CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF SHORT STORY WRITING IN HINDI AND URDU LITERATURES
A. DEVELOPMENT OF SHORT STORY IN HINDI LITERATURE

The first regular short stories in Hindi started appearing at about the beginning of the 20th century with the works of Kishorilal Goswami’s Indumati, Madhav Rao Sapre’s Ek tokdi bhar mitti, and Bang Mahila’s Dulaiwali, followed a little later by Chandradhar Sharma Guleri’s classic Usne Kaha thha. All these stories are characterized by tender emotions. The most important thing is that they move in a recognizable sphere of human relations.

But before the regular Hindi short story appeared there had been a period of preparation during which a change in outlook had gradually come about. There were tales of magic and wonder, and Arabic and Persian romances full of fantastic incidents and contrived situations. Besides, there were love-romances which had little of reality about them. Kishorilal Goswami (1865-1932) was a prolific writer of such romances, full of love-intrigues with manipulated plots. Various influences gave a social orientation to literature, such as Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj, national consciousness, western education, all laying stress on a more realistic portrayal of life.

Meanwhile, a new kind of story also began to appear imparting moral instructions, and bringing about a social reform. They spotlighted social evils and tried to correct them. As literature, most of them were, however, dull and insipid. The characters were not individualized; the complexities of human nature or of social situations were not explored; the plots were invariably contrived; and there was strong tendency to exhort and sermonize. Nevertheless, they clearly reflect the turn towards social consciousness.

Premchand (1880-1936) appeared on the literary horizon during the first decade of the twentieth century. His dynamism and deep social and political commitment, at once broadened the range and scope of Hindi story. In many ways he was a traditionalist. He adopted the narrative style of telling story, beginning with a long introduction, interspersed with the author’s comments and
moral reflections. His language was close to the spoken language of the people, drawing heavily on the popular idiom and turn of phrase.

Many of Premchand's stories moved among the poor sections of society. He gave very vivid, moving, and authentic pictures of the life of the lower strata of society. He interested himself largely with contemporary life, and gave voice to the dreams and aspirations of common people. With him, the Hindi short story entered, charged with great moral fervour, the larger sphere of social life and of the destiny of people as a whole. There is vibrant zest for life, deep optimism and intense human sympathy which make Premchand's stories eminently readable even today.

Jaishankar Prasad, drew his inspiration largely from India's past. His earliest collections Chhaya (1912) and Prartidhwani (1926) are the lyrical effusions of a romantic poet. The stories of Akashdeep (1929) are similar, but more matured. His later collections Aandhi (1931) and Indrajaal (1936), however, reflects the life of the common people; and are marked by deep human sympathy and understanding. Vishwambharnath Sharma Kaushik and Sudarshan, other notable writers of the time, dealt largely with urban life, and their stories were infused with national aspirations.

After Premchand, the idealistic note soon began to subside, and the manner of telling the story too changed, from the narrative to the dramatic. In the thirties the influence of the Marxist ideology and the other the post-war writings in Western literature began to be felt. The Marxist ideology defined the need to use literature as a weapon of social change. It was this sharpening of focus that gave a new dimension to the earlier socially-oriented, humanistic short story. Premchand's later works too reflect this change in outlook, but now it became well pronounced.

The other powerful influence was the First World War. It deeply affected the thinking of sensitive men. Consequently, traditional concepts came
to be questioned. In other words, it was the literature of the loss of faith. These two currents, though very different from each other, had something in common. Both were dissatisfied with the state of affairs, and felt the need for change. But whereas one put its finger on the root cause of human suffering and sought to overcome it through struggle and the establishment of socialist society, the other was bewildered at the sense of pain and shock, and sought refuge in metaphysics or the individual strivings for spiritual peace etc.

Post Premchand, we find in the Hindi short story both a continuation of the earlier traditions and a search for new avenues of expression. Jainendra, Agyeya, and Yashpal are three of the notable writers of this period. Jainendra’s mainly deals with his life’s philosophy. In Agyeya we sense, haunting questioning about the meaning of things and a sense of things falling apart.

There were some, like Ilachandra Joshi who dealt with man-woman relationship. There were also those, like Upendranath ‘Ashk’, Chandragupta Vidyalankar and Bhagwati Charan Verma, who kept the social perspective in view but did not necessarily, take into account the inner contradictions of society. Yashpal largely carried on Premchand’s tradition but he was more urban. He, however, laid greater stress on the class contradictions in society, and dealt with objective reality.

Thus the short story began to explore different regions of human existence and though structurally, the story became more compact, its general framework remained the same but it gained in poignancy and in depth, though not much in range. Independence and the years following produced younger writers who brought a marked change in the sphere of short-story writing. They were aware that free India was inheriting a legacy of many a social, economic and political problem, poverty, disease, over-population, corruption in public life, etc.
Hindi periodicals, notably Dharma yug and Saptahik Hindustan, and short story magazines like Kahani, Sarika, Nai kahanian etc. were brought out from big towns, where contributors were mostly young writers. The stories began to deal more with the middle and lower-middle class urban life and less with rural life. The story moved largely in the urban sphere dealing with unemployment among educated youth; strain on the joint family system; weakening of human ties under stress of life in a competitive society; strain on husband-wife relations and the consequent effect on children. The writers were increasingly critically skeptical. Some writers presented the situation in a negative, depressing manner, reflecting frustration. While some, described extra-marital relations, some others presented defeated, cigarette-smoking, brooding young men, full of self-pity and living in the dark world of despair.

Others like Harishankar Parsai and Sharad Joshi, wrote in a satirical vein. Side by side are stories of deep human interest, full of pathos, dealing with the life of the common people and their predicaments. On the one hand they reveal dehumanization and distortion of human values; on the other they show an intense sense of concern and sympathy for the suffering humanity.

The skepticism later developed into a further loss of faith in life, in human relations and in social causes. The past was looked upon as of no help or guidance and the future held no hope or promise. The story became more personal in character, very much like a confessional diary.

Nevertheless, it gave a new edge to aesthetic appreciation, made us more aware of the complexity of life and of the inner response of the individual to external reality.

There were, thus, two main trends during the 60s in Hindi short story writing- the socially oriented story and the story of alienation, etc. This discussion would be incomplete if we do not take into account the different ‘movements’ in the sphere of the short-story from mid-50s onward. They reflect
not so much the course of development of the short-story itself as the different attitudes that their sponsors have been taking towards the concept of the short story.

‘Nai Kahani’ (New story) is usually associated with three short storywriters, Mohan Rakesh, Rajendra Yadav, and Kamaleshwar. The new story goes straight to life, and gives precedence to life’s experience. In the ‘new story’, the ‘new’ did not connote modernity or any specialty, but to keep in step with the changing reality is to be ever new. These writers stressed on the social purposefulness of the story, on establishing wholesome social values, on cleaning our impulses, and linking us with the best in our tradition.

The new story is centered round the average common man. He is viewed as just a man. The new story thus confronts us with ‘man’s crisis.

The protagonists of ‘Sachetan Story’ emphasized the importance of ‘awareness’, or consciousness. The names of Maheep Singh, Narendra Mohan, Devendra Issar etc. are associated with this movement. The ‘conscious’ story is the story of active, conscious acceptance of life. Further, the unity between intellect and emotion was restored in the conscious story. In respect of the technique of the short story, the protagonists of the conscious story stand for the fullest freedom of making experiments in technique.

The ‘Samanantar Story’ (The parallel story) initiated by Kamaleshwar is the story of the common man, inducing him to struggle for his rights and for a better life. It is also called the story of the ‘common man’s context’. Further, the pity in the heart of the common must was not allowed to go dry; but converted into a an instrument for change. The Samanantar story therefore is the story that is involved in the common men’s struggle on a big scale.
Thus, in all these trends, we find an emphasis on the need to come closer
to life, to social reality, the need to take into account the environment in which
the individual is living and to enlarge the area of his awareness.

During the 1970s the general tenour of the story becomes sharper and
the note of protest in the socially oriented stories is more strongly heard. The
prominent names in this category are Nirmal Verma, Harishankar Parsai,
Krishna Baldev and Amar Kant. The predominant trend, however, is in some
form or the other the same which had been initiated by Premchand. The writer
also draws on the local dialect in his writing as a consequence of which the
diction, terminology and idiom of the Hindi story are enriched. Thus, in range
and sensibility, and in use of language and experiment with form and style, the
short story in Hindi shows immense growth and possibility.
B. DEVELOPMENT OF SHORT STORY IN URDU LITERATURE

Before going into the details of the development of short story writing in Urdu it would not be out of place to have a short insight into history of Urdu novels.

Ruswa is a landmark which no writer of the history of Urdu novels can miss. When he died in 1931, Urdu fiction had made a break from the past and Ruswa's own contribution had been considerable in imparting to it a sense of creative social realism through his masterpieces Umrao Jan Ada and Sharif Zadah. He was instrumental in stabilizing the structure and patterns of novel so that it could be recognized as a distinct and powerful art form and freeing it from the dastan and folklore traditions of story telling. Romantic impulses still troubled most of the novelists and were, in fact, driven to the extremes by Rashidul Khairi and the like, but in Ruswa these are tempered with objectivity which asserts itself whenever he feels the need for it. It fell to Premchand to give greater depth and apply a socially alert and analytical mind to the moulding of characters and planning of the story more coherently and meaningfully.

Premchand picked up the threads from where Ruswa had left and further enriched the novel. However, the preoccupation of the age was the short story rather than the novel. The translations from really talented writers like Sajjad Hyder Yildirim, Premchand and Sultan Hyder Josh published in widely circulated journals like the Zamana, Avadh Akhbar and Makhzan did a good deal to popularize modern fiction and to promote original writing. For long earliest short stories groped for style. Rashidul Khairi and Khwaza Hasan Nizami followed the abridge dastan or expanded fable style with feeble attempts at characterization or plot building that disclose no plan. With Sajjad Hyder Yildirim and Josh, the scene started changing rapidly. It was the pioneering work of these early writers that short story grew into the most popular form of fiction.
Among individual story writers who invite attention, Niaz Fatehpuri has been noticed earlier as a prose writer and journalist. He started writing short stories in the same florid vein as Yildirim but slightly varied his style when he mounted an attack on religious hypocrisy and bigotry. Sha’er ka Anjam and Shahab ki Sarguzasht are important in that these are more like novelettes. While his stories have a romantic aura, he does show an interest in analyzing the mental make-up of his characters but his romanticism frequently obstructs the analysis. Nigaristan, Jamalistan, Naqab uth Jane ke Ba’d and Mukhtasarat-e-Niaz are collections of his stories.

Sultan Hyder Josh was a contemporary who wrote many popular short stories, marked by wit, satire and humour, inducing a mood of self-examination of the ensnaring effects of blind imitation of Western ways of life and thought. The overall readability is the saving grace of his overworked style and covers up the technical flaws. He gave us a large volume of readable stories in the formative years of fiction. Two of his collections Afsanah-e-Josh and Fikr-e-Josh are worth mentioning.

Farman Fatehpuri has divided the development of the short story in Urdu into four phases—the first period 1900-1930; the second 1930-47; the third 1947-60 and the final phase 1960 onwards.

In the first phase of this development the dual trends of reformism and romanticism co-existed but the stories Yildrim, Niaz, Ahmad Shuja’, Majnoon, Josh, and Hijab Imtiaz were patently romantic. The veil of reformism which their characters wore was rather thin. In the works of Premchand the object of reform came to have ideological overtones. The purely reformist trend progressively assumed an actively patriotic role, with pronounced sympathy for the freedom struggle and finally, for social development. This was juxtaposed to the Western wave which soon passed.
Progressivism found a strong supporter in the short story during its second phase of development, stronger than even poetry of which the critics have said a lot more. In fact, it was the short story which heralded the birth of Progressivism. While the Progressive Writers' Association was born about four years later, Angare a collection of short stories exploded on the otherwise placid scene with a thunder.

Ahmad Ali, Sajjad Zaheer, Rashid Jahan and Mahmuduz zafar had their stories collected in this slim volume. Of these also only Rashid Jehan and Ahmad Ali stayed in on the field. They had repudiated, even ridiculed the well established traditional ideas on sex, social norms and rites and rituals in a rather uncontrolled and emotional manner. Nevertheless, they had served the purpose of awakening the average writers' intellect and observation to the surrounding chaos, social inertia and economic stagnation. The earliest group of short story writers had also touched upon the social theme but it gave the feel of a passing wave. They were ill at ease in finding their bearings because of the empty formalities and etiquette from which they could hardly tear themselves away.

The new group approached the subject fearlessly and placed it in the proper ideological perspective. Some of them got derailed into the stinking wilderness of sex perversities or obscenity. They believed that realism lay primarily in uncovering the ugly and the rotten. This distanced them from their historical context and, therefore, their social relevance. There were not many of them in any case and it did not take long to isolate them. Simultaneously, there was a parallel group of psycho analysts under the spell of Feud and Jung. This trend persisted for well over a decade. The majority, however, kept close to the Marxian concept of history's synthesizing role in the advancement of objective reality positive and progressive.

The third phase began after 1947. It was afflicted by an obvious disadvantage of the dispersal of short story writers into two distinct national groups. These groups were engrossed in the process of identification with a new
set of circumstances often disparate and inconsistent. The vast physical and mental destruction, created by the Second World War still stared the bewildered humanity straight into the eye and called for rehabilitation. The heart rending happenings of the post-Partition period added to the more serious problem of rehabilitation of the vast masses of people uprooted by communal carnage.

It shook the conscience of the sub-continent. The intelligentsia was stung by estrangement and loss of faith and the anguished pined for expression. The younger generation experienced the emotional upheavals, suffered from strung nerves and even lapsed into morbidity and nihilism. Throughout the sub-continent, the pre-Independence motivation of struggle against the foreign subjugation was taken over by the fight for social justice, economic development and democratic functioning. Notwithstanding the broad ideological affinities as expressed in the literature, a large section on both sides burnt with a sense of disillusionment. Behaviour and reaction became complicated and the writer found an easy cover in psychoanalytic interpretation of individual action and sentiments.