

Feminist Issues in Indian Writing in English: A Comparative Analysis

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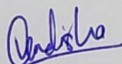
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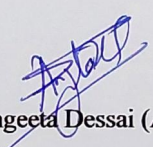
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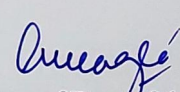
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This is to certify that the dissertation report “**Feminist Issues in Indian Writing in English: A Comparative Analysis**” is a bona fide work carried out by Ms. Vandisha Santosh Dabholkar under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Masters in English** at the Shenoj Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University.


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PREFACE

I present my dissertation titled “**Feminist Issues in Indian Writing in English: A Comparative Analysis**” with immense joy and pleasure. This research is the result of a deep-seated love for Indian Writing in English and the topic of Feminism. I embarked on my research journey with the intention of adding to the corpus of knowledge on this topic. Throughout the course of the research, I have been driven by a multitude of motives. I have selected three Indian Women Writers who address feminist issues in their novels, and I intend to compare their ideas on this topic. Secondly, there was a huge gap created by not examining Satthianandhan, Deshpande and Kane together which I have tried my best to fill by putting in all my knowledge and hard work.

In addition to personal motives, the impetus for this research also stems from the issues faced by women in Indian society today. This evolving idea of feminism and feminist issues has presented both challenges and opportunities, inspiring me to explore new avenues and perspectives through Indian Writing in English.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The success and outcome of my dissertation required a lot of assistance and guidance. I am extremely fortunate to have them all for the completion of the research. What I have done was only due to guidance and constant support and I would not forget to thank them.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my guide, Dr. Sangeeta Dessai ma'am for their unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement throughout this journey of dissertation. Their expertise, patience, timely hints, and suggestions have helped to weave the ideas of the dissertation together to make it a unified critical expertise. I am grateful for the mentor-ship they have provided whenever I needed it.

I am indebted to the University Library for providing me with the books and other resources essential for the research. I would also like to thank Krishnadas Shama State Central Libarary, Panjim as their assistance has been crucial in facilitating data collection and analysis by providing me books and other resources.

I also would like to thank our Dean of Shenoi Goembab School of Languages and Literature for their steadfast support and encouragement. I will not forget to thank the faculty and staff members of English Discipline for their encouragement support and guidance till the execution of the dissertation.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their unstinting support and patience in bearing with my temperamental highs and lows during the research period and for always supporting me. This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and contributions of all those mentioned above, and for that, I am truly grateful.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation “**Feminist Issues in Indian Writing in English: A Comparative Analysis**” explores how Indian women writers of English literature have portrayed feminism and feminist issues in a complex as well as simple manner. It looks at how they have used different literary devices to show the challenges, victories, and complexity of women’s lives in Indian culture. This study explores how feminist issues or thoughts have evolved and how it intersects with concerns of caste, class, religion, and regional identities through an analysis of select Indian feminist writers.

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the complex aspects of feminism and issues relating to that in Indian literature and its significance in questioning patriarchal conventions, elevating the voices of the marginalised women, and outlining strategies for achieving social justice and gender equality. In order to clarify the changing depictions of women in Indian literature and their contributions to feminist discourse, this study looks at how female protagonists are portrayed as well as their difficulties, goals and agency.

By investigating this topic the dissertation hopes to advance knowledge of the complex relationships that exist between Indian literature and feminism in India.

CHAPTER 1: EMBARKING ON EXPLORATION: INITIATING THE DISSERTATION QUEST

1.1. Introduction

Feminism grew as a movement to establish the rights of women and free them from oppression and subjugation. Women have been subjugated and marginalized for a long time hence feminist movement was established to free women from sexism and oppression to acquire full gender equality in law, work and domestic places. The idea of Feminism spread across India like wildfire and most of the women came out to fight for their privileges in society, to define, establish and defend equal political, economic and social rights and opportunities for themselves in India. Feminism is thus the pursuit of women's rights within the society.

The idea of feminism has different aspects; hence the researcher intends to do a comparative study of Indian women authors, compare their ideas of feminism and an in-depth study of their texts. A comparative study of the texts will help to understand the dynamic nature of feminism and its concerns. It will also help to build a relationship between the two or more authors who are being compared to provide a piece of more detailed information about the same. Also, the interrelation between the various feminist perspectives offered by the authors will shed light on various feminist issues that are relevant in the Indian context.

In order to achieve this, many feminist workers work towards the belief that women should have the same rights as men. In the past, women were not granted such rights because they were considered to be weak, fragile and dependent on men for

survival. The belief might have changed but women are still fighting for their equal rights in society.

The topic relating to feminist issues was selected in the Indian context and Indian Writing in English to find out how feminist writers address these issues in their texts.

1.2. Objectives

- To provide a detailed feminine contextual description of the authors.
- To understand the nature of gender inequality and examine women's social roles, experiences, and interests.
- To understand the complexities of the gender dynamics, especially in the context of marriage, the trauma of disturbed adolescence through their novels.
- To differentiate between the women portrayed by the authors in their respective novels and understand/ find if there is a distinctive gendered perspective.

1.3. Literature Review

There is limited source material available on feminist issues in Indian Writing in English.

However, a few articles explore the area of feminism in Indian literature. '*Seeing Like A Feminist*' is an essential reading by Nivedita Menon wherein she says that when women are in charge of both the public and private realms, institutionalized patriarchies still maintain control. As Menon seeks to undermine organizations, ideologies, hierarchies, and laws using only words, her work is riveting. The depth and inclusivity of feminism

in this book, and the humanistic writing style will provide a broad understanding of what it means to be a feminist.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a feminist critic, translated "*Breast Stories*" from its Bengali original into English in 1997. Draupadi, Behind the Bodice, and Breast Giver are the three stories that make up the collection "*Breast Stories*." The breast, which is often used to represent purity and motherhood, is used to represent how women from underprivileged communities are exploited. Through the portrayal of characters who experience sexual harassment and discrimination as a result of a male-dominated culture, the novel explores body politics, women's labour, and exploitation.

The concept of agency, or a person's capacity for independent decision, is at the heart of Gayatri Spivak's writing. It is written in the book "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" A woman, according to Spivak, is a voiceless part of society. The main premise is that a woman can speak literally, metaphorically her words will never be valued either in conversation or in other forms of expression.

Nine short tales were collected in *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) by Jhumpa Lahiri, who was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 2000 and addresses some feminine concerns. In Lahiri's work, there is a struggle to come to terms with one's own identity, but her female protagonists manage their new, fragile identities in their unique ways and voices. With the aid of her characters, she skilfully blurs the distinction between fiction and reality while writing about human experiences.

A few articles were discovered and one of the articles is '*Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity: A Study of Krupabai Satthianandhan's Kamala: The Story of a Hindu Life*' by Roshni Patel. It speaks how Krupabai, using Bakhtin's notion of dialogism

as a framework, explores the narrator's use of dialogue to depict the internal struggle or conflict between tradition and modernity that exists within Kamala's mind.

An article by Karin Edgardh's *'Texts and Paratexts in a Colonial Context. Krupabai Datthianandhan's English Novels 'Saguna' and 'Kamala''* aim at a paratextual analysis of the works according to the theories of Gerard Genette that is to investigate how the paratexts introduce the readers to the narratives and elucidate the colonial discourse of the time.

In another relevant research article, *'Women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande: A Study'* by Sathupati Prasanna Sree, the researcher explained the hardships that women have faced in the novels and their struggle to be independent. The Researcher says that the women in Shashi Deshpande's novels stand at the crossroads of traditions.

'Indian Woman at the Cross Roads: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's Heroines' is an article by Mala Renganathan in which the researcher examines the themes used in Deshpande's novels, women's sufferings etc. The researchers also discuss how Deshpande has portrayed modern Indian women in most of her novels and their struggle to adjust to family relationships, both before and after marriage.

One more article by Sweta Anand titled *'The Crisis of Female Identity in the Novels of Jane Austen and Shashi Deshpande: A Comparative Study'* presents a critical study of the works of Austen and Deshpande. In the article, the researcher tried to compare these two authors since the novelists focus on a similar set of problems related to marriage, family and career. The researcher also mentions that the novelists epitomize the whole female community of the world.

To add to this an article by N Saraswathi titled *'A Comparative Study of Shashi*

Deshpande's That Long Silence and Henrik Ibsen's A Doll House' discusses the novels mainly focusing on the themes such as suffering and problems related to home and society. Through this parallel study, an attempt is made by the researcher to introduce the two heroines who differ in making decisions.

An article by Prerona Bora '*A Feminist Study of Kavita Kane's Lanka's Princess.*' In this research article, written from a feminist point of view, an effort has been made to examine Surpanakha's life to determine whether or not she was a victim of the patriarchal system or a vampire.

Another article '*A Study of Voiceless Women Characters in the Novels of Kavita Kane*' by Tarun Preet Kaur focuses on analyzing how these reworkings of ancient texts recount the same story from a feminist point of view and how the author uses myth to retell the same story from a feminist perspective.

'The Study of Women Characters from Kavita Kane's Selected Novels' by Hiranman Pandurang Kamble examines how Kavita Kane's portrayal of female characters is in Indian epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata. The researcher discloses to us that Kanes's novels offer a reinterpretation of myths from the viewpoint of underrepresented Indian mythological women characters.

All these articles have explored issues of feminism and some of the feminist issues faced by women in the society.

1.4. Hypothesis/ Research Problem

To find whether there is a difference in the perspective of three Female Indian Writers with regards to their examination of Feminist Issues.

- Whether there is a difference in the examination of the feminist issues?
- Whether there are feminist issues in the novels of select authors?
- Whether there are similarities /differences in Sathianandan's *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Child-wife*, Deshpande's *The Dark Holds no Terrors* and Kane's *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*.

1.5. Research Methodology

1. Feminist Theory: Feminist Ideas investigate how societal gender differences are created and maintained. According to critical feminism ideas, gender relations frequently oppress both men and women and uphold a system built on patriarchal principles. Since feminist theory focuses on analyzing gender inequality one can see in the select writer's works, their thoughts on gender discrimination, objectification, oppression, patriarchy etc. The critical theory which will be used in the research paper will be feminism and the feminist theory and the feminist issues in the texts of these feminist writers.

2. The select works are:

A. Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life - Krupabai Sathianandhan

B. Dark Holds no Terrors - Shashi Deshpande

C. Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen - Kavita Kane

1.6. Necessity in the field of language and literature

There is a necessity for this study on feminist issues in Indian Writing in English, as a broad study in the field of literature is required, as it will enable an understanding of how gender dynamics are portrayed in Indian Literature in English. It will help draw attention to how women have been marginalized and have been denied a voice of their own within their domestic spaces.

Research on feminist issues in the works of Sathianandhan, Deshpande and Kane together have not been done by any researcher, hence a work that explores the feminist issues in the context of Indian Writing in English is essential.

1.7. Relevance to the society

1. A study of feminist issues will throw light on the nature of men-women relations, gender dynamics and how this works in the Indian context.

2. The researcher is trying to cover the feminist issues that are still faced by women in India regularly. By examining feminist issues there could be some awareness created on these issues of concern to the society.

3. This study can be relevant to society as some women of the same society must have gone through such issues in their households and they will be able to relate to it.

1.8. Scope of the Research

1. The proposed research will cover relevant feminist issues of concern to society and hope to create a debate/discussion of the issue.
2. The researcher intends to do a comparative study of the authors and compare their ideas and thoughts on feminist issues.

1.9. Chapter Scheme

Chapter I

This chapter introduces the research topic and briefly describes the procedure that has to be followed. The chapter lays out the objectives, research, methodology, literature review.

Scope of the research and so on under this chapter.

Chapter II

Chapter II explores the topic of feminism in general and its criticism. It also looks at Feminism in India and the issues faced by women in India.

Chapter III

This chapter introduces the authors in detail and also the select novels. The chapter also focuses on in short summary of the texts, themes, symbolisms and women characters. It tries to present the feminist issues which are faced by women in the novels.

Chapter IV

This Chapter include comparative analysis of the authors and their select texts. It also focuses on the topic Feminism and how it is seen in the select author's work. It also sees the problems faced by women and how they have overcome these problems.

Chapter V

This chapter states the overall conclusion of the dissertation. It also includes the findings, limitations, recommendations etc.

CHAPTER 2: FEMINISM REDEFINED: UNRAVELING LAYERS OF EMPOWERMENT

2.1. Feminism: An Introduction

"Feminism is the radical notion that women are people."

-MARIE CHER

'A belief and desire for equality between the sexes.'

The feminist movement was and still is one of the greatest movements which is going on throughout the world. The word 'Feminism' was first coined by the French Philosopher Charles Fourier in 1837. The first wave of feminism began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 with an idea to get equality for women. From this incident, this movement was spread all around the world, which also contributed to creating different waves of feminism. The first wave of feminism began in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries and was mainly concerned with tackling the issues of women's suffrage and opening up opportunities for women as earlier women were bound to do only specific things and slowly there were different waves of feminism in the world.

The basic objective of first-wave feminism was to get society to acknowledge that women are people, not objects. First-wave feminism's leaders were abolitionists, but their main concern was the rights of white women. For years to come, feminism would be plagued by this exclusion.

Feminism's early phases were linked to the abolitionist and temperance movements. It gave rise to well-known campaigners like the African-American Sojourner Truth (d. 1883), who cried out, *"Ain't I a woman?"* Victorian America witnessed a rise in "un-ladylike" behaviour by women, including public speaking, protesting, and jail time, which posed a threat to the "cult of domesticity." The

disparities between men and women as they were perceived at the time were examined in light of conversations regarding voting rights and women's involvement in politics. Some argued that since women were morally superior to males, having more of them in the civic arena would enhance political discourse and public behaviour.

Second-wave feminism emerged in the early 1960s and lasted for about two decades and the discussion was widened by second-wave feminism to cover a wider range of topics, such as sexuality, family, domesticity, the workplace, reproductive rights and official legal inequalities.

This wave occurred against the backdrop of the civil rights and anti-war movements, as well as the rising self-awareness of numerous minority groups worldwide. The second wave's voice was growing more extreme, and the New Left was becoming more prominent.

During this period, the movement concentrated most of its emphasis on passing the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, which guaranteed social equality for all people, regardless of gender. Sexuality and reproductive rights were also major topics.

The second wave of feminism was easily neglected and seen as less urgent than other social movements, such as Black Power or campaigns to halt the Vietnam War because it found a voice among so many others. In response, feminists established groups dedicated to "consciousness raising" and women-only organizations. Feminists fought for their due in publications such as "*The BITCH Manifesto*" and "*Sisterhood is Powerful*." The second wave was more theoretical, drawing on a combination of psycho-analytical theory and neoMarxism. It linked the oppression of women to wider criticisms of capitalism, patriarchy, normative heterosexuality, and the roles that

women play as mothers and wives. There was a distinction made between sex and gender; the former is biological, while the latter is a social construct that changes over time and across cultures.

When it came to feminism, the first wave was mostly driven by middle-class, Western, transgender, white women. The second wave, however, attracted women of colour from developing countries who were looking for support and sisterhood and asserted that "women's struggle is class struggle." To show how racism, class, and gender oppression are all interconnected, feminists used terms like "the personal is political" and "identity politics" and described women as a social class. They started a focused campaign to eradicate sexism from every aspect of society, from cartoons for kids to the highest echelons of the government.

Third-wave feminism began in the early 1990s and New feminist currents and ideologies, including intersectionality, sex positivity, vegetarian eco-feminism, trans-feminism, and postmodern feminism, emerged during the third wave. With its diversity of ideas, third-wave feminism represents a less cohesive movement than the first and second waves. The return of young feminists to the lipstick, high heels, and cleavage boldly displayed by low-cut necklines that the first two stages of the movement associated with male tyranny was one facet of third-wave feminism that baffled the mothers of the previous feminist movement. When Pinkfloor declared that a push-up bra and a brain could coexist, she articulated this new viewpoint.

Fourth-wave feminism emerged sometime in 2012 and is distinguished by its emphasis on intersectionality, digital technologies, and women's empowerment. The fourth wave focuses on gendered norms and women's marginalization in society in an effort to achieve greater gender equality.

Sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, objectification of women, and sexism in the workplace are the main concerns of fourth-wave feminism. A salient characteristic of the fourth wave is internet activism. Fourth-wave feminism advocates for the greater participation and power of marginalized groups in society, such as people of colour, transgender persons, and homosexuals. In addition, it opposes gender norms that are still seen as restrictive for men and women and supports equal pay for both sexes. The movement also opposes gender-based violence, objectification, sexual assault, and harassment.

The movement has been characterized by some as a response to post-feminism, which maintains that equality between men and women has already been attained. Additionally, it revived some of the ideas of second-wave feminists. Martha Rampton wrote that the movement supports "gains in female representation in politics and business" and criticizes "sexual abuse, rape, and violence against women, unequal pay, slut-shaming, and the pressure on women to conform to a single and unrealistic body type."

Feminists want the world to understand or at the very least acknowledge the disparities in how men and women are treated. Despite significant progress towards equality, women and men are still not playing on an even playing field. ("Feminism." Encyclopaedia Britannica, Encyclopaedia, inc.,28 Feb.2024, www.britannica.com/topic/feminism.)

2.2. Feminism and Feminist Criticism

The feminist literary criticism of the existing world is the direct outcome of the women's movement of the 1960s. It was literary from the onset, in the sense that it

realized the significance of the portrayals of women promulgated by literature. The representation of women in literature was felt to be one of the most crucial forms of socialization since it handed over the role models indicated to women and men. In feminist criticism in the 1970s, significant effort went into revealing what might be called the mechanisms of patriarchy, which also means that the cultural 'mindset' in men and women perpetuates sexual inequality. Then in the 1980s, in the other critical approaches to feminism, its mood changed and feminist criticism became more eclectic meaning that it started to draw upon the findings and approaches of other kinds of criticism such as Marxism, Structuralism, linguistics etc. Secondly, it switched its focus from attacking male interpretations of the world to digging into the nature of the female world and outlook reconstructing the suppressed records of female experiences. At last, the attention was switched to the necessity to put together a new canon of women's writing by rewriting the history of the novel and poetry in such a way that overlooked women writers were later given new experiences. However feminist criticism since the 1970s has been remarkable for the wide spectrum of positions that exist within it.

Using a feminist perspective aims to make it possible to understand how individuals interact with institutions and maybe provide answers for confronting and eliminating oppressive structures and systems. With a focus on oppression, feminist philosophy takes into account the lived experiences of all individuals, not just women. Disrupting oppression is a fundamental tenet of feminist work, even though opinions on the proper place for feminist thought as a theory or paradigm may differ. (Peter Barry, 121-130)

2.3. Feminism in India

In India after independence, where women had already started receiving an education, the New Woman was starting to take shape. Women had become more self-aware and interested in their human rights as a result of their education. At that time, women began to clash with the traditional moral code and the double standards of social law that had been in place for centuries, marking the beginning of the feminist movement in Indian literature.

In Indian culture, men are seen as having hegemony over culture and authority. Men's defence of masculinity and belief that women are not fundamentally human is a particular aspect of Indian society. Religious rituals and cultural establishments marginalized women. The goal of feminist movements has been to end this marginalization. The 1960s and 1970s saw a strong feminist movement that contributed to the theorization of a woman's speech.

India encountered a prophet in Raja Ram Mohan Roy during this internal conflict. Inspired by English education and society, Roy set out to improve the status of women in India.

The history of feminism in India may be broken down into three distinct eras. The first phase, which started in the middle of the 19th century, was when reformists began to advocate for women's rights by making changes to the education system and social mores that affected women. The second phase, which lasted from 1915 till Indian independence saw Gandhi include women's movements into the Quit India movement and the emergence of separate women's organizations. Lastly, the third stage, known as post-independence, has focused on ensuring that women are treated fairly both at home and in the workplace after marriage as well as on their right to political parity.

The foundation of Indian feminism was laid by the reform and anti-colonial movements of the 19th Century and Savitribai Phule was known as a passionate feminist in

India who was breaking all the stereotypes. Hence she is also regarded as the 'Mother of Indian Feminism.' The discussions taking place in the world about violence against women had an impact on Indian feminism and the Indian women also received achievements in the movement.

In 19th C colonial India, formal education was denied to women of all castes as women back then were considered vulnerable, weak etc. Still, slowly few women came forward and started indulging themselves in novels and finding their solace in studying and learning something different than household chores, and slowly women started getting education.

There were a few famous women who made the 19th Century the 'Age of Women' and among the trailblazers who freed themselves from societal restraints and utilized their writing to confront the patriarchal culture and its traditional values were Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Savitribai Phule, Pandita Ramabai, Rashsundari Devi etc.

The first Indian poetess to write in both, French and English was Toru Dutt who was a natural linguist and left behind an impressive collection of prose and poems and couldn't write more due to her early death at the age of 21 in 1877 due to Tuberculosis. Her best piece 'A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields' was published in 1876.

Likewise, Savitribai Phule too came forward with the help of her husband Jyotirao Phule to educate herself and other women and she wrote her work. ("Feminism in India." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, en. [Wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism_in_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism_in_India).)

Along with defying prejudices, these women served as role models for other women who wanted to overcome obstacles and pursue higher education. These authors helped to define the 19th Century as the “age of women” by exposing their long-hidden literary preferences as well as their moods, disappointments, longings, and pleasures.

2.4. Feminist Issues in Indian Context.

As the idea of feminism started spreading throughout the world India too, participated and accepted the idea of feminism and the equal rights of women in society. Indian women struggle to survive due to a variety of restrictive patriarchal family structures, their age, their link to men through marriage and procreation, their family of origin, and patriarchal traits.

Numerous patriarchies exist in India, which contributes to the diversity of feminisms due to the country's heterogeneous experience. Consequently, feminism in India is not a single theoretical perspective; rather, it has evolved in response to historical and cultural realities, as well as to consciousness levels and how men and women are perceived as a group. The widely accepted definition entails a knowledge of the oppression and exploitation of women in society, the job, and the home, as well as a deliberate attempt to improve the situation.

Prior to independence, the majority of feminists were okay with the gender gap in the workforce. Feminists, on the other hand, contested and worked to undo the established disparities in 1970. These include keeping women in the unskilled labor pool, paying them less than men, and limiting their options for employment. However, feminist consciousness was raised, which recognized the disparities not just between men and women but also within many power structures, including those based on class,

geography, religion, and so forth. This presented another difficulty for feminists, who had to ensure that, in designing their expansive efforts, the needs of one group would not be neglected at the expense of those of another.

Throughout the 20th century, their emphasis has been on recognizing women as equal members of society with the authority to make decisions about their own life and the right to self-determination. In contrast to western societal conventions, Indian women are not permitted to travel freely and live with a guy of their choosing. It is imperative that she be a devoted and honourable woman; so, a careless attitude will not be accepted. She can become a legitimate wife once she satisfies all of these requirements.

Their sexuality is restricted for the exclusive goal of maintaining holiness, and society is the only entity that limits their freedom of movement. Western feminists want Indian women to take the lead in bringing about change and to stand up for their rights to be treated like people rather than as stone statues of Devi. Though it's customary to idolize women in India, contemporary women desire to be real, tangible human beings. Women are urged by feminists to broaden their perspectives and seize new opportunities because women's growth is the only path toward sustainable development. ("Status of Women in

India." Times of India Blog, [timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/lawpedia/status-ofwomen-in-inida-51422/.](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/lawpedia/status-ofwomen-in-inida-51422/))

Another example is marriage, where a woman spends the majority of her life in a devout commitment. After the age of 18, a girl is thought to still be biologically capable of bearing children. There were too many incidents happening in India which

contributed towards the injustice against women as women always were considered to be inferior and were mistreated by men in every household in India. However, women came out openly against such injustices and started fighting for their rights and equality in society. In a gigantic context, the rising feminist movement in India was influenced by Western ideals.

The significant issues which women faced in India were associated with dowry-related violence, forced practice of sati, sex-selective abortions and custodial rape. India is predominantly a nation with social hierarchies among communities. Age, sex, ordinal rank, familial and caste lineage, money, occupation, and relationship to the governing power are among the factors that can be used to dissect these hierarchies. Girls from low-income homes experience the double effects of instability and vulnerability if social norms and financial demands lead to the creation of hierarchies within the family. Girls are less likely to have access to the family's financial resources and are typically viewed as inferior to their brothers.

2.5. Conclusion

Feminism is about valuing the many experiences, identities, skills, and abilities of women while working to enable every woman to exercise her entire set of rights. It's about ensuring that diverse women and girls have the same possibilities in life as boys and men, and it's about levelling the playing field between genders.

Indian feminism is a living example of resilience, variety and intersectionality from the early feminists' groundbreaking work to the modern activism of grassroots groups and online advocacy. Indian feminists continue to fight for gender justice, elevating the voices of the oppressed and dismantling oppressive structures, in spite of

overwhelming obstacles like deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, caste-based discrimination and systematic disparities.

Feminist viewpoints offer a crucial lens through which to analyse and remake our world by dissecting patriarchal institutions, dispelling stereotypes, and elevating oppressed voices. Embracing the feminism's ideas is essential as we negotiate the complexities of gender politics and work for a more fair and inclusive society for all.

CHAPTER III – THROUGH THE LENS OF LANGUAGE: EXPLORING SELECT NOVELS VIA TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

A detailed feminine contextual description of the authors will be fulfilled under this chapter by using a feminist theory to help the readers know about these writers and about their writing career. It will also cover the textual analysis of the texts using the feminist theory and by covering the important feminist issues.

3.1 Introduction of the authors

3.1.1. Krupabai Satthianandhan

Krupabai was born as Krupabai Khisty on 14 February 1862 to Haripunt and Radhabai Khisty as their thirteenth child out of fourteen who were Hindu converts to Christianity in Ahmednagar and later moved into the Bombay presidency. She lived with her parents and her elder brother, Bhaskar. Her mother and older brother Bhaskar raised her when her father passed away when she was still a young child. She was greatly influenced by Bhaskar, her elder brother, who tried to stimulate her mind by lending her books and having lengthy conversations with her about many topics. Her brother played an important role in her life as he directed her towards learning, showed her what books to read and infused new ideas into her. She was an eager, intelligent and precocious learner and her brother also imbued in her his love of Western literature, particularly of Romantic poetry. However, he too died young and Krupabai made him immortal in *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life*, her semi-autobiographical book.

Bhaskar's death left Krupabai severely wounded, and two European missionary women took up her care and education. *Saguna's* portrayal of her first close meeting with the British suggests that it was a mixed experience for her. She later enrolled in a

boarding school in Bombay where she met a female American doctor who piqued her interest in medicine. Early in life, Krupabai internalized her father's missionary ideas and made the decision to become a doctor in order to assist other women, particularly those who were in purdah.

Her health was beginning to deteriorate by this point, so even though she was awarded a scholarship to study medicine in England, she was unable to travel. Nevertheless, in 1878, the Madras Medical College granted her admission, and she moved in as a boarder in the home of the renowned Christian missionary Reverend W. T. Saththianadhan. Her academic record was excellent from the beginning, but a year later, she experienced her first health breakdown from stress and overwork, and in 1879, she had to go back to Pune to recuperate with her sister.

Back in Madras a year later, she got to know the Reverend's son, Samuel Saththianadhan, and they became friends. Samuel and Krupabai got married in 1881. Soon after, Ootacamund's Brecks Memorial School hired Samuel as its headmaster. Together with teaching at several other girls' schools, Krupabai was able to establish a school for Muslim girls in Ootacamund with the assistance of the Church Missionary Society. The hill station of Ootacamund was well-known for its healthy climate, and Krupabai's health remained well there. She found the time and energy to write, and she appeared in prestigious magazines with pieces published under the pen name "*An Indian Lady*". She launched her literary career by contributing articles to local newspapers, magazines, and journals. Krupabai also experimented with poetry and a few of her poems are included in 'Miscellaneous writings'. The couple moved to Rajamundry three years later, and when Krupabai fell ill once more, they moved to Kumbakonam. Despite her fluctuating health, she produced a lot during this time, and

by the time they moved back to Madras permanently in 1886, she was prepared to start a full-length novel. *Saguna* was published in serial form in the esteemed Madras Christian College Magazine between 1887 and 1888. But during this period, her only kid passed away before it turned one, and she developed a serious case of depression for which she needed medical attention.

Although Bombay diagnosed her with tuberculosis, it was declared incurable. Acknowledging her little time left, she started working on *Kamala*. Up until her death, she worked nonstop on the book, only taking a sabbatical to write her father-in-law's memoir and her mother-in-law's incomplete one.

On August 8, 1894, in Madras, Sathianadhan passed away. Her passing was greatly mourned by her fans, and a few months later the Madras Medical College established a scholarship for women in her honour, and the University of Madras established a memorial award for the top female matriculation candidate in English. Her works were translated into Tamil and released as books.

In addition, she penned *Kamala*, *A Story of Hindu Life* in 1894. In these two bildungsroman books, she discusses issues of gender, caste, ethnicity, and cultural identity. Two novels address the same issue, despite their different social contexts: the plight of women who refuse to fit the denigrated stereotype of domesticity. Both *Kamala* and *Saguna* experience varied degrees of antagonism due to their unusual inclination towards reading. The majority of *Saguna* is autobiographical. The protagonist, a Christian convert's daughter, overcomes all obstacles to complete her formal schooling, gain entrance to a medical college, and eventually find a guy with whom she might have an equal relationship.

The honour of being the first Indian woman to introduce the Indian heroine to English literature belongs to Krupabai. As a trailblazing female writer of Indian literature in English, Brahmin-Christian Krupabai Satthianadhan is acclaimed for both the substance and form of her works, which shed light on the inner lives and difficulties of women in nineteenth-century India. (Krupabai Satthianadhan, xi-xii)

3.1.2. Shashi Deshpande

Shashi Deshpande was born in Dharwad, Karnataka on 19 August 1938, and the younger daughter of the Kannada dramatist, writer, and Sanskrit scholar Adya Rangacharya and

Sharada Adya. She grew up in an upper-middle-class family. Her father had taught her Sanskrit, and she also speaks Marathi and Kannada languages. Shashi Deshpande was educated at a British Covert school, later moved to Bombay University, and has degrees in Economics and Political science. She took a second degree in Law in Bangalore and had her first job with a lawyer, then as a law reporter. In 1962 she was married to Dhirendra H. Deshpande who was a medical doctor and had two sons. In 1968 they went to England and stayed there for a year and after coming back to Mumbai, she studied journalism from 1969 to 1970 and worked for a couple of months as a journalist for the magazine 'Onlooker'. She also has a degree, a master's in arts. In 1970 they moved to Bangalore and her writing career began in earnest 1970s with the short stories. The writing was not a conscious decision for her as she had two children with no career and hence she was restless with just being a housewife and a mother. In England, she felt isolated with having no friends and her husband being at work the whole day. After returning, Bombay urged her to write about these experiences and

1972 saw her first short story 'The Legacy' which her father advised her to publish. She published her first collection of short stories in 1978, and thus her writing career began. Despite knowing other languages, she only writes in English and the web of her main text is woven from Indian women's lives, their day-to-day lives deeply impregnated by religious, social, and political traditions and gender relations which are determined by male power structures. Shashi Deshpande has emerged as a leading woman novelist in Indian literature. Most of Deshpande's protagonists are women of middle and upper-middle-class families who are educated and exposed to Western ideas, fighting for their own space, for their place in the family and their social and cultural setting. The emotional upheavals in the minds of these women and their reactions to various issues related to women caught between tradition and modernity are susceptible to treatment from a feminist's angle. She focuses only on one woman protagonist in her novel and their problems. Shashi Deshpande's women characters, the portrayal of women needs to be studied from a feminist angle. She is an author of the 70s and 80s, and hence she portrays a realistic picture of the contemporary middleclass, educated, urban Indian woman. Her novels focus on the miserable plight of middleclass, urban Indian women, and also analyse how the situation has not changed even in the twentieth century. She has eleven novels, children's books, two long stories and many short stories which rest on the complexities of tradition and modernity.

Her first novel was *The Dark Holds No Terror* published in 1980. *If I Die Today* in 1982, *Come Up and Be Dead* in 1983, *Roots and Shadows* in 1983, *That Long Silence* in 1988, *The Binding Mind* in 1993, *A Matter Of Time* in 1996, *Smallin* 2000, *Moving India* 2004, *Strangers To Ourselves* in 2013 are some of her novels that were published. These

novels brought the author fame and recognition that very few of her fellow Indian English fiction writers can claim. Her novel *Shadow Play* was shortlisted for The Hindu Literary Prize in 2014. She has written four children's books, several short stories, and nine novels, besides several perceptive essays, available in a volume entitled *Writing from the Margin and Other Essays*. She won the Raugammal Prize in 1984, the Nanjangud Tirumalamba Award for *The Dark Holds No Terrors* in 1989, *Sahitya Akademi Award* in 1990 for the novel 'That Long Silence'. She was also honoured with the *Padma Shri award* in 2009. These novels belong to Shashi Deshpande's early phase and portray a mild form of feminism. She is one of the eminent writers whose women protagonists are drawn from the middle class family who are sensitive, intelligent, educated, and career-orientated. In Shashi Deshpande's novel, *The Dark Holds No Terror*, characters move in their real world. Shashi

Deshpande studied deeply the psyche of female characters. The protagonist's struggle is essential in understanding their characters to search for a meaningful existence. All characters explore nature of the human freedom and tensions between the individual's need for oneself and society. All characters of Shashi Deshpande's novel establish Deshpande as a sculptor of new womanhood. The women in the novel believe that their personality is determined by their innate and intrinsic qualities. Deshpande's concern is more with women's suffering in marital relationships, and family and exhibits the mental trauma a woman undergoes. In her writing, all her characters are women who have developed true strength within themselves, Deshpande's strength lies in the characters which she has created. All her characters are facing the very dilemma between modernity and tradition. She does create men's character, but she admits her inability to bring forth a rounded male character. They have very little role to play but

they influence the thematic structure through the patriarchal system. She doesn't blame men, nor does she claim that women are good and men are bad. Women in her stories belong to the middle class but, they are convincingly alive. Her major attempts are to capture moments of sensibility to reveal the inner lives of her characters. In Deshpande's literary world, there are characters taken from all the sections of life. They are medical practitioners writers, and educated housewives, there are some causes of suffering exclusively for females.

Shashi Deshpande has made bold attempts at giving a voice to the disappointments and frustrations of women. In her novels, we can see the ill-treatment of major women characters and how the themes in them are related to women's problems. Shashi Deshpande has exposed gross gender discrimination and its fallout in a male-dominated society. She started writing the novel because her father was a writer, she graduated in English and was born as a woman and hence she chose to write about feminism as many women don't speak openly about the problems they face at home. Deshpande bears the subtle processes of oppression and gender differentiation operating within the institution of family and the malecentred Indian society at large. Deshpande's feminism does not uproot a woman from her background, but it only tries to expose the different ideological element that shapes her.

These include social and psychological factors such as a woman's subordinate position in the family and here restrictions of sexuality. She seeks to expose the ideology by which a woman is trained to play her subservient role in society. Her novels eclectically employ the post-modern technique of deconstructing patriarchal culture and customs and revealing these to be man-made constructs. She is trying to understand women, their history, roles, and their place in society including their relationships with others.

Her novitiates like explorations and every time she is restricted, she is confronted by discoveries that make her rethink the ideas she started with. She doesn't write about the grinding poverty of the Indian masses. The woman deprived of love, understanding and companionship is the centre of her works. She shows how traditional Indian society is biased against women. The important aspect of Shashi Deshpande's novel is that she declines to some modern educated women characters, who suffer many problems and contradictions in the minds of society. During British rule, Indian-educated women suffered a lot because of the opposition between the age-old Indian traditions, norms, and values of life and the overwhelming impact of the Western lifestyles and ideas who look at their lives in other ways. She has also unchanged a class of Indian women who are posted. Most of the humiliated women are from rural India as in rural places all the traditions and norms or rules are very strict and have to be followed without questioning. Deshpande acts as an advocate of the freedom of women in the context of the socio-cultural milieu of Indian society.

The themes and topics, the cultural contexts of her novels reflect her own family and its cultural setting. It includes literature, Indian myths, Traditional Indian music, and medicine, and an intimate or close relationship with her father. Her novels are family novels including their generational enfolding, in their ramifications, is the groundwork of the novels. Its complexities are more clearly understood by the readers. In her novels, women are not simply victims of circumstances, of family and society but over time they have come to stand out as self-assured, self-empowered, articulate personalities. They leave behind limits and limitations and live a free life. All of her protagonists are shown to be in confusion in the beginning but later slowly the confusion through introspection, self-analysis, and selfrealization, and at the end of the

novel, they become significantly more confident. In 2015, after the murder of a Kannada professor and writer M.M.Kalburgi, she returned the Sahitya Akademi Award and resigned from her position on the Sahitya Akademi's general council due to Akademi's silence over the murder. She had two sons Raghu and Vikram out of which Raghu passed away in 2017 and the other son Vikram lives in the US. In 2018 she visited a program in Goa in which she addressed people about the consequences of wanting a Hindu nation.

3.1.3. Kavita Kane

Kavita Kané was born on 5 August 1966 in Mumbai and is an Indian writer. She is known for writing mythology fiction and is an author of the new era of retelling. Though she was born in Mumbai she also grew up in cities like Patna, Delhi and Pune with her parents and two sisters. Her father had a personal collection of over 10,000 books and her father used to say 'If you did not read, you were considered a freak.' She was a fanatic of cinema and theatre and her hobbies are restricted to reading.

She is married to a mariner, Prakash Kane, and lives in Pune with her two daughters, Kimaya and Amiya, and her other family of two dogs and a curious cat.

She was an alumna of Fergusson College, Pune and completed her post-graduation both in English Literature and Mass Communication from the University of Pune. She wanted to beware administrative services, but she chose a career in journalism because she wanted to be a writer and this was the only pragmatic career option for writing during that period. She worked for several years in different media houses such as the Magna publications, Daily News and Analysis and The Times of India. She was a senior journalist for over two decades.

Her debut novel was *Karna's Wife: The Outcast Queen* and after the success of this bestselling novel, she opted to become a full-time author. (Kavita Kane, I)

Kavita Kane has authored seven best-sellers books which are based on lesser-known women in Indian mythology such as *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* in 2013, *Sita's Sister* in 2014, *Menaka's Choice* 2015, *Lanka's Princess* 2016, *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* 2017, *Ahalya's Awakening* 2019 and now *Sarasvati's Gift* in 2021. All of these books are about marginalized characters whom she finds especially fascinating. Her novels are also translated into Hindi & Marathi.

Today, she is considered a revolutionary force in Indian writing, mainly because she has brought in feminism where it is most needed that is in mythology.

For one who confesses that the only skill she knows is writing, her literary journey expectedly began as a journalist, with twin post-graduate degrees in English literature and mass communication and journalism from the University of Pune. With a career spanning two decades in Magna Publishing and DNA, and as assistant editor in the Times of India, she now devotes her time to being a full-time author. ("Kavita Kane."Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kavita_Kan%C3%A9.)

Taking into considerate the above biographical details of the authors it will help to understand the similarities and the differences among the authors and their background details and will help in easy comparison of these authors.

3.2 Introduction to the Novels

The forth coming section will examine the texts which are selected for the research to see whether there are similarities or differences in their novels and to know the story line in brief.

3.2.1. Kamala: A Story of Hindu Child-Wife

A renowned work of Indian literature, *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Child-Wife* offers an early feminist viewpoint on gender, social, and religious issues in nineteenth-century India.

The tale of a young girl whose lovely childhood as the daughter of a Hindu priest ends with her marriage to a harsh husband is told in *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Child-Wife*, which is written in exquisite, thoughtful prose. After being treated like property by his family and having her degree and independence disparaged, Kamala soon harbours aspirations of divorcing and running the danger of embarrassment to have a chance at true happiness.

One of the first examples of an Indian woman as the protagonist in English women's fiction is the moving account of Kamala's experiences as a child-wife, mother, and widow.

The poignantly told tragedy *Kamala* tells the story of a Brahmin girl's introduction to child marriage and her development into a mature wife, mother, and widow. Its author, Krupabai Satthianadhan, is credited with being the first Indian lady to fictionalize the life of an upper-caste Hindu woman in English. The interiority of the modern upper-caste Hindu woman's existence and mind was first made known to the world outside of India in the late nineteenth century by *Kamala*. The beautiful and

tragic Kamala, the protagonist of a century's worth of Indian women's English fiction, is an archival treasure. She represents the beginnings of a changing consciousness and the New Woman protagonist of a century of Indian women's fiction, emerging from the anonymity of traditional role identity in all the uncertain colours and shadows of Indian-British cultural hybridity. The novel's realist perspective is one of its unique features. When Kamala was originally published, it was a pleasant surprise to modern English-speaking readers who were accustomed to romanticized depictions of Hindu child marriage or culturally vacuous language that were the result of missionary and colonialist imagination as well as Indian revivalist nationalism.

Tradition and religion are the omnipotent twin powers that shaped her into these roles from birth. She discovers early on that "fulfilling a great idea, of duty before self," is her life's mission. She also understands that becoming a housewife must be the focus of her goals. The 'sum and substance of her moral code,' strengthened by an early acceptance of fate as all-powerful, serve as a pillar of support for her throughout her life. Their goal is to provide a reliable source of guidance during difficult times, comfort during suffering, and a foundation for hope.

Kamala was a young girl who lived with her father who was a Sanyasi. She was a carefree child with no such restrictions that the other girls of her age followed. She used to wear a pearl necklace around her neck which the girls used to get jealous of her. She was devotedly fond of her father as her mother died when she was quite young. A few years later she was approached by Ganesh's family for their marriage, and she soon was married off by her father. Soon after the marriage Ganesh left for his further studies leaving Kamala with his parents alone. At the beginning of the marriage, she was happy as her in-laws treated her well whereas only Gungi her sister-in-law disliked her. Gungi

started filling the ears of her mother against Kamala and soon she too started hating her. Kamala was close to her father-in-law, but her mother-in-law told some or the other things to her husband and turned him away from Kamala. Kamala was all alone in her husband's house without her husband. Kamala used to do all the household work but still, her mother-in-law used to shout at her for no reason. A few years passed by and her husband Ganesh returned after completing his studies. He and Kamala became good friends and Ganesh took up the responsibility of teaching Kamala. His mother disliked the idea, and she started talking ill of Kamala. Gungi and her mother poisoned the ear of Ganesh against Kamala and soon he too started staying away from her. Then there comes Sai Zadhovni, locally famous as 'Bai Sahib'. She used to gather all the information through people and knew about everyone and everything happening in the village. Soon Sai and Ganesh came close, and Sai made Ganesh against Kamala as Sai wanted to be with Ganesh. Soon Kamala conceived the child of Ganesh and she moved in with Ganesh where he used to work. But for her delivery, she came back to her in-laws and delivered a healthy baby girl. Again, her mother-in-law started cursing and often said "Who needed a child just now, and that too, a girl?" This would make Kamala feel depressed. Again she went to stay back with her husband and noticed that Sai often visited their house with some or the other work but then came a day she started visiting every day which Kamala hated. One day when Sai came she ordered Kamala to get her a spittoon. To this Kamala was very angry and she forced Sai to leave her house which later led to a big conflict with Ganesh. Ganesh accused her of having an extramarital affair and said that the child was not of his. Kamala couldn't tolerate this big blame on hers and decided to leave Ganesh forever. However, she returned to her in-laws' house and explained everything to them. By this time her in-laws got to know about her

background and that she belonged to a rich upper-class family. Her mother-in-law took care of her even more. But one day her daughter fell sick and soon she died and at the same time she lost her husband to cholera. And within no time Kamala was a widow and childless. However, she decided to be with her in-laws and look after them till her death and Kamala spent all her money on unselfish works of charity and started looking after those who needed some help.

The emotional realism with which the author portrays Kamala's character and mental state gives Kamala its strength. Though its creative and artistic aspects can also be appreciated, the novel should be read for these reasons alone.

3.2.2. The Dark Holds No Terrors

The Dark Holds No Terrors is about a young woman Sarita, (Saru), a middle-class metropolitan worker who experiences oppression in her home, career, and marriage, and who appears to have lost control over her own life. She is raised to believe that when she will get married, she will own her own home and is informed as a child that she is an

‘ammanat’ of the other house. Her family consists of four people, Sarita, her parents and her younger brother, Dhruva. The story's main character and narrator is Sarita. Her mother, Kamala Tai, is an archetypal traditional Indian woman with a predisposition towards discrimination based on gender. She treats her daughter with less respect than she does her son Dhruva.

Sarita falls in love with a man of a different caste and marries him despite parental opposition since she never received love from her parents since her birth which she received from Manohar as he showered his love and affection on her. Sarita

is an intelligent and hardworking woman who becomes a successful doctor, but her marriage breaks up because of her success. Sarita defies her mother to become a doctor and defies caste restrictions by marrying the man she loves. She becomes tired of her tense, bitter and loveless relationship with her husband and her parents. She uses Boozie to advance her career but later starts ignoring him after achieving her goal. In one way she cheats Manohar by having an extramarital affair with Boozie, just for the sake of her career. She goes through traumatic experiences as her husband refuses to play a second fiddle role as Manohar, is typically an Indian husband who thinks that he is a family head. When Saru goes to her parental home all the memories of her are refreshed. She had undergone great humiliation and neglect as a child as her mother used to hate her and only loved her younger brother Dhruva and, after marriage, Manohar neglected her as a wife when she started earning more than him. Manohar is an ill-paid professor and prevents the fact that his wife is the primary breadwinner. The situation worsens when he finds that his wife is being charged with the slogans for women's rights and empowerment and hence, he shrinks and starts suffering an inferiority complex. It then becomes a clash of egos between Sarita and Manohar.

Deshpande discusses the flagrant gender discrimination shown by parents towards their daughters and their desire to have a son. After her marriage, as she gains a greater social status than her husband Manohar, all begins to fall apart. Her husband's sense of inferiority complex and the humiliation he begins to feel, as a result of society's reaction to Saru's superior position develops sadism in him. Her husband vents his frustration on Saru in the form of sexual sadism, which has been vividly portrayed by Deshpande.

From a feminine perspective, Sarita describes a man-woman relationship. She talks about how Manohar, her husband, is envious of her growing reputation of her as a talented physician. He starts to suffer from an inferiority complex. To project the image of a better spouse, he begins to take advantage of her physically, intellectually, and socially. Sarita feels unable to deal with her husband's abhorrent actions. At last, she decides to eventually leave her marriage and seeks safety in her father's home and begins her campaign against patriarchy.

Sarita goes through trauma and confronts reality but in the end, realizes that the dark holds no terrors for her, and she also realizes that her children and patients need her and thinks that everyone else in the world is also alone in their lives. At last, she decides to go back to her husband to peacefully manage Manohar to fulfill their desires. The compromises between Sarita and Manohar are finally sorted out at the end of the novel.

3.2.3. Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen

The novel *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* focuses on the titular character that is Karna's wife, Uruvi. The story of the novel is narrated by Uruvi through her point of view and how she looks at everything that is happening around her.

Uruvi, the Princess of Pukeya, visits the Kuru Dynasty to see the Kuru Princes, the Kauravas and the Pandavas who compete in archery. She comes with her godmother, the Pandavas' mother Kunti. Throughout her early years, she has played and engaged

in combat with the Pandavas and Kauravas, respectively. Arjuna, the prince of the Pandavas and the most famous pupil of Guru Dronacharya stays ahead of the competition. Karna intervenes to challenge Arjuna to a fight so he may demonstrate his dominance in the field after Arjuna is declared the world's best archer after the competition.

The nobles rise to question Karna about his origins as Arjuna is about to lose the battle to him. The enigmatic gifted archer Karna reveals that he is a lower caste Sutaputra community member and the son of a charioteer. When the Pandavas hear this, they tease Karna, and Arjuna decides not to engage in combat with a Sutaputra. Despite having remarkable archery skills and gallantry, Karna has always received harsh treatment from society. He works hard every day to demonstrate his abilities to prove himself and gain status, but he has been continually denied that luxury.

Karna is made to despise everyone and everything as a result. Without any hesitation, Dhuryodhana steps in to save Karna from the greatest disgrace of his life during that tournament and installs him as Anga's king. At that point, their friendship blossoms and Uruvi develops a deep romantic attachment to Karna. At that point, Kunti notices that Karna is holding her abandoned illegitimate child's armour and earring. Even though she recognizes him as her firstborn child, she chooses to keep silence out of a sense of honourless hoof nour.

After this occurrence, Uruvi finds it difficult to stop thinking about Karna. When her parents seek her approval to prepare Swayamvaram, she tells her father that she wants to marry Karna and extends an invitation to him. Her parents eventually give in to her request honouring their only daughter's sentiments, despite the opposition of all her close pals. Everyone expected Uruvi to adore Arjuna as her spouse on the day of the

swayamvaram, just as Draupadi did. However, this swayamvaram was very different from Draupadi's, as Arjuna was allowed to marry Draupadi and Karna was deprecated.

Karna's ego was severely bruised by yet another humiliation at the hands of Arjuna, but Uruvi's swayamvaram balanced the ego conflict. When things were about to go out of control, Krishna stepped in and resolved the issue, much to the agitation of the other participating monarchs and princes. The true issue, however, doesn't arise until after the marriage; all her friends and relatives, whom she had previously regarded as reliable supporters, make fun of her and try to drive her away because she is no longer the Princess of Pukeya but rather the Outcast Queen. Uruvi quickly adjusts to the circumstances, and Karna and Uruvi's love grows into something magnificent and magnificent.

Karna always looks at Uruvi as his conscience, reminding him when he is wrong but also showing him support and understanding during good times and bad. Karna's friendship with Duryodhana was continuously criticized by her, but he remained devoted to his friend for personal reasons, ultimately leading to his downfall. Karna committed his whole life to his friend, Duryodhana to support his only good friend who helped him in his bad times. Uruvi tried convincing Karna to leave the side of Duryodhana as he was evil since his young days, but Karna did not pay notice to her on this topic.

One day the Kauravs invited the Pandavas to play the dice game in the court wherein Pandava King Yudhishtira lost game after game gambling away his entire kingdom, wealth, army, four loyal brothers and their wife Draupadi. After this, it was Karna who encouraged Dushasana to drag Draupadi into the court and disrobe her in front of everyone. This incident deeply created hatred towards Karna by the Pandavas.

The eighteen-day war of Mahabharata created a lot of destruction, killing thousands of people, animals etc. Many people lost their lives including Karna and Uruvi bravely took the responsibility of looking after Karna's parents, his wife Vrushali, and their children.

Karna's Wife: The Outcast Queen is among the best modern interpretations of the Mahabharata. The narrative is cleverly told from Uruvi's point of view.

The select novels' short summary will help to know the problems which were faced by women and if they are same or different though being written in different time periods. It will also help to know that how being written in different time period/ century they share a common idea of giving a voice to the female characters, making them the main protagonist and the narrator at the same time.

3.3. Empowering Voices: Exploring Feminist Themes in the novels

This section will examine some common issues/themes in the texts that are also a part of Indian society. Also, certain differences in the feminist issues depending on perspective and time period will be seen in this part. This will help to appreciate the efforts initiated by the women writers to portray the struggle of women which they face in their day to day lives. Being a protagonist of different time zone one can see the common issues faced by the women protagonists in the novels.

3.3.1. Themes in Kamala: A Story of Hindu Child-Wife

1. Child Marriage

An important issue that grappled in the 19th century was child marriage. It was a common thing which was happening in Indian society back then. Kamala, the protagonist of the novel, too was married off at a very young age wherein she had no idea about the meaning of marriage and how it works. She was a young child who always wandered on the streets. Kamala's marriage ceremony and consequent experiences expose the darkest realities of child marriage. Kamala has no voice in the selection of her life partner. The marriage has been arranged by her elders. Her response towards the marriage is childish.

When Kamala was living at home, she seemed to cherish her time with her father, and this is evident in the way that she waited for him at home. With a temple nearby and mountains all around her home, Kamala finds serenity in her daily surroundings. However, she has experienced a significant change in her life since marrying Ganesh and moving to a busy city. Following their marriage and subsequent move to a different place, the protagonists' attitudes, feelings, and emotions drastically change. People's sentiments and emotions are also influenced by their physical location. One can see the intricacies of Kamala's existence in her in-laws' house and the depths of traditional Brahmin household life. Her minor function in the home is highlighted, ensuring her complete lack of uniqueness: 'Kamala's duties commenced very early in the morning. She slept in her mother-in-law's room, a dark dingy room lighted by only one window at the top and full of little niches in the wall. In one of the niches were kept her simple toilet things, a kunkun box, a shell comb, and a hand mirror. In the darkest corner were Kamala's own little bundle of clothes and her

mattress rolled up by it. In the morning, long before day-daybreak, there was a stir in the house and the mother-in-law would wake the girl who slept near her. Thus, aroused Kamala hurried out through the quadrangle to the back of the home. for it was her duty to get the water vessels ready and fill them with water for the morning ablutions.'(, 57).

It is analyzed in-depth and intelligently, expressing a deep sense of empathy for the child-wife and making the clear claim that such "foolish and ignorant women" are to blame for the life she led, calling it "dark and dismal." The book also exposes other significant realities, such as the artificial barriers that prevent marriages from flourishing and the strict expectations placed on child wives in joint families. These expectations, which have clear generational and gender divides, effectively stifle any potential for the child's wife's mental or psychic development and reduce her to the status of a terrified subordinate, a menial, and a piece of property. The fortifying walls of Kamala's conventional and religious upbringing lead her to seek safety behind them. By deliberately connecting with the mythical Aryan wives praised for their tenacious endurance of injustices in their practice of pativrata dharma (husband worship), she even finds a certain quiet joy in agony.

By incorporating the lives of Kamala's friends into the primary narrative, Sathianadhan emphasizes that Kamala is a representative of the entire female community. Her focus is on exposing and denouncing the negative aspects of child marriage, but she ignores Kashi and Rukhma, who are 'intensely' and 'extremely happy' in their husbands' homes because their parents have 'found' them lovely spouses and thoughtful mothers-inlaw. Instead, she focuses on two other child women in the narrative, Bhagirathi and Harni, who, like Kamala, endure extreme cruelty at the

hands of their husbands and in-laws. They are both psychologically and physically abused and imprisoned inside a rigid domesticity.

2. Male dominance

A system of male domination is a common definition of patriarchy. This description obfuscates rather than clarifies the intricate web of interrelated elements that make up the patriarchal system. A patriarchal system is one in which men govern women by controlling their sexuality to leave property to their male successors. It is based on the ideology of war, which justifies violence and is sanctified by religious symbols. It is mostly about men abusing their power because they think they have the right to use emotional and physical abuse to subjugate women.

In the novel, Kamala faces male dominance after her marriage. Her husband ill-treats her and he does not care for her. However, at the beginning of their marriage, he was fond of her and took up the responsibility of teaching his wife, Kamala. But later his mother and sister told him some ill things about Kamala and estranged him from his wife. Ganesh's family are appalled by his idea of educating Kamala. His mother believes that it might raise the woman to the equal status of a man and hence finds the idea horrifying. His father who initially favoured Kamala now stops talking to his son. For this reason, he started neglecting her dear wife and when Sai entered his life he ignored Kamala despite the fact that she was pregnant with his baby. He even insulted Kamala when she disrespected Sai and asked her to leave. At this point, they had a huge fight and blamed Kamala saying the child was not of his but of someone else. Male ego and power could be reflected through his behaviour towards Kamala who was a sweet, genuine, and loyal wife towards her husband.

3. Domestic Violence

This is a common theme in the novel as most of their mothers-in-law mistreat their daughters-in-law in their village and they think that it's quite normal to do so. The mothers also ask their husbands to stay away from their daughters-in-law and their matters. Kamala lived a life of humiliation and disgrace at the hands of their husband and the family. Women generally don't prefer violent ways to fight against the dominant violence rather tend to submit to it mutely. Kamala too considered the beating given by her mother-in-law, husband or any other sort of violence as the result of her mistakes. She never considered them wrong rather always considered herself to do the wrong things and suffer alone. Kamala, on the other hand, is the picture of calmness from the start of the novel and stays that way throughout, a strong and endearing creature through all the sufferings she went through, experiencing more emotional abuse than physical abuse before moving on to live a peaceful life and giving up worldly pleasure. Her qualities do not develop as a character, giving us insight into what is known as a flat character.

She misses the atmosphere of independence she had at her house after marriage because she is subjected to severe harassment at her in-laws' home. At first, Ganesh shows interest in her and instructs her with great enthusiasm. However, he has an affair with Sai, his mistress. Ganesh and Kamala move to the city with their little one. On the other hand, Ganesh and Kamala frequently argue because of the "other woman" in his life. He falsely charges Kamala with having an extramarital affair with Ramchander one day. She then departs from the residence and heads to her father-in-law's home. Before there could be any combination between Kamala and Ganesh, he

died of Cholera disease and Kamala regretted her decision to leave her husband alone after the fight.

Kamala quickly harbours aspirations of leaving married life through divorce, willing to risk shame in the hopes of achieving long-lasting happiness after being treated like property by his family and disparaged for her education and independent spirit.

4. Enforced widowhood

In ancient times being a widow was considered to be a great sin. People believed that if a woman loses her husband, then she also loses her greatest adornment of a woman. In the novel, the themes of the enforced widowhood are d in the death of Kamala's husband and how Kamala had to follow all the rules and restrictions that a widow has to follow. Kamala was too young to be a widow and by the time she understood the true meaning of the relationship of husband and wife she had lost her husband. She was very young to go through this and to add more misery to her life she also lost her young infant daughter and her father.

However, she blames herself for her husband's death since she left her husband's house and she believed that she deserved all the misery. Sattthianandhan has given Kamala a chance to be free from widowhood by marrying Ramchander, her close relative who proposes to Kamala and declares his love for her and offers her freedom from the crippling confines of being a widow. However, Kamala rejects his offer of marriage proposal and decides to follow the norms of widowhood till her last breath.

3.3.2. The Dark Hold No Terrors

1. Gender discrimination

Sarita, the main protagonist in the novel face discrimination since her childhood. Her mother used to discriminate between Sarita and her younger brother, Dhruva. She didn't like Sarita because she was a girl. Her mother didn't consider Sarita as her daughter and shares an incident or story that when she was born it was raining heavily and says that night was terrible, but Saru feels that her birth was terrible for her mother. Saru's mother showered all her love on Dhruva. He was loved by everyone in the house and hence she used to hate her mother and brother Dhruva. Dhruva's birthday was celebrated every year with great joy along with all the religious rituals, but Saru's birthday was hardly acknowledged. Sarita was seen as a burden by her mother whose responsibility was to look after her until her marriage since girls were/are considered someone else's treasure. Her father sometimes discriminated between his children as he used to only take Dhruva on a cycle ride but never took Saru. Her father used to remain silent when Saru's mother used to scold her even though it was not her mistake. An aperture between mother and daughter was formed because of her mother's hatred towards her and love towards Dhruva. This attitude of discrimination has an overwhelming effect on Sarita at a very young age. She becomes rebellious. Later when

Dhruva dies accidentally by drowning in a pond her mother blames her for killing Dhruva.

She also says why she didn't die instead of Dhruva which shows her mother's hatred towards her however Saru kept on saying she didn't do this intentionally it was an accident. She asked why she would kill her brother because however he might be he

was her brother and she loved him, but still her mother accused her and blamed her for killing Dhruva. This incident had a very bad effect on Saru's life hurting her soft and kind heart and after this her mother started hating her even more. At every given opportunity Saru's mother insulted her. Sarita dreams of becoming a doctor and hence she rebels against her mother for her education she leaves her house and moves to Bombay to study medicine and luckily her support supports her. Saru's mother didn't considered education given to girls. In Bombay, she falls in love with Manohar, who is a lower-caste boy. But still, she marries him by going against her family's will. After this, her mother cursed Saru and said she had no daughter and cursed Saru saying she would never be happy in her life.

2. Male Ego

Sarita marries Manohar even after getting opposed by her family, especially her mother as

Manohar is not of the same caste as Sarita. Manohar was an underpaid professor and poet. Both of them loved each other. At the beginning of their marriage, everything was fine but later problems started taking place among them as Saru became a famous doctor in the city and got recognition. She started earning more than her husband, Manu and this hurt the feeling of a man who can never see their wife's achievements. More problem arises when in an interview with Saru, Manohar was asked a question by the interviewer 'how does he feel when his wife earns not only bread but also butter' to this question Manohar only laughed but inside he was very angry and upset. That same night he took out all his frustration and anger on Saru through sexual sadism/cruel sex by physically hurting her. Saru was shocked to see this side of him

which she had never witnessed before hence she decides to speak about this to him the next day, but Manu was all normal the next day and he asked what marks she had on her body which was done by Manu himself. Therefore, she was unable to share the things which she wanted to say. Saru used to be busy with her work as a doctor that she was unable to give time to her family as a wife and a mother, which created more problems in their relationship. As a wife and a mother, she was unable to devote her time to her husband and children. She was detached from her children and husband because of her profession. All these things hit his male ego and Manu started to attack his wife almost every night with sexual brutality and sexual sadism as he thought he could not match her level professionally. Saru learns this and decides to leave her job, but Manohar does not allow her to do so as they will not be able to live a lavish life. In the end, Saru decides that she should get him treated for his disease. She decides to reconcile herself and decides to face the hard realities of life. She learns that escaping from a problem is not a permanent solution to the problems instead the solution must come from within.

3. Self-Exploration

In her parent's house Sarita's mother never allowed her to go out with her friends or alone anywhere. She was always asked to be in the house and was not allowed to go out in the sun as she might get a dark skin complexion which later would create a problem for her marriage. Her mother never loved her as she used to love Dhruva, her younger brother. Her mother looked at Saru as a burden on them and never cared for her hence Saru used to hate her mother and her brother Dhruva. Saru was craving love and care which she never received from her mother. After her boards, she wished to

move out of the city for further studies and when she moved out, she explored and learnt many new things. She started exploring the city, her new life, and her new self. She was fascinated by all the new things she had been exploring in her new life, a new journey. She felt free from all the worries, her mother's taunts, hatred, and restriction. In the city, she was able to live a stress-free life without any restrictions. She was more fascinated when she met Manohar; it was like having a crush on a movie star and not being a part of her real life. Saru was naturally hungry for love. Saru and Manohar fell in love with each other after meeting several times and she received love and attention from him which she had been craving for years. She desired nothing but love and she started to feel the love from Manu. She married Manu by going against her parents because they opposed it. In the beginning of their relationship, everything was going well between them but when Saru got recognition in the city as a professional doctor, problems started occurring among them. This created a feeling of inferiority and hatred of Manohar towards Saru, and he started disliking her. He sexually assaulted her at night like a cruel animal which he was also not aware of, while Saru was helpless during this situation. She could not fight back as she knew she could not match the strength of her husband and hence quietly suffered the pain. It became usual for almost every night and during the day he used to become normal and treated her nicely by taking care of her like a loving husband. To escape from his double sides, she returns to her parent's house after the gap of fifteen years in which she notices many changes after her mother's death. She realises that she is brave and can face anything bravely whatever coming her way. She also realises her own strength to face anything. She took this opportunity to examine, to begin and to strengthen her destiny. She could think

sensibly and logically and realised escaping from a problem is not a solution but facing that problem is and it comes from within oneself.

4. Quest for Identity

Sarita a modern, highly educated Doctor and a married woman, with two children attempts to break her silence to attain self-identity. She wants to get free from the dark experiences of her childhood and her marriage. Saru is a humble, modern and sensitive girl but she lacks self-confidence. Saru was an unwanted child, and her mother always made her realise this.

Saru's mother didn't care for her and neglected her. As a child, Saru never received love, care, or attention from her mother and after Dhruva's death, she is more unwanted by her mother. Saru was a victim of gender discrimination and was always neglected and ignored in favour of Dhruva. She was stuck in the strict rules and discipline and was treated as a burden many times. She believed that gender discrimination could be reduced through education only and she desired to be a doctor by going against her mother's wish. Saru's mother often taunted her for her dark complexion when she learned about her attraction towards Manohar and always used to tell her that she could not attract any men towards her. But at last, she marries Manohar without getting permission from her parents. As she was hungry for love and care, she felt extremely happy to learn that Manohar was true to her and had an innocent love for her. But her happiness lived for a very short time because of her growing popularity as a doctor. It becomes a cause of humiliation for Manohar. Saru's busy schedule fails her to satisfy Manohar's love. Her growing popularity created problems between them as Manohar could not tolerate it and it affected his manly pride. He becomes a sadist and tortures

her, her weakness becomes his strength. She decides to escape from him and goes back to her father's house. There she realises her own strength to face anything. She decides to meet Manu and is determined to continue her job. She doesn't want to run away from life but now is ready to face life with more courage. She realises that marriage is of mutual understanding and not a subjugation of one by the other. Her quest for identity led her to self-realisation and find her inner world.

3.3.3. Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen

1. Quest for Identity

Karna is known for courage and generosity. He was a great human being and often showed his generosity or greatness in different situations. He was resentful because he did not know whose real child he was. But his foster parents Radha and Athiratha who raised him, did so with their utmost love and care. Karna always believed that he was born into nobility but had no proof to prove people as the society always considered him as Sutaputra or the son of a Charioteer. Though Duryodhana gave him a position as a King of Anga and had everything that he could wish for however he was unhappy and miserable because he could not come to terms with what he was being labelled as. Wherever he went people always referred to him as Sutaputra even though he was a King of Anga. Throughout his life, he complained about this and tried to find his real parents. All the time, he nourished bitterness within himself about his low birth as he always felt he was born into some upper-class family but was abandoned by her parents and hence he tried hard to find his true parents and true identity. The truth of his noble birth was disclosed by his real mother Kunti a few days prior to the Great War

Mahabharata which led Karna to his downfall as he learnt the truth of his true identity as the elder brother of the Pandavas later this truth led towards his death in the war.

2. Women as Decision Makers

The bold Uruvi never thinks twice about challenging incorrect social conventions. With all of her flaws, she is a self-assured lady who is content to accept herself and her imperfections. She has demonstrated her trust in herself by making significant life decisions. She is an accomplished individual who is resistant to social pressures and criticism. She is anticipated to wed Kshatriya Arjuna during her Swayamwara marriage. However, she rejects Arjuna and marries Sutaputra Karna, much to everyone's surprise and dismay. Her parents finally agree to her daughter's request after a few fights during which she tells them how much she loves Karna. Since their daughter always justifies her choices, they have a great deal of faith in her judgment. As a Kshatriya queen married to a Sutaputra, she endures great humiliation after her marriage to Karna. She handles things with ease, though, and bears the fallout with courage. She even smiles while responding sarcastically. At first, she gets into problems because her in-laws' house is very different from her own.

Nevertheless, she brings a good reputation to her new family by bringing about a change in the unpleasant atmosphere with her optimistic attitude and unconditional love. Despite being born into a Kshatriya household, Uruvi gives her everything to the family's well-being without question. Through her attempts to connect with family members, she demonstrates that she is a good woman who works to break down barriers of misunderstanding. She devotes her entire being to serve everyone. After getting married, Uruvi told her parents about her plans for her future with Karna. She

said “I am looking forward to my new life. I shall live in the home of the man I love, looking after him and his family. There will be enough strength in me to be his wife and I shall be proud of that” (*Karna’s Wife: The Outcast’s Queen*, 24).

Her expression of love for Karna and his family is evident in her statements. She loves Karna so much that she has psychologically prepared herself to join a new family, which she views as her own decision. She was a loving and responsible woman, not just in words but in deeds as well. Uruvi cultivates a moral mindset and consistently pursues the truth. As a result, she tries to divert Karna from the incorrect friends, Shakuni and Duryyodhana. Karna is unable to comprehend that she has tried her hardest to point him in the correct route. She possesses strong mental and emotional qualities.

Her human ability to rise beyond suffering and hopelessness is admirable. She was hesitant to return to the Pukeya kingdom following Karna's passing. After the loss of their cherished son Karna, she continues to be strong for her in-laws' family, who are in a devastated state of mind. Having bestowed upon them bravery and power, she believed it was her responsibility to provide for them while Karna was away. She developed into an aware individual who grasped life's realities and the truth.

3. Woman as a Motivator

The tragic hero Karna considers himself fortunate to have Uruvi as his wife. She falls in love with him right away at the Hastinapur archery festival, when Karna, although an excellent archer like Arjuna, is humiliated for being born as a Sutaputra. However, Uruvi has given his heart to Karna. She bravely told her father King Vahusha how much she loved and cared for Karna. She said “What will I gain if I marry a man I don’t love

and lose my soul? With Karna, I will gain my life, my soul. I love him. I love him for what he is. I love him for what he will be.... I shall live my life simply. When I am an old woman, I shall look back on a happy, peaceful life which I dared to choose and live the way I wanted to" (*Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*, 24).

Uruvi is a lady who follows her emotions more than her intellect while making judgements. Because of her unwavering love for Karna, a member of the lower caste, she even defies social conventions as Pukeya's princess to wed him. Even after learning about his flaws, she still harbours the same amount of affection for him. She is well aware of his strengths and shortcomings and comprehends the void in his life caused by the humiliations he endured as a child growing up in a low-caste household. Throughout his life, the unfortunate man battles unceasingly to fulfil his potential as a superb archer. He finds motivation in Uruvi's positive energy and attempts to fill the vacuum in his life with her affection. She brings up the wrong companions Duryodhana and Shakuni, who make use of Karna's vulnerability to their advantage. Despite being aware that her efforts are fruitless, she maintains her optimism and keeps Karna motivated to the finish.

In Karna's tragic life, Uruvi is the only one who brings light and hope. Because she married a member of the lower caste, Karna, she suffers the same humiliation from her royal acquaintances. She loves her new family without conditions; thus she never lets it bother her. When Yudhishtira came to pick her up in Hastinapur she said more calmly "No! This is my home! This is Karna's home; This is our home with memories in every corner! This is my sanctuary" (*Karna's Wife* 298). Even after Karna passed away, she still has a sincere affection for him. She stays with his family and takes care of them as her daughter-in-law. Uruvi is a woman who prioritises positivity over negativity in

all areas of her life. It's a common belief that every successful man has a woman by his side. Karna's unfortunate existence and happiness are both due to Uruvi, a woman who serves as his pillar of support.

4. Tragedy and Sacrifice

Karna's life exhibited alternating highs and lows of tragedy and sacrifice. He continually demonstrated this spirit of sacrifice, but it was all in vain because the one thing that truly mattered to him was desiring to be someone he was not, at least not in the eyes of society which destroyed him. Perhaps in truth, he was, but in the eyes of the world, he desired to be someone he was not. Because of this obsession, he continuously blundered. He was a perceptive individual. He was intelligent enough to realize that Duryodhana was acting improperly. But rather than being merely a spectator, he actively encouraged Duryodhana on numerous occasions. Karna may have spared Duryodhana's life if he had applied his intelligence instead of his thanks and loyalty. He continued to make mistake after mistake and did not apply his intelligence.

The novel also shows a lot of sacrifices made by various characters. Kunti had to sacrifice her firstborn Karna as she was unmarried when she had Karna through a boon which no one knew of. Karna had to sacrifice his identity of being born in the high class as he was abandoned at birth. Karna was adopted by a Sutaputra and lived with the same identity until his death wherein at last he sacrificed his own life. Uruvi who fell in love with Karna and determined to marry him was at first not allowed to do so due to his low birth and as she was a Pukeya Princess. She determined her decision to marry Karna sacrificed her royal amenities married Karna and moved into his home which was not so lavish compared to hers. She sacrificed her royal lineage for her love. The

great war of Mahabharata is a great example of sacrifices and later its impact on the rest of the people. People who participated in the war had to sacrifice their lives for its leaders and its impact was huge for the others to handle, Karna at first was deprived of his royal lineage and the throne and at last, sacrificed his life for his brothers and mother without any other thoughts. The impact of Karna's death was so huge to handle by everyone who were close to him, especially his foster parents and his first wife Vrushali. Even the Kauravas and the Pandavas lost their loved ones in the war who were fighting for their rights in the war. Kauravas and the Pandavas had to sacrifice their sons and close friends in this war and its impact was long-lasting on everyone who witnessed the Great War Mahabharata.

5. A Life Full of Wrong Turns

Krishna spoke with Karna upon his arrival to demand peace. "Why are you torturing yourself in this way? You are not this at all. I will tell you who your parents are. Your father is Surya, and your mother is Kunti" (*Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*). Karna suddenly started crying. He was constantly curious about his origins and identity. He was always curious about the person who had dropped him off in that small box in the river. It dawned on him suddenly that, despite the fact that it was not inherently the case, he had been deliberately cultivating animosity toward the five Pandavas. Somewhere, he felt that he must despise these five people because of his gratitude to Duryodhana. Despite not harbouring any anger, he constantly worked it up and came across as the meanest person around. Shakuni would always say the next cruel thing after saying the first still Karna wouldn't stop there since he was constantly attempting to justify his allegiance and express his gratitude to Duryodhana for everything that

had been done for him. He knew in his heart that everything he was doing was wrong, but he persisted because of his unwavering loyalty. He was a great guy, but he was also prone to making blunders. All our lives are like that we have to wait ten years to recover from a single bad decision. Karna took too many incorrect turns and never recovered, and this incorrect turn cost him his life.

After the analysis of the novels some common issues were seen and were discussed in the above part in connection to the Feminist Issues. Though women are the protagonist and the main leader in these novels the writers have portrayed that they are not free from the clutches of patriarchy, discrimination and male dominance. The women protagonists have undergone all these issues and have faced it with courage and have fought back against it to prove they are sturdy and not frail.

3.4. Symbolism in the novels

3.4.1. Kamala: The Story of Hindu Child-Wife

1. Kamala- Her name symbolises a lotus dearly kept by her mother. Kamala is a girl who was carefree and with no burden before marriage and after marriage, she symbolises how a woman who is a responsible wife and daughter-in-law looks like.
2. Narayen- He is a Sanyasi who symbolises the father and how fathers treat their daughters before and after their marriage.
3. Ganesh- In the beginning, he symbolises the man of the dreams whom any girl can wish for but later shows his true colours by having an extramarital affair.

4. Ganesh's Mother- She symbolises all the mothers-in-law who mistreat their daughters-in-law and do not care for them. She is a perfect example of a cruel mother-in-law.
5. Ganesh's Father- He symbolises the husbands who are under the control of their wives. He stopped talking with Kamala under the influence of his wife.
6. Ramchander- He is a symbol of those men who are in one-sided love. He symbolises patience and those men who wait for their loved ones but they never returns to them.
6. Death: The death of Kamala's close people symbolises that one should be close to one another and should avoid unnecessary arguments.
7. Child-wife- All the child wives in the novel symbolise the forced traditions a girl has to follow at a very tender age and that is getting married. Most of the girls are married off at a very young age by their parents.
8. Widowhood- It symbolises the widowhood that a girl has to follow after their husband's death. Some of the girls including Kamala were a widow at a very young age.

3.4.2. The Dark Holds no Terrors

1. Sarita- Her name symbolises a 'princess or lady.' She is a symbol of those girls who try to do something different in their lives, by going against their family, society, culture traditions etc. She tries to find her own self.

2. Manohar- He symbolises the men in an Indian society who cannot see their wife's appreciation and honour in the society. He later becomes a husband who takes out his anger at night by physically and sexually hurting his wife Saru.
3. Kamala-Saru's mother symbolises those women who prefer their male children to daughters. She didn't care for Saru and disliked her.
4. Sarita's father- He symbolises those men who are under the control of their wives. He always used to remain silent when his wife used to scold Saru.
5. The conflict- The conflict between Saru and her mother symbolises the clash between the old and new, tradition and modernity. The conflict between Saru and Manohar symbolises the typical husband and wife in which the husband cannot see his wife's superiority.
6. Marriage- It symbolises that girls are seen as an object belonging to a different family altogether and their socialization stresses their future roles as wives, whereas boys are seen as the head of the family who looks after the parents.
7. Home- Saru's home for her symbolises a trap in which she is stuck wherein she does not have any freedom, both before and after marriage.
8. Dhruva- He symbolises the boys who are loved by their families. Boys are given more importance than girls and he is a perfect example of it.
9. Boozie- He symbolises those men who are the victims of the society who are used by the women for their needs or till the need is fulfilled.

3.4.3. Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen

1. Uruvi- She symbolises the women who stood on their firm decisions even after being opposed and criticised by everybody.
2. Karna- He symbolises those children who are abandoned by their mothers and struggle to find their true identity. He is also a symbol of someone who is rejected by those who should love him.
3. Kunti- She is a symbol of those women who cannot appreciate their illegitimate sons in public. She also symbolises those wives who are deprived of the love from their husbands.
4. The Pandavas- They represent the five pillars of Dharma and symbolise unity
5. Kauravas- They represent the evil and the main rivals of the Pandavas.
6. Draupadi- She is a symbol of the power of women and the importance of standing up for oneself, even in the face of opposition.
7. The Great War- The war symbolises death and destruction and how people have lost their closed ones. The war symbolises the fight between the 'Dharma' and 'Adharma'.

3.5. Women Characters in the novels

Women plays a vital role in any person's life by making their living smooth. Women are the backbone of the family as her role in the family starts at the dawn and ends after the dusk wherein, she works through all day just to fulfil the wishes or duties of the members of the family. Likewise, women in the select novels too plays a foremost role to protect their families. This part focuses on major and minor women characters in

the novels to give an insight of the characters and to know how these women characters have evolved through their personal dark experiences.

3.5.1. Kamla: The Story of a Hindu Child-Wife

1. Kamala

Kamala was the daughter of Narayen, a sanyasi, and an old Brahmin. She was married off soon by her father rather than Ganesh's father who had come to their house to ask for Kamala's hand in the marriage for their son. After the marriage, Kamala was happy in her new home but soon her mother-in-law started harassing her. Kamala is gradually made aware of how different the sudra girls caring for the cattle on the mountaintop where she grew up are from her, but she treats them with kindness, and they play together and support one another. When she travels as a child bride to the town's Brahman section, she finds herself in a very different reality. The dialogue she and the other disgruntled females had beside the Brahmins' well is reversed in the book. Up until her cousin Ramchander informs her of her true circumstances after her father passes away, her estranged husband passes away soon after her infant daughter's death, and she can dedicate herself to "unselfish works of charity," temple festivals and pilgrimages offer the only ways out. There is something transcendent and Christ-like about Kamala, a nobility in suffering, yet too close a parallel can be made because of her all too human need for affection, her chronic abuse-induced low self-esteem, and her naivete.

After being humiliated by her husband Kamala initially decided to quit her life but then she looked at her baby girl and dropped the idea. The sight of her daughter gave her strength and hope to live her life with her in-laws rather than her father. Women after marriage should always be in their husband's homes and only leave the house after their deaths.

2. Sai Zadhovini

Sai, who is pitiable for letting her Western education corrupt her, is the one who may be portrayed as the main antagonist of the story after Kamala's violent mother-in-law. Sai was the one who estranged her husband's affections. After having their unfulfilled arranged marriage turned down by Ramchander for leading an austere life, Sai turns to a life of crime and blackmail.

3. Kamala's mother-in-law

Ganesh's mother was a simple, impressionable woman. She very easily was led by others, and sometimes in her excitement of the moments expressed her feelings in strong language. She was a woman who treated Kamala well in the first year of her marriage however her daughter Gungi poisoned her mother's ear and made her against Kamala. She turned against Kamala and started mistreating her only daughter-in-law. But at last, when she realized that Kamala belonged to an upper-class rich Brahmin family she treated her well but it was too late to do so.

4. Gungi

A short fat girl and Ganesh's sister. She disliked Kamala and was baffled by her soft sweet ways and her willingness to do every duty that was laid on her. She hated Kamala and turned her parents against Kamala. She too soon was married off at a young age however she continued to poison her mother and brother against her.

3.5.2. The Dark Holds no Terror

1. Sarita (Saru)

Sarita is the main character and the protagonist of the novel. Sarita is a modern, educated woman. She is a woman who is trapped as an animal at the hands of her husband Manohar.

Sarita is a doctor by profession and a middle-class wife who looks for love in the relationship with her parents and husband which leads to a painful search for her own self. All the phases of Sarita's life that is childhood, youth, and adulthood which she holds in dark spirits which haunts her is death. Sarita fights against the patriarchal society in the novel. Sarita is elucidated by Deshpande in a psychiatric manner. Sarita suffers due to the death of her mother's love and deprived and deserted daughter of her mother. Saru cannot hold this great sorrow within her she wants to run away from everyone to rid herself of this nightmare terror. Saru is passionate about love and care. In college she meets Manohar; she falls in love with him. She marries him against her parent's wish. Saru looks to marriage as a door full of freedom and enters into married life, with the hope of new beginning. In earlier years of marriage, she considered herself as the luckiest woman on the earth, but afterwards, she finds that being a woman she

is not free from suckling. She is a wife who is more successful than her husband. This creates an inferiority complex in Manohar and becomes the main cause of Sarita's suffering and physical torture. She was frustrated and disappointed with external behaviour. During the daytime, she is a popular lady doctor and in the night time, she is trapped in the hands of Manohar. The position that both Sarita and Manohar possess is not identical to Manohar.

2. Kamalatai (Sarita's Mother)

Shashi Deshpande portrays Indian middle-class society and typical Indian mothers.

Kamalatai is a dominant woman over her husband. She didn't keep good relations with her husband's family, she quarrelled over a little piece of land. Kamalatai has two children Sarita and Dhruva. Sarita was a neglected child. Kamalatai's discriminatory behaviour makes Saru feel unloved and unwanted. The birth of a son gives a woman status, and she invests in her son's future, creating a symbiotic bond. Dhruva was given more importance than Sarita. Kamalatai wanted Dhruva to be brave like Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj, so she asked Dhruva when was just four years old, to sleep in a separate dark room alone. Dhruva was much pampered and spoilt by her. According to Kamalatai son's birth is auspicious because he carries the family lineage, brings in dowry or maybe traditional and superstitious beliefs could be one of the reasons. Sarita's mother was an old-fashioned housewife who remained in the kitchen for most of the time and went to her bedroom like an overnight guest, like an illiterate and uneducated woman, she also blames her daughter for the death of her son and alienated herself from her daughter for the whole of her life. After the death of her son, Kamalatai never celebrated any festival, never attended marriages nor celebrated

Sarita's birthdays. She loses her interest in life after Dhurva's death. Kamalatai was against Saru's marriage to Manohar as he belonged to a lower class (caste). Afterwards, she suffered from stomach cancer. She didn't tell of her sickness to anyone not even to her husband. It was too late when her husband knew about it. She did not forgive her daughter till her last breath.

She remained an unsatisfied woman all her life.

3. Sarita's Mavshi

Sarita's mavshi was an affectionate mother she had five children of her own yet she was very kind and affectionate towards Sarita in her childhood, but after the death of her husband, Sarita found that she was altogether a different woman. Her affection, concern, interest, and curiosity all had disappeared.

4. Smita (Sarita's friend)

Smita was a typical housewife. In her college days, she was a slim, frail-looking girl with large vulnerable eyes. But after marriage, she turned into a plump woman and mother of three children, she looked beautiful but obscene.

5. Nalu (Sarita's friend)

She is a typical middle-aged spinster. She was a professor teaching at a college, well off financially but she lacked in sweetness and composure perhaps because she was devoid of love, odd husband and children.

3.5.3. Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen

1. Uruvi

The sole child of King Vahusha and Queen Shubra, Uruvi is the princess of Pukeya. The author of the book best sums up Uruvi's inner and outer attractiveness by saying that she is "an heiress to her father's legacy, his intelligence, and her mother's charming beauty." She was too bold to consider the repercussions of her actions, too proud to exercise caution, and too passionate to convey her views with restraint, despite the alluring fire in her eyes, warmth in her smile, and passion in her voice. Uruvi is an optimistic girl who inherits great skills, knowledge, abilities, and mental strength.

She has been characterized as a confident woman with strong self-esteem and selfassurance in her skills. She gave off the impression of being an inquisitive child who was eager to learn and had an intellectual curiosity. She likes to ask questions and look into a lot of diverse topics. She has learned a lot of things because of this intrinsic personality. She is therefore exceptionally skilled in all fields, including astronomy, mathematics, herbal gardening, horse riding, ayurveda, and healing.

Uruvi is described as an efficient woman who excels in every capacity she plays. She always upholds her ideals by making her parents, King Vahusha and Queen Shubra, proud, by being their daughter. Her spouse Karna has always benefited from her moral support and motivation. She's always shown her in-laws, Adhiradha and Radha, a great deal of love and respect as their daughter-in-law. She cared for Karna's first wife, Virushali, and her children with wisdom and understanding, always understanding their suffering. As a mother, she instils all virtues and principles in her son Vrishakethu.

For all women, Uruvi is an exemplary role model and an encouraging woman. The virtues and significance of selfconfidence and accountability are passed down to modern women through her character.

She is special in her manner. Even at an early age, she realises her full potential by immersing herself in a variety of educational pursuits. She connects with others more readily since she possesses strong interpersonal skills. It instructs her to get along well with everyone after she marries Karna. Her upbeat demeanour earns her a good reputation in her new household.

As a princess, Uruvi had the freedom to learn and permitted Gurukul to further her education. Uruvi rode her horse to the Gurukul every morning, where she spent the day immersed in the world of medicinal herbs and other treatments, even though girls her age are often trained to become delicate princesses. She strives for excellence in her areas of proficiency, which include music and art. She has been endowed with a unique talent for healing. The remedies for ailing bones and poor skin were not herbal paste and sandalwood. However, her calm, gentle touch did the magic.

Her education came in very handy during the Kurukshetra War when she stayed close to the battle-scarred fields, tending to the gory corpses and ripped limbs of injured troops. Having witnessed the wounded and dying soldiers on the battlefield, she is a kind-hearted woman who understands the terrible effects of war. With a gentle heart and an unadulterated soul, Uruvi is a charming queen.

She had made a significant contribution by using her gentle touch and smile to heal numerous injured warriors and heroes. In the past, women were only permitted to gently tend to the wounds of warriors; only men were permitted to take part in battles that claimed thousands of lives. Thousands of wounded and terminally ill heroes are

treated thanks to Uruvi's knowledge of medicinal herbs. Except for princesses in the past, women are not allowed to receive an education. She demonstrated that women are more capable than men in every discipline. Women are naturally endowed with an insatiable thirst for creativity, love, and sacrifice, which elevates them beyond males in every endeavour. A person's life is a journey of learning. Every person's life experiences shape who they are and motivate them to pursue self-actualization. Education is a crucial component that helps people reach their greatest potential. The best illustration of how education can help a person identify their strengths and weaknesses and maximise their potential is Uruvi. She has grown up to be a responsible, educated woman who contributes to the betterment of humanity.

2. Kunti

Kunti was born as Princess Pritha to King Shursena of Mathura, but her father gave her away to his childless relative King Kunti Bhog. She was the wife of King Pandu and bore him three sons with a special boon of hers. The Sage Durvasa had blessed Kunti with a boon and shared a mantra through which she could invoke any divine being to provide her with a son. And like this Yudhishtira, Bheema and Arjuna were born to Kunti. Kunti also had a hidden truth about the birth of her first child from Surya God through this boon Karna however, as a virgin and unmarried girl she had to abandon him to save the respect of her and her family in the society. When she saw Karna for the first time as a grown-up at the Hastinapur archery tournament she was shocked and realised that he was her first son Karna. When the war was about to happen Kunti visited Karna and disclosed the truth of his birth and confessed that as a mother she loved him very much and asked him to switch sides and join his real brothers so that

he could also be safe. Karna declined her offer and said that he would not kill any of his sons except Arjuna. There was definitely a complicated relationship between Karna and Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas. She did love Karna, even though she did not identify him as her son in public. Because of his birth circumstances and subsequent adoption, Kunti felt a mixture of love, remorse, and regret for Karna. Although Kunti rejected him at first, Karna maintained a strong feeling of loyalty and regard for her despite not knowing his true ancestry for the majority of his life. Kunti was the embodiment of selflessness; the patriarchal system oppressed her. Kunti was a woman who lost everything, including her husband, father, son, kingdom, and pleasure. She was the woman who endured great suffering throughout her life. Every single lady aspires to have a happy life with her spouse and kids. She yearned for the same satisfaction and pleasure her entire life, but patriarchal society and fate both kept her from fulfilling these aspirations. She yet led a dignified life and did not fear anything. Kunti was well respected and appreciated by Uruvi because of his excellence and selflessness. Kunti was a very sweet woman. She regretted this decision of leaving her firstborn till the end of Karna and her death and repented of her decision forever.

3. Vrushali

Karna's first wife is Vrushali. She is the embodiment of love and tranquillity. When she initially learned of Karna's second marriage, she handled the matter coolly rather than escalating into an argument and remarked "If he is going to be happy so be it" (*Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*, 45). Vrushali was a passive woman who believed in becoming the shadow of her husband. She also was a wise and pious woman. She and Karna knew each other from their childhood, and both grew up playing together. When

Karna was about the age of marriage his foster father Adhiratha chose Vrushali as his bride as they were good friends from their younger days.

4. Draupadi

Draupadi was the daughter of King Draupad and Prishati and she was born out of fire along with her brother Dhristadyumna. She had such grace and elegance that all the men desired her to be their wife. When Karna had attended her swayamvara she had rejected him to participate in the contest as he belonged to a low caste. However, Draupadi also admitted that she had a soft corner for Karna and loved him more than her husband Arjuna. She also regretted not marrying Karna due to his low birth.

5. Radha

The foster mother of Karna loved and cared for him more than her real son. She never discriminated between her real and foster son. She was a kind, sweet and simple woman living a peaceful life with her nuclear family. She was kind towards Uruvi and supported Karna in whatever decisions he took for the betterment of the family.

6. Queen Shubra

The wife of King Vahusha and mother of Uruvi. She was a kind and soft-hearted woman. Queen Shubra was against Uruvi's idea of getting married to Karna but at last granted her permission to see her only child happy and to find the love of her daughter's life.

7. Bhanumati

Wife of Duryodhana and a close friend of Uruvi. She was a good human being and treated everyone with more care than her husband.

These women through characters portray their boldness, strengths and weaknesses. They are empowering women who seek for freedom from their everyday discrimination and male dominance. They wish to live their lives on their own terms which is full of freedom without any barrier. These characters somewhat can motivate those who wish to seek freedom but are silent due to fear or lack of self-confidence. They can definitely encourage those who wish to live a carefree life without any pressure.

3.6. Chapter conclusion

This chapter briefs us on the lives of the authors and their journey towards their writing career with women being a main protagonist giving it a touch of feminism. A detail into the life of these writers helps to know more about them and their journey towards opting writing as an occupation. It also gives details of their other works which also speaks about feminism or are of women centric. It also gives in short summary of the texts to know what exactly happens in the texts and it will help to connect dots with the feminist issues which are discussed in terms of themes and symbolisms. It also focused on major and minor women characters from the novels and how they too have suffered the feminist issues in their households along with the main protagonists.

Sattianandhan, Deshpande and Kane are feminist writers, and it is evident through the above short summary of their personal life and from the short summary of the texts. They have skillfully proved their feministic writings and have given justice to the voiceless women who are always ignored in other male-centric novels. Their novels definitely relate to real life problems and issues that women face till date in society.

CHAPTER 4: INK CONNECTIONS: BRIDGING WORLDS THROUGH COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The issues that women face each day are countless. They go through a lot however they don't fail to satisfy their family needs. After the deep study of the novels some feminist issues were noticed such as Discrimination, Domestic and physical violence, Patriarchy, Abuse, Enforced Widowhood, Extra marital affairs, Marital Rape, Forceful marriage, Threshold of womanhood and Gender-based issues. In spite of the various ordeals they do not fail to attend to the needs of their family. There is a deeply ingrained belief that it is women who have to cater to the domestic needs. As a consequence, there is often a conflict - a struggle to balance personal desires with familial needs. This chapter therefore undertakes an examination of feminist issues that the women have to deal as a consequence of this struggle. After a close reading of the selected novels certain issues were identified like...The next section will examine these issues through the lens of feminism.

4.1.1. Feminism as seen in Krupabai Satthianandhan's work.

Krupabai Satthianandhan's work '*Kamala: A Story of Hindu Child-Wife*' was one of the earliest works which focused on a female as a protagonist. Krupabai has portrayed how the life of a young girl has been changed drastically after her marriage. Her young and tender age, which was full of enjoyment and without any concerns, has completely vanished and is packed with fears and tensions after marriage.

The young girls who are married off by their parents at a young age suffer the same humiliation and violence in their homes at the hands of their in-laws and husbands. Kamala and her new, young married friends meet at a well and discuss the issues they face at home. Bhagirathi, one of the women from the village where Kamala

lived, suffered terrible persecution at the hands of her husband. One day her husband got a mistress at home and she left his home, however, Bhairathi's mother took her daughter back to her husband's home and said 'What jewels he gave you! Can't you at least be satisfied with them?' This incident shows that women are not allowed to leave their husband's homes willingly and it is said that married women can only leave their husband's houses after their death. In the novel women only let the other women suffer be it your mother. A woman without a husband is unlucky and disabled. For many young Hindu girls, this was their way of life. A life of subservience and letting her husband rule her life. This account of Kamala's friend's terrible fate is relevant to the times in which many Hindu women found themselves. Satthianadhan utilizes this tale to illustrate the conflicting opinions that the public has about infidelity in marriage. The expectations placed on women to respect their husbands' wishes and keep silent. The beliefs that physically abusing a woman is not bad; rather, it is a means of improving her as a wife. In this moment, Kamala discovers a side to her husband that she had never seen before: his dominating nature.

Kamala represents social consciousness. Satthianadhan was born in 1862, under the hegemonic British colonization. Brought up as a devout Christian and exposed to the Arnoldian educational system as well as Victorian feminism and literature, she was deeply influenced by the colonialist and missionary discourse that India was as helpless and degenerate as its women (the metaphor for the nation) and that only the colonizers' civilizing arm could lift it out of its plight. She was also involved in the nationalist politics of the century's latter decades, particularly the effort to reshape the Indian New Woman a concept popularized by colonial and missionary discourse into the Aryan woman, who was praised for both her independence and her

adherence to traditional home beliefs. Kamala makes these difficult and current topics fictitious. More covertly, Saththianadhan's work is a psychological novel that deceives the reader by addressing the protagonist's and author's frightening experience of cultural schizophrenia. The goal is to liberate the protagonist from the conventional roles of widow and child-wife and expose her to feminist individualism as it is understood in the West. But later, more on this final intricacy. Frightening experience of cultural schizophrenia. The goal is to liberate the protagonist from the conventional roles of widow and child-wife and expose her to feminist individualism as it is understood in the West.

After moving Ganesh and Kamala from Ganesh's parent's house to a city apartment of their own, Saththianadhan gives Kamala the chance to express her latent feminism. Saththianadhan allows them to transcend the customs of the joint or extended family by giving them this independence. The idea of living with her husband alone without his intruding family had Kamala "in ecstasies." She is carried away into fantasy worlds where she imagines that she will bring happiness to her newborn son. It is crucial to emphasise that her aspirations are devoted selflessly to her husband's happiness and well-being. According to her cultural upbringing, Kamala blames herself for Ganesh's frequent separations from her in her own home, "bringing herself low even to the dust at her husband's feet." At the same time, her newly awakened selfhood grows subversively and becomes uncontrollable; it makes its statement when Ganesh starts entertaining Sai, his lover, in their home. The novel's most striking passage is when the unwaveringly modest pativrata (husband-worshiper), subtly confronts her husband and his mistress. 'The author acknowledges that it was unusual for a woman to act in this way when describing how Kamala forcibly removes Sai from her home.

Feminist ideas are awakened at this moment wherein Kamala takes a stand for herself and her equal rights towards marriage and speaks against Ganesh's extramarital affair with Sai. From a feminist standpoint, the portrayal of Sai the intelligent, free-spirited, and rebellious woman—as the oddball, rejected woman suggests the author's ideological and psychological ambiguity.

Applying Gilbert and Gubar's idea of the psychological pattern of women writers from the nineteenth century to Sathianadhan's situation appears reasonable. Taking their argument further, one could hypothesize that the "monster" or "mad woman," Sai, who is a fiercely independent female character, is actually an integral part of the woman writer's inner self, 'the author's double,' whom the author guiltily repudiates, and who aims to "destroy all the patriarchal structures which both Sathianadhan and her submissive heroine try to accept as inevitable." Then, through this "mad woman," is Sathianadhan expressing her own selfdivision and her wish "to both accept and reject the strictures of patriarchal society"? Perhaps Sai in Kamala might also be understood as a concealed part of the writer's inner self, seeking the power of self-articulation in a society that banned it, even if she is a diluted form of the monster/mad lady of nineteenth-century western women's fiction. Kamala's actions and words represent a significant and historic advancement for upper-caste Hindu women in India—quite the contrary. By asserting her right to independence, Kamala transcends the conventional line. At least in fiction, Kamala's revolt represents the pinnacle of Sathianadhan's feminist stance in the book; she has freed the upper-caste Hindu lady from the servitude of silent husband-worship. By divorcing her spouse, Kamala advances a little further toward self-liberation. Her decision to physically cut off all ties

to her home serves to further solidify her psychological rejection of tradition.
(Krupabai Satthianandhan, 1-18)

4.1.2. Feminism as seen in Shashi Deshpande's work.

Shashi Deshpande's work '*The Dark Holds No Terrors*' is completely different in that it dispels the myths of womanhood as the embodiment of all virtues and man's superiority. The issues experienced by career women, a relatively new topic in Indian English fiction, form the basis of the story. Saru serves as a metaphor for the middle-class working class.

When Saru was younger, her parents disregarded her in favour of her brother Dhruva. She receives no love from her parents and is not considered important. She remembers the happy, celebratory atmosphere in the home at her brother's naming ceremony. As a child, she was firmly ingrained with the belief that she was her parents' liability. The way her mother adored her son at her daughter's cost the novelist used her daughter's suffering as a focal point to unite her feminist beliefs. Saru's mother often warns her not to go outside in the sun since it will aggravate her dark skin. The unintentional drowning death of her brother was a turning point in her life. She has been plagued by the memory of her mother accusing her of allowing Dhruva to drown on purpose for her entire life. She feels bad about herself as well because she thought she should have done more than just watch as her sibling drowned. She never challenges her mother's accusations against her. Thus, Shashi Deshpande exposes the societal side of rivalry between siblings that results from a mother's excessive love for her son.

Shashi Deshpande's work *The Dark Holds No Terrors* challenges the notions of male dominance and female perfection. This novel is unique in Indian English fiction because it focuses on the challenges of a career woman. Saru represents the middle-class working women of modern India. She defies tradition but eventually attempts to reconcile with the current realities. This is mostly because she is going through a transitional period. Consequently, the entire progression of the book may be seen in four phases, such as denial, anger, fleeing from reality, and finally an effort to reassemble. Shashi Deshpande's portrayal of a woman's suffering is sympathetic, but not glorified. Shashi Deshpande maintains objectivity throughout the work, avoiding generalisations and partial perspectives. The novel investigates questions such as 'Does Shashi Deshpande recognise the challenges faced by women in a male-dominated society?' Particularly those who lack economic independence. The book transcends beyond the specific boundaries of feminist issues. Shashi Deshpande explores questions about human connections, man's sad loneliness, and other generally relevant topics with a lady at the centre of the story. It portrays a dichotomy that is ingrained in Indian culture and influences ideas about what constitutes a woman's proper and improper function in both public and private life. As a result, in private and public spheres, women are expected to be both conventional and contemporary. The pitiful condition of a middleclass working woman from India is exposed. By means of this story, Deshpande challenges the notion that the wife's work can provide her with the tools to achieve financial autonomy and autonomy. However, a woman's occupation does not have the capacity to lessen the gap between men and women.

Sarita's entire life now revolves around the single goal of survival. Saru is mentally prepared to confront Manu, as When it's time for Sarita to confront her life,

she realises she can't rely on outside support and must find her way out. She resolves to overcome the darkness that has persisted in her life for a long time. The novel mentions a woman drowning herself in a well after being mistreated by her in-laws. Another female victim was tied to a post by her in-laws in cattle shed and fed. Saru despises her mother's harsh judgment. The emphasis is not on men's brutality to women but on women's cruelty to women. This highlights the novelist's unconventional female perspective.

Shashi Deshpande, as a realist writer, has often created novels that highlight the patriarchal oppression of women and their souls. Patriarchy can take many different shapes. Women face numerous forms of subjugation. The novel deals openly with a husband's sexually insane behaviour of raping his wife at night. Deshpande depicts the harsh reality that the female heroine faces every night.

4.1.3. Feminism as seen in Kavita Kane's work

In Kavita Kane's *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*, Uruvi is depicted as a mainstream character who recounts her side of the story through her thoughts, conversations, and actions.

This novel is not only from a marginalized woman's character but also from a pariah's wife's perspective. Uruvi despite being the princess of Pukeya marries Karna who is a sutaputra.

She broke the patriarchal stereotype by marrying a pariah despite having a huge gap in their social status.

The patriarchal system oppresses all marginalised groups, and not only women. Uruvi's father, King Vahusha, represents patriarchal oppression by fighting against Karna's status as an outcast, preventing her from marrying a lower caste. Uruvi, was the sole daughter of King Vahusha and Queen Shubra of Pukeya, hence she has always been cherished and indulged with comforts since childhood. Uruvi's decision to marry Karna highlights patriarchal oppression. For her, being his wife provides significance to her existence. Uruvi's parents' initial objection to marrying Karna indicates a tight caste structure and patriarchal culture. The caste system prioritizes patriarchy and limits individual freedom.

Karna's Wife is unmistakably feminist fiction in which stories are reimagined, rewritten, and retold from a female perspective. The author concentrates on a character that has previously been overlooked by readers. The title *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* depicts the protagonist as being marginalised twice, first as a woman and then as an outcast. Unlike other docile female characters, Uruvi fiercely challenges patriarchal society and questions every wrong assumption. Kane delves deeply into Uruvi's psychology and portrays her as a powerful woman who defies society's traditional clichés.

Uruvi revolts after learning that Karna ordered Dushana to drag Draupadi to the court and disrobe her in front of all. Karna cannot stand her rage anymore. She takes a stand against her husband's unfairness and leaves immediately. Though the reader perceives the character of Uruvi as haughty, her attitude in questioning patriarchy makes her a strong and powerful figure. Kane portrays her as a forceful and aggressive woman who is very effective at questioning incorrect concepts, traditional methods, and patriarchal rules.

Uruvi's direct approach to Karna demonstrates her yearning for an egalitarian society that transcends wars and individual battles against patriarchal systems. Her dedication to maintaining harmony and healing reflects her ultimate goal of creating a peaceful world. Uruvi's behaviour exemplifies the term feminism. Uruvi's feelings for Karna are portrayed as a mere infatuation. But Kane interprets it differently. Uruvi's yearning for Karna is more than a fad. Uruvi, Pukeya's pampered princess, adored Karna, whom other people despised. In Kane's language, her bravery tempted her to fall in love with an outcast by defying royal society while also understanding every conceivable conclusion.

Kane's portrayal of two different women's natures through two different characters, Uruvi and Vrushali, demonstrates the complicated temperament of women, the submissive and the challenging. Uruvi does not belong to the typical "life" guild, which lives their lives by entirely surrendering to their husband's will; she breaches all Karna rules. She is not Karna's shadow; instead, she creates his voice and universe. The only shame she has ever felt is for intruding into Vrushali's 'marital paradise' without her consent. When Karna praises Vrushali, she transforms into a normal wife who expresses her envy of her husband's first wife.

In this novel, all the royal ladies, Uruvi's friends, and acquaintances have disregarded, avoided, and refused to join her; moreover, others have treated her with 'frosty scorn'. She becomes aware of her low self-esteem and her fall from grace. She is relegated to the status of an inferior royal lady, an outsider who has lost her identity as Pukeya's princess and Anga's Queen. The treatment or humiliation she receives from them reminds her of her mother's warnings about her future life with Karna, which she previously dismissed.

She has a variety of roles to play in her life/novel. The role of a decent daughter, obedient queen, curer, and devoted wife. She might be described as a reformer who has worked tirelessly to transform society's attitudes about outcasts. Her love for her husband has no bounds. Her wrath towards those who mistreat her husband is clear in her actions.

Historically, women had no say in society, especially when it came to protecting their husbands. However, Kane's Uruvi occasionally reminds us of Kannaki, the mythological heroine who burned down the entire city through her curse to seek revenge of her spouse's murder. After Karna died in the battle, she rejected male dominance by refusing to travel to Hastinapur as Karna's queen and denying her son the title of king. She maintained her autonomy while refraining from violent clashes with established systems. She decides to repair the emotional scars of war, expressing her anger and rejection of the conflict.

Feminism is closely linked to the select novels as it can be frequently seen in the novels. Satthianandhan, Deshpande and Kane have skillfully used the feminism in their respective texts giving justice to the term and the protagonists. They have explained how the women have faced the feminist issues and have successfully overcome it through their will.

Hence it is fair to say that the authors have adeptly used the idea of feminism in their texts.

4.2. The Author's depiction of the problems faced by women in the novels

This section of the research focuses on the issues of gender inequality, discrimination and many other problems faced by women in the select novels. It examines women's social roles, experiences, and interests and how women were forced to forget all their other roles and were forced and were bound to household chores.

Women have been shown to adhere to century-old family traditions in which they often take on a subordinate or submissive position to their male counterparts. Because men have always believed they are part of a higher social class than women, they have shaped everything to suit their needs. They have established a realm in which they hold the position of lords and women are their subjects. Indian traditional society continues to condone and even encourage the subjugation of women. It is present in social norms, human standards of conduct, religious concepts, the legal system, and even within families. Women suffer from being ensnared in a network of mechanisms that keep them from generally breaking the rules. The innocent world of women is gradually broken down by patriarchy and customary rules that bind society's activities. Everyday life presents a lot of problems for women. Our society solely considers and values the traditional roles that women play as mothers, wives, daughters, and so on. A woman may be passionate about her uniqueness, have a professional identity, and respect herself.

The common problem which the Protagonists of the select novels have faced is Discrimination. They were discriminated by their own family members at different phases in their lives. They were discriminated in terms of their gender, caste, class and color. Though the select authors belong to different centuries and wrote about different women at different times they have faced common problems of being discriminated

and ill treatment. They are discriminated at the hands of their own family members and their loved ones. Since women are considered to be inferior to men, they are not allowed to speak their hearts out rather are forced to suffer in silence.

Satthianadhan's struggle to reconcile two very different worlds is revealed in the book as a confession of her inner dilemma. Her advocacy for women's freedom through western ideology and her reformatory point of view in Kamala are two ways that she demonstrates her dedication to women's issues. While it could be argued that in part, she does so to reveal and address her disturbing experience of cultural self-division, her reliance on the ideologies of her distant past is almost equally insistent as she reaches out for them through the fictional agency of some characters created in her novel. Kamala's early years are spent in freedom until she is forced to marry and become a part of society's customs. Satthianadhan highlights the social limits that even parents face. When the time comes, even though parents are reluctant to let their children be married, it is a custom that must be followed since young girls in Hindu culture are typically married off at the age determined by the parents. One can see the innocence of a youngster who does not fully understand the obstacles Kamala must endure, as well as the profound sorrow Kamala's father feels for her future.

Kamala must give up the things she enjoyed as a youngster and become a conventional Hindu wife. Due to her early marriage, Kamala must rapidly mature into a young woman since she is unable to live the life of a child. Early girl marriage, according to Satthianadhan, is the reason why many women live their lives serving their husbands and kids and don't have time for an education or to form their own opinions. The subject that Satthianadhan discusses so candidly is Kamala's humility

and muteness following marriage. Serving one's husband and in-laws without question leaves a lady unable to express her own opinions or speak up for herself.

In her newly married life, Kamala is constantly under observation by her mother-in-law, and she must obtain permission from her in-laws to leave the house. Kamala visits her father-in-law frequently since he is understanding and reminds her of her own father.

Kamala, however, receives brutal treatment from her sister-in-law Gungi and mother-in-law Ramabai. Due to her low-income background, they view her as a burden, and they frequently mention that she was raised without knowing the identity of her actual mother. This section of the work by Satthianadhan illustrates the Hindu ritual of dowry, which involves giving money or jewellery to the husband's family from the bride's family and this also highlights the issue of dowry.

These customs exacerbated the desire for a male and were a burden for many families with daughters. A daughter-in-law who received a dowry that her husband's family felt was insufficient was treated horribly and eventually lost all status within the family. Furthermore, Sathianadhan highlights how common it is in many Indian households for there to be a bad mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. a never-ending struggle with jealousy and a better status within the family for their son's affection. Mother-in-laws are frequently portrayed as nasty to their new daughters-in-law, a notion that has caused many Indian women's suffering for centuries. The young girl must endure physical and mental abuse in addition to living in a difficult environment. In Satthianadhan, the typical Indian Hindu woman is portrayed as modest and gentle, predisposed to bear any hardship that comes her way simply because she is a woman.

Furthermore, Saththianadhan demonstrates how the woman's inability to advance as a human being against her will is what keeps her from feeling alive.

Sarita illustrates societal inequality in the context of raising a male and a female child in Deshpande's '*The Dark Holds No Terrors*.' Deshpande also depicts a picture of spousal abuse and men's inferiority feeling when their wives achieve greater success in school and the workforce. This book examines the various challenges, problems, and hurdles that women face as they forge their own identities and hate all forms of limitation.

Since she was a little child, Sarita has encountered prejudice, exploitation, and hostility in her own family. Her mother loves her son and Sarita being a daughter is deprived of that motherly love. In response to her brother Dhruva's passing, her mother even chastises her, asking, "Why didn't you die? "Why are you alive when he's dead?" (*The Dark Holds No Terrors*, 226). These harsh statements have made Sarita upset and thinks about how she will identify herself in society and her environment to go forward. Her mother desires Sarita's death rather than her son's, treating her as an unexpected child. In order to break through social taboos and establish her value as a reputable physician, Sarita seeks to create her identity. She distances herself from her spouse and her family in the process, nevertheless. With remarkable effectiveness, thus, Deshpande depicts the limitations and struggles a woman faces on her path to maturity. Over the course of her life, a woman faces numerous obstacles. Sarita aspires to achieve harmony and find her unique personality while upholding all her obligations as a lady. Deshpande does a fantastic job of capturing the struggle and turmoil a middle-class lady faces in her personal and professional life in an attempt to forge her own identity. Sarita is always aware of the biased social factors that force them to occupy a

submissive role. Women have thus historically been restricted to domestic tasks like cooking and cleaning. Due to their subordinate status to men, they are consistently excluded from public life. Sarita detests the status that women occupy, although she occasionally finds enjoyment in acting in this way.

Kane attempts, using the mythological structure of the Mahabharata, to give voice to another figure of the sacrificial lady who was also a victim of patriarchal hierarchy. Through Kunti's portrayal, Kane paints a heart-breaking portrait of a woman who has lost everything, including her name, identity, father, spouse, kingdom, and pleasures. Kane presents the victim Kunti to us to demonstrate the extent of a woman's suffering at the hands of patriarchy.

Uruvi was a pampered child and a Pukeya Princess hence she was respected in society and never knew the feeling of discrimination. But after her marriage to Karna, an outcast, she was considered to be inferior by society and the people who were close to her. Even her closest friends avoided talking to her and ignored her at every function attended. Though Karna was Anga King, a position given to him by Duryodhana Karna was still considered an outcast or Pariah. Hence Uruvi too was considered the same by the society wherein she had to face a lot of humiliation and disrespect.

Caste and creed discrimination is something that Uruvi, a brave royal woman in Kane, does not hold. By highlighting the difficulties faced by a woman who marries an outcast guy, the author has subtly addressed the problem of caste prejudice in her work. The author discusses the problems associated with prejudice against women and caste. To present the dominant socioeconomic structure of Indian culture, she explains how these topics were addressed throughout the country's mythological literature. Through Uruvi and Karna, Kane brings up certain contemporary themes of gender and

social status disparity in India. By illustrating the reactions of other female characters to Uruvi's revelation of her love for Karna, the Outcast, she suggests deeper implications. The mythological women were influenced by some discriminatory caste and gender-based ideas of the hegemonic patriarchal structure, as seen by the common association of caste with nobility or its consideration in emotional matters like love or marriage. The author demonstrates how Karna is viewed by everyone as an unwelcome guest in the royal game who has taken Arjuna's honour. He was considered unqualified to contend with a Kshatriya prince because he was a charioteer's kid, she says. When Kripacharya disputes his identification, Bhima mocks him, telling him that since his father is King Dhitrashtra's charioteer, he is qualified to "rule the stable, not the kingdom of Anga." Additionally, the story describes how most people who think that merit has a set pedigree discriminate against Karna despite their belief that he is a man of courage and competence.

Even though Uruvi was raised in a royal household, she finds herself alone and in a difficult situation after marrying Karna. She marries a man from the lower classes of society, which isolates her and paints her as a criminal. Kane reveals how gender consciousness and caste conditioning shaped the myth of the woman, leading to prejudiced beliefs and attitudes.

The author reveals the interpellated power of the hegemonic patriarchal structure through it. The woman is aware of her gender, caste, and nobility, as the text suggests. Very potent is the novelist's depiction of the androcentric, caste-conscious mythological world of Hastinapur. To control both the woman and the members of the lower caste, it can force the woman to adopt and adhere to specific norms and customs established by the men in the upper caste.

Thus, the feminist issues faced by women in various forms are highlighted in the above section.

4.3. Complexities of Gender Dynamics

This section will examine the complexities of gender dynamics that the protagonists in the novels have faced. Gender which tells the sex of any person and dynamics means the way people or any other living being behave and rejoiner on particular situation or scenario.

The interactions and relationships that arise between individuals based on gender are referred to as gender dynamics [Gender and power dynamics, Anonymous]. Gender roles and the power structures that define them are socially constructed concepts that influence gender dynamics. Gender dynamics have the power to both challenge and reinforce prevailing norms, depending on how they are expressed. For example, a man could say that women should only stay at home and take care of the children, while a woman could say that it is acceptable for men to experience and express their emotions, including crying. Gender stereotypes have the potential to cause unhealthy or unequal relationships by making people feel as though they and others should act or "be" a certain way based just on their gender. Like when one person has complete control over decisions and the other is left in the dark. We encourage negative and unhealthy assumptions about gender and the connections between different genders when we have gender preconceptions about how individuals should behave. It is imperative to acknowledge that gender stereotypes and norms can be reinforced and

upheld by anybody, regardless of identity, and that it is in everyone's best interest to strive towards their deconstruction or challenge.

Gender Dynamics in Kamala: A Story of Hindu Child-wife

In the novels too one can see the complexities of gender dynamics and the way it is portrayed in the novels by the authors. Kamala, a young girl, had to go through a lot of trauma and disturbance at a tender age due to her in-laws, husband and sister-in-law. Her mother-in-law and sister-in-law tortured her and cursed her every time they saw her. They were cruel towards her and after a point, Ganesh's mother turned her son Ganesh too, against Kamala who loved his wife dearly. He had taken up the responsibility of teaching his wife but left it halfway due to his mother as she passed the misinformation about Kamala. Kamala had no say in her husband's home, and she quietly had to listen to everything that her mother-in-law told her. One day when her in-laws did not give her any lunch, she quietly accepted it and stayed hungry rather than speak. She couldn't dare to ask for food for herself and hung around hungry. She was a carefree child before marriage but after getting married she was bound to duties and responsibilities which she was not aware of. Kamala had to quietly accept and listen to whatever her mother-in-law asked her to do; however, no matter how much Kamala worked at home her mother-in-law always criticized her. Ganesh couldn't speak against her mother hence he used to keep quiet and let Kamala suffer without her fault.

The public realm, where Kamala and her friends regularly have unrestricted conversations about their lives, and the private realm of her family life, where she is confined, are the two constants in her life. She either has to endure her in-laws' abuse

or is left alone in her private life, which turns into a place of agony. Whether it's the party she attends, the pilgrimage she goes on with her friends or the public areas provided by the well beyond their houses, Kamala is content and unrestrained. 'The freedom and innocent pleasures such journeys afford are in striking contrast to the dull, artificial surroundings of the Hindu homes.' (*Kamala: A Story of Hindu Child-Wife*, 67).

Gender Dynamics in The Dark Holds No Terrors

Sarita has little self-esteem and is modest and humble. She is also highly sensitive. She is a middle-class woman who aspires to be an anti-matriarch and wants to escape the strict boundaries set by her mother. She also wants to live in a place where she may follow her own decisions without interference. Her quest to find the secret strength within every human being that transforms existence into something enjoyable and achievable drives her to despise her parents' house. Through pain, realism, and self-discovery, Sarita realises that she is no longer afraid of the dark. In a world ruled by men, where women have few options for escape, she manages to live. Rather than giving in to her issues or running away from them, she faces them head-on with incredible fortitude.

Because they were undermining her ability to survive as a human being in the family, Sarita found it humiliating that her mother preferred her brother Dhruva and showed no concern for her. The excitement that filled their home on the day of his naming ceremony is another thing she recalls wherein on that day she was completely neglected by her parents.

The mother-daughter bond should be enjoyable for each girl, but it is harsh for Sarita. Her existence is filled with helplessness, fear, and panic, and the idea of disowning one's mother raises concerns. Gender prejudice and lovelessness are the foundations of the motherdaughter relationship in the book *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. The primary figure was Sarita's mother. Sarita is a girl who has dark skin. First, for being a female, and then, for being dark, Sarita's mother doesn't like her. Dark-skinned girls are considered less valuable when they are married according to Indian custom. Parents should provide a larger dowry for a girl who is dark-skinned. Sarita experiences anxiety and isolation as a result of her mother's intense affection for her sibling. Sarita feels a strong influence from her parents' partisanship. Her nature starts to become rebellious. She silently observes the entire incident without acting to save her brother when he unintentionally drowns in the pond. The belief that she is to blame for his demise has haunted her ever since.

Deshpande skilfully captures the patriarchal structure of our culture as well as parents' longing for a boy. Her indifference rendered Sarita the victim of their denied love.

For her schooling, Sarita struggles against her mother. Despite her mother's disapproval, Sarita travels to Bombay to pursue her medical studies. She then rebels by getting married to a man who is not from her caste. At her decision to wed Manohar, Sarita's argument with her mother reaches a breaking point. She has shown that she rejects the customs and ideals that her orthodox mother upholds by choosing a boy from a lower caste. Following her marriage, Sarita is offended to learn from a shared acquaintance that her mother had stated,

"Let her know more sorrow that she has given me". (*The Dark Holds No Terrors*, 197).

Sarita believed that her mother had cursed her, which was why she was "unhappy and destroyed" in her marriage. As soon as Sarita is acknowledged as a doctor, issues between her and Manu begin. A man who views himself as superior will not let a woman achieve fame. Similarly, when Sarita succeeds in her career as a doctor, Manu embarks on his discriminatory endeavour. Manu's sense of insecurity is greatly heightened by her economic independence, which negatively impacts their married life. Her accomplishment bruises his ego, making him feel inadequate, which drives him to act viciously. He acts like a normal person during the day, but at night he becomes a cunning rapist who attempts to prove his masculinity by attacking Sarita.

Gender Dynamics in Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen

Uruvi is a bold character portrayed by Kane who doesn't think before questioning the wrong deeds. She is an open-minded person who has no fear of anything and takes most of her decisions firmly without having any fear of the consequences. She was stubborn and obstinate. She led a self-determined existence, making decisions about her life that she stuck with until the very end. To wed her beloved Karna, Uruvi overcame all obstacles, "antagonism," and "disgrace." Her marriage was just the start of many hardships for her. She accepted accountability for her choices and stayed true to herself the entire time. A lady is without class or caste. Her family from birth determines who she is till she marries into a different family. Next, her affiliation with and responsibility for her married home serve to identify her.

It was a harsh reminder to Karna of his ineptitude and his desire to wed a princess of the Kshatriya caste. Uruvi was therefore subjected to social criticism and mockery as the spouse of an outcast. His stormy history, anxious present, and agonising

future had to be shared with her. However, she never felt discouraged or regretted her choice. When things got hard, she would remind herself that she had married the love of her life a privilege that not many women in her community had. Uruvi lost her relationships, acquaintances, and society when she married Karna, a person below her caste. She and her family became social misfits in an instant. Uruvi gave up her opulence, the luxuries of her palace, and most significantly, her standing, influence, and regard in order to accompany the Sutaputra.

She would not stop talking about the human conscience and would question her elders whenever they made a biased choice. Additionally, Uruvi asserted without hesitation that Kunti was to blame for Karna being an outsider and pariah in his own family as well as in society. She reasoned that he became friends with evil due to the rejection, disregard, and abandonment of the decent and upright. Though spiteful, Duryodhana was the only one who saved him and showed him the respect he deserved when he was being treated with disgrace. He was the only one to openly praise Karna for his virtues, bravery, nobility, and most significantly, his merit as a superb archer and warrior.

His first wife Vrushali was wise, obedient, cool, collected, flexible, and mature. She possessed the ideal attributes of a "wife," being kind and obedient. She and her husband belonged to the same class of adhiraths. Up until Draupadi appeared between them, Karna and Vrushali had a happy and blissful married life and were loyal to one another. In whatever her husband did, Vrushali was submissive and obedient. She submitted silently when Karna attended Draupadi's swayamvara and expressed his wish to wed her. Her children belonged to their father; thus she had no legal claim to them. The future and fate of his children were decided by the father. Vrushali was so helpless and

unable to prevent any of her children from being killed during the crucial Kurukshetra war. When he unexpectedly married Uruvi and brought her home, she was also obligated to accept her fate without resistance. Vrushali wasn't any different from other royal ladies of the past or present in that she didn't have the authority to speak out against her lord's decisions. Women such as Gandhari, and Kunti were also victims of deceit and exploitation before Vrushali, but they lacked the ability to challenge society. Women were forced to share their husbands with other women since polygamy was accepted and acknowledged in society. Draupadi was the second wife of her husbands and the one who had the audacity to confront the court about morality, dharma, fairness, and a husband's rights and duties. Vrushali took pleasure in carrying out her responsibilities in line with social norms. To make her husband happy, she was content to act the part of a "good" wife by showing patience, consideration, and resolve. She was happy to have him by her side but had no goals for either herself or her spouse.

Draupadi, even though she was a princess had no choice in the selection of her partner. She quietly had to marry the guy who won the swayamwara through competition between different kings competing against each other to win Draupadi as if she were some trophies rather than a human. Hence Draupadi had to marry the guy who would win her in the competition rather than choose the partner of her preference. Draupadi represented authority, prestige, honour, and alluring beauty—everything that the impoverished, downtrodden Karna yearned for. Karna's retaliatory attack on the Pandavas's wife intended to make her aware of the hardships of a social "pariah," further exacerbated the issue. Along with Duryodhana and Dushashana, he openly mocked Draupadi by calling her a "whore." He wished to dispel her sense of dignity and attractiveness. Overcoming the woman who dared to degrade him in public was his

wounded masculine pride's ambition. Karna's comment was the catalyst for Dushashana's decision to disrobe her. Draupadi couldn't fight back against the man who was dragging her into the court as he was stronger than her. After this incident when Uruvi learnt that Karna too was involved in this, she fought against him and decided to leave his house and eventually leaves him and stayed with her parents while she was carrying his baby in her womb. But constant apologies from Karna made her return to his life and the house again.

After Karna's death in the Kurukshetra war against the Pandavas Uruvi chose to stay and take care of Vrushali and Karna's parents while remaining faithful to her married home.

She also gave her all to help the poor and suffering people. She proclaimed: "My place is here with Radha, with Vrushali, and with the sick and the maimed" (*Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*, 301).

Gender Dynamics are typically based on perceptions of masculinity and femininity, though there are certain exceptions and variances to it and this issue is also applicable to the select texts. It is creatively portrayed by the authors how gender dynamic works and how it is interconnected with the characters. Kamala and Sarita have faced this issue since their childhood however Uruvi, has undergone it after her marriage with a lower caste man. Kamala was tortured by her mother-in-law and Sarita was tortured by her own mother for being a girl. Uruvi faced problems due to shift in her caste and now she had no say in the daily affairs happening in the society. Through the above section one can clearly make out the difference of gender dynamics which the characters have faced before and after marriage and how this trauma has disturbed their adolescent lives.

4.4. Unveiling the major Women characters

This part will focus on the major protagonists of the novel characterised by the authors in their respective novels.

In Krupabai Satthianandhan's novel *Conventional Hindu Society*, Kamala negotiates the difficulties of being married off as a child bride. Kamala's persona epitomizes the challenges, fortitude, and disobedience against repressive standards that other women encountered in that era. Throughout the book, Kamala struggles with patriarchy, societal norms, and her own need for independence and self-expression. Her trip offers a profound examination of gender dynamics and societal inequities, while also shedding awareness on the predicament of women in similar circumstances. The experiences and difficulties that women in conventional Hindu household encounter are further woven together by the other female characters in the book. Their interactions with Kamala serve as an additional example of the intricate relationships between power and gender roles in the context of family and society systems.

Just as William Shakespeare did in his plays, Shashi Deshpande has placed women at the forefront of her novels. Women characters end up being the protagonists as the characters develop, despite her attempt to represent society as a whole in her writings. Their dread upon Saru's return to her parent's house at the start of the book allows the author to use the cinematic device of flashback. The novel has a fittingly symbolic title. After letting go of her fear and shame, there occurs a change toward self-realization. After letting go of her lifelong guilt and gaining new insight that allows her to move past the terrible memories of her past, Sarita overcomes her depressive state. From then on, her evenings will no longer be filled with terrors related to her important

roles as a daughter and her new role as a wife, which will aid in her quest for freedom. Sarita is portrayed as a modern, educated Indian woman who tries to get rid of her parental home due to discrimination and carelessness. She has suffered a lot since her birth for being a girl. Earlier being born as a girl was considered to be a sin and they were considered as a burden on the family. At the parental home, Sarita faced great discrimination and humiliation and even after her marriage she could not get rid of it.

In *Karna's Wife*, Uruvi portrays a character who hails great talents, acquaintances, and strength. She is a perfect example of those who fight against inequality and injustice no matter who stands in front of them. They fight for the rights and equality in the society to achieve peace and harmony. As a born princess she always had the freedom to do anything of her choice through her free will but real problems occurred after she decided to marry Karna, an outcast. She was treated by society as an outcast and was ignored by those people who once loved her.

The common thing which all three major characters in their respective novels share is that they are the narrators of the story. Their authors have given them full freedom to narrate their own stories through their own words and explain to people the problems they have faced from start to end in their lives. The select novels perfectly portray how education can help a person identify their strengths and weaknesses and how to overcome the problems bravely that come their way. In Sathianandhan's novel when Kamala takes an interest in learning she is opposed by her mother-in-law and when Ganesh takes up the responsibility of training his wife, his mother and sisters are against this idea as they believe that a woman should not raise her level that of her husband and considered wives as 'the cat under the plate' whose only job is to serve

her husband's family. Still, Ganesh continued with determination to teach Kamala. However, Kamala had to face the consequences of Ganesh's actions wherein her mother-in-law stopped cooking food for her, making her starve. Her mother-in-law poisoned her son's ears so much that he stopped taking an interest in her further studies and one day stopped teaching. He had changed, and she felt offended by his behaviour, but she did not know how to explain this. The realization that the sole person she considered a friend was starting to show signs of indifference was a huge disappointment to her, as she had previously shown no concern for the other individuals and had learned to tolerate their treatment of her. Whatever knowledge she learned from her father and husband she utilized it properly at the end of the novel when Ganesh started his affair with Sai. She raised her voice against their affair and also decided to leave her husband. The courage which she gathered is so commendable that even her husband was shocked to see this side of Kamala.

Sarita in her home too was suffering a lot due to her parents' ill-treatment given to her as they were too busy loving their son. Sarita had faced a lot of discrimination and now she wanted to be free from all of these and the only option to get away with this was to pursue higher education. She told her parents that she wished to study medicine, but her mother didn't support her in this decision. Luckily her father agreed, and she went to Bombay to study medicine. She also met her future husband Manohar in the city who was a teacher by profession. She married Manohar against her mother's wish hence her mother also cursed her saying she won't be happy in her married life. The curse turned out to be true as soon after their marriage problems started arising. Sarita was getting fame in the city whereas Manohar was only an underpaid professor. She felt inferior to his wife, and he started hating her and turned cruel. He tortured her almost every night

since he knew he couldn't harm her in any other way. He turned into a sexually sadistic person at night and in the mornings, he was fine. Due to this reason, Sarita couldn't speak to him about the person Manohar turned to at night. She failed to stop him from doing so, hence, to escape this treatment from her husband she left his home and went back to her maternal home after many years where she noticed everything had changed. Her mother had died, and her father was old and lived with a young boy who was a student there in some college. Here Sarita realizes that she cannot run away from her problems and escape them. She has to face all the problems with courage and decides to go back to her husband, children and her patients. She realises that she can face any problem with courage now and decides to accept Manohar back in her life again

and start their life all again.

Uruvi was not an ordinary girl who was deprived of everything in the past including education and other liberties. She was a Princess hence she was given the best treatment at home as well as in society. She grew up with the Kauravas and the Pandavas and studied and learnt different things from and with them. She was given the best education as she had the freedom to learn and was permitted to Gurukul for further studies. She knew how to ride a horse, as during those periods girls were not allowed to ride a horse nor were they allowed to take education. Girls were bound to household chores and were restrained from getting basic education. Uruvi was lucky in these terms and this education of hers helped her the most when she was in trouble, she also made proper use of this education of hers during the Kurukshetra war where she treated the injured soldiers. When she faced humiliation for marrying a sutaputra, she faced it with courage rather than crying over her decision to marry Karna. She

followed her heart and was adamant about her decision to marry Karna when everyone was against this decision. She was brave enough to face everything with courage which she faced after marrying a person from a low caste. She eventually stuck with Karna and his family even after he died in the war.

The women in the novels share a few common problems which they have faced personally such as discrimination, humiliation and male dominance. These women suffer through these problems as at one point they know that they can't fight against them hence mutely face all the problems or difficulties which are thrown upon them. Kamala when unmarried was not bound to the house and had no such restrictions from her father but after getting married she was full of responsibilities and a lot of restrictions. She had to get permission before going out of the house from her in-laws and had to listen to them and follow their orders. Though she completed all the given tasks carefully she was always criticized by her mother-in-law and sister-in-law. She had no voice in her husband's house. The discrimination that she faced at the hands of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law for being Sanyasi's daughter and for getting no dowry from her father was so much that they also took away Kamala's husband from her not thinking of a baby she was carrying in her womb of their son.

The same discrimination was faced by Sarita for being a girl child but by her own parents. She was always criticized and ignored in their house for being born as a girl and not a boy. And when Sarita's mother delivered a boy, she was so happy that she almost forgot she also had an elder daughter. Her mother showered all her love on their son and was careless towards her own daughter. Sarita was dark in complexion hence her mother never allowed her to go out in the sun as she might get darker. Her birthdays were never celebrated in their house, and they hardly remembered them, but

they happily celebrated their son's birthday every year with great joy. Sarita's mother wanted her son to be brave hence she had also asked him to sleep in a separate room alone at the age of four to overcome fear and to be brave like Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj. On the other hand, Sarita's existence never mattered to her parents, especially her mother. When Dhruva died in accidental drowning, she blamed Sarita for killing her son and wished for her death instead. Luckily for her future studies, she left her home to get rid of the discrimination she faced at home but unfortunately, it didn't leave her back even after she got married to a professor against her mother's wish. Sarita became a famous doctor in town and was recognised by everyone and this thing hurt his male ego. He knew he couldn't come to her level at any cost and hence he turned into a rapist almost every night and tortured her. She was shocked to see this side of her loving husband and was devastated. She knew she couldn't physically fight against her husband when it came to stopping him from humiliating her at night and Manohar knew he couldn't match the level of her wife which made him feel inferior to her and hurt his male ego. Sarita decided to get him treated at last and resolve all the issues they had built unconsciously.

On the other hand, Uruvi hadn't felt any such discrimination in her life since her birth. She was an only child of a King and hence was treated with great care, love and attention. She was given a freedom which other ordinary girls of her age were denied. She always enjoyed power and luxury in her parental home. She was raised with Kauravas and Pandavas and was a favourite child of her so-called foster mother Kunti. She always took most of the decisions on her own and had the liberty to do anything that she wanted to do. But when she decided to marry Karna, a man from an outcast, her parents opposed this decision of hers. She was stubborn to marry Karna hence her

parents gave their approval for the marriage, but everything changed after their marriage. Uruvi had to face great humiliation and discrimination for marrying an outcast. Her closest friends stopped talking to her and started avoiding her at family gatherings and discussions. She now was treated as Pariah's wife and not as a Princess by society and her closest people. She was shocked to see the sudden change in the people who once shared a great bond of affection with her. Uruvi had to face discrimination and inequality which she had never experienced while she was unmarried and now everything came upon her, and she had no idea how to deal with it. The only good thing was that Karna was by her side, the love of her life who supported her and also used to seek her decisions when he was in confusion. She was a great wife to her husband and always supported him but was against the alliance he had with the wicked Kauravas. She bravely faced all the humiliation and discrimination which came her way for the love of her life and also accepted his first wife.

The comparative analysis of the major characters helps to learn about the similarities and differences of each women protagonist. Through this study one can clearly know that the women protagonists are strong and can overcome any problem on their own terms. All three of them belong to different centuries however they are mighty and are capable to take decisions for the betterment of their lives.

4.5. Strategies in texts to resolve female struggles

This part of the research focuses on how the women characters have overcome the problems they have faced throughout their lives and how at last they have fought

against the injustice given to them. These women characters have realised their inner strengths and weaknesses and have fought back against the ill-treatment given to them.

Sattthianandhan, Deshpande and Kane have portrayed in their novels the women Protagonists as brave and courageous who fight for their rights and happiness. All of their protagonists are caught between patriarchy and tradition from which they wish to seek independence.

Kamala was a young girl who was married off at an early age and endured a life of shame and humiliation at the hands of their spouses or relatives. Each hero, however, approaches the "system" in a different way. She decides to avenge all the mistreatment she has endured as a woman. Women typically succumb to domestic abuse silently and avoid using aggressive methods to combat it.

Even though Ramchander suggests marriage, Kamala decides against being married again after learning of her husband's liaison with Sai, his cholera illness, and eventual death. She decides to live a life of peace and salvation, even leaving widows and children the entirety of her fortune. She achieves the idea of her virtue as a woman by denying herself her own desires, which is interpreted as love for others. The voice of modernity forces Kamala to question everything, while the voice of tradition urges her to bear all the suffering quietly and meekly. She looks to the past to establish her "moral code," which instructs her to be "good," yet her contemporary, individuated self-rejects the notion. The conversations between tradition and modernity that Kamala has in her head throughout the book never come to clear-cut conclusions. Instead, what matters is how Kamala, as a modern colonial person, acknowledges her desire while still denying it. Kamala at last gathered the courage to speak against her husband's extramarital affair with Sai. She usually kept quiet when Sai visited their house but

when her visits started increasing, she questioned Ganesh about the same. Ganesh accused Kamala too of having an extramarital affair with her distant cousin. In outrage, she left his house with their young daughter at night and eventually decided to kill herself, but she planned to live her life for her baby and decided to go to her in-law's house. Though she was well-read and had some knowledge of society, she was a typical Indian woman who believed that once a woman is married, she is not allowed to leave her husband's home until her death. She told everything to her in-laws bravely without hesitation about their son's extramarital affair with Sai and told them the reason for leaving his house at the odd hours. Her mother-in-law who once tortured her now accepted her when she came to know about her maternal home. She belonged to a high-class family and had lived a life of luxury until her mother's sudden death. Kamala's happiness was short-lived as she lost her daughter and her husband at the same time. She was a widow at a tender age and had lost her precious ornament which was her husband and her kunkun. However, Kamala, as a brave lady, fought and overcame the loss she had and decided to devote her whole life to the wellbeing of widows and children. She also rejected the proposal of her cousin, Ramchander of remarriage who tried to convince her by saying, "You were mine before you were born. You were promised to me by your mother" (*Kamala: a Story of Hindu Child-Wife*, 154).

The thing that gives Kamala her uniqueness is her alter ego, which longs to be free of conventional constraints. This surprising facet of her personality comes out as neither typical nor representative of the traditional stereotype. The start of the book suggests that Kamala has a possibly dangerous alter ego. The writer's childhood identity is reflected in this. When Kamala achieves economic independence at the end of the novel, she is given a crucial prerequisite for emancipation. She gains some authority of her

own as a heiress, even though she is unaware of it. The author's belief that women's liberation could follow from economic independence is demonstrated when Kamala's in-laws embrace her into their family after learning that she has unexpectedly become wealthy and is no longer a destitute waif who must grovel in the dust for scraps that fall from their table.

As an ascetic Hindu widow, humble and suffering yet motivated by a lofty moral aim, Kamala finishes her life in this manner. The emblematic figurehead of nationalist discourse, she is changed from the stereotypical victim of liberal Western reform to an exalted Aryan woman praised for "their commitment, their purity, their sacrifice, who was to ensure the moral even spiritual power of the nation and hold it together." After all of Sathianadhan's efforts to free her from orthodoxy, Kamala is being elevated to the status of a symbol of tradition, which may indicate that the author reluctantly acknowledged and submitted to the unassailable power of the nationalist discourse over the liberal women's reforms that she was so fervently committed to.

Sarita though brave since her childhood always felt inferior when it came to her brother. Her parents showered Dhruva with all their love and care and ignored Saru since

Dhruva's birth. She hates her parents for the same thing and often takes offence at her mother. Speaking to her mother, Saru states, "If you're a woman, I don't want to be one" (*The Dark Holds No Terrors*, 55). The hatred Saru expresses for women's lives is evident in this one sentence, which she says is motivated by the patriarchal system's general prejudice against women. Breaking through her home's ostensible protective barrier, Saru makes her first public rebellion against the patriarchal power structure. She leaves home to relentlessly pursue achievement in medical college because of her

intense resentment and bitterness towards her mother. The departure of Saru from her mother is the foremost step towards autonomy.

Due to the treatment, she receives at home, Saru decides to pursue a career in medicine in an attempt to discover who she is. She believes that a job in medicine will provide her with the means to escape the miserable life she currently leads at home. Sarita had to endure her mother's resistance in both her career and her marriage. She further demonstrates her disobedience when she marries a man of her choosing and achieves financial independence. Contrary to her parents' expectations, she marries a college friend she falls in love with. To leave her non-gender-sensitive home environment, Saru aspires to marry. In an attempt to escape the oppression of her mother and the gender prejudice she was unable to comprehend or put up with, she eagerly anticipates taking on the role of wife. Her marriage to Manu has its ups and downs, which leads her to believe that while pain appears more real, even joy is an illusion. Though Saru was a woman, she was powerless to stop Manu's advances or even voice any complaints because he was a male and could treat his wife any way he pleased, even to the point of marital rape. The main source of their disagreement is her ascent in social standing. Manu attempts to act the part of the typical male-dominated role by sexually abusing his wife at night in an attempt to assert his dominance as he is unable to exercise his male dominance over her. Saru quickly realises that going to her parental house to seek sanctuary from her husband after her mother's death is fruitless because she is not welcome there. As a daughter, she is expected to be happy with her husband. After over a fortnight at her father's house, Saru realises she is responsible for her own life and must overcome obstacles. She must focus on her happiness and let go of the past. She musters the bravery to confront the darkness, the place where her

spouse subjected her to mental and physical abuse. She knows that if she faces the darkness, it won't be terrifying. The book closes on a hopeful note mature Saru will stop at nothing to ensure that gender inequality stands in the way of her happiness; instead, she will overcome it and improve her lot in life. Saru grows into a self-assured lady at the end of the novel *'The Dark Holds No Terror'* realising that darkness prevents one from seeing things clearly and impartially. Inspired by her Indian cultural heritage, Saru decides to fight for her rights after realising she is no longer a "guilty sister, unduly demanding daughter, and unloving wife" but rather a wise woman who can help her family through any difficult times.

Uruvi since her birth was a brave girl who fought for her rights and equal opportunities in society. Though she had not faced many issues and problems at her parent's home she had to face a bunch of issues after her marriage to Karna. Despite her fierce criticism of Karna, she will always be in love with her. Uruvi loses control of her emotions and expresses her thoughts without reservation when Shona implies that her love is artificial and that she is extremely conceited. When Shona tries to classify her as exceptional, she lets her fury be known very clearly. She becomes quite enraged when Shona refers to her as a pretender who wants to treat her husband like an outsider. She quickly shows her displeasure with Kunti for abandoning Karna in the river to conceal her parenthood when she learns that Kunti is Karna's mother.

She accuses Kunti of being self-centred and blames her for Karna's downfall, claiming that she only disclosed this at the last minute to rescue the Pandavas. "He remains rejected even now as he was at birth. You made him a pariah within his own family"

(*Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*, 259). Karna remains silent while Uruvi expresses her anger towards Kunti due to her concern about Karna. She counts all of Karna's painful moments and holds Kunti responsible for them all because she is a devoted, loving wife who cannot take the shame that has befallen him.

These women prove that if any women decide to do anything and fight for their rights in society, they can do it on their own terms without any help. They are their own motivators in life who have motivated themselves to give their best and fight against the injustice given to them. Through the characters of Kamala, Sarita and Uruvi the writers have given insight into women's predicament and their everyday struggle to prove their identity in the society and how they have successfully overcome these issues with grace and at last have satisfaction on their faces for taking stand for themselves and taking crucial decisions on their own to lead a cheerful and healthy life.

4.6. Chapter conclusion

This chapter focused on different aspects of the authors as well as their novels. Feminism in the author's work have been discussed and it is clear through their novels about their feministic nature of writing the novels making the women as main protagonists. Since the authors Satthianandhan, Deshpande and Kane belong to different centuries and write on different time periods their idea of feminism also differs from one another but the common theme which they share is of discrimination of women. The idea of feminism indeed is seen in their novels through the portrayal of women and her struggles in everyday life.

They have built their women characters in a strong and bold personality, and they are unique in their own way. The writers have also mentioned how their protagonists have

evolved over a period to gain their independence from such struggles. The complexity of gender is depicted in the novels wherein one can notice how the women protagonists have no say in their own homes and in the day-to-day activities.

A detailed analysis of the major women characters has portrayed details about their personal lives and how the authors have portrayed women's sufferings, hardships, misery oppression etc. through feminist issues. These women protagonists have emerged victorious in spite of suffering with courage and determination. The writers have presented a few solutions to tackle hurdles. Their path is essentially of exploration. These hitherto unheard voices are provided a 'voice' that rearticulates their place in the society.

CHAPTER 5: REFLECTIONS AND REVELATIONS: NAVIGATING THE CONCLUDING THEORY

5.1. Findings from the Research

1. The works of Krupabai Satthiandhan are not so famous among the other writers.
2. The works of Krupabai Sathianandhan, Shashi Deshpande and Kavita Kane have not been researched together.
3. The Feminist issues addressed in the novels are related to the issues that women face every day in the society.
4. Not only do uneducated or illiterate women face discrimination, instead modern, educated women too must face the issue of discrimination.
5. The Feminist issues found in the novels are related to one another though they were written in different time periods.
6. The movement of feminism began in the early 19th Century still there is no permanent solution to the feminist issues.
7. There are similarities in Sathianandhan, Deshpande and Kane's works as their main focus is on female protagonists and the problems faced by them.

5.2. Limitations of the study

1. The study will be limited to a few texts due to time constraints. However, the researcher has included representative texts in the area of concern.

2. The research will be limited to analysis of theory and reference through books. No interviews or questionnaires have been utilized.

5.3. Recommendations for further studies.

The topic of Feminism itself is an extensive subject of study, however, it has been addressed by many Researchers. It is quite a vast topic for study and so is gender discrimination and other feminist issues. It would be recommended that these topics if researched should be done separately as this is a vast topic. A future study on this topic would be highly recommended as the structure and functioning of politics in society. My earnest desire is that this work will stimulate additional research and discussion in the area of feminism and feminist issues. Hopefully, the research relating to it will yield a more significant result in future.

1. A study on Krupabai Satthianandhan and her works is recommended as it is believed that she was the first female writer who addressed the issue of feminism in her texts making a woman its protagonist.
2. A comparative study of Satthianandhan's work and any other feminist writer of India can be conducted.
3. One can also do research on feminism and inter-sectionality and how it is implied to modern society.

5.4. Conclusion

In summary, feminism in Indian writing in English highlights the intricate relationship between gender, culture, and society. It's clear from feminist literary criticism that women writers have played a significant role in questioning social norms and promoting gender equality. These authors have made major contributions to the discourse on gender dynamics in India, ranging from exposing the problems faced by women in patriarchal settings to rethinking conceptions of femininity and empowerment.

Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life is a classic novel of Indian literature which provides an early feminist perspective on issues of religion, class, and gender in nineteenth-century India. Written in beautiful, meditative prose, *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* is the story of a young girl whose idyllic youth as the daughter of a Hindu priest ends with her marriage to a cruel husband. Incorporating the author's perspective as a woman from a family of Christian converts, *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Child-Wife* is a powerful work of fiction by a pioneering figure in Indian literature. Even though Kamala eventually gets to live a happy life with love and fortune, she resists and becomes a saint and chooses a life of tranquillity moksha. In 1894, Kamala was a subtler woman who was accustomed to suffering at the hands of everyone. Ramchander suggests marriage, Kamala decides against being married again after learning about her husband's affair with Sai, his cholera illness, and eventual death. She decides to live a life of peace and salvation and even bequeaths all of her wealth to children and widows.

In Shashi Deshpande's book, women are portrayed as the most oppressed and pitiful representations of human misery. She believes that in every aspect of human endeavour, women are not treated equally to men, not only in India but also in other nations. When it comes to sharing the possibility for her life to be fulfilled, she has experienced oppression, suppression, and marginalization. As a youngster and as a wife after marriage, Sarita experiences severe humiliation and neglect. Deshpande talks about the overt discrimination against girls based solely on their gender and their wish to have a boy. Shashi Deshpande has, in a nutshell, addressed gender-based issues in her book *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. She's shown us how women suffer when they get married to males. She delves deeply into society while also summarizing her personal experiences as a woman. Despite her financial freedom and education, she has proven that. Realistically speaking, women are thought to be abused by their partners and to have no legal rights outside the home. The problem of gender inequality, which is widespread in our society, is covered throughout the book. Shashi Deshpande elevates the status of women, as can be seen from a cursory reading of her writings. She is a fervent supporter of men and women having reciprocal relationships. In her opinion, coexistence of men and women will enhance both individuals' quality of life and the greatness of the country.

Shashi Deshpande has briefly discussed gender-based concerns in her book *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. She has given an example of how marriage and men hurt women. She analyses society in detail in addition to detailing her own experiences as a woman. Despite her degree and financial independence, she has proven that. Beyond the realm of reality, women are thought to be the targets of domestic abuse and to be denied legal safeguards outside the house. The subject of gender inequality that

permeates our culture is addressed throughout the entire book. The female protagonists in Deshpande's works strive for equality and independence with their male spouses, but they eventually come to understand that the root of the issue is a long-standing physiological issue in humans. Eliminating discrimination from society overnight is a difficult task. Sarita breaks the usual societal taboo by skillfully juggling her jobs as a professional and a family member. Nothing can stop her from succeeding as a woman—not her mother's stupidity, her dark complexion, her feminine characteristics, her husband's animalistic attitude, or his disinterest.

So, in order to defy society's long-standing traditions surrounding gender roles, she transforms into a strong woman. She had to start a torturous journey to discover who she really was after experiencing multiple instances of discrimination. She chooses to mend her connection with Manohar in spite of her revolt, bravery, and love for herself.

Deshpande's characters stand out because they are aware of their servitude. Being conscious of their inner pain, they strive to overcome every obstacle. In their efforts to overcome masculinity, Sarita and Indu ultimately learn that the only way to eliminate this century-old custom is to form a community of enlightened beings.

When some of Kavita Kane's female characters are examined, it becomes clear that these women never completely satisfied the demands and desires of the males in their lives, while living in civilizations where men held a dominant position. Kane does a good job of bringing to life the lost, unheard, and overlooked characters by presenting the readers with an entirely fresh perspective.

The portrayal of Uruvi by Kavita Kane presents her as a celestial feminine with a plethora of virtues that any woman can emulate and look up to. This beautiful society has been designed by women, who are the true architects. Being a woman is a natural blessing, as some women sacrifice their aspirations to support their families in pursuing their goals in life. A woman's loss of identity affects not just her own happiness and peace of mind, but also that of her family. Women are born with the capacity to inspire others and guide them towards the proper path in life. Women are the ones who inspire positivism and lead the family in the correct route.

Kavita Kane portrays Uruvi as a strong and brave girl who realises her full potential through life experiences, in *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* in a really lovely feminist role. As a daughter, wife, mother, sister, and daughter-in-law, she does all of these roles more than admirably. In contrast to other women, Uruvi challenges the patriarchal society and disobeys the laws. Because of their optimistic views, women have the ability to transform society. An excellent illustration of what a lady ought to be is Uruvi. Her spouse's success and happiness can be attributed to her unwavering support and devotion to him. Uruvi is presented in the book as a singular man who embodies love and sacrifice.

There are no such differences in the perspective of three Female Indian Writers with regards to their examination of Feminist Issues though they were written in different time periods. The feminist issues such as discrimination, male dominance etc. are common in their novels. They have almost covered all the feminist issues relating to the Indian society in their novels. However, a few differences were discovered as they were written at different centuries. The feminist issues such as child marriage and dowry related issues are not similar in the other select texts. The difference in the

examination of feminist issues can be seen as written in different eras and on different situations that women have faced.

This research is relevant to the Indian society as these issues can be related to Indian society wherein women have faced these issues on daily basis. It also throws light on man-woman relationships in Indian context. It also portrays the gender dynamics mentioned in the novels and how the women are discriminated in the novels and how the women have no right to make any decisions on their own. Such issues are still faced by Indian women hence this issue can be relevant to the society.

In order to improve the conversation around feminism and literature in India, the study also emphasises the necessity for deeper investigation into lesser-known or marginalised voices in the Indian context.

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