

Waves Of Change: Contributions Of Women To Kannada Literature

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Abstract

If we look at the history of Kannada Literature of one thousand five hundred years ago till the beginning of the 20th century, there is not much literature written by women that can be recognized as women's literature. Women were deprived of education and were not given many opportunities to participate in public life in a male dominated social system. A life of dependence without freedom was predominant for women. Due to many such reasons women have not been able to find their unique place in the mainstream of Kannada Literature for a long time. It is only in the 20th century that we see creative women being recognized.

Since the time of Satavahanas, women undertook jobs in administration, affairs of the state etc. It is known that Vijayamahadevi, a Sanskrit scholar, was a great poetess and the daughter of Chandraditya, the son of Pulakesi of Badami Chalukya. Vijayamahadevi wrote the play Kaumudi Mahotsava.

In Kannada literary history, the name of a Jain woman named Attimabbe is famous. She built 1500 "Jina basadis" and idols of Jina thereby earning the title of "Dana Chintamani". Kavi Ranna wrote the poem Ajita Purana. Ponna wrote and made a thousand copies of Shanti Purana and donated them.

In the 12th century, the contribution of Vachana Karthis in Vachana Literature was immense. For the first time, women also responded to literary creation and cultural change. Women like Akkamahadevi, Gangamma, Sulesankavva, Lakkavve etcetera participated in Kannada Vachana Literature without discrimination.

Yet in the beginning of the 20th century, women who had been schooled entered the field of literature with some interest such as Thirumalamba, Shantabhai Nilagara etcetera.

Key Words: Vachana Literature, Kannada literary, women's literature.

Introduction

Women's Vocational Movement in Kannada:

In the 12th century, after Kanti several Vachana Karthis started a movement by composing vachanas in Kannada. At certain stages we can see that women seriously thought about the society and expressed their thoughts in their literary creations. They started creating literature. The first spurt of creations was during the time of the Vachana Karthis of the 12th century. The first person we see in this is Akkamahadevi. She is one of the leading writers of Vachana Literature. Akkamahadevi is the first woman poet of Kannada. Akkamahadevi can be recognized in many ways as the leader of the Sarana Movement, the symbol of self-respect, the true advocate of the feminist movement, the elder sister of Akkar. Akka, who gave up happiness at a young age had a lot of challenges to look forward to. Akka, who accepted Lord Shiva as her husband and scorned the worldly pleasures of this world and walked as Keshambhari became a role model for many devotees.

The era of Kannada literature known as "Suvarnayuga Vachana Sahityakala" in the 12th century has a special place in the literary history of Karnataka. Since the time of the Vedas, Sanskrit was the property of literary scholars and academicians. For the Indian women, the era of Puranas and Dharmashastras was a turbulent era. When one gains insights into the pre-Aryan cultural period there are instances of women scholars like Gargi, and Maitreyi participating in spiritual discussions. Since women were treated differently in the society for several centuries the Vachanakaras are credited with correcting the prejudicial vision of the masses towards women. Perhaps no other century has seen such a gift as the Vachana Karthis of the Basava era. In that period, it is seen that men and women gathered together in the Anvabha Mantapa without any distinction of caste for voting and for participation in the arguments and the discussions.

Vachanakartiyas are the ones who immediately come to our minds such as Akkamahadevi and Samitakka. Vachan

Yuga created a new awareness regarding the literacy among women, taught all classes of women and provided an opportunity to more than 36 people to create Vachanas. Most of these devotees had realized the truth of samsara and longed for the purity of life and presented that samsara is not an object of philosophy, but a motivator and a supporter. Prominent among them are Amuge Rayamma, Akkamma, Sathyakki Lakkamma, Kethaladevi, Kalavve, Kamavve, Gangamma, Neelambhike, Goggavve, Sathyake etcetera. All of them contributed immensely to Kannada Literature.

A Woman in the Pages of History

During the Vijayanagara Empire, the queen of Kampana, Gangabike wrote Madhuravya (Vira Kampanaraya Charita) in Sanskrit. Achyutaraya's elder queen Thirumalambe composed a work called Varadambika Parinaya on the subject of her husband's second marriage. Abhirama Kamakshi is said to have composed Abhinava Ramabhyudaya and Raghunatha Abhyudaya was written by Ramabhadramba. It is known that there was a poetess named Madhuravani in the court of Raghunath Nayaka. In the court of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (1672-1704), there were poets named Sanchiya Honnamma and Shringaramma.

Sanchiya Honnamma composed the poem "Hadibadeya Dharma" in Sangat. She had fully accepted the supremacy of men in the society, and throughout her work has expressed the opinion that if women work for the happiness of men, there will be happiness in the family and in the society. She was neither a thinker of women's progress nor a questioner of male supremacy. "Kuvare nadare bandu kuvariyadode kundenu" which means "Woman falls because of a woman, is a blind farmer", and "Pennu Pettavaru Perchuvaru, Penna Selekkele Peraru, Penna Permegondanu Himamvatanu". Thus, we can see in her the cold melodious protest against the inferior status of women that expresses a strain of the pro-feminist thought.

She claims Jaimini Bharat as the basis of Padmini Kalyana Sangatya written by Shringaramma.

Many women also composed kirtans in the context of Dasa Literature. Rukmini Bai, Prayagbai of Vijapur, Galigali Avva, Harpanahalli Bhimavva etcetera taking the pen name of Gopalakrishna Vithala wrote more than 400 songs and a couplet - Ramayana.

Women play a major role in the creation of folk songs. But most of their works are lost. Yashodabai, the author of works like Sita Parityaga, Rukmini Kalyana, Chandravali etcetera can see that the works of Bommasandra's Bhagirathamma such as Kirtana Ramai based on folk rhymes have survived by chance.

Post-19th Century Feminist Thought

After the time of the Mysore kings till the 19th century and the dawn of Hosgannada - literary production is not seen much. Feminist ideas began to appear in the cultural climate of the 19th century. Concerns for the emancipation of women were also included in the National Revival Movement.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, women who had some interest in schooling, and literature were seen but they did not dare to enter the field of literature. There was a time when men had to write on behalf of women. Some newspapers and organizations of the time organized competitions with prizes for women's writing with the aim of encouraging girls to write.

Thus, by writing for the competition, Shantabhai Nilagara, Tirumalamba, Saraswathi, Devi Gowda, started their writing careers, wrote essays, novels, and won prizes for those articles. When the Karnataka Vidhyavardhak Sangha of Dharwad invited such essays for publication, Shantabai Nilagara, headmistress of a girls' training school in Dharwad, wrote a work called "Sadguni Krishnabai". It was published in Vagbhushan Granthmale in 1908.

It is the first novel written by a woman in modern times. Karthi's first novel Shantabai Nilagarare. In this work, there is an attempt to remove the apprehensions and doubts about the education of women in the society of that time.

Woman in Modern Literature

Nanjangudu Thirumalamba was the first modern Kannada novelist and her novel Sushile (1913) was considered to be the first novel by a woman. Thirumalamba and R. Kalyanamma Navara were more idealistic than the Renaissance authors of the older generation's reforming spirit, thought and language. Being a widow herself, she thought not only about education, but also about the problem of hair loss, unequal marriage, child marriage, widow marriage etcetera. She created works in various genres such as stories, novels, drama, articles etcetera

by bringing in the characteristic scenes needed to change the society's mind and the status of women through her works.

Tirumalamba started a publishing house called Satihitaishini Granthmale and a newspaper called Karnataka Nandini in 1913. In 1916, R. Kalyanamma Sri Shara's Women's Society (1913), which has a more precise position than Tirumalamba's, also started women's issues containing various topics of women's world.

Children's flag section, and children's writings were published in this newspaper which helped to create literary creation and inculcate ambition in children at that time. He advocated that women should be educated in such a way as to develop social consciousness so that women can extend their responsibility for civic social work. Many women participated in the Indian independence movement. For those who had not crossed the kitchen till then, the concept of education arose along with the concept of independence of the country. The feeling that the society is not only comprised of men, but also includes women became predominant among people.

Women also need education. Even then efforts were made to find out that the development of the society was possible. T. Tha Sharma's wife Tirumale Rajamma (c. 1900) created works in the genres of poetry, drama, and portraiture under the pen name, Bharati. He wrote the plays Tapaswini, Mahasati, Matsalya.

A generation after her as depicted here includes Shyamaladevi who wrote stories under the name of Mrs. Krishna in 1910. Gouramma of Kodagu (1912-39), Giribale or Saraswati Rajawade (1913), and HV Savitramma (1913) had the spirit of modern educational reform and engaged in progressive thoughts and writings.

All of them have created works by projecting the problems of exploitation of the women and the poor. A collection of short stories by Gouramma of Kambani Koda, Giribale depicts cruelty, selfishness, poverty, hypocrisy and stupidity in sharp, logical language. The strength and wisdom of rebelling against injustice are present in the works.

Shyamaladevi Belgaonkar, the author of the collections of Hubisilu in 1936, gave an artistic form to the social problems. Sita-Rama-Ravana Vimukti by HV Savithramma is an important work from the point of view of Ramayana. He was one of the first to write a work of concern for women. His poems draw our

attention to the women's freedom from bondage and restraints of that time. For women's freedom and happiness, there is a different world and field of work apart from marriage. H.S. Katyayini (1923-95) was a distinguished storyteller who coined the new terms for useful services.

Shantadevi Malvada (1922) wrote more than 26 works on various subjects including research-oriented works like *Rasapaka din Hidadu Shurarani* and *Keladi Chennammaji* that challenged the traditional values and the attitudes of the female relationships.

Translated Women's Works

Sita Devi Padukone composed works in Hindi Konkani and Kannada in 1903. Vasanthi Padukone 1908-95 produced translations of her own works in Kannada and in Hindi. She thought about the progress of women from a moral standpoint.

Jayalakshmi Srinivasan has written more than a thousand articles and stories in Tamil and Kannada which are prominent among the villagers Ramachandra, Kumudini, Kripashankar, Chanchale, and Pirme.

Prominent novelists

The origin of the term novel is intriguing. *Gadhyakavya* written by Bhanbhatta in Sanskrit is famous. In the North Karnataka, Turumuri Seshagira Rao's *Kadambari* was published under the name of Hosaganna Gadyarupa. In the early days of the development of novels in Kannada women created and contributed their works. *Satihitaishini Granthmale Tirumalamba* is an example of this feature. A feature of his works is especially the theme related to women and their social status. Among them, Anasuya, pen name Triveni (1928-65), stands first among the prominent female novelists. She gained popularity in the 50s and the 60s of the 20th century by creating twenty-four stories and novels in a span of a decade, focusing on various women's problems using psychological formulae, attractive style, beautiful language, and narrative ingenuity.

M. K. Indira (1917) an important name after Triveni started writing at the age of 44 and became popular with the novel *Tunga-Bhaddra*. He saw various social problems of the society and the subtle threads of the exploitation of women in the world from a traditional standpoint.

After 1970, the voice of rebellion was heard in literature. The depiction of oppression and exploitation of Dalits first appeared in poetry and later in prose literature. Then some writers also started writing. His writing became even more vivid with this Dalit insurgency. Sharifa, B.T. Jahnavi Sukanya Maruti etcetera started portraying the Dalit society and their problems very sensitively in literature.

Some Kannada women have worked in universities, legal fields, medical and scientific fields.