

Module 1

SHORT STORY AS A MINOR FORM OF LITERATURE

Introduction:

Story has been existing since the dawn of the human civilization. Different kinds of stories prevail: stories, tales, fables, parables, anecdotes and folk-tales in different languages in all countries. However, the short story differs from them. Only the common thing in them is story telling. Short story is a story first and then it is a short story. The impulses behind short story and other types of stories are the same viz;

1. The curiosity to know others.
2. The desire for self-assertion.
3. Love for story-telling and listening.

As a minor form of literature, a short story is a brief, and therefore easily apprehensible as completed work, usually entertaining, frequently intriguing in both form and content. Short stories tend to be less complex than novels. Usually, a short story focuses on only one incident, has a single plot, a single setting, a limited number of characters, and covers a short period of time.

Definitions and Characteristics of Short Story:

Many practitioners of short story form have attempted to define short story but it is almost impossible to give a definite definition of the genre. No summary phrase can include in itself the diversity of possible story types, lengths and approaches. Consequently, no one theory of short story form prevails.

Walter Allen in his book *The Short Story in English* (1982) says that the short story before the modern short story came into being, was a manifestation of the romance. Its aim was to entertain. Its province was the extraordinary. The short story deals with, dramatizes a single incident and in doing so, utterly transforms it.

He further says that “the short story should be rooted in a single incident or perception that principally differentiates it from the novel. One should feel that it is the reading that is the fruit of a single moment of, time of a single incident, a single perception”.

According to Edgar Allen Poe, ‘a short story is a prose narrative requiring form half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal’.

W. H. Hudson emphasizes on the singleness of purpose while defining the short story and says: “A short story must contain one and only one informative idea and that the idea must be worked out to its logical connections with absolute singleness of aim and directness of method”.

S. K. Kumar quotes Edgar Allan Poe’s definition, ‘Short story is a piece of prose fiction which can be read at a single sitting, it presents an artistic and unified impression of life through many devices especially theme, characters and action’.

R. L. Stevenson thinks that, “The short story is not the transcript of life but a simplification of some idea of it”.

Encyclopedia Britannica defines short story as: “A kind of prose fiction distinguished from the novel (roman) and the novelette (nouvelle or novella) by its compression and intensity of effect”.

Sir Hugh Walpole’s definition is more comprehensive: “A short story should be a story: a record of things happening, full of incidents and accident, swift movement, unexpected development, leading through suspense to a climax and a satisfying denouement”.

In the book entitled *A Background to the study of English Literature* (1950) B. Prasad says, “The short story is not merely a greatly shortened novel”.

Characteristics of The Short Story:

In spite of the common aspects, the short story differs from novel on the basis of its peculiar parameters viz. brevity, economy and the singleness of effect. If a short story deviates from these parameters, there is very fear that the short story may cease to be a short story and it may take a shape of a tale or novel. So the main task of a short story writer is to observe scrupulously the above parameters and it is like dancing on a rope. J. A. Cuddon remarks, ‘This (short story) is one of the most elusive forms’. The short story is a narrative of interrelated events, involving a conflict and a resolution. The following are essential features of the short story.

1. Brevity or Economy:

The brevity or economy is an important parameter of the short story relating to its length. The short story is called short story because it has brevity (shorter length). Its usual norm is that it should be in about 3000 to 6000 words in length. The excellent short stories are written even in 1000 words. The brevity, to be used effectively, implies command over language and control over incidents. In a good short story every word and every incident contributes to the final effect. Joseph Shipley states the importance of brevity in a short story, “This brevity dictates the

structure”.

The short story strictly allows the parameters of economy. It implies the economy of words as stated in the above parameter regarding length. B. Prasad states, “The language of the short story should be a model of economy. Every word in it should contribute to its effect”. The economy implies also the economy of incidents and characters. A good short story usually has 2 or 3 characters and a few incidents numbering 4 to 5 with minimum characters passing through minimum incidents. The short story writer effectively shows one dominant personal trait of a character or a single experience of life or a single moral of life. This is done alone in short story and it is possible due to the small canvas of short story. It is rather a skill to write effective short story with economy.

2. **Short** - A short story can usually be read in one sitting. It is a piece of prose fiction which can be **read at a single sitting** (fixed place and time, social surroundings).
3. **Single Subject**: Short stories usually focus on a single subject or theme. Subjects or themes may range from something as mundane as a daily errand or as thrilling as a ghost tale.
4. **Concise and Simple Plot**: A single, easily contained plot is one of the hallmarks of the short story and helps shape its other characteristics. Its **plot is not very complex** (in contrast to the novel), but it creates a unified impression and leaves us with a vivid sensation rather than a number of remembered facts.
5. **Limited number of characters**: Due to the limitations of the genre, short stories typically focus on just one or a couple characters. As short stories usually cover such brief periods of time, even a single character may never be fully developed. However, historical examples, like some of Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales,' may find interesting ways of involving many different people.
6. **Factual and Poetic Style**: It ought to combine matter-of-fact description with poetic atmosphere.
7. **Unified Impression**: It ought to present a unified impression of tone, colour and effect ‘**unity of effect**’ (Poe). It tries to leave behind a single impression or effect. Usually, though not always, it builds around one character, place, idea, or act.
8. There is often **little action, hardly any character development**, but we get a snapshot of life (slice-of-life story).

9. **Union of Idea and Structure:** There is both a unique union of idea and structure.
10. There is a **limited set of characters, one single action and a simple plot** (often: exposition, complication, crisis, sad / happy ending).
11. A short story very often has an open / **abrupt beginning** and an open or **surprise ending**.

Elements of Short Story:

1. **Plot:** Plot is the soul of short story. Plot means arrangement of incidents. The success of the story depends upon the plot, the action that takes place in the story. It is a series of connected happenings and their results. In order to have a result, we must have an initial event, or conflict. Short story is told in an artistic manner by selecting and arranging the events into a plot with an intention. The short story writer organizes the incidents with a definite purpose to present his ideas or pictures of life or human experiences in a particular way. The short story writer has a small span and space for the development of plot. He immediately plunges into the course of plot and rapidly reaches the end. In the middle of the plot the story points to the approaching end which is surprising, shocking and sudden. Sometimes the end of plot reveals the hidden theme of short story in a flash. The end of the story is considered to be the most important characteristic of short story. The end of short story throws light back on entire structure and gives it a new meaning. There is an unexpected end coming as a shock or a surprise which is called twist ending or ironical reversal of the situation.

Stages of a plot – Usually plot has 5 components:

a. Introduction (Exposition)

-Sets up the story by introducing the main characters, the setting and the problem to be solved.

-Trigger Incident – The event which begins the plot; introduces conflict

b. Rising Action

- The main part of the story where the full problem develops.

- A number of events and /or obstacles are involved that will eventually lead to the climax.

c. Climax

-The highest point of interest in the story where the most exciting events occur.

d. Falling Action

-Follows the climax.

-It contains the events that bring the story to the conclusion.

e. Denouement (Conclusion /Resolution)

-The final outcome.

-The conflicts are resolved and the loose ends are tied up.

2. Character:

People involved in the events of the plot are the characters. Characterization is the information the author gives the reader about the character themselves. The author may reveal a character in several ways:

1. His/her physical appearance
2. What he/she says (how they speak and what they say to others – often revealed in dialogue)
3. What he / she thinks (their feelings, hopes and dreams)
4. What he/she does or does not do
5. What others say about him/her and how others react to him/her including the narrator.

Characters

- **Protagonist** - The main character or hero in a story.
- **Antagonist** – The person or force that works against the hero, or main character, of the story.
- **Narrator** – The person or character who tells the story, gives background information, and fills in details between dialogue.

Flat vs. Round Characters:

- **Flat Character-** A flat character is simple and one-dimensional, usually only there to fill a simple role. Flat Characters are not well-developed, does not have many traits. Sometimes stereotyped, easily defined in a single sentence because we know little about the character. Most minor characters are flat.
- **Round character-** A round character has a complex personality, more like a real person. Round Characters are well developed, has many traits, both good

and bad. They are realistic and life-like. They are not easily defined because we know many details about the characters. Most of the major characters are round.

Static vs. Dynamic Characters:

- **Static Character-** A static character is one who stays the same throughout the entire story.
- **Dynamic Character-** A dynamic character changes in some way during the story. They usually come to some sort of realization that permanently changes them as a result of the events in the story.
- **Foil** – A character who adds contrast to the protagonist.

There are a limited number of characters in short story and therefore their interrelation is very close and tense. There are two types of characters, major and minor. The minor or insignificant characters are kept in the background or drawn with no details. They are called flat characters which have no growth and change. Short story focuses on major characters. A short story writer tries to go deep in the ‘psyche’ of some characters that are round characters.

Short story is a story that happens in the life of someone. Not only human being but also animals and birds also play the role of character. Without character the story may not exist. There must be living being in the story that thinks or acts in order to keep the story going. Considering the limited scope of the short story, it is natural that the number of characters is strictly limited. Generally 2 to 4 characters are present in the short stories. E. M. Forster in his book *Aspects of the Novel* explains the difference between the story and the plot. He says, “The King died and the Queen died” is a story. “The King died and the Queen died because of grief”, is a plot.

3. Setting:

The setting is where (place) and when (time) the story occurs. **Time** can include not only the historical period—past, present, or future—but also a specific year, season, or time of day. **Place** may involve not only the geographic place—a region, country, state, or town—but also the social, economic or cultural environment.

The time and location in which a story takes place is called the setting. For some stories the setting is very important, while for others it is not. There are several aspects of setting of a story. Some of them, or all, may present in a story. The plot, the character and action i. e. incidents – all these do not take place in a vacuum. There is a definite physical background to a story against which the characters move and incidents happen. This background is called setting of a short story. Compared to novel in short story the setting is brief and constant. So, the setting includes the

landscape, locale, place, and the scene used as active or passive background of the action. Setting can include atmosphere, the tone and feeling of a story. Setting can vary as per the theme and situation in the story. In a number of stories the setting may just help to create the right atmosphere but in others the setting goes a long way in creating the desired effect. It leads touch of ‘reality’ to the story. The proper selection of setting, therefore, is an essential part of the story teller’s art.

4. Point of View/ Narration:

The point of view is the perspective from which the events of the story are presented to the readers. The short story writer uses some narrative techniques. He plans an order of events to create a surprise at the end. He uses different techniques of narration. He may use a flashback technique. A flash back technique is that one in which the later events leap into the past to give some meaning to the present. Occasionally a short story writer may use stream of consciousness technique. Its intention is not just to comment but to expose the state of mind of the character by bringing to surface the thoughts and emotions and everything that is floating on the stream of mind. This stream of mind is constantly moving in zig-zag manner touching the past, present and even the future. Similarly, the writer accepts a specific point of view to satisfy the need of his narration. There are two main types of point of view: **first person point of view** and **third person point of view**. In the first-person narration, a character in the story is the narrator and uses the pronoun “I”. The story is told through one character’s eyes and the events. **In the third person narration**, the narrator tells the story about other people and uses the pronouns “they” or “she / he” rather than “we”. There are two types of third person point of view:

1. **Omniscient**- the narrator knows everything about all the characters and the events and can shift from character to character.
2. **Limited** – the narrator may choose to tell the story through one character or a group of character’s eyes.

5. Conflict:

Conflict is the main struggle or opposition in a story that the protagonist has to solve or face. Conflict in stories is either:

- 1) **External**
- 2) **Internal**

There are 6 main types of conflict.

Internal Conflict:

- Character versus Self:

This is an internal conflict. The character struggles with moral dilemmas, emotional challenges or desires. The conflict is with the character's own conscience or soul. It is a struggle within one's self; a person must make some decision, overcome pain, quiet their temper, resist an urge, etc.

External Conflicts:

- Character versus Character
- Character versus Society
- Character versus Nature
- Character versus Supernatural
- Character versus Technology

It is the conflict that makes the story interesting and appealing. The conflict is a struggle between two people or things in a short story. The main character is usually on one side of the central conflict. On the other side, the main character may struggle against another important character, against the forces of nature, against society, or even against something inside himself or herself (feelings, emotions, illness).

It is the opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move. It is any form of opposition that faces the main character. Within a short story there may be only one central struggle, or one dominant struggle with many minor ones. Conflict can be straightforward in a single track or it can be complex. In Premchand's story, "The Shroud" (Kafan), the conflict is many-sided: it is economic, social, moral, emotional, familial, and so on.

6. Theme:

Theme is the story's message, unifying or central idea. The theme may be the author's thoughts about a particular topic or view of human nature. It is the total meaning of the story. Without theme, the story lacks meaning or purpose. Sometimes the theme is stated, sometimes it is only implied.

The short story writer allows the characters to move in the action of story with an intention to suggest something. His efforts may be to arrive at certain conclusion as a human experience. It may be the truth, a principle operating in human experience, some reflections, some moralizing or visions of life. The theme concerns with the final impression of the story. In short, theme is the authors' commentary on an aspect of human nature or life in general.

7. Dialogue:

The speech of characters in a story is called a dialogue. Dialogue reveals the emotions, moods, intention and attitudes of the characters to themselves or to others. Dialogue helps us to narrate several incidents only actually happening in short story. So, dialogue is a very good device to report such events and characters' attitudes to readers.

8. Moral:

Moral is an essential but not a compulsory element of a short story. One of the functions of literature is to teach. The writer is the engineer who constructs the building of literature. A writer hopes to instruct his readers through his writing. In such a case the story has a moral. It may be stated directly or indirectly. Therefore, the presence of a moral is desired feature of a short story. It is believed that through his writing a writer wants to give some lessons to his readers.

9. Title:

Every short story has its own title. There is no story without a title. Sometimes it is symbolic also. The title should be short and eye-catching. A story without title is like a tree without lives and flowers or a temple without a God.

10. Ending:

A short story very often has an open or **abrupt beginning** and an open or **surprise ending**. It usually ends at or soon after the climax; while a novel may reach its climax and then take a chapter or two to tie up all the loose ends. But the short story often leaves much to the reader's imagination. The writer usually 'springs' the surprise end, leaving us to reflect on the unexpected twist and its ongoing significance for the characters and actions. The best beginning, better middle and surprising ending are the features of good story. The success of the story depends upon the end of the story. If the story has been well written there is often much satisfaction from the way the threads have been pulled together to complete the story, even if we find ourselves completely caught by surprise. Many of the most satisfying short stories have the most unexpected, but plausible, endings.

Q. I: Answer the following questions in one word, phrase or sentence only.

1. What is meant by plot?
2. What are the types of characters?
3. What is conflict?
4. What are the types of conflicts?

5. Who wrote the book *The Aspects of the Novel*?

Answers:

1. The proper arrangement of incidents
2. Round and Flat; Static and Dynamic
3. Conflict is the main struggle or opposition in a story that the protagonist has to solve or face.
4. There are six types of conflicts:
 - Character versus Self
 - Character versus Character
 - Character versus Society
 - Character versus Nature
 - Character versus Supernatural
 - Character versus Technology
5. E. M. Forster

Q. II: Complete the following sentences by choosing one of the correct alternatives given below them.

1. The conflict between man Vs society is called
a) Physical b) Psychological c) **Social** d) Classical
2. The arrangement of incidents is called
a) conflict b) **plot** c) setting d) point of view
- 3 is an essential but not a compulsory element of a short story.
a) **Moral** b) Character c) Plot d) Setting
4. The central character of a story is called the
a) antagonist b) antagonize c) **Protagonist** d) instigator
5. The time and location in which a story takes place is called as
a) plot b) **setting** c) conflict d) characterization

Exercise:

Q.A: Answer the following questions in detail.

- 1) Write a detailed note on the characteristics of short story.
- 2) Find out the difference between the short story and the novel.

Q. B: Write short notes on the following:

1. Plot of the story
2. The characters in the story
3. Setting
4. Conflict in the short story
5. Point of view

Module 2

SHORT STORY AS A MINOR FORM OF LITERATURE: TYPES

Introduction:

In the previous unit, you have learnt the nature, the elements, and characteristics of short story. In relevance to that, in this unit you will get acquainted with short-story as a minor form of literature and also its various forms or types.

Short story is one of the minor forms of literature. The meaning of short story is implied in its name only. Short story is very brief in size or length and has a story. It may be defined as a prose narrative, “requiring from an half hour to one hour for its perusal”. It can be read at single sitting. Any subjects, from earth to heaven can be fit for short story. So, H. E. Beats aptly thinks, “Short story can be anything the author decides it shall be”.

A short story typically takes the form of a brief fictional work, usually written in prose. **Anecdotes, fables, fairy tales, and parables** are all examples of the oral storytelling tradition that helped to shape the short story. In fact, '**Aesop's Fables**,' first collected in the 4th century B.C., may have been the first anthology of short stories in Western literature. These early forms were orally transmitted from generation to generation. Some of the earliest stories are found in the Vedas and Upanishads, in the Old Testament. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* though written in verse are told by travelling pilgrims. Some of the earliest forms were the tales of adventure, based on the great deeds of popular heroes.

The modern short story was originated in the second quarter of Nineteenth century in America. Edger Allen Poe is generally considered as the father of short story. His *An M. S. Found in a Bottle* earned wide reputation. Soon, it became very popular form in Europe through successful efforts of great writers like Maupassant, Bulzac, Chekov, Tolstoy, etc. The short story is recently developed form in English literature. It has made considerable development in Twentieth Century. In England, this form was made popular by Doyle, Kipling, Wells Maugham, etTypes of Short Story:

The stories primarily consist of brief accounts of the incidents and events, taken place in the life of characters. In olden days and later on in medieval period, stories were presented in oral form and got transmitted from one generation to another. The literary roots of the short story can be found in oral story telling tradition such as anecdotes, fables, fairy-tales, folk-tales, legends and parables.

1. Anecdote:

Anecdote is the oldest form of short story. It is defined as “short amusing story about real incident or person.” It is a narrative story with a point. The word anecdote is derived from Greek word *anekdota* which means ‘unpublished’; from an-+ ekdotos an- means un- and ekdotos means published; *anekdota* means unpublished items. Later on the term anecdota was applied for short tales that focused on the author’s point.

Anecdote is defined as a short and interesting story, or an amusing event, often proposed to support or demonstrate some point, and to make the audience laugh. Anecdotes can include an extensive range of tales and stories. In fact, it is a short description or an account of any event that makes the readers laugh or brood over the topic presented for the purpose.

Anecdotes and humorous pieces are not only jokes, but exquisite literary devices as well. Their primary purpose is to stir up laughter, to disclose a truth in a general way, or to describe a feature of a character in such a way that it becomes humorous, and at the same time gives us a better understanding of the character. Authors may use anecdotes to illustrate their own theme or impart wisdom or humour to the audience.

Anecdotes may be real or ‘imaginary’, primarily meant for the amusement of listeners. However, it is presented as the recounting of real incidents taken place in real settings in the lives of real persons. Sometimes it will be unelaborated narration of single incident.

2. Legend:

A **legend** is a semi-true **story**, which has been passed on from person-to-person and has important meaning or symbolism for the culture in which it originates. Legend is an old story from ancient times about people and events that may or may not be true. It is a narrative story dealing with famous or notorious persons or events. It sometimes describes someone who is very well-known and admired usually because of ability in particular area. So legend is considered the story about an admirable person. King Arthur was central figure in the legends making up matter of England. In medieval period large number of stories were created on this legendary figure.

The Grimm Brother defines legend as folk tale historically grounded. Oxford Dictionary defines legend as a traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but not authenticated. According to the Royal Spanish Academy

Dictionary, Legend is a story based on real characters or events but magnified by fantasy or admiration. The admired person from society is considered as legend.

History is full of legends that have entertained the people for ages. Legends hail from different cultures around the world. Some are still held as strong beliefs. The most popular legends are Lady Godiva, Robinhood, King Arthur, The Fountain of Youth, Bloody Mary. Though, traditionally told as true stories, legends often consist supernatural elements. There are two types of legends- Folk legends and Urban legends. The popular legends serve as a literary text.

Legend is a popular narration of fantastic events which are generally transmitted by tradition from generation to generation. As they are orally transmitted, the legends are modified in the course of time. There are number of legends, popular among people-The legend of Phoenix who rises from his ashes. The legend of Alexander was used in all poetry. In medieval period the legend of King Arthur served as source of number of romances.

There are different categories of legends and famous legendry figures belonging to them:

1. Children legends: Santa Claus, The mouse Perez
2. Urban legends: Walt Disney, The Alien Rosewell
3. Religious legends: Joan of Arc, Stories about saints and sinners.
4. Legend of Terror: The headless horseman, their miracles, the witches of Salem.
5. Universal legends: Robin hood, King Arthur.

Characteristics of Legend:

1. **Characters:** Characters in legend are limited to small cast. They may be inanimate objects, Gods, or Superhumans. The Gods are super heroes who may appear in human form but maintain immortality and supernatural abilities.
2. **Setting:** Legend generally takes place in the past and the setting is somehow relevant to the culture from which it derives.
3. **Plot:** Plot is a systematic arrangement of events and incidents. The plot of legend includes lots of actions, suspense, and conflict. The characters of legend often encounter calamities and struggle hard with their fate to overcome. Legend offers a moral lesson for life.
4. **Point of View:** Legends are written from third person point of view. The

culture, values and beliefs of the society are reflected in the legend. The principal character in the legend can overcome any obstacles to reach his destination.

3. Fable:

Fable is a short story in which animals or objects speak and is often used to teach moral or religious lesson. In fables animals, plants, inanimate objects or forces of nature are employed as characters. The purpose of fable is to teach lesson about human weaknesses.

In Cambridge Dictionary fable is defined as: Fable is a short story that tells moral truth often using animals as characters. Oxford dictionary also defines, Fable is a traditional short story that teaches moral lesson especially one with animals as characters.

The word fable is derived from the Latin word 'fibula' which means 'a story' and a derivative of the word 'fari' which means 'to speak'. As a literary device fable can be defined as "a brief story with moral lesson". It is generally considered that Aesop, Greek fabulist is the real originator of the fable form. He created fables for the purpose of entertainment but later on became the means of teaching moral lessons. So Aesop's fable were considered the first 'Morality Tales' and they were orally transmitted. These fables have long been used to teach children moral lessons. In India also fables were emerged in the name of Panchatantra and Jataka Tales.

Characteristics of Fables:

- They are fiction in the sense that they did not really happen.
- They are meant to entertain.
- They are poetic, with double or allegorical significance.
- They are moral tales, usually with animal characters.
- Fables are short, and they usually have no more than two or three characters

The salient features of fables are: 1. Fables provide moral teaching. 2. Animals are used as main characters. 3. Fables personify objects and forces of nature.

4. Parable:

A **parable** is a succinct, didactic story, in prose or verse that illustrates one or more instructive lessons or principles. It differs from a fable. The fables employ animals, plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature as characters, whereas parables have human characters. A parable is a type of analogy. The parable

- a short narrative uses metaphor and symbolism to illustrate a moral point. It is a short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle

The Oxford Dictionary defines Parable as “a short story that teaches moral or spiritual lessons, especially one of those told by Jesus as recorded in the Bible.” Parable is one of the many literary forms in the Bible but is especially seen in Gospels of The New Testament. It is considered as a short story and is different from metaphorical statement.

The word Parable is derived from Greek word ‘Parabole’ which means “a throwing beside”. The root meaning of the word Parable means ‘placing side by side’ for the sake of comparison. The Gospel writer identifies a narrative with spiritual meaning by calling as Parables. Jesus gives an example from everyday life to convey the spiritual truth. Parable is one of the Jesus’ favourite devices to preach the masses. Parables of Jesus are recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Parable has the following features:

1. It is easy to recite.
2. It has everyday common circumstance.
3. It teaches religious lesson.
4. It has surprising end.
5. It uses metaphors.

There are three types of parables- didactic, evangelical and prophetic.

5. Fairy Tales:

Fairy tales have been around for thousands of years, beginning with oral traditions. These fictional stories come from all cultures and many have their own versions of well-known tales in the English world.

Fairy tale, derived from folk-tale is a form of short oral narratives, known to folklorists and is orally passed down generation to generation. It deals with marvelous stories which are always set in the magical world. The magical creatures such as witches, mermaids, elves, dwarves, fairies, nymphs, giants, goblins, dragons etc. play important roles in the development of the wonder tales.

In the 17th century, the fairy tale form gained its name as a self-conscious literary form at the hands of French writers. The fairy tales were originally known as ‘Contes des fees’ in French and were translated into English as fairy tales. It was Madame d’ Aulnoy who invented the term *conte de fees* or fairy tale in the late 17th

century. But Charles Perrault was the first great fairy tale author, writing in the 18th century. His romantic tales - Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, and Beauty and Beast earned wide popularity.

In Germany the famous book of Grimm Brothers 'Household Tales' known as Grimms fairy tale, appeared in 1812. These German tales inspired Hans Christian Anderson whose Emperor's New Clothes and The Snow Queen became very popular. In England this fairy tale form was popularized by George McDonald and later by Oscar Wilde.

Fairy-tale is a sub-class of folk-tale. But many writers turned these oral fairy tales into literary fairy-tales. The stories from Panchatantra were written from oral resources. The stories of Grimm Brother have been brought into written form. Hence the oral and literary fairy tales freely exchanged plots, motifs and elements with one another. There are common characteristics of fairy tales:

- Set in the past
- Use some form or variation of "Once upon a time"
- Fantasy or make-believe elements
- Enchanted setting - can include forests, castles, water or kingdoms
- Clearly defined good and evil characters
- Magical elements
- Characters take on unusual forms (giants, witches, dwarfs, talking animals)
- Groups of three (objects, people or events)
- Clearly defined problem, climax and resolution
- Most often they have a happy ending
- Teach a lesson that is important to the culture it came from

Most importantly; fairy tales do not have to include a fairy!

In short, fairy tale is an imaginative story or piece of literature told in a variety of media. These are the stories based on magic and fantastical settings, plots, and characters and happy endings. A quality fairy tale tells a compelling story with a timeless theme. It can be characterized by the story elements (Characters, plot, setting, theme, style, tone, and point of view).

A) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative:

1) is called the father of short story.

- a) Chaucer b) **Edgar Allen Poe** c) Thomas Malore
- 2) The form short-story was originated in
- a) **America** b) England c) Greek
- 3) King Arthur was the legendary figure of
- a) America b) **England** c) India
- 4) The story that is orally transmitted from generation to generation is called.....
- a) **Anecdote** b) fairy tale c) folk-tale
- 5) is type of story in which animals and objects speak.
- a) **fable** b) fairy-tale c) parable

B) Answer the following questions in word/phrase/sentence each.

- 1) Who was Aesop?
- 2) What is fable?
- 3) What is an anecdote?
- 4) What is Panchatantra?
- 5) What are the Gospels?

Answers:

- A) 1. a Greek slave.
2. A short story in which animals speak and which teaches moral lesson.
3. A short amusing story about real event or person.
4. Panchatantra is an ancient Indian collection of animal fables in Sanskrit.
5. Gospels are the four books of Bible that tell about life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Exercises:

A) Write short notes on:

- 1) Anecdote
- 2) Legend
- 3) Parables
- 4) Fable
- 5) Fairy Tale

B) Write answer of the following question in about 250 to 300 words.

- 1) What are the types of short story?
- 2) What is legend? What are the characteristics of legend?
- 3) What is parable? What are the features of parable?
- 4) What are the characteristics of fairy tale?

Module-3

A. THE SHROUD

Premchand

Introduction:

Premchand (31 July 1880 - 8 October 1936) is known as Munshi Premchand. He was an Indian writer famous for his modern Hindustani literature and was regarded as the greatest writer in Hindi Literature. He is one of the most celebrated writers of the Indian subcontinent, and is regarded as one of the foremost Hindustani writers of the early twentieth century. Born as Dhanpat Rai Srivastav, he began writing under the pen name Nawab Rai, but afterwards switched to "Premchand".

He has been referred to as the Upanyas Samrat (Emperor among Novelists). His works include more than a dozen novels, around 250 short stories, several essays and translations of number of foreign literary works into Hindi.

Premchand is considered the first Hindi author whose writings prominently featured realism. His novels describe the problems of the poor and the urban middle-class. His works depict a rationalistic outlook, which views religious values as something that allows the powerful hypocrites to exploit the weak. He used literature for the purpose of arousing public awareness about national and social issues and often wrote about topics related to corruption, child widowhood, prostitution, feudal system, poverty, colonialism and on the India's freedom movement.

Plot of the Story:

In a small village somewhere in India Ghisu and Madho, father and son respectively, are seen sitting outside their hut in a tense and irritable mood on a dark winter night as Madho's wife Budhia lies writhing and wailing in childbirth in the hut. The whole village is drowned in darkness and gloom. Madho, Budhia's husband, is impatient and irritated at the heart-rending cries of his wife and at one moment even wishes that she were better dead than be suffering such mortal pains. The family lives in utter poverty as the two men are lazy, greedy, selfish and unwilling to work for livelihood. They choose to live on charity, deceit, begging and theft. They are real parasites on the society. As expected, Budhia dies in childbirth with the child also dead inside her. All this while the two fellows are fast asleep! This is a problem for the two loafers as death rites need money, including buying a ritualistic shroud for the corpse. The two men, therefore, resort to their old ways of fund raising through begging and

borrowing. Their belief is: No need to worry. God will provide! Ghisu gets two rupees from the village zamindar: the banias and money lenders of the village also contribute out of charity and pity. Thus the two loafers have booty of full five rupees cash in hand. This turns their head. Hungry, greedy and addicted, they wander off to the village pub where they drink like fish and eat like pigs. They sing and dance and squander the entire money on such revelry. Consequently there is no Money to buy a shroud and perform death rites for the dead wife. Even so they believe that just the money came, so will come the shroud also from somewhere. Dead drunk and with such consolatory thoughts they collapse on the ground.

Characters in the Story:

1. Ghisu:

Ghisu is one of the characters in the story *The shroud* written by Munshi Premchanda. He is the father of Madho and father-in-law of Budhia. He is sixty years old. He is lazy, shirks his duties and wastes his time wandering outside. He drinks along with his own son Madho. He has no qualms or conscience.

2. Madho:

Madho is Ghisu's son. He is married and Budhia is his wife. She is pregnant. Madho, like his father, is lazy person and he depends on his wife for food and clothing. He doesn't work. He is burdened with debt, steals potatoes and pegs from people's fields and fill themselves. He is a destitute. He doesn't take care of his pregnant wife. When she is writhing in childbirth pains, he doesn't sit beside her. Instead he waits and wants her to die. He spends / wastes all money on revelry leaving the dead body of his wife at home. He is an insensitive person.

3. Budhia :

Budhia is the wife of Madho. She is pregnant. We see her writhing in labour pain inside the hut. She had brought some order in the family of Ghisu and Madho. She would go for work and bring some food for the two men in house. As a result, the two men had become lazier. She cries a lot in the labour pain. She doesn't get medical help. At last she dies with her child dead inside. The two men, instead of buying the shroud for her, waste the money in merry-making.

4. The Zamindar:

The Zamindar is a minor character in the story. Ghisu and Madho go to him pleading for help and money to buy the shroud for Budhia. The zamindar rebukes them for not turning up for work. At last he flings two rupees at them but he did not

utter a word of sympathy.

Theme of the Story:

Premchand's stories are full of realism. He describes the problems of the poor and the urban middle-class people. His works depict a rationalistic outlook. He shows his deep concern for poverty in India.

In the short story, *The Shroud*, he tells us how poverty causes degeneration of man into a beast. Ghisu and madho are poor. Both of them steal food from people, don't go for work and therefore, we get angry with their behavior. But given a deep thought, we understand that the real problem is poverty. They don't have a decent house to live, don't have enough land to till and they were not paid properly for their work by the upper-case people. There was a great social inequality. There was a great economic inequality also. Both of them belong to chamar caste which is very low. Money-lenders in the village look down upon them. They yoke them for work without payment. They exploit them physically, socially, economically and culturally. So these so poor people react in a bad way. We feel that both, Ghisu and Madho are bad people. But it is the poverty that has made them greedy, selfish and deceitful.

There is also a parallel thought running throughout the story: the miserable condition of women. The patriarchal system always imposes sorrows and suffering on women, it exploits women and does great injustice to womenfolk. It imposes on them meaningless age-old customs, traditions, morals and manners. The custom of buying the shroud for the dead is useless. People don't buy new clothes when one is living but they have to buy a new piece of clothe as a last rite. The new clothe is of no use to a dead person because it burns along with the corpse. But the people do follow the practice of wrapping the corpse in the shroud without asking a word against it.

The writer has a message to convey us from the story. He exposes the cruelty and injustice done to the lower class people. He criticizes the social system which turns man to behave like a beast. He tries to open our eyes by highlighting social and economic inequality in the village.

Setting of the Story:

The setting refers to a place where the events in a story happen. The action in the shroud happens in a small village. The village is drowned in darkness of ignorance, misery, exploitation and superstitious practices. The action takes place late in the evening in a hut. The hut symbolizes poverty and suffering. There is a description of village life. The people in village – The zamindar, banias and money lenders all help

Madho and Ghisu to enable them to buy the shroud. Thus all the events in the story take place in a remote village i.e. rural part of India.

The Title of the Story:

The title of the story must be apt and attractive and suitable one. The title, The Shroud is very proper because it shows the rites to be performed after the death of a person. Here, the woman named Budhia dies in her labor pain. So her husband and father-in-law, being poor, demand money from the people to buy her the shroud. They go to the market to buy the shroud. But somehow their heads turn and they waste the money in drinking and eating. They think that it is useless to wrap a corpse in new clothes. So without buying the shroud, they return to the village. They think that the shroud will come from people somehow. Thus the whole action of the story moves around the buying of the shroud. It also exposes the meaninglessness and senseless superstition being practical from immemorial times. Therefore, the title 'Shroud' is suitable one. It conveys the message of the story well.

A. Answer the following questions on one word/ phrase/ sentence each:

1. Who was writhing in labour pain inside the shack?
2. How did the whole village treat Ghisu and Madho?
3. When did the peasants call Ghisu and Madho for work?
4. What would Ghisu and Madho do by entering into other people's fields?
5. When people finished eating and rinsed their mouths, what were they served in Thakur's marriage?
6. What did Madho find the next morning ?
7. What did Ghisu and Madho do when they found Budhia dead?
8. Where did Ghisu and Madho go immediately after Budhia's death ?
9. What did Ghisu do before the zamindar?
10. How was the zamindar by nature?
11. What did Ghisu buy from the liquor shop?
12. How much did Ghisu and Madho spend on the meals?
13. What did Madho do after finishing the meal?

Answers

A. Answer the following questions on one word/ phrase/ sentence each:

- b) 3 rupees b) 2 rupees c) **five rupees.** d) a rupee.
8. When reassured about the funeral preparation of Budhia, Ghisu and Madhoset out for
- c) **the market** b) crematorium c) the bank d) home
9. The kindly came to take a look at the corpse of Budhia.
- d) **village women** b) neighbours
- c) villagers d) Madho and Ghisu
10. Ghisu and Madho had of humiliation
- a) a lot of fear b) **no fear** c) a thought d) a sense
11. Ghisu ordered two seers of puris, along with....., liver pieces and fish fry from the shop
- b) chicken fry b) boiled eggs c) **mutton curry** d) sweets
- 12 Madho prayed god to take his wife Budhia to
- c) the market b) crematorium c) the bank d) **paradise**
13. As the darkness depended, the atmosphere in the liquor shop became
- d) sad b) **livelier** c) heavier d) worst
14. Finally, Ghisu and Madho bought..... shroud for the funeral of Budhia.
- e) a very costly b) a very cheap c) **no** d) an old

Exercises:

A. Answer the following questions in detail:

1. Discuss 'Shroud' as a multi-layered story.
2. Critically appreciate the story 'Shroud' in your own words.
3. The story 'Shroud' diagnoses the ills of the society. Explain.

B. Write short notes on the following:

1. The character of Ghisu
2. The character of Madho
3. The title of the story
4. Setting of the Story

Module-3

B. LALOO

Sarat Chandra Chatterji

Introduction:

Sarat Chandra Chatterji is a very famous novelist and short story writer of the early 20th century in Bengal. He wrote about the lifestyle, tragedy and struggle of the village people and the contemporary social practices that prevailed in his time. He was the master storyteller who created many unique and beautiful characters among them two most famous Characters were 1) Srikanta (Novel Srikanta), 2) Sabyasanchi (Novel Pather Dabi) 3) Devdas (Novel Devdas) 4) Lalu etc . He is one of the most famous writers both in Bangladesh and India. His books have been translated many times.

The story is an amusing tale of wayward boy. Eliciting loud guffaws, giggles and sometimes snickers, the short tale is as distinctly typical of Sarat Chandra as are the melodramatic family dramas. The story, Laloo is narrated by an unidentified friend of Laloo. It tells us about the mischief and reformistic attitude of Laloo.

Plot of the Story:

Laloo is a real mischief to his family with the mother always being at the receiving end of his tricks. Once he scares her mortally by throwing a rubber snake on her body. She sprains her ankle badly. She is fed up with son's mischief and arranges to appoint a private tutor to discipline Laloo. This is vigorously disliked by Laloo, as having resident teacher in the house is like having a policeman under the roof.

Laloo's mother is a devout person. She invites her "preceptor" (guru) to stay in her house as gratitude and respect towards the old man. She believes that the stay of the good man would sanctify her renovated house. However, Laloo does not appreciate the plan and when the preceptor comes to stay in the house Laloo arranges to drip ice-cold water on him while he is asleep. As a result, the poor old man keeps awake throughout the night, tries to sleep in the veranda and is bitten by swarms of mosquitoes. When Laloo's mother knows this and discovers Laloo's tricks he is much ashamed at inflicting insult on her Guru and is livid with anger. She wants to thrash Laloo soundly but Laloo escapes and stays for fifteen days at his aunt's house.

Laloo may be a mischief monger but he is a Jack of many trades and skills. He has a good mechanical brain and he can repair different gadgets skillfully. He is innovative and self-dependent. He wants to set up his own business at an early age.

A completely new side of his personality is revealed in the episode of goat sacrifice to goddess Kali at orthodox believer Manohar Chatterji's worship at his home. It happens that the blacksmith who performs the actual sacrifice is taken severely ill and cannot report for the work. There is no one else who can undertake the responsibility. At this juncture, Laloo's name surfaces for the job as he is such a dare devil. His father also consents. Laloo slices off the heads of two goats vigorously but now the sacrifice as it were has him in its grip. He is drunk with violence and demands more goats to be beheaded. However, there being no more animals, Laloo begins to chase Manohar himself in order to slice his head in the sacrifice! Panic breaks loose in the house and Manohar is mortally afraid. Laloo pretends to be possessed by the spirit of sacrifice and plays the role like a deft, seasoned actor. Manohar Chatterji requests Laloo with folded hands to spare him. Here is Laloo's chance. He makes Manohar take an oath that henceforward he will never in future perform animal sacrifice in Kali worship. The story concludes on this suggestive note.

Characters in the Story:

1) Laloo :

Laloo is the central character in the story because it focuses all through on the pranks of Laloo. Laloo is an adolescent son of a small town lawyer. He is a mischief-maker boy and therefore a source of anger and anxiety to his mother, Nandarani. Once he intimidates his mother by throwing a rubber snake at her. As a result, she sprains her ankle badly. She arranges a teacher for him but Laloo insults and troubles him also. But though Laloo is a pampered boy he has mechanical skills of repairing various household gadgets. So everybody liked him in spite of his naughtiness.

Laloo's bad image is erased from our mind in the episode of sacrifice to goddess Kali. He helps Manohar Chatterji by offering his help to cut sacrificial goats. But then he pretends to be possessed by the spirit of violence and chases Manohar with a sickle. He scares Manohar and makes him take an oath that henceforward he will never perform animal sacrifice to Kali. Thus Laloo turns out to be a mature personality who opposes killing of innocent animal.

2) Laloo's Mother :

Nandarani is Laloo's mother. She is a devout and simple hardworking

housewife. She is always worried about the future of Laloo. With a view to educate him well she arranges her own old teacher as a private tutor for Laloo. She also believes that the stay of her guru will sanctify her house. She gets furious when Laloo troubles her guru and expresses her apology.

3) Laloo's Father :

Laloo's father is a well-to-do lawyer in the town. He doesn't care much about the future of Laloo. He had built a three-storeyed house. He loves Laloo very much in spite of his mischievous nature. He doesn't say a word of anger when Laloo troubles his tutor by pouring on him ice-cold water.

4) Laloo's Private Tutor :

The name of the private tutor of Laloo is the Smritiratna. In fact he had been guru of Laloo's mother. On request made by Laloo's mother, he consents to be a private tutor to Laloo and lives with them. However, Laloo troubles him by dripping ice-cold water on him. Laloo's mother begs the teacher's apology. Laloo's mother had a great respect for the teacher. She believes that her house will get purified by his stay.

5) Manohar Chatterji :

Manohar Chatterji was a man of locality. He wished to sacrifice goats to propitiate Goddess Kali. But the blacksmith who was supposed to perform the rite did not come. So Laloo is offered to cut the sacrificial goats. Laloo did the work and in a fit of frenzy chased Manohar with a view to kill him. Manohar, greatly scared, pleaded for mercy. Then Laloo made him swear that henceforward he will never in future offer goats to Kali worship.

Theme of the Story:

The story Laloo is written by the 20th century Bengali writer Sarat Chandra Chatterji. Sarat Chandra was essentially a thinker and a social reformer. During his time Bengal was in the grip of social evils like sati, child marriage, caste, discriminations, untouchability, exploitation of women and poor people, animal sacrifice etc. This unhealthy atmosphere moved Saratchandra deeply. He grew uneasy to see social evils around him. His work represented rural Bengali society and he often wrote against social superstitions and oppression. He was particularly sensitive to the cause of women. Therefore, he wished to give a message to the evil-doers. So his reformist attitude is conveyed to us through the characters of Laloo. At the end of the story, we see how Laloo forces Manohar to swear against animal

sacrifice. So here Laloo functions as the mouthpiece of the writer and his reformist zeal is presented through Laloo. Thus the central theme in the story is to expose the social evils and to protest against them. The writer wants society to take 'corrective' action and get rid of the bad social evils and practices.

A. Answer the following questions on one word/ phrase/ sentence each:

1. How did Laloo frighten his mother?
2. Who was invited to come and reside in the house after Laloo's class?
3. Whom did Laloo's mother hope to invite to bless her?
4. What was the name of Laloo's mother's preceptor?
5. What was the name of Laloo's mother?
6. What did the preceptor do when the cold water dripped on him?
7. How did Laloo's mother feel looking at the preceptor's condition?
8. What did Laloo's mother say after preceptor's incident?
9. In the youth who could surpass Laloo in the gymnasium?
10. Where used to be an annual worship of the Goddess Kali?
11. What oath did Manohar Chatterji repeat before the Goddess Kali?
12. What type of person Manohar Chatterji was?
13. How was the priest?

Answers:

A. Answer the following questions on one word/ phrase/ sentence each:

1. By throwing a rubber snake
2. The tutor
3. The preceptor
4. Smritiratna
5. Nandarani
6. The preceptor went into the verandah
7. Nandarani felt alarmed, anxious, overwhelmed with shame.
8. Throw myself into the Ganges.
9. Nobody

10. Manohar Chatterji's house
11. there shall be no more animal sacrifice in my house.
12. Manohar Chatterji was a bulky person
13. The priest was lean

B. Complete the following statements by choosing the correct alternative:

1. Getting a tutor to live in the house was quite as bad as calling in the
 a) **police** b) enemies c) relatives d) Yamraj
2. Laloo's father had a.....storied mansion.
 a) **three** b) single c) five d) two
3. Laloo's mother's preceptor was unwilling to travel all the way from
 a) the market b) his Ashram c) the forest **d) Faridpur**
4. The big room on the..... floor was cleared for the preceptor
 a) first **b) ground** c) third d) top
5. When the cold water dripped on him continuously, the preceptor tried to take rest
 a) in the backyard b) in the Ashram
c) on a wooden bench d) in the room only
6. Laloo's mother saw a..... in a rag.
 a) **lump of ice** b) lump of suger c) lump of mud d) water bottle
7. When his schooldays were over, he started working as
 a) **a contractor** b) a preceptor c) a priest d) a teacher
8. On the occasion of the Chhat festival, a new type of toy made by Laloo brought him almost
 b) **ten rupees and a half** b) two rupees and a half
 c) two rupees d) five rupees and a half

C. Say whether the following sentences are true or false:

2. At the Bengali school, Laloo was the mechanic for everybody's petty jobs.
3. Laloo was not endowed with exceptional strength and unbounded courage,

he was fearful.

4. Laloo's father ordered Laloo to go to sacrifice the goat.
5. Laloo could not catch the bulky Manohar Chatterji.
6. Laloo had pretended that the blood had gone to his head, and had played a trick on them.

Answers: 1. True 2. False 3. True 4. False 5. True

Exercises:

A. Answer the following questions in detail:

1. Critically appreciate the story 'Laloo' in your words.
2. Discuss the theme of the story 'Laloo'
3. Sketch the character of Laloo in your words.

B. Write short notes on the following:

1. Smritiratna's visit to Laloo's house
2. An annual worship of the Goddess Kali
3. Laloo's mother

Module 4

A. A SEASON OF NO RETURN

Gurdial Singh

Introduction:

Gurdial Singh is a Punjabi writer, novelist and short-story writer. He was born on January 10, 1933 at Bhaini Fateh, in Faridkot District, Punjab. His father was carpenter-cum-blacksmith. Due to utter poverty he has had to give up his studies while he was still in eighth grade. He began working as an apprentice to his father. The headmaster of the middle school, Madan Mohan Sharma, came to his help and he completed his Matriculation. Against all odds in 1962, he became a teacher of Punjabi in a village. Then he completed B.A. in English and history. In 1967, he completed his M.A. in Punjabi.

He has authored eight collections of short stories, nine novels, three plays and nine books for children. He has translated several of his own works into Hindi. He received the 'Jnanpith Award' in 2000. He is also the winner of Sahitya Academy Award for his novel *The Last Flicker* (1999). Along with the prestigious 'Jnanpith' and Sahitya Academy Award, he is also the recipient of 'Soviet Land Nehru Award' (1986), and 'Bhai Veer Singh Fiction Award' (1992). Gurdial Singh worked and retired as a Professor at a regional Centre of Punjabi University. Now he resides at his hometown, Jaito, Faridkot.

'A Season of No Return' is an extremely sensitive description of the psychological changes that result from interaction between the village and the town. Along with the superficiality of human relationships, the story points out man's exploitative and commercial attitude.

Plot:

Kauri comes to live with her son Santokh to help her daughter-in-law through her pregnancy. Santokh and her daughter-in-law are shown to be the perfect pictures of obedience. Both are more than willing to do their duty by her. They look after the needs of Kauri punctually. They attend to all her physical needs, including the minor ones. Yet somewhere deep inside, Kauri is not comfortable with herself. Santokh's wife delivers a boy and the child is left in the care of Kauri. Kauri provides her love, kindness and affection to the child. Santokh and his wife, being employed persons, lead a clockwork life. Kauri finds it intolerable and constantly yearns to go back to

village. There is no one to share her joys and sorrows. Therefore, she suffers from the feelings of loneliness and isolation. Even the maidservant is in her own hurry and has no time to talk with her. So Kauri, being isolated, begins to long for her own home, her own people and her village. As a result of all this, her physical condition worsens. Now the couple thinks the presence of Kauri to be a burden on their purse. They think that the woman's work is over and she is of no more help. So they decide to send her back to the village.

The story is a spotlight on the unchanging plight of Punjabi women on one hand, and exploitative and commercial attitude of modern men on the other. Gurdial Singh shows that modernity has made little difference to the fabric of familial and social relationships. It is hence there has been no significant change in the condition of women like Kauri.

Characters:

1. Kauri:

Kauri is central character in the story. She is a middle-aged Punjabi woman. She belongs to a farming community. She has completed her primary duty – to look after the household and rear the children. She is the mother of two sons – Santokh and Gyana. Both of them are married. Santokh is an engineer and Gyana looks after the family land. Her husband is a normal human being. Gyana, his wife and their children are obedient. Her life in the village is happy, natural and informal. It is smooth, without clockwork mechanical haste. However, Kauri's life undergoes a sea change when she is taken to the city by Santokh. She accompanies Santokh unwillingly and there starts a new chapter in her life. She is expected to help Santokh's wife through her pregnancy and delivery. Santokh is an engineer and his wife is a college teacher. Both behave well with Kauri and look after her needs. Both, being employed, move out and in according to their office timings. Kauri suffers isolation as there is no one to share her joys and sorrows. The formal, mechanical behavior of her daughter-in-law disturbs her a lot. The clockwork haste upsets her. Nothing is smooth for her in the city. She is nothing more than a servant in the house. No doubt that her physical needs are taken care of. But what about her mental and emotional needs? As a result her life becomes formal, lonely, mechanical and loveless. She suffers a great mental agony. She starts feeling restless. She never voices her psychological needs. She starts dreaming of her village. She repeatedly asks Santokh to take her back to the village. But as the couple needs her to look after their son, they just calm her down by raising the point of inconveniences. She couldn't find any reason to go back. The mental agony and feeling of isolation

affects her health and she falls ill. Now the couple fears the challenge of possible responsibilities and decides to send her back to the village. As long as Kauri was in healthy condition, they were not willing to send her back. One feels a great sympathy for her suffering. What is heartening about Kauri is that she is treated as an object. In no cases her will is respected. She is just taken for granted. Her wills are crushed under the weight of motherhood and womanhood. Her suffering, doubtlessly, shows the unchanging plight of Punjabi women.

2. Santokh and His Wife:

Santokh is the son of Kauri. He is an engineer. He lives in a city. He is a man of modern outlook. He believes less in the lesser things like caste or creed. He has married to a girl of a low caste. There were no marriage procession and no rituals. It was a big issue for the biradari. He has married of his own accord, disregarding the wishes of his parents. Only his young brother was pleased with all the happenings. He had special affection for Santokh. He takes Kauri to the city to help his family.

Both Santokh and wife are employed. His wife teaches in a college. They live a mechanical clockwork life in the city. They have no time to sit, speak and understand other people. They are so busy in their life and work that they simply could not understand the psychology of Kauri. They are rather diplomatic and selfish persons. They could not see beyond their self. They attend to the physical needs of Kauri very punctually but couldn't see her mental agony. What they need in the form of Kauri is an uncomplaining servant. It is so because as long as she was in good health, they were not willing to send her back, but as soon as she falls sick, they send her back. Santokh and his wife are representatives of typical modern money-minded, commercial and loveless material men. They are insensitive to others suffering. They have become puppet-like in the clutches of time. While Kauri represents helpless traditional woman; the daughter-in-law is a modern woman with self-will, competence, economic independence and practical wisdom.

Theme/s:

A good work art contains many themes. Every single reading of a good work provides a new meaning. Likewise "A Season of No Return" has many themes. First of all, it is a story of the unchanging plight of Punjabi women. A woman's demanding role in the traditional family structure never ends. Her role is decided by the men- initially by husband or by the elders and later on by her son/s. For her entire life she has to carry on the burden of motherhood or womanhood. She is expected to perform these roles selflessly, uncomplainingly and without voicing her wills. This is what exactly one notices in the case of Kauri in the present story. In the story Kauri

is taken for granted. No one cares for her freedom of choice or her will in decision making. She simply surrenders to the decisions taken by her sons. She is shifted to and fro without respecting her wishes. She is simply taken as an object for others well-being. She suffers silently. Her plight goes unnoticed. Her sad, helpless and uncomplaining nature makes one to sympathize with her.

Secondly, the story is about the superficiality of human relationships. They are often of an exploitative nature. Many a times we do not discern this exploitation. Even within a family people use one another for their convenience and advancement. In Indian family system members of family are taught to be cooperative tolerant and helpful. In the story Kauri is tolerant, accommodative and helpful. She has learnt to live for others. She does everything for the comfort and well-being of others in her family. Her husband too is tolerant and accommodative. There is no superficiality either in Kauri or in her husband. However, Santokh and his wife are self-centered, self-serving and superficial in nature. With the changing times their habits, needs and minds are changed. They have grown intolerant, money-minded and material. It is hence their relations with Kauri are superficial, mechanical and of exploitative nature.

Thirdly, one can locate the theme of transition in the story. The life of modern man has changed tremendously due to the economic, social and technological changes. This has given birth to new values making the old ones useless and outdated. So the modern man is in a confused state of mind. One cannot say which values are correct. Therefore, we cannot blame Santokh and his wife or Kauri. Santokh and his wife keep pace with the time and they have no other choice. They are caught in the trap of time and change. Kauri is uncomplaining, tolerant and selfless. She is in her middle age and cannot change now. In the process of transition both old and new are likely to be benefitted or suffered.

Lastly, the story can also be interpreted as a picture of the conflict between the rural and urban life. The modern city life is mechanical, formal and it runs clockwise. As against the simple rural life it is more complex. In rural life, there are so many to share joys and sorrows with. In city life, no one has the time to sit and share joys and sorrows. Urban man is caught in the whirlpool of change. In the village interactions are natural, informal and smooth. While Kauri represents rural life, Santokh and his wife represent urban life.

It is an extremely sensitive description of the psychological changes that result from interaction between the village and the town. It is a story of interpersonal relationships. Modern technological and economic development has changed man upside down. Man has become more self-centered and intolerant. Human

relationships have become mechanical; superficial. This superficiality of human relationships is the theme of the story. The title suggests man's helplessness in the face of material world. The story also points out man's exploitative and commercial attitude. Thus, the story could be interpreted on different levels. At the end of the story everyone feels "that there was something strange and unfamiliar". This feeling of estrangement is the result the exploitative and commercial attitude of Santokh and his wife. This modern couple busy with their clockwork schedule has to keep moving ahead as there is no other choice. There is no return because they cannot return to the same situation they are made to leave or had left. Hence, the title 'A Season of No Return'.

Setting:

'A Season of No Return' sets in an undefined urban location. However, there is depiction of both the village and city life. There is a transition from a village to a city. The two settings help to understand the story properly. They show how the pattern of life in city is entirely different from that of the village. The pattern of life in city shows how man is caught in trap of time and change. In the village life is peaceful, restful and unscheduled. It is smooth and without clockwork mechanical haste. In city people work as robots, slaves to the clocks and they have no time to sit, speak and share joys and sorrows. There is almost a total breakdown of communication. It is an unsentimental and pragmatic world where relations have subordinate place. The man in the city is caught in the speed of change and so he has no time to stand and stare. In such a world, when an individual from a village comes he suffocates and almost dies. Thus the shift in setting is apt and serves the purpose of the story.

A. Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. Who comes into the room with the cup of tea?
2. Which words did the daughter-in-law repeat in her characteristic way?
3. What makes Kauri dance in joy?
4. What makes kaka get impatient?
5. At what time did Santokh and his wife get ready to leave?
6. Why had Kauri come to be with Santokh and her daughter-in-law?
7. Why did no one in the village speak to Santokh straight?
8. With whom does Kauri share her joys and sorrows?

9. Why did Kauri find it impossible to keep listening to the woman from Jalandhar?
10. Why did the season remain more or less same in the city?
11. Why did Kauri want to help the maid?
12. Who had tutored the maid?
13. What makes Kauri nostalgic?
14. Who was the only source of energy and cheer for Kauri?
15. When does the feeling of estrangement and sadness end?

Answers:

A. Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. The daughter-in-law
2. "Maaji, pranaam! It's six o'clock. Please have your tea."
3. An innocent smile on kaka's face
4. The tip-tap of his mother's chappals
5. By quarter past eight
6. To help her daughter-in-law through the pregnancy.
7. Because he had married of his own accord, disregarding the wishes of his parents.
8. With a woman from Jalandhar.
9. Because she used to start bad-mouthing her of her a daughter-in-law
10. Owing to the proximity of the sea
11. She wanted to help her out so that after finishing her work in good time, the maid could sit and talk with her.
12. The daughter-in-law
13. The feeling of isolation
14. Her grandson / kaka
15. On Saturday night after seeing Kauri off

B. Choose the correct alternative and complete the sentences.

1. Kauri had been hearing the sweet voice of for the past one year.

- a) **her daughter-in-law** b) her grandson
c) Cuckoo d) nightingale
2. Kauri had been sleepless for almost
- a) a day b) **a week**
c) a month d) two nights
3. The daughter-in-law offers tea to Kauri exactly at
- a) **six o'clock** b) thirty minutes past six
c) thirty-five minutes past seven d) quarter past eight
4. Santokh and his wife had forbidden Kauri from
- a) **doing household chores** b) talking with neighbours
c) entering into garden d) speaking with the maid
- 5.....offers Kauri a tablet and glass of water.
- a) **Santokh** b) The daughter-in-law
c) A Gujarati woman d) The maid
- 6.....had special attention for Santokh.
- a) **Gyana** b) Kauri
c) Kaka d) Santokh's Bapu
7. At gurudwara, Kauri meets up with
- a) Gujarati Women b) **several Punjabi women**
c) many people d) her relatives
8.becomes envious of Kauri's lot.
- a) A Gujarati Woman b) **A woman from Doaba**
c) Santokh d) Women of her Biradari
9. Kauri's daughter-in-law was
- a) **a college teacher** b) an engineer
c) a clerk d) a primary teacher
- 10was condemned by everyone as someone of a low caste.
- a) Gyana b) **Kauri's daughter-in-law**
c) Kauri d) Santokh's Bapu
11. Kauri felt relieved when she saw coming in.
- a) Gyana b) **the maid**
c) Kaka d) Santokh's Bapu
- 12prevents Kauri from doing the household chores out of fear.
- a) The daughter-in-law b) **the maid**
c) Santokh d) Santokh's Bapu

13. The maid had.....Children.

- a) **five**
- b) two
- c) three
- d) six

14. The dialogue between the daughter-in-law and Kauri is

- b) healthy
- b) **mechanical**
- c)emotional
- d) sentimental

15.....accompanies Kauri up to her village.

- a) **Santokh's engineer friend**
- b) Santokh
- c) The daughter-in-law
- d) Kaka

Exercises:

A. Answer the following questions in detail.

1. Discuss "A Season of No Return" as a story of the superficiality of human relationships?
2. Discuss the different themes of the story "A Season of No Return".
3. Are Santokh and his wife at blame for the suffering of Kauri? Justify your answer.
4. "Kauri suffers as she is caught in the trap of time and change". Illustrate.

B. Write short notes on the following:

1. Santokh
2. The miserable plight of Kauri
3. The daughter-in-law
4. The village and city life

Module 4

B. REBATI

Fakir Mohan Senapati

Introduction:

Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843-1918), the most revered writer of Odisha, is the pioneer of modern Odia prose. He had little formal education. He was largely self-taught. He was a versatile man – a schoolteacher, administrator, journalist, nationalist leader, social reformer, scholar and writer. His literary career cannot be separated from his reformist one. He wrote school textbooks on Mathematics, Geography and History. In addition to 20 short stories, he brought out an Odia journal, a news bulletin, and translated ancient epics into modern Odia. His writing primarily deals with social reform and especially with the empowerment of women and the underprivileged.

“Rebati” was the first short story in Odia Language. It was published in 1898 in a journal *Utkal Sahitya*. It is a story in which a girl child is caught between traditional superstition and modernity. It could be read as a proto-feminist plea for women’s education. Set in a cholera epidemic, it is tragic story that examines the workings of social attitudes.

Plot:

The story takes place in village Patapur in Cuttack district of Odisha. The family of Shyambandhu comprises four members: Shyambandhu and his wife, his mother and his daughter Rebati. Rebati is ten years old. Shyambandhu is a God-fearing, simple, honest, straightforward and kind-hearted man. He works as a dutiful tax collector for the oppressive *Zamindar* on a salary of two rupees per months. He does some incidental work for the tenants as a result his average monthly income is not less than four rupees. The salary, three and half acres of cultivable land and two cows - it was enough for running the household smoothly.

Both Shyambandhu and his daughter Rebati are fond of singing *bhajans* (the devotional songs). There is an upper primary school in the village opened at the request of the villagers. The school has a teacher named Basudev, aged twenty. In the course of time Basudev comes closer to Shyambandhu’s family. Shyambandhu comes to know about a girl’s school in Cuttack and he requests Basudev to teach his daughter. Basudev readily agrees to Shyambandhu’s proposal and Rebati’s lessons

begin. Within two years Rebati manages to learn Odia alphabets and reading and writing. Meanwhile Shyambandhu thinks of marrying Rebati with Basudev. But soon there follows the misfortune of Shyambandhu's family. Shyambandhu and his wife die of cholera one after another. Rebati and her grandmother have to sell the two bullocks to meet the expenses of the funeral rites. The *Zamindar* takes back the land given to them for cultivation. He also takes away the cows by force. The grandmother sells the belongings one after another to meet the daily needs. Basudev comes forward to help them in their distress. Earlier Rebati had a soft corner for Basudev, but now Basudev too develops affection for Rebati. One day Basudev also dies suddenly. Rebati becomes completely alone. The grandmother strongly believes that all this happened due to Rebati's education. She starts abusing Rebati. After the death of Basudev, the completely broken Rebati falls ill. She gives up food and dies. The old woman also meets her tragic death in the end. Thus there occurs a complete destruction of the whole family.

Characters:

We come across some eight characters in the story. They are: Shyambandhu and his wife, his mother, the *Budhi* and his daughter Rebati; Basudev; the *Zamindar*, Hari Sa and the village *dhobi* Bana Sheti. However, some are round and some are flat. Round characters are complex and undergo development while flat characters do not change throughout the course of the story. Some characters do not appear directly but they play important role in the sense that they help the reader understand the socio-economic and cultural system of the time. Let's study them:

1. Shyambandhu Mohanty

Shyambandhu Mohanty lives in a village named Patpur. His family comprises of four people: He and his wife, his mother and his daughter Rebti, aged ten. He owns a big house. He works as a tax collector for the *Zamindar*. His salary is two rupees per month. He gets a few extra rupees for doing some odd incidental work for the tenants. Thus his monthly average income is not less than four rupees. Besides, the three and half acres of land and two cows are more than enough for running his household. He respects his mother, helps his wife and loves his only daughter, Rebati. Thus he is a family man in the true sense of the word.

Shyambandhu is a simple and straightforward man. He is honest and dutiful. The kind-hearted Shyambandhu is well liked by the tenants. He is a God-fearing man. He teaches Rebati Odia *bhajans* and scriptures. He learns of a girl's school in Cuttack and requests Basudev to teach Rebati regularly. It symbolizes his awareness and understanding of the fast-changing world. He is the supporter of modernity. He

is eager that his daughter should have education. He acts as an agent of change. He engages a private tutor, Basudev, for Rebati's teaching. As a good father he dreams of marrying Rebati with Basudev. However, he falls a victim to cholera epidemic. Before death he requests Basudev to look after his family after his demise. Significantly enough, his untimely and tragic death affects the family adversely and puts an end to Rebati's education. Shyambandhu stands for the progressive and modern outlook.

2. Rebati

Rebati is the ten year old girl of Patpur village. She is the darling daughter of her father. Like her father, she is fond of singing *bhajans*. She regularly sings before Shyambandhu. She has a strong desire to seek education. In spite of the opposition of her grandmother, her education begins at home. She progresses fast in her studies. Within two years she could read fluently, without a pause. Shyambandhu raises a subject of her marriage with Basudev and a noticeable change occurs in her behavior. She develops a kind of affection for Basudev. Shyambandhu's untimely death puts an end to her education. Then the family is reduced to great a poverty. She suffers a breakdown. She loses appetite, spends sleepless nights and reduces to skin and bones. With the death of Basudev her life, as if, comes to an end. She gets disappointed and stops going out and falls ill. The memories of her parents haunt her all the time and her condition worsens day by day. She gets deeper into a state of unconsciousness and dies a tragic death.

Rebati is the product of conservative and orthodox society. She represents the womenfolk who stand for female education and emancipation. She is a girl caught between traditional superstitions and modernity. The whole story revolves around Rebati's education.

3. The Grandmother

Rebati's grandmother is the custodian of a conservative social system. She is the dominant female figure in the story. She supervises many things including the serving of food to Shyambandhu at the time of dinner. She plays a strong role at the time of major family decisions. She believes that girls should never be educated, instead, they should learn about household chores. She raises the age-old questions: Study? What's that? What will she do with studies? She opposes the very idea of Rebati's education. She feels contended on the issue of Rebati's marriage with Basudev. However, the cruel hand of Fate takes away both her son and daughter-in-law through the agent of cholera and everything comes to an end. The miserable and helpless grandmother sells pans and pots to meet the daily needs. She throws herself

on the floor and cries all day long. She loses her eyesight, and holds Rebatī's studies responsible for it. The orthodox and superstitious minded grandmother strongly believes that Rebatī's education is responsible for all the misfortunes. She considers Basudev equally responsible for the tragedy. She begins to regard Rebatī as a girl of ill omen and evil ways, and treats her cruelly. But she tries to feed Rebatī during her illness. The miserable, helpless and the blind old woman meets her tragic death in the end. The grandmother represents the social attitudes of the time.

4. Shyambandhu's Wife

Shyambandhu's wife goes unnamed in the story. Like most of the Indian women of her time she has no prominent role to play in the family decisions. She is a simple housewife, a dutiful wife and a lovable mother. She looks after her husband, her daughter and mother-in-law. She is a happy and contented woman. She is docile and doesn't have much say in the family matters. She likes the idea of Rebatī's education. She feels sorry for Basudev being orphan. Hence, often on festive days she invites him to her house. After her husband's death, she also becomes the victim of cholera epidemic and dies.

5. Basudev

Basudev is a teacher in an Upper Primary School of Patpur. He has graduated from the training school at Cuttack. He is a handsome and good-looking youth of about twenty years. During his childhood, he had epileptic fits which left a permanent scar on his forehead. But the scar adds a grace to his personality. He is very simple and straightforward man. He is a sweet and gentle soul. Having lost both his parents in childhood, he had been brought up by his maternal uncle.

He is a *Karan* by caste. He often visits Shyambandhu's house. Shyambandhu's wife invites him on the festive days and serves him sweetmeats. These visits develop a pleasant and affectionate relationship between them. He informs Shyambandhu about a school for girls. He, thus, instills in him a desire to provide education to Rebatī. He tries to create a progressive awareness of value of education. He works as a private tutor for Rebatī. In the hours of crises, he rushes to Shyambandhu's house even at the risk of his life. He tries to help them in every possible way. After the death of Shyambandhu and his wife, he looks after Rebatī and her grandmother.

In the course of, he feels attracted towards Rebatī. At one point of time their eyes meet, however, the love story doesn't flower as the love-birds fall victim to the ways of Providence. He goes to Hariharpur and on his way back dies of cholera. His untimely and tragic death affects Rebatī very badly and soon she too meets her tragic death.

He stands for the agent of change. He represents modern and progressive attitude. He also represents hope. He wishes for emancipation and empowerment of women.

Other Minor Characters

The *Zamindar*, Hari Sa and the village *dhobi* Bana Sheti are flat characters of the story. They stand for the well-established socio-economic system and culture of the society. They exploit the poor and needy in their own way. They are opportunists. They stand for the workings of social attitudes. These characters help the reader to understand the socio-cultural-economic ethos of the time properly.

Theme

Rebati's plea for education is at the centre of the story. Female identity and empowerment is the theme of the story. The story is about female education and the superstitions concerning it prevalent in the then Odia society. Through the grandmother's blind and superstitious nature the writer has presented the traditional biased approach. The main plot of the story revolves around Rebati's education. The story deals with the life and sufferings, and the tragic end of Rebati. The story also presents the conflict between values: progressive versus orthodox. Fakir Mohan expands the dimension of the conflict by highlighting four evils in the society. They are – poverty, ignorance, exploitation and orthodoxy. The writer gives us a very grim picture of poverty prevalent in the rural parts of India. He describes the heart-rending story of Rebati's family after the death of both her parents. Ignorance has made their lives miserable. Due to ignorance, they fall prey to superstitions and remain far away from progress. Rebati's grandmother takes education as an ill omen only because of ignorance. She cannot think beyond the institution of patriarchy. In the story Rebati's mother and grandmother represent the womenfolk of the rural India. Thus, it is a touching tale of the universal female condition. Senapati has also presented the cruel workings of the feudal system in the story. The *Karans* like Shyambandhu have to work, traditionally, for *Zamindars* as record-keepers and accountants. The *Zamindars* exploit these poor people in their own way. While women are exploited in their families, the poor people are exploited by the *Zamindars*. Both the women and the poor people suffer their lot silently without voicing their sufferings. Rebati has to suffer without her fault. The *Zamindar* takes away almost all the belongings of Rebati's family after her father's death. Even Hari Sa and the village *dhobi* Bana Sheti exploit the grandmother and Rebati in the times of their crises. This kind of exploitation is but the natural consequence of poverty and lack of education on the part of the sufferers. This is what Senapati tries to highlight through the question of

Rebati's education. He just wants to eradicate all these evils by providing education to women. Rebati is just a small part of his larger scheme. What he wants to focus is that if women are educated most of the prevailing bad practices will come to an end. With women's education, orthodox beliefs and superstitions will come to an end. He wants show us that education is a pious work; hence he engages Basudev and Shyambandhu (Both are Lord Krishna's names) to bring about a desirable change in the society. Thus Senapati's concerns are primarily with social reform and then with the empowerment of women through education.

Setting of the Story

Written in a colloquial style, the whole drama of the action of the story takes place in village Patpur. The choice of both the setting and characters are significant. 1898 was the period when there was feudal system in Orissa and in Cuttack district a few new schools for girls were established. The story written against this backdrop has its own significance. Shyambandhu and Basudev are *Karans* by caste. *Karans* of Odissa then worked for *Zamindars* as record- keepers and accountants; they also served in the field of education as teachers. Thus the names of the places and characters and the plot lend the story a kind of authenticity. Further, the feudal system and the exploitation by the *Zamindar* make the story a realistic document. The other issues like poverty, ignorance, orthodox thinking and superstitions form the background of the setting.

A. Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. Where does the story take place?
2. What was the salary of Shyambandhu per month?
3. How much land did the *Zamindar* allow Shyambandhu to till?
4. What was the average monthly income of Shyambandhu?
5. Who is a teacher in the school of Patpur?
6. From whom does Shyambandhu learn about a school for girls?
7. Who opposes to the idea of Rebati's studies?
8. When does Rebati's *Vidyarambha* start?
9. When did cholera epidemic strike Patpur?
10. Who is the first victim of cholera epidemic?
11. Who rushes to the house of Shyambandhu regardless of the consequences?

12. Who requests Basudev to take charge of Shyambandhu's house?
13. Who helps Basu and the womenfolk to manage the obsequies?
14. How did they manage expenses of the funeral rites of Shyambandhu?
15. Why does the grandmother start abusing Rebati?
16. Why, according to the grandmother, Basudev had to die?
17. Why, according to the grandmother, Rebati had fallen ill?
18. Who is Hari Sa?
19. Who tries to feed Rebati?
20. What does the grandmother stand for in the story?

Answers

1. Patpur
2. two rupees
3. about three and half acres
4. not less than four rupees
5. Basudev
6. Basudev
7. The grandmother
8. on *Sri Panchami*
9. on a spring day of *Phalgun*
10. Shyambandhu
11. Basudev
12. Shyambandhu
13. The village *dhobi* Bana Sethi
14. By selling the two bullocks for seventeen and a half rupees
15. Because she believes that all their sorrows and misfortunes were due to Rebati's studies
16. Because he had committed the sinful act of teaching Rebati
17. Because of her studies
18. The owner of grocery shop
19. The grandmother
20. The grandmother stands for orthodox beliefs in the story

B. Choose the correct alternative and complete the sentences.

1. Fakir Mohan Senapati belongs to the state of
a) Maharashtra
b) Karnataka
c) **Odisha**
d) Manipur
2. Fakir Mohan Senapati writes in..... Language.
a) Hindi
b) **Odia**
c) English
d) kannada
3. Rebati isyears old.
a) six
b) **ten**
c) twelve
d) twenty
4. Shyambandhu represented the *Zamindar* as his
a) **scribe**
b) home servant
c) agent
d) accountant
5. Shyambandhu's family comprises of..... members.
a) **four**
b) six
c) two
d) three
6. Basudev is a.....by caste.
a) Hindu
b) **Karan**
c) Muslim
d) chamar
7. Basudev was brought up by his
a) paternal uncle
b) **maternal uncle**
c) grandmother
d) mother
8. Basudev is graduated from the training college at
a) Patpur
b) Hariharpur
c) Odissa
d) **Cuttack**
9. Basudev is..... years old.
a) thirty
b) **twenty**
c) twelve
d) ten

20. Rebati suffers from

- a) cholera
- b) malaria
- c) pneumonia
- d) **high fever**

Exercises:

A. Answer the following questions in detail.

1. Discuss “Rebati” as a tale of female education and emancipation.
2. Discuss the social realism depicted in the story.
3. Discuss “Rebati” as a touching tale of the universal female condition.
4. “Rebati” is about female education and the superstitions concerning it prevalent in Odia society. Discuss.
5. Fakir Mohan examines not the workings of the fate but of social attitudes in “Rebati”. Discuss.

B. Write short notes on the following:

1. Shyambandhu
2. Rebati
3. Basudev
4. The Grandmother
5. The Cholera Epidemic