

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

A dissertation submitted to the University of Hyderabad

in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

by

Karri Syamala



Centre for Comparative Literature

School of Humanities

University of Hyderabad

Hyderabad 500046

May 2014

Chapter 4

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Work Cited

Vidmahe, Kathyayani.ed. *Telugulo Streela Sahityam*. Warangal: Kaktiya University Publications, 2003.
Print.