Chapter: 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction:

Story is the oldest form of literature. Though the world literature has a remarkable treasure of stories, India in particular has its own rich tradition of story literature. Gradually, the story elements and its treatment changed with the revolution in ideas, way of life and advancement in journalism. Consequently new forms of story emerged. However perfection in short story form is brought about by an amalgamation of American, Russian, French and British efforts. On parallel lines, Indian excellence did not lag behind in adopting and adapting the story form to the level of making it very much Indian. Despite regional diversity and variety of cultures short story form flourished in different languages holding outstanding similarities. Rabindranath Tagore, a legend of Bengali literature and a man of repute in Indian English literature and Dhoomketu, a pave-maker of Gujarati short stories, respectively belong to two extreme ends of Indian territory highlight interesting similarities in their selection of theme, character and philosophy.

Rabindranath Tagore had started short story writing in Bengal in such a way that many of the literary personalities came under his overwhelming influence. Similarly, Dhoomketu was the first to pave the way for short story writing in Gujarati literature. Though he also came under the influence of Tagore he successfully created his independent image of Kalpanavihari.

The present research is an appealing exploration comparing attitudes of the two authors, Rabindranath Tagore and Gaurishankar Govardhanram Joshi, ‘Dhoomketu’ keeping their contribution to the short story form in perspective. The reasons to promote this study are as follows:

a. Tagore had inherited outstanding intelligence and was from an affluent family while Dhoomketu was from an average family. However their observation of life carries strong parallels.
b. When Tagore was amusing Bengal through his stories with the objective of targeting social evils like dowry, child marriage, condition of widow, woman and wife in his sharp satirical tone, at the same time Dhoomketu was spreading the charm of short story in Gujarat by writing on social issues in his mild tone. Hence both the writers are contemporary.

c. The endeavour aims to prove that both the writers have adopted the western short-story form, adapted it in the Indian context by incorporating all the colourful elements like tragic, comic, horror, suspense, and thrill. Moreover, they are excellent in arousing sentiments.

d. It is also significant that both the writers have the backdrop of a village in many of their stories.

e. Both Rabindranath Tagore and Dhoomketu were profound thinkers and their ability to perceive truth in everyday life of the common people made them write stories. Thus the story, for them, became the medium of close contact with human nature. The essence of almost all the stories of Tagore and Dhoomketu carries the thought that Life is painful. Tagore himself defines his stories as, choto pran, choto byatha, choto choto duhkha-katha. (Radice 267)

f. Tagore has been explored as one of the best poets and a renowned novelist but not many have researched on the creative realistic dimension observed in his short stories. On the other hand, Dhoomketu’s regionality has universal appeal and this study will provide a transnational voice or language to Dhoomketu’s poetic sense which is comparable with Tagore’s short-stories.

g. The comparative study between the two Indian authors may open up a new vista of regional and cultural studies in India where diversity of languages have always given birth to a diversity of literatures.

Tagore’s writings preclude an unfathomable depth of transparent feelings. His poetic sense of beauty incessantly strikes the mind, heart and body. His poetry sublimes the reader while his stories shake up the human heart up to the level of
feeling. One can feel the incident, the freshness of the village setting and the oneness of the writer with the character. Tagore has poetically worded his idea of story in his poem *Passing Time In The Rain*,

Small lives, humble distress,
Tales of humdrum grief and pain,
Simple, clear straightforwardness;
Of the thousands of tears streaming daily
A few saved from oblivion;
No elaborate description,
Plain steady narration,
No theory or philosophy,
No story quite resolved,
Not ending at the end,
But leaving the heart uneasy.
All the world’s unnumbered
Stories never completed:
Buds unriply torn-
Dust of fame unsung,
The love, the terror, the wrong
Of thousands of lives unknown.

(Radice 270-271)

In this poem, Tagore has clearly stated that his stories are all about painful life (theme); his narrative technique is clear and straightforward; and his stories end without end which illustrates the hard core reality of life. Thus the writer does not philosophize but presents his point of view. This poem is also indicative of Tagore’s emphasis on human emotions. Similarly, Dhoomketu too has given importance to awakening of feelings and defined short story as,

..... Short story is a flash of light which presents a point of view, while doing it, it does not beat about the bush but directly points a finger towards inactive emotions of the readers creating the imaginative world and piercing the heart.

(Dhirubhai Thakar 100) Translation mine

(જે વીજળીના ચમકારાની પેઠ એક પ્રભિવડ્ધ રજુ કરતા કરતા લોકોની નીકલી જાય અને બીજી અત્યાચાર તંતુઓ વિના અંગગતિનિહિત કરીને સુખી લાગશીઓ જગાડી વાંચારની આસપાસ એક નઠી જ અલફાનિક સૂધી ધરી કાઢે એ હૂં માંદરી ચાલી.)
Dhoomketu’s definition of a short story emphasizes on simple and lucid narrative technique and creation of imaginative world which indicates fine blending of real and ideal action. Quintessentially, both the writers are viewing story as a medium to propagate values. The Britannica Guide to The World’s Most Influential People notices Tagore’s art of story writing in these words:

Most of his finest stories, which examine ‘humble lives and their small miseries’ date from the 1890s and have a poignancy, laced with gentle irony, that is unique to him. (Luebering 242)

In K.R.S. Iyengar’s opinion, Tagore’s short story has:

…. a sort of structure: there are characters and incidents: there is a suggested tangle of relationships: and there is a conclusion that, as it were, stings and consoles at once. Yet a good story is a living unity, not by virtue of these factors alone (or these chiefly), but rather by virtue of the indwelling soul; in other words, the idea that inspires and sustains the story…. With Tagore’s short stories the poetic flash is the main thing; it is the poet that sees the truth of things, the story–teller merely snapping the scene at the required angle. (108)

Similarly, Dhoomketu’s excellence in short story writing is remarkable and is considered a landmark in the Gujarati short story writing. Noted historian Dhirubhai Thakar said,

The entry of Dhoomketu in Gujarati Short story writing is very important phenomenon in history. (Dhirubhai Thakar 93) Translation mine

Dhoomketu wrote almost 492 stories. Among these some of the stories have world class excellence. Snehrashmi a distinguished Gujarati writer considers Dhoomketu as the father of Gujarati short stories. (qtd. in Sharma and Oza 36) Gujarati Sahitya no Itihas notices that,

Dhoomketu was a leading personality among the creators of short story who transformed the short story form into a national highway from a small path. (Gujarati Sahitya no Itihas 513) Translation mine
Thus, Dhoomketu is one who has carved a niche for Gujarati literature among Indian literatures. Dhoomketu’s wide range of themes and its treatment; his close observation of life; his beautiful description of nature scattered in the words of stories; his imagination and his minute emotional sensitivity; his style, diction and command over language are remarkable characteristics that could easily find comparison with the best in world literature.

One of the remarkable characteristics of the writing style of Tagore and Dhoomketu is lyrical quality of their stories. One notices that the purity of emotions exemplified by the characters, fragrant fresh description of nature and brevity and exactness of expression take the story at the height of lyric. An eminent Gujarati writer Umashankar Joshi has appreciated the lyrical quality of Dhoomketu’s stories (Umashankar Joshi 96). Another distinguishing attribute of the short stories of Tagore and Dhoomketu is that both of them advocated for independence of women.

Women characters in the short stories of Tagore and Dhoomketu represent women of the late nineteenth century India, struggling to be treated as human beings. They are conscious beings who fight against the male dominated society not because they are women and the other are male but because they are human and they want to be treated like humans. So there is a touch of feminism found in the stories of both the writers. Obviously the tone is different. The traits of the women characters of both the writers can be delineated as follows:

a) The women characters are creating the image of the female hero.

b) They are not against man but they are against illogical domination of man. In fact they are complimenting man, supporting them for a better life.

c) They oppose stereotype gender role and discrimination against women, particularly images of women as passive, weak, and physically helpless.

d) They respect womanliness and value themselves as dignified beings.

Hence, women characters too have become focus of the study. The study does not have any specific feministic approach in the analysis of the women characters in the short stories. In fact, the study supports the idea that our existence on earth
transcends the laws established by man and society and therefore a life led in a natural environment devoid of all forms of social evils and restrictions would eventually help man in manifesting his true nature and thereby lead to the creation of a society that does not encourage domination at any level. Nature keeps the things in balance. Anything in excess is not desirable for the betterment of the society. And therefore, woman cannot be studied in isolation. Everything is interrelated and that is why for better environment and culture women must be treated as human beings. Kundanika Kapadiya has accurately given voice to woman’s cry:

I am not only a body, I have heart also and I also have thoughts.

(30) Translation mine

Before we go into the discussion of the contribution of Tagore and Dhoomketu in introducing and balancing all the elements of a short story to the extent making it a living soul, let’s take a look into the worldwide endeavour in perfecting the short story elements and form. Short story as a form was planted and nurtured by many great literary personas in the world; the discussion demands the mention of their stalwart figures whose domination and contribution still have remarkable impact on story writing. The following discussion will see the development of short-story form in the context of India and the world.

1.2 Short story: The Indian Context

India has had its own rich tradition of narrative tales and fables right from the Vedic times onwards. H.H.Wilson says that “Hindu literature included collections of domestic narratives of an extent surpassing that of any other people and of an antiquity at the least exceeding similar compilations in any oriental tongue”. (qtd. in. Singh R.S. 136). In effect, the systematic study of the story can be meditated through the phase-wise development of Indian literature:

a) The first phase of Indian literature occupies a long period, from about 2000 BC to 1000 AD and begins after the advent of the Aryans.

b) The second phase occupies the period from around 1000 AD to 1800 AD. It was around 1000 AD that the modern Indian languages emerged as
developed vehicles of literature, except for Tamil whose literature can be traced to the 1st century BC.

c) The third phase begins from around 1800 AD after India came under the overwhelming influence of the western civilization due to the consolidation of British power and introduction of the British education system in India.

Among all literary forms the story was already in existence in the form of folklore which was in the oral form. *Panchatantra* is a masterly attempt at uniting popular fables about beasts, birds and human and non-human beings into a pattern that would turn even children who are weak in mind into experts on public affairs. *Panchatantra* is politics with genuine policies. The *Jatak Kathas*, the tales of the Buddha’s past incarnation in Pali languages incorporated much folklore material. Gunadhyya produced a masterpiece *Brihat katha*; Somdev’s *Kathasaritsagar* and Kshemendra’s *Brihat kathamanjari* in Sanskrit also preserve the tale tradition. Later during the Gupta period, one can find works like *Vikram Vetal, Sinhasan Batisee* etc.

Thus the story is the mother of all the later literary development in forms but story as a form was adopted and adapted by the Indians in original Indian settings with character, plot, incident, creating the single effect with proper management of time. The Indian English short story began its history towards the close of the nineteenth century with the publication of Kamla Satthianandan’s stories in 1898. Further attempts however were sporadic although the short story genre had come into fashion. Y.K.S.Venkataramani and K.Nagarajan take up an important place. Venkantaramani contributed two collections of short stories under the title *Paper Boats* (1921) and *Jatadharam* and other stories (1937), while Nagarajan created a single volume called *Cold Rice* (1945).

Besides these two, the other most important writer of the early twentieth century was Rabindranath Tagore. The short story in Bengali and Indian English was invented by Tagore. Tagore started his short story writing in 1891 and continued almost to his death, he wrote over ninety stories (Radice 1). Some of them contained universal appeal. Anita Desai wrote of them: ‘Almost every story contains enough
observation to fill a novel. (Dutta and Robinson 265) Satyajit Ray judged them to be ‘among the best stories ever written.’ (Dutta and Robinson 265).

With the publication of *The Lost child and other stories* (1934) of Mulk Raj Anand in the mid thirties of the twentieth century an era of short story in its proper form began. The efforts were supplemented by Manjeri Iswaran, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao. Mulk Raj Anand gave voice to poor people’s day to day life, their complexities and conflicts. His story became the medium to strike at the decayed and inhuman social customs of the feudal society, powerful patriarchy, child marriage, and cruelty in education.

R.K.Narayan’s *Swami and friends* (1935) became a landmark in creating an imaginative setting of Malgudi - a village, and his insight into child psychology.

Raja Rao captured mostly social and political scenes in his short stories. His well-known works are *The Cow of the Barricades and other stories* (1947) and *Police man and the Rose* (1978). The remarkable feature of Raja Rao’s stories is use of myth.

After independence some remarkable names in story writing are Khushwant Singh, K.A.Abbas, Manohar Malgonkar, Ruskin Bond.

As the study demands to look into the development of Gujarati Literature the following sub-point is a glance towards development of short stories in Gujarati Literature.

### 1.2.1 Short Story: The Gujarati Context

The Gujarati Short Story emerged with the efforts of K.M.Munshi, Ranjitram Mehta and Dhansukhlal Mehta—the main writers before the Gandhian era. They were pioneers but none mastered the art as did Dhoomketu, who shot into fame in 1923 when his story *Post Office* appeared in the magazine *Sahitya*. His first collection of stories, *Tankha* (1926) was published three years later. During the next ten years four more volumes appeared in quick succession. He chose people of low strata as characters of his stories. He wrote some of the finest stories in the language which contains sentimental idealism in them. The stories of Ramnarayan Pathak (pseudonym
Dvireph, 1887-1955) strongly contrast with Dhoomketu’s sentimentalism. Dvireph, a Gandhian and a writer of philosophical disposition had basically a more intellectual outlook towards life. Some of his stories on harijan and evils of drinking, rather didactic in tone, written under the impact of Gandhi reflect the temper of the period. Ramanlal Desai (1887-1954), also tried his hand in short story. But the major writer of the period is Jhaverchand Meghani (1897-1947) who integrated his experience of the folk life into Gujarati literature. Besides, Sundaram and Umashankar Joshi are also remarkable names in the field of short story writing. Jitubhai Mehta and Bakulesh (1910-57), both Marxist writers, made the short story a weapon for the propagation of political ideology. Pannalal Patel (1912-89) joined the fight and some of his stories written under the influence of the Marxist thought, such as Pithinun Padikun (A Packet of Tamarind, 1949), or National Saving (1943), contributed to the growth of political stories in Gujarati.

1.1 Short Story: The Western Chapter

Story has its rich tradition across the geographical boundaries. The west is rich with Aesop’s Tales and The Arabian Nights. And in English literature verse form of stories can be traced back to Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. In Italy, however, Chaucer’s friend Boccaccio had written his own tales, contained in the Decameron in prose with much greater success. But the present modern short story form can be studied through the following phases:

a) The first period is 1350-1800 during which sporadic efforts to write stories were done. (Pre-Modern)

b) The second period is from 1800-1919. (Modern) The inventors of short story form in its modern sense belong to this period. Like Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe etc.

c) The third period is from 1919 onwards. Due to the two world wars, the entire scenario of story writing came under the influence of Albert Camus, Kafka and Existentialism. The major theme of the story writing during this period was the changing equations of relationships. (Post-Modern)
The short story, as a form of literature, originated in the West. Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, the noted American short story writers perfected the short story form. It is said that the concept of the short story originated in Russia but because of the language problem the stories of Russia got its recognition later than English.

The world of short story is interesting as the people who have left their footprints in the sands of time have become immortal through the art they have surpassed in telling the short story. However, the study of the short-story form will remain incomplete without visualizing the western parameters observed in the stories of Tagore and Dhoomketu.

1.3.1 Short Stories: The American Context:

It is said that the short story form originated in America. The first impulse came from Washington Irving. He brought the art of characterization as well as the presentation of moods. The other writers were Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe who displayed a rare technique of handling situations. Edgar Allan Poe’s (1809-1849) conscious effort towards identifying the real essence of short story in its infant form is remarkable. Poe was particularly remarkable for the creation of atmosphere, and very often succeeded in transporting his readers to realms far removed from reality. His effort together with American journalism gave boost to the development of the short story form. His control over the mind of the reader was fantastic, his words rule over the real. His *Fall of the House of Usher* is an excellent example of Poe’s genius. For him story is,

In the brief tale, however the author is enabled to carry out his full design without interruption. During the hour of perusal, the soul of reader is at the writer’s control. A skilful artist has constructed a tale. He has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents, but having deliberately conceived a certain single effect to be wrought, he then invents, such incidents, he then combines such events and discusses them in such tone as may best serve him in establishing his preconceived effect. If his very first sentence tends not to the out-bringing of this effect, then in his very first step he has committed a blunder. In the whole composition there should be no word written of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. (qtd. in Pathak 19-20)
Besides single effect or single impression his stories also open a new insight in the field of mind analysis of the character. Poe’s short stories dictated rules for generations of short story writers.

Another noteworthy name in American short story is Nathaniel Hawthorne, who wrote stories as a weapon to spread moral values in the society. His *Twice Told Tales* a collection of short stories is remarkable. Dr. Heidegger’s experiment is a beautiful piece of thrilling incident revealing moral at the end. Hawthorne’s story has perfect balance of artistic beauty and Poe’s story has single impression or effect. Hawthorne’s special gift was the achievement of realism; he presented before us men and women who seemed to come out of the stories moving in front of the eye of readers. Story, characters, background and style together hold the reader in such a way that it intoxicates the brain of a reader. Thus he started to write the story not to preach but as an artistic piece. The outstanding ability of the writer lies in the skill of responding and reacting towards the revelation of mystery of the incident.

1.3.2 Short-Story: The European Context:

In Europe, Short stories have been tried by many like Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), as in *Wandering Willies Tale*, Mrs. Gaskell (1810-1865), as in *The Squire’s Story*, Charles Dickens (1812-1870), as in *The Bagman’s Story*. Although many Europeans tried their hand in short story but nobody took care to develop short story as a literary form. R.L.Stevenson was the first to give creative shape to short story in Europe. He continued with the single effect or impression as the heart of story. R.L.Stevenson’s *Will of the Mill* - a satire on tedious life is a significant work.

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) is also noteworthy. Most of his stories have an Indian background. He chose British officers working in India and imposing their authority on Indians. The European short story was a toddler in the hands of Kipling. H. G. Wells added scientific element to the stories. His stories are related to science, as if his words sit on the clouds of imagination adding an element of surprise in such a way that logic cannot question. H. G. Wells has appropriately defined the short story:
Insistence upon rigid forms and austere unities seems to me the instinctive reaction of sterile against the fecund….I refuse altogether to recognize any hard and fast type for the short story, any more than I admit any limitation upon the liberties of the small picture.

(qtd. in Pathak 134)

Thomas Hardy’s discerning sense in the story brought short story near to lyric. Katherine Mansfield was able to portray a sentient character in a few pages. *Doll’s House* and *Garden Party* are the two prominent examples of a writer’s profound understanding of child psychology. *The Fly* is another illustration of her bizarre study of mind in which a deep and dark truth is put in the simile between a man and a fly. Arrow like incidents and true depiction of inner world of characters are the two main characteristics of Mansfield.

Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) emphasizes upon the point of view. His stories are in the first person narrative. He does not care for Poe’s single effect; for him an interesting narrative technique is the most important device in short story writing. He says,

…that many of my short stories are written in first person singular. That is literary convention as old as hills…its object is of course to achieve credibility….

(qtd. in Pathak 166)

1.3.3 Short Story: The French Context:

Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) (5 August 1850 – 6 July 1893) was a popular 19th-century French writer. He is considered one of the fathers of the modern short story and one of the form's finest exponents. Maupassant's stories are characterized by their economy of style and conclusion. Many of the stories are set during the Franco-Prussian War of the 1870s and several describe the futility of war and the innocent civilians who, caught in the conflict, emerge changed. He authored some 300 short stories. The story *Boule de Suif* ("Ball of Fat", 1880) is often accounted his masterpiece.
1.3.4 Short story: The Russian context:

Gogol’s (1809-1852) *Over Coat* brought such a success in the literary world of Russia that it led Fyodor Dostoyevsky to speak,

*All of us are born from the Over coat of Gogol.*

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Overcoat)

His short stories suggest that they are the descriptions of *experience*. Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) is also a name of fame in the sphere of the short story. Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) the most popular short story writer and a legend has gifted a tremendous piece of work in the form of story to the world literature. He has written almost 800 stories and started the age known as *Mood of Chekhov*. The sorrowful mood of Chekhov has left an irremovable imprint in literature. His *Ward no.6, The Bet, Death of a Clerk* and many more, are unforgettable pieces of art. His stories are character centered. Live characterization, lucid style, poetic sense, shades of laughter sprinkled with sorrow - these characteristics make his stories a living entity. Chekhov had at first written stories only for financial gain, but then his artistic sense crossed the boundary of needs and he invented such techniques which gave boost to the evolution of the modern short story. His originality consists in an early use of the stream-of-consciousness technique, later adopted by James Joyce and other modernists.

Gerhart Hauptmann, a German author used short story – *Novelle*, a typically German genre to explore philosophical thoughts.

1.4 Contribution of Tagore:

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was among the pioneers of that global sea change in attitudes, the man who recognized the truth of interpenetration of human life with cosmic life of the world. Tagore has remarked that human nature is everywhere the same. Tagore always knew that it was the individual, in all his or her lonely mystery that mattered most. His profound understanding of human nature is reflected in his writing. By the end of Nineteenth century, Tagore had been already acclaimed as a fine writer of short stories and the new genre had become very much
native. The three volume collection of short stories of Tagore entitled *Galpguchha* contains 84 stories, the last of which was written in 1933. Tagore also wrote three more stories collected in *Tin Sangi* (1941). He also wrote several fables and allegorical tales, among which the most notable and also most powerful is *Tota Kahini* written in 1918 against the recommendation of Sadlar Commission. He himself translated the story into English. When his stories began to be published in English he became one of the most popular and influential short story writers making a significant impact on many writers in other languages.

Undoubtedly there were precursors of Tagore to experiment with the form but he was the first to realize its potentiality and to acquire mastery of the art. For him it was not the story but the mood and the movement; a slice of life, a vignette of the moving and changing panorama which became important. He did not have any particular model before him though attempts have been made to discover affinities between his stories and Chekhov’s. This is a new form of art that emerged out of an authentic experience of rural India. He started with small happiness and small sorrow, the smiles and tears, the trifling and the ordinary as the ingredients and created stories of feeling.

In the first ten years of the Twentieth century, Tagore exploited the new form so deftly that it was transformed into a major literary genre. It did not remain only narrative of single moments or of simple problems but matured into records of complex problems. *Nasta Nid* is the finest study of man-woman relationship, a tragedy in miniature.

After 1912, the nature of Tagore’s stories is different from the stories of the earlier period not only in technique but in mood. The later stories deal with middle class life and its problems. The stories also depict cowardice of Hindu husband in the stories like, *Aparichita, Payla Number, A Wife’s letter*.

The most powerful story written by Tagore in this period is *Strir Patra (A Wife’s Letter)* - a manifesto of protest by a woman. The protest in *Strir Patra (The Wife’s Letter)* is through the voice of the Woman Mejo-Bou,
Among the love stories *Ek Ratri*, and *Sampati*, reveals both poetry and psychology - a perfect combination of beauty and emotions.

Some stories of Tagore are still unsolved. He exploited the mysterious corner of human mind by keeping some of his stories incomplete; *Didi* (Elder sister) is a simple example of it. Some of his stories are good pieces of showing intensive relation between man and nature. His intuition rules over the rationalism in perceiving the reality of life. He has the soul of the poet and that is also the soul of these stories, perhaps uncomplicated but immensely and genuinely poetic in the successful creation of mood.

Tagorean imagination also dug supernatural elements marvelously; Stories like *Sampattidan* (Return of Property) where a skeleton of a woman comes back to become the partner of her husband’s thought substantiates man’s knowledge of unknown. In *Nihithe* the voice of the dead woman crying to the husband, who has married again, opens up psychological study. Tagore is at his best in his story, *The Hungry Stones*, combining mystery and imagination. It is also remarkable for rationality in the narration.

Tagore has been compared to such masters of the short story form as Edgar Allan Poe, Anton Chekhov, and Guy de Maupassant. Tagore's short fiction is often set in the rural villages of Bengal and is peopled by characters from the underprivileged sections of society, reflecting Tagore's commitment to social realism in prose. Many of Tagore's short stories also include elements of the supernatural and bizarre. The celebrated Indian film director Satyajit Ray has adapted several of Tagore's short stories into movies.

Many of these tales are concerned with marital relationships and the various forms of estrangement and conflict between husband and wife. A *Wife's Letter* is narrated by a woman writing to her husband describing the many injustices imposed upon married women. In the tale *Vision* a woman goes blind after which her husband begins to neglect her and falls in love with a young girl. *The Skeleton* portrays a man
who engages in dialogue with the ghost of a skeleton used in classroom demonstrations.

The modern short story is Rabindranath Tagore's gift to Indian culture. Sukumar Sen says that:

*Tagore is the first writer of the true short story in Bengali (1891) and he has remained the best.*

(Iyenger 67)

Many of Tagore's short stories became available in English after he had gained international acclaim as the Nobel Prize winning poet of *Gitanjali.* He works out the emotional possibilities of different human relations. The following passage is a very good example of lyrical grandeur which gives a poetic expression to the feelings of the orphan girl and those of the postmaster.

*It was a fine afternoon in the rainy season. The breeze was softly warm; there was a smell of sunshine on wet grass and leaves. Earth’s breath – hot with fatigue seemed to brush against the skin. A persistent bird cried out monotonously somewhere, making repeated and pathetic appeals at Nature’s midday durbar. The postmaster had hardly any work: truly the only things to look at were the smooth, shiny, rain-washed leaves quivering, and the layers of sun-whitened, broken-up clouds left over from the rain. He watched, and felt how it would be to have a close companion here, a human object for the heart’s most intimate affections. Gradually it seemed that the bird was saying precisely this, again and again; that in the afternoon shade and solitude the same meaning was in the rustle of the leaves. Few would believe or imagine that a poorly paid sub-postmaster in a small village could have such feelings in the deep, idle stillness of the afternoon.*

(Radice 44-45)

Thus, Tagore peeped into the relationships of man and man, man and nature and man and woman; observed the reality with direct emotional experience and feeling and presented it in front of the readers. Krishna Kripalani has judged Tagore in following words,

*Tagore’s genius was of a different order. He achieved success not by a forced adaptation of foreign models or by ministering to popular sentiments, but by his own uniquely creative*
response to the impulse of the age. He made no herculean effort to pour Indian contents into Western moulds, but let himself browse freely and without compulsion or inhibition on whatever suited his genius on the classical, medieval and folk tradition of his own land and on whatever foreign pasture came his way, with the result that the reflective grandeur of the Upanishads, the chaste sensuousness of Kalidasa, the lyrical abundance of Vaishanv devotion, and the rustic virility of the folk idiom are some well blended with western influences in his poems and songs, his stories and dramas, that generation of academic pundits will continue to wrangle over his specific debt to each or any of them.

(Krishna Kripalani 49)

Thus, having discussed Tagore’s qualitative contribution to the genre we would discuss Dhoomketu’s contribution in Gujarati Literature.

1.5 Contribution of Dhoomketu:

Gaurishankar Joshi (1892-1965) was popularly known in the literary world as Dhoomketu. He was a versatile genius who tried his hand in almost all the literary genres. He used to write poetry under the penname of Vihari and some poems have been written under the name of Pagal (mad). Dhoomketu started writing short stories in periodicals and journals. In 1923, the story Post office was published in the journal Sahitya. The story was published without the name of the writer but it gave a solid direction to Gaurishankar for short story writing. In 1926, his first collection of short stories entitled as Tankha was published which was welcomed by literature lovers with peals of enthusiasm. The publication of the book also placed Dhoomketu among the best short story writers. The writer has produced almost 24 short story collections; his last story collection is Chhello Zabkar. Thus Dhoomketu has secured a name in the world of Gujarati literature especially in the short story genre which was getting its new form. The quality contribution of Dhoomketu in Gujarati literature led Umashankar Joshi to speak,

(Quoted in Nitin Vadgama 6)
The literary form of the short story was planted and consolidated in Gujarati literature by Dhoomketu.

Translation mine

While discussing short story form Dhoomketu emphasized on **moderate length** and **interest** as the two main ingredients of the short story. He also included importance of sound **Dhwani - Vyanjana** (the power of words) in the short story. With reference to the origin of the short story, Dhoomketu said that the story was born with the birth of language. According to him, short story wakes up imagination and emotions and leaves the sound of the thing which it wants to say. Dhoomketu has contributed number of collection of short story - Tankhamandal-1 (1926), Tankhamandal-2 (1928), Tankhamandal-3 (1932), Avshesh (1932), Pradip (1933), Tanakhamandal-4 (1936), Malika Ane Biji Vartao (1937), Tribheto (1938), Akashdeep (1947), Parishesh (1949), Vanchhaya (1949), Pratibimb (1951), Vanrekha (1952), Jaldeep (1953), Vankunj (1954), Vanrenu (1956), Mangaldeep (1957), Chandrarelka (1959), Nikunj (1960), Sandhyarang (1961), Sandhyatej (1962), Vasantkunj (1964), Chhello Zabkaro. Dhoomketuni Shreshtha Vartao (1958) and Dhoomketuna Vartaratno (1966).

Dhoomketu has brought forth different incidents that keep on occurring in the life of common persons (especially woman characters). The character of Mallika in the story **Mallika** has become unforgettable due to her devotional and selfless love towards her husband which becomes ageless. The character of Champa in the story **Grihtyag** is symbolic of the suppressed voice of women since times immemorial; Ali in the timeless story **Post office**; Bhaiyadada in **Bhaiyadada**, and the character of Hasan in **Chowkidaar** – all leave a long lasting impression on the mind of readers. Dhoomketu excels in creating an ordinary emotion in an extra-ordinary way. The characters themselves speak their own language. There is lucidity of incidents. The writer is the master of making reality. The scenes are not created. They create themselves spontaneously. The rhythm of emotion is like a poem or a song spreading its own melody by melodious pain. As the writer has selected his theme from all kinds of **Rasa** it generates a rainbow of emotions coloured with reality. Dhoomketu ponders over the form of a short story and says:
Short story is as beautiful as Tulsiramayan’s couplets (duha), outstanding feature of it lies in its entirety, it is like that kind of embroidery from which if one pearl is taken away from the thread, it leads to unweave entire patch of work.

(Pradeep 1) Translation mine

The pastoral setting in the stories of Dhoomketu brings in universal themes clad with reality. Some of the stories also contain Gandhian philosophy in recreating villages and making it a model for others. Ordinary man and woman with their simplicity of life, their happiness dipped in the dignity and village have become the central theme of the stories like Post office, Bhaiyadada, Govind nu Khetar, Lakhmi, Jivansangeet and Bhabhi.

Dhoomketu also advocated for the abolition of untouchability. That is why he mingled his ideas in the theme he selected to propagate the idea of a free Indian. He took up the problems of the common people fighting against destiny to sustain them; Janmabhoomi no Tyag is one such story in which Vaghji Mochi (a cobbler) is forced to leave the place from where he had been earning since years. As such there was natural attachment between him and that place. At the end of the story he dies due to unemployment which resulted in severe poverty and starvation and also his longing for the place where he used to work. He had spent some very beautiful moments at that place with his wife; his contentment is also remarkable - the person who was just earning his daily food and happily leading his life. Anandratri is another such story where the story is based on the newly married wife beginning her household with her husband in harsh poverty while Hriday Palto portrays a strange face of a woman. Thus most of the stories of Dhoomketu are created on the land of reality but if the characters are seen from the eyes of the writer, they are portrayed with intense humility only.

In Dhoomketu, one eye of the writer is observing the reality of life while the other is contemplating about an abundance of emotions and feelings in human life. Thus, most of the stories of Dhoomketu are dipped in the emotions like love, friendship, freedom, culture, devotion towards beauty, love for art, love for untouchables, motherhood, sacrifice, penitence, service, devotion, dedication, tolerance, faithfulness and affection. It also contains liking towards villages, love for
nature, disparity between rich and poor, complexity of marriage life, human nature, etc.

During his literary career, Dhoomketu tried his hand in all the genres of literature but he became distinguished in the form of short story and that is why Umashankar Joshi appreciated his qualitative endeavour in these words:

श्रीधूमकेतु अद्वितीयताने उमेदकाव्योनी लक्ष्यलग लाली मु स्वीकारी।  
(Umashankar Joshi 76)

(Dhoomketu has raised the short story to the level of lyrics).

The description from the story The Letter supports the above statement.

The sky was darker now and the cold more intense, for the wind was blowing straight along the road, on which there fell, like frozen snow, only the faint light of the morning star.

(Best Loved Indian Stories 2)

These lines are suggestive of the condition of the mind of the main character of the story Ali. His life had become dark and cold due to loneliness and old age. His life had also become lifeless and inactive but the ray of hope (Faint light of the morning star) is his daughter’s letter and that is why he was going regularly to the post office to collect the letter since the last five years. Thus, by his creative genius, Dhoomketu brought those elements which literary people wished for. Consequently, the collection of the short stories of Dhoomketu entered the world of literature with commotion. Kanaiyalal Munshi, a great novelist in Gujarati Language, acknowledged Dhoomketu’s quality in these words:

धूमकेतु विशिष्ट गृहवतावाला सर्व के अभिलक्षयों महकान्ते जीत जीतनो ऊक्लास खुट थाय अद्वा तत्वो के भो रहस्य माफ़त अतुरास गमे त्यांती पाप्त थाय सोनर्य प्रेतेनो सानुक्रृत प्रतिवाद वौधिक कुतु हल्ल जीतनी वास्तविकतानी रंगेंहिंदाम मनवर्तन के अथी कल्पना अने जीम प्राप्त थाय के... अभिलक्षयों अभिलक्षयी तेमज अभिलक्षयी
Dhoomketu is a creator of distinguished quality. His works are mostly enriched with elements from which sprout zeal of life; and through it illuminates passion for mystery, flexible reaction towards beauty, logical wonder and also imagination and warmth to change reality of life into art. Moreover, his style is rich with variety of expression and literary beauty.

This is how Dhoomketu creates life in momentary action. He successfully describes the beauty of the Himalayan ranges and village life. His power of observation is marvelous. All his short stories effectively portray the persons as characters that he has personally encountered in his life. Similarly, the scenic beauty is disseminated in abundance in his stories. His imaginative power and microscopic sensitiveness to feel the incident was extraordinary.

The language used by Dhoomketu has positive force. Some of his short stories contain creative prose writing and lucidity is the hallmark of his language. The occasional appearance of ornamentation increases the beauty of prose. The magnificence of the short story lies in the similarity in the spontaneity of feelings in the stories and the beauty of lyrics. The lyrical quality of the short story gives space to the protagonists of the stories to express themselves fully in their dilemma without any forceful bondage.

Dhoomketu was a man of free imagination but he utilized his power of imagination to empathize with his fellow human beings. Thus his stories have many characteristics that draw parallels with the stories of Tagore. Tagore views on Dhoomketu’s creation are as follows:
Yes, Dhoomketu has created an atmosphere. He has given expression and artistic shape to the emotions of heart and has given voice to ideals. He set values of life devotionally which resulted into creation of atmosphere - of warmth not of passion.

(qtd. in Sharma and Oza 77) Translation mine

Having made an effort in the first chapter to introduce the subject of the present thesis by scientifically making a survey of the origin and development of the short story form of literature, in and out of India and placing Tagore and Dhoomketu’s contribution in perspective, an outline of the subsequent chapters is provided to justify the comparison of both the writers.

The second chapter is an endeavour to systematically examine the major themes in the short stories of Tagore and Dhoomketu, which among others includes the condition of woman, the place of woman in society, life, love, man-woman relationships. It seems that both the writers have a feeling of respect and pity for woman and therefore most of the stories of both the writers are women oriented. Woman is woman and is expected to behave as a woman in all corners of the world. Their condition is same though the degree of the standard of living is different. So it is woman who becomes the victim of a male dominated society one or the other way and it is her life which goes through a painful journey. The society affects a woman more than a man. Society is made up of woman and man and so both are discussed on equal planes. However, since long as the society has been walking with the ideology of men, therefore more space, in recent times, has been provided to women than men. But, in the race of equality women are forgetting their value systems which would greatly affect the society and man-woman relationships in the longer run. And therefore the approach of the present study is to favour the logical stand of women.

The third chapter will discuss characters of the short stories. Both Tagore and Dhoomketu have very carefully infused life inside their characters within a very short plot. This incarnation of characters is no more a need of the plot but they appear naturally. This chapter will discuss some of the prominent characters in comparison.

The fourth chapter will compare the philosophy of the two writers. The outstanding quality of the two writers is to propagate human values through short story with a pragmatic approach. Both Tagore and Dhoomketu have used the short
story to spread **morality**. So this chapter will examine the point of view of the writers through their characters’ actions and reactions and the impacts of incidents on their lives. Most of the characters of Tagore and Dhoomketu do not take refuge in complaining to God or talking in terms of personal gain. They have their own **point of view of life** and they just live it at their best. They even do not believe in the philosophy of predestination. On the contrary they firmly believe that it is man who is ultimately responsible for his actions.

The fifth and concluding chapter will discuss similarities and dissimilarities of the two writers in the treatment of theme and character, mood, and style of presenting the incidents and the point of view. Finally, a list of the findings would be stated.
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