happens with the woman in the story. This aspect is very artistically and symbolically narrated by Ramnarayan Pathak.

The second interpretation is – the flood means the flood of world and the lamp stands for the good deeds of human beings. Their good deeds always speak for them. Though a human being dies, his good deeds always survive. This story presents an interpretation similar to Rabindranath Tagore’s poem ‘Sonar Tari’. Thus, Flood of Jamuna is undoubtedly one of the finest stories.

2.2.2. A True Story:

A True Story or An insight into the dark corner of the Hindu society is written in a conversation form. The story is told from the viewpoint of the officers of the place where Pathak used to practice Law i.e. in Ahmedabad and Sadra so that sentimentalism cannot creep into the story. The inspector from Department of Explosive powder Mr. Pestanji, police inspector Mr. Sendha, lustful Mr. Bhinde and the storyteller Mr. Keshavlal, an education inspector, get together in a compartment in a train. The story is told in order to idle away tedious journey time. Before the story begins, Mr. Bhinde suggests that a woman should figure in the story. In the story, Mr. Keshavlal, who has been appointed as an assessor, presents a complete report of the murder case like a commentary. The atmosphere of the court emerges with complete reality. All inspectors discuss about a police investigation in a train compartment. The passenger inspectors comment on the points of the case. In this way, the story continues. The character sketch of each officer is drawn in the course of conversation. Though it is incidental, it makes the story fascinating as well. Mr. Keshavlal ends the story, and the whole story seems to be so much improbable that each one of them believes it to be untrue. In the meanwhile, a woman, sitting at the far end of the same compartment covering her face, speaks it is right. The woman is Hari. She is returning from Andaman. The last scene of the story is very strange. The story also reveals the theme of woman trafficking and the crimes related to it. Thus, the story throws light on the dark
side of the society. Pathak brings a kind of theme which seems to be apparently improbable but in reality it is probable.

2.2.3. The Secret of Success in Government Job:

The next story in chronological order is *The Secret of Success in Government Job*. It is a fine instance of Pathak’s art of dialogue writing. The protagonist narrates his tragic tale in a dramatic monologue like a farcical Sanskrit drama *Bhaan*. He presents the same type of humour that we see in *Don Quixote* and *Bhadram Bhadram*. The great source of humour for the readers of the story is the exaggerated depiction of a woman who literally and stupidly tries to follow the old medieval rituals of Sati life at the present time. In this way, the rituals prevalent in the present society are mocked at and it is suggested that they should be removed from the society. But the speciality of the story is that she makes her husband, a government servant, feel sad. Thus, this is a character centred story that offers a fine combination of comic and tragic experience. The hero of the story spends a great amount of time in the government office instead of his home. The reason is not that he is very sincere but he is in a difficult situation as the woman he has married is bound by the traditional rituals of Sati life and he wants to save himself from her torture. This type of depiction makes the story not only psychological but also humorous. The hero of the story presents his mental state gradually. The speciality of the story is that though the story is told in a light mood, it is tinged with a tragic element. This story is a fine example of Pathak’s successful experiment of the portrayal of tragic and humorous elements, depiction of good character sketch and psychological aspect and the use of dramatic monologue in the story.

2.2.4. Jakshani:

*Jakshani* is a characteristic story of Pathak. The story has its highest place in the humorous stories of Gujarati Literature. Rasiklal Parikh considers this story to be a beautiful picture of a happy married life, whereas Gaganvihari Mehta finds it to be a mockery of child marriage and superstition (Pathak and Shukla 165). The whole story is divided into three parts. The first part is narrated by the wife; the second part by the husband and the third part by the wife. It seems as if the three different scenes of a play are enacted. The story is presented in narrative style. In
the first part, at the outset, we find the intelligent and literary dialogues between the educated and civilized husband-wife that show their happy married life. Later, the wife informs her husband that they are to go to a friend’s house for the treatment of his friend’s wife. She would stay with her during the treatment as it is a woman’s hospital.

In the second part of the story, the lonely husband in the absence of his wife tolerates the situation while making fun of his condition. He has no other way out than to tolerate it. He tries to convey everything about his helpless state by creating a light atmosphere. He does accept that he does not like the absence of his wife. To put in his words,

“A separation from a wife for a short duration is not a great deal, but it numbs the heart and it nearly stops functioning. It feels the thorns being pushed into it and when we can’t walk properly, people start laughing at us” (51).

The husband goes to hotel for food where he also makes arrangement of food for his pet bitch. He convinces the Brahmin cook that there is Goddess in his house and she fulfils the desires of everyone. The Brahmin cook wants to make his short wife tall very quickly so he sends food to the storyteller’s place unaware of the fact that he is actually sending food for the bitch. But the storyteller does not want food free of cost so he pays for food by informing him that the Goddess does not take meal free of cost.

In the third part, the wife returns and cleans the house. She becomes totally untidy and her head and clothes get strewn with dust. She has kept the end of her sari around her neck. Meanwhile, somebody knocks at the door. When she opens the door, she finds the Brahmin cook who has come for the blessing of Goddess Jakshani! The Brahmin cook asks for the blessing for his wife. But the heroine of the story attempts to convince the cook that she is not a Goddess. Her untied hair gives the impression to the cook that she is no other than the Goddess. The cook keeps praying for blessing his wife. At the very moment, her husband enters into the house and gestures the cook to leave. He welcomes his wife by addressing her as “Chandi, be happy!” (56)
This dramatic episode provokes a roar of laughter and entertains the readers thoroughly. The best part of the third section of the story is its dramatic end. The miracle of the last utterance “Chandi, be happy!” is so natural that it leads to great pleasure.

2.2.5. Mukundray:

*Mukundray* is considered to be one of the classic tragic stories in the entire Gujarati literature. It is Pathak’s memorable story. It is a struggle between the old and the new generation. The generation gap is a major theme of the story. There is a difference between the outlook of the traditional Raghnath Bhatt and the modern Mukund. Generally, when two generations are not ready to understand each other’s outlook, it leads to conflict. However, the conflict in this story is not due to misunderstanding in outlook. The conflict is wholly one sided. This makes the story more tragic.

The story that opens with the realistic depiction of the ancient temple, banyan tree and cattle at the outskirts of Ravaiya village begins with a telegram to Raghnath Bhatt, which is, generally considered, inauspicious in a village. The telegram announces the arrival of Mukundray. Mukund returns home with his college friends. The generous hospitality, loving and parental behaviour of the old father and widow sister towards Mukund is responded with coldness by Mukund. He behaves very rudely with his old father and sister. Pathak has very artistically drawn how the college education of city alienated Mukund from his native, home and family and made him pretend false richness. Finally, when he goes to bid farewell to his friends, he also leaves with his friends. The father comes to know from this incident that “He is no longer ours. He is lost”(69). And at the same time, the tonga man replies in confirmation that “Mukund has gone with his friends” (69). This incident shocks Raghnath, makes him unhappy and dumb. Finally, he sorrowfully expresses his rage in these words, “it is better to have no son than to have such a son” (70).

Some other storyteller might have ended the story here. Even Pathak also could have ended the story here. But in order to make the story even more tragic, Pathak has formed the second part of the story. The sub story within the story in the last part of the story intensifies the agony. The pent-up agony of Raghnath
caused him to tell the story of the temples of Kumbharia built by the king Vimalsha. Once Vimalsha, a devotee of goddess Ambaji, was going to her temple, he came across a big well with the steps on his way. He went in to drink to satisfy his thirst. A man belonging to Vanzara community was sitting on the steps. He asked for some money for water. He went to goddess Ambaji. The goddess appeared to him and told him to ask whatever he wanted. Vimalsha wished for the boon that he must not have any descendant. The old father finishes the story and is lost in silence. The way the old father becomes silent with the last sentence of the story of Vimalsha, Ganga, her widow daughter, too becomes silent. The last lines of the story - “a deadly silence pervades the entire house” - greatly shocks the readers and grieves them deeply (70). It has a lasting effect in the minds of the readers. Pathak showed to Gujarat that the story could be the most tragic even without the death of a character which was hitherto unknown to the readers of Joshi.

2.2.6. Kapilray:

*Kapilray* is a unique story of Pathak among his other stories. A man of very common writing skill suffering from megalomania cherishes great ambitions and eventually becomes unconscious and goes mad. This depiction is done in a very light tone in the story. The storyteller starts the story with the description of an asylum. The employment of flashback technique in the story makes the opening scene extraordinary. The story seems to be a tragedy of noms de plume. It is actually a story of mental analysis of a mad person. It is a story of a Gujarati youth who is highly ambitious of achieving fame in the field of literature. The humour in the story is based on the exaggerated depiction of whim or weakness of Kapilray.

Kapilray is a youth desirous of a position of a poet. But he is not having the least poetic sensibility. He believes that a poet must have a nom de plume. He employs a new pen-name for every new literary creation to the extent that he uses different pen-names even in the application to transfer the ownership of the father’s farms to his name. Moreover, he never repeats the pen-name that is used once. It is his firm belief that if one knows how to make a matching rhyme scheme, one can compose a poem. It is his belief that government does not allow literature to flourish. So he decides to teach a lesson to the government with the
help of literature. It is his firm belief that like Tagore’s poetry, his poetry also
deserves Nobel Prize. He has assumed all possible pen-names for the literary
creations that he would compose in future.

Thus, though the story is full of laughter, it is tinged with sadness. The
writer has done subtle analysis of the reasons behind megalomania of the mad
person. The analysis of the mad person’s mind attracts special attention of readers
in the story.

2.2.7. Khemi:

Khemi is one of the best stories of Pathak’s first volume of the short stories
-Dwiref ni Vato. Here, Gandhian influence in the portrayal of Dalit characters,
particularly during the Non-cooperation movement can clearly be traced out.
Under this impression, Khemi’s character has been culled in the same fashion.
There is no doubt that Khemi is considered to be one of the best heroines in
Gujarati literature. Pathak has expressed a fine confluence of reality and sentiment
of humanity and love inspired by Gandhian outlook. Here we find caste
discrimination and untouchability; social rituals, traditions and superstitions; and a
new approach to exhibit courage to fight social evils like addiction to alcohol,
exploitation and bribery. Though the art of Pathak in this story sounds purposeful;
it is balanced enough and does not sound propagatory.

Khemi is a story of love. For many readers, its attraction is because it is a
beautiful depiction of the life of a Bhangi, a person from Dalit community. This is
the outcome of modern outlook. The opening of the story is very attractive.
Dhaniyo and Khemi are sitting at the steps of the toilet. Khemi is helping Dhaniya
to light bidi. Any painter would love to draw this scene. The relation or opposition
of life and art is very typical. But this image is worth watching:

“Let me help you.” said Khemi spreading the end of her sari with which
she would cover her face. She went near Dhaniya and provided protection against
the wind. Dhaniya could light his matchstick this time. The glow at the end of the
bidi started glinting as he breathed in and out. Dhaniya stared at her wife’s face -
young, chubby, dark-complexioned, but bright, with sparkling eyes and wearing a
nose ring. He forgot his bidi and was engrossed in the beauty of his newly married
wife. Khemi was about to return to her earlier place after the bidi was lit when Dhaniya told her:

I would die if you budge from this place.
Don’t be crazy; you are really mad. said Khemi and returned to her place.
I swear by you, Khemi, you are very much dear to me. (114).

The description of the intimate conversation between Dhaniya and Khemi, sitting at the steps of the toilet waiting for a square meal at Baniya’s caste dinner party, is quite realistic. Khemi could not endure Dhaniya’s insult by Baniya, an organizer of caste dinner party. This incident made Dhaniya feel dejected. She gave eight annas to Dhaniya for alcohol in spite of her being against it. But Dhaniya becomes a drunkard and starts beating Khemi. Khemi leaves Dhaniya and goes to Nadiad. Eventually her mother-in-law comes to Nadiad and takes Khemi back home. Dhaniya and Khemi had taken vows. But Dhaniya had resumed drinking because he was constantly worried about how to raise the wherewithal to fulfil the vows and to pay other debts. Dhaniya died before he could fulfil the vows. As a result, the onus was on Khemi to realize the pledges made by both of them. And she succeeded in doing so after seven years. Now she was free to marry but she was not willing to do so. Her reply to all the proposals was: “I don’t want to remarry now” (123). This strong determination of Khemi is a true characteristic of Aryan civilization. Though the end of the story is tragic, it is balanced. That even the people from the lower strata of the society can have the virtues of nobility, generosity, civility like Khemi is well portrayed by Pathak.

The second volume of the short stories Dwiref ni Vato was published after seven years. The short stories in the second volume are markedly different from the first part in outlook, attitude and structure as well. The writer is also well aware of the change. In the preface to the second part, he writes,

.......there are some places in the world where evils reside and people are helpless against the evils and the writer cannot abhor towards even the person who is trapped by the evils (127).
This changed outlook of Pathak becomes apparent in the short stories of the second part.

2.2.8. A Change of Heart:

The first story of the second collection is *A Change of Heart*. The story is set against the backdrop of the Non-cooperation movement of 1930 led by Gandhiji. A Christian couple from Mumbai comes to live in a village where they have purchased land. The land basically belonging to the farmer has been seized from him during the Satyagraha movement. The people of the whole village turn against this Christian couple. When Fonseka’s wife Jenny becomes pregnant, both are worried about her delivery. At this critical moment, the villagers help the couple to have an easy delivery. This incident greatly affects them and changes Fonseka’s heart.

This sympathetic treatment of villagers leads Fonseka to leave the place and return the land. Such a ‘change of heart’ becomes a fine example of triumph of feeling of love and virtue of non-violence. The hidden goodness in human beings is expressed when they are treated with kindness. This is the secret of the story. This secret has been well stated by the writer himself towards the end of the story:

> They have given their land to the people and a trust has been set up that has helped Abdul to run a `Delivery Home’. He is joined by a doctor, a specialist in delivery. They also provide Childbirth education and the women of the sub-district benefit from that. (139).

2.2.9. The Last Dandakya Bhoj:

The second story of the collection is *The Last Dandakya Bhoj*. The story, set in ancient background, addresses some questions related to man woman relationship. The story presents a fine chemistry of violent sexual impulse and sexually perverted behaviour of Dandakya Bhoj. Dhandakya Bhoj desires to have sexual pleasure with women but he does not want a son. In the last ten generations, a son has killed his father and has ascended to the throne. Consequently, Bhoj wishes to have sexual gratification without making any queen pregnant. On the contrary, his sexual passion gets stronger day by day but his
sexual energy becomes weaker. He tries to regain his sexual powers with the help of different medicines.

Towards the end of the story, the Kalpis get settled with their cattle in the Dandak as they have been facing severe famine in the south. The king sees a beautiful Kalpi girl of sixteen on a tamarind tree. The king molests the teenage Kalpi girl in his fantasy. The king becomes the victim of the wrath of the Kalpis and meets his doom. Thus, to gratify one’s sexual desires without caring for others’ feelings lead to destruction. This is the central idea of the story. In the preface to the second volume of the short stories, the writer has said that “the result of the use of artificial methods of contraception” is the central idea of the story. This aspect is seen from the point of view of women’s unwillingness for sex. The perverted mind leads to disastrous results in life. The attitude of the writer in this story is to depict the innermost secrets of mind instead of the questions related to material world.

2.2.10. Two Meetings:

Two meetings is again set against the backdrop of the Non-cooperation movement. The story describes Vinayak’s life in prison and his meetings with his mother and wife after his participation in the Non-cooperation movement. Vinayak, a graduate from Mumbai University, joins the freedom movement led by Gandhiji after his college education. He agrees to marry Diwali only to fulfil his mothers’ wish, albeit unwillingly. In the beginning, he almost behaves strangely with his illiterate wife and hardly talks to her. But when he comes to know that his wife has become an active volunteer in the freedom movement, his behaviour towards his wife changes completely. He gets attracted towards Diwali’s courage, pride and love for country. On seeing Diwali as a developed personality, he becomes extremely happy and starts loving her. Thus, the story depicts the real atmosphere of the time of visit of the prisoners in jail. It also shows clear and realistic picture of a mother’s emotions during the Non-cooperation movement.

2.2.11. Surdas:

The next striking story of this collection that captures the reader’s attention is Surdas. It is a delineation of the complexity of the human mind and the feeling of suspicion leading to destruction in life. Rampyari and a foreigner sarangi player
come into contact with Surdas. Suradas, the foreigner and Rampyari sing and play musical instruments and make their living. The envious Suradas is not able to make out that there is no place of marital relation in Rampyari’s life. Had Surdas not been blind, he could have understood the matter, with just one glance at the foreigner, that there was no point in believing that Rampyari loved the foreigner. Surdas is not able to judge the real situation due to his extreme envy, suspicion and blindness. Even in Rampyari’s death song he finds that they are preparing to run away. Consequently, Surdas murders Rampyari with a stick in a rage. When Surdas comes into contact with Rampyari and the foreigner, the reader feels that Surdas would be happy now and can lead his life peacefully. On the contrary, his extreme envy makes his life even more painful.

Pathak has done the characterization of Rampyari and the foreigner sarangi player well and briefly. The reasons given by the writer in order to arouse Surdas’ envy are natural and rational. Surdas hits Rampyari with a stick on her head and she meets her death. This incident seems to be designed as the end of the story. Thus, Pathak points out the complexity of life in this story.

2.2.12. Kodar:

The best story of this collection Kodar beautifully personifies the changed outlook of Pathak. An advocate Parmananddas, his son Shantilal, Shantilal’s wife Malti and a servant Kodar, who is almost like a family member, are characters in this story. The story develops around the character of Kodar. He is the main character of the story. The character of Kodar belongs to the lower stratum of the society like Khemi. But he is noble and sincere. After the death of the advocate Parmananddas, Kodar takes care of Shantilal like a mother. Kodar’s excessive care for Shantilal and his rigid attitude to do all works of his master himself often disappoint the newly wedded and enthusiastic wife who wishes to do everything for her husband. Shantilal understands the feeling and unhappiness of his wife. He has also realized that Kodar will not change his extremely rigid attitude. On the other side, Malti cannot understand Kodar’s mind as she is unfamiliar with him. But Kodar does not think anything about this situation as he finds his behaviour very much natural. In this way, though all the three characters of the story are innocent in their own way, a tragedy occurs in this family.
The writer has done a psychological analysis of all the three characters keeping in mind the small occasions that arise in a happy middle class family. Kodar and Malti have deep affection for Shantilal but none of them understand his inner confusion. The tragedy of the story is that though the three characters are good, their lack of empathy makes them unhappy. Eventually the situation worsens to the extent that Kodar has to leave home.

Pathak could have ended the story with the death of Kodar. But Pathak’s changed attitude inspires him to bring a happy ending to the story rather than a tragic one. Kodar’s death brings the couple closer instead of causing dispute between them. Malti understands Kodar now and repents. Both take care of Kodar a lot when he is on his deathbed but they cannot save him. After one and half years later of Kodar’s death, Malti gives birth to a baby boy. At this moment, she is inspired to name her child beginning with ‘K’. This is a clear indication of her repentance. This moment is a transformation of tragedy into happiness.

A fortuitous occurrence about the publication of Dwiref ni Vato is noteworthy. Each part was published exactly after seven years. The third volume of Dwiref ni Vato was also published exactly seven years after the second volume. Pathak’s art of short story has reached its culmination in the third and the last part of the collection Dwiref ni Vato. He seems to be very wise, calm and sympathetic in observing and judging things around him.

2.2.13. Kanku and Kanaiya:

The story Kanku and Kanaiya is written in continuation of the story Renkadi ma. At the end of the first story, Kanku and Kanaiya get married. The writer has depicted the life of the couple after their marriage in Kanku and Kanaiya. The story gives a beautiful picture of the charm of first love and pleasant married life of Kanku and Kanaiya. The story also presents enmity and conspiracy between Narottam Sheth and his neighbour Keshavlal against the simplicity and honesty of the two village characters. They get a good amount as a reward for honesty. Instead of spending the amount on useless things, they use it in digging a well in Kanaiya’s native place. The description of this event manifests civility and nobility of the people of the lower strata of the society.
Pathak has drawn a very beautiful word picture of a happy married life of the hero and the heroine at the end of the story:

One hot day while breast-feeding the infant, Kanku fell asleep under the shade of a roadside tree on the cart, tired after the hard work of the day. Kanaiya lay down on the land using a piece of cloth as a pillow. When he awoke from his slumber, he saw that the sunshine was approaching Kanku’s face. He moved the cart a bit and the shade covered her face. Some American tourists on a tour to India saw this sight and one of them made a note of something in the diary! (275)

The illustration of the happy couple sleeping under the shade of a roadside tree on the cart is very striking. Pathak’s art of depiction is clearly displayed in this word picture.

2.2.14. Most Fortunate Wife!:

The story Most Fortunate Wife! is a description of obsessive sexual desire of a man that makes the married life of a woman miserable and intolerable. The story touches the tragedy of a married life from a different perspective. The woman finds the tactile touch of a man disgusting after reaching at a certain age. At this age also the man remains engaged in sexual pleasure like a newly married man. He considers woman’s body to be an instrument for sexual gratification. Pathak has observed the tragedy of this situation and depicts this aspect from a woman’s point of view. The writer suggests that there is no difference in sexual instincts of a man whether he belongs to a higher social stratum or lower social stratum. But in such a situation, the woman from higher social stratum has to suffer a lot.

Pathak has delineated the life story of two couples in the story - Mallika and her husband Vinodray and Jivi and her husband Patel. Though Mallika is mature and aged, she has maintained her beautiful figure. She is unhappy due to her husband’s excessive sexual desire in addition to being a childless mother. On the other side, Jivi has several children but Patel’s sexual instinct is as strong as a young man. Consequently, she lives alone away from her husband’s torture. The agony of Mallika’s married life is such that she can neither share nor endure it.
From the point of view of husbands’ love, the married life of both women seems happy. But the very love has become the reason for unhappiness. Both the wives find this lasciviousness unbearable at an advanced age. But Mallika is unhappier compared to Jivi. Jivi can live alone leaving her husband but Mallika cannot do so. She has to suffer this bestial behaviour of her husband till the end of her life. When Vinodray’s transfer takes place, Mallika goes to bid farewell to her friend. The thoughts of her friend are true for all: “How helpless we human beings are! There was no one who could help her out” (294). The writer has shown the cruel irony of life in the last part of the story. After Vinodray’s transfer, Mallika cuts her life short within a year. Some of the common friends come to Mallika’s friend’s place after the funeral rites of Mallika. Most of them said:

What a fair lady she was! How delicate! So fortunate! The moment we see her we think of the most fortunate woman.

How can the most fortunate wife die? I was lost thinking about the words: The most fortunate wife!!(295)

The word ‘fortunate’ is used ironically for the central character of the story Mallika in the last paragraph of the story. It ironically represents that the central character of the story Mallika is very unfortunate in reality.

2.2.15. Two Brothers:

Two Brothers is a story of disastrous result of envy leading to destruction. Jivaram and Rajaram are brothers. Jivaram is envious of his brother. He is never concerned about his brother’s welfare. The selfish and jealous Jivaram cannot tolerate when his younger brother is paid handsome salary and leads a happy life in city. He even creates problems for Rajaram. Rajaram sends his son Mohan to Jivaram’s place. On the way to Jivaram’s place from the station, Mohan falls into the marsh. He meets his death instantly. Jivaram’s son Jayanti, who has gone to the station to bring him, only knows the fact about the entire incident. But he can not disclose this incident to anyone. The clever Jivaram comes to know the crux of the matter and talks as if Rajaram himself is responsible for the whole incident. Finally, Jivaram’s son Jayant dies after suffering mental agony. Consequently Jivaram and his wife also pass away. The slight twinge of envy leads Jivaram and his wife to meet their doom.
The story has some limitations too. The last paragraph of the story seems to be unnecessary. One can hardly prove its justification from an artistic point of view. Secondly, the writer has not shown why Jayanti has lagged behind Mohan when Jayanti goes to bring Mohan. It rather seems that the writer has set the end of the story from the beginning. This story, especially, gives an impression of a mismatch between the incidents and the characters.

2.2.16. The Aim of Jagjivan:

In *The Aim of Jagjivan*, Jagjivan is shown under the influence of physical attraction. Jagjivan is a staunch follower of Gandhiji and his principle of celibacy. Vanravandas’ daughter Saraswati is sent for some change of climate to Jagjivan’s place recommended by Gandhiji. Jagjivan remains fully alert. He never meets Saraswati alone. The way it is shown in the story that Jagjivan remains vigilant suggests that his mind is occupied with sexual passions and it may lead him to indulge in physical relationship with Saraswati anytime. When he feels that he can refrain himself from passions, Saraswati becomes pregnant as a result of her relation with Ratilal Zaveri. Now the only way out left in such a difficult situation is that Jagjivan and Saraswati should marry. Gandhiji also advised the same. In a conversation with Gandhiji, it becomes clear that Jagjivan’s mind is victimized by sexual attraction. Finally, Gandhiji gives permission to Saraswati to marry Jagjivan. He also draws Saraswati’s attention to the fact that Jagjivan did not get ready to marry Saraswati when she was really in a tight corner. After listening to this, Saraswati drops the idea of marrying Jagjivan instantly and decides to stay with Gandhiji in the ashram.

The central idea of the story is not about the moral relationship between man and woman but about the hasty decision of observing celibacy. It is true that every human being is possessed with sexual passion and its suppression is almost impossible. Generally, when such ideals are imposed on a person from outside, a person meets one’s doom at any time. Secondly, when a person has lofty aims, he is proud of it and starts feeling superior. Such ego leads a person to destruction. Thus, Pathak openly ridicules Jagjivan’s blind adherence in the story.
2.2.17. Loss of Uttar Marg:

Ramnarayan Pathak was awarded Motisinhji Mahida gold medal in 1943 for the short story *Loss of Uttar Marg* (1940). The story, *Loss of Uttar Marg*, set in medieval atmosphere, also talks about man woman relationship. The story is an achievement of Pathak in describing bizarre rituals; a religious sect Uttar Marg and the atmosphere of distant past created out of it like *The Last Dandakya Bhoj*. The theme of the story is celibacy, its hurdles and mutual love relationship between man and woman.

The story speaks about the development of love between man and woman in an unnatural atmosphere. The main characters of the story Harkant and Chandralekha have been chosen for the attainment of moksha observing the horoscope and chiromancy. They observe celibacy for seven years. Consequently, the sadhika Chandralekha will become an image of Jwalamukhi Devi and the sadhak will become the ninth accomplished man. They are suggested to observe celibacy. There is a difference between what is said to a person to do and what one does spontaneously. In the beginning, both remain firm in observing celibacy. But as they approach accomplishment, they deviate from the path of Uttar Marg. When they are going to perform the last ritual at the rock of Jwalamukhi, the steamer is caught in a storm. At this moment, Harkant realises that death is approaching consequently he frees himself from social beliefs, religious rituals and embraces Chandralekha with love. Harkant kisses her several times with intensity stronger than that of the storm raging before them as if they were a husband and wife even in their previous lives. They accept mutual love instead of religious achievement. According to the religious rule book, the fallen sadhak will have to go out of the village and the sadhika has to live in the village away from the sadhak for lifetime. Since they cannot live together, they decide to die together by chewing some poisonous leaves. The end of the story may sound to be tragic but actually it has a happy ending.

2.2.18. Transmigration:

In *Transmigration*, Pathak has introduced a completely new setting. The story is an entertaining experiment of animal behaviour. Ordinarily, a dog, a cat or other animals become a part of human life in such stories. On the contrary, the
hero in this story becomes a dog and lives like a dog in a dream. Pathak has presented his minute observation about a dog’s behaviour in this story. The daily routine, nature, passions of a dog is described like a story. Pathak has delineated a dog’s sense of possessiveness, faithfulness and sexual life with reference to the dogs of Bhat colony and Pandya colony. Several questions are raised in the mind of the hero of the story: The dogs often keep barking at one another with a particular sound all night. They are not fighting with anyone. A lonely dog keeps barking in a droning sound with its neck stretched upward. It will move around three four times before it settles himself. It urinates at its boundary or near a wall or a pole raising one leg. The hero of the story wonders why they behave in this manner. It is natural for the hero of the story to feel curiosity; we too sometimes feel the same type of curiosity. This curiosity has made Pathak write such an imaginative and interesting story.

2.2.19. Memorial Pillars of a Crow:

*Memorial Pillars of a Crow* is a story of man’s greed for fame and the cruel and indifferent course of Nature. Shadanan Purohit, the favourite priest of the king, writes a eulogy for the king. He selects a place for the memorial pillar which is right in front of the house of his enemy Madhusudan Purohit, a priest. But in the course of time, when the other king comes, he destroys everything set up by the previous king. He discontinues the service of Shadanan and appoints Madhusudan Purohit as a priest. In addition to it, the new king permits Madhusudan to install a stone inscription criticising Shadanan along with the previous king in front of the first memorial. But the story does not end here.

After many years, one morning a foreigner enters the kingdom with the enemy army plundering the villages and farms and creating fear among all throughout the way. He shoots a crow, orders to arrange a beam upon the two pillars and hangs the dead crow in the middle of the beam. This place is titled as *The Pillars of the Crow* after this incident. The memorial pillars and its history have been forgotten and the evidences have become the subject of research for archaeologists. One finds the same interest as one is reading a folklore. The irony at the end of the story makes the meaning of the story even more prominent.
Pathak ridicules our research and archaeology knowingly or unknowingly in the last part of the story.

2.2.20. Aruna and Trivikram:

The relations between man and woman are fragile. A slight misunderstanding or a surge of emotion can make life miserable. *Aruna and Trivikram* is such a story of misunderstanding. Both love each other. Society has also accepted the love between them. Seemingly, there isn’t any obstacle that can make their future married life difficult. Despite, something unexpected takes place in their relationship. Both the lovers have decided to spend six months before the marriage separate from each other with mutual understanding. Such separation makes love intense and meeting after the separation would become more enjoyable. But no such thing takes place here. Pathak has stated the reason in the story itself:

> It often happens that our genuine feelings hinder our understanding and keep hurting us. Our feelings at times flow without intellect and that too in the opposite direction (402).

Aruna grows more and more impatient as the marriage day approaches. In her letters, she starts doubting Trivikram’s love out of impatience. Finally, both decide to part from each other. But when they meet face to face, all their misunderstandings are clarified and finally the story ends happily with the confirmation of their marriage.

Thus, the stories from the three parts of *Dwirer ni Vato* encompasses a wide range of themes like man woman relationship, happy married life, complexity of marriage life, Non co-operation movement, simplicity and complexity of Dalit community, envy, psychological description of human nature, greed for fame, generation gap, obstinacy for following old customs and portrayal of sexual relationship. The description of the speciality of human nature shows Pathak’s depth of understanding about human psyche. Variety of themes and innovative experimentations are significant characteristics of Pathak’s stories. Thus, the short stories of Pathak are a true portrayal of mystery of life with the help of least number of characters, events and words.
Works Cited

