

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF NOVEL IN A SELECTED INDIAN LITERATURE

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LITERARY GENRE

The early man probably related to each other by making sounds, noises, gestures like any other animal, but being a high order species for its survival, started communicating through various signs. Also to mark their location and surrounding, they probably made scratches, symbols on stones.

These sounds and noises they made incoherently, later took a form of some earlier speaking. As they evolved, every region, developed such scratches, carvings into symbols. Eventually, the manner of speaking became the oral language and the symbols became **scripts** in the form of writing.

In the modern world, we have further categorised/organised these ancient scripts into various literary genres (French: “kind” or “sort”) , which basically is the manner a literary work is written in, as the writer wishes to. Be it majorly of four types poetry, **fiction**, nonfiction and drama, with subsets such as fable, fairy tale, fantasy, folklore, horror, humour, legend, mystery, mythology, essay, biography/ autobiography, speech, short story.

NOVEL

Regarding novels, these are a genre of fiction. It is brought out in Britannica



that **Quote** “Novel, an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience ,usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of person in a specific setting” **Unquote** (encyclopaedia Britannica)

Further it also says **Quote** “The novel is a genre of fiction, and fiction may be defined as the art or craft of contriving, through the written word ,representation of human life that instructs or divert or both. “**Unquote**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NOVEL IN HINDI LITERATURE

In Indian literature, novels (called as **उपन्यास**) have been playing an important role in the cultural upbringing of the

society through its moral storytelling. So far as hindi literature (हिंदी साहित्य) is concerned, it has developed over a period of time. Basically an earlier form of writing, but not very old. This script and its dialect began in the 19th century. Within India called as the *Akhand Bharat* which had its expanses much larger than what is today and with some countries close to India having language such as Urdu, Farsi and Indian native Sanskrit of that time, “*Panchtantra ki Kahani*”, fairy tales, fables were a means of giving morales to the youngsters and elders alike.

Such stories were most usually fictional or if it were of some real instances it was laced with figures which caused an impression on the reader or listeners such as *Rajas*, gods, etc. Sometimes birds and animals were also described to be speaking to each other making up various different stories of morale and righteousness. In the western world the short stories were not a separate distinct genre. Till the middle of the 20th century they did not receive much of attention as they do today (Britannica), so the Hindi language-which we speak, converse or write today has its genesis in the 19th century, a century much earlier than the western world. It is a recent occurrence thus, Hindi in today's form is a modern version. The earlier versions were *Pali*, *Prakrit*, *Apbransh*, *Awadhi*, etc.

Though **Amir Khusro**, can be considered as the pioneer of the modern day *Khadi Boli Hindi*. He had a fore-thinking that one day this *Khadi Boli* dialect will be the talking as well as the written

expressive language, much so that in his own wisdom, wrote poems 800 years earlier, in reverence of his guru *Hasrat Nizamuddin Ahuliya*, much before the 1800s. Coming to the point, surprisingly till 1800 there were no such writing which are classified today as short stories or Novel in present day Hindi.

In Hindi literature short stories and novels have a recent past. As per approved research work “हिंदी कथा साहित्य और उसके विकास पर पाठकों का प्रभाव” written in 1964 by *Dr Gopal Rai, MA, D.Lit, Hindi Department, Patna College, Patna University*, explored that around 1800 Insha Allah Khan wrote the first short story “*Rani Ketki Ki Kahani*”.

Thereafter “*Betaal Pachisi*” was written by Somdev Bhatt, “*Singhaasan Battisi*” by Brijballabh Hariprasad and “*PremSagar*” by Lallu Lal, etc gained attention and were spread across the hindi speaking people. Before 1800, there was no such Hindi story writing tradition, although there may have been some small short stories written, but did not gain popularity. However till 1870, Urdu, Sanskrit, Farsi stories were translated into hindi. Surprisingly, *Rani Ketki ki Kahani* subsisted till about 70 years without any major contribution in short story writing. So “*Rani Ketki Ki Kahani*” of few pages cannot be called as the hallmark of novel writing/publishing.

1870 was an important landmark year for the history and beginning of Hindi Fiction writing (हिंदी कथा साहित्य). “*Devaraani Jethaani ki Kahani*” was written, which had some elements of present day novel, was published.

During that period, 15 more books were written, with only 9 being published. Eventually the novel writing got flourished in Hindi literature. The year 1870 was again a very important period for hindi literature. From this year, the structure of storytelling evolved extensively. Devakinandan Khatri's epic fantasy "Chandrakanta" (चंद्रकांता) was written. It also introduced the two important concepts called "Tilism" and "Aiyar" into Hindi literature. Subsequently other novels such as "Hridayharini" and "Lavanglata" were also written by Kishorioal Goswami. This also started the historic epic romance tradition. More "Pramini Parinay", "Triveni", and "Swargeey Kusum" named novels also laid the foundation of "श्रिंगारचरित्रण"- socially oriented novels. In the the year 1890, saw the writing of so many other novels like "निहामय हिंदू", "सुहासनी", "मौदिनी", etc were also published. This period is also considered to be the stepping stone in Hindi literature for Hindi Novel.

THE BEGINNING OF HINDI NOVEL WRITING

As per research work done by Rajiv Sharma, (*in Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education*), The period of the early Hindi novel can be considered from 1877 to 1918.

In 1877, Shraddharam Phillauri wrote the novel "भाग्यवती". This novel was quite informative, it had the subject matter of that of a novel, that's why it's called Hindi's first उपन्यास.

Bengali novels, which has been the source of inspiration for Hindi novels, has been very fertile. Many novels were published before the year 1877. Among them, "नवाबु विलास" (1825) of Bhavanicharan Bandyopadhyay and "आलालेर घरेर दुलाल" (1857) of Piarichandra Mitra became quite popular.

The impact of many Bengali novels is clearly visible on Hindi novels. The land of Hindi novels has also been enriched by the translation of many Bengali novels.

Called Pt. of this era, Shraddharam Phillauri, Lala Srinivas Das, Balkrishna Bhatt, Thakur Jagmohan Singh, Radhakrishna Das, Lajjaram Mehta, Kishorilal Goswami, Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay, Brajnandan Sahai and Mannan Dwivedi are the prominent social novelists. Pt. Shraddharam Philouri wrote "भाग्यवती" (1877) and taught women about the importance household culture. Lala Srinivas Das in "परीक्षागुरु" (1882) conveyed that, what is not understood by explaining a hundred times, sits in the mind from a one-time ordeal.

Subsequently, Gopalram Gahmary gained fame among the 'detective novelists'. He brought out a monthly letter called "जासूस" in 1900, wrote several novels for it. Some of his major novels are "अद्भुत लाश" (1896), "गुप्तचर" (1899), "बेकसूर की फाँसी" (1900), "सरकती लाश" (1900) etc. He has also been called the 'Arthur Conan Doyle' of Hindi literature. Apart from him, Ramlal Verma, Kishorilal Goswami, Jairamdas

Gupta, Ram Prasad Lal, etc. have also written some such novels.

THE CHRONOLOGY SINCE ORIGIN OF HINDI NOVEL WRITING

According to Rajiv Sharma's research work, he has discussed that **Novel** is relatively a new literary genre. It seeks to uplift social and personal life that includes the duality, spread and motion of ordinary life. This genre originated in the modern period of Hindi literature. It was only in the *Bhartendu* era that such a situation started to arise that writers began to feel the need for a new genre. In fact, they couldn't express their whole point of view openly. Poetry, essays, plays, etc were proving a non starter to be presenting the age-old consciousness.

The prominent period of hindi novel writing were

- First period- *Bhartendu Yug* (1850-1915)
- Second period- *Premchand Yug* (1916-1936)
- Third period- *Premchandottar Yug* (1936- 1960) - With pioneer being Premchand the other prominent writers were Jainendra Kumar and Ilachand Joshi.
- Fourth period- *Adhunik Yug*, the modern age from 1960 onwards.

In this article, the first three periods are being explored.

THE BHARTENDU ERA

In such a situation, it was *Bhartendu Harishchandra's* attention was drawn to

the novel genre. He was familiar with Bengali novels and wanted to write novels in Hindi on the same lines. In the absence of the creation of independent novels, some Bengalis were also in favour of translation of novels. Due to his efforts, many Bengali novels were translated into Hindi and some novels were also written in Hindi. He wanted to write the novel himself, but could only write the opening page. He had named his novel - “एक कहानी कुछ आप बीती कुछ जग बीती”

Surprisingly, the undeniable fact is that the tradition of writing novels in Hindi started with the influence of Bangla. The foundation of novel writing was laid in the *Bhartendu* era itself, but it gained the right form in the *Premchand* era. Regarding Premchand's writings, literary historian Shri Hazari Prasad Dwivedi wrote:

Quote "If you want to know the morals, language, spirit, way of life, hope, aspiration, sorrow and understanding of all the people of the Northern part of India, then you cannot find a better indicator than Munshi Premchand."
Unquote

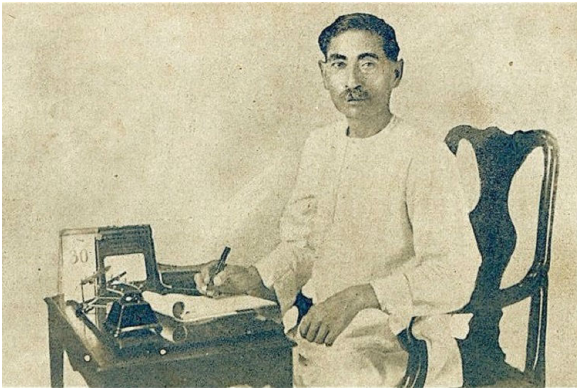
THE PREMCHAND ERA

The ending volume of this timeline is considered to be from 1917 because in 1918 Premchand's first ever novel "Seva Sadan" (सेवा सदन) was published. This is where the Premchand era began from. Although a decade earlier, in 1907 Premchand's "Prema (प्रेमा) अर्थात् दो सखियों का विवाह" "one such novel was

also written, which was quite different from his style of writing, did not get much acclaim (Note* Premchand then wrote under the pen-name *Navaab Ray* “*Varanasi*”). After this particular novel, he did not write any other hindi उपन्यास, till the next decade. Thus on this basis, from the year 1890-1917 (especially including 1918, publication year of “*Seva Sadan*”) can be considered the “Premchand Era” (प्रेमचंद युग).

After 1918, Munshi Premchand’s novels were immensely accepted throughout the country and kept on being published. For the next 15 years, it was really the *Premchand* era and he solely became the “उपन्यास सम्राट” (“novel emperor”) of Hindustani Literature.

PREMCHAND AND HIS INFLUENCE



The timeline of the *Premchand* era is considered from 1918 to 1936. *Premchand*’s span is of great importance in the development of Hindi novel (हिंदी उपन्यास). He is considered the first Indian novelist to have deeply understood the struggles and problems of Indian life. His novels are the story of the suffering and pain of the common

man. His timeframe also shares with the (छायावाद काल), the Romanticism era.

Premchand’s notable novels include:-

- सेवासदन (1918)
- प्रेमाश्रम (1921)
- रंगभूमि (1925)
- कायाकल्प (1926)
- निर्मला (1927)
- ग़बन (1931)
- कर्मभूमि (1932)
- गोदान (1936)
- मंगलसूत्र (1936- which is unfinished.)

Premchand writing style is of simple language. He believed that he wrote not for critics, but for readers. Later on, many others got influenced by his work, were Vishwambharnath Sharma Kaushik, Shrinath Singh, Shiv Pujan Sahai, Bhagwati Prasad Vajpayee, Chandiprasad 'Hridayesh', Rajaradhiman Prasad Singh, Siyaramsharan Gupta etc.

Vishwambharnath Sharma Kaushik’s two novels “माँ” and “भिकारिणी” gained popularity. Among Premchand’s age novelists, Shiv pujan Sahai's only novel, “देहाती दुनिया” (1926) is also famous.

In Chandiprasad ‘Hridayesh’s novels, glory of man's virtuous attitudes has been inscribed in the soulful idealistic style.

Like Premchand, Raja Radhikaraman Prasad Singh and Siyaramsharan Gupta

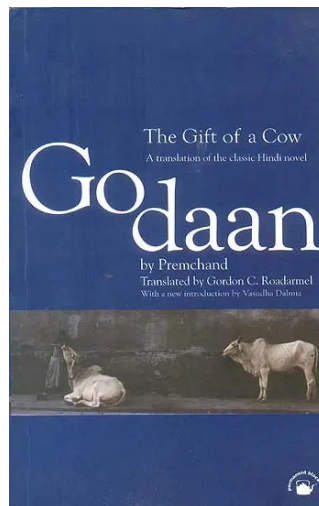
also composed novels influenced by the Gandhian philosophy.

THE POST PREMCHAND ERA

In the *Post-Premchand* era, two generations have been active in writing novels. There is a generation of novelists whose psyche was created in the Premchand era, but they later made their new path. The second generation is of novelists who came to this field after attaining independence. Those novelists pointed to new possibilities in novel writing. Dr. Ramchandra Tiwari believes that “a third generation of novel writers has also been produced in the last few years. These generations are connected to each other at the level of value and recognition. If we talk about classification, in general, these novels can be placed in the social, humanistic, libertarian, naturalist, individualistic, psychoanalytic, social realist, historical and zonal classes.

Despite this classification, there are many novels in which the tendencies of many classes have been mixed. Apart from this classification, modernity and democracy have been placed at the centre of many novels”. In this era, Amritlal Nagar successfully gave a plot to various themes in his novels. In the drop and the sea, the colonial power of the Nagar has fully emerged. He spoke of the individual and society, wrote historical novels like “शतरंज” and “खिलाड़ी”, also wrote “सुहाग के नूपुर”, “नाच्युँ बहुत गोपाल” and “अग्निगर्भा”, which focused and centred upon various social problems. One of such novel was Godaan.

GODAAN {Published 1936}



(Main Characters
Hori- the main protagonist
Dhaniya- Hori's wife
Gobar, Sona and Rupa- Hori's children
Heere and Shobha- Hori's brothers
Jhuniya- Gobar's wife)

“गोदान”, the most sought after novel by Premchand, depicts a life-long story of a conservative society of the 20th century. Godan explains a wonderful depiction of an Indian farmer showing how he is a victim of the exploitation of *Seth* (merchant), *Sahukars* (moneylenders), *Zamindars* (landlords) etc. to raise his family and spend his whole life with fear and despair.

Godan describes how an Indian farmer takes a loan from *Sahukar* for his small basic needs and spends his whole life in despair to repay that debt. It also explains how *zamindars*, mill owners, professional lawyers, politicians, etc ill-treat and exploit innocent illiterate and innocent farmers.

The author has beautifully depicted the frustration, disappointment, indebtedness of our society. Premchand has tried to convey through Godan that Indian farmers are trapped in the

clutches of *Sahukars* (moneylenders) and are victims of heavy debt and how they spend their whole life worrying about feeding their families.

Here, the writer has said all about it in a context that is even important today. The author has made a strong attack on the *Mahajans*, *Sahukars*, etc. and explained how a farmer has to spend his whole life, foolishly doing rounds of them.

THE THEN SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Premchand wrote from the last decade of the 19th century to about the third decade of the 20th century, on all the social problems that were prevalent in India.

Premchand was a versatile litterateur. Glimpses of history are clearly visible in his works. Although India was full of many kinds of practices and customs during Premchand's period, which divide society into classes like small and big, high and low, their presence is also prominent in his works. Premchand's childhood was spent in extreme poverty and pitiable conditions.

He understood the emotions and importance of means of earning, that's why his works were written on the basis of these human emotions. In his works, he had poignantly depicted the feelings, circumstances and problems of the common man.

THE PREVAILING NATIONAL MOVEMENT OF THAT TIME

During the British rule, the country was in the clutches of slavery. Mahatma Gandhi was awakening people to rise to the occasion for attaining freedom and such ideals of Non Cooperation Movement (असहयोग आंदोलन) were being sowed.

Gandhi's ideas made an impact on Munshi Premchand life. In the year 1966 Premchand literally began to accept the significance of "*Gandhinian*" values and the leader in Premchand took expression with his pen- in the field of politics to make an impact on the prevailing movement against the atrocities of British Raj. During a speech at Gorakhpur, Gandhi announced the trend of Government employee resigning. Though Premchand was ill then, he went to hear Mahatma's speech with his whole family. So much moved with the call of the moment of sacrifice, he consulted his wife Shivrani Devi and resigned from the government job of 21 years. He resigned on 16th Feb 1921.

All facets of Gandhi's National movement, struggle for freedom were revolving around Hindu Muslim Unity, women upliftment, untouchability, *Satyagrah*, these were all reflected in Premchand's writings. One of such acclaimed literary work was his novel "*Karmabhoomi*". Gandhi's effect on the entire nation was so impactful that

Premchand penned “*Premashram*” expressing the charisma of Gandhi’s effect on the countrymen across the nation. Under the influence of the Non-Cooperation Movement and Gandhi, Premchand wanted to free India from the clutches of the British supremacy with the help of his most powerful weapon, his pen.

Premchand was not only upset with the indifference of this class during India’s freedom movement, but also he was unhappy with the indifference and neutrality of this class towards the valiant and ugly form of superstition, rampant, feudal exploitation, class and caste distinctions prevalent in the society. Premchand was born in the backdrop of a sub-existing India where he himself and his family were forced to go through difficult situations of economics.

CONCLUSION

It was in response to the helplessness, status and public interest of inequality that Premchand’s thoughtful nature as well as mind was inspired. Thus he went about writing in a manner and authored around 300 short stories, around a dozen novels, dramas and also a journal called “*Hans*”(this being the oldest literary Hindi magazine which was in vogue during the Premchand’s era). Some of his works inspired the writers of that time and few of them were also

translated in many languages. Befitting to his ever lasting contribution to Hindi literature, he has been titled as the “उपन्यास सम्राट”.

DISCLAIMER

This is a project during study.

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