Introduction
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In the Indian English literature, the output of drama and their English translations is very scanty. The amount of writing in the genre of drama is limited compared to other literary genres. In the case of Indian Drama in English the most important reason is the English language which is not the mother-tongue of the Indians. Drama is primarily to be staged and performed. It is a representation by means of speeches and gestures, physical and verbal, whereby the clever actor identifies herself/himself with the person and situation she/he represents. The natural dialogues are the most important elements of the performance of drama. When the Indians speak English on the stage, it loses its naturalness of the mother-tongue. Hence the effect of dialogues results in an artificial conversation and consequently the impact on the audience is not effective and it often becomes comic. It is apt to quote R. K. Dhawan who opines, “It is a well-known fact that the real success of a play can be tested on stage. A playwright needs a living theatre to put his work on acid test, evaluate its total effect on the audience and thereby get a chance to improve upon his performance. This handicap has not allowed him to pursue playwriting in a systematic and comprehensive way” (Dhawan 19). In the absence of the performance and the lack of theatre facility, the writers instead of writing plays turn to writing novels, poems, essays and short-stories.

“The study of drama is half literary and half sociological because drama comes in direct contact with the people, literate as well as illiterate, through stage production. The role of the audience is an important factor. . . . the study of drama is a study of the audience too, and this poses a difficulty to the Indian student of Indian drama as Indian people are as varied and diverse in character, culture, habit and custom as Indian nature itself” (Yadav 01-02). Despite its limitations Indian drama in English and dramas in English translation are emerging steadily. These endeavours are being recognised and appreciated by conferring awards on the playwrights.

The Indian society is patriarchal i.e. the structure of the society is based on the rule of men. Patriarchy is usually considered oppressive. In the feminist criticism, it subordinates women at various levels by promoting masculine values. The key criticisms are: women are subordinated on the basis of their gender; masculine values are considered superior and more valuable; and structures of societies are designed to maintain male values and privileges. Consequently, man is dominant and woman is dominated. The dominant and the dominated in their larger connotation have always been
at confrontation which manifests not only in the organised political movements but also at the lower unit of the society i.e. the family. This confrontation has always been the core topic for the social historians, sociologists, political scientists and also for the litterateurs. Even women have been writing about this issue of confrontation. But there has been a charge that women have been only the domestic narrators. As Jasbir Jain says, "Men have traditionally been bards, priests, preachers, courtiers and warriors. Discourse, sermons and political rhetoric have conventionally been the spheres of men. Whereas gossip, lullabies, story-telling, folk-songs and religious recitation have been the spheres allotted to women" (Jain xi).

The social, political, religious and historical conditions have determined the space of women in literature also. These conditions have been shaping the literary productions. It is the men and their positions that have been governing the representation of women in literature. The image of Indian women has been that of passivity. Socially speaking, the Indian women are considered as passive and hence powerless. If they move at all, they will do so in obedience to their menfolk, however tyrannical they may be. Barrington Moore, a distinguished sociologist calls it a "willing acceptance of social degradation" (quoted in Haynes and Prakash 05). These representations have been regularly reproduced in all the writings.

Due to literature, and educational and social reforms women have been learning to shake off their bindings and are finding a space and voice to free themselves from the age-old labels. They have started challenging the social order by writing about their own experiences - outside the age-old frame created by men, society and history. They are getting to know what they really are, and are trying to explore what it is that men imagine about women. Instead of writing the sad and sordid tale of misery, they have started writing about their agency i.e. about their ability to act and react against the conditions that constrain them. According to Sally Lloyd et al. agency is (1) "an act of exit" which relates to the end of relationship; (2) "an act of prevention" which implies woman's knowledge of an event prior to its occurrence and an attempt to stop it; and (3) "an act of missing" where woman does not act. Actions of such women may not be visible to an outsider observer. Since they keep their decisions to themselves, they could erroneously be viewed as lacking agency (Lloyd 272-273). Agency encompasses an active resistance that women demonstrate against their oppression. Resistance is a key concept that is linked to agency and is particularly relevant in interpersonal violence and abuse. Foucault's profound statement, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault 95-)
96) has contributed to feminist theorising on the sources of women's oppression and everyday resistance.

The present study aims at analysing the theme of resistance in eighteen plays written by Indian women in the ten Indian regional languages. The study is confined to the critical analysis of the theme of resistance discernible in the English translations of the source texts. The study deals with the women protagonists' search for their identity and assertion of their rights through their resistance. The regional literatures provide a glimpse of the varied and diverse experiences that make up an Indian woman's life. These plays from various regions present a more varied spectrum of Indian society. Each play reveals women not as the passive creatures who can only be acted upon by others, but as the active constructors of contexts and meanings which both reflect and affect their society. Writing about women's agency as a method of social change has been embraced by these feminist playwrights, primarily because writing the plays and thereby their performance are considered as the effective tools for breaking the silence on oppression. Their plays have "the potential for challenging hegemonic assumptions about human histories and futures" (Enslin 559). Accordingly their plays bring out "what is missing, silenced, or absent" (Leavy 228). Like Sandoval, these playwrights recognise the importance of women's agency and their stepping outside their own social space and position to resist. This differential positioning is "performative: it is the form of agency self-consciously constructed to mobilise and enact power" (Sandoval 218).

The world of women as depicted in the genre of drama has hardly been regarded seriously for the purpose of study. Many of the poems and novels by women, their creation of women-world and their resistance to hegemony are being studied. It is felt to be a worthwhile effort to take this topic for study. It is to follow seriously Ramanujan's advice: "Anyone who wishes to study Indian women, listen to their voices . . . often startlingly different from what one is used to in our classics . . . and the myths and cults of goddesses" (Ramanujan 14). Further, much of the criticism and the analysis of the plays have been moulded by the male perspective of the patriarchal culture. Therefore rethinking of these issues is felt necessary. Today's need is the cultural re-evaluation and criticism of plays through female perspective as Maggiham says "as they are men, they can not completely understand and study the female exploitation" (quoted in Pattanshetti 26).

An attempt has been made to study the plays by women in English translation and thereby critically analyse the theme of resistance in these plays. The primary concern
while selecting the plays is not based on any aspect like the popularity of the playwrights or the grade of their criticism. They are selected on the basis of the theme of resistance in these available regional plays by women in English translation. It tries to exhibit a fresh perspective and give the readers new insights in probing the theme of resistance.

The plays selected for study deal with what James Scott calls "everyday forms of resistance" (Scott 29) as exhibited in the behaviour of women who lead though complicated yet unchallenged life. The playwrights announce a broad move away from the studies of revolution and the extraordinary moments of collective resistance like political war and social protests into the analysis of personal resistance to the power of men. Thus they deal with every day forms of resistance in the everyday living of women. They exhibit different resistance strategies adopted by women to survive the inhumanity of enslavement and cultural erasure. They explore the place of resistance in the Indian family, society, myths, legends, politics, religious practices and history. Covering the groups from Dalit women to urban dwellers, from legends to epics, and from politics to religion the plays collectively depict a rich variety of resistance previously neglected in the study of women's writings especially in the genre of drama. The plays taken together suggest that the notion of resistance be rethought so that it can be applied to a much wider range of socio-cultural practices affecting the life of women in the society. The playwrights critique the monolithic constructions of women. Unlike the unitary approaches to the study of gender, an attempt has been made to provide fresh insights through an intersectional approach. This perspective allows looking at the ways in which women's various social identities and their respective social locations together affect how women make sense of their lives.

The genre of drama is considered more powerful for setting in the social changes. The earlier generation of women playwrights was much preoccupied with themes such as mythological women characters and women's status in the family as an obedient, all sacrificing and submissive women. They have dealt with the themes related to women such as dowry system, conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, the sorrow of childless mothers and the like. But slowly this trend started changing during the mid-twentieth century. These women playwrights started enacting the anger that women felt about the patriarchal tyranny.

Resistance, in the selected plays, is depicted as an everyday phenomenon without any extraordinary transformation in material and social conditions. Their resistance, as Lila Abu-Lughod considers, is quiet and behind closed doors as well as expressed openly
(Abu-Lughod 47). The critics like Abu-Lughod emphasise the unconventional resistances instead of grand overthrows. The playwrights have presented everyday life for studying resistance which takes place in the most common places of circumstances. Even then it produces important effects affecting power-relations. The plays bring out the efforts of the women protagonists to resist the objectives of the dominants in controlling them. The plays collectively depict a rich variety of, as Haynes and Prakash call "non-confrontational resistance and contestatory behaviour" (Haynes and Prakash 02) previously neglected in the study of plays. The aim of the study is to highlight how the struggles of the dominated, though not dramatic, seriously affect the relations of domination. Consequently, struggles in everyday life can grow into large-scale and conscious challenges to the political and social order. The aim of the study is to demonstrate how even the commonplace dialogues and ordinary actions can undercut hegemonic projects and ideological presumptions. These can be as Haynes and Prakash call, “small-scale struggle” (Haynes and Prakash 04).

These women playwrights have explored the wide range of actions hitherto neglected as forms of resistance. They have generated their own forms of action and have highlighted the ability of women to formulate the self-consciousness and in some cases their rebellious consciousness. These more modest forms of struggles are often undertaken without any explicit intention but to assert themselves. As Michel Foucault observes, “Power and struggle appear here not as polar opposites but as phenomenon which often co-exist and shape each other” (Foucault 92).

The process of questioning the older paradigms about the biased societal rules has been taken up by the playwrights. The “once culturally unquestioned” (Rich 57) power-relationship between men and women has been interrogated by the protagonists. As Girish Karnad advises “.... to have impact on the heart of society, drama must attempt honesty - not merely using a mythical history, but by engaging actively with possibilities in the present" (Karnad 331). Accordingly the women playwrights have tried to reformulate dramaturgy by assuming multiple points of view and new forms to articulate their experiences through their plays. The preoccupations of the playwrights fall into the distinct trends - the re-interpretation of mythology, legends, history and the other texts; and the interrogation of certain practices like seclusion and difference. For bringing out the concept of resistance the study has taken into consideration the concepts of difference, subalternity, seclusion, intersectionality, feminist family theory, Islamic feminist theory,
revisionist mythmaking and the theory of mutedness. Depending upon the themes, the eighteen plays have been categorised into seven sections.

All these plays offer remarkable insights into and the new perspectives of women's life. They offer their audience new modes of perception, new lenses through which to view the past, realise the difference, and work towards the empowerment based on human possibilities that have been ignored by patriarchy. They have shifted their focus from being mimetic to transformational plays that derive from the sharing of experiences, to be able to strengthen, transform and create new horizons of expectations. The protagonists refuse to fall into a silent consent to oppression.

Feminism had begun as an activist endeavour with the goal of social change. It advocates equal rights and opportunities for women, especially the extension of their activities in social and political life. If the term feminism refers to the principle of asserting women's rights and independence these playwrights are feminists claiming and advocating the rights of women. Boxer writes of practicality: "What feminism claims for women is justice and that social changes necessary to make the attainment of justice a practical possibility" (Boxer 228). The feminist concept had been popularised since the Women's Liberation Movement in 1960s in America. Much before that the Indian women like Tarabai Shinde, Swmnakumari Devi and others had started supporting the women's cause.

Encouraged by the successes of feminism, women started entering the spheres not ventured into so far and gradually more women playwrights and theatre persons along with their theatre companies came forward though their number is still less. Women were not happy with the portrayal of their experiences by the male imagination. Therefore they started as Lynda Hart tells, "to talk in their own voice and to present their own spectacles . . . Language, space and the body are loci for the woman playwright to dramatically challenge the images of women determined in dominant discourse" (Hart 13). It is thought provoking that the women playwrights selected for study have made better use of the space of the theatre to represent women's issues. In the entire history of the development of Indian drama there has hardly been any discussion of the plays written by women either in English or in regional languages. Women are found to be largely absent from the history of Indian drama. Therefore in chapter one an attempt has been made to present a survey of Indian drama in general and plays by women in particular.
A question arises whether it makes any sense to circulate the richness of regional literature through English translations. No doubt, literacy in India is invariably bilingual. English is the language that links the various language sectors of the country. However translations build bridges between the languages. Translations transcend the boundaries of languages and become successful by blurring such boundaries. The process of translation of regional Indian literature into English has assumed a paramount importance in the post-colonial phase of Indian history. In order to regain national pride and identity in an era of Globalisation and Westernisation Indians have to get back to their traditional roots and their native wisdom reflected in the literature of the regional languages, and their English translation enables people in a multilingual and multicultural country like India not only to comprehend the essence of Indian sensibility but also to develop intellectual, emotional and national integration.

However, translation is not an easy process. It has to take into account a number of constraints, including socio-cultural context, the rules of grammar of the two languages, their writing conventions, their idioms and the like. Perhaps the most common misconception about translation is that there exists a simple word-for-word relation between any two languages, and that translation is therefore a straightforward and mechanical process. On the contrary, translation is always fraught with uncertainties as regards the translation of idioms and usages from one language into the other. It is difficult to translate the vernacular experience and the linguistic nuances of regional languages into English. All the languages and cultures have their own private realm which renders difficult to translate into English or any alien language. The translator's task encompasses a sympathetic understanding of another's situation, feelings and motives along with language nuances.

The translation of plays by women playwrights demands that the translator be not just conversant with the languages of the source texts and the target texts and competent in handling the specific requirements of the genre, but also acknowledge the historical and cultural nuances of the source language and sensitive to the issues of gender. Translation would then provide access into the rich reserves of the regional language traditions and thereby towards a better understanding of the society of the target text. The ultimate success of translation rests on the readability and the performability of the plays. It is useful to make available the regional language texts in English. If English is the language for documenting the history of the country and its culture, then certainly it
makes good sense to reach out to larger reception through English translation of plays in the regional languages.

Translation allows women to claim for themselves yet another space that offers them great potential for initiating social change by reaching the wider range of reader/audience. As Louis Althusser explains, “The play is really the production of a new spectator, an actor, who starts where the performance ends, who only starts so as to complete it, life” (Althusser 151).

To critically analyse the works of women playwrights means the re-reading of the tradition and re-ordering of the canon. All these days the dramatic canon has been monopolised by patriarchy; the acts of repossession have now begun. But “Resistance to patriarchy has always been labelled as deviant. For example, women who resist ‘wifely duties’ are labelled neurotics or frigid . . .” (Humm 49). The critics like L. A. Carbone have casually linked the feminist struggle for women’s right with family breakdown. Many critics argue that, “The feminist movement has weakened the foundational institution of life - the family” (Carbone 16). The feminist movement is not weakening the institution of family but trying to bring in solidarity by mutual understanding among the family members.

The first chapter presents a brief survey of the Indian English drama while concentrating on the women playwrights. It tries to highlight the paucity of the women playwrights. It also gives a glimpse of Indian woman through the ages. It makes a reference as to how women have responded to theatre as writers and their achievement in writing plays, the role of translation and how translations of plays respond in voicing out women’s issues. It attempts to understand the reasons for distancing and alienation of women from the genre of drama. The study aims at probing into the possible reasons behind their absence.

The second chapter deals with the meaning of resistance and resistance literature.

The critical analysis of the theme of resistance discernible in the eighteen plays selected for study is divided into two sections - Chapter Three - Part I and Chapter Four - Part II. These chapters deal with the major concerns and issues of the eighteen plays.

The fifth chapter presents the final reflections in the form of Conclusion of the study.
References


