
CHAPTER I :

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a very broad concept. Hence, various scholars, writers and critics define it from their own points of view. For some, it is a mirror of the society; for some, it is the reflection of the writer's mind; and a few think, it is the study of human life. Literature may be classified from the point of view of geographical expansion. In this way, Regional literature may contain the monolingual or multilingual literature, National literature, and world literature. The basic concern of all these classes of literature is human being, and the basic function of it is 'to instruct and to amuse' the readers.

There are different methods and approaches by which one can study literature; for example psychological, historical, sociological, biographical, and recently flourished and getting growing popularity comparative method. It is this comparative approach of the study of literature which has evolved a new branch called 'comparative literature'. The present dissertation attempts to study the two novels of different languages comparatively. Therefore, it would be very useful to get the answers to the questions like what is comparative literature? What is its nature and scope? Which literary theory does it follow? After getting the satisfactory answers to these questions, the study of comparative

literature would be easy.

R.A. Sayce, a renowned scholar, makes a distinction between 'Comparative' and 'General' Literature. He defines 'General Literature' as 'The study of literature without regard to linguistic frontiers', and 'Comparative Literature' as 'the study of national literature in relation to each other'.¹ Though these two kinds of study, seem to be different and separate, the line of distinction between them is very much flexible. While studying one of these kinds, a scholar must take the help of the other one; for example, when we trace the development of the Ode in Europe since Pindar, we contribute to the 'General Literature'; but when we take a survey of this development we compare Odes of Pindar with Odes of Thomas Gray, we contribute to the 'Comparative Literature'.

The beginning of comparative literature goes back no further than the early nineteenth century. The very term comparative came into existence from the French 'Anatomic Comparee' of Cuvier. The beginning of this term can be found even in 'a series of courses' called 'course de litterature compree' in French by Noel and Laplace.

S.S.Prawer, a scholar of the comparative literature defines it as :

An examination of literary texts
(including works of literary theory
and criticism) in more than one

language, through an investigation of contrast, analogy, provenance or influence; or a study of literary relations and communications between two or more groups that speak different languages.²

The definition of comparative literature points out its nature and scope. Firstly, it can be used in the study of literature as well as in literary criticism. Secondly, the texts under comparative study must be in more than one language. Thirdly, investigation between / among them should be of contrast, analogy, provenance or influence. And lastly, it studies literary relations and communications between two or more language speakers.

S.S.Prawer quotes H.H.H. Remak's definition of comparative literature as :

"... the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and the other areas of knowledge and belief, such as arts, philosophy, history the social sciences; the science, religion etc, on the other hand".³

This definition seems to be broader than that of S.S.Prawer. He points out that comparative literature is a study of not only two literatures of different countries, but between literature and other areas of

knowledge like philosophy, history, etc.

On the contrary, Van Tieghem's definition of comparative literature :

"The object of comparative literature is essentially the study of the diverse literatures in their relations with one another".⁴

seems to be rather narrow and sticking only to literature.

There is wide scope for the study of comparative literature. Firstly, it studies the literature of different nations, regions, provinces, races, religions etc. Secondly, it studies 'national illusions' - the ideas which nations have of each other. Thirdly, the method of comparison can be used in science, religion, history, social sciences, etc.

The study of comparative literature doesn't follow a particular method. Comparison itself becomes a method. It is useful 'in all literary study and in all sciences, social and natural'. It requires something more than the methods of studying 'single literature'. Here 'single literature' means the literature of the same kind and of the same language. Hence, the methodology for the study of comparative literature is more subjective, in the sense that it depends upon the scholar how he should study comparative literature, than study of single literature. While explaining the methodology of

comparative literature Amiya Dev, the renowned Indian comparatist says :

It may be that comparative literature does not have a literary theory that is distinct from that of single literatures. But there is absolutely no doubt that comparative literature has a method of its own, a method that is distinct from that of single literatures.⁵

A comparatist therefore, at first, has to find out the method of his own and then he should continue his study.

The history of Indian Comparative Literature is not much old. In this connection, Nirmala Jain points out 'That India can not boast of a history of more than three decades'. But we have to admit that India being a multilingual country, must have already in existence the method of comparing different literatures in different Indian languages. Recently, the study of comparative literature is flourishing in India.

Amiya Dev defines comparative literature as :

....It (Comparative Literature) is a study of literature that involves more than one literature. The exact nature of this involvement depends on the literatures we are involved with.⁶

Dev stresses here the quantity and nature of literatures

involved in the study. Nabneeta Dev Sen in the preface of her Counterpoints: Essays in Comparative Literature defines comparative literature in the following way :

Comparative literature is a point of view, an approach, that pushes the boundaries of literary criticism not only beyond the study of a single literature, but also beyond the conventional fence of aesthetic appreciation and historical criticism by making the study of literature inter-disciplinary.⁷

In his preface to Taulanik Sahityabhyas: Tatve Ani Disha

a wellknown critic of comparative literature Dr.Chandrashekhar Jahagirdar, explains the basic principles of comparative literature..He says :

....सांस्कृतिक सापेक्षतावादाला अनुसरुन तौलनीक साहित्याभ्यास हा संस्कृतिविशिष्ट प्रमाणकांवर आधारलेला असला पाहिजे तौलनीक साहित्य हे मानव जातीच्या सार्वत्रिक मूल्यांना आधारभूत मानून, देश, काल, वंश या पलीकडे असणा-या वैश्वकतेचा शोध घेते..⁸

In the light of these definitions given by renowned Indian comparatists it is quite clear that they have stressed not only the literary and aesthetic points of view, but also historical, cultural and critical points of view.

In the Indian context, the study of comparative literature is rather different and difficult from that of other nations in the world; for, India is a country of diversity. In India, there is a variety of languages, castes, religions, cultures. Moreover, the Indian society has different political, economical, cultural and social backgrounds. The literature in India is multilingual. A scholar well-acquainted with this situation will be able to study the Indian literature comparatively.. While asserting the identity of Indian comparative literature, in the 'Introduction' of his book Aspects of Comparative Literature Chandra Mohan says :

....Comparative Indian literature is hardly a concept needing debate,
It is simply there, and actually poised to take off into a new era of vigorous growth.⁹

While commenting upon his own visiting lectures in India H.H.H. Remak says :

It has convinced me that nowhere in the world is the present evolution of comparative literature as dynamic and constructive as in India...¹⁰

Novel is the closest genre of the human life. It studies human life alongwith its social, political, cultural, racial, religious and moral problems, around which novel is woven in a theme. The scientific study of such themes is called as 'thematics' or 'thematology'.

S.S.Prawer gives us three important benefits of the comparative study of themes.

- 1) Such a comparative study of themes 'enables us to see what type of writer chooses what type of material, and how the material is dealt with at various times'.
- 2) It enables us 'to examine and contrast the spirit of different societies and epochs as well as those of individual talents' ;
- 3) It 'must not be divorced from study of literary styles.' Therefore, a comparatist while studying themes comparatively should keep in mind these three important points.

Satendra R. Singh aptly writes about the comparative study of Indian novel, as follows :

... A comparative study of the novel in India should be thematological, for only such a study can determine the Indian of the Indian novel and give the Indianist empirical evidence to authenticate the concept of Indian novel.¹¹

Singh is of the opinion that while studying Indian novels comparatively there is a danger of losing their Indianness. But such a study is thematological, it would help to assert their Indianness of the Indian novel. He suggests in his article 'Towards a concept of Indian Novel' that upto this time the comparative study is

bilingual only. He expects it should be increased as multilingual thematic study. Such thematic study 'should focus on affinities and **resemblances** on analogies without contact, on the recurrent symbols, myths.... character-types, concepts and images'.

In his article entitled 'Indian Literature : Matter And Method' K. Chellappan gives a list of some dominant themes in Indian novel . They are as follows :

1) The rise of Nationalism.

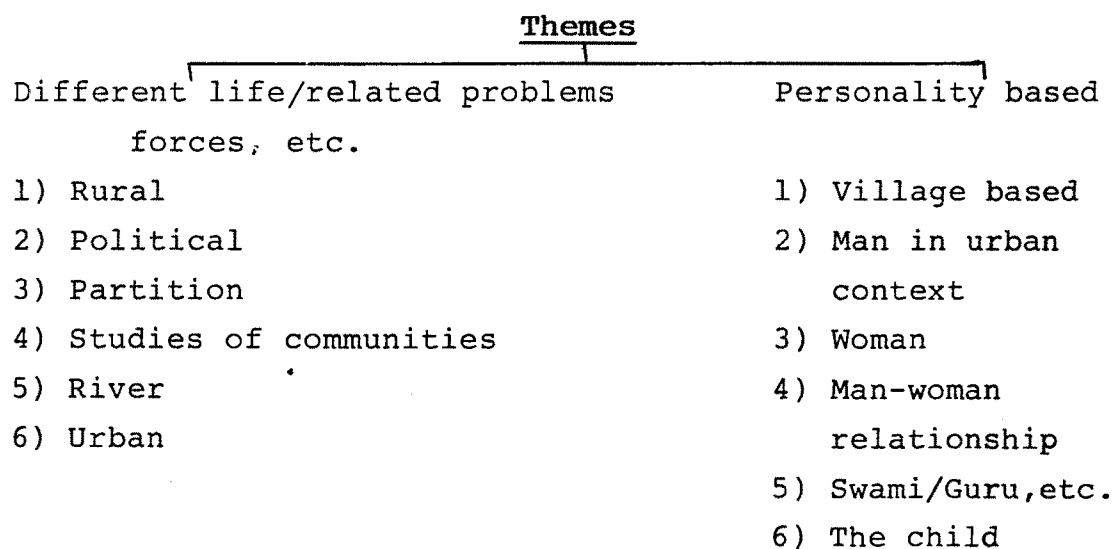
2) The Quest Motif.

3) Love of God.

4) Mythological and legendary themes. In the present novel in India these themes are being used on a large scale.

Satendra R. Singh who is already reffered to, has classified the themes of Indian novel in the following manner :

The following tree diagram shows this classification



From the above classification of themes the comparatist would be helped much. There is a great need as well as scope today, to study the Indian literature comparatively. It would develop and open a new era of thematics in Indian literature.

From the historical point of view Indo-Anglian novel came to the literary scene during the last three-four decades of the 19th century. The novelists of this period were mostly from the Bengal and Madras presidencies. Most of these novels were social and the novelists had modelled themselves on the 18th and 19th century British fiction. A few historical novels were also published.

The novel of the Pre-Independence period was greatly influenced by political, social, changes caused by the Gandhian movement. It is this period during which the three great novelists came on the horizon of Indo-Anglian novel: Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. Their art of fiction writing was in the development stage during this period. Besides this trio, D.G. Mukharji, C.S. Rau and a few others were some other important novelists of the Pre-Independence period.

The Post Independence period produced a bulk of novels and novelists. The trio Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao produced their great novels during this period. They became more social. Realism was continued still further strongly through the works of Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgaonkar, Khushwant Singh etc. During the late sixties Chaman Nahal and Arun Joshi

were the prominent novelists. The themes of their novels were east-west encounter and alienation.

Meena Shirwadkar, an Indian scholar while tracing the development of Indo-Anglian novel and woman's changing image, and rôle in it, writes aptly :

..... The early Indo-Anglian novels had shown woman in the family, but novels after 1940 begin to reflect woman participating in the freedom struggle, imbibing knowledge, experiencing a sense of emancipation....¹²

About more recent novels, she further writes :

.... More recent Indo-Anglian novels tell us more about the motivations and reactions of women who work...¹³

This remark points out clearly that women had started working in the various sections of industrial and urbanized life. Therefore, working women's problems became one of the dominant themes of the novels of that period. After the sixties, surprisingly there was a significant emergence of women novelists on the Indian literary scene. Among them Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai were in a very much dominating position. The themes of their novels were east-west encounter, urbanization, current politics, and political, social and psychological realities.

During the last quarter of 20th century women writers seem to be championing women's liberalization from the world of men. Various factors like different social reforms, education, economical condition and the impact of western life-styles have made women aware of their own rights, freedom and independence. Slowly women have been strengthening their position. They are emerging as equals to men. The traditional role of a woman was only of a kitchenroom creature not entering into a drawing hall and fully dependent on men. Her condition was not better than a slave. Her opinion about some important happenings at home was also not supposed necessary. She used to obey the orders of her father, brother, husband and finally son. The Indian society has been continuing as a male dominated society. Man is supposed to be the true leader and head of the family. It is he who decides all the matters may be about giving vote, economical and social factors. On the one hand, she is treated as a slave or a maid-servant, on the other, but rather hypocritically, she is being worshipped as goddess and sometimes treated as a symbol of purity and chastity. It points out the social double standard and hypocrisy. But she is rarely given any freedom. While explaining the condition of woman in society Sarabjit K. Sandhu quotes Shantha Krishnaswamy thus :

"She is a creature who as a child is sold off to strangers for a bridal price, or when she grows up serves

as a supplier of dowry for her husband's family, or who as a widow, in a final act of obliteration immolates herself on her dead husband's funeral pyre to be acclaimed as a 'Sati-Savitri' as an immortal"¹⁴

This is a speaking picture of woman in the society. She has been getting always secondary importance.

The recent tremendous development in the feminist criticism and critical theories on the international literary scene have thrown much light upon the place of woman in society. It was in fact, Virginia Woolf who started first, writing about the condition and problems of woman through her writings. It created a lot of awareness about their freedom among women. Many feminist critical theories have been developing. Among them the prominent-ones are Simon de Beauvoir's The Second sex¹⁵, Kate Millett's Sexual Politics¹⁶, Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own¹⁷ etc. But all these books are rather too much feminist concentrating on physical sufference of woman. Their main concern is the struggle against all the forms of patriarchal and sexual oppression. While explaining the nature of feminism Sushila Singh in her article 'Recent Trends in Feminist Thought : A Tour de Horizon says :

"Feminism is committed to the struggle for equality for women,

an effort to make women 'like' men.
 But the struggle for equal rights
 historically and politically
 emphasizes the 'value' of women as
 'they' are"¹⁸

But most of the western feminist critics mentioned above, express rather extremist views concentrating on political, physical and sexual freedom. Their main concern has been the attack on the masculine world. These books have influenced the women novelists too.

The recent women novelists in India although influenced by the western feminist criticism, do not fully accept them as they are. The reason is that the sociological, political, religious, cultural and historical situations in India are much more different from those of the western countries. Hence, the Indian women novelists do not seem to accept the extremist views of the western feminist criticism in their novels. Though they begin their novels with these extremist views, at the end, they tend towards the adjustment with the Indian situations.

The present dissertation deals with two Indian women novelists : Shashi Deshpande who writes in English and Shanta Gokhale who writes both in Marathi & ⁱⁿEnglish and both these novelists write about middle class educated women and their problems in their novels.

This dissertation proposes to study thematically Shanta Gokhale's Marathi novel Rita Velinkar¹⁹ and Shashi

Deshpande's English novel That Long Silence²⁰ in comparative terms.

Shanta Gokhale is a very recent short-storywriter, dramatist and novelist in Marathi.

There are many short-stories in English and in Marathi to her credit, published in English and Marathi magazines.

Besides, she is a writer of an unpublished play Avinash

Moreover, she is a good translator. She has translated many Marathi short-stories' into English - for Women Writing in India a book edited by Dr.Susi Tharu, Hyderabad.

The present novel Rita Vekinkar is published in December 1990. This novel has been awarded 'V.S.Khandekar' award of the Government of Maharashtra in 1993.

Shashi Deshpande is a renowned novelist and short-story writer who writes in English. Her important novels dealing with the women in India are as follows :

- 1) The Dark Holds No Terrors
- 2) Roots And Shadows
- 3) That Long Silence

Roots and Shadows has won the 'Thirumati Rangamal Prize' for her the best Indian novel of the year 1982-83.

That Long Silence has won 'Sahitya Akademi Award' in 1991-92.

The Dark Holds No Terrors has been translated into

German and Russian languages.

The Legacy , , It was Dark , The Miracle , and It was the Nightingale are the short story collections to her credit.

The present study of That Long Silence of Shashi Deshpande, and Rita Velinkar of Shanta Gokhale, emphasizes the thematic aspect comparatively in the light of the theoritical framework delineated earlier.

The design of the study of these novels is as follows :

Chapter I is of an introductory one which presents the theoritical framework regarding comparative literature, Indian novel, themes etc.

Chapter II presents the focus on the relationship between Woman and Society.

Chapter III presents an analysis of the relationship between Man and Woman.

Chapter IV explains and analyzes the theme of Quest for Identity.

Chapter V will be of concluding nature where the arguments made in the course of dissertation will be touched upon afresh, and the contribution made by these two novelists to the body of comparative literature will be accounted for.

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