This chapter mainly deals with the literary and cultural background set for women's poetry of the post nineteen eighties. Attention is drawn towards the construction of the nation in the form of a woman and its influence on the ideal womanhood prescribed for the nation's women; its repercussions in the socio-literary spaces are looked on in this chapter. The periodisation usually seen in the histories of Kannada and Hindi literatures give almost no space to the contribution by women. Women's writing does not fit into those parameters and demands a different categorization and periodisation. Three categorisations are identified under which poetry by women are discussed. The ebb and fall of poetry by women goes along the changes taking place in the literary and social realms.
Taking this into consideration, the silence maintained by women poets is also read as a response to the prevailing trends. This chapter deals with the background for the post eighties poetry by women, discussed in the later part of the dissertation.

Among a number of other things associated with the re-structuring of a 'new nation", the re-configuration of "Indian identity" was a task to be looked at. To meet the essential needs, strong foundations were laid in the socio-cultural realms. This not only motivated one to contest the colonial construction of 'the Indian" but also provided a platform where the 'new Indian" was being imagined.

The image of the "Indian" by the western commentators as irrational, deceitful and sexually perverse needed to be set right to carve the image of the 'New Indian". This New Indian represented the newly emerging nation, with the capabilities to challenge the "West". As Susie Tharu and K.Lalitha have rightly argued in the introduction of their seminal anthology, 'Women's Writing in India" sculpting the new respectability was one of the major tasks taken on by social reform movements in India during the nationalist struggle, which set out to transform a traditional society into a modern one. Indian nationalists believed that women would provide moral and numerical strength to work towards this. They were more concerned about the 'moral purity' of the society, which was of a greater importance to them, as the entire nationalist movement was perceived on these grounds. It is worth noticing that the notion of moral purity takes the form of chastity when referred to women. Several scholars like Partha Chatterjee, Tharu and Lalitha, Sangari and Vaid, Francisca Orsini and others have observed
that regulating the new woman was one of the central concerns of the reform movement.

As the new nationalism glorified India's past, it fostered conservative attitudes towards social beliefs and practices as well. Partha Chatterjee in his essay, "The Nation and its Women", points out that the social space was divided into spiritual and the material and women represented the true identity, which was part of the spiritual space. Women's reform then meant a work towards the safeguarding of this true identity. The reforms proposed by the nationalists were also an attempt to construct the new woman. Thus "the women's question" was one of the central issues in the Nationalist movement.

Well known feminist scholars like Kumkum Sanghari, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, Susie Tharu, K. Lalitha and others have already drawn our attention towards the role of upper caste and middle class ideologies in developing notions of 'Hindu' and 'Indian' womanhood, which is in contradistinction to the actual patriarchal norms prevalent among the other classes and in opposition to the 'western' woman.

In due course, "middle class' womanhood was portrayed as the 'ideal Indian womanhood'. It was understood that the 'ideal woman" is culturally superior to the westernised women as well as the common women of the lower classes/castes. According to Sanghari and Vaid, the formation of the desired notion of spirituality and of womanhood is thus very much a part of the formation
of the middle class itself, wherein hierarchies and patriarchies are sought to be maintained on both material and spiritual grounds.⁵

In the process, only certain issues related to women within this patriarchal framework get highlighted while the others get suppressed. If the reformers had to consider issues related to women in general they had to work without damaging or maligning the new concept of the ideal Indian woman reflected in the image of *Bharatha Malhe* (Mother India) or *Karnataka Maathe* (The Kannada Mother) who emerged as icons, representative of a cultural model that was part of the idea of a sacred Nation. In the after-word of the English translation of a Hindi novel *Mai*, by Geetanjalishree, the author points out that,

Mothers are known to have strengths, most ostensibly to decide, control, manipulate - none of which is particularly hidden. Yet they seem to be puppets who dance to everyone's tune, even when they are known to have solid cores, definite shapes, and rock hard resistances.¹

The concept of the Indian nation was perceived in the form of a "woman", as a mother/goddess and this kind of portrayal was being made in almost all the visual and verbal systems of signification (see Images: "Bharat Mata" and "Mahatma Gandhi", page. 231). The nationalist scholars have invoked the notion of kinship in order to resolve any conflict between the nation and the linguistic region. The image of *Karnataka Maathe* was being constructed along the lines of *Bharatha Maathe*. Mother Karnataka is lauded as the daughter of Mother India. The bond between mother and daughter is celebrated. This bond also gets highlighted and
extended as a representation of the sacred bond between mothers and daughters of the nation. As both the formations were products of similar situations, neither the mother nor her daughters are self-dependent to give an independent space for the women of this nation. The mother-daughter bondings were invoked to fix the idea of sacredness and dependence. When this was done, the responsibility to defend and protect the nation as well as its women automatically goes into the hands of the 'sons of the soil'. Sumathi Ramaswamy while introducing the concept of Tamiltaay, the 'Tamil Mother', notes that the figure of Tamiltaay imagined as the founding mother and guardian deity of the Tamil-speaking community, "underwent a fundamental transformation, from high goddess and sovereign queen, to a frail and endangered mother totally dependent on her "children", the loyal speakers of Tamil." 

The construction of ideal Indian womanhood and the construction of the nation in the form of mother were carried on simultaneously. Motherhood gained utmost importance in the construction of the ideal Indian womanhood. Several feminist scholars have already drawn our attention to the above fact. For example, Fransesca Orsini who has worked on the Hindi Public sphere observes that,

Motherhood was isolated as the central experience of women's lives, and charged with a new nationalist significance: children were no private family affair but were the children of the nation and the makers of tomorrow's India.
Motherhood, the significant identity of this period, also carried with it qualities like tolerance, patience, affection and forgiveness. Qualities like valour, spirit to defend and the urge to fight went against the sober qualities associated with the concept of ideal Indian womanhood now suffused with maternal qualities. Therefore the responsibility of protecting the motherland fell to the 'sons of the soil'. The 'man' emerged as the saviour and 'woman' his dependant. Only those issues related to women which fitted into this framework and contributed towards strengthening the idea of the nation as a woman, were considered by the nationalists. The caste and class distinctions of the emerging middle class also affected the notion of the motherhood/womanhood. As Sanghari and Vaid indicate, it is true that,

…..Reforms undertaken during nationalism have been interrogated in terms of their class and caste character, their role in redefining gender and patriarchies has been largely ignored.\(^9\)

Therefore one needs to watch those elements recovered in the name of tradition and those incorporated in the name of modernity.

The recovery of tradition throughout the nationalist period was always the recovery of the 'traditional' woman - her various shapes continuously readapt the 'eternal' past to the needs of the contingent present.\(^{10}\)

This woman recovered from the contours of tradition was specially modified to counter the notion of Western womanhood and to represent the 'new Indian womanhood'. Partha Chatterjee notes that, 'The social order connecting the home and the world in which nationalism placed the new woman was contrasted not
only with that of modern western societies; it was distinguished from the patriarchy of indigenous tradition". The new Indian woman was neither wholly traditional nor completely modern.

However, there seems to be an interesting division of social space among men and woman by the nationalists. Modern ways of organizing our social life such as politics, science and technology, which provided strength to the West to colonize other parts of the world, were to be borrowed by us from 'outside' to strengthen ourselves and tackle the West. The 'inside', represented by the indigenous culture, tradition and the traditional, was forbidden to the outside world. The true identity of the 'inside' thus lay in the spiritual. The home and the space outside home were signifiers of the spiritual and the material worlds. This dichotomy had a special significance for the nationalists. Once the spiritual distinctiveness of our culture was safeguarded, any compromise to attain superiority over the material world was acceptable. This framework based on the dichotomy of the spiritual/inside and the material/outside was extended to all fields. Home represented the inner spiritual self and our 'true identity' and women were the representatives of this space. They were considered to be the representatives of the purity and sacredness of this spiritual inside and were expected to maintain and restore the sanctity of the inside. The outside materialistic world mostly belonged to men.¹²

The emphasis on the reformation of the so-called spiritual or the true identity then meant the reformation of the true Indian self. Therefore, educating women who were the true representatives of this true Indian self was also
essential. Women's education was one of the most important agendas of the reformist movement. As Orsini notes, debates on 'woman's question', were also profoundly affected by the symbolic identification of womanhood with 'Indianness'.

To understand the formation of the woman's self during the postcolonial period it is necessary to look into the process of fashioning of the self by earlier women writers. In other words, to understand the arguments proposed by contemporary women's writings in Kannada and Hindi, it is essential to look into the formation of women's subjectivity that preceded this period. Women's writing does not fit into the parameters of periodisation usually followed in the histories of Kannada and Hindi literature. The contribution by women in the field of literature demands a different categorisation and periodisation, which accommodates their voices and views. Women's poetry from the late nineteenth century to the contemporary period are discussed under three movements in the history of women's writing. They are as follows:

The Nationalist Movement. (1920 - 1950)

Movement of Self Expression. (1940 - 1970)

The Movement of Identity Politics. (1980 onwards)

For the sake of convenience each movement is recognised under a specific period. This does not mean that the concerns of the movement do not move beyond the marked periodisation.
Social reforms by the nationalist elite in India had begun in the late nineteenth century itself. Indian woman was the central object of social reforms that were floated during this period. From the twenties to the early fifties was a period when debates regarding women's education surfaced and it is in this period that women writers wrote extensively in most of the Indian languages. Writing by women during this period highlights varied opinions of the women writers about women's education, socialization and modernization of women. In the context of Kannada and Hindi, some of these views foreground the image of the Indian woman as 'grihalaxmi, the goddess of the home and 'aryaakulaangane' (honourable woman of a dignified family) or 'arya mahila' (An honourable woman), the one who belongs to the aryan dynasty (women of the aryan dynasty were believed to have been independent from the shadow of men). The women writers of this period expected the society to be more humane towards them. Their arguments were focused mainly on women's education and social equality for women. They also edited magazines which carried articles by women that discussed issues related to women and their reforms. I would like to read these narratives as resistance narratives for they also are opinions by women, their responses to the prevailing patriarchal structures and are about the formation of women’s subjectivities.

Several women were active in the social and literary realms during the nineteen twenties to nineteen fifties. In the context of Kannada and Hindi, writings by Tirumalaamba, Kalyanamma, Saraswathi Bai Rajwade, Subhadra
Kumari Chauhan, Mahadevi Verma, etc., sketch various dimensions associated with the positioning of women in the society. Writings by women poets are more profuse in Hindi during the Nationalist Movement than in Kannada.

Some of the important concerns voiced by Indian women/writers of this period can be traced as:

- Betterment of the conditions of women both in the family and in the society.
- Formal education of women.
- Finding a space in the Nationalist discourse.

Women writers not only wrote on these issues at the discursive realm but also produced literary texts that represent their concerns. These issues taken up simultaneously by women are very much interrelated. They not only shape the portrayal of the ideal Indian woman but also contribute towards the representation of women's subjectivity. I shall first discuss the Kannada scenario and then support my argument by bringing in samples from the Hindi language.

In Kannada, women wrote and published their poems since 1900 but women poets/writers never came to the forefront. This was due to many reasons. Some of them were widows, victims of child marriage living a solitary life, dedicated to God. Some of it was because the patriarchal society considered inhibition in women to be 'natural', as "natural" as the social and traditional constraints forced upon them just because they were born as women. They were either neglected or simply ignored by the mainstream at every point of history and a number of women poets remained invisible on the vast canvas of Kannada literature. For example, Anantha Padmanabha Rao notes that,
Gurulingamma Baitara Siddamallappa Bagevaadi's poems were published as 'PadyaroopavalV' in 1916. 'Kirlanatarangini' another poetry collection by the same poet was published in 1930. 'Saaleya Haadugalu' a poetry collection by Shantabai Neelagara was published in 1922. M.Lakshamma's 'BhajamiRathnavalf' was published in 1932. Bharatada Nagamma was famous for her songs for women. Her poems were published as 'Baalika Geeta Kusumuanjali' in 1937. 'Slree Geeta Sangraha' by Kalaburgi Umadevi was published in 1957...

He mentions the names of many more women poets to establish the emergence of modern women’s poetry from the early twentieth century in the Kannada context. But there is hardly any literature on these writers found in the canon. Women writers fought against the odds and continued their writings both in Kannada and Hindi. Hence, it is important to retrieve and record the history of our mothers as the background of contemporary women's writings in Kannada and Hindi.

As said earlier, women argued for women's education, a betterment of their living in general, improvement in the condition of widows and against child marriage. This was their agenda in the private and public spheres and it came out through their writings. Some women were engaged both in writing and with activities associated with the emancipation of women, the reformist zeal in these women resulted in their writings. Tirumalamba, Kalyanamma, and Belagere Janakamma laid the foundation of women's writing that followed in the later years in Kannada.
Tirumalamba (1887-1982) is the first woman novelist, poet, critic, editor and publisher in Kannada. She edited magazines for women in Kannada like ‘Karnataka Nandini’, ‘Sanmaargadarshini’ and ‘Veeramathe’. She wrote at least eighty poems between 1901 and 1902. They are compiled in the collection of poems titled as "Bhaktigeethavali". In an interview given to C. N. Mangala, Tirumalamba has said that these poems were prayers pleading to God to show her the way and calm down the sadness of her heart which was being subjected to an angry fate. Her first poem in the collection written in three stanzas, "Sraswathi (Bharathi) Poreyennanu" (Bharathi Protect Me), came out around 1902. The first part of Bhaktigeetavalı is prayers to Vagdevi and has thirteen poems, the second part contains prayers to Mahalaxmi and has twenty seven poems, the third part Harikeerthanas has sixty poems, while the fourth, Atmopadesha (Self Preaching) has sixteen poems and the fifth on Kolala (Dandia, a dance by dancer holding small coloured sticks) comprises of twelve poems.

On the whole, Bhaktigeethavali has one hundred and twenty eight poems in it. Some of them were published in some of the issues of ‘Karnataka Nandini’. Some published as part of her novels and other creative works like, Ramananda, Chandravadana, Bhargavagarva Bhanga, Vivekodaya, Sumukhivijaya and Ajaamilopaakhyana were part of the Satihilaishini publication series. Eight of her works were prescribed as text books for the S.S.L.C and Inter classes in Madras, for Metric and Degree classes in Mumbai, fourth form, fifth form, S.S.L.C, Senior Inter and B.A classes in Mysore between 1918 and 1933. Tirumalamba's poems appeared in three anthologies. "BhadrageethavalıC (1916),"

She is the first major woman writer in Kannada who advocated the woman's self. According to Shivarama Paddikkal the women characters in her writings are independent; self-confident and are able to take decisions on their own.\(^{17}\) She argued for a social space for women. She was against the confinement of women within the four walls of the house. Tirumalamba opposed child marriage, the tonsure of widows, dowry, and ostentatious expenditures, especially at weddings. She also talked about the way a woman should live in a society and what a society should expect from women.

Tirumalamba's concept of the ideal woman is reflected in all her writings, be it journalistic or creative. Though she functioned within a limited conventional position, she glorified the abilities of women and was responsible for generating a tremendous confidence in their strength. Love, affection, patience and sacrifice were some of the very important qualities she talked about. These are the key qualities she gives to her protagonists. As Shivarama Padikkal says, it is quite evident from Tirumalamba's writings that she subscribes to the view that a woman has to proclaim her feminine identity by overcoming all the obstacles through her 'patience, virtue, culturedness, education and will power'.\(^{18}\) While writing about the way women should take care of the health of their family members, she says.

Men may not have as caring a heart filled with sympathy as women. There would be few people who would not listen to you.
If each of you take care of the health of your family members, the problem of death and diseases at an younger age will vanish from our country.\textsuperscript{19}

Tirumalamba strongly believed that women were more powerful than men in every way. She claimed in one of her articles that women were to be understood as a saviour of man and society. In her opinion while a man is an innocent "child", woman is 'the mother' who cared for him, corrected him, and bore all the responsibilities for him.\textsuperscript{20} By such analyses, Tirumalamba elevated women's position. She highlighted the importance of women both in the family and in the society. Recurring questions like male dominance and domestic oppression of women were addressed by women writers of her time.

Tirumalamba lost her husband at the age of fourteen. She was traditionally educated at home and was not exposed to an English education as was common in her time. Hence, though she advocates women's education, she perceives the problems faced by widows from a '\textit{traditional}' position. Widowhood, she believed, was the result of evil deeds of a woman in her previous life. It is important to note here that Tirumalamba resisted the popular belief that widows themselves were evil to the family and inauspicious to a society. Widow characters in her novel fight for dignity and work to serve the society, but oppose re-marriage and renounce worldly pleasure. As noted by C.N.Mangala,

Tirumalamba never thought of divorce or any kind of tug of war between men and women. She believed that a husband was the ultimate god for a wife. Because Tirumalamba had full support and encouragement from her father she could never think of men
as wrongdoers. She always proposed that both men and women should make attempts to understand each other. She wished that women would educate men about their responsibilities towards their women."

For Tirumalamba, an ideal woman is a caring mother, an educated person capable of educating others and an obedient wife. As observed by Shivarama Padikkal, "Maathru Nandini", (Nandini. the divine mother) 'Vic/hyaarlhinr (one who seeks knowledge) and 'Sathi Hithaishini (the benevolent wife) are the ideal metaphors through which Tirumalamba perceives her female protagonists.22 According to a Kannada critic, Vijaya Dabc, Tirumalamba's defence of women's capabilities, intellectual power, and their right to a dignified life are remarkable.

When women wrote about their plight, men differed on some of the ideas propagated by women while agreeing on a few. Masti Venkatesha Iyengar, an established writer, a novelist, and a critic in Kannada language in his book Vimarshe (Criticism) wrote a special article on the Satihitaishini Publications. In this article he reviewed novels written by Tirumalamba. Masti begins by defining what a novel is and then moves on to prove how Tirumalamba's writings both in structure and content do not qualify as novels. He sarcastically comments on the author's intension of bringing in women's emancipation. Masti also raises questions regarding the portrayal of the women protagonists in Tirumalamba's novels. He further points out how the women characters do not cater to the dos and don'ts prescribed to them by the society and therefore are artificial and
lacking in noble behaviour. He writes at length about the specific qualities of the
ideal womanhood. One of Tirumalamba's articles written in the 1920s
demonstrates such differences of opinion. She said -

There have been differences of opinion among male writers
regarding women's progress and its downfalls. The reason for such
differences in my opinion is the incomplete knowledge that men
have about the natural structure and character of women's mind,
their intellect and intuitions. Men have not taken into consideration
the constant conditioning and orientation of women’s minds by so
many thousand years.

In the early decades of 1900, the idea of women's education gained
momentum in Karnataka. Whether women should be educated or not, if yes what
kind of education do they deserve and if education is responsible for diverting
women from their usual responsibilities were the hot topics of discussion.
Suggestions were made for 'educating women' in certain ways so that the then
existing family and the social order would not be disturbed. In an article 'Baalika
Shikshana' (education for girl children), K. Ramaswamy Iyengar argues,

Actual education for women comprises of more than learning
alphabets and going to school. First comes house keeping, second
is to learn to live according to the husband's will and wish, third is
about how to respect and take care of the in-laws and the other
members of the husband's family, the art of saving and managing
money is the fourth and the fifth is to have good company.
He gives a detailed account of why and how these help in keeping a family happy and intact. Tirumalamba agrees completely with him. A good wife, according to her was the one who obeyed her husband and considered him a God. For example, in her novel, 'Nabha', (1914) she says.

Learned readers! Do those gripped by the desire for wealth ever respect their gurus, their parents, their kith, or kin? Do they think of evaluating anything in terms of justice and injustice? ... Nabha a witness to this exchange, thought, "What? Can a wife demand so much of her husband? Isn"t he to be treated as a god? O Lord Rama! How cruel are the ways of the world! ..."26

While K. Ramaswamy lyengar"s position forces women into the folds of domesticity alone, Tirumalamba argues for a position, which allows women the right to get education. It does not stop women from acquiring knowledge through alphabets. Though she agrees that the duty of a woman is to take care of the family and respect the husband, she insists on providing education for women. She suggests that education is necessary for women because it would help them in becoming better wives and mothers.

One can find such comments in her editorials and "Salhi Hitai shinV, a column she wrote in 'Karnataka Nandini'. An article on late Ambal Narasingayyangar who initiated education for women in Karnataka was carried in Karnataka Nandini21 This obituary also covers the proceedings of 'Prajaprat hinidhi Sabhe' (The Mysore Representative assembly) and the 'Artha
Saadhaka Sabhe’ (the Budget Session) where important decisions were taken regarding women's education.

Immediately after Sree Chamarajendra Wodeyar took over as king of Mysore in 1881, he constituted ‘Praja Prathinidhi Sabhe’ (The Mysore Representative assembly).\(^{28}\) Ambal Narasimha Iyengar, the then advisor (Darbaarubhakshi) for the Maharaja Sree Chamarajendra Wodeyar played a major role towards the success of this. In princely Mysore there was a long discussion about why women need to be educated and what kind of education was to be imparted to them. Mr. Vema Reddy, a landholder of Malur Taluk and the member of Praja Pralinidhi Sabhe proposed that women should be educated towards being good children, good sisters, good wives and good mothers. Education should help them towards being good homemakers. Smt Rukmaniyamma who was later posted as the Women’s Interests Lady Superintendent, Maharani’s College, Mysore, argued for women’s education and introduction of Kannada as the medium of instruction. During the sessions of Praja Prathinidhi Sabhe, reacting to the doubts raised by Vema Reddy, whether women would go wayward if they are educated, Smt Rukmaniyamma argued that men were the sole cause for all the misfortunes occurring in women's lives.

Education for Women was officially executed in the Mysore Samsilhana (The Princely Mysore State) in 1881.\(^{29}\) With the support of Narasimhaidengar, the 'Maharani Girls School' and the 'Maharani Women's College' were established. Ambal Narasimhaidengar was also responsible for the establishment of 'Bhashojjivini College', 'Karnataka Nataka Sabhe', 'Marimallappa School' and
'Abalaashrama'. 'Maharani College Hostels' were started and sanction was given for the use of the prestigious Devaraja Bahadur Fund towards women's education. Many women took the BA and MA exams. Gradually the number of educated women increased. Ambal Narasimhaiyengar is said to have paid a number of parents for sending their aged daughters to school and such girls who went to school received up to Rs. 50 per month as scholarship from him. He argued with the Maharaja that when such large amounts of money were being spent on posh banquets and other affairs of the State from which no returns can be expected, spending on women’s education should not be considered as desecrate. The article 'Sthree Vidhyaabhyaa.su' (Women’s Education), which appeared in Karnataka Nandini and the editorial "Balikeyaraya-Mahileyara Shikshana' (Education for Girls and Women), which appeared in Veeramaate clearly gives a picture of the kind of education proposed by Tirumalamba for women. She agreed with Ambal Narasingayyangar that the education for women should be intended not only to impart knowledge but also to shape them as good daughters, good sisters, good wives and good mothers. She believed that there is a specific direction in life for women. If this direction goes wayward, it would result in crossing the boundaries of 'Sthreedharma' (righteousness of a woman). Reacting to Rukminiyamma's argument at the 'Praja Prathinidhi Sabhe' (The Mysore Representative Assembly), Tirumalamba writes, that men are not the sole cause for all the misfortunes in women's life. She reasoned that there were large number of women not at all exposed to formal education who have managed their husbands, sons and brothers through their experiences and natural wisdom. Women need to have religious earnestness, belief, concern for their duties, sympathy, obedience and submission in order to control men. All these qualities
she felt have been omitted in today's education. She pointed out that the emancipation of widows was not considered under the women's education project. 'This could have resulted in the exclusion of philosophical perspective, patience and caring which should have been part of the syllabi', she argued.\(^{33}\) She demanded an education with training programmes for the 'orphaned-destitute sisters' that would give them peace and contentment in both worlds.\(^{34}\) She stressed that education for women should highlight the qualities women acquire by birth. It should remind them of their limitations and their duties as women belonging to the 'arya dharma'.

The whole debate about women's education was also a debate that contributed towards the construction of the subjectivity of the new Indian women. The new Indian woman should resist male domination, refuse to be a shadow of man and prove herself to be the 'Arya Mahila' who sustains all representations of 'Aryadharma'.

Nationalism is another area where contributions by women have to be noted. *Bhavageetavali* the collection of poems by Tirumalamba has a number of poems that invoke the Kannadaness and Karnataka as a nation. These poems have women as central characters. The poet invites her brave sisters to come forward and stand by the country. She says that the women should bring freedom to the nation by encouraging their men to fight for the country and drive out the foreigners. Another poem similar to this is where the poet wakes up the mother (land) saying that her irresponsible sons have all proved to be *eunuchs* and of no use.
...Mother, your sons, an irresponsible lot!

Like eunuchs, they have lost all courage ....

Therefore it is the task of 'Arya Mahile', the women concerned about 'Arya Dhanna' to wake the Mother up.

Tirumalamba gives a call to the women to wake up and take the responsibility of mobilizing men and inviting them to fight for the nation. She asks them, '...who else could safeguard the treasury of Karnataka Maathe at this crucial hour?'

Yet another poem published in 'Sanmaargadarshini' in February 1923, is about cautioning Karnataka Mathe (mother) about her irresponsible and cowardly sons.

Arye\ Our aarya women who believe in aaryadharma are in trouble. So wake up, mother and help your children...

Thus Tirumalamba wrote a number of poems invoking Kannadaness and the Kannada nation. C.N.Mangala, a noted Kannada critic has established 'Shashwali', the trust in Tirumalamba's name and has instituted an award. This award will be conferred annually on an Indian woman writer considered to be the best of the year. Mangala observes that these poems were written much before B.M.Srikantaiah's 'Kannada Taayanota' (The Vision of Mother Kannada), which appeared in 1936 and is acclaimed in the book, "A History of Kannada Literature" by R.S. Mugali as the first poem in Kannada to express Kannada Nationalism. Tirumalamba also published writings by other women in her magazine 'Bhakti Poetry' form, which was already available, was used by
women writers of this period to talk about themselves and their problems. During the 1930s many women poets published their poems in 'Karnataka Nandini'. Yaggamma and Tulasi Bai Subbarao who wrote under the pen name 'mallige’ are important among them.\(^4\)

R.Kalyanamma (1892 - 1965), writer and an activist, was also a well-known social worker. R. Kalyanamma founded Sharadha Stree Samaja (The Sharada Women's Society) in 1913 that worked towards the betterment of women.\(^4\) She edited the magazine 'Saraswathi’ for almost four decades. Campaigning for the education of women was the main agenda of this magazine. Kalyanamma”s primary motive was to bring awareness among the modern women about their deplorable status by awakening and correcting their collective conscience and thus lead them on the path of progress. She did this by portraying the ideal histories of the \textit{aryan} women to a modern day female audience in 'Saraswathi';\(^4\) Though more and more women were getting educated, women's education and educating women remained important issues for discussion.

Kalyanamma published articles written for and by women in her magazine 'Saraswathi. 'Saraswathi’ published the presidential address by Smt Gauradevi Inchalmutt who presided the women's session of the 'Kannada Sahitya Sammelana'\(^1\) (The Kannada Literary Conference), held at Gulbarga in 1949. In her presidential address Smt Gauradevi Inchalmutt said.

Everybody is aware of the women's status during the Vedic times.

As times passed, the differentiation between men and women increased, marking a clear-cut distinction in the roles played by
each. There was a sharp decline in the literary pursuits due to the changed status of women's education. Those women who had once created Vedas and hymns now could not even recite them; they could not read, listen to or see the ancient texts. Not just that, they should neither remotely relate to it nor meddle with dharma. Women were forbidden to perform religious rituals, forced to believe that there was no god above their husband. Women were subjugated through such restrictions and regulations for selfish motives which hampered their progress and resulted in their alienation leading to literary degradation and further blocking their access to literature.  

Like elsewhere, women writers in Karnataka too have considered the Vedic period as the 'golden age' of women's education and social status. A glorified picture of the past was being imagined against the then prevailing situation. Through magazines, creative writing and public speeches, women raised questions about themselves, the roles they played and the social norms. In the process, as Orsini sees.

They were partly shaped by current symbols and notions of Indian femininity, at the same time they refashioned these symbols in the new spaces they had access to, whether in literature or any other fields like political activism, etc.

Though the context was different for Hindi, discussions, debates and decisions regarding women's education are very similar to that in Kannada.
Nationalist movement seems to have a greater influence in shaping the point of departure and also becomes the centre for a number of issues associated with the notions of education and socio-cultural identity. According to Orsini, women's voices began to appear in the Hindi press and Hindi literature only in the 1920s. The Nationalist movement and its reformist zeal provided a perfect platform for issues related to women's education.

Hindi played a more prominent role in girls' education than in that of boys. ... In an educated household, boys were often educated in Urdu and English and girls in Hindi. ... This was partly due to the fact that women's education was not intended to be conducive to employment but rather envisaged as an instrument of self-improvement, and partly due to Hindi's association with religion and with devotional texts. 46

Men in keeping with women's roles as mothers and housewives planned out their education. Like in the Kannada context, a series of articles and stories were published in Hindi magazines debating whether women's education should be role based or not. In 1916 Purushottam Das Tandon wrote:

The education of each person should keep in mind what he or she has to do when he or she grows up ... In a word, I believe that the ideal of the whole of women's education should be one of making them into sugrihinis (ideal women who took care of the household). Since a woman's true dharma is paatiwat dharma, devotion
to her husband, education should aim at strengthening these roles, not at threatening them.  

Both in Hindi as well as in Kannada the entire discussion was centred on the *maryaada*, the bounds of morality for women in the society. Every now and then the importance of *maryaada* was highlighted. Orsini observes that education, in a sense became a way for women to argue for their right to define their own roles. Women's journals in Hindi like *Grihalakshmi, Stree-Darpan*, and *Chand* fostered upcoming women writers and issues related to women.

Like in Kannada, even in Hindi literature and culture, construction of an ideal Indian womanhood and the construction of the nation in the form of the mother were carried on simultaneously and Motherhood gained supreme significance. Nationalism and the subjectivity of women connected to Indian nationalism gained utmost importance. Women poets also contributed to this in a major way.

**Subhadra Kumari Chauhan (1904-1948)** is a major Hindi poet. She is known to have combined in her personality 'the patriotism of Joan of Arc and the lyricism of Meera'.  

She was born in a village called Nihalpur in Allahabad. Educated at Crosthwaite School, Allahabad, she became a full-time congress activist along with her husband Thakur Laxman Singh of Khandwa whom she married in 1919. She actively participated in the National Struggle and was the first woman *Satyagrahi* to be arrested in Nagpur. She was one of the few women
not to observe *purdha* or seclusion. Subhadra Kumari Chauhan took part in all major campaigns during the nationalist struggle and was elected MLA in 1936.\(^{50} \) She wrote highly inspiring patriotic poems like *Senani Ka Swagat* (Welcoming the soldier) and *Veeron ka Kaise ho Vasanf* (How should the spring be for brave men). Her *Jhansi hi Rani* (Queen of Jhansi) is one of the most recited and sung poems in Hindi literature. Hindi critic Ramdarash Mishra in his article *Poetry of the Post Romantic era*\(^{51} \) identifies two streams in Subhadra Kumari Chauhan’s poems, one patriotic and the other, family life. The second category of poems celebrate motherhood and a wife’s love for her husband. Noted Progressive poet and critic in Hindi, Gajanan Muktibodh notes that, while other women poets are engrossed in using the elements of Nationalism as their themes, Subhadra Kumari stands apart from them, because she writes about the subtleties of family, motherhood and womanhood along with nationalism. He says,

Subhadra Kumari remains special because the tone of affection in her poems originates from motherly warmth. An affectionate motherhood is deeply etched in her poems.”

…..While I was reckoning my childhood,  
my little daughter speaks.  
This little dwelling of mine  
Then, blossoms into a 'garden in spring’…..\(^{53} \)

While motherhood and certain other qualities of womanhood were being celebrated in literature and other areas of life, different other issues noted by women writers of that time did not get much importance. Tharu and Lalitha observe that,
The commitments that run through all her works are an intense patriotism, a need to secure equal rights for women, but above all, it would seem, a desire to break down the barriers of caste and religion that divide people.

*Mukul* (Flower), 1930 and *Bikhre Moti* (Scattered Pearls) 1932 are her poetry collections. Her poems for children were published independently in journals.

**Mahadevi Varma (1902-1987)** is one of the greatest Hindi poets. Born in Farukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, Mahadevi Varma was just nine years old when she got married, she was nevertheless permitted to pursue her studies first at home and later at school and college. A competent student, she was a contemporary of Subhadra Kumari and was also educated at the Crosthwaite School, Allahabad. She then passed out of Allahabad University with an MA in Sanskrit in 1932. On completing her studies she took to writing poetry. Teaching and public service were her other interests.

Though she did not take an active political role like Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Mahadevi Verma took to wearing Khadi and started teaching as a volunteer in two villages outside Allahabad. Like Tirumalamba, Mahadevi strongly believed that education was essential for women. Founder of the *Trayag Mahila Vidyapitha*, she promoted the education of girls and served as principal of this institution. She is renowned for her book of memoirs, *Ateel Ke Chalchitrd* (The Moving Frames of the Past) and *Smriti Ki Rekhayen* (The Lines of Memory). Her book *Ateel Ke Chalchitrd* translated by Neera Kuckreja as
"Sketches from My Past: Encounters with India's Oppressed' is a powerful collection of real-life portraits of oppressed women and other deprived members of society.

Her decision to write prose and poetry and attend 'kavi sammelans' (poetry festivals) was daring for those times. Mahadevi Varma's uniqueness lay in her commanding parity with men. She is widely recognised, along with Nirala, Sumitranand Pant and Jaishankar Prasad, as one of the four founder-leaders of the new romantic school of Hindi poetry that came to be known as 'Chhayavad.

As an activist she tackled women's issues, helping women to actually overcome their vulnerability rather than merely theorizing about them. Her involvement in activism is what really makes Mahadevi Varma a different writer too. Her writings revealed her deep concern for unfortunate and exploited women. Sensing the burden on Indian women serving as slaves to men enslaved by colonial power, she wrote incisive essays debating the role and situation of women. The best of these appeared in 'Chand, a women's magazine of that time which has been later compiled as a book in the year 1942 as 'Shrinkhla Ki Kadiyaari (The Chains of Subjugation). She says,

The truth is that begging has never procured women their rights nor will it ever in the future, because their condition is distinct from other objects of exchange.

........In society, a man's rights are decided by his co-operation and his contribution towards development. In this way our rights are relative to our strengths and abilities. This might not sound very
practical but its application will prove its validity. Many a times I have been able to improve women's conditions by awakening their inner strength rather than trying to change their external circumstances. The solution of the problem depends on the knowledge of the problem. And, this knowledge solicits a knowing mind. Therefore one who desires to posses authority should also learn to exercise it.....Woman is a man's counterpart. Like man, woman is also an important member of the society.55

While she was of immediate help to the young middle class women through the institution she headed, her writings centred on the lives of unsung women heroes whose socio-economic status remained submerged. The lives of these women became permanently etched in some of her outstanding prose. Her book of memoirs, 'Ateet Ke Chalchitrd, is mainly centred on the experience of women who touched Mahadevi Varma's life deeply. Her poetry imbibed an intense mystical quality. The mystical qualities in her writings led to the birth of a movement called Rahasyavad in Hindi. In nature she saw infinite mystery, expanse, depth, eternity and an indomitable spirit. She equated the perennial link between the human heart and nature to that between an object and its shadow. The following lines demonstrate her love for nature:

Why an introduction dear, you are within me,

... You are drawn, I am just an outline.

you are the sweet melody, I am just a string of notes,

you are limitless, I am but an illusion of
Mahadevi Varma has authored over five volumes of poetry besides essays, memoirs and criticism pieces. Apart from literary criticism, devotional issues also formed an important part of her writing. Some of her published anthologies are *Nihar, Rashmi, Neeraja, Sandhya Geet, Deepshika* and *Nedamhara*. Mahadevi Varma and Subhadra Kumari Chauhan were two contemporary writers who challenged male monopoly in the field of Hindi poetry.

The birth of the nationalist movement at the end of nineteenth century made a lot of difference in Indian women's lives. A step taken by the Indian women towards their education also led to the tackling of various other women related concerns. Elisabeth Bumiller in the introduction to her book, *May You be the Mother of Hundred Sons, A Journey among the Women of India* notes that, the All India Women's Conference began in 1927 as a forum that met to discuss women's education but soon expanded into a group that worked to stop *purdah*, child marriage and the other problems... In 1931, largely as a response to women's participation in the civil disobedience campaign, the Congress party passed a resolution endorsing political equality for all women, regardless of
qualifications. This was at a time when women in some European countries had not yet won the right to vote.⁵⁸

Hindi women writers were directly exposed to the changes taking place in the socio-political realms of the country because most of the major nationalist struggles and reform movements started either in parts of Northern India or in Bengal. As a result they had an opportunity to actively participate in the national struggle and the reformist movements. The opportunities available to Kannada women writers during that period to associate themselves with such socio-political movements were very limited. Women writers from the Hindi background responded to Indian Nationalism as it spread in the nation, in general, and the northern parts of the country, in particular. Writers from the Kannada background also responded to the nationwide movement, but they were more concerned with Kannada Nationalism. The main concern then for women's writing, both in Kannada and Hindi, was to improve the plight of the Indian women. Though the agenda arose from similar situations shared by them as Indian women, there were differences. At times the concerns were region and language specific though they shared the national question and the women's question. Women writers raised their voices against oppression within the country and dreamt of a “new woman” who would lead a better life within her family and society. The reformists' movement that had spread all over the country in various forms laid a perfect background for their demands.
The development of women's expressions in Kannada literature underwent certain interesting changes both in reception and perception, from Tirumalamba to Belagere Janakamma, who wrote in the forties. From a reformist mode the trend changed into a self-expressionistic mode. The demands which once focused on women's education, claims to dignity, self-respect and respectable lives for women in society in general now incorporated problems faced by women as individuals. When women realised that their problems were caused by the patriarchal society, they brought out the pitfalls of patriarchy in their writings. They started questioning the male value system and male dominance in their literature. Men were no more considered as innocent, child like individuals who have to be corrected by women. Women's duties grew beyond being an obedient and suppressed wife. Though most of the questions raised by Tirumalamba and her contemporaries remained unanswered, new questions were added to this list.

Belegere Janakamma (1912 - 1966) is the first woman poet of the Navodaya™ period. She probably is the first woman poet in whose poems elements of resistance to oppressions surface predominantly. By the time Janakamma started writing, things had changed to some extent. Though women went to schools to seek education, going out of the house was still a taboo in the conservative houses and Jankamma had to give up her education. She regretted this and expressed her liking towards education. She conveys her feeling
efficiently in one of her poems, "Echcharike" (Caution) included in her first collection of poems "Kalyana" published in 1945 -

Our Sita who is free from all desire,

has a great desire to read.........

In the poem, 'Gandra (The Husband) she refers to the domestic violence women go through. Having an agreement with the husband she says, is like -

the frog seeking shelter under the shadow of a snake. If he gets angry he is nothing but 'an incarnation of Yama (the God of Death). He has the power to decide whether one should float or sink. For a man, wife is just a commodity.........Man is so powerful that he can do anything.....Man is extremely powerful.....If you do not listen to him. he can even break your neck.....He is the punisher and he is the protector and so, he is your God!"62

These lines are so sarcastic that they give entirely a different dimension to the poem. She felt that God had cheated the women community.

Woman's body is not a tree limited only to bear children.

However, in her poem, 'Chanda Shasana" (severe reign), she asks, when there is no justice, what is the use of questioning?

Life of simple women who lead a simple life is reflected in her poems. Though her notion of good and bad was dominated by her time, she voiced
resistance to violence, social injustice, and plight of women. She wrote about the plight of women in many of her poems.

'Hennaata' (Woman's Plight) is one such poem where it is said that the dreams women dream get shattered even before they are realized. In this game between men and women, women perform their roles only to lose.

what's in a nest
a wild hollow vegetation
no substance no taste
no fragrance

The picture of marriage, considered being the most important stage in a woman's life is always presented in special ways. The role of a wife is highlighted in the context of marriage. It is understood that an 'insecure virgin' enters into the institution of marriage with much eagerness and longing for a secured life. The notion of insecurity attached with women yet to be married and the hope of security and protection associated with the concept of marriage and husband are put to question in Janakamma's poems. The following poem demonstrates how women become prey to their own instincts.

trusting a trap of habitual instincts
walking into it like an unsuspecting calf
Then...
dance when you are made to dance
play when you are made to play
and oblige to the whole world like a slave.
Nemichandra, a Kannada short story writer who has edited a major book on the life and works of Belegere Janakamma writes.

She has been subjected to the perils of illiteracy and lacked encouragement. She had to write under the accusing gaze of the conservative society and the mockery of the people around her. This is precisely why Janakamma should be considered not just a poet, but also as a voice of the women of the first half of the century, as she documents the status of women in her times, their experiences in general and the most intimate sensibilities of women of her times.

Though several people ridiculed her for writing poems, some of the Kannada writers and readers welcomed her whole-heartedly. She enjoyed a lot of importance during her time. Bellary, the place where she lived was one of the major centres of literary activities in the 1940s. She had a chance to meet most of her contemporary Kannada literary dignitaries. Established poets and writers like D.R. Bendre and Masti Venkatesha Iyengar praised her poems. Bendre and Masti are celebrated literary personalities who have been awarded the Jananapeeth for their contribution to Kannada. Bendre and T. Subba Rao have written poems on Janakamma. Rajaratnam, another well-known Kannada poet who has been given a special place in the Kannada cultural scenario by literary critics and common masses visited Janakamma. Many other literary dignitaries including Masti who had an opportunity to visit Bellary made it a point to meet Janakamma. Her poem "moRe" (Cry) was published by Masti in his literary journal 'Jeevana'. Her poems
were also published in many other literary magazines. Sir Murugarajendra Swami of Chitradurga Mutt offered financial support to publish her poems. Though her world was limited to herself and her surroundings, her poems represented women's experiences in general and voiced resistance at large.

An interesting point to be noted is that in the case of Tirumalamba Masti objected that the women characters in her novels were not depicted the way women should behave in the society. In the case of Janakamma, even though the resistance she showed to the patriarchal society was much more direct and strong, he welcomed and promoted her. One reason could be that like Tirumalamba, Janakamma never contested with male writers on equal grounds. Though she talked about the plight of women and condemned male domination, it was on a personal level, limited to the poet and her poems alone. She never got actively involved with activism like Tirumalamba nor did she argue in the public spheres. Women's activism coupled with writing has always been a problem for the mainstream. Apart from this, Janakamma pronounced her association with the male writers as that of a younger sister who needs their encouragement and goodwill. She wrote letters to Bendre in the form of poems, addressing him as her elder brother to which he also replied addressing her as his sister. She received letters in the form of poems from T.Subbarao, Kalgoodu Ashwatharayaru, Y.Nagesha Shastry all addressing her as their sister. The subjugation of woman's self that is present in the brother-sister relationship itself accommodates space within the patriarchal framework. Thus it was not at all a problem for the male writers to encourage Janakamma. Instead it was their duty to promote and patronize their 'sister'.
The other reason for Masti to promote Janakamma could be that by the time Janakamma started writing, the attitude of society towards its women was undergoing a gradual change. Reformist zeal was already in the air and was greatly valued. Encouraging women into the social spaces was a gesture highly respected. Masti, already an established writer could have shown this gesture. Janakamma called for changes in the attitude of men who oppressed women. Her criticism towards them was harsh. In relation to the life to be led with such men, she sought for changes in woman’s life. Though Tirumalamba spoke from a very conservative position she demanded drastic changes for women in the society. Tirumalamba was also his contemporary and her novels were prescribed as text books in colleges and schools. Her writings were popular through the magazines she edited and published. She had a wide readership among academicians and the common public. May be Masti’s male ego could not accept a woman competing on equal grounds. Is it the same male ego that gets boosted while promoting a young bright woman? It might have been much easier for Masti to criticize oppressive men than to support women challenging the social order he believed in. The other reason could be that poetry was not as direct as prose. Access to poetry was limited and the readers/audience were from certain limited social groups only.

Women writers were aware that the problems faced by women were due to certain shortcomings in the society. They never considered Literature as an entity independent from society. Women writers were aware that the changes brought about in politics were directly or indirectly responsible for social change. Women had access to education and the power to vote. In 1932 the Government had
recognised the social service provided by the Kannada writer R.Kalyanamma and had appointed her as a woman representative for the City School Board. Then in 1933 she was appointed as a Bench Magistrate in Bangalore, where she served for fifteen years. Women were presiding in literary conferences and actively worked towards women's emancipation. They were editing magazines and journals where they voiced their opinion regarding socio-political issues. Translations of articles regarding women's emancipation, women's rights, etc., were published for the readers. One of the articles titled 'Men and Women are Equals', a translation from the English magazine, 'Theosophist' was chosen for publication in 'SarasM'athi' in 1955 said.

Now is the age of vote-power. Since women have the right to vote, nobody dares to talk of them insultingly. Not only that, if women realize the power their vote carries and uses it wisely, they could teach the men a good lesson.

Introduction of women's education and other social reforms were effective in bringing a gradual change among women and in the attitude of the society towards women. Women gradually started realizing that their plights as women were the result of the patriarchal social practices. They openly wrote about various kinds of problems they faced as well as the physical and mental violence they came across in their everyday lives. Be it within the family or in the social structure, women have always been kept "inside" and have been protected from 'outside' invasions. The social space allotted to them is therefore very limited.
Like the other Indian languages Kannada literary history too recognizes very few women writers. After recognizing a few women poets who were part of the twelfth century *Vacana movement*\(^\dagger\); which is considered to be the secular, egalitarian progressive period; the main stream literary history in Kannada mentions the name of Sanchi Honnamma only in the seventeenth century. Kannada literary history does not mention any women poet till the late nineteenth century. In the beginning of the twentieth century, i.e., during the pre-independence era some of the prominent names of women poets like, Tirumalamba, Belegere Janakamma, Tirumale Rajamma and Jayadevithayi Ligade come to light. While the works by male poets like, B.M.Srikanthaih. Masti Venkatesha Iycngar, Bendre, Pu.Ti.Na were given much critical attention by the literary critics in lengthy paragraphs, the women who wrote during the same period were hardly discussed.

### Women Writers and the Progressive Movement in Kannada:

The whole lot of women writers who emerged in the fifties followed the Movement of Self Expression initiated by Belegere Janakamma. Women writers were aware of the plight of women in society and raised their voices against atrocities faced by women in society. The agenda now was a demand for humanity and self-respect. Triveni and Anupama Niranjana are two names who ought to be mentioned here. *Pragathisheela*\(^\dagger\) or the Progressive Movement in Kannada literature was a well-prepared canvas on which women writing flourished. Several women writers appeared on the literary scene during this period. The *Pragathisheela* movement believed in bringing literature from its
romantic persona to the realities of day-to-day affair. Common people and their lives was the subject for the literature of this period.

Along with many other social causes, Progressive literature largely supported women's issues. It was during the Progressive movement that a large number of women writers started figuring in the Kannada literary scene. Their writings centred on home and family. They questioned patriarchies from their own limited spaces. Women writers put forth the psychological trauma women undergo. They talked more openly about their aspirations. Time and again they constructed the image of the 'ideal man' desired by women. Their writings executed a humane perspective towards women. But they were yet to attribute gender discrimination or gender politics as the root cause of women's plight. Triveni can be considered to be a representative woman writer of the Progressive period. Seemantini Niranjana in her article. "Themes of Femininity" traces the dominant themes in the novels by the Kannada writer Triveni. She notes that,

A broad delineation of themes in Triveni's novels reveals a predictable dailiness in the situations described and the responses of characters. The effect is a narrativization of ordinary everyday life, participating in its making as well. Her thematic focus is largely the family, the relations between man/woman within it and the fulfilment of woman's role through reproduction.

The other women writers during this period had similar traits. Though the Progressive movement largely supported women's issues, in the case of Triveni
and her contemporaries, their writings were branded as 'kitchen literature' and popular literature that did not deserve intellectual recognition. In the literary history of the post sixties all this is simply edited out. Not only has the achievement of women been edited out of literary history but a false version degraded as 'kitchen literature” substitutes it. Women writers wrote novels in large numbers but there was a sudden silence in the field of poetry.

Poetry itself has a limited space where thoughts get condensed to images and metaphors. A woman poet engendering a patriotic self or a self within the given norms of femininity was to some extent accepted, because while doing this she will also subscribe to the notion of chastity and morality. Which means along with a very limited space the genre allowed the themes allowed almost no space to say anything different from the mainstream. This could be one of the reasons why women opted to write prose during the Progressive period both in Kannada and Hindi. They preferred prose to the compact space offered by the poetry to render their expressions. It looks as if they subvert the notion of space associated with them through their preference to write prose. Therefore their not writing poetry should also be considered as a form of resistance. When given a chance to express, they definitely preferred to talk about their plight in an elaborate manner, loudly and in detail so that their grief and sorrows could be heard by the whole world. With the new wave of modernism women again started writing poetry.
Kannada Literary Modernism is represented by the *Navya* Movement while Hindi Literary Modernism stretches across *Prayoga* the Experimental Poetry, *Nayi-Kavila* and *A-Kavila* Movements. Modernism politically celebrates liberal democracy and highlights the individualistic experience of the middle-class male, the aspirations and ideologies of the Indian educated middle class.

*Pragathisheela* or the progressive movement in Karnataka was followed by *Navya*. According to *Navya* or the Modernist writers, the chaos and confusion which resulted from the political situation in the post-independence period, with the development of capitalistic tendencies and dehumanisation have paved the way for the emergence of modernism. The modernists believed that with specific qualities and special use of language, literature has the unique ability to express knowledge of the other disciplines in its own way. Literature enjoyed the highest status during the modernist era which no other discipline had till then occupied in the Kannada socio-political scenario. The main thrust of the Modernist poetry in Kannada and Hindi was similar. Both considered literature as something special and autonomous.

The poetry scene especially during this period was dominated by male writers who moulded language, imagery and presentation to suit their expressions and marginalized the social questions raised by various writers in their texts including women. Along with a number of other issues raised by the Romantic/Nationalist and the Progressive movements, questions addressing social
issues raised by women writers during this period were completely marginalized. Established critics attached no great significance to issues related to women and did not respect women’s writing.

In the case of Hindi 'Tar Saptak', the collection of poems by seven poets edited by Ajneya and published in 1943 made a big difference to the Hindi poetry scenario. Poets of this anthology were determined to experiment both with the content and form of poetry. Tar Saptak heralded the beginning of Prayogvad and was considered as a representative poetry of this literary movement. No woman poet was included in this anthology. According to Namvar Singh, an established Hindi critic. Tar Saptak stressed on the 'search of a new path', whereas Doosra Saptak brought out in 1951 stressed on the 'search for the self'. Another eminent Hindi critic, Bachan Singh opines that, with the publication of Doosra Saptak, Prayogvad got transformed into Nayi Kavita. Doosra Saptak was a representative anthology of poetry of the new movement, Nayi Kavita blended the qualities of Pragativaad and Prayogvad. The only woman poet included in Doosra Saptak was Shakunt Mathur. Shakunt Mathur the only woman poet of the much praised Doosra Saptak says that though she has written umpteen number of poems, she never considered herself to be a poet and never took her writings seriously. Her husband too took her writing lightly and ignored its importance. Even then whenever she managed to write poetry, she compared it with the profound writings of her husband and felt inferior. “Chandni Chunar’ (Medicinal powder in Silver) and ‘Abhi aur Kuch’ (A little more) are two collections of poems by Shakunt Mathur. Teesra Saptak, the third anthology of seven poets, was published in 1959. Poems by Krithi Chudhary were included in
this anthology. 'Khule Asmaan ke Neeche' (Under the Open Sky) is her poetry collection. The three *Saptaks* represent the concerns of the *Prayogvaad* and the *Nayi Kavita* movements. These representations were mainly dominated by the concerns of the male poets and their views of the world. Another name needs mentioning among the Hindi women poets of the nineteen fifties is Kanta. Kanta was associated with the editorial board of the reputed Hindi literary magazine *'Kalpana'* a bi-monthly published from Hyderabad. Her poems, articles and criticisms were published in various Hindi literary magazines of that time. Kanta is a well-known name in the field of Hindi literature. Her Hindi translations of the poems by Anna Akhmatova the Russian poet was published in *Tanav* edited by Vanshi Maheshwari. *Vo Kuch Bhi Dekhli Hum* (Whatever I See) and *'Samyaateet’* (Beyond Time) are the two collections of poetry by Kanta. *'Kanta Geet Smritf'*, *'Kavvyakar Ek'*, and *'Kavvyakar Do'*, three anthologies of poems by Kanta have been published posthumously. Apart from some of these women whom the main stream poetry had to consider, there were many other women whose poems and writings got published but failed to get as much attention as they deserved. Some of the issues of *'Kalpana'* published in 1955 support this view. Indira Nupur's poem was published in the August issue, poems by Vidyavati Kokila, Vidyavati Mishra and Shakunt Mathur were published in the September issue. *'Khali Frame'* (An Empty Frame) a play by Vidyavati Kokila and poems by Kirti Chudhary were published in the October issue and a poem by Rama Singh was published in the December issue of *'Kalpana'*. This proves that even though women writers, especially women poets writing in Hindi, actively wrote and published their writings in various established literary magazines they were never recognised in a major way like
their male colleagues. *Nayi Kavita* was followed by various major and minor literary movements like *A-Kavita, Naxalwadi Kavita, Janwadi Kavita, Yuva Kavita* and many more. As said earlier, Mona Gulati was the one and the only woman poet associated with the short-lived *A-Kavita* movement. Apart from this, none of the movements recognised poetry by women nor allowed any space for women's expressions. The concerns of all these literary movements mainly remained patriarchal.

Women had already entered into certain social spaces and their demands though not met completely, at least were heard and were also met to some extent. After a long pause maintained during the second half of the movement of self-expression, once again we see women writing poetry during the late sixties, which later took a definite form during the late seventies, drawing attention towards gender inequality with more clarity. Critics popularised the notion that women could do no 'serious writing' and had failed to write 'good poetry'.

Late sixties was the period when women started getting organized. Organizations popularly known as 'Mahila Samajas' showed up in big cities and smaller towns in Karnataka. Sewing classes, cookery classes, English speaking classes, embroidery and painting classes, etc., were conducted for women in these places, either free of cost or with a minimal fee. *Mahila Samajas* had their own libraries where novels by women writers like Triveni, Anupama Niranjana, M.K.Indira, H.S.Parvathi, Saisuthe, Usha Navaratnaram and many others were available in abundance along with other popular magazines, fiction and thrillers. In the context of *Mahila Samajas*, though literary events were also given some
space among other activities, it did not gain utmost importance as one of the main agendas. Since literature was an independent entity for Modernists, literary scenario under the *Navya* reign stayed away from what was happening outside literature. As writing by women was directly associated with women's life, it was always treated as something that was part of the day-to-day life and not "*literature*”. Apart from *hdahila Samajas*, women's activist's organisations, which were more dynamic in voicing their protest against the atrocities on women also showed up in various parts of the State. Seventies was the time when women's movement was taking a shape and gradually spread to various parts of the country taking different shapes and forms.

**The Movement of Identity Politics (1980 onwards):**

The *Bandaya* and the *Dalila* movements emerged as a reaction to the *Navya* or the Modernist movement. G. S. Amur a senior critic from Kannada says,

Unlike the Navya movement which had a strong streak of pessimism, the new movements are inspired by a positive vision derived from Marxism and indigenous ideologies like Lohia-vaad and Ambedker-vaad. Both these movements are protest and pro-people movements. They reject the dominant cultures and elitist conceptions of literature. They assert their identities and rights.  

Baragooru Ramachandrappa, Siddalingaiah, Devanooru Mahadeva, Aravinda Malagatti, Candrashekar Patil are some of the important names among them.
Much has been said about Bandaya and Dalita movements. The Bandaya and the Dalit writers were sensitive to women issues. But they too saw women either as oppressed or as Dalits and not as women beyond those identities. Either class or caste always prioritised gender in the context of both the movements. On the other hand, K.V.Tirumalesh pioneered a set of writers who deviated from the Modernist tradition in their style and approach. H.S.Shiva Prakash, Jayanth, and a few women writers like Vaidehi, Sarvamangala, Sa.Usha, highly influenced by the Navya were also writing. They were lucky enough to get due attention from the mainstream. Things were happening simultaneously. In the eighties various small groups such as women, dalits, minorities, both linguistic and religious started questioning the all-pervasive notion of Indian Nationalism and its literature. New class/caste configurations of these groups began to emerge after the eighties. In this context, in the place of a monolithic "Nation' and "Literature", diverse ways of understanding our society and culture gained significant ground.

One of the reasons for women's writing not getting recognition could be due to the non-recognition of the differences among women. The notion of universal womanhood attributed qualities common to all women and thereby specificities of the issues concerned with women got subdued. Also issues related to women were isolated from other social milieu in which women had no direct participation. Therefore, when other issues are in the forefront, their relationship with 'women' and their lives automatically remains unnoticed or becomes less important or something not to be considered under any other slot apart from its own. This prevailing attitude in the socio-cultural scenario is reflected in almost
all realms of society. Archana Varma in her article, 'Women voices in Identity Discourse', points out that.

Dalit, religious, and now women identities have emerged as new streams of self-representations. Dalit identity has a caste ridden society to fight with, which they call the 'Manuvaadi society". The minorities have the majorities to oppose, which they call as religious fundamentalist society. It is so ridiculous that women’s community in general is considered to have men alone in opposition.

Thus, when women are considered as a homogenous group, they are displaced from their original identities and differences say. for example, caste and class differences. Such formations also are convenient patriarchal arrangements, which consider women as a homogenous group that can be dominated by another homogenous group, the 'men'. This leads towards a tendency to ignore the diversities and the complexities present among women belonging to different classes, castes and with different concerns, arising from different regional and economic backgrounds. Therefore. 'Women representation", most of the times, remains inappropriate. Literature is no exception. Tradition of literary histories did not consider works by women writers' worth including or reviewing. In the later period, some consideration was shown by piling up samples of their writings and was slotted as "Literature by women".

The post eighties witnessed crucial changes in women's poetry in Kannada as well as in Hindi. Placed in a colonial/post-colonial situation,
women's poetry has gone through "double colonization," both from outside and within the Indian literary contexts. Contemporary poetry written by women in Kannada and Hindi is an attempt to address various questions arising out of these contexts.

Gender politics determines women's writing. Women's writing in recent years is oriented more towards women-centred issues voicing their demands and specifications. Recent writing by women draw attention towards gender inequality with more clarity. A shift from universal spaces to gender/class/caste-specific spaces can be traced in the poetry of the nineties.

At this juncture, women's re-consideration of their consciousness and the refashioning of the woman's "self can be understood as a reaction to the exclusion they experienced all through out in the history of the literary tradition of Kannada and Hindi. Sarvamangala, Ilema, Vaidehi, Vijaya Dabee, Bhanu Mushtaq, Malathi Pattanashetty, Kamala Hemmige, Muktayakka, Savitha Nagabhushan, Sa.Usha, Pushpa, Pratibha, Saraswathi and many more poets writing in Kannada articulate along these lines. Similarly Katyayani, Archana Vanna, Indu Jain, Anamika, Snehmayi Chaudhari, Gagan Gill, Teji Grover and others writing in Hindi also voice similar concerns.

Kannada novels like 'Chandragiriya Teeradalli' by Sara Abubekar, 'Asprashyaru' by Vaidehi, 'Stree Loka' by Savitha Nagabhushana, and 'Shivaganga' by Champavathi and Hindi novels like 'Idannamama' by Maitreyee Pushpa, "Katgulab" by Mridula Garg, 'Chinnamqsta' by Prabha Khetan and 'Mai" by Gitanjalishree are some of the examples of their endeavour to recreate
women's world with enormous details drawn from day to day life situations and activities of women. While established critics of main stream Kannada and Hindi have failed to understand the concerns of feminism, women critics like Vijaya Dabbe, Sumitra Bai, Tejaswini Niranjana, Simanthini Niranjana from Kannada and Suman Raje, Mrinal Pande, Nirmala Jain, Katyayani, Anamika and Prabha Khetan from Hindi are writing on women's issues and the relevance of literature produced by them. Critics following this trend have tried to understand Literature through a feminist perspective. By eighties with a background of the *dalila*, *bandaya*, *A-Kavita*, *Yuva Kavita* and the larger women's movement predominant in the social scenario, women's literature in general and women's poetry in particular, emerges as an important form in Kannada and Hindi literatures.

2 Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha, eds. Women Writing in India 600 B.C. To The Present (in two volumes). Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1993, p. 9


5 ibid. p. 10


" Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, 1989. p. 9

"" ibid. p. 10

" Partha Cheterjee. 1994. p. 244

"ibid.
13 Fransesca Orsini, p. 244


15 Karnataka Nandini. magazine for women started in 1916 was active till 1920. Sanmaargadarshini, was specially for the youth and was started in 1922.


18 - —.. 2001, p. 129

19 Karnataka Nandini, vol.3, issue.3. Jan 1920, pp. 16-17


Shivarama Padikkal. 2001, p. 128


7 Karnataka Nandini. vol.3, issue.3. February 1920. pp. 3-7

28 History of Legislature: The Mysore Representative AssemblyVol III (1924-1940)

29 Karnataka Nandini. vol.3, issue.3. February 1920. p. 5

30 Ibid.

11 Ibid. pp. 8-10


33 Karnataka Nandini. February 1920, p. 8

Editorial, Karnataka Nandini.


41 'Karnataka Nandini' and 'Veeramathe' were magazines in Kannada edited by Tirumalamba.

41 Anantha Padmanabha Rao. 1984, p. 63

42 In 1938, she established Akhila Karnataka Makkala Koota in Bangalore. It is a place where children from all social classes can participate in the activities. In 1932 Government recognised the work of R. Kalyanamma towards the upliftment of children and appointed her as a woman representative for the City School Board. In 1933 she was appointed as a Bench Magistrate in Bangalore, where she served for fifteen years.


46 -, 2002. p. 246

47 -, 2002, p. 253
see Veer Bharat Talwar. 'Feminist consciousness in women’s journals in Hindi”, in Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid. 1989 and 'Widening Concerns: Hindi Women's Journals' in see Fransesca Orsini. 2002

" http://www.geocities.com/dakshinakanpa/art31Avomen6.htm

51 Fransesca Orsini. 2002, p. 252


54 Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha. 1993. pp. 419-420


'Navodaya' is a period of high romanticism in Kannada.

“Navodaya” is a period of high romanticism in Kannada.


“_________, 1988, p. 78, My translation.

64 - 1988. p. 120. Tr. Chailra.


“Belagere Janakamma lived in Ballary which was then a hot seat of literary activities. Sree Murugharajendra Swami of Chitradurga Mutt proposed to finance the publication of Janakamma's first anthology of poems, 'Kalyana'. Shrat Agencies in Bangalore came forward to publish the book. Masti, Rajaratnam and other literary dignitaries who visited Ballary made it a point to meet Janakamma. Her poem 'moRe' was published by Masti in his literary journal 'Jeevana'. People of Belagere knew her as 'Janakamma who writes poems'.

67 For more details see 'Ooleyaada KavanagaLu' (poems that became the letters), Nemichandra. 1988, pp. 157-170

68 "Sthree Purusharu Sari Samaanaru", translation of an article from the magazine Theosophist was published in Saraswathi, vol.35, issue. 10. 1955.
Women actively participated in the social movement of the 12th century, said to have led by Basavanna, in Karnataka. This movement gave space for the common people, who gave their opinions regarding the social, spiritual and philosophical states of the society through their compositions called Vacanas. They were all in Kannada language. Vacanas came in the form of revolt against the dominant power structures like the Sanskrit, the Brahminical, the Later. Vacanas were appropriated by literature. Apart from Akka Mahadevi. Soole Sangavva. Ammugeya Raayamma, Kaalavve. Rechavve. Goggavvc and many more women in a large number contributed vacanas.

Pragatisheela Movement came up as a critique of the romantic Navodaya movement in Kannada.


72 ‘Navya’ or the literary modernism ruled the intellectual scene with an imperialistic approach and embodied experiences catering to the male world. Individual seems to be the center of expression and concern about serious threat to individuality was the central theme. Men dominated the poetry scene especially during this period.


77. *Samyaateet*. Hyderabad: Navhind Prakashan, 1964


