ABSTRACT

The thesis entitled “The Changing Perspectives in Indian Society: A Comparative Study with Reference to Select Novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari” aims at exploring the life styles of a motley collection of women who belong to three different generations. The comparative study of their works is thought provoking as their novels are written in two different languages English and Tamil, depicting the life style of people from two different geographical locations, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu but from India which is known for its cultural diversity. The status of girl children, the role of mother and elders in the life of a girl, her search for identity as an individual, her clarity of vision in the end with a note of optimism and how married women are handicapped and hampered by the desertion of men in the family at times are analysed and compared in their novels along with the marriage institution in India, the deep-rooted culture and the rituals observed. The impact of the gloomy childhood memories urges the educated protagonists to analyse their place in the society and their exploration for self enlightens their minds to face life and its problems with a revived spirit. Their gradual awareness about the intricacies of life and the resultant enlightenment about the ways through which the intricate knots of every problem to be untied are to be traced with reference to select novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari.

The first chapter “Introduction” explains the role of Comparative Literature and its impact on scholars. This chapter focuses on how Indian literature provides the natural basis of a comparative study, because of its treasure house which has a diverse
compilation of incredible books. It also discusses the role of novel form and how it has been used as a tool to project the prevailing social conditions in the society. The later part of twentieth century has witnessed the emergence of several women writers not only in English but also in the regional languages in India to herald a new era. Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari are two such writers whose themes own socio-cultural significance. A parallel study of their works of art will give an idea about the essential need for human insight into the relationship that exists among the members of the family in India. What is optimistic in the reading of their novels is not that the condition of women is criticised but that they always end their criticisms with a resolute preference and praise for a better future for women without losing their hope in marriage institution. The novels *Roots and Shadows* and *The Dark Holds No Terrors* written by Shashi Deshpande and *Pālaṅgal* by Sivasankari are taken for analysis in Chapter II and Chapter III and *A Matter of Time* and *Poy* are for Chapter IV.

The second chapter “The Position of Female Children in Indian Society” deals with the female psyche of girl children as the product of cultural forces. Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari show the gradual changes in their life style from early twentieth century. They show the role of girl children in Indian families, their wishes, expectations, work load, anxieties, desperation, demand for equal priority, awareness about their career and their revolt to free themselves from the clutches that bind them. Whenever chances are given, they try to widen their scopes by escaping from the authority. Rather than by men folk they are instructed to be obedient, submissive and passive by their mothers and grandmothers who know the expectation of the tradition bound Indian society. The young girls protest against the advices and counseling but after
crossing their adolescence, they understand the role of women in the tradition bound Indian society and their struggle for existence. They understand that the mothers and grandmothers are the real tutors from whom they gain the required strength to face the marital problems with ease. This chapter traces the changes in the life style of girl children from early twentieth century.

The third chapter “The Status of Married Women in India” deals with the importance given for marriage in Indian society, the rituals performed, man-woman relationship, the communication gap that thwarts the life of many women for decades, the tolerance of ladies before two generations, the impatience of educated modern middle class women in the gradually changing tradition bound Indian society and the life style of widows. Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari portray the experience of married women through their protagonists to make the readers comprehend what is to be done to resolve the crisis and provide a healthy living standard to the future generation of India. Both choose the situations with which the majority Indian women can identify themselves. Their protagonists solve the problems in a balanced way and their practical approach instills new hopes for a better future. The changes in the life of married women and widows from early twentieth century are traced and discussed.

The fourth chapter entitled “From Despair to Hope” is the continuation of the exploration of how married women are handicapped and hampered by the desertion of men in the family. The sudden silence, absence or indifference of men in the family shakes the equilibrium of women and children. Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari show how the married women are not given enough space to understand and incorporate the disloyalty or infidelity of men in A Matter of Time and Poy. The novelists depict the
predicament of the middle class educated as well as uneducated women, their stress, anxiety, the loss and the pain. Shashi Deshpande presents the three generation of women in *A Matter of Time* to show how women of every generation is better than their ancestors though the problem remains the same. Sivasankari offers ample scope for the readers to think about the future of her protagonist after her bold decision to leave her husband though reconstructing the life by facing the social remarks in Indian society would be a challenge.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The comparative study of literature begins with the dawn of literature. In *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Susan Bassnett states, “Sooner or later, anyone who claims to be working in comparative literature has to try and answer the inevitable question: What is it? ...comparative literature involves the study of literary texts across cultures, that it is interdisciplinary and that it is concerned with patterns of connection in literatures across both time and space” (1). Comparative literature tries to trace, the changes, transformations and travels of literary genres and texts across different cultures and languages. The scholars of comparative literature explore the connections of literature with history, philosophy, politics and literary theory along with the intersections of literature which include the other cultural forms such as film, drama, visual arts, music, and media. Hence Sandra Bermann in her Presidential Address to the American Comparative Literature Association in 2009 rightly stated, “Comparative literature regularly joins literary texts from different languages and cultures. It also regularly connects, say, a poem with dance, a film with the novel, photography with the essay. It even relates different disciplinary languages and modes of thinking” (434).

Comparative Literature also promotes reading across linguistic margins in order to highlight everything, which the special and exclusive focus on a national literature tends to obscure. Hence the Comparatist has to acquire an in-depth skill in several languages, literatures as well as other disciplines. This idea is reiterated by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek in *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application*. “First,
Comparative Literature means the knowledge of more than one national language and literature, and/or it means the knowledge and application of other disciplines in and for the study of literature…” (13). Wellek and Warren in their *Theory of Literature*, a book that was enormously significant in comparative literature when it first appeared in 1949, suggest, “Comparative Literature…will make high demands on the linguistic proficiencies of our scholars. It asks for a widening of perspectives, a suppression of local and provincial sentiments, not easy to achieve” (8).

Comparative Literature studies have become the highly regarded academic discipline because comparative literature provides an opportunity to study the resourceful and creative literature in all its forms. It also attempts to fuse linguistic margins and promotes cultural co-ordination. Comparative Literature courses introduce the Western, East Asian, Middle Eastern and South Asian literary traditions, the global diversity of literary forms and genres along with the methods of comparative literary study. The courses offered in European, American and Indian universities are based on literatures of two languages in original and in translation. It results in a surge of research dissertations. The works from all parts of the world including the vernacular languages of the Indian sub-continent are studied and investigated. The growth and development of this field can be gauged by the emergence of new Comparative Literature journals, new chairs in Comparative Literature, and a significant raise in publications. The reason for the fascination for comparative studies is given by Susan Bassnett in *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*:
Most people do not start with comparative literature, they end up with it in
some way or other, travelling towards it from different points of departure.
Sometimes the journey begins with a desire to move beyond the
boundaries of a single subject area that might appear to be too
constraining, at other times a reader may be impelled to follow up what
appear to be similarities between texts or authors from different cultural
contexts. (1)

English, French, and German comparative literature programs at Universities and
Colleges focussed just on the canons of their respective national traditions when the
courses were started. The European literatures were celebrated for the aesthetic autonomy
while works from the non-West were simply read more from an ethnographic, historical,
or anthropological view than as works of literature with their dignity. David Damrosch in
What is World Literature? remarks, “The world’s literature is not yet sold by a Borders
Books Without Borders” (25). Hence the field of comparative literature has been
endeavouring, to overcome this division between the western literature and non-West by
combining the diligence, accuracy and rigidity of European literary studies with the
interdisciplinary area of studies. At present a remarkable change can be seen in the mind-
set of comparative scholars.

The lovers of books embark unconsciously towards comparative literature
because literature and readers have always ranged outside the boundaries of one national
language. For instance German literature is brimming with the influences of English,
French, Italian, Greek and Roman literature. Comparative literature extends the scope of
acquiring knowledge by way of identifying a new thing as similar or related to something
older. Sometimes, writers who do not know each other show fascinating similarities and differences. The striking resemblance between the Indian poet Mamta Kalia’s poem “I Feel Like Crying All The Time” and the African poet Okot P’bitek’s poem “My Husband’s Tongue is Bitter” throw a new insight to understand the problem of married women. Jennifer Harford Vargas’s comparative study of Fakir Mohan Senapati’s novel Chha Mana Atha Guntha who hails from Odisha in India and the Colombian novelist Garcia Marquez’s novels and U.R Ananthamurthy’s “Comparative Study of Fakir Mohan Senapati’s Chha Mana Atha Guntha and Rabindranath Tagore’s Gora” grasp the attention of scholars in India and inspire them to focus on comparative literature. There is no limit to the list of examples that could be devised.

The French term ‘Literature Comparé’ was first used by Villemain in 1829. Mathew Arnold used the term 'Comparative Literature' in English, in his inaugural Lecture at Oxford in 1857 while highlighting the importance of the comparative approach to literature and propounded:

And everywhere there is a connexion, everywhere there is an illustration:
no single event, no single literature, is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literatures. The literature of ancient Greece, the literature of the Christian Middle Age, so long as they are regarded as two isolated literatures, two isolated growths of the human spirit, are not adequately comprehended; and it is adequate comprehension which is the demand of the present age. (456)
Comparative literature needs a special focus because art and humanity are considered as one entity and so literature needs to be studied as one. When the works of two or more than two writers are explored side by side, the readers can understand and appreciate the thoughts of the writers and admire their converging and contrasting attitudes. While comparing, it is interesting to note human nature which remains the same everywhere irrespective of many socio-cultural differences. Art and literature are the two different versatile media through which these resemblances and differences can be observed. A researcher who has inquisitiveness can take up comparative literature as it will motivate him to cross borders and will enrich him with a different enlightenment. Such an experience is impossible to achieve while reading within a single literature. It enlightens the mind and does not ruin the idea of the writer. Reading texts in isolation would limit the richness of the text from blossoming. In *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* Susan Bassnett explains the exciting expedition of comparative scholars. “Once we begin to read we move across frontiers, making associations and connections, no longer reading within a single literature but within the great open space of Literature with a capital L, what Goethe termed Weltliteratur” (2).

Goethe propagated the idea of world literature as one entity though the study of comparative literature was either dismissed as inferior or demanded a special set of canons or New Poetics for evaluation by a selected few during his period. Goethe liked to be informed of all works and counselled all to do the same. In *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* Susan Bassnett recollects how Goethe regarded poetry as the common property of all mankind (2). Comparative literature was considered as world religion by Gayley and Francois Jost. In *Introduction to Comparative Literature* Francois
Jost claims that national literature cannot constitute an intelligible field of study because of its arbitrarily limited perspective and “comparative literature represents more than one academic discipline” (29). All cultural differences disappear when great works are read. Susan Bassnett remarks, “Art is seen as an instrument of harmony and the comparatist is one who facilitates the spread of that harmony” (4). Sandra Bermann too believes that human destinies can be transformed only by transnational, interdisciplinary and responsive humanities in today’s world of globalisation, financial collapse, migration and displacement. She added in her presidential address, “To prompt such a humanities, no fields are better suited, it seems to me, than comparative literature and translation” (432).

The awareness about comparative literature budded in India in the late eighteenth century after Bengal came under the British rule. In “Comparative Literature in India: A Historical Perspective” Sisir Kumar Das explains how Warren Hastings, the first governor-general of India, in his introduction of Charles Wilkin's translation of Bhagavad Gita in 1785, advocated for a comparative study of the Gita and great European literature. “I should not fear” he wrote, “to place, in opposition to the best French version of the most admired passages of Iliad or Odyssey, or the 1st and 6th books of our own Milton, highly as I venerate the latter, the English translation of the Mahabharata” (qtd in Das 2011, 22).

The Europeans discovered inspiring ideas in both Indian and Persian classical literature. Though the classical works were from India, a different civilisation, they understood the uniqueness and grandeur of them. Gradually Indian literature and European literature came into contact in an unprecedented manner before Indian
independence. Both sides read the text of others for the first time and this resulted in a surge of new translations as well as world literature. Sir William Jones’s English translation of Shakuntala and Jayadeva’s Gitagovinda into English prose appeared in 1789. Forster’s German translation appeared in 1791. Frederick Schlegel’s The Language and Wisdom of India was published in 1808. Franz Bopp’s Analytical Comparison of the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and Teutonic Languages appeared in 1816.

In Sahibs and Munshis: An Account of the College of Fort William Sisir Kumar Das states a situation in India which has laid a strong foundation for the declaration on the universality of letters defending the study of comparative literature as an expression of the unifying force of human creativity:

Lord Minto, commenting upon the English reading of the Meghadutam by the famous nineteenth century British Sanskritist H.H.Wilson wrote ‘the work of Kaleedas unfolded now for the first time to such distant generations as our own displays this uniformity in the characters and genius of our race which seems to write at once the most remote of regions of time and space, and which always gratifies the human mind to discern through the superficial varieties in which some slight difference of external or even intellectual fashions may even disguise it. In Kaleedas we find poetical design, a poetical description of Nature in all her forms, moral and material, poetical imagery, poetical inventions, just and natural feeling, with all the finer and keener sensibilities of the human heart. In these great and immutable features we recognize in Kaleedas, the fellow and kinsman of the great masters of ancient and modern Poetry.’ (114)
This open pronouncement made in 1806, on the study of literature as a universal and collective asset of all mankind elevates the scope for comparative literature to a lofty height in India.

The spread of English education created a new critical awareness which paved the way for the Indian scholars to review the promising and rising literatures. The ancient texts written in Sanskrit or Tamil or any one of the Dravidian languages, were studied with reference to English literature in particular and European literature in general. The European scholars, who had taken the initiative, valued the texts written in Indian regional languages. G. U. Pope, who had taken the first initiative in Tamil, praised the efforts of Thiruvalluvar in the introduction to his English translation of the Tamil Classic *The Sacred Kurral* as, the brevity rendered an oracular effect to the utterances of the great Tamil master of sentences. “They are the choicest of moral epigrams. It is an ‘Apple of gold in a network of silver’. Something of the same is found in Martial, and the Latin elegiac verses” (vi). He stressed the need for a comparative study between *Kurral* and gnomic poetry of Greece and the Latin elegiac verses in their terse and aphoristic statements, in expression and emotion, epigrammatic wit and brevity, and theme and sentiment. In the preface he appealed the Tamil scholars to study the sacred verses in English to widen their concept and to understand the point that no literature can stand alone.

In the editorial Preface of *The Sacred Kural* the European scholar and missionary of the London Missionary Society, H.A.Popley narrates the importance of the treasures that Indian Literature is enriched with. “No section of the population of India can afford
to neglect her ancient heritage. The treasures of knowledge, wisdom, and beauty which are contained in her literature, philosophy, art, and regulated life are too precious to be lost. Every citizen of India needs to use them, if he is to be a cultured modern Indian” (1). Albrecht Weber, speaks of the reflections of the *Iliad* in *Ramayana*, and Greek influence on Sanskrit plays. John Garrett’s *Classical Dictionary of India* discusses the ideas of Weber. Weber suspects, “Some kind of knowledge of the substance of the Homeric story found its way to India” (qtd. in Garrett, 114). Whenever comparisons are made, they serve as replications of the original as one talk about the Indian Shakespeare, Kalidasa, the Indian Aristotle, Aurobindo or the Thomas Hardy of Odisha, Fakir Mohan Senapati.

The Indian writers in the nineteenth century felt the importance for a global review of literature which resulted in laying a strong base for comparative studies of literature. In 1893 a significant framework within literatures was given by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his essay, “Shakuntala, Miranda and Desdemona” which was an added step ahead to eliminate all the nationalistic considerations. Rabindranath Tagore was the first person to propose the comparative study of literature as an academic discipline in India. In his lecture in Bengali, at the newly established National Council of Education or *Jatiya Siksa Parisad* in 1906 formed to create a parallel system of education outside the University of Calcutta, Tagore spoke on Comparative Literature. In the article “Comparative Literature in India: A Historical Perspective” Sisir Kumar Das says, “Tagore used the English expression ‘comparative literature’ to explain what he meant by ‘world literature’, a term immediately reminds one of *Weltliteratur* used by Goethe in 1827” (25).
Satya.P Mohanty, in his article “Indian Literature and Comparative Perspectives” stated a situation in which, U. R. Ananthamurthy one of the pioneers of the Navya literary movement in contemporary Kannada literature asked a crew of professors and doctoral students of Cornell University:

Why vernacular Indian literary texts so rarely receive the kind of careful attention critics give to major texts in European and American literature. Emphasising the need for extended textual readings as well as cross-regional analysis of the literary traditions in India, he called for textual comparisons that highlight similarities and differences in the way common themes and similar social situations are treated. He argued that several strands of cultural and social influence run through Indian literary texts, strands that are impossible to see clearly if our focus remains confined to the works of any one linguistic or regional tradition.

U.R. Ananthamurthy argued in his lectures at Cornell, the need for fine-grained interpretations of works of modern Indian literature as well as analyses of cross-regional textual clusters. His own focus was on the contrast between Senapati’s *Six Acres and a Third* and Tagore’s *Gora*, and he wanted his audience to consider how different both novels are in their uses of language and dialectal registers. Close textual analysis is essential for comparative studies of this kind.

The new volume *Colonialism, Modernity, and Literature: A View from India* by Satya P. Mohanty, Professor of English at Cornell University is a response to Ananthamurthy's call. He has assembled an innovative volume of essays which provide
close readings of a uniquely representative work of modern Indian literature and develops its analyses in a resolutely comparative framework. The essays by Jennifer Harford Vargas and Paul Sawyer suggest what a critical comparatism would look like and how to develop a method to talk about ‘world literature’. Ananthamurthy's call to scholars and critics of Indian literature led to this collaborative work. The close readings and theoretical explorations of the essays not only inspire more such engagements with important literary works and their multiple contexts but also illuminate the minds of comparative scholars. They promote alternative textual interpretations of Indian literature, seek to revitalise debates, and unlock innovative avenues of cross-disciplinary research in which literary criticism is part of a collaborative project to define the features of the world which are inherited from the Age of Empire.

Aijaz Ahmad, Sisir Kumar Das, Amiya Dev and K. Ayyappa Paniker insist the need for more comparative studies in Indian literature as it would enrich the reading process. If texts are read without a tinge of comparison, it would limit the text from emerging. Comparative studies always expand the scope of the text, and does not infect. When the Indian English writers were blamed by U. R. Ananthamurthy for marketing their creativity for money, Rukhaya in the article “Sisir Kumar Das’s ‘Comparative Literature in India: Transcending Boundaries’” answers, “Comparative literature is the solution to fuse all of these into a discipline that will give rise to newer literatures while encompassing both grand and minor narratives into an organic whole” (2). It is good to understand that each text is part of a continuum of uncountable collection of texts which speaks about the functions of the society they are created in. Comparing the texts can disclose the ideologies and experiences of people who lived in that time period and
culture. Each text contributes a different viewpoint of society and it imparts a great pleasure to the readers. Indian literature provides the natural basis of a comparative study, because of its treasure house which has diverse compilation of incredible books. Sisir Kumar Das in his article “Comparative Literature in India: A Historical Perspective” proclaims:

Comparative Indian Literature is not merely a search for national literature counteracting the search for universal literature which is the professed aim of the study of Comparative Literature. Comparative Literature is not an exercise of discovering abstract universalities of literature. It must deal with literatures in their concreteness and hence the study of Indian literature together is but a part of comparative literary studies as an academic discipline. The future of comparative literature in this country will naturally be directed towards an intensive study of various Indian literatures in the main, but so long it realizes that its texts and contexts are Indian, its methodology comparative, but its main subject is literature, it will serve the cause of Comparative Literature. (29)

In Indian Literature the novel form from its very beginning has also been used as a tool to project the prevailing social conditions in the society. It evokes social consciousness by presenting a social comment or criticism. The novels written in English and vernacular languages in India play a vital role in reflecting the life of the people in India. It mirrors the social reality, the complex ways in which men and women organise themselves, their interpersonal relationships and their insight of the socio-cultural reality.
The later part of twentieth century has witnessed the emergence of several women writers not only in English but also in the regional languages in India to herald a new era. Their works share yet another glimpse about the family life in Indian society. The family life in the tradition bound society and the role of men and women in the family are the main focus for not only the writers who write in English like Anita Desai, Anjana Appachana, Kamala Markandaya, Manju Kapur and Shashi Deshpande but also the writers in the regional Tamil language like Anuradha Ramanan, Indhumathi, Lakshmi, Lakshmi Raja Rathnam, Sivasankari and Vasanthi.

Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari are two such writers whose themes own socio-cultural significance. A parallel study of their works will give an idea about the essential need for human insight into the relationship that exists among the members of the family in India. The comparative study of their works is thought provoking from a sociological perspective as the novels are written in two different languages English and Tamil, depicting the life style of people from two different geographical locations, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu but from India which is known for its cultural diversity. Close textual analysis in original evokes a sense of delight and presents a deep insight into the socio-cultural realities which helps to understand the life of women who belong to three generations. In *Critical Theory Today* Lois Tyson explains the role of a reader and adds, “The individual reader’s subjective response to the literary text plays the crucial role” (185).

The thesis entitled “The Changing Perspectives in Indian Society: A Comparative Study with Reference to Select Novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari” analyses
the way by which the individuals especially women are moulded by the society and the gradual changes in the life of women who belong to three generations. This comparative study will help to understand the universal human consciousness. While discussing about Gabriela Adameşteanu, a Hungarian writer who has propounded the male power and patriarchal perspective in pronounced ways, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek states, “When women are wholly voiceless… whether this is a result of the patriarchy still being too overwhelming or whether other factors, such as women's opposition and rejection of “feminism" as being too similar …is worthy of further comparative study” (141-42). The comparative study between the novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari would also be very effective in bringing to limelight the literary affinity, literary correlation and literary tie between these two writers as the focus is on the role of women and girl children who feel that they are underrepresented in Indian society. It is interesting to note the dissatisfaction and rebellion of girls to overcome the hurdles that limit their progress. The writers show how their protagonists rebel when their scope is limited and analyse their situation when they face problems. They compare their life style with the life style of their mothers and grandmothers and learn the art of solving the problems without breaking away from the family unit.

The novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari explore the role of women who belong to three generation in Indian society, their experience, man-woman relationship, the standard of living of the working class people, their dreams and the compromises in the family. Their works depict how educated women are tossed between the traditional customs that are followed in the family and the modern thoughts that they assimilate from the education. The problems exposed by them in their works are quite effective and
influence the readers mind as they share what they and their companions face in everyday life. So their works drag the attention of the readers in no time. They stress the communication gap that exists in the Indian families which is the prime reason for the misunderstanding. A motley collection of women are presented for the readers by them and hence it is made easy to understand the conflicts, dilemma and predicament of women who belong to three different generations and the changing pattern of life style. Through their works the Indian culture with its richness and diversity is successfully introduced to the western countries and in turn India is accepted as a land of plenty with appealing ethnicity, traditions and rituals.

Their works are known for the assorted compilation fantastic women characters. The readers enjoy a unique experience in their voyage to the world of variety and understand diversity of social facts. Their target is to make the readers to probe into their works to understand the social values in India and the women’s outlook on life. The human experience in India is similar but the artists differ in their approaches in presenting them.

In both Shashi Deshpande’s and Sivasankari’s novels the status of girl children, the role of mother and elders in their life and the search for self-hood linked with a search for identity of women as an individual and her clarity of vision in the end with a note of optimism drag the attention of all. The marriage institution in India, the unbridgeable communication gap between people belonging to different generations, husband and wife and the deep-rooted culture and the rituals observed, take a form of a search for complacency and contentment. The gloomy childhood memories and the economic
independence gained through education urge the educated protagonists to analyse their role in the society and in the family. This search enlightens their minds and with the newly acquired wisdom they face the life and its problems with a revived spirit and optimism. Their gradual realisation about the intricacies of life and the resultant enlightenment about the ways, through the intricate knots of every problem to be untied are to be traced with reference to select novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari. The multi-dimensionality of their novels, the thematic study, the psychological, sociological and narratological dimensions invite an analysis from several points of view.

Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari are contemporaries and a comparative study of their works would be an aesthetic expedition and rewarding experience. Both of them are from educated middle class families and their works have a clear portrayal of the contemporary society offering the possibility of assimilating tradition and a wish for a change. This evident similarity would generate a curiosity to study deep to conclude whether Shashi Deshpande is influenced by Sivasankari or the vice versa. Most of the comparative scholars believe that the notion of influence must be regarded as virtually the kept concept in comparative literature studies. The literary scholars are of the view that the concept of influence is central to comparative literature studies as it is the expression of direct relationship or the influence of the one over the other. But Shashi Deshpande’s first novel was published in 1980 when she was forty two years old whereas Sivasankari’s work in 1967. Shashi Deshpande does not know to read or write Tamil. So it is impossible to assume the direct influence of one on the other. The study of unconscious influence of one writer over the other is an aesthetic concept that has to be probed deep. The unconscious influence is from the Indian society in which they are
living. Hence the comparative subjects are considered as a bottomless reservoir hardly tapped by contemporary scholars.

While narrating about the scope for comparative study Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek in *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application* states, “Novel has a ‘deep consciousness’ and ‘spirit creating effect’. The ‘creation of consciousness’ and the ‘creation of spirit’ is to be understood with reference to the woman/female consciousness and spirit. This is its most important feature of innovation” (185). The novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari have a profound realisation about the prevailing situation and possess spirit creating effect. The above proposition by them is more important because it underlines the suggested intertwining of the authors’ innovative sociological perception with narrative innovation. Their innovation in narration has broken new ground in Indian literature.

Shashi Deshpande’s work is generally described in terms of a stream-of-consciousness narrative and her innovation of the stream-of-consciousness narration has been sufficiently established. In this, her work is markedly different from that of Sivasankari whose work occasionally follows stream of consciousness narrative. In *Poy* stream of consciousness is used to highlight the impact created by Giri in Dhurga’s life, whereas in *Pālaṅgal* three different eras are narrated simultaneously to present the changes in society vividly. Their novels have to be read carefully, because there is a dimension of strongly and vividly worded perception of national characteristics in the text and women belonging to three different generations and their life style are frequently compared.
The most important dimension of their novel is the development of awareness about the submissive role of women in Indian society, particularly on the level of marriage and social interaction, and the conscious rebellion against the codes put forth by the women of previous generation. A combination of authorial intention and the contextual and systemic dimensions of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari’s works offer a chance to trace the position of women in Indian society, their hopes, aspirations and trials to achieve their objective. Though they centre around the life of women their writing style, setting and discourse differ significantly. What is optimistic in the reading of their novels is not that they explore the condition of women but that they always end their study with a resolute preference and praise for a better future for women without losing their hope in marriage institution.

Their works depict the role of education in the life of women in the later part of twentieth century. Gradual shedding of segregation between men and women can be viewed in families and women are being considered as part of the family and not as dispersed individuals. This positive cultural change is officially sanctioned and promoted by the various levels of government, the business community and the educational system. Their narrative continues into a historical timelessness where the relationship of both the novelists is merged into events of Indian history. An important dissimilarity between Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari is their literary output and literary maturity. The contribution of Sivasankari is remarkable and voluminous as she has chosen her mother tongue Tamil as her medium of writing.
Shashi Deshpande was born in 1938 in Dharwad, Karnataka, India. She is the second daughter of the eminent Kannada dramatist and Sanskrit scholar Sriranga. She studied at a protestant mission school in Karnataka. As a school girl, she read the works of T.S. Eliot, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray and Walter Scott. She likes the novels of Jane Austen and the crime fiction by Dorothy Sayers, P.D. James and Sherlock Holmes. She is a voracious reader. Her father has given her the freedom to read and think for herself. At the age of fifteen she went to Mumbai, graduated in economics, then moved to Bangalore, where she completed a degree in Law with a Gold Medal. She later received an M.A in English Literature. Shashi Deshpande married a doctor from a conservative background at twenty four. After marriage, when she was at Mumbai, she devoted early years of her marriage to the care of her two young sons. During her stay in Mumbai, she did a course on journalism at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and worked for a couple of months as a journalist for the magazine *Onlooker*. While working in the magazine, she began writing and the first short story that she wrote was published in 1970. Her short stories were published in popular magazines like *Femina, Eve's Weekly* etc. Her maiden collection of short stories was published under the title *Legacy* in the year 1978.

Her writing career began in 1970, initially with short stories, of which several volumes have been published. Shashi Deshpande's first book was *The Legacy*, a set of short stories, and since then she has published dozens of stories. Her short stories have been widely anthologised, in *Best Loved Indian Stories, Volume 1*, published by Penguin India in 1999. She is the author of four children`s books. Apart from fiction, she has written a number of articles on various subjects including literature, language, Indian
writing in English, feminism and women's writing which have then been put together in a
collection entitled *Writing from the Margin and Other Essays*. She has been invited to
participate in various literary conferences, seminars as well as to lecture in Universities,
both in India and abroad.

Shashi Deshpande won Thirumati Rangammal Prize in 1984 and Nanjangud
Tirumalamba Award, for *The Dark Holds No Terrors* in 1989. She won the Sahitya
Akademi Award for her novel *That Long Silence* in 1990. She won the Padma Shri
Award in 2009. Her novel *Shadow Play* was shortlisted for ‘The Hindu Literary Prize’ in
2014. On October 9, 2015, she resigned from her position on the Sahitya Akademi's
general Council and returned her Sahitya Akademi Award to join the protest of other
writers against the Akademi’s perceived inaction and silence on the murder
of M.M.Kalburgi. She has been extremely upset by the silence of the Akademi on the
murder of Professor M.M.Kalburgi who was a Kannada writer, scholar and winner of the
Sahitya Akademi Award. He was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Dharwad in
August 2015.

The emotional deprivation is the centre of focus in most of her works. Most of her
short stories and novels have been translated into a number of Indian as well as European
languages. She translated two plays written by her father, Adya Rangacharya Shriranga,
as well as his memoirs, from Kannada into English, and a novel by Gauri Deshpande
from Marathi into English. At present, Shashi Deshpande lives in Bangalore with her
pathologist husband.
Her novels include *The Dark Holds No Terrors, If I Die Today, Come Up and Be Dead, Roots and Shadows, That Long Silence, The Binding Vine, A Matter of Time, Small Remedies, Moving On, In the Country of Deceit* and *Shadow Play*.

Her Short Story collections are *The Legacy and Other Stories, It Was Dark, The Miracle and Other Stories, It Was the Nightingale* and *The Intrusion and Other Stories*. She has written the Screenplay for *Drishte* in 1990. Her Children’s books are *A Summer Adventure, The Hidden Treasure, The Only Witness* and *The Narayanpur Incident*.

Shashi Deshpande is a multi-faceted genius. Her confidence as a writer relaxes her readers and she takes them with her way of narration. She focusses her attention on Indian families into which any reader of Indian soil can easily enter. Anyone who has read her novels diligently knows that her exceptional value lies in her uncompromising toughness, in her attempts to do what has never been attempted in English, her insistence on being read on her own terms and a refusal to be packaged according to the demands of the market. In Bageshree’s article “Whys and Otherwise” Shashi Deshpande declared, “I'd like to form my own canon”.

Shashi Deshpande referred to a turning point in her life in her interview to *The Hindu* in Aditi De’s article “Breaking that long silence”. She stated, “Despite marriage and motherhood, I felt very incomplete, even dissatisfied. That's when I read Betty Friedan's *The Problem Without a Name*. I felt: ‘I'm not only a woman. I'm not only a mother. I'm not only a wife. I'm not only a female. I'm a human being with a mind. It gave me a lot of unhappiness that my intellect wasn't being connected to my female self.’” For writer Shashi Deshpande, writing was a means to self-discovery. She was
exasperated being known as somebody's daughter, somebody's wife, and mother. She speaks the fact mildly but firmly, and her words linger on. Her stories are about a human being who tries to place herself within relationships, people, and ideas. According to her *The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, and The Puranas* are narrated by males and hence the voices of women do not find a place. Shashi Deshpande interprets these stories through her collection, *The Stone Women.*

An early short story, *A Liberated Woman,* is about a young woman who falls in love with a man of a different caste, and marries him against her parents wish. She becomes a successful doctor, but her marriage breaks up because of her success. *The Dark Holds No Terrors,* Shashi Deshpande's first novel, which is chosen for the present study seems to have developed from this short story. Sarita, the heroine, becomes a doctor, and marries Manohar against the consent of her parents. Her problem begins when she establishes her name in her profession and she fails to solve the communication gap with her husband. Sarita goes to her parental home, to escape from the problems where she regains her strength and clarity of vision about life.

*Roots and Shadows* which is selected for the present study describes the authority of an old lady Akka, a childless widow over others. She makes Indu, a journalist who left home as a teenager as her heir. She marries Jayant against the wish of everybody in the family. Indu returns to the house after the letter of invitation from Akka, her great-aunt after her pro-longed absence. At her ancestral home, she comes to realise the strength and the resilience of the village women she had previously dismissed as weak. She learns the art of managing marital problems without disquieting her marital tie with her husband.
In *A Matter of Time* Gopal, the respected professor, loyal husband of Sumi, and caring father of three daughters walks out on his family for reason even he cannot express. His wife, Sumi, returns with their three daughters to the Big House where her parents, Kalyani and Shripati, live in oppressive silence for decades. When the mystery is disclosed, it shocks Sumi’s daughter Aru. *A Matter of Time* reveals the intricate relationships within an extended family encircling three generations. It speaks about the problems of single parenting, the mental distress of children and the role of education in the life of women.

Shashi Deshpande’s key concern is to explain the distress and conflict of the modern educated Indian women who are caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand, and self-expression, self–determination, individuality and independence on the other. At the same time her protagonists compare their life style with women who belong to three different generations. This comparison enhances the clarity of the vision of the protagonists of Shashi Deshpande and they find solution to all intricate problems with ease. Her fiction travels around the expedition of the women who try to prove their identity as an individual without breaking the family unit. They learn to fulfill their roles as daughter to their parents, wife and mother. She deals with a range of common familial crisis, which activate the exploration. While depicting the woman’s struggle to secure self-respect and self-identity for herself, the author subtly bares the multiple levels of oppression, including sexual oppression in Indian society. Shashi Deshpande is the master in allotting the women characters the precise roles that would fit in the socio-cultural modes. The values of the gradually changing society are depicted to highlight the budding changes in the life of women.
Sivasankari is a renowned writer and activist. Sivasankari was born in Chennai on October 14, 1942. She studied at Ramakrishna Mission and Sarada Vidyalaya Schools. She got first rank in her college and ninth rank in Madras University in Bachelor of Science, Zoology. She learnt South Indian Classical music. She was an exponent of Bharatanatyam, the Indian classical dance performing concerts in India and abroad. Her switch over from classical dance to creative writing can be considered as a meaningful accident. She has started writing novels because something felt deeply and experienced needs to be shared. She stated in the interview with Prema Srinivasan to *Literary Review* in *The Hindu* in the article entitled “A Humanist First” as:

I started writing by sheer accident. I was all set to become a bharathanatyam dancer, when I found myself an author at the age of 25. As a city bred girl I was only looking out of a small window upon an upper middle-class world, at that point of time. Love and marriage were the usual motifs then, related in my stories with truth and sincerity. When I moved to Villupuram in 1971 my angle of vision changed phenomenally, as if my perspective was from a 100-storey building! I came face to face with reality and this influenced my subsequent writing. My life in the next 13 years became meaningful as I could internalise my experience in the villages and could express these in my writing with authenticity.

Sivasankari has carved a niche for herself in the Tamil literary world over the last four decades. Her fiction has outgrown its regional character and has become the part of Indian national storehouse of fiction for its universality. Her works are celebrated for its
exclusive content and flow of thought. She has the skill of a storyteller with a strong sense of belonging.

Sivasankari occupies a permanent place in the psyche of Tamil readers because her writings examine the existing crisis in Indian society and in personal lives in the face of a fast-changing world. She was born in a Tamil Brahmin family but was endowed with a deep dislike for some orthodox Hindu superstitions and rituals that has no grounds. This dislike is obviously seen in her writings. She views at tradition with warmth, without losing the sight of the evils that it nurtured. She insists on the need for a change in the society and indicates that the changes creep in only at a very slow pace. In the interview with Marie Banu she stated:

I was 25 when I penned my first story Avarkal Pēcaṭṭum. It was about a childless woman. It is customary to do the Kaappu function on the 7th or 9th day after a child is born. On this occasion, certain communities ask a childless woman to bathe and dress a grinding stone imagining it to be her child. When I went through this incident, it hurt me very much. I believed that it emotionally affected the woman even more, and the insensitive attitude angered me. The older generation did have a reason for doing this, but I felt it was barbaric and demeaning.

Awareness on social issues, special sensitivity to social problems and commitment to set people think and act are her unique characteristics. Sivasankari never talks about the numerous awards and accolades garnered over her long career, but about the social and moral responsibility of a writer of contemporary fiction. In the Rediff
Interview with Shobha Warrior she said, “Since we are in the mass media, I feel literary people are the torchbearers or opinion-makers because they have followers. Yes, your responsibility is greater if you become a public person as we have a moral obligation towards society”.

Sivasankari is grateful to her husband Chandrasekar, broad-minded family and the editors of magazines for their immeasurable support and motivation. In 1984, she lost her husband and the following year she published Avan her novel on drug addiction, which involved considerable research. This total preoccupation with the subject helped her go forward in life. Her novels on Drug Abuse, Alcoholism and Old Age Problem, written after many years of research and authentic spadework, have won a lot of acclaim and have been serialised in National and Regional television networks with tremendous public response, and Subah the serial on drug menace, was adjudged as one of the mega hits of 1987. Eight of her stories are made as film in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. She is the first writer to narrate her stories in video and audiotapes.

Her article on Eye Donation made a deep impact resulting in thousands of people pledging their eyes for donation. Her articles on the physically and mentally challenged, and the old aged, have awakened social awareness. She was instrumental in setting up the Rajaji Centre for De-Addiction at the VHS Hospital, Taramani, Chennai. She is the founder of 'Prajarajyam’, 2008, Sivasankari Charitable Foundation 2006, Sivasankari Charitable Trust 1998 and ‘Agni Trust’. ‘Agni Trust’ is a voluntary organisation founded by the renowned writers Sivasankari and Maalan in the year 1986. It organises many meetings, workshops, seminars to inculcate positive thinking, right values and patriotism.
The Singapore Library has her fiction 47 Nāṭkal in its collection. Library of Congress has seventy two titles of her works. She is the recipient of numerous awards such as Kasturi Srinivasan Award, Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiyar Award, Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award, 'Woman of the year 1999-2000' by the International Women's Association, Woman of the Week, The Hindu March 25, 2006, Tamil Annai Award, Rajiv Gandhi National Integration Award for taking up the project Knit India Through Literature, The Best Children’s Book of the Year 1998 Award, Premchand Rastriya Sahitya Samman Award, Prof. K. Swaminathan Memorial Award 2009, Lifetime Professional Achievement Award 2010 and Gopichand Literary Award, a National Award for writers of all Indian languages.

Her works include 36 novels, 48 short novels, 150 short stories, 15 travelogues, 7 collections of articles, one talking book, 4 volumes of literary research books, 2 volumes of anthologies, and biographies of Smt. Indira Gandhi and Sri. G.D. Naidu. Her stories and articles have been published in prominent Tamil periodicals and many have been translated into English, Japanese, Ukrainan and other Indian languages.

Nūlēṇi, Malaiyin Aduththa Pakkam, Vāṇaththu Nila, Nāṇ Nāṇāga and Iṇṇoruththi + Iṇṇoruththi.


Her travelogues are Pudhumaiyāṅga Aṇubhavaṅgal (USA), Aṇubhavaṅgal Thoḍarkiravuña (USA), Maṇam Kavarndha Malaysia, Piradhamarudan Oru Payaṇam Part I and II, Pudhiya Cuvaḍugal, Pudhuppudhu Aṇubhavaṅgal, Hongkong-China-Bangkok, Āhā! Arabu Nāḍugal, Corkaṅgalil Cīla Nāṭkal, Ola Ole Ula- Spain and Portugal, Mahatma Pirandha Māṇṇil (South Africa), Veḷḷi Enrāl Venice Nagaramthāy(Venice), Pyramid Dhēcam, and Āhā! Alaska!

Her collection of articles includes Ēṉ Chellaṅgal, Ēṉ Kaṇṇōṭṭathhil, Ciṅga Nōlkāṇḍā Nammai Ciṟaipaḍuththuṉavathu? Cīla Aṇubhavaṅgal Cīla Māṇidhargal, Pudhiya Kōṇaṅgal, Koṉjam Yōcikkalamē and Uraththa Cindhanai.
Her collection of short stories are *Uṇmai Kadhaigal*, *Kuṟappaṅgaḷ*, *Trunk Call*, *Kaṟugu*, *Anilgal*, *Pul Thaḍukki Bayilvāṅgal*, *Natpu*, *Aravindhar colgirār*, *Theppakkuḷam*, *Avargaḷ Pēcaṭṭum*, *Pattāmpūchchiyum Thūkkamum* and *Sivasankariyin 60 Cirukathaigal*-I and II. She has written an Anthology entitled *Neṉjil Nīṟppavai – Part I and II*. The six novels translated into English are *The Betrayal and Other Stories*, *Portable Roots*, *Deception*, *Bridges*, *The Trip to Nowhere* and *Thyagu*. Sivasankari has translated *Kaṭavul ēṇ Cīrandha Naṅbar*, *Eṉṇam Vacappaḍum* and *Rāvi Nadhiyil*, the short stories of Gulzar into Tamil.

Sivasankari rejects the feminist label. In her interview to Geetha Badmanabhan she stated, "I am a writer and incidentally a woman. I wrote on women's issues because they affected me. The minute the writer is in conflict with the humanist in me, I'll put the pen down".

*Knit India Through Literature* is her mega-project involving intense sourcing, exploration and translations of literature from eighteen Indian languages, with an objective to introduce Indians to other Indians through culture and literature. Her Literary Research Books are *Knit India Through Literature Volume I-the South*, *Knit India Through Literature Volume II - the East*, *Knit India Through Literature Volume III -the West* and *Knit India Through Literature Volume IV - the North*. Having worked for fourteen years, she completed her mission *Knit India Through Literature*, in June 2009. She initiated this project with an aim of meeting and interviewing the stalwart writers of all the eighteen Indian languages that are accepted and approved by the Eighth Schedule of Indian constitution.
The extensive bilingual work in four volumes — categorised South, East, West and North — covers every corner of the country, presenting the languages of the respective regions, the writers and their works, besides exclusive interviews, with an originality. The Tamil and English editions of the first volume the South, the second volume the East, the third volume the West and the final volume the North of this project have been published in 1998, 2000, 2004 and 2009 respectively. Volume I includes the interviews of writers from Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, Volume II from Assam, Bengal, Manipur, Nepal and Orissa, Volume III from Konkani, Marathi, Gujarati, and Sindhi and Volume IV from Kashmiri, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi and Sanskrit.

The article “Her Write to Change Lives” written by Subajayanthi described Sahitya Akademi’s appreciation for her work Knit India Through Literature as “first of its kind in Indian literature”. Knit India Through Literature is aimed at substantiating the idea of unity in diversity through literature. Sixteen years ago, she stopped writing fiction and started Knit India Through Literature which has wide-opened yet another glimpse towards the significance of comparative literature. “Writers can help change people's mindset, says Sivasankari” written by Malabika Bhattacharya describes how this project was acknowledged by Sahitya Akademi as a ‘bench mark’ and Mr. Navakanta Barua, the well-known Assamese writer who was present on the occasion commented as: “Knitting is primarily a woman's job. And who could knit better than Ms. Sivasankari?"

Sivasankari’s Pālaṅgaḷ which is chosen for the present study is a celebrated account of three generations of women who witness changes in their life style at a very slow pace. Apart from the author’s metaphor of a woman carrying out the role of forming
a link or a bridge between the elder and younger generations, the distinctively structured novel persuades the reader to create links between the disparate worlds of the families whose lives are impressively and intricately documented. This novel explains the constant conflict between the old and the young generations and their struggle to understand each other. They represent the two opposing and contrasting poles of convention and change. The novel narrates the tale of three generations of Tamil Brahmin family circle. The dominant characters are women and the novel speaks about women’s key role in the traditional society, from bearing and rearing children to managing the kitchen and sustaining the social network to provide the foundation for the observance of ritual practices. But they are intentionally trained as per the expectation of men.

The chronicles of the three generations — 1907-1931, 1940-1964 and 1965-1985 are brought out to show their life style and gradual changes that are permitted consciously or unconsciously in the life of women. They are neither contiguous, nor they belong to the same family. Although there are three stories narrated concurrently- from 1907-1931, 1940-1964 and 1965-1985, there seems to be no link between them. Each of these stories has an independent plot and characters. The common line that links them together is the customs and traditions and the thinking pattern of women characters. Beginning with the 1907 generation, the author blends the stories of the three, so that a parallel vision of their lives is understood. Hence it is easy to compare and trace the changes introduced in the life of women in every generation.

The first story that begins from 1907-1931 defines the women characters who worked proficiently to complete the unending domestic chores. The first phase speaks
about the selfless service of Pattamma, her sisters in law and her daughter Sivakamu. Their ignorance and self-sacrificing attitude are narrated to show how their services have furnished their family with comfort. The importance given to gender socialisation practices is obvious through the constant training given to Sivakamu to become an eligible daughter-in-law. Elaborate rituals performed during puberty and pregnancy is explained. The plight of some women characters who had to endure endless pregnancies and abortions, is also highlighted. Crude abortive practices followed proved fatal, either to them or to their unborn children. Women had no existence outside their conjugal homes which is reflected through the practice of widowhood of Sivakamu.

In the second story, which spans from 1940-1964, there is a noticeable dilution of customs and ceremonies when compared to the former story. Pubertal rituals are viewed as a private affair and widowhood ceremonies are gradually stopped. The individual desires, feelings and wishes of the protagonists Mythili and Padmini are given some priority. However, conflicts of values are shown between the older and younger generations. Anandam’s ideals are objected by her granddaughter Mythili, and Mangalam’s by Padmini. Anandam and Mangalam criticise their daughters-in-law and granddaughters. Sivasankari has traced the rebellion and retaliation of adolescent girls Mythili and Padmini which is the prime reason for the gradual changes in the life of women. The desires and ambitions of Padmini are cherished by Padmini’s parents Venkat and Mythili which is a remarkable change in the Indian society.

The third story, which spans from 1965-1985, projects educated and empowered women characters. They learn to tackle their problems and adversities of life as they are
employed. The strong conflict management skill of Charu that helps her to get liberated from her maniac husband Suresh is highlighted. She retaliates against his violent sexual demands and walks out to lead a life with her daughter Aparna. Subsequently, she tackles the responsibilities of being a single parent and refuses to maintain the marital relationship for the sake of her daughter. Her practical approach is shown in her resolution to send her daughter, Aparna away to her father’s place till her divorce procedures get over. The long years of separation from Aparna, alienates her from Charu. Aparna emerges as a self-willed girl who despises the interference from her mother and grandmother. She decides everything on her own including joining a vocational course, selection of her marriage partner and even abortion. The challenge of motherhood is encountered by Charu and Aparna.

The positive handling capacity and courage of Aparna makes her to bear the death of her husband, Siddharth. She decides to remarry and start her life anew. Unlike the women of the earlier generation, Aparna does not put end to her life after her husband’s death. The experiential transition of women from daughterhood to motherhood is also shown through their maturity to understand their mothers better. Mythili adores her mother Rajam’s endurance in tackling her mother-in-law, Anandam. Aparna admires her mother, Charu’s patience in dealing with her. The transition to old age is conveyed through the fear of Charu and Vimala for the welfare of future generation and hence they criticise the life style of the younger generation.

Sivasankari’s novel, *Deception* entitled *Poy* was initially published in Tamil in 1985, but was translated into English in the year 2007. The first half of the novel depicts
the nuptial bliss enjoyed by Giridhar and Dhurga who are the prototypes of a typical upper middle class family. The later half narrates the change in the behaviour of Giri after his visit to England for a six month training Programme arranged by his company before his promotion. Dhurga loses her equilibrium when she receives no communication from him. She struggles to answer the questions of her sons. When the company manager of Giri conveys the information about Giri’s resignation, Dhurga’s hope shatters. She is handicapped after receiving his divorce notice. She is shocked to read his letter which states that he led a life of illusion with Dhurga and his quest for complacency is fulfilled after meeting a rich widow Linda. Dhurga understands his greediness and meets him to show the real nature of Giri to her sons. The novel portrays Dhurga’s pragmatism and empowerment as a mother and individual.

Shashi Deshpande’s was born in 1938 Dharwad, Karnataka, India in a traditional Brahmin family and her father was an eminent Sanskrit scholar and renowned Kannada dramatist and writer from whom Shashi Deshpande learnt Sanskrit. Sivasankari born October 14, 1942 in a Tamil Brahmin family was also a student of Sanskrit though her mother tongue is Tamil. The art of mastering languages paved a good way for them to prove their identity. Shashi Deshpande had no intention of writing novels and short stories. Sivasankari wanted to be a dancer. Shashi Deshpande was encouraged by Dr.Deshpande to write novels as Sivasankari’s husband Chandrasekar’s massive support is the prime reason for her dazzling growth. This striking resemblance in their career though a coincidence would catch the attention of any comparative reader.
They express their gratitude to their broad-minded family and the editors of magazines for their support. Both were supported by their educated parents and life partners. Shashi Deshpande was educated at Mumbai and Bangalore whereas Sivasankari at Chennai which happens to be a blessing in disguise to heap ample exposure from the cities. Shashi Deshpande completed the degree in Law with a Gold Medal. Sivasankari scored first rank in college and ninth rank in Madras University in Bachelor of Science, Zoology. Their quest for knowledge hunt helps them to boom out well in their career with caliber.

Shashi Deshpande’s stories were published in magazines like Femina, Eve’s Weekly, Illustrated weekly of India, Junior Statesman etc. She worked for a couple of months as a journalist for the magazine Onlooker. Legacy the first collection of her short stories came out in 1978, and 1980. She has written and published short stories entitled Best Loved Indian Stories Vol. 1, published by Penguin India in 1999. Intrusion is translated into German and French. She has written four children’s books, a number of short stories, and twelve novels besides several perceptive essays available in a volume entitled Writing from the Margin and Other Essays. On the other side Sivasankari’s stories were published in magazines like Kumudam, Vikatan, Kalki and Savi. She has written short stories which comprises of eight volumes, thirty six novels and novellas. Both won the Sahitya Akademi Award.

Shashi Deshpande has written the Screenplay for Drishte in 1990. Six of Sivasankari’s novels have been filmed in Tamil, one in Kannada and one in Telugu languages receiving popular public acclaim for their integrity and social commitment.
Apart from that Sivasankari presented constructive and thought-motivating programs and anchored Talk Shows for television. Both Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari travelled abroad which has become a source of inspiration for them.

Shashi Deshpande is properly acknowledged by the Universities in India and in many other nations and her books are prescribed for students. Sivasankari has become popular after her remarkable contribution *Knit India through Literature* and the translated versions of novels like *Bridges, Deception, Betrayal and other Stories, Thyagu* and *Portable Roots*. Her name and fame are yet to reach people as she has written novels and short stories in Tamil.

Both Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari have educated the people about new concepts, ideas and issues, exposing with the delicacy of a surgeon, the festering wounds and sickness of society. They discuss on family problems, the role of women in the society and their relationship with society in general and men in particular. Both are sincere and they are committed to give their best to their readers. They do not talk of the numerous awards and accolades won over their long career, but discuss about the social and moral responsibility of a writer of contemporary fiction. Shashi Deshpande narrated her responsibility to Shyamala A Narayan as:

Though no writer in India can get away from the idea of social commitment or social responsibility, committed writing has always seemed to me to have dubious literary values. However, after 25 years of writing, I cannot close my eyes to the fact that my own writing comes out of a deep involvement with the society I live in, especially with women.
My novels are about women trying to understand themselves, their history, their roles and their place in this society, and above all their relationships with others. To me, my novels are always explorations; each time in the process of writing, I find myself confronted by discoveries which make me rethink the ideas of women in our country.

In the interview to Shoba Warrior Sivasankari too admitted “I think every human being has a commitment to the society in which s/he lives because we take so much from society… I feel literary people are the torchbearers or opinion-makers because they have followers… Most of my readers identified with my characters. They felt I was telling them their stories, so they come closer to the writer”.

The thesis entitled “The Changing Perspectives in Indian Society: A Comparative Study with Reference to Select Novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari” aims at exploring the life styles of a motley collection of women who belong to three different generations. The status of girl children, the role of mother and elders in the life of a girl, her search for self-hood linked with a search for identity of woman as an individual, her clarity of vision in the end with a note of optimism and how married women are handicapped and hampered by the desertion of men in the family at times are analysed and compared in their novels along with the marriage institution in India, the deep-rooted culture and the rituals observed. The impact of the gloomy childhood memories of the protagonists and their urge to analyse their place in the society and family after their remarkable success in the career are studied to show how their exploration for self enlightens their minds to face life and its problems with a revived spirit and optimism.
Their gradual awareness about the intricacies of life and the resultant enlightenment about the ways through the intricate knots of every problem to be untied are to be traced with reference to select novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari. The multi-dimensionality of their novels and the thematic study demand an analysis from several points of view. The novels *Roots and Shadows* and *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *A Matter of Time* written by Shashi Deshpande and *Pālaṅgal* and *Poy* by Sivasankari are taken for the present study.

The chapter “The Position of Female Children in Indian Society” deals with the female psyche of girl children as the product of cultural forces and how gradual changes enter in the life of women from early twentieth century. The chapter “The Status of Married Women in India” deals with how Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari portray the experience of married women through their protagonists, to make the readers comprehend what is to be done to resolve the crisis and provide a healthy living standard to the future generation of India. The chapter entitled “From Despair to Hope” is the continuation of the exploration of how married women are handicapped and hampered by the desertion of men in the family. Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari show how the married women are not given enough space to understand and incorporate the disloyalty or infidelity of men in *A Matter of Time* and *Poy*.

Sandra Bermann’s Presidential Address to the American Comparative Literature Association in 2009 encourages comparative scholars to proceed further to rediscover new avenues “to open a more interdisciplinary and transnational space for the humanities. The work we do there may not immediately reach far beyond our university walls or
transform distant destinies. But its potential is great for heightening an awareness of our poly-cultural, poly-lingual world. It provides an educational site for posing new and challenging questions and for inviting readers to discover new languages, cultures and arts” (444). Sandra Berman’s ideas insist the fact that art and literature are the common property of the civilised world. All can participate in the advantages or pleasures derived from the efforts of talent and genius. Art and literature break all visible barriers, time and space. They delight and enlighten the readers without a barrier and offer the requisite joy and knowledge. Comparative literature provides the forum to explore literature as one entity and brings people closer. The comparative study of the works of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari is an illuminating experience that motivates to view literature as an integral medium of thought and a common expression of humanity differentiated by racial, historical, cultural and linguistic influences.

Simon de Beauvoir’s Second Sex and Elaine Showalter’s “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness” and “Toward a Feminist Poetics” have provided ample scope to elucidate the ideas stated by Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari. Lois Tyson’s ideas and Wolfgang Iser’s "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach" have offered the required freedom to interpret their texts. Iser states, “In considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to the text…the literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic, and the aesthetic; the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader” (189). Transliteration is done to enhance the precision and to provide the ideas of Sivasankari with accuracy.