

## INTRODUCTION

I intend through this research endeavour to conduct a comparative study of select fiction by Gujarati women writers in its original Gujarati and in English translation. For this comparative study I shall apply Andre Lefevere's (1945-1996) conceptual framework of 'Translation as a Rewriting of the Original' and his concepts of four constraints namely – Ideology, Poetics, Patronage and Universe of Discourse. A detailed analysis of the varied strategies implemented by translators has been conducted. The thesis also explores the extent to which the translation of linguistic and cultural nuances is accomplished and it also traces the challenges posed by the stylistic and pragmatic structures of the target language.

The research begins with an overview of the literature of the Gujarat region in general and goes to an overview of the emergence of women writers in Gujarat along with the political, historical and anthropological contexts impacting the region and its literature. The research is undertaken with the view to analyse women's representation in the fiction by male and female writers of Gujarat and to conduct a comparative study of the difference in the treatment of women and their issues at the hands of both. As literature mirrors the society, a survey is conducted of the condition of women in the society in real time and how the images are captured by the literature. Another aim of this research is to examine how the woman subject has been 'rewritten' in English translation and which are the factors affecting the representation or at times misrepresentations of the women. And how the constraints advocated by Lefevere affect the translation as well as the representation of the image of women when transferred to a completely different set of language and culture.

At the same time, the study is undertaken to map the emergence and impact of women writers on the spectrum of Gujarati literature and how their novel style and fresh perspective impacted the literary field. They presented the unseen world of women, their emotions, their issues and contexts. This research will draw from post colonial and third world feminist theories to critically analyse the literary world of these writers. If we look at the history of Gujarati literature, we can see that the contribution of Gujarati women writers is not as copious as that of the male writers but they have brought forth fresh perspectives to the field of literature. Their views and experiences were different from those of the male writers and as a result newer ways of expressions started appearing in their writings. Their major contribution was towards changing the image and representation of the woman subject in Gujarati literature. Although the women writers belonged to different backgrounds, their

literature unanimously voiced the urgent need for equality and reform in the condition of women. Through their women characters they voiced their inner urge for freedom and upliftment. The thesis would also overview – the contribution of women writers on the spectrum of Gujarati literature, their choice of themes and characters, their equation with the social, historical and political aspects of the time, their treatment of characters, especially women characters, their viewpoints reflected through their literature etc. To analyze the literary worlds of these writers for the conceptual feminist framework, I propose to draw from Post-colonial and Third World Feminist and Gender Theories.

As mentioned in my Research Proposal, the objectives of this research (also listed in my Synopsis) are as follows:

1. To draw a comparison of the select Gujarati texts with their English translations within the conceptual framework of Lefevere's theory of 'Translation as Rewriting'.
2. To examine the linguistic and cultural shift in translation and how the "four constraints", listed by Lefevere, play their part in the rewriting process.
3. To conduct a survey of the representation of women characters in Gujarati fiction by male and female writers to observe the paradigm shift in the woman's image with the arrival of women writers on the spectrum.
4. To examine how representations of the female gender have been translated or 'rewritten' when rendered into English along with scrutinizing whether any manipulation has occurred to make a different and more acceptable image of the women of Gujarat.
5. To inspect if any ambiguity has occurred while transforming the text into a completely different language and culture and how the translator has approached it.
6. To analyse the factors that have led to the selection of the original text and whether their translations have been successful in meeting the objectives of their originals and how far the translator's personal perceptions or prejudices have altered the meaning or image of a character in the rewriting process.

Section I of the 'Introduction' is titled, 'History and Development of Translation in Eastern and Western Contexts with Special Reference to Lefevere's Theory of "Translation as Rewriting"'. It briefly surveys the rise of translation and its emergence and development in the world particularly in context to India and the state of Gujarat. This section also discusses

in detail, the primary theory of Lefevere which has been applied to analyse the primary texts in this thesis.

Section II of the 'Introduction' titled, 'Locating Women in the Literary Traditions and Socio-Cultural Contexts of Gujarat', maps the political, social, economic and educational background of the region for better understanding of the peculiarities of the province and formation of its literature. Along with examining the general scenario, the section attempts to gauge the condition of women in the changing situations at political, social and economical fronts. And lastly, this Introduction performs a literature survey. It documents the literary traditions of the region along with the shifts and growth ushered in by stalwart writers, novelists and poets. It also attempts to provide an overview of the literature of Gujarat beginning from the early phase of its formation to its development from Early to Medieval and Post-Modern time periods. Folk and tribal literatures too have been considered, to arrive at an overall assessment of women's location in the literary scenario of Gujarat region and state.

Chapter One of the thesis conducts a comparative study of women's representations in Gujarati fiction by male and female writers of Gujarat; it also explores the ways in which the woman's image undergoes a transformation (or doesn't), in the works by women writers and the factors that contribute to the same. Chapters Two, Three and Four perform a comparative study of the primary texts in Gujarati with their English translations. Andre Lefevere's theory of translation is used to analyse the representation of women in original as well as translated fiction. Chapter Two deals with Kundanika Kapadia's novel *Saat Pagla Akashama* and its English rendering *Seven Steps in the Sky*, Chapter Three conducts an analysis of Ila Arab Mehta's novel *Vaad* with its translation *Fence* and Chapter Four deals with three texts – a short story collection by Himanshi Shelat *Andhari Galima Safed Tapka* and its translation *Frozen Whites in a Dark Alley*, and two anthologies of Gujarati short-stories translated into English – Amina Amin and Manju Verma's – *New Horizons in Women's Writing: Stories by Gujarati Women* and Rita Kothari's *Speech and Silence: Literary Journeys by Gujarati Women*.

## SECTION I

### **History and Development of Translation in Eastern and Western Contexts with Special Reference to Lefevere's Theory of 'Translation as Rewriting'**

This section attempts to map the history of Practical Translation and trace the inception of a new field of study called 'Translation Studies' along with the emergence of a phenomenal boom in Translation Industry in the later half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Eastern and Western perceptions of translation and the difference in their treatment to it; this difference of approach and perspective I shall examine here, along with the scenario of translation in the Indian context. For my research endeavour I have selected my primary texts from Gujarati literature along with their English translations and as a result I will also explore the condition of translation activity in case of Gujarat and Gujarati literature. My research and analysis of Gujarati fiction in English translation employs the translation theory and framework of Andre Lefevere. His concept of 'Translation as Rewriting' and his notion of the four constraints, namely – Ideology, Poetics, Patronage and Universe of Discourse – has been my yardstick while analyzing the select Gujarati texts by women writers with their English rendering (in chapter two, three and four), I will therefore perform here, in detail, a discussion of his translation theory. Finally, I will discuss the scope of translation activity in 21<sup>st</sup> century and many years to come with reference to India and the world.

The commencement of translation activity globally is closely associated with the emergence and advancement of multiple languages and cultures. The earlier perception regarding translation as purely linguistic activity has been replaced by socio-cultural phenomenon and later the concept of 'translation as a creative act' in form of 'Transcreation' (Lal 34) has emerged with the changing time. During nineteenth century a new fascinating discipline known as 'Translation Studies' emerged which interacted with disciplines from humanities and liberal arts and evolved into a major branch of Comparative Studies. The name of the discipline has been suggested by Andre Lefevere in 1978 and all the issues related to translation started to be addressed under one roof. Development of various languages and translation activities have occurred concurrently where after a prolonged period of being considered as 'secondary activity', translation has proved itself to be a creative act, liberating itself from the narrow notion which simply states it as "...the rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language (TL)" (Bassnett11). The discipline has established its worth and has bestowed much prestige on the translator who endeavours to

create a new text after careful interpretation which can be appealing to the readers unfamiliar with the original language and culture.

The prejudice against translation as a subservient activity is the outcome of the monotheistic and monolingual Western civilization which strongly considers the authority of the author as sacred and emphasis on the notion of the ‘originality’ of the text as the Western view of translation has always been language-centric. In views of A. K. Singh, “Most of the myths prevalent in translation studies have led to disorientation of Translation Studies (TS). The Western view of TS is language-centric. Major thinkers like Roman Jakobson considered translation in terms of language as ‘intralingual’, ‘interlingual’ and ‘intersemiotic’. So did Popovik who considered translation in terms of four types of equivalence as linguistic equivalence, paradigmatic equivalence, stylistic equivalence, and textual equivalence. Translation is an act of communication, and in communication, the medium is at times considered more significant. However, in reality, meaning is more important than medium. Medium is not the end, the meaning is. In that case the types of translation would shift from language-centric to meaning-centric...” (10)

### **Early Scenario of Translation in India**

India is a unique sight of a mosaic of plurality of languages and cultures which has survived the test of time over centuries. India comprises the strongest linguistic diversity in the world but against the general assumption such multilingualism does not generally contribute to translation activity. Translation is a need of monolingual countries while in India where a majority of the population is either bilingual or trilingual, translation is part of everyday routine without any self-consciousness attached to it. It is noteworthy that during ancient times the recorded languages were smaller in number namely Sanskrit, Prakrit and later Pali (which spread with the rise of Buddhism in India). It is only after Sanskrit lost its royal patronage giving way to Prakrit – the more natural form of the language out of which all modern Indian languages (bhashas) derived, that the scope for translation arose.

There was a dearth of translation activity in India during the many centuries of foreign invasion. During the five hundred years of Muslim dynasty (with the exception of Dara Shikoh who translated some *Upanishads* into Persian) there is no record of any Arabic or Persian text getting translated in Indian vernaculars. During the ancient period (from 1500

BCE up to 1800 CE) we can hardly find any evidence of translation activities taking place amongst Indian languages or any foreign text getting transferred to Indian vernaculars. The possible reason for this prolonged history of non-translation could be, hypothetically speaking, a sense of self-sufficiency and superiority of the Indian elite classes. In words of Harish Trivedi, “The traffic in translation was never thick throughout the pre-modern period in India, i.e., right up to the impact of the West in the eighteenth century, and whatever little translation there was, was all in one direction, from the Indian languages out” (105).

With the changing times, many *bhashas* emerged and Sanskrit language started losing its royal status and patronage. During the Medieval Bhakti movement free adaptations rather than faithful translations of the sacred scriptures began flowing into these *bhashas* which helped liberate the scriptures from the monopoly of Brahmin community and their easy availability to the masses. The *bhashas* simultaneously enriched with the free rendering of these sacred texts along with the works of many famous playwrights like Kalidasa and these adaptations of Sanskrit and Prakrit texts helped in the evolution of the modern Indian languages. Talking of the impact of these translational activities K. Ayyappa Panikar says, “These languages gave a fresh life, a renewed relevance, a meaningful re-incarnation, to the ancient classics; and these classics in their turn provided substance and style to new languages...These versions of the old classics in medieval Indian languages...were not just literal translations, but they did maintain and project the local ethos and image. As a result, these new versions became the classics of the new literatures, and the reading public did not look upon them as translations...” (xxvi- xxvii)

In India translation activity has been taking place since time immemorial without any self-consciousness, without any notions of loss, finding proper linguistic equivalence, faithful translation, word-to-word or sense-to-sense translation and there was a kind of free adaptation taking place without the translator ever feeling the burden of the heavy task of transferring a text from one linguistic and cultural background (SL) to another (TL). The line between ‘original’ and ‘translation’ is quite blur in Indian literary tradition as unlike the Western monolingual literary tradition, we had no fear of the ‘other’. Expressing his views in this regard, K. Sachidanandan says, “Our literature...is founded on translations since the various Ramayanas, Mahabharatas and Bhagavatas in different languages including the Tribal versions...have been the very foundations of our rich literatures...The Ramayanas of Pampa, Kamban, Ezhuthachan, Mola, Premananda, Ekanatha, Balarama Dasa, Tulsi, Kritibas

or Madhav Kandali, for example, were taken to be neither translations nor adaptations, but original works as they were the most brilliant manifestations of the genius of the respective languages” (5).

The height of the unconscious efforts of translation can be seen where the line between the original and its rendering totally vanishes at times and often it has been noted that the translation gains more popularity than the original. For instance, *Ramacharitmanas* of Tulsidas composed in 1573-75 has superseded the original epic the *Ramayana* composed by Valmiki and gained more popularity. Later with the arrival of the British and introduction of English which served as a common link and filter amongst various Indian languages, we became more aware of our diverse cultural and linguistic heritage along with our regional literature and translation activities. Sukanta Chaudhuri shares her views in the same line, “A multilingual society obviously finds the mechanical task of translation easier – not only for languages within its ambit but, owing to the verbal faculties fostered, others as well” (73). For a country like India with its multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism, translation becomes a vehicle to negotiate socio-linguistic divergences and point out the unique harmony that underlies them.

A noted poet and translator P. Lal introduced the term ‘Transcreation’ pointing out the amount of creative talent invested in the act of translation particularly in the matter of the rendering of the scriptures. In India the free adaptations of the scriptures have been taking place for the past many centuries – initially only orally (in form of storytelling, drama performances during festivals, as well as recitations by the bards; later in written forms – translations from Sanskrit to regional languages) and now at multiple levels – movies, dance and musical performances, animations etc. thus opening up many possibilities of creative transformation. The creative liberty of translators during various ages has been appreciated turning the whole endeavour into ‘Transcreation’. There has been a dearth of translation theory in India and only recently we have realized it with the development of the discipline of ‘Translation Studies’ and the introduction of various Western translation theories as a result. Throwing light on the probable reasons for the same Sujit Mukherjee says, “What we don’t yet have in India is a theory...of translation. This may be because,...we have been practicing translation for so many years...that we forgot to stop and theorise” (36).

The Western theory of translation was introduced quite later and with that the translator seems to get more aware of her translation endeavour turning the whole thing into

an irksome exercise. Translation has created an undesired fear and suspicion of ‘the other’ – foreign culture in the West due to their single dominant literary tradition. In views of Indra Nath Choudhuri, “The major difference between translation practice in the West and in India is that in the West translation is considered a complicated linguistic and literary act, while in India it is an inevitable way of life. In the West, translation has been subjected to scrutiny from a variety of perspectives, such as, Structuralism (Jakobson), Deconstruction (Derrida), Psycho-analysis (Andrew Benjamin) Gender (Lori Chamberlain) and the post-colonial discourse (Lawrence Venuti). In contrast, in India the focus has been more on the pragmatic aspects of translation” (30).

In India linguistic transfers across many languages have been practiced for centuries even when there is a dearth of theoretical guideline and surprisingly the lack of theoretical framework has not affected the praxis of translation in the least. We do come across some scattered references advocated by noted Sanskrit scholars like Rajasekhara – an expert of Sanskrit and Prakrit who mentioned the notion of *haran* (abduction) with reference to poetry, word and meaning (as the Western notion of plagiarism) in his book *Kavyamimansa*. Other Indian terms used for the Western term ‘translation’ – *chhaya* (shadow), *anuvad* (saying or repeating after in a way of explanation), *rupantar* (change into another form), *bhashantar* (change into another language), *tarjuman* etc. are not the exact synonyms and they all reflect the paradigms of the language and cultural traditions they belong to.

### **Translation scenario during Colonial Period**

During colonial period a lot of exchange occurred between Indian languages (mostly Sanskrit) and English. Translations from Sanskrit into English began in the 1770s and ‘80s and a lot of Indian philosophy, scriptures and literary theory got translated into English. For the British translation was an act of understanding and discovering the history, culture and the social contexts of the land they intended to rule. Macaulay’s policy was designed to produce interpreters or translators to help them rule their subjects better and to spread Western literature resulting into the translation of a large amount of English literature into different Indian languages in a manner and quantity unlike any other foreign literature so far. The British promoted translation activity only from English into Indian regional languages to establish the superiority of their literature and culture and neglected the translations among Indian languages as part of their larger political aim of ‘divide and rule’ still translation amongst vernacular began simultaneously with the translation from English. Many

multilingual translators began the translation endeavour from English into Indian vernaculars but at the same time, they even-handedly began translating Sanskrit texts into Indian languages, especially their mother tongues. Translation in India may have begun under the influence of colonialism but it soon turned out to be a mutual exchange between Indian languages. The freedom movement also played a major role in promoting the concept of unity among Indians from diverse parts and communities and generated substantial translation activity resulting into the translation of many European texts of science, politics, literature and philosophy into Sanskrit and other Indian *bhashas*.

### **Contemporary translation scenario in India**

In the present day many Indian English and regional writers are challenging the conventional notions of translation theory (mostly Western) and their concepts of equivalence, ideas of loss and gain, fidelity to the source, authenticity through their creative skills and are setting a new trend with their conscious use of certain typical Indian words representing the particular culture the text is based in. They are redefining translation theory with their efforts to bring some of the neglected languages (at times dialects) and culture and their literary heterodoxy to the lime light by figuring out ways to deal with them in their rendering into other Indian or European languages and in the process, they aim to generate an Indian theory of translation to deal with the specific issues of translating Indian languages and dialects.

In nineteenth and early twentieth century translation activity in India took a new direction with the increase of translation from and into English language which gradually emerged as a global language. A lot of regional literature was translated into English which in return bestowed fame and recognition to the writer and her literary efforts at not only national but international platforms. On the other hand, many potential writers and their works remain unnoticed and unacknowledged as they are not carried forward in English. This trend has formed hegemony of English language and created an illusion that only the literature available in English is of merit and the remaining is lacking in literary standards and creativity. In his comments in his famous text *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literature*, Aijaz Ahmad writes, “...only the literary document produced in English is a national document; all else is regional, hence minor and forgettable, so that English emerges in this imagination, not as one of the Indian languages, which it undoubtedly is, but as the language of national integration and bourgeois civility” (75).

The English language makes the regional text look more cosmopolitan and elite as a true and authentic representation of the regional culture. It also affects the canonization process. In late nineteenth century there has been a tremendous rise in Indian regional literatures being translated into English and perceived economic feasibility. The emergence of the English translation industry has manifested some changes in the publishing and marketing sections with an upsurge of events like book launches, promotions, book reading by the author, book review etc. bringing to limelight many interesting factors related to the writing and translation of the book and author's and translator's personal lives and experiences. But at the same time, we must not neglect the other, darker side, which is highlighted by Geetanjali Shree, a famous Hindi writer in the following words, "The attempt is to capture the market as widely as possible. But [that] hasn't led necessarily to better translations. Sometimes it is only quicker translations! A readership is forming for translations, but it is still haphazard and abysmal compared to English originals" (Gupta).

Often the quality of the translated work is compromised for the easy flow of money for the publishing industry creating a false notion of popularity of some writers and texts. Moreover, the translation of texts from regional Indian literatures into other Indian languages has been neglected all together, still many institutes, at state and national levels, have taken up this mammoth task to promote regional translations. The efforts of the Sahitya Akademi and the National Book Trust in this sense are remarkable and they must receive their due credit.

### **Case of Gujarat**

Gujarati literature too has made its unique contribution to the translation enterprise. Translation activity has been an integral part of the literary tradition of Gujarat which has received translations from many European languages (especially English) along with a few Indian languages (Sanskrit and a lot of Bengali literature has been translated in Gujarati) influencing the style and thematic aspects of the literature composed in Gujarati. It is quite surprising to find plenty of Bengali works available in Gujarati translation especially the works of Saratchandra Chatterjee (1876-1938) translated in Gujarati by many invisible translators. Rita Kothari comments on this as following, "For instance, in Gujarati...about 33 novels by Saratchandra exist in an array of 'official' and 'unofficial' translations and have formed the staple diet of at least two generations in Gujarat. Many writers claim to have been deeply 'inspired' by Saratchandra's characterization. Some readers managed to read versions

that made him appear to be a Gujarati novelist; what mystified these die-hard vegetarian readers was how a Gujarati novel could have a fish-eating woman” (265)! Many Gujarati authors (Nagindas Parekh, Raman Soni etc.) were well versed in Bengali and have indulged into translation activities.

However, for a very long time Gujarat has been in the position of recipient to other languages especially Sanskrit, English and Bengali. To quote Rita Kothari again, “The difference between what has gone out of Gujarat into other languages (including English) and what has come into the Gujarati language from outside sources is staggering...approximately thousand works from Indian and some European languages exist in Gujarati translation...In contrast, very little from Gujarati literature has made inroads into other languages, particularly English” (138).

The dearth of translation from Gujarati into other languages could be the result of the general apathy of the people of the state towards literary and translation activity due to their focus on commercial activities which hardly required them to acquire any literary skills. In the last few years, it has become a matter of serious concern for writers and critics of Gujarati literature that some of this literature should be available to the audiences outside Gujarat. When compared with the other languages like Tamil, Malayalam or Bengali, Gujarat has a meagre quantity of Gujarati texts translated into English. Also, as compared to women writers, male writers on the Gujarati literary scene have tended to monopolise the translation industry and continue to hold positions of privilege. In the past few decades, however, the scenario has changed and much Gujarati literature has started appearing in English translation. Many academicians (especially English teachers) have been involved with this activity of rendering Gujarati texts into English either on their own accord or as part of a larger translation projects funded by either UGC or Universities. Translation has become a very popular subject of research in Post-colonial period with the rise of many doctoral and research works based on this field, often resulting in the translation of Gujarati texts into English or other Indian languages. With the emergence of many literary journals publishing translation works of regional writers into English, the activity has been accelerated resulting into many individual or collective translation endeavours.

## **Lefevere's theory of 'Translation as Rewriting'**

During 1990s Andre Lefevere came up with a unique approach of translation which focuses on disparity between the original text and its translation instead of the resemblances, unlike majority of the theories, resulting into the shift in focus from the earlier purely linguistic approach to socio-cultural context in translation. In the trend setting text *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, Lefevere introduces his concept of "translation is a rewriting of an original text." According to him

All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulation processes of literature are exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live.

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Lefevere's theory ventures to unfetter the translation activity from the earlier restricted approaches which focused more on the fidelity and faithfulness on the part of the translator who hardly received her due credit for her creative abilities implied while rendering a text from SL to TL and appeals to commemorate the various interpretations offered by the translator. He argues that as the translated text is a processed text, the distortion on the part of the translator and the linguistic incongruity between source and target language can be accepted. He explained how translation or rewriting manipulates the literary text but at the same time it attributes an afterlife to the original text and author during the various periods which otherwise would not have been possible making it accessible to larger number of people. According to Lefevere, rewriters create the images of a writer, work, period, genre, sometimes even a whole literature. He also stresses that, "...a writer's work gains exposure and achieves influence mainly through misunderstanding and misconceptions created by rewriters (Lefevere "Mother" 234).

In Lefevere's opinions the original text and the target language to render it into are selected to fulfil certain purposes which the translator is supposed to carry out. According to him, "...translation is produced on the basis of an original text with the intention of adapting the original to a certain ideology or poetics of a different audience, and it is an activity performed under constraints of patronage, poetics and ideology initiated by the target systems, as such it is an act of *rewriting* of an original text to conform to certain purposes instituted by the receiving system" (Lefevere "Translation" vii).

These constraints, at times, become the determining factors in the process of translation and they are not absolute but are open to change according to the changing demands of the time and society. As far as the translator is concerned, she has the freedom to either stay within the parameters or move beyond the boundaries of these constraints. Reflecting on the impact of these constraints Lefevere further adds, "Translation is another type of rewriting...motivated by the ideology and poetics of people who hold some kind of power, or wish to use rewriting to gain power in the target culture...The ideology of a given place and time in which the rewriting occurs combines with the dominant poetological conceptions to determine the image of a work but also of a writer, a genre, a whole period etc." (Lefevere "Translation" ix).

They also play vital role in the formation of literary system and culture. Translation, in Lefevere's views, directly influences this process as, "Translations have been made with the intention of influencing the development of a culture... Translations have been made with the intention of influencing the development of a literature, and this intention is reflected on the level of each of the four constraints under which translators operate" (Lefevere "Translation/History" 8).

Andre Lefevere views translation as refraction and a radical rewriting which involves manipulation at many levels of choices made by the translator due to a number of factors when she adapts the select text in accordance to the dominant systems of patronage, poetics and ideology. In his views, "Translation, then, is the visible sign of the openness of the literary system. Of a specific literary system, it opens the way to what can be called both subversion and transformation, depending on where the guardians of the dominant poetics, the dominant ideology stand" (Lefevere "Why" 237)!

## **The Four Constraint Theory**

### **1. Ideology :**

Ideology is the first constraint mentioned by Lefevere which represents set of ideas or a body of beliefs pertaining to economic and political theory of a given society. As per Lefevere's opinion ideology reflects the prevailing concept of how a society should function and this constraint can become a great hurdle during the translation process. Ideology is – “the grillwork of form, convention and belief which orders our actions” (Jameson 107). Ideology is generally connected with and imposed by the constraint of Patrons – a person or institute which commission and publish translations.

### **2. Poetics :**

The second constraint Lefevere mentions is that of Poetics which is a kind of code of behaviour. In his opinion Poetics, “...consists of both an inventory component (genre, certain symbols, characters, prototypical situations) and a “functional” component, an idea of how literature has to, or may be allowed to, function in society” (Lefevere “Mother” 236).

A poetics is never supreme and tends to change over the years yet it tries to establish itself as absolute at a given point of time. Translators try to recast the original as per the poetics of the dominant culture to ensure its success in TL system and even tries to establish a new poetics through rewriting. Poetics play a pivotal role in the creation of literary canon by deciding which literary works and writers impound more closely to the accepted poetics – in original and in rewriting will be accepted in a given system. The translators need to consider the prevailing poetics while deciding – first the work to be considered for rewriting and second while selecting his/her translation strategies simply to make certain that the translation will actually be read.

### **3. Patronage :**

Patronage is a kind of authoritarian body which controls the ideology of the translator and the general poetics and seeks to find a balance between literary and social system. According to Lefevere Patronage means, “...something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature” (Lefevere “Translation” 15).

Patrons can directly influence the publication of a translated work and in case the original work does not fall in line with the accepted standards of the receiving culture, they can prevent the translation process as they are the deciding factors of what should be acceptable in the receptive socio-cultural system. Lefevere has rightly pointed out, “The patron is the link between the translator’s text and the audience the translator wants to reach. If translators do not stay within the perimeters of the acceptable as defined by the patron (an absolute monarch, for instance, but also a publisher’s editor), the chances are that their translation will either not reach the audience they want it to reach or that it will, at best, reach that audience in a circuitous manner” (Lefevere “Translation/History” 6-7).

In Lefevere’s opinion patrons make efforts to strike a balance between literary system and other systems which form a society and culture of the current time and they force the writers and the translators to work within the parameters established by them to justify their absolute power. Also, just like poetics, patronage can also amend with time when a new powerful source of patronage emerges with the changing time and social values. The literary system directly reflects the change of patronage by a number of rewritings published (sometimes the same book is rewritten a number of times with the change in the dominant poetics or patronage) (Lefevere “Translation” 14-15).

Patronage is basically consisting of three elements according to Lefevere – ideology, economic component and status. The ideology effects “the choice and development of both form and subject matter” (Lefevere “Translation” 13) of both the original and translation. The patrons by ensuring the economic stability in form of pension, royalty of the writers and rewriters take care of the economic factor. The status of the original writer and that of translator is also considered by the patrons before promoting or rejecting any text or author.

#### **4. Universe of Discourse :**

The final constraint operating within the system is called ‘Universe of Discourse’ and defining it Lefevere says, “...certain objects, customs, and beliefs thought unacceptable in their own culture. It is heavily influenced by the status of the original, the self-image of the culture that text is translated into, the types of texts deemed acceptable in that culture, the levels of diction deemed acceptable in it, the intended audience, and the “cultural scripts” that audience is used to or willing to accept” (Lefevere “Translation” 66). By ‘cultural script’

what Lefevere implies is the accepted behavioural pattern expected by people in certain culture.

The translator requires to exhibit the highest form of creativity while dealing with this constraint. He/she might need to take much liberty while dealing with the pragmatic side of the language which reflects the source culture. This aspect is quite taxing for the translator as h/she needs to “naturalize” the different culture, to make it conform more to what the reader of the translation is used to...” (Lefevere “Mother” 237)

The translator has to choose between being absolutely faithful where the linguistic expressions do not diverge and where they do, use his/her creative ability to fill the gap with an equivalent expression available in the target culture. A noble expression in one language may sound base in another, an expression may seem harmonious in one language while carried to another may sound trenchant and a skilful translator needs to find a balance by trying to use different strategies like – sometimes imitating the original expression while on the other by introducing foreign phrase or figures of speech (but only after making sure that they do not deviate too much from the general customs acceptable by native culture). Through such exercise the translator can do great service to his nation by enriching its language. In Lefevere’s opinion, “...if translators want to really translate items belonging to the original’s Universe of Discourse that do not exist in their own, they will have to “coin new expressions,” as Cicero advised. By doing so, translators have, over the centuries, enriched their native languages not only with new vocabulary but also, in Pliny’s words, with an “abundance of stylistic figures and resources” (Lefevere “Translation/History” 46).

### **Concluding Remarks**

To conclude this section I can say that translation activity has been a window to world literature and has time and again proved its worth as a creative endeavour where a translator strives to create an entirely novel text for the TL readers with the help of her creative ability of making choices at various levels like linguistic, stylistic, pragmatic and deals with various challenges in form of finding appropriate equivalence, deal with culture specific expressions and most importantly to make the SL text which belongs to a different language and culture altogether appealing to the readers of a different cultural system. In case of a country like India with its ancient history and civilization, languages and dialects, various cultures and rituals associated with various religions, castes and sub-castes, the task becomes even more

taxing. Translation has been a part of the literary history of the country and later with many foreign invasions and with changing time, the activity diverted its roots from indigenous languages to the newly formed *bhashas* to many European languages with English taking the front seat in the Post-modern era almost turning it into a vehicle to represent the 'Indian' literature not only to the world but even to modern day Indians.

Translation theory in India has faced general neglect, and yet, it has never created any hindrance in the praxis of this activity. Later with the introduction of Western translation theory, the consciousness has built up in India regarding the lack of the theory part and many efforts are being made to develop translation theory alongside the practice of translation. In the particular case of Gujarat, the translation activity was taking place slowly at initial level due to many cultural factors but it has picked up pace only recently with an assurance of representing Gujarati literature at the international level.

Different theories of translation have emerged since its inception and the focal point of these theories has always been on the dissimilarities between the SL and the TL text. In such situation, Andre Lefevere and his approach of 'Translation as Rewriting of the Original Text' shift our attention towards celebrating the differences between the original and its translation thus encouraging us to analyse rather than criticise the factors responsible for a better understanding of the process. This also helps sharpen our creative faculty for translation. He, along with this concept, points at the determining factors which he calls 'constraints' namely – ideology, poetics, patronage and Universe of Discourse – and explains in detail each constraint in some of his famous texts and essays. His theory has been a turning point and has given a new direction to the newly emerged and rapidly developing discipline of 'Translation Studies'. From here we shall proceed to the next section which reviews the cultural, literary and political history of Gujarat which has provided context to the literature of Gujarat and its women from the twelfth to twenty first century.

## **SECTION II**

### **Locating 'Women' in the Literary Traditions and Socio-Cultural Contexts of Gujarat**

Section II attempts to analyse and map the cultural and literary traditions of Gujarat from socio-historical, anthropological perspective since literature as an agency contributes

towards the formation and augmentation of a society. I have also surveyed the political, social, economic and educational background of the region for better understanding of the peculiarities of the province and formation of its literature. Along with the general scenario, my research focuses on the condition of women in the changing situations at political, social and economical fronts. This investigation helped me to uncover the actual life situation of the women of Gujarat through various stages of development and what role they played in degrading or upgrading their position in society and family. A detailed study of the literature of Gujarat beginning from the early phase of its formation to its development from Early to Medieval and Post-Modern time periods has been attempted. I have also taken into consideration the folk and tribal literature for an overall outlook of the literary scenario of the state.

### **The Political Background**

#### **(i) Initial Phase of Formation (5<sup>th</sup> century onwards)**

The region of Gujarat, as recorded by Munshi, was earlier known as ‘Gurjaratra’ or ‘Gurjaratra Bhoomi’ – the land of the ‘Gurjar’ (1) tribe which apparently set foot in India in either later part of fifth century or earlier part of sixth century from the Punjab region and settled first in Rajasthan, spreading to different parts of Saurashtra and later to the vicinity near Narmada river. Kanhaiyalal Munshi describes the peculiarities of the region in the following words, “Protected by the sea on the west, by the sands of Kaccha and Rajputana on the north, the Aravalli, the plateau of Malva, the Vindhya, the Satapudra and the Sahya Ghats on the east and south, its rich alluvial soil has reared a race of men and women, soft and luxury loving and yet possessing qualities which maritime activities generally foster and stimulate namely a spirit of enterprise, practical wisdom, catholicity of taste and social flexibility” (viii, ix).

The region has received the best of nature and culture and has a rich heritage of history, civilization and literature to earn a respectable position in India and in the world. But it failed to structure as one political unit for a very long time and witnessed many political, social and economical cataclysms since very early period of its formation at the hands of various rulers, dynasties and invaders. As Dr. M. R. Majumdar rightly remarks, “...the exact boundaries of these provinces were, however, uncertain and they varied greatly during the course of history” (11-12).

The dwellers of the region were subjected to strains of war and pillage frequently due to the struggle of different rulers – the Mughals, the Marathas etc. to establish overall ascendancy. Gujarat was also a cluster of a number of small princedoms and dynasties even during the powerful reign of Hindu or Muslim rules pre and post-British rule.

## **(ii) Phase of Anarchy and Political Upheaval**

During the Solanki and Waghela period, the province experienced harmony and progress, businesses developed, education and literary activities speeded up with increase in its prosperity and in its aesthetic value with the construction of beautiful architectures and spread of Jainism. The Jains had arrived from Rajasthan and Magadhadesh where they were denied royal patronage. Gujarat offered better hospitality to them, and soon became their homeland.

The same region witnessed chaos for next hundred years to come as it turned into a battlefield for power play. When Alaudin Khilji conquered Patan after defeating Karan Waghela, the last Hindu king of Gujarat, Muslim rule was established in A. D. 1297 and a large number of Hindu population was forced to migrate due to the stalking of the Muslim dogmatists. Govardhanram has rightly called this time 'BhramanYug' (Rawal 13) (Age of Migration). During this period, Gujarat received no mercy from its invaders – its shrines were defiled, its wealth plundered and women dishonoured along with forceful conversion of the faith of people. A large part of population which had wandered from place to place in vain search of security and settled elsewhere started their life in normal course by factionalising themselves into castes and *panchayat* and started their literary activities. With the weakening of Mughal reign, the Marathas tried to establish their rules and Gujarat once again suffered through the frequent attacks and looting by the Marathas and the general disorder increased due to the frequent change in rulers leading to the rise of the sense of uncertainty in people.

In these contexts of tyranny and trauma, the condition of women was pitiable and the liberty they used to enjoy in settled establishment in society earlier was snatched away by frequent power change and migrations. Their security became a matter of high concern for people who obstructed their freedom behind the fortifications of caste, *panchayat* and religion. These factors were also responsible for downgrading their position in the society and within family. The caste system became more and more rigid along with narrowing the

hold of the *panchayat* and stringent religious rules as people used these organisations as protective shields to fight and sustain against the prevailing foreign attacks.

During the early phase, literature composed in Gujarat was generally a repetition of episodes from scriptures and was highly wanting in novelty of style and themes. Later with the arrival of Jains, literature activity increased with the compositions created by Jain monks who used it as a tool to spread their religious doctrines. This literature was artistic in nature and was mostly created for the purpose of entertainment as well as to propagate their religion. Even when Gujarat was suffering a great political setback and facing a phase of anarchy, these monks continued their literary activities in the underground shelter houses which also helped in the perseverance of much of the literature of that time. They experimented and developed many literary genres like biographies of famous rulers popularly known as ‘charitas’ (*Vasudevacarita* is the first biography composed by a Jain teacher in B. C. 320), ‘dharmakathas’ (religious stories), Jain versions of the Ramayana (*Paumacariyam* by Vimala in A. C. 300), books of history etc.

### **(iii) Colonial Period – Early Phase (From 1818 onwards)**

After a long phase of disarray Gujarat experienced relief, peace and order with the establishment of the British rule in 1818. The dawn of British rule looked promising to bring political stability in Gujarat. Since ancient times Gujarat has been the most urbanized region of the country due to its long undisturbed coastline which helped in building contact with the outer world and developed trades like textile, jewellery, handicraft, ship making etc. Certain towns like Porbunder, Veraval, Mangrol and later Bharuch and Surat emerged as important ports and trading centres which helped to develop international trade and many trading communities like the Baniyas, Muslim as well as Parsee emerged as a result. This international intercourse of Gujarat had given rise to the well-to-do middle class and its multi-ethnic spirit. The exuberant and practical minded people of the state considered the arrival of the British as an assertion of progress and liberation. People gradually changed their attitude and became more absorbent to suit the demand of the changing time and the resentment of caste inequality and religious orthodoxy either waned or became milder with time.

Though the caste system along with the old system of trade still had a powerful hold over the society, the amendment occurred following the arrival of the British, forced the old

and new systems to co-exist simultaneously. The traditional social and political set up was affected by the introduction of new policies by the British. In earlier time, the customs had an upper hand and an individual was helpless without any choice at social, professional and personal levels. Occupations were pre-determined by one's caste in old traditional society wherein under the British rule, various job opportunities sprang up and the criterion for the selection were altered taking into consideration the skills, education and the general potential of the person regardless of the caste s/he belongs to. The British commenced the concept of modern education through English medium educational institutions in India and through them they claimed to refine the natives from their barbarism by introducing them to the world of Western philosophy, science and civilization. The ultimate aim of the British in introducing English medium education was mentioned in the famous Minutes by Lord Macaulay who preferred English as a medium of education over Arabic or Sanskrit. He noted that through English education they could create – “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect...” (para. 34) and who could help the Empire to control the masses, and fill up various jobs in administration. Their ultimate motive was to raise a class of faithful Indians who would support the British rule.

In pre-British era the education was imparted in traditional way. In Gujarat education was a private affair and many rulers, during the course of their reign, tried to patronise it through grants and funds. Education was firmly believed to be sacred act and only higher caste person having pure and chaste demeanour like the Brahmin can indulge into it. As a result the Brahmins had monopoly over the field of education, knowledge and intelligence. Uma Chakravarti rightly observes, “This monopoly helped them to gain control of social production in the new territories being incorporated into a particular social formation” (“Gendering” 17).

The education system was directly controlled by religious institutions and it was theological in nature with an intention of providing moral backup as well as elementary training to special groups for vocational purposes. Women were denied any access to education initially due to restricted social norms. Despite this fact, women actively participated in the composition and performances of oral folk literature like garba, garbi, rasada, lagnageeto, lullaby etc. These genres are directly connected with day to day life and reflected the culture and traditions of contemporary life. Due to the anonymity of the authors of majority of folk literature, these songs composed by women remained undocumented for a

long period. Later with the changing time, they were recorded in a number of volumes and anthologies (but without any uniformity) and published specially in Post-modern period, becoming easily available for reference. One of the most famous anthologies is edited by Jhaverchand Meghani titled *Sorthi Lokgitao* (1931) which contains folk songs of Saurashtra region. Other collections are *Radhiyadi Raat* (2007) edited by Meghani, *Amispandan* (2004) edited by Pravinchandra Dave, *Parivarik Preet: Aapdu Lokgeet* (2014) by Dr. Indu Patel, *Garba - Lokgeet Sangrah* (2014) by Natvar Patel and others.

Eighteenth century witnessed the rise of an era based on reasoning and radical reform activities taking place in social, political and literary fields known as the Reform Period in Gujarat. The religious authorities gradually started losing their clasp due to the British policy which recognized law as the supreme regulative system and as a result many fundamental laws were sanctioned during this period – the Sati Regulation of 1829, the Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850, the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1850, and the Act to Prevent Infanticide of 1870 – opening up possibilities of social and religious reform. The British established law as a supreme rule irrespective of the caste or religion which created quite a stir in the conventional social and religious set up. In Gujarat many incidents of religious upheaval occurred and the well-known Maharaj Libel Case was the evidence of it where the high Vaishnav Priest Jadunathji Maharaj was challenged by reformists like Karsondas Moolji, Narmad etc. who wanted to expose his hypocrisy and he was forced to appear in court. A continuous struggle occurred between the new found legal system and the traditional caste system.

#### **(iv) Signs of Conflict against British Rule**

Under the disguise of amity, progress and liberalization, the British tried to influence the natives and uproot the very foundation of its society and culture. For example, the ryotwari system introduced by the British promoted private property rights over the traditional joint property system, the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 turned peasants into tenants by snatching away their cultivation rights, the new revenue system was based on the collection in cash, unlike the earlier paying in kind, forced them to secure cash at any rate exposing them to the greed of the local landlords. The condition of the farmers, as a result, deteriorated leading to the gradual decline of their livelihood. Many a times they were forced to abandon their native village and migrate to nearby town to be wage labourers and lead a miserable life of poverty. The indigenous textile industry together with many small handicraft

trades shattered and along with peasants a number of weavers and artisans found themselves jobless. This situation had special repercussion on the lives of women as they were exceptionally involved in the textile, handicraft industries and farming. Commenting on the degrading position of women Jayita Sengupta says, “With their vitality shrivelling up under such an oppressive system, their songs and stories also dried up. They were shunted back to their household grind and were subject to the triple-fold oppressive system – the British patriarchal order, the Brahmanical patriarchal order and the oppressive patriarchal order of the household. As women began to be absorbed into the domestic grind they were also deprived of rights to education and articulation” (128). This new revenue system altered the social and economical relationships within the customary village community.

Even the various job opportunities which emerged for the natives irrespective of caste or religion seemed promising initially but they benefited only select sections of the society – the upper sections due to their privileged positions and an open access to education. The lower caste people were denied education in the traditional social set up and when educational and job opportunities were presented, they found it quite inappropriate for their traditional occupations. As a result, a monopoly was created by certain castes into government services and higher positions.

The existence of the British presented yet another conflict between the Eastern and the Western way of thinking and life style. The gulf between the educated city dwellers and illiterate rural sections increased as a result. Unlike the traditional times, the focus shifted from family to individual, the status of an individual was not dependent on his birth anymore but on his ability to obtain wealth and property. The new emerging intellectual class nourished on the Western philosophy through English education and literature was enamoured by Western ideology and its materialism – its scientific advancements, industrial revolution, idea of democracy and liberty along with its rational thought. The British Legal system started controlling all the other sections. All these led to a drastic change in the life style and perceptions of educated people who clearly preferred the modern Western dynamic. They preferred service over agriculture, modern clothing over traditional ethnic wears, use of modern gadgets and furniture. Even their food pattern changed.

These sweeping alterations in routine way of life pose one more challenge for women that is to mould themselves according to the new Westernized habits and life style. For men the acceptance of the new way of life was more convenient due to their access to education,

contact with British and professional reasons. But for women, who had rarely stepped out of their houses or had very little access to education, the arising expectations were a cultural shock. The change in clothing style, food habits, general etiquette in public – all these were quite unnatural and they found it difficult to adjust themselves in the altered circumstances. Parth Chatterjee has noted the changing reality of the outer world under the British rule for men and how it interfered and altered the lives of women inside the home hinting at a new form of patriarchal exploitation in the following words,

The need to adjust to the new conditions outside the home had forced upon men a whole series of changes in their dress, food habits, religious observances and social relations. Each of these capitulations now had to be compensated by an assertion of spiritual purity on the part of women. They must not eat, drink or smoke in the same way as men; they must continue the observance of religious rituals which men were finding difficult to carry out; they must maintain the cohesiveness of family life and solidarity with the kin to which men could not now devote much attention. The new patriarchy advocated by nationalism conferred upon women the honour of a new social responsibility and by associating the task of ‘female emancipation’ with the historical goal of sovereign nationhood, bound them to a new, and yet entirely legitimate, subordination. (248)

For a lower class woman, these things were of little concern but for women belonging to middle-class or well-to-do families these mannerisms were a must, binding them into one more grasp of grooming themselves to be socially accepted. Even highly educated men prefer intellectual and cultured women as their life partners and in the scarcity of such opportunities where a woman can gain higher education or spruce her personality, the gulf between the social expectations of women and their real situations increased pushing them into deep state of depression. In words of Anupama Rao, “Women (especially women from the middle-classes) came to be embodied with a set of ‘traditional’ expectations about good behavior, respectability, and comportment that they carried within them, which allowed them to negotiate the tortuous thickets of the public world. This ‘compact’ between the nation and its men about the role of women in public life achieved during the early 20th century, came at the cost of

excluding a whole set of issues from the agenda of social reform, and it allowed some women to be modern at the expense of others” (Rao).

Gujarati literature also bears witness to such condition of women and voices their internal struggle to match up to the expectations of family and society. A novel by a pioneering Gujarati woman writer Lilavati Munshi titled *Jasodano Jivana Vikas* depicts the predicament of a rustic woman Jasoda who tried hard to adjust to the new, modern life style to be accepted by her husband. Even Lilavati’s husband Kanhaiyala Munshi, who married Lilavati after the death of his first wife, who was an illiterate woman, found in Lilavati a perfect companion as she was educated, creative and independent woman.

Despite these major changes, caste system still had its firm hold over society and the reformist after much struggle could only reduce the number of sub-castes into primary castes at the max. These transformations had many positive outcomes such as due to modern education, job opportunities and development of railways people started moving out of the cocoons of family and caste system and came in contact with diverse cultures. The traditional restrictions in the matters of food, residence etc. started to dilute gradually but still caste was a powerful force and it never completely got abolished. It only got covered up by the new system for the practical purposes. Bombay emerged as the most important trading centre of India during 19<sup>th</sup> century. The city also attracted intellectuals for education purposes and became a hub of social, political and economic activities.

For women these changes brought both pros and cons. On one hand opportunities of education and development sprouted up and the social restrictions slacken off due to the attraction for modern life style. On the other hand they posed more challenges as women were forced to push their traditional boundaries and adjust with the newer way of life which was spreading rapidly, to remain up-to-date and well-informed about the outer world along with handling their household duties. They were often compelled to shift from their native village to a big city along with their husbands and face a complete culture shift.

Education opened up many career opportunities for them to be financially independent and to earn name and fame on the basis of their skills and talent. Despite these positive changes, the societal and family expectations continued to function from within conservative norm where a professionally successful woman was expected to be a good home maker and family oriented simultaneously. Even women initially could not adjust to

this changing situation and suffered through guilt when unable to meet these expectations. The firm hold of patriarchy on women has left little scope for women's liberalization. A woman had to suffer a double oppression – on the one hand opportunities to be educated were available opening up many professional avenues while on the other hand she was tied by regressive notions of womanhood which often compelled her to give up professional aspirations for the sake of family needs. A noted social reformist Uma Chakravarti has rightly pointed out “The twentieth century has continued to reproduce, in all essentials, the same kind of womanhood that the nineteenth century has so carefully, and so successfully constructed as an enduring legacy for us” (Chakravarti, “Whatever” 79).

Literature too registers this emotional trauma of women who struggle to balance their professional and personal lives. One such example is a story by Vasuben Bhatt titled *Talim* where the protagonist Ramila faces dilemma when she was offered an opportunity to undergo training for the sake of her promotion. Her confusion regarding taking up this opportunity or letting it go for the sake of her young child, her sense of remorse for leaving behind the child, her constant thinking of her husband and child during the training and her final emotional outburst at their re-union are depicted creatively with careful detailing by the author.

## **Social Backdrop**

### **(i) Social Set-up**

In Gujarat, society was caste-driven and was divided into a composite system of several castes and sub-castes which were separated in two major categories of upper caste consisting of Brahmins, Rajputs and Baniyas and lower caste consisting of peasants, artisans and herdsmen. Along with the people of various castes, many tribes resided in forests known as ‘Rani Paraj’. Throwing light on the complex system of caste and sub-caste in Gujarat, Bechardas Doshi said, “Though in the classical Hindu concept of social structure, society is composed of four varnas, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras, in Gujarat a concept of eighteen varnas has prevailed. These eighteen varnas were composed of the four traditional varnas plus nine narus (ranks) and five karus (sub-ranks)” (qtd. in Desai 55).

According to K. M. Munshi's analysis of the social system of Gujarat, even in 19<sup>th</sup> century there were no less than 315 castes in the region which did not mix up socially (x). Many socio-political reasons like migration, frequent attacks by foreigners, difference in

occupation or religion etc. were responsible for this scenario and rigidity of caste and religious system became stringent with the passing time as it was a collective survival strategy of the natives against foreign attacks. The caste council played a significant role in confining these categories and in influencing every aspect of a person's life based on the traditional principles of that caste. In ancient period, caste as well as religion played a vital role in an individual's personal, professional and social life and hardly any opportunity was available for him/her to change the already pre-decided course of life. For women the situation was even more pathetic as they could hardly think of a different life outside the predetermined roles set for them by the society.

Gradually with the changing time, the grudge of caste and religion was slackened as newer opportunities of trade and prosperity sprang up. The association of the people of the province with the sea due to its geographical peculiarity became an important occupation and a means for the acquisition of wealth. As a result, intellectual pursuit and religious staunchness were never given much value in the region as they were of no avail for the activities of trade. Being street smart, shrewd and spontaneous were the virtues required for the sake of successful tradesman ship so people obtained them with their experience giving less importance to cultural and intellectual accomplishments. Literary activities were prevailed during this time but the literature composed was monotonous (mostly theological in nature) and of little artistic value. Jain monks took advantage of this vacuum and with their artistic skills they created brilliant verse stories with the purpose to propagate their religion and to satisfy the literary needs of the middle-classes.

The establishment of the British rule became a vehicle of social and moral reform and progress. Old barriers and chauvinisms started to evaporate with the newer opportunities and sense of development at social and political levels. The establishment of railway and the media became the active agents of transformation as they provided opportunities to people to come out of the cocoon of caste, religion and traditional rigidity. With the spread of education, reform activities speeded up and efforts were made for the internal reform of caste system. Amongst much resistance, the education of girls was favoured by the educated class which helped the upliftment of women. Monogamy became an accepted rule amongst the people of advanced castes. Widow re-marriage was yet a dreaded dissent still efforts to improve their condition were made by active reformists. Castes came to be looked upon as social institutions rather than eternal human compartments. The varying demands of the

changing time forced society to accept new outlooks and reorient themselves so as to peacefully co-exist.

The contemporary literature did reflect this ideology and propagated social reform. Poet Dalpatram's (1820-1898) poems *Bapani Pingal* (1845) and *Hunnarkhanni Chadhai* hint at the idea of reform. He also spread awareness for educating girls, abandoning addictions, secularism, social reforms in the form of lessening the expenses on social occasions, abolishing child marriage etc. through his journal 'Buddhi Prakash'. Later Narmad, who was an active reformist, appealed to forsake religious rigidity through his poem *Hindustanni Padti*. He, like his predecessor Dalpatram, with help of his famous journal 'Dandio' propagated social and moral reform.

## **(ii) Family Structure and Economic Scenario**

The traditional system of joint family existed in all caste. The joint family was considered a social unit and an individual had no opportunities to be separated from it. Neera Desai rightly points out, "The family "joint in food, worship and estate" was the economic, social and cultural nucleus of Hindu society... The joint family was an omnibus organization performing several functions – economic, educational, cultural, recreational and political. In fact the family, and not the individual, was the unit of society. The male head of the family as in all patriarchal families, was the all-in-all in family matters. Hence the individual had no voice in choosing his education, vocation, friend or wife" (63-64).

Majority of people lived in villages which were predominantly based on caste system and it directly affected the village economy which subsisted mostly on the barter system.

## **(iii) Condition of Women in Society**

### **a) In Pre-Colonial Period**

In the pre-British society, the condition of women was pitiable due to the lack of humanitarian approach towards them. Their position was subordinate to that of men with limited rights and opportunities. A girl was considered a burden (*Saap no Bharo*) and her birth was seen as a curse for the family. Certain castes like Jadeja, Rajputs and Kulin Kanabis even practiced female infanticide (*doodhpiti*) to save the honour and expenses of the family in the matter of dowry in wedding. This approach led to an excess of male population

in comparison to the female. According to Munshi, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, female-male ratio was 772 –1000 in the Leva Kunbi caste (x). Girls were denied education and married off at a very young age (between 3 to 11). This consequently led to the evils of child marriage, early widowhood, Sati system and ill-assorted marriages making the lives of women even more onerous. Munshi had correctly pointed out the pitiful condition of women in the following words, “They are married early and premature motherhood and savage midwifery complete their physical ruin if widowhood does not relegate them to a dreary and unproductive life (xi).

In many contemporary poems, the pitiable condition of the child wife or child widow was reflected. One such example is a poem by Vallabh Bhatt addressed to the mother goddess as following,

Goddess mother, old is the husband thou hast given me,  
Mother, accursed is this coming to life of mine. Alas, what more can I say?  
Goddess mother, a little child am I and he a great lumbering, aged man,  
My youth is like a blossom and my husband is a shrivelled mummy.  
Mother, mine are just sixteen years and he has seen his eighty.  
Goddess mother, of a winter’s night there is many a taste one feels,  
But doltish is old age, and my husband is deaf and dumb.  
Goddess mother, sportive am I and would like to play and I make my eyes  
twinkle,  
But, mother, he, he says, ‘I’ll beat you,’ and lifts his stick in his hand.  
Old is my husband, mother, what good can come out of age?  
Goddess mother, on the festival all the girls are gaily dressed and merry,  
But my husband is tired and weak and ugly, and I bend my head in shame.  
Mother, my hair is black and his head is all white or grey.  
My youth is at its blooming and already my life is wrecked.  
Goddess mother, why was I not strangled at birth, why was I not poisoned?  
Yet if my husband die, it is my part to be true to death.  
Nay, Goddess mother, with joined hands I pray at thy feet,  
When I am born again, give me a husband that is young and strong.  
(qtd. in Rothfeld 56-57)

In almost all major castes polygamy was practised by men primarily to beget a child especially a male child to continue family legacy. But for a woman, remarriage under any circumstances was prohibited. In case of the death of her husband she had the option to become a Sati and burn on her husband's pyre or lead the celibate life of a widow – shunned by family and society. B. M. Malabari in his book *Gujarat and Gujaratis* gives reference of another inhuman custom called 'cold sati' in regard to a widow of a high caste family where she was found pregnant at the time of the death of her husband. In such cases traditional sati system cannot be implied so the family used to serve her with best food which was capped with poison leading to her death. The poor widow would soon become a cold sati later to be taken to her pyre. In the same book Malabari has recorded a case in which a widow suspected her in-laws to attempt to poison her under the 'cold sati' custom and begged her mother for help but the mother replied, "Drink drink, my child, drink to cover thy father's *abru*/drink it, dear daughter see I am doing likewise" (295). This incident reflects the extent to which women have internalised the violence towards themselves. Not only that they also participate in acts of violence against another women, indicating thereby the deep-rooted impact of patriarchy on their psyche.

A woman's predicament as widow or co-wife was regarded as chastisement for misdeeds of the past. In such circumstances where a woman had no option of earning her livelihood or participate independently in the outer world, she had to accept her fate as it was without any hope of relief. The concept of predetermined fate played a major role in degrading woman's position in society. Gujarati literature mirrors this predicament of women and many novels and stories are built on the same theme line. For example, in the epic novel *Saraswatichandra* (1887-1901) by Govardhanram Tripathi (1855-1907) the central woman character Kumud meekly accepts her fate after the death of her husband and does not make any efforts to bring any positive change in life. Although she is educated, her perspective is more bound by tradition and she surrenders to it without any resistance. Jasbir Jain throws light on this attitude of women in the following words, "But women have very limited freedom...Either society, religion or traditions control them and more often than not religion, tradition and morality are use to exclude women from power and knowledge and reinforce patriarchal authority" (84).

The general condition of women was pitiable still when we look at the history of the region, in comparison to other regions, Gujarat has witnessed many liberal minded and

autonomous women who played an active role at both social and political fronts. Since earlier times, women of this region had been sharing the burden of life with their male counterparts and in a few communities especially peasants and labourers, women were quite active in the various tasks related to cultivation or labour. During ancient period, many powerful women were credited to handle the state affairs confidently like Minaladevi ruled Gujarat during Siddharaj Jaisingh's infancy, Naikadevi led the army of Patana and drove back Mahmud Ghori and Anupamadevi stood beside her husband Tejhpala.

A number of women participated in the freedom struggle (Usha Mehta (1920-2000), Perin Captain (1888-1958), Poornima Pakvasa (1913-2016), Smt. Hansa Mehta (1897-1995), Jyotsna Shukla (1892-1976)) and in Bardoli Satyagraha during 1928-30, many peasant women displayed resilience and courage to fight for the national cause. The freedom struggle opened up gate for women to come out of the confines of their houses and fight for the national cause and many women had stormed the fortresses of powerful foreign rule with their unyielding courage. They fought bravely, bore the '*lathi*' charge and horrors of jail life with unbending spirit and proved their potential. Despite the hard life, they had preserved their feminine grace and they emerged as powerful personalities breaking all the myths about female self.

Many women have been actively associated with various spheres of public life like social service (Poornima Pakvasa), freedom struggle (Jyotsna Shukla – a teacher, Secretary of 'Stree Samaj', Surat, active during Bardoli Satyagraha and freedom struggle), politics (Smt. Hansa Mehta – was amongst the 15 women who were the part of the constituent assembly for drafting Indian constitution), and business (Indumati Chimanlal Sheth) (1906) – the founder of first *khadi* store in India) since early times. Mirabai of 16<sup>th</sup> century was a leading poetess of the region who revealed her poetic genius through her devotional poetry and earned an irreplaceable position in our hearts. However, one point requires special mention here that is these women mostly belonged to the privileged classes (affluent or upper middle-class) with many opportunities available to them easily. The condition of the lower and under privilege class women was still pathetic despite many reform movements for their betterment. Plenty of literature was produced during this period which was influenced by Gandhi and his ideology reflecting the ideas of freedom, national well-fare, reform in society etc. Many women also composed literature mostly poetry on the theme of patriotism, freedom struggle and Gandhi's life and views. A number of publications can be referred to for the influence of

Gandhi on women like – *Indian Women's Battle for Freedom* by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay (1983), *Gandhi, Women, and the National Movement, 1920-47* by Anup Taneja (2005), *Women in Indian National Freedom Movement* by K. B. Pradhan (2012) etc.

### **b) Gujarati Women in the Post-Colonial Period**

In the post-British period the well-being and status of women varied, depending on factors like levels of literacy and education (English and regional), economical advancement, and social status, family, caste and religion. She was considered on more humanitarian ground. Reform efforts towards educating women started echoing positively and as a result woman's education was taken seriously. According to Neera Desai the first school for women was established in Ahmedabad in 1849 by the Gujarat Vernacular Society followed by two more in 1850. In Surat too a girl's school was started by a reformist Durgaram Mehtaji. In Bombay Presidency during 1896-97 only 18 women were studying in colleges. During 19<sup>th</sup> century many efforts were made to train women for professional life and in Ahmedabad a college was established to train women teachers for primary schools in 1871. Even midwifery classes were started in Bombay in 1875 (333-334).

Many Women's Associations like - Gujarati Hindu Stree Mandal, Vanita Vishram, the Arya Stree Mandal, the Hindu Ladies Social and Literary Club etc. were formed for variety of purposes associated with the education and training of women. They performed important tasks like educating young married girls who could not continue their studies due to family pressure, arranged training classes in the variety of subjects like painting, embroidery, music, English, First Aid etc. These associations gave much confidence to women who gradually started coming out to public sphere and voiced their views openly. Many public meeting were conducted by women under the sponsorship of these women's associations where many prominent women like Mrs. Sharda Mehta, Mrs. Vidyagauri Nilkanth addressed and inspired women demanding more educational and training facilities for women.

It is important to note that these women associations or the public meetings did not attract any controversies or opposition from the orthodox society because their primary focus was the reinforcement of an ideal womanhood with demands for education and liberty for women. Their outlook was not radical and their demands more subtle and in alignment with the expectations of the existing society. In words of Simone de Beauvoir, "Women's actions

have never been more than symbolic agitation; they have won only what men have been willing to concede to them; they have taken nothing; they have received” (28).

During 19<sup>th</sup> century many journals for Gujarati women started to get published like *Stree Bodh*, *Sudha*, *Sundari Subodh* etc. *Stree Bodh* was the first Gujarati journal for women (published from 1857 till 1950) and Karsondas and other social reformers were closely associated with it. These journals, although they appeared progressive and held promise for women in general, in reality they hardly contributed to raise women’s status. These magazines only helped in, in Sonal Shukla’s words, “...construction of an indigenous version of ideal Victorian woman as perceived by modern Indian man” (WS-65). Their sole purpose was to train women to develop refined taste and mannerism so that they can perform their roles as suitable companions to their educated husbands. These journals had various informative sections on different topics like literature, travels, history and biographies of some famous personalities to impart general knowledge to women to assist them in their roles of ideal wives and mothers.

Despite the fact that the journal *Stree Bodh* enjoyed the support and benevolence of people like Behramji Malabari, Kabraji, Dadabhai Naoroji, Karsondas Mulji and scores of other progressive men who believed in education of women and played active role in the activity of women’s emancipation, it did not involve itself in any of the campaigns that the social reformers carried out in the second half of the 19th century. The sensational *Maharaja Libel Case* of 1862 which had direct bearings on the lives of women did not find any place in the journal nor the event of the first widow marriage (of Dhanakorbai and Madhavdas whom Kabraji himself supported) and its aftermath in Gujarat which took place in 1871-71. It can be concluded therefore, that the so called educated reformists of nineteenth century intended to keep women out of public domain.

Many debate, public lectures were held, books were published to spread awareness towards the education of girls by reformists like Dalpatram, Narmad, Navalram, Karsandas, Manilal who appealed to the society at large emphasising the advantages of educating women which would be beneficial not just to her but to her family, children and nation at large. The reformists tried hard to encourage women’s education and promote well-fare but their own vision for women was limited and biased. They failed to see education as a liberating force for women giving her tremendous power, opportunity to hone her skills and preparing her for public life and financial independence. Svati Joshi points out this narrow mentality of the so

called reformists towards women by giving example of Dalpatram and his views on women's education as, "Dalpatram's insistence on education for girls was based in the belief that it would make them 'good' women... His model of an educated woman is the European woman ... He wanted women of the indigenous ruling class to have education as a matter of privilege, and more importantly to improve the image of women in society by dissociating themselves from shameful, unseemly social practices, indulged in on occasions like wedding apparently even by women of upper classes" (337).

Society expected women to get education so that they could contribute towards the betterment of their family, their husband and also impart better training to their children. The double standard of society towards women – although educated, she should continue performing her traditional role meekly can be noted here. B. N. Motivala in his biography on Karsondas registers his words below, affirm this disturbing stance: "...look at the picture of a woman who delights the heart of a man and who overpowers him by her pure love. Observe her traits, she walks gently. She speaks only sweet melodious words. She is both mild and guileless. She neither sits idly nor wanders here and there. She puts on neat and clean clothes" (366). Being a reformist his views on women and their position in society is quite narrow and stereotypical.

Despite a gradual rise in educated women entering the public domain, society at large remained prejudiced towards them and resisted the very idea of women gaining success outside their homes. For instance, when Miss Cornelia Sorabji who was the first lady graduate of Bombay Presidency was appointed as a faculty in Gujarat College in Ahmedabad in 1888, there was a lot of protest. A newspaper, *Satya Vakta* reported on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1888, the matter in the following words, "The appointment of a lady to teach male students in a college is a strange reform of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Has female education made so great a stride or is there such an excess of female teachers in the girls' schools in the Bombay Presidency that a lady who has received high education has been appointed to a college for males? Really, such an appointment is surprising. It would have been praiseworthy if Miss C. Sorabji had been nominated to the department of female education" (qtd. in Desai 338).

The general bias of society and its apathy towards education of women were abetted by many social factors like child-marriage, widowhood, social restrictions which did not allow women to grab educational activities freely. Another aspect was the matter of purity and impurity attached to different phases in women's lives like menstruation or child birth

which put restriction on her free movement. To abolish the social evils, quite a few tangible efforts were made – the establishment of Anti-Child Marriage Association in 1871, the abolition of Sati tradition in 1829 and widow re-marriage Act in 1856 etc. As far as the case of Gujarat was concerned, Sati was an exceptional practice and even widow remarriage was practiced amongst some lower castes. Only the upper castes staunchly opposed it. Many famous literary figures tried to raise their voice against it and they had to face consequences as a result. For example, Narmad was ex-communicated for marrying a widow and Karsondas Moolji was driven out of his house for writing an essay on this tabooed subject.

Many reformists tried to set an example for the society by practicing what they preach in their personal lives. An interesting incident from the life of Narmad who himself was a staunch reformist can be considered here. In a book *Uttar Narmad Charitra (1866 to 1886 – ‘Mari Hakikat Part – 2)* the editor Natvarlal Iccharam Desai quotes an incident from the poet’s life. In 1870 when Narmad shifted to Surat from Mumbai, a young widow of Nagar family named Narmadagauri fell in love with him and requested him to marry her. Narmad faced an impasse as he was already married to Dahigauri and did not want to do any injustice to her but at the same time he was determined of not to let go of this opportunity to set an example of reform for the society. Prior to the decision, he had a lengthy discussion with his wife to whom he had given full freedom to choose her options – to get separated from him (in which case Narmad would take full responsibility of her till she lived) or to stay with him as a co-wife. Being a faithful and supportive wife, Dahigauri decided to stay with him and share a status of a co-wife with Narmadagauri. Later when Narmadagauri gave birth to a son Jayshankar, Dahigauri took full responsibility of the child (58-71). In this case Narmad emerged as a kind, liberal minded husband who not only propagated women’s individuality but practiced it when the time came. However, it is important to consider the options open for Dahigauri. Had she decided to be separated from Narmad, would the society have allowed her or given her due respect for it? In the given circumstances, she must have been left with only one choice – to bear her fate as a co-wife of her husband who had received all the credit of a brave reformist (of course he also bore the share of his troubles as he was ex-communicated but later earned a name for himself as ‘Veer Narmad’).

To conclude, therefore, women in pre-British time were confined to their houses and rarely ventured out, that too in escort of men. After the British rule was established and education spread, women got more freedom, their mobility increased and there was a general

rise in the education of girls. Yet these positive changes affected only a small section of upper caste women (especially whose families strongly believed in reform and had active reformists amongst them). The lower class women were still bound by the tradition and were exploited. Even the women of the upper caste enjoyed freedom in much limited amount as they themselves were not ready to accept their autonomous positions and handle their own power and capacities. Many such women characters are created in Gujarati literature too who, although educated and talented, could not enjoy an independent identity due to the regressive contexts. In the novel *Saat Pagla Aakashma* by Kundanika Kapadia, Vasanti who wanted to be a professional singer and Lalita who was highly educated could not stand their ground in front of their husbands' demands for family oriented wives and succumbed to negligence and domestic violence in the end. Amruta, a highly educated lady, in the novel *Amruta* by Raghuvir Chaudhari faces a dilemma regarding the choice of a perfect life partner but in due course forgets completely her own happiness, sense of freedom and her desire for independence. In the short-story *Dikrinu Dhan* by Dhiruben Patel the central character Shakuntala who is an educated professional woman fails to fight for her rights and desire to get married due to the financial responsibility of her family. Ultimately, she suffers a deep sense of guilt and frustration as a result.

### **c) Modern Times (late 18<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century)**

During late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the picture had completely altered with more and more women gaining education not for the family status but for their own betterment. Many women were seen entering public life as a need of the hour, women living away from family for educational or professional purposes, women entering various professions and gaining power and positions. The society also gradually accepted these changing connotations of women's lives and supported women to be self-sufficient. The standards of an ideal woman changed as now qualities like confidence, maturity, ability to take decision, open mindedness etc. were expected of her. Modern period, with a rise in educational opportunities, changing mind-sets and availability of employment prospects with advancements in science and technology opened up to women, exclusive fields that had been reserved only for men earlier, like defence, technology and medicine.

Changes in the structures of education, economics and society gave rise to more nuclear families and brought forth newer challenges for women in form of dual responsibilities of the house, children and job. The rise in number of cases of sexual

harassment and physical abuse of girls raised questions of her safety within and outside her house. Ila Mehta's short-story *Shamik Shu Kehse?* deals with this sensitive issue where the protagonist becomes a victim of eve teasing and humiliation in her office. She faces dilemma initially about how to inform her husband Shamik and fears his reaction in this matter but later takes a bold decision to fight it on her own accord without caring for her husband's point of view.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has presented two contrasting viewpoints – the Western concept based on pure physical, skin-deep beauty while on the other hand the rigid concepts of veiling advocated by some Islamic countries – which have made woman's existence even more painful. Even the popular media's projection of woman as a beautiful commodity along with the societal pressure to look attractive and more acceptable amongst peers and relatives have created a fake image of woman devoid of any human qualities. This time the chains that bind her are more psychological than physical and unless she opens her eyes against them, she is more likely to be ambushed in these misleading concepts.

Woman has to think logically to free herself of these binding norms of modern times as today in the name of liberation her physique and beauty is exhibited to earn profit reducing her merely to an attractive body. Such blind attraction for skin deep beauty would lead to a new kind of slavery for modern women. The only ways out are education and awareness which will save her from modern stereotypes and help her find her real self. One such example of strong minded woman is found in Bindu Bhatt's novel *Mira Yagnikni Diary* which narrates a story of Mira, a young, educated, confident lady who has to suffer embarrassment in public due to a skin disease she is suffering from – white leprosy but instead of losing heart she decides to change her mind set and stops caring for people's opinion to regain her self-esteem. It is high time for woman to recover and reconstruct her identity and self-respect in the public as well as private domain. As Ashis Nandy examines, "For the more sensitive woman,...The first task that faces her is to devise means of de-emphasizing some aspects of her role in her family and society and emphasizing others, so that she may widen her identity without breaking totally from its cultural definition or becoming disjunctive with its psycho-biological distinctiveness...Indian women have paid terribly for Indian insensitivity, but they have also extracted a heavy toll from a society which has not yet learned to live with all aspects of womanhood" (42).

### **Literary Milieu**

### (i) Early Literature (1000 AD to 1400 AD)

The literary history of Gujarat dates back to around twelfth century and the literature composed during this phase was mostly religious in nature and was inspired by the concept of aversion to worldly pleasure with a focus on the spiritual. The literature was in verse form and the thematic sphere could hardly go beyond mythology except a few efforts made scantily by a few poets to explore themes like romance, adventure, sorrow, bravery etc. During this period a number of plays were also written. Some of the notable literary works of the period are – an allegorical drama *Maharajaparajaya* (composed approximately between 1174-1177) by Yashpala on the conversion of Kumarapal to Jainism, literary works by Somaprabha like *Kumarapalaprati-bodha* (c. 1185), *Sumatinathacharita* (a religious work), *Sukhmuktavali* (a collection of verses) and Somesvara's (c. 1184-1254) – *Kirtikaumudi* and *Surathotsava* (two epic poems) and one drama *Ullagharaghava Ramasalaka*. One of the oldest texts of the period which converts from Apbhransh to Gujarati was composed by Salibhadrasuri in A. D. 1185 called *Bharateshvar-Bahubali Raas* revolved around the theme of a battle between Chakravartipadechu and Bahubali – two sons of Rushabhdev. Also worth mentioning is the play by Jayasinha *Hammiramadamardana* regarding the victory of Viradhavala over some Muslim invaders. This literature was conventional in style and thematic treatment. It came across as quite wooden, even effusive, at times, and repetitive in its representation of classical myths from Vedic, Puranic and indigenous literature. However, the literature in general lacked vitality and failed to represent the reality of the times in terms of theme, style and narration.

### (ii) Contribution by Jain Monks

The credit to develop early Gujarati literature goes to Jain monks who exhibited their creative talent by producing literature of merit. After the hostility faced at the hands of Maurya, the rulers of Magadhadesh, Jain monks were in quest of some hospitable lands and their search ended with their arrival in Gujarat. The refined spirit of the region and the absence of any great intellectual and literary tradition suited their purpose. The upper middle classes were in pursuit of some means to fulfil their craving for literary entertainment. These monks filled it by their literary effort to provide amusement to the common folk. They made a clever use of literature to fulfil two motives – to entertain the common folk of society and to popularise their religion. They wrote 'Dharmakathas' – religious tales, where they made free use of the classical legends. Many of these legends were the re-tellings of famous

legends where they redrafted it to propagate their religious motif by converting a Puranic hero or a brave ruler into a follower of Jainism. They mixed these tales with the flavour of romance and love to achieve their motif and to entertain the common folk.

Jain monks developed genres like ‘Raas’ (a metaphorical song sung while dancing in circle), ‘Fagu’ (narrative poems of love and romance in Fagan – spring), ‘Prabandh’ (historical biographical songs), short story, biography etc. Their special contribution was in the development of a special genre namely – ‘Padyavarta’, Verse Tale. Somasundara (1374-1446) and Tarunaprabha, (1355) were amongst the early notable Jain monk writers. The most remarkable of them all was Hemachandra Suri, the most learned of all, whose arrival heralded a new era on the literary scene of Gujarat. His famous text of grammar *Siddhahemachandra* composed on the insistence of King Siddharaj earned him national reputation. His literary efforts helped in the development of the language. Hemachandra was a scholar and many of his students carried forward his literary tradition through their brilliant contributions.

### **(iii) Medieval Period (1450 AD to 1850 AD)**

Literature in old Gujarati was written in ‘Apabhransha’ and it was mythological, heroic and instructive in flavour and written in verse form. After thirteenth century the use of Apabhransa gradually waned and was replaced by what we know today as old Gujarati. The period offered large varieties of the verse genre – ‘Raas’, ‘Fagu’, ‘Baarmasi’ (songs of different seasons), ‘Prabandh’, ‘Padyavarta’, ‘Aakhyan’ (a long narrative poem), ‘Garbi-garbo’ (lyrical songs to be sung while dancing in circle), ‘Rasda’ (garba sung by women), ‘Prabhatia’ (songs to be sung at early morning), Lullaby, ‘Chabkha’, ‘Chappa’, ‘Duha’ (couplet) etc. The literature was religious in nature with hardly any mention of the secular. As Anantrai Rawal points out, “The thematic sphere of Medieval literature is limited and religion is at its centre – the literature composed before Narsinh Mehta was done by wandering Jain monks...apart from Jain and Hindu writers, the literature composed by Parsee and Muslim after their arrival was also inspired by their religious notions and traditions...” (my tran.; 25-26)

From 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Gujarat came under the influence of Bhakti movement and plenty of prominent writers composed literature inspired by the Bhakti tradition. The biggest inspirational source for literature during this time was Vaishnav bhakti. Along with

the worship of Lord Krishna, devotion for Shiv and Shakti was also expressed in literature. Narsinh Mehta (1414-1481) was the most prominent poet of the period who brought new perspective to Bhakti poetry in Gujarat. His poetry expressed pure devotion towards Lord Krishna who was a living lover for him and he expressed his intense desire to unite with Him. He has mostly composed 'padas'(couplets) along with 'aakhyans', 'fagu', 'prabhatias' etc. about various episodes from Krishna's life based on the Puranas and a few biographical narrations of a few episodes of his life where he received magical support of the Lord (*Shamaldasno Vivah* and *Kunvarbainu Mameru*). In his poems Narsinh Mehta mostly present women from mythological background as Radha and Gopis of Vraj indulging into almost erotic form of devotion towards Lord Krishna. Often the poet portrays himself as one of the women friends of Radha or Gopi involved in a sweet love-talk, romance and erotic description of their attraction towards the Lord.

There were hardly any women poets during the Medieval period with the exception of Mirabai and a few minor poetesses. Mirabai (1403-1470) was a major voice during the period who composed mostly couplets in three languages – Vraj, Rajasthani and Gujarati. The main subject of her poetry was devotion towards Lord Krishna, worshipping the Lord with a zeal of a lover, meeting or separation with Him, description of his flute playing and his '*raas-leela*' with Gopis and Radha. Coming from royal family, her devotion towards Krishna often put her in trouble as her single minded devotion for Krishna, brought disgrace to her in-laws. Her poetry is full of romance and bhakti for Lord Krishna who was a living beloved to her. Her couplets are full of grace, romance, passion and delicacy where she becomes a lovelorn beloved with acute desire to meet and unite with her lover.

As mystic and Krishna devotee, she mingled with sadhus and mendicants, all the time singing devotional lyrics composed by herself. Note here the fact that Mirabai forsook the comforts of marriage and the royal court, in order to walk the path of the wandering sadhu or mystic. Such a choice in a woman was rare but not entirely blasphemous or unheard of. Had she dared to abandon family life for some other reasons (love for another man or for the sake of personal ambition), she would have been humiliated or killed immediately. Devotion or bhakti was not just her spiritual refuge but also a space of subversive freedom. She could stand her ground because the context of religion and spiritual piety extended its own brand of convention and protection. The sacred fold of Bhakti protected her and at the same time enabled her to transcend the gender taboos and binaries. According to Avadhesh Kumar

Singh, “A woman could be free, if at all, only as Amrapali or Mira. She has to either sell of her body in instalments for her belly or neglect her body and womb as a spiritual devotee as Mira did. The spirituality is a sublimated form of self-courted *sati*” (122).

Along with her there were a few lesser women poets like Gauribai, Diwalibai, Krushnabai, Puribai, Radhabai, Vanarasibai, Janibai – who mostly composed religious poems depicting the themes like aversion of worldly pleasure, childhood of Krishna, life of Lord Rama and Sita and episodes from scriptures.

In the bhakti canon, among significant male poet-saints from Gujarat, there was Akho (c. 1615-1674) – a scholar of Vedant and a spiritual reformist, his poem *Akhegita* (1649) holds supreme value in ‘*gyanmargi bhakti*’ (knowledge based bhakti) in Gujarati. Then there was Premananda (1649-1714) – the best ‘aakhyan’ poet of Gujarat; also, Bhalan (1434-1514), Pritam (1720/25-1789) and Dhiro (1753-1825) – all of them were significant and made their mark on the Bhakti scene of Gujarat. Dayaram (1767-1852) was the last leading poet of Medieval Bhakti tradition whose contribution to various verse forms is incredible. He has composed some famous ‘aakhyan’, many devotional poems, texts of criticism on his own creations. Although he has penned plentiful of literature, he is most famous for his ‘garbis’.

A lone voice on the scene was that of Shyamal Bhatt (1718-1765). He was well known for his stories composed in verse in the Medieval period. His stories are full of the supernatural elements to attract the attention of the common folk. Women did appear in the literature composed during Medieval period but mostly in mythological backdrop and typically bound by traditional norms with only a few exceptions to be noted in the verse stories of Shyamal Bhatt where his women characters exhibit all the traits of a modern, autonomous women who prove to be equal partners to their male counterparts with their sheer courage and intelligence.

Thus, Medieval period in Gujarat had the legacy of brilliant literary gems who, with limited means and access, composed tremendous literature and helped to build the spirit of the age.

#### **(iv) Reform Age (1850 to 1885 AD)**

The contact with Western philosophy and English education during colonial period brought a newer awareness in the educated and intelligent natives towards the flaws prevailing in their own society and it helped to accelerate the reform activities which took a form of active movements during this era. The literature became a vehicle to propagate reform with exploration of new genres in prose and poetry. Discussing this thematic shift in literature, Dhirubhai Thakar expresses his views in *Arvachin Gujarati Sahityani Vikasrekha – 2 (Age of Reform)*, “The writer directed his attention to the present situation instead of the other worldly matters. All the aspects of life like religion, social, political, cultural started to be discussed in literature. The literature of this period focused on humanity, human qualities and concept of globalization instead of religious matters and concept of secularism.” (my tran.; 3) The horizon of literature broadened as newer concepts like humanity, moral grooming of society, political reform found their representation in literature.

Dalpatram (1820-1898) who was a pioneer of prose in Gujarati literature implicated modernism and reform through his literature – his poem *Bapani Pingal* (1845) hints at reformism and another poem *Hunnarkhanni Chadhai* was Gujarat’s first patriotic poem appealing to the youth of the country to redirect their attention towards skill based professions. His meeting with Forbes was a historical event resulting in the establishment of ‘Gujarat Vernacular Society’ in 1848. As an Editor of a famous reform journal *Buddhi Prakash* from 1855 to 1879, Dalpatram spread awareness in the contemporary society.

The most radical and brilliant literary gem of the period was Narmad (1833-1886) who was a staunch believer of reform and his literature mirrored the reformist ideology intensely. He was a fearless reformist in speech as well as in conduct and he had debated openly in favour of widow remarriage and against a number of exploratory social norms. His views regarding women and their freedom were much ahead of his time. In a book *Uttar Narmad Charitra (1866 to 1886 – ‘Mari Hakikat Part’ – 2)* edited by Natvarlal Desai, Narmad’s views pertaining the same have been registered in his letter that he addresses to a lady named Maanbai advising her to continue her education after marriage to become a role model for other women in the society as “Many scholars through their words and writings are trying to improve the condition of women and to liberate them from the slavery imposed on them by our people, but till men allow their women a freedom of choice and... women themselves take advantage of the freedom, the condition of the women of our country will not improve” (my tran.; 58).

Regarded as the father of pure prose in Gujarati literature, Narmad experimented with the lyric and epic forms and with many genres in prose and poetry. His writings were seeped in and kindled the patriotic spirit among his countrymen. His compositions like *Jay Jay Garvi Gujarat*, *Sahu Chalo Jitva Jung*, *Rann to Dhiranu* etc. are sung till date. Significant among his essays are the ones he wrote on the idea of reform like – *Stree Kelavni* and *Punarvivah* in 1868-69, on the need for education of women and widow remarriage, such themes paved the way for future and upcoming writers. He is also credited with writing the first Gujarati dictionary; and for writing *Mari Hakikat* (1934) – the first autobiography written in Gujarati.

There were a few other important writers like Navalram (1836-1888), Nandshankar Mehta (1835-1905) – his novel *Karanghelo* (1866), Mahipatram Nilkanth (1829-1891) – penned the first social novel *Saasu Vahuni Ladai* (1866), Karsandas Moolji (1832-1875), Ranchhodlal Udayram Dave (1837-1923) and C. C. Mehta (1901-1991) were the fathers of Gujarati stage and drama along with a few Parsee writers – Behramji Malbari (1853-1912), Kekhusaro Kabraji (1842-1904) who contributed to the fields of journalism, poems, gazals, garbi, play, novels etc.

Many famous Parsees were also associated with theatre activities and the formation of a special group of theatre called ‘Parsee Theatre’ in 18<sup>th</sup> century due to the ownership of many Parsee personalities. As my research focuses chiefly on the condition of women in society and their representation in literature, I would like to make a special mention of the case of Parsee theatres and their tradition of female impersonation and its impact on the position of women in society. With the establishment of Parsee theatres in late 18<sup>th</sup> century, many Parsee troops became active and started performing dramas regularly. Amateur drama activity had begun amongst young Parsee students in Bombay around 1850. Shortly Parsee business professionals cum actors formed drama companies. Initially they staged dramas based on themes of Persian ‘Shah-Nama’, Shakespearean tragedies and comedies, and later in 20<sup>th</sup> century various themes based on Hindu scriptures became popular with these companies. They made use of English, Gujarati, Urdu and Hindi languages for their dramas.

At this point, I would like to make a special mention of the drama companies towards female actors. Due to the stigma associated with the arts of singing, dancing and acting which were solely allied with courtesans along with the limited public life access for women, no woman of respectable families would like to associate with drama companies. Due to this

reason the drama companies had to struggle to find female actors and as a counter effect of this trend they took refuge in the phenomenon of female impersonation. Many male actors became very popular with the audience due to their artistic skill of playing the roles of women on stage with diminutive detailing of tone, dressing, style etc. The incident of this female impersonation has multiple impacts – the major two being the reaction of and the psychological effect on the audience and the illustration of female self on the stage. The public appearance of women was totally condemned and accessible only to courtesans so the audiences merrily accepted this replacement.

According to Kathryn Hansen, “...the pleasure of witnessing a gender 'stunt', or of weeping while feeling a homo-erotic 'buzz' – may well have surpassed the pleasure of seeing a real woman on the stage...For the viewer thus incapacitated in his/her ability to read the actress as other than 'prostitute', the female impersonator offered a more palatable surrogate” (“Stri” 2296). The proprietors of the theatre companies used these erotic images of female impersonation to earn more profit. The after effect of this occurrence was that women were denied entry in the world of entertainment for a long period of time.

In such unfavourable circumstances, few women dared enter the world of theatre, among them were actress Gohar Jaan, Malika, Fatima, Khatun and others who initially faced much contempt and humiliation at the hands of audiences as well as male actors. Many sensational rumours spread about them in the meantime regarding their personal lives and association with different men degrading their positions to those of ‘prostitutes’. Sadly, they became more popular, not due to their acting talent, but due to such misrepresentations of their private lives. When analysed from psychological point of view, the female impersonation and misrepresentation imply perpetual patriarchal control over female body. It is noteworthy that the pioneer female actors along with many to follow their footsteps did not include any Parsee or Hindu women for a considerable period of time as they remained safe within the confines of their houses and communities. Instead, many Anglo-Indian actresses used to play the roles of ideal, chaste and cultured middle-class Parsee or Hindu woman having appropriate dressing sense and respectable mannerisms. Once again, the stereotype was that of docile domestic femininity having popular standards of beauty in form of ‘fair skin’, large eyes, and an hourglass figure. Also, women had no direct access to theatre as audience till 20<sup>th</sup> century and even then it was accepted only if she was accompanied by a male escort.

The second important effect was on the shift in the general image of the ‘respectable woman’ in public. Newer gender codes informed the conduct for women based on her speech, mannerisms, her dressing, hair style etc. The outer appearance, gestures, etiquette were given more importance compared to the internal qualities of the woman, thus objectifying her and diminishing her status at home and outside. Kathryn Hansen in another article *Theatrical Transvestism in Parsi, Gujarati and Marathi Theatres (1850-1940)* mentions this fact in the following words, “Whereas the sexuality of the new woman became subsumed within the norms of modesty, the feminine ideal was henceforward associated with inner sensibility and the capacity to suffer” (110).

Gujarati and Marathi theatre was also highly influenced by Parsee theatre and they also followed the tradition of female impersonation. Originally in Gujarati traditional drama performances called ‘Bhavai’ (and ‘Tamasha’ in Maharashtra) female transvestism by male artists was practiced and became quite popular. But later with the advancement of education and urbanization ‘Bhavai’ and its rustic satirical settings lost against the grand and spectacular theatre set up of Parsee theatre.

During this era of reform, many Gujarati playwright shifted their focus to reformist issues of the contemporary reform movement. Apart from other social concerns, the special focus of many of the Gujarati plays of this period was the emancipation of women’s overall condition and education. To list a few well-known plays by famous Gujarati writers, there was, *Kanta* (1882) by Manilal Dwivedi (1858-1898) (based on a historical even of the killing of the king of Patan), *Lalita Dukhdarshak Natak* (1866) by Ranchodlal Udayram Dave (1837-1923) (based on the theme of incompatible marriage and the ultimate suffering of Lalita as a result), *Kajoda Dukhdarshak Natak: Ek Prasang* (1872) by Keshavlal Motilal Parikh (based on the theme of the evil of child marriage), and *Kanya Vikray Khandan Natak* (1888) by Keshavlal Harivithaldas (critiquing the evil practice of selling a girl child and dowry system). In all these plays, the central women characters are educated women from reputed families – women who are victims of exploitation at the hands of their own family, their in-laws or husband and meet their deaths untimely. These plays proclaim justice for women but the women characters portrayed therein are passive sufferers, merely blaming society for their misfortune. Helpless, submissive and an easy prey of circumstance, these projections of the long suffering good woman conspire and regenerate the stereotype of ideal womanhood – the well-meaning ‘angel’ who is meek, modest and depends on male support and permission

to progress in life. Virginia Woolf describes ‘The Angel in the House’ to mock the Victorian model of ‘ideal womanhood’ and to warn young, educated and aspiring women professionals to let this ideal image over shadow their talent and attitude towards life and career in her famous essay “Professions for Women” as follows, “She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily...she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathise always with the minds and wishes of others” (231).

**(v) Pundit Era (1885 to 1915 AD)**

The reform period was followed by a revival of Sanskrit literature, a longing for Puranic idealism, an age of renaissance in Gujarat called ‘Pundit Yug’ or ‘ShaksharYug’. Writers of this age, were influenced by the best of both the Eastern and the Western culture which in turn triggered rigorous experimentation with new genres (especially in prose), embedding them with a variety of thematic and narrative strategies in the representation of real life situations and characters. Govardhanram Tripathi emerged as a major literary voice of the age with his epic novel *Saraswatichandra* (1883-1890) in four volumes. It became a magnum opus of Pre-modern Gujarati literature and has continued to inspire many generations of writers till date. Women characters in Tripathi’s *Saraswatichandra* exhibit this social perceptions and ideas of reform and they become vehicles to carry them. Majority of his women characters are portrayed as the mannequins of ideal, virtuous womanhood with high levels of tolerance and selfless service towards their families and society in general. Located in patriarchy, the women sacrifice their own needs and desires at every stage in the interest of family life and harmony. They are (what Virginia Woolf calls them in *A Room of One’s Own*), “angels” – angelic examples of the ideal daughter / daughter-in-law / wife, worth emulating. Such patriarchal projections of an idealised womanhood have only served to romanticise and justify the unjust dehumanisation of the woman subject in life and fiction.

Other eminent writers of the era were Manilal Nabhubhai Dwivedi (1858-1898), Narsinhrao Divetia (1859-1937), Ramanbhai Nilkanth (1868- 1928), famous for his satirical novel *Bhadrambhadr* (1900) and a drama *Raino Parvat* (1914); also worth mentioning are the two Dhruv writers – Keshavlal (1859-1938) and Anandshankar (1869-1942), two well-known poets – Kant (1867-1923) and Kalapi (1874-1900) famous for writing romantic poetry having aesthetic touch. Other famous writers were Balvantrai Thakor (1869-1952), Khabardar (1881-1953) and Botadkar (1870-1924) – both have written English lyrics as well

as prose. The most brilliant gem of the era was poet and playwright, Nanhalal (1877-1946), son of poet Dalpatram who had been bestowed upon the title 'Mahakavi' for his contributions to poetry – lyrics, khandkavya, epics, bhajan, patriotic poems – as well as to prose – novels, short-stories, biographies, memoirs etc.

**(vi) Gandhian Epoch (1915 to 1945 AD)**

With the emergence of Gandhi (1856-1948) on political scene, his ideology of truth, non-violence and fraternity – spread all across the country bringing to the centre, marginalised segments of society such as the Dalit, labour class and untouchables. Eventually these concerns found expression in Gujarati literature as well and for more than a decade Gujarati writers followed Gandhi's views and propagated them through their poems, plays and fiction. Even the highly Sankritised language of the previous era gave way to simple, day to day, rustic language. Gandhiji himself has contributed to a good extent to literature through his essays, speeches, dialogues, auto-biography, letters etc.

This period witnessed the emergence of many prolific writers. Some were of Gandhian views, some progressively Western / modern, while some continued to function within conservative (even regressive) contexts. Of supreme significance among them were writers like Kakasaheb Kalekar (1885-1981), Kanhaiyalal Munshi (1887-1971), Ramanlal Desai (1892-1954), Dhumketu (1892-1965), Pannalal Patel (1912-1989), Jhaverchand Meghani (1896-1947) and Manubhai Pancholi 'Darshak' (1914-2001), who was a writer, teacher and freedom fighter. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award for his novel *Socrates* (1974)) and the Gyanpith Award for his novel – *Zher to Pidhache Jani Jani* (1972).

Kanhaiyalal Munshi (1887-1971) was a visionary author on the literary scene, unlike his contemporaries of the Gandhian era, he did not get influenced by Gandhi's ideas as he propagated 'Art for Art's Sake' concept. He was much ahead of his time with his modern outlook towards life and nation. He has explored the genres of novel, travelogue, essays, plays, books on history in English. He has written mostly three types of novels – social, historical and mythological. Some of his most famous novels are – *Verni Vasulat* (1913), *Kono Vank?* (1915), *Patanni Prabhuta* (1916), *Gujaratno Nath* (1918), *Pruthvivallabh* (1920), *Rajadhiraj* (1924), *Lopamudra Part – 1* (1933), *Jay Somnath* (1940), etc. His speciality as a writer is his strong theme line and his brilliant character sketches.

Munshi created many powerful characters. His women characters especially were much ahead of their times as they were unlike any women characters Gujarati literature had witnessed. Their boldness, self-sufficiency, ability to fight for their rights were tremendous and they were received well by readers of their time. They set a new bench mark in the portrayal of women characters in Gujarati literature and remained an inspiration for many writers for centuries. Ramanlal Desai (1892-1954) a contemporary of his was another remarkable talent on the scene. He produced some memorable women characters in his novels but unlike Munshi, his women were mostly derived keeping in mind the context of culture, tradition and social acceptance. Majority of his women were self-sacrificing, naive and stereotypically feminine. Another novelist of the era who brought forth the issues of the rural poor labouring class to the forefront through his short-stories and novels was Dhumketu (1892-1965). Ramnarayan V. Pathak 'Dwiref', (1887-1955) was a voice of critical sensibility, his uniqueness lay in his contribution to translation and literary criticism.

A writer known for his realism and realist fiction was, Pannalal Patel (1912-1989) who gave a realistic turn to the form of novel with his narration of rustic veracity of all the aspects of rural life. To increase the impact of the rural set up he makes use of dialects which takes his literature to a different level. He has given many memorable novels – *Vadamana* (1940), *Madela Jiv* (1941), *Bhiru Sathi* Part 1-2 (1942-43), *Manvini Bhavai* (1947) etc., plays, memoirs, children's literature, philosophy. He is the only Gujarati writer who has narrated the life of farmers in realistic, lively and meticulous way in his fiction. He has portrayed a few remarkable women characters and his characters stand out due to their rustic background and unfailing capacity to face the consequences of harsh life with determination. Like Pannalal Patel, Ishwar Petlikar (1916-1983) has also selected themes from rustic background for his novels and short-stories. Other writers of calibre are Chunilal Madia (1922-1968), Shivkumar Joshi (1916-1988), Jyotindra Dave (1909-1980) and Gulabdas Broker (1909-2006), Jhinabhai Ratanji Desai 'Snehrashmi' (1903-1990), Harishchandra Bhatt (1906-1950), Betai (1905-1989), Mansukhlal Jhaveri (1907-1981), Chandravadan Mehta (1901-1991) etc.

Gandhian Era in Gujarati literature witnessed many brilliant gems of literature but the title of 'Yug Kavi' (Poet of the Era) was bestowed upon the best of all – Jhaverchand Meghani (1896-1947). He was an ace poet, playwright and novelist and also a multi-faceted personality. He converted his deep interest in folk life into his life mission by travelling

excessively into the region, meeting different people specially tribes like Barot, Charan, Bharvad etc. along with elderly women of the villages to collect the treasure of folk literature. He has penned many books on folk tales of Gujarat under the titles of *Saurashtrani Rasdhara* Part 1-5 (1923, 24, 25, 27), *Sorthi Baharvatiya* Part 1-2-3 (1927, 28, 29), *Sorthi Santo* (1928), *Sorthi Lokgitao* (1931) etc. He has also edited and published many folk songs. According to Prof. Pushkar Chandavarkar Meghani has saved about 770 folk songs from getting extinct.

Gujarat in the pre-Gandhian era, had established a few drama companies – mostly through the efforts of Parsee writers based in Mumbai. However, these companies had lost their shine and waned due to their greed for fast profit. In the Gandhian era, with the efforts of a playwrights like Chandravadan Mehta (1901-1991), NrusinhVibhakar (1888-1925) and Jayanti Dalal (1909-1970) Gujarati drama and theatre once again regained its previous position of grace and honour.

Poetry in this period has witnessed some brilliant voices, noteworthy poets in the fray were those like, Sundaram (Tribhuvandas Purushottamdas Luhar) (1908-1991), Umashankar Joshi (1911-1988), Prahlad Parekh (1912-1962), Rajendra Shah (1913-2010), Balmukund Dave (1916-1993), Venibhai Purohit (1918-1981), Ushnas (1920-2012), Makrand Dave (1922-2005), Harindra Dave (1930-1995) and Suresh Dalal (1932-2012). Their poetry mirrored the changing socio-political situation, patriotic spirit as well as global perspectives. The gazal form too was explored by poets like Mareez (1917-1983), ‘Shunya’ Palanpuri (1922-1987), Amrut ‘Ghayal’ (1916-2002), Gani Dahiwalā (1908-1987), Shekhamad Abuwalā (1929-1985), and Barkat Virani ‘Befam’ (1923-1994).

Women, in large numbers – under the guidance of Gandhiji and inspired by the spirit of nationalism and education – abandoned the seclusion of their homes and joined the movement for national independence. They sang and composed a number of patriotic songs to be sung not only during processions but on different social occasions like wedding, festivals etc. The traditional forms like ‘garba’, ‘garbi’, ‘rasada’, ‘katha’, ‘bhajan’ were infused with new symbols of patriotism and creatively used to assemble women for the national cause. During the Bardoli Satyagraha many special songs were composed by women poets like Sharda Mehta (1882-1970), Mithuben Petit (1892-1973), Bhaktiba Desai, Jyotsnaben Shukla (1892-1976) making use of rural language to keep up the spirits of peasant women who actively participated in the movement. Rukshmani Parekh published a

collection of poems titled *Swarajya Strotaswini* (1930) where many nationalistic symbols like national flag, 'swadeshi' movement, rentio (spinning wheel) etc. were utilized to exhibit patriotism. Jaymanbehen Pathakji (1901-1984) gave two collections of poems *Tejacchaya* and *Sonalan* and has attempted sonnets, 'khandakavya' and verse-dialogues. Distinguished leaders like Indumati Sheth (1906) and Mrudulaben Sarabhai (1911-1974) also published their collection of national songs titled *Geeto* (1930) promoting the use of khadi and swadeshi products. The most prolific of all women poets was Jyotsnaben Shukla who was a revolutionary freedom fighter, teacher, social worker and who became a chief poet of the period with her nationalistic spirit and creative abilities. She has a few collections of poem to her name like *Aakashman Phool* (1941), *Azadinan Geeto* (1947), *Bapu* (1948). She had also composed many famous songs during the Bardoli Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 advocating national cause and patriotism.

It is important to note here that these women poets who took part in the national cause and encouraged the patriotic spirit among illiterate women folk of their times, came from upper class, educated and liberal minded families. Their education made them well-aware of the current situation and inspired them to participate in the freedom struggle. Also the ongoing freedom struggle was so over powering that their literature merely became a vehicle to carry patriotism and could not go beyond this immediate cause. These women poets were artists of substance but the contemporary situation did not allow them to experiment with any other themes or creative ideas. Some of them did try their hands at expressing various themes like devotion, autobiographical elements (Tapigauri – Munshi's mother in *Anubhav Tarang*), 'khandakavyas' (Dipakba Desai – 1881-1955) as well as injustice to women (Diwaliben Nathalal) but they were over shadowed by the nationalistic spirit.

The nationalistic movement kindled a new hope for the emancipation of women from the tyranny of the age-old rigid customs by providing them an opportunity to step out of the confines of their domestic life with the challenge to prove their ability and strength in public sphere and many women readily joined this movement to achieve the long desired status of equality and liberty only to be disappointed at the end as the leaders appropriated the image of a passive and idealistic women to promote their campaign and they unknowingly but willingly participated in it. Expressing her views on Gandhi and women during nationalism Ketu Katrak states, "Gandhi's specific representations of women and female sexuality, and

his symbolizing from Hindu mythology of selected female figures who embodied a nationalist spirit promoted... a ‘traditional’ ideology wherein female sexuality was legitimately embodied only in marriage, wifehood, domesticity – all forms of controlling women’s bodies” (395-96).

**(vii) Modern Period (1955 to 1985 AD)**

Under the devastating impact of Second World War along with global political upheaval all around, feelings of despair and helplessness increased. On the other hand scientific and technical advancements gave way to a new hope for better life. Mankind found itself getting pounded up between two opposite poles. For India, the joy of independence was trammelled by the horrors of Partition which divided the country along sectarian lines and gave way to communal riots and mass assassination along with the migration of thousands of people. Death of Gandhi came as a big blow to the citizens of the young country. Gradually India came under the influence of Modernism which soon started reflecting in literature. Modernism, which began in the West around 1880, started reflecting in Gujarati literature after 1955. Gujarati writers started expressing newer attitude towards the content and form of literature. Modernism entered Gujarati literature through poetry.

The credit to bring modernism in Gujarati literature goes to Suresh Joshi (1920-1986) who has experimented and contributed tremendously to almost all the genres of Gujarati literature – poetry – *Upjati* (1956), *Pratyancha* (1961), *Itara* (1973), *Tathapi* (1980); Novels – *Chinnapatra* (1965), *Maranottar* (1973); Short-story collections – *Gruhpravesh* (1957), *Apich* (1965), *Na Tatra Suryo Bhati* (1967), *Ekla Naimeshaaranye* (1980); essays, criticism, research, editing, translations. Literary journalism was the source of his inspiration for his literary activities which he carried through various journals like *Falguni*, *Vani* and later *Manisha* and *Kshitij*. Many contemporary writers were influenced by Joshi and significantly contributed to modern trends in poetry. Among them were poets like, Gulammohammad Sheikh, Labhshankar Thakar (1935- 2016), Ravji Patel (1939-1968), Manilal Desai (1939-1966), Sitanshu Yashaschandra (1941), Chandrakant Seth (1938), Ramesh Parekh (1940-2006), Anil Joshi, Aadil Mansuri (1936-2010), Chinu Modi (1939), Rajendra Shukla (1942), Chandrakant Topiwala (1936), Madhu Kothari (1939), Bhagvatikumar Sharma (1939), Jyotish Jani (1928), Vipin Parikh (1930-2010) etc.

During Modern period, the popularity of the novel in Gujarati fiction seemed to decline. The readers found it more and more difficult to make any sense of the Modern novels. Gujarati writers acquired modern trends of writing novel from European writers. In Gujarat, many fiction writers experimented with modern novels like Madhu Rye (1942), Mukund Parikh (1934) Radheshyam Sharma (1936), Kishor Jadav (1938-1018), Jyotish Jani (1928), Ravji Patel (1939-1968), Labhshankar Thakar (1935-2016), Chinu Modi (1939-2017), Pinakin Dave (1935), Jayant Gadit (1938-2009), Dharendra Mehta (1944) and others. Chandrakant Bakshi (1932-2006) and Raghuvir Chaudhari (1938) have given the most number of novels along with their contribution to other genres like poetry, short-stories, plays, essays. Raghuvir Chaudhari makes use of modern technique and sentiments but instead of despair and atheism in existentialism, he makes use of positive attitude, faith and morals while Bakshi depicts the dilemma of individual trying to find balance between personal and social life along with dealing with the issues of loneliness, traditional v/s modern outlook and the changing social and political realities.

The women characters present in the works of modern writers exhibit a kind of restlessness in their attitude and views and many of them are quite impulsive while making important decisions about their lives owing to the newly found modernist tendencies as experienced by people in modern society. They seem to be dazed by the newly found sense of freedom and want to make full use of it but at the same time they are also aware of the binding chains of social expectations which continue to prevail. Two extremely opposite pictures of women are presented by these writers where on the one hand we have good archetypal women like Aai and Aruna in Dharendra Mehta's novels *Adrashya* and *Be Beheno*, while on the other hand we find autonomous and independent-spirited women who are cast as self-centred and heartless in their demeanour towards other characters, especially towards men – for example the character of Nira in *Ekaltana Kinara*, Keya in *Baki Raat*, Vagdevi in *Maru Naam Taru Naam* in novels by Chandrakant Bakshi.

There is a third type of woman who is trapped between the orthodox social beliefs and unconventional modern trends and who could not decide which side to choose (like Amruta in the novel with the same title by Raghuvir Chaudhari, Karuna in *Be Beheno* by Dharendra Mehta, Roma in the novel bearing the same title by Bakshi). Majority of these women are highly educated and involved in one or the other professions still at times they behave in a reckless way like getting separated from their husbands on a trivial matter, extra-marital

relationships only to satisfy their physical needs or decision to get married only for the sake of getting rid of their loneliness. It seems the writers want to indicate that the women in modern era are yet to make peace with the rapidly changing time, the changing connotations of successful and fulfilling life and thus behave in an amateur way exhibiting their lack of reasoning abilities and adaptability skill without considering the fact that the social standards for both the genders have always been different and for women they pose greater challenge in form of being modern, smart and extrovert personality in the public life while docile and naive being in private life. The sudden shift and role reversal has put much mental burden on women that their confused state of mind is the result of it.

During Modern period many plays were written in Gujarati by famous play-wrights like Mahesh Dave, Chandrakant Seth, Raghuvir Chaudhari, Madhu Rye, Rasiklal Parikh (1897-1982). During the period the activity of journalism was accelerated with the development of mass media. The genre of essay became a handy tool for expressing views and connecting with the people and a number of essays started to get published regularly. Essays and criticism are closely linked and many famous essayists tried their hands at criticism with their analytical skills like Suresh Joshi, Prof. Harivallabh Bhayani (1917-2000), Nagindas Parekh (1903-1993), Jayant Kothari (1930-2001), Pramodkumar Patel (1933-1996), Sitanshu Yashshchandra, Raghuvir Chaudhari, Chandrakant Sheth, Ramesh Shukla, Pravin Darji (1944), Madhusudan Parekh (1923) etc.

#### **(viii) Post-modern Time (1985 to present)**

The Modernistic movement started losing its grasp by late 19<sup>th</sup> century. On one side political upheaval, economic imbalance, communal riots and terrorism increased the sense of insecurity and fanaticism, while on the other hand, the developments in science and technology promised a better, comfortable life-style with the relaxation of physical boundaries giving a new sense of freedom. The world was divided into two extreme helms – the underprivileged and downtrodden communities were fighting for their rights and demanded justice while the rising middle-class section was looking forward to a promising future with the help of newly found opportunities in the field of education and professions. This acute contrast created much confusion giving way to a class struggle of a different kind. The rising power of media spread awareness towards the differences as well as the commonalities broadening our spectrum of knowledge and opportunities. People in general were struggling to find balance between the extremes and faced dilemma which was

reflected in the literature of the time too. Literature of the period reflected this confusion and a clear marking of two trends emerged – Modernism and Post-modernism.

Gujarati literature started reflecting Post-modern traits. Plenty of poems were composed during this period. In Sarup Dhruv's (1948) two poetry collections *Sabarmati Puche Che* (1986) and *Salagti Havao* (1995) she brings to light the contemporary issues of the Dalit community, communal riots, Bhopal gas leak tragedy, famine, child labour and her poems are the examples of Post-modern literature. Another eminent poet of this era was Meghnad Bhatt (1935-1997).

With the inception of Dalit Movement all across India, Gujarati literature too started reflecting the struggles of the oppressed caste in form of Dalit literature. Gujarati Dalit literature, like other Dalit writings, is a result of the insurgency against the exploitation of the upper castes for centuries. Many poets from Dalit communities of Gujarat – Himmat Khatsurya, Harish Mangalam (1952), Dalpat Chauhan (1940), Nirav Patel (1950-2019), Praving Gadhvi (1951) etc. came to the literary scene and gave a number of poetry voicing against the injustice bore by Dalit community at the hands of upper castes for centuries. Joseph Macwan (1936-2010) was a prolific prose writer of the era who received Sahitya Akademi Award for his first novel *Angaliyat* (1986). These writers contributed to Gujarati literature with their creative talent by bringing to light the suffering and exploitation of this community. Many of them made use of special dialect spoken by the people of this community to give realistic touch to their literature. They, through their literature, created a few women characters of substance (Kanku in *Angaliyat* by Macwan) and through them had depicted the pathetic condition of the women of their community who had to face the 'double oppression' at the hands of the upper-caste as well as the men folk.

The genre of fiction has developed tremendously during Post-modern period in Gujarat. The flow of fiction which had slowed down during Modern period seemed to have speeded up during this era. Although the novels were written in greater numbers compared to any other genre, they lacked Modernist technique and skill. Dhruv Bhatt (1947) with a range of well-known novels – *Agnikanya* (1988), *Samudrantike* (1993), *Tattvamasi* (1998), *Akoopar* (2010) etc. emerged as a strong voice and he advocated the theme of 'eco-feminism' and wrote about the lives of the much neglected communities of tribals – he foregrounded their rich cultural heritage and emphasised the alternative ways of living life in alignment with nature. Many powerful women characters like Supriya, Puriya or Ma of

Ranigufa in *Tattvamasi* or Awal in *Samudrantike* appear in the fiction by Dhruv Bhatt who emerged as strong individuals of either the tribal groups or educated young women devoting their lives in service of humanity and protecting nature.

The emergence of women writers on the horizon of Gujarati literature was a slow and gradual process which fruited in the twentieth century within modern and postmodern contexts. The impact of B. R. Ambedkar's transforming feminist thoughts, the general spread of education and lifestyle changes led to the emergence of first generation women writers and poets in Gujarat. Among them were, for instance, writers like Vidyagauri Nilkanth, Lilavati Munshi, Hansa Mehta, Vinodini Nilkanth and others. In the second generation followed, gutsy women writers like Dhiruben Patel, Kundanika Kapadia, Saroj Pathak, Varsha Adalja, Ila Mehta and Himanshi Shelat and many more. An extensive and critical appraisal of women's writing in Gujarati is taken up in the next chapter – Chapter One.

#### **(ix) Folk and Tribal Literature**

##### **Folk Literature**

Gujarat has a rich heritage of various performing arts and mainstream literatures. To add to this is the rich legacy of its regional and folk literatures. Gujarat's folk literature is an ancient collective asset which has continued to prevail into contemporary times – garbas, bhavai, prabhatiyas – remind us of the prosperous cultural heritage of the state.

Folk literature is the oldest doctrine of any civilization created by indigenous people and it is idiomatic in nature reflecting the tradition, customs and rituals of the then society. The earlier folk literature was in oral form – it was spread and preserved through strong oral traditions of India in various parts of different pan Indian regions. Proper documentation of folklore happened much later. As oral, flowing and fluid literature of and by the people, folk literature, as we know it, must have passed through a great deal of editing and modification. As literature that has been part of living human traditions and is a rich conglomerate of social norms, lifestyle and customs, festivals, culture, land and seasons – folk literature is a treasure house of cultural, moral, social and emotional imprints of the region of its birth. Popular myth, indigenous and mainstream gods and goddesses, tales from the region and from the scriptural – Vedic and Pauranic – texts and epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata make their way into the larger fabric of folk. So also, small details from the life, customs,

festivals, food habits and region of the people who were co-creators of the songs and stories that have come down to us. As Hasu Yagnik points out, these were songs that mingled the mainstream with the margins, “Elements which give pleasure of miracle are taken in folk tradition from written tradition” (my tran.; 22).

The folk literature of Gujarat has mostly been preserved and documented by scholars and performers of the Charan and Barot communities. Besides the Charans and the Barots there were other groups – Mir, Raval, Turi etc. who were famous for their narrative skills. But out of all these only Charan and Barot received royal patronage and became more popular with their special skills in the art of narrative and performance. Majority of the royal courts had their bard poets who were invited on special occasions to sing songs in praise of the bravery and adventures of the King or to narrate stories of the sacrifice, charitable spirit of the ancestors of the royal family. Much of Barot literature was preserved in form of manuscripts but later with careless handling much of it was lost and got extinct. Many scholars like Dr. Balvant Jani (1951), Prof. Narottam Palan (1935), K. C. Barot, Ambalal Rohadiya, Ratudan Rohadiya (1928-2008) etc. have done tremendous research in the field of Barot literary tradition but unlike Charani literature (comparatively many manuscripts of Charani literature were preserved), extended research was not possible due to the lack of the preservation of manuscripts.

Charani dialect has gained its traits from both Gujarati as well as Rajasthani languages. Charani literature flourished in royal courts as well as amongst the common folk equally and it has influenced the mainstream Gujarati literature as during the Medieval period a free exchange of ideas and themes had occurred between both the types of literature. Starting from Bhalan, Shamal, Dayaram till Premananda (who has used many Charani ‘*duhas*’ in his Aakhyanas) many well-known Gujarati poets have been influenced by folk literature of the time. Even scholar like Hemachandracharya has used some ‘*duhas*’ of Charani literature as an example of Aapbhransh grammar. When Gujarati language was still developing, Charani was a fully developed dialect with many verse and prose genres well-developed like Bhakti songs, biography, ‘birdavali’, ‘charuj’, ‘baarmasi’, ‘veli’, ‘raas’, ‘sako’ (narration of adventure), ‘prakash’, ‘rupak’, ‘vilas’, ‘saroj’, ‘saloka’, ‘zhulana’, poetry, ‘nishani’ etc. A major name in Charani literary field is that of Dula Bhaya Kag (1903-1977), also known as Kagbapu whose tremendous contribution was in form of his songs and poems in an eight-volume work known as *Kagvani*, *Gurumahima*, *Chandrabavni*, *Vinoba-Baavani*,

*Sorath-Baavani*. His songs and poems were mostly divisional and patriotic in nature. Another notable personality who has contributed immensely in the field of folk literature is that of Joravarsinh Jadav (1940) in form of 94 works written, edited and compiled by him. These volumes consist of folk stories, children's stories, folk songs and criticism of folk art and culture.

### **Contribution of Women to Folk literature**

Women played an active role in composition and spread of folk literature through songs, lullabies and hymnals. Hasu Yagnik in his book *Guajarati Loksāhityani Jivanchakra Antargat Rachanāo* expresses his view that folksongs are the monopoly of women rather than men in Gujarat and the compositions, which are depended on life cycle, also prove the same (17). Folk literature was a tool for them to voice their feelings and to lessen the burden of household chores through the musical representation of their emotions. It also brought some charm and novelty to their routine monotonous lives, a vehicle to express their emotions which otherwise remain unexpressed. As G. S. Jayashree comments on the contribution of women to enrich folk literature, "It is worth mentioning that the voice of the woman resounds more in the oral narratives of the *bhashas* and in folk songs and performances than in published or classical works. It is also possible to trace a female literary tradition as a more or less continuous trajectory from the earliest periods of recorded history of the present times in the *bhashas*. It reveals an inheritance of covert and at times overt resistance to the marginalization of the woman and to institutions of patriarchy... The ways in which the distinctive female identity is established through the oral and written traditions have many parallels in the literature(s) of the various regional languages in India" (97-98).

Thus, women had monopoly on the composition and performance of folk literature. It is surprising to find that the emotion of separation has been expressed mainly in folk literature by women of Kathiawad. There are a number of reasons for this – many dwellers of Saurashtra region were sea fearers due to easy proximity of sea and they crossed it in search of commerce, a big section was of herdsmen who had to leave the dry region in search of food for their cattle, Rajputs form a major section of the population who had to travel distance places with their army to fight. Under these circumstances, women had to suffer separation of their lovers or husbands and these emotions were expressed through songs depicting their worries for their beloved and their emotional imbalance. During this initial

phase of literary tradition, where female voice was hushed or not considered seriously, folk literature provided an outlet to their innermost feelings without any vacillation.

Women have not only composed folk songs and stories, they have also been a component of this literature, their presence exists in the form of many symbols that indicate various feminine features associated with them. In folk literature women had been compared with many elements of nature like animals and birds – mare (courage, youth and personality), lioness (wildness and strength), female deer (fearful nature), peahen (attractive style of walking), she cuckoo (sweetness of her voice), she snake (her ability to mesmerise through her killing beauty), eagle (determination) etc. The bird symbols also indicate her fate of not being able to stay at one place forever (her shifting to her in-law's house after marriage).

Folk songs designate the predicament of the women of that particular region by throwing light on the different aspects of their personality as well as psychology. Harivallabh Bhayani in his essay 'Bhātigal Sāmagri Thāl' has rightly said that folksongs, a catalyst of expressing emotions of life, are significant for psychology of women. (qtd. in Yagnik 4) Women have contributed immensely in preserving and spreading the folk literature in forms of Rasda, Garba, Lagnageeto (Wedding songs), Kirtan (Hymns), Khayana (short poems mostly couplets about mysteries of life mostly sung by labour class women of south Gujarat while toiling in farm), Fatana (sarcastic and humorous folk songs to be sung on the occasion of marriage) etc. to be used at various occasions and which have become part of the general life style. But their major contribution was in the composition of songs in reference to the occasion of marriage called Lagna-geeto. Such types of songs have the maximum variety available according to the various rituals associated with the occasion or in reference to the bride and the groom and their family members.

Apart from the songs of marriage rituals, many songs were found where a maiden girl curious for marriage can express her desire to her grandfather known as 'Chundadi Lagnageet' or songs which point out to the predicament of a bride after her marriage in her in-law's house, her plight in an ill-assorted marriage etc. Folk songs give opportunity to women to express their sentiments openly to their family or society unlike the mainstream literature. In folk songs the inner most feelings are expressed publically without any hesitation. Folk literature is not created only for the sake of entertainment but to voice the contemporary personal and social issues faced by women.

Other types of folk literature found in abundance are ‘Vratkatha’ (tales of vows) and ‘Ballokkatha’ (tales for children). Vratkatha are specially created for women folks and they had religious connotations. These tales are about various vows to be taken and followed by women for various reasons – festivals, family problems, worshipping god/goddess on certain occasion, for the long life and health of husband or parents etc. Meghani has compiled many such tales in his collection titled *Kankavati* (1927). Children’s folk tales are to be narrated by grandfather/mother to children at bed time. It is to be narrated in special style with some spontaneous performances like imitating the voice of some animal or bird to make it more interesting and appealing to children. Meghani has collected many such stories in *Dadajini Vato* (1927) and even Gijubhai Badheka has edited many such tales.

### **Tribal Literature**

The state of Gujarat has rich and sustaining traditions of tribal literatures and indigenous systems of knowledge. The extended tribal belt from Danta to Dang district itself makes for 14% of the state’s population. Many tribals reside in this tribal belts of Gujarat region, among them are the Bhil, Ghoghala, Rathva, Nayaka, Tadavi, Vasava and the Pateliya in districts like Danta, Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Panchmahal, Bharuch, Surat, Valsad, Dang etc. There are around twenty nine tribal groups residing in Gujarat. Every tribal group is known by its traditional names. The major tribal groups are of Bhil and Dubra tribes.

Tribal literature is mostly religious in flavour and is inspired by scriptures and popular myths. Apart from religion, associated tribal rituals, pagan myth and lore also find reflection and representation in it. Tribal cultures, often follow the popular religion like Hinduism, Christianity, Islam (after they get converted) yet they do not follow these religions in the conventional way. They have their own Gods and Goddesses whom they worship with sincere devotion. This literature can assist to get a better idea of tribal people and their culture. Their literature is rich in both prose and verse with various genres like story, poetry, epics etc. The use of the special tribal dialect prevailing in the region gives this literature a special trait. Tribal literature of Gujarat was mostly oral but later with the attempts of many scholars like Chandrashobha Deshmukh, L.D. Joshi, Nathji Pathak, Pandurang Vanikar, Dr. Bhagwandas Patel (1943), Hasu Yagnik (1938) and tribals like Lalchand Ninama, Ghelubhai Nayak, Shankarbhai and Revaben Tadvī documentation and preservation of tribal literature was initiated. In more recent times, Professor Ganesh Devy has done a lot of work in tribal languages and literatures of Gujarat.

Unlike the civilized society, tribal society had been matriarchal since the beginning. The man had to wander constantly for the sake of hunting so the family was influenced by the mother and the society was matriarchal in nature. In words of Dr. Bhagvandas Patel, “In the matriarchal social system the entire control of social, economic, political and religious matters were in the hands of women. Women used to take part in religious rituals. There were many female deities worshipped and it was believed that these deities protect the society. Female deities were considered as ancestors in tribal culture” (my tran.; 4).

Later after the acquisition of farming and cattle herding as life style, the male started gaining more importance as these activities require his attention. The patriarchal social system was introduced in the society mostly dependent on farming and the female started losing her power gradually. Still the tribal women are more liberal and enjoy better position and freedom compared to civilized society. Equal rights for women is not a new concept among tribals, whose culture was essentially non-discriminatory and held its women at par with men in the society. According to Bhagvandas Patel in tribal culture women even enjoyed sexual freedom and their sexuality has been accepted naturally without any social bias. They are free in the matters of choosing their life partners or getting a divorce. Even a woman with a child out of her pre-marital relationship is accepted with respect by her future husband without any rancour (2008).

Women have been active agents not just in the composition of tribal literature but also in its performance. They have participated in narration, singing and dancing sessions of the stories and thus they could express their desires and passion without any social restrictions. Even the representation of women in tribal literature reflects the concept of equality and liberation. Many tribal oral epics are women centric where women emerge as stronger personalities and often over power their male counterparts. The two very important tribal epics *Rom Sitamani Varta* and *Bhilo nu Bharath* are the tribal versions of the Sanskrit epics – the Ramayana and the Mahabharata respectively. It is important to note that these oral tribal epics, although they are inspired by the ancient epics, differ considerably from the original especially in the matter of representation of women characters. Unlike the original epics these tribal versions seem to be woman-centric where women characters emerge stronger, more powerful and dominating compared to their male counterparts. For example, the characters of Sita, Draupadi, Kunti and many others are very well defined and are portrayed as taking active part in political, social, religious matters along with the men of the family. At no point

they are depicted as helpless, naive creatures but are shown to guide and inspire male characters at every important junction of their lives.

These tribal epics honour their women characters and they also reflect the traits of their ancient matriarchal society. For example, these epics do not have controversial episodes from the original versions like Sita's 'Agnipariksha', even the episode of Ram's decision to abandon Sita is not based on the issues of public opinion or family honour but due to a quarrel taking place between Sita and Kaushalya leading to the same. The episode of Yudhishtira staking Draupadi in gambling followed by Draupadi's 'Vastraharan' is completely skipped. Women at no point of time have to face disrespect or guilt due to their gender. Even they are never accused of being the reasons of the wars taking place. They are given due respect as they emerge as individual personalities having liberal minds and powerful personality traits. They do not just share equal status with men but they emerge stronger than men at many points. Men are shown to seek their help and advice often while taking any important decision. They become friend, philosopher and guide for men in these epics.

Other rural tribal epics like *Bagdavat Lokkatha*, *Gujrano Aerlo*, *Pabuji* and *Rathod Varta* are mostly based on patriarchal notions of bravery and revenge so compared to the above two epics women characters could not develop naturally in them. Still they do have strong women characters like Jelu, Sadhu, Rakhma etc. in *Gujrano Aerlo* and Morchangrani, Aadkhu, Devlo, Hirapath, Mansa, Maran etc. in *Rathod Varta* who can boldly put forward their opinions even in the patriarchal society and share equal status and at times influence men with their wit, sarcasm and power.

To conclude, we can say that women in folk and tribal literatures have enriched the literary tradition of Gujarat with their novel themes, character portrayal, representations of various elements of nature as well as the contemporary society in various shades. The speciality of this literature is that it represents society, nature, religion and characters as they are and not as they should be and this very aspect throws light on the fact that tribals are free from repressive attitudes of civilized society and they follow the rules of nature whole heartedly without corrupt interventions from the so called patriarchal and civilized worlds.

### **Concluding Remarks**

To sum up, therefore the Introduction, has offered a blueprint of the scope, contexts and framework of my research on Gujarati women's writing (fiction) in English translation. Section I of the Introduction discusses in some detail, Andre Lefevere's critical framework for translation as an act of "rewriting". And Section II has attempted a survey of the cultural and literary history of Gujarat (land of the Gurjars – Gurjar Pradesh), from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the present contemporary time. I have tried to map in brief, the various political, social, economic phases of the land and its people and tried to link them to the different anthropological and historical aspects.

The region has produced many legends at political, social, spiritual and literary fields that have inspired a number of people all across the globe. It has a rich heritage of tremendous literature created by talented and visionary writers along with plenty of folk and tribal literature. Gujarat has produced many literary gems who exhibited their creative potential by exploring various genres and narrative style. They have tried to convert social realities into literary themes and vice versa, as they have striven to present them artistically through various characters. In the midst of it all, how has Gujarat treated its women and represented them in real life and in fiction; that is a central question around which my work revolves.

Since the focal point of my research is to survey the position of women in real life and society and how they are received by literature, I have investigated various factors related to the lives of women and cultural and traditional factors responsible for their condition in society and family. To check how the literature responds to women and their condition, I analysed Gujarati literature beginning from 12<sup>th</sup> century till present time – mainstream as well as folk and tribal literature and I have arrived at the conclusion that the region of Gujarat has passed through numerous phases during different periods of its formation without losing its hospitable, catholic spirit and multi-dimensional characteristic. The women characters have been represented in Gujarati literature since earlier periods but during the initial phase their presence was not taken note of or used as a background for the main theme based on male experiences. Although they were present, they did not receive complete attention of the authors and many aspects of their female personalities were concealed under the garb of traditional and cultural ideologies.

Gujarati literature had to wait for a prolonged period to receive literature where all the hues of female gender, her emotions, her desires and her views can get expressed.

Initially their images were more based on religious and cultural ideology presenting them as mannequin of ideal images of socially expected norms but later after 18<sup>th</sup> century more realistic representations started to appear where female voice was heard with special attention and women were depicted on more human ground as independent beings. Women characters started getting relieved from the image of docile and meek persons completely dependent on men for their survival to strong, independent and bold personas ready to take full responsibilities of their lives. Also, unlike the earlier period where only women from royal and well-to-do families were present in literature, women from all walks of life started to appear in literature describing the social realities of various class and caste. The trajectory of women's representation(s) in fiction across the various phases of Gujarati literature has been interesting, beginning with absence to their partial presence and later, their full-fledged arrival in fiction as writers and characters covering various realities and aspects of a woman's life and sensibility.

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