CHAPTER-III

NOVELS OF TRIVENI
Triveni is the pen name of Anasuya Shanker who was born on February 1, 1928 and died on July 29, 1963. Though her literary life lasted only a decade, she produced twenty novels and three collections of short stories. The central focus of Triveni's novels is on women. Triveni has her own ideology. She does not follow contemporary women writers, who are traditional and who use popular literary form to express their views. She is the first Kannada woman novelist to explore, with considerable insight, the psychological problems faced by middle class women at different stages in life, and is particularly interested in societies in which women's social status, their educational backgrounds and their professional involvements are rapidly changing. Triveni sets the individual against a background of the social forces that determine her experience and investigates, especially within the structure of the family, the origins of women's tensions and behaviour. She writes about the emotional cruelty women experience in marriage, and their longing for affection, and their frustrations. Triveni indirectly questions man's domination and restrictions imposed on women. In her novels like 'Hoovu Hannu', 'Sotu Geddavalu', 'Aparswara', 'Kankana', 'Bellimoda', 'Mukti' etc. Triveni crosses the boundaries of womanhood, chastity and other values and proves that a woman's body and soul are above limitations or barriers.
3.1 Importance of Marriage and Family Life:

Many of Triveni’s novels deal with the theme of marriage. She leans towards depicting the youthful dreams and loving scenes concerning marriage. She is one of the first women writers to show that there is something vitally wrong and cruel in the institution of marriage, as far as the woman is concerned. She analyses woman’s marginalization and deprivation both before and after marriage.

The institution of marriage is of unrivaled significance in the life of a young person. In the life of an Indian woman it marks a point of maturity and signifies the flowering of life. According to Dharmasastra ‘marriage is a sacrament’ one of the most significant, dominant and sacred institutions. Marriage occupies a crucial place in Indian society. It plays a decisive role in human relationships. Portrayal of marriage in Kannada novels is a recurrent feature and it is this element in Kannada literature, which gives a typical feminine sensibility. Marriage is considered as the promised end in a traditional society. Symbolically speaking husband and wife are supposed to be the two horses of the chariot of life. They both must function properly. If one horse pulls in one direction and the other in another direction, the chariot will collapse. Husband and wife should play complementary roles. ‘Marriage’ says Simone de Beauvoir, “is the destiny traditionally offered by society.”

Triveni’s novel, Kankana projects the experience of victimization in marriage in a different way. Although the heroine attempts to free herself from such victimization by stepping out of the bounds of marriage, she does not
succeed. But, a few novels also show women as being strong enough to stand up to their husbands and when necessary, assert their individuality. Triveni’s characters are from urban middle class and her themes, generally are about love, marriage and family. She has pleaded for a fair and just treatment of women in the institution of marriage. She has effectively documented the myriad facets of womanhood. From a woman’s point of view, the institution of marriage in the Indian context exploits her and suppresses her individuality because,

a. She has no choice regarding her marriage – partner.
b. She is denied economic freedom,
c. She is sexually abused within and outside the fold of marriage,
d. Her family-life and career clash.
e. A widow is denied the right of remarriage.

Each novel of Triveni registers the plight of women arising from one or more of the above causes. *Banu Belagithu* is a mellow novel about marriage and companionship. The theme of the relationship between a man and a woman is evolved through the various developing stages of the two individuals as friends, lovers, husband and wife. It is a fulfilling relationship, which documents all the ups and downs of marriage and its bitterness and sweetness. Ramanatha and Kalyani finally learn to live together as friends, keeping their bond strong in family life. Thus Triveni shows an inwardness while talking about women’s problems and family life. This advantage provides strength to her writing. Most of her novels are about the lives of women young and old,
educated and uneducated, rich poor, single or married, beautiful or ugly etc. She excels in delineating social, psychological, and personal turmoils and studies them with keen perception and deep insight.

Kankana/Mukti

Triveni's eleventh novel Kankana (sacred bond, 1957) with its sequel Mukti (bliss, 1959), focuses on the fast changing life styles of post independent Indian society from a woman's point of view. It also judges the mores of a transitional society and the institution of marriage. The novel criticizes the marriage system in India. Kankana is a social novel that deals with the educated young women who take different stands and follow different paths in their lives according to their status and condition. 'Mukti' is the continuation and second volume of the same theme. Marriage is an important event in the life of a woman. The importance that our society accords to marriage is reflected in our literature and it is the central concern of Triveni's novels. In our society the girl is forced to learn early that she is "Paraya Dhan" (another's property), and it is her parents' responsibility to choose her a suitable husband.

What a girl makes of her life, how she shapes herself as an individual, what profession she takes up are not as important as who she marries. Marriage is the ultimate goal of a girl's life. Though marriage is important both for men and women, woman does not enjoy the same freedom as her male counterpart. Even if the woman chooses her own husband, she is labelled a rebel not only by the family but also by the society consisting of both men and women. The two novels depict the lives of six young women. The first novel
begins with the point when these six young women finish their college studies and enter 'real life'. Kasturi, Ambika, Vedavalli, Rama, Sushila and Amritha are the six young women characters in the novel. They are all insulated from the problems and challenges of life, engrossed only with their classrooms, teachers, examinations; and they are totally unprepared to face 'life'. The question 'what next?' assumed gigantic proportions in the minds of all the six girls:

They had spent all the time, moving mechanically, from nursery through elementary and high schools to college. They used to be terribly bored with the long summer vacations. But now, beginning with the following day, they were no longer students. They were expected to enter a new life. The very thought that now they should come out of the irresponsibility and idleness of student-life began to consume them. Marriage or employment? These were the only two alternatives before them. And both the alternatives were beyond their choice or control, to be decided by their parents and others.

These two novels focus on the possible types and attitudes of Indian womanhood in modern India. Though the Indian woman is educated, employed and is economically independent, it is not enough. Family, marriage and social norms bind her completely and there is something that provokes conflict in her mind and makes her restless. They confront marriage in some form or other unsuccessfully, and the first one to
meet a violent end is Kasturi. She takes life casually, flirting with young men. These six friends go to Ooty on a pleasure trip. During the trip, Kasturi falls in love with Suresh the cousin of Ambika. When Kasturi's marriage is arranged by her parents with somebody else, she writes a letter to Suresh, in which she pours out her heart. He ignores her and exposes her as a characterless woman. Thus he refuses to marry her. This hurts her and ultimately Kasturi commits suicide, throwing herself in front of an incoming train. Through this character Triveni picturises men who jilted girls in the name of love. Vedavalli is unable to get married because of her dark colour. She runs away with her music teacher Saldhana and gets converted to Christianity. But their married life becomes a tragedy. Her parents totally cut her off. She gradually understands the real nature of her husband, who is an alcoholic and a womanizer. Finally, she decides to get some job herself and support her husband.

Simone de Beauvoir in her *Second Sex* observes: "In patriarchy the young girl does not accept the destiny assigned to her by nature and by society and yet she does not repudiate it completely. Thus she is divided against herself."3

Among the six friends, Ambika is the only woman, who comes out successfully in her confrontation with the institution of marriage. Ambika says: "Yes, I have found my life's fulfilment in the lives of my husband and children. I am very happy in being a good wife, and a good mother."4 Besides the fact that she is rich she has no expectations in life. She is happy with the choice made by her parents. She marries a man who has some business in Calcutta. So
she goes away to Calcutta from Mysore. She has a settled, contented married life there.

In late 19th century, an Indian woman was denied both education and economic freedom. She had no identity of her own. She had to seek fulfilment in her husband (chosen by her parents) and children. But with the introduction of western ideas and formal education, her ways of thinking began to change. But the hold of tradition and traditional systems did not change so easily, hence an Indian woman began to feel trapped, strangled and suffocated.

Sheshadri, to whom Sushila is betrothed gets frustrated in life because of his unemployment and goes into exile. He gets so frustrated that he just disappears, never to be seen again. The helpless Sushila chooses a wrong untraditional way for her living. Society calls her licentious and wayward. But she does not care. Before she decides to lead an immoral life, she discloses all her pain and suffering to Rama, “Don’t you see that the problem of women’s marriage is intimately linked to the problem of unemployment? Which unemployed man wants to go for marriage? As their getting job gets delayed, marriages of women also get delayed.”

Rama (who figures prominently in Kankana) has grown up in a poor family and has seen the sufferings of her parents. Therefore there is a practical outlook in her thinking and behaviour. She has to shoulder the entire burden of the family, consisting of her mother, two younger sisters and a younger brother. She is so poor that she can’t afford to buy even books needed for her studies. During vacations, she undertakes some jobs like private coaching to
feed her family. After graduation, she joins the staff of a tutorial college to maintain her family. In her tutorial college, Rama comes in contact with an extraordinary student, Nagendra. She is beautiful and well behaved. So naturally Nagendra is also attracted towards her. One day Nagendra observes:

"This woman, who ought to have been wife to a man, and mother to her children, is forced by abject poverty to even forget that she is a woman, and, like a man, is toiling for sustenance, in rain or sun, bursting aside all the womanly duties. This pained him very much."6

Rama loves Nagendra wholeheartedly. He is ready to marry her. Rama knows that she would be fully contented if she married him. But her wisdom and her sense of responsibility make her sacrifice her happiness. She chooses a tough path in her life. She has a helpless mother, Janaki, a sister who is ready to spoil her life to become a film actress, and a young brother who has almost become a thief in his young age only. Rama feels that it is her duty to look after all these family members. She daringly overcomes all the doubts that her sacrifice may be a failure and decides to marry a rich coffee planter who is blind. Her friends get stunned at her decision and oppose it. But she expresses her confidence and vehemently argues that her new riches would solve all the problems of her family. Rama justifies her decision. She says: "You are a dreamer, of a world of your fancy; I have faced reality that is my misfortune. A dream is beautiful; the actual is unpleasant."7

It is Rama’s good-luck that her courage saves her. She cannot forget Nagendra, her former lover, till she gets a male child. But her blind husband
Subramanya’s culture and courteous behaviour makes her forget everything and she has a very satisfactory life. Her sister marries the manager of the coffee plantation and her brother completes his education with her help. As Meenakshi Mukherjee comments: “The joint family has always provided rich fictional material because of variety and complexity of human relationships that it offers.”

There is only one unhappy incident that takes place in Rama’s married life. Nagendra, her lover visits her the last time and presents as wedding gift two poetical collections of Bendre. It is more unfortunate and pinching to Rama, because it takes place in the presence of her friend Amritha. The novel Mukthi continues the story of the six women introduced in Kankana. It also focuses round the issue of marriage with direct statements and discussion. The novel in the beginning offers a glance of the stories of Rama, Valli, Sushila and Ambika then develops the story of Amritha. As Amritha thinks: “Why is it that marriages of girls get postponed now a days? Is it because they are also educated like boys? Is unemployment responsible? Has the attitude of the present generation changed? Or the present generation is unwilling to bear family responsibility?” These are the questions haunting Amritha, who has not been able to marry though she is thirty. By discussing the courses of the lives of these women, Triveni introduces the various possibilities and necessities by which their young lives are touched. Rama marries an old man who is blind but rich, so that she can help her family financially.
Valli elopes with a man who later lets her down. As her parents have rejected her as a result of her marriage, she cannot go back to them. She takes up a job and tries the hard task of reforming her alcoholic husband although he has let her down. Sushila takes the easy way of promiscuity and goes after a way of life that is full of momentary, worldly pleasures. Amritha alone among them is jobless. With the support of her sensible brothers, she learns typing and short hand and joins the staff of a newspaper as a journalist.

Amritha has no miseries of poverty. She is not pretty. So nobody comes forth to marry her. But Amritha faces the situation boldly like all her other friends. It is the gift of their education - they are bold enough to face life. Marriage, which is the universal solution for someone in her position, does not come by easily. Her parents are unable to find a match for her as she has a dark skin. Conforming to the unwritten dictates of their society, they believe that she should not be allowed to take up a job as that would preclude even the remotest chance of marriage.

She persuades her traditional minded parents and joins a job without caring for the criticism of the society. She makes her two younger brothers marry. She boldly rejects the disgusting proposal of marrying Sundar Rao, a widower who has six children. She goes all the way to Bombay to seek her fortune. The most important feature of her character is that, she takes all the care to see that her attitude in life remains always positive without a bit of bitterness in it. Amritha also succeeds in life in her own way though different from that of Rama's who also succeeds in her life. Amritha comes in contact
with Keshavmurthy while working as a typist in an English Newspaper in Bombay. When they come to know each other that they both were Kannadigas, intimacy develops between them and they fall in love with each other. But it is not adolescent love between them, it is a cautious relation as they are both mature.

Amritha cannot forget the factors of her age and looks. On the other side Murthy cannot disclose his problem to her. He has all the fear of losing her if he disclosed his situation. He is already married to a T.B. patient. He is duped by his own people in that marriage. His wife is under treatment in a sanitorium in Bangalore. Infact, she wants her husband Keshavamurthy to marry someone else. But Murthy knows it fully well that it is not possible. Ultimately when Amritha decided to marry Murthy, he discloses all his situation which shocks her. Naturally Amritha berates him and forbids him to see her until he resolves the crises in his own life. At the end of the novel, when the reader is almost sure that Amritha will remain a single woman as a consequence of all this, Murthy's ailing wife dies and he in his new freedom claims Amritha's hand. But, because of her maturity and positive attitude it is possible for her to understand Murthy and take it in the right spirit. So there is no hindrance for their marriage when Murthy becomes a widower.

Triveni has attempted to analyse the different facets of woman's existence that has no family footing in her life, through the characters of Vedavalli, Sushila and Kasturi. But they are individualized cases and therefore they remain as tragedies of individuals just fit for sympathy. They do not rise
to the level of representing or symbolizing woman's condition. It only gives the impression that they could not get happiness through marriage. Beyond this, the critical social set-up, which is responsible for their unhappiness remains ungrasped or untouched by the author. So on the whole Triveni seems to present woman, whose ambitions of family life get centred round the events of life, full of happiness only. Triveni knows well that the colourful dreams of young girls get shattered in real life. But still, she seems to put forth a simple theory that, marriage alone is the most important event in life for woman and it is marriage only that decides whether her life would be a hell or heaven.

Triveni does emphasize the need for woman's education. But, she follows all other contemporary writers and does not consider the inevitability of a job for woman's economic independence. And so, marriage is the first and the only choice of woman's life, according to Triveni. Triveni was writing at a time when the culmination of a woman's life was seen in marriage and family life. Hence, she tries to portray imaginatively the joys and sorrows of family life. The problems of individuals who get in to the marriage contract become her major themes. She explores the various dimensions of family life. She depicts human nature with all its complexity.

3.2 The Woman's Point of View:

"Yatra Naryastu Poojyanthe Ramanthe Thathra Devatha" – This is a well-known Sanskrit slogan about women. It means that wherever women are worshiped, there dwell the Gods. It is part of the tradition of India to bestow dignity on women and worship them. Ironically, tradition also believes
strongly in the words of Manu that a woman, in her childhood is under the charge of her father, after marriage under the charge of her husband and in old age under the charge of the son. It was also said that ‘stree na soutantryan arhati.”

Rabindranath Tagore claims that; ‘Women is God’s best creation’. She added beauty, grace, and charm to every aspect of life. She has been universally eulogized by all the great men of all ages and all regions. It is observed that: “People have a strong opinion that there is a basic difference in the natures of man and woman. Men are virtually pure, physically strong, and emotionally mature; women, on the other hand are ritually pollutable, physically weak, and lack strong will power.”

Among the many dilemmas of womanhood is her physiology itself. The menstrual cycle not only impedes her freedom of movement and working capacity, but also embarrasses her in many other ways when it is delayed or missed. The pain of delivery itself is too unbearable. Pregnancy is too long a period of great caution and extra demands. Sometimes it is also a danger to her health and life. As K.D. Kurakoti rightly quotes: “Most of the women are denied the independence of mind and other opportunities which are easily available to man. Moreover the range of a woman’s experience is extremely narrow and limited compared to that of man.”

At the end of the second decade of this century once again a few women writers appeared in new Kannada writing. To the hitherto existing predominantly male perspective an attempt was made to add a fresh perspective from a female vision. Among these Triveni stands out as one who
attempted to create self-awareness in women and enable them to struggle for their own emancipation. As Esha Dey has pointed out: “Women in fiction depend on women in reality, patriarchy, which is the ruling social system almost all over the world ordains that woman's place in the home, her role as a wife and mother is quite often synonymous with her total human existence”.12

As the women who were undergoing education progressed in their studies and as the educated middle class woman stepped out of their homes into the wider world, the lives of women and the issues they confronted slowly underwent a change. New problems came up for women in this changed society. The evils of dowry system, the problem of widow re-marriage, the torture of prostitution, lack of economic independence become freshly controversial issues. The progressive novelist Triveni expressed her views on value based patriarchal society and its inbuilt tradition, and a gradual change of attitude towards female. As a social thinker Triveni's writing focused on woman's plight in the midst of Hindu traditional society, the social problems and her struggle for freedom. Child marriages, poverty, prostitution, women's exploitation, problems of youth are the themes of Triveni. She grapples with these contemporary issues and attempts a host of themes like, motherhood, marriage, widowhood, individuation, marginalization, woman as wife, mother, sister etc.

Her novels Bekkina Kannu, Doorada Betta and Sharapanjara deal with the serious social problems of women's mental illness as related to gender. Triveni was a pioneer in dealing with such themes. In many of the novels Triveni has questioned moral restrictions that society has imposed on women. Triveni's
Hoovu Hannu, Modala Hejje, and Keelugombe are reflections of this theme. She analyses the unequal power relationship that exists between men and women in Indian society. He dominates the home also; and, as a result, often the woman is forced to be at the receiving end. Society has to be taken into account for understanding an individual and his behaviour. The novel Keelugombe exemplifies the kind of mental setup with which a wife, who suffers because of the behaviour of her husband, reacts against the social background of those days. The behaviour of Seetha and Narasimaha can be studied against the background of the social status of woman, the family and social pressures that were there on Seetha (the woman) in those days.

**Hoovu Hannu**

Being so caught up
so mastered by the brute blood of the air,

Did she put on His knowledge with His power?
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?¹³

—*(Leda and the Swan)*

By 'Indian woman', one conjures up images of the wife trailing behind the husband, never daring to walk alongside him. One also thinks of such painstaking and devoted women as Seetha and Shakuntala. Triveni has registered the woman's point of view strongly, has pleaded for a fair and just treatment of women. She has documented the myriad facts of womanhood. Traditionally, the Indian woman has been represented as a spineless, wooden
creature, subjected to male domination. It brings to fore the concept of gender in the patriarchal society.

Prostitution was a very favourite subject of all writers during the enthusiastic days of progressivism. Writers under the leadership of A.N. Krishna Rao wrote novels dealing with this subject. These were followed by a novel by T.R. Subba Rao, another well known novelist, presenting intimate pictures of a house of prostitution. But the treatment of the subject was traditional and lopsided because they all considered the subject from man's point of view. At the time and context of Triveni's writing, Feminism had not yet taken a concrete form. In those days the writings of women were mostly ignored by critics. It is to Triveni's credit that novels written by women started getting their due.

_Hoovu Hannu_ presented the subject for the first time from the woman's angle. The novel proves that even a prostitute is a mother, and remains a mother for whom her daughter's happiness comes first and hers later. This novel also depicts young lovers, their fears and dreams and their courtship.

The novel starts with the untimely death of Vasu, a poor clerk, leaving behind him twenty one year old wife, Rama and a four year old daughter, Sheela. The premature death of her husband makes Rama a destitute:

Rama realized then that male protection was indispensable for a woman to lead a respectable life. Her situation now was similar to a creeper, which has lost the support of the tree, helplessly rolling about on the ground and being trampled upon by all and sundry. As Young woman without a husband was like food
which belonged to nobody and so, to everybody. So felt Rama about herself and she lost heart reacting that her life was like such food to partake which crows crowd around.14

The novel deals with her struggle for life and her attempts to bring up her only daughter Sheela and make her a good housewife. Rama attempts to lead life respectfully, taking up one petty job after another, only to give them up to save herself from the hungry eyes of her employers. Rama has to yield to the pressure of lusty men in the society. Her poverty forces her to be a prostitute in the interest of her daughter. She sacrifices everything of hers for the sake of her daughter. She thinks that her daughter at least should get good education and lead an honourable life later. Intentionally, she puts her in a convent school. Her daughter grows up both physically and mentally and becomes an educated and beautiful young woman. Finally, Sheela marries her own teacher in college and Rama, who comes to know of these developments, feels that her sacrifice has not been wasted. After a few years, her daughter with her young child comes to live in Rama’s neighbourhood. Sheela observes the growing friendship between her child and a cheap whore. She dislikes the development of friendship between them. When Rama comes to know of this, she withdraws herself and disappears from their life, so that her daughter could lead an unstained good life.

Rama wants to lead a peaceful life all by herself with her daughter, but men and society take undue advantage of her poverty and plight and force her to become a prostitute. The charmingly beautiful Rama loses her beauty gradually and becomes ugly. Infact Rama was content in her life with her
husband though they were poor. But after her husband's death it is all poverty and cruelty of the society that she experiences. It becomes intolerable and inevitable for her in the interest of her daughter that she yields to the pressure of lusty men and stoops. Triveni narrates the condition of helpless Rama: "Even as Rama was struggling every moment to live respectably, her life was being mercilessly trampled upon by the talk of the people. All these days she had silently suffered their remarks which fierce her very being. Isn't there a limit to one's tolerance?"\textsuperscript{15}

So, though the society is held responsible for her fall, it is mainly her poverty that causes her fall. All this is well depicted and the character of Rama is very well delineated; of course, all her experiences at the hands of the cruel men of the society do not contribute for the characterization. But, they all certainly succeed in picturizing her sad plight and arousing sympathy and pity for her in the minds of the readers. \textit{Hoovu Hannu} attempts to show how Rama is pushed into prostitution by her poverty on one side and on the otherside, by the society which considers the helpless woman as a sex toy only. As N.V. Vimala quotes: "Lines separating morality and immorality are clearly drawn in Triveni's writings. Her '\textit{Hoovu Hannu}' depicts the circumstances which force a lonely woman to become a prostitute."\textsuperscript{16}

The sex inhibition thrust only on woman through the preached values like 'chastity', 'loyalty to husband' etc., and the buying capacity of the philanderer make the fallen woman lose her prestige, status, personality and honour in the society. Rama of \textit{Hoovu Hannu} represent the women who become
preys to the one sided ethical code of conduct preached by the society and it is
the result of the author’s rage against the society and sympathy for women
who suffer injustice. Simone de Beauvoir is of “the view that the history of
humanity is a history of systematic attempts to silence the female. She states:
“one is not born, but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization as a whole that
produces this creature...which is described as feminine.”17

The society which praises the woman for her chastity, forces her to
become a prostitute, when she becomes helpless and then exploits her freely to
the extent that she can not lead her life happily in a normal manner. Triveni
rightly points out this chastity, contradiction, impropriety and cruelty that are
there in the social set up. She warns that it is because of economic dependence
and it is therefore essential that woman must try to become economically
independent first, to lead a happy independent life. Triveni’s warning was just
a step in that direction though it was not very much cognizant in those days.
Therefore, Triveni’s major concern as a creative writer is her women characters,
their plight, their suffering, and their own solution to the problems created by
the world. Her characters are full of strength and weaknesses. They help others
by sacrificing their own values.

Keelugombe (The Puppet)

The first serious feminist novel of Triveni is Keelugombe (The puppet, 1955). In this novel Triveni question the exploitation of women in the male-
dominated society. It is true that most of such stories that view the unequal
man woman relationship from a woman’s perspective tend to be thesis stories.
This novel reveals woman, who is the victim of man's tyranny. It comes as a major document of Triveni on the basis of the traditional man-woman relationship within the framework of marriage.

Venkateshaiah of Mysore, a middle class Bank employee has a big family consisting of his mother, wife, three daughters and a son. His eldest daughter Seetha is married off at her age of thirteen only, to Narasimhaiah, a teacher in Hassan. Seetha is the central character of this novel. Narasimhaiah lives in a joint family with his father and his four brothers and their wives and their children. Though educated, Narasimhaiah is cast in the mould of a traditional Indian husband. He treats his wife Seema as a full time maid during day and a ready whore at night. After marriage, when Seetha is afraid of going to her husband’s room, her mother advises her in these words :

‘Seetha, a husband is God incarnate. Do you understand?’ ‘Yes’

‘Then, just obey whatever your husband tells you. Don’t you be adamant or stubborn?’ ‘Have you seen me being stubborn at any time?’ Don’t answer back your husband. If you serve your husband faithfully, you will please God. Remember, ‘a husband is God incarnate to a wife.’

Seetha enters her husband’s room, only to be brutally attacked by her husband. She is shocked by this traumatic experience at night. She runs out to her mother and sleeps with her. When Narasimhaiah’s mother hears of this encounter, she remembers: “On my nuptial night I too was frightened and was soundly thrashed by my husband. All my bangles were broken.” This shows
the cruel treatment meted out to women, generation after generation. Kaveramma, the mother-in-law of Seetha takes all loving care of her. She becomes pregnant within six months of her marriage. Narasimhaiah does not want it. But his grand father Shrikanthaih has a deep desire to get kanakabhisheka performed. The physically weak Seetha has abortion and Shrikanthaih gets disappointed. Seetha recovers within a month or two. She has abortion again and again four or five times. At last when she becomes pregnant the seventh time, she is sent to her mother’s house by Narasimhaiah, because, others in the family force him to do so. Seetha gets good nourishment and rest in her mother’s house and gives birth to a male child.

Narasimhaiah celebrates his son’s birth and is happy with his wife. But when Seetha returns to Hassan, her husband’s house, her life becomes the same miserable one. She suffers abortion and again and again and becomes very weak in health. Narasimhaiah shifts his family to Bangalore for his son’s education. Madhusudan, his son opposes Narasimhaiah’s attitude towards his mother and pleads for her. Narasimhaiah cannot tolerate this but he can not oppose his grown up son either, so keeps quiet. After a series of miscarriages, caused by her husband’s incessant lust, Seetha is reduced to a heap of bones. Her periodic visits to the hospital for treatment become a routine in her life.

Triveni registers the various facets of the traditional man-woman relationships with in the framework of marriage: “A wife, for Narasimhaiah, was no more than a slave doing household work, and at night a prostitute catering to his pleasure in bed. For the carnal pleasure he got from his wife at
night, and at being a slave at home during day he had given her shelter at home, and fed her.\textsuperscript{20} Rohini a girl who serves in the house of Narasimhaiah attracts Madhu. There is a kind of unknown mutual attraction (infatuation) between both of them. But Madhusudan realizes this only when Rohini is married off to somebody else. Madhu admits his mother to a hospital when her health breaks down. Seetha gets acquainted with the lives of some patients in the hospital.

There is Narasamma, who wants to kill her newly born baby girl and then end her life also, because her in-laws including her husband, have warned her that unless she gets a boy, she need not return home from the hospital. Then there is Sharadamma, who, after delivering the tenth child, undergoes tubectomy to avoid further pregnancy. She says, 'How does he know the pain and agony of child bearing and delivery? Hence, I myself had to undergo this operation'. As Madhurvari, an educated modern woman, tells her, this is another form of keeping women in eternal subjugation: "It is the fault of the society to have prohibited remarriage for a widow even when she happens to be young. It is the fault of men, who dare not oppose society and come forward to marry a young widow. This is proof enough that the male is still an animal as far as the female is concerned."\textsuperscript{21}

Seetha is warned against further pregnancy, which might cause her death before she is discharged from the hospital. Madhu the son of Narasimhaiah opposes his father when he tries to have sex with Seetha. Ultimately Seetha dies in a few days of her sickness. In Keelugombe there is an
attempt by Triveni to show and condemn man’s sexual exploitation of the helpless woman and his cruelty towards her. The author’s intention is to sympathise with woman, express hatred for man, and condemn his behaviour through the depiction of the helpless, soft-hearted heroine Seetha, and Narasimhaiah who is heartless and has only animality in him. The very title Keelugombe (The puppet) suggests the bound status of woman in the social and family setup. Seetha becomes a victim to the animality of her husband from the wedding night and ultimately the same cruelty to her husband proves fatal to her. She cannot try to escape from that and even cannot raise her voice against it to oppose. She is not trained to do so by her family or the society.

But there is some protest in the novel against this injustice. It is through Madhu and Madhuravani, who belong to the next generation, that Triveni expresses her protest. Once a woman gets formal education, like Madhuravani (The writer’s persona), she can see through the female stereotypes (an obedient wife) set up by men, and escape those stereotypes.

Education gives security to a woman. One can draw upon education during days of difficulty as one can draw money from a bank in which one has deposits...Anyway; you have not had any education. But, at least, educate your daughters. It doesn’t matter even if you can’t get them married. 22

Triveni does show a progressive attitude in protesting against man’s cruelty and his use of woman for his pleasure and sex, as a puppet in his hand. She does express that this condition of woman should change. But for that
change to take place again, man’s generosity and sympathy is the only way that Triveni finds. And that is her limit. The women are completely brainwashed through the impressions formed in their minds about the superiority and supremacy of men. They cannot come out of this belief though reality gives the opposite kind of experience. Women are preached right from their childhood, ‘obey your husband’, ‘Never oppose him’, ‘you can please God if you serve your husband well,’ and ‘your husband is your God’. The simple version of all these preaching is that woman should become a puppet in the cruel hands of man to satisfy his sexual urge.

By the time Seetha realizes this, she becomes a victim of her animal like husband’s urge just at the age of fourteen. And she suffers throughout her life. She realizes that marital life is a bundle of defeat, insult, disgust, and intolerable miseries. Triveni depicts quite emotionally (appealingly) the character of Seetha, who dies becoming a puppet in the cruel hands of her lusty husband Narasimhaiah. Infact, in the hospital the writer creates a perfect contrast in Madhuravani and her husband for Seetha’s married life. Madhuravani has planned well in advance, with her husband, as to when to have the first baby and how many children they should have. Madhuravani and her husband treat each other like friends. Where as Seetha’s relationship with her husband has been that of a master servant. Thus Keelugombe depicts a woman’s role and position in Hindu traditional society. It is the first major novel in Kannada, by a woman writer, on woman’s problems.
Modala Hejje (The First Step)

The subject matter of Modala Hejje (the first step, 1956) is again the life of a woman who is born and brought up in poor family circumstances, does not get any opportunity to lead a contented life in the society, and therefore commits a crime is imprisoned and released after five years. The society in the field of morality and social behaviour, has one law for men and another law for women. The novel criticizes society, which treats women cruelly and protests against man's inhuman exploitation of helpless women. Triveni depicts man as a sadistic brute and the harsh treatment of an unwed mother by society. The novel is also popular from the point of view of narration. While all the earlier novels have third person narration, this novel experiments with first person point of view with three different narrations.

The central character is the eldest daughter of Venkataramanaih, who also has another daughter and a son. As a woman who is neither fair nor rich she grows up as an 'unwanted child'. Because of her dark colour, she is always the object of ridicule and contempt of her neighbours and friends. She fails to continue her education beyond the school leve'. Often, whenever the young girl (the protagonist) asks for some petty things like a sweet or a petty frock, she is beaten by her mother, as the narrator tells:

The family growing day by day, poverty and ill health these aggravated Subbi's (her mother's) impatience and short-temper. She couldn't take out her frustration on everyone. I was the only person easily available for her to vent her anger. She was too
weak physically- to do anything in the house; but she would find some small fault or another in whatever I did.23

But her younger brother is encouraged to get whatever education is possible in their circumstances. Her mother differentiates between her daughter and son regarding food and clothes. When she comes of age, her father starts his search for a suitable match for her. Everyone who comes to 'see' her, refuses her because of her dark colour, (though they are not fair either. 'What does the colour of a boy matter?'). Finally, her parents grow tired of getting a match for her. They decide to get her younger sister married off. Her younger sister Mani is fair and good-looking. But the dark girl does not get a groom because of her complexion and her poor family background. She gets only despair, disgust, and neglect stored in her heart. The writer here (being a woman herself) registers the frustrations of a grown-up but unmarried woman:

After Mani's (her younger sister) marriage, all my emotions and passions, latent till now, suddenly surged to the fore. A girl till now, I at once became a woman. I began to notice the meeting of the eyes, its speechless messages, stolen glances, meaningful smiles exchanged between Mani and Murthy. When Murthy's eyes, pregnant with ardour, met Mani's eyes, my heart became heavy. Before marriage, whenever Mani would be lost in the thoughts of her lover, I used to smile at such childish behaviour.
But, now, I began to realize how empty life was without such
craze, without such thrill.24

She is almost a maid servant in the house, right from her childhood.
After serving her mother during her confinements she goes to Bangalore to
look after Mani during her confinement. There, Shivaswamy who stays near
the house of Mani attracts her. The dark girl, who does not know what love is
in her life, yields to the advances of Shivaswamy. Her parents have failed in
their attempt to put her life on a safe path by marrying her off. The dark
complexioned girl has no bid in the marriage market. So her hungry eager eyes
see a lover in this lusty Shivaswamy. From this point onwards, the narration is
taken over by the rake, Shivaswamy. He narrates the ways and means of
seducing the poor and unmarried girl (the nameless protagonist). We come to
know that the girl is only a helpless victim, more sinned against than sinning.
The seduction proves to be easy because at this point of time, the rake is jilted
by a beautiful woman. His wounded male ego is searching out for somebody.
His victim is physically and mentally starved, all her passions roused by her
sister’s conjugal life which is denied to her. Shivaswamy analyses this situation
thus: “I was the flame and she the moth. If I went about it carefully, I had no
doubt that I would catch her. My heart beat fast. It swelled with pride that at
last I had conquered a woman.”25

He promises of love and marriage. He plays with her and then deserts
her. She decides to succeed all by herself where her parents have failed, and
makes acquaintance with Shivaswamy. She takes the first step independently
in life, but goes wrong and stumbles. Shivaswamy, who enjoys sex with her, disappears after that. The dark girl has his seed in her womb. At this the third section opens, the story is narrated by an old nurse of a maternity hospital.

Triveni chooses a nurse, to whose hospital the poor woman comes for delivery, achieving thereby both distance and sympathy. The narrator (the old nurse) describes this situation poignantly:

> My eyes turned toward the door. There was a dark girl (the protagonist) leaning against the door, her face contorted with pain. Her clothes were in total disarray. She would bite her lip to suppress her pain. There was not with her a mother to beg doctors and nurses to save her daughter’s life. There was no husband with her to suffer with her. No father was near her to calm and console his daughter, writhing in pain.26

She gives birth to a female child in the hospital. The nurse in the hospital finds out that literally she has none neither a husband nor parents nor friends to look after her, listens to the story of this dark girl, and says to her:

> “You should not try to satisfy your hunger by eating dirt”. She realizes the peculiar plight of the woman and advises her; ‘Don’t kill yourself with worry; every human being errs, you have also erred; and now, owing to a man’s cowardice, you are suffering alone. Be careful in future; and never trust a man easily. Until his desires are satisfied, a man behaves like a slave to the woman; and once he is satiated, he severs all his connections with her.
Men are like fire; if we touch them, our hands get burnt. And the burnt place never gets healed.

The dark girl ponders over the future of her illicit baby, which would not be accepted by the society and decides that death of the baby is the only solution. She murders her own child, but is caught by the police and is imprisoned for five years. On the day of her release from the jail, Shivaswamy is brought there for imprisonment on the charge of raping a girl and murdering her. The father of the dark girl is there at the gate of the jail to receive her. This novel appeals for its technique of narration.

1. It is in the form of the autobiography of the dark girl, till she comes to Bangalore for Man's confinement ('I' as a narrator).

2. Then it is in the form of the autobiography of Shivaswamy.

3. The pregnancy and confinement of the heroine is narrated by a nurse. The murder of the child is also reported by her (Third person narration).

4. Again the dark girl tells her own story of her life in the jail.

It is quite significant that the heroine has no name in the novel. Still, the author has seen to it that the development of the story is not hampered because of the namelessness of the heroine. The characters of the dark girl and Shivaswamy are successfully and convincingly delineated. The dark girl remembers: "From the moment of my birth, I had suffered, going through the hell-fire of poverty. Joy and happiness had always been a mirage for me. Toil and disappointment had been my props in life. But then... but I wanted to live like everyone else." There are the miseries of the protagonist, who wanted to
live like everyone else. Thus the writer registers the passionate yearnings of grown up, but unmarried woman.

*Bellimoda*

You are your own refuge

There is no other refuge

This refuge is hard to achieve. (The Dhammapada)²⁹

The psychology of a man deceiving the innocent woman for wealth and property is analysed in the novel 'Bellimoda'. Indira is the daughter of Sadashivaraya, the owner of the coffee estate *Bellimoda*. Mohan a graduate comes to Sadashivaraya to seek his help for higher education abroad. He agrees to marry Indira the only daughter the rich owner of the coffee estate. Indira gives her consent to marry him after his return from aboard, according to his wish. She believes in Mohan. Her mind is clear and she is innocent. Indira’s character is a faithful representation of self-sacrificing Indian woman. To her, marriage is the most important happening in woman’s life. It is both a problem and solution to life’s problems. Indira’s mother gives birth to a male child Giri during this period and dies before Indira’s marriage takes place as settled. Indira happily writes to Mohan about the birth of her brother. But, the death of Indira’s mother after the arrival of Giri completely changes the future life of Indira. Indira, who eagerly waited for the arrival of Mohan, immediately notices the change in him the moment he comes. The change in him is there because he knows that now he cannot be the lone heir to Sadashivaraya and even if he married Indira, he cannot own fully the coffee estate *Bellimoda*, for
Giri is there now to share it. He attempts to reject Indira with this selfish feeling in his mind. Indira had thought that the glow of his eyes was the light of his love for her, but now she understands that it was his thirsty longing for the property, as she is very sharp minded. The real mind of an individual shows itself out only when he reacts to the social and family problems and his mind and character can be understood from how he grasps the situation, takes it, and reacts to it. Apparently every individual looks a gentleman till his selfish motive is satisfied. It is the deceiving, misleading attitude of the human mind.

The strong-minded Indira takes it silently and soberly when Mohan refuses to marry her, without revealing the intention. It shows her maturity. Mohan had expected her anger and protest in reaction to his rejection and so her silence and soberness become unbearable to him. Indira suppresses all her feelings with unperturbed mind and to protect Mohan’s interest, she takes the blame on herself and refuses to marry Mohar. When Mohan gets injured, slipping in the estate, she attends on him sincerely but unselfishly. Now his mind changes. It is his thoughtlessness and fickle-mindedness. There is change in the behaviour of such people according to circumstances. Indira says: “the broken mind cannot be mended” and remains unmarried.

1. Here we can see her self-respect and freedom of thought.

2. The pain of despair that Indira experiences, does not perturb her mind, because she rightly reads the minds of other people and takes the incident in the right spirit.
3.3 The Conflict between Tradition and Modernity:

As T.S. Eliot explains in his *Tradition and the Individual Talent*:

Tradition is not solely, or even primarily the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits, and customs, from the most significant religious rites to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of 'the same people living in the same place.'

The progressive novelist Triveni expressed her views on value based patriarchal society and its inbuilt tradition. Triveni can be described as modern. 'Modernity' in the words of Deman is, "Modernity which is fundamentally a falling away from literature and rejection of history, also acts as the principle that gives literature duration and historical existence." The conflict between tradition and modernity occupies a prominent place in the novels of Triveni. Tradition signifies some definite customs, habits, beliefs, and convictions which have been prevalent in the country for a long time. Where as, modernity denotes a change in attitudes, ideas and beliefs of the people generated by the drastic and impersonal forces of urbanization, science and technological advancements.

Triveni has an obsessive concern with the fate of a married woman in Indian society. The society is in a state of transition with our cultural values in the melting pot. One could sense in Triveni's novel, a compelling urge for a
way of living, which would respond to the innermost yearnings of women for freedom and self-dignity. In *Hannele Chiguricaga*, the protagonist in fact symbolizes the conflict between feeling and reason, innocence and adventure, natural feminine instinct and the social convention, modernity and tradition. She refuses to conform to the accepted patterns of male oriented, dominated, and approved social behaviour, which face with a choice between their conviction and conformity.

Triveni portrays an ideal Indian woman in *Apaswara* and *Apajaya* whose life is divided in two phases. The central theme of the novels is not only a clash of tradition and modernity but also that of the urban and rural cultures, the superstitious beliefs of the rural folk as against the values of modernism in the city dwellers. Triveni is able to present a brilliant synthesis of the old and the new in the character of Meera. The novel *Apaswara* depicts Meera in an urban atmosphere, as a young carefree, impulsive, college-going girl, whereas *Apajaya* displays her as a transformed and mature woman living in a totally new environment of a village. This transformation in Meera is characteristic of the idealism of an Indian woman. Meera’s adaptability to new circumstances is remarkable; she struggles all along to bring out the best in both cultures. This reminds T.S. Eliot’s view in his famous essay titled *Tradition and Individual Talent*, the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. There is a symphony of culture in *Apaswara* as seen in the perfect blend of tradition and modernity in
the character of the heroine. Thus Triveni wrote about the conflict between the old and the new, the rural and the urban cultures.

_Hannele Chiguridaga, (When the Old Leaf Turns Green Again)_

This novel is unique in many respects. Triveni's earlier novels are plot oriented, but this is character oriented. Parental tyranny and widow marriage are the major concerns of this novel. It also reflects the conflict between tradition and modernity. This novel was published in 1963. In fact these themes are nothing new to Kannada fiction, many novels have dealt with these themes. The very first novel in Kannada, _Indira Bai_ (190C) depicts the issue of widow marriage. The heroine of the novel _Hannele Chiguridaga_ is Malati, a widow, she is the last daughter of a well known Advocate in Bangalore, who is called Rayaru. She has five elder brothers and she is the only girl in the family. Rayaru is seventy plus and is well to do. He has led a contented life. He has retired from his practice and is facing the problem of passing time without anything to do. Triveni has drawn his picture with all care and patience. She goes on unfolding Rayaru's oddities and eccentricities. All his sons are grown up and even his grand sons are coming of age but Rayaru still has the notion that his days (of power) are not over. He has an attitude of not believing in the youngsters in any matter. He is so forgetful that he cannot remember either the number or the names of the children. He dreads death like a child, and he does not even want to talk about death. On the slightest physical problem, he begins to moan and groan until everyone in the family gets tired of serving him.
His wife, Rajamma, is viewed as an 'ideal woman'. Triveni portrays the character of Rajamma as a very conventional and traditional woman... She is fully aware of the oddities in her husband, and still she loves and respects him. She works hard for her husband and children. Triveni has drawn Rajamma's portrait thus:

Rajamma's personality was such that whoever saw her immediately admired and respected her. She was not very tall and her body was a little on the stout side. She was light coloured and her face was round and innocent like that of a child. Her cheeks would be thickly powdered with turmeric and her brow with kunkum. Looking at Rajamma, her hair covered with flowers offered to the goddess, jingling red glass bangles on her wrist, and golden rings on her toes—looking at Rajamma one experienced the same joy and satisfaction that one got from the full moon.\(^\text{32}\)

Though Triveni projects in her novels the traditional image of woman, the portrayal becomes realistic with a thrust on woman's sense of frustration and alienation. The characters created by her, like their creator, were torn apart by the conflicting forces of tradition and modernity. Rajamma keeps the family together with children and grand children. The traditional Rajamma, irrespective of her husband's eccentricities and oddities, tolerates him and keeps the family intact and functioning. This shows the traditional value of
Indian wife, sanctity of marriage, importance of family as a social unit and woman as an embodiment of service and sacrifice.

So even at that old age Rayaru himself moves about and gets his only daughter married off. It is around this time that Rayaru loses his wife. Rayaru feels lonely and lost, at the death of his wife but still feels that he is young. Within a few days after this his son-in-law, Malati's husband, dies suddenly when he had gone to Madras and the only loving daughter of Rayaru, Malati returns and stays in his house. He yields to the pressure of his elder sons and permits Malati to join a college to continue her education. Triveni explains: "Rayaru could not bear the sight of his daughter going to college... Malati who should have been carrying a lovely babe in her arms, was carrying books now." 33 The first half of the novel is devoted to the development of Rayaru's character, the second half introduces two serious issues. Around this time Shiva, the younger son of Rayaru, gets enticed with an actress acting in dramas and wants to marry her. Malati gets acquainted with Prasad, a relation of the eldest daughter-in-law of Rayaru. It develops into love. Prasad is a widower and has a son. They decide to marry. But, traditional as Rayaru is in his beliefs, he cannot accept the idea of a second marriage for a woman, and he vehemently opposes the idea. Rayaru does not agree to this marriage.

Meanwhile Shivu tells his father about his decision of marrying Jayanti, the actress. It creates a commotion in the peaceful life of Rayaru. He opposes the marriage. But Shivu deserts the house and marries Jayanti. The father son
relation gets cut off. Rayaru feels hurt at this haughty behaviour of his son. Malati hesitates to tell about the marriage proposal from Prasad at this juncture. Rayaru who feels that family name (honour) would be tarnished because of her second marriage only gets angrier. Malati feels that peace of the family is at stake because of her. So she tells her father about her decision of giving up the idea of marrying Prasad. Madhav, the eldest son of Rayaru convinces his father like this: "Father it is not your days any more. The day you retired, the day we became capable of earning, that very day your period was over and ours began. If you think you can have your own way as long as you live, what are we youngsters to do?"34

Even when Rayaru is unreasonable and totally adamant in his views, his daughter understands him. She tells her brothers that considering the way their father is brought up, one cannot expect him to change in his old age. Her simple submission to his will proves more persuasive than her brothers' open revolt. Lastly, Rayaru realizes that his lonely daughter is sacrificing her happiness for his sake. He goes to Sringeri, without telling any one, to seek religious advice about his daughter's remarriage from Swamiji. When he returns from Sringeri, he gives kunkuma prasada to all including Malati, the widow. That is his consent for her remarriage and it takes place with Prasad.

It is rightly observed: "When old and new ideas face each other, there should be mutual adjustment. No use in confrontation. We have to live according to the present. If we swim against the current, we only have drowned."35 Naturally, the aged Rayaru falls sick and becomes bed ridden. He
feels his end is near. He calls his eldest son, one night, and hands over all the charge of the family headship to him. But the very next day he recovers and becomes healthy. Immediately he calls back his eldest son and takes back the charge. The old leaf that was about to fall at night is green again in the morning. Triveni has depicted the adversities resulting from inter-caste marriage, widow marriage and the generation gap in a very realistic and convincing manner in this novel.

*Apaśvara/Apajaya*

The novels *Apaśvara* (disharmony 1953) and its sequel *Apajaya* (defeat, 1956) deal with the difficult problems of adjustment due to unequal marriages. Triveni successfully contrasts two ways of life (rural and urban) and two value systems (traditional and modern). The orphan Meera, the only daughter of her parents, goes to Mysore with her uncle after the untimely death of her parents. Her uncle Krishnappa, is a clerk in Mysore. He has four sons. Kamalamma, Krishnappa's wife is contented in bringing up her four children. She feels dissatisfied with the inevitable arrival of Meera. But still, she yields to the pressure of her husband and agrees to nourish Meera. Meera, who is just seven years old, grows up with boys. These boys, her cousins and Krishnappa, her uncle, are fond of her; but Kamalamma does not like her much. So tussles and exchange of hot words take place between husband and wife, and mother and sons.

In course of time, Gopala, the eldest son of Krishnappa, completes his intermediate exam, and joins a medical college. Meera impressed by this and
has the ambition of studying medicine. After completing his medical course Gopala marries a doctor’s daughter in Mysore and goes away to Bombay for his career. Meera joins the intermediate course after completing her high school education. Even before her intermediate examination commences Meera’s marriage is fixed with Shamu, a rich youth of a nearby village. He is good looking but not so well educated. Meera has the ambition of studying medicine and becoming a doctor. So she does not like to marry Shamu who is less educated than herself. But she yields to the persuasion of her uncle and concedes for this marriage. Meera goes to the village of her husband after marriage. The village life does not suit her. She cannot adjust herself to the totally different life style of the village. In order to give some meaning to her life, she tries to educate the village women, but fails.

The novel effectively contrasts the rural and urban life styles. As soon as Meera steps into the village, she is surrounded by curious villagers for whom the concept of privacy is something unheard of. There is no electricity in the village. The village is surrounded by only mud houses and disgusting dirt. The writer registers the different life styles of Shamu and Meera clashing but, more important is, their minds cannot meet, they are poles apart. Once, Shamu happens to be affectionately caressing a young white calf. When Meera happens to come there, Shamu offers the calf for her to catch:

On his part, Shamu proffered the calf into the arms of Meera, still gently stroking the calf’s back. Meera, also taken in by the calf’s beauty, stretched out her hands. But, at once observing raw cow-

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dung on the calf’s leg, its tail, and sides wet with cow-urine, and the pungent smell coming out of the calf’s body, disgusted, Meera quickly withdrew her outstretched hands. As a result, the calf fell to the ground with a thud. Shamu felt that the fall of his pet calf was indeed a bad omen.36

Meera can not understand Shamu’s love for fields and rustic life. Shamu is totally surprised over Meera’s poring over books and magazines. Once Shamu expresses his opinion about Meera’s love of books:

“My dear, how many books do you read? What does attract you in those lifeless books?” Meera’s patience could stand no more. She said, “Don’t you roam about fields and gardens day and night? Don’t they bore you?” Shamu frowned and said, ’Do we get bored with the Sun whom we see everyday? I am bound with the sacred bond of affection to Mother Earth; does any son get bored with his mother? Her loveliness is ever new; her affection is everlasting. How can one get the same satisfaction one derives from her service in books.’ 37

But she gets herself adjusted and welcomes the unavoidable life that has come to her lot. When she learns that she has passed in her Intermediate examination, she feels sad for she cannot fulfill her ambition of becoming a doctor. This shows Meera is born to be a doctor; Shamu is born to be a farmer. Shamu, who is attracted by the beauty of Meera, has made all adjustments to provide all facilities and amenities to her in the village. Though Meera is
unhappy with the life that she has to lead much against her wish, she becomes pregnant. She is unhappy with this to begin with, but later decides to accept things as they come in life, and has peace in her mind. She gives birth to a female child and names her Veena. Veena becomes a link between Meera and Shamu, who were living poles apart mentally though were living in the same house physically. But this contentment also proves short lived. Shamu wishes to have six girls and three boys, but a modern woman like Meera may refuse to accept such an archetypal role:

Do you fancy that children fall from heaven? Do men realize the worth of a child? It is not a simple thing to carry the baby in one's womb for nine months and then deliver it. A woman has to apportion her own flesh and blood for the child; sometimes she has to stake her own life. But men-he behaves like a heartless brute after his little act is over, as if then onwards the entire responsibility of the child rests with the mother. Surely, if I have to give birth to nine children, in the process I can as well ready my grave.38

This sudden anger of Meera surprises Shamu because women are supposed to love children. Veena, the loving child of the whole village because of her charming looks and pleasing babble dies at the tender age of five. Meera loses the only comfort she had for her uncontented life. She cannot bear children any more because of the medical trouble that had occurred at the time of Veena's birth. Meera is in a wilderness after the death of Veena her loving
child. Shamu notices the need of Meera that she should go away to forget her present misery. Shamu agrees for continuing her education and Meera joins a medical college in Mysore which helps her to get fulfilled her long cherished ambition of becoming a doctor. She is very happy at this. While she is leaving for Mysore, Shamu says to Meera, 'If you feel uncomfortable with your new life in Mysore, do come back to village, it is your house and the doors are always open for you.'

The novel narrates the tragedy of a mismatched couple. It also depicts the evils of an ill-fated marriage. Shamu knew that his wife was neither happy nor at peace though he had provided her with all facilities. But he did not show any eagerness to know the reason for it. A girl from the city, she has not yet come to terms with rural life; it is only a matter of time before she gets adjusted. So he thought lightly. He kept himself away from Meera, who was always a dreamer. Meera, who is away from Shamu, realizes that Shamu needs the company of a woman. She suggests and tries for his second marriage. Shamu opposes it at first. But later he realizes that he needs an heir to look after his large property and therefore agrees for the second marriage. Shamu's paternal aunt's daughter Sarasi becomes his wife, through the efforts of Meera. Even after this marriage, Shamu is more inclined towards Meera only. Sarasi feels unhappy at this. In course of time Sarasi gives birth to a male child. Meera feels satisfied at the success of her efforts. By this time Gopinath and Vijaya, the classmates of Meera, decide to marry each other. But parents of both oppose their marriage. They decide to arrange for this marriage in the village of
Shamu, according to the suggestion of Meera. Sarasi does not like this arrangement. But Shamu insists and the marriage takes place. The sub-plot, of successful love marriage, functions as a good contrast to the main plot of failed marriage.

Because of such incidents that show Shamu's inclination towards Meera. Sarasi becomes jealous of Meera. Meera completes her M.B.B.S. and returns to Shamu's house. She starts practicing there. More expenditure is incurred on her practice than the income she gets from it. Sarasi feels that she herself and her children are being put to loss because of Meera's practice and protests. Meera, who had experienced discordant notes (Apaswara) during the early part of her life, now experiences defeat (Apajaya) in her attempt to lead a joint family life with the patient co-operation of her co-wife Sarasi. Meera understands that she should desert the house and go away from there, if her husband Shamu should have a peaceful life with his satisfied second wife Sarasi. She tells Shamu about this with all caution and delicacy, convinces him and goes away to Mysore to join her job in 'Vijaya Pharmacy' started by Gopinath, and thus asserts her independence. Triveni's characters are shown very often as torn apart by the conflicting forces of tradition and modernity:

Shamu could not make Meera change her resolve. It was a very sad thing for him that Meera was leaving him, but in his heart of hearts he felt it was a good thing, though. Better to keep away from fire than put your hand in it and get burnt. She would thus be happy.39
3.4 Psychological Novels:

'Psychoanalysis' is a process of analyzing the human 'psyche' (mind and behaviour) based on the science of psychology, which studies and helps to understand the perturbation hidden at the bottom of the human mind.

Sigmund Freud observes in this regard:

Ill - luck that is, external frustration - so greatly enhances the power of the conscience in the super ego. As long as things go well with a man, his conscience is lenient and lets the ego do all sorts of things, but when misfortune befalls him, he searches his soul, acknowledges his sinfulness, heightens the demands of his conscience, imposes abstinences on himself, and punishes himself with penances. 40

Psychology

The behaviour of a human being, who is a social being, may be based on or caused by the other individuals, groups or communities which are there in the society. The study of such human behaviour against the background of the society is called social psychology. Triveni is ideally suited to the tracts of human psyche with a sharp psychological insight into subtleties of human mind. She has tried to mirror the different facets of the society and the individuals losing the balance of mind and its possibilities within the framework of family from woman's point of view in her various novels. Because woman identifies herself with the family. Man has no such limitations. So he behaves freely. Of course, we must keep in mind that because of the
pressures of the age thrust on woman there were more possibilities of women going lunatic. Triveni's novels are to be understood and analysed against this background only. The following novels of Triveri show how different human minds react to different situations and undergo changes.

Triveni was the first writer to treat psychological themes in Kannada fiction. She wrote four psychological novels Bekkina Kannu (1954), Doorada Betta (1955), Mucchida Bagilu (1956) and Sharapanjara (1962). A successful psychological novel has to satisfy two criteria. It has to be true to the science of psychology, and it should be clear of being a 'case history'. Her novels particularly Sharapanjara and Bekkina Kannu are the best examples of psyche of people who lose their capacity for rational thought on being subjected to traumatic experiences.

Triveni is able to highlight exploitation of women in a patriarchal society and how it sometimes leads to the loss of balance of mind. Bekkina Kannu presents the innocent Kusuma's character who is deprived of her mother's love and who becomes a victim of her step - mother's cruelty, hatred and thereby loses her peace of mind and goes mad. She gets the love of Rajashekar who has experienced such situations in life and has developed a new vision of life. Kusuma recovers and becomes sane because of Rajashekhhar's love. If there is lack of mother's love in this novel, in the other novel, Sharapanjara there is lack of husband's love, which causes the tragedy of madness. The problems faced by the characters, and their madness are different in nature, as can be noticed
from the family background of the characters and the incidents presented in these two novels.

_Bekkina Kannu (Cat’s Eye)_

Jagannatharaya gets a female child late after five years of marriage. The child is named Kusuma. Naturally the child becomes the focus of her parents and her grand mother’s life. The grandmother, who loved Kusuma excessively, dies of old age. It is the first shock on the delicate mind of the child. Kusuma attempts to seek the love of her deceased grand mother in her friends and her pets, a cat and a dog. Love is an essential support of life for all people. As Dr. Shubha Tiwari points out: “But the girl has many psychological knots woven into her personality. She has fear of rejection ingrained all over her psychic self. Being unwanted, she loses the basic satisfaction every human being needs, a sense of belongingness.”

Then how can this young child live without love? Added to this, Kusuma loses her mother and it is a greater shock to the young mind. Jagannatharaya is extremely soft and compassionate toward her because she is a motherless child. So it is a bolt from the blue to her when her father remarries. This is the first step, which leads her toward madness. There after in the novel we can read how a step mother’s mind works. It would not have affected the balance of mind of Kusuma, if Padma had expressed her love right from the beginning. But Padma pushes Kusuma out of her laps on the first day of marriage. Kusuma waivered for a few steps away from Padma and then fell down:
Kusuma, lying on the ground, raised her head and saw Padma. For the first time in her life, she experienced the bitter taste of indifference and contempt. Her big eyes began to shine. There were no tears in her eyes but hatred - hatred that shone like a sparkler.\(^{42}\)

Kusuma is separated from her father and is made to sleep alone. When she screams out at night out of fear caused by wind and rain; Padma shouts more loudly than thunder and the thunderbolt and frightens Kusuma. Kusuma wakes up at night out of a disturbing dream that symbolizes her sense of insecurity: "Kusuma shrieked loudly, calling out for her father. But there was no answer to her call. She shrieked again louder, like an insane person."\(^{43}\)

Triveni gives a skill portrayal of both the new wife and the motherless child. The new wife Padma resents presence of a step-child. Kusuma, the motherless child is unseated from her father’s love and suffers the dislike of the new mother. Kusuma feels that Padma’s eyes are like the eyes of a cat, when Padma is in a rage. So the pet cats of Kusuma also looked cruel and fearful to her. Because of her father’s gradually increasing indifference towards her and the cruelty of her step-mother, Kusuma’s life becomes miserable; she develops loneliness and becomes psychic at the young age of just 17 years. It is observed that: "Children have primarily the fear of supernatural agents (ghosts, witches), being alone in the dark or in a strange place or being lost, animals, injuries, accidents, pains etc."\(^{44}\)
Kusuma, who has experienced an abundance of love of everyone in the house all these years, cannot react and beat Padma back when she beats her. So Kusuma beats and tortures her loving pet cat. The cat whose eyes are like Padma’s, becomes the victim of Kusuma’s hidden hatred of her step mother. This is the alternative that her neglected mind finds. It is noteworthy that Jagannatharaya does not understand the mind of his own daughter. He is fond of the company of his second wife. The other surrounding people also do not understand Kusuma’s mind and situation. On the contrary they all behaved with her in such a way that they pushed Kusuma into madness unwittingly. On the whole, the external pressures like family, society, environment and beliefs etc., which are characterized by certain mental attitudes cause such problems. On the other side the efforts of Padma to gain more and more love of Jagannatharaya her husband, made Kusuma more mad. Padma’s cat like eyes, her green sari, and her hair all these caused hatred and fear in the innocent mind of Kusuma. By way of revenge Kusuma strongly feels like beating somebody and throwing stones on the house roofs etc. It is not her natural character. The family circumstances which have led to the unhinging of her mind cause such a situation. She starts stealing money as she does not get it from her parents when she needs it. This is another kind of reaction of her mind.

Further in the novel, it can be seen how the social customs, traditions, and beliefs affect the mind of the individual. In olden days it was believed and practiced that the diseases were caused by evil spirits (devils) and they could
be cured only by witches and wizards, not by the doctors. Accordingly Kusuma is taken to a wizard Timmappaiah. His horrifying figure, the sacrificing of the chicken, holding pepper-smoke to her nose to drive away the evil spirit, all these aggravate her imbalance of mind and she goes completely mad. On one occasion,

Padma continued to laugh and Kusuma couldn't hear that any more. Everything in the room—the mattress, bed, wall, and the light—everything appeared to be laughing with Padma uproariously. Helpless and frightened, Kusuma turned her eyes round and round. The laughter began to bore into her mind. Tears filled the eyes, and everything became dim. Every object around her appeared to be floating, spinning.45

Towards the end of the novel, Kusuma recovers from her madness because she gets love and nourishment of affection from Rajashekar, supported also by Padma, the stepmother and Jagannatharaya, the father. It helps her to recover and lead a new life of happiness. In this novel Triveni has analysed the effects of the sudden change in the environment on, and the shock it gives to, the young growing mind of a girl and she has further suggested that love, affection, care, and protection etc, are essential for the satisfactory growth of a child. The novel reveals that the relation between mother and child is very important in making life tolerable and natural to the child. The novel has succeeded in proving that a person becomes weak in mind, loses balance and goes mad because of the external pressures of environment and recovers from
it only when he/she gets the support of love and care of the good people around. This novel provides a beautiful analysis of the mind of a young girl who is psychologically disturbed. It shows how if the delicate balance of mind is disturbed it can make the life of the person miserable.

Doorada Betta (Distant Hill)

A similar incident is there in the novel Doorada Betta. Triveni has analysed and discussed the problem of widow marriage against the psychological background in this novel. Sunanda is married to Shekhar at the age of seventeen. Within a year of the marriage her husband dies of typhoid. The conflict between the conscious mind and the unconscious mind of the heroine Sunanda in regard to her re-marriage can be seen here. Everything appears well and smooth apparently, but the conflict in the deeper mind cannot be noticed by anyone. The stones and thorns of a distant hill become visible only when you go near; otherwise it looks very plain and smooth. Sunanda loses her husband at her young age of nineteen and becomes a widow. Triveni explains the agony of a young widow: “But having gone through an ordeal by fire on her husband’s death, she now looked like a tormented soul.”

Sunanda was haunted day and night by the memory of her husband. His words, his gestures, his loving looks, kept burning her alive. When she saw many of her friends going to college in a carefree manner, her sorrow overwhelmed. Even in the midst of a loving family, and all the luxuries that
surrounded her, Sunanda remained deeply unhappy. Meanwhile Sunanda finds employment as teacher in a girl's school.

Seetaramu, her brother cannot reconcile himself to his younger sister's painful existence as a widow. With the cooperation of his parents he helps Sunanda to overcome her fear of social taboos, convinces her to accept Sridhara, as her husband. Ultimately she agrees to marry Sridhara. But it is not so easy for her to re-marry. Sunanda suffers from somnambulism or sleep walk. She throws all the articles that remind her of her first husband into the well. The suppressed desires and ambitions torture her in the form of dreams. Her conscious mind agrees for widow marriage but the unconscious mind protests, because her traditional mind has accepted the social custom that a woman can marry only once in life. The traditional Hindu society observes that: “Our society does not permit a widow to re-marry. A widower remarries with ease, but not so a widow. You have been made to believe that widow remarriage is against our dharma. So you feel that you are an inferior creature, stepping outside dharma.”

Triveni draws our attention here to the inherent exploitation of women in the social system and the psychological problems such a system causes. Because women internalize patriarchal values, they find it difficult to change. This thought which is suppressed but stored in her unconscious mind presents itself in her dreams. The changes that take place in the society are not readily and easily accepted by the traditional minded people. This can be seen here in this novel. It is observed that widow marriage was in practice in those days.
Triveni’s progressive ideas here are combined with her interest in the study human psyche to bring out a beautiful novel full of psychological insights.

**Sharapanjara (Cage of Arrows)**

The novels of Triveni present characters undergoing an inner psychological turbulence arising out of a conflict between reality and the illusions that the characters build for themselves. The complex nature of their self-created illusions is characterized by the co-existence of, alongside the illusions, a given social framework in which they operate. *Sharapanjara* is undoubtedly Triveni’s most widely read psychological novel. Noted film director, the late Sri Puttanna Kanagal’s moving presentation of the story through cinematic media in the sixties helped the novel to reach millions of Kannadigas all over Karnataka. In *Sharapanjara* there is the depiction of a woman who becomes physically weak after her marriage, suffers the fear of a secret memory of pre-marital love affair hidden in her mind and becomes psychic. She gets treated and returns home. But, she has to face the adverse family circumstances. She does not get support and love of her husband because he thinks that she is not pure. Therefore she is admitted to the institute of mental health, once again. The family background is effectively used to convince the reader that Kaveri is bound to go mad. Woman had no place in the male-dominated society. The husband fails to understand his wife Kaveri. Which in turn forces her go mad permanently.
The author explains the condition of Kaveri sympathetically:

She was lying, in a corner of the room, talking to herself. Satish covered his nose with his kerchief and stood staring at her. Her hair had become hard and knotty. Her skin had lost its glow. Pounding thin air with her fists now and then, Kaveri was muttering to herself. She didn’t notice Satish’s coming. Even when her eyes turned toward him, she couldn’t recognise him...Satish could never erase this picture of Kaveri from his mind.49

We can see the principle of psychology working behind the character of Kaveri. Kaveri, after returning from the hospital, has a natural desire to live happily with her husband intimately like all others and expects due respect from them. For that, she tries very hard to gain the love of her husband Satish, but in vain. This leads Kaveri to madness the second time. An observation is made to understand the mentally retarded patients: ‘In the former, they probe into their inner psyche and attempt to understand their personality, their hidden strengths, and their potential’. As Seema Jena says: “The technique of withdrawal becomes a means by which a woman discovers her personality and digs up her hidden potential and learns not to repress her talents.”50

The society started treating Kaveri quite differently when her husband himself rejected her. The whole of her behaviour, her talk, her walk, her work everything was viewed doubtfully, keeping it in mind that she was mad, and they pitied her. But Kaveri does not need any of the society’s sympathy or pity.
After returning from the hospital, the mentally recovered healthy Kaveri
expects friendship, affection, faith, and respect from her family and friends. In
fact it is the responsibility of the nearest relatives of the patient and also the
surrounding society to treat the patient with all tolerance, faith and respect
when he recovers from the mental illness. But in the case of Kaveri, the mental
set up of the people around her is just the opposite. Kaveri somehow bears the
whispers and insults of the people. But when her husband says, 'the harlot,
who invites, gets no value,' and goes to another woman for his sexual
satisfaction, Kaveri loses the final balance of her mind and becomes lunatic
again, never to come out of it. So the main cause of Kaveri’s lunacy here is the
result of lack of love of her husband. Like a fox driven to a corner by hounds,
Kaveri, in desperation confronts her husband:

If I were insane once, would I remain insane for ever? That I was
insane once you will never forget, neither will you allow me to
forget. Every minute, every step, you stab me with the label of
insanity with your looks, words, and acts. The shopkeeper was in
doubt as to whether or not he should give me grocery. I got
angry and threw the grocery list on his face, and went to the
market. At once, you people jumped to the conclusion that I had
run away, that I had lost my way, and that I would lose my
honour. Try to forget that I was mentally ill once, and allow me to
forget it. I also desire to live and lead a normal life like others...51
The novel *Sharapanjara* is not only a psychological study of a woman's mind but it is also an ironical commentary on the male-dominant society. Satish is unable to accept his wife's pre-marital relationship, yet does not hesitate to having extra-marital relationship himself. The novel is a satire on the double standards of a male-dominant society. We can see in both these novels *Bekkina Kannu* and *Sharapanjara* how intolerance and cruelty of the members of a family and the society cause madness in sensitive individuals. The patients who recover from any other physical sickness are treated as normal human beings by the society, whereas, the patients who recover from mental illness are not treated so. It is because of the lack of their understanding that innocent lives become miserable and suffer. These novels emphasize the need for educating people in such cases. The narrator (a psychologist) of *Mucchida Bagilu (Closed Door)* makes this point very touchingly. The doors of our mind are always shut. Hence we appear polite and cultured to others. We suppress and dump down our emotions and passions. We hide our vulgarity deep inside us and express politeness:

Supposing the closed door opens! Then every one will become aware of the weaknesses, dirt, and vulgarity within us. From one point of view, the mentally ill are innocent, free from hypocrisy. We hide everything whereas they speak out what is in their mind, and are labelled 'insane.'\(^{52}\)

*Mucchida Bagilu* is a complementary kind of novel to *Sharapanjara* and *Bekkina Kannu*. Triveni makes a plea for a proper attitude on the part of society...
towards mentally ill patients. There is no stigma attached to mental illness, she asserts, and it is the duty of the society to help these patients regain their health.

To sum up, the position of woman in general and Indian woman in particular has been ambivalent. At a time when there were not many women writers in Karnataka, Triveni's achievement appears to be all the more extra-ordinary. As an independent writer she took up women's causes long before anyone had heard of feminism, it is true that Triveni's range of characters and themes is limited; her characters, mostly, are from urban middle class, and her themes, generally, are about love, marriage, and family. Among the twenty one novels written by Triveni four novels are psychological novels. She was the first one to introduce and popularize psychological fiction - fiction that dealt exclusively with the mentally disturbed. Remaining as many as seventeen novels depict woman's position and her experiences in the fast changing scenario of Indian society. Her novels portray real life situations in the changing domestic patterns and social environment of ordinary life. She states the emotional cruelty women experience in marriage, their longing for affection and their frustrations. Thus her stories throw a new light on those corners of women's lives that have perhaps, remained in the dark for centuries.
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