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## Contribution of Indian Women Writers to Indian English Short Story Genre

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### Abstract

Though story telling is a traditional form, recently it has been developed in a new technique. Formerly, it was existed in a oral form, but now it has become a written form. The Indian English short story is an important branch of rich and vast literary heritage of India. It seems that the Indian short story writers have not only been influenced by the ancient literature in India, but they have been influenced by the European literature also. The contribution of women writers to the development of the short story has been of a great importance. Though they have contributed less to the short story, it has got its own important place in Indian English literature.

The early women writers wrote about Indian social life. They wrote about Indian values. The advent of women writers in the literary field has a great significance for their contribution to the literary genre. It is undeniable that the women short story writers' efforts have added a new dimension to the exploration of the human personality and the Indian social milieu which is changing yet changeless in a profound sense. They offer significant images of human reality. Hence, attention is to be paid to them.

**Key Words:** Origin and development of Short Story, Themes and New Dimension.

### Indian English Short Story

The Indian English short story is an important branch of rich and vast literary heritage of India. *Panchatantra, the Buddhist Jataka Tales, the Katha Saritsagar, Dasakumaracharitam Upanishads, Puranas* and the well-known epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata reveal that story telling used to be an old form of literature. One can trace the origin of short story in India into the stories:

*.... Which lie embedded in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, or scattered in the Upanishads, and the epics, the story which constitute the Panchatantra, the Hitopadesha, the Sukasaptati, the*

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*Dasakumarchatia and the VetalPanchvimsati in Sanskrit, the Buddhist Jataka Katha in Pali and a host of similar stories in modern Indian languages.*

It seems that the Indian short story writers have not only been influenced by the ancient literature in India, but they have been influenced by the European literature also.

### **Indian Women Short-Story Writers and Their Contribution:**

The contribution of women writers to the development of the short story has been of a great importance. Though they have contributed less to the short story, it has got its own important place in Indian English literature. About women's art of telling stories, K. R. Srinivas Iyengar rightly says:

*... Women are natural story-tellers even when they do not write or publish.*

A woman writing in India has gone through different phases. The first phase is characterized by an urge for self-expression. But, this strong desire for self-expression is not necessarily accompanied the mastery of the medium. The major problems at the end of the nineteenth century were a lack of education and the purdah system introduced by Muslim rulers and adopted by the Rajputs, the Marwadis, the Maratha aristocrats and princely families. This made it impossible for women who have life outside the house. As women acquired education they began to feel an increasing urge to voice their thoughts and feelings. Meena Shirwadkar says:

*...The awareness of individuality, the sense of incompatibility with their tradition bound surrounding, resentment of male dominated ideas of morality and behavior, problems at home and the pace of work or in society all came up in a welter for projection.*

With an instinct to narrate a story woman entered the field of literature. A good number of women writers entered the literary scenario. From 1960's onwards women's voice

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became inevitable part of literary field. They became more and more conscious of their status in the society and their self-identity.

The early women writers wrote about Indian social life. They wrote about Indian values. The advent of women writers in the literary field has a great significance for their contribution to the literary genre.

Cornelia Sorabji, the author of three short story collections is one among the early writers. Her stories reveal the continual practice of evil customs and the impact of early widowhood on young women.

Ruth PravarJhabvala has written four collections of short stories which focus on the predicament of widowhood and woman in an uncongenial domestic situation.

Anita Desai is prominent Indian-English woman novelist as well as a short story writer. She has published two collections of short stories. She deals with the subjects like temperamental differences in the marital life, various psychological complexes and the social sensibilities. Her approach is that of a psychologist and she is interested in the 'interior landscape' of the mind. Thus, she has added altogether a new dimension to the fiction of Indian writing in English.

Shashi Deshpande is another major Indian –English women short story writer. Her stories deal with various themes like love and hate, suppression, exploitation of women and causes of unhappy marriages. She mainly focuses on women and her sacrifice. She makes use of Indian mythology and adopts stream of consciousness technique in her fiction.

AnjanaAppachana and Dina Mehta are also well-known short story writers. Dina Mehta's stories reflect the awareness of the woman's dilemma.

Jai Nimbkar, contributes to this short story form. Her two short story collections deal with the theme of love, marriage and conflict between illusion and reality.

Among the other Indian women story writers in English are, Sujatha BalaSubramaniam, NargisDalal, BharathiMukharji, Sunita Jain, SadiquePeeraBhoy, VasanthaRavindran, InduSuryanarayan, Veena Adige, Attia Hussain, Margret Chatterjee, padmaHejmodi, C. Vimala Rao, Gouri Deshpande, githahariharan, ManulaPadmanabhan, ManjulaKak, Subhadra Sen Gupta, kalpanaSwaminathan, Nina Siba, Deepa Shah, Anita

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Nair, Shoba De, Karnala Das, Laxmi Kannan Malathi Rao and Vera Sharma. Writers of Indian diaspora are Sunita Namjoshi, Bharati Mukharjee, Chitrabannerjee Devakaruni, Jhumpa Laheri, Susan Vishwanathan, Tara Deshpande.

Many well written volumes of short fiction include the other women writers like Vasantha Ravindran, Prema Shastri, Joy Shrilobo, Anjana Basu, Anuradha Muralidharan excetra. Their contribution to the short story genre is really significant; C.V. Venugopal remarks thus;

... Their exploration of Indian feminine sensibility emanates from thoroughly sensitive appreciation of the Indian women”

Thus, the early writers have unquestionably added variety of themes and diversity of techniques to this art form, but they have yet to rise above some of the shortcomings such as complexity, subtlety and suggestiveness and they have yet to cultivate the qualities of brevity, in their works like the masters of genre, Maupassant, Doyal, Faulkner, Henry James, Hemingway, Galsworthy and Katherine Mansfield.

Most of the women short story writers in Indian writing in English are but single volume authors. However, their work merits serious critical attention. Their contribution adds to the enlargement of the scope and significance of the Indian short story in English which has attained the status of a major genre in Indian English literature.

It is undeniable that the women short story writers’ efforts have added a new dimension to the exploration of the human personality and the Indian social milieu which is changing yet changeless in a profound sense. They offer significant images of human reality. Hence, attention is to be paid to them.

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