Chapter I

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I

Novel is the most popular form of literary creations in the recent times. No other genre of literature can represent life in whole better than novel. In India narratives are as old as other forms of arts and literature. Dandi’s *Dasa Kumar Charita*, Subandhu’s *Vasavdutta* and Banabhatta’s *Kadambari* are remarkable specimen of prose fiction in Sanskrit literature. But fiction in the modern sense is the result of the impact of Western literature. The origin of Indian English novel dates back to 1835 with the publication of Kylash Chunder’s *A Journal of 48 Hour of the Year 1945 in the Calcutta Literary Gazette*. Another work of fiction written in the same style is Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s *Republic of Orissa: Annals from the Pages of the Twentieth Century* was published in 1845. Both these fictional works are literary fantasy lacking in technique and craftsmanship. But Bankim Chandra Chatterji is considered to be the real pioneer of the Indian English novel. He wrote *Rajmohun’s Wife*, his first novel in English. His contemporaries like Toru Dutt, Lal Behari De, K.Chakravarti and B.R.Rajan Iyer strengthened the foundation of Indian English novel.

But the writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan and Nirad Chaudhary brought true credit and reputation to Indian English Novel. They are considered the four wheels of Indian English Novel. The other notable writers who enriched Indian English Novel are Khawaja Ahmed, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Lamber Mascarenhas and Khushwant Singh. Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Upmanyu
Chatterjee, Allan Sealy, Arun Joshi and Salman Rushdie widened the scope of Indian Novel in English both thematically and technically. Women writers also added new colours to Indian English Novel.

The history of Indian women novelists in English begins with *Binaca* by Toru Dutta Published in 1878. The other early women writers are Raj Lakshmi Debi, Mrs. Krupabai Satthianadhan and Mrs. Ghoshal. Among these many of them belong to Bengal and their novels were translated into English from Bengali.

During the formative years of Indian English Novel, Cornelia Sohrabji made a distinguished contribution to the development of this literary genre. She was the first woman writer who spoke for the freedom of women. Her fictional works are anthologized in *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* (1901), *Sun Babies* (1904) and *Between the Twilights* (1908). The works of these early writers lacked plot construction and characterization. They were didactic and allegorical which have only historical importance on the path of achievements to come in future in this literary genre.

It is only after the Second World War that women novelists of quality have begun enriching Indian fiction in English. Of these writers, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala are the most outstanding. Anita Desai added a new dimension to the achievement of Indian women writers in English fiction with her novels *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) and *Voices in City* (1965). The early writers stressed on social, economic, political and cultural grounds. But in Anita Desai, the preoccupation is with the inner world of sensibility rather than outer world of action. Other notable novelists are Nayantara Sehgal and Vimala Raina. The
contemporary outstanding women novelists are Shobha De, Anita Nair, Githa Hariharan, Gita Mehta, Namita Gokhale, Kiran Desai and Arundhati Roy.

Let’s have a glance at some important Indian women novelists writing in English who admirably contributed to this genre.

Kamala Markandaya born in 1924 at Madras, is undeniably one of the most prolific, skilled and popular Indian English novelists. She has ten novels to her credit. *They are Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) *Some Inner Fury* (1955) *A silence of Desire* (1960) *Possession* (1963) *A Handful of Rice* (1966) *The Coffer Dams* (1969) *The Nowhere Man* (1972) *Two Virgins* (1973) *The Golden Honeycomb* (1977) and *Pleasure* (1982). Markandaya is definitely one of the representatives of Indian women writers writing serious literature in English. We find a wide range of themes with universality of appeal in her novels. Her novels foreshadow many diasporic issues with which we are preoccupied even today. She uses her creative sensibility in the purposive direction which gives her novels a certain representative characters that mark them out as a significant entity in Indian Novel in English. She treats the themes of tragic wastes, the despair of unfulfilled love, the pain of artistic ambition, the quest for self realization and truth by the young, all themes popular with modern European and American novelists. She has brought the extra dimension of India to these themes, a present-day India racked by confusion, violence, convulsive social and political changes.

Ruth P. Jhabvala a European born in Germany in 1939 settled in India occupies a unique position in the history of Indian English Novel. She has penned seven novels – *To Whom She Will* (1955), *The Nature of

Attia Hosain born at Lucknow in 1913 occupies a permanent place in Indian English Novel with her only novel Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961) which focuses on the socio-political scenario of Indian independence era.

Nayantara Sahgal is the daughter of Vijayalaxmi Pandit. She was born in 1927. Her novels are A Time to be Happy (1957), This Time of Morning (1965), Storm in Chandigarh (1969), The Day in shadow (1971), A New Situation in Delhi (1977) and Rich like US (1985) Autobiographical elements and political concerns are the characteristics and part of Sahgal’s themes. She deals with human existence, human values and complexities of man-woman relationship.

Anita Desai born at Mussorie in 1937 is one of the leading women writers in Indian English literature. Her novels are – Cry, the Peacock (1973), Voices in the City (1965), Bye Bye Black Bird (1971), Where Shall We Go This Summer (1975), Fire on the Mountain (1977), Clear Light of Day (1980) and The Village By the Sea (1982). Anita Desai is more interested in the interiors of the mind than the political and social realities. She is considered the pioneer of psychological novel in modern Indian English Literature. Her novels occupy a unique place in Indian English Novel for their richness, psychological depth, sophistication and flawless style and technique.
Some other women novelists who deserve passing remarks are:

Kamala Das has given some renowned novels. They are The Alphabet of Lust (1980) A Doll for the Child Prostitute. The search for identity is a recurrent theme in the novels of Kamala Das.

Bharati Mukherjee was born in Calcutta in 1940. She studied in Calcutta and settled with her American husband in USA. She taught English at McGill University in Montreal. She has two novels on her credit Tiger’s daughter (1971) and Wife (1976).

Shashi Despande was born at Dharwad in Karnataka. She got education in Bombay and Bangalore. She was given Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel That Long Silence. Her works include: Moving on, The Dark holds No terrors, If I Die Today, The Intrusion and other Stories, Come up and Be Dead, Binding Vine and A Matter of Time.

Shobha De was born in Maharashtra in 1948. She studied at Mumbai and Delhi. She began her career as a journalist. De has had diverse career as a model, a copywriter, an editor, a script writer and a novelist. She was the editor of the gossipy magazines Stardust and


Brinda Mukherjee has two remarkable novels on her name. They are *The Fourth Profile* and *A Fizzle Yield*.

Gita Mehta was born in Delhi in 1943 into a family that played an active role in Freedom struggle. She is the daughter of Biju Patnaik, a well-known freedom fighter and later a major political leader of Orissa.

Arundhati Roy, born in Shilong in 1961, is an Indian novelist, activist and a world citizen. She won the Booker Prize in 1997 for her first novel *The God of Small Things*. *The God of Small Things* (1997) is the only novel written by Roy. She has concentrated her writing on political issues. Roy is better known as an activist, a figure-head of the anti globalization, Narmada Dam, India’s Nuclear Weapon Deals etc.. She has devoted herself solely to nonfiction and politics, publishing two more collections of essays as well as working for social causes. She was awarded the *Sahitya Akademi* award for her collection of essays, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, but declined to accept it. Her other works are *Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire, The Cost of Living and End of Imagination*.

Kiran Desai, born in India in 1971, got her education in India, England and US. She won the Booker Prize for fiction in 2006. She is the daughter of Anita Deai. Her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) won the Betty Trask Award and the second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) won the prestigious Booker Prize. It revolves around many subjects such as morality and justice, globalization, racial, social and economic inequality, fundamentalism and alienation.

II

In the mid of 19th century Western literatures made a tremendous impact on Indian literatures and Gujarati literature was not an exception in it. It was a time when prose work was created equally as verse. Novel has become the most popular literary form in Gujarati literature. In Gujarati literature novel has its origin in English literature. *Karanghelo*, written by Nandshankar Mehta in 1866 is considered the first Gujarati novel.

Sorabji Dadabhai Munsafna, a Parsee writer wrote a long story *Hindusthan Madhyenu Zoonpadun* in 1862 but it lacked plot and originality. It was an age of social reformation. Most of the writers presented the contemporary society with its social evils and ways of life. Many social and historical novels were written during the two decades from 1866 to 1886.

But the publication of *Saraswatichandra* in 1887 by Goverdhanram Tripathi became a landmark in the history of Gujarati novel. It is considered a saga of love and culture. Presenting the contemporary society in four volumes it describes the four aims of of life in Indian Culture. *Saraswatichandra* is the most popular and most read Gujarati novel since its publication. Krushnagauri Hiralal Raval is considered the first Gujarati woman novelist. She was a teacher and
reformer she focused on contemporary social evils. Her story _Sadguni Hemantkumari Sansar Sudharani Varta_ published in 1892 is considered the first Gujarati novel by a woman writer. Ramanbhai Neelkanth has penned the most humorous novel _Bhadrambhadra_. He has created an immortal character of Bhadrambhadra in Gujarati literature.

K. M. Munshi created wonderful historical novels. His well-known novels are _Verni Vasulat_ (1913), _Patanni Prabhuta_ (1916), _Gujaratno Nath_ (1916), _Jay somnath_ (1916) and _Prithvivallabh_ (1916). The distinguished characteristics of his novels are dramatic dialogues, gallantry and historical perspectives in themes.

Chunilal V. Shah wrote _Avantinath, Neelkanthnu Ban, Roopmati_ and _Jigar ane Ami_. His best creation in last phase is _Kantakchhyo Panth_.

Jyotindra Dave and Dhansukhlal Mehta jointly created a humorous novel _Ame Badhan_. Zaverchand Meghani has given admirable social novels _Vevishal, Sorath Taran Vahetan Pani_ and _Tulsi Kyaro_. His _Sorath Taran Vahetan Pani_ laid foundation for regio-folk novels in Gujarati literature.

Ramanlal Desai enriched the Gujarati novel by giving it a social touch. His novels are _Kokila, Divyachakshu, Poornima, Gramlakshmi_ and _Bharelo Agni_. Gunvantraya Acharya introduced and pioneered novels on sea voyages in Gujarati novel by giving some novels like _Dariyalal, Haji Kasam Tari Vijali, Sakkarbar_ etc.

Pannalal Patel has created some great Gujarati novels. His most praised and widely read novels are _Malela Jeev_ and _Manvini Bhavai_.

Ishvar Petlikar, Pitambar Patel and Pushkar Chandarvakar also contributed Gujarati literature with their novels. Manubhai Pancholi known as ‘Darshak’ has made Gujarati literature rich with great novels like Deepnirvan, Zer to Pidha chhe Jani Jani and Socrates. Chunilal Madia, Yashodhar Mehta and Jayanti Dalal also enjoy a remarkable position in the history of Gujarati novel.


Women writers made a late entry in the realm of Gujarati novel. Gujarati literature has given very few outstanding women novelists. Yet making the Gujarati novel modern in real sense women novelists have played a crucial role. Gujarati novel has witnessed various phases of change ever since its birth in 1866. The names of such women writers are Dhiruben Patel, Kundanika Kapadia, Saroj Pathak, Varsa Adalja and Illa Arab Mehta.

There are some other women novelists who also contributed to enrich Gujarati novel. They are Vasuben, Savita Ranpura, Malti Desai, Bharti Dalal, Usha Sheth, Sarala Sheth, Pushpavati Mehta, Dipi Kothari,
Naina Gandhi, Smita Bhagvat, Bharti Vaid, Tarulatta Mehta, Himanshi Shelat among many others. But it is true, while reading history of Gujarati literature one can observe that women writers are not given appropriate niche in it.

Let’s try to get acquainted with some of them and examine their contribution to Gujarati novel in brief.

Some early Gujarati women writers attempted on novel but they gave a small number of novels.

Sarojini Mehta (1898-1977) was born in Ahmedabad in a well-literate family of Ramanbhai and Vidyagauri Neelkanth. She has written short stories and other research articles. She has given only one novel *Amarvel* (1954). It is a scathing satire on some social evils prevalent in the contemporary society. She also exposes tyranny faced by the women in the name of customs and traditions.

Vinodini Neelkanth (1907-1987) sister of Sarojini, has written short stories, essays, travelogues, biography and children literature. She has given only one novel, Kadalivan published in 1946.

Labhuben Mehta (1915-1994) has given only one social novel, Pranaydee published in 1957.

Vasuben Bhatt (1924) has given three novels, Zakal Pichhodi (1959), Sarsinj (1966) and Divse Taran Rate Vadal (1968)

Sarala Sheth (1913) is basically known as social worker. Her novels are Ghatmal (1970), Manthan (1975), Shalini (1979) and Vikrut Man Manvina (1989)

Jaya Thakor was born at Viramgam in 1926. She has given short story collections and a big number of novels. Her novels present women’s condition and struggles in the society. Her significant novels are Vatsala (1953), Sati; Mota Gharni Vahu (1954), Samasya ane Siddhi (1955), Dhoopchhanv (1958), Vividh Bharti (1961), Be Ghar (1968) Navprasthan (1970), Chakravo (1973) Kadam Kadamna Sathii (1976), Svayam Sansar (1976), Hastan Aansun (1976), Putravadhuni Shodhman (1976) and Uchhino Vaibhav (1991)

Dhiruben Patel was born in Baroda in 1926. She began her career as a lecturer in English in Mumbai. She contributed in all genres of literature. She has written short stories, novels, plays, and poems. Dhiruben is a prolific writer. Her novels are, Vadvanal (1963), Va Vantol (1970), Shimla na Phool (1976), Vamal (1979), Gagan na Lagan (1984), Ek Phoolgulabi Vaat (1990), Ek Daal Mithi (1990), Vans no
Ankur (1967), Ek Bhalo Manas (1979), Andhali Gali (1983), Kadambari ni Ma (1988/96), Hutashan (1993) and Aagantuk (1996). Dhiruben has achieved an outstanding position in modern Gujararati literature. She has been given an admirable position in the history of Gujarati novel. She was conferred the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for her novel Aagantuk in 2002. She was also given Ranjitram Suwarnachandrak, the highest meritorious award for Gujarati literature in 1983. She also rendered her services as the President of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad during the year 2003. We shall discuss her position in the history of Gujarati literature and her contribution to Gujarati Novel in the next chapters.

Mrinalini Desai (1927-1994) mainly wrote in Marathi. But she has also given three Gujarati novels. Putra Manvino (1972) has Gandhiji as central figure, Nishigandh (1973) is story of a woman freedom fighter and her third novel Poornahuti (1979) is based on mythological background.

Kundanika Kapadiya was born at Limbadi of Surendranagar district in 1927. She has written short stories, essays and novels. She has three novels at her credit, Parodh Thata Pahelan (1968) Aganpipasa (1972) and Saat Paglan Akashman (1984). Saat Paglan Akashman became a tremendous success in the history of Gujarati novel. It was given Sahitya Academy Prize in 1985. Under staunch impact of feminism, this novel presents the struggles and oppression faced by women. Kundanika advocates freedom of women and throws light on their pathetic condition in patriarchal society. Critics find that excessive social presentation has harmed the aesthetic elements of the novel and it becomes a social document only.
Padma Fadiya (1928) has given three social novels. They are Tyagane Tapasya (1962), Premghata (1969) and Anaprichhi Preet (1969).

Bharati Vaidya born in 1929 has contributed three novels. They are Pagdandi (1975), Kacha Manno Mel (1978) and Venasna Vela (1995).


Suhas Oza born in 1936 has given three novels. They are Satya (1968) Dvidha (1971) and Deepshikha (1990).


Usha Sheth born in 1938 has written two novels, Mrityu Mari Gayun (1979) and Avanavi (2006).

Illa Arab Mehta was born in 1938. She inherited the literary talent from her father Gunvatraya Acharya, the well-established writer in Gujarati literature. Illa advocated for women and revolted against male


Some other contemporary women novelists who contributed to Gujarati novel are Bharti Dalal (1940), Smita Bhagvat (1945), Himanshi Shelat (1947) and Kajal Oza (1966).

It is found that most of the women novelists have attempted to present the contemporary society in their novels. They generally deal with problems of women and their struggle against fate and patriarchal world. Their themes are based on marital relations, motherhood, routine
of house wife, suffering of woman in the name of customs and traditions etc. Among them Kundanika kapadia’s *Sat Pagla Akashman* and Varsha Adalja’s *Batris Patalini Vedna* are outstanding novels. We find social realism in most of their novels. It is Dhiruben who has presented social realism with psychoanalytical insight in her novels. Saroj Pathak also tried to present the inner world of the characters.

In present study the researcher has attempted to analyze Namia Gokhale’s and Dhirubern Patel’s depiction of women in their novels, their vision of life, the presentation of contemporary society, and their craftsmanship as novelists from comparative angles.

III

Namita Gokhale
Namita Gokhale is one of the well-known women novelists of recent times. She was born at Lucknow in 1956. Namita spent her childhood between New Delhi and Nainital, in the foothills of the Himalayas. It is said that there is something about the Kumaon hills surrounding Nainital, Almora and Ranikhet which breeds good soldiers, scholars, politicians and littérateurs. There are Pants, Pandeys and Joshis. There was Govind vallabh Pant, the great politician and now his son K.C. Pant and his wife Ila. There is Murali Manohar Joshi. There is Shivani Joshi, a Hindi novelist and her daughter Mrinal Pande a journalist and a TV personality and there is Namita Gokhale. In her seventies Namita fell in love with Rajiv Gokhale, the son of Law Minister in Indira Gandhi’s cabinet and married him at the age of eighteen. Soon they moved to Bombay where Gokhale worked as a film journalist. They jointly published a film magazine, Super. They had many ups and downs in life. Rajiv had to face financial crisis. He began to drink heavily and became victim of cancer of liver. They struggled a lot but finally he succumbed to death leaving two teenage daughters take care of for Namita. Not only this but Namita also was stricken with cancer of the uterus while writing Paro, and barely survived.

Namita had plenty of personal experiences in life that became a treasure for her writings. We can say that her eventful life has provided her with a vast canvas for her work. Namita had enough material to start writing a novel. Her first novel, Paro: Dreams of Passion, published in 1984 had a great success in India and abroad. It created a stir by its frankness in the early 80s, and pioneered the sexually frank genre which made Shobha De famous. Paro has been described as ‘far more witty and genuinely irreverent than any of De's novels’ by Khushwant Singh. It is a
satire on Delhi's upper-class. This satire upon New Delhi and Mumbai elite received much recognition and caused uproar due to its explicit depiction of sexual reality.

*Paro* is an autobiographical novel. The novelist identifies herself with the society she lives in and with the object of her creation. Namita identifies herself with both Priya Sharma and Paro who appear to be the protagonists in the novel. "*In Paro I was making fun of Delhi's socialites.*" she says, "*Delhi is basically a small town with large pretensions.*" The novel has sexual and psychological overtones. Namita had felt and seen death very closely. She had more experiences of death. Her mother-in-law died in her arms; her sister-in-law Sunanda Bhandare, Judge of the Delhi High Court succumbed to cancer and finally her husband. Thus it is natural for Namita that after love death became her obsession. Her obsession with love and death resulted in two books: *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* (1994) and *The Book of Shadows* (1999). *The Book of Shadows* made the top of the Indian best sellers list. It is part ghost story, part erotic romance, set in an isolated bungalow in the midst of a forest in Kumaon hills.

*Gods, Graves and Grandmother* is story of Gudiya’s life which has lot of twists and turns. She arrives in Delhi with her grandmother. A miracle occurs when some pebbles on a marble are turned into a place of worship. But her grandmother dies as a saint. As we follow the twists and turns of Gudiya’s story we see unfold before us the peculiar dance of chance and will that is human existence. *The Book of Shadows* is a beautiful haunting novel with erotic romance set in the foothills of the Himalayas. It is a story of a haunting house in Kumaon hills. Gokhale gives free reign to her imagination in this novel. Bitya, a young lecturer from Delhi, left disfigured from an acid attack by her former lover’s sister
lives in that house. Critics find the character of Bitya modelled upon author’s own experiences in life.

*Shakuntala: The Play of Memory,* published in 2005 is Namita’s beautiful creation combining her extraordinary gift of story telling with history, religion and philosophy to craft a timeless tale that transcends its ancient setting. The protagonist Shakuntala is named after the fifth century Sanskrit dramatist Kalidasa's heroine Shakuntala. Gokhale's mortal Shakuntala is bold and restless at a time when women are confined to the household. Shakuntala questions the rules and customs of society, and when the opportunity arrives, she goes out into the unknown to satisfy her adventurous spirit. Shakuntala is a vivid portrayal of the tragic life of a woman whose desire to live on her own terms is thwarted at every turn by circumstance and the age in which she lives.

Namita Gokhale has always found writing a “Catharsis” and story telling a quite “therapeutic exercise”. Critics consider *Paro* as an autobiographical novel. Commenting upon her subjectivity Namita says:

*It's strange, but often I write about things before they happen to me or to those around me. I used to get terrified by these coincidences until a very intelligent woman explained to me that writers are intuitive and often carry a field of prescient energy. Otherwise every writer I know cannibalizes experience, it’s inevitable.*

She tells Humra about her real nature, “I would love to be a carefree, fun-loving person but I suspect I’m more of an anxious, irritable
sort of person in private. The real Namita Gokhale tries very hard to be sincere and is probably a bit silly.”

Namita Gokhale has masterful grasp of English language and a vivid imagination. She has written five novels and some other non-fictional books and continues to work as a journalist and a publisher. Her works focus on women’s issues and literary criticism. She lives in Delhi. Despite tragedies in her personal life, she finds a lot of magic in everyday life. She asserts, “Failure is more important than success and suffering is great incentive to growth. It reveals and redefines character. Happiness makes lazy and flabby”

When asked about her other works in comparison to Paro she says, “Well, every novel has a life of its own, a sort of autonomous existence. Paro reached out to a lot of people and I’m grateful that people still remember it so many years later. Yet I do feel that I’ve grown as a writer.”

Her debut novel Paro was a wonderful successful in India and abroad. It was described as not just blatant but extremely bold. She says:

The shocked and scandalized reaction which Paro received in India took me completely by surprise. I was very young then, and did, of course, react to that, in the sense that I set out to write a very stark and depressing book, to show the critics that I was a serious writer. But I don’t think I have ever been inhibited in my writing, whatever the subject.
She expresses her views on media and publicity and says, “Yes, media hype is needed to sell books, although a good book can sometimes make it by word of mouth. As I said before, every book has a life, a kundali, of its own, which has very little to do with purely literary merit.” And further says about prospect of writing as livelihood, “Not in India, no. Even elsewhere, they say you can make a fortune by writing, but not a living. It’s a very insecure and uncertain way to survive but it has glorious compensations.”

As an author, Namita frankly expresses her views:

To leave your books behind is important. My novels are very temporary; I leave them behind like snakeskin. I think the hype around the authors and their books is highly exaggerated. They are important in that moment of discovery and have irrevocable internal value but the whole cultural construct around authors is tragic because they start believing in the hype themselves. What matters is what remains in the literary consciousness over a period of time; that is the way to survive.

The danger of being a writer is, she adds,

People start reconstructing your life for you. I keep reading about my obsession with life and death; that it comes from my life's experiences. I am an obsessive person. I obsess over alu ka paranthas and how perfect the shalgam, gobi ka achaar was. I obsess over life. I love life, I enjoy but I always know what life is. The ‘momento mori’ works all the time. A small reminder of
death in any work of art adds to the pleasure of life. I've been sitting with death for a long time.  

She writes her experience while she was writing the ghost story *The Book of Shadows*. She says, “Every time I write a book, I feel I'll never write again. But before I know it, I've begun again. *The Book of Shadows* was a strange book. I was a bit of a ghost myself. A lot of the book wrote itself.”

Namita discloses how *Shakuntala* describes her vision of life. She confesses:

I have past life memories. They formed the core of the book in *Shakuntala* where I have fictionalised them. The anger, the 'paranormal' thoughts on birth and rebirth are not constructs, they are several dimensions of how I see life. I don't believe in anything but I do sense them intuitively, that there are things I have deep and prior knowledge of.

She expresses her view on her first successful book:

One of the worst things to happen is to have a successful first book. *Paro* got a lot of attention. It is still in print but I don't think it is my best book. It is quite sad to have it remembered as a sensational book. In a span of 21 years, I have become a better and more competent writer. My relationships with my books have been different with each one. I continue to be surprised by *The Book of Shadows*, it intrigues me still.
Namita manages her husband’s consultancy work and along with that she is also into publishing and writing and travelling and organizing literary events. She tells how she manages everything so tactfully:

*I get compulsive about writing. I write on backs of envelopes, scraps of paper. When I have to write I can write anywhere — at airports, in crowded places. It's a downloading of experiences. Reading is interactive. It works like a time-release capsule. At some moments you can empathize, the other moments leave you cold. As readers you deconstruct the book. That is why it is important for the writer to leave the book behind.*  

As a woman, Namita recalls Freud's belief that all human beings are androgynous:

*We all carry a lot of men and women in ourselves. Every marriage has two men and women in it. On Mother's Day I wrote about my grandfather for he was the one who mothered and nurtured me. I don't take strict gender positions. The concept of the yin and the yang, of ardhanarishwara, is relevant even to our times.*

Her work is very woman-oriented because she feels, ‘*a woman's life is 'reflected in the rhythm of the seasons, not like men whose stories are rooted in wars, territories and legislation'*.

Namita’s works are as under:

*Mountain Echoes* is Reminiscences of Kumaoni women. She traces lives of four old Kumaoni women in this work. They are Shivani, the
well-known Hindi novelist, her grandmother Shakuntala Pande, Tara Pande and Jeeya (Laxmi Pande). Namita felt it difficult to complete the work, she herself says, “It was extremely difficult to weave together a fabric out of disjointed threads because memories are essentially very fragile things, these women were very reluctant to go back into their pasts.  

The Book of Shiva Published by Viking in 2003, is a work of non-fiction by Namita. Shiva is destroyer and protector, Supreme Ascetic and Lord of the Universe. He is Ardhanarishwara (half-man and half-woman), he is Neelakantha, who drank poison to save the three worlds--and yet when crazed with grief at the death of Sati, set about destroying them. Shiva holds within him the answers to some of the greatest dilemmas that have perplexed mankind. Who is Shiva? Why does he roam the world as a naked ascetic covered with ash? What was the tandava? What is the story behind the worship of the linga and what vision of the world does it signify? Namita Gokhale examines these questions and many others that lie within the numerous of stories about Shiva.

Present Tense Living On The Edge is an anthology of essays, published in 2004. It is an anthology of essays on musing, fictional speculation and visual arts. It discusses issues of ethnic identity, divisiveness, riots, the insidious cycle of marginalization, alienation, anger and reprisal, beyond the sanitized constrains of media discourse into voices of real and visceral fears, of outrage, protest, and of hope.

The Puffin Mahabhrata recently published in 2009 is a story told and retold a million times, the story of defeat as much as victory, about humility as much as courage. It is the greatest story ever told. Like a
storyteller, Namita Gokhale brings alive India's richest literary treasure with disarming ease and simplicity. She retells this timeless tale of mortals and immortals and stories within stories, of valour, deceit, glory and despair, for today's young reader in a clear, contemporary style, *The Puffin Mahabharata* is a book that will be loved by readers of all ages.

Namita Gokhale is one of the Festival Directors of the DSC Jaipur Literature Festival. The **Jaipur Literature Festival** is an annual literary festival taking place in the pink city of Jaipur. The Jaipur Literature Festival is the biggest literary festival not just in India, but in Asia, and was described by Miranda Seymour as "the grandest literary Festival of them all". It is held each year in Jaipur, Rajasthan during the month of January, usually in the Hall of Audience and gardens of the Diggi Palace in the city centre, and celebrates excellence in Rajasthani, Indian and International writing. The festival directors are the writers Namita Gokhale and William Dalrymple.

Works by Namita Gokhale are:

Dhiruben Patel

Dhiruben Patel was born in Baroda on 29th May 1926. Her father, Gordhanbhai Patel was a commerce journalist and her mother Gangaben was a social worker. Her father spent some years in Europe so he was staunch champion of individual independence. Her father made a tremendous influence in developing the ideology of Dhiruben. Her mother was a staunch Gandhian and during freedom struggle she was jailed for six times. Her mother actively participated in Indian Freedom Movement. She was not well educated yet she acquired knowledge of
Hindi, English, Gujarati and Sanskrit with a lot of hard work. Gordhanbhai was a nature lover and he always treated his daughter like his friend. Thus the parents of Dhiruben played a crucial in development of Dhiruben’s talent and skills. Since her childhood Dhireben was fond of reading and writing. Her father everyday brought a new book for her and she used to read it next day.

Dhiruben completed her schooling at Podar Highschool of Santakruz in Mumbai. She graduated from Alfinston College of Mumbai. She passed M.A. with English literature in 1949 and began her career as a lecturer in Bhavans College, Mumbai. Dhiruben worked as lecturer in Bhavans College from 1949 to 1961. She also taught at College of Dahisar during 1963-64. She also worked as the editor of the Gujarati magazine Sudha from 1965 to 1975. Not only this but she also tried her hand on publishing business and she published some adolescent literature under the titles of Anand Publishers and and Kalki Prakashan. She also contributed to Gujarati movies by writing songs and dialogues for three films.

Dhiruben has achieved an outstanding position in modern Gujararati literature. She has been given a creditable position in the history of Gujarati novel. She also gave her services as the President of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad. She was conferred the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for her novel Aagantuk in 2002. She was also given the highest meritorious award for Gujarati literature Ranjitram Suwarnachandruk in 1983. Her novels Vans no Ankur and Andhali Gali are prescribed in the syllabi of S.N.D.T University, Mumbai, Saurashtra University, Rajkot and S.P. University, Vallabhvidyanagar. Being a
student as well as a lecturer in literature, she was completely acquainted with all various isms, trends and movements in literature.

She contributed in all genres of literature. She has written short stories, novels, plays, and poems. Dhiruben is a prolific writer. Her works are:

**Novel:**
- *Vadvanal* (1963)
- *Va Vantol* (1970)
- *Shimla na Phool* (1976)
- *Vamal* (1979)
- *Kadambari ni Ma* (1988/96)
- *Ek Phoolgulabi Vaat* (1990)
- *Ek Daal Mithi* (1990)
- *Hutashan* (1993)
- *Aagantuk* (1996/2000/02/03)
- *Vans no Ankur* (1967)
- *Ek Bhalo Manas* (1979)
- *Aandhali Gali* (1983/88/90)

**Short Story Collection:**
- *Adhuro Kol* (1955)
- *Ek Lahar* (1970)
- *Vishrambh Katha* (1966)
- *Taadh* (1987)

**Comic Stories (Hasyakatha):**
Kartik ane BijaBadha (1988)
Kartik Rang Rasiyo (1990)

Play:
Pahelun Inam (1955)
Pankhino Malo (1956)
Vinashne Panthe (1961)

Bhavai:
Bhavni Bhavai (1988)

Radio Play:
Manno Manelo (1959)
Mayapurush (1995)

One act plays Collection:
Namni Nagarvel (1961)

Translation:
Tom Sawyer (1960/93)
Huckleberry Finn (1967/93)
Chalo Hasie (1995)

Children Literature (Bal Sahitya):
Anderi Ganderi Tipri Ten (1966)
Goro Avyo (1987)
Bataknu Bachchun (1973/87)
Mitrana Jodakna (1973)
Pardukhbhanjan Pastonji (1978)
Thus Dhiruben has attempted on all genres of literature like novel, novella, short story, drama, radio play, and children literature. But her real genius comes out as short novel writer. We witness a drastic change in Gujarati literature with the publication of her novel *Shimla na Phool* (1976). It is a novel about Ranna the protagonist who represents woman’s search for self. In this novel the novelist has given a chance to the protagonist to search for her own identity. It unravels for the first time the world of woman. Her novel *Kadambarini Ma* (1988) subtly explores the changing phases of human relationship while actually focusing on new angles of looking at the much abused relationship of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in Indian society. The novel provides a fresh insight into woman’s psychology. Kadambari the protagonist emerges as a New woman in Gujarati literature. Kadambari is a typical timid Indian wife, feeling safe among the tyrannies of a drunkard husband. The novelist raises questions against the age-old pathetic condition of women and male dominance in Indian families. *Hutashan* is a social novel. It is depiction of mother-in-law- daughter-in-law relationship.

*Aandhali Gali* is psychological insight into life of a woman who all of a sudden decides to marry at the age of forty four. Kundan, an unmarried woman of about forty, lives a lonely life in Mumbai. The novel presents a picture of happy married life of Paresh and Shubhangi who brings new changes in Kundan and her approach towards life. But Kundan is disappointed in the end and she is again thrown away into that dark street of life that is-aandhali gali which has no end.

*Aagantuk* was published in 1996. It was given the central academy award in 2002. It is a marvellous story of a sanyasi who can not adjust in
the so called practical world and can not return to sanyasi life. Ishan comes back to Mumbai from Kashi giving up his sanyasi life. His brothers Ashutosh and Arnav are settled in their life so they are not happy on his arrival. Ishan’s situation is like Trishanku. Due to his former fame as a saint Ishan has a tremendous twist in his life.

About her most praised novel ‘Aagantuk’ Dhiruben says, “Since square peg in a round hole is not possible. Like that can this world show forbearance with thorough gentlepersons? And in search of such person I wrote ‘Aagantuk’.”

According to Dhiruben sensitivity for a writer is more essential than the gender, ‘I firmly believe that sensitivity is the first and last requirement of a writer, it is of no importance whether the writer is man or woman.”

She is of the opinion that writers have some social responsibility. She says:

Pleasure is the prime aim of literary creation but a writer can not escape from his social responsibility because his writing is not bound to be in four walls only, it has a universal significance. If you think, ‘I write for me, I don’t care for others’ then better is you give up publishing.

She opens her inner heart and confesses:
Since the beginning I have lived on two levels unknowingly. One is external world which is seen and assessed by all and another is the inner world that is my own and I only know it. The roots of my creation lie there...

Beginning from 1960s several women writers till date have contributed to Gujarati literature. And still many of them have not been given place in the history of Gujarati literature.

V

Comparison between two things, places or persons is a natural instinct of human minds. We always use our intelligence to compare and this leads to better understanding of the things and acquisition of knowledge.

Comparative Literature as a discipline in Indian Universities has not flourished as in the West and European countries. Otherwise we have a lot many vernaculars and regional languages to make comparative studies. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said, “Indian literature is one though written in many languages.” It has a unity with a lot of varieties.

The well-known Gujarati poet Umashankar Joshi said, “I am an Indian writer writing in Gujarati.”

Indian literatures provide the natural basis of comparative study for us, only because it is our own literature; we understand it better than any other literature. We can say it is our own culture. The strength of cultural
relativism is that it emphasizes contrasts. The human mind is everywhere the same, has the same capacities; but the solutions individual culture find to problems of human existence are different. The object of Comparative Literature may be to bring out those differences with in the cultural relativism. Diversities of literatures do not necessarily prevent one from discovering deeper affinities between them.

“Differences” as Levi- Stratus has remarked, “are extremely fecund, it is through differences that progress is made.”

The necessity for the study of literatures in relation to one another, this is the basis of comparative literature today, was felt strongly in nineteenth century.

The first person to plead eloquently for a comparative study of literature and that too as a discipline in India was Rabindranath Tagore. The newly established National Council of Education or Jatiya Siksa Parishad in 1906 formed by some leading educationists invited Rabindranath Tagore to speak on Comparative Literature in 1907. The title of Rabinranath’s lecture in Bengali was Vishva sahitya meaning world literature. Tagore used the English expression ‘comparative literature’ to explain what he meant by ‘world literature’ a term that used by Goethe in 1827 as Weltliteratur.

Tagore said,

*We must free our selves from narrow provincialism; we must strive to see the work of each other as a whole, that whole as a part of man’s universal creativity, and that universal spirit in its manifestations through world literature. Now is the time to do so.*
Tagore’s call to free ourselves from the ‘narrow provincialism’ of literary scholarship and some of them indeed made significant contribution towards the enlargement of literary perspective, the first department of comparative literature came into existence in our country in 1956 at Jadavpur University. Amiya Dev writes:

*Comparative literature is the only method for working out pedagogy of Indian Literature. There is no Indian literature as such. There are only Indian Literatures and there is the methodology to approach them. We call it Comparative Indian Literature.*

Indian literatures are a product of a multiracial and multicultural social-historical mélange. We can not understand any Indian national literature as a singular entity in isolation. We can study various national literatures in the context of reciprocal influences only. There are multiple threads of unity in our multilingual and multi religious culture. And it is through Comparative literature that we can better understand them.

Some terms to understand the form and function of Comparative Literature:

Henry Remak says:

*Comparative Literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of the relationship between literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts,*
philosophy, history, the social sciences, the science, religion etc., on the other. In brief it is comparison of one literature with another or others…….  

John Flecher defines it:

Comparative literature: analytical description, methodical and differential comparison, synthetic interpretation of inter linguisic and inert cultural phenomena through history, criticism and philosophy in order to understand literature as a specific function of the mind.  

John Flecher makes the boundaries of comparative study broad and limitless saying that:

Comparative literature is the branch of literary study which concerns itself with the basic structures underlying all literary manifestations of whatever time or place: so it is concerned whatever is universal any particular literary phenomenon. There is therefore no limit theory to its field of investigation, since literature in all languages and their relations with each other and with other art-forms come within it purview.  

Prawer has given a very simple and straightforward definition of the term. He says Comparative study is:
An examination of literary texts in more than one language, through an investigation of contrast, analogy, provenance of influence or a study of literary relations and communications between two or more groups that speak different languages. 

We can divide the Indian Literatures in three categories. They are,

(i) Indian Literatures with provenance and tradition of Sanskrit Literature
(ii) Indian Literature written in English
(iii) Indian Literature written in other official-vernacular languages like Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Gujarati etc.

All these Indian Literatures have one similarity that is its ‘Indianness’. Thus to study the two women novelists of Indian Literatures, ‘Comparative study’ is the best method to study them critically and analytically. Keeping in mind this the above concepts of Comparative study, the researcher has under taken this present study of the two women novelists, Namita Gokhale writing in Indian English Literature and Dhiruben Patel writing in Gujarati Literature.

As Namita Gokhale and Dhiruben Patel both are women writers and most of their novels have women as their chief protagonists so it will be an interesting study to compare their novels from various point of views. This comparative study will also focus on depiction of women as protagonists and their feminist perspectives in their novels. Both writers have lived in metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai so it will also show how they represent their contemporary society and the socialites in their novels.
The aims and objectives of the study are:

To examine and compare each novelist’s thematic concerns, presentation of the society, presentation of women in their novels and their vision of life.

To assess and analyze these novelists’ art of character delineation and craftsmanship.

To make a comparative study of the selected novels of Namita Gokhale and Dhiruben Patel.

To assess the contribution of Namita Gokhale and Dhiruben Patel to Indian English and Gujarati Literature respectively.

Namita Gokhale and Dhiruben Patel have made remarkable contribution in their respective literatures. Some research works have been done on the novels of Dhiruben in Gujarati and same is in the case of Namita but their comparative study of this kind was still to be undertaken. Dhiruben is a prolific writer. She has contributed in all genres of literature but the present study is restricted to her four selected novels only. The novels selected are; Namita Gokhale’s Paro: Dreams of Passion, Gods, Graves and Grandmother, A Himalayan Love Story, The Book of Shadows and Shakuntala and Dhiruben Patel’s Andhali Gali, Kadambarini Maa, Hutashan and Aagantuk. All these novels are published during 1983 to 2005. Thus, the study covers all the five novels of Namita Gokhale and four selected later novels of Dhiruben Patel published after 1983.
The chapterization of the dissertation is as under:

**Chapter 1. Introduction**

**Chapter 2. Novels of Namita Gokhale**

This chapter gives a brief and critical summary of all five novels of Namita Gokhale selected for this study.

**Chapter 3. Novels of Dhiruben Patel**

This chapter gives a brief and critical summary of Dhiruben’s four novels selected for this study. Dhiruben has written more than thirteen novels but they are not included in this study.

**Chapter 4. Comparison of both the Novelists**

This chapter deals with comparative study of Dhiruben Patel and Namita Gokhale’s novels and focuses on the novelists’ themes, character delineation, their craftsmanship etc. It gives a general comparison and brings out the similarities and dissimilarities.

**Chapter 5. Conclusion**

In this chapter the conclusion and findings of the study are discussed. It also mentions to what extent the objectives of the research are achieved and have the hypothesis turned out to be true or not. It describes the significance of the research and possibility of further studies.
of the novels of Dhiruben Patel and Namita Gokhale from various perspectives and angles.
Notes and References:


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