CHAPTER-VI

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE WORKS OF

SHASHI DESHPANDE AND M.K. INDIRA, A

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Comparative literature has many facets-linguistic, continental, formal, aesthetic, technical, theoretical, attitudinal, rhetorical etc. However, it has to be mainly approached through culture, because culture alone stands significant. Most important thing is, a culture alone can develop and strengthen the human values. The principle of contrastiveness itself operates in dimensions opened through cultural perspectives, while indulging in exercise. While comparing two works author/scholars should be aware of the fact that not only is every author but each work of an author is an independent Island. It needs to be approached fresh, because each work is a creation in terms of its time, circumstances and mental framework. The important aspect in the Indian context is showing concern as a binary study of literature without crossing the national and regional frontiers. There is a rich variety of literature of regional beauty and masterpieces like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Panchatantra, the Puranas, etc., are the works compared in the global
context. The comparison should provide insight into the distinctive scheme in which each chooses to tap the potential of a particular subject and what each envisions and awakens to see in the subject. Generally speaking, women writers everywhere have increasingly pre occupied themselves with concerns like women's uneasy alienated space in a pullocractic world. The tensions brakes their society's expectations of them and the demand of their talents and their art, their imperious drives and demands towards selfhood, self realization and self-worth, need for individual autonomy and recognition and the equally imperative, often antipathetic need for the security as well as the consolation of community make them grapple with issues like, 'who am I?' 'Who can be?' 'Where is home?' etc. The existing realities like those provoke and pave the way for a change. According to Cixous, "a woman can establish herself as a woman by writing". She observes, "woman must write, must write about women and bring women to writing from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies". 'Gender' seems to be a crucial issue for a better understanding of women, while trying to locate the boundaries of the specific and different in the constitution of gender identity. From the social and cultural perspective, gender becomes a social expression of the basic psychological difference between men and women, which is divided appropriate into masculine or feminine roles and which
is learned through primary and secondary socialization. Thus, the whole sex is biologically determined and gender is socially determined. The primary notable fact about this comparison between Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira is that Shashi Deshpande represents the status of women in India, whereas M.K. Indira represents the status of women in a particular region - i.e., Malnad in Karnataka. The study chooses these two novelists in particular because they are immensely popular and quite important to modern section as a genre. Shashi Deshpande has used domestic setting and examined the home and the family and also the loci of oppressions/suppressions. M.K. Indira has used the same background but the setting is different, the Pre-independence Indian women's conditions are focused in her works. Women characters in their novels are at odds with their personal and environmental setup and the presence of women in their writing is become a major preoccupation.

As women have traditionally been story-tellers all over the world, they not only used the mythic sources of the epics in their local 'avatara' but also the more realistic materials of family histories and memories. So, do Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira. They not only struggle with formal tradition of social comment but also bring novel materials into their literatures, within their respective communities. Women writers as a mode of communication, use patriarchy and its aftermath, patriotic
movement, partition and exile, indexing changing social conditions which provide specific background to universal theme of solitude, adolescence and adulthood, sexuality, death and rebirth, widowhood and its cruel impact. All the these are themes of their novels. Shashi Deshpande’s and M.K.Indira’s writings are tantamount (equivalent) to liberation from sexual and patriarchal society. Their writings highlight the notion of the marginal woman in an andocentric world. In their works, insights take precedence over compulsions of technique, acknowledging the paradoxes in a given epoch, waging an artistic, cultural, ideological and philosophical struggle. In this sense Shashi Deshpande is “modern” whereas M.K.Indira still fears from the dogma, the same old hangovers created significance in her writings. Infact, they both posit ego, sex and love and freedom. Both Shashi Deshpande and M.K.Indira grapple with their contemporary issues and attempt a host of themes from their own past motherhood, mothering, marriage, individuation, marginalization, woman as wife, mother, sister etc. But in M.K.Indira’s novels, problems of child widow, the role of fate, exploitation, suppression, are more capricious. Whereas in Shashi Deshpande’s novels, self-identification, self-realization are major crises. Yet, the significant thing in both is that woman is a human being and not a sex object.
Women characters play a vital role in the novels of Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira. The heroines of Shashi Deshpande are determined in making a choice between the courses open to them. They either take on alienated path or plunge headlong into an encounter, unmindful of the outcome. But M.K. Indira's heroines do not have such determination, they surrender themselves to the social order and they are not ready for an encounter. Shashi Deshpande's characters break out of the roles society has prescribed for them and find power in novel roles that they create for themselves which unite images of masculine and feminine powers. Saritha, Indu, Jaya, Urmi, Madhu et al., are the characters require us to view the modern heroines as new avatars, archetypes of women who reject standard feminine roles in order to accomplish significant social action. Like Ibsen's Nora, Euripide's 'Medea', Aeschylus's Clytemenstra, Vyasa's 'Draupadi', Maitrey; et al. M.K. Indira's characters are still in dark. The society which she represented and exposed is still orthodox. Women have no respect and they are treated as second class citizens. Phaniyamma, Shankari, Sita, Chandri, and many other women of her locality are in dilemma of dogmatic society. They are not aware of the fact about the economic independence and fail in thinking of modernity. M.K. Indira, who represented the society in her novels lived in a, pre-independence remote village, where, the religion
played a dominant role in the life of village people. Writing horoscope, believing in black magic, Mantra-tantra were still in practice. M.K. Indira depicts the social condition in her novel *Phaniyamma*, “Along with Madi went the upholding of tradition, ritual and above all the attitude of frogs-in-a-well. If anything happened in a neighbouring village which went against tradition, there was an uproar...Then the Brahmins would have to grid up their dhotis and walk the thirty miles to Sringeri. A child widow for instance, became pregnant. The man who impregnated her would go himself to Sringeri and procure the order for her excommunication”². This is how woman’s fate was sealed in the society. Indira writes in her novel about the society in which Teginamane Site survived, “Manjaiah Heggade was the head of Dharmastala, two hundred years have passed for British rulers who have established the dominion, thirty years after - Mumbai, Madras, Bangalore, Mysore, witnessed literacy, modernity etc. But some places were still in dark, among them Malnad was in the first place”³ (P-57). M.K. Indira’s character can be compared with Nora, Medea, Drupadi, whereas Shashi Deshpande represented the society in her novels as post independence scenario. The female archetypes of old are still valid Shashi Deshpande’s heroines emerge from a conservative, middle-class, semi-urban milieu. People still believe, as Shashi Deshpande pointed out in her novel, *Roots and Shadows* - “The members of the older generation still
suffer from superstitions......some of them eat food from the unwashed plates which their husbands have used. If you utter the name of Rama, the soul of the dead will go to heaven quickly. The wife's dying before her husband is to be considered good fortune. If a widow does not shave her head, she is a second class citizen. When Saroja (Naren's Mother) wanted to learn music, "Akka put her foot down."4(P-55) Shashi Deshpande unveiled the prejudice and collective unconsciousness of the Hindu ethos. She depicted the gutless women who become completely faceless shadows of their husbands without a protest or her pet objects of division and contempt. To support this idea of Shashi Deshpande we should quote the passage "But, there is one family I do remember a couple, one woman specifically. We had been invited to tea. The man sat and talked to us. The woman came in later with trays of food, cups of tea and glasses of water. She came in silently, unobtrusively, like a shadow and went out in the same way, her husband's conversation not interrupted even by a fraction of a second by her presence...."5 (PP-158-159). All the novels of Shashi Deshpande are in a sense breaking of that social long 'silence', that woman have kept about their suffering and neglect. Shashi Deshpande and M.K.Indira are not a contract of fancy and fantasy of the phallocratic notion of Utopia, but they envisage a whole world in sympathetic terms. Their worlds are neither hyper real nor surreal but emerge as
synonymous of reality. The concepts of “Living space” grapple with issues related to the betterment of females. The fecund society which they portray through their novels would remain handicapped - The Social perspectives in their novels are overviewed, in traditional society where woman’s voice is muted. In a society where male domination prevails marriage is compulsory to female and they are caged and cabined. The society believes that, a husband is a sheltering tree to his wife. The diasphric dialogue over shadows in Shashi Deshpande’s novel That Long Silence. The analogy of husband-wife being like a pair of bullocks, or the husband being like a sheltering tree or the wife being an extremely narrow minded, egoistic sparrow suggests that they do not live as truly human. “When people are treated as things and come to regard themselves as things that can be managed controlled, shaped, and exploited, they are prevented from living in a truly human manner.”6 All these feelings are expressed in her novels, The Small Remedies, Matter of Time etc., M.K.Indira’s novels like, Phaniyamma, GejjePooje, Giribale, TegginamaneSite, Sadananda and so on reflect this crisis. Shashi Deshpande’s and M.K.Indira’s attempt is to restructure sexual colonialism in the society. Their novels can surely be read and appreciated individually, but thematically they are interlaced, focusing on the psychological complexities of female subjectivity, as well as the collective
feminist struggle and women's community in social troposphere. As character in fiction, taking birth in the imagination of their creator, bring about the aesthetic completion of the work insofar as they can stand as three dimensional representations in a hypothetical reality, is conveyed imitating the rounded individuality of human beings in actual life. So women in fiction depend on women in reality. The ruling social system almost all over the world ordains that women's place is the home and her role as a wife, mother, is almost fixed. M.K. Indira has explored some new roles of women, fixed by the male in the society of Malnad region.

This is in understanding the intrinsic connectedness and preoccupations with the above discussed issues, that a sense of unity of a wholistic imaginative pattern is gained. "Young widow Bullamma, becomes pregnant from her own caste Joysa. But the same Brahmin society excommunicates her from the society and considers her as an 'outcaste'. The next generation of Bullamma too becomes 'outcaste.'" (P-207). This feudalistic attitude of society is exposed by M.K. Indira. Whereas, Shashi Deshpande reveals strictly traditional families which expect women to be models of mythological figures like Sita, Savitri and Gandhari. The characters of Shashi Deshpande can be compared with M.K. Indira's characters in social sphere. Indu of Roots and Shadow, Phaniyamma of Phaniyamm, Saritha of The Dark Holds No Terrors,
Chandramathi of Gejjepooje, Urmi of The Binding Vine, Shankari of Giribale, Jaya of That Long Silence and Dakshanyani of Phaniyamma, are all fractured selves in the beginning of the novels. The situations and events keep adding new dimensions to the knowledge of life and the shaping of nations since the societal constructs impose rigid strands and restraints on these women. As Shouri Daniel told, “a modern Indian woman describes the ‘female incarnate’: She has no shape or form: She is everything or nothing. She is fluid, pour her into any mould and she takes it....Ideals and principles lie outside her nature.”8 This existential position is perhaps best exemplified in the decadent Brahmin orthodoxy. Indeed it is not by chance that an orthodox Brahmin hero declares. “The object, I thought, is the woman.”9 This suggests that in their novels we have seen are the produces of an intense intellectual engagement with the socio-economic realities of the writer’s contemporary world. As such the novels fulfill the whole aim of living which is to develop a specific ideological stance to the political underpinnings of one’s immediate society. Marriage plays an important role in the novels of both Shashi Deshpande and M.K.Indira. In Shashi Deshpande’s Roots and Shadows- Indu feels, she is against the arranged marriages. Speaking about the prospective bridegroom of Mini, Kaka declares. “He has two legs, two arms, two eyes, two ears, so what if he is not too bright, (P-52).....May be the body is a
little ugly, may be a little stupid....but everything else is fine. The family is good, it's known to us, they have money, she'll be quite comfortable."10 (p-56) Indu feels sorry for the helplessness of Mini and of thousand of other girls. But when she thinks of the disillusionment of her own love-marriage, there is much to ruminate over. M.K.Indira exposed hard reality of marriage in her novel Phaniyamma. Phaniyamma becomes fortunate when her grand father declares that "Phani's horoscope is a fine one. All the sixteen qualities came together when I matched the children's horoscopes. Life long bliss and the birth of eight sons is what I see ahead. I've never been proved wrong until now. Wait and see, by the time you welcome your daughter-in-law to your house, it will be filled with wealth and joy. No doubt about that."11 Around forty priests had gathered in the Anchemane, the marriage ceremony lasted for eight days. Perhaps Phaniyamma had seen Nanjunda from distance at some wedding feast or the other, and that too about four years ago. Shashi Deshpande's heroine Jaya in the novel That Long Silence: finds herself jobless and curiously free. "Stay at home, look after your babies, keep out the rest of the world, you are safe. That poor idiotic woman Suhashini believed in this I know better now. I know that safety is always unattainable. Your's never safe...."(P-17) The woman had shopped and cooked, cleaned organized and cared for her home and her family with such passion.....where had
she gone? We seemed to be left with nothing to be arranged or re-arranged, put back in place tidied..."12 (P-25). Jaya wonders at the belief that wife-hood is 'auspicious'. M.K.Indira has same character in her novel Tegginamane Site. The protagonist Site is adventurous and knows the reality of the life.

Site jumps into the river to help Annapoorna, it was the period in which women did not go out of the house. She teaches a lesson to idiot Appu, who tried to molest her. She crosses the fled prone river. "Site is illiterate but intelligent, not an angel but smart, courageous: she is a realest rather than imaginative. She is free from lying, hiding etc.,"13 Here M.K. Indira revealed the fact, the women protagonists wrestle with established realities of the society. Shashi Deshpande's and M.K.Indira's works are a matter of ambiguous and multiple spacings between the desires of culture. The subject and discourse that finish the text with its inevitable ephemerality. Their verbal imagination operates as ferment in all cultural life themes of exploration, settlement, development, social imagination that explores, settles and develops imagination which has its own rhythms of growth as well as own modes of expression. Writing becomes a tool for reform. One can locate what Barbara Godard opines in the writings of women, and we can find it in the writings of Shashi Deshpande and M.K.Indira.

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"By drawing on non-cannonical genres and naming non-cannonical figures in their work, these women writers are both resolving the work of their predecessors and creating a collective tradition, grounded the realities of women's work and in the material conditions for textual production as women's domestic labour. Remarking the traces of this hidden life in the high literary genera of poetry, drama, and the novel, these women writers provide evidence of the tessera, the antithetical completion. Anamorphic, these texts provide a vision of women's lives and textual production that distorts the fictional representation of women in the great traditions. Thus it is the great serial text of women's lives that is warp to the woof of the great tradition.14

In a broader perspective, Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira are humanists preoccupied with a process through which human potential, especially dealing with their contemporary social problems in terms of their own ancestral roots of religion and culture. In their novels the battle of sexes is presented in vivid images of women as powerful and equally vivid images of men as powerful and powerless.

The thesis has attempted a thorough study of Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira, their social and cultural perspective, and how women belonging to diverse socio-economic and geo-cultural realities. Their novels record and reflect a very broad spectrum of the experience of life.
For instance, the struggle of Shashi Deshpande's protagonists for harmonious survival in sexist culture is a pragmatic critic not only of phallocracy but also of an excessively growing materialism. It must be pointed out that I am not the first one who talk about comprehending the notions of women as the 'marginalized'. Though they stand for modernity, their fight for self-identity, dignity, equality, individuality, happiness and peace in their society. M.K.Indira’s Protagonists are not at all aware of the fact of 'marginalization' culture and tradition's sanction in humanity, indictment and these made their cultural life with piognance and passion. However, her protagonists have only one denominator, their biological serviceability to the men in their lives. In a Brahmin community, body is the matrix of the whole feminine existence. In order to emphasize the essentially sexual role of woman distinctly different techniques of characterization are in operation. The Brahmins who consider their wives, are all being ugly and undesirable, are unceremoniously lumped into a realistic sketch peppered with naturalistic touches.

One can find in Shashi Deshpande's and M.K.Indira's novels, protagonists of same background conflicting in different types of cultural scenario. Shashi Deshpande's protagonists like Indu of Roots and Shadows, Saru of The Dark Holds No Terrors, Jaya of That Long Silence.
Urmi of *The Binding Vine*, Kalyani of *A Matter of Time*, Madhu of *Small Remedies* represent modernity. As Shashi Deshpande revealed in an interview given to Vanamala Vishwanatha says, “No, infact it was very untypical because of my father. He never allowed us to state that we were Brahmins. We were very conscious of our difference. There were no elders in the family who could have introduced us to the rituals and rites of a Brahmin upbringing. So we had a very free and uncultured childhood, a good upbringing......we started reading and thinking very early...................He never barred us from doing anything we wanted.  

Like Shashi Deshpande herself her female protagonists are sensitive, self conscious, brilliant and creative. For instance, Jaya of *That Long Silence*, possesses ambivalent attitude of contemporary independent minded Indian women. Sarita of *The Dark Hold No Terrors*, who strongly resents the onslaught represents the post-modern dilemma of a woman. Indu of *Roots and Shadows* - explores the inner self and who symbolizes the new woman and is educated who lives in close association with society brushing aside all its narrow conventions. Aru of *A Matter of Time* perceives, new dimensions of betrayal and cruelty in the woman-man relationship. Urmi of *the Binding vine* determines not to plaster cast into a stereotyped image by the people around her. These women have inner
strength. But education tells the “new” women with a volcanic steam to disown even womanhood.

M.K.Indira’s novels tell us the stories of women whose lives are arid deserts of negatives that they are like part of male property, and how women are self-sacrificing and devoted to their husband. A family myth was created by sanatana patriarchal hierarchical Hindu society. The myth keep is being alive by Malnad people. The woman is mother, taking care of her children and patience, self-sacrificing are abundant in her gifts like the mother earth: the woman in ‘Grihalakshmi’, symbolizes the prosperity of home: She is Sahadharmini identifying herself with the dharma of her husband, her master: She is sati, her life begins and ends with her husbands. M.K.Indira’s phaniyamm of phaniyamma, is a child widow of 13 years. Site of Tegginamane Site: is rebellious, who accepts the religious sanctions blindly. Shankari of Guribale is an innocent housewife, Chandramati of Gejje pooje: is educated but becomes a prey to male dominated society. Bullamma of Jatikettavalue is an excommunicated widow who become pregnant by a Joyesa. Two blind girls Tunga Bhadra of Tunga Bhadra: and Kamala of Sadananda are young widows who confront the grim reality of widowhood. All protagonists stand for tradition. They are all innocent and uneducated. Their lives are deep
rooted in agrarian culture. The changed social code did not reach deep and wide: that is Malnad. The system retained most of ideological elements of the patriarchal hierarchical, Hindu social order, and that remained male-dominated. The widow problem posed a threat to the social order. M.K. Indira was confronting one of the social problems of her time. As Margaret Urquhart points out, "Vivacity, bounce, and impulsiveness are considered unbecoming even in a young maiden, and more so in a wife..................................... Sometimes by excessive curbing the natural effervescence of girlhood result in an almost cow-like passivity."16 The above observation holds good in the case of M.K. Indira's characters too. Take for example the case of Phaniyamma becoming a widow at the age of nine. "On the eleventh day the old men and women mercilessly broke the bangle of nine-year old girl. They wiped off her turmeric and kumkum and tore of her mangalsutra. Phaniyamma cried a little, only because her beautiful new bangles from the fair were destroyed (p 47).... Four years latter..... Phaniyamma bent her head like a lamb and wept. Nearly fourteen now, she had grown to full stature in the darkened room, her hair cut off and shaved her head absolutely smooth."17 (p-49). These are all the hard realities of that age. Shankari of Giribale also had undergone the same experiences. Giriymamma, Shankari's mother in law advices: "Do not open your mouth
in front of your husband, practice and follow all festivity. Offer the guest, who comes to house, do not leave performing pooja. (p-119-120) ..... Do not leave him whether he beats or scolds you.... Keep mum and do your work.”18 (p-80). Dharma of a woman is to devote herself to her husband. M.K.Indira’s characters think and seek fulfillment of their own rights. They are engaged in a struggle for identity.

In the process of individuation, each heroine undergoes a quest for spiritual and worldly affirmation which invariably results in an active conflict with the existing social forms and myths of dominant culture. As they endeavor to re-form, revision themselves, they confront the arch representative of the prevailing cultural and social order.

Manohar of The Dark Holds No Terrors, Akka of Roots and Shadows, Bhattaiah of Phaniyamma, Venkatesh of Giribale, Gopal of A Matter Of Times, all stand as testimonies. In defying them a new, the woman protagonists wrestle with the symbolic form of ultimate reality as andro-gendered and with all that androcentrism implies-socially and culturally for women. Interestingly it is in the prepatriarchal form of the absolute that these women discover the ground of being their own inner spiritual and creative depths.

A moderate, gentle ironic eye is cast by ShashiDeshpande and M.K.Indira upon the more fundamental absurdities of the human
condition, particularly the discrepancy between the idealized and the actual or the male and female as well as their characters. It is just in the case of, Saru, Indu, Jaya, Urmī, Sumi, Shankari, Sīta, Chandri, Phaniyamma, Kamala or Bullamma, but both novelists have a tendency to portray characters as types within a distinct moral framework. For instance, the subtle irony in Shashi Deshpande’s description of Sarita’s mother, stems forth from the fact that she is a patriarchal stereotype. Battaiah of Phaniyamma has the description of the response of Bhattayya stands, the lingering committed moral, streak, through this Indian cultural contexts, appears in the two writers is being under consideration. Both Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira seem to write from a dual striated world, ostensibly with god above (wo) man below, a world in which there is always reversal of woman’s plans by God. Both novelists attempt to situate God in the human soul, like the transcendentalists, in their works. There is a cross gender representation. The historical co-incidence of Karnataka’s regional ideology, ‘quest for identity’ and the emergence of India as a nation respond to the impact of feminist movement. Widely articulated feminist awareness lend strength and credibility to Shashi Deshpande where as M.K. Indira remained untouched with the fact of feminism.
Shashi Deshpande's and M.K. Indira's major achievements having the pronounced historical cast of their imagination we are unable to trace how sensibility and socio-historical and cultural development coalesce. Hence their novels can be read carefully through social and cultural perspective. It is necessary at this juncture of the changing scenario of Indian women. Thus Shashi Deshpande's and M.K. Indira's heroines can be considered as case studies of the concerns of all Indian female, the marginal (she) search for an individual identity. The alienation and fear of domination of a woman, in an androcentric world is paradigmatic of the remnant colonial legacy. To Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira, the deeper levels of fiction exist only as the deeper levels of their characters' consciousness. In both the novelists predominantly there is only one central character but they are not static characters-they are always learning from their pasts. Interestingly, one must note that the state of being conscious or unconscious is central. Both portray personalities from a humanistic vantage point both colour them as a constant movement towards a unity of an individual's dual halves: In a way, it might be remarked then that in the novels of Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira, they suggest that writing of women is to be defined as 'crisis'. This is cultural and social crisis, which constitutes a continuous crisis for their writings. Hence the paradoxes and contradictions of characters are within
the characters or as Bill New writes, "The opposing features of an individual's personality war with each other only if that is what he or she wants. If the personality displays many sides, then they are all parts of its characters and not at heart irreconcilable." 19

Since Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira identify the personality within the person, mutable, social and cultural, these characters in fact carry the torch of psychological realism, a fine convention all the same. Thus, the novelists, Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira take beyond the issue of male power versus female. By presenting images in which forces outside the control of men or women have the control, can be witnessed in Shashi Deshpande's Indu of Root and Shadow Jaya of That Long Silence, Saru of The Dark Holds No Terrors. But M.K. Indira's protagonists like Shankari, Site, Phaniyamma, Kamala and many other women are under the control of men. Shashi Deshpande can be described as modern. Modernity in the words of De Man is, "Modernity which is fundamentally a falling away from literature and rejection of history, also acts as the principle that gives literature duration and historical existence". 20 Shashi Deshpande's heroines are not passive and static. They are not mere housewives: they are often career women: Saru-is a doctor, Indu-a journalist, Jaya-writer, Urmi-lecturer. In this sense, M.K. Indira's protagonists are all traditional. All are housewives: all women are
victims., as Raja Rao puts, “woman is the earth, air, ether, sound: woman is the microcosm of the mind; the articulations of space, the knowing in knowledge; the women in fire, movement clear and rapid as the mountain stream, the women is that which seeks against that which is sought. To Mitra she is Varuna, to Indra she is Agni, to Rama she is Sita, to Krishna she is Radha. Woman is the meaning of the word, the breath, touch, act: woman, that which reminds man of which he is, and reminds herself through him of that which she be. Woman is kingdom, Solitude, Time; woman is growth, the gods, inherence, woman is death, for it is though woman that one is born: woman rules, for it is she, the universe’.21

Infact, all her protagonists cited here are Brahamins, most of them widowed in childhood or those who have lost their husbands while in the full bloom of youth. They appear in the novels in the decline of their lives in thirteen. Phaniyamma of Phaniyamma, Dhakshayini of Phanivamma, Bullamma of Jatikettavalu, Kamala of Sadananda et al. depend on others and it is inevitable to them. As they choose to live sincerely in the light of traditional beliefs, life after widow hood is for them one of the basic necessities from a position of helplessness-helplessness of a sort. Since most of them have been child widows the desire for children which is natural to women gets entangled with the question of sex, the direct confrontation between their beliefs and physical longings of the modes
the belief established its supremacy. For instance, Dakshayani of the novel
Phaniyamma, had become pregnant by her brother-in-law, and gave birth
to a baby son. Her-in-laws try to drive her out of home when they learn
that she is pregnant, but she does not budge. "It’s your son who is filled in
my womb. Why should I go to my mother’s house? You can take care of
me when the child is born. One son instead of another, what’s the
difference?". The budding attitude of rebellion in the women has begun
in M.K. Indira’s novels. The evidence of tradition oriented Indian society’s
gradual change can be witnessed in Shashi Deshpande’s novels. Processes
of Industrialization, urbanization, and secularization have brought about
political-economic, cultural and socio-psychological changes in the life
patterns and attitudes of the people of this country, specially among the
urban population. One of the most fundamental and far-reaching social
changes brought about after India’s independence has been the
anticipation of women from their tradition-ridden ethos. The concept of
love, marriage and sex has undergone a lot of change. Woman who was
dissatisfied with the inhibiting cultural roles assigned to her from the
unconscious dawn of the patriarchal India, is now gaining strength to
rebel against cultural social oppressions. Shashi Deshpande’s heroines,
Indu, Urmì, Jaya, and Saru, stand at cross roads caught between tradition
and modernity. M.K. Indira, does not seem to be affected by the changing
process of society, all her settings are pre-independence Indian, process of Industrialization, urbanization and secularism does not effect her heroines. Women of M.K. Indira were not aware of the emancipation. Most of M.K. Indira’s heroine were born, when laws were more terrible than these were in force-the people in Malnad had merely heard of an instrument clock in those days. They identify time, in the hour - glass in an alcove and tottered off. Post was just introduced, people were practicing black magic on one another: they were taking the name of the mother of Ganjanur and the god of Dharmastala to make petty point. At that time no one asked to bride or the groom whether they agreed to the wedding. To see each other would of course be a major sin. They didn't demand for schooling: It was enough if he knew the mantras for Sandhyavandane and the prayers to the Gods. M.K. Indira’s women is merely the stereotype of Sita or Savitri, her novels belong to pre-independence Indian social set up. Tunga Bhadra of Tunga Bhadra reveals high caste Brahmin woman in social and cultural life of third decade of twentieth century. The novel Phaniyamma holds a mirror to the life of Brahmin society, their dogmatic, traditional and orthodox beliefs of one hundred and fifty years ago. Site of Tegginamane Site, Kamala of Sadanand, Bullamma of Jatikettavalu, Bhanashankari of Giribale are all
illiterate, the limitation imposed on woman again restricted to family function.

Since both have seen women, more than men, through the point of view of Social and cultural perspective. The feminine syndromes – express, through resisting a social exhortion to irrelevant silence, a feminine assertion. Thus the social and cultural confrontation of characters are more direct and the structure of their novels is used to pose an order of both negotiation and contradiction. It would be appropriate to assert the negotiations of modernity and tradition seen in Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira, on social and cultural level. The social and cultural crises in their novel perhaps should be viewed in both synchronic and diachronic relations. The totality of the perspective which the thesis has touched upon is addressed by Clement Moisan: “The production of the author is not of course, reproduced exactly, rather, it makes of the text a site of further contestation. As consequently, it overtakes the text as a negotiating act marking more clearly its position within or apart from a diachrony of other negotiations. The reader may choose, for example, to resituate a text to make it appear an origin of a subsequent series implying a break within the series or may situate it within a process of automatization either care intervening in what appears to be a self regulating totality. In any event, the readers in what ever guise realize the
text assuring its historically, but within a system of continuous questioning and desire". Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira have written novels on same social and cultural background, and the hard realities of Brahmin wives. Indeed they tried to reveal the very acme of Hindu male sexual fantasy. Both writers bring out the boiling and broiling problems of marriage as an evil social practice because right from the beginning to the end it is a history of women's suppression, a long drawn-out drama of negotiation in which she feels uncertain, is dragged and dragged all along the thrashing floor of humiliation till she blurts out helplessly 'yes', whether the man is a rake or an idiot or an uncultured boor. Shashi Deshpande dwells upon this subject, "Millions of girls have asked this question million of times in the country......what choice do I have? Surely if this, this fact that I can choose, that differentiates me from the animals. But years of blind folding can obscure your vision so that you no more see the choices. Years of shackling can hamper your movement, so that you can no more move out of your cage of no-choices(P-125)...........what was marriage after all, but two people brought together after a cold-blooded bargaining to meet, mate and reproduce so that the generations might continue."24(P-3).

For a girl, marriage therefore is all-de-sac making her so "dependent"-Indian society is constantly humiliated. M.K. Indira, brings
out, such things in one of her character Site. In Tegginamane Site, Site’s step-mother Motamma, who conveys her inner urge to her husband Shankar Bhatta, “Girl, attain menstruation age, something goes wrong, does Sringeri Swami leave us. Certainly he’ll excommunicate us.”25 Most of Indira’s protagonists are child widows, they got married early in their age. Phaniyamma of Phaniyamm, Kamala of Sadananda, Bullamma of Jatikettavalu, Shankari of Giribale. Two blind girls in Tunga Bhadra marry according to the laws of their age. Phaniyamma for instance, “In this atmosphere, like a plant of Jasmine, Phaniyamma grew quietly. She did not say very much and spoke only if she was spoken to. If her friends pressed her she would play cowrie games, or gujjuga or channemane in her spare time....In those days boys wore the sacred thread at the age of five and girls were married off between seven and nine. Ten years was considered too old for a girl. Soon the search for a groom for phaniyamma began....”26 (P-20) Most of M.K.Indira’s characters do not know what is marriage. As Simone de Beauvior observes, “The more the women assert themselves as human beings, the more the marvelous quality of the other will die in them.”27 Two cultures have been in operation in India: one is characterized by ‘Purush Pradhanya’ the other by “Prakriti Pradhanya: in one, the cosmic principle is conceived in terms of the male and in the other, in terms of the female. The point is that all social stratifications, and
the philosophical abstractions in support of these derive in the ultimate analysis from the infrastructure and the economic structure. Shashi Deshpande’s characters understood this because of their background. M.K. Indira’s protagonists cannot understand the philosophy what sanatana Hindu society has profound one for them.

Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira, in other words understood, the contradictory attitude towards the woman that derives from the background of two cultures: How does the society tend to view the woman in two diametrically opposite ways Viz., a) she is seen as socially inferior, b) she is seen as mother. Shashi Deshpande’s character Saritha of The Dark Holds No Terrors, is a very good example where the socially inferior character in the Hindu society is portrayed. Her role as the leading earning member of the family expresses her anguish (though these lines are quoted elsewhere it is necessary to quote again).

"A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband....... that’s the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage. Don’t ever try to reverse the doctor-nurse, executive-secretary, principal-teacher role.......women’s magazines will tell you that a marriage should be an equal partnership....."28 (P-124). Indu, Jaya, of Shashi Deshpande and M.K. Indira’s protagonists like Shankari, Chandri, Phaniyamma, are equally contributing to their families progress but society treats them
inferior. Here, the social inferiority is originally an aspect of the male dominated ideology - which came into being in support of the economy and it is sought to be mystified by relating her to the image of mother. Shashi Deshpande’s and M.K. Indira’s writings are deeply concerned with the problems that agitate women. Though their settings were different, all their novels examined above enforce the area the novelists have all along been striving towards the self-discovery or quest for identity.
NOTE

3 M.K. Indira: Tegginamane Site, p. 57
4 Shashi Deshpande: Roots and Shadows, p. 55
5 Shashi Deshpande: That Long Silence, pp. 158-59
6 Calvin. S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey Personality, p. 319.
7 Dr. Mandakini Purohit: Indira Avara Samagrha Sahitya Adhyana (Hemantha Sahitya 972.C. 4th Section Rajajinagar, Bangalore -10).
10 Shahsi Deshpande: Roots and Shadows, pp. 52-56.
11 M.K. Indira: Phaniyamma P-38
12 Shashi Deshpande: That Long Silence
13 M.K. Indira: Tegginamane Site, p. 150
15 R.S. Pathak: (ed), The Fiction of Shashi Deshpande (Article – A woman’s world. All the way! Interview Vanamala Vishwanatha) p. 232.
16 Women of Bengal Quoted by Biswajivan Muzumdar in Rabindra Upaynas, Culcutta 1981. P-123. In Criterion, p. 26
19 Bill New: Margaret Laurence, p. 2
22 M.K. Indira: Phaniyamma
24 Shashi Deshpande: Roots and Shadows, pp. 125 and 3.
26 M.K. Indira: Phaniyamma, p. 20
28 Shashi Deshpande: The Dark Holds No Terrors, p. 124.