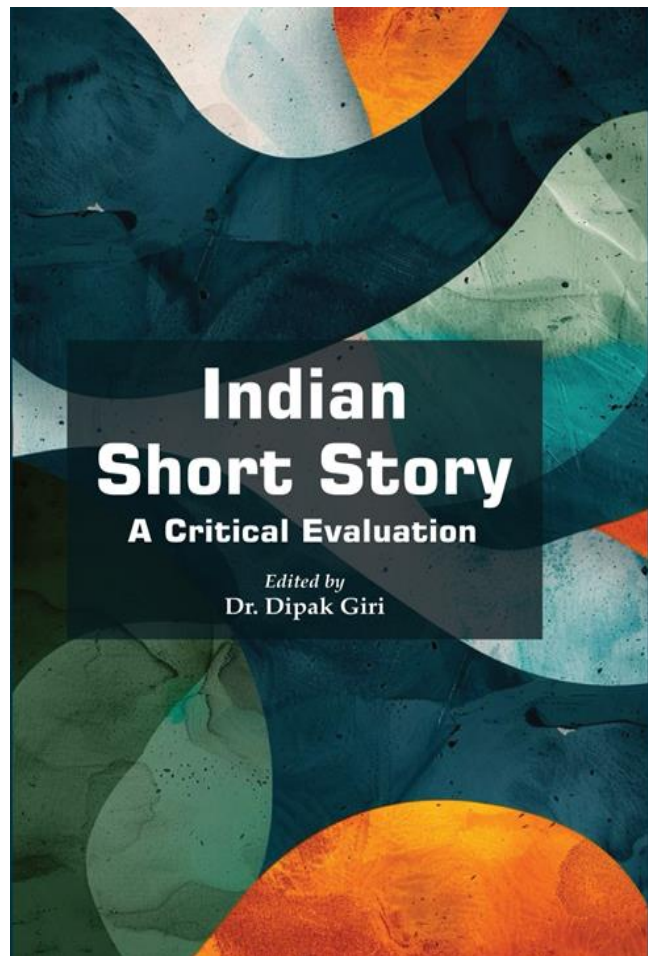


***Indian Short Story: A Critical Evaluation* by Dr. Dipak Giri, New Delhi:  
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**Reviewed by**  
Sahabuddin Ahamed  
Assistant Professor (Guest Faculty) of English  
Pandit Sundarlal Sharma (Open) University  
Chhattisgarh, Bilaspur, India.  
Email: [ahamedgg@gmail.com](mailto:ahamedgg@gmail.com)

A short story is the shortest form of fiction that contains all the elements of fiction- plot, character, dialogue, setting, theme, and style. Concentrated on single plot, it reflects emotions quickly. Its actions are swift, creating a single impression upon the reader. As a distinct literary genre, Indian short story is the most popular form of Indian writing. Its significance lies on the exploration of the very essence of Indian life, culture, and identity. It has evolved over time and become distinctive as it is an amalgamation of Western and native Indian literary traditions. Indian short story has contributed to the development of Indian literature and has an enduring influence.



Indian Short Story: A Critical Evaluation, edited by Dr. Dipak Giri, provides a comprehensive and thoughtful analysis of Indian short stories. Beginning with the definition of the genre 'short story,' the book highlights the significance of Indian short stories. This book contains twenty-six scholarly articles on renowned Indian short story authors, such as Mahasweta Devi, Qurratulain Hyder, R.K. Narayan, Somadeva Bhatta, Ismat Chughtai, Rabindranath Tagore, Anita Desai, Ruskin Bond, Saadat Hasan Manto, Salman Rushdie, Mulk Raj Anand, and Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay. Each article provides a detailed discussion of their works,

analyzing various aspects such as characterization, narrative technique, symbol, motif, theme, metaphor, and multiple socio-cultural contexts in which they were written. The collection of articles by various academics presents a multifaceted view of Indian experiences- social, cultural, spiritual, historical, political, and economic issues. In an insightful and succinct manner, the volume offers a comprehensive exploration of the relationship between the literary landscape and those wider contexts represented in this literary genre. With its rich tapestry of various perspectives, themes, styles, and issues, this volume offers a critical analysis of Indian short stories. Scholars have employed a variety of theoretical perspectives, including feminist, psychoanalytic, ecocritical, subaltern, and postcolonial to examine the works and enrich their understanding of them. This anthology is a fascinating insight into all major Indian short story writers and their contribution to Indian literature.

The opening chapter “Mapping Motherhood in the Selected Short Stories of Mahasweta Devi” by Shachi Sood illustrates motherhood and women’s marginal position in a patriarchal society. Women undergo double oppression both in the public and private sphere of their lives. Their maternal agencies and bodies are exploited, oppressed, isolated, and estranged by the very oppressive systems. Despite the dehumanizing impacts of hegemonic culture upon them, the female protagonists of the selected stories are defiant and resilient. As they attempt to demystify traditional socio-cultural norms, and their struggles are for their liberation, recognition, voice, and emancipation. Naseer Ud Din Sofi and Raheela Mohamed’s chapter on Qurratulain Hyder’s short stories explore the intertwined and interconnected nature of human history, culture, relationship, and experience across time and space. The migrant characters constitute their fluid and hybridized identity and belonging through their multiple dislocation, relations, negotiations, and cross-cultural encounters during and after the British colonization of the Indian subcontinent. They uncover the complex, inclusive, and pluralistic ethos of Indian society. The characters challenge the traditional gender roles and exclusive national identity and belonging, seeking social justice, equality, and humanity. Shantanu Siuli’s article on “Aag Ka Darya” by Qurratulain Hyder examines the cyclical, non-linear, interconnected, and fluid history of the Indian subcontinent—how spatio-temporal dimensions affect one’s culture, history, and identity. The complex and entangled historical events and cross-cultural interactions have enduring impacts on the lives of the characters who form their fluid, disintegrated, negotiated identities. Pinki Arora’s article on Rita Garg’s Tales focuses on the future human conditions in which people lose their faith on God or partially believe in God because their lives are affected by science and technology. People have no concern for

the lives of their babies, as they are selling them; and rich criminal traders collect organs of babies for organ transplant, becoming God-like. The stories' futuristic approach evokes a sense of fear and terror among the reader. The article on R. K. Narayan's "Father's Help" by Bikramjit Sen paints the positive role of parents in children's growth, development, and morality. It emphasizes the importance of proper guidance in the lives of children in coping with life's problems and developing emotional and moral integrity. M. S. Shajith and G. Bhuvaneswari's article on Somadeva Bhatta's Kathasaritsagar focuses on the dual nature of monsters in Indian literary traditions and on its cultural and mythological narratives reflect on fear and morality and reality and fantasy. Deepak Rana's chapter makes a comparative study of short story and fiction with references to R.K. Narayan, Rabindranath Tagore, and Munshi Premchand. The chapter on Ismat Chughtai's "Lihaaf" by Baidehi Mukherjee reflects societal hierarchy in body politics in which the life of the upper-class represents hypocrisy, privilege, and hegemony. It reveals how dominant ideology of society and culture is apparent in sexual relationships between the characters whether heterosexual or homosexual. The chapter on Rabindranath Tagore's "The Postmaster" by Mrityika Maitra illustrates myriad human emotions especially loneliness and the socio-political conditions which influence characters' lives and social positions. Preethi Jose's article on Rabindranath Tagore and Anita Desai's short stories presents a comparative study on cross-cultural encounters. It highlights the issues of identity, culture, relation, family, tradition, and women's position in Indian and American society.

Samim Reza's article on Ruskin Bond's "The Tiger in the Tunnel" from a psychoanalytic perspective presents an apocalyptic vision of the world- human Anthropocene and its consequent ecological disaster. It focuses on the protagonist's psychosocial and psychological transition from childhood to maturity. Ananya Ghosh uses feminist perspective to explore the issue of homosexuality of the protagonists in the short story "Lihaaf" by Ismat Chughtai. It unveils how lihaaf (quilt) functions as a metaphor of trauma and non-normative sexuality. Abhik Ganguly's essay from Lacanian psychoanalysis examines the protagonists' disoriented feelings, desires, anxieties, and awareness. It reveals the working of the 'symbolic order' through the metaphorical telephonic conversation and the absence of the symbolic in the psyche of the woman. Sayan Chatterjee's chapter on Sowvendra Shekhar's short stories explores the subhuman and traumatic existence of the subaltern Adivasi communities and their struggles for liberation, equality, and humanity. Muhammad Abdur Rahman's essay on Rabindranath Tagore's short stories provides a critical insight into the nuanced layers of

Indian society, culture, and tradition and human condition. Swarnava Bhattacharyya's essay on R.K. Narayan's short stories from ecological perspective traces the role of Anthropocene in the environmental disaster and interrelationship between human and nature. The essay on "The Quilt" by Sampurna Chowdhury looks into the homo-eroticism of the characters which is considered a taboo in Indian society, challenging heterosexual norms. Aryaa Singh's essay from a postcolonial stance investigates the issues of cultural dislocation, cultural identity, and cultural hybridity the characters undergo and forge in different socio-cultural locations in Salman Rushdie's "The Courter." Chiranjita Borah uses Frantz Kafka and Soren Kierkegaard's theories of existentialism to analyze existential crisis, alienation, absurdity of life, and fractured human psyches which the characters undergo as a result of the disastrous impacts of modernity and capitalism in the short stories of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha and Manoj Kumar Goswami. In her critical analysis of Rabindranath Tagore's short stories from a feminist perspective, Shreoshi Dey looks at women's lives, self-assertion, and empowerment, critiquing patriarchal society and traditional gender roles. Shreyashi Banerjee in her study on Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" illuminates the impoverished conditions of the subaltern under postcolonial ruling elite and how female body works as a form of resistance to those oppressive and dehumanizing systems. Shraddha Bhattasaly's study on Tagore's "The Postmaster" seeks to illustrate human psychology and socio-cultural circumstances which affect individuals' lives. Sikha Sengupta's comparative study on the Puranas and Sirshendu Mukhopadhyay's short stories examines ontology, human identity, and human psychology within Deleuzian ontological framework. Ankita Saren and Srijani Ganguly's article reflects on human conditions and human emotions and socio-cultural milieu which influence the characters' lives, identities, and social positions in Rabindranath Tagore's "The Postmaster." Kundan Das in her article examines the themes, narrative techniques, and style of Rabindranath Tagore's short stories. The concluding chapter on Mulk Raj Anand's short stories by Dipak Giri provides a critical insight into various ills of society such as discrimination, oppression, inequality, exclusion, and dehumanization the impoverished or subaltern people undergo on the basis of caste, class, and gender.

In conclusion, Dr. Dipak Giri's book presents a rich tapestry of Indian short story which stands as a distinctive form of literature. It offers a thorough and comprehensive examination of the prominent Indian short story authors and their works. Its wide range of subjects and theoretical perspectives make it provocative, engaging, and insightful scholarship. Its strength lies in its diverse issues, perspectives, and contexts, providing a multifaceted study on Indian short

stories. The book will be beneficial to those who wish to gain a deeper understanding of Indian short story genre. It is a great resource for students, teachers, scholars, and academics. Its significance lies in the exploration of nuanced layers of Indian society, culture, identity, and aesthetic. It makes a significant contribution to Indian literature.