The evolution of Prasada's mind and art.

A close study of the various literary works of Prasada clearly reveals that there were four distinct stages in the evolution of his mind and art.

Ist stage 1906 - 1915.

IInd stage 1921 - 1925.

IIIrd stage 1926 - 1929.

IVth stage 1932 - 1936.

Ist stage 1906 - 1915. (The stage of inquisitiveness).

Though as a gifted child Prasada also began to compose Hindi verses at an early age of 6, but his systematic literary activities commence from 1906.

The following works belong to this period:

1. Chitrardhara.
2. Mahabharata Ka Mahatva.
3. Kanaka Kusuma
4. Prema Pothika.
5. Kalyani Perinas.
7. Indu, a high class Hindi monthly.
8. Sashama.

I C. Rajya Shree. (a play of Hershewramohan period).

In Chitrardhara we find a collection of those stories, poems, and short plays which he wrote at an early age. One simply marvels on reading his stories like Urvashi, Jyothi Vehena couched in a new style in which prose is intermingled with melodious songs, and thus appear more like a dramatic piece than a mere narration. In Ayodhya Ka Udhara Vena Milena, and Prema Rajya we find a new style of writing historic events in poetry.
II.

In Sajana, and Prayashchitta, etc. we find him laying foundation of one act plays, which are so popular in these days.

In the poems collected under the heading of Prage, Jharna, Kenan Kusuma, and Prema Patni, he has struck entirely a new note, both in style and thought.

In the domain of essays he has displayed his budding intellect in the form of a few essays as Saroja, Bhakti and Prakriti ka Saundarya, etc.

He also introduced a new technique in the art of short story writing. His first story Grama appeared in 1911 in the Indu, and the other stories of this period are collected in Chhaya. The II stories reveal how he has evolved a new style in fiction by the judicious combination of plot, events, characters, and other essential elements into one.

Besides these works he continued writing for the various Hindi Magazines as Saraswati and Hariek Chandrika, etc. In 1910 he founded the Indu a high class Hindi Journal. Through this paper he inspired, guided, and encouraged many young talents of Hindi.

The striking note of this period is his inquisitiveness about every thing he came across. He stands before nature as a child taken aback by heart full of charm. With his head empty but mind filled he gazes at the manifold spectacles of nature trying to read, understand, and master its mysteries. He is bewildered by the grandiose and as well as gentle form of nature. He feels unsatisfied.

Every new sight enkindles a fresh urge in his youthful heart. He is fascinated by the nature, but he feels that he can not identify himself with it. He wants to solve this mysterious riddle but finds himself all the more embarrassed and puzzled.

Thus we conclude that inquisitiveness is the dominating note of this early stage.
After the first period of literary activities we find an interregnum of 5 years. Many reasons are given for this gap. Some think that during this period he was busy in setting his home affairs in order, while others suggest that he was preparing himself for the greater task of writing historical plays for which he had to read oriental and as well as occidental literature. Such apparently barren periods are found in the lives of many eminent people of all countries. In the lives of Shakespeare, Milton, Carlyle, and various other master minds such periods do generally occur. In fact there can be no hard and fast rules which govern the evolution of the mind and art of any great man.

The second stage starts with 1921 and continues upto 1925. The following works belong to this period.

1. **Ansu** (A lyrical poem of 190 stanzas)
2. **Vismakhe** (a play from Raja Tarangini).
3. **Ajata Shatru** (A historical play).
4. **Kamans** (a political allegory).
5. **Pratigwan** (a selection of 15 short stories).

An examination of all these works shows that the distinguishing mark of this period is his constant struggle even in the face of heavy odds.

**Ansu** is the most valuable gift of this period. Many Hindi poets like R.K. Verma, Mirala, M.L. Chaturvedi, and Mahadevi Verma etc. have composed poems on this subject of Universal interest, but none can stand a comparison with his poem. The rapturous beauty, ecstasy of revelry unmindful of the privations and tribulations, a spirit of triumph and non-surrender to despondency, these are some of the outstanding traits of this poem. **Ansu** is a tale in 190 stanzas of sufferings, and the sweet recollections of the past youthful days of the lover and the beloved. It may be called an ode on love and beauty.

In **Vismakhe** and **Ajata Shatru**, he depicts the struggle between youth and age. In **Kamans** an allegorical play he portrays...
a young political leader who represents the rising tide of disquietude and revolution in the emotional hearts of the youths of the day. One can read through the pages of these plays, the aspirations of the youthful minds bubbling with unceasing vigour, and unbeat en vitality. The youth is out for revolt against all age-long conventions, taboos, and the so-called moral turpitude. The spirit of belligerency is the keynote of this period.

It is no longer childlike curiosity that assailed Prasada's mind but he found himself equal to the task, and waged a ceaseless war with a young crusader's spirit against all hostile elements of the world which conspired to cow down his rising enthusiasm for the struggle.

IIIrd stage 1926–1929 (the stage of triumph).

No doubt it is the shortest period of his literary activities yet it is the most creative and inspiring period of his life.

The following works belong to this stage.

1. Lahare (a lyrical poem)
3. Anshi (a selection of 11 short stories).
4. Janamejaya Ka Naba Yajna (a play of Post Mahabharata period).
5. Shashis Gupta (a play of Gupta period).
6. Aike Ghunte (A parody on free love).

The poem Lahare is a distinct improvement on Anshu, if not in artistic beauty, at least in philosophic and intellectual outlook on life. The spirit of boyish inquisitiveness and youthful belligerency is missing and is replaced now by sober, critical and conservative outlook on life.

On the side of fiction his satire is getting more acerbated and biting. The thirty stories of this period depict variegated aspects of human psychology. In some he portrays the conflict of passion, while in others romantic, idyllic, and realistic tendencies. The inequalities and vagaries of the Divinity, the struggle of the starving millions for...
their existence, the tortures and oppressions of the capitalist class on the labouring and toiling class are some of the common themes of these stories. A mystic note is also discernible in some of them.

In the domain of dramas, Janamejaya gaṇapati describes the ideological conflict of Māgha and Aryās. The best ways for ending these blood feuds are the intermarriages between the hostile communities residing in the same country. This indeed appears to be the central lesson propagated through it.

In Skanda Gupta, he glorifies an ideal hero to whom nothing is so dear as the call of his mother-land.

In Aika Ghunta he ridicules the fanciful tendencies of the youth for free love.

The dominant mark of this period is his triumph over nature. The adversities and hard realities of life no more dismay him. He knows when and where the wage war, and how to win it? An element of humour so rare in his works also finds its expression hither and thither at this period.

But this humour is not of a cynic but of a seasoned philosopher poet who is triumphantly marching towards the end of pilgrimage of his life.

In Kunsāla he paints a picture of the society which is thoroughly corrupted. Here he is more realistic. By his marvellous genius in this domain also he has introduced many innovations which will be discussed, in other chapter.
For 2 years from 1930-31 Frees took rest to prepare himself for life's greatest task. First he had to get his house and business also in order. Having accomplished this he went on to the pilgrimage of Jagen Natha Puri in 1931. Just as in his early boyhood he was much impressed by the gorgeous scenery of Barbuda, similarly the sight of the mighty ocean inspired him to compose Kamayani. This period is called of intuitional mysticism and of complete identification with the nature. He composed the following works during this period.

1. Chandre Gupta (A historical play).  
2. Dhruva Swami (A historical play of Gupta period).  
3. Titali (A social novel).  
5. Indrajala (A selection of short stories).  

In Chandre Gupta he depicts an ideal hero, a true nation builder, and a great leader. Chandre Gupta, the Mauryan Emperor is represented as having all those enviable qualities of head and heart of whom every nation is proud.

This play is an enlargement of his previous one-act play Kalyani Ierasinga which he wrote in 1912.

There is a distinct improvement in all his previous plays in technique, language, and characterisation. His last play Dhruva Swaminik deals with secular problems, drawn out from the annals of Indian history. If women is to be treated as a chattel, if her beauty and chastity are to be bartered for political gains, these and many other questions pertaining to the right of widow to choose her companion for life etc. are discussed in this short play.

Both in plot and technique it is an innovation. This play can be staged without any difficulty.
In the domain of fiction his novels show that though a mystic yet he never shirked from grappling with the realities of the life. It is a novel of real rural life. It is interesting to note how this philosopher-poet discusses here like an expert various agrarian problems. It is in his third incomplete novel Iravati of 136 pages that we find him more of a mystic than a novelist. It looks more like a treatise on Buddhist and Hindu philosophy. The political problem of the day are so much interwoven with deep philosophical discussions and enrapturing impassioned love scenes, that one seems entirely lost in them. Here he identifies himself with the spirit of the novel.

In the 14 stories collected in Indra Jala we find the same spirit working within him. He completely identifies himself with every thing he writes. It appears as if his personality and the stories whether they are realistic or salient and Gunat or mystic as Galavati are the same.

The highest achievement of this period is his lost epic poem Kamsyani which occupies an important place not only in Hindi, but even that in the literature of the world. It is here Prasada is at his best. The philosophy of life expounded in it, is as much mystic, as it is real. It is history of men and women, their passions and emotions, their despair and rejoicing, their struggles ending in triumphs and defeats, their quest for truth and beauty, and ultimately their complete absorption in the Highest Divinity from which this universe has emanated.

A detailed critical examination of this poem will be made in a separate chapter. Thus we come to the conclusion that Prasada, who as a child looks awestruck at the grandiose and gentle form of the nature, with his heart full and head empty, who adores as a youth the reviving beauty of nature, who again mirthfully plays with it as a playmate, ultimately reaches that stage when he is no longer different from it.

With his intellect highly perfected he completely identifies himself with the same nature, towards the end of the pilgrimage of his life.