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**THE DEVASTATION OF EPIDEMICS AND THE PAIN  
DEPICTED IN HINDI LITERATURE**

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## Abstract

Whenever there is an epidemic or any disease, it opens many layers of the human mind. A person's mind always suffers from fear, despair, and depression. Be it the current epidemic or 1700, 1800 or 1900 AD, social conditions are not under control. Nothing remains in the control of man. All the efforts made by humans proved futile at the time of the epidemic. Everyone is familiar with the situation of Covid-19, but literature is the medium to become familiar with the epidemics of the Past. Writers have depicted the epidemic in their respective times in literature in such a way that it exactly matches the Covid-19 situation. Every Hundred Years Pandemics occur, for example, Plague in 1700 AD, Cholera in 1820 AD, Spanish flu in 1920 AD and Covid-19 in 2020. There have also been many pandemics after every hundred years, but their nature is different. We will try to understand them further. Last two years, everyone has been struggling with the (Corona Virus) Covid-19 epidemic; everyone also knows its negative effects. Whatever epidemics have come into the world before today, their information can be seen in the pages of history as well as in the pages of literature. The writer of every era engraves them in literature, and this is called a meaningful creation. Epidemic - related literature has been composed in all languages. Hindi fiction is also not untouched by this, be it smallpox, Influenza, tuberculosis, malaria, cholera, plague etc.

**Keywords:** Epidemic, Literature, Infection, Fear, Pain, Life, Economic difficulties, Death, Depression.

## Introduction:

On the pretext of Corona, the attention of all writers and scholars has gone towards the Epidemic and famine. It has become a major topic of discussion. An investigation is going on whether literature regarding epidemics and famine has been written in Hindi literature or not.

Many literary works have been written in Hindi and other Indian languages on the subject of famine and epidemics. Even today, a lot is being written. It is expected that questions will be asked from literary works related to famine and epidemics in the coming competitive examinations.

It is necessary to know what an epidemic is. In answer, such a disease or infection that rapidly infects people in a particular place, village, state, country or around the world simultaneously called an epidemic. There is a possibility of the epidemic in any area due to natural disasters (flood, drought, earthquake, air, water,



animal, bird, tree, plants). Mostly it takes the form of an epidemic when it is a completely new infection like Covid-19; these infections occur in different categories. 1) Endemic, 2) Epidemic, 3) Pandemic.

**Endemic** - An infection or disease that affects a specific area. As malaria has spread in a small area of a village or smallpox infection is spreading among people. It comes at a particular time or season, which can be controlled. This can happen over and over again in that area. For example, we can take the novel 'Maila Aanchal'; it begins with the opening of a malaria centre in the village.

**Epidemic** - An infection or disease that spreads rapidly among a large population in two weeks or less. It can spread from one country to another country or neighbouring countries, but not all over the world ; it is called endemic; for example, Zika virus, which is caused by the bite of an Aedes mosquito. For the first time, this infection was detected in 1947 AD. In 2007 AD, it spread from Africa to Asia. Another example is the Ebola virus, first detected in 1976 in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. After this, from 2014 AD to 2016 AD, its outbreak was seen in West Africa. In 2019 AD, its outbreak again increased in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The third example is the Nipah virus, which was first detected in Kampung Sungai the Nipah in Malaysia in 1998, hence the name Nipah virus. In 2001, the first case of this virus was found in Siliguri (West Bengal), India. The fourth example is the SARS virus spread from China in 2002 AD and gradually, it expanded to 29 countries. SARS and Mars's virus are members of the same family; Coronavirus is also part of the same family. The fifth example is Swine Flu (H 1 N1) 2009, which arrived in India in 2015 AD. This virus mostly affects areas of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Delhi.

**Pandemic** - Such an infection or disease that starts from a particular area and infects the people of the world very fast is called a pandemic. Many pandemics are first epidemic, but if it spreads wider, it is declared pandemic, Like- Covid-19. It first started (December 2019) in the Wuhan region of China in the name of Coronavirus. Which was considered an epidemic until February 2020, but by March, the whole world was infected by it, because of this WHO declared it a Pandemic in March 2020 AD. Cholera, plague and influenza also came in the form of pandemics worldwide.

Whenever a pandemic comes, it brings sorrow, pain, agony, despair, fear, pity, sobs and various kinds of gruesome forms. Man cannot even imagine what could happen the next moment. Many such compositions are found in our Hindi fiction literature, which even trembles the soul of the reader after reading. In today's era, a pandemic is seen from a scientific point of view, and it is also correct; people have become so



educated that they can understand that it is not a divine outbreak. However many years ago, it was not like this. That disease or pandemic was considered a divine outbreak like smallpox. Even today, due to the lack of education in many parts of India, a pandemic is considered the wrath of the Goddess or Mother. When the coronavirus started, 'Corona Mai' was being worshipped in many areas of Bihar. People had started observing Nirjala fast so that the epidemic outbreak would not be on them.

Whenever there is a pandemic in any country or place, it changes people's lives. We see change comes in people's thinking and lifestyle. How it creates family, economic, social and religious difficulties. All these are discussed in our Hindi fiction. There are many compositions on the epidemic in which these circumstances are depicted, for example- Banarsidas JaM's autobiography 'Ardhkathanak' (1641 AD) in Braj language, Bhagwandin's story 'Plague ki Chudail' (1902 AD) in Hindi compositions, Nirala's Novel 'Kullibhat' (1918 AD), Premchand's novel 'Premashram' (1922 AD), 'Pratigya' (1926 AD), stories 'Goddess of Heaven' (1925 AD), 'Idgah' (1933 AD), 'Milk Ka Daam' (1934 AD), Premchand's article 'Force' (1933 AD), Pandey Bechan Sharma ligral story 'Vibhats', Phanishwarnath 'Renu' story 'Pahlwan Ki Dholak' (1944 AD), a novel 'Maila Aanchal' (1954 AD), Mohan Rakesh's play 'Ashad Ka Ek Din' (1958), Harishankar Parsai's autobiography 'Gardish Ke Din' (1980 AD). Rajinder Singh Bedi's story 'Quarantine' in Urdu composition. In all these compositions, the story has been shown in the context of the epidemic. While reading these compositions, we can face all the situations of the present time, which are as follows:

- 1. Phanishwarnath Renu's story 'Pahlwan Ki Dholak':** The village mentioned in Phanishwarnath Renu's story 'Pahlwan Ki Dholak' suffers from malaria and Cholera. The gruesome form of depression, fear and dread of the village battling the epidemic is depicted in the story. During the infection, the sound of moaning and kai (vomiting) of the people suffering from the disease comes at night. Out of fear, the children start crying out, saying 'mother, mother'. Describing the situation of the epidemic, Renu writes, "The village was often deserted. Every house was empty and two or three dead bodies started rising daily. "The situation of Covid -19 also looks the same as described by Renu. Many people died due to a lack of oxygen. Many houses became deserted.
- 2. Bhagwandin's story 'Plague's witch':** The next work is Bhagwandin's story 'Plague's witch'. Plague infection is depicted in this story. The story is gripping and presented in a dramatically. The story begins with the arrival of the plague in the city of Prayag, when the plague entered Prayag, and hundreds of animals started dying every day, people started running away from their homes. During



the epidemic, the poor and the rich Kya, Mahajan, Doctor, Zamindar, Lawyer, Mukhtar all the animals in their houses start dying. People are forced to leave their homes. In the story of the story, Thakur Vibhav Singh's wife gets the plague. Due to fear, the doctor stays away. Vibhaysingh's living wife is declared dead after seeing it. Thakur Saheb asks the priests and servants to cremate the dead wife's body out of fear, but the servants do not burn the dead body out of fear. Instead they throw it raw in the river Ganges. Due to the coolness of the river, Vibhav Singh's wife wakes up, and people mistake her for a witch. At the end of the story, everyone believes that she is not a witch. Do not want to touch sick people, even afraid of cremating them. In the past, when the corona pandemic was in its early days, the condition of the people was like this. Earlier, people did not allow dead bodies to be burnt or buried in the cremation grounds or burial grounds. The sanitation workers had to bury the dead body in some secret place by digging a pit many feet deep. Due to the non-availability of space in the crematorium, people used to throw the dead bodies of their relatives in the river. A different gruesome, and distorted form of a pandemic was visible.

- 'Vibhats' by Pandey Bechan Sharma:** Similar incidents are described in the story 'Vibhats' by Pandey Bechan Sharma 'Ugra'. Which the epidemic of 1916 and 1917 has been shown. The story is about the village of Anupshahar, where the influenza epidemic is spreading, "It was in the year 1917 that war fever or the devastating terror of Influenza prevailed in most parts of the country. Hundreds of animals were dying every day in every city. There was chaos in every village, with many Anupshahr houses and markets around it. All the animals in Mera's village were in fear. No one went to the market for fear of death, because people had heard that the disease spreads even further." People are afraid to touch the dead body of their family members. People believe that those who died are gone, but why should those who are left put their lives in danger? The main character of the story is Sumera who is so miserly and greedy. He does not even live from eating the raw meat of a dead goat. There is only Sumera in the village, who loads the dead bodies of the people, who died of the epidemic in a bullock cart and flowed into the river Ganges. In this sequence, he also becomes a victim of the epidemic. During the illness, his mental condition worsens, and eventually, he too dies. The story is very interesting and thrilling, which justifies its title.
- Harishankar Parsai's 'Gardish Ke Din':** In Harishankar Parsai's autobiography 'Gardish Ke Din', the author recalls the bitterest memory of his childhood days spent during the epidemic and writes 'The most bitter childhood memory is of the plague. 1936, 1937 AD would be. I was probably in the eighth



grade. I was a student. There was a plague in the town. The population had left their homes and lived in the forest by making huts. We did not go. Mother was seriously ill. We could not take her to the forest. There was much activity. On nights, the lamps used in our houses. I used to be afraid of these lamps. Even the dogs had left the settlement, in the silence of the night; our voices were scary to us. "In this epidemic, Parsaiji's mother died. Due to untimely death, the whole house was shattered. After some time, Parsaiji's father also died in mourning for his wife. Epidemics have also been depicted in Hindi plays along with autobiography. Mallika's father dies of an epidemic in Mohan Rakesh's 'Ashad Ka Ek Din'; in this regard, Ambika says, "When your father died in the last epidemic". With Cholera, mention is found. In the fourth act of the play, he says about the disease destroying India, "We will send explosives, cholera, and dengue.

5. **'Quarantine' by Rajinder Singh Bedi:** Another story related to the Pandemic which is very similar to the present context is the story 'Quarantine' by Rajinder Singh Bedi which is written in the Urdu language. This story is translated in Hindi by Sanjeev Kumar and Dr Zia ul Haq. In the Past, when people who were ill due to the corona pandemic were being 'quarantined'. The word that has come into vogue at present is quarantine. The word quarantine is derived from the Latin word quadra giant and the Italian word quarta, which means 40 days. When the plague struck, patients were kept separate from other people for 40 days to prevent the spread of the disease, hence the name quarantine. Rajinder Singh Bedi's story shows how people fear quarantine more than the plague. "The plague was dreadful, but the quarantine was even more dreadful; people were not so much troubled by the plague as by the quarantine" Due to the quarantine in the hospitals, the patients could not meet their relatives, due to which the patients lost their courage due to illness and loneliness. In the past; in the early days of Corona, people were afraid of quarantine, just like in the story. If a person was admitted to the hospital due to some symptoms, he used to commit suicide because of fear. Corona has not happened, and later, the corona report used to come negative. It is also told in the story of how doctors see patients with a full arrangement. Washing hands with soap, and consuming warm liquids on coming home from the hospital. However even then, if you feel a slight sore throat, then it should be understood out of fear that the plague symptoms have started. Even in the Corona period, people repeatedly washed their hands with soap, and consuming hot water. They were using masks; still, there was fear among people. What kind of pollution is there in the environment during the Pandemic in the story? The atmosphere that remains are also stated which corresponds to the time we have spent. For example, schools,



colleges, offices and markets are all closed, and people rarely leave their homes even for essential goods. The story depicts the whole situation during the epidemic, which is completely in line with the past environment.

6. **Niralaji's novel 'Kullibhat':** The next creation is Niralaji's novel 'Kullibhat'. Plague and Influenza, two epidemics, are described in this novel. The first depiction of an epidemic is found in the first pages of the novel "I have passed sixteen years.... little, great disaster, plague in the village". The second depiction of an epidemic is in the middle of the novel "At the same time Influenza there was an outbreak. Father passed away a year ago. That is why I had a job. The telegram came, 'Your wife is seriously ill. Come for the last visit. I am now twenty-two. A year ago, the horrors of death were known in the newspapers. On coming to the banks of the Ganges, there was a flow of dead bodies in the Ganges. It has been told that how the way of living of the people changes during the epidemic, and the population of the village starts decreasing day by day. Niralaji has written this novel on his acquaintance's pity. His own life and the depiction of the epidemic have also come. Nirala writes how the disease of Influenza had spread in his village and in-laws (Mahishadal and Dalmau). Due to this epidemic, his wife also died. When he goes to his village after performing the last rites, he finds that everyone in the house has died due to this epidemic, except for only two nephews. Due to the death of people in the village, the village has become desolate. There is a pile of dead bodies. There is no place even to burn dead bodies. When Nirala returns to Dalmau, to meet his son Ramkas and daughter Saroj, he wanders along the banks of the river Ganga where his wife Manorama Devi was burnt. Nirala sees only dead bodies all around, which disturbs the mind. . The past situations also like this, every day some or the other heart - wrenching news was received. The number of people who died was not known. There was no place even to burn the dead bodies in the crematorium.
7. **Premchand's 'Idgah', 'Doodh Ka Daam', 'Goddess of Heaven', 'Premashram' and 'Pratigya':** Similarly, the story and novel Samrat Premchand has also depicted the distorted form of the epidemic through his many stories, novels and articles. In Premchand's creation, there is a mention of the epidemic during the First World War. Hamid, the main character of his story 'Idgah', loses his father in his young age, due to Cholera. His father died of Cholera last year" Similarly, in the story 'Doodh Ka Dawn', the boy Mangla who is the main character of the story, his father (Gudad) dies due to plague. "This year the plague hit hard, and the anus has already hit" Cholera causes the death of Sithasaran's parents and the children (Janakeesaran, Kamini) in the story 'Goddess of Heaven'. "One day, Babu



Santasaran started having a sweet pain in his stomach, and he sat down to eat mangoes. He had just got up after completing a hundred to see what had happened. He fell down. Malaria and Cholera was depicted in the novels 'Premashram' and 'Pratigya'. Malaria is depicted in part 27 of the novel 'Premashram'. It was early morning and the month of Kwar. The rain had ended. Where to go in the countryside, the stench of rotten flax used to waft ... Sawan used to cover up those who were shy. Mosquitoes and malaria were rampant; Neem bark and Giloy were springing "in the novel 'Pratigya' Death is due to cholera, "Parents died of cholera within a week, so the lonely house became sad". Premchand writes about the plight, economic condition, condition of the youth due to the epidemic in his article 'Force', "Indian farmers are in a pathetic condition like slave time. No one can describe it in words. They know their plight, or their God knows. The landlord needs timely revenue, the government needs timely rent, two handfuls of grain to eat, and one rag to wear, but on the one hand, frost and heavy rains are ruining the crop; on the other hand, plague, Cholera and coldness. In the same way, in the green and flowing youth of their youth, they are going away from the world. The past situation was also similar. What is the old and what are the young? Almost many people left the world untimely due to this pandemic. The youth who had days of playing and eating, who had many dreams for their future, said goodbye to the world without seeing the world.

8. **Dharamveer Bharti's Village of the Dead:** The name of Dharamveer Bharti's short story collection is also on this story Murdon Ka Gaon; this collection was published in 1946. This was the period when there was a severe famine in Bengal and the British government, pretending to be a welfare state, had left people to die. The story begins in a ghostly manner, but after some time it is revealed that these are stories of people dying of hunger.

## Conclusion:

The world is in the direction of continuous change. The arrival of the Pandemic in this change is neither new nor such that it will not come again. Epidemics will continue to come even after us, some lives will be saved, and others will be lost. Various forms of humanity will come to the fore, and all these incidents will continue to be recorded in the pages of literature.





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