CHAPTER IX
CONCLUSION

An exploration of women's world and enquiry about their world remained as one of the impulses behind historical engagement. But at the most basic level of reconstructing women's history, certain problems arise about the discovery of sources and their proper interpretation. Though for the modern period compact compendium of vast sources on women throughout the world and across many cultures are available like journals, articles, pamphlets, biographies, diaries, directories, organization records, etc, while evaluating medieval period there is acute paucity of source material regarding women.

Moreover majority of the works on women's issues suffer from the single most drawback namely relying primarily on the dominant perception of the dominated where general history analysis has been masculine by definition, giving importance only to authority and influence. Because wars and materialistic history gained attention and the role of women has been neglected and underestimated.

In most historical records women were deprived of their basic prerogative to be recognized in their due capacity, but also their past was appropriated along with their psyche, by a crude imposition of the roles and notions in which they had no choice. One has to search among these sources to locate them in the social, economic, religious, political and psychological immobile of changing histories. Hence a new methodology and frame work with a fresh approach to known material and available sources is essential to search for new meanings that could provide valuable new insights on women's history.

In such an endeavor we use miniature paintings for the analysis of women, as a new historical available source material, in order to narrate events and actions of different women. This is of immense significance to overcome the lack of material on women in medieval Deccan history.
In this effort the present thesis, Representation of women in the miniature paintings in the Deccani School, highlights miniature paintings of Golconda School, Hyderabad School and regional Schools of Kurnool, Cuddapah, Shorapur, Wanaparthy and Gadwa. These miniatures are analyzed along with their thematic contents and their significant features chiefly in relation to the depiction and representation of women.

Miniature paintings in Medieval Deccani School illustrated women in various realms, which indeed helped in providing a framework for women's lives and their reflection in contemporary history and society. It indicates that new source material like art, indeed did not remain silent on the subject of women. Hence art and women were twined to look at historical assumptions about gender-dynamics. Here the female roles and activities were depicted not only with distinctive features, but were visible at many instances along with those of their male associates, however in subordinate relation.

Moreover such an endeavor contributed to retrieve the 'lost', 'Stolen', 'concealed" or "buried." past of the womankind to perfect and justify the definition of the discipline of history, as the study of human past in its totality. This representation and identity of women through artistic mediation reflected the shifting trends of historical research and helped in locating meaning in textual and narrative structures. Because art-forms in particular as a new targets had an explicit framework of both gender inclusive and gender specific issues. An examination of women's history through paintings also contradicts the literary trends in which males were typically represented as stronger, more aggressive, dominant, active and in general more important than females, who were presented as weak, passive and dependent. In these texts male perspective is taken to identification of the culture, where as the female view was typically considered as peripheral to the norm or some how exceptional or idiosyncratic.

In other words in dominant study-centered view of culture, women were often described primarily in terms of their lack of male characteristics and relative to men. Under such circumstances, when we look at these artistic sources like paintings, biological determinants for gender differences are substantiated
and women were portrayed with asymmetrical relation to that of men against universal gender dichotomies.

In particular artistic reflections like miniature paintings granted a kind of diversity in historical source material and hence the hitherto and un-explored potency of these miniatures for historical evaluation of women was tapped. Because women are part and parcel of society and one cannot be non-challant about the vital connection between the intricate interplay of the depictions of art and paintings and actual portrayal of women in the period concerned.

Moreover, the female forms in Indian art would help to understand how feminity was constructed and depicted with different decorative designs and themes, according to certain laws or principles of the society. It will also present a clear and a responsible perspective regarding women in medieval times.

The present work was carried over on the basis of various primary and secondary sources, maintaining a close track of the existing contours of scholarship and literature in historical enquiry like published and unpublished documents and historical manuscripts in Persian, French, English, Urdu, and Telugu, which proved to be of immense use for the present research. Miniature paintings pertaining to Golconda and Hyderabad in these manuscripts apart from depicting usual male-dominated royal scenes, also represented the neglected sensual, private and historic feminine world, retaining the medieval geographical and archaeological environment with glowing Deccani colors. Various themes helped in understanding the evolution of art in medieval Deccan that set forth with a unilateral pattern of growth which was sustained and enriched by contemporary developments in other spheres of Deccan region.. Here artistic concern was not just with the prettiness, charm and sensuous beauty of the females but also with the aspects related to power, participation and strength of royalty as well as their artistic, aesthetic, spiritual and literary endeavors.

Besides these various accounts of foreign travelers and scholars of the times like, Tavernier, Thevenot, Careri, Fitch, Newberry, Ferishta, Manucci, Methold and others, who referred to the economic wealth, society and religious conditions of the Deccani states and their observations regarding the situation of medieval
Deccan, conducive to the growth of art were evaluated. They witnessed the glory of the Qutb Shahis and considered the kingdom as the jewel of the Deccan. They gave account of not only on the pageantry of the court, life of the kings but also brought acumen upon the socio-economic life of common people.

As far as secondary sources are concerned, the entire existing literature on the subject has been consulted to the maximum possible extent with two main approaches. The first approach was predominated by Indian scholars and few foreign experts who looked at various conditions of medieval Deccan from 17th to 18th centuries. The second and final approach was exclusively related to all works of art, their style of presentation and in particular to miniature paintings of Golconda and Hyderabad.

One can pulse from these works that Qutb Shahis and Nizams were not only good administrators, but also great patrons of art. The constructive interest of rulers in artistic pursuits and their encouragement to a class of confident artists and painters provided incentive for the development of miniature art. The foreign contacts of Sultans also resulted in a variety of miniatures with Persian, Turkish, Mughal, Vijayanagar, Rajput and European influences, which were thoroughly digested like depiction of gold sky, flowering shrubs, marbled decoration, plastic rendering of draperies, almond shaped eyes, triangular sharp edges of saris, tiny paintings of women, etc. Yet Deccani features like profuse use of gold, unique color combination of pink, blue, yellow, jewelry, Deccani landscape, etc can be perceived. With a different and individual flavor, they maintained distinctive qualities especially in their subject matter, pictorial approach and perspective with excellent illustrations, conglomerations of conventions, coupled with quantity of stylistic sensibility and thematic contents.

An analysis of portraits and a link between the socio - political and cultural milieu of the times disseminated the art knowledge and helped in removing several contradictions and anomalies regarding medieval Deccani art and their existence. A survey of historiographical trends clearly points out that if we take up the issue of women and their depiction in medieval Deccan history and art, much has to be explored.
Hence in the present endeavor, a chronological account of the development of art based on a neat division of themes covering the entire Span (C17th to 18th Century) was made to arrive at a comprehensive picture of women and to interpret the artistic manifestation within the historical context of medieval Deccan. Moreover apart from placing miniatures against various contexts, an attempt has also been made to trace the kind of atmosphere that led to the culture synthesis that was expressed to the medium of miniatures in the Deccan. This cultural history was analyzed amidst political, economic and social spheres and established vital linkages between the artistic representations of women and the situational realities that were prevalent in medieval Deccan.

The study also revealed that the tradition of miniature of paintings which the Turks or Muslims brought with them stemmed not so much from the nonnative forces of Islam itself, but also from a interaction of various factors like geography, climate, availability, historical settings, and mobilization of resources together with a continuous cross-fertilization of currents through migration of rulers, architects and craftsmen and mobility of migrants and pilgrims. Amidst the maze of kaleidoscopic description, painters attempted to build up various themes, each quite different from the other, highlighting the medieval Deccani political, geographical background and the stunning Deccani colors.

The positive prevailing conditions in polity, economy and society of Golconda mainly from 17th to 18th centuries reveal that on political front new dynastic centre at Golconda got stabilized with economic progression and cultural interaction. This synthesizing blend of patronage system was instrumental to a great extent in the development of miniature paintings in the Deccan because it was this royal patronage, of Qutb Shahis, their interest in artistic pursuits, abundant economic wealth and the theme of Deccani culture, which remained the prime factors for the growth, progress and existence of miniature paintings.

The Golconda School displayed features like depiction of court scenes, depiction of royalty, their companions, nobility, courtiers, with different themes like music, dance nature, architecture, medicine etc. large scale human figures, use of new rich and dark colors like coral -red, purple and orange giving
delightful and attractive look to the paintings, illustration of natural beauty of mountains, trees, birds and animals, heavily shaded draperies, depiction of figures along with architectural settings or palaces in the background.

The survey of the stylistic development of these miniature paintings at Golconda disclosed that the paintings were sophisticated and cosmopolitan, with harder, flatter and more stylized designs. In several themes of fighting, hunting and other scenes of imperial pastimes, creativeness was set in motion. The themes containing the spontaneous beauty of natural history of animals birds, mountains, trees, flowers and fruits, were perfectly captured by the royal Golconda atelier consisting artists from all over India and Islamic world. This rendered Golconda miniature paintings to remain original and significant in Deccani art.

Though the miniature art diminuted due to the decline of the kingdom, which catered to the demands of royalty, the styles in art, which for convenience, were named after the ruling dynasties of the period need not necessarily originate with the rulers nor degenerate when the dynasty ends. Due to several other means or possibilities like patronage given by Mughals, nobility etc., there was diffusion of art styles and welcome renewal of interest in pictorial material once again. In other words, albeit the quality suffered to some extent in the later miniatures of the Deccan, creativity continued with the reminiscent of the earlier glory.

In transitional phase from C1687-1724 AD, art continued with nobility as central power - structure. Many artists received patronage from their Noblemen who were cultured persons and had artistic pursuits. These feudatories after breaking ties with the central power at Golconda transformed into small hereditary kingdoms after the fall of Golconda. The artists readily invented styles deserving praise from their new masters, which in one way increased the prestige and the power of new independent authorities. With them a later chapter in Deccani painting started at Hyderabad, which developed into Hyderabad School of painting with its allied kalams of Kurnool, Cuddapah, Shorapur, Gadwal and Wanaparthty principalities
All these factors led to the continuity of Deccani tradition, even after the fall of Golconda kingdom. However in later works of miniature painting quality suffered to some extent, but creativity continued which maintained some of the charms of earlier Deccani culture. A great shift or change that took place was that, Deccani artists, patrons, noblemen, governors and princes turned away from portraiture to rediscover the beauty of women, escaping into an idealized world of princesses and courtesans. Most male portraiture from then on was dry and repetitive, but there was a tendency towards effects of mere prettiness in the re-discovered feminine world. This was the reason why comparatively lesser number of themes exclusively on royal sultans and other notables were painted in 18th century Deccani art when compared to Golconda paintings.

The transitional phase has exclusive features like depiction of nobility, attendants, huge butterflies, leisure life of nobility like smoking *huqqa* mlaid with brass flowers, illustration of staircase, gold carpets, sky in pink, orange and dark blue colors, bright green gardens, figures resting their hands on a pillow, figures with more gestures and movement and relaxation, more of private life of nobility. The paintings also incorporated several aspects of beautiful nature like depiction of birds like deer’s, ducks, cranes, peacocks and other small cute lovely birds, illustration of different kinds of trees related to Deccani landscape, rolling monsoon clouds hills etc. Paintings with gold decorated green borders and a gray washed margin.

During this phase, the nobility displaying plenteous vitality gave stimulus to artistic advancement, which throws light mainly on the court culture, costumes of the time and color patterns. They mainly concentrated on relaxed atmosphere, environment with tropical lushness and typical Deccani costumes. Inspite of their fewer numbers, the miniatures exhibited brilliant features of themes of the time, maintaining typically Deccani art characteristics.

With the establishment of Asaf Jahi kingdom from 1724 AD onwards once again a new School namely Hyderabad School of painting emerged with Deccani traits, where majority of themes concentrated on royalty and royal life, still though a cross section of common society was also portrayed with precision.
underlying variations in lifestyles like pomp and glory and indicated the patronage which made the resources available. The constructive interest of rulers in artistic pursuits and their encouragement to artists and painters provided incentive to the development of miniature paintings in the Deccan.

In the hierarchy next to the rulers were Paigah nobles, who were very influential and faithful to Nizams. They promoted art, literature, sports and enjoyed great respect in society. The ministers namely Salar Jung and his successors and Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad who were symbols of nobility also gave encouragement to art, literature and patronized men of learning.

On economic front of Nizam's rule, the wealth can be seen in the piled up stacks of gold bricks, chests of diamonds and pearls and mountains of silver rupees. Wealth was spent in organizing social gatherings, in designing the architectural styles and in aesthetic and moral resurgence by way of patronizing poets and artists. This provided the necessary incentive for the promotion and development of the art of miniature painting. For instance one can perceive abundance of wealth in the lavish use of gold jewelry, gold brocades worn by both men and women and also in the utensils and furniture illustrated in the paintings.

As a result of coexistence of diverse cultures, languages, and traditions, a delightful blend of culture enriched Hyderabadi society, which came to be known as Hyderabadi culture. In religious sphere, Nizams from the beginning laid the foundation of a secular society This religious synthesis of Hindu and Iranian Islamic cultures can also been seen in art and architectural aspects like depiction of cultural themes in paintings and construction of blend of Indo-Islamic architectural styles making Hyderabad tradition rich and unique.

The regional Schools throw light on local Muslim Nawabs and Hindu rulers' independent approach and outlook in political and artistic spheres.

Significantly art became a status symbol and we find an inexplicit congruence among the psyche of the Deccani's regarding the need to have a firm belief in the cultural integration and a kind of determination to sustain the cultural synthesis for long. This process was also facilitated by the diverse activities in various
spheres, which resulted in an inflow and outflow of different categories of people such as ambassadors, mendicants, traders, poets and mainly artists who worked with local talents. This resulted in new styles and new symbolism in art... Such synthesis can be perceived in miniature paintings which indicate that culture as a concept led to a situation in which artistic patterns and multi-faceted improvement of human entity can be achieved.

The Hyderabad - School displayed depiction of royalty with nobility and courtiers, musical aspects like listening to music, hunting scenes, marble terrace outside a building, figures depicted in a pavilion or courtyard garden, golden and red wooden balconies and light brown doors, terraces covered with cushions or flowered carpets of yellow, green, red or mauve color, depiction of flower pots of blue and white, china - ware, small conical trees, tangled clouds, colorful birds flying across, long plain flowing muslin *jamas*, pearl - chains., etc.

The investigation of Hyderabad and regional Schools divulges that the art of miniature painting prospered for much longer time with artistic excellence and multiplicity of styles. Besides the looks of rulers, nobles, their manners and costumes which enabled to know court customs, themes on nature and music also received impetus. All these themes were immensely lively and convincingly individualized. Two main traditions developed within Hyderabad School. While some artists leaned towards the depiction of Islamic arabesque and garden setting in their portrayals, others endeavored to use idealized human being as a means of expression in these themes.

In other words some artists gave more importance to living beings than non - living things. Later these two traditions merged to produce a complete picture comprising of human forms along with the architecture and landscape in which they lived and functioned. The artists highlighted in their work, the features like dramatic element, breezy quality and naturalistic tendencies. The colors like pale blue, pink and green are charming and fascinating.

More importantly the historical and critical evaluation of women in miniature art indeed opened up new vistas in interpretations. For instance the various miniature paintings on women around themes of royalty, themes of royal court
and palace life, themes on Raginis, themes on Yoginis, themes on Courtesans, themes on maidens, themes on ordinary women, themes on Music, Dance, Poetry, Medicine and Nature, Aesthetic, Spiritual, Festival and European themes. These thematic contents decimated knowledge of prevalent cultural traditions through their subject portrayals. The most important aspect is that apart from highlighting art history, they gave scintillating picture of lifestyle and active role of women in various realms of that age.

The study provided interesting details of how they depicted the lives of women in socio-historical context of times. The life of Royal and Ordinary women, their dress-patterns or textiles, ornamental-designing in miniature paintings of the Medieval period are best sources of knowledge.

In Golconda School of miniatures, some of the important features that are found are depiction of court scenes in large numbers, dancing scenes, portrayals of courtesans. European models, pictures of ordinary women, etc. The specialty of the miniatures was that, women in various spheres like royalty (royal ladies), royal work (maidens) royal past times (courtesans), royal art (dances and musicians) and day to day living (ordinary women) were portrayed.

In few paintings, royal personages as well as Ordinary women were shown wearing beautiful red colored chakdar jama, jacket with lahanga and dandiay. While wealthy wore other type of garments made with gold or zari, the Ordinary could not afford them. Women were generally depicted wearing zari apron or veil cloth both ends falling over both shoulders with floral designed long pyjamas. Altogether miniature paintings represented beautiful floral, leaf and creeper designs in printed, painted and embroidered types in dress-trend, which was generally a culmination of Hindu and Muslim dressed patterns.

The secular attitude and the close relationship of the kingdom with that of Hindu Vijayanagar Empire also led to the fusion of cultures. Particularly in the dress styles of women like the sari of twelve cubits covering a bodice with sleeves coming up to the elbows was generally depicted with borders of varying width of gold and silver embroidery. Miniature paintings of the time depicted all these textile-features with rich coloring, elaborate designing and pleasant look.
Regarding jewelry patterns both Hindu and Muslim took pride and felt it as a matter of great privilege in wearing a variety of ornaments in gold, silver and other precious stones. Mainly Qutb Shahis territories had nearly twenty-eight sites of diamond mines enabling them to use them for ornamentation. Even miniature paintings revealed this wealth of jewelry and their variety by depicting and decorating them along with women portraits.

The ornaments that were generally used and illustrated in paintings were, Kantlvnal, Kangan, Glasari, Goshpera, etc. Hence due to the importance given to jewelry in Qutb Shahi times, royalty gave patronage to skilled craftsmen to produce excellent jewelry and even miniaturists recognizing their significance depicted variety of ornaments in their illustrations particularly related to women of Golconda.

These miniatures on women with various themes and styles had a peculiar charm in their colors, rhythmic vitality and in the depiction of beautiful features of women. They conveyed a convincing image of royal magnificence of the Royal women. The pictures of Harem scenes and courtesans indicated that they were part of elite structure. Miniatures also signified the luxury and pleasure of royalty at royal court and palace. They remained as wealth of artistic sensibility and technical professionalism in history of painting while depicting women.

The paintings on music and dance signified the interrelationship between cultural and arts. Actual dance programs performed at Golconda royal courts became the subject themes on which numerous paintings were based. It was noted that the demonstration of performing dancers and other artists, became popular subjects in the visual arts through Indian cultural history. Dancers of the Golconda court were commonly shown as ladies of the court entertaining the ruler, his personal and chief guests. They were usually depicted individually as well as frequently with idealized Princess or court ladies, whose presence added charm and elegance to the paintings. Few scenes reflected accurately the role of female musicians at Deccani court and at rural amusements. Individual portraits of these artists indicate their importance and usual honor given to them by the Sultan and the artists of the time. This depiction of artists also indicates that the
royalty appreciated music and dance and their inclination towards painting, combined their artistic interest by commissioning portraits of themselves with artists at concerts. This deep personal communication of cultured patrons was a unique theme in the field of miniature painting of Deccan.

A due cognizance should be taken of fact that we find few European themes like Madonna, Virgin Mary, etc, also being depicted in miniatures. In some pictures, the ideal form of courtly beauties and the personification of the forces of nature were expressed systematically. Youthful and pretty women highlighting the sensuality and beauty were depicted as related to experiences of love and emotions. These images of women with delicate hand gestures, lightness in walking are based on balance and moderation. The women, which artists created, were strictly conventionalized to show that their appeal transcended human experience and the aesthetic relationship of art to human emotions.

Few representations of women vis-a-vis men indicated the theme of Nayaka - Nayaki trend that was a favorite subject among the scholars and the people. Naturally its pictorial representation became the fashion of the time. Another striking feature is that in most of the pictures the duties or functions of the attendants and maidens who formed a part of royal retinue and who performed various tasks are portrayed along with the royalty, but one cannot see any class difference in the depiction of the two.

Among the themes, Yogini paintings are were also illustrated. Here the term Yogini is not related or confined to any particular devotional belief, but was simply one of the methods accepted for fulfilling the desire of women, which is more worldly than spiritual in nature. Yoganis were royal ladies who in garb of an ascetic or in close association with Saivite Joginis of the time went in search of their beloved. Here the concept of Yogini indicates a discipline and dhyana or concentration for achieving their goal through philosophical knowledge. This life of royal Yoginis, became the theme for Indian miniaturist, who portrayed them in dignified, meditative, saintly and traditional realms. This artistic evidence, throws light not only on the religious history, mainly existence of
Joginis and Saivite sect in Medieval Deccan, but also the activities of majestic ladies. The Yogini miniatures indicated that these paintings indeed reflect regional, ideological concepts, which were conceptualized, formed, shaped and reared by symbolizing women along with the Islamic patronage given to these paintings.

During transitional phase miniatures depicted Royal women and maidens dressed both in Hindu and Muslim styles, at their royal and private houses. They reflected the life led by Princess at her royal court in leisure and maidens engaged in their royal service as they were depicted holding morchhal, fan, chauri, decorating, etc. Features like, individual portraits of women with natural beauty of trees and flowers as background, pictures of women standing alone, listening to music on a white marbled terrace covered with carpets, women with nobility smoking huqqa, languishing on terrace with maidens, women with languorous eyes, dusky complexions, harem scenes and scenes with dramatic element are perceived.

In few paintings animals like cat was depicted sitting near the Princess, another popular feature of Deccani painting indicating the compassion and delicacy of Royal women. The idealized beauty, gentle eroticism and lyrical feeling marked the main features of this period of miniature paintings on women. Different kinds of other animals like, cows, cranes, swans, etc, were also depicted in the background in majority of paintings and were placed at different parts of the scenes indicating their real locations. This combination of women with compassionate animals in one way represents women's soft character and love towards other natural creatures.

The dressing patterns like pyjama, skirt and veil of both royal lady and the maidens are typical features of Deccani miniature painting. The paintings also illustrated various utensils, cushions and carpets that were generally used by royalty. Gilt - decorated borders and gilt - sprinkled blue outer margin and colors like vibrant white, green, pink, strong greens, glowing reds, a dark blue and gold can be perceived in the miniatures which added beauty to the grace of women pictures.
Music, which remained as one of the favorite pastimes of nobility, was even depicted in miniature paintings of the time with rhythmic sensibility. The palette, the depiction of women with excessively long eyes and the distinctive foliage composed of tiny dabs of bright color arranged in circles were identical to conventions in 17th and 18th Century Bikaner painting. The artists working at Hyderabad must have been influenced by the Rajputs style of miniature painting and must have illustrated it to please their patrons like depiction of large eyes of women. Still the textiles, ornaments and architectural settings and placement of different objects depicted within the palace were Deccani features. Few pictures illustrated three strata of women together like ladies of noblemen, maidens serving them and female artists entertaining the noble ladies. Differentiation in rank and status was clearly visible in such miniatures.

Religious themes of merit were also executed like women greeting a holy man in a formalized landscape with a pink background and blue border, two Hindu women visiting a saint in the mountain, who holds rudraksha mala (a spiritual chain) in his hands. Paintings like Common women carrying water from the well as if returning to their houses were also depicted which reflected day to day living of women of the times and even illustrated different kinds of textiles and decoration of Ordinary women, who too appeared beautiful and well-dressed and symbolized both Hindu and Muslim women. Mughal influence like rigid poses and meticulous technique was related to Mughal domination and to the Mughal artists working with their patrons in the Deccan. In most of these miniatures paintings although the energy and humanism of 17th Century was absent to large extent, they however retained lyrical quality and gripping severity.

The Hyderabad School of paintings had distinctive characteristics like, depiction of deities and Raginis in large numbers, women with Maharastrian type of saris, women sitting on chair, listening to music played by female artists, hunting, women in conversation themes, aesthetic, decoration and spiritual themes and themes of mother and child. An insight into the miniature paintings
of this School also throw light on varied themes related to women like Queens of regal elegance, beautiful Princesses, capable maidens and talented artists.

In many paintings of women fine arrangement of figure groups, their easy and fixed postures, ethnic type dresses, the typical Deccani background and the often used poppy flower-beds in the foreground of the painting displayed a peculiar model of contemporary Hyderabad Deccani life-style and structure of the royal atmosphere. Among the themes depicted, court scenes and Zenana scenes in which ladies were drinking, smoking huqqa, playing with pigeons, listening to music on a terrace or playing with children prevailed. Girls playing yo-yo or a duenna escorting a beautiful damsel were other popular themes.

When compared to earlier Schools of Deccani painting, the significance attached to women in Hyderabad School was intensive and actually was symbolic of the easy going and pleasure loving Deccani people. The painters illustrated such themes more than hunting or war scenes for their patrons to provide visual pleasure.

One peculiar feature of Hyderabad School was that the figures were generally set in profile against a flat background in pale green or pallid blue color with perfect complexions of the characters depicted with perfect execution of line and figuring. In most of the miniatures of the women, the costumes, jewelry and personages depicted remained Islamic in nature since the patrons Nizams and other notables were of Islamic origin. But few paintings illustrated by Hindu officials mainly at sub-Schools depicted Hindu women and themes related to Hindu-culture. Portraits related with European women residents and subjects were also illustrated with European outlook, which politically signify their stay at Hyderabad or semi independence of Nizams under European domination. This shows that few paintings had European influence in matter of detail and depiction when compared to early Schools, which indicates that the artists were more influenced by the Mughal and Rajput trends rather than European styles. European influence became much more marked only after 1800 AD.

The women figures were illustrated usually on a terrace outside a building or with a pavilion or in a courtyard-garden in the background of which variety of
Deccani-natured trees like mango, plumera, champa, coconut, palm, etc can be perceived. In many paintings a small decorative tree with conical leaves in light green or gold color was depicted. These suggest a sense of massiveness and add a breezy quality to the atmosphere. The terrace or the architecture occupied the central portion. They were depicted with flowerbeds and fountains where ducks played in front of them. Sometimes small cypresses were illustrated in the flowerbeds along with poppies mainly white or yellow colored round flowers with pearl like petals and dots. This natural beauty with women's sensuality illustrated gives additional glow to the paintings of women in particular.

Women figures were generally well built, tall and beautiful. They generally had a backward sloping forehead and young smiling face with sharp features. Their faces were shown in profile, but at times were shown in front. Their long, wavy and black hair was brushed back and felled to the shoulders in loose curls in most of the paintings.

Most importantly the crux of Hyderabad was themes illustrating Ragini paintings or women symbolizing musical modes. They made the tradition of depicting Ragamalas to have greater intelligibility, warmer appeal and more universal communication than abstract art. In one way though Ragamalas may not be perfect visualization of music yet they explored the possibilities of emotional expression. This was simultaneous with assimilation of musical modes for expressing in a new way, the feelings of women in love and other traditional perceptions. They enabled to understand and appreciate the intimate relation existing between the Nayika and Nayakas and between nature, music and women. Ragas like Malhar, Asavari, Kalyani etc. were visualized as charming ladies with different complexions and colorful garments. In these Ragini miniatures, the inter-relation of notes with color on one hand and emotional expression on the other hand illustrating women made possible the graphic representation of Ragas through poem - pictures and natural sceneries. Each raga here centered around one particular trend that it developed, explained, elaborated and exalted and was finally painted.
The standard Ragamala with thirty-six paintings depicted possible relationships and psychological feelings of women categorized according to the emotional potential of different times of day like dawn or sunset or seasons of the year like pre-monsoon or rainy season. They were depicted with a background of wild jungle plants, whose rich birds and blossoms are emblems of divine creativity. Here nature is used to intensify the human situations and in totality remained as India feminine modes of music expressing emotional themes. These paintings proved that arts influence one another and intermingle as a result of their natural evolution.

The jewelry depicted in most of the paintings of Hyderabad School was rich and consisted mainly of ornaments like kanthi, pachladi, satladi, etc. Armlets worked with gold and red between double rows of pearls, wristlets of eight fold pearl stings or gold bangles between two rows of pearls and double pearl or gold anklets. Ruby and emerald drops, gold earrings with pearls in the ear and gold rings with pearls, rubies and emeralds are other ornaments depicted in paintings. All together both Royal and Ordinary women were depicted wearing different kinds of silver, gold and other ornaments made of precious stones and pearls, which indicates that use of jewelry was the order of the day. All women whether princess, attendants, musicians, singers or dancers wore these ornaments.

In dress-trend, women generally wore a transparent white, red, yellow, blue, green or mauve color 'peshwaj' dress over a long choli and tight trousers with plain or flowered material. Duppattas too were transparent and covered the front and fell on the back or crossed in front along the two stringed pearl chains reaching the back. This mode of wearing the duppatta is known as khada-duppatta and is a peculiarity of the medieval Deccan. In several miniatures there was a swing and sweeping movement of duppattas. This tendency is also another important characteristic feature of Deccani painting of Hyderabad. Hence keeping in view of Hyderabadi composite culture in which Royal and Ordinary women used gem and jewelry of exquisite designs and types, the miniaturists of the time depicted extensive jewelry mainly in relation to the themes on women in
their paintings, which indicates that women and jewelry which remained as two sides of a coin from historical times, received much importance not only in cultural history of Nizams but also in artistic history of the times.

The regional Schools depicted themes with folk - idioms and spiritual - contents which are symbolically conceived like depiction of lord Krishna with Gopikas and depiction of God and Goddess like Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Durga etc. The colors like yellow, reds and green leap out with astonishing vibrancy. It indicates that from the beginning of 18th Century art activity seems to have continued within and outside Nizam Shahi territories in diverse forms, where incidental motifs of a costume, trees or rocks within the broad pictorial parameters were imitated. The eclectic character of these emergent kalams represented the resilience of the imperial patronage in recognificance and diversity of regional Schools, where regional identities or themes got reflected. The glances of the female figures and their stretched bodies seem to demonstrate the tension of a godlike energy.

Such pictorial evidence provided a kaleidoscopic picture of women in various spheres of their functioning, decoration, engagements and activities. Various themes portrayed reflect the fact that, among arts, painting cleanses the mind, curbs anxiety, augments future good and causes the greatest delight. Since miniatures in a concrete form became social objects and are subject to the laws and principles of the society to which they belong, they cannot be looked at or experienced exclusively as objects of aesthetic pleasure or beauty alone, isolated from social environs. In turn they are something useful as well as beautiful. The question of this connection to social life and requirement has always been a vital issue, because art is not an exclusive cult of chosen few, but an intelligent rigorous discipline distinguished from other ordinary human activity.

The traditions, beliefs and practices together with social attitudes and aptitudes of persons belonging to particular region or society also played a significant role in deciding its styles and techniques, which on other hand are essential for both religious and secular purposes and more for social and individual enjoyment, pleasure and recreation. It is not just a physical substance
but in reality transcendental in sense indicating the grace, emotions and feelings of society, in which they were produced and executed.

In general when compared to the painting of the west which is an art of mass, the painting of the east remained an art of line, where art forms like paintings interpreted and expressed form through a clear cut theme of illustrations, which preceded ideas and are depicted by colors, lines and figures giving us insights about aspects of the time.

Similarly the intrinsic character or dynamic activity represented in miniature paintings also had their own references to the life and nature they depicted. In reality they are needed for the employment of skill and vision to reconstruct and reorganize the observed facts and situations of life and nature and their interactions. They are also essential for concentrated attention, intrinsic perception and appreciation of aesthetic principles. They generated some interest in the relatively neglected areas of art in relationship to social phenomena, thus leading to the growth of historical research and in marshalling historical facts by interpreting them in terms of meaningful questions.

Above all the importance of the miniature paintings in the art history of the Deccan can be gleaned from the fact that they were patronized by the very sultanates of the Deccan kingdoms and the tradition of patronizing them continued even after the extinction of the kingdoms, especially under the Nobles, lesser notables and officials. They produced a new situation in medieval Deccani art being most astounding conservators of human creativity.

These Deccani artifacts being the chance survivors of an extinct culture never the less transmitted to us the ideas, habits and tastes of their makers and possessors. One could feel the ideal physical type of medieval Deccani atmosphere of Qutb Shahis and Nizams, which these pieces mirror. The precise study of their material culture or artistic endeavor gave us an account chiaroscuro effects also.

The painters in most paintings lavished special care to render the undulating waves of features, to give it the quality of dynamism, which is the essential source or field of creation. To the maxim they tried to reflect the contemporary
magnanimous life of the elite structure. The narrative scenes, the grandeur and humanistic values were expressed by figure grouping and gesture, supported by the choice of earthy colors and the broad, generous rhythms of the compositions. Every aspect of life was incorporated into a known hierarchy of values in the physical, psychological and metaphysical realms. In this ordered body of values, each miniature painting, with its own particular function was placed in accordance with a superexcellent norm.

The critical aspect of the miniature paintings of the Deccan brought to light that very scant attention was paid to record or depict events realistically which is testified by the difficulty in differentiating between portrayals of the real Princes and idealized symbols of Regality. It also appears that very few histories or historical events were commissioned as the Sultans were not passionate recorders or lacked temperament for documentation. Although the miniatures spoke of a flourishing civilization with distinctive aesthetic and cultural values, yet due to the paucity of such paintings, it is hard to understand the contemporary values, language and expression. Moreover, these paintings in general were not an art of the people at large but of its patrons belonging to the aristocratic roots of the medieval kingdom.

However, while acknowledging the fact that the analysis of the miniatures as a tool for historical research is subjected to certain criticism mainly presenting only the point of view of royalty. However one cannot escape the inescapable inevitability of accepting that despite its problems, the miniature had a special purpose and significance for a researcher of historical process.

In historical sense, the miniature paintings acquired full worth as historical documents, since they reflected various facets of contemporary life. They often provided true records of the lifestyle of the times in politico, socio-cultural spheres. Working even in minutest forms, these miniatures of Golconda and Hyderabad Schools have captured the spirit and mood of the subject matter in minutest details like the royal splendor of the sultans and the princesses, the romance and the passion of the lovers, the elegance of the court, etc.
The medieval artists tried to paint to life, bringing out not only the physical features and personal appearance, but also even the personality of each subject like their expressions, feelings and activities. Since history consists of individuals acting according to their different characters and motives, the portraits of these historical figures must be recognized as being an important source in their own right.

Moreover the miniature paintings played a significant role in evolving the cultural identity of the region and its people and also the diverse form of activities and institutions in the region. In other words, they gave the Deccani region a cultural identity and endowed it with an all-round regional stability and maturity. They highlight that the medieval Deccani kingdoms are not only noted for their cultural history, political winnings but also for their pictorial heritage. The most striking feature of miniatures was that, artistic concern remained not just with the beauty and grace of the females, but also highlighted the other aspects like their feelings, engagements and talents. The female figures had sharp figures with curvaceous line. In few paintings like new themes were introduced like women hunting, sitting on chair etc where insight was totally innovative. Depiction of Ordinary women and European ladies was up to reality and was pleasant in perceiving. The artists created startling powerful shapes and strong decorative patterns keeping in view of the cultural systems of the time.

Though a critical aspect reveals that most of the portraits depicted uneven quality in their draughtsmanship, which are marked by heavy shading, dull in perspective and with wavy consorts, there was lot of difference in the quality of the pictures owing to the fact that large and wide sources of influences were available to the Deccan painters, which created a bewildering multiplicity in details of drawing and coloring. For instance few paintings in the representation of the nature, architecture and pot - pourri, peculiarities of these paintings can be associated with the Deccani paintings of all kinds. However in themes and way of presentation and qualitative depiction of personages, Deccan School had its own way of representative style remaining within the grove of the main current of artistic trends.
All these miniatures remained as part of cultured aroma of new confrontations and enabled to rediscover a new feminine world. They reflected the tradition of depiction of women in art forms of India and in totality reflected art - culture of women in medieval Deccan history and of natural forms feminine beauty with Deccani styles and women in various realms of Royal - structure, servile - form, and Ordinary - strata of medieval era,

The paintings depicted by different artists included women of different status, the distinguishing features marked in their fashions and locations. Most of the illustrations were painted to life bringing out not only physical features and appearance but even the characters and feelings of women in that specific context, which makes it clear that women's representation in Golconda and Hyderabad Schools are not just chance portraits but appears that painters had studied the characters and day - to - realities of both sections at depth and hence the depictions looked so individualized as actual portraits. In other words naturalism was achieved to a great extent and gave the real feeling of the themes depicted. The miniature also dealt extensively with the iconography, composition and picturization of various scenes with which women were associated like palace life, hunting, hawking, listening or playing music, dancing, worshiping and other daily engagements, displaying their elegance, beauty, capacity, talent, and spirituality.

These magnificent themes, gives a glimpse of feminine world depicted in paintings. They gave pictorial account of both individualistic element or episodic lives of women as well as group scenes, which have great significance. They dealt with female beauty where figures appeared delicate and tendered and faces that were charming and beaming. The female faces drawn in profile were striking and represented different dispositions of women. These pictures portrayed women in relaxed graceful poses, which denotes great freedom as well as feminine serenity. They gave the message of feminine tender, prettiness and elegance with garmented designs and decorative elements. In totality they reflected the culture and art of medieval times on which women were involved or associated with.
An attentive study of these works of art also reveal about the techniques and persons who created them. The visual system essentially oriented to the human image is almost invariably foregrounded pronouncing community, cultural and regional trades. These can be analyzed through costumes or ornaments where every motif of pattern, mode of wearing or material used denotes a specific period, place and culture. Knotting, tying or wrapping of the upper and the lower bodices, conditioning posture and movements could indicate specific communities and locales.

Here one miniature was not usually the work of a single artist. Generally while the composition was conceived and drawn by a master painter, the colors were applied by other junior members, one of whom executed the costumes, another faces and a third the details of jewelry, weapons and other furnishings. A single model was often used for several copies. They were executed from the sketch kept by the master draughtsman and on which the instructions for the color were noted. These sketches were very highly priced and carefully preserved by their creators, who handed them over to their descendents as family heirlooms.

Few paintings were inscribed with a title or even a poem, which rendered a verbal interpretation of the themes more or less closely related to the painted version. Pictures gave bliss and reflected beauty for which these paintings really stand living under the spell of time, space and causation. They with artistic grace were executed with new vigor and spirit throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.

In contrary to music or literature, which appeals more to be senses and liberates the passions, but cannot take tangible form, paintings dealt with specific concrete works and forms that had an existence of their own. Here symbol of emotional aliveness where the boundary between high and low art became blurred.

The royal paintings were powerful and sophisticated made for an epicurean elitist taste with considerable technical expertise, expressive originality, subtlety of color and spirited landscape. They depicted possible relationships categorized according to the emotional potential of different situations. The sense of court
was petrified by opulence. Darbar scenes were enlivened by artist's ability to make active and energetic patterns from the textiles or the architecture. Portraits remained convincingly individualized and exaggeratedly generalized and immensely lively.

Few paintings like procession scenes representing women remained as celebrations of worldly pomp, asserting the opulence and wealth of the court. Their stylistic primitivism, coupled with the quantity of people and material objects suggested that work was as much a declaration of wealth as a fulfillment of artistic sensibility. In these paintings the time, colors, season, hours and virtues were so blended together as to create a composite production. Here painters belonged to different traditions. However they were not traversal and were re-rooting retaining a strong regional base. Sometimes in depiction a series of changes underwent according, to contemporary prototypes of rvAers and chieftains possible according to the changing perception of the patron community and ruling elite. Artistic enterprise itself remained highly stratified in accordance with the prestige granted the type of activity. However changes were more discernible in the secondary rather than principle figures including motifs where descriptions, iconographic etc, changed. Altogether technologies, ideologies, cultural system, above all splendid patronage affected miniature art, where changes in any of these variables modified its artistic culture and gave rise to new variants of them.

Among entertainments, paintings portrayed different kinds like dance, music, hunting which was a favorite source of recreation of the ruling class. In many paintings hunting by hawks was commonly depicted. The practice of hunting was also prevalent among women mainly princess during the 18th century as evident from few paintings. This depiction or use of horse, elephants, and camels indicates the aristocratic mounted travel. Europeans provided a ready market for these paintings hence many pictures of Europeans subjects, reminiscent of some of European themes were painted at the beginning of 17th Century. Later after Mughal conquest of Golconda, artists from Bijapur and Golconda left their places of work to find patronage with the smaller sub states.
of the region, resulting in large number of miniatures at many places having identifiable Deccani characteristics. In 18th Century much of these dispersed tradition reassembled at Hyderabad.

In addition the arts represented one possible way of testing human significance of various aspects of the message of a religion or a secular ideology. On other hand for the arts like paintings a complete separation from a religion or secular ideology means relevance from the obligation to serve a tradition regarded as superior to an itself and from its various efforts at social control over artistic expression. It also means the loss of a type of patronage that has historically been more continuously interested in the arts and that has tended to exhibit more concern for the aesthetic merit of art.

Structures were based on improvisatory perceptions of functional anatomy with characteristic of rhythm of movement. Where often their body languages acquired a more formed delineation through their articulation in dance and the performative modes. Sedentary habits or agility, sense of pride or servitude were illustrated through a theatric hyperbole and pictographic abbreviations, with excessive girth, recumbent positions mercurial movements or drooping or genuflecting body-forms. Periodic repainting or remaking formed part of their basic raison d'être. They used ingredients and chemistry common to the techniques of paintings and left their impact on visual sensibility. Here artists being the formulators of the pictures were in a position to chose and articulate and even effect changes in the representation of traditionally transmitted imagery. They indeed made changes because of the Psycho-social mediation of the times they belong to.

Depictions alternated from being assertive to ambiguous or even cosmic at times possibly according to the changing perceptions of the patron commonly vis-a-vis the ruling elite. During Golconda phase while royalty was depicted seated on throne, during transitional phase and later phase, they were depicted at seated on a terrace or on a cushion indicating the simple life style or decline of political authority.
Similarly women figures that were depicted within royal courts at Golconda School, in later years were depicted in aloofness with sensitive and individual figures, highlighting more of sensual features of women rather than figure-grouping. These must be either the result of patron's perceptions to view such figures or artists taste to depict such scenes.

Another significant aspect observed was that there existed a relationship between these technological aspects and patronage given. While Golconda School of patronage, which was comparatively stronger than transitional phase, produced paintings with better quality of paper, pigments and palette, latter phase reflected dull imageries. Different themes representing hunting, royalty, domestic dwelling, allegories, nature, were portrayed with innate realism, with shining colors, milky marble architectural settings, flowing waters and Deccani landscape of heat, air and humidity. To this category also belonged women figures which were portrayed and we have figures like women smoking *huqqah*, drinking cup of wine etc.

Paintings throw light on certain social customs like worship, festivals, smoking of *huqqah* and drinking wine both by men and women. Though we have depiction of royal ladies and other ladies of court smoking *huqqah*, or drinking, incidentally we do not find any painting of drinking regarding the women of lower society.

This analysis of women through art on the whole focused on the possible material manifestation of various dimensions of women by interpreting art depictions. This line of approach ultimately could lead to major theoretical contributions explaining the emergence and development of women's history as observed through time and across space. To put women back in their proper place is not nearly to fill a long-standing gap and thus complete the sum, restoring its balance to the whole. But, it is to discover a new dimension of the historical object, perceptible only when approached from a particular intellectual angle. Here representation stands satisfactory as form and contributes to the general abstract design and can be said to be a matter aesthetically. Paintings
remained representations of expressions, feelings, lifestyles, things and situations of women

A critical part of the study also reveals that, most of the miniature paintings on women were structured specifically for a male viewers gaze. The female figures and their structure of looking and longing with a variety of significances are manifestations of the male viewer or patron, the connoisseur and the painter.

Paintings were defined by the presence of women and are infiltrated with feminist concerns. The female beauty whether she is sitting, playing music, writing, gazing in a mirror, holing a flower, or smoking huqqah remained as a compelling object of desire for male gaze. The thematic structure of these paintings articulated through the actions and gestures of the women provided insight into different modes of spectatorship. In few paintings where women were depicted in aloofness on terrace or in a garden gave a feeling of outside world of the palace, a place for escape and illicit embraces. In few paintings of royal women with maidens or sakhi, maidens play out a scenario unique to painting by unveiling her mistress for her lover's eye. There by decorating her in one sense display her to her male admirer. By serving her and gazing upon her, they turn the mistress into an object to be attended reverentially and passion by men.

In few other paintings maidens tried to shield the royal women's nudity from prying male eyes with a cloth which in one way indicates an object which is something to be looked at. The male eye looked at the female's beauty with desire and for aesthetic enjoyment and fulfillment. Whether visible or invisible like male peering at women from a window or doors, in few paintings the cloth that conceals or reveals the women's known beauty, male view was everywhere implied in these paintings. However the cloth provides dubious protection since though it conceals the women from the peering, it reveals her to the viewers. It lets him see what her lover longs to see implicating the viewer in the lovers desire for the women and her physical aspects like her nude breasts, long legs, sensuous smile and her entire body illustrated as twisted perfectly with seductive exposure.
Female viewer may find several places where her own interest and activities intersect with the themes of the paintings of these paintings. Her image remained as a symbol of womanly perfection to be emulated, to the connoisseur, women pictures embodied the aesthetic experience and its structures of longing. The paintings on women remained as sum total of artist's visual rhetoric. The brilliant looks of the female figures, their natural gestures, sinuous lines of their postures, black hair, and glowing colors of their jama, veil, and bodice gave completeness to painting turning it into a perfect picture, where grace of women was revealed through these paintings.

Maidens by decorating or adorning their mistress act out the process of objectification. In one way beautiful women were made up by their beautiful maidens. It is important to note here that not the woman but her beauty which was venerated in these paintings. Hence whether it was maiden, courtesan or a royal lady all were made up sensual, delicate and touchy. The principal figures face, hair, body were less different from those of women around her. The main differences were only seen in their placement, work involved, number of jewels and clothing style.

These paintings were mainly done for royal feast of their eyes. The themes of stolen glances, attractive poses, cosmetic adornment, expressive outlook, teasing concealment and illicit revealment were extremely potent for men in a court culture. Such features were painted accordingly to patron's desire and fulfillment. The faces of women were often the most characteristic feature of the painting style evolved in these courts. Their sharp profile and large eyes, perfect expressions of faces, platted smooth hair, and gentle smile, sweet delicacy of body are most recognizable features of women of Deccani style with fetishizing structures that exalted not just the beauty of women but also beauty of Deccan School.

Structures of desire elicit from female viewers in the court zenana longing for beauty or power as well as sexual desire. In one way these paintings open up for women a place for interventions in the male construction of feminity even while appearing to depict them as the passive recipients or objects of male desire. The
royal ladies would have compared themselves with these portraits of women figures and must have enjoyed loving sensuous female portraits.

A persistent theme in the artistic history is the sensuous female figure often provocatively depicted. An exploration of women in art indicated that men look at women and women watch themselves being looked at. Such paintings were enjoyed by the patrons for their own pleasure. The beholders of such pictures were presumed to be male. Here looking is of course an act that involved a power relationship and it is patrons who commissioned the paintings who looked at them and women who looked at these miniatures generally were those within this power structure.

Regional artistic achievements, with political identities even were conflated with the delicate sensual figures of women. The visual rhetoric of female paintings builds the principle figure into an object for the eye satisfying in itself. Here the women as an object exist solely to be looked at and this perfectly suited the aesthetic pursuit of sensual pleasure in which material world became the connoisseur. In one sense few images of women exhibiting her beauty satisfied patrons as well as merchants who bought these pictures.

Paintings had subject matter in the sense of theme or underlying idea. Here representation meant that the paintings represented the persons, things and scenes of the time, which are of historical significance and are connected with the life styles of the then cultural trends and feelings. For any creative process is a representative process in which both words depiction and portrayal includes. It is the projection of that cultural humanity in its own particular circumstances, which can be perceived.

Regarding the question whether women of the times had any say in the manner of their representation in art mainly in this context of the sensuality, one has to view the erotic not as a self-evident universal category but as a culturally defined concept that is ideological in nature. Moreover what is erotic in one cultural context may not be viewed thus in another and even women of the times must have enjoyed viewing the pictures which represented them. The erotic in art is indeed, a culturally loaded category where routine use of similes of female
bodily possession and submission must be viewed as historically specific phenomenon.

Thus in these paintings women whose beauty is revealed through painting so much as the beauty of the painting which is, ultimately, revealed through the medium of the woman. In particular miniature paintings of Deccani School representing women remained as artistic expressions of historical phenomena with gender - arrangements. They acted as transmitters of a symbolic repertoire of female realms, which is not explored much by other alternative sources. They portrayed women in a broad range of themes in a variety of cultural domains reflecting both royal and ordinary women interculturally and intraculturally depicting simultaneously women of power and influence with women of talent and servitude.

These illustrative modes reflected women with tune, song, colors, season's hour and virtues of life and time, creating a composite medieval art culture. This art with standing recurring political storms, military disasters, economic heat, social upheavals, and fluctuating cultural weather of Golconda and Hyderabad kingdoms indeed represented women with historical context of situational circumstances, naturalistic schemes for resilient views, unraveling spaces and escalating entrancement and above all for advancement of women's history.