CHAPTER – II

HINDI NOVEL BEFORE PREMCHAND

Traces of the Hindi novel can be found since 1800 to the present where it is a very dynamic, experimental and living. Premchand is the first significant novelist who provides Hindi novel an identity and direction. A specific change in characteristics is observed with his advent on the Hindi novel scenario. Thus the age from 1800 with the publication of Inshaallah Khan’s *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* and to the arrival of Premchand with his *Sevasadan* (1918) can be categorized as the age of the Hindi novel before Premchand. As the Hindi novel centres around Premchand, the pre-independence Hindi novel can be further categorised as the age of Premchand (1918-1936) and Post-Premchand Hindi novel (1936-1947).

I

The first fictional prose work in the modern age, Inshaallah Khan’s *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* is a brief work primarily depicting the triumph of the love of Rani Ketki and prince Udebhan against parental opposition. Shyamsunderdas presumes that this work was written by Inshaallah Khan around 1800 A.D. In the introduction he further states that presumably this story was written between samvant 1856 and 1865. The writer is conscious of his setting a new precedent of Hindi prose, or is rather laying the very foundation of Hindi prose.

Prince Udebhan and princess Ketki fall in love with each other and wish to be married. The parents of Udebhan agree but the parents of Rani Ketki
consider the status of the dynasty of Udebhan inferior and not fit for their
daughter. Raja Surajbhan wages a war on the kingdom of Rani Ketki’s father
that is on the kingdom of Raja Jagatprakash. Raja Jagatprakash sends a
message of distress to his guru Gosain Mahender Gir, who resides on the
Kailash Parvat along with his devotees. Coming to his rescue the guru wrecks
havoc on the army of Raja Surajbhan through a strong dust storm, hailstorm
and locusts. He even curses the family and transforms them into deers. But
Rani Ketki could not forget prince Udebhan and one day disappears from the
palace by applying the magical ashes given by the guru. The disappearance of
Rani Ketki brings a change of heart in her parents who ultimately reconcile to
the wishes of their daughter. With the help of Raja Inder, Guru Mahender Gir
transforms Udebhan and his parents to their original form and festivities of the
marriage take place on a grand scale.

The language of the author is quite simple, lacking suspense in narrative.
Thus, it is dry and resembling the essay. The only place where the writer has to
some extent been able to raise some curiosity of the readers is when Gosain
Mahender Gir is not in the position to trace Udebhan and his parents whom he
had turned into deers. The failure of tracing Udebhan and his parents could lead
to serious consequences to the extent of the marriage of Rani Ketki being
stalled.

The work is simple prose, quite un-novel like and lacks a specific plot.
The delineation resembles the narrative prose. The characters too are flat and
undeveloped. Besides for the change of heart of the parents of Rani Ketki for
Prince Udebhan no specific change is found in them nor do we find them to
grow from the beginning to the end of the work.

The two restrictions that the writer imposed upon himself in his works
are the non-usage of foreign words and the syntax similar to what we call
Urduness.

Regarding the contemporary language scenario, Shyamsunderdas in the
‘Bhoomika’ of *Rani Ketki ki Kahani* comments:

> Hamare pradesh men aadhunik bhasaen men poorva men avadhi,
> madhyadsh men brajbhasa aur paschim men khadi boli ka prachar raha.
> (*Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* 5)

Awadhi in the east, Brajbhasa in the central region and khadi boli in the West
are the modern languages current in our province.

Earlier Awadhi and Brajbhasa were employed for literary works while
khadi boli was generally employed in the day to day conversations. Gradually
khadi boli became popular for literary works and the usage of Awadhi and
Brajbhasa declined. Shyamsunderdas credits Insallah Khan for popularizing
khadi boli by creating *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* through the same medium. Thus,
the credit of providing a literary form to modern Hindi prose, that is the
beginning of the use of khadi boli, goes to Saiyyad Inshaallah Khan along with
Lallulal’s *Premsagar* (1802) and Sadal Mishra’s *Nasiketopakhyan* (1803).

The language of *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* is distinct in the sense that one
frequently comes across rhyming words such as “aatiyan jaatiyan”, and
“gharwaliyan batlatiyan” among others. This distinctness is assumed to be
because of the influence of Punjabi language in which such applications are
observed. The language in the beginning of the nineteenth century was in an
underdeveloped stage. Selecting *khadi boli* as his medium of expression at a time when language is passing through a transitional phase is a giant leap for Hindi prose. This is a story entirely in Hindi and does not contain any resemblance to any other dialect other than *Khari Boli*. Thus, throwing light on the terms such as Hindi, *Hindvi bhasa*, *bahari boli* and *ganvari*, Bachhan Singh remarks:


(Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas 60)

Bahari Boli means Yamani Bhasa, which is Hindustani containing Arabic. By bhasa he means Sanskritised scholarly Hindi, which is not the language of the cultured is Ganvari. Thus Insahallah Khan has written *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* in a language of the cultured, which is the language uninfluenced by Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian.

Though the work might not have much significance from a literary point of view or its form, keeping in view the period during which it was written, it does assume importance from the linguistic aspect. Elaborating on this aspect, Premchand in his essay *Sahitya Ka Udeshya* remarks:

"Hamare sammelano aur anjumano ka ab tak aam taur par bhasa aur uske prachar par hi bahas ki jati rahi hai. Yahan tak ki Urdu aur Hindi ka jo aarambhik sahitya maujood hai, uska udeshya, vicharon aur bhavon par asar dalna nahin, kintu keval bhasa ka nirmaan karna.

(Sahitya ka Udeshya 7)

The most common discussion of our seminars and conferences upto now has been language and its propaganda. Even the early literature available in Urdu and Hindi has as its objective not of influencing ideas or emotions but only of creating language.

Thus, *Rani Ketki ki Kahani* is a work belonging to the category of *Khari Boli* wherein its importance is not from literary point of view but from the aspect of the creation and the development of language. Published in the early
years of the nineteenth century this work is undoubtedly an early illustration of Hindi prose. Not only that but because of its being the first narrative work the scholars even consider it to be the first story in Hindi. In fact, it is a prose narrative similar to Lallulal’s *Premsagar* (1802) and Sadal Mishra’s *Nasiketopakhyan* (1803).

Though the brief story is of no significance from the point of view of the novel form of the West its importance of being among the first modern prose works cannot be denied as the work depicts certain modern characteristics such as the importance of love in marriage and individual freedom to love and marry according to one’s choice.

. The use of prose for the first time for expression itself is a revolutionary step in Hindi literature. Language had been a major barrier for the growth of the Hindi novel. Had *khadi boli* been dominating, the other literary works would have quickly followed. The efforts of prose domination and presenting the new mode of writing qualify Inshaallah Khan an important position in Hindi novel. Applying the rules of English novel to a Hindi work when the English novel itself was in its early stages in England and with more than half a decade before English education was introduced in India would amount to discrediting the writer of his dedication and contribution to Hindi prose. Thus, it took another seventy-seven years for the next work of Hindi novel, Shraddharam Fillori’s *Bhagyawati* (1877) to appear on the Hindi literary scenario.
The transition of the language from Awadhi and Brajbhasa to Khadi boli, creates a vast gap of around seventy-seven years until the publication of Shraddharam Fillori’s *Bhagyawati* (1877). The author in the *Bhoomika* reveals the work’s moral domination and socially educative nature. He remarks:

> Bahut dino se ichha thi ki koi aisi pothi Hindi bhasa men likhoon ki jiske padhne Bharatkhand ki striyon ko grahast dharma ki shiksha prapt ho, kyonki yadhi koi striyan kuch padhi likhi hoti hain, parantu sada apne hi ghar men baithe rahhene ke karan unko desh-videsh ki bol-chal aur anya logon se barat vyavahar ki poori buddhi nahin hoti. (*Bhagyawati* p-5)

The semi-educated women too because of the lack of exposure do not have a complete understanding regarding manners and behavior with other people. Thus I had a long pending desire to write a book in Hindi that would provide some education to the women of the Indian sub-continent regarding their familial duties.

It is this didactic element of spreading awareness that provides form to the work. Like most of the early Hindi prose, this work too begins with a story containing the dry narrative element that lacks curiosity and spectacle. The writer rather reveals the conclusion first and then narrates the incidents. Consequently he fails to maintain the curiosity of the readers. In his usual style he avers:

> Ab Bhagyawati ne sare parivar se alag hoke jaise apni buddhibal se fir sab padarth ikatthe kiye aur aapat se sampat men pahunchi vah sara vrutant sunne ke yogya hai. (*Bhagyawati* p-55)

The entire account of Bhagyawati separating from her in-laws, generating income by her intelligence and becoming prosperous is worth listening to.

Just for the sake of the depiction of the poetic justice, the writer in the next few pages depicts the pathetic poverty stricken condition of her unjust in-laws. The problem is not with this activity but with the undue haste and artificial means of achieving it.
The story ends with the reconciliation of Bhagyawati and her in-laws. Thus the gross story of one hundred and twenty three pages is just in forty to forty-five pages. The entire work is just a story and the plot consists of just the linear unconnected incidents being put one after another. Thus plot, the indispensable component of the novel is really missing. Most of the incidents seem to be introduced with the only objective of highlighting the virtues, achievements and characteristics of Bhagyawati. The narration by the novelist is clearly suggestive of his objective. He narrates:

Bhagyawati ke dhairyat aur kshma aadi ke gun kuch apne hi ghar men nahin the… (*Bhagyawati* p-74)

Bhagyawati’s qualities of patience and forgiveness were not limited to her family alone…

The novelist then narrates the incident of Bhagyawati who tactfully handles a hot-headed and quarrelsome woman of her neighborhood. As soon as this incident is delineated, the novelist begins with a fresh incident. He avers:

Ab Bhagyawati ki yeh baat bhi sunne ke yogya hai ki uske gun vidhyachaturai, dhairyat, santosh se adhik uska man shoorvir kaisa tha. (*Bhagyawati* 110)

Now this attribute of Bhagyawati too is worth listening to. Apart from being virtuous, intelligent, patient and content, how valiant she was.

The several sub-plots of Bhagyawati’s in-laws, their leaving for pilgrimage and her parents’ family do not in any way help in the development or the justification of the main story. A consistent theme that should be spread throughout the novel is non-existent. Consequently the question of the reader’s curiosity being maintained throughout the creation does not arise. The nature
of most of the incidents too is the same and they are either related to theft or fraud.

From the point of view of characterization too the work is unimpressive. The title itself is suggestive of the work containing only one chief character and the other characters seem dwarfed in her comparison. The writer has only presented a revelation of ready-made characters and not made any contribution to their growth. Bhagyawati’s character, indifferent to the situation always remains steadfast and is not dynamic. She is the spotless moon of the full moon night, endowed with rich qualities and free from all defects and weaknesses. Evaluating the character of Bhagyawati, Shivnarayan Srivastava states:

Bhagyawati ko sarvagunsampanna banane ke prayatna men lekhak ne kahin manaviya seemaon ka dhyan nahin rakha hai. (Hindi Upanyas 31)

The novelist has overlooked the human limitations in presenting Bhagyawati endowed with all the virtues.

The consequence of Bhagyawati’s dominance is that the other characters of the work have become puppets, dancing to the fancy of the writer.

The depiction of the contemporary milieu adds to the authenticity of the fictional work. Apart from the social reforms related to women, the praise of the British rule, the prevalent corruption and western influence among others provide the readers with a perception of the transition taking place in society. The transitional milieu is not directly portrayed but is suggested through the discussion taking place among the characters. The work justifies its objective of social reformation and is presented in an intelligible manner. Such kind of presentation is of historical significance too.
Co-incidentally it does contain some seeds of the novel form but these seeds could not sprout and assume the form of a novel. With the consequence the work has achieved a mixed form of the moral tales in Sanskrit and the contemporary essay. It can thus be termed as a perceived narrative.

*Bhagyawati* presents a shift in Hindi prose as compared to the earlier work *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani*. In spite of being an underdeveloped novel *Bhagyawati* does contribute to Hindi literature as being a complete prose work.

The language had acquired stability and a definite shape by the zealous efforts of Bhartendu Harishchandra and Nagari Pracharini Sabha. The age too was witnessing religious, social and political upheavals. For the first time the prevalent Sanatan dharma faced challenge from the social reformation organizations that had become active under the influence of the Indian renaissance. Thus *Bhagyawati* is a work influenced by the contemporary social reforms. Apart from spreading the message of social reformation the work is a significant specimen of transition of Indian society from a narrow rigid outlook to a broad, progressive and reformist attitude. Though the work lacks an appropriate plot and relevant sub-plots, the progress of Hindi prose from *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* to *Bhagyawati* is quite evident. From the dominance of prose the shift is to complete prose. Hindi as a language had acquired stability and a definite form appropriate for literary expression. Thematically too a great leap is observed from romance to social reformation.

The work is primarily didactic and having a reformist approach. Though *Bhagyawati* is the second work that comes to light after a long gap of around
seventy seven years and its importance is not from perspective of language but from delineating the changes necessitated by the influence of the Indian renaissance. Thus the novel is historically significant.

### III

*Pariksha Guru* (1882) is the first novel of the English kind to appear in Hindi. Lala Srinivas Das, the author of *Pariksha Guru*, belonging to the Bhartendu circle is credited by the majority of the critics with being the first original novel in Hindi. Associated with the middle class life, the novelist terms the work in the *Nivedan* as “…worldly story providing didactism from experience”. (*Pariksha Guru* 3)

It is quite obvious from the ‘worldly story’ that the novelist has based his work on the ground of realism that is distinct from the stories of the fairies, princesses, animals-birds and divine narratives. Lalaji has also termed it as a novel, suggesting that he wanted to write a novel based on the style of the English novel.

The principal theme of the novel is to prove the trial as the guru and the novelist at several places clarifies that the selfish and flatterer friends would desert Madanmohan during distress. Only the trial during adversity would differentiate the genuine from the fair weather friends. Through this theme the novelist has not only skillfully provided a broad picture of the contemporary national milieu but has also woven it with a specific objective.
The plot of the novel is regarding the reformation of an assumed nobleman of Delhi misguided by falling into wrong company. Through this medium the novelist evaluates the vivid incidents of life into a weak aphorism. The narrative is very scattered because of the several chapters being unrelated to the main plot. The novelist has included several historical and didactic stories for proving his point; consequently creating chaos in the novel. On one hand this quality of being scattered signifies the fault regarding the organization while on the other hand also demarcates the possibility of the future novels.

The novelist resorts to the flash-back technique in emphasizing the difference of ideology and values between the generation of Madanmohan and his father. The use of flash-back technique by the novelist in the beginning of the plot indicates a revolution in the narrative technique of the Hindi novel.

The distinct characteristic of Pariksha Guru is that for the first time it presents the realistic issues of life. Neither does it contain a love story of the traditional kind nor some amazing incidents. The presentation of the contemporary middle class and its various members is its prime objective. The words by the novelist in the Nivedan themselves reveal that the treatment of this prose is to set a new precedent in the history of Hindi literature. The novelist states:

Ab tak nagari aur Urdu bhasa men anek achhi achhi pustaken taiyyar ho chuki hain, parantu mere jaan is reeti se koi nahin likhi gayi. Isliye apni bhasa men yah nai chaal ki pustak hogi. (Pariksha Guru 3)

Up to now many good volumes have been written in Nagari and Urdu, but none of this type has ever been attempted. Thus it will be a work of new custom in our language.
Differing from the contemporary prose, the novelist in the exposition of the work itself reveals the traits of a novel. The prose works of the Pre-Premchand age, similar to *Udebhan Charita ya Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* and *Bhagyawati* begin with providing a lengthy introduction of the characters and presenting the incidents right from the birth of the protagonist and providing comprehensive details of the family background. But no such information is provided in this work and the mysteries too are revealed at an appropriate time and place. This task is dexterously handled by the novelist and he succeeds in raising the curiosity of the readers. The novelist does not reveal the traits of the principal character Brajkishor upto the one sixty eighth page of the novel. The craft conscious novelist thought it necessary to clarify in the *nivedan* the difference between the novel and the drama. The essential fact is that the novelist is conscious of the artistic style of the novel, which he may have adopted from the English novels. This awareness of artistic novelty too proves *Pariksha Guru* to be the first novel of the English type in Hindi.

Though *Pariksha Guru* is credited with being the first novel in Hindi, it does contain traces of drama and narratives. The maxims, idiomatic phrases and soliloquies of Brajkishor serve as illustration of the influence of the past on the new emerging literary form.

The comprehensive reading of the novelist is revealed through his extensive knowledge of history and literary works in English, Sanskrit, Persian and Urdu. As proof of his scholarship, the author quotes writers such as Lord Chesterfield, Shakespeare, Kabir and William Cowper and from works such as
Hitopdesha, Manusmruti, and Ramayana among others. The writer, in the nivedan acknowledges his obligation of the epics and other literary writers and forms in achieving this feat of accomplishing the work. He avers:

Is pushtak ko rachne men mujhko Mahabharat adi Sanskrit, Gulistan vagere Farsi, Spectator, Lord Bacon, Goldsmith, William Cowper adi ke purane lekhon aur streebodh adi ke vartman risalon se badi sahayata mili hai…

(Pariksha Guru 6)

In writing this book I have received huge assistance from Mahabharat, Sanskrit and Gulistan and Persian, the old writings of Spectator, Lord Bacon, Goldsmith, William Cowper and periodicals providing understanding to women…

By resorting to the illustration style the novelist has created Pariksha Guru into an encyclopedia of knowledge. But the abundance of illustrations, quotations and moral preaching results into the structure of the work becoming deformed and creating an obstacle in the smooth flow of the story. This confession is made in the ‘Nivedan’ too wherein the novelist suggests the ‘+’ sign for the readers who wish to skip through the illustrations and just go through the lineal account of the story. This indicates that the novelist himself was conscious of the structure and the form of the plot but could not conceal his greed of spreading knowledge.

The novel is realistic in its minute and realistic depiction of the contemporary social milieu. The lack of sub-plots helps in not complicating the story of the novel. Throwing light on the limitation of the theme of Pariksha Guru, Satyapal Chug remarks:

Vaastav men yah kathavastu ek choti kaha ni ke hi upayukt hai. Ismen jeevan ke vividh angon, manav-man ke nana raagon aur pravruttiyon ke prasar ka avakaash nahnin. (Hindi Upanyas: Uday Aur Utkarsha 83)

In fact the theme is appropriate only for a short story. It does not have scope of diffusion of the vivid aspects of life and the various passions of the activity of the human mind.
The efforts of the novelist of appropriate character-portrayal reveal his awareness regarding characterization. The positioning of the characters according to their importance too is suggestive of the novelist’s skill of characterization. Madanmohan is the protagonist and the center of the action in the novel. Brajkishor makes special efforts of reforming Madanmohan and his endeavors ultimately bear fruits. Thus, his position is next to the protagonist. The female characters do not find any significant place in the novel with the exception of a minor role of Madanmohan’s wife.

All the characters of the novel represent a specific class of society. Madanmohan’s father is an old fashioned, God fearing, practical and man of values. His wife is an ideal Hindu wife. Brajkishor, though modernist in his attitude, is proud of his culture and an active citizen. Through Brajkishor, the novelist has highlighted the issues ranging from social, personal and of national interests. Lala Brajkishor is an ideal character and the novelist’s mouthpiece. By depicting the protagonist not as a heroic but as a weak character, the novelist is also credited with introducing a distinct kind of realistic characterization. Analyzing the conduct and the expressions of the characters, Satyapal Chug avers:

Madanmohan saras, bhola, darpok tatha bhavuk hai isliye vah jitni jaldi sharmata, gabharata tatha bhaon chadhata hai, vaise Brajkishor nahin. Brajkishor ka nischal, nidar vyaktitva beparvahi tatha svatantrata se baat karta hai.
*(Hindi Upanyas: Uday Aur Utkarsha 91)*

Madanmohan is credulous, sentimental, timid and sensitive. Thus his expressions of shyness, fear and frowning are prominent, while Brajkishor does not reveal his expressions and keeps his emotions under control. He is fearless, consistent and expresses himself in an easy and unrestrained manner.
The conversations are presented in a natural style. Thus, we find instances of a character intervening and making statements before the other character can complete his statement. The conversations, depicted among the friends of Madanmohan, are brief, effective and practical, while that of Brajkishor are lengthy, at times monotonous and assuming an argumentative form.

In the novel, rather than employing the difficult words from Sanskrit and Persian, the language spoken by the people of Delhi has been emphasized for presenting an authentic sketch of an assumed nobleman of Delhi. Thus the novelist has neither made the language burdensome by employing the out of vogue Sanskrit words nor has the language digressed by the usage of Urdu words. He has made use of Sanskrit, Persian and English words that are simple, in vogue and intelligible. The writer in the nivedan itself remarks:

Is pushtak men dilli ke ek kalpit rais ka chitra utara gaya hai aur usko jaise ka taisa (arthat swabhavik) dikhane ke liye sanskrut athva farsi arabii ke kathin kathin, shabdo ki banai hui bhasa ke badle dilli ke rehne walon ki sadharan bolchhal par jyada drishti rakhi gayi hai.  
(Lala Srinivas Das 5)

This book presents a picture of a resident of Delhi and to present him as he is (that is natural) the emphasis has been more on the day to day language of the people of Delhi rather than the difficult words from Sanskrit or Arabic and Persian.

*Pariksha Guru* is a work of the period when *khadi-boli* prose was attempting to acquire a literary form. Thus its language provides us with the information of the language and the words of that time. From the aspect of language *Pariksha Guru* is close to life. It is the contemporary day-to-day language of its age.
With abundance of instructions and directions, the work is idealistic from the renaissance point of view. Yet it creates a realistic impression in matters such as providing an authentic picture of the transitional Indian society, regarding the selection of the characters for the story and in the presentation of the appropriate language.

The novelist has desisted from the presentation of the divine and miraculous incidents as presented in *Rani Ketki ki Kahani*. Thus Bachhan Singh remarks:

> Ismen parampara mukt silsilevaar katha nahin kahi gai hai balki usmen aavashyaktaanusaar ulat fer kiya gaya hai. Patron ke svabhaav, unke parasparik sambandhon ko yathasambhav vishvashniya banane ki chesta ki gayi hai, bolchal ki bhasa, patron ka kalpanik chitrang sankankshta aadi ka sambandh men ve pahele hi se satark the. Yahi karan hai ki ise Hindi ka pehla upanyaas kaha jaata hai. *Devrani Jethani Ki Kahani, Bhagyawati* aadi men ye aupanyasik tatva nahin milte. *(Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas 79)*

The story is not narrated in a linear manner but the necessary changes have been made. Attempts have been made to make an authentic presentation of the nature of the characters and their mutual relationship. He was conscious from the very beginning regarding the language of conversation and the fictional delineation of characters among others. This is the very reason of its being considered the first novel in Hindi. ‘*Devrani Jethani Ki Kahani*’ and ‘*Bhagyawati*’ do not contain these elements of a novel.

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*Pariksha Guru* exhibits all the major characteristics of the English type novel. The novelist too depicts awareness of his work being different from the
drama and the narrative tradition. His knowledge of plot and narration is evident from his statements made in the *nivedan* itself. He remarks:

Pehle to padnewale is pushtak mein sa udagar ki dukaan ka haal padhte hi chakravenge kyonki apni bhasa mein abtak vartaroopi jo pushtaken likhi gain hain unme aksar nayak nayika vagere ka haal thet se silsilevaar (yathakram) likha gaya hai “jaise koi raja, badshah, sheth, sahukaar ka ladka tha uske manmen is baat se yah ruchi hui aur uska yah parinam nikala” aisa silsila kuch bhi nahin maloom hota “Lala Madanmohan ek angreji saudagar ki dukaan men ashab dekh raha hain Lala Brajkishor, Munshi Chunnilal aur Master Shimbhudayal unke saath hain.” Inmen Madanmohan kaun, Brajkishor kaun, Chunnilal kaun aur Shimbhudayal kaun hai? Inka swabhav kaisa hai? Yah baten pahlese kuch bhi nahin jatai gai! Haan padhnewalen dhairya se sab pushtak padhi lenge to apne, apne maukepar sab bhed khulta chala jayega aur adi se ant tak sab mel mil jayega. Parantu itna dhairya na rakhenge vah iska matlab bhi nahin samajh sakenge. (Pariksha Guru 3-4)

Initially the readers would be confused on reading about the traders shop as the narration in the books of our language are from the very beginning in a chronological order “as there was a son of some king, emperor, sheth, moneylender and because of certain idea a particular interest arose in him and this was its conclusion”, no such order is found here. “Lala Madanmohan is having a look at some showpieces in an Englishman’s shop. Lala Brajkishor, Munshi Chunnilal and Master Shimbhudayal are with him.” Of them who is Madanmohan, who is Brajkishor and who is Shimbhudayal? What is their nature? Nothing of this sort has been informed here in the beginning! All the things will be clear from the beginning to the end, if the reader has patience and reads the entire story. But those without patience will not be able to make out anything of this.

The characters of this work are neither the aristocrats nor royalty but belong to the contemporary middle-class. The first novel in Hindi keeps the middle-class in the centre-stage, the class that plays a crucial role in the transition of society. The earlier novelists of this age lacked a modern outlook and the necessary knowledge of the novel form. They also lacked the capability of serious critical inquiry.

*Pariksha Guru* is also the first work in Hindi literature depicting resistance to discriminatory economic policies of the British rule. Brajkishor’s views regarding loss to the Indian economy by the Indians purchasing costly
artifacts from the British depicts the economic awareness that is later observed in full bloom only in the works of Premchand. This resistance is missing in the earlier works of Bhagyawati and Rani Ketki ki Kahani. Bhagyawati rather depicts the praise of the social welfare measures of the British in India and nowhere shows any signs of discontent against the discriminantory economic policies of the British in India. It is probable that at the back of his mind the novelist is juxtaposing the social welfare measures during the feudal rule that existed prior to the establishing of the British rule. Inspite of all its incompleteness and deficiencies Pariksha Guru for the first time depicts in Hindi the organization of the elements of the novel and the application of the novel craft.

At a time when most of the writers were staunch followers of Sanatan dharma, Lala Srinivas Das’ dealing with the economic and industrial issues with a view of progress and prosperity of the nation in itself speaks volumes of the intellect and the foresight of this nineteenth century novelist.

The influence of the Indian renaissance is clearly visible in the works of Bhartendu Harishchandra (1850-1885). In his essay Bharatvarshonnati Kaise Ho Sakti Hai?, he remarks:

Hindu Brothers! You too should give up your internal difference. Love each other. Follow this principle. Whoever lives in Hindustan, whatever be his/her colour, caste, is a Hindu. Help Hindus. All Bengalis, Marathis, Punjabis, Madrasis, Vedics, Jains, Brahmans and Muslims should hold each other’s hands.

Belonging to the Bhartendu group known as the ‘Bhartendu Mandal’, Lala Srinivasdas, as a writer, just like Bhartendu raised in his dramas, raised his voice against the social problems of his age. The novelist in Pariksha Guru
expresses a desire to modernize the nation with new means of agriculture and through industrial progress. It insists on not blindly emulating the British, emphasizes on traditional education and condemns fashion and extravagance. Bhartendu and his compatriots like Lala Srinivasdas were trying to free themselves from the influence of Britishers through their writings. Thus the efforts of Lalaji in attempting a holistic presentation of the contemporary age are worth commending. Premchand’s idealistic realism in fact begins from here itself.

Pariksha Guru being considered the first English type (keeping novelists like Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy in consideration) novel in Hindi suggests that the Hindi novel begins with social realism as its identity. This journey of social realism as its identity is carried forward by Premchand and Yashpal among others to the present times and has become capable of acquiring diverse dimensions.

IV

If Pariksha Guru is the first novel in Hindi of the English type, then very soon appeared Thakur Jagmohan Sinha’s Shyamaswapna (1888), an Indian type novel in Hindi, as it is a convergence of Reeti Kaal and the modern prose. This dual quality of prose as well as verse provides it a distinct position in Hindi novel. The author on its cover page claims it to be “prose dominated imagination in four segments” and in English claims it to be a “novel”. Supporting Ambikadutt’s view of the work being a prosaic verse, Srikrishna Lall in the
bhoomika observes:

…Shyamaswapna sachhe arth men gadhkavya hai. Is men gadhya aur padhya donon men hi kavya ki srushti hui hai parantu yah gadhya pradhan hai. (Shyamaswapna p-14)

…Shyamaswapna in true sense can be considered to be a prosaic verse as it contains poems in prose as well as in verse. But it is prose dominated.

One of the chief characteristics of the novel is its realism. The realism of the novel is in quite contrast to the miraculous depictions of the Hindi period of the Reeti Kaal (1643-1843). But Shyamaswapna is totally devoid of realism.

Terming his work a ‘dream’ the novelist in the dedication states:

Raatri ke chaar prahar hote hain – is swapna men bi chaar prahar ke chaar swapna hain – to vah bhi swapna hi hai – par mera Shyamaswapna swapna hi hai. (Shyamaswapna p-3)

Night consists of four prahars. This dream too consists of a dream for each prahar. The world is like a dream – then this too is a dream. My writing too is explicitly a dream – but my Shyamaswapna is only a dream.

Of the three characters of the novel – Kamlakant, Shyama and Shyamasunder, both Kamlakant and Shyamasunder are lovers of Shyama.

Revealing Shyamasunders’ intense love for Shyama, the novelist avers:

Ve apne pran ko bhi itna nahin chahte the. Nainon ka tara main hi thi. Prem pinjar ki unki men hi saarika thi. Brahma, Ishwar, Ram, jo kuch thi men thi, ve mujhe ananya bhav se mante the. (Shyamaswapna 70)

He did not have that much love even for his own life…I was the only starling of his love – cage. Brahma, Ishwar, Ram, I was all. He had undivided faith in me.

Shyama, the heroine of Shyamaswapna resembles the heroine of the Hindi Reeti Kaal (1643-1843). She has mastered the art of shrewdness at a tender age of fourteen. On the shrewd acting of the fourteen year old Shyama,
Kamalakant cannot help remarking:

Vaahri Shyama chaudah varsha men jab tum itni chatur thi tab aage jaane kya hua hoga. (*Shyamaswapna* 64)

Oh wonderful Shyama. If you were so shrewd at fourteen then what might you have been at later age.

Apart from shrewdness, the beauty of Shayama too is similarly described as the heroines of the Hindi period of *Reeti Kaal*. Describing her beauty, the writer observes:


The qualities of a lotus and a moon are distinct. Yet her face exhibits the splendor of both. The dark eye-brows seem like an arch. On seeing them Lord Kamdev too was distracted from the discussion of his bow.

The language employed by the writer in describing the beauty of Shyama too is similar to that of the ancient poets. He observes:

Nab joban naresh ke pravesh hote hi aang ke sipahiyon ne badi loot maar machai isi bhaose men sabhon ke haunse ra gaye…par yah na jaan pada ki beech men kati kisne loot li. (*Shyamaswapna* p-8)

With the entrance of the king of youth, the soldiers of the various body parts went ransack and lost their discretion…but nobody could make out who plundered the loins.

Among metres Thakur Jagmohan Sinha's favourite metres are Doha, Savaiyya Kundaliya, Sortha etc. Even in prose the novelist has displayed dexterity in Yamak (repetition of words or syllables of similar sound but different in meaning) and Anupras (alliteration). The beginning of Shyamaswapna is in the same manner.

Aaj bhor yadi tamchor hi ror se, jo nikat ki khor hi mein jor se shor kiya. (*Shyamaswapna* 5)
The words such as Bhor, Tamchor, Hor, Jor aur Sor, Janjaliya aur Jaliya, Jivasha, Nirasha Mithyasha, Pyasa, Nain aur Chain, Viheen, Deen etc exhibit the figures of speech-Yamak. Tamchor which is the corrupt form of 'Tamrachood' is done so just for the sake of repeatation, the figure of speech - Yamak. In this manner one comes across conscious efforts by the novelist in attempting repeatation which is the influence of the Reeti Kaal.

The characters of the work are types and based on the characters of the Hindi period of Reeti Kaal (1643-1843). Kamlakant and Shyamasunder too are heroes as depicted in the works of Reeti Kaal (1643-1843). All the characters are of poetic temperament. Most of these verses are soaked in Shringar Rasa. Thus not only the language employed and characterization but the environment depicted too is unrealistic and similar to that of the works of the Reeti Kaal. The incidents depicted in this unrealistic environment are not only hard to comprehend but are also beyond thought and reason. Consequently the plot too is complicated and incoherent. The writer observes:

Bahut thaur unmatt kavya rachi jako arth kathora l
Samujhi jaat nahin kaihun bhatin sangna shabd athora l

I have created a very frenzied literary composition whose meaning is uncouth, hard and arduous.

The novelist confesses of having created a very frenzied literary composition whose meaning is uncouth, hard and arduous. Thus, Shrikrishna Lall comments:

Trutiya aur chaturtha prahar ke swapna men is prakar ke unmatt kavya avashyakta se adhik hai.

I have created a very frenzied literary composition whose meaning is uncouth, hard and arduous.
The dream of the third and fourth prahar contains more than necessary such frenzied literary compositions.

The descriptions in the first two prahars are devoid of any kind of complexity or incoherence. But with the third fragment of the dream begins the unnaturalness, complexity and incoherence. This complexity is further heightened by the complicated relationship shared among Shyama, Kamlakant and Shyamasunder.

Besides Hindi, the novelist has quoted verses of Sanskrit poets too, especially Kalidas and Bhavabhuti. The language of the writer is heavily influenced by his comprehensive reading of Hindi and Sanskrit poets. Analyzing the influence, Srikrishna Lall, in the bhoomika states:

Prakruti-varnan ki prerna unhe Sanskrit kaviyon se mili aur shrungar-varnan ki prerna Hindi ke reetikaleen kaviyon se. (Shyamaswapna p-29)

The Sanskrit poets have provided him the inspiration for the Nature descriptions and the Hindi poets of the Reeti Kaal the inspiration for Shringar descriptions.

At the same time the literary composition also shows evidence of the influence of Bhartendu Harishchandra. Instead of the Reetikaleen embellishment and spectacle, Bhartendu laid emphasis on art and naturalness. The same innate naturalness and freshness is observed in the poetry of Jagmohan Sinha.

The mingling of Khadi boli, Brajbhasa and Bundelkhandi vocabulary is observed. Citing the admixture of language the cause of the work becoming excessively disorganized and loose, Srikrishna Lall avers:

Sach to yeh hai ki Jagmohan Sinha kavi the aur kavya ki bhasa hi ve likh sakte the aur usi bhasa ko unhone gadhya ka roop diya jiske karan vah nitant avyavasthit aur shithil ho gai hai. (Shyamaswapna Bhoomika p-32-3.)
Basically Jagmohan Sinha is a poet and could write only in a poetic style. Consequently he has provided a prose form to his poetry. Thus the creation seems excessively disorganized and loose.

Whatever modernity in this prosaic verse can be found is regarding the rebellious ideology of Kamalakant against the Brahmans, the creators of the ancient scriptures. Kamalakant revolts because he is a Kshatriya prince and loves Shyama, a Brahmin girl. He is put behind bars for his desire of marrying her. His views differ from the views of the scriptures regarding love and marriage. As the scriptures cannot be dishonoured, the novelist supports his stand on the basis of an ancient treatise. Through the legend of Devyani and Yayati, the novelist has depicted the acceptability in the scriptures regarding the marriage of Kshatriya boy and Brahmin girl. Through the ancient treatises the writer also confirms the acceptability of Gandharva Vivah. He cites illustrations of Nal-Damyanti, Dushyant-Shakuntala and Radha-Krishna among others to strengthen his stand. The emphasis on Gandharva Vivah presents the increasing importance of love in marriage in the Pre-Premchand society.

Apart from its strong influence of the Hindi Reeti Kaal (1643-1843) the unique feature of Shyamaswapna is the dominance of prose and the voice of rebellion. Yet Srikrishna Lall does not consider these characteristics sufficient to include it into the category of a novel. As the composition treats the same subject in alternate passages of prose and verse he finds it suitable for classifying it as a “champu kavya”. Expressing his disagreement of including the work as a novel, he remarks in the bhoomika:

Is Reetikaleen vatavaran ke chitro se poorna jatil aur asangat katha vastu tatha umatt kavya se yukt ‘Shyamaswapna’ ko upanyas kahena uktisangat
Though the writer himself terms the work as an original novel or an organised imagination it does not seem rational to term this work depicting the Reeti Kaal in full bloom and containing complicated and incoherent narrative, a novel. From the perspective of literature it would be more appropriate to term it as an ancient narrative, legendary tale or a champu kavya…Thus Shyamaswapnā is a champu kavya in the form of a beginning and a conclusion in the backdrop of a dream.

Inter-textuality is another significant characteristic of Shyamaswapnā. Scores of poetic creations of poets such as Dev, Behari, Tulsidas, Padmakar, Raskhan and Sripati find place in this creation. Of all poets Bhartendu Harishchandra is most profusely quoted. According to Shyama, Kamlakant keeps reciting poems of his long-standing friend, which are the works of no one else but Bhartendu Harishchandra, an old time friend of Thakur Jagmohan Sinha. Also while writing a letter to Shyama, Shyamasunder quotes couplets composed by his friend. These couplets are an extract from Bhartendu Harischandra’s Prem Sarovar. Also when, under the influence of the witch, Shyamasunder is released from the prison and finds himself in his kavita-kutir, where are scattered the works such as Shyamalata, Devyani, Sankhya and Yog. Of these Shyamalata and Devyani are works of none other than Thakur Jagmohan Sinha himself. The consequence of intertextuality is that the writer enriches the readers with his comprehensive reading of Hindi and Sanskrit works. Thus, this characteristic too makes the work unique as it is not observed in any other earlier or contemporary work of its time.
Focussing on his contribution to modern Hindi prose, Nagendra observes:

Shaili-vikas ki drishti men itna vaividhya aur itni sajivta parvarti yug men nahin dekhi gayi. (Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas p-494)

From the point of view of development of style we do not come across such dynamism and liveliness in the earlier ages.

The work is neither incident dominated nor character dominated, but lays more emphasis on emotions, yet Shyamaswapna is Jagmohan Sinha's unique creation of the Bhartendu era. Besides representing the environment, language and temperament of the Reeti Kaal, it also represents modernity – the dominance of prose and the voice of rebellion. Fact is that it would be more appropriate to term the creation a poetic composition rather than a prose. But it definitely contains the activity of the beginning of prose writing. It contains an excellent expression of unrestrained love. Presenting an illustration of ideal love it concludes with a pessimistic opinion about the influence of love and women on men. The opinion provided is the co-mingling of the views from Panchatantra, Hitopadesh, Bhartahari and Shankracharya. This pessimistic conclusion regarding unrestrained and ideal love is an echo of the opinion of the medieval age.

Namvar Singh in The Novel of English Type and Indian Novel suggests that not all Indian novelists subscribed to the colonial model of English novel. Certain novelists resisted the model of the English type novel as he exposes two faces of colonialism. Thus, he appreciates the efforts of novelists like Bankimchandra, Fakir Mohan Senapati and Hazari Prasad Dwiwedi who rejected the realistic English novel in favour of romances like Kapal Kundala,
Durgesh Nandini, Anand Math and Shyamaswapna of the 19th century, which were the foundation stones of the Indian novel – not works like Parikshaguru (1878) by Lala Sri Niwas Das, the first novel of English-type in Hindi. Awadhesh Kumar Singh in Towards a Theory of Indian Novel remarks: “In rejection of the English-type novel, Namvar Singh saw rejection of colonialism.”

Though Thakur Jagmohan Sinha cannot be included into the category of English type modern novelists, but Shyamaswapna definitely contributes to the enrichment of the contemporary Hindi prose.

V

With all the works published upto Shyamaswapna, none achieved popularity that reached a wide section of society. It was only the publication of Devkinandtan Khatri’s Chandrakanta (1991), which created a sensation unprecedented in the realm of Hindi novels.

The novel Chandrakanta (1991), depicting a feudal setting with the state of Naugadh, presents the hero, Prince Virendra Singh possessing the medieval qualities of chivalry and being in love with the extremely beautiful and virtuous princess Chandrakanta. With an objective of making the work interesting and engrossing the novelist introduces several obstacles in their union. The father of Chandrakanta, the king of Vijaygadh, influenced by trivial measures of prestige and standing in society, is the first obstacle in their union. The other obstacles are Kroor Singh, the son of the minister in the court of the kingdom
of Naugadh and Shivdutt Singh, the king of Chunar. It is only mutual interest that brings the reconciliation between Chandrakanta’s father and Virendra Singh. Thus along with the depiction of the incidents of magic and deception (Tilisma and Aiyari), the incidents of the conflicts and the clashes among the neighbouring kingdom too raise curiosity and anxiety among the readers.

Chandrakanta and Chandrakanta Santati present a chain of amazing and astonishing incidents of magic and deception. Regarding the chain of amazing and astonishing incidents of magic and deception, Ram Darash Mishra comments:

The novelist without caring for cause and effect of incidents creates incidents and the readers keep flowing along with being astonished with the snares of the illusory world. These works contain an immense potential of astonishing the readers and this is their objective too.

These incidents of Tilisma and Aiyari served as a spectacle for the readers. This trend was a change from the earlier reformation works presenting the realistic social issues. Defending the depiction of the Tilisma and Aiyari incidents, Satyapal Chug remarks:

…The rationality of the arguments by the novelist regarding the authenticity of the incidents is not important. Important is that an early novelist understands that a novel is not a fairy tale and does not resort to a free-play of his imagination. The novelist violating this fact and depicting divine
incidents will be responsible to the readers regarding their justification. Thus the novelist resorts to such devices that create an illusion of authenticity.

The lack of relevant sub-plots can be considered a drawback of *Chandrakanta*. But this drawback is not perceived because of the presence of large number of characters and incidents which successfully keep the readers engrossed with their activities and development. The novel *Chandrakanta* is in itself complete but *Chandrakanta Santati* an extension of *Chandrakanta* in twenty-four volumes, cannot be comprehended without going through Chandrakanta as all its major characters are present upto the last twenty-fourth volume.

Basically *Chandrakanta* and *Chandrakanta Santati* are incident dominated works. The novelist doesn’t pay much attention to characterization. It presents persons and not characters that can be given any name. Thus it is difficult to differentiate one character from another. All their action is removed from reality and is imaginary. The characters here are created to suit the requirements of the incidents and not vice versa. In fact this is character narration or ready made construction of characters but not characterization.

The characters are static and go through no change or transformation from the beginning of the work to its end. They lack individuality or any trait that can term them as round characters. According to the will of their creator they exhibit their evil and virtuous qualities and are either entirely evil or entirely virtuous. The nature of the conduct of the characters is even not with an objective of providing entertainment to the readers. This objective is fulfilled by the strange incident of *Tilisma* and *Aiyari* (magic and deception).
Inspite of the characterization of the novel being its drawback the novel succeeds in achieving popularity among the readers. Analyzing the reason of the popularity of these flat characters among the readers, Nand Dulare Vajpayee comments:

Nayak aur nayikaen yadhapi raajkiya vargon se li gayeen hain, parantoon unka charitra-nirmaan prem aur veerta ke swachhand prasangon ko lekar hi hua hai, jismen unmen jan-sadharan ke liye bhi akarshan aa gaya hai. (Premchand: Sahityik Vivechan, p-110)

Though the hero and the heroine belong to the royal class, their character portrayal is based on the incidents that depict unrestrained love and chivalry. Thus attracting the masses towards them.

Usually the objective of the depiction of the milieu is to express the sensibility of the age besides providing authenticity to the depicted incidents. But Devkinandan Khatri’s objective in Chandrakanta is solely to provide entertainment to the readers and not to raise the social and political issues. Yet one does come across implied influences of the contemporary milieu. Satyapal Chug states:


The influence of the renaissance in the works of Bhartendu-era is distinctly evident. The depiction of gallantry, high ideals and the Rajput chivalry too is influenced by the same renaissance feeling. The nationalism of Bhartendu-era is Hindu nationalism that contains hatred for the Muslims. That same hatred is observed in the works of Devkinandan Khatri.

The novelist confesses that the objective of his works is only to entertain the readers. Thus the chief attraction of his works is the astonishing world of magic and deception, the external world away from the world of reality. Neither does the novelist desire to expound a definite philosophy of life nor to
provide a clarification regarding human nature through the character portrayal in his works. He does not wish to raise any issue or to provide any solution of them. Had he any of these objectives he would have provided a definite conclusion to his works. The only objective of the novelist is to depict poetic justice and provide entertainment.

But Acharya Ramchandra Shukla rejects these works of Devkinandan Khatri as unliterary just because of their not depicting the contemporary milieu. He alleges:

Yahan par yeh keh dena aavashyak hai ki in upanyason ka lakshya keval ghatnavaichitra raah; rassanchar, bhavvibhuti ya charitrachitran nahin. Ye vaastav men ghatnapradhan kathanak ya kisse hain jinnmen jeevan ke vividh pakshon ka chitran ka koi prayatna nahin, issye sahityakoti men nahin aate. (Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas p-216)

It is important to state that the objective of these works is only to present amazing incidents and not inciting sentiments, depicting power of emotions or characterization. They are in fact incident dominated narratives or tales that contain no attempts to present the vivid aspects of life. Thus they cannot be included in the category of literature.

Regarding the language employed by Devkinandan Khatri in his works, Acharya Ramchandra Shukla avers:

Kehana chahen to yeh keh sakte hain ki unhone sahityik Hindi na likhkar ‘Hindustani’ likhi, jo keval isi prakaar ki halke rachnaon men kaam de sakti hain. (Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas p-216)

It can be said that he did not employ literary Hindi but ‘Hindustani’ that is suitable only to such light creations.

The language of Chandrakanta and Chandrakanta Santati is simple, colloquial and devoid of any complexity. He has employed the prevalent indigenous and foreign words from Persian and Arabic. The employment of this kind of language was inevitable by taking into consideration the literary standard of the contemporary readers. It is the simplicity of the language that
not only led to the creation of a wide base of readers of the Hindi language. The popularity of the work can be gauged by the publishing of around forty-five editions between 1891 and 1963 A.D. Thus *Chandrakanta* and *Chandrakanta Santati* mark a paradigm shift from the earlier didactic and socially reformative works such as *Bhagyawati* and *Pariksha Guru*. With them picked up the trend of depicting amazing incidents and of providing entertainment. Had other writers upheld this tradition (social realism) then the art of the depiction of social realism would have matured prior to the arrival of Premchand.

Premchand did not consider everything written as literature. In his collection of essays *Kuch Vichar*, he categorically states:

> Parantu mera abhipraya yah nahin hai ki jo kuch likh diya jaya, vah sabka sab sahitya hai. Sahitya usi rachna ko kahenge, jismen koi sachhai prakat ki gai ho, jiski bhsa praudh, parimarjit aur sundar hai, aur jismen dil aur dimag par asar dalne ka gun ho aur sahitya men yeh gun poorna roop se usi avastha men utpan hote hai, jab usmen jeewan ki sachaiyan aur anohbootiyan vyakt ki gai hon. Tilismati kahaniyon, bhoot-preet ki kathaon aur prem-viyog ke akhyanon se kisi jamane men ham bhale hi prabhavit hue hon, par ab unmen hamare liye bahut kam dilchaspi hai. *(Kuch Vichar p-11)*

I am not of the opinion that anything written is literature. Only that work which reveals truth is literature, the language of which is mature, refined and beautiful. That which has the qualities of influencing the heart and the mind and these qualities in their completeness originate only when it expresses the truth and the experiences of life. Through tilismi stories, stories of ghosts and spirits and the stories of love and separation might have had influence on us in the past but they do not interest us any longer.

Further Premchand believes the “criticism of life” to be the most appropriate definition of literature. He elaborates:

> Chahe vah nibandh ke roop me ho, chahe kahaniyon ke ya kavya ke, use hamare jeewan ki alochana aur vyakhya karni chahiye. *(Kuch Vichar p-8-9)*

It should provide a criticism and definition of life whether in the form of an essay or a story or poetry.
On this basis rejecting Chandrakanta and Chandrakanta Santati to be literary works Premchand avers:


(Kuch Vichar p-9)

The age that we have just gone through had nothing to do with life. On the basis of creating a fictional world our writers created the choicest Tilisma. We had the story of Fisanaye Ajaayab, Bostane Khayal and Chandrakanta Santati. The objective of these tales is only to entertain and the satisfaction of our desire of the wonderful. Proximity of literature with life was something impossible. Story and life were considered to be both mutually opposite matters.

With the publication of Chandrakanta the trend of the novels depicting amazing incidents picked up and they provided the much needed entertainment. The contemporary readers ignored the didactic and socially reformative kind of novels and with the lack of encouragement from the readers the growth of the socially reformative novels got stunted.

VI

Almost at the end of the age of the Hindi novel before Premchand arrives Mehta Lajjaram Sharma’s Aadarsha Hindu (1915). Like Shraddharam Fillori’s Bhagyawati and Lala Srinivasdas’ Pariksha Guru, Mehta Lajjaram Sharma’s Aadarsha Hindu (1915) is another didactic work of the Pre-Premchand Hindi age. Just as Shraddharam Fillori’s Bhagyawati is influenced by the social reformation taking place in the nineteenth century, Aadarsha Hindu is influenced by the contemporary Sanantan dharma. This work depicts
the influence of the Sanatan dharma on this age. The work is also a fine specimen of the resistance to the social reformation taking place in the Indian society during the Pre-Premchand age.

The novelist proposes to emphasize the significance of Hindu religion, eradicate the evils in Hindu society and to create a healthy and virtuous society based on the beliefs of *Sanatan dharma*. To fulfill this objective the writer presents the work in a manner of a travelogue. The male and the female protagonist are on a pilgrimage and visiting places of religious significance such as Kashi, Gaya, and Prayag among others. The experiences of this couple during the pilgrimage form the novel *Aadarsha Hindu*.

The writer touches upon a wide range of issues concerning Hinduism from evil practices at places of pilgrimage, significance of religious traditions and customs, superiority of Hindu religion and customs, Hindi language, untouchability and economic condition of rural artisans among others. Rather it has been the writers attempt to touch upon almost all the contemporary issues relating to Hinduism. This has made the work artificial and highly didactic. But one cannot deny the sincere efforts of the writer in attempting to present the incidents in a natural manner as if naturally cropping up from the incidents occurring in the work.

The novelist attempts to expose the ritual performing pundits in Prayag cheating innocent public. The novelist also emphasizes the significance of being vegetarian. If a pandit cites shastras permitting the Hindus to intake fish, Pandit Priyanath, the mouthpiece of the novelist quotes *Manusmruti* that
strictly prohibits consuming food by taking life of a living creature. Citing the
significance of being a strict vegetarian Pt. Priyanath taking recourse to
*Manusmruti* avers:

Jo prativarsha ashwamedha karta hua sau ashvamedha kar jaata hai aur usse
jo poonya hota hai vah poonya maans na khane wale ke poonya se badhkar
nahin hai…Jis kisi pranaani ka maans is lok men khaya jaata hai vahi pranaani
parlok men us bhakshak ka maans khata hai, yahi manishiyon ki aangna hai.
*(Aadarsha Hindu, Part – II, p-19)*

The merit achieved by performing hundred Ashwamedha yajna is not above
the merit achieved by abstaining from consuming flesh…It is the order of the
sages that the creature whose flesh is consumed in this world will intake the
flesh of his eater in the other world.

The novelist being a staunch follower of *Sanatan dharm* supports the
orthodox beliefs and practices. He emphasizes on the importance of traditions
and customs. He is a supporter of purdah-system, religious ceremonies, caste
system and idol worship. Thus he praises Priyamvada, the female protagonist
for maintaining purdah even from a pure Brahmin and a member of their group,
Pandit Godbole. His views regarding the status of the women in Indian society
too have a strong Sanantani influence.

The writer makes use of the novel as a vehicle to spread *Sanatan dharma* and is less concerned with the the literary form of the novel. Thus the
work lacks an appropriate plot and structurally resembles Shraddharam Fillori’s *Bhagyawati*, having artificially assorted incidents forming a novel.
Consequently the plot and characterisation remain underdeveloped. The
travelogue form provided to the work provides it some uniqueness. The
characters portrayed too are with a purpose of espousing the sanatani beliefs.
They are not individuals but a means to propagate the views held by the writer.
Thus we find ready-made characters but no characterization.
The pair of Sukhada and Pandit Kantanath serves as a foil to the pair of the protagonist Pandit Priyanath and Priyamvada. Unlike Priyamvada, Sukhada’s views differ from the Sanantan dharma. But this leads her to pain and unhappiness and ultimately she realizes her folly and accepts Sanatan dharma. Presenting her acceptance of Sanantan dharma, Sukhada states:

Aapka joothan khane ko mil jaee aur aapki charan-seva, bas inke sivay mujhe ab kuch nahin chahiye.’ Vah ab yahan tak sambhal gai thi ki inki ichha na hone par bhi apni khushi se ghar ka kaam kaaj karti, inki aankh bachakar jis din inki dhoti dhone ke liye mil jaate apne ko krutarth samajhati. (Aadarsha Hindu Part II, p-51)

Apart from the remnants of your food and doing your service I do not wish for anything else.’ She had so much recovered that inspite of his unwillingness would happily perform the household chores and would consider herself fortunate if she could manage to save his eyes and wash his dhoti.

The work similar to most of the works of its age lacks relevant sub-plots and appropriate characterization. The character where some change is presented is Sukhada, the wife of Pandit Kantanath, the brother of the male protagonist, Pandit Priyanath. In her transformed state she accepts herself as a Hindu house-wife and tows the line of Sanantan dharma.

The writer even resorts to melodramatic and supernatural presentation of incidents to convince the readers into accepting Sanatan dharma. Thus when the virtuous Sanantan dharma abiding female protagonist, Priyamvada, is in the custody of the villain Ghurhu, who attempts to molest her, her rescue by the lathi yielding men is portrayed as a divine intervention. Presenting the incident, the novelist states:

Is tarah Soordasji ke pad ga-gakar jyonhi vah prarthana karne lagi na maloom kanha se aath dus lathaiton ne aakar us aadmi ki mushken kas leen. Kasne ke anantar laat aur ghooson se uski khoob khabar li. (Aadarsha Hindu Part-II, p-129-30)
From somewhere eight to ten lathi yielding men arrived just when she invoked God by reciting the verses of Soordasji. These men not only tied his arms to his back but also rewarded him with several kicks and blows.

Though the incident can be observed as a co-incidence, the novelist does attempt to give it a supernatural color or present it as poetic justice. The objective of spreading Sanantan dharma facing serious challenge from the contemporary social reformation organization has been the principal concern of the writer. Thus Ramchandra Tiwari avers:

Kishorilal Goswami, Lajjaram Sharma and Gangaprasad Gupt were supporters of Sanatan dharma. Though opposed to the new reformation movement of Arya Samaj these writers desired the establishment of the ethical view of life.

The novelist with his Sanatani bent of mind attempts to defend the orthodox Hindu culture from the onslaught of the social reformation organizations. As the Hindu religion was under attack from several sources, the approach of the writer is reactionary and as a defense mechanism shrinks within and closes self from accepting any other worldview. His concern for Sanatan dharma makes him totally indifferent to the novel form and in making the work interesting. Shivnarayan Srivastava avers:

Age chalkar isi sudharvadi dharre par Hindu Grihastha, Adarsha Dampati (1904), Bigde Ka Sudhar (1907), Adarsh Hindu (1915) aadi anek aur upanyas bhi Mehtaji ne likhe. Kalatmak drishti se inmen bhi koi vishesta nahin parilakshit hoti. (Hindi Upnya: Aitthasik Adhyayan p-37)

Later on the basis of the same reformation style Mehtaji wrote several other novels such as Hindu Gruhastha, Aadarsha Dampati (1904), Bigde Ka Sudhar (1907), and Adarsha Hindu (1915) among others. Artistically no speciality is observed in them too.
The writer employs language that is appropriate for adding authenticity to the incidents depicted. The Hindu characters are depicted speaking pure Hindi with some Sanskrit words sprinkled here and there. The language of the Muslim co-passenger in the train is Hindustani with Urdu words dominating. A Parsee co-passenger is portrayed speaking Gujarati but is presented in Hindi script and is intelligible to non-Gujarati speakers too. The co-passenger obsessed with English language and culture speaks more English words in his Hindi. The writer too resorts to several English words for wider communication. Will power, motto, refresh and government are some of the English words employed by the writer.

The novelist has thus paid more attention to the issues concerning Hinduism rather than the literary form of the work. Ignoring the form of the work, it authentically presents the contemporary Indian milieu. The writer not only discusses each and every significant issue of his time but also provides a Sanatani solution to them. Though his views are influenced by Sanatan dharma, one cannot deny the sincerity of the writer in dealing with the issues raised.

The Pre-Premchand Age consists of diverse literary works that are attempts to emulate the novel right from the initiating of the works from verse to limited prose such as *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* to *Shyamaswapna* wherein the novelist consciously claiming his work to be a novel but with several critics refuting the claims of the writer on the basis of the strong influence of the ancient narrative legend and the dominance of verse. The reformation tendencies and its reaction too are observed in *Bhagyawati* and *Aadarsha*
Hindu; though the reformation objectives differ in both the works. Bhagyawati is not religious reformation but spreading awareness of the contemporary world to the simple, illiterate or semi-literate rural women folk and bringing a reformation through emancipation and literacy. Aadarsha Hindu reveals the desperation of the contemporary orthodox class that feared the erosion of conventional values at the hands of the religious reformists.

Among the works written during this period only Pariksha Guru fits best into the category of the novel of the English kind wherein the writer shows awareness of the structure, plot, and characterization of the novel as well as its difference from the drama and the legendary narratives. Majority of the critics accepting it as the first novel in Hindi comes as no surprise.

Chandrakanta and Chandrakanta Santati do contain a sizeable characteristics of the novel but their tilt towards the amazing and the exciting world of magic and deception, an escape from the contemporary harsh realities, deviods them from being credited with the inclusion into the category of novel. Rather the tremendous popularity of Chandrakanta and Chandrakanta Santati change the direction of the Hindi prose from sociological realism to entertainment and a world of fantasy. But along with Aadarsha Hindu, Pariksha Guru and Bhagyawati it is closer to the novel in comparison to Rani Ketki ki Kahani because of its prose element. Shyamaswapna alone can be credited to be the first novel in Hindi of the Indian type with its prosaic verse qualities.
Though the last fortythree years of the nineteenth century form a natural period in Hindi literature, the literary instinct was not in abeyance during the five decades preceding this period. Till the age of Bhartendu Harishchandra (1857-1900) the Riti school (1643-1843), though perceptibly decaying, was still a living force. The stimulus towards decisive change came from the writers’ initiation into humanism and the determination of a few elect spirits to adopt the new language, Khari Boli, which was gradually replacing Brajbhasa, the language of the Hindi poetry for centuries. The emergence of Khari Boli, the language of the cultivated circles in and around Delhi, was one of the major contributions of the Mughal Empire to the progress and the efflorescence of the modern Hindi and the force behind the evolution of the Hindi literature.