

The Development of Indian English Short Story Writing in the Colonial and Postcolonial Periods and Their Influence on Contemporary Short Story Writing

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Abstract:

The research paper predominantly focuses on the Indian short stories in English that were written before and after independence. India has different languages and dialects for communication, and there wasn't a common medium through which all the Indians could communicate. Later on, English became a common medium of expression to facilitate sharing and evoking emotions that ultimately strengthened a strong demand for independence from the British government. English was a link language, and it became an official one after India got independence. Literature is an influential medium through which a thought can be easily inculcated in the minds of the readers. A short story is one of the best literary mediums to convey a common and powerful thought. It gives us a thematic understanding of what the author wants to say within a short text. The aims of English literature before and after independence were categorically different. The journey of Indian English short stories has had a steady development and has had a significant influence on present-day short story writing.

Keywords: colonialism, Postcolonialism, short stories, nativisation.

Introduction:

A short story is a work of art that is narrative and can be read in a short time. The characteristics of short stories allow the readers to have complete focus on all the incidents in the story for a single effect within a short time. A dictionary defines an invented prose story as shorter than a novel, usually dealing with a few characters and aiming at the harmony of effect and often focused on the formation of mood rather than plot ("Short Story"). Indian writers have significantly contributed their efforts to the development of short stories in India. Manjer S. Isvaran is one of the original Indian writers in English, and he wrote with recognisable importance to radiate his lot with the development of the short stories; he contributed his effort at a time when it was yet to find a grip in the field of Indo-Anglican

letters. The short story was a modern form of art before the arrival of Isvaran's short stories. He published *Naked Shingles* in 1941 as his first collection of short stories. He is the first Indian writer of fiction in English who has established a reputation almost exclusively based on his success in the field of the short story. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Sharad Chandra Chatterjee, and others who were concerned chiefly with novels had periodically tried their hands at short stories. Rabindra Nath Tagore wrote some of the finest short stories, but he was chiefly concerned with other forms of literature, i.e., poems, plays, and novels.

Colonial & Postcolonial Literature:

Colonialism is a practice of supremacy, in which the suppression is involved from a group of people to another ("Colonialism"). The literature produced by the People who are producing literature during the colonized period in which the European countries were colonized other countries mostly the countries in Africa, Asia, and South America is called 'Colonial Literature'.

Postcolonialism can be understood by the etymology of the words like 'Post' and 'Colony'; the word 'Post' is derived from the Latin word, 'Posts', which means 'after'. The word 'Colony' is originated from the Latin word, 'Colonus', which refers to a grower, a cultivator, or settler in a new land ("Postcolonialism"). The period after Colonialism is called post-colonialism. Broadly defining the term, 'Postcolonialism' refers to how race, civilization, culture, and human identity itself are represented in the modern era after many colonized countries got independence. The European powers exercised their dominance over the immeasurable regions of Asia, Africa, and South America until the mid-twentieth century. The domination was restrained not only to the political lives of the people but also extended to the cultural, economic, and social living situation of the colonized people. A substantial struggle in the colonized nations caused the overthrow of the colonial system. These liberated nations are known as 'Postcolonial' (Abirami 166). Hence, Postcolonial Literature refers to the literature produced by the people in the post-colonial period i.e., after getting independence from their colonized countries.

Short Stories before Independence:

The subcontinent of India was under British Imperial rule for more than two hundred years. During British rule, the natives of India were suffering from several harassments. Especially, the cultural and moral lives of the native Indians were deeply disturbed. Because of this reason Indian writers emerged intending to unite Indian people and wipe out the colonial standpoint. As there are many languages in India, Indian writers selected English as a medium of their literature, because English was the link language through which all the Indian people could come together and unite to fight against British rule. The 'Literature' produced by the Indian writers mostly in English, is known as 'Indian English Literature'. The early literary works of the Indian English writers concentrated on the themes of 'Nationalism', 'Ethnicism', 'Racism' and 'Cultural Identity'. The authors also concentrated on the different sub-themes like: 'alienation', 'rootlessness', 'gender discrimination', 'labour exploitation', 'poverty', 'hybridity', 'corruption', 'marginalization' and so on (Abirami 168).

The themes of short stories, produced before independence, were mostly associated with the human lives, social and political problems under which the Indians were suffering.

The Indian history of short story writing is rich and influential as it has an impact on Indian Literature. However, the genre of the short story in India was properly developed after independence. Novels and plays were the most popular forms of literature in the pre-independence period. Short stories were considered only a small literary contribution to the vast Indian English Literature. Only after independence, the form of a short story was given significant attention in Indian Writing in English.

Short Stories after Independence:

Short stories in English were developed after 1935 in India; that time was productive for Indian short stories in English. The age of oppression was over after India got independence; people were free from domination. The period was to keep new steps on the ground of education, Literature, business, trades, etc. The decade of 1950 was the decade of struggle in India for a new setup for the nation (Abirami 166). The optimism was raised and the country was considered the largest democracy in Asia. For the new setup in the country, financial trials were important than politics.

During this decade of 1950, new problems have been raised in the country. People were struggling with poverty and settlement. There was a chaotic situation after the partition of India and Pakistan; the nation was facing violence and hatred. Two major Indian short story writers emerged i.e., Attia Husain and Khushwant Singh; they started writing short stories in English. Attia Husain was dealing with Muslim life and society. The system of India was not changed even after independence (Edward 3). Khushwant Singh has conveyed his distress in his short stories. Many writers experimented in writing English short stories. These writers are Ruth Prawar Jahbvala, K. N. Daruwala, Hamdi Bey, Kamla Das, Arun Joshi, Vivek Adarkar, Shashi Deshpande, Nisha Cunha, Raja Rao, and Shinnie Antony, etc. These writers deal with social problems located in India. The Indian writer, Khosla presents the various painful situations of Indian women. Muzumdar writes and focuses on common human beings in India. Phadake writes about the nature of people in India. In the Sixties, the titles and themes are changed in writing and focused on the lifestyle of Indian people because people were also changing their lifestyle thinking attitude, etc.

Satire was used in the literature mostly in those days; Bunny Reuben has exposed the false values of Indian people. He also wrote about prostitution, marriage feast, etc. Klewin Sio writes on human foibles. Ruth Jhabvala wrote about the people who are influenced by western culture and thoughts. Bhabani Bhattacharya has written about the image of India; he focused on the bureaucrats' life in the towns of India (Soni 14). In the post-colonial period of literature, people rebel against the previous: colonial period of literature and focus on the new challenges that arrived in liberated countries. Satire is used to make a positive change in the targeted person or people. In the post-independent period of literature, people want growth and development in their countries: to achieve this, they have to change the mindsets of the people. Hence, with the help of satire writers targeted such people who needed to be changed their mindsets in a newly evolving and developing country. Some people were lost their

identity by following western culture and style; they must be Indian in culture and thoughts to protect identity and existence as a human being in this world.

After India got independence, the subjects were changed from gaining independence to self-desires like intellectual liberty, patriarchy, feminism, problems of the Dalit community, and so on. The collection of short stories for example- *Ambiguity Machines*, and *Other Stories* (2018) written by Vandana Singh, *Magical Women* (2019) by Sukanya Vyankatraghavan, *When I Hid My Caste* (2018) written by Baburao Bagul, and so on represents the modern.

The features of short stories have been changing and will be changed in the future. Now the literature is more reachable to the readers as there are more facilities available for a publication like an internet, applications on a mobile phone, blogs, etc. which support reading stories and books. Some stories are written for entertainment and have no other intention. People can enjoy their reading on their electronic devices while having free time or traveling.

Conclusion:

The English short story writing in India has been developed with the association of human beings with nature and the struggle of all human beings for living their lives. In modern times, short story writing has developed and it has become a popular form of literature as it requires less time to read and to understand the whole story. The Indian short story writing has an important influence on the contemporary short story writing. The influence is further giving motivation to the 21st century authors to try their excellence in this form of literature also.

The journey of Indian English short story writing changes from time to time; before independence, it was concerned with the national important issues like freedom fight, brotherhood, national integration, etc. They are also concerned with the people who try to adopt the western culture, their dialects, their way of thinking, and even names. These people lost their identity as Indians but at the same time, they are not English even, because they are Indian in flesh and blood. Hence, they lost their identity; it was important to awake these people and make them think about the nation and its growth. In the post-colonial period, the topics were changed this time the issues are quite different; they are not related to the freedom struggle and anything like that but something related to the contemporary issues: like problems of young people, problems of poverty, employment, etc.

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