Introduction
Short story is a genre of literature introduced to man right from his childhood which awakens literary interest in him. It develops his moral and human instincts and makes him morally and ethically strong. As a genre of literature it is as old as humanity and is deep-rooted in the culture and heritage of a country. It is believed that short story had its origin in 4000 B.C. when the sons of Cheop, an Egyptian king had narrated stories to their father for his delight. In a similar way the beautiful damsel Scheherzade had told the stories of *The Arabian Nights* to the King Shehriar to save herself and the other women from his amorous snares. But it was christened as short story for the first time in 1933 in *OED supplement*.

According to Wells short story is a form of fiction shorter in length “which can be read in twenty minutes” (qtd. in *Studies in Contemporary Indian - English Short Story* 10) with brevity, economy, unity and short length as its salient features. The essence of the writer’s mind is reflected in one go through the short story. According to Grace Paley,

> Stories are shorter and more concentrated, more economical in the sense of pulling together all the information and making leaps across the information. Unity in story means that something has to be whole, even if it ends in an open way. (n. pag)

It focusses on a single event or sometimes even on a single character. If it goes ahead with multiple characters and talks about many situations, the different situations are given in a coherent manner. Most of the short stories focus on dramatic conflict, a sudden change in the plot or twisting end. As pointed by Walten,

> A short story concentrates on a single character in a single situation at a single moment. Even if these conditions are not met, a short story still exhibits unity as its guiding principle …..Dramatic conflict - the collision of opposing forces is at the heart of the story. (4)

As a genre of literature the short stories have the general constituents of fiction like plot, character, setting, point of view and style which give concrete shape to its theme. Any subject like death of a horse, loss of a cloak or a girl’s first love affair can be the subject of a short story. It is more restricted in characters and situations and is concerned with a single effect. It is more flexible than a novel and gives more freedom to the writer who is concerned with the present moment without talking about what
happened in the past or what will happen in the future. It is an attempt to “catch the eternal in the casual, invest a moment with the immensity of time.” (Naik 179)

Theme, plot, subject and narration are important for a short story. With the help of plot, characters, style and point of view a clear cut shape can be given to the theme. At the same time strategy, development, twist of language, conclusion, characterization, situational composition, description, title and style are also equally important because these together give literary value to the story and give identity to the writer. As Kamal Mehata says, “Every author used the elements plot, characters, setting, point of view, style, etc. to provide a concrete shape to his themes.” There are different types of narrative techniques adopted by the writers such as explaining the story in the words of the characters, third person narration, narration through conversation or letters or diaries, poetic narration and flash back technique. Whatever be the type of narration the story has to kindle our imagination both intellectually and emotionally. As Poranki Dakshinamoorthy says, “The best story is that which brings live to our eyes a great truth of life, fills our heart with a great experience and makes us read it very often.” (9) They make us think and understand the deep and hidden meaning of events. The quality of a short story depends on the writer who knows to differentiate between the unimportant and important occurrences in the course of life. A good writer also knows to attract the reader’s attention towards certain happenings which would have otherwise escaped the notice of the reader. According to Guy de Maupassant,

The author knows how to eliminate between the minute and innumerable daily occurrences all those which are useless to him. He at the same time knows how to emphasize those which would have escaped the notice of less clear sighted observer. And it is this which gives the story its effect and value as fiction. (n. pag.)

According to S.K. Das there are atleast three distinct stages in the growth of the short story as a modern literary form. (302) These three stages are anecdotes, tales and fables and short fiction. Though the short story had its ancestry in fable, fairytale, myth, legend, anecdotes and parables it was neglected for a long time as a separate and special fictional form. Short fiction emerged during the 19th century with the arrival of journals and periodicals which encouraged character-sketches and reportage of incidents and contributed much to the growth of short story. Edgar Allan Poe had the credit of bringing
short story to life. He not only contributed hundreds of his own short stories but also provided the first serious axioms for judging a short stories merit. Short story enjoyed a remarkable success in many languages all over the world only after Poe’s time. In United States Poe and Hawthorne contributed to the success of short story. Similarly in Russia, Gogol, Turgenier, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy contributed a number of short stories. In French literature Balzac, Marimee and Daudet produced great short stories. The greatest short story writer of the 19th century was Guy de Maupassant who gave brilliant snapshots taken from lower or middle class French life. Similarly Anton Chekhov was one of the greatest Russian writers who contributed to short stories by presenting real life scenes in a sympathetic note. He always sums up his characters in a few passages of dialogue or inventory of clothes, facial appearance, style of speech, reflecting class and occupation as well as individuality.

Clear-cut and concrete plot was given more importance in the 19th century but today short story has got more flexibility by imbibing in itself figurative rhythmic pattern and direct presentation. On the whole it can be said that short story is a product of the writer’s imagination deep-rooted in his consciousness with the rare combination of accuracy and passion to appeal to the readers.

The origin of Indian short story tracks back to the Vedas, Upanishads, the Puranas, the Panchatantra, Hitopadesh, Jataka Kathas and Kathasarithsagar. The Kathasarithsagar is a compilation of tales of wisdom, wit and delight whereas the Jatak Kathas are world’s first didactic tales and the Panchatantra is a compilation of fables. As M.Rama Rao says,

We have had in India stories which lie embedded in the hymns of the Rigveda, or scattered in the Upanishads and the epics, the stories which constitute the Panchatantra, the Hitopadesha, the Sukasaptati, the Dasakumaracharita and the Vetalapanchvimsati in Sanskrit, the Buddhist Jatak Katha in Pali and a host of similar stories in modern Indian languages. (216)

Apart from these we have Chandamama Stories, Kasi Majili stories, Gunadhya’s Bruhatkatha, Nannaya’s Prasanna katha and Janapadha stories. It is believed that Indian Short Story had its birth in the written form when these stories appeared in the printed form with some modifications after the invention of the printing press. But it came into
existence as a literary genre only when, “the mythological, adventurous and marvelous stories had exhausted their possibilities and the novel had got established.” (Das 302) According to Poranki Dakshinamoorathy though Indian short story is present since ages it owes its present form to the Western Literature. The first Indian short story in the modern sense was “Lachamania” written by Fakir Mohan Senapathi in 1868. Shashee Chunder Dutt published the first short story collections _Realities of Indian Life: Stories collected from the criminal reports of India_. (London, 1885). Shashe Chunder Dutt and Sourindra Mohan Tagore published another short story collection called _The Times of Yore: Tales from Indian History_ (London, 1885). P.V. Ramaswami Raju brought out two collections of short stories from London: _The Tales of Sixty Mandarins_ (1886) and _Indian Fables_ (1887). Kshetrapal Chakravarthy published _Sarala and Hingara: Tales Descriptive of Indian Life_ (Kolkata, 1895) and Kamala Sattianandhan published _Stories of Indian Christian Life_ (1898). B.R. Rajan Iyer’s stories appeared in _The Prabuddha Bharatha_ during 1896-98 which appeared as an anthology entitled _Rambles in the Vedanta_ (1905).

Correlia Sorabji was a Parsi lady educated in Britain who became the first woman advocate in Calcutta in 1924. She wrote four collections of short stories: _Love and Life Behind the Purdah_ (1901), _Sunbabies: Studies in the Child Life of India_ (1904), _Between the Twilights: Being Studies of Indian Women by One of Themselves_ (1908) and _Indian Tales of the Great Ones among Men, Women and Bird People_ (1916). In these stories which have an undercurrent of social reform and narrated in Victorian manner, she dealt with Hindu life and Parsi life in both Princely and Plebeian circles.

Other notable short story collections of that period are: S.M. Nateshaa Sastri’s _Indian Folk Tale_ (1908); Dwijendranath Neogi’s _Sacred Tales of India_ (1916); A. Madhavaiah’s _Short Stories by Kusika_ (1916) and Sunity Devee’s _Bengal Decoits and Tigers_ (1916), _The Beautiful Mughul Princesses_ (1918) and _The Rajput Princesses_. Shankar Ram wrote _The Children of Kaveri_ (1926) and _Creature All_ (1933) which deal with spiritual crises in human lives. His stories present rural reality of India with its superstitions, caste system, poverty and other problems.

In ‘Gandhian era’ (1930s and 1940s) the writer’s major concern was social reform. A.S.P. Ayyar, K.S. Venkataramani and K.Nagarajan are some writers of this era A.S.P. Ayyar in his short story collection _Sense in Sex and other Stories_ (1932) dealt with
the plight of women in traditional Hindu society and tackled some of the problems such as evils of sex and marriage faced by Indian women of the day. K.S. Venkataramani, K. Nagarajan and S.K. Chettur are the prolific writers of the 1930s and 1940s.

These writers were followed by the Big Three or the Indian Trio: Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao who depicted the cultural encounter between traditionalism and modernity and examined the Indian traditions and asserted the Indian ethos in their work. Mulk Raj Anand is the advocate of the down trodden and the under privileged and voiced the concerns and predicaments of the lower classes in our society and used crude language to convey the truth of Indian myth fused with harsh reality. In his short stories he condemned some of the social, political, ethical and moral practices which resulted in the oppression of the poor, the down trodden and the women through humour and irony and talked about the pride of parents, child marriage, stubbornness of elders, hypocrisy, insanitation, cruelty in education through his short stories. He attacked social evils on scientific and humanistic grounds which resulted in a rationalist analysis of contemporary taboos. His myth was to remove untouchability. Though his stories are similar to fables, parables and folk tales he employs a remarkably different style talking about various moods, persons, social surroundings and colours of life revealing his reformative zeal and psychological enquiry. His short story collections The Lost Child and other Stories (1934), The Barber’s Trade Union and Other Stories (1944), The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories (1947), Reflections on the Golden Bed and Other Stories (1959), Lajwanti and Other Stories (1966) and Between Tears and Laughter (1973) attack the social evils like child marriage, patriarchy,untouchability, insanitation and cruelty in the field of education.

Writing in lighter vein and style, Narayan deals with the various facets of human life in an engaging or entertaining way or stoops to journalistic details of sensationalism. Though his women characters are few in number they are strong. He neither makes any reference to religion and belief nor allows cynicism and mockery to enter his works but reveals the ironies of life impressively. His collections include: Dodu and Other Stories (1943), Malgudi Days (1943), An Astrologer’s Day and Other Stories (1947), Lawley Road and Other Stories (1956) and A Horse and Two Goats (1970).
Raja Rao writes on social and political scenes around him. He tries to evoke Indian thought and tradition. The themes of his short stories are related to the prevalent myths, national upsurge and rural characters that express his ardent vision and deep-rooted Indianness. His short story collections are: *The Cow of the Barricades & Other Stories* (1947), *The Policeman and the Rose* (1978) and *On the Ganga Ghat* (1989). Though less prolific than Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan as a short story writer, he has occupied a unique place among all the Indian writers in English. Employing both the novel and short story forms in his own way, he is an expatriate writer who constructs the spiritual, cultural and intellectual aspects of India in a remarkable way. He was a writer who took writing seriously as a practice. As Prof. Makarand Poranjape points out,

Raja Rao considered his writing a sadhana, a spiritual discipline. Regarding him is also a sadhana. Like great Russian writers Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, his fiction elevates the spirit, taking the reader to a higher plane of consciousness. (qtd. In Sasibala 65)

Manjeri Iswaran is the prolific short story writer of 1930s. His stories in the form of either anecdotes or unabashed tear jerker present illuminating glimpses into human psychology. His female characters range from housewife to school-going girl, mother-in-law to daughter-in-law and young widow to a granny. He excels in the sympathetic revelation of female psyche with war, Indian freedom struggle, innocence of children, women’s problems and other social evils as his themes. He writes mostly on families caught between traditionalism and modernity. But the major flaw in his short stories is prolonging the story even after the point has been made.

As pointed out by Dwivedi the earlier phase of Indian short story was lacking in originality of conception and craftsmanship,

Their propensity for social amelioration and moral instruction blinds them to the inherent charms in the art of story telling. There is a general lack of vision and artistic sense. (*Spectrum History of Indian Literature in English* 137)

Khushwant Singh is the short story writer of free India who talks about blind belief, evils of democratic system with a blend of irony and comic sense. In his stories he attacks vehemently in an ironical and comic sense what he feels despicable, repulsive and unscrupulous. As V.A. Shahana says,
The per-dominant quality of Khushwant Singh as a short story writer is his comic spirit, informed by the sense of incongruity and the bewildering phenomena of contradictions in life. (67)

His four short story collections are *The Mark of Vishnu* (1950), *The Voice of God* (1957), *A Bridge for the Sahib* (1967) and *Black Jasmine* (1971). Apart from the above mentioned short story writers, we have K.A. Abbas, G.D. Khosla, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Bunny Reuben, Chamal Nahal, Parasu Balakrishnan, Ruskin Bond and Usha John who contributed in varying degrees to the growth and development of short stories. Though K.A. Abbas is known for film industry he has created a niche for himself in Indian English short story through his collections in which he writes about political problems like partition, bloodshed and refugee, influx and social evils like poverty, ignorance, inefficiency, hypocrisy, selfishness and unemployment. G.D. Khosla is another short story writer who through his works gives us a peep into the multifaceted personality of mother India. Writing about different types of people from rickshaw pullers to businessmen from film heroines to defiant loving ladies with sensitivity and objectivity he hits hard at social evils like untouchability and ill-matched marriage through his four volumes of short stories. Manohar Malgonkar has published three collections of short stories which deal with army life and hunting.

Ruskin Bond is another prominent contemporary short story writer who has brought out a number of short story collections like *Neighbor’s Wife* (1966), *My first Love and other stories* (1968), *The Man Eater of Manjeri* (1972) and *The Girl from Copenhagen* (1977). But he is confined to a particular locale and the events taking place there. Manoj Das, a contemporary of Ruskin Bond writes about the dreamy quality and the ethereality of atmosphere in his short stories. Margaret Chatterjee, K.N. Daruwalla and Shiv K.Kumar are the Indian English poets who have made significant name as short story writers.

When the short story was immensely developing during the Gandhian era and the post-independent era, women’s voice started becoming an inevitable part of Indian literature. Before the twentieth century, woman was confined to the four walls of the kitchen without any worldly knowledge. With Gandhiji’s clarion call of ‘Swaraj’, woman started crossing the threshold of her house and thus began the renaissance of Indian
woman. The modern women became more aware of their potential and started taking strides with the fast changing scenario of life. But they faced a lot of hurdles created not only by men but also by other women which was captured in the works of women writers. Thus from 1960s women’s voice became an inexorable part of Indian literature. They became more conscious of their self identity and their status in the society. A good number of women writers entered the literary scenario to make their voice audible to the society. In 1960s feminism whose aim was to gain equal rights and opportunities for women in the male dominated society was in full swing. This feminism got focused through the works of the women writers.

For a woman her works are no less a process of self actualization as her life is. In both, she wrestles with a host of obstinate paradigms and syndromes, precipitated by not just the myths, legends or the collective memory of the inherent conservative elements within a community, but equally with the ones thrown up by the movement of feminism itself. (Lakshmi Kannan 37)

Thus women started contributing a lot to the genre of short story and became famous all over the world. It may also be because of the English language in which they chose to write. Thus emerged a new class of women writers in the post-independent era who began to explore new sexual mores, fresh possibilities in human relation, marriage and motherhood. These women writers were out-spoken and expressive in their thoughts and vision. Notable among them is Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, a Polish by parentage, a German by birth, an English woman by education and an Indian by marriage. She wrote four volumes of short stories: Like Birds, Like Fishes & Other Stories (1956), How I Became Holy Mother & Other Stories (1964), A Stronger Climate (1968) and An Experience of India (1972). Her gloomy vision of India which she calls ‘a country of heat and dust’ is portrayed in her short stories.

Nergis Dalal published a single volume of her short stories The Nude (1977) which is out of print at present. Arun Joshi and Anita Desai talk about deep hidden human motives and emotions. In her Games at Twilight and Other Stories (1978) Anita Desai has talked about the subjects like temperamental differences in married life, psychological complexes and social sensibilities. In the last two decades there has been a rapid growth of Indian women writing in English. Most of them are educated middle class women who express their discontent through their writings. They have written
about the plight of women trapped in the institutions such as child marriage, dowry, forbid of women’s education, arranged marriages and enforced widowhood. Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Shoba De and Namta Gokhale take us into the bedroom of their characters focusing on their behavioral patterns and the factors that account for their unconventionational actions.

Women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of enduring self sacrificing women towards women searching for identity. Their women characters can no longer be defined in terms of their victim status. Instead of restricting the lives of women to one ideal, they depict the diversity of women and the diversity within each woman. Thus they try to make the society aware of women’s demands giving way to self expression.

Shashi Deshpande is the other major prolific contemporary short story writer who has five volumes of short stories to her credit. She deals with women’s problems such as marital discord, separation, depression in love, boredom, lack of understanding in marital life. Though her protagonists are not feminists they give more importance to reconciliation, stoicism and self denial. She depicts the inner trauma of her characters in such an apt manner that the readers feel as if they are sharing the agony of her characters except for a few stories like, “The Legacy”, “A Man and a Woman”, “A Rainy Day”, “A Liberated Woman” most of her protagonists are women.


Thus Indian English short story has traveled a long way making a break through by exploring new areas and techniques. Though modern Indian English short story has grown in variety and vitality, most of the writers have confined themselves to social scenes and events ignoring certain other burning issues of the day such as political
awakening and upheavals. Due to constraints of journalism some writers have added incisiveness and coherence to their stories but have lacked behind in terms of intricacy, subtlety and suggestiveness which can be easily predicted by any careful reader comparing their works to those of their counterparts in the West. On the whole it can be said that Indian English Short Story is standing at crossroads and hence has to strive invariably to arrive at safe destination overcoming the deficiencies and evolving measures of rehabilitation and effervescence.

When this is the condition of Indian English short story, the course of Telugu short story is entirely different. Andhra is the birth place of short story. Gods, demons, dwarfs, animals, birds and fanciful things formed the subjects of mother’s tales to their children. The short story has changed in form and content. The present day stories are based on a single incident. Every small problem in life is the subject of a short story. Bitter facts in life are reflected in short stories. Women’s physical and psychological state in the patriarchal society is described in short stories. The stories from 1926 to 1940 are about the national movement, prostitution, social reformation and the problems of Harijans whereas the stories from 1940 to 1960 have unemployment, labour problems, rationing and love marriages as their themes and the stories from 1960 to 1980 are concerned with sexual problems and women’s problems, class conflicts, revolution, poverty, bribe, nepotism, dowry, bride burning and social injustice. After 1980s till the present science fiction (RipWan Vinkle), stories based on technology and case studies (Yendomuri Veerendranath’s “Thulasi”, “Thulasidalam”) have gained importance. In Telugu short stories there are different forms such as novella, short story, mini story, galpika, sketch, one page story, column story and card story. Apart from this cinema stories and radio stories have emerged. Based on the subject different structures such as humorous stories, crime stories, political stories, reformatory stories, revolutionary stories, feminist stories and dalit stories have evolved.

The history of Modern Telugu short story began in 1910 with the publication of Gurujada Apparao’s ‘Diddubatu’ (Correction) in Andhra Bharathi. The themes of his stories were marriages of Kanyasulka, prostitution, married life of young wives with old husbands, widow marriages, widowhood due to more age gap in marriages resulting in adultery and illegitimate pregnancies, intercaste marriages, abortions, women education,
crimes on women, women taking up weapons for self protection, relief of women from domestic chores. He also wrote *Stooping to Rosie* in English which was translated into Telugu as *Samskartha Hrudhayam* [Heart of a Reformer] by Avasarala Subba Rao.

After Gurujada we have many short story writers like Kandakoori Veeresalingam Pantulu, Chilakamarti Lakshmi Narasimham, Rayasam Venkata Shiva, and Paanuganti. But their short stories were in no way different from the ordinary except the stories by Chintadeekshita. He was the first person to write about the lives of tribal people as his main aim was to write about their wandering life. His stories reveal his faith in traditional and cultural aspects and humour. Sripada Subramanya Sastri was another special Telugu Short story writer who wrote about the life of Andhras in a common language in his own style. In the words of Vallampati “he is the perfect Telugu short story writer who has acquired subject from Veeresalingam and narrative technique from Gurujada.” (qtd. Sastri 593) His short story “Kalupu Mokkalu” [Weeds] which talks about the moral decline of the society has carved a niche for itself in Telugu Short stories. His short stories “Illanti Thavaayi Vaste” and “Sagarasangam” (1931) can be classified as Dalith stories. These stories exemplify his foresight in the long run. His stories were in dialogue form without any narration. Veluri Sivarama Sastry, Kanchanavalli Kanakamba, Mokkapati Narasimha Sastry are some other prolific Telugu writers. Mokkapati’s writings have a blend of humour and style. Viswanatha Sathyanarayana is a famous poet, critic and novelist whose short stories though few in number stir up the mind.

Chalam was a writer who brought out a revolutionary change in Telugu short stories in terms of subject and style.

"Woman too has a body; it needs exercise. She has a brain; it needs knowledge. She has a heart; it needs experience" - This has been the basic theme that was repeatedly expressed affectionately, sincerely, forcefully and artistically in several of Chalam's stories, novels and essays. (qtd. Praveen Marthanda)

In his literary career which started in 1921, he depicted the strengths and weaknesses, mights and limitations of the women who tried to liberate themselves from the traditional shackles. The theme of his writings was the doctrine of free love expressed through the attack of the institution of marriage and through romantic feeling. *Quest, Jealousy, Aa Rathri* [That Night], *Prema Paryavasanam* [Consequences of Love],...
Satyam Sivam Sundaram [Truth, Soul & Beauty] are his short story collections. As quoted by Vallemperati,

Without Chalam it would have taken time to have Kodavaganti Kutumba Rao, Gopichand, Buchchi Babu, Ranganayakamma, Volga and Satyawathi in the Telugu literary scenario. (Sastri 595)

With sharpness and heat, he writes on what he believes is truth and supports the measures taken by both men and women to develop their personality. He also wrote about man-woman relationship, self-deceit, suppression in the name of chastity and the suppression of the untouchables. Through his stories he has severely criticized the practice of women exploitation and self-deceit in the name of loyalty. Motivated by progressive ideals he tried to break the walls in between man-woman relationship. In 1946 he wrote a dalit story “Harizana Samasya” [A Harizan’s Problem]. Thus he has occupied a unique place in short story literature. Suravaram Prathap Reddy, Kanuparthi Varalakshmamma, Srinivasa Siromani and Bhammidipathi Kameshwara rao are the contemporaries of Chalam who can be called as remarkable short story writers.

After Chalam, Adavibapiraju occupies a prominent place in Telugu short story. He also wrote some dalit stories such as “Sarasanna’s Daughter”, “Steps’ and reformatory stories such as ‘Blind Girl’ and ‘Tears’ in which he has pictured the realities of contemporary life.

Munimanikyam Narasimha Rao is a Telugu writer who can be compared to the English writer Beripain in the creation of unique characters. He wrote stories with humorous themes and presents an absorbing picture of middle class marital life. ‘Kantham’ is a well known character in Telugu literary scenario created by him around 1921-22 in a romantic story ‘Storm in a Teacup’.

Karunakumara originally called as ‘Kandukuuri Anantham’ was the writer who brought reality in the Telugu short story fiction. The pressures of caste, religion and relationship were his themes. The impact of Mahatma Gandhi and Unnava couple can be traced in his short stories. His Short story collections were Karaunakumara Kathalu [Karunakumara’s Stories] and Sannajeevulu [Downtrodden People]. Appalaswamy is the writer who had published six volumes of short stories called, Viswakathavedi [Dias of Global Stories]. Malladi Ramakrishnasasstry was a Telugu writer with the impact of
Western literature whose stories have human touch. The next writer who brought a twist in Telugu Short stories is Kodavaganti Kutumba Rao whose style of writing is to enter into the hearts of the readers directly. The themes of his stories are love, justice, man-woman equality, affection, conscience and social relations and are filled with simplicity, frankness and naturalism with the impact of Marxism. Sri Sri, the famous poet also wrote some short stories published as an anthology called Charama Raathri [The Last Night]. Some of his stories are humorous, while some others are ironical. His stories which show the other face of the society don’t have the spurt or the sharpness of his poems.

Tripuraneni Gopichand is a prolific short story writer who gave fresh lease of air to Telugu short story. He has many volumes of short stories to his credit like Bhaaryalone Undi [(Everything is in a wife]. In some of the short stories like “Hindu Paativratyam” [Chastity of a Hindu], “Pativratha Antharangikam” [Inner self of a chaste woman] he had mocked the ethical values of Hinduism whereas his “Dhaana Vaddhi” and “Bhaaryalone Vundi” discuss the irrational streaks of the human mind resulting in utter calamity. Palagummi Padmaraj was a writer of psychological aspect whose stories with unusual endings confuse the readers. His short story “Gaaliavaana” [Cyclone] which is considered to be influenced by Somerset Maugham’s “The Storm” bagged second prize in International short story competition held by New York Herald Tribune. Buchchibabu is a short story writer who writes with the unpredictable mind of human beings as his main theme. His novel Chivariki Migiledi [What will be left towards the End] was a masterpiece in modern Telugu literature and was an encyclopedia of different subjects like Indian Independence movement, caste system, communalism, socialism, Gandhian Politics and human relations. He portrays women as the designer of their own fate. The first writer to introduce folk style in his short stories is Madhavapeddi Gokhale who had published two short story collections Mooghajeevulu [Dumb people] and Bhallakattupaapayya [Pappayya working on a small Bridge]. His stories depict the life style and psychology of working class people with a reformatory perspective.

Chaganti Somayajulu known as ‘Chaso’ is a reformer and is compared to Russian writer Anton Chekhov in his writings. The aim of his stories was to initiate progressive thinking, creative subject building and social awareness. His writings were focused towards building self-confidence in Indian women. Rachakonda Viswanatha was a writer
who was a lawyer by profession and reflected his profession in his works. He wrote about the psychology of the middle class people. Mullapudi Venkataramana was a humourous writer who has created famous characters such as ‘Budugu, Seegana Prasoonamba, Appa Rao, Radha Gopalam, and Two-plaited Sita.’ He is known for his hilarious style of writing. As pointed out by Bhagyalakshmi,

The stream of consciousness, psychoanalysis, the studies of Jung and Freud did influence short story writers and novelists. Kodavaganti Kutumba Rao, Buchchi Babu, Gopichand, G.V. Krishna Rao, Rachakonda Viswanadh Sastri and others experimented with language, expression and characterization.

Kalipatnam Ramarao hailed as ‘Kara Master’ who strived hard for the accuracy in short stories can be compared to Chaso. His stories are incisive reflections of the social structure, conditions and class system of his time. Most of his stories were revolutionary in style. Madhuranthagam Raja Rao was a writer who wrote about the rural beauty of Chittoor district. He was a writer searching for human values and was against the barriers between human relations. Devarakonda Balagangadhar Tilak was a poet and a short story writer who analyzed life from a different perspective and pictured unimaginable conditions with compassion. Pooranam Subramanya Sharma was the editor of Andhra Jyothi Weekly and strove for the development of short stories. Kethu Viswanatha Reddy is a writer who writes about the social, economical, complex human relationships in Rayalseema Region. His stories won’t let the readers sleep but stir them up.

Along with these men writers there were some prominent women writers who wrote for the cause of women. Women’s education in India began during the pre-independence period with Gandhiji’s clarion call of Swaraj. This education inculcated a sense of individuality and awareness among women. The three major movements namely the social reform movement started by Veeresalingam Panthulu, the independence movement under the leadership of Gandhi and the library movement under the leadership of Ayyanki Venkataramayya led to the increase of women writers. Women writers started looking at the society around them and recorded it in their writings. Because of widening education, growth in publishing opportunities and increase in number of newspapers and magazines that catered to reader’s craving, 1960s and 1970s witnessed a spurt of women’s writings.
But Bhandaaru Achchamamba (1874) was the first writer to write a modern Telugu Story, “Dhanatrayodasi” published in Hindu Sundari monthly in 1902. It dealt with a modern theme of a wife trying to correct her husband similar to the theme of Gurujada Apparao’s “Diddubhatu” [Correction]. If Apparao’s story was idealistic and amusing, Achchamamba’s was practical and humourless. She wrote Abala Sachcharitra Ratnamala [Remarkable Stories of Women] which included the biographies of 34 outstanding women in various fields. Apart from that she also wrote many essays, poems and articles which were published in Hindusundari and Saraswathi magazines. In her short stories and articles she severely criticized men for degrading the status of women. In another article “Vidyavantulagu Yuvathulakoka Vinnapamu” [An Appeal to Educated Women] she discussed the importance of women’s education and the measures to promote it. “She was not only the first story writer but also the first feminist historian who produced progressive writings with feminist awareness even one hundred years ago.” (Kondaveeti Satyavathi n. pag.)

Illindla Saraswathi Devi (b.1918) is the senior women short story writer of Telugu Genre writing since 1934. Born and brought up in the Eastern Coastal Region of Andhra Pradesh she used colloquial dialect in her earlier stories written in 1940s. Her stories were published in journals such as Bharati and Sujatha. Panduga Bahumanam [Festival Gift], Akkarakuvachchina Chuttam [A Helpful Relative] and Muthyalu Manasu [Muthyalu’s Heart] are her collections of short stories. Her short story collection Swarnakamalalu is the winner of Central and state Sahitya Akademy awards. Her stories reflect the life of the middle class people. She was also the winner of ‘Gruhalakshmi Award’ for the best woman writer in 1964 and ‘A.P. Sahitya Akademy Award’ for literature in 1974.

The next woman writer of equal prominence was Achanta Sarada Devi (1922) whose first short story was published in the journal Chitraangi in 1945. There was emptiness and desolation about the vision of life provided in her stories. Influenced by Rabindranath Tagore and Devulapalli Krishna Sastry, she admired the work of Anton Chekhov and Katherine Mansfield. She has five collections of short stories to her credit: Pagadaalu [Corals], Paaripoyina Chiluka [Escaped Parrot], Okanaati Athithi [One day Guest], Mariichika [Mirage] and Vaanajallu [A Drizzle]. She was the recipient of
Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademy Award. Like the themes of Shashi Deshpande of English her themes are of philosophical and ponderous nature submerged in a pensive mood.

Bhanumathi Ramakrishna (1925) was a talented writer with a number of stories to her credit. Her *Atthagaari Kathalu* [Mother-in-law’s Stories] bagged her ‘Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Academy Award’. Her autobiography *Nalo Nenu* was published in English as *Musings*. Dwivedula Visalakshi (1929) was a notable writer who had 13 novels, 4 anthologies of short stories and an anthology of essays to her credit. She analyses the themes like wealth and death from a new perspective. In her novel *Vaikuntapaali* she talks of adoption and in her *Maarina Viluvalu* she talks of the status of educated women in the society. She also discusses about women’s property called “Stridanam” in detail in her novels and short stories.

Nayani Krishna Kumari (1930) has made her name as a poet rather than a short story writer. Though few in number her short stories “Ayatha”, “Kavigari Bharya”, “Chilukatalli Pullindi” reflect her personality and attitude towards family and society and illustrate the endearing relationship between husband and wife. She has written 2 anthologies of poetry: *Agniputri* [Daughter of Fire, 1978] and *Em Cheppanu Nestam* [My Friend! What can I tell You? 1988], 2 collections of short stories: *Ayatha* and *Manamu Mana Puurvulu*, a historical anthology: *Andhra Katha Telugu Basha Charitra*, *Aparajitha*, An anthology of reviews: *Pariseelana* and a Travelogue: *Kashmira Deepakalika*.

Vasireddy Seethadevi (1932) had written 40 novels and 10 short story collections to her credit. She depicts the political scenario, societal behaviour of human beings at various levels and the concepts of development in her stories. Her *Mattimanishi* (Man of Earth) which reflects the mental state of young women was translated into 14 Indian and foreign languages by the *National Book Trust*. Her readers commented that ‘her stories played a decisive role in their lives.’ (Sivasankari 211)

Usharani Bhatia (1932) daughter of Kommuri Padmavathi Devi was a writer appreciated by Kalipatnam Rama Rao. According to him ‘she was a writer with social responsibility.’ (Interview by Nidadavolu Malathi) Her short story collection *Vanthena* [Bridge] talks of the contemporary problems in the society and the psychology of women.
She also wrote “Thandri”[Father], “Kuthuru”[Daughter], “Prathikaram”[Revenge], “Arunodhayam” [Sunrise], “Chittadivilo Chinnari” [Small Child in a Forest] and “Edgar Allen Poe” which are considered to be the prominent stories reflecting the lives of people.

Abburi Chaya Devi is a prominent writer who writes about the exploitation of women in the guise of family bonds. Her stories written after the western writer Stephen Jwig were published as an anthology called “Parichitalekha”. Her “Bonsai Bhatukulu” [Bonsai Lives] portrays the life of women who live mechanically under the control of family members.

Tenneti Hemalatha(1935) was a writer who in her Gaalipadagalu Neetibudagalu [Kites and Water Bubbles] took up the subject of prostitutes from a different perspective of their miseries, their abuse by men and the diseases they contracted. She has written 100 novels, 700 radio plays, 100 short stories, 10 stage dramas, 5 volumes of literary essays and 2 volumes of literary criticism. In 1980, she wrote Ramayana Vishavruksha Kandana [Objection to Ramayana Vishavruksha] in response to a book called Ramayana Vishavruksham [Ramayana – A Poisonous Tree] written by Muppala Ranganayakamma.

Thuraga Janaki Rani,(1936) grand daughter of Chalam started writing in 1951 at the early age of 15. Her first short story “Bhavisyamu” [Future] published in Krishnapatrika was about man-woman relationship. Her themes were centered around educated women. Her story “Jaganmatha” [Universal Motherhood] was about an unwed mother which captured the essence of womanhood.

Nidadavolu Malathi (1937) best known as a short story writer hosts a website www.thulika.net wherein she brings out eminent Telugu fiction translated into English. Muppala Ranganayakamma (1939) was a writer and critic who had the influence of feminism and Marxism on her. Gender equality and depiction of women’s family life in India were the main themes in her works. She has 15 novels and 70 short stories to her credit. She had written Ramayana Vishavrukshamu criticizing the epic Ramayana. “Palletooru” [Village], “Aarthanadham”[Scream], “Manamiddarame Undham” [Let the Two of Us Live alone], “Vijaya” are some of her notable stories. She used a crude language to attack the exploitation of women which made Sriramamurthy (a critic) label her as an “angry [young] woman.” (Sriramamurthi 237) This was condemned by
Venkatasubbaiah who felt that it was natural for a woman suppressed for ages to burst out.

Study of women’s issues based on historical and sociological grounds started with Ranganayakamma. When a woman who has been oppressed and violated for centuries, questions our fraudulent values, we cannot expect those defiant questions to be in polite language. We must brace ourselves to be hurt. We are not qualified to dismiss those questions as angry outbursts. On the contrary we must ask ourselves why the voice is so loud and where those ferocious questions are coming from. (Vallampati 137)

Though Ramapati Rao (Manjusri, Pseud) has high regards for her writing he felt that the drawback in her stories was her athivada dhorani (fixed ideology) and lack of understanding of the society.

Srimati Muppala Ranganayakamma is an excellent writer. She has sharp imagination and brisk style. Although she has vigorous imagination, fierce ingenuity and inspirational style, she could not become a writer of the caliber of Premchand, Sarat and Tagore because of her fixated enthusiasm on her ideology and subsequent lack of understanding of the existing social structure. (Ramapati Rao 83)

Due to her themes which dealt with the oppression of women she was considered as the forerunner of feminism in Andhra Pradesh. In the context of Marxism, Ranganayakamma depicted women’s economic problems and oppression in her “Janaki Vimukthi” in 1978 itself. This was considered to be the “beginning of feminist writing in Telugu.” (Bhagyalakshmi xx) Yuddanapudi Sulochana Rani was a writer who was successful in terms of readership and financial success. But she was severely condemned by her contemporaries for writing escapist fiction and did not receive validation from the academy even till the 1970s. Her novels Jeevana Tharangalu [Waves of Life], Bandi[Vehicle], Premalekhalu [Love Letters] were appreciated by the readers. Her “Pelliprayanam” [Journey of Marriage], “Radha Padina Badha”[Problems That Radha Faced] were the notable stories.

P. Yashodha Reddy writing in the Telangana dialect has two anthologies of stories Maavoori Muchchattlu [Pleasantries of our Town] and Echchamma Kathalu [Stories of Echchamma – A Brahmin Sect] to her credit. Apart from these, she has
written numerous scholarly articles and books on language, culture and classical Telugu literature.

R. Vasundhara Devi is a modern writer who has beautifully pictured the internal and external thoughts of human beings. A blend of Virginia Woolf’s egalitarian philosophy and Catherine Ann Porter’s artistic skill can be viewed in her stories. Her philosophical search interlinked with life became her theme while death and loneliness were the issues involved in her stories. “Penjeekathi Avala” [The Other Side of Darkness] and “Cheruvu Daggara” [Near the Lake] are her prominent short stories.

K.Ramalakshmi, wife of the renowned poet Aarudhra is also a short story writer. Malathhi Chandur was the first women writer to write on modern themes. Her “Champakam-Cheedapurugulu” [Champak Flowers and White Ants] was the story of a girl whose parents exploited her due to her earnings and never allowed her to marry. She was also a columnist of *Pramadaavanam* in which she published a series of articles on foreign women writers and beauty and health tips.

Binadevi is a writer widely discussed since the 1960s. She received ‘Rachakonda Viswanatha Satry Award’ for writing in Raavi Sastry style. There are different rumours that a judge B. Narasinga Rao and his wife Balatripurasundaramma are jointly writing under the pseudonym of Binadevi. Another rumour is that B. Naringa Rao himself is writing under his wife’s name to circumvent some of the government rules. But ‘in public sources the actual writer is given as B. Balatripurasundaramma, wife of B. Narasinga Rao.’ (Ramalakshmi) Seelasubhadra Devi, Mukthevi Bharati, Vasaprabhavathi, Saradha, Sivaraju Subbalakshmi, Pavani Nirmala Prabhavathi(1939), Prolapragada Rajyalakshmi, C.Ananda Ramani, Vedula Shakuntala, I.V.S. Achyuthavalli(1943), D.Kameshwari, Govindaraju Seethadevi, K.V.Krishnakumari, Thamirasa Janaki, Indraganti Janakibala, Mandarapu V. Lalitha(1933) are the other major prolific short story writers.

The periodicals and newspapers are mainly responsible for the variety and volume of Telugu Short stories. The old generation women writers continued to publish their short stories in women magazines such as *Gruhalakshmi* and *Hindusundari. Andhra Patrika, Andhra Prabha, Bharati* and *Telugu Swatantra* started welcoming women writers. *Bharati* a milestone for its high literary standards featured women writers like Kommuri Padmavathi Devi, Illindla Saraswati Devi, R.Vasundhara Devi, Dwivedula
Visalakshi, Kalyanasundari Jagannath and Turagu Janakirani. *Telugu Swatantra* encouraged women writers like K.Ramalakshmi, Turaga Janakirani, P.Saraladevi and Ranganayakamma. Gora Sastry and Khasa Subba Rao editors of *Telugu Swatantra*, Puranam Subramanya Sharma editor of *Andhra Jyothi Weekly* were supportive of women’s writings in 1960s. *Sahiti, Swati, Tharuna* and *Jayasri* were the weekly and monthly magazines that were publishing women’s writing extensively. In 1960s female writers reached a status which was impacting the magazine circulations as a result of which the magazine editors started to accommodate the demands of the female writers like high remuneration, acceptance of incomplete works and publishing without editorial intervention. Arrepalli Vijayalakshmi comments on the rise in the writings of women writers as,

29 novels were written by females in the first quarter of 20th century. And by the 1960s the number rose significantly. Nearly 200 women have produced several thousands of novels. Regarding the female fiction in the post-independent period, [I must say] a peculiar phenomenon occurred. There is a major change [in the history of Telugu fiction]. (Vijayalakshmi 10)

This increased demand for the fiction of women writers made Sriramamurti comment,

Currently, women have been writing fiction like never before. The demand for fiction by females has increased tremendously. I think it is perfectly fair to label the present period as ‘navalaa yugam’ [female novelists’ epoch] and I mean it in both the senses. [The term navala has two meanings in Telugu “woman” and “fiction”] (234)

Thus periodicals and magazines played a major role in the growth and development of short stories in general and women writers in particular.

The stories written from 1980 onwards by the new generation writers are labeled as contemporary short stories or modern stories. Unlike the earlier writers, the present day writers wrote with a different theme and style giving importance not only to the social life but also to the regional language.

The stories of this period are of four types: regional stories (Rayalaseema stories, Nagavali stories, Vamsadhara stories), problem oriented stories (Telangana movement stories, Nallakaluvalu), stories reflecting religious, caste and professional recognition and
activation (Dalith stories) and stories representing women empowerment (Feministic stories).

For the last two decades Telugu short story has been moving ahead with rapid strides. Naveen, Mudiganti Sujatha Reddy, Yashoda Reddy and Kasila Prathap Reddy were the prominent writers already on the literary scenario. As pointed out by Dr. Kesava,

The decade of nineties in Telugu literature has got influenced by the struggles of Dalits, women and the people of the under-developed regions of Andhra. It has provided new language to Telugu literature. (31)

Modern Telugu literature is influenced by various movements from time to time. In the last two decades of 20th century Feminism and Dalit movement came to the forefront strongly changing the direction of literature. Writers like Allam Rajaiah, Raghothama Reddy, Kaluva Mallaiah, Kathi Padma Rao and Yendluri Sudhakara Rao are in the forefront of Dalit literature. Similarly Volga, P.Satyavati, Jayaprabha, Kondepudi Nirmala, Vasantha Kannabiran, Kuppili Padma, Abburi Chaya Devi are shaping the opinion of the people in favour of feminism questioning the values of patriarchal society that oppress women. Among them Katyayani Vidmahe and Volga are in the forefront. Many short stories and short story collections reflecting the contemporary approaches have evolved. Many feminist stories have been published under the editorial ship of Jayadheer Thirumala Rao. Volga is a feminist writer who writes in a rebellious way. She has published four volumes of feminist stories such as Raajakeeya Kathalu, Prayogam Bhinna Sandarbhalu and Mrunmayanaadham and urges the women to come out of their male domination and family bondage. Kuppili Padma’s “Masigudda” [Waste cloth] rebels on the condition of housewives. Other contemporary feminist writers are K.Varalakshmi, K.B.Lakshmi, B.Padmaja, Mrunalini and Indraganti Janakibala. Endhluri Sudhakar’s The story of the untouchables had a different style and portrayed the other aspect of dalitism. Bhargavi Rao published a dalit short story collection Inkana - Ikapai Chelladu. [Still? Can’t continue hereafter] Thus the short story genre is expanding in a multifaceted manner. It makes us foresee its bright future elevated to the International standards with the intention of “Bringing together Men and Mind.” (Rama Rao Muse India)
When this is the evolution of Telugu short story, the course of Tamil short story was different in its own way. Tamil Short story had its origin in the old epics of Tamil Literature. It was even found in the middle age and the middle stone age. It was believed to be the oral literature transferred from generation to generation without any written form. An Italian father Veeramamunivar learnt Tamil and started writing short stories in Tamil. His Paramartha Guru Stories published in 1845 was the first Tamil Short story of its kind. Katha Sinthamani published by Sri Chandravarnam Pillai in 1875, Vinodharasa Manjari published by Veeraswami Chettiar in 1877, Abhinava stories by Selva Kesavarayar were the steps in the development of Tamil Short stories. Bharathiyar wanted to develop Tamil Short story fiction and translated 11 stories of Rabindranath Tagore into Tamil. His short story collections were published under the titles Navatantra stories and Kathaigottu. But the stories in these collections had neither the style nor the features attributed to short stories.

V.O.C. Iyer hailed as ‘The father of Tamil Short Stories’ wanted to develop the short story fiction in the range of Gokhal, Edgar Allan Poe and O.Henry. Being a Tamil Professor, he was the first short story writer who followed the style of short stories and wrote the best short stories in Tamil. The short stories which were published earlier did not have the features of short stories. Though short in length they explained the all the incidents in the life of a man or a woman with a good ending. Like the present day short stories they did not start from any point concentrating on a single feature with a single emotion or thought. The short story was well developed abroad had its development in Tamil in the Twentieth century only. The period of short story genre in Tamil Literature can be divided as, pre-dark period, dark period, manikodi period; Kalki and Anna period and modern period. The last part of nineteenth century and the early period of twentieth century upto 1927 in which there were great short story writers like Va.Vee.Su. Iyer, Taandavaraya Mudaliyar, Selvakeesavaraya Mudaliyar is termed as the pre-dark period. 1927-33 is hailed as the dark period in the Tamil short stories where much of the literary output is not found. As Rambai puts it, “From 1927-1933 there was a dark period in the Tamil short stories.” (395) The period after 1933 in which the Tamil short stories flourished is called as the Manikodi Period. The writers of this period were called as the Manikodi group. Pudhumaiipittan, B.S.Ramaiah belonged to this group. In the same
period there were some other prolific short story writers like Kalki and Annadurai who contributed a lot to this genre and hence it is called Kalki and Anna Period. The period from 1950s in which the Tamil short story was enriched by the writings of Akilan, Ku.Alagiriswamy, La.Caa. Ramamritham, Jayakanthan, Chudamani Raghavan and Ambai was called as Modern Period.

K.Vridhachalam with the pseudonym Pudumaipittan was hailed as the King of Tamil Short stories and Mapasan of Tamilnadu. He picturised the cruelties of society in his short stories and inspired the thoughts of everyone. He gave new form to short stories by eliminating old words which were not in use and by introducing new words. He wrote the realities of life as he saw and felt with irony and humour. Pathos of the poor and social problems was the recurring themes of his stories.

Though C.Rajagopalachari wrote many stories for the benefit of the society, he was not adept at using different techniques of the short story. His “Annaviym Pithavum” [Mother and Father] talks of the ingratitude of an educated man towards his parents. K.P.Rajagopalan was the second person who strove for the development of short stories. His stories follow the style and grammar of the modern short stories. He was a revolutionary writer who used to pinpoint the cruelties of the society in his stories. Psychology and fiction used to play a prominent role in his stories. He is adept at describing the emotional feelings, the happiness and worries of the family life. His short story “Thirai” [Screen] depicts the yearnings of a widow and “Vidiyuma” [Will it Dawn?] portrays the effects of fate. His anthology Kanamale Kadal [Love without Seeing] is a collection of historical stories. He was the writer to enrich the short stories and elevate them to International status. He reshaped the structure and theme of modern short story.

The editor of Manikodi magazine P.S.Ramayya wrote more than 300 stories and most of them are reformatory. The short stories of Kalki with more emphasis on coherence of theme, unexpected ending and emotional feelings took the readers into an imaginary world. Mouni’s short stories which had a different style, theme and narrative technique were not understood by the readers on the first reading. N. Pichchamoorthy’s “Mullum Rojavum” [Thorns and roses] and “Kolubommai”[Dolls in a parole] are heart rendering stories. In T.Janakiram’s short stories which had very good style, handled irony
and satire in an adept way and picturised complete characters. Jayakanthan who entered
the short story genre in the 1960s criticizes the wounds created by the financial crisis in a
satirical way. In some of his stories he contrasts the life in the huts to the rich life in the
bungalows. The writers of the 1970s concentrated on the interpretation of life rather than
plot.

There are some writers who write by sitting at home and observing the lives of
people without getting involved in the political uproars or the reformations. In
fact the political uproars and reformations in the society are like the roaring waves
on the surface of the sea. As the bottom is always calm, the happiness and
sorrows in the society are quite normal. Some people have the natural ability to
feel them and put them in words. (Varadharajan 342)

K.Chandrasekhar’s “Pachchai Kili” and “Kannilladha Kabhodi” and the stories of
T.N.Kumaraswamy belong to this type. Akhilan, Kalki Janakiraman are the prominent
writers in the 1940s. The prominent short story writers of the post independent era are
Rajaji, Lakshmi, Chudamani Raghavan, Rajam Krishnan, Jayakanthan, Saroja
Ramamoorthy, Lakshmi Subramanyam, Komagal, N.Parthasarathy, R.V.Annadurai,
Ashokamitran, and Ambai. Akhilan enriched the genre for 37 years right from his first
story “Mitiyaal Matiyaal” in 1938 to “Kaakkai Virattaponaval” in 1975 which have been
published in 16 volumes after his death.

Magazines played a vital role in the development of short story as a genre of
English Literature. Manikodi started by Sri. K.Srinivasan had the development of short
story as its aim. As Parthasarathy commented, “Manikodi was a ladder for the rapid
growth of Tamil short story.” (Parthasarathy). The magazines such as Elzutthu,
Kalaimagal, Dheepam, Kalki, Anantha Vikathan, Sudhesi Mithran helped for the
development of short stories. Next to Manikodi, Elzutthu Oolziyan strove for the
development of short stories in 1930s. During the same period Mangai published stories
with widow remarriage and women education as its themes. Apart from these there were
certain magazines which were run exclusively for women by both men and women. The
first magazine of this kind was Penmathi Bodhini started in 1891 followed by
Chakravarthini started in 1905. In 1909 Hitakarni was started by Pandit Visalakshi
Ammal followed by Penn Kalvi run by Revu Thayaramma from 1912. In 1924
Chintamani was started by Balammal followed by Jagan Mohini in 1924 by Vai.Mu.Ko.
But all these journals and magazines stressed on the general code of behaviour to be followed by women giving utmost importance to womanhood, chastity, motherhood and virtues like patience, endurance, etc. During this period *Maandhar Marumanam* was started by Maragathavalli Ammal in 1936 to plead for the cause of widows. Apart from these there were the journals like *Mangai, Kalaimagal, Kumudini, Rani* and *Dinamani Kadir* which strove both for the growth of short stories and for the cause of women.

There were so many women writers who wrote on the psychological turmoil of women, the domestic problems and the sensitive issues in their lives. Kothainayagi Ammaiyyar belonged to this type. She ran a magazine and wrote many novels. After her many women entered this field. But in many of the critical works published by the scholars, women writers and their works between 1840 and 1940 were not mentioned. Actually during this period women not only published their works but also held editorial posts. The weeklies and monthlies published the work of women and showered prizes and acclaim on them. But their works were not considered as a part of the mainstream literature or criticism. The reason was that their works were considered to deal with political issues only and was considered to be oblivious to socio-political issues. But in fact the women writers of that era were not carried away by the fancies of change and were concerned with their knowledge and experience. They wrote what they felt right about their culture and tradition.

Krupa Sattianadhan wrote two novels: *Saguna* in 1886 and *Kamala-A Hindu Wife* in 1896. Kamala was the first English novel to be translated into Tamil. It was translated by Samuel Bowel and was serialized in *Nanbar Vattam* magazine around 1893. Those were the days when the country was beset with problems of poverty, degradation and injustice and girls were considered as slaves. In such a situation the novel reflected the realities of life with intelligent dialogues and self searching questions. In 1897 Rajathiammal wrote a novel called *Gnana Prakashini* which reflected the fears of people against social upheaval in the wake of the social reforms. The women writers of that age believed that a novel’s strength lay in what it said. In 1905 Pandit Visalakshi Ammal brought out a magazine called *Hitakarni* which expressed strong views on how a girl should conduct herself, her duties and her education. Many stories and essays on the development of women were written. On the whole, women writers created feminine
characters which gained social approval. In 1906 Devakunjiammal in her novel *Vijayalakshmi* which was serialized in *Chakravardhini* criticized the corruption of Deputy Collectors, Tahsildhars and bureaucrats. Hence it is proved that ideas of social reform were known to women writers of that age.

In 1912, Meenakshi Sunderammal in her novel *Jayasheelan* criticized the flaws of Brahmin community with its outmoded rituals and suggested the need for reforms. She also commented that lack of education was the reason for the inferior status of women. On the contrary Rajambal wrote of women in a despairing manner. In her novel *Nagarathnam* (1909) she commented that women were the enchanting demons who seduced men to sin. Those were the days when there was an opinion that educated women would not be obedient to men or conduct themselves well. It was also feared that if the blind beliefs of Hinduism were swept away through education it would destroy their religion. During this period Gajambika in her novel *Gnanammal* talked of women’s rights and emphasized that a woman was not a doll but a living being with emotions and rights.

In 1912, Revuthayaramma published a magazine *Penkalvi* which discussed child marriages, dowry, child widowhood, women’s education, etc. The beginning of 20\(^{th}\) century was a period of renaissance in which Kodainayakiammal held an important place. She was the driving force behind women writers who broadened their outlook and helped them to break out the orthodox restraints. Through her magazine *Jaganmohini* she encouraged many women to write. She also expressed her ideas in the form of essays, stories and conversations and wrote warm, agreeable stories along with detective stories. Learned persons like Rajaji contributed articles to this magazine. Publishing many crucial issues in the lives of women, along with national and cultural affairs it introduced many writers like Gugapriyai, Kamala Padmanabhan, Jayalakshmi Srinivasan, Kamala Shadagopan, Vasumathi Ramaswamy and Ranganayaki. Her novel *Padmasundaram* translated into Malayalam was the first novel to be translated into a different language. She supported widow remarriage, eradication of untouchability and advocated the purchase of swadeshi goods and remarriage of virgin widows. She discussed the ban on foreign goods in her *Vazhkaiyinnadham* alias *Vanakuyil*, the distressing spectacle of marriage with much age gaps in *Veeravasantha*, pathos of widows in *Shyamalananthan*
and *Unarchivellam*, the life of prostitutes in *Jeeviya Shuyal*. Apart from the above said themes she also talked about unemployment and corruption and hence was hailed as the ‘Queen of Novels’.

Sister Girija Devi wrote *Mohanaranjani* alias *Samugasthotram* which strongly deals with the problems of Brahmin widows, child marriages, and adherence to blind beliefs. It was the time when Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy abolished the Devadasi system and child marriages through the legislature. In 1936 Maragathavalliammal published *Mathar Marumanam* [Remarriage of women] which openly supported widow remarriage and other social reforms. Gugapriyai who entered the literary world in 1935 was the pioneer of modern Tamil literature and the first woman writer to win a prize from *Anandavikatan* and her essays first appeared in *Chintamani* started by Balambal in 1935. Though she was a liberal thinker who welcomed any improvement in mankind, she did not approve of writing sexual parity in the name of modernity. She was a good writer using idiomatic expressions in a simple language and her precision, structure and use of literary devices were obvious in her novels and short stories. She wrote a number of short stories along with novels.

Kamala Padmanabham writing under the pseudonym of Tamarai, Jalaja, Pankajam and Kumari had 70 short stories, 10 novellas, some English short stories and essays to her credit and concentrated on family stories, human consciousness and ideals. *Chettinadu* magazine published from Karaikudi in 1938 contained some of her novels and the magazines such as *Jagannmohini, Kaveri, Grihalakshmi, Bharatamani* and *Kalaimagal* welcomed her short stories. After her death at the age of 32, a collection of her short stories *Vasantha* appeared in 1946 in which she lamented about the evil of dowry. With simple and engaging narrative technique, she feels for the down-trodden in “Alagayi”. Some other important stories of hers were “Ubaya Kalathiram”, “Chachuvin Sambandam”, “ICS Mapillai” and “Dr.Nethra”. The other prolific short story writers were K.Sunderambal, Padma Seshadri, Venkatalakshmi, M.S.Kamala, C.R.Saroja, Jayalakshmi Srinivasan, Vasumati Ramaswamy, Kumudini and Visalakshi. Ranganayaki Thatam the daughter of well-known writer Gonasthai started writing under the pseudonym of ‘Kumudini’ after translating Tagore’s *Kumudini* into Tamil. She wrote many essays, short stories, novels, travelogues and plays relating to women and was the
first women translator. But she attached much importance to marriage and chastity. Jayalakshmi Srinivasan, a writer from Karnataka started writing in 1927-28 and wrote essays on child care, rural development, and social welfare. She also wrote for Kannada magazines and translated some stories from Tamil to Kannada and vice-versa. Ambuja translated Premchand’s *Sevasadan* and Thulasidas’ *Ramcharitamanas* into Tamil. Vasumati Rameshwaran, the editor of *Bhagyalakshmi* and *Rajyalakshmi* government magazines wrote 80 short stories, several essays and plays. *Panithirai* [A Screen of dew], *Kaveriyodhu Kalanda Kadal* [Love mixed with Kaveri] and *Rajakka* were the collections of her short stories. In 1940 Saroja Ramamoorthy in the name of C.R.Saroja wrote several short stories on contemporary problems. *Kuyilosai, Navarathri, Annai, Dandanai, Verum Goodhu* were some of her short story collections. She is a writer of modern outlook who strongly opposes issues like imposing chastity and on women but she does not reflect these ideas in most of her stories. The reason was that she made certain compromises with her stories to see that they get published. In the year 1940 K.Savitriammal, K.Saraswathiammal, Gowriammal, K.P. Sethuammal started writing in *Kalaimagal* attributing the traditional framework within which a woman has to live. According to them a woman should carry with her the virtues of sacrifice, self-effacement, tolerance, patience no matter even if she dies of the sacrifice. Savithriammal and Vishalakshiammal the two sisters under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi felt and wrote against remarriage of widows and attached great importance to marriage. But K.P. Sethuammal sister of Ku.Pa.Ra challenged the then existing tradition by remarrying after her widowhood and wrote on the plight of the widows. Gowri Ammal was a writer writing in the pre-independence era who felt and wrote about the importance of the role of a mother for a woman. Further she was a writer who had the idea of caste-discrimination. Vai.Mu.Kodainayagiammal who wrote more than 115 novels was a strict Gandhian and traditional. She was the editor of *Jaganmohini* and wrote on all the issues arising in the then society. In almost all her stories, she punished the widows who got remarried by allowing them to commit suicide after making them realize their mistake. As Lakshmi points out, “Death by fire and under military trucks and cars seem to be the modern ‘Sati’ devised by the authors.” (C.S. Lakshmi 123)
Gugaipriyai, an active member in Tamil writer’s Association, an editor of two magazines felt that literary growth and advice to the younger generation should be the goal of the magazines. A Gandhian with reservations on certain issues her writings advised women to abide by service, motherhood, chastity and wifehood. Jyothirlatha Girija in her “Thelivu” questioned why widows should remarry when there were so many unmarried virgins and advised the widows to channelise their thoughts somewhere else.

Thiripura Sundari alias Lakshmi wrote many novels like Kanchanaiyin Kanavu, Thottathu Veedu and Mithila Vilas. A doctor by profession she was exposed to a different kind of experience and tried a lot to change the condition of widows. But her writings did not deviate from the traditional norm and reflected her emotions. Though her heroines were working women their final goal was marriage. She never wrote her own experiences of professional exploitation and professional struggles. But surprisingly her first story written in 1940 was of a widow.

Tamarai Kanni was a writer who wrote stories on the importance of Tamil, on social evils like old men marrying young girls and on the suppression of women. Another writer of the 1930s is Vasumati Ramaswamy who feels that writing can be used as a weapon to bring about changes in attitudes. According to her education in a girl helps her to bring up her children well and spread the ideas of patriotism, sacrifice and simplicity.

Rajam Krishnan was an outstanding writer of the 1950s who felt that a woman’s status and freedom must be viewed in the context of women’s education, culture and tradition and not by questioning the family system. Her stories revealed that marriage and security are inevitable for a girl. She wrote Penkural, Malargal Amudhamagi Varuga, Kurinji Then and Valaikaram. Valaikaram was based on Goa’s independence fight and Kurinji Then was based on her experiences with the scheduled tribes in Ooty. Chudamani Raghavan and Vasumathi Ramaswami were the writers who excelled in both novel and short story forms. Such writers who rebelled at the society and created revolutionary stories were rare and the way they looked at the changes in life, its ups and downs and problems was akin to living in a garden and looking at its changes.

Like Tamil and Telugu short stories Kannada short story too had its origin in the periodicals. The earliest examples of Kannada short stories were Panje Mangesh Rao’s “Bharata Sravana” (The Recitation of the Mahabharata) and “Kamalapurada Hotlinalli”
published in 1900 in a monthly called *Subhasini* and hence Panje Mangesh Rao was hailed as the pioneer in the field of Kannada Short stories. After Panje, M.N. Kamat wrote a few stories belonging to the pre-history of Kannada short story. But in fact Kannada short story became a distinct literary genre due to the efforts of Mast Venkatesa Iyengar (b. 1891) whose first story appeared in 1911 in *Madhuravani*. Writing under the pseudonym of ‘Srinivasa’ he was hailed as ‘Maasti Kannadada Aasti’ [Maasti is Kannada’s Treasur] and was honoured with ‘Jnanapith Award’ and the title ‘Rajasevasakta’ by the then Maharaja of Mysore Navadi Krishnaraja Wadeyar. His *Keluvu Sanna Kathegalu* [Some Short Stories] was the first noted work in Modern Kannada literature. “Dombara Chenni”, “Kaagegalu”[Crows], “Ranganna Maduve”[Ranganna’s Marriage] were some of his anthologies. His other prominent stories were “Navaratri” [Nine Nights] and “Sri Rama Pattabhisheka” [Sri Rama’s Coronation].

Kannada short story writers belonging to the pre-independence era labeled as ‘Navodaya’ [New Awakening] were imbibed with Gandhian ideals, humanistic concerns and a positive vision of individual potential in a society. During the peak of the Navodaya period M.V.Seetharamaiah started writing short stories under the inspiration of Maasti Venkatesh Iyengar. he was a multi-talented personality: poet, novelist, painter, musician, literary critic, researcher, dramatist, essayist and biographer and had penned 12 collections of poems, 10 collections of short stories, 9 novels, 4 collections of essays and 9 plays. His short stories carry a liberal message of love for surroundings, nature and mankind.

The period between 1950 and 1970 labeled as Navya (Modern) was entirely different from Navodaya. They wrote about social pressures on individuals, their disillusionment, boredom and impotence. Yashwant Chittal, Ramachandra Sharma, U.R.Ananthamoorthy, P.Lankesh and Santinath Desai were the prominent writers of this period who dealt with traditional values in conditions which they doubted. They felt that the question of identity was the need of the hour. U.R.Ananthamoorthy was one of the greatest short fiction writers who attempted to test traditional values in the present context. His anthology *Prasne* contains his best short stories “Ghatashraddha” which describes the tragedy of a young preganant widow from a boy’s view point. His *Mouni*
includes the stories like “Navilhallu” [Peacocks] and “Clip Joint”. In his short stories he attempted to test the traditional values in the context of the present. Ramachandra Sharma and Shantinath Desai refused to accept the old moral attitudes and explored the psychology of their characters and unveiled their unconscious desires and motivations. P.Lankesh discussed the corrupt nature of the man and the society in his writings. Yashawant Chittal wrote about the pressure of the outer world on the individual which bewilders him and makes him introspective. Some of the Navya writers felt the need for a change. They felt that a real new literature can be born through a total change of political, social and ideological aspect. As a result the short story again shifted its centre from the individual to the society.

The period from 1970s onwards was called Navyottara [post modernist] in which the writers sought to fulfill a more socially responsible role. Poornachandra Tejaswi and Devanur Mahadeva were the prominent writers of this age. Devanur Mahadeva wrote about the experiences of the oppressed and introduced Dalith sensibility in Kannada short stories and paved way for writers like Mogali Ganesh who explored the subject further. His Marikondavaru [Those who sold Themselves] and Mudala Seemeli Kole Gile Ityadi [Murder in the Eastern Region] portray a realistic account of the life of the daliths. Poornachandra Tejaswi’s “Abachurina Post Office” [The Post Office at Abhachur] narrates the repercussions of setting up a post office at Abachur, “Kubi Mattu Iyala” describes the combats of a doctor with the superstitions of villagers and “Tabarana Kathe” decries bureaucracy. He believed that a new literature can be born only through political, social and ideological change.

In 1970s a group of Muslim writers like Abdul Rasheed, Bolwar Mohammed Kunhi, Sara Abubakar and Fakir Mohammed Katpadi wrote about the cadences of small town Muslim life in their writings. ‘The Bandaya movement’ of 1980s and 90s produced vital writers like Kum.Veerabhadrappa who satirically explored the inequalities of the prevailing social order. Raghavendra Patil focused on the ordinary man who has no concern for the post-independence reality and produced colourful and eccentric characters. Jayanth Kaikini was a clever and witty writer who picturised the class and individual aspirations and despair. M.S.K.Prabhu was a unique writer who wrote about the reminiscence of Kafta and Borge. Young writers like Ashok Hegde, Gopalakrishna
Pai, Sridhara Balagar, Nagaraj Vastare tried to capture the essence of global reality like booming IT sector, disintegration of family, migration of rural folk to the cities, degradation of biosphere, etc.

Of late a simplistic form of literature called the ‘Pragatishila’ (Progressive) meant for the common man gained popularity. The best known writers of this progressive movement were A.N.Krishna Rao, Basavaraja Kattimani and T.R. Subba Rao. A.N. Krishna Rao portrayed idealistic musician in his Sanyaraga. Basavaraj paid tributes to the heroes of the Quit India Movement in his “Madi Madidavaru” [Those who Did and Died] the tencity of a journalist in “Mannu Mattu Hennu” and immorality in religious institutions in “Mohada Baleyalli”. T.R. Subba Rao’s stories were intense and full of idealism but with a human face. He wrote about the problems of the under-privileged, down-trodden and the outcaste in “Purushavatara” and “Munjavininda Munjavu” and about the plight of the prostitutes in “Masanadha Hoovu”.

The sensibilities of Women Writers found new expression and they took up the same themes of history, social justice, family squabbles, suffering and questions of allegiance taken up by male writers but from a new perspective. But they have not gained due recognition in Kannada literature. Their works which included stories, translations, and essays were understandably dumped into the cellars were branded as ‘Kitchen Literature’. Prior to 1980 their names were mentioned only in the last paragraph of criticism. Akka Mahadevi, Kodagina Gowramma (or) Rajalakshmi, N.R. Rao were such writers. But people like Da.Ba.Kulakarni, Govinda Pai, and V.Seetharamaiah encouraged women’s writing and wrote encouraging criticism and foreword to their works which inspired women writers. As a result, works of Nanjanagudu Thirumalamba, Kalyanamma, Shyamaladevi, BeligireJanakamma, Ulluru Mkambikamma, Kodagina Gowramma were brought to light. Research was carried out on the works of Saraswathi Devi Gowdara, Saraswathi Bai Rajawade and Vani.

There were women writers even earlier to 1908. The first available inscription in Kannada dating back to 450 A.D. mentions about scholars like Saminirmidi. But Kannada women writers were found around 1160 only. As a part of the Veera Saiva movement in 12th century nearly 30 women wrote prose. The great writer Akka Mahadevi and many other writers like Helavanakatte, Giriyamma and Harapana Halli
Bhimavva, belong to this movement. During the Odeyar period women writers like Honamma (1680), Shringaramma (1685) and Cheluvamba (1725) belong to this period.

Women writers of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century chose the traditional themes and diction for their writings. C.R Chellamma, Venkatasubbamma, Shanti Bai and others wrote during this period. Raja Kalanidhi is a scholarly work of Chellamma. The two important writers who emerged between 1913 and 1953 are Thirumalamba and Thriveni. Kalyanamma, Jayalakshmi Srinivasan, Thirumale Rajamma and Mukambikamma are the other important writers. Thirumalamba was the first woman journalist and publisher in Kannada who began a publication series under the name *Satihtaiishini* and also edited the first magazine for women. She also brought out a magazine called *Sanmargadarshini* for children. Ulluru Moogambikamma wrote dozens of short stories and hundreds of poems out of which several poems were against tonsure of widows.

Kalyanamma was writer and journalist who started Shri Sarada Samaj in 1913 and published a magazine for women called *Saraswathi* for more than 4 decades. She also wrote novels, short stories, dramas, essays and portraits. Both Thirumalamba and Kalyanamma did not support widow remarriages but prescribed ascetic life for them. Jayalakshmi Srinivasan basically a short story writer had been publishing since 1927 and published 5 collections of short stories. Thirumala Rajamma was a writer whose areas of interest were journalism, translation, biographies and dramas and was attracted by historical and mythological themes. Saraswathi Bai Rajawade known as journalist, short story writer, essayist, translator, playwright and a poetess published nearly 70 stories after 1929. Shyamaladevi a writer, printer, editor and social worker had two collections of short stories to her credit. A writer having a deep concern for fellow human beings and looking with sharp insight at her environment, she has a great desire to change the society. As she could see both the darker and brighter side of life, her stories reflect a wider experience and knowledge of life and did not have overlapping of themes or repetition of backgrounds or monotones description.

H.V.Savithramma is a prominent short story writer and translator. Her first short story collection was published in 1949. Kodagina Gowramma was a prominent short story writer who wrote for eight years only. Her short stories posthumously published as
two collections had social evils such as caste system, sexual bias, dowry system and the plight of women as their themes. Padmavathi Chinnappa Rastogi, the personal secretary to Vijayalakshmi Pandit during 1939 published her collection of short stories Kodagina Hennu Mutthamma in 1948. She voiced the many delicate feelings and severe problems faced by an educated woman through her stories. Shyamala Belagaonkar was the first writer to write about the working women with sympathy and care. Her stories are the tales of gender discrimination, dowry problem, male-domination and women’s quest for a respectable life.

Anasuya Shankar known as Triveni started problematization of the gender questions in Kannada literature. She wrote about the emotional repressions of middle-class women. According to her women’s emancipation is possible only when their problems are recognized by men. She was the first Kannada writer to identify the intensity of women’s psychology.

N.Rajalakshmi was a writer who recognized the emotional repression of women in her anthology Sangama. She depicted how women suppressed their emotions in order to go by the society. Vaidehi, Tejaswini Niranjana, S.Usha, Prathiba Nandakumar, Vina Shanteshwar were the other prolific women writers. Among them Vaidehi and Veena portrayed bold, assertive women. Vaidehi was the post-modernist writer who depicted the plight of women in an indignant and rebellious tone. Her stories lament the gender discrimination in which she gave a call for social transformation. She was the recipient of Karnataka Shaitya Akademi Award, M.K.Indira Award and the Katha Award. Anupama Niranjana was a doctor by profession and wrote on important issues relating women.

In the thirties and forties women writers were facing problems of publishing their works. But there were editors and publishers who took special interest on women literature and encouraged women writers. Most of the Kannada women writers lacked proper education and could not pay proper attention to the literary skills and had faced opposition at the domestic level. There main themes were severe social problems, problems of widowhood, history and mythology. Lack of adequate social awareness and proper education delayed the entry of women writers in the literary scenario. The second generation of writers differed themselves from the first generation in their background, attitude, priorities, artistic values and literary forms they adopted. They identified
themselves with the women’s liberation movement rather than the literary movement. “Understandably, women writers in Karnataka associated themselves more with the cause of Women’s Liberation movement than with the literary movement.” (Vijaya Dabbe 30)

When the first generation writers fought for education to produce the home-maker, the second generation writers advocated economic independence. While former tried to save the widows from tonsuring their heads, the latter fought for widow remarriages. Thus there was shift in priorities and emphasis of the Kannada women writers.

In the field of short stories women writers entered the literary scenario much later than the men writers. Hence they did not have a legacy of their own to follow. Hence they had to follow the men short story writers who had set up a model by then. The impact of these men writers were found in the short stories of the women writers. To study this impact of the men writers on the women writers, men short story writers and their works have also been taken up for study. Most of the women writers were in the feminine phase just making their women characters fit in the roles ordained for women. There were some exceptional writers like Chudamani Raghavan, Shashi Deshpande and Volga who did not follow this trend blindly. These writers tried to demystify the ordained roles of a wife, daughter and daughter-in-law. They even deromantised the concept of Gruhalakshmi and queen of the kingdom through their writings. They can be compared to the Western feminist Betty Frieden who in *The Feminine Mystique* has demystified the dominant image of a happy American suburban housewife and mother. But Indian feminism is different from Western feminism. In India there are many laws favouring women like labour legislation act, the Hindu code bill, the dowry prohibition act and bills legalizing abortion. But they were not properly implemented since women dared not to make use of them. The reason was that they felt glorified in motherhood, being a docile wife and a daughter-in-law. Hence Indian feminism is entirely different from Western feminism and the Western theories of feminism can not be blindly applied to Indian situation. In India in the hoary past women given a prominent place and were really glorified. But gradually this situation changed and chaining the women in the ordained roles of women began. There were many men writers who tried to suppress women in the name of motherhood, docile wife like Sita and a humble daughter-in-law. Along with them were present some writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Chandu Menon, Gurujada
Apparao and Periyar who wrote for the emancipation of women. During the 1960s and 1970s due to the impact of education and growth in publishing opportunities there was a surge in women’s writing. Women started writing stories and poetry based on their experiences. During this period the myths about feminism brought about by Western Stereotypes began to fade and people started welcoming this kind of literature. Women writers started expressing their ideas about love and marriage, the problems they face in the changing scenario, the way in which they overcome these problems. The feminist ideas that entered in the 1950s gained momentum only in the 1980s. Women started exploring their identity through their writings. They shattered the barriers created by the patriarchal society and started expressing their own experiences. Through their stories and poems they questioned the politics behind their oppression. They discussed sexual politics, economic measures and globalization through their writings.

Women’s writing in Telugu literature can be classified into phases. The first phase is predominant in the society for a long period of time and is still present. It consists of literature which reflects the ideas of patriarchal society. In the second evolved literature which questioned the injustice meted out to women, gender discrimination and fought for the liberation and rights of women. The works of Ranganayakkamma belong to this phase. She depicted women’s economic problem’s and oppression in “Janaki Vimukthi” in 1978. This in fact was the beginning of feminist writing in Telugu. This phase is in full swing at present. The writers like Volga, P.Satyavathi, Jayaprabha, Kondepudi Nirmala, Vasantha Kannabiran, Kuppili Padma, Abburi CHayadevi started gaining public opinion in favour of feminism through their writings. The third phase has started only now. It is the phase of self realization. Literature which explores the inner self of women trying to find identity in the society and gain liberty developed in this phase. Only a few stories like Volga’s “Anveshi” belong to this category. Gogu Syamala’s “Nalla Poddu” which focused on women’s self awareness also belongs to this category. This phase is in development stage at present. Volga and Katyayani Vidmahe can be called as the writers of this phase. It is hoped to gain momentum in the future. But the intensity of feminism in Tamilnadu was very less. Very few writers like Periyar, Bharathi, Bharathidasan strove for the emancipation of women. As a result Tamil women
writers were not much influenced by feminism and their works can not be viewed from feminist point of view.

Due to the impact of feminism in the modern era many of the Telugu and Indian English women writers were portraying unconventional and modern women who tried to change the picture of docile, meek submissive role of a woman. They wrote whatever they felt like writing and did not bother about the approval of the society for their writings. But on the other hand Tamil writers during the period of Chudamani Raghavan were portraying a traditional and conventional woman who would gain social approval. The then Tamil women writers wrote for the traditional magazines. Hence they suppressed their real thoughts and feelings and wrote the stories that could be easily accepted by the editors. Hence they tried to portray traditional women within the framework of family with feminine characters. Surprisingly Chudamani Raghavan and a few other writers like Ambai and Rajam Krishnan were out of the ordinary in portraying modern women who daringly crossed the threshold of their family, thus voicing against the exploitation of women. But the Telugu women writers (the contemporaries of Volga) never wrote for money and there was a lot of demand for their works by the magazines. Hence they did not bother about the society and wrote freely on sex and exploitation of women. They did not wear the mask worn by Tamil women writers. Hence it was quite natural to see Volga as feminist revolutionary writer of the post independent era. Strngely when the Indian English Women Writers were also writing about the modernity and feminity of women, Shashi Deshpande never allowed her protagonists to cross the threshold of their homes. Though they rebel inwardly against the male domination and exploitation in the name of family and security they finally accepted life as it comes to them. There won’t be any change in the existing situation but the change would be in the perspective from which the problem is viewed at. This may also be due the impact of Kannada literature in which her father was a popular figure. The Kannada literature gave utmost importance to the traditional behaviour of women. When the contemporary writers of Chudamani Raghavan were giving utmost importance for chastity and were against widow remarriages, she was courageous to voice against widowhood and questioned why a widow is considered inauspicious when a widower is not? In her “Chirippu” a woman and a neighbourhood man get married around the same time. They
also lose their partners around the same time. But very soon preparations for marriage began in the man’s home. When the woman attends the marriage, her presence was considered inauspicious. She points out to the groom and says, “He is a widower. Isn’t he an inauspicious presence? But he is sitting on the dais. Send him away.” (21) Thus through the story Chudamani Raghavan voices that both for a widow and a widower the losses are equal and re-marriage is also on the equal footing of once-shared lives.

When the writers were attributing divine qualities to motherhood and elevating it to a level of fulfillment of womanhood, Chudamani Raghavan wrote stories that showed motherhood as a burden. She allowed her characters to marry thrice or get divorce from their husbands in order to safeguard their jobs. Chudamani doesnot try to portray a conventional woman who sticks on to her husband’s thought. She through her stories shows how womanhood and motherhood have been elevated to the position of divine qualities thus exploiting the women. Thus it can be observed that in a period when all the writers were writing conventional stories portraying traditional women or stories which are like advice to women, Chudamani was portraying bold, self assertive women who were not conventional and who had their own stream of thoughts. The reason for this difference could be that the contemporaries of Chudamani were bent on getting their stories published in the conventional magazines and as a result they were ready to compromise with their themes and characters. But Chudamani was not worried about the publication of her works. If they were not published in the so called conventional magazines, she saw to it that they were published in the unconventional magazines. As C.S.Lakshmi points out,

Chudamani feels that writing must be for self expression even if it is taken up only as a hobby. It should not however be a contrived self-expression. She has no problem writing what she wants. This may be because she sends stories that may not be accepted by the traditional journals to journals which call themselves non-traditional and is thus able to strike a happy balance. *(The Face Behind the Mask)*

Similar to Chudamani Raghavan Volga too depicts unconventional women who can not bound by the traditional mode of patriarchy. In accordance with her contemporaries, and going a step ahead Volga depicts the psychological turmoil of women, the exploitation of women in the name of procreation, dowry, rape, gender
discrimination and marriage. Unlike Chudamani she does not leave by portraying the problem and leaving the solution to the hands of her readers but suggests daring solutions to these problems. She allows her women to cross the threshold of the family to go in search of self-identity. Volga pictures the exploitation of women in the name of marriage. Thus we can observe that though there are some similarities between Chudamani Raghavan and Volga in their themes and characterization Volga has gone a step ahead in giving daring solutions to the problems faced by women.

Unlike Chudamani Raghavan and Volga Shashi Deshpande portrays traditional women who are bound to customs and traditions. Her few unconventional women too cannot escape the pang of guilt. Kannada women writers started questioning the exploitation of women only in the late 1940s. Though Shashi Deshpande writes only in English, she has been influenced by Kannada literature which is her regional language. Hence she pictures the psychological turmoil of her protagonists and the process of transformation they undergo. Except for a few stories like “A Man and a Woman” and “The Cruelty Game” she never allows her protagonists to move away from the family circle and makes them return to the centre of family with a changed perspective.

Though all the three are woman writers they belong to different states and started their literary career at different periods of time. This cultural and regional impact is found in their short stories. Though these three writers talk of woman’s trauma, there is a difference in the way it is depicted. Chudamani just presents the problems without showing a solution to the problem. She does not impose any moral implications on them. Deshpande depicts the problems faced by her protagonists, makes them brood over it and allows them to return to the family circle with a changed perspective. Volga who belongs to the new generation of writers not only portrays the problems of her characters but also gives daring solutions to them. Hence an attempt is made in the forthcoming chapters to discuss in detail the select short stories of these writers with a comparison of the portrayal of their women characters.