CHAPTER 1

HISTORY OF WOMANHOOD AND REFLECTION OF IT IN LITERATURE

1.1 Introduction

“Women remind me of a kite flying high in the sky, swaying proudly in the immense expanse, marking its colorful presence in the blue background, enjoying the lift of the ambient air but however I decorate in the description of the kite, the fact is that – it is tied, controlled, molded and owned by somebody it cannot control. Her glories are marked only as long as her master wishes it to be. As soon as the thread is cut, the story of its demise begins. The sky she was so proudly swaying into, turns into a cactus yard, hurting her at every instant. Her colors fade away. She is torn apart. The breeze which supported her rise, her lift, her stay there, slaps her down to the earth, rather hell only because she is disowned by her master. While falling down she would witness the destruction of her ambitions, her pride and her life, and even now when she is free of her ties, she would have no control over her demise. Finally when she would reach the earth, all torn apart and would get entangled in one of the pulses of the city. People passing by would only laugh at her conditions. Some wacky kids would get her down the poles – some would practice archery with it and some would mend it only to be “reused”. And she yet helpless would surrender to her fate, just like a woman does, confused between her ambitions and her set duties.”
But the Woman - a fascinating creation of God has the ability to give, share, foster, bear, work, excellent qualities of head and heart. In the exclusive history of our country - India, women have suffered a lot and still they have retained their unique qualities. In the incredible history of our country, which has seen the rise and fall of many empires, the status of women has privileged and suffered equally. They have been raised to thrones like Razia Sultan, only to be the victim of criticism and prejudices, followed by death or jailed domestically to suffer (with systems like sati, purdah, dowry etc). In ancient India the women had an equal status with men in all aspects. They were equally educated like the men and were active during philosophical debates. Ghosha was the daughter of a family which composed hymns. Ghosha continued that tradition of composing hymns. Lopamudra was the learned wife of sage Agasthya. Maitreyi contributed in the enrichment of her husband’s personality and enhanced his flowering of spiritual thoughts. She was taught the doctrine of the soul and had the power of attaining immortality by her husband sage Yajnavalkaya. Gargi was a Vedic prophetess and a composer of hymns. It is stated in the (Patel) “An unmarried learned daughter should be married to a bridegroom who like her is learned. Never think of giving in marriage a daughter of very young age”. It has been also stated in (Patel) “A young daughter who has observed Bramacharya (i.e. finished her studies) should be married to a bridegroom who like her is learned”. In the Vedic period widows were allowed to remarry. It is stated in (Patel) “ Rise up woman thou art lying by one whose life is gone, come to the world of living, away from the husband and become the wife of him who holds thy hand and is willing to marry thee”. Gargi and Maitryi are the notable women of ancient India. According to studies the women had an equal status during the early Vedic period. But in 500 BC their status began to decline and with the Islamic invasions by Babar and the Mughal dynasty and later Christianity. Women were robbed of their freedom and rights. Jainism allowed women to take admissions in religious orders but slowly and gradually women faced confinement and restrictions. Child marriages became prevalent during the sixth century. The India of medieval period was the dark period for Indian women. In its incredible history of invasions, the Indian landmass has witnessed rulers from around the world. Each brought a different culture with them. Each of them had a different setup for what they thought the duties of women were or rather what they should be. And all women could do was, accept or suffer. Probably
these were the only options she could choose from. She had always been treated as a commodity to be passed on from her parents to her in-laws. No human has a choice on his birth or death. But for women the choice is very scarce compared to their counterpart. They never had a choice in their education, their freedom, their marriage and children. All she had to do was accept. And she did it silently probably because she didn’t know if any other method of existence did exist. The status of women declined because the Muslim invaders kidnapped any woman and kept her in their harems—the part of a Muslim palace or house reserved for the residence of women. In the harems the women were used by the invaders to satisfy their lust. It became necessary for people to protect their women from such invaders. Original Indians wanted to protect their women and thus the purdah system got introduced and women were forced to put on veils just to protect themselves and their honor from the evil eyes of the onlookers. Thus women lost their freedom and were restricted to move freely. People began avoiding the girl child because she was thought of to be a burden for the parents. Parents considered her a guest as she had to be married and would depart to her in-laws family. They avoided educating the girl child as it would be an investment in vain. They thought that she had to perform household chores where formal education was not required. Instead of wasting sources for daughters people thought of utilizing it for their sons. Bringing up a girl child was again a difficult task in an orthodox society. There was always a concern for her safety. A concern that was different from that of the sons. In case she loses her chastity or somebody rapes her, she would be a lifelong burden for the family. Many dowry deaths were reported and due to the evil of dowry female infanticide increased. The continuing abuse of dowry menace led to sex-selective abortions and female infanticide. A woman was even raped for dowry by her own husband and still marital rape was not considered an offence. But gradually the scenario changed. As per an article published in Times of India on 3rd May, 2015, according to Section 498 A of Indian Penal Code it is a criminal offence if a husband or his family treats his wife cruelly. The cruelty, though not defined, covers physical and mental harassment, including beating and can be extended to incessant demands for sex. The accused is liable to be punished with a prison term of 3 years and fine. Today there are provisions in the Hindu Marriage Act, the Indian Penal Code and Domestic Violence Act which take care of violence within marriage and offer recourse to women.
Sati: - A practice in which the wife of the dead husband dies by burning herself alive on the funeral pyre of her husband. According to the Hindu scriptures a woman who dies by being a sati would directly go to heaven. Raja Ram Mohan Roy took the initiative of abolishing this practice after his bhabhi became a sati. The women were considered pious as they died after their husbands. Thus the women earned respect by sacrificing their lives which never bore any outcome. They were asked to burn themselves in the name of religion. They did it forcibly to even get rid of the miserable state of widowhood which came up with its never ending tortures in their life. The scriptures consider burning of the body as pious. To prove her piety even Sita had to go through agnipariksha. The norms of the society were framed by the men. And the society was even not able to take care of the women. Thus all such practices came up. This was a wrong practice during those times because the woman was not responsible for the death of her husband. Another factor to be thought of is that if the husband would also die like the satis after the death of his wife. Women believed that death by being a sati was a better option than to live the life of a widow which is more difficult and full of suffering. A widow had a life full of deprivations. They were forced to live alone, sleep on a rug instead of a comfortable bed. A widow had no opinion in anything around her life; she could not participate in any social function and had to mandatorily shave her head.

Jauhar: - It is the practice of mass suicide prevalent among the Rajputs. The wives immolated themselves when they became sure that their husbands would be killed in the battlefields. Thus all the women would set up a huge pyre and set themselves on fire to protect their honor and their whole clan. Chittor is well-known for the jauhar of Rani Padmini, Rani Karnavati and the wives of Rana Uday Singh because they believed that it is better to die and save themselves from falling into the clutches of other males and losing their honor. The society would consider a woman respectable only till her husband was alive, and till she served the husband and his family. The moment a woman went against the wishes of her husband and his family, she was labeled as evil, wicked and was not accepted. Thus we can call it a pride of the women of those times, or call it a tradition prevalent then, that Rajput queens preferred to embrace death than being abducted by the invaders and endure dishonor.

Child Marriage: - In medieval India it was a custom to get the girls married at the age of 8-10, in some cases even younger than that too. They had no
access to education and were forced to carry out house hold duties. Child marriage caused problems like poor health of women due to repetitive child bearing and high mortality rate of women and children due to increased birth rate.

**WIDOW REMARRIAGE:** - Widows had to live a very difficult life, they were never considered equals and had to be under many restrictions. They had to live a pious life after the death of their husbands and were considered a bad omen. They were forced to renounce all worldly pleasures, had to shave their heads, have only boiled rice for food and sleep on a thin rug instead of a comfortable bed. They could never participate in any celebrations and were not allowed to remarry. If any widow remarried she was considered guilty and was treated as some criminal whose only crime was that she wanted to live her life in her own way. Due to the difficulties faced by a widow in the orthodox society she chose being a sati rather than leading the difficult life of a widow. But on the opposite side the man who lost his wife could get remarried. There were no compulsions for the man. He was a free bird who could enjoy as he wanted. In Hinduism the husband would not go for the funeral of his wife just to get remarried. Thus the society laid down different rule books both for the man and the woman.

**PURDAH SYSTEM:** - This system was introduced to guard the women from the evil eyes of the kings who invaded our country. The drawback of it was that women lost their freedom. Despite of this system women were treated as commodities by men. So it never helped the women in any way whether she used the purdah or not but instead it made her a prisoner of the man who possessed her by just making her his property.

**EDUCATION:** - In medieval India the girls had no access to formal education. They were only taught household chores and were expected to do them sincerely. The Hindu society had above mentioned problems. Societies like Buddhism, Christianity and Jainism were lenient towards their women. Women of these societies had more freedom to take decisions concerned to their life as they were educated and had a liberal approach. They believed that gender had nothing to do with attaining salvation and they were equally worthy of the grace of God. During the supremacy of King Ashoka, women participated in religious sermons. King
Harshvardhana’s sister Rajayashri was an eminent scholar of her time.

The status of women in South India was better than the women in North India. Women like Priyaketaladevi, Queen of Chalukya Vikramaditya, Jakkiabbe are the ones who brought laurels to the society and who were administrators of that time. In the kingdom of Vijaynagar women were active in each and every field. They could wrestle, blow trumpets and were master in sword fighting. They could write accounts of the expenses and could also record the kingdom’s affairs as they had educated themselves. We have no traces of schools in Northern part of India. Based on the observation of famous historian Ibn Batuta, Honavar had 13 schools for girls and 24 schools for boys. A major evil widespread in the Southern part of India during that time was Devdasi Pratha -a system in which girls are offered as servants of god and then they are supposed to live a life of celibacy in the temple. But with passing time devdasis began being equated to prostitutes. They were degraded by the society and even their families discarded them. ‘Devdasi’ in its originality was a religious practice in Hinduism wherein the girls were married to a deity. These women took care of the temples, and even learned and practiced classical Indian art traditions along with Bharatnatyam. But the practice lost its divinity to the society of those times which started treating the devdasis as prostitutes. The priests of the temples took advantage of these girls by the coming-of-age rites and used it as a freedom to have sex with girls of 12-13 years. Lower caste women were forced into this system and it was a source of their exploitations. Through this system, exploitation and prostitution was encouraged under the concept of ‘Sacred Prostitution’.

Indian society witnessed a regression because of the constant degeneration of women in the society. Educated Indians noticed this and tried to make reforms in the society. Through the efforts of educated Indians the women of our society acquired the freedom and means to be educated, widow remarriage was legalized. Evils like polygamy and the purdah system were prevalent mostly among the Muslims and the Hindus of North India. The Aryasamaj and The Brahmo Samaj opposed deleterious practices such as polygamy, purdah system, sati, jauhar etc. Through the establishment of the Prarthna Samaj, Jyotiba Phule became a catalyst for social reforms. Phule advocated the causes of women and established a girl’s school in Pune in 1851 and encouraged widow remarriages. There was a wave of social reforms all
over the country. A law in which marriage before 12 is illegal was passed by the Mysore govt. In Baroda it was minimum 12 years for girls and 16 for boys. In 1829 the sati system was abolished. In 1856 the Hindu Widow’s Remarriage Act was passed. Thus widow remarriage became legal and children born of such marriages were considered legitimate. Despite of reforms in the education of women there was no regular system of education for women in the 19th century. Daughters of higher class families got educated at home by personal tutors. In Bengal the missionaries made valiant efforts in educating girls but they focused more on preaching Christianity. The serious efforts to educate women failed due to the Purdah system and fear of parents that their daughters would embrace Christianity, plus there was no tangible benefit to the women who were educated. Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar opened more than 35 girls' schools between 1857 and 1858. But the women in Mumbai lived a comparatively freer life due to the absence of the Purdah system. Brahmvo Samaj published journals for promoting education among women. The Mahakanya Vidyalaya in Punjab was established by Arya Samaj. Since 1882 the government more liberally gave grants for schools. By 1902, there were around 12 women colleges in Bengal, Madras and United Provinces. Dayanand Saraswati, founder of Arya Samaj, encouraged remarriage of women with greater emphasis on female education and widow remarriages. He started spreading awareness in the society about the values of women education and argued that an educated man required an educated woman. He was a renowned social reformer especially for women.

Thus women’s education made a steady progress and this led to number of increase in the female students. Early marriage and orthodoxy were abolished. The system of co-education began during this period and created uproar in the society. People from all over the country opposed it. This was implemented in post graduate education. There was a growing tendency among girls to be at par with men and also to be like them in all their interests. Muslim girls did not progress much because they had no easy access to education. They had no voice in their families. They had to live according to the norms set up by males. They became aware for their rights with the spread of education. The Indian National Social Conference added a section for ladies in 1903. But despite of all the efforts put forward to bring legislative changes, real changes can be brought about only by the society and literature. In 1930, the Child
Marriage Prevention Act was formed and was made applicable for all communities, and legal actions were taken against all those involved in the act of marriage if the girl was below 14 and the boy below 18. In 1939, the Hindu Women’s Right to Property Act was passed and under it a widow had a share in the property of her husband and could demand separation. The Baroda government in 1931 got the Divorce act legalized, which was nowhere done in India. But despite of all the efforts put forward to bring legislative changes, real changes can be brought about only by the society and its people.

Women started participating in the struggle for freedom through the motivation of the Swadeshi, Home Rule and Non-Cooperation movements. Gandhiji specially appealed women to come out of their homes and take up the work of picketing and spinning. Women offered themselves for arrest and imprisonment by breaking the chains of their homes. Gandhiji had a deep understanding and sympathy for women. He always considered women brave as they never took chloroform during childbirth and bravely faced the labor pain and gave birth. He used to tell women that it is better to be single rather than marrying a person and being his slave or bearing his tortures for no reason. Thus he made them fearless and tried to make them free from insecurity of not getting married. The Second World War witnessed an increase in the employment for women. Women started yearning for economic independence and freedom for their rights and this changed the intellectual, moral and social outlook of women of the upper classes compared to the past 700 years. Revolutionary changes like abolition of purdah system, co-education, free social intercourse between men and women, increase in the age of marriage and abolition of monogamy of men created uproar during this period. Most of the times, these reforms and positive changes were limited only to the Hindu women. The Muslim women did not get much benefit out of it because the community was very rigid about the norms related to the space and freedom of women. The biggest proof of this is that even today in our metro cities we find women in ‘Burkhas-purdahs’.

The condition of women improved due to the influence of education and through the support of government. After 1950 there was a change with every new generation born for the girls. Indira Gandhi the Prime Minister of India was a source of inspiration for parents and the girls during those years. During her tenure she
introduced the Matritva Sahyog Yojna under which women were provided cash incentives for improvement of health & nutrition (pregnant and lactating).

1.2 History of Feminism

Definition- Feminism is the advocacy of women’s rights on the grounds of political, social, and economic equality to men. Feminism can be defined as a collection of movements and ideologies that aimed at defining, creating and protecting equal, political, social & economic rights for women.

It means that women have the right to enough information to make informed choices about their lives. Whether a woman is from middle class, rich, working class, rural or urban she seeks equality at the social and economic level and demands the rights desired by every woman like – right to education, right to equality, right to take decisions etc. The history of Feminism has been divided into three different phases:-
1) Beginning in mid nineteenth century.
2) From 1915 up to India’s Independence.
3) Post Independence.

Even though there has been lot of progress by the Indian Feminist movements, Indian women suffer from discrimination. Even the issues of landownership and educational rights still face many barriers due to the patriarchal orders. In the past 2 decades the number of female feticide has increased. The Western society has been criticized for their feminist moves as they mostly benefitted the privileged women and neglected the poor class women. Therefore the feminist movements in the West have been called caste movements of different women from various feminist movements & organizations. There are different types of feminism:-

1. Liberal Feminism- It is a type of feminism through which equal rights for women can be achieved by legal ways & social reform. It is a fight for equality with men. It aims to reform the existing practices in society, rather than advocating for revolutionary change. Mary Wollstonecraft & Betty Friedan advocated Liberal Feminism during their times. Liberal feminists are conservative people from middle class.
2. Cultural Feminism – A feminism that believes that female essence is vital to society. According to Cultural feminism there are fundamental personality and psychological differences between men and women. They believe that women’s differences are not only unique but superior. This theory keeps in mind the biological differences between men and women – like periods and giving birth to a child & projects the idea of an inherent “women’s culture”. Cultural feminism looks to enhance the relationships between genders and celebrates being a woman. They believe that a ‘woman’s way’ is the better way. Whenever we talk about life, the discussion is only masculine but now it must be balanced by accepting the woman’s point of view.

3. Radical feminism is that which views women’s repression as an essential arrangement of force whereupon human connections in the society are organized. It challenges this by dismissing standard gender roles and male repression. The term radical in radical feminism is an adjective which means of or relating to the root or setting off to the root. Radical feminism find the underlying driver of women’s' repression in patriarchal gender relations, instead of legitimate systems (liberal feminism) or class conflict (like communist or Marxist).

4. Socialist feminism centers upon both general society and private circles of a woman’s life. It contends that liberation must be accomplished by attempting to end both the financial and social sources of women’s' oppression. It broadens the Marxist woman's rights that capitalism is the reason of all women’s repression; incorporates radical feminism’s hypothesis of the gender roles and the patriarchy. Socialist feminism faces the customary foundation of sexism, prejudice and classism: the determination of an existence of mistreatment or benefit in light of mishaps of conception or circumstances. Socialist feminism is a comprehensive method for making social change.

5. Eco feminism is a social and political development which unites environmentalism and woman's rights. Eco feminism contends that a relationship exists between the repression of women and the degeneration of nature. Eco feminists are concerned with associations between sexism and the power of nature. They are likewise concerned with bigotry and different attributes of social disparity. Some
present work accentuates that the industrialist and patriarchal framework is in light of triple mastery of the "Southern individuals" (3rd World people, mostly of the South of the 1st World), women, and nature. This is even alluded to as worldwide north and south.

6. Black feminism basically contends that sexism and racism are inseparably connected. They contend that the liberation of Black women involves opportunity for all, since it would oblige the end of prejudice, sexism and class repression. Black women in this classification regularly allude to themselves as womanist.

7. Separatist feminism is that which does not bolster hetero relations because of a conviction that sexual differences between men and women are irresolvable. They for the most part don't feel that men can make positive contributions to the feminist movements and that well intentioned man imitate the progress of patriarchy. Truly a branch of radical women's activists.

Thinking of feminism, the names that ring a bell promptly are Virginia Woolf, Adrienne Rich, Elaine Showalter and Simone de Beauvoir. The credit for the introduction of Feminism goes to the Western society. Genuine, these representatives began the task of conjecturing the needs of women in a society where their internal sentiments ought to be verbalized, uproarious and striking.

History cannot be translated in concrete terms by neglecting the differences in society. Feminism is multicultural and diasporic. Needs of women living in various nations are different and they are adapted by a few variables: familial, societal/racial, conjugal, financial, and social and individual cognizance (subjectivity). In such an assorted connection, it would be far wrong to partner Indian woman's rights with the western, which is stamped by radical standards, and summon Western feminist critics on the issues that women in India have to face.

Jasbir Jain's Indigenous Roots of Feminism tries to dissect the feminist movements in India in an authentic point of view, free from the after effect of western concerns. In five parts, she embraces this investigation of feminist talk, textualizing
history and historicizing writings. She has discussed selected texts, from the Upanishads and the Itihasas (sagas) down to the contemporary local books and movies. She says: "Draupadi deconstructed the ideas of chastity and sati; Sita, of power and motherhood; Kali, of brutality; Puru's young wife, of sexuality; the Bhakta ladies, of marriage and petition to God."

Jasbir's conviction is that "feminism is more than a voice of challenge or addressing. It is good reflection toward oneself, a vanquishing of internal apprehensions and an acknowledgment of self-esteem ... It doesn't desert qualities or connections; however happens to make new ones."

The Indian sagas and puranas which possess a wide range of story systems and a massive understandings, have the strength to touch all conceivable parts of human life helping us to elevate — and understand — a percentage of the fundamental inquiries that legislate the family life and the public life. Kalidasa's Shakuntala and Ilango Adigal's Kannagi are preeminent occurrences of women, who, despite of being brought up in homes of patriarchal prohibition and complete surrender and despite of having less power, throw up a fight for their ethical rights and put the men to shame.

There never had been a noteworthy opposition at any level- social or political against the patriarchy in the Indian society. But amazingly the women who participated in Bhakti movement opposed this captivity forced on them by men and achieved gender equality. Women tested patriarchy and rebelled against their unequal position in society. Meera, Avvaiyar and Karaikal Ammaiyar, challenged the patriarchy and weakened the male dominion by keeping away from the province of marriage. In the part "The Nineteenth Century and after", Jasbir looks at five writings — Phaniyamma, Suvarnalatha, Fragments of a Life, Kagzi Hai Pairahanand, Cast me Out — where the heroines battle for "some breathing space." Despite of all odds, they set free from the abusive societal standards and, thus, enhanced the women’s world.

Jasbir is dejected that woman has not been "noticeable" in our Indian history and that they have been treated as objects of men's lust. For e.g., she says, women's role has been disregarded in Dalit history and in the Ambedkar development. "Dalit aesthetics, despite a fair amount of theorization by the dalits themselves, is
falling into a rut even though their writing is ripe of more theorization. The nature of their protest has dominated their theorization.”

In entirety, she is of the conclusion that feminist discourses in India in the course of recent years have been molded by our colonial past, from one perspective, and our struggle to foreign command, on the other. Likewise, it has constantly attempted to make space for women to battle against social burdens and religious confinements, which underline and strengthen the monetary, social, political and mental concealment.

The position of women in Indian literature is quite varied and diverse. Women have been writing in India since 1000 BC. Women, in earlier times, were always displayed as secondary characters compared to the heroic male characters that were portrayed as the spine of the story. Around 18th century male writers didn’t consider women a topic to be published and emphasized. It is a common belief that man is the most powerful component of human society, whereas a woman is just a supporting component. This notion of woman being weak or secondary has been handed down to us from our ancestors. Even the great myths of Indian literature portray woman as a meek and passive creature.

Beginning with our own Indian mythologies we have first in the list, Manu who in his Manusmriti speaks about women and the multiple roles that they have to play in society. He projects them as slaves from the beginning till the end of their life. Manu writes in (Manusmriti 5/151 Patwari)

“Girls are supposed to be in the custody of their father when they are children; women must be in the custody of their husband when married and under the custody of her son as widow. In no circumstances she is allowed to assert herself independently”.

In (Manusmriti 5/158 Patwari) it is written

“Women have no divine right to perform many religious rituals, nor make vows or observe a fast. Her only duty is to obey and please her husband and she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven.”
The two great epics of India, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* give no scope for women. It pushed them into the castle and depicted them as machines of reproduction. Even Sita in *Ramayana* had to prove that she was still chaste after her abduction by Ravana. Revered as an example of womanhood, she still had to undergo the *agnipariksha* and was asked to abandon the palace and live in the forest and that too when she was pregnant. She brought up the kids with all honor and wisdom and in the end was again asked to prove her chastity. All men want their wives to be like Sita—long suffering and obedient, if not found to hold by this definition she was a bad woman. Of course, Draupadi can be considered an exception to the female characters in these mythical works. She raised her voice against her husband’s directions and fought bravely like a hero. This trend continued in history and still exists. The deep rooted patriarchal notions do not allow them to realize and express their roles. She is unaware of her own capacities, and therefore unable to raise her voice against her undeserving suffering. In the middle ages the condition of women worsened than ever. Further the condition was worsened with the origin of superstitions which restricted the movement of women. Women were tortured in the name of tradition and religion.

*Bhakti* songs were the foundation on which women writing had a new life in medieval India. The Bhakti songs portrayed the images in the day to day familiar language of the ordinary people. The female *bhaktas* wrote poetry on the family tensions, obstacles within the family, absence of their husband, the restrictions they faced in their life, the boring and meaningless daily household tasks and on their marital status. They were women who opposed the traditional roles of the women during those times. They even questioned the norms of the society by abandoning their husband and their family. They preferred being a wandering *bhakta*. Many of the women even formed groups and joined the poet-saints. They focused on pure devotion of their Divine husbands. The rejection of the societal norms was to go near to their God and worship him. Women *bhaktas* like Mirabai, Janabai, Akkamahadevi and Bahinabai were well known for their poetry. For e.g. Mira is deeply in love with Krishna despite of being married to Rana. She proclaims before all, “Mere to Girdhar Gopal, dusro na koi, ja ke sir mor mukat mero pati sohi.” She projects her feeling for Krishna even though she is a married woman. Thus this line speaks about the fearlessness of Mira during her time. Through this she conveys her reluctance to
follow the tradition of being committed to her husband and her family ties. She is deeply absorbed in Lord Krishna’s devotion.

1.3 Women’s Writing

In the past, the works written by women were undervalued because of assumed superiority of male writers. During those days, women were limited to writing about their perception and experiences within the enclosed domestic setting. It was believed that women could not write on serious themes. There was also not valued because they were thought of as inferior to male writers. The authors expressed in their writings their dissatisfaction with the troubles of upper caste Hindu women trapped in tyrannical institutions such as child marriage, dowry, prohibition on women’s education, arranged marriages, enforced widowhood etc. A woman’s thoughts were constricted to her domestic arena. She could not write about the world outside her home as she never had any exposure to the world beyond her four walls. Another reason could be that in a patriarchal society male experience was considered to be much superior. On the other hand, male writers focused on more ‘serious’ themes which appealed the mass and mobilized them to act (like politics, education, social reforms). Thus, their work got more priority and acceptance in the society. Nobody was interested in reading what a woman had to say. Thus women writing did not gain a momentum in the 18th century.

At the outset of Indian English Literature there were male authors who wrote about man’s world with an incidental presence of women. Men used women as tools for writing. Writers like R.K. Narayan or M.R. Anand created a few minor women characters, but the portrayal was not genuine because men had no contact with the inside world of women, i.e. real sufferings of the women. Whenever they have tried to portray women, it has been in the traditional mould where they play a supporting role, not that of a protagonist. Howsoever sensitive these writers were, they did not think of women’s lives to be interesting enough for good fiction. Few writers who opted for women as protagonists, created a portrait which was highly romantic and far from the real women. The sacrificing mother, suffering wife, or the weeping widow, were the only description of women found in fiction. The Indian
society gave their thumping approval to the *Sita, pativrata (which requires a woman to be chaste, devoted and a loyal wife under all circumstances)* image of women found in the novels of the time. A submissive woman was considered a virtuous woman. A woman who was not virtuous had no place in the society. If a woman was not conservative she was regarded immoral. Traditional moral aesthetics dominated these narratives.

In the 19th century, lots of women actively participated in India’s freedom struggle against the British rule, which gave women an opportunity to come out of the traditional boundaries set for them in the society. They were required to look after the household chores and look after the family, but by participating in the freedom struggle she proved it that she is at par with man. Women started writing articles and messages that helped keep people motivated in the Nationalist movement. This ultimately gave the required boost to women’s literature. At that time, their writings primarily focused on the country’s freedom struggle. Gradually, different feminist theories from all around the world began to influence Indian English literature. Under the influence of western feminist theories, status of women in the colonial rule and the war of independence and western philosophies regarding women empowerment, woman characters started gaining prominence in the writings of many writers who have hitherto portrayed women as weak and passive characters.

When India gained freedom, the contribution of women nationalists was acknowledged all over the country. The Indian Constitution approved equal rights to women, by considering them legal citizens of the country and as an equal to men in all respect. Still the status of women told a different picture.

They were confined within the households, and forced to succumb to the male-dominated society. This was the story almost everywhere in India. Indian women, who participated in the struggle for freedom along with men, were deprived of taking part in the struggle. They were forced to become homemakers. Their main goal was to strengthen the family and support their husbands who were the builders of Independent India. Thus women became a minority despite of possessing all the innate qualities to do anything.
Indian women had realized their true potential. They began questioning the rules framed for them by the society. Thus, they flung the barriers of their houses and society and earned a respectable position all over. Women today have proved themselves at par with men in every field from social work to going in the space. No field remains untouched by Indian women today. Be it politics, entertainment, literature, sport, or technology, we witness the women power in all fields everywhere. Today the Modern woman is not affected by the constraints of society; instead she has learnt to give priority to her education and to her career. There was a time when women writers were not recognized by the society. But today we have Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Shobha De, Anita Desai, Himanshi Shelat, Jhumpa Lahiri and many more who hold a distinguished position in the society and can put any other writer to shame as they not only write on female sensibility but also on the topics which were considered a taboo till now. For instance, the dissatisfaction in the sexual life of the heroine in the story *Sammohan* (Infatuation) by Himanshi Shelat. Through their writings they portray a realistic life of women and their heroines give the messages of strength and demonstrate the will to fight against all odds. This way they depict the woman as an equal in all respect and not a piece of the authoritarian male world.

The time has changed now. Women’s writings have proved that they can be competitive. Women writers such as Eunice de Souza, Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das, Mamta Kalia, Melanie Silgardo, Imtiaz Dharker, Smita Agarwal, Sujatha Bhatt, Tara Patel etc, are shining examples of this. Post-independence literature saw the emergence of a large number of women writers. These women writers express powerful female sensibility which is lacking in male writers of their time. Women writers dealt with sensitive issues like frustrated desires, the disappointment of living in a male dominated world, sex and the intricacies of love. Thus we can see the venting out of her desires as a courageous deed in which the women try to raise their voice against their own sufferings. This is the quality of a ‘New Woman’ in which she raises her voice and wants to be heard as well as be in a position of equality with man. The ‘New Woman’ is not modern woman. Modern has more to do with the time, trend, fashion and everything. Newness has to do much more with the spirit within. For e.g. the mother in Shelat’s story *Koi Bijo Manas* (The Other Man). Pushpi is a villager whose 7 year old daughter has been raped and killed by the rapists. Pushpi has the spirit of a New Woman.
The creation of the image of a heroine who asserts herself as a person indicates the writer’s acknowledgement of women’s ambitions and avoidance of traditional norms. It tells of her motives to create a perfect personality and at the same time it brings out the writer’s capability to get free from the tradition. This change in the imaginary woman goes hand in hand with the change of the status of women in the society. “The new opportunities for education and employment, the emergence of new socio-economic patterns and the privileges of new and equal political rights for women are slowly changing the traditional conceptions of the role and the status of women in contemporary society.” The Western society had a great influence everywhere. The women in West were working women who were financially independent. It became necessary for the women to go out of their homes and earn a living to have an identity of their own and break free from the rigid shackles.

This practice slowly came to India also and with it women in India gained financial independence. Education and financial independence gave rise to a new ideology in the woman which paved the way for the New Woman.

1.4 Introduction to Women’s Literature

Shashi Deshpande holds a special place in the history of Indian English Literature because she was among the first writers who gave a voice to the middle class urban Indian woman. She is one of the original writers Indian English Literature has witnessed who kept the Indian emotional feelings alive in her plots and characters.

Kamala Das in her works makes use of her frustrated desires to criticize the male domination. Das’s provocative poems are known for their bravely honest explorations of the self and female sexuality, urban life, and woman’s roles in traditional Indian society, issues of postcolonial identity, and the political and personal struggles of marginalized.

Mamta Kalia’s first book in English, Tribute to Papa and other Poems comes from its relaxed attitude to poetry, its wit, its ironical meanings reflect on the
male domination. Her poems are constructed as an irony on the economical continuation of man.

Melanie Silgardo in her poems carried an emotional tone, to project patriarchal domination over the society.

The author of the book Fix, Eunice De Souza is famous among those who attack the false use of socio-cultural values.

Intiaz Dharker in her, Purdah speaks about the sufferings of Muslim women. How woman’s voice is unheard in the society due to the male supremacy.

“One day they said
She was old enough to learn some shame.
She found it came quite naturally.”

Tara Patel is the writer of the poems called “Women” and “In a Working Women’s Hostel.” She, like Kamala Das, speaks about post-colonial identity and personal struggle of women in her life.

The Sita image received a shock as women became mature in seeing themselves as individuals. Sita made way for Draupadi. Both are viewed as icons of Indian Womanhood till day. They have a striking similarity in their life. Both are different in their unique ways and have helped in shaping the Modern women of India in different ways. Both were beautiful, virtuous and powerful. Nothing could curtail their spiritual aura. Due to this women find strength in them and consider them very reverent. Today’s women portray a variety of shades of their character. Women can express the love and tenderness of Sita and also become aggressive, and be revengeful like Draupadi. This change can be witnessed in the novels of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande; Nayantara Sahgal and recently Arundhati Roy along with many modern women authors in Indian English Literature.

Nayantara Sahgal brought a major change in terms of female perception. Anita Desai followed suit and both gave a boost to a new era of writing. These women writers wrote about the self-realization of women which was in stark contrast to the
works of the past that dealt with issues of morality and put the responsibility of preservation of morality only on women. A female protagonist’s search for individuality and freedom was never before seen or known. Sahgal is the first writer in India to have broken the long generated principles. Her works focus on the personhood. According to her: “It takes half of life to achieve personhood but perhaps there is no greater glory.”

*The God of Small Things* is a path breaking novel by Arundhati Roy. This book has created ripples in the socio-moral as well as literary world in India. Roy’s characters are torn between traditional barriers. She emphasizes that “a woman is a being. She is not an appendage of man. A woman is not the “other”. She is not an addition to man. She is an autonomous being, capable of, through trial and error, finding her own way to salvation.” (qtd. in Kaur)

Thus, the Indian woman not only as a writer but as a person and a fictional character has come a long way – from being portrayed as a meek and submissive character to voicing out her opinions and breaking societal norms of morality through her individuality and moral strength. Women writers have time and again proved it that when it comes to creating something, be it a story or be it a new life, she is second to none.

### 1.5 Origins of the Short Story

Short story is a natural art, yet it’s a proof that poetry writing began well before, but stories were told since the time man began speaking or using language as a means of communication. The short story is considered to be the most natural and amusing form of literature that is created extensively throughout the recent years. It is not a genre that has developed now but has been going on since ages before writing came into existence. Stories are as old as the most punctual writing. For a really long time in every single nation of the world, stories have remained present in one or the other structure, e.g. anecdotes, jokes and short stories.
On investigating the historical backdrop of any writing on the planet, we discover stories in distinctive structures. For instance, tales, stories, purposeful anecdotes, ballads and the folk stories that managed fabulous matters with enchantment and charm. India has the wealth of Panchatantra and Hitopadesh. The West has Aesop’s tales along with the Apocrypha and Old Testament. Boccaccio’s Decameron and Arabian Nights are as old as mankind. Consequently, the historical backdrop of the short story is in fact decently lengthy. The short story has passed through many phases like myth, tale, parable, legend and the novella. In structure, substance and method, obviously, they differed from the current short stories. But the truth of the matter is that this form is visible to the traditional sentiment and has been created through such forms as 'fabliaux', "novella" and “exemplum’.

Looking at the stories in the yester years and the modern period, the distinction is shocking. The rough story of the past has offered spot to a refined story beating with human investment composed in a manner that is very clean and imaginative. As it were, the short story has emulated the walk of human development and has turned into one of the genteel method for representation. The short story is a never ending phenomenon, but still it has been disregarded now and again. Drama was a favorite of the Elizabethans, the Romantic sonnet was the favorite in the 18th century, and the novel was a favorite of the Victorians.

The short story was legitimately created throughout the nineteenth century as a fine art by scholars as Hawthorne and Poe in United States; Balzac and Maupassant in France; Chekhov, Gogol and Pushkin in Russia and Sir Walter Scott in England. They, with their commitment in this class, have placed the short story on the scholarly guide.

Since the start of human advancement there has been no halt in the custom of storytelling: man’s interest for stories is as solid and voracious in man as it was before he learnt to make stone weapons. (Clark and Lieber 3)

However, throughout the most recent years the short story has created a huge amount and variety of collection more quickly than throughout
the previous five centuries. There is no manifestation of innovative composition in which the twentieth century has uncovered such a large number of potential outcomes of craft, elucidation of life and stimulation. In this way short story has turned into a unique scholarly structure.

1.6 Development of Short Story in Literature of India

The short story is a development of the twentieth century in India. It has turned into a constantly developing part of Indian writing following the time when Indian scholars began exploring different avenues regarding their recently discovered abstract type. The short story has profound establishes in all the dialects of India and has flourished decently. This structure has its roots in the ages old Indian Literature and is additionally molded by the effect of present day Western aces of this genre.

India has an ages old tradition of story-telling by portraying the life of India with kaleidoscopic colors and pattern. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the tales and parables in the Panchatantra, the Jataka Tales and the Kathasaritsagar and the folk stories of India is a captivating universe of stories without anyone else's input. Both the antiquated Indian tale and the aged Indian well known story have aided the Indian short story writer in gifting his stories an unequivocal shape. It is the effect of the antique writing. As told by Manjri Isvaran,

“India was the nursery of story and fable and the Indian story-teller was as fertile in tales inculcating practical wisdom as in illuminating epic and religious myth.” (Isvaran vii)

Formerly this type of writing was portrayed differently as katha, akhyan, upakhyan, afsana and dastan. The short story as a structure today is considered as the most youthful offspring of current writing; however the roots are in aged India. The short story has profound roots in all the dialects of India and has bloomed extensively well. In short stories as well in different fields, Rabindranath Tagore, our poet of India was the incredible pioneer.
1.7 Development of Short Story in Indian Writing in English

Indian English writing has built its credentials everywhere throughout the world. Indian essayists in English have utilized above all manifestations of writing. The short story in English might have begun to take unequivocal form in the 1920s, and is hence barely more than eighty years, yet its advancement so far clearly shows a different probability of being a standout amongst the most noteworthy structures in the field of Indian literature in English.

To give a spark to their stories the Indian short story writer went under the impact of the Western short story writers and their classics. The Indian writers began writing short stories in the English language. Due to the effect of education in English medium, written work in English under different impact of spread of English instruction, beginning of diaries and magazines and also because the works of Tagore proved to be fountain of incredible force. Shankar Ram, Manjri Isvaran, A.S.P. Ayer, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, K.A. Abbas, Manohar Malgaokar, Humayun Kabir, G.V. Desani, R.K. Narayan, and others incorporated in this.

The credit of being "the first Indian English short story writer with a considerable output" goes to a lady – Cornelia Sorabji. (Naik 13)

In 1970s, an Indian woman first released a collection of short stories through which the women writers came to light. Currently all our significant women writers showed up. Writers who have put themselves at the global platform are: Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Bharti Mukherjee, Jay Nimbkar, Sujata Bala, Anita Desai, Rajj Narasimhan, Shashi Deshpande, Indriyani Sowkar and Jhumpa Lahiri. Jhabvala has been recognized as "the most sophisticated novelist”. She is the most productive of our women writers with four accumulations to her credit. Her short stories are considered to be the best ones.

The use of English language by the writers played a major role in their recognition. In addition the investigation of the feminine sensibility of the women of India radiates from an altogether delicate valuation of the Indian woman.
1.8 Development of Short Story in Gujarati Literature

Despite of the progress of the short story in English, short stories likewise prospered in other regional dialects. In the nineteenth century, this genus was acquainted with the populace of Gujarat through translation of short stories of the European stories and the most celebrated tales of the Eastern and Western countries. During the end of nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, a few periodicals helped the advancement of the short story structure. According to Mehta in George

“The credit for writing original short stories goes to the Parsees who wrote such literary material because they had a clearer conception of this new genre than other Gujarati writers”.
(Mehta in George 744)

The monthly periodicals excessively assumed a paramount part in the advancement of short story structure. *Gyan Prasarak* (Propagator of Knowledge), *Sundari Subodh* (Good Advice for Women) *Stri Bodh* (Advice for Women), are just a few of them. *Jnansudha* (Nectar of Knowledge) and *Buddhi Prakash* (Light of the Intellect) contributed significantly in the rise of the short story in Gujarati. A collection of short stories named *Vidyavaridhi* (Ocean of Knowledge) was released in 1899.

By 1908, short stories became distinguished as an important fictional genre. The stories by Bhogindrarao Divetia, Ranjiram Mehta and Narayan Hemchandra, quickened the progress of the Gujarati short story. In the second decade of the twentieth century Narad, Malyanil, D hansukhlal Mehta, and Kanaiyalal Munshi presented the sophisticated manifestation of the short story in English. In the Gandhian era, Dwiref, Dhumketu, and R.V. Desai delineated the ideology of Gandhiji in their stories and spread it further. The scholars who later took the short story in Gujarati to its modern structure are of later years who made a further stride in giving the Gujarati short story its contemporary structure are Sundaram, Umashankar Joshi, Zaverchand Meghani, Pannalal Patel, Jayanti Dalal, Snehrashmi, Gulabdas Broker, Ishwar Petliker, and Chunilal Madia These authors wrote on distinctive subjects like
the Satyagraha development, Freudian idea of sex and Marxist philosophy. Also some of them wrote about the internal world of human’s personality and wrote on psychological stories. Eva Dev, Chinu Modi, Prabodh Parikh, Suresh Joshi, Raghuvir Chaudhari, Chandrakant Bakshi, Suvarna Rai and Mahesh Dave are all the post-independence writers who wrote on new trends in this genre.

In the pre-independence time, some women began writing through monthly magazines. They wrote on stories related to reform and these stories influenced the readers. A publication named "Vartalahari" offered chance to numerous budding writers of short stories. The magazine had a different segment in which prominent women writers wrote.

According to Mehta in George this magazine had created a wave of awareness among the women about their status and their rights in the society. (Mehta in George 745)

Sumati, Urmila, Lilavati Munshi, Shardaben Mehta, Vijayalaxmi Trivedi, Pramila, Vidyaben Nilkanth and Arvinda are the noteworthy women writers who gave a new direction to short story writing. As said by Mehta in Jotwani

“In the post- Independence period many women writers have stepped into the field of writing, and they have focused on the inner conflicts of modern women”. (Mehta in Jotwani 58-59)

Saroj Pathak, Varsha Adalja, Kundanika Kapadia, Dhiruben Patel, Ila Arab, Madhu Rai and Himanshi Shelat are such famous writers.

After Independence there emerged another class of women writers of English language and of Gujarati language who wrote on the new perception of human relations, reflected on the psychology of characters, and presented the conducts of morality and the conflicts which arise in the mind due to it, by portraying the yearnings and dissatisfactions of the Indian woman. There is some similarity found in the English short story and the Gujarati short stories, particularly in these women writers.
1.9 Portrayal of Woman in Indian English Literature

Writing definitely catches the steadily altering realism of life. The description of the status of woman in the public arena is also a part of this. The position of women everywhere across the globe, especially in India, is experiencing a quick transition lately. Furthermore consequently the description of woman is paramount in the investigation of writing everywhere throughout the world. Woman has encouraged writing and has been one of its critical subjects as well. A woman-an inventor of writing and hence her presence in literature cannot be overruled. An imaginative writer has the observation and the expository personality of a humanist who gives a precise evidence of the life of humans, public opinion, and societal framework.

Among all creative structures, fiction reflects the current social conditions. The depiction of woman in fiction is likewise represented by the predominating outlook towards women in the public arena and the creator's reaction to it.

Normally Indian culture describes women as conceivably warm, delicate, subordinate and meek. In pre-independence time, this was the picture of woman in writing. The majority of the Indian books that deal with women offered an edgy outlook towards the subject or wind up admiring the conventional good values of women, in the same way as quietness, dedication and by hopelessly accepting whatever is allotted to the women.

"One peculiarity of the images of women" says, Mary Ann Fergusson," throughout history is that social stereotypes have been reinforced by archetypes. Another way of putting this would be to say that in every age woman has been seen primarily as mother, wife, mistress, and sex object- their roles in relationship to men." (Fergusson 4-5)

They were depicted in these conventional parts given to them in societal schema by the writers. Furthermore, the characters are excessively far off from realism and excessively unsophisticated, and indulged a lot in sentiments and ethics.
Cornelia Sorabji was the first short story writer in the English language that composed stories pretty much in match with topics, for example, social analysis of life, love, understanding and enduring of the women in India and the characteristics of womanhood in India. The same situation was experienced by the writers in India in other Indian dialects likewise. All were obsessed in presenting a romanticized picture of the woman in India selected from history and myth. According to Bhatt

**The basic mythic and archetypal image, which existed in ancient times, has such a strong appeal and is fundamental to our culture that it still continues to exist in our literature. (Bhatt 26)**

Besides the ancient writing, had two disagreeing pictures of a woman i.e. the honoured picture and in addition the dishonoured and abused picture. An Indian writer, Raja Rao and the earliest poetess Toru write keeping in mind the Indian mythological women like Sita and Savitri while Derozio writes on a woman of demeaning status in his verses.

Earlier English fiction had described a family woman, yet later in 1940; it began to mirror woman’s cooperation in the independence struggle, absorbing information, encountering a feeling of liberation. The soul of nationalism provoked the development towards enhancement of women. A woman is no more the dumb person she was in the past. In olden days she was considered useless and had no say in anything, be it her education, marriage, family affairs after marriage etc. But today’s woman has become capable enough to voice her opinion in any aspect of life surrounding her. Writing, composed during the Freedom development, ventures another depiction of the woman in India. Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao would never exist without their writings on a woman. Akkayya and A. Javani created uproar in the enlightened Indians through their writings whereas Anand wrote on the plight of many Lajwantis who dealt with the male-dominated superstitious society. The western influence brought its liberal education which enforced new morals and standards of life upon women in India. The mould was in the direction of a positive, fearless and honest effort to form another lifestyle for women. Public opinion and the writers noted the participation by women in the struggle for independence and a transition was noticed towards the sensibility of women. Nonetheless, these writings were just a
handful. Despite the fact that women were battling to leave the life of stagnation, a set of women writers started dismissing this angle.

The unrest was not overnight. Despite of the speedy transformation and development in the education for women, the conventional woman still had a deep impact on the horizons. In genuine abstract practice, various women characters in fiction are discovered employing the part of exemplary model. They institute the agony, relinquishing part of Sita and Savitri. Be that as it may, the existing world writers switched over quickly from writing love stories and stories based on myth and exhibited the substances of the life of women. The picture of a woman, family and the societal framework continued altering as the years progressed; the views of the writer also witnessed a change, thus bringing about a mixture of practical pictures. Beginning of the twentieth century, there was a change noted in the status and soul of the women in India by sociologists. The woman continuously began evolving in these phase of transition.

The New Woman emerged after Independence with the advent of women’s education and this new wave of transition. Education instilled a feeling of distinction in women and excited an enthusiasm toward their rights. The effect of western society excessively helped in changing the status of woman in our culture. A display of the promising New Woman was made by the new writers instead of imitating the customary Sita and Savitri image introduced by old writers. The New Woman hated the detached wedded life as a sacrificing woman who followed the shadow of her husband on the grounds that the education has developed her feeling of distinction. She expects a measure of fulfillment.

The New Woman miracle was reflected in Indian literature. R.K. Narayan’s characters were conservative and disobedient. Bhabhani Bhattacharya’s acted like links between the East and the West and old and new. Mulk Raj Anand’s characters were based on the liberation of women. Additionally, women's activist patterns showed up not too far off and they collided with the traditional good code.

These styles are depicted in Indian English writing which speaks of the uproar of women for a different and simple lifestyle. The picture of woman in writing
in late decades is completely not the same as it was before. Indian writings in English
composed throughout the two decades of the twentieth century give an impression into
the female mind and describe a full range of woman’s world and her experiences. An
investigation of late Indian writing uncovers that the women heroes are very aware of
themselves and are no more quiet and meek. One would find a remarkable distinction
in women’s demeanor as contrasted with the depiction of women in old writing.
Therefore, the soul of flexibility is available in the courageous women of modern
Indian fiction. This marvel of the depiction of New Woman is reflected in the fiction
of Indian dialects. The New Woman, be that as it may, is a mesmerizing development
out of the current Indian culture and not only a visually impaired impersonation of the
women’s activist philosophy of the west. This sensation is a result of the unavoidable
conversion occurring in Indian culture as the nation walks ahead to speed with
whatever is left out in the world around.

In the book *Images of Woman in Indo-Anglican Novel*, Meena Shirwadkar
asserts that, after the progressions in the culture of India, novel writing also witnessed
a growth from delineating women characters exclusively as encapsulations of misery,
feminine assets to depicting complex real characters.

However the change happened with the rise of a few profoundly gifted
women writers in the late years of the nineteenth century. They composed of Indian
women, their clashes and dilemma against the foundation of modern India. The
altering settings have set these writers in a fortunate position. Ruth Prawar Jhabvala
Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande Attiya Hussain, Nayantara
Sahgal, Geeta Mehta, Shobha De, Kamala Das and late Dina Mehta have delineated a
different female sensitivity at work in the discernment and the demonstration of
realism. Their main commitment comprises of investigating the ethical and mental
issues and echo of their female characters with their exertions to adapt to the
difficulties and attain another agreement of association with their own self and with
their surroundings.

The women writers depicted practically Indian women’s feeling of
disappointment and their detachment. Kamala Markandeya effectively depicts the
twofold pulls that the Indian woman is torn apart from longing to declare her identity
as an individual and her obligation as a girl, wife and mother. Anita Desai captures the
distressed mind of the sophisticated women in India. Jhabvala is basically troubled with the agony of the white woman in India. Nayantara Sahgal composes delicately of the way ladies endure owing to sexist partiality in a male dominated set-up. These women writers describe the woman in Indian culture and her issues and situations every once in a while and her endeavors to attain an agreeable association with her environment. They have additionally attempted to examine the social approach and principles that have helped in giving the Indian women their part and picture. In addition they are intending to evaluate the sociological impact on the mind of the women heroes.

These writers develop the 'New Indian Woman' who is disappointed with the limited scope of her roles at the social, cultural and sexual levels allocated by the oblivious dawn of the male-dominated India. Some of the women have recorded this resistance against this male authoritarian set up in our Indian society. During the recent three decades, women writers have shifted from conventional persevering generous women to shattered female characters in search for self. Accordingly fiction composed throughout this period delved into the psyche of a woman and dealt with their experiences.

These scholars have composed with great concern and thoughtfulness for their female characters. The concealed and stifled universe of Indian women comes to picture and lives up to expectations. Indian feminine sensibility could be completely felt by examining their expectations. In this manner, major changes in social, cultural and financial structures have fundamentally extended and adjusted the way of realism for women in India in their writing.

1.10 Portrayal of Woman in Gujarati Literature

The depiction of woman in Gujarati writing excessively has maintained its tempo with the altering social picture of the Gujarati woman. Gujarati fiction mirrors the predominant inconsistencies in modern culture around a woman’s status – her exaltation and mistreatment.
Old Gujarati writing envisioned woman as an admired person who was attributed the customary part by the male authoritarian culture. She submissively followed her socially relegated part of a committed little girl; wife and mother who existed inside the boundaries of these gender roles. The writers managed this exalted picture of woman for whom, the topmost duty was to keep her man satisfied and happy and be at his service completely. This is witnessed in Govardharam Tripathi's *Saraswati Chandra* (1887) through the main character of Kumud, Kumudsundri, who is portrayed as a perfect being. This novel *Saraswati Chandra*"...made an impact on the imagination of the Gujarati people and shaped their moral and ethical ideals."
(Suhrud in Mukherjee 193).

So since the release of that novel, this picture of woman has been continued by the male scholars pretty much in the same light, however with fluctuated touches of inventiveness of the different creators. Kanaiyalal Munshi in *Swapnadrashtra* (A Visionary) (1924), Manubhai Pancholi, "Darshak" in *Prem ane Puja* (Love and Worship) (1944), Ishwar Petlikar in *Mari Haiya Sagdi*, (The Fire in my Heart) portrayed the position of woman in Indian culture and managed some reformist plans. But through the creation of Raghuvir Chaudhari's *Amrita* (1965) and *Lavanya* (1989), there appears the rise of present day woman's awareness in Gujarati writing.

In the beginning of the twentieth century there was a social change. *Sundari Subodh* – a monthly periodical circulated revolutionary stories which had topics like women’s education, widow marriage and the wrongs of extramarital relations. Numerous women writers likewise helped it. They composed on women’s issues and the social discrimination they confronted in a patriarchal culture. *Tunki Kahanio* (Short Stories) (1909) a collection of short stories edited by Pramila and Arvinda made a wave of consciousness amongst women about their status and their rights in the public eye. *Tunki Kahanio* (Short Stories) depicted New Women who ascend in rebellion against the treacherous social framework. After the nineteenth century, a change was witnessed - a dissent was traced and sensitivity for women was communicated. The Gujarati writing of the second and third decades demonstrated
women partaking in the battle for freedom. Because of the freedom struggle women came to limelight and writing records it. Gandhiji's reasoning offered ascent to another humanism and new profound quality focused around human values as opposed to religious conventionality. The pattern was towards a positive, daring and blunt exertion to figure out another lifestyle for women. The books composed throughout this period were loaded with female characters that stood hand in hand with their male partners in the battle for freedom. Dr. Ami Upadhyay in an interview with Shelat questioned that, ‘What was the role of Gandhi for women? To which Shelat replied that Gandhiji brought women out of their homes for the freedom struggle. He motivated them to be active in the freedom struggle.

Numerous scholars of the post-freedom period have depicted female characters with a steadfast autonomy of psyche while a few authors during this period took a striking flight from the old picture of the woman who look for joy beyond her marriage but however did not go to the degree of exiting of the nuptial bond. Gulabdas Broker, in his best stories portrays this picture of woman while, Saroj Pathak composed a book on an exceptionally questionable and strong subject – lesbian relation between women, a forbidden theme at that time. She depicted characters that frequently have a tendency to go astray from the customary example. According to Sarla Jag Mohan-

**These writers have undoubtedly become controversial but their approach has certainly been nearer to the reality of human existence. (Mohan in Bhatt 47)**

Thus the women just wanted to be treated as human beings and be treated as equals in all aspects. They wanted to assert their identity. This was the emergence of the New Woman by the influence of the Western society and the awareness brought about by feminist movements.

**Himanshi Shelat opines that “There was a sudden rise in the awareness of women regarding their own identity”**.

“Parivartanano aarambh thai chukyo che pan haju disha joie tetli”
spasht nathi”. (The change has begun to take place but the direction is not clear enough) (Shelat 34).

The characters portrayed by Chandrakant Bakshi and Suresh Joshi are very far from this image of the New Woman. They are all enduring, mindful and relinquishing picture. In Paralysis (1969) and Priya Niki (Dear Niki) (1987), Chandrakant Bakshi appears to be of the opinion that a wife should quietly tail her spouse wherever he goes. In his literary work Lili Naso Ma Pankhar (Autumn in the Green Veins) he writes-

A woman has to pay for every happiness. She has to pay for her closed eyes and for keeping her eyes open too.

In another novel Baaki Raat (The Remaining Night) Baxi presents his view on possibility of equality between man and woman in the following words-

“When a wife would be able to read the newspaper before the husband on the morning tea table, it would be a great achievement in the area of women equality and liberation.”

This opinion of Bakshi would just give a minor equality to the women and may even take lot of time for it to happen. Thus many authors have described the gender inequality through their writings and protested to it by their writings.

In any case, in the post-freedom years, numerous women writers have come into the enclosure of artistic composition, and they have concentrated on the inward clashes of advanced women. Education made women aware of their rights and they don't appreciate if their status in family or society appears mediocre when compared with men. The women's activist viewpoint has likewise made its appearance felt. Writers display women who felt deep need of financial independence. Several female characters would prefer to remain unmarried. Indeed the individuals who are married have to declare their right and ultimately have a clash with the in-laws and their husband due to lack of space provided to them. An extreme change enters into the flow of Gujarati writing with the production of Dhiruben Patel's Shimla Na Ful (The flowers of Shimla) 1976 wherein she has given an opportunity to the heroine to
seek her identity. In spite of the fact that the amount of woman writers in Gujarat is significant, there is very little of feminist fiction accordingly. Kundanika Kapadia, an extraordinary writer and a feminist, whose book *Saat Paglan Akashma* (Seven Steps in the Sky) has the effect of real work with a solid feminist predisposition. It is a novel of social rebellion. Exploitation and abuse is integral to the novel.

In this way with changing time, the depiction of woman got more practical with a push on her feeling of dissatisfaction and estrangement and on the clashing strengths of convention and innovation. Today the writers, particularly women, focus their contemplation on the internal clashes of modern women. Remarkable among such writers are Dhiruben Patel, Saroj Pathak, Kundanika Kapadia, Varsha Adalja, Ila Arab Mehta, Manju Rai and Himanshi Shelat. Ila Arab Mehta's *Batris Putlini Vedna* (Grief of the 32 dolls) (1982) is additionally a novel that voices the desolations and yearnings of lady in the male ruled pop culture. The private openings of a lady's heart are at its best in Varsha Adalja's *Khari Padelo Tahuko* (1983), while Bindu Bhatt in her *Mira Yagnik Ni Diary* (The Diary of Mira Yagnik) (1992) writes on the strong and unexplored subject, i.e. Homosexuality. Concerning their commitment to the improvement of Gujarati composition Mansukhlal Jhaveri says:

"*Gujarati prose however is well developed and the prose of Kundanika Kapadia, Mrinalini Desai...is delight to read.*" *(Jhaveri 230)*

Tragically talking, women writers despite of their remarkable contribution to Gujarati writing are neglected. Shelat says that when the best editorials come out the very best of female writers are always neglected. They have never been taken seriously when they write nor do the women read serious literature.

Fiction composed throughout the most recent three decades gives a flash into female mentality and travels with the various facets of female experiences. Short stories composed by Indian women exhibit the Indian woman, her clashes and situation against the foundation of modern India. The writers analyze the social approach and principles that gave women their image and assigned them their roles for themselves and the society. Through their analysis the woman has learnt to explore her psyche and tackle the moral dilemmas in her life by trying to accomplish new vistas in their relation with themselves and their surroundings.
1.11 References


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