

Women's Poetry in Telugu, 1900-1950:
A Comparative Study of Text and Context

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CERTIFICATE

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Date:

This is to certify that I, Karri Syamala, have carried out the research embodied in the present dissertation “Women’s Poetry in Telugu, 1900-1950: A Comparative Study of Text and Context” for the full time prescribed under the Ph.D ordinances of the University of Hyderabad.

I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this dissertation was earlier submitted for the award of a research degree of any university.

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In memory of my husband

Late K. Godavari Sarma

The work is dedicated to you

For you, who taught me how to dream.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Poetry is the reality, no doubt,

But the poet too compels attention.

(K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sterling.1984, 55.

Women's writing in India is not a new or a recent phenomenon. Indian literary history, though not distinctly, has enlisted many women writers, across India, and they seem to have written from 600 B.C., (Tharu and Lalitha xvi) or maybe even before it. But to our surprise, of all these centuries of their literary strife, very little is known about them until recently. It was said that women have had their share in producing great literature even from the period of Rig Veda, the composition of *The Hymns* by Ghosha, and a series of poems in a collection by Buddhist nuns named *Theri-gatha*, to name a few (Margeret 3).

When gender studies began to probe into women's writings, it has been able to unearth the hitherto hidden literary creativity of Indian women. Women's studies as a discipline has

enabled us to know about various situations encountered by women, about various issues concerning them, about their suppressed urges etc., and about issues which had been recast in their writings. The corpus of women's writing that has been unearthed, encompasses all the genres of literature like poetry, short stories, novels, biographies, articles (to be published in magazines), letters, and journalistic writing. The following words from *Women Writing in India* by Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha, confirm this:

To our surprise we found that the early twentieth century, commonly considered a period when the women's movement was at low ebb, had been a high point of women's journalism. In almost every region women edited journals for women [...] and many hundreds of women wrote in them (Tharu and Lalitha xviii).

The above statement also asserts the geographical distribution of women's journalistic writing throughout the country. However, their writing was neither considered seriously nor received any scholarly attention until recently. This reveals the condition of women's writing which took centuries of their tireless effort despite recognition to assert and establish themselves as writers.

In a society where the social status of women had been inferior and they felt neglected, it is no wonder that women writers had not outwardly expressed themselves. However, even in such adverse circumstances, we hear some names of women here and there in Indian Literature, since Vedic period. Women poets like Ghosa, Saswathi, Romasa, Lopamudra, Apala, Viswavara, Gargi, Sulabha, and Mythreyi are a few among them. The book, *Indian Poetess: From Vedic to Modern Times* made an attempt to bring representative "Indian poetesses" who belong to

different ages (literary periods) and whose work is difficult of access (Margaret v). It also represented women's work in different vernaculars with varied themes and poetic value, taking selected poems from Buddhist poetesses, from Vedic Sanskrit, from the mediaeval period (which is known for its religious poetry) of the bhakti school up to the poetesses who wrote in English including the works of Aru Dutt, Toru Dutt, Ellen Goreh and Sarojini Naidu (Margaret 27). The book, with its English translations, gives a panoramic view of poetry, by Indian women poets over the centuries.

Here is a stanza of an English translation of the Vedic poet Ghosha:

A Prayer to the Aswins

I call to you, O Aswins, listen to my cry,

And give your help to me as parents to a son;

Friendless am I, bereft of relative, and poor,

Save me, O save me from the curse which rests on me. (Margaret 29)

The poem talk about the poet's seeking boons by invoking gods like Aswini. It is a traditional song of prayer to the gods. There is a curious observation found in another book titled, *Literature in the Vedic Age*, which gives information about Vedic women poets:

[..] the nature of their prayers, reveal the social background of their composers, who thus become fairly representative of their society. Ghosa was a maiden anxious to get married while Surya was the newly wedded wife. In Sasvati we have an affectionate and faithful wife. Indrani is a jealous wife while Romasa and Lopamudra are voluptuous women. Apala's plea is moving, she is sick and abandoned by her husband. Visvavara is a happy and contented matron, while Aditi is a proud mother. Poor Godha was a modest and righteous woman. The nymph Urvashi, as her lover says, has the heart of a hyena and Yami is eager to seduce her twin brother Yama. Thus no two women are exactly alike and together they offer a glimpse into the feminine world in Vedic society. (Bhattacharji 8-9)

All these Vedic songs / hymns, reinforce women's involvement in their lives.

To put it precisely, Indian literature by women, though it was struck with the limitations of varied kind in each period, had never given up on its creativity. Moreover, it challenged the changing times and made its presence felt throughout. Women seem to have also in their writings captured their overriding emotions with consciousness and sensibility, compelled with their experiences, their cultural ethos, caste and creed which they had inhabited.

Though a few names of women and their creativity bring some strength to the above argument, there are instances where women were allowed very little to voice. The woman's social position as a subordinate/subaltern did not allow her to open her mouth before her social superiors. Hence her literary contribution remained unheeded. The story of Apala who contributed to Vedic hymns shows how she "was rejected by her husband, because she had a disfiguring skin Disease" (de Souza 1).

The stories of the religious poets of the bhakti school of the mediaval period, reveal to us the pathetic familial conditions and social situations they had encountered, to reach their goal of divinity. The life stories of Akka Maha Devi, Meerabai and many more tell us of their persistent struggle to be relieved from familial bondages, which sometimes went to the extent of their death¹

In her introduction to her poetry anthology *Nine Indian Women Poets*, Eunice de Souza says that though in India women's writing poetry was observed from about 1000 B.C., on both religious and secular themes, very little of it got recognized and acknowledged (de Souza 1). Even standard books of Indian literary history could document very little. de Souza says: "Some of it has been almost entirely forgotten. Even standard histories of Indian writing [...] club a number of women together in one chapter, often mentioning some of them only in passing reference (de Souza xiii).

Taking this as its backdrop, my work focuses on women's writing, mainly on the works of early twentieth century women writers of Telugu in India. This study attempts a comparative approach to the study of the Telugu poets. I have translated fifty poems from Telugu to English to discuss their work in relation to other women poets who wrote in English during the same period. As the number of women poets who have written in English during the same period is rather small, I have mainly discussed the work of the Telugu women poets, bringing in the comparative aspect in relation to the poems written in English wherever necessary. Cross-cultural studies help a lot in understanding the basic emotions felt by women writers across

¹ Volga says this in her introduction to *Kavayitrula Kavitha Margam* by Silalolitha. Volga is a contemporary Telugu feminist writer. In this introduction she elaborately discusses the conceptual frameworks that governed Telugu women's literary history.

different language cultures. The protest, whatever little there was made by the early modern women writers, is due to their centuries long suppression, gender discrimination and their forced submission to the illogical, social and moral taboos that prevailed in the male dominated society. In spite of facing such struggles, women still could explore their glorious creative worlds and made their presence felt. Geraldine Forbes in her *Woman in Modern India* discusses in detail the social status of women in India:

Historically, women experienced [...] rules and prescriptions differently depending on their religion, caste, class, age and their place in the family hierarchy. There were women who lived up to the ideal of womanhood but there were also women who rebelled against these prescriptions (Forbes 19).

India has witnessed many social changes in the period between 1900 and 1950. One among such changes was the advent of English language (Dayal 192-3). New educational reforms, received attention with the Charter Act of 1813 with the release of some funds by the British Government to encourage and spread education in India. But very little expansion of education at a very low pace was observed with the entry of a few middle class Indians at this initial stage. Some (Indian) Orientalists led by the British thinkers such as H. H. Wilson raised an argument in support of “learning Classical Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic” as these languages have their “moral spiritual values and [the] rich religious philosophy” (Dayal 192). But the counter argument was put forward by Anglicists and Indian reformers like Ram Mohan Roy in support of English system of Education. They stated that “western education was liberal and scientific” and that it emphasized “rationalism and humanism,” which was contrary to what they felt as static orthodoxy and narrow minded Indian culture. When such divergent thoughts and opinions were prevalent, Macaulay, the law member of the Governor-General’s Council and an ardent

supporter of English, issued his Minute in 1833, which led to English becoming the official Language. As an extension of this, “William Bentick, the Governor General, issued a Proclamation in March 1835, saying that henceforth Government funds would be utilized for English education” (Dayal 193). This opportunity, though “a setback to Oriental Learning,” gave a scope to impart “Western Literary and Scientific Knowledge to Indian students and scholars”(Dayal 193). The acquisition of English language and their awareness of higher education brought in a radical transformation in them. This new language and new awareness gave them a new insight. It further roused a political consciousness and created an urge in them to take an active part in India’s struggle for freedom. Thus, for the Indians, the new education had resulted in a new awakening.

However, Indian society had different views on women’s education. Indian reformers, in the beginning wanted to impart education to women to make them play good roles as wives and mothers to run the household but not to allow them to take part in any outside (social) activities. Only very few girls from the elite families could avail the opportunity of getting English education despite objections from the then society and community. Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922),² and gifted writers of Indian English, Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu are a few names which come under such privilege.

Contrary to boys’ education, the position of girls’ education in India was quite discouraging. British writers and their “Civilizing mission” clearly demanded education for women. In the words of Geraldine Forbes, “Influential British writers condemned Indian religions, culture, and society for their rules and customs regarding women.” (Forbes 12). These

² Ramabai, the founder of Sharada Sadan, a widow’s home, did a lot to educate women. She supported herself by selling her writings, *Stree Dharma Neeti* (Morals for Women) 1882, *High Caste Hindu Women*, 1888.

charges by the Britishers led Indian women to become learned and to lead a life of “New Women” (Forbes 61), which in turn promoted the establishment of girls’ schools for the first time in India in cities like Poona and Calcutta. In advocating English education in India, Christian missionaries were the pioneers. They took lead in establishing schools in Madras and Bengal and taught English as one of the subjects.

In the progress of women’s education, Lord Dalhousie, Governor-General of India (1848-1856) is to be acknowledged as an ardent supporter of women’s education. When the “Wood’s Dispatch”, containing Educational Development programmes, was passed in 1854, a special reference was made for the education and employment for women (Dodwell 335). The government took the responsibility for making women literate by arranging girls’ schools separately, to start with at the primary level. Along with the support from the government, many patrons including the reformists came forward to enlist their support for women’s education.

Organizations like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and Theosophical Society too extended their services in promoting women’s education. A record was found that stated that two girls named Kadambini Basu and Chandramukhi Basu were the first women graduates (in the British Empire), who received their B.A.s from Bethune College in 1883, affiliated to Calcutta University (Forbes 43). The success story of women’s education during this period led to the foundation being laid for many more girls schools across the country. Madras Theosophical Society led by Annie Besant (1847-1933), Arya Samaj in North India, Arya Kanya Pathashala (Girls’ School) of Jullundhar in 1890 with a lady as its Principal are a few among them. Pandita Ramabai’s efforts should not be ignored in this context, as she was the first person in India in educating widows (Forbes 47). Savitribhai Phule’s role in educating women acquires greater significance, for she pioneered the education of women from the lower castes. Through the

efforts of these educated women, women became stronger in the subsequent generations. The first generation educated women have “articulated the needs of women, critiqued their society and the foreign rulers and developed their own institutions” (Forbes 61). These “new women” paved the way for the emergence of women’s organizations, which can be considered historic events. Women started to involve themselves in social activities and in the meetings of women organizers outside their families. This can be considered as an early sign of the advent of modernity in women’s lives and some of these women even felt the need to share English as a common language (Forbes 64). In this context it is pertinent to refer to Savitribhai Phule’s poem, “Mother English.”

This newly introduced education encouraged women of India to become “progressive” in their attitude. The significant achievement in the field of women’s education was the entry of women in colleges. There were a few arts’ colleges which were meant for women. Medical colleges, teacher training colleges, vocational education centres including colleges of law, commerce, technical and industrial courses too became centres for the enrolment of girls. A significant moment in this context is the establishment of Shrimati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women’s University in 1916 in Bombay. Pandita Ramabai, who was reputed to be the first woman to have read the Vedas in modern times, the founder of Sharada Sadan, Bombay, a school for widows, Rani Chimnabai of Baroda, Cornelia Sorabji, the first Indian woman barrister are products of some of these institutions. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Pandit Vidya Sagar, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and in the Andhra region Kandukuri Veerasalingam and Raghupathi Venkataratnam Naidu and many more made major efforts on behalf of women.

Their English learning enabled them to move with the times. Women have “joined the new clubs and associations formed for women” (Forbes 64). Such dynamic activities led them to

become women participants of Indian National Congress and the National Social Conference during the Indian Independence movement.

These “new learned women,” with their dynamic process of communication in English, voiced their feelings on political, economic and social conditions of the country in their writings. There was a visible growth of women writers in various Indian languages too around this time. They were eager to know more about women related issues taking place across India and outside. Women’s journals made a lot of contribution in the production of a large corpus of women’s writing during this period.

In the Telugu language, there were magazines like *Gruhalakshmi*, *Anasuya*, *Hindusundari*, to mention a just few titles, meant exclusively for women. Many of these magazines played a major role during this period and placed hundreds of women writers on the literary front. There were a few magazines in Telugu, which were exclusively run by women editors and very successfully too. The list of women’s journals includes:

<i>Andhra Lakshmi</i>	edited by	Kallepalli Venkata Ramanamma,
<i>Hindusundari</i>	edited by	Balanthrapu Seshamma,
<i>Savitri</i>	edited by	Pulugurtha Lakshmi Narasamamba
<i>Anasuya</i>	edited by	Vinjamuri Venkatarathnamma.

K. N. Kesari, a sympathizer and social supporter of women's education, was the editor of the women's magazine, *Gruhalakshmi*. Through this magazine, he even felicitated the best women writers of each year by conferring 'Gruhalakshmi Swarnakankanam' (Gruhalakshmi Golden Bracelet) award, presenting it on the eve of the birth celebrations of one of the earliest Telugu poets, Molla. Kanuparthi Varalakshamma, Kavithilaka Kanchanapalli Kanakamba and Sthanapathi Rukmini were among the recipients of the award. This award was considered the best and the most prestigious award among literary circles. A few of these award winning poets have been represented in the present dissertation. The emergence of these organizations for women at pan-India level enabled them at later phase to "take up leadership roles in politics and social institutions [...] in the construction of the Indian nation" (Forbes 64).

During this period "Brahmo Samaj, the Bengal-based reform society" in Bengal sponsored educational programmes, and "supported reforms for women" and in 1865 conducted a meeting to discuss various issues related to women (Forbes 64). The Prardhana Samaj in Bombay too helped in improving women's status. Pandita Ramabai with the help of Justice Ranade (in 1882) and a few of his friends, "helped in setting up the Arya Mahila Samaj for the general uplift and enlightenment of women" (Forbes 46). Along with these organizations, there were some notable women reform associations. Bharat Mahila Parishad (Women's Social Conference) of the National Social Conference was one among such which was inaugurated in 1905.

It is interesting to note that when the first meeting of the Bharat Mahila Parishad was arranged, more than two hundred women attended, and the meeting hall was fully packed and there was no room for men. The speakers delivered inspiring speeches and adopted some resolutions to be followed by the women regarding education, prevention of child marriages,

etc. The women were expected to involve themselves in activities such as teaching orphans, inspecting schools for girls and helping widows find respectable employment. The general discussion focussed on a number of issues including medical relief, domestic life, early marriage, and child welfare.

The impact of these meetings was very strong and was felt in several regions across the country. Women in the Telugu region started conducting meetings at the local level. The meetings at Guntur and Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh were a success in this regard. In many of these meetings, the main topics continued to be female education and the need to abolish evil social customs such as child marriage, dowry, and neglect of widows.

Many Telugu writers like Bhandaru Achamamba³, Kanuparthi Varalakshamma, Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma, Gudipudi Indumati, Desiraju Bharatidevi, Tallapragada Viswasundaramma, and women freedom fighters and social activists like Durgabai Deshmukh, Kandukuri Rajya Lakshmi (wife of reformist Veeresalingam), and Maganti Annapurna Devi became active participants in such a socially vibrant background and extended their contribution in many ways in addressing the contemporary women's issues.

At the national level some organizations tried to promote women's education, particularly promoting the English Language. This learning, helped them and

[...] made possible communication across language barriers. On the other hand, there were growing numbers of women literates in the vernaculars which enabled them to learn about women's issues in the new women's journals. (Forbes 64)

³ Bhandaru Achamamba was the first woman to write a biography of women achievers across the country titled *Abala Satcharitra Mala*. It is said that she was the first Telugu writer to have written the Telugu short story, a new literary genre in the Telugu literary field.

The small informal meetings gradually became notable where women organizers devoted to volunteer work in their spare time in teaching, helping widows, focussing on social issues like child marriages and girls' education. At a later phase these organizations gave rise to national women's organizations.

Geraldine Forbes recorded three such major organizations which emerged between 1917 and 1927 such as Women's Indian Association (WIA), the National Council of Women in India (NCWI), and the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) (72). One such organization of the Theosophical Society of Madras was formed by Margaret Cousins, an Irish feminist and theosophist in 1915 along with the support of the already existing Tamil Women's Association, to promote female education etc. It is interesting to note that Annie Besant became the first president of this organization, WIA. They focused their work in four areas -- religion, education, politics and philanthropy. Their work of philanthropy included other areas such as "feeding the poor," "setting up shelter for widows and providing relief for disaster victims" (Forbes 74). The WIA ran a monthly journal, *Stri Dharma*, published in English.

Like Annie Besant and Margaret Cousins, at the regional level Durgabai Deshmukh rendered a lot of service as a social activist at a very young age. This patriotic fervour made her the youngest volunteer for the Congress session at Kakinada; a coastal area in Andhra Pradesh, in 1923. This active lady could win the heart of Gandhi and later act as a translator of his Hindi speeches:

The youngest among the women freedom fighters during the Non-Cooperation movement was Durgabai, who rendered valuable service in fulfillment of the work of her great predecessors like Dr. Besant, Margaret Cousins, and others (Janaki 49).

Through various ups and downs, women activists could form the National Council of Women in India (NCWI) in 1925 with women of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. NCWI, which was next to the All India Women's Conference (AIWC), supported by Mehribai Tata (wife of Dorab Tata) and daughter of Homi Jahangir Bhaba, a well-known educationist and founder of atomic research in India. She urged that middle-class women should visit slums and talk with the people there about the "disgrace of living on charity" and the "necessity of self-respecting honest work" (Forbes 76). But it seems this organization could not do much because of the elitist nature of the members.

All India Women's Conference (AIWC) held its first meeting at Poona in 1927 and the Maharani Chimnabai Saheb Gaekward of Baroda was introduced as the first president of the organization. In her speech, she insisted that "women needed a special type of education, not feminist in nature for that would imply antagonism between men and women but an education to help them understand their position as supplemental to that of men"(Forbes 79). Her speech highlights many women-related issues that were not focussed by early organizers, though it envisages only a supportive role for women. She "focused on social customs- especially Purdah and child marriage which hampered the growth of female literacy" (Forbes 79) and said that it was the time of women's awakening.

After the 1930s with the advent of the Civil Disobedience movement, these organizations took a decision to become apolitical and enlarge the purview by including more social issues like labour, rural reconstruction, indigenous industries, textbooks, opium and Sharada Act (Forbes 80). They passed resolutions that ranged from advocating film censorship to urging widespread instruction in birth control (Forbes 81).

Now women became aware of the direction they had been progressing. On one hand their focus was on women centered issues, and on the other hand they were helping the entire nation which was in the surge of the national movement. Forbes says the following about these women:

Their work was taking them in two directions; one that would benefit women specifically and one aimed at helping the entire nation. Their work on behalf of women was increasingly focused on legal disabilities while concern with the welfare of the nation led them toward Gandhi's program of reconstruction and social action. (Forbes 81)

All these discussions and activities by women's organizations developed a kind of comradeship among Indian women. These activities show the distinct choices made by women in supporting the nationalist project.

The participation or role played by women in the nationalist struggle was not a simple story to be narrated as their involvement in the struggle had indeed helped in shaping a definite view regarding their mission. Starting from the time of Bakim Chandra Chatopadhyaya's "Bande Mataram" movement to Mahatma Gandhi's Swadeshi movement and the boycotting of foreign goods, women had been asked to take on public roles and they had indeed contributed to the nationalist movement.

The entry of Mohandas Gandhi as "the hero of the South African struggle" (Forbes 124), to the Indian field (1915) stirred the whole movement at a multi- dimensional level. In his meetings in public and with women's social reform organizations Gandhi invoked India's sacred legends and said that "India needed women leaders who were pure, firm and self controlled"(Forbes 124) like the ancient heroines, Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi. His talks about

the poverty of the masses and the *swadeshi* vow to give up foreign goods caught the attention of the public, especially the rural masses.

The speeches of Gandhi touched the Indian peasants and made them his loyal followers. They even succeeded in motivating women with their convincing and appealing tone. He assured the families regarding their family honour. Gandhi's contribution to women's status in India is unforgettable. His civil disobedience campaign brought a large number of women into public life during 1930-32. In fact Gandhi was the person, because of whom women actively participated in the freedom movements like Satyagraha movement, the Non-cooperation movement, Khadi movement, the Civil Disobedience etc. It was historically a landmark period, says K. Janaki, the writer of the book, *Role of Women in Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh* when "for the first time in the history of India and that of the world that women were given great importance in the political movement" (Janaki 34).

Women's picketing and marching were aimed at the goal of *Swaraj*. Sarojini Naidu, as the president of the women's political organization, led many campaigns and was arrested a number of times. Women from different regions stepped forward to involve themselves in this campaign. Women from Bombay, Gujarat, Bengal and Madras came forward to take part in processions. At a later stage, there were some women revolutionaries who wanted to prove their bravery along with men. In this context, Indian women were motivated and were triggered by their new education. They were also successful in expressing their views in the form of literary contributions. At this juncture, one can remember Nehru's words of tribute to women regarding the entry of women in the movement.

We record our homage and deep admiration for the womanhood of India, who in the hour of peril for the Mother Land forsook the shelter of their homes and with unfailing courage and endurance stood shoulder to shoulder with men folk to share with them the sacrifice and triumphs of the struggle (Janaki 1).

Women of India, who had been involved in the activities of nation building and who had experienced the struggle and pain also recorded their heartfelt feelings and urges in the form of their writings. There is a lot of literature produced during this time by women writers and it brought into existence new literary genres. The advent of English language in India gave scope to some of these liberated minds. Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu would stand among the first Indian English women poets and at the regional level, in Telugu, Bhandaru Achamamba is to be recognized for her being the first short story writer.⁴ She may be considered the first woman historian in writing women's literary history, titled *Abala Sacharitra Ratnamala* in 1901.

Telugu Women poets:

It is a laborious task to collect and rebuild women's literary history to know and understand the spirit and vitality of their consciousness which was newly felt by them in the early part of the twentieth century. During this period, a lot of discussion happened on the importance of

⁴ Bhandaru Achamamba story, "Dhanatrayodasi" published in *Hindusundari* in 1903 is recognised as the first short story in Telugu literature. Till then there was no genre like the short story in Telugu.

women's education. Many articles were written and published by versatile women writers in various magazines of the period, which were run for women and some by women themselves. Many articles were written by women in the magazines, *Telugu Zanana*, *Hindusundari* etc. The articles discussed topics related not only to women's education but also on the status of Hindu widows, parental care and responsibility of girls. Later this awareness extended in organising ladies' clubs and to work in association with others and for women to become aware of their own strength and capabilities. Bhandaru Achamamba wrote a book titled *Abala Saccharitha Rathnamaala* (1901) which assumes special significance in this context as it introduces women, who have contributed richly to the knowledge and culture of the nation, by way of biographical sketches. These include some significant women from across the country such as Krupabai Saththianathan, Toru Dutt etc.

More than two hundred Telugu women poets were identified and anthologized in the one and only book available as a record of early Telugu women poets, *Andhra Kavayitrulu*,⁵ published in 1953. The book was solely compiled by Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma, a versatile poet and a recipient of gold medal and Kalaprapurna title from Andhra University for her literary excellence.⁶

Lakshmikanthamma was a great scholar, who had contributed a lot to the pool of Telugu literature and did literary service for around sixty to sixty-five years. Apart from writing poetry both in Telugu and Sanskrit Languages, she also rendered great service to the society. She was a

⁵ Information on Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma's *Andhra Kavayitrulu*, information is from *Telugu Sahitya Kosam - Adhunik Saahityam* (1851-1950).831

⁶ This Information is taken from the book *Samsmruthi*, a posthumous publication on Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma in the form of a memoir.

woman socialist, a brave woman and an activist in the independence movement. Like Sarojini Naidu she was also a great orator and woman of letters.

Lakshmikanthamma also compiled another book on Indian Women writers titled *Akhila Bharata Rachayitrulu*. While compiling this book she had to travel widely, sometimes leaving her family and young children too. Together these two books compiled by her can be considered her magnum opus apart from her own literary contribution. In *Andhra Kavayitrulu*, Lakshmikanthamma, recorded the contribution of Telugu poets, starting from the poets Chanamma and Prolamma (probably belonging to the 13th century) who were related to the family of Tikkana, who was one of the translators of the great epic, The Mahabharata into Telugu (Lakshmikanthamma 4-5).

Social Obstacles for Women's Writing:

In the court of king Sri Krishna Devaraya, who used to conduct Bhuvana Vijayam, the poets' summit, along with his eight court poets, who were popularly called as *Ashtadiggajalu*, literally eight great elephants, one of them, Allasani Peddanna, recited extempore a poem on the pleasant and luxurious background needed for poetic creation: The poem expresses the conditions expected to be provided for male poets and the royal treatment received by them during those times. They were honoured by kings, respected by people and altogether enjoyed a very comfortable life.

But in contrast to this, women poets were never to expect such a treatment, even in their dreams. The biographical sketches of Athukuru Molla and Tarigonda Vengamamba, who were child widows show the miserable social conditions in which they lived and how they had to fight with the society they lived in and the families they belonged to (Rao, A.S.)

There is a story associated with Molla about her smartness and her poetic mastery and scholarship. Once, Tenali Ramalinga, the court poet of Krishna Devaraya, happened to meet the poet Molla, a woman of the lower caste, on his way. Molla had a hen in her hand, while a goat was walking beside her. Seeing this, the poet Tenali Ramalinga is supposed to have commented using words with double meaning. Though his words hurt her, she is said to have responded coolly and retorted with her scholarly smartness. Tenali Ramalinga might have asked for the hen in her hand with dual meaning. While answering, she too is supposed to have replied using expressions with dual meaning indicating that he shouldn't comment on her employing such language.

“Nenu neekammanu” (I won't sell this to you I am [as elderly as] your mother)

In this sentence one meaning indicates that she doesn't want to sell the hen, and the other shade of meaning says that she is to be considered his mother, for, in India, women other than one's own family members, had to be treated as mothers. Taking a cue from this Indian concept of motherhood, Molla gives Tenali Ramakrishna a smart answer.

The incident of this story portrays the true image of the then society and the status of women in such a society. In this story as Molla belongs to a low caste we cannot expect good reception and respect from the society. If such adverse conditions had to be faced by a reputed poet, (who had been tested for her poetic scholarship and whose poetic prowess had been

acknowledged by the court poets), what would be the reception for minor poets? There was a lot of controversy regarding Molla which may be gathered from Telugu literary history of Kandukuri Veeresalingam titled *Andhra Kavula Charitra*, Andra Seshagiri Rao's *Andhra Vidhushimanulu* and Kanuparthi Varalakshamma's article "Molla Yapakeerthi, Yame Namavruthanthamu," in *Bharati* magazine. The story about Molla and the associated information is evidence of the cultural restrictions and social suppression experienced by women writers for centuries. Thus the above story reveals the truth that the royal comforts narrated by the court poet Allasani Peddana were exclusively meant for men. However, Molla's scholarship had been appreciated all these centuries. Her Ramayana (Molla Ramayana) is the first Ramayana, written by a woman poet in Telugu and one of the best Ramayanas in Telugu.

When it comes to the literature produced during 1900-1950, a long and vigorous "new flow" is observed in Indian languages other than English. However, very little of this has been available until recently. Considerable research work on women's studies focusses on the early women poets has been done and it has in the more recent times unearthed and made available their work. The present study has been able to identify more than one hundred and fifty established women poets. However, I have discussed in detail only thirty five poets.

It was a pleasant surprise to see some of the Dalit women poets, who were found writing since 1890 thanks to the painstaking work undertaken by Gogu Syamala. Really, it is a remarkable thing to struggle and succeed in a society of deep social and class conflicts. The question of recognition and of acknowledging Dalit women poets by literary historians is a slow process. K. Suneetha Rani rightly points out and questions this silence regarding their existence.

As Telugu had a great tradition of women's writing, a considerable number of women writers starting almost from fifteenth century, had been observed beginning from Tallapaka Timmakka (probably belonging to the 15th century, for it was said that as Annamacharya, her husband lived between 1424 and 1503), Atukuri Molla, Rangajamma, Muddupalani, Madina Subhadramma and Tarigonda Vengamamba (mid 19th century) etc., contributed to its variety and richness. However after Tarigonda Vengamamba, "there was no women literary production almost for half a century" says Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma in her *Andhra Kavayitrulu* (101).

But when it comes to the twentieth century it may be observed that the number of poets has multiplied. It is a period accompanied by social, political and economic changes and of reform movements that contributed to the upliftment of women by providing them formal education and other social benefits.

1900-1950 is a period known for the increasing awareness of women and for the recognition of their self-respect. By the end of the century, women have recognized the importance of their existence and succeeded in rebuilding their new world. The period identified for critical attention of women's writing in telugu has responded to notions of patriarchy, social reforms and the national movements. The period reflects social movements like the *Vandematharam* Movement, Home Rule Movement, Andhra Movement, National Movement etc. This was the period when women like Annie Besant (1917) and Sarojini Naidu (1925) had been elected as Presidents of Indian National Congress to lead the movement. Against the backdrop of the social, political and cultural movements, a congenial atmosphere had prevailed by 1900, when women could form associations and discuss their problems. By 1910, All Andhra Mahila Sabha (Akhila Andhra Maha Sabha) was formed. The motto of such organizations was to

motivate women and to increase their awareness about the benefits of education. They also tried to mould them to changing social situations and train them accordingly.

It is from the perspective of these contemporary movements that women's wishes, hopes, desires, emotions, encounters, failures and successes are to be studied. To know their passions, inclinations and intended expectations, literature is the only source (Vidmahe iii). In this regard, at the regional level, the role played by social reformists like Kandukuri Veeresalingam and others cannot be ignored. The evil social practices that prevailed at the national level were equally experienced by the women of Andhra. Child marriages, *Sati*, enforced widowhood, *devadasi* system, dowry system are a few among them. To bring about a change in the status of Telugu women, the reformists and many social organizations made their effort. They have succeeded in their attempts by providing women with an awareness of their situation, especially through education. Some magazines and periodicals promoted the cause of women's education. The efforts of the first feminist writer of Telugu, Bhandaru Achamamba (1874-1904) must be remembered in this context for her initiation of programmes for the social uplift of women and for her passion towards women's education.

Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu:

The social problems that prevailed in the Andhra Pradesh region placed great obstacles in the lives of women. Social evils like child marriage, *kanyasulkam*, *sati*, enforced widowhood, *devadasi system*, dowry system and female infanticide are some of the evil practices that prevailed in society. In this social scenario Kandukuri Veeresalingam (1848-1919) took on the

role of a crusader against these social evils. He was a pioneer of the social reform movement which helped the emancipation of women. He understood the importance of women's education and advocated the same through his lectures in various meetings. A prolific writer, he condemned all sorts of evil social practices through his writings.

The service he rendered for women's welfare was through the conduct of widow marriages that helped many girls to lead a comfortable life. He was involved in many rescue operations of widows in difficult circumstances. He carried out these with the support of his ardent followers. He was a staunch supporter of widow marriages as the condition of widows in the society was very miserable. Being a social activist Kandukuri wanted to protest enforced widowhood:

Despite strong opposition from all sides, the first widow marriage was performed in 1881 at Rajahmundry [...] By 1901, this society performed 33 Widow marriages... continued by Kandukuri followers, and other ardent reformers like Chilakamarti Lakshmi Narasimham of Rajahmundry and Unnava Lakshmi Narasimham of Guntur. (Janaki 5)

Unnava Lakshmi Narayana, was famous for his novel *Mala palli* (Dalit Village) novel.

Kandukuri Veeresalingam even established a society in 1906, named Hitakarini Samaj, with an aim of running widow homes, orphanages, educational institutions. To run the Samaj in a successful way he donated all his wealth and property. In this regard his wife Kandukuri Rajya Lakshmmamma's contribution cannot be ignored. Her immense respect, faith and confidence in her husband Veeresalingam made her involve herself very actively, in all his social activities. The couple made their house one of the centers for such activities. They encouraged women of

all castes to meet once a week which in turn gave courage to all women to come out of their homes and become aware of the changes taking place in the contemporary society. It was said that these little meetings motivated many women to participate in various activities like the burning of foreign goods, Salt Satyagraha, Dandi March etc. Organised during the freedom movement.

Apart from his social as well as reform activities, Veeresalingam was a writer, editor and translator. In fact he is considered the pioneer in introducing the genre of the novel to the Telugu literary field with his novel titled, *Rajasekhara Charitra*. Being a writer, he had powerfully articulated his views and ideas through his pamphlets and articles, condemning the social evils, practised in the society. Two journals *Viveka Vardhani* and *Chintamani* were founded by him during 1874 itself (Padmavathi 37). His literary corpus includes works from a 6th class Reader to the History of Andhra poets⁷, novels, plays, stories, articles, prahasanas, book reviews etc. He also translated Shakespeare's play *Merchant of Venice* into Telugu in "Dvipada Style", in 1880 (Arudra 926). His articles stirred the society and influenced many people including women. Many women poets of this period are the recipients of such influence. Kotikalapudi Seethamma was the disciple and devoted follower of Veeresalingam. Later she became a guru to the Queen of Pithapuram (a town in East Godavari Dist.), Maharani Chinnamamba. Seethamma also acted as president to Mahila Sabha (women's congregation) associated with Pradhama Andhra Maha Sabha (First Andhra Association), and its first meeting was conducted in 1913 in Bapatla.

⁷ Veeresalingam, Kandukuri. *Andhra Kavula Charitramu*. It is a History of Telugu Poets, in which he included poets from Kavyayugam (epic era) to Adhunikayugam (Modern era) taking around 238 poets, published in 1917. In this book he included, Molla (probably of Krishnadevaraya's period), Muddupalani and Tarigonda Vengamamba (around 1840). In the concluding part (p.949) he says that after Vengamamba there were no women poets writing poetry, but there are some Sathaka (hundred poems) poets, one lady is Madina Subhadramma, almost contemporary to Vengamamba. He concludes this article wishing that now in Andhra there were girls schools promoting girls' education. Hence there may be some good women poets in future. (949, 950)

In the process of promotion of women's education, Veeresalingam encouraged people in establishing women's organizations in various places like *Vijyana Chandrika* society in Narasapur in the present West Godavari district by the local supporters. Veeresalingam was also behind the establishment of libraries to encourage women readers and to cultivate reading habit among them. The establishment of Gouthami Grandhalayam (earlier known as Sarvajyana Grandhalayam) by Nalam Krishna Rao, the father of Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma (the compiler of the anthology of women's poetry) was one of the rare gifts to Telugu bibliophiles. I have relied upon this library at Rajahmundry for the collection of a lot of material, both the primary and secondary, on the Telugu women poets.

Thus the contribution of Veeresalingam, an architect of the Telugu modern society⁸ and literature and his service to Telugu women is unforgettable. In this regard the role of magazines on women and women's writing should not be ignored. Veeresalingam himself had established and run a magazine, *Sathi Hithabodhini* (1883) which was exclusively meant for women. "This was the first magazine in Telugu run for women," says D. Padmavathi who had done a scholarly work on Women's magazines in Telugu, titled *Aspashta Pratibimbalu* (Opaque Images)(35).

⁸ I am aware of the critical work on Veereslingam's contribution by scholars such as Digavalli Venkata Siva Rao.

Bhandaru Achamamba (1874-1905):

Bhandaru Achamamba was the first feminist historian in Telugu literature⁹ and also the first short story-writer and the first woman to establish women's clubs and women's associations in Andhra Pradesh. The first women's club was founded by Achamamba in Bandaru town and named it as Brindavana Stri Samajam, which was the first women's club in the Telugu land (Sathyavathi 36). Though she lived for a very short span of life, her achievements had been lauded and duly endorsed by women of Telugu literary society. She was known for her remarkable, explicit and unabated speeches, and it surprises one to note that she was not formally educated. She gave marvelous speeches that were highly motivating, travelled widely, established women's clubs and made women come out of their houses and work for the women's associations and clubs. Most of her speeches and writings were written down and published later in magazines like *Hindu Sundari* (Telugu Sahitya Kosam 7). Most of her speeches reflect her intense feelings for women, their social status, their education and their self sufficiency.

There has been a lot of controversy regarding the author of the first short story in Telugu literature. Till recently Gurajada Apparao's short story, titled "Diddubatu" (Correction) was considered the first short story written and published in 1910. Gurajada was credited for having experimented for the first time in this genre in the Telugu literary field. But more recent scholarship has discovered the story titled "Dhanatrayodasi" written by Bhandaru Achamamba in 1902 itself and recognizes it as the first short story in Telugu. This story was published by *Hindusundari* magazine, in 1903 (Sathyavathi V). It is quite amazing to find that the story was

⁹ Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma. Andhra Kavayitrulu.p.106

written excellently even before the genre of the short story was neither identified nor practiced in Telugu Literature (Sathyavathi VI). It was even found that she wrote twelve stories in all as compared to Gurajada Apparao who wrote five or six.

Role of Magazines in Telugu Literature

In Telugu Literature, the role played by magazines in bringing out the women writers into light during 19th century, is remarkable. There were a few magazines which were run exclusively for women such as *Gruhalakshmi*, *Anasuya*, *Andhra Mahila*, *Zanana*, *Hindusundari* and *Savitri*.

The first Telugu women's magazine was started by Kandukuri Veeresalingam in 1883, and the magazine was known as *Sathi Hitha Bodhini*. During 1883-1947, around twenty five women's magazines were run at various places by various people with different agenda. A few magazines among them were run by women to impart awareness among the women readers. Mosalikanti Ramabayamma (editor, *Hindusundari*), Pulugurtha Lakshmi Narasamamba (editor, *Savitri*), Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma (editor, *Anasuya*), Kallepalle Venkataramanamma (editor, *Andhra Lakshmi*), Durgabai Deshmukh (editor, *Andhra Mahila*) were among them. Many of these magazines like *Hindusundari* (1902-1945) from Kakinada and *Gruhalakshmi* (1927-1960), had been run for a long period and made a good impact on their readers. Many of these magazines focussed on issues like the need for women's education, women's rights and also about gender discrimination. *Hindusundari* (1902) was the first magazine in probing into these issues and it is known for its articles and discussions on progressive writings, child rearing, health care, child and widow marriages, divorce act etc., and issues related to the freedom

movement. Definitely these magazines have given a huge scope for women to publish their writings. Kesari, the editor of *Gruhalakshmi* magazine, started conferring “Gruhalakshmi Swarnakankanam” (Gold Bracelet) to a woman who is proved to be the best in the field of education, in art or in the field of social service, on the eve of Molla Jayanthi, in honour of the poet, Molla. The first such award was conferred on Kanuparthi Varalakshamma for her contribution of “Sharada Lekhalu” a series of letters on women’s issues. Others who received the award were Chilakapati Sithamma, Kanchanapalli Kanakamba etc. (*Gruhalakshmi* 1937, 899). Benguluru Naagratnamma was also one of the recipients of this award. The present thesis includes the translations of poems by some of the women poets who had received Gruhalakshmi Swarnakankanam awards. It is also interesting to note that *Gruhalakshmi* magazine had started publishing its Tamil edition from January, 1937 (*Gruhalakshmi* 1937, 905).

These magazines help us reconstruct the women’s society that prevailed during that period including the problems faced by them both at domestic and societal levels. Many of the women poets were writing poems and getting them published in these magazines. In the present study, a majority of Telugu women poets have been drawn from these magazines. Almost 150 women poets (both major and minor) have been identified, and a list of these poets and their works with the details of publication has been provided in Appendix II. But it has not been possible to get hold of all the individual works and anthologies.

In this way the services rendered by the reformists, the promotion of women’s education and the role played by magazines reveal the establishment of a new trend in the lives of Telugu women. Apart from this, due to the influence of the stirring moment of the society, the freedom moment, many women poets flooded the magazines and newspapers with their poems and other

genres of literature such as plays and short stories, focussing on themes related to burning and contemporary issues.

Kanchanapalli Kanakamba, Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma, Pulugurta Lakshminarasamamba, Gudipudi Indumati Devi, Kanuparthi Varalakshamma, Sthanapathi Rukminamma, Chavali Bangaramma, Tallapragada Viswasundaramma, Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi, Devulapalli Sathyavathamma, Veluvolu Vasanthadevi, Desiraju Bharatidevi, Paruchuri Bhuvaneswari, Oleti Nithyakalyanamma and P. Sitharamamma are only a few names of the huge list of women writers of the period. Many of these poets played an active role in the freedom struggle as well. These poets were inspired by Gandhi and many other national as well as local leaders and participated in processions, meetings in the promotion of khadi, taking part in campaigns like Salt Sathyagraha and Non-Cooperation Movement. In this regard, the advent of Andhra Mahila Sabha and the role played by its founders are unforgettable. The inspiration of Annie Besant and the theosophist, Margaret Cousins is a landmark in the history of the Andhras. Poets like Devulapalli Sathyavathamma and Tallapragada Viswasundaramma were arrested and imprisoned due to their active participation in these movements. Viswasundaramma wrote a few poems based on her jail life experience apart from other poems. One of her poems “*Jailu Gadiyaramu*”, has been included in *Women Writing in India*. In another poem, “*Streela Cherasaalalo*”(Women’s Cell), she displays the pathetic situation of women prisoners. This poem gives the real picture of the freedom fighters during their stay in prison, how they had been tortured, illtreated and humiliated by the wardens and matrons who resemble *rakshasas* (devils).

Let me quote a few lines from this poem:

When the tough guys of wardens are implementing

Strict instructions, to keep us in discipline,

We dwell without fear

Though the rigorous imprisonment remind us of the

Mythological place, Lankapuram.

We remained there fearless,

Not weak, but with tremendous strength

To bring independence to our country

However, unfortunately, many of these poets and their works had been ignored and were not much represented in popular, contemporary magazines (other than women's magazines), as their works were not considered serious. Their works were published only in women's magazines. Despite all the unfavourable conditions, a large number of poets wrote poems on themes related to contemporary issues such as the freedom struggle, on Gandhi, on Charkha (spinning wheel), on Mother India etc. and also on themes like women's education, prohibition, Sharada Act (Child Marriage Act), the agony of widows and many more. The advent of Gandhi through his "new ways" of the struggle for freedom brought a stir in the history of India and drew women too into the front line.

Apart from men reformers and leaders, Telugu women too contributed a lot to their fellow sisters. Several individuals and their writings and women's organizations had their impact on women during the period of their awakening. Bhandaru Achamamba (*Abala Sacharita Mala*), Kotikalapudi Seethamma (*Sadhu Rakshaka Satakam* and *Ahalya Bai*), Ponaka Kanakamma,

Kanuparthi Varalakshamma and others had contributed a lot through their lectures and by writing essays encouraging women's education, on the eradication of social evils, and creating an awareness among them to overcome unforeseen problems.

Dalit Women's Poetry in Telugu Literature

As Indian society had been built upon the caste system that differentiates people based upon the nature of their work, the Dalits were considered to be the low. They were ill-treated by the upper castes in various ways through the practice of untouchability, social suppression and inequality; subsequently the dalits were addressed as Harijans. The persistent suppression and high intolerance shown for centuries made them revolt against the upper castes to prove their own existence by stating that "each class and caste had its own rights and privileges fixed by custom and tradition" (Kavelkar 7). As Indian high caste society has traditionally exploited marginalized communities like Dalits, Adivasis, and Other Backward Castes including Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. Much before the Indian Freedom movement, these communities started a parallel movement under the leadership of Jyotiba Phule, the Father of Non – Brahmin Movement.

The advent of missionaries in India and the British Rule promoted the cause of education of the lower classes. The missionaries played a major role in imparting education to the "untouchables" who were till then treated as "a species much lower than even a dog or a cat"(Kavelkar 39) by the Hindus, mainly by the Brahmin community in social and religious matters. Poor, uneducated and socially banned, these masses have been exploited over centuries by the people of higher castes.

The caste system was a steel frame and the so-called lower castes were denied education and social status. In the uplift of these lower classes and their attaining social status, the role played by Jotiba Phule (1827–1890) is significant. He, understood the real meaning of liberty, equality and fraternity, fought against Brahmanism. He was agitated over the issue of social reform and Brahmin dominance. To propagate his ideals, Jyotiba Phule established an organization, the “Satya Shodhak Samaj” in 1873(Satyanarayana 3). Its aim was to challenge Brahminical supremacy for, according to him, Brahmanism had always controlled and prevented education from reaching the lowest castes. As he was one of the victims of high class supremacy and dominance, he could understand the cause of all the difficulties of the masses. Realizing the importance of education, he established educational institutions for the masses. Jyotiba Phule even founded a school for girls in 1848. As K. Kavelkar says, “Home being the earliest school for every child he thought of making the ignorant mother learned, who was the first teacher” (Kavelkar 44). But the school had to face the problem of non availability of female teachers. To solve this problem, he trained his wife, Savitribai, personally at home and made her a teacher in that school.

Indian women owe a lot to Jyotiba Phule for this act as “Jyotiba was a pioneer of the female education in India” (Kavelkar 44). He was the first to establish a school for girls, and to conduct it with much personal hardship. Girls’ schools were earlier run by the missionaries who were more interested in religious conversion, Jyotiba felt that the only effective way to fight the dominance of Brahmins and break their monopoly was to educate the masses by employing non-Brahmin teachers, who could understand the mindset of the lower classes” (Kavelkar 44). Jotiba Phule who is considered the father of the Non-Brahmin movement and who fought against the Brahmin exploitation of masses influenced the society by his writings and

publications. He succeeded in bringing in a revolutionary social reform movement in Maharashtra.

The socio-political issues and movements of the latter nineteenth century and early twentieth century including Gandhism and the fight for Independence influence Indian literature at various levels. It also influenced and inspired the backward classes or working classes. Under Phule's influence people like Muktha Bai, a first generation Dalit feminist, came to the forefront. Savitribai Phule established many schools and stood as the first woman teacher of modern India. In 1854 itself, she wrote a poetry anthology with forty one poems (Katyayani 55).

During the early period of the 19th century Adi Hindu Movement was started in various parts of India. In Andhra Pradesh this Adi Hindu movement gained a lot of importance (Syamala 6). In 1917 in Vijayawada the meeting of the Adi Andhra Maha Sabha was a grand success with the Dalits passing many resolutions in the meeting. They raised the issues of attacks by higher castes on the underprivileged castes. The use of water from common wells, the right of their children's admission into schools, distribution of vacant lands, allowing their nomination to various positions in the Assembly, Municipality, and District and even at Taluk levels of local bodies were some of the issues discussed at their meeting.

It is quite amazing to observe that many Dalit women took active part in all of these activities and movements. We observe that women writers from these communities wrote along with popular male writers like Gurram Jashuva, Guddela Joseph, Kusuma Dharmanna etc. Though many more women poets wrote in post-independence period a few had written before the 1950s.

Very few writings in Indian literature had been written with an awareness of issues concerning Dalits. Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* may be considered a powerful novel in English when viewed from this perspective. A Telugu poet, Tallapragada Viswasundaramma in her work "Awakening Song" mentions the "untouchables" while praising Mahatma Gandhi. Among Indian English women poets, Mary V. Erulkar is the only poet who seems to have responded to the issues and problems of social and class conflicts. In her poem "Street Song" she presents the feelings of motherhood expressed by a Dalit woman. Though she was not a Dalit herself, she could project the "utterances of the insulted and the injured" (Erulkar 12) who remained as labourers for generations, "their hands with dirty work". In Bharati Sarabhai's poetic play, "The Well of the People" the protagonist, the "Old Lady", is a representative of the masses, who sacrifices her life saving money to dig a well in the temple, to provide water to the masses. She had initially intended to spend that amount for Kumbhamela, which was her life goal or dream.

Dalit women's literature in Telugu is said to be found from 1890 (Syamala XV). In the early Dalit literature, women poets wrote songs on Jesus Christ, as a contribution to Dalit devotional literature. This literature is mainly placed under the category of Christian literature in Telugu and has been in existence for two centuries. The literature seems to have been started by Pingali Ellanarya of 1750 (Rao, Sundara IV), and was being continued from strength to strength. This Christian literature in Telugu flourished in all genres like epics, short epics, plays, *sathakas* and also *sankeerthanas* (devotional songs). (Rao, Sundara V)

It is interesting to observe that there had been women's contribution too in Christian devotional songs. Among Dalit women poets who published their works before 1950's are Philip B. Jnana Ratnamma (1890-1960), Vesapogu Gulbhanamma (1905-1971), Kommu Krupamma,

Katta Chandramma and Pilli Vizia Charles (1926-). Their Christian songs were and are regularly sung by Christian devotees in the churches during prayer time.

Many of the Dalit women writers obtained their education through missionary schools and benefitted by it in all respects. Though they were known very little in the mainstream literature, their contribution to the Dalit literary corpus is significant. They also took an active role in the Indian freedom movement. This experience finds its expression in the writings of Tadi Nagamma, Jala Mangamma (Syamala 53). But it seems that many of these Dalit women writers may not have revealed their identity, to avoid socially negative comments. It shows that they were more interested in their active participation in the freedom struggle than to be identified as Dalit writers (Rani 15). However, the writings of Dalit women were collected and published more recently with the title *Nalla Poddu*, (2003) and the book is the first anthology of its kind.

The Purpose of the Comparative Study

The aim of my research is to bring out some common strands in the writings of women poets at the regional and all India levels. This comparison is mainly to show the response of these poets to the socio-cultural and economic conditions that prevailed in the society from 1900 to the 1950s. The modernization of Indian society due to the advent of the British and English education brought a lot of change in the attitude of Indian women across the country. With the changing scenario as the backdrop, I want to study the themes in the writings of Telugu women poets, using a comparative approach. The purpose of the comparative study is to bring out the

common experiences felt by Telugu writers and Indian English women poets as well as to observe their specific identities in terms of their experience.

The study of comparative literature introduces the study and understanding of literature beyond linguistic and national boundaries. It makes possible the study of theory, interpretation and criticism of literature across cultures. It also allows us to study literature in its interaction with allied fields like linguistics, psychology, law and philosophy. The comparative perspective invites the exploration of such cultural periods and trends as Renaissance, Romanticism, Realism, Modernism, Colonial and Post-colonialism across national boundaries, of genres and modes of discourse (such as tragedy, the novel, the sonnet, the grotesque, stream of consciousness). The comparative theoretical perspective explores such topics as poetics, narratology, fictional worlds, literary representations, interpretation of texts, and history of literature and literary theory.

In this comparative study I find that the regional women poets writing in Indian languages other than English to be more responsive towards contemporary issues than the women poets writing in English. The number of women poets in Telugu crosses a hundred, whereas women poets writing in English are very few in number. Most of the regional poets are found to be progressive, working on different missions, like promoting girls' education, eradication of child marriages, and canvassing for the importance of Hindi as a language to forge national unity. Among women poets in Indian English, except Sarojini Naidu and Bharati Devi Sarabai, no other poet responded to the contemporary social issues.

I have translated all the Telugu poems used in this dissertation. All the critical material in Telugu used here has been translated by me (unless otherwise stated).

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Chapter 2

Telugu Women Poets: Their Muse Crossing the Horizon

This chapter contains biographical sketches of the Telugu Women poets. I have translated one or more representative poems of each writer.

Madina Subhadramma

Madina Subhadramma belongs to the nineteenth century, but her poems, published in *Gruhalakshmi* magazine reveal her gender consciousness even before the feminist thought was established in Telugu women's writing. If questioning is a kind of social protest, she may be regarded as an early feminist, who questioned the social and familial conditions of widowhood. She preferred the life of a widow to leading an independent life to that of a wife who is dependent. This awareness of womanhood against the then prevailing social taboos, make her a frontline woman writer. Therefore I have included her in the list of poets, considering her as a pioneer of modern twentieth century poetry.

Subhadramma belongs to Gode Jamindaar's family of Anakapalli in Visakhapatnam district. This family later shifted to Visakhapatnam. The family is known for their cultured behaviour. Women of the family were educated. The members of the family have written many

kavyas, established educational organisations and were involved in literary service. In fact, Madina Subhadramma was the first woman to write poetry among modern Jamindari families. The hundred and fifty year old and greatly reputed Mrs. A.V.N. College in Visakhapatnam was established by this family.

Subhadramma was the daughter of Gode Jaggarao who was personally interested in literary writing. While the literary discussions were going on at their home, Subhadramma would observe them keenly and cultivated the habit of writing. She was well educated and wrote many *Sathakas*, *Dandakas* (Songs of praise of god) and other poems. Though details of many of her works were not available as many as twelve of them seem to have been published, though Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma in her *Andhra Kavayitrulu* mentions only the names of *Raghavarama*, *Raghurama* and *Kesavarama Sathakas* and says that the books have not been found anywhere. Some three poems, which were said to be hers, were found in *Gruhalakshmi* magazine titled, “*Heenamyna Brathukela Maaninulaku?*” (Why Women had to Lead Miserable Lives?), “*Bharya*” (Wife) and “*Karya Siddhi Kramamu*” (The order of the tasks completed).

In the poem, “Why Women had to Lead Miserable Lives?”, she talks about the social status of women in the then society. The poem shows a woman’s life as a widow.

We can consider her as one of the first feminist poets in Telugu. Writing with such social awareness is a new concept for her times. Silalolita opines that women preferred devotional poetry and through such poetry they expressed their inner urges, emotions, feelings fearlessly as the society was not ready to accept such indulgence by women writers.

Why Women had to Lead Miserable Lives

(Heenamaiyunna Brathukela Maninulaku)

Madina Subhadramma

Though husband has died,
Though the lady dwells in poverty and is neglected by sons,
Though friends become enemies and deliberately neglect,
Though she may not get minimum food even after begging,
Though God who is usually kind becomes unsympathetic and unfavourable,
Even though the brothers are rich and prosperous,
It is not desirable for her to stay in their homes.
It is better for her to commit suicide
than to be hurt and be humiliated by their sarcastic words.
Why should women be humiliated
And lead miserable lives?

Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma

Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma was born in 1917 to Nalam Krishnarao and Suseelamma. Her father was popularly addressed as “Madhura Kavi,” a musician and active participant in the movements of the freedom struggle, Salt Sathyagraha in 1930 and Quit India movement of 1942. Lakshmikanthamma’s mother Suseelamma was also his follower, adhering to Gandhian ways, wearing khadi and spinning. Along with other socio-cultural activities Nalam Krishnarao had done a lot of service in establishing public libraries to promote reading habit among people, especially women. He played a major role in establishing Gouthami Grandhalayam(Gouthami Library) by merging Veereslingam’s library with it and started it anew.

Lakshmikanthamma was a great scholar, who contributed a lot to the pool of Telugu literature and did literary service for more than half a century. She received honours like “Kalaprapurna,” “Andhra Saraswati,” “Ubhaya Bhasha Praveena,” “Vidvatkavayitri,” “Andhra Vidushi Kumari,” “Telugu Kavayitri Tilaka,” “Telugu Molaka” etc. and also received “Gruhalakshmi Swarnakankanam” in 1954. She was a member in many organizations like Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Academy, the Senate of the Andhra University etc.

Apart from her literary contribution, writing poetry both in Telugu and Sanskrit languages, she rendered her services to the society as a brave woman, and was an activist in the independence movement. She wrote her autobiography titled *Sahiti Rudrama*. Once during her pregnancy she went to Amaravati to stop animal sacrifice. In that tense situation she herself stood in the place of the animal to be sacrificed. Finally the ritual of sacrifice was stopped. Like

this she actively participated in many movements and inspired people, including women and youth.

She received honours like Kanakabhishekam and Gajarohana Sanmanam. She was the first woman in Telugu history and Telugu literary history to have received such felicitations and honours. For her *Andhra Kavayithrula Charitra* (1953) she received the Telugu Bhashasamiti award. She stood first in literature and received a gold medal from Andhra University. She wrote a total of eighteen books, three in Sanskrit and fifteen in Telugu.

Most of her literary works were based on themes related to progressive aspects of women and Indian freedom movement. In her works there are two poetic compositions. One is *Mahilavikrama Sukthamu*, which contains poems related to historically important women like Rani Rudramma, Chand Bibi, Rani Ahalya, Ganga Devi, Jijiyabai, Manchala, Vasavi, Chanamma, Kasturba, Sarojini Devi etc. Another work is titled as *Lajja Kirita Dharini*, which included eminent personalities of India such as Molla, Jhansi Lakshmi Bai, Rudramma, Kasturba, Sarojini Devi etc. *Na Telugu Manchala* is a long lyrical poem written in the form of a ballad. She wrote a poem on Gandhi, “*Oka Chinna Divve*” which shows Gandhi’s influence on her.

She has translated a few Hindi devotional poems taken from Kabirdas, Tulasidas, Rahim and Brindavandas. She rendered them into Telugu under the title of *Sadukhti Manjari*. She wrote a small epic in satirical form titled *Kanyakamma Nivali*, with the repeated refrain O! Kanyakamma. This epic reminds us of Arudra’s *Kunalamma Padaalu*. Here is an excerpt from it:

To minister, the rowdi is a protector

To the rowdi, the Minister is the protector

Better not to have enmity

O! Kanyakamma!

She had written two books which may be considered her magnum opus *Andhra Kavayitrulu*, and *Akhila Bharata Rachayitrulu*. These two books prove her to be a great research scholar who could identify almost two hundred women poets and their biographical details. *Oka China Divve* is a book of poems, and one of the poems “*O, Mahatma! O, Mahitmatma!*” was addressed to Gandhi considering him greater than the ancient sages and monks.

O! Great Soul! (*O, Mahatma, O, Mahitmatma!*)

Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma

To compare thee to our ancient sages
And call thee a Maharshi is quite unjust
Where do they have the spirit of thy grandeur?
By performing the rituals of Sathyam and Ahimsa,
You are the courageous Himalayan rock
Who crossed the tortuous journey of life
Sacrificing thy selfhood
By acts of benevolence as thy prime duty.
By surpassing the line of life thou art
The mountain of Himalayan sacrifice
That renounced everything.

Kanuparthi Varalakshamma

Varalakshamma was born on 6.10.1896 and her parents are Palaparthi Seshayya and Hanumayamma. She got married to Kanuparthi Hanumantharao in 1906, who belonged to Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh. She was one among five brothers and two sisters. Owing to the support given by her family, mainly by her brother Narasimha Rao in the early phase of her development, she cultivated a good reading habit. Later, after marriage, her husband Hanumantharao's support made her a good writer. In those days Bapatla town was known for its political organizations and literary associations. A few more poets of this period like Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma, Desiraju Bharati etc., were also from the same town. In 1931 she established "Stri Hithyshini Mandali," a women's organization in Bapatla town and worked as its secretary for almost twenty years.

She produced a huge corpus of writings in the span of four to five decades. Her literary production includes, around fifty stories, one or two novels and also a large number of songs and poems which inculcated patriotic and religious feelings among people. She even wrote a few playlets for children meant for performance. Most of her writings were published in the renowned magazines during those days, like *Bharati*, *Gruhalakshmi*, *Anasuya*, *Vinodini* *Anandavani* and *Kalyani*.

She received recognition mainly for her column "*Sharada Lekhalu*" (Letters of Sharada) from the first issue of *Gruhalakshmi* and she was conferred with "Gruhalakshmi Swarnakankanam" award in 1930. She was the first recipient of this "Swarnakankanam." She was also the first woman who received the best woman writer award from Andhra Pradesh

Sahitya Academy. In *Prapancha Telugu Maha Sabhalu* (World Telugu Conference) function she received a copper plate for being a distinguished writer.

Other literary columns run by her in the magazine *Andhra Patrika*, “*Ma Chettu Needa*,” and “*Chettu Needa Muchatlu*,” carried discussions of the organizations she had been involved in. The term *Chettuneeda* (under the shadow of the tree) is symbolic of team formation, unity under one roof. Her wish was to project the organization as a tree. These two literary columns of the magazine were very successful in inspiring and enlightening the minds of women. Apart from these works she also gave many radio talks and wrote a long poem, an “Appraisal of Gandhiji.” She wrote hundreds of poems and songs to inculcate faith in God and patriotism among her people.

Varalakshamma wrote an elaborate critical article on the poet Molla in *Bharati* where she protested against the discussions on Molla’s caste. Molla was being denigrated saying that her name suggests that she might belong to a prostitute’s family. Another point that was made was that she had made use of some abusive descriptions and used one or two objectionable words. Commenting on this, the critics argued that she must definitely belong to a prostitute’s family, and that otherwise she could not have employed such descriptions. To this argument Varalakshamma gives a counter argument very powerfully in her article which can be considered one of the landmark essays of literary criticism in Telugu literature by women writers. Some arguments of this article were quoted by Andra Seshagiri Rao, a versatile poet, critic and writer of 19th century and author in his book *Andhra Vidushimanulu*.

A Man the of People (*Prajala Manishi*)

Kanuparthi Varalakshamma

Andhra kesari means, the one who
Was well known in the Andhra land,
He who stood against the government during the freedom struggle
And braved his chest against bullet attack,
He who was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi
working for Satyagraha ,
He who experienced jail life
discarding all earthly pleasures and pain,
Celebrating the centenary of a person of such stature
of Prakasam Pantulu of the Tanguturi family
Is not only appropriate but prestigious for the Andhras.

from A Garland of Hundred Poems (from *Sathakamu*)

Kanuparthi Varalakshamma

Why don't you give her education? Or show her a path

Or arrange for her re-marriage?

Why do you harass her for her husband's death?

Without showing her a remedy? Tell me, Lakshmi!

Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma:

Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma was born in 1889. She was the sister of the renowned poet, Devulapalli Krishna Sastry, who wrote both romantic and progressive poetry. Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma ran a women's magazine, *Anasuya*, from 1914-1920 and functioned as an editor of the magazine, contributing a lot to both women and society. She worked as secretary for organizations like *Stri Samajamu* and *Stri Prardhana Samajamu* in Kakinada for a long time. Her father, Devulapalli Tammanna Sastry, was also a poet belonging to Pithapuram in East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh. Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma's daughters V. Anasuya and Sita were popular singers in the AIR.

Venkataratnamma's poems were written with simple diction and had lyrical quality. A few of her poems were published in *Gruhalakshmi* and *Anasuya* magazines. One poem was represented in Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma's *Andhrakavayithrulu*. Lakshmikanthamma appreciated the poet for the beauty of her language. In her words, "Her poetry appears like a beautiful lady with simplicity without any decorative ornaments" (Lakshmikanthamma 139).

Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma wrote poems on varied themes including poems on Gandhi and patriotism. Her poem titled "*Gandhi Stuti*" (Appraisal of Gandhi), is a poem praising him as a genius for his preaching of peace. She compares Gandhi with Lord Krishna. To the poet, Gandhi with his spinning wheel appears as Lord Krishna with his wheel, the weapon he holds with one of his fingers. She was known for her soft words and images which reflect her attitude.

Offering (*Nivedana*)

Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma

O! Lord! Almighty! The sparkle of the sky!
 Your countenance, the heavenly site with glittering visuals!
 It seems I am not fortunate to see it before my eyes.
 I must be ill-fated not to be able to enter your temple.

I tried many a time to enter your temple.
 Except for listening to the resounding temple bells, I couldn't view you.
 The door to your abode had been shut.
 Disgusted, with a loaded heart, don't know how many times,
 Had I a similar experience.

Thou art the Lord of both the homes,
 My in-laws' and my parents',
 Protecting us like eyelashes the eye.
 Pardon us considering all our faults
 Accept our divine offerings and prayers
 Lift us up with your appearance and with your blessing eyes.

By keeping my whole heart secure
 I have come to thee many times offering
 Devotion in the form of sandal paste, flowers in the form of reverence

Love in the form of the chant of your name a thousand times.

Hence, save me. O, my saviour!

Won't you have a look at me for an hour at least?

Listen to my voice praying to you

Anyadha sharanam naasthi

Thvameva sharanam mama!

My Way (*Na Mathamu*)**Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma**

As far as possible, retaining softness
Not leaving human quality anywhere
Maintaining equilibrium between good and bad
Keeping up self-confidence and self-respect
Doing good to people to the extent possible
Keeping them in mind and not letting them out
Not withdrawing even when experiencing only failure
Still hoping for success in future with better effort
Not finding a place to hide
For fear of committing sin or facing blame
Though alone in action
Let me lead a courageous and bold life
Without fear and timidity
Without feeling shy or proud
Live the way people expect me to.

Love Kingdom (*Prema Rajyam*)

Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma

At dawn while earth and sea
 Respond to Sun's radiant reflections,
 I moved out of the house in the mood full of rejoicing
 In search of the 'Love kingdom'.
 On my way I came across a poet
 Whom, I asked for the short route to reach that kingdom.
 He told me, "Come I'll show you the place and
 You can view the zenith of the mansion
 And experience its radiance."
 After a while I spotted
 A bright illuminated mansion.
 He said, "This is the one you are searching for."
 But my mind was upset and agonised knowing
 It to be the capital of a dream land.
 Then, at a distance I found a horseman riding
 He asked me to follow him, so I did.
 Likewise going merrily along with him
 I travelled towards the sea side.
 From there continued and reached a valley
 While the enchanting lovely sight charmed me,
 I found an exquisite flowerlike beauty
 Glaring at the rider.

“This is the open place of the Kingdom you are searching for,
You could see the amorousness of love makers,” said he.
But to my discontent it was an empire for cognition,
And not for my use.

Losing hope I slowly started moving away.
On my way, I encountered a cart with some servants.
They asked me to follow them and told me,
“Only in our kingdom is the place of your search, the place of your dwelling.”
After reaching there, I found a lady
Decorated with glistening ornaments.
Viewing her I was utterly disappointed.
As the dusk had slowly enveloped
Even if it had been the kingdom of heaven,
Finally I approached a hut and asked a lady, a pretty looking one.
She replied,
“I had heard about it but my feet are confined
To home, my kingdom,
I don’t know the way which leads to the said kingdom.”
Saying so she sighed and left.
I observed that the hut she dwelled in was such
An abode of peace!
Her face was very lovely and graceful.
I felt a radiant illumination in my heart
And realized that home and nothing else is the real place of the Love Kingdom.

Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi:

Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi was born in 1904. She wrote an autobiography titled “*Apparaogaru-Nenu*” (Apparaogaru and I) and wrote stories and poems influenced by the Romantic Movement. She was familiar with Kannada, Gujarati, Urdu, Marathi and Hindi languages. She even translated a few of her poems into Hindi which were appreciated by scholars. Her style of writing is very simple and terse.

She is popularly known as Soudamini. She was the wife of the versatile poet Basavaraju Apparao, who was known for his lyrical poems. Six of her poems were selected and published in the book *Vaithalikulu*. These are “*Parichita Kantham*” (A Known Voice), “*Priya Nirikshanam*” (Waiting for the Beloved), “*Artha Geethi*” (Voice of Agony), “*Nirikshana*”(Waiting), “*Pranayini Geetham*” (Lover’s Song), “*Duradrustam*” (“Bad Luck”). Some of her poems were published in *Gruhalakshmi*.

She wrote many poems with lyrical quality. Her poems have a romantic sensuousness. One of her poems reads as follows:

The Song of the Mild Blown Wind
Softly reaching the ears
Every sound of the footsteps
Imagining them to be yours
Eagerly I rush out, my dear,
With the illusion as if you have come.

This poem is filled with a romantic tone and tunes external sounds into verbal rhythm. It reaches our ears and hearts and has a pleasant impact on our senses. The sound of winds blowing, the sound of footsteps--all reveal the woman's ecstatic mood while waiting for her beloved. This gives the poem its "sensuous quality". Her poem "Bad Luck" (*Duradrushtamu*) is a poem about a mother's agony for a lost child. The whole poem is written in the form of a metaphor. The death of the child is not suggested directly. Comparing the child with a mango fruit is a typical image used in Indian classical literature.

Bad Luck (*Duradrushtamu*)**Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi (Soudamini)**

Wandered a lot over the country
Seeking pleasure and peace.
Dipped into many rivers
Wishing to cling to *moksha* (salvation).

Climbed many mountains
In search of Lord Shiva.
Prayed to many Gods
To be blessed with a fruit as boon.

Performed many rituals
Hoping goddess Parvathi will protect and bless.
And at last by Her grace
Could give birth to two precious gems.

Though they were blooms to our lives
We couldn't hide them properly
And know not where we lost them.
Oh ...what bad luck!

Ecstasy (*Paravasyamu*)**Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi (Soudamini)**

The neem tree's shadow
Of our backyard
Showers pleasant and cool comforts in the hot sun.
In the soft soothing moon light of the night
My beloved plays on Ektara strings
As I sing the sweetest melodies,
While floating enchanted in the musical spell,
Night had been swept away unnoticed.

Chavali Bangaramma:

Chavali Bangaramma (1897-1960) belongs to the period of early Telugu romantic poets. Many of her poems were published in literary magazines like *Bharati*, *Udayini* etc., during 1932-1937. A few of her poems were also included in the poetry anthology *Vaithalikulu* edited by Muddu Krishna. She is known for her native flavour of poetic expressions and natural descriptions. The recurring themes found in her poetry were romantic love-making, separation, and nature. She was well appreciated by her contemporary poets.

Bangaramma wrote around twenty five poems and her poem “*Kappathalli Pelli*” (A Frog’s Marriage) was known for its poetic imagination. In folk community, there is a belief that if frogs are happy it increases the yield of paddy. The frog’s marriage ritual is believed to bring heavy rains. This belief is captured wonderfully by her use of metaphorical poetic diction. Her other poems like “*Aa Konda*” (That Hill), “*Tamassu*” (Darkness), “*Karthika Purnima*” are frequently cited and found in the anthology, *Vaithalikulu*.

“*Aa Konda*” is a poem which talks about a hill or a mountain. The poem gives a picture of her experiences while she was travelling in a train. During the travel she makes some observations of the mountains which she comes across. She feels as though the mountain also is travelling along with her. While articulating this idea she uses images, seasoned by alliteration. The specific sound of the train while running is represented as “Dabbu Thei,” (literally “get me money”). As though giving response to the train, the mountain too follows the train’s route. The poem signifies the poet’s remarkable observation on the money-minded world.

“Tamassu” (Darkness) is a poem on the poet’s pessimistic view of the world. As a poet, when she opens her eyes (metaphorically), she finds darkness pervading everywhere in the world. To get rid of this darkness, she soars high in the sky and finds darkness there too. With that desperate agony she falls down on the earth with her folded wings. In that whole travel between earth-sky-earth her pessimistic realization reveals that both her worlds are enveloped by darkness.

Thus the poet Chavali Bangaramma may have only a handful of poems to her credit, but she has been able to secure a remarkable position among women poets of Telugu literature.

Offering (*Nivedana*)**Chavali Bangaramma**

O, God! Fixed are you between beginning, middle and end!

Why couldn't I fix his heart in my trust!

God, You may reside in minute molecules

Why don't you allow me to reside in his heart?

You are known for maintaining justice.

Ensure that I am treated as equal.

Leaving me alone at home

Is it fair

That he goes looking for a partner?

My constantly being ill-treated by the mother-in-law

My starving on earth,

Not asking for food or water,

Is all that not for his sake?

Let him not bury thoughts in his mind.

But allow them to come to surface.

See that the light in his eyes won't fade away.

Sun! Go and tell him to come and see me.

Darkness (*Tamassu*)**Chavali Bangaramma**

Got up with closed eyes, turned back and saw.
Could neither see the pair nor could hear about it.
Heart beat fast, and my throat
Dried up as though I couldn't swallow anything.

Became tired calling out repeatedly
While the tired heart, felt arrested
I still soared up to the heavens
But there too
I found the same darkness!

Sound couldn't be heard and vision got blurred.
Folding my wings in darkness
I fell down on the ground
And there too I found the same darkness.

Full Moon (*Karthika Purnima*)**Chavali Bangaramma**

Chirping birds remained silent,
Trees too observed silence,
Why doesn't he acknowledge the maid that follows?
He moves on and on
To view the sight of
Brimming moonlight-drenched world!

Though the swinging clouds
Come in between, blurring his eye sight,
Without stumbling he moves on and on;
Showing off his sense of pride!

Perhaps he doesn't hear the musical notes nor see the sights
He doesn't stop a while nor even shelter
He moves on and on!
As though oozing out his elevated pride!

Realizing the spirit behind the chirping of birds,
Hiding the pale face
He moves on and on!
As the whole body is upturned!

Tallapragada Viswasundaramma:

Tallapragada Viswasundaramma was born on March 6th in 1899 in a village named Undi in West Godavari district. She had a literary background. Her brother Mallavarapu Visweswara Rao was a renowned poet. In the introduction to her book titled *Kavita Kadambamu* (Garland of Poetry), published posthumously by her brothers Mallavarapu Venkata Krishna Rao and Mallavarapu Visweswara Rao, they provide a few biographical and literary details of their sister. Some of these poems were published in magazines like *Krishna Patrika*, *Bharati*, and *Gruhalakshmi*. A few of her poems were included in *Vaithalikulu*, edited by Muddu Krishna in 1935. A few of these poems were translated into Hindi too.

In Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma's *Andhra Kavayitrulu*, Viswasundaramma's poems were discussed under the heading, "Modern Telugu Literary Era" (*Navya Andhra Vangmayamu*.) (282). The editor commented that Viswasundaramma's name has to be remembered along with Soudamini (Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi) and Chavali Bangaramma. The "poet trio" must be recognized for their contribution to the new trend of Telugu poetry of the period, the trend of Romanticism and for their competing with their male counterparts. Lakshmikanthamma continues as follows: "It is only after these poets that one observes the trend of Romantic poetry, (Bhava Kavityam) and it is being followed by other Telugu women poets of the period" (282).

Viswasundaramma wrote poems on varied themes including on women's consciousness. Her themes include patriotism, social commentary, and poems on Gandhi, prohibition and a few poems on freedom struggle. The poems included in the anthology *Kavita Kadambamu* had been published earlier in various magazines.

She was closely associated with and deeply involved in the Indian freedom struggle. She took active participation in the Non-Cooperation Movement, in 1921. She took part in the Salt Sathyagraha movement and was arrested and put in Vellore jail in 1930 for four months. She was arrested again in 1932 for taking part in the Civil Disobedience Movement and was kept in Vellore Jail. With a view of imparting good education she established an ashram school in Chagallu town named “Ananda Niketan.”

She wrote some poems with patriotic fervor. The poem, “*Melukolupu*” (Awakening) is a good example. The poem discusses many issues such as attaining freedom for the mother land, untouchability, about Gandhian ways and the greatness of Gandhi. Some of the lines of the poem read as follows

Awake, o, Indian
 Awake, o, patriot,
 Awake, and find a solution
 to your Mother Land!

For the title of the poem “Mother Land” she uses an original Telugu expression, “*Thalli Desapu*” instead of the usual Sanskritised expression “Mathru Desapu.”

Prohibition (*Madyapanamu*)**Tallapragada Viswasundaramma**

My dear brother, listen!

Or else, you'll be spoilt and be thrown out!

Don't become an addict to liquor,

Your family, your children will become miserable

Hence listen...

When you booze, your mind gets intoxicated,

You lose control over your mind.

You lose control over your senses

Fall down to the ground!

Hence listen...

You start abusing others

You become angry like an adamant man

You lose your dignity among people

And even lose your money!

Hence listen...

Your parents will desert you,

Your wife and children go away scared of you,

Ultimately you'll become no one

To your own relatives.

Hence listen...

You'll become degraded to a level

Worse than that of a dacoit and will be abusively maltreated.

Losing all your charm

You will have to lead a life of isolation at the end of your life.

Hence listen...

At least now, you wake up,

Try to give up your habit!

Walk on the path paved by Gandhiji,

That will show you light

Dispelling the darkness in your life.

Hence listen...

Hopelessness (*Nirasa*)

Tallapragada Viswasundaramma

I thought so, even earlier, I thought so,
That the winds of advantage had stopped
When my thoughts and heart were clouded
When my whole body was feverish.

As my heart ached under shackles
As mind was clouded with depression
In my tender flawless love
Waves rose roaring, disturbing my heart.

As though dark clouds shrouded the mind
In the light of a full moon night
I felt you will churn the divine sea of *amrutha*,
And cradle me with your soothing words.

But all my desires have vanished
And ideals have been shattered
Tales of woe resulting from boundless love
Burning in the heat of separation.
How can I bear the burden of this life!
Come near, dear, with tender lovely words.

Widow's Agony (*Vithanthu Vilapamu*)**Tallapragada Viswasundaramma**

O! My mother, mother of my Hindu land
Though born your daughter I am suffering still.

O! You Saviour! With your heart full of love
Why don't you look on me with kindness?

I have lost the affection of my parents
And have even become enemy to all my relatives.

I don't seem to deserve love from brothers
I have experienced all sorts of troubles.

Sisters, both elder and younger I have
Still no one sees, comes to my rescue.

Insulted amongst my friends
Unable to participate in women's gatherings.

We cannot decorate our hair with flowers
Cannot use fragrant body sprays.

Make-up items are banned for us
Cannot express closeness to relatives.

No question of attending marriages and social functions
No way can I witness pleasant occasions.

Cannot enjoy wearing colourful dresses
Should bend and wither only in kitchens.

This widowhood is pinning me down a lot
And this odd attire is daunting.

Is there no way to get rid of this horrible phase?
Tell me, o, brothers and sisters!

O! Hindu mother, think a while and say
What life is ahead for this poor widow!

O, mother! Show a way to such child widows
Wipe out their agony.

In the Women's Cell (*Streela Cherasaalalo*)

Tallapragada Viswasundaramma

With his philanthropic view
When Dr. Khan is providing us food, with concern.
When writer Kannan, and Chandranul
Are kind enough and supplying us with the required things,
When Miss Smith, Miss Frances and other Anglo Indian women
Are protecting us,
When the tough guys of wardens are implementing
Strict instructions, to keep us in discipline,
We dwell without fear
Though the rigorous imprisonment reminded us of the
Mythological place, Lankapuram.
We remained there fearless,
Not weak, but with tremendous strength
To bring independence to our country.

Now and then when VIPs
Like the I G Ls, the Collectors etc., visited the place
When matrons, who remind us of demons, like Trijata
Taught us how to take care
When the convict wardens
Came for regular visits, bringing their bosses' orders,

When the jail wardens, dressed in black saris,
Threatened us on their routine rounds.
Never deviating from their aim
And persistent towards their goal,
Like Sitas exiled in Ashokavana,
All lady prisoners were leading jail life
Imprisoned in Rayavellore jail.
We are a bit fortunate
As now and then they listened to us and respected our worth.
Treated in a respectable manner
As if we were high class prisoners,
They treated us in a better way
As A class and B class had strict rules.
At least because they were scared of their higher authorities.
But unfortunately, poor fellows, the C class prisoners
Were horribly ill-treated
And severely punished by the lathies
By the harsh and unkind wardens.

Vattikonda Visalakshi

Vattikonda Visalakshi (b.1921) is one of the well-known writers of the early twentieth century. Though she wrote poems to infuse patriotism among her fellow men, she was mainly known for her novels.

Her poetry collection *Abhyudaya Geethalu* (Progressive Songs) published in 1943, is a small and slender book of poems. Majority of the poems are message oriented or were written on themes of social awareness. “*Koyila*” is a poem written on the song of the bird. The poet criticizes the bird for the song it is singing and for not having any sympathy towards the poor and the suffering. She asks the bird to stop such romantic songs and sing for universal peace and benefit of all with its melodious voice.

“Welcome” is a poem written, addressing the goddess, “Muse.” The poet gets jealous of the “Muse” for taking the side of male poets and for always dwelling in their company. Apart from poems such as these, she wrote some epic like poems called “*Khanda Kaavyalu*.” *Bhrungama*, *Jaladama*, *Swagatham* (Welcome), *Pranaya Bhiksha*. She wrote novels titled *Khaidi* (Prisoner), *Bharata Nari* (Indian Lady); *Yugadharmam* (Way of the World) etc.

*Koyila***Vattikonda Visalakshi**

While one in a million earn
Huge amounts and properties--
And the remaining labouring masses,
Though working hard day and night,
Suffer and struggle even to get a fistful of rice to eat –

Sitting on the mango tree's tender branches
Eating bit by bit the slender leaflets
You sing love lyrics in mournful tunes
Don't you have a little compassion in your tender heart!

When life is enmeshed with the unrest of
Caste and religious disputes
How would it desire your amorous songs?
Becoming socially conscious, bring forth, in full throated ease,
A revolutionary song.

Welcome (*Swagatham*)**Vattikonda Visalakshi**

Listening to the poet's songs
Listening to his poetic stanzas
Continuing as his life-long beloved
Have you forgotten the existence of the woman poet?
Have you got immersed in his embrace?
Can you not come out of it?
Do you wish to persist in such cosy comfort?
By offering a potion of his poesy
A product of his imagination
Which is sweeter than honey
Has he seduced you?
Enjoying your presence
Does he object to your meeting women?
Does he ask you to stay only beside him?
By habitually listening to men's preaching
Have you, being a woman
Taken his side
Decided not to visit us at all?
Do you want to remain there permanently?
Do you think it is justifiable?
Don't you want to take part in

The movement for women's progress?

Don't you have any fellow feeling?

The wonderful secrets of "Nature"

I will unravel before you

Make you find your life's fulfilment.

Come soon, o, poetic Muse!

We welcome you whole heartedly! O, tender poesy!

Allow us to pay homage to you by burning camphor!

Accept our prayers! Muse of modern poesy!

Oleti Nithyakalyanamma:

According to Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma's anthology, *Andhra Kavayitrulu*, Oleti Nithyakalyanamma comes under the fourth generation of Telugu literary figures, but no biographical details of this poet were found anywhere (237).

Her poems were published in the *Gruhalakshmi* magazine. She wrote poems on themes related to patriotism like "*Swatanthrya Lakshmi*" and "*Sarojini Devi*." She is deeply concerned about the discrimination of women in society. To her, the existence of women must be noticed, accepted and recognized. She questions thus:

In God's creation

Freedom is equal to all.

So, why is it denied, to women?

In one of her poems, titled "*Kantha*" (Lady), published in *Bharati* magazine, she says that without the existence or presence of wife, there is no life or light in man's life. Her poem, "*Gruhastu Gruhini*" (Husband and Wife) contains a similar theme, i.e., highlighting the importance of the close association between the husband and wife. She senses that their love will spread the fragrance of happiness which keeps the entire house happy. Her poem, "*Swatanthrya Lakshmi*", is a patriotic poem which articulates the poet's confidence in attaining the freedom of the motherland. Great women like Meerabai (Meeraben), Sarojini Naidu, Rukmini Devi, Kamala

Devi, etc. had been active participants in the Salt Sathyagraha. For their participation they were tortured by police lathies. Many women were beaten till their bangles were broken from their tender hands. This poem pictures the details of the freedom movement, women's involvement and the harsh treatment by the British including beating women.

Many of her poetic lines reveal her acute awareness of the problems in society, mainly women-oriented ones. And wherever possible, she tried to highlight the existence of women as significant beings.

In the poem "Celebrations of Sankranti," (*Sankranti Sandadi*) she narrates various people's response to Pongal in a very amusing way. Again this poem also highlights women's response to the celebrations of the festival.

In the poem "God's Blessing" (*Divyasissu*) she blesses the women and entreats them to retain their traditional values and soft nature and not to be spoiled by the advent of English culture.

A few of her poems highlight her poetic talent. Her poem, "The Nature of the Rainy Season" (*Sravana Prakruti*) is written in the style of the great Indian poet Kalidasa's nature descriptions. Her poem, "*Swatanthrya Lakshmi*," describes the painful moments of women who endured sufferings during their participation in the freedom movement:

Long soft hair was loosened, scattered and

Spread up to knees

The fair tender hands lost their bangles

The whole body oozing blood

Bearing the punishment

Given by the police lathi...

*Sarojini Devi***Oleti Nithyakalyanamma****1**

In your tender petalled smile

In your beautiful looks

In your honey dew words

Gush forth new poetic streams.

A tender stalked Jasmine's tender fairness

A virgin rose's delicious fragrance

A smiling jasmine's nascent nectar

Lie engrossed in your articulation.

O, Sarojini! Always.

O, Sarojini! Truly.

Murmuring sounds of tender leaves

Smooth layers on boiling milk

Secrets hidden in the brook's songs

Are found in Sarojini's songs.

2

On seeing Indians in shackles of slavery
You felt disgusted and
Shed hot tears
O, you! Sarojini!

Incessantly from then till today
To bring laurels to
Mother India
You have striven a lot!
Discarded old notions
Saying there was no truth in the old.
Gave lectures in various countries
With the skill of your oratory.

3

On the land of non-violent struggle
Adhering to Gandhian ways
Sharing his yolk of burdens
You have been a lady, O, Sarojini.
In *Salt Satyagraha*

You have showed meticulous strength
and the people were stunned
at your strength and patience.

By showing your mettle
In the land of non-violent struggle.

You have proved, O, Sarojini,
That women are not meek and weak!

Sthanapathi Rukminamma:

Sthanapathi Rukminamma (b. 1915) belongs to Nidalavolu town of West Godavari district. She was secretary of a literary organization, *Kavitha Samithi*. Her poems were published in *Gruhalakshmi* magazine. She wrote poems on different aspects and variant themes. She employs scholarly language. She was very much influenced by the Independence movement. A few of her poems were based on themes related to patriotism and personify the mother land.

She was also a recipient of Gruhalakshmi Swarnakankanam in 1952. She learnt Sanskrit and English on her own and did extensive literary work. Her works were also published in magazines like *Bharathi* and *Andhrabhumi*. Many poems in her poetry anthology *Poolamala* (Garland of Flowers) and were earlier published in these magazines.

Her other works are: *Dayyalu* (Ghosts) and *Neelati Revu* (Bank of a River), anthologies of short stories.

Love (*Prema*)**Sthanapathi Rukminamma**

If you want to adore mere beauty
Better don't love illuminating sites
Better for you to love instead the light of
The unending line of cosmic ray.

If you want to admire me because I am a girl
Better you don't.
Instead love the almighty
Who poses for the varied cosmic dance forms.

If you want to love me for my property
Better not do so.
Instead go into the depths of oceans for limitless joy
That reveal unearthed gems and precious stones.

If you want to love me only for love's sake
Come! My dear! I will offer you one
Which is better than Sun, the almighty and the ocean
My honest heart!

Announcement (*Chatimpu*)

Sthanapathi Rukminamma

Long ago, a king appointed a watchman to keep a vigil at night. As he could not perform the task because of some other work, he asked an idiot of a fellow, an ascetic kind, from the adjoining fields to replace him. This is what he said:

1st watch

The entire world is hope bound
 Strangely many thoughts arise in our actions
 Day shrivels and the span of life withers
 Hence, beware! Beware! Take care!

2nd watch

Mind is ephemeral, money is momentary
 Life is fleeting and action is passing
 Know that Yama is ruthless
 So, beware! Beware! Take care!

3rd watch

No parents, No relatives
Neither siblings nor shelter
Not a penny at this moment
Hence, beware! Beware! Take care!

4th watch

To steal the gem of knowledge from your body
There always hide like thieves lust, anger and greed
In various directions in every corner
Hence, beware! Beware! Take care!

Kanchanapalli Kanakamba:

Kanchanapalli Kanakamba (b.1893) was the most scholarly writer among women poets in Telugu literature. A scholar in Sanskrit, English, Tamil and Kannada and an author of many books, she was known as Bahu Grandhakarti. Though she was a child widow, with the support of her paternal uncle, she could improve her knowledge by acquiring higher studies in Madras, and succeeded in attaining B.A., in English. Later she became a faculty in Queen Mary's College, Madras. She was one of the recipients of Gruhalakshmi Swarnakankanam in 1936, and six other gold medals in the competitive exams conducted by Vignana Chandrika Parishad.

She started writing from her 12th year onwards and wrote *Ranga Sathakanu* (1905) her pioneering work. She wrote more than 16 books covering all the genres of literature including plays. Her literary corpus includes:

Amruthavalli (1907), *Kasiyatra Charitramu* (1912), *Hamsa Vijayamu* (1935), *Padyamukthavali* (1917), *Shaili* (1935), *Thomalia* (1937) etc. Many of her works are of epic kind and long poems. The few poems given here are extracts from *Thomalia* and which have been frequently quoted in anthologies of Telugu women's poetry.

from “To Married Women”

(from *Gruhalakshmulaku*)

Kanchanapalli Kanakamba

Whoever follows the principle that
 Our mother land, our attire, our language
 And our own cultural heritage is good for us
 Can claim as pure Andhra,
 Say seers!

. . .

While flora and fauna including
 Lifeless rocks stick to their real nature,
 Follow their subjected characteristics,
 Why should only man hasten to follow others' ways?
 Maybe it is the characteristic of “*Kali Dharma*”

. . .

Every individual possesses his own earth and heaven
 Every individual consists of his own good and bad.
 Without earth and heaven it is not a world, there is no home.
 And if there is no such difference
 We'll be called “Herd of Cattle” instead of being called a mob of the people.

Desiraju Bharathidevi

Bharathidevi was born to the prominent lawyer and renowned poet Chandra Mouli Chidambara Rao and Annapoorna as a single child. Her mother, Annapoorna, was known for establishing the first *Mahila Sangham* in Bapatla town. She got married to Sri Desiraju Rama Chandrarao. Her writings are: *Kaantha Sathakam* (poetry), *Mukthamba* (a play). A few parts of the play and poems were published in *Gruhalakshmi*. Her poems used to be read in every woman's club in Bapatla. She wrote many poems encouraging women to become patriotic, to wear khaddar and write poetry. She wrote elegiac poems on the death of Ravindranath Tagore, and on the immersion of Gandhiji's ashes.

An Elegy on the Death of Tagore (*Ravindrani Maranam*)

Desiraju Bharathidevi

Ravindra Guru!

You are the hero of the world

Who brought incredulous fame to India!

And yet you too couldn't escape from the cruel cycle of "Time"!

Not only the State of Bengal

But the whole of India receives similar impressions

Of your fervour while observing your poetic art

And feels proud of you.

...

For your entry

The heaven's threshold was opened instantly wide!

Great Soul! To felicitate you,

Heavenly sages are coming.

To applaud you with echoing sounds.

To adore you

Here are the devotees and yogic men, o, My Great Lord!

With garlands and with high spirits.

There they are, the poets of the universe!

While their sweet, welcoming romantic tunes

Are meant to recreate and to relax you

On your tiresome journey,
The heavenly dancers arrive
To serve thee, the poet of the Universe.

Doppalapudi Anasuya Devi:

Doppalapudi Anasuya Devi was born in the year 1919 and belongs to Renturu in Guntur district. Though she was not well educated, she learned to analyse great epics like Ramayana, Bharata and Bhagavatha. Her writings are: *Mathruhrudayamu* (Mother's Heart) (1949), *Asrutharpanamu* (Tearful Offering), *Ushasri*, *Parichayamu* (Introduction), *Vihanga Vilapamu* (Birds Heartrending Song) etc. Some of her poems describe women's pain and agony related to child birth. Such themes were rarely found in women's writing of the time which address issues of women consciousness and gender sensitivity. Her poems appeal a lot for her sincere approach in revealing her heartfelt feelings with her tender thoughts. In a poem, she describes her feelings of being pregnant:

An unseen great sculptor entered
 Day and night without taking rest
 Don't know how he is creating? It is
 His wish to design, and there is nothing in my hands!

The above lines remind us of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's poem, "Creator." Most of her poems are concerned with themes related to pregnancy, child birth, enjoyment of motherhood etc. She wrote poems without any hesitation while describing her feelings.

Of Scavenger's Duty (*Paaki Pani*)

Doppalapudi Anasuya Devi

There is no disgust while cleaning up the urine and waste through the rectum.

Don't know where the earlier disgust had gone.

Maybe the love of the baby made it vanish

Might have converted the hatred into love.

Or the gods magic will

Never had the feeling of slavery while nourishing the baby

Nor even anger upon the child

No feeling of inferiority while touching

No heart ache either of previous thoughts whatsoever.

Earlier, while caressing the baby

Or carrying it

The fear that it may soil the dress

With urine or human waste

Always preoccupied in the mind,

Though, I liked the presence of children.

Amazingly, after attaining motherhood

With the child God has brought forth a change in

All my ill feelings.

No sickening thoughts while serving the baby.

I feel I was appointed a governess to the child

By Almighty.

Hence I obey this duty without any protest.

Delivery (*Kanpu*)**Doppalapudi Anasuya Devi**

In an interior corner of no entry
Where none can view it
Perhaps it's sculpted into shape.
Now any moment it may come out
As new pains come from the pelvis.

In the excitement of viewing the nascent baby
And doubts on my ability to bear it
A long perplexed distance is observed
To strengthen the conscience.

Exhausted completely and fatigued
As nascent baby's screams echo in the heart
I forget the whole pain and suffering
With the birth of the new born treasure.

Gudipudi Indumati:

Gudipudi Indumati was born in April 1889 in Guntur and was brought up in Vijayawada. Her parents are Anantha Lakshmi and Mathukumalli Naraharyaksha Sastri. She was conferred with the titles of Kavitha Visarada, Kavi Simhi and Madhura kavayitri. Some of her works like *Lakshana Parinayam* appear to be *Prabandhams* (Descriptive Poetry). She might have written some works in this genre to prove that women of the modern period too could write in Classical style. She was also a good orator who would cite examples from various *prabandhams*, which shows her command over literature. She too was conferred Gruhalakshmi Swarnakankanam. *Taruni Sathakam* and *Neethi Taravali* are written in the form of giving advice to other women.

Awakening (*Melukolupu*)**Gudipudi Indumati**

This Mother land,
Is a greater mother,
Who produced great philanthropists like Sibi.
She is the pious mother
Who gave birth to the great follower of truth like Harischandra,
She is the brave mother
who produced the great warrior like Bhishma,
She is the mother
Who gave birth to a son, a stern follower of guru's advice
And a mighty person like Rama
She is the mother of immense prosperity,
Of precious stones
Of great comforts
And is well known.
O! Bharata Matha! Let triumph be yours!

You are the mother of the great Vikramaarka
Who was famous for his courage, generosity and good heart.

Devulapalli Satyavathi:

Not many biographical details are known about Devulapalli Satyavathi except the fact that she belongs to the Tanuku area, says Lakshmikanthamma in *Andhra Kavayitrulu* (319). But it was later found out that she was born on 15-06-1893 to Vangala Vaasudevudu and Subbamma. She was a child widow. She established a *Mahila Samajam* and did a lot for the welfare of women. She attended political meetings in Kakinada and met Durgabai in 1923. She took an active role in Salt Satyagraha which took place in 1930. She was a devotee of Congress. She wrote many poems on themes related to the national issues of the period. She was a sensuous poet like Keats. Most of her poems were published in *Gruhalakshmi*. The following are some of her poems collected from *Gruhalakshmi*: “*Sathyagrahulaku*” (To those Who Practice Satyagraha), “*Prabodhamu*” (Preaching), “*Meerabai*,” “*Udayamu*” (Morning), “*Parihasinthuva Nanu Ganchi Pakshi Raja?*” (Would You, Bird King, Laugh at Me?).

Morning (*Udayamu*)**Devulapalli Satyavathi**

Dressed in wonderfully coloured sarees
The eastern belle with radiant rays
Appears, as though welcoming
The Sun, the saviour of the world.

With gleaming flavours the day breaks
As though the erudite sun has arisen
Why do you engross in deep sleep
Awake quickly, o, you innocent mind!

Wake up, o, life! Rise up quickly!
Why do you panic and struggle in darkness
As celestial fire illuminates your soul?
Why do you sleep unmindful of your abilities?

*Meerabai***Devulapalli Satyavathi**

Where is the distant land of England

And this land of India!

You reached here to bring salvation to our lives

How can we repay your endeavours

Through night and day in this world?

Frustrated with England and inspired by Mahatma Gandhi

You reached here so desirous to serve him unquestioningly.

Determined to serve the land

To propagate khaddar

You left your place and reached here

To delight us, O, Meerabai!

You have tried to unite us

With your entry into the Andhra country

Triggering our patriotism for the independence movement

To break the chains of slavery.

By shunning the mirage of falsity and luxuries

My beloved lady

You became the rightful heir to the philanthropist, Gandhi,

You are so blessed on this earth.

While we were roaming about
Covering our heads with masks, hiding like owls
as though to brighten the fire of altar that exists in us,
You entered the Andhra country to bless our lives
Our women are proud of your commitment to work.

Boyi Droupadi

Boyi Droupadi was born in 1920 to Boyi Nagamma and Pallayya. Though objected to by her father who had a low impression of girls' education, Droupadi continued up to the middle school with the support of her elder brother. She later wanted to go for teacher training. But she had to face many problems during the teacher training course as a low caste community member who could not secure a seat in the hostel. She had to struggle a lot both physically and financially. She rendered service as a teacher for 34 years. She acquired poetic talent as members of her family were active participants in the freedom struggle. This gave her an opportunity to bring out her experiences in the form of poems.

O, Glow Worm! (*Minugura!*)

Boyi Droupadi

To which distant land or holy place
 Are you travelling, o, glow worm!
 Completing his rule of the day, the sun in coral hue
 Is strolling towards the western horizon.
 The deity of dusk came in gliding
 Spreading her hair enchanted by the beauty of shrubs.
 Dark clouds encompassed the whole sky
 Moon concealed himself in the clouds
 The darkness of the night has lost its grace.
 Darkness, enveloped the earth,
 Filled it like a whirl of smoke.
 In this blinding pitch dark night
 You began your travel
 Raced as though to fulfill some appointed deed
 To which distant land or holy place
 Are you travelling, o, glow worm!
 Spilling honey dew drop by drop
 You are travelling in dark nights
 You say, no need of day light,
 But please allow the dawn and the light to enter.
 And let the sun wake up and come.

You don't listen and return

What work did the lady of the night call you for?

Did she call you for serving God?

Why don't you take me also

To the land you are going to, following your shadow,

For I want to accompany you

To that distant land and holy place.

O, Glow worm! Let's travel together.

Iytam Indira and Iytam Bharati

These two poets were popularly known as *Janta Kavulu* “Pair Poets” born in 1930 and 1931 respectively to Iytam Kali Varaprasadaraya and Savitramma. They belong to Guduru area. Their literary works include *Janani Sathakamu* (Garland of Poems for Mother), *Annapurna Subhashita Ratnavali* (*Annapurna Moral Verses*), and *Pratima Devi*, a historical novel. *Annapurna Subhashita Ratnavali* earned them a good name. Along with these, some poems were written on social reformers. One of them was found in *Andhra Mahila* magazine.

Kandukuri Veeresalingam, the Great

(Kandukuri Veeresalingam Ghanudu)

Iytam Indira and Bharati Devi

Believing in his self, possessing confidence,
 Not scared even a wee bit of his opponents,
 Glittering with divine charm,
 The whole body swinging with strength,
 Not losing courage
 From the threats of rivals.
 Glowing with the fiery
 Spirit of independence throughout,
 By securing honour and fame to this Andhra land
 He became immortal, pious and sacred
 Spreading fame across the world,
 He is none other than Veeresalingam, the great!

He is an editor, a selfless man,
 Praised by people,
 Who accepted the burden of hard circumstances
 On to his shoulders.
 Cultivated the seeds of reform in the Telugu Land,
 Became a man of popularity.

Using the sharpness of his pen
He condemned the evils
And stood daringly, holding his head high.

In the lotus pond of Rajahmundry,
Ruled earlier by the king Raja Raja Narendra,
He, Veeresalingam, the Great,
Shone like the resplendent sun!

Golukonda Kavulu

Golukonda Kavula Sanchika was an anthology, published in 1934 and was compiled by Suravarm Prathapareddy, a great literary historian and scholar. In this book there are ten women poets who wrote on different themes. Two of these poets, Pulugoti Anandamamba and V. Lakshmiddevamma were selected for the present study.

Women's Education (*Strividya*)**Pulugoti Anandamamba**

If women show aversion towards education

They will be ill-treated for their ignorance.

No wonder, if you throw away the light

Won't the darkness prevail in the house?

Women disrespecting their mother tongue and

Adoring other languages is not the right way.

It's as though being rich, a woman throws away the mangalasutra¹⁰

To wear new and gorgeous ornaments.

¹⁰ The chain worn by a married woman

Mother Land (*Desa Matha*)

V. Lakshmiddevamma

Why don't you sing a song like Thyagayya
 To let a withered plant sprout leaves?
 Why don't you inscribe an epic like Thikkana
 To let even a centenarian get goose pimples?
 Why don't you administer like Krishnaraya
 Who could fight Lord Yama himself in battle?
 Why don't you patronize poesy to get quick fame
 Like Raghunatha raya?

Why don't you flash a magic spell
 And turn the wheel of democracy like Timmarusu?
 Is there anyone possessing similar traits
 Among your millions of sons now, beloved mother land!

O! You, Mother India!
 You are the personification of boundless life and health
 And zenith of power of labour.
 We adore you for you are the saviour.

The mighty valour has reached heaven and is resting.
 The cosmic power is exhausted and is relaxing.

Indians have become degraded now.

O, Mother! Praise once again our spirits and save our souls.

Other Poets and Their Works:

There were a few poets whose details were not found anywhere and some were not very prominent. In case of some of these poets, only a single poem may have appeared in print. But these poems have been taken into the present dissertation as they appear to be very relevant in many respects, in the style of narration, in the theme of the poems and their treatment. Hence these poems have been put together under the heading of “Other Poets and their works”.

In Praise of Sharada Bill

(Sharada Billu Prasamsa)

B. Gnanamba

If Indians don't follow their dharma
If mighty women soldiers don't discard devotion to their husbands
If the radiance of the God of Truth does not shine
Then the Sharada Act should remain powerful!

The agony of widowhood will be eradicated
The sufferings of the dowry system will be abolished
And the poor would lead a pleasant life
The Sharada Act will provide the ultimate happiness.

Sharada Act*(Sharada Chattamu)***Nadivinti Venkata Ratnamma**

Since many years,
Indians had been devoured by grief
by the acts of child marriages.
To mar the pride of the evil acts
And to bring an agreeable act for all
You, Sharada, have come to us.
Shouldn't we, Indian women,
Applaud thee in an instant for the act?

The orthodox may grunt
For the detriment of their sacred dharmas,
Cursing thee for indulging in acts of shamefulness.
But thou art triumphant of all your opponents.
Let your deed be memorable and legendary.

The Cry of a Cock (*Kukkuta Rodanamu*)**Pattisapu Sithamma**

The difference between you and me is
Only in the anatomy, but nothing else.
The struggle for life is the same for us.
Then is it heroic
To create enmity among our community
Tying knives around our necks
And to allow us to die? You sudra!
Is it for this
That you raise and keep us under the basket?
Those that serve ourselves by picking up fallen grains
Don't you have a little mercy, you sudra!
Are you likely to have any problem with us?
If so, you may have the right to kill us.
Instead, I help you a lot.
Don't I wake you up always at right times like a true servant
Keeping in mind when you go to the fields?
Don't I wake you up in the morning
Crowing "kokorokko"?
Why do you kill
Someone who helps you wake up from your deep sleep?
You steal the newly hatched eggs

We manage to hide from others
From my wooden basket.
Are you not ashamed of such deeds, you, criminal!
To swallow those tiny eggs
That cannot satisfy your hunger.
I may not be able to cry like you.
But is not the misery of losing a child the same for us both?
Can't you think even this much?
What's the point of knowledge, you, cruel one?
Every new year, during Sankranti,
You get us to fight for your entertainment,
And when you become angry and stiff
Having lost the game
You kill us by throttling our neck.
Don't you have the fear of sin, you cruel one?
During village festivals you catch,
Kill us in one stroke in the name of sacrifice.
Does your wish get fulfilled by killing us?
Hasn't the ancient grammarian Panini
While trying to frame the grammar rules
Recorded them for short and long vowel sounds
By observing us crow?
How far is your killing us justifiable?
Didn't you hear the popular saying-"Athmavath Sarvabhuthani"?

Graveyard (*Smashanamu*)**R. Subbamma**

For me, this graveyard is a pleasant place.

Here, I sing my sad heartrending songs

To the eyes of blood sucking devils

Who dance in excitement.

On these earth-buried skulls

Someone designed my future.

Groping in the mirror of the blue sky

I write the songs of my life.

In these silent woods where even a leaf is unshaken

I have become an emperor, but

These skulls too would have giggled like me some time back,

Looking at my buried skull.

All the countless tales of the past

Are getting back to my memory at this moment.

For me, this graveyard is a pleasant place.

Here I sing my sad heart-rending songs.

Sita, the Expatriate (*Pravasini Sita*)**P. Ramasitamma**

Lord! By disentangling from your embrace
Why should I wish to visit the forests?
This parting overwhelmed me like the sea.
Enough Lord! This expatriation is quite unbearable.

Whom shall I share my heartfelt agony with?
I have invited the whole problem myself.
I couldn't anticipate my ill-fate.
Why did this thought of valediction generate in my mind?

“Sita! In my dark life
You are the light of dawn,” you said then to me so tenderly.
Then how could you bear
To leave me in the deep forest?
If I am silent even for a while,
My beloved! You felt the whole world was vacuous.
How could you endure my expatriation
While I languished alone in the dreary gloom?

Reverence to God (*Daivabhakti*)

Kolluri Gouridevi

By believing God dwells in stone idols
 And becoming devotees in temples,
 Pouring milk into the ant hills in the deep forest,
 Taking a dip in the heart of the river,
 Do people really get rid of the sins committed?
 These people are thieves, rotten and spoilt.
 In this world, many, due to their possession of wealth,
 Indulge in acts of sin while young.
 But when they become old, make efforts,
 Through bhajans and prayers,
 Endlessly chant god's name to obtain salvation.

Wouldn't it be a pleasurable spectacle to a father,
 When all the siblings stay together and united;
 Don't wise men say
 That God is the father of this whole universe?
 Won't He then be satisfied
 When all fellow dwellers of the universe support each other?

Come Sister, Let's Go to School (*Sodari Rave Balloki*)

R. Nagaratnamma

It's already eight o' clock.

Let us go early

Will be marked,

Otherwise!

Late comers get their

Punishment!

Come sister! Come sister!

Let's go to school!

Let's study the lessons well

Recite before the teacher

They will give good marks

Will make us class leaders

We will win all prizes

Come sister! Come sister!

Let's go to school!

Everyone will respect

Will treat us with love

Endearingly ask us our names

Though you might be naughty with mother

You will be humble with all others

Come sister! Come sister!

Let's go to school!

Let's bring name and fame

To our mother and father

Be happy always

Speak truth always

Wish to get freedom

And fight for equality

Come sister! Come sister!

Let's go to school!

Let's trouble all a little

Abolish dowry to the bridegrooms

Become saviours of women

Let's prove we are not weak dames

But strong women

Come sister! Come sister!

Let's go to school!

Let's serve human beings, serve God

Serve the country affected by turbulence

Serve women's community

Let's feel content asserting

That all the religions are equal,

Come sister! Come sister!

Let's go to school!

Gems of Telugu Women (*Andhra Vanithamanulu*)**P. Appalanarasamma**

You are the woman
Who made the garland of
The history of the gems of Indian women
For the Telugu people.
My mother, Bhandaru Achamamba!

“Forget me, but not your mother land.”
Uttering these words, you have soared
High in the direction of heaven.
My mother, Annapurnamma!

Having the courage of
A leader of the past like Nagamma
The whole “Telugu” land was blessed by you
O! Lakshmibayamma!

Showcasing the power of women
You have shown that
They are no less than any male warriors.
Hail! Duvvuri Subbamma!

Observing the pathetic condition
of the people of your community
You responded by sacrificing your whole property...
How great! Yamini Poorna Tilakamma!

Competing with our great poets
Molla and Muddupalani
In weaving poems
You have earned great fame,
O! Kanchanapalli Kanakamma!

Devastated Life (*Sidhilampu Jeevanamu*)**P. Appalanarsamma**

Since the time you were born and while growing
You have been leading a life without joy
Like a jasmine blooming in the woods.
This society which crushed and squeezed
The gems of Indian women
Created obstructions
For your happiness in life.
In this galloping times
Traditional taboos are but chains.
Maybe they would only tighten further.
Does the day ever come
To break them?
You are immortal my sister!
Till your dreadful life remains in our hearts
We will continue
To fiercely burn.

Desire (*Korke*)**G. Jayalakshmi**

1

Had I been born
On this huge mountain peak
Like a fruit bearing tree
Maybe my life would have been meaningful
Humbly serving the sages of the place.

2

If I were a beautiful flower of the garden
Spreading fragrance
I would have enhanced the beauty of this lady (Nature)
And would have made my life worthy.

3

If I were a bird in the sky
Singing and flying like a liberated traveller
I would have sung the finest romantic lyrics in full throat
In this divine moment of fresh spring
Along with the echoes of mountain springs.

4

If I were an unending flow of a stream

On this enchanting beautiful earth

Quenching the thirst of passers-by

I would have been a recipient of their blessings.

Why Go on Talking About Caste, Telugu Child!

(Kulamu Kulamandu Vetiki Telugubidda!)

Koka Hanumayamma

“Behaviour is the prime thing for human beings
But not the caste,” is the proverb.
Instead of saying this
Why go on talking about caste.
My Telugu child!

While new trends of literature
Are spreading in all directions now,
Instead of casting off
Ill-feelings of caste discrimination
Why are you crazy and utter the words caste, caste...
Entertain them in your mind,
My Telugu child.

While people in other countries
Are getting out of narrow views of creed
And becoming united,
Why do you indulge every minute
In the thoughts of discrimination

And behave maintaining distinctions

And avoiding people saying caste, caste...

As though you were approaching a patient with an infectious disease?

from Agony of Women (*from Abalavilapamu*)

Brahmandam Kanakasundaramma

Women are not supposed to be educated,
Yet they should consider their husbands as gods.
Girls are not supposed to learn music,
Yet are expected to sing melodiously.

Women are not supposed to do bodily exercises,
Yet they should always work laboriously in the house.
Women are not supposed to know about health education,
Yet cleanliness of the house is to be maintained.

Oh! You elders! What kind of injustice is this?
Would even God do the work
Which He is ignorant of? At least now,
Get women educated in various fields with love.

Darkness (*Andharkaramu*)**Pydimarri Sitadevi**

Isn't earth the place

Where desire is the only frontier?

Is this not an infinite divine stage?

All the existing creatures

Are brilliant actors on this stage.

After playing this great role

Where do they go?

Who knows!

Became a Sinner Leaving all the Fruits of Good Deeds

(Phalitamella Vadili Patitudayye)

Pothapragada Rajyaratnamma

As if scattering detachment
 He wore matted hair.
 Saying why this property without the friendship
 He transferred it all to his companion.
 Telling he is not lustful, not at all,
 he took on the form of Vishnu.
 Saying monogamy is the best
 he donated half his body to his wife.
 Enduring all such difficulties even God
 Because of the close friendship with the moon
 Kept a prostitute in his hair,
 Became a sinner giving us all the fruits of good deeds.

Beggar Woman? (*Bhikshuki?*)**V. Ranga Devi**

Roaming the whole town
Along with the morning sun
Is your duty.
But hasn't it deserted you?

Serving the poor and needy
Is an ideal condition
According to Arya Dharma.
But hasn't it degenerated now?

When you come begging,
Saying no rice,
Behaving indifferently
Hasn't it become the order of the day?

The Hindu dharma
Followed as a tradition
From the ancient times
Hasn't it deteriorated now?

Due to the rationing of commodities

While food grains are being measured

Tomorrow and the day after

How can you spread out your pallu for begging?

Women's education (*Streevidya*)

Smt Veluvolu Vasantha Kusumavathi

When there are women who can write Vedic scriptures

Women who can write romantic poetry

Women who can generate heroism in abundance

Is it not shameful to ban education for them?

One woman inspired the great Indian war.

One lady reared Shivaji as an emperor.

One had caused the war of Palanaadu.

Do you think, this would have been possible, if women had been uneducated?

Learned mothers can teach their children

Combining good conduct with education

Can mould them into great warriors.

Hence you cannot keep women away from learning.

She must be a minister when it is time to deliberate

A mother when it is time to feed.

Apostles of dharma call her the one who bears the burden.

How can they perform those duties if they are not educated?

As women who have been educated

Are capable of writing knowledgeable information

Which reveal the many wonders of the world

Is it fair to keep women away from education?

Mahatma Gandhi**Smt. Veluvolu Vasantha Devi**

To make the whole world feast on thy richest melodies
To sing thy harmonious tunes of non-violence
Like a majestic bird of spring time
O! Gandhi, let the sacred dust of thy feet be our saviour.

While millions of mortals of our universe
Praise thee for thy mighty glory
Our Mother Land's sorrowful countenance
Will wear a streak of mirth.

To these millions of Daridra Narayans
Who dwell in hunger and poverty,
You offered having agonised
The wheel as a remedy to their suffering.

In the name of orthodox Hindu religion
While women and the *panchamas*
Were enduring endless torture
Your discourses will redress their grief

It is our prayer that

Your desire to free the country would be fulfilled.

How will the desires of such great souls

Remain unfulfilled?

In Praise of Gandhi (*Gandhi Stuti*)

Veluvali Venkatalakshminarasamamba

He is the person who extinguishes the fires of anger of Indians and teaches them
lessons of peace.

He is the one who dispels the darkness of ignorance in the world and scatters the
moonlight of knowledge.

He is the one who is determined to uplift the Harijans and help the cause of the
poor.

He is the one who removes the difficulties of the low caste and stands as constant
support of the poor.

He is the precious gem of deity to Indians.

He is the thunderbolt against the cruel and the brute.

The forerunner of the followers of the dharma

It is possible to adequately praise Gandhi, the lord.

He is a god of treasure to all Indians

A doted child of mother India.

A teacher of austere ways

to those who love and dwell in comforts.

He is Lord Krishna who shines
holding the spinning wheel as a weapon.

He is the Buddha who treats alike
the mighty rich and the beggarly poor.

Thou he is the ideal figure to the whole world,
Alas, he is to remain shackled with change and remain subdued.
What else is it but the nature of *Kaliyuga*
That a mountain should appear small, when viewed in a mirror?

Work Cited

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Chapter 3

Themes of Comparison:

Unheard and Heard Voices

In the present study of Telugu women's poetry, I have identified certain recurrent themes. We see many of the selected themes reflected in Indian English women's poetry too. A comparison will help us in the reconstruction of the historical and socio-political conditions of India that prevailed during the period, 1900 to 1950.

A study of these themes reveals the poets' response to as well as their protest against the problems that prevailed in the society. It focuses on the poets' response from woman's point of view. It tries to see how they have faced the problem as women and as individuals.

The themes of Indian women poets reflect in many ways the inner and outer spheres of their lives. Although the emancipation of women in India has always seemed to be limited, women projected their selves and identities through their literary talent. The status of women's writing has been changing over centuries. Mainly, the period, 1900–1950, was characterized by many political, socio-cultural and economic changes. This is reflected in the life styles and attitudes of the society in general and of the writers and poets in particular. These changes influenced the way women wrote during this period. The changes in the social scenario have been reflected in the very selection of themes. As the span of this literary creativity is half a

century, it has been possible to make analytical observations on the literary production during the period. This study also makes it possible for us to compare women poets writing in regional languages (Telugu) and Indian English women poets of the same period.

The comparative perspective can lead to further insights into the well-known cultural traits of Indian history and literature such as multi-lingualism and multi-culturalism. Some of these themes have been treated from a modern outlook. The intensity of thought and feeling observed in some of the post-independent women poets matches with that of the women poets in the period, 1900-1950. We need to view them from this perspective because in this period women who were rooted deeply in traditional notions of womanhood and identity metamorphosed and sharply responded to the social and political conditions, and offered feminist reflections too. For example, the traditional favourite theme of love between man and woman was treated tenderly and mildly by these early women poets. But these themes have been raised to the level of high emotional articulation by their successors. Thus expressions of the erotic and sexual impulse and explicit love-making are reflected in the poems of post-independence women poets like Kamala Das, who is seen as a controversial poet.

a) National and Social Themes:

Poems Written in Response to the Freedom Struggle and on Gandhian Themes

Indian women poets both at pan Indian and regional levels owe a lot to Mahatma Gandhi and his ideals. These have mainly influenced middle class women. Many of these families came

forward, allowing their women to receive education by attending schools and colleges. Male reformers like Kandukuri Veeresalingam, Gurajada Appa Rao, Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham and Raghupathi Venkataratnam Naidu along with many women activists like Bhandaru Achamamba, Kandukuri Rajyalakshmi, Kanuparthi Varalakshamma, promoted women's education and sought to provide sound social status for women.

As though these women poets were paying a tribute to their mentors, the poets have produced a large corpus of literature on Gandhi and other leaders. This theme is dealt with both by Indian English and Telugu poets. It may be observed that some of these women poets wrote elegies and commemorative verses on their mentors. The impact of Gandhi on women all over India has made them record their unforgettable moments which occupy the foremost place in literature. In the "Preface" to her book, *Role of Women in Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, K. Janaki, articulates thus:

Indian Freedom Movement is unique in many ways. It had many remarkable features. One of the most outstanding features was the fact that it involved the women of India in a manner unprecedented anywhere in the world. Particularly after the advent of Gandhiji [....] India rallied to the call of the Indian Freedom Struggle [....]. The role they played is surely unique in the world history. (Janaki V)

In Telugu, Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma compares Gandhi with a transcendental figure by addressing him as royal sage (Raja Yogi). In her poem, "O! Mahatma," she compares Gandhi with ancient sages. Towards the end of the poem she concludes by elevating him from an

ordinary sage's level to even a higher level. The poet in her eagerness compares Gandhi with a sage, though the sage doesn't seem to possess Gandhiji's grandeur and his fame. Gandhi with his selflessness and truthfulness could rise to the height of the Himalayas. Here the poet uses a metaphor to invest him with the strength of a mountain. A sage may lead a simple life like Gandhi, but he does not sacrifice his life for the noble cause of winning freedom for his country. Therefore she projects him as a "Raja Yogi," who by rejecting all his physical comforts transcends to the highest level:

by surpassing the line of life
 the mountain of Himalayan sacrifice
 that renounced everything

(ll. 9-11)

Sarojini Naidu's "The Gift of India" portrays how her children (Indians) were fighting in the war. She portrays the miserable condition of the Indian soldiers fighting the war. This may be about Indian soldiers who fought in the First World War for the British Government:

They lie with pale brows and brave broken hands,
 They are strewn like blossoms mown down by chance
 On blood brown meadows...

(ll. 10-12)

The ghastly sight of the war field was projected through these lines. She demands, in a typical Indian motherly and womanly way, for justice to be rendered to her dead children, who ought to be remembered with gratitude. This demand shows the brave act of a mother, who painfully accepts the “victorious death” of her children.

We come across a similar theme of describing “wounded soldiers” in the work of the Telugu Poet, Oleti Nithyakalyanamma in her poem, “Swatanthrya Lakshmi.”¹¹ In this poem the poet describes the women volunteers who took part in the Freedom movement and who were beaten ruthlessly by the British police. The lady volunteers’ bodies were beaten till their skin was torn by the police lathi:

Long soft hair was loosened, scattered and
 Spread up to knees
 The fair tender hands lost their bangles
 The whole body oozing blood
 By bearing the punishment
 Given by the police lathi...¹²

Still, the women bore such painful and tortuous punishment to attain freedom for their mother land. This poem reveals the brave deeds of women during the movement.

¹¹ Though this poem was not translated by me as a part of the work, I have used it here to convey the theme effectively.

¹² This poem was taken from the magazine *Gruhalakshmi*. Oct. 1931. 615.

Another Telugu poet Veluvali Venkata Lakshminarasamamba wrote a poem titled “*Gandhi Sthuthi*” (In Praise of Gandhi), praising him as a genius for his preaching of peace. She compares Gandhi with Lord Krishna. To the poet, with his spinning wheel, Gandhi appears as the Lord with his weapon of a wheel on his finger:

He is Lord Krishna who shines

Holding the spinning wheel as a weapon.

He is the Buddha who treats alike

To mighty rich and the beggarly poor

(ll. 13-16)

Another poet Veluvolu Vasantha Devi also wrote a poem titled, “Mahatma Gandhi.” In this poem she praises Gandhi as the saviour of the “untouchables,” who offers them the path of the spinning wheel as a remedy to their suffering:

To these millions of *Daridra Narayans*

Who dwell in hunger and poverty,

You offered, having agonised,

The wheel as a remedy to their suffering

(ll. 12-15)

It is interesting to observe that a large number of women poets at the regional level seemed to have responded to Indian Freedom movement. We observe that the themes related to the Freedom struggle are more in literature written in Telugu than in English. That the literary magazines and newspapers were flooded with poems on these themes which inspired millions of people, is a historical fact. Kanuparthi Varalakshamma, Utukuri Lakshmikanthamma, Gudupudi Indumathi, Desiraju Bharati, Tallapragada Viswasundaramma, Burra Kamala Devi, Devulapalli Satyavathi, Puttaparthi Kanakamma, Voleti Nithyakalyanamma, Samavedula Chiranjeevamma were a few noteworthy ones among them.

To focus on a few more Telugu poets, Desiraju Bharati in her poem “*Deevenalosangumamma*,” requests the mother land to bless her children who have become soldiers by forming an “army of peace” (*shanthi sainyamu*) to take part in the country’s fight for freedom by burning foreign clothes, by their involvement in the movement of Civil Disobedience, and finally by becoming Indians who “make the world bewilder” and be victorious. She wrote another poem titled “The Tune of Spinning Wheel” (*Ratnapu Nadamu*) in the form of a traditional song written in a few stanzas. The rhythm of this song reverberates in the minds of the people provoking them to join the Freedom movement. The tune of this spinning wheel may become horrific echoing in the ears of the enemies:

O! You Indian maids, have you heard the echo of the tune of the spinning wheel!¹³

Secures people, their property, their chastity and

Provides comforts always to the whole of mass

¹³ The lines were taken from “The Echo of the Tune of the Spinning Wheel,” from *Bharata Swatantryodiyamamlo Telugu Mahila Patra* by Vasa Prabhavathi

...Have you heard the echo of the tune of spinning wheel!

In the poem “*Awakening*,” the poet Tallapragada Viswasundaramma writes about the eradication of slavery and untouchability as Gandhian concepts. She propagates the greatness of Gandhiji to her fellow countrymen. The poem is a powerful articulation on the practice of untouchability that prevailed in the society.

One more Telugu poet, Gudupudi Indumathi’s poem “*Awakening*” talks about the possessions associated with Mother India (Bharata Matha), gems of children she had begotten in all these centuries. Now such precious gems as Gandhiji, Lalalajpathi Roy, Dadabai Naoriji etc., are thinking of her release, i.e., of attaining freedom for Mother India. Therefore, why should we be lazy and cowardly? Hence people must rise, awake, and involve themselves in good acts and deeds.

There were a few poets who were known to have published only one or two poems on this theme of patriotism such as Samavedula Chiranjivamma who wrote “*Volunteer*” (*Desasevika*), in praise of the service rendered by them during Salt Satyagraha and other activities. The poet acknowledges the volunteers and their services through her poem.

Veluvolu Vasantha’s “*Preaching*” asks her fellow women to know the value of khadi sarees (hand woven cloth). She awakens them to realize the real help rendered by them to Mother India. Tallapragada Viswasundaramma has written many poems related to the real struggle waged by women during their imprisonment. Poems like “*The Lathi’s Rule*” (*Lati Rajyamu*), “*In the Women’s Cell*” (*Streela Cherasalalo*), “*The Tower Clock in the Prison*,” (*Jailu Gadiyaaramu*), are a few on the theme of freedom struggle.

In the poem, the “In the Women’s Cell” (*Streela Cherasalalo*), she displays the pathetic situation of women prisoners. This poem gives the real picture of freedom fighters during their stay in the prison, tortured, ill treated and humiliated by wardens and matrons who resemble the rakshasas, the devils. She laments more for the “C” class prisoners who were tortured and humiliated more. This poem shows the poet’s sympathy for her fellow women prisoners. Her poems on Sarojini Naidu, Gandhi and prohibition show her awareness of the social problems and issues:

When the tough guys of wardens are implementing
 Strict instructions, to keep us in discipline,
 We dwell without fear
 Though the rigorous imprisonment reminds us of the
 Mythological place Lankapuram,
 we remained there fearless,
 Not weak, but tremendous strength
 To bring independence to our country.
 Hence can break the chains of slavery
 To bring independence to our country.

(ll.7-16)

The poem gives a mirror image of the then society where people indulged in activities which could bring freedom to the country.

Many women poets in Telugu wrote poems on national leaders as they owed a lot to them. Kanuparthi Varalakshamma wrote a poem on the national leader, Andhrakesari Tanguturi Prakasam, addressing him as “*Prajala Manishi*,”¹⁴ (Man of the People). To her, he is a person of high stature:

He who stood against the government during the freedom struggle
And braved his chest against bullet attack,

(ll. 3-4)

Sarojini Naidu as a national leader and a poet influenced many Telugu writers which can be seen in their works. Voleti Nitya Kalyanamma wrote a poem titled “Sarojini Devi.” In this poem, the poet praises Sarojini Devi’s deeds during her participation in the freedom movement. The poet says that Sarojini Naidu became a good supporter of Gandhi in bearing his “yolk of burden,” though she was a lady with her own limitations. With her meticulous strength she proved the Indian women’s mettle. Sarojini stands as a symbol of women’s strength to the whole Nation:

¹⁴ This poem was taken from Pothapragada Rajyalakshmi’s book, a biography on Kanuparthi Varalakshamma.

By showing your mettle
 In the land of non-violent struggle.
 You have proved, O, Sarojini,
 That women are not meek and weak!

(ll. 36-9)

Another Telugu poet, Tallapragada Viswa Sundaramma also wrote poems on Sarojini Naidu, about her imprisonment during the freedom struggle. The poem titled, “Imprisonment of Sarojini” (*Sarojini Nirhbhandhamu*) is a poem of appraisal of the deeds of Sarojini Devi. Viswa Sundaramma also wrote another poem on Sarojini Naidu titled “The Fame of English” (“Angla Gouravam”) that was based on the concept of the Englishman’s “Pride” and the poet’s sarcastic comments of the English ways.

In contrast to Telugu women poets, there were very few women among Indian English women poets who wrote poems on Gandhi and the Freedom movement. Even Sarojini Naidu wrote very few poems related to the theme. She wrote poems like “The Gift of India,” “An Anthem of Love,” “To India,” and on leaders under the title of Memorial Verses, and individual poems titled “Gokhale,” “The Lotus,” “Awake” (To Mohamed Ali Jinnah) etc.

Being a woman poet the concept of motherhood has been beautifully treated in such poems. In the poem, “The Gift of India,” Sarojini Naidu showcases her “Selfhood” as Mother India, and the soldiers fighting for the country as her sons. They have been sent by her to distant lands to perform various tasks in the war:

Priceless treasures torn from my breast
 And yielded the sons of my stricken womb
 To the drum-beats of duty, the sabres of doom

(ll.4-6)

She even expresses her lament for the “Torn red banners of victory,” because the banners were drenched in red blood to achieve the victory expressed in the poem.

One more name to be remembered when we talk about Indian women’s poetry on Gandhian theme is Bharati Devi Sarabhai,¹⁵ who was a Congress volunteer and who also worked in Gandhi’s ashram. Her poetic drama, *The Well of the People*, appears to be a manifesto of Gandhi’s deeds. This is a symbolic, verse play with a distinct and significant representation of the Gandhian spirit. “The Chorus” in her play is very important because it sings out the actual story, as in a conventional type of dance drama and symbolizes the different psychic and spiritual planes of man’s life. In a few Indian English anthologies, her “Chorus” has been given place, considering it to be a poetic version.

Bharati Sarabhai has propagated Gandhian views in a very popular way through her verse play. She has had hands on experience in serving people while working in the Sabarmathi Ashram. She even actively participated during the kumbhamela, serving sick people, and working as a volunteer under Nehru’s leadership. She laments at the innocence of peasants who spent huge amounts on rituals like *kumbhamelas*.

¹⁵ Bharathi Devi Sarabhai was the first Indian English Woman dramatist who wrote two plays, *The Well of the People* (1943), a poetic drama, and *The Two Women* (1952), a social drama.

Poems Written on Spinning Wheel as a Theme:

The range of themes varied from poet to poet. But a common theme strikingly observed in both the languages, was the image of the “spinning wheel”. The spinning wheel or charkha which has been introduced by Mahatma Gandhi represents the livelihood of the poor and the middle class.

The Telugu poet, Veluvali Venkata Lakshmi Narasamamma in her poem, “Appraisal of Gandhi” compares the charkha or the spinning wheel of Gandhi to the wheel-shaped weapon of Lord Srikrishna who wields it on the tip of his finger and gets ready to punish the evil doers (*dushta sikshana*).

Another poet, Desiraju Bharati, in her poem titled, “The Tune of the Spinning Wheel” (*Ratnapu Nadamu*) echoes the reverberating tune of the spinning wheel and enthuses the people to take part in the Freedom movement.

Bharati Sarabhai also uses the image of the “wheel” in her poetic drama, *The Well of the People*. Gandhian village workers, who were to motivate illiterate peasants, have been described as “straight, energetic, clad in home spun cloth”¹⁶. The chorus of these workers says:

Our spirits filled with imagery

Golden-age-old, buried under modern debris.

¹⁶ This cloth is made up of thread got from the spinning wheel and is called Khadi. To avoid foreign goods and clothes, Gandhi largely propagated and promoted “desi cloth” so as to generate revenue, minimize the expenditure and make Indians including women self sufficient. In those days every house had this ‘Charkha’.

We pressed their claim to re-present reality,
 We preached and fought for instant liberty,

[...]

Affirmed the home, gave it occupation,
 For we climbed the hill through the spinning wheel --

(Sarabhai 28)

Poems Written on the Social Conditions:

Many poets proved themselves by writing poems on social problems which demonstrate their awareness of the problems in society of their time. They have responded to contemporary issues like the Sharada act, prohibition, women's education, women and their sense of belongingness, untouchability, widow hood etc.

Madina Subhadramma, an early nineteenth century Telugu woman poet, seems to have responded to one such theme. Her poem "Why Women had to Lead Miserable Lives?" (*Heenamai Yunna Brathukela Maninulaku?*), is based on the pathetic and pitiable life led by widows during her period. She could succeed in portraying the society and the social status of women in her poem:

It is better for her to commit suicide
 than to be hurt and be humiliated by their sarcastic words.
 Why should women be humiliated
 And lead miserable lives?

(ll 8-11)

The poem shows a woman's life in her desolate condition. The poem talks about the lady, leading the life of a single parent amidst poverty, with the responsibility of children, nurturing them without anybody's support, with friends behaving like enemies, with begging also not fetching much, and with God not being merciful to her. She laments why women should continue to lead such a miserable life.

In Indian English poetry, the first Indian woman poet in English, Toru Dutt, writes a poem titled "Savitri" which documents the potential theme of widowhood. As Toru Dutt died in the prime of her youth, she did not get a chance to utilise her talents fully or to write on a variety of themes. However, she composed a few poems expressing her views on contemporary societal issues, among which the difficulties of widowhood have been portrayed in one of her long poems "Savitri." The cursed life of widowhood that prevailed in the then society is found in her lines; she shows her ill feelings towards the ill-fated lives of widows:

And think upon the dreadful curse
 Of widowhood; the vigils, fasts,
 And penances; no life is worse

Than hopeless life, the while it lasts.

(Toru Dutt 46)

I think that this poem is a living example of the portrayal of the socio-economic condition of women during those days.

The society described by Toru Dutt for widows is similar to that we have observed in Madina Subhadramma's poem. Maybe Toru Dutt was too young to suggest any remedy to the problem, except to acknowledge it. But the Telugu poet Subhadramma suggests a remedy to the sufferers--that it is better for them to lead an independent life than to remain dependants and lead a miserable life. Both these poets responded to the problems of women (capturing the concept of identity crisis), long before the problem was raised and questioned by their contemporaries or successors. Subhadramma's poem can be treated as a protest by a woman poet written almost a century prior to the other poets.

Sarojini Naidu also wrote a poem on widowhood, "Dirge" which describes the pathetic condition of a widow, who once enjoyed "glimmering robes" and "gleaming glass or jewels on her wrist":

The henna leaf [...] hands [...] know the comradeship of grief,

Red spices for her lips that drink of sighs

Or black collyrium for her weeping eyes?

Shatter her shining bracelets, break the string

Threading the mystic marriage-beads that cling

[...]

And flowering springs that mock her empty years?

(ll 9-24)

Tallapragada Viswasundaramma also wrote a poem, “Widow’s Agony” (*Vithanthu Vilapamu*). The poet displays the drudgery of widowhood. She, being a child widow, could express the pain even more effectively. The whole poem narrates the condition of the widow and her agony at not being accepted in social and family gatherings and functions.

We cannot decorate our hair with flowers
Cannot use fragrant body sprays.

Make-up items are banned for us
Cannot express closeness to relatives.

(ll. 13-16)

With an agonizing tone, she concludes the poem wondering if anyone is there to rescue and offer these child widows a bright future.

When it comes to the later part of the twentieth century, many Indian English and Telugu poets have been found responding to societal issues and writing poetry.

In India there was the evil practice of getting their girl children married when they were very young in the name of child marriages. This social practice resulted in early widowhood, which in turn brought many other related problems and evil practices. In fact, some of the women poets had been victims of these child marriages. It is curious to observe that almost all

the poets in this work had been married. Unfortunately there were a few poets who were child widows. The biographical details of the 19th century poet, Tarigonda Vengamamba reveal that she was a child widow; she expresses the painful suffering of her widowhood. Kanchanapalli Kanakamba was also a child widow, but later she was allowed to go for higher studies; she proved herself to be a meritorious scholar.

The Sharada Act lighted the lives of many women of our traditional society and minimized the practice of child marriages. This act had brought responses from the in poets too. A poem titled “Sharada Act”, written by Nadivinti Venkata Ratnamma, was published in 1929 in *Gruhalakshmi*. In this poem the poet expresses her happiness for ending the evil practice and shows her gratitude by saying it is time to celebrate its enactment:

The orthodox may grunt
 For the detriment of their sacred dharmas
 Cursing thee for indulging in acts of shamefulness.
 But thou art the triumphant of all your opponents.
 Let your deed be memorable and legendary.

(ll. 9-13)

Another evil social practice was the consumption of alcohol. Many families were victims of it. Tallapragada Viswasundaramma wrote two poems on this theme, both of them were titled “Prohibition.” In these poems she addresses the drunkard and lists out all the evil things associated with consuming liquor--the person losing his respect, losing his health, desertion by relatives, ruining of the family etc. The poem describes the poet’s keen observation of its ill effects:

Your parents will desert you,
 Your wife and children go away scared of you,
 Ultimately you'll become no one
 To your own relatives.
 Hence listen.....

(ll 13-6)

In this account of responses to social problems, a poet who needs mention is Bharati Sarabhai, who was a true Gandhian. In her verse play, *"The Well of The People"*, she discusses many social issues. The act of untouchability, one of the evil practices of the Hindu society and the drudgery of the lives of Indian peasants were narrated very powerfully:

He gave his eyes to them that day. Their eyes
 Blinded with pain saw the Hindu outcast
 Harijan, banned of man, like lonely chatak,
 [. . .]
 Crying for water of equal men.

(Sarabhai 43)

As the "Hindu outcast Harijan," (the phrase as used by the poet) the Dalits were banned from entering the place where the well was situated, and from fetching the water from it for they

were “untouchables”. But they cry for water as the thirst is the same for all people irrespective of their caste and creed. As Gandhiji was aware of the problem and saw their sufferings, all of them, the “untouchable” peasants, eagerly looked up to him for help, like the *chataka* birds waiting for the rains to quench their thirst.

Poems on Other Significant Themes:

“The Cry of a Cock” (“*Kukkuta Rodanamu*”) by Pathisapu Sithamma, is a poem displaying the agony of the bird; it struggles for life like us humans but no one recognizes it. She enlists the deeds of human cruelty and sinful acts towards them: “Tying knives around necks and allow to die”, “ get us to fight for your entertainment” , “steal the newly hatched eggs,” “manage to hide from others” “From wooden basket”, “during village festivals catch and kill in one stroke in the name of sacrifice”, and many such. She concludes the poem by the cock preaching to the human being:

How far is your killing us justifiable?

Didn’t you hear the popular saying- “*Athmavath sarvabhuthani*”?

(Il. 44-45)

There is a poem by Sarojini Naidu titled, “The Old Women” which talks about a beggar who silently waits near the gate in all seasons, in rain and sun alike:

So patient she sits at my gate
 In the face of the sun and the wind and the rain,
 Holding converse with the poverty ...
 [...]
 And waits for her ‘ultimate sleep’.

(ll. 15-8)

The Telugu poet, Kanuparthi Varalakshamma, wrote a poem titled “Summer” in which she describes the severity of summer and how people shut themselves in their houses to avoid sun-stroke and other problems. The poem is written by her to make people aware of the need to make arrangements of cool drinking water on the roadsides to quench the thirst of travellers, passers-by and even beggars. The whole poem describes an old beggar’s pitiable and death-like situation of not being able to get water anywhere. Finally, when he has almost collapsed, a small girl, being kind-natured, fetches him water. This poem shows the poet’s awareness of human problems.

It is a long poem written in a descriptive mode in the form of a ballad. This poem can be compared with Sarojini Naidu’s poem “Old Lady.” Both the poems reveal the pitiable lives led by discarded people of the society. But as both the poets have a humane attitude, the most neglected people in society become the subjects of their poems.

There are some poems, though not written by popular poets that need to be focused on. They are varied in theme and reflect on specific social problems. A poem titled “*Neti Karavu*” (The Present Famine) is written by an anonymous poet, mentioned only as Godavari Mandala Vasini (a resident of Godavari district). It is based on the famine that occurred during those days. This poem was published in the magazine, *Anasuya* in the year 1919. The theme of the poem gives us the impression that it must have been written by someone of those times as the poem reflects all the problems prevalent during that period.

The poet points out the difference among various classes of people. While the higher class enjoys delicious food, the others belonging to the lower strata could eat only “Rangun Rice” (just like man eating fodder), as it was the only affordable or available food without any quality. During the World war period, scarcity of food items happened to be a severe problem experienced by the people. The poor could not afford quality rice and had to depend on lower quality food grains. The poet questions God for such discrimination reminding Him that they too are His children:

As there is no scope for soft silky clothes

We are managing with coarse Khadi handloom clothes,

As there is no availability of paper for writing

We manage with just oral arguments.

The poem showcases the agony of various people suffering from lack of basic needs, due to the rationing of civil supplies.

Let us compare this with the Indian English poet Mary V. Erulkar's poem, "For a Child in Time of Famine". Mary Erulkar's poem shows the influence Wordsworth on the poem:

Once down the hills of laughter he raced
 With sun like a golden kite sailing from his shoulder
 And the valley corn like a yellow river at his feet.

(ll.1-3)

The phrase "yellow river" reminds us of the poem, "Daffodils." But unfortunately, this "gay mood" of the poet cannot be sustained for a long time and it passes into a "pensive mood" with her witnessing famine. Now her eyes can see only barren fields.

For Oh! The corn lands like singing bonfires have died away
 And the fields are dark and the laughter loth,
 And from the body's hollows the white bones creep,
 Edging like hungry owls into the sun.

(ll. 14-17)

No other established Indian English poet of her times could portray famine with such powerful articulation. As the number of women poets in English was very small, we cannot expect a large number of poems to be found so as to represent all the themes.

b) Themes of Domestic Life, Self and Identity and Womanhood/Motherhood

Poems on Domestic Life:

Familial relations as a theme in women's writing would include a study of the roles played by them in the family, the responsibilities taken up by them either by imposition or by volition, and their achievements in this regard, i.e., a recognition and acknowledgement of their self and identity. Though we find many poems suitable under this category, I have chosen only a few poems that reflect a refinement and richness of thought and expression in them. I have mainly drawn on those poems I have translated while also giving examples from other related poems wherever possible.

In the theme related to domestic life, we observe that poets have responded less to this theme, compared to other themes. Some poets wrote poems on the construct of a "dream house" and its relevance in their lives. Talking about festivals and rituals, and playing a major role in performing them are aspects of domestic life.

Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma's poem, "Premarajyam" talks about the ideal house and women's preference to "home" than to other interests. The concept of a "dream house" was very ideally created in this poem. The poem glorifies the image of Indian women and their glorious life in the ancient past. The poem is also a representative of the "presence of sweetness near at

home”. The poet in the beginning, attempts all the possible ways to find her utopian destination, the Love Kingdom:

At dawn while earth and sea
Respond to Sun’s radiant reflections,
I moved out of the house in the mood full of rejoicing
In search of the ‘Love kingdom’.

(ll. 1-4)

After a long search, she reaches a small hut which is very simple and neat and clean without any exaggeration. The poet wants to stay a while there to take rest as she is fully exhausted in her search for her love kingdom. Meanwhile the poet enquires the lady of the house regarding her search and finally the poet realizes that home is the place where we have to find love.

I observed that the hut she dwelled in was such
An abode of peace!
Her face was very lovely and graceful.
I felt a radiant illumination in my heart
And realized that home and nothing else is the real place of the Love Kingdom.

(ll. 42-6)

With a positive note, the poet suggests that home is the only place where one can get peace of life.

In Indian writing in English, one is reminded of Lotika Ghosh's poem titled, "My Abode" (Gokak 173-4). Though it refers to an abode, it has the meaning at its metaphysical plane. The poet's anguish for spiritual life was well described by her. As she wants to build her abode, she wants it on the path where God travels. Though the poem talks about the abode in external terms, it is more a poem on the poet's spiritual perception:

On the way of your coming and going

I have built my abode;

On the way of your coming and going

On the infinite road.

(ll 1-4)

A few poets wrote on Indian festivals, the celebration of which are part of Indian life style. Samavedam Chiranjivamma's "*Sravana Lakshmi*" is a poem that describes the ritual performed during the "Puja." The poet personifies the month "Sravanamasa" to a beautiful lady and describes when "after taking head bath" [how] "the ends of hair drop out water drops," and "the Goddess of nature is shining." This is a common sight in the month Sravanamasa which comes every year in August. It is an important and an auspicious ritual especially for newly wedded girls. There are poems too describing other festivals. "Sankranthi Sandadi" is one such example.

Poems on Women's Self and Identity

Identity crisis and quest for identity are basic motifs for any human being. This concern for identity reveals various aspects of human thinking like the awareness of one's identity, the quest for freedom, search for the roots, experience of alienation and many more. Protests against worldly problems and queries too come under this aspect of identity and self. Indian women writers too respond to many of these issues and their response is reflected and revealed in their works. Women wrote poems which clearly brought out their identity crisis. Madina Subhadramma, in her poem, "Why Women had to Lead Miserable Lives?", articulates the miserable conditions of women if they have to live and lead a forcible single life due to the loss of the life partner. Probably for the first time in Telugu, a woman poet dares to question her identity:

It is not desirable for her to stay in their homes.
 It is better for her to commit suicide
 than to be hurt and be humiliated by their sarcastic words.
 Why should women be humiliated
 And lead miserable lives?

(ll. 7-11)

Even in such hostile conditions, it is not preferable for them to depend upon their brothers and stay with them. Relations may take advantage of such miserable condition and illtreat the

women of the house horribly with their sharp expressions and humiliate them. The poet questions, why women still want to be in their clutches and allow themselves to be humiliated. She says it is better to die than to be with them. She wonders why women prefer to lead such miserable lives.

This poem is the best example in portraying the socio-economic conditions of the widowed women during those days. The poet responds to a widow's life and sharply reacts by saying that it is better for her to die than to lead a dependable life. The poet's awareness towards independent life was openly discussed against the prevailing societal norms meant for women from *Manusmruti* which clearly states that "na stri swathanthrya marhathi" (no woman deserves independence).

Though the poet Subhadramma seems to have written many poems and books acknowledged by the great critic Arudra, unfortunately very few of them are available today. From her available works, published in *Gruhalakshmi*, one can find her poems of social awareness employing her sharpness of expression.

Toru Dutt, the Indian English woman poet had composed a poem expressing the filthiness of widowhood, in her long poem *Savitri*. The cursed life of widowhood in the then society is presented in the following lines:

[. . .] no life is worse

Than hopeless life, the while it lasts.

Day follows day in one long round

Monotonous and blank and drear;

(Dutt 46)

This poem is an example that portrays the social condition of women during those days. Toru Dutt seems here to be very modern for her times. The Telugu poet Tallapragada Viswasundaramma, in her poetry anthology *Kavitha Kadambamu*, wrote poemson widowhood. Her poem “*Vithanthu Vilapammu*” (Widow’s Agony), displays the drudgery of widowhood. A child widow herself, Viswasundaramma could express the pain very effectively. The whole poem is picturesque in quality, narrating the condition of a widow and her agony for not being accepted in social and family gatherings and functions:

No question of attending marriages and social functions

No way can witness pleasant occasions.

Cannot enjoy wearing colourful dresses

Should bend and wither only in the kitchen rooms.

(ll. 17-20)

With an agonizing tone, she concludes the poem asking if there is anyone to rescue these child widows and offer them a bright future:

O! Hindu Mother, think a while and tell
 What life is ahead for this poor widow!

O! Mother, show a way to such child widows
 Wipe out their agony.

(ll. 25-8)

Reading the above poems we come to know of all the superstitions and ill practices that prevailed in the then society and the efforts made by the women poets to discuss these issues.

Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma's poem "*Na Mathamu*" (*My Way*) projects of her selfhood. It is a poem of humility with the hue of self confidence and contentment. She wants to retain her humane quality by balancing good and bad, maintaining self-confidence and respect in "her own way." She says:

Let me lead a courageous and bold life
 Without fear and timidity
 Without feeling shy or proud
 Live the way people expect me to.

(ll. 12-16)

Among the Indian English poets, some of Nilima Devi's poems are about the question of identity. Her poem "Hidden Face," (*Antharatma*) protests in a mild way to express the urge of her inner soul which "wants" to be liberated from the shackles of her womanhood or gender restrictions. The poet's hidden face always teases her, addressing her as earth-bound, because the poet could never come out of the fixed soil due to societal fears. Her "inner spirit" always mocks the poet who is under "born limitations" (of being woman), who could not break her chains for being liberated. It says:

O Earth-bound! Could you break

Thy chains of bondage? Then come.

(ll. 71-2)

But the poet could never do so. Because she knows her limitations, and she is aware of them, she says:

But, vain, vain would I tear at my roots

Deep down in the clay of the cinging earth:

So mock on, Stranger, mock on.

(ll. 73-5)

Throughout the poem we can see her inner conflict between her poetic temperament and her worldly limitations. This poem can be considered as a pioneering attempt on the theme related to women's consciousness in Indian English women's literature.

"The strange spirit within herself" though "powerless to resist," yet struggles against "the magnetic attraction of the earth." This "attempt for liberation" (of "soul" in this poem), found in Indian English women's poetry occupied a crucial place later on in Indian English women's literature.

Another poem "Romance" Nilima Devi talks about the "eternal quest for romance" and the poet's search for it in the nature.

An elusive dream

Is the eternal quest for romance.

Where is it?

(ll 1-3)

Then she gives a huge list of possible sources like the "snow-capped mountain-peak," "swift-flowing, far-off river," "the sweet scent of a cluster of moon-washed flowers" etc., but finally she locates it within and finds her identity because of it. Probably, only an Indian could identify love in mystic thoughts and mysticism in love. The poet finally ends the poem:

May be in none of these it is,
 Nor any where
 In the world of sound or sense,
 But in the depth
 Of the human heart itself,
 Like a spraying bubbling forth
 From times beginning
 To its end.

(ll. 16-23)

In women's writing, themes on women's education reveal their awareness of education for their right thinking and for the betterment of their lives. Among the Telugu poets, Veluvolu Vasanta Devi, Puligoti Anandamamba, etc., expressed their views on women's education. Surprisingly, I haven't come across any poet of Indian English writing a poem on this theme. Perhaps, they took education for granted. Veluvolu Vasanta Kusumavathi's poem "Women's Education" expresses her agony at being denied education. She questions why education should be denied to women when they are capable of writing even Vedic scriptures. She asks:

When there are women who can write Vedic scriptures
 Women who can write romantic poetry
 Women who can generate heroism in abundance

Is it not shameful to ban education for them?

(ll. 1-4)

The poet assures the world that if women were educated they will contribute to the transmission of knowledge in the form of news and can unravel the wonders of the world.

P. Ananadamamba, on the other hand, throws light on the negative effects of lack of education among women. In her poem, “*Strividya*” she refers to the consequences of their aversion towards education:

If women show aversion towards education

They will be ill-treated for their ignorance

No wonder, if you throw away the light

Won't the darkness prevail in the house?

(ll. 1-4)

An interesting aspect of this poem is her awareness of the consequences of the neglect of mother tongue in favor of the learning of other languages, perhaps of English or Hindi. The poet very ruthlessly comments on this fascination as an attraction towards gorgeous gold ornaments while throwing away their *mangalasutram* (marriage thread).

Women disrespecting their mother tongue and

Adoring other languages is not the right way

It's as though being rich, a woman throws away the Mangalasutra

To wear new and gorgeous ornaments.

(ll. 5-8)

I have rarely come across such powerful motivating lines to inculcate awareness among women. The image of "*mangalasutra*" and of its importance will be known only to women, and only women can use such images. In this context it is pertinent to refer to a poem titled "Mother English" by Savitribai Phule. As against Anandamamba who asks Telugu women to study the mother tongue, Savitribai wants women, especially women from socially disadvantaged castes to study English, the language of scientific knowledge and opportunities. Another poem related to the theme of women's education is R. Nagaratnamma's "Come Sister, Let's go to School." The poet narrates all possible benefits of going to school in a rhythmic way. The poem is lyrical in quality and reads as a folk song.

Let's study the lessons well

Recite before the teacher

They will give good marks

Will make us class leaders

We will win all prizes

Come sister! Come sister!

Let's go to school!

(ll. 9-15)

Apart from these poems that motivate women to get themselves educated for the upliftment of their social position, there are poems that dare to question *Kavitha*, the muse of poesy, for taking men's side. "Welcome" is a poem written, addressing the goddess muse that puts logic and argument to good use:

Listening to the poet's songs

Listening to his poetic stanzas

Continuing as his life-long beloved

Have you forgotten the existence of the woman poet?

(ll. 1-4)

The poem goes on to critique the Muse throughout and in the concluding part, the poet makes her realize why she should take women's side and involve herself in "the movement of women's progress":

Don't you want to take part in

The movement for women's progress?

Don't you have any fellow feeling?

The wonderful secrets of 'Nature'

I will unravel before you

May you find your life's fulfillment.

Come soon O! Poetic muse!

(ll. 21-27)

The poet tries to persuade the Muse by saying that if she supports women poets she can get the benefit of viewing the wonders of the world from a woman's perspective which she had not experienced till now.

There is another Telugu poem titled "*Minugura!*" (Glow Worm!), written by a Dalit woman poet, Boyi Droupadi. The poem talks about the poet's perception of a wandering life and also her keen observation of nature. If these glow worms have to be viewed, one has to go into the darkness. Who will have the courage to go into darkness to view lives that dwell in darkness? She describes darkness very poetically in the following lines:

Darkness, encompassing the universe with black,
Raised like a whirl of smoke.

(ll. 10-11)

The metaphor of a woman's journey, a Dalit woman's journey, from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, comes through most efficiently in the following lines:

Why don't you take me also
To the land you are going to and following your shadow

For I want to accompany you
 To that distant land and holy place
 O! Glow Worm! Let's travel together.

(ll 25-29)

Boyi Droupadi treats the theme of education very differently from others.

Poems on the Theme of Womanhood:

Under the broad theme of womanhood we observe woman's expression of their emotions and love as recurrent poetic themes of articulation. The treatment of love has been a theme from very early women's writings in Telugu right from Molla and Tarikonda Vengamamba and the most controversial of them, Muddu Palani. These themes have sometimes been dealt with even under the cover of Bhakti Poetry (Silalolita 6).

The love of divinity, expression of physical love, romantic thoughts and moods has all been significantly found in their writings. The poets, who belong to the romantic trend or movement, happened to write poems opting for love as one of their themes. Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi, Chavali Bangaramma, Tallapragada Viswasundaramma, Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma and a few more poets can be studied under this category. Venkataratnamma openly announces her desire in the following lines:

I moved out of the house in the mood full of rejoicing
In search of the 'Love kingdom'.

(ll 2-4)

In Telugu literature, expression of romantic love, of melancholic moods, of separation and nostalgia are found as recurring themes.

Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi wrote a poem titled *Paravasyamu* ("Ecstasy") which explicitly reveals a woman's romantic mood while she was in her beloved's company:

In the soft soothing moon light of the night
my beloved plays on Ektara strings
as I sing the sweetest melodies,
While floating enchanted in the musical spell,
night had been swept away unnoticed.

(ll. 4-8)

Here the expression "swept away," expresses the romantic mood.

In another poem titled Love ("*Prema*") Sthanapathi Rukminamma responds love quite differently from the way men respond to it:

If you want to adore mere beauty
 Better don't love illuminating sites
 Instead love, better for you to love the light of
 Unending line of cosmic ray

(ll. 1-4)

Here the poet very frankly rejects the man's feeling of love. She moves away from the narrow vision of her lover's concept and tries to take love to a sublime level.

If you want to love me only for love's sake
 Come! My dear! I will offer you one
 Which is better than Sun, the almighty and the ocean
 My honest heart!

(ll. 13-16)

In contrast to the Telugu poets' lines Sarojini Naidu's poems are more aesthetic and indulge in a deliberate use of Indian poetic tradition. Makarand Paranjape says: "Nowhere is her use of Indian poetic traditions more evident than in her love poetry." (Paranjape 16)

Sarojini Naidu's poems from her *Broken Wing* reflect her tender love feelings. In "The Feast" she says:

Bring no fragrant sandal-paste,
Let me gather, Love, instead,

(ll 1-2)

Further, in "The Lute-Song" she says:

Why need you pavilions and pillows of silk,

Soft foot-cloths of azure, O Sweet?

My heart be your tent and your pillow of rest,

And a place of repose for your feet!

(ll. 9-12)

These are a few of Sarojini Naidu's articulations on the love theme. "If you call me" (Paranjape 107) is a poem which speaks about the ecstasies or fondness for her beloved. She will come hastily and reach him without any fear and hesitation (Paranjape 107). "The sin of love" is an example of a poem that offers a "response to the question of the body" (Paranjape 108).

There is another poet in Indian English, Zeb-un-Nisa who takes a bold step to express her romantic mood in her poem "Love's End" (19)

While lips in love are meeting,
Comes satiety's cooling shower!

(ll. 11-12)

The “satiety” is such that it lasts for an hour. It is a very daring expression of love by a woman in her time.

There have been love poems which express the poets' ecstatic love and longing for the embrace of their beloveds. In Telugu, Tallapragada Viswasundaramma wrote a few poems on the theme love and she is bold enough to address her beloved as “O! My Love!”

Serapia Devi, an Indian English poet, also wrote poems on this theme. Here the poet invites her beloved and offers him “a cup filled” sweet wine to raise the mood of the lover's passion:

My heart is filled with love
As a cup is filled with sweet wine
Oh come and taste,
Give me thy lips my beloved.

(ll. 1-4)

Though the telugu poet, invites her lover to come to her, she does not promise any offering, but reminds him of his loving words and deeds for her. In both, one can find the poets' craving for their beloved's love. Their passions and their eagerness while waiting have been tenderly articulated. Serapia Devi says:

Take me with a kiss from the face of the world

As the sunny rays kiss the dew from a fern-leaf uncurled",

(ll. 8-9)

Viswasundaramma's lover, on the other hand, comes for love making and conveys the love through pleasurable, soft and tender words.

In English, some of Nilima Devi's poems," Love and Death", "Romance", "Fragment" are poems reflecting the theme of love. In the poem "Love and Death", Nilima Devi articulates her sentiment for her beloved in a very traditional mode. A typical Indian woman's way of treating her beloved, of "seeing god" in her beloved can be seen in the following words:

Beloved, if thou dost care,

Open the door of my heart

There thou wilt find

A Shrine on its altar –

Thy image divines
 At its feet burns a lamp
 Bright with my undying love

(ll 9-15)

The last two lines show the poet's overwhelming importance to him in this regard.

In contrast to Indian English women poets, very few Telugu poets wrote poems on love as their theme. Sthanapathi Rukminamma's "Love", Vinjamuri Venkatarathnamma's Love Kingdom, Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi's *Waiting for Beloved (Priya Nirikshnam)*¹⁷ and Tallapragada Viswasundaramma's *Caress (Lalana)*, *Let my eyes go (Naku Kannulu Vova)*, *That Love (Naati Valapu)* are a few to remember here.

There were a few poems written on the theme related to womanhood mainly on the varied moods of women. Among the Telugu poets Basavaraju Rajyalakshmi wrote a poem "Ecstasy" (*Paravasyamu*) which gives the mood of satisfaction as she spent her time with rich and memorable moments in the presence of her beloved:

In the soft soothing moon light of the night
 my beloved plays on Ektara strings
 as I sing the sweetest melodies,

(ll. 4-6)

¹⁷ This poem was not included in my translations but the poem is given only as a passing reference.

Another poet G. Jayalakshmi in her poem “Desire” (“*Korke*”) expresses her crazy wish to be born like a tree on a mountain peak so that she could serve humanity. She could have added beauties to nature if she were born a flower in the garden. She says:

If I were an unending flow of a stream
 On this enchanting beautiful earth
 I would have been a recipient of blessings of theirs,
 By quenching thirst of passers by

(ll. 15-18)

This appears to be a simple poem but as far as its theme is concerned it has the romantic fervour of a Wordsworth poem. The poem is rich for its picturesque quality. The poet’s desire to lead such a life that is beneficial to mankind, like a bird singing a song of liberation, suits the political mood of the society. It desires to become “an unending flow of a stream to quench the thirst of passersby” and to fulfill their wishes.

It is observed that Indian English poet Serapia Devi’s poem “Song of Wind” has close resemblances to the above poem. In this poem also the poet imagines a world of enthralled beauties:

I swept from towering clouds
 Over mountain-crests and highlands
 Across the sea's vast expanse
 And the fragrant islands.

(ll 1-4)

She concludes her poem in the following words:

I gently folded my wings
 Charmed by her soft voice, so fluty
 I fell asleep at her feet
 Dreaming of earth's beauty.

(ll 17-20)

There is a Telugu poem titled "*Udayam*" (Morning) by Devulapalli Sathyavathi that is beautifully woven with poetic descriptions. It promotes an awakening among the dwellers of the earth to wake up to receive the benefits of the world:

With gleaming flavours the day breaks
 As though the erudite sun has arisen

Why do you engross in deep sleep

(ll. 5-7)

She concludes the poem asking us to get up instead of suffering in the darkness. Moreover, she tells us to elevate our spirits with the rise of sun:

Wake up O! Life! Rise up quickly!

Why do you panic and struggle in darkness

As celestial fire illuminates your soul

Why do you sleep unmindful of your abilities?

(ll. 8-11)

Some Telugu poets wrote on the same theme of gender discrimination. “*Sidhilampu Jeevanamu*” (Devastated Life) by Appala Narasamma expresses the depressed mood of gender discrimination experienced by women.

This society which crushed and squeezed

The Gems of Indian women

Created obstructions

For your happiness in life.

(ll. 4-7)

Akin to this is Tallpragada Viswasundaramma's "*Nirasha*" (Hopelessness) that expresses a dark mood of pessimism.

As my heart ached under shackles
 As mind was clouded with depression
 In my tender flawless love
 Waves rose roaring, disturbing my heart

(ll 5-8)

R. Subbamma's *Smasanam* (Grave yard) reminds us of a renowned Telugu male poet of 20th century, Jashuva. Among Telugu women poets, no other poet had touched this theme. In this poem, the poet, instead of lamenting the ghastly sight of grave yard, opens the poem expressing happiness at the sight of the grave yard:

All the countless tales of the past
 Are getting back to my memory at this moment
 For me, this graveyard is a pleasant place--here,
 I sing my sad heart-rending songs.

(ll 13-16)

Chavali Bangaramma wrote a poem on darkness titled “*Tamassu*” (Darkness). She travels a lot, soars higher and higher to avoid the darkness of the world, but cannot:

While the tired heart, felt arrested

I still soared up to the heavens

But there too

I found the same darkness!

(ll. 6-9)

Among Indian English women poets, Mary V. Erulkar and Nilima Devi’s poems resemble this theme. Erulkar’s poem, “Leave Taking,” reminds us of Keats’ “Ode to Autumn.” Consider the following lines:

When, when shall my new year come with leaves in bud

And the broken boughs like green fountains,

And your dear thought that lies like a child...

In my aching side,

Nagging beneath the nerve

(ll. 26-8)

In Nilima Devi's poem "The Hidden Face" the following lines remind us of a typical Keatsian style.

My heart aches and aches in sadness of my futility.

My soul cries out in doleful distress.

(ll 21-2)

Poems on Motherhood:

While discussing relationships, the Telugu poet, Gudipudi Indumati describes emotional feelings of a woman who happens to meet her niece (her brother's daughter) after a long time. She could not meet her brother and his family all these years, due to the indifferent attitude of her sister-in-law. The woman caresses the baby,

Keeps the baby in the lap and gently kisses,

Overly caresses the head, softly strokes on the hand,

Bursts into tears, and emotionally says

at last I found my darling

The poem reveals the heartfelt feelings of a woman who was away from her relatives for a long time. Her eagerness to express her doting feelings towards her niece is very touching. The reader is convinced that such a treatment of emotional attachment and sentiment can be done only by a woman.

The Telugu poet, Samavedula Chiranjeevamma, wrote a poem titled “*Suputrika Jananama*” (The Birth of a Girl Child). It is a long poem that narrates the importance of women in family and society. The poet laments the ill treatment and the degrading of even the birth of a girl child. She reminds us about the strength of women in the epics and classical literature:

Here and there only one or two may be weak
But all belong to family life
Then why still mock
At their birth as a girl child!

In her poem “Bad Luck,” the Telugu poet, Soudamini, depicts the mother’s agony for her “lost children” (children who have died). Like a stereotypical Indian mother she says she could bear children very late in life only due to god’s grace. They are metaphorically referred to as two mangoes, the fruits given as “prasadam,” as God’s blessings showered upon her:

Performed many rituals
hoping goddess Parvathi will protect and bless
And at last by Her grace

Could give birth to two precious gems.

Though they were blooms to our lives

We couldn't hide them properly

And know not where we lost them

Oh ...what a bad luck!

(ll 9-15)

The above lines are representative of Indian motherhood represented by many poets across India too. A mother's true feeling, is conveyed by the poet in these lines.

A similar treatment is found in Toru Dutt's "Sita", based on the theme of reminiscences, about recapturing the past and immortalizing moments spent by the siblings at their mother's side:

It is an old, old story and the lay

Which has evoked sad Sita from the past

Is by a mother's sung , , , ,

(ll. 16-8)

The story of "Sita" retold by a mother to her children gets imprinted in their young minds in such a way that throughout the night they dream the whole story. The mother's narration is

such a powerful one that the three children can visualize the whole scene as though it is taking place in their presence. It even takes them to the deep forest where Sita dwells. This power of the mother's narration even makes the children shed tears along with Sita.

The poem reveals the way Indian mothers bring up their children using such narrations, providing them enough strength to face their future which may be filled with unknown adversities. The children are also be given enough training to sympathize with people who have been engulfed with misfortune.

Indian children are rightly provided with such basic cultural education during their pre-schooling period. Association with their parents and grandparents provides this education. This is the Indian concept of bringing up children. Toru Dutt's poem "Sita" is the best example of such a concept. The poem reveals the mother's close association with her children: "Three happy children in a darkened room!" (l. 1)

And in her later life, Toru Dutt with nostalgic fervour recollects this happiest sight and articulates these lines which reflect an unforgettable Indian sentiment:

When shall those children by their mother's side

Gather, ah me! As erst at eventide?

(ll. 21 - 22)

Sarojini Naidu in her poem, "To My Children" addresses her children Jaya Surya, Padmaja, Ramadheera and Leelamani, and responds to them. Like a devoted mother, the poet wishes that her children be blessed by gods and goddesses to lead a happy childhood:

Leap and sparkle, dance and shine
 Blithely and securely set
 On love's magic coronet...

In another poem “Queen’s Rival”, Sarojini Naidu depicts the Queen Gulnor, as a mother who accepts her defeat at the hands of her “two spring times old” daughter, declaring that her daughter is her rival. Her daughter snatches the mirror away from her hand and enjoys watching her own beauty in it. The Queen finally identifies her sweet rival and declares to the king: “Here is my rival, o King Feroz” (l. 54).

In this poem a mother’s disappointment is swept away because her rival is no other than her daughter; this shows the sweet relationship between mother and child.

There is another poem by Sarojini Naidu on the same theme- “The Call of Spring”. This poem is addressed to her daughters, Padamaja and Lilamani. A mother’s mood is captured by the poet, while she plays with her children. The poem sensuously presents how motherly love springs out from her heart while enjoying the child’s company:

O come let us go and play with the spring
 Like glad-hearted children together.

Another Indian English poet, Themis, in her poem, “New Birth” uses images and symbols related to motherhood:

Placenta of creation

The mystic womb-enraps the child-soul

(ll 19-20)

The Telugu poet D. Anasuya writes poems on motherhood. As she was very much obsessed with the act of conceiving, she identifies and acknowledges all sorts of experiences she underwent during the period of pregnancy and child bearing.

She very daringly and openly narrates the labour pain she suffers during child birth. One cannot find anyone among her contemporaries who could give such verbal expression to the theme; Even among women poets today, we rarely find such descriptions.¹⁸

Exhausted completely and fatigued

But as nascent baby's screams echo in the heart

I forget the whole pain and suffering

With the birth of the new born treasure.

(ll. 10-13)

¹⁸ Among modern Telugu women poets during 1980s-90s, Kondepudi Nirmala wrote a poem on this theme, “Labour Room.”

She wrote another poem titled “Of Scavenger’s Duty” where she narrates many of her so called “silly” thoughts and deeds related to nurturing a baby. She compares service to her child as scavenger’s work; being a mother, she did not curse herself or her baby for such an action, but earlier she used to hate even to think about it. The poem showcases a kind of metamorphosis among women after bearing children, their attaining maturity and have enough patience to serve their family and children. This can be considered a good sign of the development of women’s consciousness:

The fear that it may soil the dress
 With urine or human waste
 Always preoccupied in the mind,
 Though, I liked the presence of children.
 Amazingly, after attaining motherhood
 With the child God has brought forth a change in
 All my ill feelings.

(ll. 10-16)

She even continues:

No sickening thoughts while serving the baby.
 I feel I was appointed a governess to the child
 By Almighty

Hence I obey this duty without any protest.

(ll. 17-20)

c) Themes of Religion and Philosophy:

Poems on Divinity and Religion:

Telugu poets like Gyanamba, wrote on religious, spiritual and mystical themes. Lakshmibayamma and Ponaka Kanakamma (known as twin poets) produced a book on these themes. Their book titled *Aradhana* (Adoration) and a few other individual poems published in *Gruhalakshmi* are available to us.

Vinjamuri Venkata Ratnamma wrote a few poems on mystical themes. Her “*Nivedana*” (Offering) talks about the total submission of her selfhood to God. As she could not get a chance of viewing His face, she starts complaining about her bad luck. The entrance to the God’s sanctum sanctorum was closed preventing her entry into the temple:

It seems I am not fortunate to see it before my eyes.

I must be ill-fated not to be able to enter your temple.

I tried many a time to enter your temple.

Except for listening to the resounding temple bells, I couldn’t view you.

The door to your abode had been shut.

(ll. 3-7)

Among Indian English poets, Themis, Lotika Ghosh and Nilima Devi wrote poems which have a touch of religious, spiritual and mystic fervour.

In English Lotika Ghosh's poem "My Abode" reveals a theme similar to "*Nivedana*"; it has a positive note. Here Lotika's mystical vision expresses her ardent longing for God, and in that vision, she is able to visualize the path of her eternal journey. In contrast to the above Telugu poem, Lotika's poem gives a positive vision to her devotional feeling. So for her even "the shut portals of silence open its door" (l. 10). She succeeds in getting entry to such a place and wants to build her "abode" (house) close to God's path.

We observe some poets focusing on themes based on religion and community. They preach to the community regarding the importance of equality and tolerance towards other religious faiths. This is indicative of the early women writers' individuality in choosing such subjects as themes for their writing.

Koka Hanumayamma, a Telugu poet, conveys her opinion regarding religious tolerance in a very effective manner in her poem titled "Why Go On Talking About Caste, Telugu Child!" (*Kulamu Kulamanduvetiki Telugubidda!*), she says:

While people in other countries
Are getting out of narrow views of creed
And becoming united,
Why do you indulge every minute

In the thoughts of discrimination

And behave maintaining distinctions

And avoiding people saying caste, caste...

As though you were approaching a patient with an infectious disease?

(ll. 13-20)

Comparing religious differences with communicable diseases is a novel expression. It is a very apt and powerful comparison. The poet agonizes over people not maintaining healthy relations with people of other religions.

Poems on Death, and Philosophical Subjects and Memorial Verses:

Both Telugu women poets and Indian English women poets have been stirred by metaphysical thoughts and have written poems on “Death” and on dead persons in an elegiac mode. To start with, Toru Dutt seems to be the person who happened to see death sitting close to her, as she died at a very young age. She also witnessed the untimely death of her siblings.

In “Savitri” she says:

Death comes to all or soon or late:

And peace is but a wandering fire;

The right must be our guiding star;

Duty our watchword, come what may;

(47)

As she was in such close company with the experience of death, she could gain the knowledge of the revelation of the soul. Hence she has been able to portray death as an inevitable happening in her poem “Savitri.”

Lotika Ghose’s poems also make mystical revelations. Her poem, “A White Dawn Awakening” reveals the Indian and, more specifically, the Aurobindonian school of philosophy:

An angel twilight descended as sleep

Bringing the dusk of eternity pregnant with change.

(ll. 5-6)

The poet’s awareness of her earthly problems which bind her to this painful earthly life (or the knowledge of it) make her achieve or transcend to the level of “mystic vision”. “The dusk of eternity” she receives “pregnant with change” is the real “moksha” she attains. Unless one experiences earthly or human suffering or pain, one does not deserve heavenly “moksha,” the ultimate goal of spiritual life. In this poem, the poet conveys her mystic experience using simple, womanly and natural images. Another poem “My Abode” represents her metaphysical exploration where she goes through some mystical experiences.

Some poets wrote memorial verses and elegies reflecting their closeness to the people they had been associated with. Poems in memory of Jawaharlal Nehru, Motilal Nehru, Gandhi, Tagore and Sarojini Naidu are a few among them.

Sarojini Naidu in her poem “Gokhale” laments the death of his “heroic heart,” as she feels that his death is a sacrifice made for our country, for the noble cause of “unity”:

Lo! Let the mournful millions round thy pyre
 Kindle their souls with consecrated fire
 Caught from the brave torch fallen from thy hand
 To succor and to serve our suffering land

(ll. 3-6)

The Telugu poet, Juluri Tulasamma wrote a poem on “Motilal *Nehru*” in memory of his death. The poet curses death for taking away his life:

Heart was broken when I heard about thy dismissal
 The whole world was baffled with this news
 Except your fame what else remained to view you
 So ridiculous the news appears
 like throwing away the butter and licking the finger.

Here, the poet expresses her grief over his death while the whole world is in a state of deep shock. His previous brave deeds were no more available, except his name and fame. What is the use of a name, if it can't help the people? Praising him now appears to her like licking the fingers for the taste of butter after it is thrown away.

Tallapragada Viswa Sundaramma, responds to the death of Mahatma Gandhi, in her poem "*Gandhi Niryanamu*" (Gandhi's Death) articulates her acceptance of his death by saying that a few of his beloved who are already dead, are waiting for him at the entrance of Heaven to welcome him. She asks all the people to wear his "burnt ashes" (*chita bhasmam*) as a vermilion mark on their forehead as a mark of respect. (Viswa Sundaramma 188)

There is another poem in Telugu on the same theme written by Desi Raju Bharati Devi. It is on Rabindranath Tagore:

While their sweet, welcoming romantic tunes

Are meant to recreate and to relax you

On your tiresome journey.

The heavenly dancers arrive

To serve thee.

O! Thou art the poet of Universe (Viswa kavi)

(Il. 18-23)

There is also a poem on “Sarojini Naidu” by Oleti Nithyakalyanamma that begins as follows:

O! Sarojini! Always
O! Sarojini! Truly,
Murmuring sounds of tender leaves
Smooth layers on boiling milk
Secrets hidden in the brook’s songs
Are found in Sarojini’s songs.

(ll. 9-14)

I have thus tried in this chapter to bring together poems written on similar themes from two distinct literary traditions to compare and contrast the women writers’ unique sensibilities and ways of expression.

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Chapter 4

Conclusion

In this chapter I will attempt to summarize the findings of my study of the Telugu women poets and Indian English women poets who have written between 1900 and 1950, and suggest some possibilities of future research in this area. While the pre-independence poets celebrated their romantic feelings of sentimental and emotional love in their works, post-independence poets have revolutionized their love poetry with free, frank and uninhibited expression in their poems.

Telugu women poets of the contemporary period too present a very modern outlook. “The period between 1960-1980 is said to be the era of women writers,” says Sarat Jyothsna Rani in her article titled “Women’s poetry other than feminist poetry 1975-2000” (*Telugulo Strila Sahityam*) (Vidmahe 121). After the 80’s, Telugu women’s poetry gains its momentum and becomes feminist. Volga, Vimala, Jayaprabha and Kondepudi Nirmala are only a few names among many feminist Telugu poets. This trend of feminist writing extends to minority and Dalit poetry from the 1990s.

Another theme which the Telugu women poets address is education. It has been observed that Telugu women have written extensively on this theme. This concern is addressed in different ways even in contemporary times, especially by Dalit women poets. English poetry on the other hand does not seem to address this issue in a significant manner. This may be due to the socio-economic background of the English poets for whom education is a given.

We have seen how the Telugu women poets are far more politically conscious about their role and involvement in the freedom struggle. Though there have been a few important poets like Sarojini Naidu and Bharati Sarabhai among Indian English women writers who have dealt with this aspect in their works, it appears that their focus on this issue is comparatively less. Similarly, most of Telugu women poets had responded to the social issues that prevailed during the period such as widowhood, child marriage, Sharada Act etc.

Though I had intended in the beginning to undertake a full-fledged comparison of Indian English women poets with Telugu poets, it has not been possible because of paucity of material of women's writings in English. It became very difficult to identify and locate the works of Indian English women poets of the period between 1900 and 1950. Except for Sarojini Naidu and Toru Dutt none of the works of the other poets were easily available. Hardly seven to eight women poets in Indian English were available. In contrast there was an amazing number of as many as hundred of Telugu women poets. Hence I decided to focus mainly on the Telugu women poets, with a discussion of women poets writing in English wherever a comparison was possible.

For the purpose of the present study I have limited myself to two languages and to a discussion of a few themes such as freedom movement, widowhood, child marriage, woman's identity, motherhood, religious and philosophical issues. There is a possibility of exploring questions and issues of the national vs. the regional, of language and identity, the woman's body etc. Similarly, one could expand the comparison of women poets by including the work of women poets writing in other Indian languages. I have suggested how a Kamala Das in English and a Kondepudi Nirmala in Telugu have extended the questions of womanhood that the early Indian women writers have addressed. A future study might extend the scope of this study to

include poets who wrote after 1950. Alternately, the study may be extended to place the Telugu women poets writing between 1900 to 1950 alongside Telugu/Indian male poets of the same period. A process such as this will help us to re-evaluate and rewrite Indian literary history.

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APPENDIX – I

హీనమైయున్న బ్రతుకేల మానినులకు

-- మదిన సుభద్రమ్మ

“కాంతుడు లేకున్న గడుపేదయై యున్న
 బుత్తులు బాలత బొందియున్న
 మిత్రులు శత్రులై మేలెరుంగక యున్న
 తిరిపేమే యూరను దొరకకున్న
 దీన పోషకుడైన దేవ రక్షామణి
 కనికరం బెదపూని కావ కున్న
 తన సహోదరులకు ధన ధాన్య సంపదల్
 కరము ప్రైభుత్వంబు కలిగియున్న
 బ్రాత్య గృహవాస మింతికి భార మగునె
 వారి కుటీల వచశ్మర వ్రజమునాటి
 బాధపడు కంటి దేహంబు బాయుటొప్పు
 హీనమై యున్న బ్రదుకేల మానినులకు
 వర విశాఖ పురా ధీశ హరి రమేశ”

(ఆరుద్ర సమగ్రాంధ్ర సాహిత్యము. 10వ సంపుటము

విజయవాడ. ప్రజాశక్తి. 1991.56)

ఓ మహాత్మా! ఓ మహితాత్మా

-- ఊటుకూరి లక్ష్మీకాంతమ్మ

“నిన్ను పూర్వములు పోల్చి మహర్షి
 యనుట మా వాచాలత
 వారికేదీ ఆర్థమైన ఈ ఘనత?
 సత్యాహింసలే నిత్యవ్రతముగ
 స్వార్థత్యాగ విధి కృతమ్ముగ
 జీవన పథమునధిగమించిన
 దైర్య హేమాద్రిని
 సర్వస్వము త్యజియించిన
 త్యాగహేమాద్రివి” అంటూ

(సంస్కృతి.1997.నవంబర్.104)

ప్రజల మనిషి

-- కనుపర్తి వరలక్ష్మమ్మ

ఆంధ్రకేశరి యన నఖిలాంధ్ర సీమను
 ప్రఖ్యాత నాముడై పరగె నెవడు
 స్వాతంత్ర్యసమరాన సర్కారు కెదురొడ్డి
 గుండె చూపె నెవడు గుండ్లకెదుట
 గాంధీ మహాత్ముని ఘనతరానుచరుడై
 సత్యాగ్రహంబులు నలిపె నెవడు
 కష్టసుఖంబులు గణియింపకుండను
 చెఱసాల వాసముల్ చేసెనెవడు
 అట్టి టంగుటూర్వంశజు ననఘయశుని
 శ్రీ ప్రకాశము పంతులుశిష్టచరితు
 శతజయంత్యుత్సవంబులు జరుపబడుట
 భావ్యమేగాదు నాంధ్రుల భాగ్యమగును.

(కనుపర్తి వరలక్ష్మమ్మ. సాహిత్య అకాడమి. 2000.60)

శతకము

-- కనుపర్తి వరలక్ష్మమ్మ

విద్య చూపరాదో? వెఱవు చూపుగరాదో?

మఱల పెండ్లిచేసి మనుపరాదో?

పతిగతించినంత బాధింపగానేల?

తెరువు చూపకుండ తెలుపు లక్ష్మీ!

(లక్ష్మీ శతకము)

నివేదనము

-- వింజమూరి వేంకటరత్నమ్మ

దేవ! మహితప్రభావ! ప్రదీప్తభావ!
 లలిత దివ్యకరుణ రసస్థావితంబు
 నవిరళశుభదంబు భవదీయాననంబు
 కండ్లయెదుటఁ గన్పట్టు భాగ్యంబునాకు
 దవ్వుగాఁదోఁచు; నాదురితంబుపేర్చి
 నిత్యమంగళప్రదమైన నీదుమంది
 రప్రవేశార్గళంబు నేర్పడియెనాకు.

ఎన్నిమాటులు నేవచ్చియున్నగాని
 గణగణనిమ్రోగు గంటలం గ్రాలునీదు
 నాలయకవాటయుగముమూయంగఁబడియె
 ప్రతిహతాశనై దుఃఖపూర్ణహృదయనయి
 పల్మఱు మరలిపోయితిం బనవిపనవి.

పుట్టినంటికి మఱిమెట్టినట్టియింటి
 కీవెగా యిలువేల్పవై యెల్లవేళఁ
 గంటికిన్ జొప్పపోలికం గాచుచుందు;
 వేదియే నపరాధంబు నేముచేసి
 యున్నగాని క్షమాగుణయక్తిసైచి,
 భక్తిమై భవత్పాదసేవలనొనర్చు
 మమ్ముఁ గెంపుఁజూపులఁ జూడ కెమ్మెమీఱ
 దివ్యసందర్శనమొసంగి తేర్పుమయ్య!
 నాహృదయ పంచపాత్రికన్ బదిలపఱచి

భక్తిగంధంబు, వినయపుష్పములు, బహుస
హస్రనామాక్షత, లనురాగామృతంబు,
నాత్మనై వేద్యముంగొని యరుగుఁదెంచి
యుంటి నెన్ని యోసార్లు; గంటనైనఁ
జూడవేలొకో, నాయెకిమీడ! తెల్పు.

ప్రాణమాత్రావశిష్టనై రక్షణంబు
గోరునాశ్రితన్; గావ నేతేరుమయ్య!
'అన్యథాశరణన్నాస్తి' యని, 'త్వమేవ
మమశరణ' మని పల్కు నామాటవినుమ!

(గృహలక్ష్మి. 1937, సెప్టెంబర్. 505)

నామతము

-- వింజమూరి వేంకటరత్నమ్మ

శక్యమగునంత సాధుత్వసరణిమనుట
 ఏడగాని మానుషము పోనాడకుంట
 మంచిచెడ్డలనొక్కపోల్కి నెంచికొంట
 ఆత్మవిశ్వాసమర్యాద లంటియుండ
 చేతనగునంత యుపకృతిఁ జేయుచుండి
 దానిమనసులోమాత్రమే దాచికొంట
 నాకపజయమేగల్గినన్ వీరవిడక
 భావికాలవిజయకాంక్షఁ బాటుపడుట.

పాపభీతితో యపవాదభయమువలనో
 తలనుదాచుకోఁదగుచోటు గలుగకుంట
 ఒంటరిగనున్న నాచేతలొరుల కెఱుక
 పడినయపుడైన నేనొక్కనడతఁగనుట,
 నేనుద్రొక్కినదారిని మానకెట్టి
 భయముఁబిఱికితనములేక బ్రదుకుగనుట
 సిగ్గుగానిడంబముగాని చెందకుండఁ
 బ్రజలునన్నెట్లుదలఁతు రబ్బంగినుంట.

(గృహలక్ష్మి. 1932, జనవరి. 988)

ప్రేమ రాజ్యము

-- వింజమూరి వేంకటరత్నమ్మ

ఉదయకాలమందు ధరణియుజలనిధియు
 నినునికాంతికిఁ బ్రతిఫలమిచ్చునపుడు
 ఇలువిడిచి కడునుత్సాహహృదయనగుచుఁ
 భ్రేమరాజ్యమున్వెదకంగ వెడలియుంటి.
 కవియొకండు దారిలో నాకుఁగానుపింప
 నచ్చటికి నడ్డుదారి యేదనియడిగితి.
 “రమ్మునావెంటఁ గొలఁదికాలమ్ములోన
 కాంతువద్దానిసౌధశిఖరపుఁగాంతు”
 లనుచునతఁడు ప్రత్యుత్తరమప్పుడిచ్చె.
 అంతలోదవ్వునం దొకవితపురము
 తోఁచెమిటుమిట్లుగొల్పెడు ద్యుతులతోడ
 “అదిగొ నీవుగోరున” దంచు నతఁడుపల్కె
 కానియదిస్వప్న ములరాజధానియగుట
 నామదిచివుక్కుమనె నాశనాశమయ్యె.
 అవలగుఱ్ఱపురొత్తొకం డగపడినను
 వెంబడింపుమనవుడట్లు వెడలియుంటి
 నాడుచుంబాడుచున్ వానిననుగమించి
 బ్రతుకను సముద్రపుందరిఁ బట్టిచనుచు.
 అచటినుండిమేమొక్క లోయకరుదెంచి
 తన్నునోహరత కతిముదంబుఁగంటి
 మప్పు డొకపద్మముఖి మందహాసమమర

రక్తిమైజూచెఁ బొదనుండి రౌతువంక.

“ఇదిగో ప్రేమసామ్రాజ్యబహిఃప్రదేశ

మునకువచ్చియుంటిమి ప్రేమముదములిందె

మివులనొప్పు” నంచుఁబలికె రవుతులొని

యక్కటా! యది జ్ఞానరాజ్యంబయ్యె.

ఆశవీడి నేమెల్లఁగా నరుగుచుండ

బాటయందొకబండి సేవకులతోడఁ

బోవఁగంటి భటులు పల్కిరీవిధమున

“రమ్మువెంట మారాజ్ఞిరాజ్యమందె

నీవుగోరురాజ్యముగూడ నెగడునమ్మ!”

అట్టులరుగనొక్కలలన యఖిలభూష

ణాంబరములఁ దాల్చినయది నాకగపడె

ఆమెఁజూడ నాశాపేశ మణఁగిపోయె

సంజతుదివెల్లు క్రమముగా సమయునట్లు

అకట! యదిస్వర్గరాజ్యమే యయ్యెఁగాన.

కడకొకగుడిసెకడకు నేవెడలి సుంద

రాంగినొకతెఁగాంచియడుగ ననియెనిట్లు

“దానిఁగూర్చి నేవింటిఁగాని వాప

దములు గృహరాజ్యసీమ వదలవుగాన

దానికేఁగుమార్గమెదియొ నేనెఱుంగ.”

అనుచు నిట్టూర్పువిడిచె నాయతివమిన్న.

ఏను దత్తుటీరముఁగన నెంతశాంతి!

ఆయువతిమోము కలకలలాడుచుండె

గొప్పవెల్లు నాయాత్మకు గోచరించె

ఇల్లెప్రేమరాజ్యమ్మన కిక్కయంటి.

(అనసూయ.1924.జూన్.1-3)

దురదృష్టము

-- సౌదామిని

చూచితి మెంతో దేశము
సుఖము, శాంతి దొరకునో యని
మునిగితి మెన్నో నదులను
మోక్షము చేపట్టుద మని;

ఎక్కితి మెన్నో కొండల
నీశ్వరు దర్శింతా మని,
మ్రొక్కితి మెన్నో వేల్పుల
కొక్కపండు వర మిమ్ముని;

నోచితి మెన్నో నోములు
కాచి బ్రోచు నని పాఠ్యతి;
కడకు దేవి దయచేతను
కంటిమి రత్నములు రెండు;

బతుకు కలంకారములే
వాని దాచ చేతగాక
ఎచటనో పోగొట్టుకొంటి
మెంతటి దురదృష్టమునో?

(వైతాళికులు. హైదరాబాద్. విశాలాంధ్ర. 1994.171)

పాఠవశ్యము

-- బసవరాజు వేంకటరాజ్యలక్ష్మమ్మ

మాపెరటను పెరుగుచున్న
 వేపనీడ యెండవేళ
 చల్లదనము హాయిసగు
 చల్లని వెన్నెలరాత్రుల
 జేరి యచటనాధు డేక
 తారమీట నేబాడుచు
 తేలియాడ హాయిలోన
 తెలియక రాతిరెగడచెను.

(గృహలక్ష్మి. 1932, జూలై.406)

నివేదన

(గేయము)

-- చావలీ బంగారమ్మగారు

ఆదిమధ్యాంతముల అమరిన దేవ!
 అతనిహృదయమును నా నమ్ముకోనీవ!
 అండపిండములలో నుండెడి దేవ!
 అతనిగుండెలలో నన్నుండగానీవ?
 సమవర్తి వనియేటి స్వామి వీవేగా!
 సమముగా నను జూడ స్వామి, సెల వీవ?
 ఇంట నా విడిచి తా నొంటిగా బోయి,
 జంటకోసము వెతగ ధర్మమంటోయి?
 ఆకలీబాధచే అవనిలో నేను
 అత్తచే జిక్కుటలు అతనికై గాదా?
 అన్న పానీయముల కాసించలేదు,
 అతనిదయకోసమే ఆసించినాను.

మనసులో భావాలు మణిగిపోకుండ,
 అరచేత దీయమని అతనితో జెప్పు;
 చూపులో భావాలు స్రుక్కిపోకుండ,
 చూడ రమ్మని చెప్పు సూర్యుడా, పోయి!

(భారతి)

తమస్సు

-- చావలి బంగారమ్మ

కనుమూసి లేచాను, వెనుదిరిగి చూశాను,

కనలేదు ఆ జంట, వినలేదు ఆ జాడ,

గుండె గుబగుబలాడెను,

నా గొంతు

ఎండి, గుట కడదాయెను!

పిలిచాను పిలిచాను. అలసిపోయాను.

అలసిపోయినగుండె అట్టే ముడిపోవ

ఆకాశమున కెగిరితి,

అక్కడా

అంధకారమె చూసేతి!

కేక వినబడదాయె, చూపు కనబడదాయె,

అంధకారములోన ఆట్టే రెక్కలు ముడిచి

అవనిపై నే బడితిని

అక్కడా

అంధకారమె గంటిని!

(వైతాళికులు, 1973. 160 (8వ ముద్రణ))

కార్తీక పూర్ణిమ

-- చావలి బంగారమ్మ

పక్షులూ పలుకకే పడియుండినాయి,
వృక్షాలు చూచుచూ వూరకున్నాయి,
తన వెంటపడుతున్న
తరుణి జూడ డిదేమి;
పోతువున్నాడు తాను,
అదుగదుగో పొంగు లోకాలు గనను!

గాలి ఉయ్యాలలై కదులుతుండెడి మబ్బు
కనుల కడ్డమురాగ, కాలైన తడబడక,
పోతువున్నాడు తాను;
తన గర్వపాంకములు దెలుపుతాను!

వాద్యములు వినబడవవో, చోద్యమును కనబడవో
నిముసంబు నిలువ డేనీడ నిలుచునోగాని,
పోతువున్నాడు తాను!
గర్వంపుపొంగు బోకారిపోను!

పక్షికలకలములే పరిభవం బనియెంచి,
తెల్లబోయినమోము తెలియకుండుటకునై
పోతువున్నాడు తాను!
తను వెల్ల తారమా రగుటతోను!

(వైతాళికులు, 1973. 158 (8వ ముద్రణ))

మధ్యపానము

-- తల్లాప్రగడ విశ్వసుందరమ్మ

వినురా, నా ప్రియసహోదరుడా!, నీవు
వినకుంటె చెడిపోయి, వీధి బడతావు।
కల్లుత్రాగుట నీకు తగదు, దాన నీ
ఇల్లా లేద్చును, పిల్లాజెల్లా యేడ్చెదరు ||వి||

మధ్యపానము జేయగానె, గొప్ప
మత్తు నెత్తికెక్కి, మాయమగు తెలివి
కల్లుమాయ జిక్కి నీవు, నీ
వళ్లు తెలియకుండ ఒరిగెదవు నేల ||వి||

బండతిట్లను జనుల దిట్టి, నీవు
మొండివానియట్లు మండిపడతావు।
నలుపురిలో నీకు సిగ్గు, మొలను
గల డబ్బుపోయిన, కలదు నీ కెగ్గు ||వి||

తల్లితోడులు నిన్ను దూర, నీ
పెళ్లాము బిడ్డలు బెదురొంది పార।
ఎవ్వరికిని కొరగాక, నీవు
సర్వబంధువులకు దూరమౌతవు ||వి||

బందిపోటు దొంగ కన్న, హెచ్చు
నిందపాలౌతావు నీచుడ వనుచు।
అందచందంబులు మాసి, నీ

వడవి పాల్గొతావు అంత్యదశలోన ||వి||

తెలివితెచ్చుకు ఇంకనైన, చెడ్డ

అలవాటు తప్పించుకొనగ యత్నించు |

గాంధీ చూపిన బాట నడుపు, నీ

అంధకారము బాపి, అదియిచ్చు వెలుగు ||వి||

(కవితా కదంబము.1973.190)

నిరాశ

-- తల్లాప్రగడ విశ్వసుందరమ్మ

అనుకొంటినే మునుపె అను కొంటినే,
అనుకూల వాయువులు అపుడె నశియించెనని 11

మనసులో తలపులో మబ్బుతెర గ్రమ్మెగా
తనువెంతయో బడలి తాపాన కనలెగా 11

బంధనమ్ములనెడద పరితాపమొందెగా,
ఆశానభమ్ములో అలమెగా పెనుముసురు 11

కల్లకపటములేని గాటంపు ప్రేమలో
కడలిమ్రోతలుపుట్టి కలగె హృదయమ్మెంతో 11

నిండుపున్నమినాటి పండువెన్నెలరేల
కారుమబ్బులు క్రమ్మె గాడతమసము లలమె 11

అమృతవాక్సుధలిల్కి, అనువయమ్మున పల్కి
ఆనందమున నన్ను తేలింతు వనుకొన్న

ఆశలన్నియును పైరాసలైపోయెగా
ఆశయమ్ములుకూలి నాశమైపోయెగా 11

పట్టుసడలిన ప్రేమవ్యధల కథలే మిగిలి
బట్టబయలగు విరహబాధలో రగిలి

ఎట్టులికి భరియింతు నీ జీవితపుబరువు
 రావొకో దరికి మృదుభావములతో ప్రియా! 11

(కవితా కదంబము, హైదరాబాద్.1973.51)

వితంతు విలాపము

-- తల్లాప్రగడ విశ్వసుందరమ్మ

ఓ హిందుమాతరో, ఓ తల్లి నీదు,
సుతగ నే జనియించి వెతజెందుచుంటి.

దీనజనావన! ప్రేమభావమున,
ఈదీన గనరాదో ఆదర దృష్టి.

తల్లి దండ్రుల దయ తలగె నాపైన,
ఎల్ల చుట్టంబుల కెల్లిదమైతి.

అన్నదమ్ముల ప్రేమ కర్ణత లేదు,
అన్ని కష్టంబుల ననుభవించితిని.

అప్పలు చెల్లెండ్లు అందరున్నారు,
తిప్పలు కనుగోరు, తీర్పగా రారు.
చెలులలో నె నెంతో చిన్నబోయితిని,
వెలదులలో నెల్లవేడ్కల దొరగి.

పూవుల తలలోన ముడువగారాదు,
తావుల గందమ్ము తలపోయరాదు.

బొట్టుకాటుకలకు పొంతబోరాదు,
చుట్టాల జనవున జూడగారాదు.

పెండ్లి పేరంటాల పేరెత్తరాదు,
కండ్లతో ముచ్చటలా గాంచంగరాదు.

రంగుబట్టల గట్టి రంజిల్లరాదు,
వంగి వంటింటనే వాడిపోవలయు.

వైధవ్యదశ నొంది వనరగా వలసె,
 అధమవేషము దాల్చి అడలగావలసె.
 ఈ దుర్దశను తీర్చ ఏత్రోవ లేద?
 ఓ సహోదరులార! ఓ తల్లులార!
 ఓ హిందుమాతరో! ఊహించి తెల్పు,
 ఈ దీనురాలికి ఏగతి గలదో?
 బాలవితంతుల భావిమార్గమ్ము
 చూపించు, తల్లిరో, శోకమ్ము బాపి.

(కవితాకదంబము. హైదరాబాద్. 1973. 191)

స్త్రీల చెరసాలలో

-- తల్లాప్రగడ విశ్వసుందరమ్మ

డాక్టరు ఖాను డాదరముతో మా కిందు
 పోషణ లారసి బ్రోచుచుండ,
 కన్నను, చంద్రనుల్, ఘనులైన రైటీర్లు
 వలయు సప్లయిల నేర్పరచుచుండ
 మిస్ స్మిత్తు, మిస్ ప్రానుసెస్, లాంగ్గోయిండియన్
 కాంతలు మమ్ము రక్షణము సేయ,
 మోటుపశుల బోలు మూర్ఖులౌ వార్డర్లు
 అదుపాజ్ఞలను మాకు అలవరించ,
 కఠిన కారాగృహమను లంకాపురమున
 బంధితులమయి యున్నాము భయము వీడి,
 అబలలముగాక యెంతయు సబలలమయి,
 భరతదేశ విముక్తిని బడయుకొరకు.

అప్పటప్పట వచ్చి గొప్ప ఉద్యోగులౌ
 ఐ.జీల్. కలక్టరు లరయుచుండ,
 త్రిజటాది రాక్షస స్త్రీలను తలపించు
 మేట్రన్లు మెలకువ మెలగనేర్ప,
 కాన్స్టిక్టు వార్డర్లు క్రమముగా ప్రతిరోజు
 అధికార్ల యాజ్ఞల నందజేయ,
 నల్లచీరల గట్టినట్టి జైల్వార్డర్లు
 అడుగడగున మమ్ము హడలజేయ,

లక్ష్యమింతయు జేయక, లక్ష్య మెరిగి,
అల యశోకవనాన సీతమ్మ లనగ,
గడుపుచున్నారు నెలతలు ఖైదు బ్రతుకు
రాయవెల్లూరు జైలు నిర్బంధమందు.

మా మాటకేమి ఏ మోమోటముననైన
ఇంతయో అంతో మన్నించుచుందు
పైక్లాసు ఖైదీలు బహుగోప్యవారని
యెంచి యించుక గౌరవించుచుందు,
'ఏ' క్లాసు, 'బి' క్లాసు హెచ్చురూల్స్‌ని గమ
నించి కొంచెము ఆదరించుచుందు,
పై అధికారుల భయముచేసిన నో
కింత మర్యాద చూపించుచుందు.
ఏమి పాపంబో, 'సీ' క్లాసు నీసడించి,
గౌరవము జూప కిసుమంత, క్రౌర్యమునను
అడులుగొల్పెద రెంతో నిరాదరమున
మోటులాఠీల వార్డరుల్ మూఢమతులు:

(కవితా కదంబము. హైదరాబాద్. 1973. 173)

కోయిల

-- వట్టికొండ విశాలాక్షి

కోట్ల కొలదిగ నొక్కడు కూడ బెట్టి
కులుకుచుండగ - నెందరో కూలి జనులు
పవలు రేయును కష్టించి పని యొనర్చి
కుడువ కూడైన లేమిచే కుములుచుండ -

గున్న లే మావి కొమ్మపై కూరుచుండి
కిసలయమ్ముల మెక్కుచు కొసరి కొసరి
పాడుచున్నావు పీడనా ప్రణయ గీతి;
లేదె యొక్కీంత కరుణ నీ లే యెడంద!

జాతి మత భేదములచే నశాంత మైన
జీవితము ప్రేమ గీత మాశించునొక్కొ!
సంఘ కల్యాణ కాంక్షివై శ్రావ్య కంఠ
మెత్తి విప్లవ గీతి విన్పించు మింక

(అభ్యుదయ గీతాలు.1943.6)

స్వాగతము

-- వట్టికొండ విశాలాక్షి

కవి గేయముల్ వినుచు

కవి పద్యముల్ వినుచు

కవి జీవితేశ్వరిగ

కలకాల ముండుచూ

కవయిత్రి మాటయే మరచావా?

కవి కవుంగిలి లీన మైనావా?

ఆలింగనము వీడి రాలేవా?

అచటనే సుఖియింప జూచావా?

తేట తేనియ కన్న

తీయందనము గల్గు

కవి కల్పితం బైన

కవితామృతం బిచ్చి

తన వశ మ్మొనరించు కొన్నాడా?

తనకు తానే మురియుచున్నాడా?

స్త్రీల కడ కేగవల దన్నాడా?

చెంతనే కూర్చుండు మన్నాడా?

కవి బోధలే వినుచు

కవి పక్షపాతివై

స్త్రీవయ్యును మాదు

చెంతకే రాకుండ

అచటనే వసియింప దలచావా?

అదియె నీధర్మ మని యెంచావా?

స్త్రీజనోద్ధరణకై రాలేవా?

స్త్రీలన్న అభిమానమే లేదా?

పరమాద్భుతం టైన

ప్రకృతి వైచిత్ర్యముల్

దర్శింప జేసి ని

ధన్యురాలిగ జేతు

వేగమే రావమ్మ ఓకవితా!

స్వాగతం బిలిస్తాము మృదుకవి తా!

నీరాజనం బిదిగొ ఓ కవితా!

నిన్నె పూజిస్తాము నవకవితా!

(అభ్యుదయ గీతాలు.1943.14)

సరోజినీదేవి

-- వోలేటి నిత్యకల్యాణమ్మ

1

నీనవ్వురేకలో
 నీ చూపు సొగసులో
 నీ మాటతేటలో
 నవ్వుకవితామృతపు
 ఝురులు ప్రవహించు.
 సన్నజాజి పడంతి మిన్నలే ధవళిమ
 కన్నెరోజాపువ్వు కమ్మనినెత్తావి
 నవ్వుమల్లియపువ్వు నవనీత మధురిమల్
 పవ్వళించును నీదు పల్కుల హృదయాల
 నోసరోజినీ! నిరతంబు
 ఓకవయిత్రీ! సత్యంబు.
 గాలిలో చివ్వురాకు గలగలధ్వనులు
 పాలపొంగులలోని మీగడతెలులు
 సెలయేటిపాటలోపలి రహస్యములు
 గలవు సరోజినీగానంబునందు.

2

దాస్యశృంఖల బద్ధభారత
 జనని నారసి యుస్సురంచును
 ఉష్ణబాష్పకణంబు లొల్కితి
 వొకటనోదేవీ!

నాటినుండియు నేటివరకున
 నారతంబును భరతమాతకు
 ప్రాజ్యకీర్తి ఘటింప జేయఁగఁ
 బాటుపడినావు!
 అల్లమేయో యనుచితపువా
 కృముల సత్యము లేదమచుఁ జూ
 పించి లీల నుపన్యసించితి
 వెన్నో దేశముల!

3

శాంతియుద్ధపు రంగమందున
 పంతమూమచు నమ్మహాత్ముని
 కుడిభుజమై వెలసియుంటివి
 పడఁతివయ్యు సరోజినీ!
 'దర్శనా' లవణంపుసత్యా
 గ్రహమునందున నీవుచూపిన
 పట్టుదలకలయోరిమికి జూ
 పరలు మ్రాన్పడిరి.
 శాంతిరణభూతలములో నీ
 సైర్యగుణమును గానబరచుచు
 చాన లబలలుగారటంచును
 జాతినావు సరోజినీ!

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1930. ఆగస్ట్.444)

ప్రేమ

-- స్థానాపతి రుక్మిణమ్మ

చక్కఁదనమునె ప్రేమింపఁ జాలునేని
వలదు ప్రేమింప దశదిశల్ వెలుఁగజేసి
ఆది మధ్యాంతములు లేని అధిక దీప్తు
చక్కనౌ కాంతిఁ బ్రేమింపఁ జనును నీకు.

తరుణి వంచుచు ప్రేమింప దలఁతువేని
వలదు ప్రేమింప సర్వదా తలువమూర్తి
నవ నవోన్మేష రీతుల నాట్యమాడు
మాధవుని నీవు ప్రేమింప మంచిదగును.

ధనము కోసమె ప్రేమింపఁ దలఁచితేని
వలదు ప్రేమింప నుడువఁగా నలవి కాని
రత్నరాసుల వెలుగొంది రహిదనర్చు
నుదధి నెప్పుడు ప్రేమింప నొప్పు నీకు.

ప్రేమకై నన్ను ప్రేమింపఁ బేర్మిఁదలఁతె
ప్రేమమున్ గొల్పరావోయి ప్రియవయస్య!
ఇనుడు, మాధవుడు దధి యన్నింటి కంటె
నమ్మకమగు నాడు మనమ్ము నిడుదు!

(కాదంబిని.1950)

చాటింపు

-- స్థానాపతి రుక్మిణమ్మ

పూర్వమొకరాజు తనపట్టణములో రాత్రులయందు గుస్తుతిరుగుటకు నొకతలారిని నియమించెను. ఆ తలారి కేదో కార్యంతరనిర్బంధముండినందున యూరిప్రక్క పొలములో నిద్రపోవుచున్న జడభరతుని యెవరో యనుకొని తీసుకువచ్చి తనకార్యమున కాతని నియమించగానతడు:

1వ జామున

ఆశచే బద్ధమయిపోయె నఖిలజగము
వింతగా కర్మలన్ బహుచింతలోదవు
తరుగుదినమునాయుక్షీణ మెరుగరహహ!!
కాన జాగ్రత్త! జాగ్రత్త!! కాచుకొనుడు.

2వ జామున

క్షణముచిత్తమ్ము విత్తమ్ము క్షణమెసుమ్ము
క్షణము జీవితమ్మెల్లను క్షణము నటన
ఎరుక తెలియుడు యమునకు కరుణలేదు
కాన జాగ్రత్త! జాగ్రత్త!! కాచుకొనుడు.

3వ జామున

లేరు తల్లిదండ్రులు లేదులేదుబంధు
వర్గము సహోదరులు లేరు వసతిలేదు
తలప నియ్యెడ సుంతైనధనములేదు
కాన జాగ్రత్త! జాగ్రత్త!! కాచుకొనుడు.

4వ జామున

జ్ఞానరత్నమ్ము హరియింపమేనియందు
కామవిక్రోధలోభతస్కరులు సతము
వేచియుందురు మూలల వివిధగతుల
కాన జాగ్రత్త! జాగ్రత్త!! కాచుకొనుడు.

(గృహలక్ష్మి, V-6, 1932. జూలై. 398)

గృహలక్ష్మలకు (కొన్ని పద్యాలు)

-- కాంచనపల్లి కనకాంబ

గీ. తనదు దేశంబు వేసంబుఁ దనదుబాస
తన కులాచారపద్ధతి తనకు మేల
టంచు నెవ్వారు నిజధర్మమందు నిల్తు
రార్యు లాంధ్రులు వారలే యంధ్రు బుధులు

గీ. ఇహముఁ బరము నుండు నెవ్వారికవ్వారి
కుండు మంచిచెడ్డ లుర్విలోన
నిహముఁ బరములేక యిల్లేదియా లేది
పశులమందగాక ప్రజలమూఁక

గీ. జంతువులు చెట్లు జూళ్ళు స్వజాతిగుణము
మానకుండుటఁ గనఁడు సీ! మానవుండు
పరుల ధర్మం బనుష్ఠింపఁ బరువులెత్తు
ఘనకలిప్రేరణంబున జ్ఞానమెడల.

(ఛాయదేవి అబ్బూరి. 20వ శతాబ్దంలో

తెలుగు రచయిత్రుల రచనలు. 41-43)

కొన్ని పద్యాలు

-- కాంచనపల్లి కనకాంబ

1. చదివిన పండితు లగుదురు,
విదితము గాకున్న యపుడు వెఱ్ఱులె పురుషుల్;
చదివిన జదువక యున్నన్,
ముదితలు విద్వాంసురాండ్రు పుట్టువుచేతన్
2. జగము మఱచువాడు భగవంతుడా, భక్తు
డా, యనాథుడా, యథార్థమెద్ది?
పాల గలసి వెంట బైలువచ్చెడు నీరు
పాలో, నీరో? తెలియ బలుక వశమె
3. గురుజనముల సేవింపక
పరమార్థముకొఱకు గ్రంథబాండాగారం
బరయుట వీణె, మృదంగము
గర మర్థించెడు గతి గద గానంబునకై
4. చుట్టు చేర్చిన సామగ్రి గిట్టు దింక
దూరదృష్టి బరాత్మను జేరవలయ
ననుచు బోధింప గాబోలు నట్టభవుడు
దృష్టి భేదంబు నలుబదియేండ్ల కొసగె

(పద్యముక్తావళి, 1927)

రవీంద్రుని మరణం

-- దేశిరాజు భారతి

జగదేక వీరుడవై
అగణిత విఖ్యాతి భారతాంబకు నార్జిం
పగ జాలిన యేటి రవీం
ద్రగురూ! కాలని యతి దప్పలేదే నీకున్!
వంగమే కాదు, నిన్నెంచి పొంగిపోవు
నఖిల భారత రాష్ట్రంబు లన వరతము;
నార్య విజ్ఞాన కవితల నరసి తాము
గర్వమును బొందు చున్నారు గాదె కవులు.

“స్వర్గలోక ద్వారపటలి తటాలను
దెరువంగ బడియె సుధీవరేణ్య!
దేవర్షివరులు సంభావింప నెదురుగా
వచ్చుచున్నారదే పరమతేజ
దశ దిశాంతరములు ధన్యవాదములు ప్ర
తి ధ్వనించెడు నదే దివ్యపురుష
పుష్పాంజలులతోడ పొంగుచు భక్తులు
యోగులదే నిల్చి రుజ్వలాత్మ!
స్వాగత శ్లోక సంగీత సరస మధుర
వాక్కుధాధార ప్రస్థాన భారము దీర్చ,
న మర కాంతలు నీ కొఱ కరుగుదెంచి

రదిగో విశ్వకవీ! నీకు మర్యాద సేయ”

(వాసా ప్రభావతి. భారత స్వాతంత్రోద్యమంలో తెలుగు మహిళల పాత్ర. 2003.63)

పాకీపని

-- దొప్పలపూడి అనసూయాదేవి

ఇంచుక యేని జనియించుట లేదు పురీష మూత్రముల్
గాంచుచునుండఁ బూర్వమునఁ గల్గునసహ్యమదెందుఁ బోయెఁగ
న్పించదు నేఁడు సుంతయు బిడ్డ పయిన్ గల ప్రేమపెంపురూ
పించఁగ దైవమివ్విధి నభేద్యపు భావము గల్గఁజేసెనో.

బానిస నైతినే యనెడు భావము స్వాంతమునం దొకింతయున్
గానఁగరాదు బిడ్డపయిఁగల్గదు కోపము నెవ్వరేనియున్
న్యూనతగాఁదలందు రను నొప్పి జనింపదు తాఁకఁబోయినన్
ప్రాణముపైకి వచ్చు గత భావము మచ్చునకైనదోఁచదే.

లాలించు కోర్కితోఁ బాల పాపను జేరి

యెత్తు కొన్నప్పుడు చిత్తమందు

మలమూత్రముల వీడి మలినంబు చేయునో

వస్త్రమునను శంక వదలకుండ

నుండెడిదెంత మోజుండినన్ బిల్లల

యందు, నే దల్లి నొనంత దాఁకఁ

బట్టితోపాటు నా భావములో మార్పు

పుట్టించె నా జగజెట్టినేఁడు

చీదరయెలేదు బిడ్డని సేవఁజేయఁ

బ్రేమ ప్రతిఫలమిచ్చుచు స్వామి నన్నుఁ

టెంచు నుద్యోగిగా నియమించినాడు

ఎదురు చెప్పక శిరసావహించుకొంటి.

(మాతృహృదయము, 1949)

కాన్సు

-- దొప్పలపూడి అనసూయాదేవి

చేరి చూడరాని సీమలో మార్మాల
దృష్టి సోక కుండ దిద్ది తీర్చి
వెలవరించునేమొ కలుగసాగెను నేడు
లేత నడుములోన నూతపోట్లు

ముద్దు బిడ్డను గాంతునన్ మోజునందు
పైఁప గల్గుదునే యను జంకు నందు
హస్త మశకములకుఁ గల్గు నంతరంబు
తోచు చున్నది స్థైర్యంబు తూలకుండ

అలసిపోయితి నంతలోఁ గలఁత దీఱ
క్యారు క్యారని గుండెలో మాటుమ్రోగె
విస్మరించితిఁ బొందిన వేదనంబు
నవతరించిన నవ్యభాగ్యమ్ము వలన.

(మాతృహృదయము, 1949)

మేలుకొలుపు

-- గుడిపూడి ఇందుమతి

ఇంక నిద్దురచాలలే దేలమీకు?
 నెంచి యికనైన వడిమేలు కాంచరాదె
 మంచిగా నెల్లరకును బొధించరాదె
 మంచిబుద్ధిని పనులు సాధించరాదె
 భయము సోమరితనమింకఁ బాయరాదె
 స్వార్థపరతను లవమైన వదలరాదె
 నెఱపుమఱపు పిఱికిబుద్ధి విడువరాదె
 నెలఁతలకు మంచివిద్యను నేర్పరాదె
 డంబములు వృధావ్యయముల డంపరాదె?

(అనసూయ.1924.ఆగస్ట్. 23)

ఉదయము

-- దేవులపల్లి సత్యవతమ్మ

౧

మేల్మీరంగులచీరలు మేనదాల్చి
ప్రాగ్గిశాంగన దనరెను ప్రభలతోడ
లోకరక్షకుడైన ప్రభాకరునకు
స్వాగతమునొసగుచున్నట్టి చందముప్ప.

౨

అరుణరుచులతోడ నరుణోదయంబయ్యె
జ్ఞానసూర్యుడొప్పె గగనమందు
నిద్రజెందనేల నిన్ను నీవు మఱచి
వేగమేలుకొనవె వెట్టిమనస!

౩

మేలుకో జీవమా! వేగ మేలుకొనవె
అంధకారములోబడి యడలనేల
దివ్యజ్యోతియె యాత్మయైదేజరిల్ల
మఱచినిద్రించెదేలకో మహిమదప్పి.

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1932.ఆగస్ట్.520)

మీరాబాయి

-- దేవులపల్లి సత్యవతమ్మ

ఎక్కడి యాంగ్లదేశ మిది ఎక్కడి భారతదేశ మద్దిరా!
ఇక్కడికేగుదెంచి ఇటు లెంతయుదీక్షను మాదుముక్తికై
తక్కక రాత్రియుంబవలు తల్లిరో! శ్లేడురో! పాటునొందు నీ
ఎక్కువయైన ఈఋణము నేగతి నీగదెమమ్మ ఇమ్మహిన్.

ఆంగ్లదేశమునందు నతివిరక్తినిజెంది గాంధీమహాత్ముని గాంచితమ్మ
కాంచిమహాత్ముని ఘనముగాసేవించిమించి యాతనియాజ్ఞ మీరకుండ
దేశసేవనుజేయ దీక్షతోపనిబూని ఖద్దరువ్యాప్తికై కదలియచొటు
కడకు మాసీమకు వడివడినేతెంచి మేమెల్లముదమంద మీరబాయి!

దర్శనంబిచ్చి మమ్ముల దనిపినావు
మీదురాకను జేసియే మాదునాంధ్ర
దేశ మిదిమొదల్ స్వాతంత్ర్యదీక్షబూని
మాతృదాస్యంబుబాపగా మరలుగాక.

మృగతృష్ణను బోలెడునా
దగను విలాసమును విడచితల్లి! శ్లేడూ!
నిగమాంతవేది గాంధీకి
దగుకూతురవైతి వెంతధన్యవో ధాత్రి.

మునుగులువెట్టి నెత్తులకు మూలలదాగెడు ఘూకరాజినాన్
విసువక సంచరించుమము వ్రేల్మిని తేజమునొందజేయగా
అసదృశలీలలవచ్చితివి యాంధ్రులదేశము ధన్యమయ్యె స్త్రీ
విసరము గర్వముంగొనియె వీరవు నీదగుకార్యదీక్షకై,

నీరదనారదకీర్తిని

గారవమారగ దిరిగిన

ఆరంగాగాంచి మాదునాంధ్రావనిలో

మీరాబాయిరో! హరినినుమేలుగబ్రోచు.

ఇహముః బరము నుండు నెవ్వారికవ్వారి

కుండు మంచిచెడ్డ లుర్విలోన

నిహముః బరములేక యిల్లేదియా లేది

పశులమందగాక ప్రజలమూఁక.

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1931.ఏప్రిల్.111)

మిణగురా

-- బోయి ద్రౌపది

ఏ దూర దేశానికే పుణ్యభూమికి
 యాత్ర సాగించేవు మిణగురా!
 పగటి పాలన చేసి పగడాల భానుండు
 పడమటి కొనలకు పయనమయ్యె
 సందె కాలపు దేవి సాగి వచ్చింది
 పొదలు సృష్టి చూసి కురులు విప్పింది
 కారు మబ్బులు మింట కమ్ముకున్నాయి
 రేరేడు మేఘాల దాగియున్నాడు
 చిమ్మచీకటి రేయి చెన్ను దెప్పినది
 గాడాంధకారమ్ము ధరణి యంతానిండి
 దట్టమై క్రమ్మింది, పొగవలె చిమ్మింది
 కన్నులు కనబడని కాళ రాతిరిలోన
 అంధకారములోన యాత్ర సాగించేవు
 పనియేమొ యున్నట్లు పరువెత్తిపోయేవు
 ఏ దూరదేశానికే పుణ్యభూమికి
 యాత్ర సాగించేవు మిణగురా!
 చుక్కలుగ చుక్కలుగ, సుధలు చిలికించేవు.
 చీకటి రాత్రిలో యాత్ర సాగించేవు
 ప్రకృతి వెలుగుతో నీవు పనియె లేదంటావు
 పొడనీయవె ప్రొద్దు, వెలుగు రానీవమ్మ
 తెల్ల వాగక నిమ్ము తెలివందనిమ్ము
 తెలివొంది సూరీడు లేచి రానిమ్ము

ఎంత చెప్పిన వినవు వెనుదిరగ నీవు
 పనియేమి నిశికాంత పిలిచెనా నిన్ను
 పిలిచెనో పరమాత్మ పాదసన్నిధికి
 నీవేగు జాడనే, నీ వెలుగు నీడనే
 ఆ దూరదేశానకాపుణ్య భూమికి
 ననుగూడ గొంపోవె నేకూడ చనుదెంతు
 ఆ దూరదేశానికా పుణ్యభూమికి
 యాత్ర సాగించుదాము మిణుగురా

(నల్లపొద్దు, 2003.56)

కందుకూరి వీరేశలింగమ్మ ఘనుడు

-- అయితం ఇందిరాదేవి, భారతీదేవులు

ఆత్మశక్తిని నమ్మి యణుమాత్రమును గాని

ప్రతిపక్షులకునేమి భయముపడక,

ఊర్ధ్వకాసనుజేసి యూగాడు మేనున

దైవత సత్కళల్ దనరుచుండ,

నమ్మిన ధర్మంబు సమ్మతింపని వారి

యదలింపులకును నదైర్య పడక,

స్వాతంత్ర్య తేజోగ్ని పంచప్రాణంబుగా

దిశలెల్ల వెలుగంగఁ తేజరిల్లి,

ఆంధ్రభూమికిఁ గీరితి నఖిలగతులఁ

దెచ్చి యజరుడై, యమరుడై, దీప్తి సకల

భూమి వ్యాపింపజేసిన పుణ్యమూర్తి,

కందుకూరి వీరేశలింగమ్మ ఘనుడు!

స్వార్థంబుఁ దలఁపని పత్రికాసంపాద

కాంచిత సత్కీర్తిఁ గాంచినాఁడు,

గుండె బ్రద్దలుసేయు కొండలఁ బోలిన

తతభారముల తలఁ దాల్చినాఁడు,

పొల్లువోవని తెల్లుపొలములో సంస్కార

బీజంబులను నాటి వెలసినాఁడు,

కలమువాడిమి చేత ఘన ఖలవితతుల

రీవి నెల్లెడల ఖండించినాఁడు,

రాజరాజ పాలితమైన రాణ్యహేంద్ర

సరస కమలాకరంబున కరసి చూడ
 ప్రభల వెలుగొంది నిల్చిన భాస్కరుండు,
 కందుకూరి వీరేశలింగమ్మ ఘనుడు!

(ఆంధ్ర మహిళ.1944. జూన్.26)

స్త్రీ విద్య

-- పులిగోటి ఆనందమాంబ

- గీ. విద్యయన్న ను స్త్రీలకు వెగటుగల్గ
వనితలజ్ఞానలనుచును వాడుకొనుట
యబ్బురంటేమి దీపంబునవలద్రోయ
నున్నయింటిలోజీకటి యుండకునె
- ఉ. కాంతలు మాతృభాషపయి గౌరవముంచక నన్యభాష న
శ్రాంతము నేర్చినంతటను సారములేదిక గొప్పయైన శ్రీ
మంతముగల్గి యున్నదని మంగళసూత్రముబారవైచి య
త్యంత సుభూషణంబులను దాల్చినరీతిని యెంచిచూడగన్

(గోలకొండ కవుల సంచిక)

దేశమాత

-- వి. లక్ష్మీదేవమ్మ

- సీ. ఎండిన మ్రోడులే సిగురులోత్తగ గీతి
 కలఁబడారేల త్యాగయ్యపగిది
 శతవృద్ధుకైన మేఘ జలదరింపఁగఁ గైతఁ
 గావింపరేల తిక్కన్నభాతి
 డీకొన్నజమునైన డీలువోననిఁ జేయ
 రదియేల కృష్ణరాయలనుబోలి
 కృతులందివేగసత్కీర్తినిఁ గొన రేల
 ఆరఘునాథ రాయలవిధాన
- గీ. ప్రాజ్యసామ్రాజ్య కార్య చక్రంబుఁ ద్రిప్పు
 మంత్ర మొనరుపరేల తిమ్మరసురీతి
 కోటికొక్కడైన నేటి నీకొడుకులందు
 దివ్యవిఖ్యాతగుణజాత దేశమాత.
- గీ. ఆయురారోగ్య సంపద లతిశయిల్ల
 నైహికాముష్మికంబుల కాటపట్టు
 పరమకల్యాణ గుణపూత భరతమాత
 మమ్ముఁ బునరుద్ధరింపఁగా సమ్మిక్కిలుతు.
- గీ. వీరధర్మంబు దివి కేగి విశ్రమించె
 బ్రహ్మతెజంబుడస్సి విశ్రాంతిఁగనియె
 భారతీయులు దౌర్భాగ్య పరతగనిరి
 తిరిగి మమ్ముద్ధరింపుమో దేశమాత

(గోలకొండ కవుల సంచిక)

శారదాబిల్లు ప్రశంస

-- బి. జ్ఞానాంబ

భారతీయులు ధర్మంబు బాయరేని
 వీరనారులు పతిభక్తి విడువరేని
 సత్యదేవత దేజంబు సడలదేని
 శారదాబిల్లు తీవ్రమైసాగుగాక!
 తొలగిపోవును వైధవ్యదుఃఖసమితి
 బాసిపోవును వరకట్న బాధలింక
 బీదసాదలు హాయి జీవింపుచుండు
 విపులసుఖమట్టు శారదాబిల్లువలన.

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1930. ఫిబ్రవరి.1052)

శారదా చట్టము

-- నడివింటి వెంకటరత్నమ్మ

ఎన్నో దినాలనుండి మన హిందువులన్ గ్రసించుచున్న యీ
 పిన్న తనంపు పెండిళులు పీచమడంచి జగద్ధితంబుగా
 ఇన్ని దినాల కీవు పొనరించితి, శారదా! శాసనంబునిన్
 పన్నుతి సేయగా వలదె సరితతమున్ భరతాంగనామణుల్

మా చిరకాల ధర్మములు మంటను గల్పెదరే శృతిశ్మృతుల్
 నీచపు కార్యమిద్ది తగునేయని పల్కెడంనంచుబల్కునా
 పాచిక మాటకారుల విపక్షులనందరి గెల్చినాడనే
 నీ చరితంబు ధన్యమగునిక్కముగా వినుమయ్య శారదా!

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1929.723)

కుక్కుటరోదనము

-- పట్టినపు సీతమ్మ

రూపభేదంబెకాని వేరొండుగావు
 ప్రాణములు నీకు నాకు నన్యాయముగను
 కలహమునుగూర్చి మాకు కత్తులనుగట్టి
 చంపనుంకించె దిది పౌరుషంబె? శూద్ర!
 ఇలనుదొరికినయట్టి గింజలనుదినుచుఁ
 బొట్టఁబోషించుకొను మమ్ము బుట్టఁబెట్టి
 కపటివై పెంచుటది యిందుకా? రవంత
 జాలియనుమాట నీకు లేదేల శూద్ర!
 నావలన నీకు నెద్దియైనా యపకృతి
 సుంతకలిగెడునా? అట్టిచో వధింప
 తగుదు. నుపకారమేచేయుదాన. వేళ
 చెప్పి లేపుచునున్న దాసీను గాన?
 ఈవు పొలమేగువేళ వీక్షించిరేయి
 'కొక్కొక్కో' యటంచు మేల్కొల్పుచుందు
 మొద్దునిద్దురలో ముస్లిపోయియున్న
 నిన్ను లేపుదు రెవరింక నన్ను చంప?
 కటకటా! చాటునను చిట్టుగంపలోన
 నొరులెరుఁగకుండ గ్రుడ్డల నుంచుకొన్న
 నెప్పుడో కన్నుమరపించి యిట్టివాని
 తస్కరింతువు నీకేమి దాపరించె
 కడుపునిండున కాలునిండెడున నాదు
 చిన్నిగుడ్లనుతినిన చీ! చీ! కిరాత.

నోరులేమి మీవలె నేడ్వ నేరగాని
 గర్భశోకమిద్దరకు నొక్కటియెగాదె?
 ఇంతమాత్ర మూహింప వదేమి నీకు
 జ్ఞానమున్నట్టిఫలమిదేనా? కిరాత!
 వత్సరాదిని సంక్రాంతిపండువులను
 వేడుకయటంచు మాకు కల్పించి పోరు
 నోడిపోయితివంచు నీవుడికియుడికి
 రెండుకాళులబిగదన్ని రెపరెపమని
 కొట్టుకొనుచుండ పీకను బట్టినులిమి
 వట్టిబలవంతముగ చంపివైతు వకట!
 పాతకమటంచు భయమేది? ఘాతుకుండ!
 గ్రామదేవతజాతరలందుబట్టి
 బలియనుచు నొకయేటున జెలుపశిరము
 ప్రాణమెట్లోప్పునో చెప్ప రాదుగాని
 మమ్ముజంప మీకోర్కె సంపన్నమగున?
 నాడు పాణిని వ్యాకరణమ్ముచేయ
 బూని మాదుకూతను మొట్టమొదటవినియు
 దానినే హ్రస్వదీర్ఘప్లుతములటంచు
 గ్రంథమున నిబద్ధముచేసె గాదె? యట్టి
 మమ్ముచంపి తినెదు న్యాయమయ్య నీకు?
 “ఆత్మవత్సర్వభూతాని” యనుట వినవె?

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1932. సెప్టెంబర్.586)

స్మశానము

-- ఆర్. సుబ్బమ్మ

నాకు రమణీయమీ స్మశానమ్ము – యిందె
పాడుకొందును నా మనోవ్యధల నెల్ల
తరుణ రక్తంబు ద్రావి నర్తనముసేయు
భూతజాలంబు కన్నులు పులకరింప

పూడుకొన్నట్టి యీ తలపుట్టెలందు
నా భవిష్యత్తు జిత్రించినార లెవరో
తడవి చూచి నీలాకాశ దర్పణమున
వ్రాసికొందును బ్రతుకులో పాటలెల్ల

ఆకు గదలాడనట్టి యీ యధ్వమందు
నేనె సామ్రాజ్యశాలి నైనాను కాని
నా వలెనె నవ్వియుం డొకనాట నివియు
పూడిపోయిన నాతలపుట్టె జూచి

గడచియున్న యసంఖ్యాకగాథలెల్ల
జ్ఞప్తి కెలయించుచున్ వీ సమయమందు
నాకు రమణీయ మీ స్మశానమ్ము యిందె
పాడుకొందును నా మనోవ్యధల నెల్ల.

(గృహలక్ష్మి. 1941. నవంబర్.516)

ప్రవాసినిసీత

-- పి. రామసీతమ్మగారు

౧

స్వామి! నీబిగ్గకొగిలి బాసి యేల
ఘోరకాంతారముల జూడగోరినాను
కడలియై ముంచె నీవియోగమ్మునన్ను
చాలునక్కటా! ఈప్రవాసమ్ముభరము.

౨

ఎవరితో చెప్పుకొందు నాహృదయబాధ
నాకునై నేన వరియించినాను; ముందె
నాయభాగ్యమ్ము కనలేకపోయినాను
ఏల నినుబాయ కోర్కి నాయెదజనించె?

౩

“సీత! నాయంధకారంపు జీవితమున
సుప్రభాజ్యోతివీవె” యంచును మృదూక్తి
పల్కితివినాడు, నేడెట్లుస్వామి! నను
కానలకుద్రోసి భరియింప గలిగినావు?

౪

ఒక్కనిముసంబు మాటాడకుందునేని
విశ్వమే శూన్యమనియెంచుప్రేమమూర్తి
ఎటులసైరించినావో నేనిటుప్రవాస
భూమి నేకాకినిగ దుఃఖమునకృశింప?

(గృహలక్ష్మి. 1932. జులై.411)

దైవభక్తి

-- కొల్లూరి గౌరీదేవి

౧

ఉ. రాలకు మ్రొక్కినంతనె పరాత్పరు డుండునటంచు నెంచి, దే
వాలయమందు భక్తులయినంత, ననాంతరమందు పుట్టల్
పాలనుబోసినంత, నదిమధ్యమునందు మునింగినంత పా
పాలను బాసిపోదురె? కృపారహితాత్ములు జారచోరులు

౨

ఉ. ఇమ్మహినర్థగర్వమున నెందరో యౌవనమందు చాలనే
రమ్ములుచేసి తామిహపరంబుల ముక్తినిబొందగోరి పా
పమ్ములు వోవగా జపతపమ్ములు చేతురు వృద్ధులైనకా
లమ్మున రామనామము విరామములేక జపింతురూరక.

౩

ఉ. సోదరులందఱు గలసి సొంపుగనుండిన వారితండ్రికా
మోదముగాదె చేతమున; భూప్రజకంతకు తండ్రియంచు దా
మోదరునెంచి జెప్పరె ప్రబుద్ధులు; కావున తోడివారిక
త్యాదరమిచ్చి జూచునపుడార్త శరణ్యుడు సంతసింపడే?

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1935. అక్టోబర్.610)

సోదరి రావే బళ్లోకి!

-- ఆర్. నాగరత్నమ్మ

రావే సోదరి! రావే సోదరి! సోదరి రావే బళ్లోకి!

అప్పుడె ఎనిమిది కొట్టిరిగా,
ముందుగ మనమూ వెళ్ళామే
పలు చుక్కలూ పెడతారూ!
వెనుకా వెళ్ళిన వారలకే
వరుసగ దెబ్బలు కొడతారూ!

రావే సోదరి! రావే సోదరి!

సోదరి రావే బళ్లోకి!

పెద్దగ పాఠము చదువుదుమే
గురువుకు వప్పాజెప్పుదమూ
ఎక్కువ మార్కులు ఇచ్చదరే,
క్లాసుకు పెద్దగ నుంచెదరూ
అన్నిట గెలుపులు పొందుదమే,

రావే సోదరి! రావే సోదరి!

సోదరి రావే బళ్లోకి!

అందరు గౌరవముంచెదరూ
ప్రేమతో మనలను పిలచెదరే
మురియుచు పేరును అడిగెదరూ,
అమ్మ దగ్గరా అల్లరి చేసిన
అందరి దగ్గర వినయము చూపుతు

రావే సోదరి! రావే సోదరి!

సోదరి రావే బళ్లోకీ!

మాతాపితలకు ఖ్యాతిని తెస్తూ
ఆనందంబున గడుపుదమే,
సత్యంబెప్పుడు పలకుదమూ
స్వాతంత్ర్యంబును కోరుదమే,
సమాన హక్కులకై పోరుదమూ

రావే సోదరి! రావే సోదరి!

సోదరి రావే బళ్లోకీ!

అందరి కలవరపెట్టదమే,
వరులకు కట్నం వొదిలించి
వనితల నుద్ధరించుదమే,
అబలలు కామని నిరూపించుతూ
సబలలమేనని చెప్పుదమే,

రావే సోదరి! రావే సోదరి!

సోదరి రావే బళ్లోకీ!

మానవు సేవా, మాధవు సేవా
అలజడి బొందెడి దేశం సేనే,
మహిళా సమాజం సేవా జేస్తూ
అన్ని మతాలూ ఒకటే యంటూ
మనసున తృప్తిన చెందుదమే,

రావే సోదరి! రావే సోదరి!

సోదరి రావే బళ్లోకీ!

(గృహలక్ష్మి.29)

ఆంధ్రవనితామణులు

-- పి. అప్పలనరసమ్మ

భరత నారీమణుల చరితము
మాలగా మా తెనుగు వారికి
గుచ్చి యిచ్చిన తల్లివో బం
డారు అచ్చమ్మా!

నన్ను మరచినగానిమీ దే
శమ్ము మాత్రము మరు వలదని
స్వర్గమునకే వెడలితమ్మా
అన్నపూర్ణమ్మా!

నాటి నాయకురాలి పౌరుష
పటిమ నీలో నవతరించెను
ధన్యమయ్యెను తెలుగు దేశము
లక్ష్మీ బాయమ్మా!

నాయ కోత్తమ వీరుల కావం
తయును కాంతలు తీసిపోరని
చాటి చెప్పితివమ్మ భళి దు
వూరి సుబ్బమ్మా!

స్వకుల దుస్థితి గాంచి మది లో
జాలిగొని నీ సర్వస్వమ్మును
ధారపోసితివ హహ యామిని
పూర్ణ తిలకమ్మా!

మొల్లయును మా ముద్దు పళనిని
 బోలె కవితల నల్లి ఖ్యాతిని
 గాంచి వెలసితి నీవు కాంచన
 పల్లి కనకమ్మా!

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1930. జనవరి.972)

శిథిలంపు జీవనము

-- పి. అప్పలనరసమ్మ

పుట్టిపెరిగి సుఖమ్మునెఱుగక
కాలమంతయు గడపుచుంటివి
అడివిలోపల పూసిపెరిగిన
మల్లెపూవువలెన్.
భరతనారీమణుల పీలిచి
పిప్పిచేసిన సంఘమే నీ
సౌఖ్యజీవనమునకు భంగము
సంఘటించినది.
పరుగులెత్తే కాలమున మన
ప్రాతకట్టులు తెగనిగొలుసులు
బుగుసుకొనునేకాని తెగుటకు
రోజులేదేమో?
అమృతమూర్తివి చెల్లి! నీశిథి
లంపుజీవము మామనములలో
బ్రదికినన్నిదినాలు రగులుచు
వెలుగుచుండెడిని.

(గృహలక్ష్మి. 1930. జనవరి. 38)

కోర్కె

-- జి. జయలక్ష్మి

౧

ఈ మహోన్నతశైలభాగము నొక్క
ఫలభరితమైన వృక్షము పగిదినేని
పుట్టియుండిన సార్థకమొందియుండు
మొనేము నాయున్ని నమ్రభావమున తపసి
వర్యుల కనయ మతిథిసత్కార్యమొసగి

౨

ఈ మనోజ్ఞ పుష్పోద్భావసీమ నేను
తావివెదజల్లు చక్కని పూవునేని
ప్రకృతాంగన సౌభాగ్యగరిమపెంచి
ఇలను సార్థకజీవిగ దలచుకొందు.

౩

ఈ వసంతాగమాదివ్యనవ్యవేళ
కొండచటయలఁజను సెలయేటి రొదల
గళముపైకెత్తి చక్కదనాలవలపు
పాడియుందును నే నొక్కపక్షినైన
అవనితలమున స్వేచ్ఛావిహారిగుచు.

౪

ఈ మనోహరనికృతావనీతలము
నెడతెగకబారు నోసెలయేటినేని

పాంథజనముల తాపము బాపి, వారి
అమితజీవనాసౌభాగ్య మందియుందు.

(గృహలక్ష్మి. 1932.సెప్టెంబర్.599)

కులము కులమందు వేటికి తెలుగుబిడ్డ!

-- కోకా హనుమాయమ్మ

- గీ. గుణమెముఖ్యము నరులకు – కులమదేల
అన్న యార్్యోక్తిదలపక – అనవరతము
కులము కులమందు వేటికి – తెలుగుబిడ్డ!
2. నవ్యసాహిత్యవాసనల్ – దివ్యభంగి
దిశలబర్చుచునున్న ఈ – దినములందు
అల్లజాతివివక్షను – యుల్లమందు
విడువనేరకయింకను – వెట్టివగుచు
కులము కులమందు వేటికి – తెలుగుబిడ్డ!
3. సాటిదేశంబులందలి – జనులు మిగుల
జాతిభేదంబు విడనాడి – జగతియందు
ఐకమత్యంబుతోనుండ – అహరహంబు
జాతిభేదంబులనినీవు – జడతబుద్ధి
హెచ్చుతగ్గులు కల్పించి – ఇహమునందు
అంటురోగులమాదిరి – అంటకుండ
కులము కులమందు వేటికి – తెలుగుబిడ్డ!
4. కులమెగల్గుచోమనఋషి – కులముగనుము
వేదకర్తయు బ్రహ్మర్షి – విపులజ్ఞాని
యైనవ్యాసుఁడు శూద్రజం – డగునుగాదె?
ధర్మమార్గానువర్తియై – ధరను కీర్తి
గనినధర్మవ్యాధు డరయ – గాను నవని

నతఁడు నీచకులోద్భవుం – డగునుగాదె!
 కులముపూజ్యముభువిని – సద్గుణముముందు
 వీనితత్వమ్మునరయక – వెట్టివగుచు
 కులము కులమందు వేటికి – తెలుగుబిడ్డ!

5. తక్కువకులమునగలరు – తఱచిచూడ
 నేటిదినములలోకూడ – నిపుణమతులు
 ఉత్తమోత్తమపూరుషు – లొప్పిదముగ
 గాంధీజీమహాత్మునివలె – ఖ్యాతిగాంచి
 నట్టిభూసురుఁడెందైన – నవనిగలఁడె
 అట్టి శ్రీమహాత్ము నుపదే – శామ్మతంబు
 ఆలకింపుముశ్రద్ధతో – ననవరతము
 జాతిభేదంబు విడనాడి – జనులుమిగుల
 సఖ్యభావంబుతో నుండి – సంతతంబు
 హెచ్చుతగ్గులు విడనాడి – హితముగల్గి
 అందరున్ సమభావమున్ – పొందువరకు
 భారతావనిమరిముక్తి – బడయలేదు
 అనుచుచెప్పుట సభలలో – నహరహంబు
 వినుచు నింకనువదలక – వెట్టివగుచు
 కులము కులమందు వేటికి – తెలుగుబిడ్డ!

6. శీలమేయౌనుతొడవులు – స్త్రీలకెప్పుడు
 సత్యసంధతయును మరి – శాంతతయును
 కరుణయును కలుగవలెను – పురుషులకును
 సర్వజనులకును తొడుగు – సంతతంబు

భూతదయగల్గియుండుట – పుడమిగాన
 గుణమెముఖ్యము నరులకు – కులమదేల
 అన్నయార్యోక్తిదలపక – అనవరతము
 కులము కులమందు వేటికి – తెలుగుబిడ్డ!

(గృహలక్ష్మి)

అబలా విలాపము (కొన్ని పద్యాలు)

-- బ్రహ్మాండం కనకసుందరమ్మ

అతివ లున్న తవిద్య నభ్యసింపఁగరాదు
 ధవునిదైవంబుగాఁ దలఁపవలయు
 సంగీతమునునేర్వ సతులకుఁగారాదు
 పాటలుసొంపుగా పాడవలయు
 వ్యాయామ మొనరింప నబలలర్హులుగారు
 బండెడుచాకిరిచేయ వలయు నెప్పుడు
 చనదు స్త్రీలారోగ్య శాస్త్రంబులనుచూడ
 పరిశుభ్రముగనుండ వలయునిండ్లు
 అకట! యిదియేటియన్యాయ మార్కులార!
 తనకు తెలియనివషయముల్ ధాతయైన
 చేయఁజాలునె? యిక నైన స్త్రీలవివిధ
 విద్యలను వేర్వఁజేయుఁడీ ప్రేమతోడ.

(అనసూయ పత్రిక, సెప్టెంబరు/అక్టోబరు, 1919)

అంధకారము

-- పైడిమర్రి సీతాదేవి

ఆశలే హద్దులై వెళ్లు యవనికాదె?
 అంతులేని దివ్యమౌనాట్యంపుశాల!
 సకలజీవారాసులు యిందు చతురులైన
 దటుల; యీ పాత్రధారణానంతరమున
 యెచటికేగెదరో వీరు యెవ్వడెరుగు

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1931.అక్టోబర్.702)

ఫలితమెల్లవదలి పతితుడయ్యె

-- పోతాప్రగడ రాజ్యరత్నమ్మ

వైరాగ్యమంతట వెదజల్లునట్లుగా
 జడలుగట్టుక జోలిబూనినాడు
 స్నేహంబునకుగానిసంపదయేలని
 చెలికానికంతయు జేర్చినాడు
 కాముకుడనుగాను గానుగాననునట్లు
 కమలాసుతునిగోము గఱచినాడు
 ఏకపత్నివ్రతం బెంతేనిఘనమన
 సగముదేహముసతికి జేర్చినాడు
 ఇన్ని బాధలంది యీశ్వరుండైనను
 జారుడైనచంద్రు స్నేహమునను
 వారకాంతగొనుచు వేణిలోనుంచుక
 ఫలితమెల్లవదలి పతితుడయ్యె.

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1932.ఫిబ్రవరి.104)

భిక్షుకీ?

-- వి. రంగాదేవి

ఉదయ భానునితోడ

వూరంత తిరిగేటి

పుద్వోగ మది, నీకు

పుద్వాస మాయెగా

ఆర్య ధర్మములందు

అడుగువారికి పెట్టు

ఆదర్శ మది నేడు

అడుగంటి పోయెగా

భిక్షకయి నీవస్తే

బియ్యమే లేవంటు

బిరబిరా పొయ్యేటి

రోజులే వచ్చెగా

ఆదికాలము నుండి

ఆనవాయిగ వచ్చు

హైందవ ధర్మంబు

అధ్వాన్న మాయెగా

రేషనింగని పెట్టి

రేపు మాపులు గూడ

కొలత పాత్రల నివ్వ

కొంగేడ జూపుదువు

(ఆంధ్ర మహిళ పత్రిక, పేజీ. 8, డిసెంబర్ 1944)

స్త్రీవిద్య

-- వెలువోలు వసంత కుసుమావతి

- గీ. వేదఋక్కులు రచించు వెలదులుండ
సరసకావ్యాలు నిర్మించు జాణలుండ
దైర్యవిత్తమ్ము వెదజల్లు తరుణులుండ
స్త్రీకి విద్య నిషేధింప సిగ్గుగాదె!
- గీ. భరతయుద్ధమ్ము ప్రేరేచె భామయొకతె
శ్రీశివాజినీ బ్రభువుగాఁ జేసె నొకతె
వీరపల్నాటి యుద్ధమ్ము విప్పె నొకతె
విద్యలేకున్న వీరిట్లు వెలయఁ గలరె!
- గీ. విద్య నేర్చిన తల్లులు బిడ్డలకును
మొదటి నుండియుఁ జాలసద్బోధ కఱపి
వీరబుధులుగ వారిఁగావింపఁ గలరు
కాన స్త్రీవిద్య దూరంగఁ గాదుమీకు!
- గీ. సచివుఁడుగ నుండవలయు యోజనల వేళ
జననిగా నుండవలయు భోజనము వేళ
భార్యయని; ధర్మవేత్తలు పల్కుచుండ్రు
చదువులేకున్న నీరీతి సలుపఁ గలరె!

గీ. విద్య నేర్చిన వారలు విరివి జ్ఞాన
 వార్తలన్ వ్రాయు నేర్పును బడయఁగల్గి
 జగతి మాహాత్మ్యముల నెన్నొ సలుపుకతన
 బాలికావిద్య దూరంగఁ బాడియానె!!

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1929.మార్చి.73)

మహాత్మాగాంధీ

-- వెలువోలు వసంతాదేవి

సర్వసర్వంసహా జనశ్చవణసుఖము
మధురమధుర మృహింసానుమాన్యగీత
మాలపించు వసంతపికాధిపతివి
గాంధీ! మముభ్రోచు మీపాదకంజరజము.

ఖండఖండంతర స్థితాఖండజనము
పూరుషశ్రేష్ఠుడని మిమ్ముఁబొగడుచుండ
నతపరాధీన దుఃఖాననమ్మునందుఁ
జల్ల స్మితరేఖ భరతభూదేవిదాల్చు.

ఈ దరిద్రనారాయణు లీవిధానఁ
గోట్లకొలఁదిగఁ గూడునుగుడ్డలేక
పొందువంతకు నీవెంతో కుందికుంది
రాట్న మొసఁగితి తన్ని వారణముగాగ.

తతసనాతనహిందూమతమ్ముపేర
స్త్రీలకును బంచములకును జెప్పరాని
స్నిగ్ధవేదనలెన్నెన్నో చెల్లుచుండ
మించుమీబోధ వాని వారించుచుండె.

మీస్వరాజ్యసంకల్ప మమేయసిద్ధి
నందుఁగావుతమని మాదుప్తార్థనంబు;
ఆలమహాత్ముల సంకల్పబలమువలన
నెట్టి కార్యములేని గట్టెక్కకున్నె?

(గృహలక్ష్మి.1929. జూలై.363)

గాంధీ స్తుతి

-- వెలువలి వెంకటలక్ష్మీనరసమాంబ

శ్లో || వందే గాంధీమహాత్మానం భారతాంబా ప్రియాత్మజమ్

దేశ దేశాంతరవ్యాప్త దివ్యకీర్తి విరాజితమ్ ||

సీ. భారతీయుల కోపవహ్ని కీలల నార్పి

శాంతిపాఠము నేర్పు జ్ఞానియితఁడు

అజ్ఞానతిమిరమ్ము నడఁగించి లోకాన

జ్ఞానకౌముది వెదజల్లెనితఁడు

హరిజనోద్ధరణ సమాయత్తచిత్తుడై

దీనులగాపాడు దిట్టయితఁడు

కడజాతివారి యిక్కటల గండడగించు

నిరుపేదలకు కల్పతరు వితండు

గీ. భారతీయుల భాగ్యదేవత యితండు

క్రూర మాంసాశనుల కెల్ల కులిశమితఁడు

ధర్మబోధనలకు మార్గదర్శి యితఁడు

గాంధీదేవుని వినుతింపగాఁ దరంబె? ||

సీ. భారతీయుల భాగ్యవారాసి యితండు

భరతమాతకు ముద్దుపట్టి యితఁడు

భోగలాలసులకు యోగమార్గమ్ముల

నుపదేశ మొనరించు నొజ్జయితఁడు

రాట్నంబనెడు దొడ్డరమణీయ చక్రంబు

కేలఁబూని వెలుంగు కృష్ణుడితఁడు

లక్షాధికారుల భిక్షకులను నేక

విధముగా గన్గొను బుధుఁడితండు

గీ. నిఖిలజనులకు నాదర్శ నిలయుఁడితండు

ఒదిగి నిల్బంధన స్థితినుండవలసె

నక్కటా? ఘోరకలికాక యన్యమున్నె?

కొండ యద్దంబులోపల కురుచవడదె? ||

(హిందు సుందరి. 1944)

APPENDIX II

LIST OF TELUGU WOMEN POETS

S.NO	Name of the Poet	Title of the Poem	Name of the Magazine/ book	Year & Month of Pub	Page No
1	Anandamamba,Puligoti	<i>Stri Vidya</i>	<i>Golukonda Kavula Sanchika</i>		
2	Achamma, Mallipaddi	<i>Vidhatrustuti</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929, April	
3	Alamelu Mangathayaru, Patibanda	<i>Viyuktha</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,March	72
		<i>Veerapathni</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Jan	966
		<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Feb	979
4	Ammayamma, Kosaraju	<i>Virahagiti</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	696
5	Ananthamma, Madamanchi	<i>Sithamma Pendli</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,July	358
		<i>Manchala</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Oct	638
		<i>Nayakuralu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,June	257
		<i>Sankranti Rangamulu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Jan	
		<i>Palle Padalu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,March	5
		<i>Varsha Ruthuvu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Aug	477
		<i>Nayakuralu Nagamma</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	230
6	Annapurna, Bulusu	<i>Prabodhamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,Nov	689
7	Annapurna, Jandhyala	<i>Aasissu</i>	<i>Andhra Mahila</i>	1944,May	35

8	Annapurnamma, Vempati	<i>Godavaripurshkaram</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,July	446
		<i>Virahini</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	710
9	Appala Narasamma, Mogapati	<i>Punya Sravani</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Aug	460
10	Appala Narasamma,P	<i>Andhra Vanitamanulu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930, Jan	972
		<i>Sidhilampu Jivanamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Jan	38
		<i>VijayaDasami</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Mar	650
		<i>Smasanam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Mar	45
11	BalatripuraSundaramma Ayyadevara	<i>Pathivrata Dharmamulu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929,Aug	
		<i>Dasara</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	669
12	BalatripuraSundaramma, Boddupalli	<i>Melukolupu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	719
13	Bangaramma, Chavali	<i>Kothapata</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		550
		<i>Ma Papa</i>	<i>Bharathi</i>	1932	35
14	Bangaramma,Goteti	<i>Chiluka Eruka</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	234
		<i>Ugadiki Swagatam</i>	<i>Andhra Mahila</i>	1949,April	6
15	BharatiDevi, Desiraju	<i>Deevana Losangumamma</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Sept	587
		<i>Madhavudu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,Aug	412
		<i>Seelamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937, Oct	505
16	Bhuvaneswari Devi, Paruchuti	<i>Vekuva</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932, Mar	28
		<i>Pilupu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	721
17	Chandra Kantha Mani, Pakala	<i>Prakruti</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,May	214
18	Chiranjivamma, Samavedula	<i>Madyapana Satwikanirodhamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Nov	887
		<i>Suputrika Jananam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,Jan	104
		<i>Prabhatam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,April	129
		<i>Sravanalakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,April	468

		<i>Desa Sevika</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct.	623
19	Durgamma, KosaRaju	<i>Gouristavamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929, March	19
20	Gangamma, K	<i>Radha Valapu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	655
21	Godavari Mandalavasini	<i>Neti Karavu</i>	<i>Anasuya</i>	1919,July-Aug	46
22	GouriDevi. K	<i>Daiva Bhakti</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935, Oct	610
23	Gunnamma. Aadurti	<i>Chinta</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	158
24	Gyanamba, B	<i>Mahammadali Maranamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, March	
		<i>Sharada Billu Prasamsa</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Feb	105
		<i>Kirti Seshulu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Nov	717
		<i>(Late) Annappurnra Devi</i>			
25	Gyanamma, Puranam	<i>Jolapata</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Dec	910
26	Hanumayamma, Koka	<i>Heccharika</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,Dec	802
		<i>Kulamu Kulamanduvetiki Telugu Bidda</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		
27	Hanumayamma,Pamineni	<i>Prasamsa</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,May	224
28	Hemalatha, A	<i>Pillalana Yelanantha Prema</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,April	119
		<i>Daivama Adapputtukadelano</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	691
29	Hemalatha,P	<i>Nivasam</i>	<i>Andhra Lakshmi</i>	1922,May	11
30	Indira Devi, Bharathi Devi, Ayitam	<i>Kandukuri Veeresalingamu</i>	<i>Andhra Mahila</i>	1944,june	26
		<i>Ghanudu</i>			

31	Indumati, Gudupudi	<i>Athamanivedanam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1919Nov/Dec	19
		<i>Tummeda</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,Jan	857
		<i>Gunavathi(Ledu Ledamma)</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,Jan	857
		<i>Gunavathi(Kaladukaladamma)</i>			
		<i>AndhraBhasha (Sisapadyam)</i>	<i>Hindu Sundari</i>	1943,July	
		<i>Taruni Sathakamu</i>	<i>A Small booklet</i>	1916	
32	IndumatiDevi, Somaraju	<i>Deena Swargavi Bhargavi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,Dec	801
33	Janakamma, Jagariamudi	<i>UdayaPradhana</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,March	32
34	Jayalakshmi,G	<i>Korke (desire)</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Dec	599
35	Jayalakshmi, Pothula	<i>Lemmoyi Lemmoyi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,Sept	554
36	Jayalakshmmamma,Gollapudi	<i>Yedarilo</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,July	1073
		<i>Brundavanam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,July	40
37	Kamala Devi, Pulavarthi	<i>Swagatham</i>	<i>Andhra Mahila</i>	1944,May	35
38	Kamala Kanya,G.S.	<i>Kondaveedu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	704
39	Kamalamba,A	<i>Kalamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,May	346
40	Kameswaramma,Thuthika	<i>Nava Nagarikamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,June	344
41	Kameswaramma, Ganti	<i>GyanopaDesam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	660
42	Kameswara Rao,Kadiyala	<i>Raghava</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	692
43	Kameswari.J	<i>Sodari</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	645
44	Kanakamma,Kam	<i>Saili</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1926, feb	

45	Kanakamma, Kanchanapalli	<i>Krushnastavam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,Nov	685
		<i>Sri Bhasyanamaha</i>	<i>Hindu Sundari</i>	1942,Sept	4
		<i>Krushnashtami</i>	<i>Hindu Sundari</i>	1942,Sept	5
		<i>Tarananama Samvatsramu</i>	<i>Hindu Sundari</i>	1944,Sept	8
		<i>Swathantryam(Khandika)</i>	<i>(Khandika)</i>		
46	Kanakamma,Ponaka	<i>Sutranjali</i>	<i>AndhraMahila</i>	1944,Oct	4
		<i>Swathathra Jyothi</i>	<i>Andhra Kavayitrulu</i>		338
		<i>Naivedyam</i>	<i>booklet, Ramana Ashramam</i>	1947	
47	kanakasundramma,Brahmamdam	<i>Abalavilapam</i>	<i>Anasuya</i>	1919 Sept/Oct	38
48	kantha Ratnamma,S	<i>Daivama! Suthudu Lenidi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	651
		<i>Janmama?</i>			
49	Kathyayini Devi,Vedula	<i>Goshpadakshetra Lakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,April	124
50	Krishnaveni,Avatapalli	<i>Prajotpathi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	198
51	Krishnavennamma, Ganti	<i>Chinta</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,Dec	755
		<i>Virasmruthi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,Dec	4
52	Krishnaennamma, Pandrangi	<i>Chinni Krishna</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Aug	431
53	Krishnavennamma, T.P	<i>Vyajalapamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932, june	305
54	Lakshmi Devamma, V	<i>Desamatha</i>	<i>Golukonda kavula Sanchika</i>		
55	Lakshmi Narasamamba, Pulugurtha	<i>Sri Goswami Tulasidasu</i>	<i>Andhra Mahila</i>	1944,May`	26
		<i>Jayanthi</i>			
56	Lakshmi Narasamma,Desaraju	<i>Mitraparitamamu (elegy)</i>	<i>HinduSundari</i>	1942,Nov`	

57	Lakshmi Narasamma,Nandivada	<i>Damodarudave</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,Oct	634
58	Lakshmibayamma,D.V.R.R	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,Sept	596
		<i>Patrikaprasamsa</i>			
59	Lakshmibayamma,DronamRaju	<i>Aandhratejamu</i>	<i>Andhra Mahila</i>	1944,Nov	19
		<i>Sri Krishna Devarayulu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929,Oct	645
		<i>Anadha Ghosha</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Jan	963
		<i>Katina Thapamula Radu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Aug	445
		<i>Nikkambu Mukthi</i>			
60	LakshmiKantamma,Bhuvanagiri	<i>Vanya Vruthi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,June	301
61	LakshmiKantamma,Utukuuri	<i>O!Mahita O!Mahitatma</i>	<i>,Utukuuri's Samsmaranasanchika</i>		
62	Lakshmikantamu,Gidugu/	<i>Saraswathi Stotram</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	222
63	Sharadamba Jonnalagadda	<i>Nayakuralu Nagamma</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	230
64	Lalithakumari	<i>Dasara</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Oct	650
		<i>Melukolupu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,July	389
		<i>Sravana Lakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Aug	424
65	Mangatayaru	<i>Sravana Lakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Aug	481
66	Nagamma,Suri	<i>Aahvanam</i>	<i>HinduSundari</i>	1943,Oct	7
		<i>Aamuktamu</i>	<i>HinduSundari</i>	1943,Oct	12
		<i>Mouna Bodha</i>	<i>HinduSundari</i>	1943,June	4
		<i>Pancharatnamulu</i>	<i>HinduSundari</i>	1944,May	17
		<i>Sri Ramana Ganapatulu</i>	<i>HinduSundari</i>	1944,Sept	3
67	NagaRatnamba, Narahari setti	<i>Prardhana</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Dec	910
68	Nagaratnamma,R	<i>Sodari Rave Ballok! (Sister)</i>	<i>Andhra Mahila</i>	1944,July	29

69	Narayanamma,Vadlamani	<i>Chikati Kanne pendu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, May	180
70	NirmalaDevi, Komaravolu	<i>Swagatham</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,May	177
71	Nithyakalyanamma, Ooleti	<i>Sravan Prkruthi</i>	<i>Bharati</i>	1931,Sept	
		<i>Kalyana Geethi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Oct	735
		<i>Gruhastu Gruhini</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Oct	646
		<i>Meera Baislaedukanya</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,July	371
		<i>Divyasisu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Mar	8
		<i>Kavi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Oct	1043
		<i>Sarojini Devi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Aug	444
		<i>Kavi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Feb	1043
		<i>Sankranti Sandadi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Jan	930
		<i>Swathathra Lakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	615
72	Parvathama,B	<i>Pushapanjali</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,June	315
73	ParvathiDevi, Kalpala	<i>Prabodhamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,April	270
		<i>Kommutengulavigo</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,March	23
		<i>Ma Chitti Thalli</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	712
		<i>Himsa</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,June	333
		<i>Parvathi Niryanamu</i>		1931,Oct	831
74	Prakasamma Bulusu	<i>Smruti</i>	<i>Andhra Mahila</i>	1944,Dec	8
75	Pranayini (Jyothishmati)	<i>Prkruthi</i>	<i>Bharati</i>	1925, Feb/Sept	
76	PundariksViralAmmal.T	<i>Godavari</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,June	209
77	Rajahamsa	<i>Saraswati Pooja</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	666
78	RajaManikyam,Kasturi	<i>Assruvulu (tears)</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Dec	800
		<i>Jevathiam Swagathami</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	590

79	Rajeswari	<i>Ganga Odduna</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,Oct	606
		<i>Sravana Puja</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,March	7
		<i>Lavana Sagara Madhanam</i>	<i>Andhra Kavayitrulu</i>		300
		<i>Dharmapathni</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929,Aug	
80	Rajyalaskshmamma.Basavaraju	<i>Paravasyamu</i>	<i>Vaithalikulu</i>		406
		<i>Duradrushthamu</i>			
81	Rajyam	<i>Telugu Talli</i>	<i>HinduSundari</i>	1944,July	
82	RajyaRatnamma,Pothapragada	<i>Vatapatrasai</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Jan	972
		<i>Phaamellvadili Pathithudayye</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Feb	104
		<i>Yamini</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,April	131
		<i>Prema</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	634
83	Rama AhalyaDevi, Allada	<i>Vyajokthi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,June	336
84	Ramabai,Mosalikanti	<i>Oke prasna</i>	<i>Sharada</i>	1923Mar/Aug	
85	Ramasithamma.P	<i>Pravasini Sita</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,July	411
86	RangaDevi,V	<i>Puvvulu</i>	<i>AndhraMahila</i>	1944,june	14
		<i>VijayaDasami</i>	<i>AndhraMahila</i>	1944,Dec	6
		<i>Bhikshuki</i>	<i>AndhraMahila</i>	1944,Dec	8
		<i>Prabodhamu</i>	<i>AndhraMahila</i>	1945,Jan	
87	Ranganayakamma,Chodavarapu	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		382
88	Chodavarapu Ranga	<i>Kumma Lalipeta</i>		1930,Dec	634
89	Ratnamma, inaganti	<i>Ratapu Patalu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Dec	921
90	Roja	<i>Prema</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,March	27

91	Rukminamma, Kalpatapu	<i>Ratapu Patalu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Dec	910
		<i>Jolapatalu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932, jan	99
		<i>Hanumanthudu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Feb	961
		<i>Pathiye Daivamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, March	32
		<i>Goppa Nakshatramu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, June	262
		<i>Chatimpu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932, July	398
92	Rukminamma, Sthanapathi	<i>Gummadu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929, Aug	
		<i>Kavita</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929, Aug`	
		<i>Pathi Sandarsanamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930, Jan	89
		<i>Dasavatharamulu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930, Aug	439
		<i>Kunthi Sandesamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Oct	618
		<i>Prabodhamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935, Dec	789
		<i>Satasai</i>	<i>AndhraMahila</i>	1944, Jan	33
		<i>Savitri Gouri Devi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Jan	
		<i>Vanamali</i>	<i>Navakavitha (anthology)</i>		227
		<i>Geetha</i>	<i>Navakavitha (anthology)</i>		227
		<i>Prema</i>			
		<i>Chatimpu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		
		<i>Sumana: Sandili</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, May	194
93	Rukminibai, P	<i>Revathi</i>			
94	Sakuntala, Indurthi	<i>Polipata</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, March	35
95	Sarala Devi, S.V	<i>Patha Phakkipatalu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, June	291
96	Saraswathi Devi, Chebolu	<i>Athmopadesam</i>		1932, May	200
97	Saraswathi Devi, Inuganti	<i>Pathi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		
98	Saraswati Kumari, Marakani	<i>Tikkanaa!!!</i>	<i>AndhraMahila</i>	1945, April	8
99	Sathyavathamma Dhavaleswarapu	<i>Sakuntala Bhartru Viyogamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935, Oct	602

100	Sathyavathamma,Achanta	<i>Ee Jeevitham Lo nintha</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Oct	2
		<i>Chitra Prasna</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Mar	53
		<i>Jola Patalu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Mar	54-56
		<i>Sravana Drusyamulu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Aug	498
101	Sathyavathamma, Devulapalli	<i>Udayam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Aug	520
		<i>pranaya Radhamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Aug	425
		<i>Nava Vegame Nadupumayya</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Oct	632
		<i>Parihasinthuva Nanuganchi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Feb	
		<i>Pranaya Bhiksha</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Oct	743
		<i>Meerabai</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,March	111
		<i>Sathyagrahhulaku</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	206
		<i>Jola Patalu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	207
		<i>Prabodhamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Sept	570
102	Sathyavathi	<i>Bhogi Panduga</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,jan	
103	Sathyavathi ,Gidugu	<i>Orpu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Mar	37
		<i>Satyam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,April	142
		<i>Jolapata</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,July	374
		<i>Sathyam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,March	
104	Sharada Devi,R	<i>Neevulekunna, Naa Yunika</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	631
105	SharadaDevi,Sripada	<i>Mounamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,April	142
106	Sharadamba,Divakarlai	<i>Bhaskaramalika</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,Jan	833
107	Sharadamba,Veluri	<i>On Kandukuri</i>	<i>Anasuya</i>	1919,Aug	30
108	Sharadamba,Vemuri	<i>Stri Vidya Pancharatnamulu</i>	<i>Telugu janana</i>	1902-03	1
		<i>Madhava Shathakam</i>	<i>Telugu janana</i>	1902-03	
109	SitaBai,P	<i>Brundavanamuna</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Mar	

110	Sita Devi,Paidimarri	<i>Andhakaram</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	702
		<i>Kanniru</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,june	327
		<i>Murali Ganam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Mar	29
111	SithamahaLakshmamma,Bharatam	<i>Surya Prardhanam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,April	114
112	Sithamambe, Betha	<i>Kaika Vighyapthi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Dec	596
		<i>Korke Thiraga Ninnu Ne</i>			
113	Sthamma Koticalapuudi	<i>Ahalyabai Kavyam</i>			
			<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Feb	1079
114	Sithamamba,Chilakapati	<i>Mangala Gouri</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937,Sept	484
115	Sithamma, Pattisapu	<i>Kukkutarodanam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Sept	586
		<i>Smasana Vairagyam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,June	333
116	Sitharamamma.B	<i>Aathwanamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	
117	Sitharamamma,Samavedam	<i>Aseessu</i>			
		<i>Bhikshuvu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,OCt	661
118	Sitharamamma,Upalambiam	<i>uplambu</i>			
119	R.Subbamma	<i>Smasaanamu(graveyard)</i>	<i>Gruhakakshmi</i>	1941,Nov	516
120	Subbayamma,NilamRaju	<i>Nari Satyagrahulu</i>	<i>Gruhakakshmi</i>	1931,June	297
121	Subbulamma,Kota	<i>VayinamulaKetenchu</i> <i>VanithaLarugo</i>	<i>Gruhakakshmi</i>	1931,Aug.	437
122	Subhadramma,Madina	<i>Karya sidhikramamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Jan	998
		<i>Heenamiyunna brathukela</i> <i>maniniluku</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		

		<i>Bharya</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929,Oct	574
123	Subhadrayamba,Siram	<i>SwayamPrabha</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	218
		<i>Sabari</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,Dec.	
124	Suramma,chebrolu	<i>Amrutavartha</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,March	27
125	Suramma,Kisapragada	<i>Suramma,Kisapragada</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929,Sept.	
126	SuryaKantamma,Mandapaka	<i>Muralivala</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,March	39
		<i>Vasantodayam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,April	135
127	Suseela,Charla	<i>Sathyamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct.	691
		<i>Balika</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		892
128	Syamalamba,A.	<i>Prema</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930,May	184
129	Tayaramma,Vedavalli	<i>Swagatam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	233
		<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Dec	
		<i>SharannavaRatramulu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,Oct	652
130	Tulasamma,Juluri	<i>Ruthumala</i>	<i>Bharati</i>	1926,Feb	
		<i>Anubhavintuvu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929,Mar.	19
		<i>Sri YasodaKumara</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929,June	284
		<i>Kirthi Seshulu(late)Mothilal Nehru</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,	69
131	Tulasi Devi,Velagapudi	<i>Radha</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932,Oct.	784
132	Venkataratnam,Vadlamoodi	<i>Tyagamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931,May	179
133	Varalakshmamma,Kanuparthi	<i>Mangala haratulu</i>	<i>Vasaprabhavathi'sbook</i>	2003,March	54,55
		<i>Ootupuranamu</i>	<i>Vasaprabhavathi'sbook</i>	2003,March	56
		<i>Pathanam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929,Dec.	775
		<i>Telugu Ugadi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1935,May	176

		<i>Ninnubolina Prajyadyudunne Krushna?</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1938, Feb	3
		<i>Prema Sudha</i>	<i>Bharati</i>		
134	Vasanth Devi, Veluvolu	<i>Prachina Bharata Stri</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929, June	262
		<i>Udbodha</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930, June	230
		<i>Jhansi Lakshmi Bai</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930, June	607
		<i>Sankranti</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Jan	
		<i>Mahatma Gandhi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929	363
135	Vasanth Kusumavathi, Veluvolu	<i>Strividya</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929, Mar.	73
136	Vedavalli Thayaramma, M.	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Jan.	897
		<i>Sarannavaratrulu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Oct.	652
137	Venkamamba, ThariKonda	<i>Bhagavatham (Pradhama Scandhamu)</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Jan.	903
		<i>Bhagavatham (Pradhama Scandhamu)</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Feb	999
		<i>Bhagavatham (Pradhama Scandhamu)</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, March	41-48
138	Venkata Lakshmi Narasamamba, Veluvali	<i>Gandhi Sthuthi</i>	<i>Hindusundari</i>	1944, Nov	5
139	Venkata Ramanamma, G.	<i>Bhagna Hrudi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932, Feb.	
140	Venkata Rangamma, Koraprolu	<i>Sharada Vilasamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Oct.	638
141	Venkata Ratnamma, Jamiseti	<i>Janma Sardhakamugade-Jagathiyandu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		40
142	Venkata ratnamma Nadivinti	<i>Sharada chattam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1929	723

143	Venkata Ratnamma, Vinjamuuri	<i>Namatham</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932, Jan.	988
		<i>Prema Rajyamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		
		<i>Nivedanam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1937, Sept.	505
		<i>Vidyabhushanam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Feb.	1017
		<i>Gandhi Sthuthi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		
		<i>Chilka</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1932, May	205
		<i>Thanmayatvamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930, July	344
		<i>Mataladanelanae</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930, Oct	624
		<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930, May	177
		<i>Sandhya Ragamu</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Jan	914
		<i>Sahaja Badhanubhavam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Oct	670
		<i>Premikulapatu</i>	<i>Anasuya</i>		
		<i>Pandlammu Padathi</i>	<i>Anasuya</i>		
		<i>GoSmruthi</i>	<i>Anasuya</i>	1919 Nov/Dec	48-49
144	Venkata Sithamma, Aluri	<i>Meerabai</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1930, Dec	634
145	Visalaakshi, Vattikonda	<i>Koyila</i>	<i>Abhyudayaageethalu(anthology)</i>	1943, Aug.	
		<i>Swaagatham</i>			
		<i>Aavedana</i>			
146	Viswasundaramma, Tallapragada	<i>Gruhalaxmi, Tanmayatvam</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		177,844
		<i>Maataladganelane</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>		624
		<i>Sandhyaragamu, Chilka</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Oct	205
		<i>Nirasa</i>	<i>Navakavitha(anthology)</i>		113
		<i>Kupithavidhi, Aa konda, Sneharuchi</i>	<i>Vaithaalikulu(anthology)</i>		124,210,59
		<i>Vithanthuvilaapam, Jailugadiyaram,</i>	<i>Kadambamu</i>		
		<i>Streelacherasalalo, Lathi Rajyamu</i>			
147	Anonymous	<i>Amaravanitha</i>	<i>Gruhalakshmi</i>	1931, Oct	720

