

Gujarati Literary Periodicals: A Historiographic Study

Ujas Pandya

Assistant Professor
SDJ International College, Vesu

Dr. Bhavna B. Teraiya

Librarian
Shree J.D.G. Commerce College and S.A.S. College of Management

ABSTRACT

A historical examination of Gujarati literary magazines is the focus of this paper. More than 168 years have passed since the first Gujarati literary magazine was published. It has been over a century since the first Gujarati literary magazine was published, but it continues to expand and adapt to today's digital world. Gujarati's literary magazines shine the brightest amid their rumoured demise in the digital world. Since Gujarati literature spans several eras, the present paper looks at multiple avenues of the evolution of the most prominent Gujarati magazines. Because of their long history of publication (over 168 years), literary magazines in Gujarati represent the current state of knowledge and public interest in the Gujarati language, literature, and culture. However, as do the ideas that guide the development of art and literature in any given period, these elements change over time. We can better understand the characteristics of any literary magazine by dividing these magazines into different eras and their influence over society in that particular period. Within several eras of Gujarati literature, this study examines the numerous typical Gujarati magazines, their qualities, and their contribution to developing literature and society.

KEYWORDS

Literary magazines; Gujarati literature; society; literary eras; the evolution of Gujarati Magazines.

The history of Gujarati literary magazines dates back more than 168 years. Starting in 1854, the publication of literary magazines became able to face the challenges of the modern day.

The development of a periodical press in Bombay is closely linked to the development of the art and science of printing and type foundry in Bombay. Printing radically changed the text production, multiplication and dissemination process; combined with an efficient

and cost-effective postal delivery system, it increased the accessibility of textual matter to a much larger audience. As one of the major languages of Bombay, Gujarati was at the forefront of all these innovations. (Ranganathan 158)

Gujarati literary magazines emerged as part of Gujarati literary journalism.

Within recent years, an increased scholarly interest in periodical literature has been apparent, and yet the subject is so vast, and the

possibilities of investigation so varied that each new effort in research seems like an act of pioneering. (Spector 9)

This study aims to analyze literary periodicals, considering several questions:

What was the character of a typical literary periodical? What were the social factors in their origin? . . . What were the interrelations between these publishing enterprises and other interests? What were the causes for the brevity of duration and early death of these periodicals? (Fleming 378-379).

Here, the literary magazines are divided into the different eras of Gujarati literature.

1. Literary magazines of the Dalpat-Narmad Era

The Reformation period is the period of British rule. During this period, the public life of Gujarat seemed to have gone through many difficulties, like many forms of idolatry, superstitions, caste discrimination, miserable conditions of women, lack of education, and slavery of kings who were agents of the British. In an attempt to bring public life out of such a miserable state, the writers of that time created such literature.

"The modern Gujarati literature began with Dalpatram (1820-1898) and Narmadashankar (1833-1886). The most outstanding work in modern times is the epic *Saraswatichandra* of Govardhanram Tripathi (1855-1907)" ("*Books in Gujarati*" 166). Narmad's essays characterize the mission of social reform. In public life, people fall to a superficial level. Narmad, with his writings in the magazine '*Dandio*', faced superstition and orthodoxy prevalent among the Gujarati people. Narmad's writing was not only severe but sarcastic at the same time. 18th-century English magazines like '*Tatler*' and '*Spectator*' were modelled before '*Dandio*'. Both periodicals dealt with the manners of English society,

"establishing principles of ideal behaviour and genteel conduct, and proposing standards of good taste for the general public". (Bond)

Ichharam Suryaram Desai started '*Gujarati*' another notable magazine in 1880. The political service of '*Gujarati*' was tremendous in attracting public attention in diplomatic matters. Through '*Saurashtra Darpan*,' Mani Shankar Kikani spread the ideas of education, knowledge, women's education, and reforms to some extent.

2. Literary Magazines of Pandit Yuga (Pandit Era)

The spread of education in Gujarat resulted in many scholars attaining enlightenment. As a result, Gujarati periodicals began showing signs of artistic enthusiasm. The frenzy of reforms that started in the Dalpat-Narmad era became more severe in this era. Also, the literates of this age studied multiple languages like English, Sanskrit, and Persian and their literature in depth. And they assume the personality of being called '*Panditas*' (scholars) in the real sense. That's why the period from 1880 to 1915 has been named Pandit Yuga, the '*Scholar's Era*'.

'*Priyamvada*', published in 1885 by Manilal Nabhubhai Dwivedi, aimed to spread women's education and improve their condition. This magazine mainly discussed women's issues. He also started '*Sudarshan*' in 1890. Mr. Dhirubhai Thakar, speculating on what achievement was achieved by '*Sudarshan*,' noted, "This text was the capstone that stopped the flow of Western civilization."

'*Jnansudha*' is regarded as one of the highest peaks of Pandit Yuga. The first comic in the Gujarati language was published from April 1892 to June 1900. The beginning and development of poet Nhalal's work are in '*Jnansudha*.' Narasinhrao, Anandshankar, Ranjitram, etc., started discussing him and his experiments in '*Gnansudha*.' Sonnets of

Balwantray Thakore, poems, stories, and criticism of Kant have been published.

Remembered as an influential literary magazine of the Pandit Yuga, Gandhi considered Vasant food, living in South Africa. Anandshankar, as its editor, attracted the best writers of the time and produced many fine writers as an author and editor of that magazine. It played an essential role in translating the classical studies of economics, science, philosophy, criticism, linguistics, grammar, and other humanities into Gujarati.

3. Literary Magazines of Gandhi Yuga (Gandhi's Era)

The archaic period in Gujarati literature from 1915 to 1950 is called Gandhi Yug. Gandhi came to India from South Africa and started Satyagraha in 1915. A great wave of revival came through 'Navjeevan,' 'Young India' and other magazines. It had an impact on the literature of that time. Hence, this period is known as the 'Gandhi Yuga' in the history of literature. Gandhian beliefs and values started appearing in his literary creation, so the magazines of this era differed from the periodicals of Pandit Yuga. "The editors like Munshi and Ramnaran Pathak even went to jail due to involvement in the national independence movement. Thus, the periodicals sometimes directly or indirectly carried the voice of the love for the nation to their readers" (Prajapati).

'Vismi Sadi' is considered the first pictorial and popular literary periodical of the Gujarati language, and today, it seems like a legend. It was started on April 1, 1916 by Haji Muhammad Alarakhia Shivji.

Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi was the editor of 'Gujarat' magazine. He writes, "I realized my creative power through Sahitya Sansad and 'Gujarat' monthly. I became eager to expand the development of Gujarati literature and culture."

The most significant development of the year is a welcome growth of 'little reviews' of poetry. This was

first experimented in 'Kavita,' a pocket-size periodical published by 'Kumar' magazine of Ahmedabad. Soon, Bombay followed suit by launching 'Kavilok' on the same lines with 'Kavita (Madia 98).

The accomplishment of providing a favourable setting for Gujarati literature, particularly for the researchers of Gujarat, is attributable to 'Forbes Gujarati Sabha Quarterly,' whose editors have encountered a diverse group of responding persons. On 25 March 1864, English officer Alexander Kinloch Forbes was established with the support of Mansukhram Tripathi. It aimed to archive the old Gujarati works and publish them later on. It has also published translations of the works of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Farasi, Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, English, French etc. From Volume 71, issue No. 2, the renowned Gujarati writer and critic became the editor. It has been a remarkable magazine of criticism that has maintained a consistent level for decades. It is popular because of its multiple academic activities. The magazine had versatile, responsible editors. According to the time, each editor has edited the articles by being loyal to the interests of Gujarat and its identity. Not only that, but it has also adopted a unique way of editing.

Through 'Sanskriti,' Umashankar served the Gujarati language, literature, art, learning, and culture.

Umashankar Joshi has written moving one-acts about the life of rural Gujarat, which are distinguished by his deep understanding and ironic detachment. (Bhagat 81)

With the discontinuation of 'Visami Sadi', Ravishankar Raval felt that such periodicals must continue to spread wisdom to the people, and this idea led him to start a periodical named 'Kumar'. (Prajapati).

4. Literary Magazines of the Modern Age

India gained independence in 1947. The consciousness of the whole country was engaged in getting freedom. Those consciousnesses became free, and after the post-Gandhi Yuga, i.e., 'Aadhunik Yuga', the modern age was born after the Gandhi era. The modern age is considered to have started in 1950. "In the post-independence period, two distinct trends are discernible in Gujarati literature. One is traditional and the other modernist" (Mehta 59). Suresh Joshi, Umashankar Joshi, Labhshankar Thakar, Radheshyam Sharma, Kishore Jadav, Sitanshu Yashchandra, Madhu Rai, Chinu Modi and many creators started creating literature in a new way.

Among the modernists whose contribution was noteworthy during 1964 are the poet Jyotish Jani ('Fin ni Diwalo'), short story writers Suresh Joshi ('Apicha') and Madhu Roy ('Bansi Namni Ek Chhokri'), and novelist Raghuvir Chowdhary ('Purvarag') (Mehta 60).

Suresh Joshi, a renowned modernist essayist, rebelled against the established trends in literature, and several literary magazines were born to do so. He also introduced the genre of personal essays,

. . . genre of personal essays was neglected so far, and now it has been developing with the inclusion of many things such as emotive imagination; kaleidoscopic nuances of sentiments; reflective playing on the poetic plight; ingenious observations. (Topiwala 17)

'Kshitij' had a prosperous seven-eight years from 1959 to 1967. Prabodh Choksi edited the first-year issues of 'Kshitij'. Suresh Joshi joins him as the editor of 'Kshitij' from the second year. In the first two years, students are introduced to the works of Dostoevsky, Albert Camus, E.M. Foster, Franz Kafka, Pearl Buck, and St. John Perse as a hint of the ones to come.

Suresh Joshi has also commented on the limitations of the modernist word:

The problem of modernity is certainly a very vital one in an underdeveloped country like India, which, having attained its freedom, finds the West at least a hundred years ahead of it. The process of modernity requires a high degree of self-consciousness . . . (74).

'Parab' was started as the mouthpiece of a specialized organization like Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in September 1960. 'Parab' contributed to the spread of absurdism, existentialism, surrealism, and naturalism. Different approaches to review are also noteworthy and exemplify the universality and cosmopolitanism of Gujarati's transboundary literature. An extensive account of the literature and the changing consciousness seminar suggests a new turn in criticism, and linguistic concerns run parallel in the periodical. Parab is still being published to date.

After beginning with the poetry readings of a few friends, the publication of this poetic activity resulted in the magazine 'Kavilok,' which was published bi-monthly in 1957 from Mumbai under the editorship of Rajendra Shah, Suresh Dalal, and others. The long journey of 'Kavilok' represented four or five generations of poets. It also published works on translations of poetic works in other languages and poetry reviews. A few miscellaneous experiments and poetry session publications also took place. In 'Kaviloka' poetry, the poet does not remain at the centre.

In January 1962, the first issue of 'Navaneet' was published. It was published by Gopal Navtia and edited by Kundanika Kapadia. 'Samarpan' was a fortnightly published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, and was founded by Kanaiyalal Munshi. Its first issue was published in 1959. It became difficult for Navneet to survive, so it merged with 'Samarpan' in

May 1980. Both literary magazines' subject matter is remarkably diverse. The writings of innovative and knowledgeable writers are found in it. It has been successful in getting write-ups from mainstream creators. The importance of translation activity and interviews of various key workers are highlighted in it. This magazine has not only maintained the standard of publishing quality works by excellent creators, but it has also developed that attitude gradually. This magazine is currently being published with the same vigour under the editorship of Mr. Deepak Doshi.

Suman Shah is the mouthpiece of Gujarat Sahitya Akademi. 'Shabdasrishti' had an exceptional contribution to developing the short story form. Under the editorship of Jyotish Jani from 1983 to 1986, The movement of Dalit literature enters into 'Shabdasrishti.' A new column, 'Creators Workshop,' draws attention. It has published various special issues, including special issues on the stories of Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi and an issue of songs and ghazals.

5. Literary Magazines of the Post-Modern Age

Between 1975 and 1980, a new climate emerged, which means the environment after the flood of modernity receded is known as the post-modern era. In the literary creation of this era, the pulse of life, sensation, emotion, and human relations are re-emphasized.

The first issue of 'Gadyaparva' was published from Mumbai in 1988 under the editorship of Bharat Nayak and ran continuously till 2008, when it was launched under the patronage of folklorist Kanji Bhuta Barot. Critics say that 'Gadyaparva' filled what was missing in modern literature. A phenomenon that disappeared from modern literature, which turned to form and shape, returns in a new form in post-modern literature. Various beads of the 'Gadyaparva' epithets of

special issues on Chitrakarlekhak, Kannad Story, Marathi story, and Nari (women) have been published. Gadyaparva's contribution will be written at the forefront in bringing Gujarati literature close to rustic life through the stories.

'Vi' was a monthly published new consciousness-raising literary works, ideas, and debates on reform. In 1998, 'Vi' again becomes 'Vidyanagar.' Some special issues of the magazines, like the 'Sophisticated Gujarati story', are special issue no. Ninety-seven, on ghazal, sophisticated poetry, the Kannada poetry and Dalit story in 1995, was published by 'Vi.' Another notable characteristic of the 'Vi' is the creative essays written by Harish Minashroo.

In September 2005, 'Tathapi' started as a quarterly. It owes its editor, Jayesh Bhogayata's keen literary sense and artistic vision. The review of the works of Gunter Grass, Harold Pinter, Rolland Barth, and an exponent of the creators' tastes in English and world literature were also published in 'Tathapi. It is a magazine that specializes in pure literature. The interest in world literature and translation activity has also settled in Gujarati literature through this periodical. The editor's fearless notes on relevant literary events are found in the issues.

'Samipe' and 'Tadarthya' are other magazines of the post-modern era. The first issue of 'Samipe' was published in September 2005. Its editors are Shirish Panchal, Jaydev Shukla, and Bakul Tailor. New topics like literary journalism are found in it. 'Tadarthya' has given special issues of different languages. A global perspective on literature is a characteristic of the magazine.

Conclusion

Text production, replication, and dissemination in Gujarati literary journalism were significantly altered by establishing a printing press in Bombay, a development traced back to colonial India.

The periodicals of the Dalpat-Narmada Era offer a perspective on society that is inclusive of humanity and characterized by diversity. An environment was established to facilitate the introduction of novel concepts. On the one hand, ideological activities such as social reforms, religious reforms, and cultural debates were in progress, while on the other, contemplative and active literary activities were also taking shape.

The collective pondering of Indian culture characterizes the era of Pandit Yuga. The magazines of this era have endeavoured to incorporate other disciplines into their study circle in addition to literature. A more sophisticated form of language is developed during this period. The linguistic structure is further tightened by juxtaposing the essential form of the language with the slang Gujarati language.

With the objective of reaching the broadest possible audience, Gandhian periodicals were published. Gandhi's ideas

appear to have inspired the magazine's creative endeavours during that period. The periodicals of the modern era opened the entrances of world literature.

In Gujarat, modernity is regarded as the first era of world literature. A novel approach to studying world literature and other art forms was initiated. Existentialism, non-conformism, and psychoanalysis were among the numerous concepts that began to influence Gujarati literature.

The post-modern era's literary periodicals were instrumental in revitalizing the stagnant climate of modern times. In the same way that modernity challenges tradition, post-modern creators and critics pose fundamental questions against modernity and revitalize the literary world by re-establishing the cadence of life. In this regard, the literary periodicals of the post-modern era reconfigure the constrained, restricted climate into a legislative environment.

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Ujas Pandya is working as an Assistant Professor of English at SDJ International College, Vesu, Surat, Gujarat, India. He is pursuing his PhD in the field of Translation (Veer Narmad South Gujarat University), M.A. (English) and also qualified GSET (Gujarat State Eligibility Test). He has published papers in both national and international journals of repute.

E-mail ID: ujaspandya@ymail.com

Dr. Bhavna B. Teraiya is working as a Librarian at Shree J.D.G. Commerce College and S.A.S. College of Management, Surat, India. She has completed her PhD (Saurashtra University) in the area of Library Science and Literature.

E-mail ID: bhavnateraiya123@gmail.com