CHAPTER-II

WOMEN NOVELISTS IN INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH AND IN KANNADA
Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them. And our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world.

Swami Vivekananda

Women are an integral part of human civilization. No society or country can ever progress without the active participation of women in its overall development. The novel has been considered a powerful medium for expressing thoughts, feelings and experiences. So “A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous, like any other organism”, says Henry James. Fiction happens to be the most successful genre for woman’s experience. Virginia Woolf declared that all novels deal with character. She also says; “But all the older forms of literature were hardened and set by the time she became a writer. The novel alone was young enough, to be soft in her hands.”

It is rightly observed: “Novels have been, and are being published in a dozen Indian languages, and also in English; and the reciprocal influence between the novel in English and the novel in the regional languages has been rather more intimate and purposive than such
The emergence of Indian Women novelists signifies the birth of a new era of freedom and emancipation for Indian women. After years of suppression women in India have new opportunities for self-expression and participation in public life. Women Novelists are expressing through their work the feminine consciousness in such a way as to bring out clearly its difference from the male. Many of the Indian women novelists have dealt with issues related to women; they have a woman's perspective or the world. Today, they are enjoying an increasing popularity and prestige. They have made a place for themselves on the contemporary Indian Literary field.

2.1 Women Novelists in Indian Writing in English:

Indian women novelists in English have dealt with the place and position of women in Indian society and their problems and plight from time to time. The earliest women novelists are Toru Dutt, Rajlakshmi Debi, Krupabai Sathianathan, Swarna Kumari Debi and Corne ia Sorabji. Their works aim at conveying their views on women's problems and on desired social reforms. It is rightly observed that, "Of all departments of literature fiction is the one to which by nature and by circumstance women are best adopted. The domestic experience which forms the bulk of woman's knowledge finds an appropriate form in novels." The post-Independence era in the Indo-Angian novel makes an obvious advancement upon the pre-Independence period in so far as it brings to the
forefront some remarkable women novelists. During the fifties, male
domination in Indian English fiction underwent a change with the
appearance of Kamala Markandaya, Shanta Rama Rau, Nayantara Sahgal
and Attia Hosein on the literary scene. The effect of modernization,
industrialization and western life style on traditional Indian society became
one of the favourite themes for women novelists. The East-West encounter
issue became the most popular theme of women novelists. With very few
exceptions, the literary scene of the fifties continued to be dominated by
male authors. The women novelists came exclusively from the upper middle
class, because the pursuit of education and of a profession was a natural
activity for women of this class.

Kamala Markandaya and Shanta Ram Rau, who grew up in England and the
United States, were diplomat’s daughters; Nayantara Sahgal comes from the
Nehru family. Some of the novels of Kamala Markandaya and Shanta Rama
Rau focussed on women characters of different social classes.

The women novelists like Anita Desai and Eharati Mukherjee belong to a
slightly upper stratum of society. Shashi Deshpande writes about women of
middle class. In the recent past, Indian English novelists have given
importance to human relationships, especially man-woman relationship and
the functioning of the female psyche. Then they started giving importance to
personal and private relations rather than social. The earlier image of
women in Indian fiction as a silent sufferer, changed to one of self-
assertion. Gradually, the nature of themes has changed from time to time.
The Indian women novelists like Anita Desai, Arundati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Namita Gokhale, Geeta Mehta and Shobha De give a picture of an independent free thinking woman claiming her life to be her own. Today the Indian woman has her own quest, a personal discovery of self and fulfilment of the self.

At the age of 21 in 1877 Toru Dutt wrote an English and a French novel, *Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden* and *Le Journal de mademoiselle Arovers*. The unfinished *Bianca* was serialized in a Bengali Magazine, in 1878. *Bianca* is a romantic love story of England. Toru Dutt’s language and style are highly reminiscent of Jane Austen and George Eliot. In the words of S.K.Das, “It reminds one of a piece of unfinished embroidery with loose threads still hanging.”

Even Women novelists like Raj Lakshmi Debi author of *The Hindoo Wife* (1876), Krupabai Sathianathan author of *Kamala* (1895), and Kali Krishna Lahiri, author of *Roshinara* (1881) deal with suffering women. The early image of woman in Indian English novels had no identity. Their duty was to obey the elders and follow the traditions. Meenakshi Mukherjee rightly observes:

> The man-woman relationship in which man’s role is dynamic and the woman’s passive is a pattern that goes very deep into the Indian ethos. The ideal is so much a part of the Indian mind, that an Indian reader never pauses to wonder whether the numerous novels that portray this relationship and present
the woman as the symbol of purity and goodness draw their material from real life, or merely follow a literary convention.\textsuperscript{6}

Cornelia Sorabji was a Parsi woman advocate in Calcutta in 1924. Her best works were published in London: \textit{Love and Life Behind the Purdah} (1901) \textit{Sun Babies in the Child Life of India} (1904) and \textit{Between the Twilights} (1908). She portrays in her novels the various moods such as ecstasy, tragedy, comedy and many more things, which are unnoticed even by women. She also criticised the hypocrisy in a male dominated societal framework. Her realistic picture of the Indian women reminds us of the sayings of Plato in \textit{The Republic}:

\begin{quote}
We shall have to train the women also,

then in both kinds of skill, and

train them for war as well and

 treat them in the same way as the men.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

The women novelists of the post-independence era constitute a significant group. The earliest women novelists of this period (1950 onwards) brought tremendous changes in the field of fiction. The glorious creative careers of Kamala Markandaya, and Sahgal were drawing to a close. By about 1980, a new star as bright as any was seen rising on the Indian literary horizon.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala was born in Germany, educated in England, and settled in India. Jhabvala herself has declared that she should not be considered an 'Indian writer' but as one of those European writers who have written about India.\textsuperscript{8} Most of the novels of R.P. Jhabvala concentrate on the
upper class in North India where the people are innocent, sensuous, and violently emotional. She also deals with domestic problems of an average Hindu joint family. Shyam. M. Asnani in his book 'Critical Response to Indian English Fiction' holds the view:

R.P. Jhabvala writes about the furious social suffering in the present day India. All her novels are full of local colour and Glamour, dealing with the young who are inert, romantic and not-too wise, and the old who are cool, calculating and rigid. She describes the head on collision between the traditional and the modern, the east and the west, and the confusion that follows in the wake of these collisions.

Jhabvala's first novel, To Whom She Will (1955) depicts a wonderful picture of Indian society during partition and the fatal conditions arising out of partition. This novel also depicts rituals, customs, marriage and love with an element of illicit relationship. Because of partition a large number of refugees came to New Delhi to settle down. The Nature of Passion deals with Lalaji's daughter, Nimmi. She is a modern young girl, wants to oppose the age-old customs and rites, myths and tradition. Through the character of Nimmi, the novelist wants to criticize these silly youngsters who have false pretensions to modernism, independence, their sentiments, emancipation and anti-traditional responses. Both Esmond in India and A Backward Place depict the note of east-west encounter. In Esmond in India, Esmond Still Wood, an English man, marries an Indian girl Gulab, Esmond is selfish and
Gulab is rough and unsophisticated. This marriage fails because of their different mentalities. *A Backward Place* tells the story of Judy, an English girl, who marries an Indian actor Bal, but the marriage does not succeed due to their different natures.

*The House Holder* a domestic comedy, deals with the conflicts between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. It also includes a story of Prem, a sensitive young teacher who suffered because of early marriage and the strange city. Jhabvala’s *Heat and Dust* won the prestigious Booker prize in 1975. It portrays the piteous conditions of two English women, who paid a visit to India and in return they became the victims of this country. *To Whom She Will* also describes the problem of arranged marriage and love marriage in India. Because elderly people experience, arrange marriages. The novel shows the victory of tradition over modernity in India. Two of her novels *The Nature of Passion* and *Get Ready for Battle* borrow their titles from the sacred text *Bhagwad Gita*. *Get Ready for Battle* is based on the immense disparity between the rich and the poor in India. In this novel Sarla Devi helped the poor and destitute. The main subject of *The House Holder* is ‘Grahstha Ashrama’. Jhabvala’s characters look a little ludicrous, some even make us laugh, but her main interest is to expose sentimentality, snobbery, hypocrisy, vanity, pretensions and pseudo-culture.

Kamala Markandaya married an English man. She resides in U.K. making periodical visits to India. Her first novel *Nectar in Sieve* (1954) is a touching novel dealing with the theme of hunger told in the first person by
its protagonist, Rukmani. The southern rural setting reminds us of Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938). Meenakshi Mukherjee, while discussing Kamala Markandaya in *The Twice Born Fiction* says:

> It may be a significant fact that in Kamala Markandaya’s first three novels there is no mention of any specific locality. The style of all these writers has the smooth, uniform case of public school in English, which is highly readable, but it is doubtful whether it is the most desirable style in fiction. Where one has to deal with particular human beings rooted in their narrow regional identities.10

This novel is translated into some seventeen languages and has gained international acclaim. *Some Inner Fury* (1955) described the love story of the Indian girl Mira and the Englishman Richard. It is concentrated on Indo-British personal relationships. Mira’s love for Richard is denied in the Quit India campaign. *Possession* (1963) illustrates a story of Valmiki, who fights a psychological battle to extricate himself from the soul killing bondage to Lady Caroline. This novel also portrays the exploitation of the have-nots at the hands of haves. *A Silence of Desire* (1960) describes a sad story of a British trained Indian clerk, whose traditional Hindu wife refuses to go to modern hospital for operation. She puts herself in the hands of a native faith healer. *A Handful of Rice* (1966) deals with the story of a village boy, Ravishankar, who moves into harsh city life, after escaping from an underworld of petty
crime. It also tells about the long suffering of Ravi's wife, daughter of a poor tailor.

_The Coffer Dams_ (1969) deals with the construction of a dam across a south Indian River. It also describes the tension arising among conflicting personalities of European and Indian engineers. It is a symbolic witness to the destruction of the ancestral land. _The NouJtere Man_ (1972) describes the story of Srinivas, an old Indian widower, who settles in London. This story is remarkable for the gentle friendship developed between an aging Indian and an old English woman. Kamala Markandaya believes that "the process of creative writing reveals depths in the mind which are of universal application."11 In _Two Virgins_ (1973) Markandaya describes a tale of two sisters, who are completely different in character. Lalitha, the 'child of grace', who earns to become a 'town miss' and Saroja, 'the child of the soil' a 'country miss'. _The Golden Honeycomb_ (1977) is the first historical novel of Markandaya. This novel describes three generations of the princely family of Devapur, covering a period of about a century from 1850 to Independence.

Daughter of Mrs. Vijayalaxmi Pandit and niece of Jawaharlal, Nayantara Sahgal is an outstanding Indian English novelist and an established political columnist. Her novels are political histories of modern India. In her novels we find major political happenings of free India. She herself has declared that each of her novels 'more or less reflects the political era, we are passing through. In her novels on the one hand, she exposes the power hungry politicians and their madness for power, and on the other hand, she
highlights the sincere freedom fighters who sacrifice for their motherland. She says: “The heroes in my novels were patterned on pre independence examples and the villains on contemporary personalities.”

Sahgal’s novels are woven around the marriages of their women protagonists and dissolution of marriage. Her first novel, *A Time to be Happy* (1958) deals with Kusum’s suffering from the torment of a broken marriage and Maya’s emotional experiences in marriage. It also deals with the last stages of the freedom struggle and the dawn of Independence. *This Time of Morning* (1968) illustrates the unhappy marriage of Rashmi and Rakesh. Nita hates arranged marriages and when she is engaged to Vijaya, she is unhappy. In *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), Saroj is the unhappy wife of Inder, who does not regard her as a person with ideas, feelings and emotions. Saroj confesses about her premarital affair. Though Inder tortured her, Inder himself is hankering after other woman. He constantly rebukes and harasses his wife. In the words of Ansani: “The humanist in Nayantara champions the new human values to blast its way through the jungle of superstition, pretence and seeming facade of politeness”. *The Day in Shadow* (1971) deals with disintegration of the marriage presented with the necessary analytical power. It is a story of divorce with harsh conditions laid down. *A Situation in New Delhi* (1977) portrays a picture of Nehru’s death, student unrest and the Naxalite movement. It has politics for background. *Rich Like Us* (1985) deals with political and ideological understanding of woman’s position. It also illustrates the uneven division of power between the sexes. This novel can be
described as a novel about the self-definition of Sonali, the western educated, strong, independent Indian woman.

Anita Desai, one of the youngest of the major Indian English women novelists, concentrates on a woman who waxes up to her social desires, questions motherhood, and becomes an exile on an island. *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) illustrates anguished loneliness of Maya, who is married to a much older, matter of fact, business like, person Gautam. Maya fails to get rid of her father obsession. But the tragedy begins in her life because her husband Gautam does not possess those wide-ranging sympathies.

*Voices In The City* (1965) is the struggle of Monisha, Amla and Nirode to adjust in Calcutta and their better experiences. Monisha and Amla oppose the stolid conventions of middle class life. At the end each character comes to grief. Monisha is driven to suicide, Amla is shocked by the rejection of her lover. “Amla’s aunt in voices in the city speaks of the necessity for every woman to have spirit and a profession.”

*Bye Bye Black Bird* (1971) illustrates the metropolitan colonial tensions of the post colonial psyche and the furies that haunt women trapped in matrimony. It also describes social and political realities and east-west encounter. *Where Shall We Go This Summer* (1975) depicts the tragic inner reality of Sita, the central character, who suffers because of the cruelty and callousness of urban life. *Fire On The Mountain* (1977) portrays psychology of two different women characters Nanda Kaul, an unsentimental old widow leading a life of solitude in a lonely place and Raka, a school girl, shy, gentle

Another novelist, Shanta Rama Rau has shown the predilection for autobiography, subjectivity, nostalgia, dream and introspection. Her novel *Remember the House* (1956) is centered on the young girl Indira. She also described the theme of east west encounter. *The Adventuress* (1970) is based on the experiences of a young Philippine girl stranded in. Journalist Nergis Dalal has written *Minari* (1967) which deals with high class life and a Byronic hero at a hill station. Nergis Dalal incorporates “essential loneliness of every human being and a sense of compassion.”

Shakuntala Nagesh’s *The Little Black Box* (1955) deals with a morbid story of a young woman full of resentment towards her relatives because they are more interested in her wealth than in loving and understanding her. But she is rescued by the love of the doctor and the nurse and her brother’s little daught. Vimala Raina’s *Ambapali* (1962) is a historical love story of Ambapali and Ajatshatru. In reality Ajatshatru is the enemy of her country. He conquers her country and comes to claim his prize, but she has already become a sannyasin. Rama Mehta wrote *Inside the Haveli*, which won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979. The heroine, Geeta is a representative of the Modern educated women, and has been a silent witness to an entire era. Haveli is the symbol of the oppression and tyranny of age old customs. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar acclaims the novel as: “A sensitive piece of realistic fiction,
even an authentic sociological study, written with a naturalness that is disarming and effective at once.16

Anees Jung’s *Unveiling India* presents a story of population, survey, and subjective personal experience. She traveled to every corner of the country to ‘know’ women. She has recorded their opinion about marriage and widowhood, sexual servitude, rearing and rearing children, sexual discrimination and other forms of exploitation. Veena Paintal’s novels deal with various questions pertaining to women. Her two novels *An Autumn Leaf* (1976) and *Spring Returns* (1977) focus on the subservient status assigned to women and the need for these women to fight against the traditional expectations of society to become independent. She discloses the long standing inviolate world of women’s natural yearnings for love and understanding. Namita Gokhale’s *Paro* (1984) deals with the story of a woman who is not afraid of her sexuality. The novel’s boldness raised eyebrows in middle class English knowing India. She deals frankly with sex, breaks the age old patriarchal taboos.

Githa Hariharan’s first novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) presents the effects of patriarchy on women of different social classes and ages and particularly the varied responses to the restrictive institution of marriage. It also deals with three women whose different and yet similar stories cut across generations and classes in case of classic female bonding. This novel got the Commonwealth Award in 1993.
The Fiction of Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, Arundati Roy, and Shobha De are a conscious attempt to do away with the secondary position ascribed to woman characters.

Bharati Mukherjee is an Indian woman novelist who lives in the west. Her novels deal with the “dual setting of England in India” in Tiger’s Daughter (1973) deals with east-west encounter from an Indian woman’s point of view. In which the protagonist, Tara Banerjee Cartwright experiences the constant conflict between Indian tradition and western attitudes. Jasmine is an autobiographical novel. It describes a more positive approach to the problem of immigration. She is married to Amit, an engineer who has already applied for immigration to Canada and the U.S. In America she becomes increasingly addicted to the media and begins to lose her sense of balance and her sense of reality. Wife (1976) deals with the neurotic behaviour of a middle class ordinary looking girl Dimple. Her novel, The Holder of the World (1994) tells the tale of an American woman who retraces the route taken by her ancestries, Salem Bibi, from America to India.

Sahitya Akademi award winner Shashi Deshpande’s works reflect reality so faithfully and starkly, that every woman identifies herself with her characters. She has added a new dimension to Indo-Anglian fiction by concentrating on the exploitation of the troubled sensitivity of her characters, especially, the women in particular. Deshpande explores the many facets of Indian life. She explains the predicaments of men and women
hailing from a middle class milieu. She has to her credit a series of novels including *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *That Long Silence* (1986), *A Matter of Time* (1989), *Small Remedies* (2000) and *Moving On* (2004). As G.S. Amur said, “Woman’s struggle in the context of contemporary Indian society, to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother and, most important of all, as human being is Shashi Deshpande’s major concern as a creative writer and this appears in all her important stories.”

Her novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* describes an unusual protagonist Sarita, who breaks the age old traditions to marry a man outside her caste. But her love marriage does not prove to be fruitful. *The Binding Vine* (1992) is centered on the life of Urmila, a sharp tongued and self-willed woman. *That Long Silence* deals with Jaya’s psychological fights against conventional male control. Shashi Deshpande’s novels deal with the sufferings of women in a male dominated society and their desire to forge an identity for themselves. *Roots and Shadows* is the story of Indu, a middle class young girl, brought up in an orthodox Brahmin family, headed by Akka. Indu rebels against Akka and marries Jayant, and deserts her home. After returning to her ancestral house, Indu discovers that she is the daughter of this house, and a commercial writer.

Arundati Roy’s Booker prize - winner debut novel, *The God Of Small Things* (1977) has been translated into forty languages in the world. The story centers round the village Ayemenam near Kottayam. It reveals
customs, traditions, rites patriarchal domination of Keralite society. It also includes consequences arising out of divorce, child's psychology, the exposure of the malpractice of Marxism and police administration. Sukumar Azhikode says, "She is a prisoner of reality and triviality. Everything about Roy's Ayemenam is superficial. The book is full of sights, especially for the westerner. But it offers no insights. It is Kerala for the foreign tourist, just the periphery." Much of the book is written from the point of view of two twins, Rahel and Estha, and is a disturbing tale of the destruction of their innocence. She also argues that the double moral standard prevalent in the society which has subjugated and reduced the women and the untouchable to a peripheral existence.

Shobha De is one of the frank and straight forward woman novelist. She is famous for the sexual mania of the commercial world. Socialite Evening is the first novel published in the year of 1988. Starry Nights, Sisters, Sultry Days, Strange Obsession, Snapshots, Second Thoughts, Shooting from the Hips, Small Betrayals, Surviving Men and Speed Post are her other works. She explores the secret depth of human psychology. She is famous for depicting the spiritual breakdown of modern society. Starry Nights is the story of a film actress, Asha Rani, of her early struggle, her rise to stardom, her acceptance of the changed scenario, ending with her decision to withdraw from acting and build the studio. She introduces her own daughter, Sasha into the film world through her own father. Shobha De observes; "I am among the first to explore the world of the urban woman in
India, semi-literate critics won’t understand that.” Her latest book *Spouse* (2005) is a defence of marriage in which she discusses the decay and demise of the venerable institution. She argues that it is not marriage that is deficient, but our attitude towards the system of marriage is deficient. She gives reason to a ‘flawed institution’ with no such thing as a perfect marriage or the perfect spouse. Her book outlines the reason behind the failure that today’s marriages face.

A new trend is to be found in the fiction of the twentieth century. The changes are to be seen primarily in the writers’ outlook and attitudes towards women and their traditional roles. They are on their way to drop social taboos, rebel against conventional morality and discard inhibitions. They freely discuss marital disharmony, sex, violence, divorce and extra marital love affairs.

### 2.2. The Women Novelists in Kannada Literature:

I looked and it was a revelation: This world was a masculine world, my childhood had been nourished by myths forged by men and I had not reacted to them at all in the same way I should have done if I had been a boy.

Simone de Beauvoir

English and the regional languages have several important women writers who have been creatively exploring various sides of women’s oppression. Kannada, one of the languages of India, has literary heritage of
more than a thousand years. Kannada language has acquired a new
dimension and significance in the context of the social, political and
economic growth of Indian people.

Women are natural story-tellers even then they do not write or publish. In
India we have seen marvelous Woman novelists. Karnataka has rich
treasury of literature. Akka Mahadevi, the first woman saint poet in the
twelfth century argued that a woman should not be regarded as a toy
created for the pleasure of man. In one of her Yachanas she says 'Burn such
husbands who regard her so' Thus she was fighting for the recognition of
woman's individuality. Formerly the belief was that man was the be all and
end all as far as woman was concerned. Writers have written as though
Akka Mahadevi has said something different from this as far as men are
concerned. But she accepted mystically that, 'woman is the wife and God is
the husband'. It is true that she chooses the independent way to liberation.
Even though man and woman are different in certain things, they are equal
in knowledge, intelligence etc.

In the feminist literature created by women the story is the main means of
narration in the advocacy of feminism by women. It was Akka Mahadevi
who revolted strongly against masculine dominance and in favour of
feminism. But in literature women are treated as separate, second class
writers. However in Kannada literature, generations of women have
enriched literature by their contribution. After the glorious age of Akka
Mahadevi of 12th century, a brilliant writer like Sanchiya Honnamma of the
17th Century in her poem *Hadibadeye Dhart-ia* (The code of conduct of Pativrata) asks men, why do you belittle woman? You, blind. Is it not a woman who gave you birth? Is it not a woman who nourished you? Educate a girl and you educate a whole family. Educate a boy, only the boy is educated.” She gave importance to family institution, which is necessary for future generations of mankind. Sanchi Honramma was a favourite maid servant of the queen in the palace of Chikadevaraja Wodeyar (1672-1704). The intention is making references to Akka Mahadevi and Sanchi Hannamamma is to recognise the fact that Indian women have in the past shown their perception of the reality and indicated their choice.

After the glorious age of Vachanakarths of the 12th century, as far as the contribution of women writers of Karnataka is concerned, the period between the 12th century and the 20th century, a period covering about eight centuries shows a gap in literary outputs by women writers. Lack of education, early marriages, lack of economic independence, life in joint families, widowhood were the causes. It is observed that: “Women writers have not yet recovered from the Philomela complex and that is why they find it difficult to articulate their innermost thoughts and feelings.”

The first two decades after independence witnessed in the field of Kannada literature, an intense activity and exuberant enthusiasm. The Kannada novel, which had entered the literary scene in the beginning of 19th century, (Gulwadi Venkataraya’s Indira Bai in 1900) grew fast both in intrinsic worth and popularity.
The first positive feminist movement by women came up in modern times. One can find discussions of the rightful position that women should have in the works of Nanjanagudu Thirumalamba, K. Kalyanamma, Kodagina Gouramma, Belegere Janakamma and Giribale. The rightful position which women should have in traditional homes, and in addition, problems like child marriage, widow marriage, dowry system, dependency of women on men, and other similar problems are discussed by them. This is the feminism of the early writers of modern times.

The important point to be noticed about these early writers is that they indulge in creative writings not merely to pass time. Their main intention is to point out the problems of women in family life. They have even suggested remedies or solutions to these problems. Even then their approach is self-defensive and not a positive affirmation of new values. Even this may be considered an achievement in those days. In the writings of Kodagina Gouramma, the values which society has placed before women to follow have been treated ironically. Her heroines react to these conditions. Their reaction takes the form of suicide, flight, conversion or sacrifice. Although these are the solutions which the heroines resort to, the writer does not recommend it in the narration. Though she depicts the problem, she is unable artistically to do it convincingly.

In this respect H.V. Savitramma is one step ahead of Gouramma. Lack of idealism, self-deception, lack of courage to face life these become the sources of trouble in the life of women because of men's egoism and pride.
Site Rama Ravana is a novel of Savitramma which has a realistically depicted
desire for woman's feministic freedom. The characters of many novels of
various writers suffer because they are bound by traditional values. It is
rightly observed that: “The women writers were still cocooned in the
concept of the Indian model woman. She is still in her cage. Because of this
she did not reveal her innermost feeling.” In the fifties and the sixties the
novel form in Kannada became the most popular and the most widely read
form of literature. Surprisingly the days that followed show rather a decline
in projecting feminism.

The first group of women novelists in Kannada advocates
feministic ideas to a certain extent although they do not go beyond the
masculine perspective. Even when they transcend the masculine
perspective, they appear to suffer from a sense of sin. Nanjanagudu
Tirumalamba's Nabha (1914) is about the sufferings of Hindu women. In the
fifties and sixties of 20th century, once again a few women writers appeared
in modern Kannada literature with them also started a different strand of
Kannada writing. To the hitherto existing predominantly male perspective
an attempt was made to add a fresh perspective of a female vision. Writers
like Triveni, Aryamba Pattabi, M.K. Indira Anupama Niranjan, and Raja
Lakshmi were in the vanguard of progressive women who took up the
vexing issues of women's problems for treatment in their writings.
Controversial problems like shaving of the heads of young widows, child
marriage, education for women, window remarriage, etc., became the issues for their battles.

Triveni is the author of about twenty novels. Some of Triveni’s novels are psychological. In them we can see the conflict between the internal and external worlds. As L.S Sheshagiri Rao observes: “Triveni purposefully uses psychology. It is true that the writers and poets use psychology before it has been used as study of human mind. Triveni cultivates psychological views in her writings and becomes successful.” Triveni adopts her own way to write novels. She does not follow contemporary women writers, who are traditional. The central characters of Triveni’s novels are women. She portrays the emotional cruelty, women’s experiences in marriage and their frustrations. Triveni’s first novel is *Hoovu Ha-mu published* in 1953. *Bekkina Kannu* and *Hannele Chiguridaga* by Triveni are representative novels which have a special technique and charm of their own. Triveni’s *Sharapanjara* depicts how a wife lost love of her husband, which has driven her into madness. ‘Though Triveni’s attitude towards women’s liberation is debatable today’, the critic Vijaya Dabbe writes, ‘in her day, because of the bias in favour of women, her writings were considered full of hatred towards men.’

Triveni who can write interesting psychological novels, some times she writes as though she is a man - hater. In *Keelugombe* the wife dances to the tune of her husband in every respect as though she has no personality of her own. She has created not only a lovable woman like Sita but she has also
created the character of Narasimhaiah who is cruelty personified. These two characters are drawn in pure white and black colours and there is nothing of the grey colour in them. The hero of Bellimoda is a weak character who does not marry the heroine because she can no longer bring property with her. In Sharapanjara, Satish rejects Kaveri because of his wrong suspicion that Kaveri is unfaithful. These novels have been written in white hot anger against suspicious men. But her psychological novels are exception to this.

The heroine of Apaswara, Apajaya has the ambition to become a doctor and therefore rejects traditional family life. It is forced on her. But once her chance of getting a child and becoming a mother is destroyed, she once again thinks of becoming a doctor. She does not want her husband to be deprived of domestic happiness. She herself arranges a second marriage for him. With her husband’s help Meera leaves home and fulfills her ambition of becoming a doctor. But once that ambition has been fulfilled, she desires family happiness again and goes back home. But she is rejected by her co-wife and so returns to the medical professor. In this novel the writer lays stress on unhappy marriages and depicts a happy family life of a medical couple. In all this chaos Meera’s dream of an independent personality dries up. Here the possibilities of improvement are recorded.

The characters of many novels of various writers suffer because they are bound by traditional values. Triveni and some others, who follow her, suffer from the same limitations. The marriage problems of girls, the dowry system, the employment problem, widow marriage, love outside marriage
bonds, sex are some of the topics on which they write. But all these heroines suffer from man’s dominance. Unfortunately they think problems are solved if they get married and find themselves in comfortable circumstances.

M.K. Indira entered the field of the novel late but has published works running into six thousand pages in two years. Though she did not start writing until she was forty-five, M.K. Indira has, in her lifetime, achieved the status of a major Kannada writer. She received the Karnataka State Sahitya Academy Award four times between 1964 and 1976. Tungabhadra, Sadananda and Gejjepuje are her popular novels. M.K. Indira has said:

All my writings are based on what I have seen and known. Nothing is purely imaginary. Though imagination may be there for purposes of ornamentation, it is not be all and end all of fiction. The most important thing in a novel is the foundation of experience on which it stands. But let me also say that my own personality is not revealed in any of my novels.

M.K. Indira’s Gejjepuje (1965) shows the life of the daughter of a prostitute who has been forced to lead the life of prostitute. Phaniyamma (1970) deals with the pitiable life of a young widow and her bitter experience of death in life. It gained immense popularity as novel and as film. Because of its popularity it created the new woman. She has to undergo all the humiliations and insults of a Brahmin widow. But she struggles to see that the widows of future generation will not suffer from them. The writer makes
it clear that though she belongs to the old generations, she has the breadth of
mind, which sympathises with sorrow and social humiliations.

*Mudiyerida Hu, Moggina Jade* and *Murida Sarapali* are written by Usha Devi.

Through these novels, she tries to explain the abnormal states of mind.

Aryamba Pattabi, Neela Devi, M.C. Padma, Pankaja, Lalithamba and
Mallika are other women writers. They reveal the woman's point of view.

Nemichandra exposes male hypocrisy in *Kappu Moda, Balliya Neralu* and
*Nannadallada Baduku*. There is no doubt that these works are genuinely
feminine in the sense that they present exclusively woman's sufferings. B.N.
Subbamma who is known as Vani, has written novels like *Bidugade* (1955),
Mangala* (1962), *Avala Bhagya* (1964) etc. Among them *Bidugade* and *Eradu
Kanasu* follow the model of description of the traditional Indian women
writers *Chinnada Panjara* and *Bale* are very good examples for the expression
of conflict of the unsatisfied woman.

Anupama Niranjan, a doctor by profession, is different from these
novelists because of her intellectual approach to the problems. She gives us a
picture of the medical world based on first hand knowledge through her
novel *Swethambari* (1957). Her *Sankoleyolaginda* (1954) concerns itself with the
problem of the independence of women. Another novel *Nulu Neyada Chitra*
(1969) gives a picture of the life of weavers. She associates her fiction with
progressive writing. She sees problems from the Marxist point of view. She
does not believe that marriage is the be-all and end-all for women. But
nevertheless she considers it one of the necessities of life. She discusses feminist problems in a way different from those of others. She records internal and external life of women and their problems. Class hatred, caste antagonism and sex differences are depicted realistically. She delineates how external forces can sometimes help women to solve their own problems. This can be seen in her collections of stories, Onuku Giliya Kathe, Pushpaka and Madhavi etc.

M.K. Jayalakshmi's Kanasina Kade deals with life of girls who live in hostels. Other works like Nindeya Nele and Mxyada Bale, analyse problems from the point of view of women.

Modern feminists are opposed to mixing up the terms womanliness and feminine distinctions. What is distinctly feminine is a social creation. It values with time, place and culture. The opinion of the feminists is that when this arrangement, which accepts difference of sex is gone and men and women are accepted as equal human beings, feminine distinctions will no longer remain. Therefore, feminism tries to publicize the confusion between womanliness and feminine distinction and man's selfish comforts, which has turned into a political struggle. It is one of the main distinctions between men and women in their novels and show women to be lower than men and thus waken women to the reality of life. Though slightly more strongly the earlier novels of Anupama Niranjan affirm traditional perspective, and in her later novels like Madhavi, strongly feminist.
Usha Navarathna Ram is rather a superficial writer. *Bandhana, Hombisilu* may be perhaps an exception. Her novel *Hombisilu* takes a quick way to solve the problem of a second woman, while in *Bandhana*, the woman cannot marry the man she loves and cannot love the man she has married and thus the heroine, who is a doctor, has to sail in two boats at the same time. *Harida Honalu* tells the story of a capable heroine who marries the eldest of five brothers, but takes care of all of them intelligently, she finds rather easy solution to all the problems. *Andolana* and *Ashwasana* deal with serious problems like a woman who loves and marries her brother-in-law. These two novels are written in a racy style and are interesting. But the heroine depicted is a woman who lives in the shadow of a man. During this period, *Sudha*, a very popular weekly magazine began serialising novels. Very soon other magazines followed *Sudha's* example. Thus increasing the demand for as well as readership of novels.

The stories which get published in popular magazines are usually of a category in which easy solutions are found to problems domestic or social by beautiful heroines. This is one extreme. The other extreme is stories and novels which reveal the hatred of writers for the social system, for husbands and men who are responsible for every kind of injustice done to women. These writers are probably inspired by the women liberation movement of capitalist countries of the west. Mother-in-law who tortures daughter-in-law or daughter-in-law who tortures mother-in-law became common theories.

"The world will not rise when women rise. When women are women, the
world will rise. And women have to overflow only from within we want you to be where you are but allow the overflow to come.28

Veena Shanteswar, Vaidehi, Sara Abu Bakkar and others more openly advocate feminism. Though sometimes Veens’s opinions are frighteningly bold, they are unexpected rather than unreal. The novels of Vaidehi reveal the new point of view but demonstrate a mastery over technique. Her writings reveal sometimes the traditional point of view but slowly the feminist perspective creeps in. The women feminist writers are faced with one of these problems. One is related to awareness and other to technique. ‘Her writing is a new milestone in Kannada literature’, writer Vijaya Dabbe says of Vaidehi’s fiction, which began to appear in Kannada periodicals in the mid seventies. She has written an award winning novel, Asprusheyaru (The Untouchable women) 1982. Vaidehi says “The real vision of the plight of Indian women came to me during the thirteen years I spent in the house of my parents-in-law. I was fortunate, though, to have a husband who allowed me the freedom to have pen and paper as my closest companions.”29

She has translated two important feminist books from English into Kannada; Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay’s Indian Women’s Struggle for Freedom, 1983 and Maitriayee Mukhopadhyay’s Silver Shackles (1985). Of the new generation of writers Veena Shanteswara is meritorious. She is one of the eminent writers in Kannada today. Her novels are more realistic than formalist. She has a good sense of dialogue and is able to reach, through the
few words spoken by her characters. She followed the feminist movement in her writings. So she came to be known as a feminist writer.

In the story *Horatu Hodavaru* depicts the life and character of a mere non-entity. In her novel *Gandasaru* (Men) in 1975 illustrates the exploitation of women by men. This story is an interesting experiment of depicting the development and expansion of the innocent mind of a heroine as contrasted with the worsening nature of the men she meets in life. Her novel, *Adrishta* (Luck) appeared in 1990. Her novels have been translated into several languages.

B.T. Lalita Nayak belongs to a nomadic tribe. In her novel *Dibba Tande* (The tribe of Hillock (1982) B.T. Lalita Nayak has given a clear picture of the poverty, ignorance and exploitation of the tribal woman. Because she belongs to a nomadic tribe, she has complete knowledge of tribal life, of their practice of polygamy and sufferings of women in their community. Nayak points out that their social, economic and cultural conditions are not improved.

Being a Muslim, Sara Abu Bakkar, author of the novel *Chandragiriaya Tiradalli* (on the Banks of Chandragiri) 1982, has given an authentic picture of evil practice of Talaq (divorce). The Talaq hangs like a sword on the head of each Muslim woman. Besides Talaq, the poverty, drudgery, male chauvinism is all there in the novel. The heroine commits suicide at the climax in disgust. Sara Abu Bakkar is an Islamic voice; she is a Muslim writer from South India. Her important work is *Sahana* which deals with the
ignorance and poverty which is common to poor Muslim families. Here man as well as woman is responsible for the state. Superstition, which has forgotten humanitarianism rules the roost. Shakina the mother having suffered much in life wants her daughter to get married and not suffer like her and Nashima does not want her daughter to be like her, such is the change from generation to generation. But poverty and ignorance are the dominant characteristics of poor Muslim families. The author satirises the religion in a very delicate manner. She depicts women as revolting this religion, which destroys men but in a wonderfully controlled and simple manner. This is a novel, which has innate sympathy for feminism. The name of the novel Sahana (forgiveness of the earth), are words which are used with great significance throughout the novel.

As Prof. Alphonso Karkala observes about women writers:

They tried to tell the world the obstacles women faced and the disadvantages they suffered in an orthodox Hindu world. These women writers struggled to give form and shape to their autobiographical accounts, which attracted publishers both in India and abroad.30

Mahashweta, chair-person of Infosys foundation Sudha Murthy’s novel deals with the rarely talked about subject of skin disease (leukoderma). It is an inspiring story of a woman afflicted with leukoderma, the book holds out hope to women with this ‘cosmetic’ disease.
Geeta Nagabhushan's Baduku is the best example of feministic novel. In which the author tries to compare and contrast the life of Jogthis (prostitutes) with other women characters. Another novel Hasimamsa Haddugal is also one of the popular novels about feminine sensibility which gives enormous evidence for woman's struggle. Lachi, a low caste village woman suffers a lot in the midst of rigorous system of the society.

Women novelists raise many questions by providing the reader with an insight into the problems of different roles that a woman in society, despite the romanticising of womanhood. Judith Fetterly rightly observes, "Literature is political and it has a palpable design on the reader, it claims to enjoy universality but has a different reality and different vision."31

Women novelists herald a changing scenario in novel writing with their in-depth portrayal of the Indian psyche, specially seen in their depiction of the women protagonists. They cannot be marginalized any longer as they are a part of fiction writing in India today.
REFERENCES


10. Meenakshi Mukherjee, op.cit., p.175.


22. The Mode of Expression used by the followers of Virashaivism which is Very near to spoken language but has a rhythm of its own.


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