

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE ORIGINAL AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *ANDHARI GALIMA MA SAFED TAPKA*, *NEW HORIZONS IN WOMEN'S WRITING AND SPEECH AND SILENCE* APPLYING LEFEVERE'S TRANSLATION THEORY

In this chapter I attempt to assess the select Gujarati short-stories penned by women writers in three texts – a short-story collection by Himanshi Shelat *Andhari Galima Safed Tapka* (1992) and two anthologies *New Horizons in Women's Writing: Stories by Gujarati Women* (2002) by Amina Amin and Manju Verma and *Speech and Silence: Literary Journeys by Gujarati Women* (2006) by Rita Kothari to investigate the matters pertaining the thematic aspects, especially the handling of the themes related to women and their lives and how the writers have dealt with various shades of the experiences and personalities of women and presented their characters from different backgrounds to reveal the shifting perception of gender and its depiction in literature. I would be analysing the images of women present in the select stories of these anthologies through various categories like – patriarchal/anti-patriarchal, psychological and futuristic or utopian. Apart from this a comparative study of the original stories with their English rendering is undertaken applying Lefevere's translation theory to examine the effect of translation on the linguistic, semantic and stylistic aspects of the Gujarati language along with the representation of the source culture, society and image of women. The chapter has been divided into three sections – Section I deals with Himanshi Shelat's *Andhari Galima Safed Tapka*; Section II deals with Amina Amin and Manju Verma's *New Horizons in Women's Writing: Stories by Gujarati Women*; and Section III with Rita Kothari's *Speech and Silence: Literary Journeys by Gujarati Women*.

SECTION I

Andhari Galima Safed Tapka

1.1 Introduction of the Author and the Translators

Himanshi Shelat (1947) is a Sahitya Akadami award winning and a critically acclaimed author of Post-modern Gujarati literature with her speciality of narrating various factors related to our daily life as observed by a sentimental writer. What makes her stories noteworthy is her portrayal of the psychological bent and sentiments of her characters in

various situations in subtle yet minute details. Apart from being a writer, she has also been involved in many social welfare activities related to children of under the privilege areas or orphanage and women of red light areas and many of her stories depict the theme based on her experiences of working with these stratum. Her contribution to the field of Gujarati literature is noteworthy in form of many short-story collections like – *Antaral* (1987), *Ae Loko* (1997), *Sanjno Samay* (2002), *Khandaniyama Maathu* (2004), *Garbhgatha* (2009), *Dharo Ke Aa Varta Nathi* (2018) *Dharoke Aa Varta Nathi* (2018) etc., two novellas and one novel *Anthmo Raang* (2001). *Platform number 4* (1998) and *Victor* (1999) are the collection of her reminiscence writings while *Paravastavavad* (1987) and *Gujarati Kathasahityama Narichetna* (2000) are books on literary criticism. Along with these she has edited a number of books.

I have chosen four stories from the collection for my present research endeavour. This entire collection has been translated by her husband Vinod Meghani as *Frozen Whites in a Dark Alley* published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi in 2007 as part of Sahitya Akademi project on translation. Two of the original stories – *Badatrana Beej* and *Andhari Galima Safed Tapka* have been translated by two other translators namely Rita Kothari and Roomy Naqvy respectively in separate anthologies and a comparative study of these translations along with those of Meghani has been undertaken to observe the difference treatment the stories have received at the hands of two different translators from completely different background (and gender, in case of the former story).

Vinod Meghani (1935-2009) was the son of a stalwart Gujarati writer Jhaverchand Meghani (1896-1947). He had served in Merchant Navy for around forty years. He had been an active translator translating from Gujarati into English which includes his father's novel *Mansaina Diva* as *Earthen Lamps* (1979) and *Sorath Tara Vehta Pani* as *Echoes from Gir* (2005), selected folklore from *Saurashtrani Rasdhara* by Jhaverchand Meghani in three volumes as *A Noble Heritage*, *The Shade Crimson* and *Ruby Shattered* published in 2003, Dhruv Bhatt's novel *Samudrantike* as *Oceanside Blues* (2001) and an abridged version of a Gujarati classic *Saraswatichandra* (2006), Hasmukh Baradi's *History of Gujarati Theatre* (2004) and Bindu Bhatt's novel *Akhepatar* (1999) as *The Inexhaustible* (2018), *Salagataan Soorajmukhi* (1994) (translation of a famous painter Vincent Van Gough's life story *Lust for Life* by Irving Stone), *Le Hun Aavun Chhu* (edited correspondence of Jhaverchand Meghani) and *Antar Chhabi* (autobiographical writings of Jhaverchand Meghani jointly edited with Himanshi Shelat).

Rita Kothari (1969) is a well-known writer, critic and translator translating prose and poetry from Gujarati into English which includes – *Modern Gujarati Poetry* and *Coral Island: The Poetry of Niranjan Bhagat* (2002), *Speech and Silence: Literary Journeys by Gujarati Women* (2006), Joseph Macwan's *Angaliayat* as *The Stepchild* (2013) and Ila Arab Mehta's *Vaad* as *Fence* (2015). She is a faculty of English at Ashoka University, Sonapat, Haryana. She has also penned many critical essays on translation theory along with a number of books on translation and partition.

Roomy Naqvy (1971) is an Assistant Professor of English at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He is a writer, research scholar as well as translator and has translated poetry and fiction from Gujarati into English that have been published by international journals as well as anthologies. He is also a recipient of Katha Translation Award 1996 for his translation of Gujarati short story *Hunger* by Anil Vyas.

1.2 Women in Translation: Representation/Misrepresentation

In the following pages select portions from the original short-stories in Gujarati and their English rendering are listed with the aim to compare and analyse the translations along with the discussion of the theme of the stories and difference in the treatment of the women characters by the author and the translator has been noted. Titles of the stories discussed in this section are as follows – *Suvarna Fal*, *Prempadarath*, *Badatrana Beej* and *Andhari Galima Safed Tapka*.

1. Suvarna Fal (Golden Fruit)

a) Thematic Analysis

This story depicts the various shades of womanhood through the characters of Nanavati sisters – Sumitra and Vatsala. Both were single, in their early forties, and were independent women settled in their professions. Suddenly Sumitra came to know of Vatsala's affair with a wealthy divorcee named Chandravadan Jagirdar and their prospect of getting married soon. Sumitra was completely devastated at this unexpected turn of events and felt jealous of her sister who would enjoy the marital bliss while she would be stuck in this house all alone like a cold cat. Her thoughts also moved in the direction where she started to imagine the course of event if she had met Chandravadan Jagirdar prior to her sister.

Initially Vatsala was full of contempt for Sumitra's decision to get married at the age of forty-three and she time and again tried to convince her to rethink of her decision but Sumitra was absorbed in the dreams of a romantic marriage with Chandravadan who according to her was a true gentleman. Vatsala also had to bear embarrassment and taunting at the hands of her colleagues due to Sumitra's decision. Even Sumitra's excitement for the arrangement of marriage and shopping for the new house seemed irritating to Vatsala. Vatsala could not voice her feelings but she felt left out as now Chandravadan was a priority for her sister instead of her. Vatsala also imagined Sumitra standing under a Kalpavruksha (an imaginary tree famous for fulfilling all wishes) collecting its golden fruits. Suddenly Vatsala could think of a solution and she felt relieved as if a golden fruit of that imaginary tree had fallen in her hand. She realized that right now Sumitra's excitement was due to her thrill for the new life but soon it would give way to a routine, monotonous life of a married couple. Also Sumitra, being quite hot-tempered and rigid, might not adjust with her new life and husband and the chances of her returning to Vatsala were pretty high. This thought was so satisfactory that Vatsala felt a surge of energy running through her body and her up till now apathy towards the marriage arrangement turned into enthusiasm and she went out for shopping for the upcoming wedding.

b) Character Analysis

Sumitra and Vatsala were both educated and career-oriented women who have consciously decided to remain single still the need for family warmth is somewhere hidden in their hearts and Sumitra's sudden decision to get married at the age of 43 without considering her sister or caring for the reaction of the society and Vatsala's jealousy of her sister hint at this subdued desire. The writer has beautifully portrayed the sentiments of these two women building the theme around them. Sharifa Vijdiwala in *Vartavishesh* has rightly said in this regard, "In almost all her (Himanshiben) stories, the events are presented through the inner sensitivity of the characters making them reach to the readers and their sensitivity.... this writer has the ability to objectively portray the subtle sentiments and feelings of her characters" (my trans.; vii).

Sumitra emerges stronger than Vatsala in this story who is independent in the true sense of the term as she disregarded anyone else's opinions in the matter of her life and decisions while Vatsala's hesitation and embarrassment is a sign of her narrow-mindedness. Vatsala's weakness as a person could also be a result of her feeling of being left out not only

because her solitary support system in form of Sumitra was about to leave her but also because she would be enjoying the fruits of marital bliss while she would be all alone in life without anyone to look after her. Vatsala's initial jealousy and her secret hope that Sumitra would return to her one day being not able to cope with the responsibilities of marriage and family indicated the hold of patriarchal system as although educated and independent, she still felt that marriage was the ultimate source of joy and contentment. She was not jealous of Sumitra's beauty or status or career but her natural decision to get married created a stir in Vatsala's life. The strong hold of patriarchy even on twenty first century women can be seen in this case. Sumitra has, however, liberated herself from its grip but Vatsala is still a victim unable to break free.

It is noteworthy that the representation of women characters in the works of women writers are generally more close to the real time women as found in our society with all the limitations of character presenting the various aspects of female personality unlike the women found in the works of male writers who represent only extremes – either too docile or too fierce. They indicate two possibilities as Sydney Janet Kaplan expresses in her essay “Varieties of Feminine Criticism”, “...the studies of the images of women in the works of female authors might also concentrate on the ways in which such images reveal women's oppression, or on how an author's own absorption of patriarchal values might cause her to create female characters who fulfil society's stereotypes of women” (38).

c) Example Analysis and Observations

Passage 1.

Once Vatsala dangled a pair of large earrings and asked Sumitra for her opinion. Sumitra had already been vexed to hear about Vatsala's decision to marry so she thought this behaviour to be a little childish. She thought of a famous proverb available in many Indian languages including Gujarati

ઘરડી ઘોડી ને લાલ લગામ... (3)

Its English translation reads:

...an old woman in a bridal attire;... (3)

Although the translation, in this particular context, seems precise still the original proverb has different connotations attached to it, particularly to indicate the silly behaviour of women after certain age to make futile efforts to look charming and attractive. It also reflects the Indian mind-set which expects women to give up such efforts after a certain age and divert her focus towards the other worldliness. Sumitra is planning to marry at the age of forty-three which is way past the socially accepted marriageable age thus Vatsala thought of this proverb in sarcasm. The Western mentality in such matters differs completely from Indian one which does not put up such strict social restrictions regarding the marriageable age. Even in India the perceptions towards marriage and right marriageable age have changed over the years with the adaptation of modern life-style still the age old mentality would not be erased from our consciousness so easily. An educated and career-oriented woman like Vatsala also could not free herself of this conventional notion. The translator's decision to rewrite this proverb in this manner shows his maturity to understand the differences between the poetics of Indian and Western culture and so he translated it keeping the reference of the theme in mind. His efforts to naturalize the SL expression (in this case a proverb which has cultural nuances) unavailable or not familiar to target culture hints at his ability to skilfully handle the constraint of Universe of Discourse. In Lefevere's opinion when a translator has to deal with a Universe of Discourse unavailable in the target language, he needs to "coin new expressions" (Lefevere "*Translation/History*" 46) to enrich the target language.

Passage 2.

Sumitra's colleagues were making inquiries about her sister's marriage and giving advice to her in the same matter.

બેન્કમાં બધાં પૂછે કે તમારી બેન કંઈ લગ્ન કરવાની છે એવું સાંભળ્યું છે, સાચી વાત કે? તો પેલો

દોઢડાહો દેસાઈ કહે કે એ ચંદ્રવદન તો પહોંચેલ છે, જરા સાચવીને આગળ વધવાનું કહેજો તમારી

બેનને... (4)

In English translation it reads:

Sumitra's colleagues at the bank she worked in battered her with questions about the veracity of the news of her sister's imminent plunge. And Desai, the nosey one, had the audacity of telling her to caution Vatsala against becoming intimate with Chandravadan; Desai had no doubt that Chandravadan was a rogue! (4)

In the above excerpt Sumitra's co-employees are being inquisitive about Vatsala's decision to marry at this age. They simply wanted to confirm the authenticity of the news. In both the original and its rewriting, there is an indirect reference to Vatsala's decision to marry at such an advanced age (reflecting the deep rooted traditional mindset). The original uses the words કંઈ લગ્ન કરવાની છે '*kai lagna karvani che*' which get translated as 'imminent plunge'. The original simply refers to her decision to marry while the translation takes it to another level of exaggeration by using the word 'plunge' which literary means 'a sudden jump'. Maybe the translator wants to suggest the suddenness and unexpectedness of the decision still the use of the word 'plunge' instead of લગ્ન '*lagna*' is a kind of overstatement. When a colleague Mr. Desai hinted that Vatsala should be cautious of Jagirdar, the translator make use of the word 'audacity' turning a simple act of suggestion into an ego issue. In the same act of suggestion, Desai uses the word પહોંચેલ '*pohchel*' in context to Chandravadan which has been translated as 'rogue'. The Gujarati word પહોંચેલ '*pohchel*' is a typical expression used often in sarcastic tone to indicate that someone is over smart or untrustworthy which has been replaced by a very strong and negative word like 'rogue'. The lack of proper equivalence might have resulted into the use of this word in English hinting at the difference between the ideology of the original writer and translator and how the rewriting makes a different reading. Roger T. Bell also shared similar views regarding the issue of equivalence in translation when he said, "....the idea of total equivalence is a chimera. Languages are different from each other; they are different in form having distinct codes and rules regulating the construction of grammatical stretches of language and these forms have different meanings" (6).

At various other places the translator's choice of words (equivalents) are either obscure or intended for a particular set of readers. For example, while referring to the act of taking supper the translator uses the word 'sup' (3) (which is used in context of sipping soup or some liquid food), at another place he makes use of the words 'cuppa' (3) or 'the brew' (6) to refer to the process of making tea or 'stir about a stew' (7) for cooking meal, to mention the word પાલવ '*palav*' (6) (loose end of a sari) he uses the word 'lappet' (7) which refers to a dressing style of women using a decorative flap or hanging part of a headdress during the early twentieth century which has a completely different connotation, using 'belle' (4) for the

original word નમણી કન્યા ‘namni kanya’ (4) meaning ‘delicate girl’. The simple everyday things like taking dinner or making tea are taken to another level to suit the expectations of the Western readers. Especially the last two words seem completely out of context as far as India is concerned. But instead of familiarizing the Western readers with Indian traditions, the translator has chosen to replace the words having any Indian context with the equivalents more suitable and familiar to the Western world. The Western poetics seems to dominate hence the choice of these equivalents.

However, it is important to note that at a few places the translator has used the original Gujarati words, with an explanation – like to refer to the bridal attire the word used in the original is પાનેતર ‘paanetar’ (6) which has been carried forward as it is in translation and the word મંગલસુત્ર ‘mangalsootra’ (6) referring to the necklace of black beads worn by married women in India. These are culture specific words having no equivalence in English so the translator has decided to use the same words with a foot note.

2. Prempadarath (A Woman in Love)

a) Thematic Analysis

This narration is an account of an over-possessive and suspecting husband Som towards his wife Taru and his friend Chirantan who was his guest for a few days. Som was a very practical minded person – career-oriented, well-settled in life and job and has earned his share of prestige in society while his friend Chirantan was like his counter image – whimsical, impractical, irresponsible and yet to settle down in career and life. Chirantan’s ease and relaxed mannerism caused jealousy in Som who believed in taking life seriously and make full use of every moment to achieve something valuable. In his heart he knew that Taru was also cheerful and free-willed person just like Chirantan but being a woman she could not choose her will under the meticulous observation of a dominating husband and so she surrendered to the socially expected roles of a dutiful wife and mother.

Som was curious to know about Taru’s response to Chirantan’s presence so he started observing her minutely, especially when she was with Chirantan, his constantly passing sarcastic comments about Chirantan’s irresponsible life-style, his keeping watch over both when they were all by themselves to prove his doubt. Deep down his conscious was biting him as he had practiced his rights over his wife apathetically and turned her into a mannequin

of an ideal wife at the cost of her natural gaiety. But when he could find no proof to support his belief and finally when Chirantan left, he was completely relaxed as now there was no danger to his harmonious and well-planned family life. Som's efforts to be in charge of the household and control Taru indicate the age-old patriarchal mentality as prescribed by Manu in his famous text *Manusmriti* where according to Kumkum Roy, "...men should exercise continuous control over women in order to protect birth (*prasuti*), the family (*kula*), one's self (*atman*), and dharma... The need to control the wife was intrinsically related to the definition of procreation that was sought to be established, a definition in which the woman was viewed as the field or passive recipient of the male sex. However, male control over the produce of the field, progeny, rested not only on claims to contribute and sow the seed, but also, and more basically, on the ownership of the field, that is, his role as *ksetrasvamin*" (73).

However, Taru's inner thoughts got reflected, almost towards the end of the story, through her trying to go away from her husband from bed into the balcony at night and her efforts to recall the moments spent with Chirantan. In her imagination she tried to be close to Chirantan and enjoy those ecstatic moments to be back to her role of a dutiful wife in the morning.

b) Character Analysis

The story throws light on the superficial relationship shared by a couple which looks cordial and well-balanced externally but lacks any real bonding. The story reflects the husband's disability to understand his wife's desires and his efforts to try to mould her as per his wish to end up creating an illusion of an ideal wife and mother who although looked happy and content from outside, was restless and miserable from within. His suspicion towards her even though her behaviour was quite normal in front of another man shows his efforts to control her completely – physically and psychologically which hints at a typical patriarchal behaviour. As Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn argues, "The oppression of woman is both a material reality, originating in material conditions, and a psychological phenomenon, a function of the way women and men perceive one another and themselves. But it is generally true that gender is constructed in patriarchy to serve the interests of male supremacy" (11).

In the story Taru might seem like a victim of patriarchal system where she is forced to suppress her real self and pretend to be content in her socially accepted roles. But if we look at her character from another perspective, she emerges as a strong character who although is

aware of her exploitation, could control her emotions for the sake of family harmony while her husband who seemed all in control of the situation was found powerless. Just like the lover of Andrew Marvel's famous poem *To His Coy Mistress* who tries to woo his beloved, at times with the use of some shocking imageries, to surrender and where although initially the lover seems all powerful and in control, is finally rendered into a feeble person and the beloved emerges as a mature, conscious being. In this story also ultimately it is Taru who comes out as a stronger personality with her ability to handle this unjust social reality due to her emotional bonding with the family and her children. When questioned during a personal interview regarding the matter of the acceptance of their fate by majority of her women characters without complain, Himanshi Shelat replied, "In our society it is not easy to change our circumstances or somebody else's or to change the scenario of relationship even though you are aware of them. Awareness is more important than doing something physically different. It is not easy for a woman to leave not because of her status but because of her emotional bonding. Hence, my characters' decision of not abandoning the situation but to face it" (2020).

c) Example analysis and Observations

Passage 1.

During Chirantan's stay in the house, Som felt that everyone else except him had lost their sanity and were behaving in a foolish way. These feelings were expressed as following :

એ એકલા બાકાત હતા એવા ગાંડપણમાં. (16)

In English translation it is carried as following:

...Som alone had maintained his composure, as a man of the house should. (18)

While the original version only mentions Som's composed behaviour, the translator has added a phrase 'as a man of the house should' to emphasis the righteousness of such a behaviour by the head of the family. No doubt Som was the head of his family but this addition here implies to the translator's (who happens to be a man) personal ideology more inclined towards patriarchal image of a family. The age-old concepts that only a man could be a head of the family, his behaviour should be mature and responsible etc. have worked on the translator's mindset while considering this line so this addition is made.

Passage 2.

At number of places the equivalents chosen and explained seem out of place. For example, Taru's inability to adjust herself in life and behave as per her husband's expectation is explained as – in original જીવનની ગણતરી અને ગોઠવણમાં સાવ કાચી પડે. '*jivanni ganatri ane gothvanma saav kachi pade*' (17) is rewritten as 'Taru lacked the ability to constantly scheme and manipulate life.' (19); Som calls Chirantar તરંગી માણસ '*Tarangi manas*' (17) is translated as 'Romanticism' (20); taunting Chirantan of his listless behaviour Som says–...તારે મઝા છે, કંઈ કામકાજ નક્કી નહિ, રખડ્યા કરવાનું. ન કોઈ ધ્યેય, ન મહેનત કરવાની દાનત. '*...tare mazhache, kai kaamkaajnahi, rakhadya karvanu. Na koi dhyey, na mahenat karvani daanat.*' (18) – in translation it reads 'Chirantan's whimsical behaviour, nomadic habits, irresponsible ways, aimless style of living, slothful behaviour and lack of ambition' (20) etc.

In the first case Shelat only hints at Taru's inability to cope with the demands of life practically has been refracted as 'scheme and manipulate life' giving it a complete pessimistic connotation. Even in the last example where Som tries to assess Chirantan's character by using some strong and insulting expressions but in translation Meghani has used a few more (at times synonyms of the same) with the mention of a very strong and humiliating word 'slothful behaviour' which creates a different image of Chirantan for the readers of translation. The original only hints at his lethargic attitude while the translation almost makes him look like a culprit for behaving in such a manner. The second example where તરંગી માણસ '*tarangi*' which literally means 'whimsical' has been translated as 'Romanticism' with a capital 'R' which has a completely different connotation (it generally means to fantasize events or people as more interesting than they really are) while the original only tries to mention his quirky nature. The translator is rather hard on the character of Chirantan and would not like to spare him of any folly of behaviour and his attitude clearly reflects through his choice of words. Eugene Nida throws light on this kind of behaviour on the part of the translation as, "A translator's purposes may involve much more than information. He may, for example, want to suggest a particular type of behaviour by means of a translation. Under such circumstances he is likely to aim at full intelligibility, and to make certain minor adjustments in detail so that the reader may understand the full implications of the message for his own circumstances. In such a situation a translator is not content to have

receptors say, “This is intelligible to us.” Rather, he is looking for some such response as, “This is meaningful for us”” (‘Principles’ 128).

The Western poetics towards life must have inspired the translator to make such choices of words for Chirantan. The difference between Indian and Western poetics is reflected through the original and its translation. While the Indian concept towards life is different with less focus on materialistic achievements, where it is acceptable to lack any desire for success in this world in the sense of career and wealth with a strong desire for emancipation of the soul reflected through Chirantan’s character while the Western concept is more based in the line with success in the matter of materialistic possessions and prestige in the society, where life is constant planning and plotting and compete with others to be more successful highlighted through Som and his behaviour. The choice of equivalents by the translator clearly reflects his incline towards Western poetics which had influenced the rewriting. As Lefevere mentioned the aim of poetics “... translators often try to recast the original in terms of the poetics of their own culture, simply to make it pleasing to the new audience and, in doing so, to ensure that the translation will actually be read...” (*“Translation/History”* 26)

Even the title in both the languages have different nuances – in English it simply hints at a woman (Taru) in love while the Gujarati word can mean a woman is used as a vehicle of achieve love which is quite symbolic and suits better to the story line. The translation does not convey it adequately.

3. Balatrana Beej (On a Rainy Day – Seeds)

a) Thematic Analysis

The story begins with a description of a rainy day during Vrunda’s childhood and its recollection in her memory for years to come. Rain plays a significant role in the story by working as a thread to bind the entire tale. Vrunda’s nostalgic moments of a thunderstorm and flood situation created due to heavy rain in her village during her early childhood, the holiday in school, the cosiness of her house, the warmth of Ba’s (mother) fingers while drying her hair with towel, her sheer joy at the splash of rain water on her face, the fragrance of jasmine flower she had hold in her hand that day – all these experiences she cherished in her memory for long. Years down during the same monsoon season she was reminiscing

those moments when suddenly a secret related to her parents' relationship got revealed accidentally to her.

As Ba was looking through some old stuff in the cupboard, Vrunda decided to accompany her when all of a sudden she came across a picture of a beautiful woman from her father's old books. On inquiring Ba informed her that it was a picture of a lady called Pushpa whom her father wanted to marry but somehow this dream could not materialize and he had to marry Ba. When Ba realized this, she wanted to call off their marriage and renounce the world as her self-respect did not allow her to bear the children of a man who did not love her. Only due to sheer helplessness Ba had to drag this relationship and the fruits born out of it in form of three children – Bharat, Nayan and Vrunda. After hearing this Vrunda could decipher the reasons behind the tense atmosphere of the house and Ba's coldness towards the father and children. Instead of getting angry at Ba, Vrunda tried to sympathise with her for all the agony and pain she had undergone while giving birth and later raising these three unwanted children. Vrunda had no doubt that on that rainy day when Ba dried her hair with towel, the warmth of her fingertips was genuine and so was her affection and Vrunda felt obliged towards her for those moments of true love and joy.

After a few days, Vrunda, who used to live in a city due to her profession, received the news of Ba's death. It was monsoon again with torrents of rain. She somehow managed to reach her house in the village and looked at Ba's dead body. The other family members were not much affected by this death as Ba went for her heavenly abode at a ripe age but only Vrunda, who knew Ba's secret, cried hugging Ba like a little child as she recalled that particular day of her childhood and felt grieved as now there was no one to give her warmth and comfort on such rainy day.

b) Character Analysis

The two women characters here – Vrunda and Ba being a mother and daughter share a different kind of bonding which is attached to a secret related to the parents. Ba emerges as a strong force against any exploitative system and even when she has to bear with it, her contempt and indifference make her stand out as an independent personality. Ba's initial resistance to continue her relationship with father shows her awareness of her rights and uncompromising attitude. She definitely is a representative of modern, independent women. Later her acceptance of her fate and giving up might be due to her inability to find any support and her sense of duty towards her children. Although she gave birth to three children

whom she never desired, her individual stand of not accepting her secondary position is commendable. Her inability to show any affection to children could only be due to this stand and till the end she sticks to it which exhibits her strong will-power. Even when she mentioned the story of her father's falling for Pushpa, her voice did not quiver due to her inner strength. On the contrary, Vrunda is a much emotional and sensitive person. When she got to know of the secret, she tried to sympathise with Ba instead of accusing her. Being an educated and professional woman, she is well aware of the condition of women in society. She is full of reverence for Ba and her courage to stand her ground which created a different kind of bond between the two.

Throwing light on the misery of women like Ba in our society Himanshi Shelat said during a personal interview, "Their conscious decision to lead such life is a different type of rebel. Leaving everything is easy as you are so sensitive that you can think of something that no one else can do. It is not easy for women to break relationships even though they suffer intensely. It requires a lot of courage to face it and most of the women of the earlier generation did have this strength. To live with this pain requires lot of guts. Ba also loved her daughter Vrunda despite the fact that she was an unwanted child and the love, the bonding was very subtle still very powerful and these factors did not allow her to turn her back and leave" (2020).

Himanshiben has depicted a woman character (Ba) who propagates a different type of feminism where instead of looking to the Western feminist theories for solution, the writer has created a living identity based on the cultural codes acquired through her growing up in Indian society where most of the women bear such fate and Ba, through her ability to convert her pain into her strength, becomes a torchbearer for them. The write here exhibits her observation power and deep understanding of the complex structure of society in India along with the status of women within the same, particularly Himanshiben's critical analysis of the over significance of the status of a mother in our society and how it can be a source of much trauma to a woman at times. Virginia Woolf in her famous text *A Room of One's Own* admired a few stalwart women writers like Jane Austin and Emily Bronte because of their ability to escape the trap of the tradition of composing literature set by male writers in the patriarchal society for centuries and write like women. As Woolf puts it, "But how impossible it must have been for them not to budge either to the right or the left. What genius, what integrity it must have required in face of all that criticism, in the midst of that purely patriarchal society, to hold fast to the thing as they saw it without shrinking. Only Jane Austin

did it and Emily Bronte. It is another feather, perhaps the finest, in their caps. They wrote as women writers, not as men write. Of all the thousand women who wrote novels then, they alone entirely ignored the perpetual admonitions of the eternal pedagogue – write this, think that” (80-81). In Gujarati literature Himanshi Shelat exhibits the guts to present the realities of the world of women as observed and experienced by her and write about them without any hesitation. Shelat has presented her women characters without glorifying their suffering like earlier writers, “...with much greater realism, and without giving it the halo of noble self-sacrifice... with greater self-consciousness, a deeper sense of involvement, and not infrequently even a sense of outrage” (Gupta 182-183).

c) Example analysis and Observations

This story has two versions of English translation – apart from Vinod Meghani’s translation (*On a Rainy Day*) (2007); it has been translated by Rita Kothari in her anthology *Speech and Silence* as ‘Seeds’ (2006). Let us first analyze Meghani’s translation followed by Kothari’s and a comparative analysis of the two subsequently.

The title ‘*Balatrana Beej*’ which means ‘seeds sown in agony’ implies the birth of Ba’s unwanted children which has been translated as ‘On a Rainy Day’ by Meghani. Although ‘Rain’ is a crucial element in the story still the narration is centred round Vrunda’s efforts to interpret the reasons of Ba’s indifferent behaviour, especially in front of Baapuji and her finally being able to unravel the mystery and her efforts to understand Ba’s anguish while bearing the seeds of a disharmonious marriage in form of her children. So the title could not fully justify the central theme.

i) Meghani’s Translation

Passage 1.

On the rainy day during her childhood, Vrunda had pluck and kept a jasmine flower in her hand. She later compared the memory of that day with the sweet fragrance of that jasmine flower.

મોડી મોડી કળીઓ બેઠેલી એવા મોગરાનું એક ફુલ એણે હાથમાં રાખી મૂકેલું, તે દિવસનું સુખ પણ એ મોગરાનાં ફુલ જેવું મહેક મહેક... (114)

In English translation it reads as follows:

All this reminded her of the mogara flower she had plucked from amid the buds that had appeared rather late in the season. Ever since that day, she had been clutching at and clinging to the joyous memory of the rainy afternoon as intently as she had then held on to the mogara blossom in the hollow of her tiny palm. Equally fresh and crisp had remained the happy memory... (125)

An unnecessary and lengthy explanation rather than translation of a single line hinders the flow of reading. The deliberate use of archaic language, perhaps to make the translation look sophisticated but without considering the fact that such elucidation actually takes away the beauty of simplicity which emerges so naturally in the original text. The Universe of Discourse constraint where the translator has to be cautious of over translating and should try to naturalize the SL language has not been utilized by the translator who has rather ‘unnaturalize’ the entire sense by over illuminating.

Passage 2.

Vrunda was an educated professional lady and to pursue her dreams she had shifted to a city. She had often insisted Ba to come and stay with her in her house in the city but Ba would refuse it on one or the other pretext.

બા ભરત-નયનની જોડે જ રહેતી, એને ઘેર આવતી નહિ. છોકરીને ઘેર રહેવાય નહિ, બાની કાયમી દલીલ. (114)

In English rendering it is translated as:

Nowadays Ba lived with Bharat and Nayan; she won't come to live with Vrunda. Ba always held forth the excuse of the superstitious custom that forbade parents from living at a married daughter's. (125)

Now here the original writer simply mentioned how Ba always denied Vrunda's offer to stay with her in the city with different excuses and one such excuse is with connection to an age old Indian custom of not to drink or eat anything at a married daughter's house so staying at her place is out of question. The catch here is that although Vrunda is not married and she owes the house, Ba puts forward such argument to refuse Vrunda's offer. As far as the original is concerned it simply states the custom in a matter of fact way to maintain the objectivity without getting into the question of right or wrong while the translator has gone an

extra step to question it on the moral ground by calling it a ‘superstitious custom’. The translation throughout the story looks more like a critical note with detailed analysis rather than a translation due to a number of reasons – the translator’s personal ideology to make things clear for the readers (by readers he perhaps meant Western readers) thus leading him to give lengthy explanations often, these explanations might be his efforts (tools) to find a balance between different poetics – Indian and Western, to erase any kind of ambiguity and also to deal with the constrain of patriots as all his efforts seem to make his translation appealing to the publishers as well as readers for easy acceptance. In short, in Lefevere’s views, he has introduced – “...new devices into the inventory component of a poetics and paving the way to changes in its functional component” (‘Translation’ 29).

Passage 3.

Vrunda found solace while recalling those cherishable moments spent during that rainy afternoon as she had only a few such moments of pure joy in the following lines

આખી દુનિયા પ્રલયમાં ડૂબે, પણ એનું ઘર આવું જ સુરક્ષિત, હૂંફાળા સુખમાં એને ઢબૂરી દેતું અડીખમ
ઊભું રહેશે એવું ત્યારે એને લાગતું. (117)

In translation it reads:

That was the afternoon when the abode that had always provided her with security and enveloped her in sheer happiness had glowed with warmth and stood like a towering and invincible rock against the forces of annihilation and a tidal wave about to engulf the universe. (129)

The excerpt hints at Vrunda’s faith as a child in the comfort and security of her house despite chaos in the outer world. The original refers to a total destruction by the word પ્રલય ‘pralay’ which has been rewritten as ‘annihilation’ which is apt with an addition of an expression ‘a tidal wave about to engulf the universe’. The translation reads more like a description of a ‘doom’s day’ as described in the Bible or the Quran where the reference of a world-engulfing flood can be found. Vrunda’s belief that her house will stand strong against any outer force expressed through the word અડીખમ ‘adikham’ meaning strong has been carried forward with an image of a ‘towering and invincible rock’ which seems to have

emerged out of some such mythological background taking the simple imagination of a small girl to a spiritual experience of a grown up person.

ii) Kothari's Translation

Now let's have a look at Kothari's attempts to translate the same story into English. The title has been carried forward as 'Seeds' in English. While the original title hints at seeds sown in anguish, the English translation only mentions seeds without any negative connotation attached to it.

At number of places Kothari has used the original words putting them in italics without giving any explanations or foot notes. Some of them are typical Gujarati or Indian expressions and without foot note it might be difficult for readers (either Indian or Western) to make sense of these words. For example – વઘારેલા મમરા '*vagharela mamra*' (113) means 'crisp puffed rice', વઘારેલી ખીચડી '*vaghareli khichhdi*' (114) refers to an Indian delicacy made with the combination of rice, lentil and spices, કથા '*katha*' (114) means reciting anecdotes from scriptures with explanations by saints, ભજન '*bhajans*' (114) songs praising the Almighty, બાલગોપાલ '*Balagopala*' (114) refers to Ba's grandchildren, ચાંદલો '*chandlo*' (115) means cash gifts given during wedding, પિતાંબર '*pitambar*' (115) meaning a yellow dhoti worn by men on auspicious occasions, કડાકાભડાકા '*Kadakabhadaka*' (119) means thunder and lightning.

These examples hint at two constraints and the translator's technique to deal with them. The first is the Universe of Discourse which has been dealt with cleverly at some points by Kothari. In the above list certain words like ખીચડી '*khichhdi*' which has become an international cuisine, કથા '*katha*' and ભજન '*bhajan*' are commonly used words in daily routine, even બાલગોપાલ '*Balagopala*' word can be deciphered clearly. So perhaps in her efforts to naturalize the language, the translator might have decided to use the original word to retain some of the flavour of the SL text. As far as rest of the words are concerned, they do require some explanation but translator's own ideology of not making use of any foot notes or explanatory notes responsible for breaking the flow of reading might have resulted into

this outcome putting the TL readers to wonder at times regarding their cultural connotations and hinder the reading as well.

iii) Comparison of Meghani and Kothari's Translations

Now let's analyze and compare the two versions of translations through examples.
First version of translation is that of Kothari followed by Meghani's version.

Example 1.

Reference to the description of a rainy day –

પાણી ભરેલાં તસતસતા વાદળા (113)

Clouds heavy with water (54)

Waterlogged cumuli (124)

Example 2.

Description of cloud studded sky during monsoon –

એકાએક આકાશમાં કાળાકાળા પહાડ ફૂટી નીકળ્યા. (115)

...the sky was filled with dark, menacing clouds (55)

...out of the blue appeared rainclouds, black as granite and mammoth as boulders (126)

Example 3.

Ba sharing her trauma while she was carrying Vrunda –

એટલો કલેશ હતો જીવને કે... (116)

such misery in my heart (56)

my conscious had bled (128)

Example 4.

Description of rain –

અને એ બારી બંધ કરવા ગયેલી ત્યારે બહાર કશું દેખાતું નહોતું. એકધારા વરસાદે આસપાસની દુનિયા સાવ જ ઢાંકી દીધેલી. (116)

When she went to close the window, nothing was visible outside. The rain was still coming down in sheets. (56)

While closing the window, all that Vrunda had been able to see were the sheets of rain that were cutting through and plashing the ambience. (128)

Example 5.

Vrunda's realization that all the three children including herself were undesired and unplanned off springs of the couple who do not respect or love each other-

...પણ ભરત-નયન અને એ પોતે, બધાં આમ જ આવી ચડ્યાં આ પૃથ્વી પર. સાવ વણમાગ્યાં, વણજોઈતા, દેવના દીધેલ અને માગી ભીખેલ એવું કશું જ નહિ. (116)

But Bharat, Nayan and she herself had simply landed uninvited. They were not desired, or wanted. God's gifts, emblems of love, nothing of the sort. (56)

What had perturbed Vrunda was the fact that Bharat, Nayan, and she too, were the undesired and unwanted offspring of an involuntary alliance, far from being the precious gifts of a divine union. (128)

Example 6.

When Ba was revealing the secret of her relationship with the father, she unconsciously mentioned about the agony she had gone through while giving birth to Vrunda but on realizing Vrunda's presence she did not complete the sentence. The writer has expressed Ba's dilemma in following words

અનાયાસે જ ઘગઘગતી રેતીમાં પગ પડી ગયા હતા. (116)

Unknowingly she'd trod on forbidden territory. (56)

...she had accidentlly stepped on a mound of scorching sand, barefoot. (128)

Example 7.

When the preparations were being made to take Ba to the funeral pyre, Vrunda got emotional and hugged Ba and cried like a child. After knowing Ba's secret, Vrunda felt more close to her and now when she had died, there was no one who can take her place. The scene has been described as following

સાવ નાની છોકરીની પેઠે એ બાને વળગી પડી. હવે વરસાદના દિવસોમાં એનું પોતાનું કહેવાય એવું કોઈ રહ્યું નહિ. (119)

Like a little girl, she cling to Ba. Now there was no one to call her own on a rainy day. (58)

Like an infant she clasped the body and clung to it, knowing that in the rainy days to come she would have none that could be called her own, her very own. (132)

These few select examples throw light on the difference of attitude through which both the translators have approached the story, their own perceptions getting reflected through their choices, strategies and methods of dealing with the venture. The first two example talk of sky studded with rain clouds which have been handled by both the translators in a different manner. In the first example Kothari chose to use the simple and direct equivalent for the original word વાદળ 'vadal' that is 'cloud' while Meghani went for 'cumuli' – a quite unusual word to be used in these circumstances. Even the second example has the description in the same line of grey sky filled with dark clouds during monsoon season. The original writer makes use of a metaphor for the dark clouds by calling them કાળકાળા પહાડ 'kadakada pahad' which has been mentioned by both the translators but their treatment is different. While Kothari simply calls them 'dark, menacing clouds' Meghani goes to the extent of calling them 'black as granite and mammoth as boulders' taking the full image into consideration. The third example refers to the psychological trauma Ba had undergone while giving birth to her third child Vrunda which has been simply rewritten by Kothari as 'such misery in my heart' while Meghani's refraction of the same as 'my conscious had bled' making Ba look almost like a sinner confessing her crime. The rewriting in the later case clearly makes a different reading and is an apparent case of mistranslation.

The forth example describes the heavy rain which has blurred the scene outside the window. Kothari's adaptation has cut short a detail that the outer world has been made invisible due to heavy rain while Meghani's has added more to the original with the use of

additional expressions like ‘the sheets of rain that were cutting through and plashing the ambience.’ In the last example Vrunda’s self-realization that she along with her two brothers were not the fruits born out of conjugal relationship of her parents but rather the unwanted and dreaded seeds of disharmonious wed lock. The original writer also makes use of a line from a famous Gujarati lullaby દેવના દીધેલ અને માગી ભીખેલ ‘*devna didhel ane mangi bhikhel*’ meaning – God gifted children after a lot of pleading and praying by parents. Kothari tries to do some justice to this line with ‘God’s gifts, emblems of love’ while Meghani has missed the entire point with his efforts to make the translation look more splendid with his decorative words with a few additions as well in form of – ‘an involuntary alliance’, ‘the precious gifts of a divine union’ which were not mentioned in the original.

In the sixth example the expression used is a typical Indian way to imply the sudden realization of mentioning something which should be concealed otherwise. Kothari has dealt with it cleverly by capturing and transforming the sense of the original words while Meghani has focused more on the words and translated it literary along with an addition of a word ‘barefoot’ to enhance the impact. The last example indicates Vrunda’s deep grief on the occasion of her mother’s death and her feeling of loneliness. The original sentences are carried forward into English well by both the translators making full sense of the situation. What is noteworthy here is while Kothari’s version is more focused on words, Meghani has gone a step further with his addition of ‘her very own’ at the end to enhance the impact of the scene gaining the readers’ sympathy for Vrunda and her misery.

If we compare both the versions of translation, we can realize that Meghani and Kothari have dealt with the same story, however, from completely different perspectives and probably for completely different sets of readers. Kothari’s version seems more close to the original with the use of straightforward expressions, skilful efforts to deal with the semantic and cultural barriers without taking away the natural flow and charm of the original. Kothari’s stand appears to be making the maximum sense out of the original for the readers not familiar with Gujarati language or culture without complicating the process too much and try to retain the original flavour through the use of some original expressions. She has been faithful to the original to an extent that she has not taken any liberty to modify any piece of the tale.

However, when we look at Meghani’s translation, we are bound to feel that his strategy is completely opposite to that of Kothari as his focus is more on the words rather

than on the sense. As a result, at times, his translation looks obscure and unnatural due to over use of archaic language and his propensity to explain everything deprives the readers of their thrill to decipher things on their own. As a result, the natural flow of reading one can feel while going through Kothari's version is mired while reading Meghani's adaptation. At times Meghani's translation is too literal (word-for-word) while Kothari has focused more on the sense (sense-for-sense). One positive aspect in his translation is that, unlike Kothari, he has given explanatory notes wherever any original Gujarati words, not known to the TL readers, have been used. Meghani's attitude could be a result of his family and professional background. Being a son of a prestigious Gujarati writer, poet, critic Jhaverchand Meghani, he must have received language skills and literary tendency in legacy and his trying to modify the original to make it look more artistic with his creative talent can be considered under this light. Also he served in Merchant Navy for forty years and so his language is bound to get affected due to that. Thus, these two major factors of his life cannot be ignored while analyzing his translations critically.

In a nut shell, both the translators have applied completely novel techniques while rewriting the original story. If both translators are assessed from Nida's point of views regarding two types of equivalence namely 'formal' (or gloss) and 'dynamic', we can say that Meghani's translation is 'formal' in nature where, "...one is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language...The type of translation might be called a "gloss translation," in which the translator attempts to reproduce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original..." (Nida 'Principles' 129)

While Kothari and her attempts are 'dynamic' in nature which as Nida puts it, "A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture; it does not insist that he understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message" ('Principles' 129).

It is correctly said that a writer may not write for his/her readers but a translator always translates for readers. And during translation process a translator is supposed to keep his/her target reader in mind and his/her choices of equivalence, treatment of the theme, strategies to deal with the SL text, tools to handle obstacles at semantic, pragmatics and cultural levels, simplicity or sophistication at linguistic levels are all inspired by the target

readers. Considering this fact, we can make out clearly that both the translators had different TL readers in mind during their endeavour. As far as Kothari is concerned, she may have focused more on both national and international readership while selecting her strategies or choice of equivalence which has resulted in her using many original words without bothering to give any foot notes. Even a foreign reader can easily make sense of her translation and can enjoy it. But when we look at Meghani's version, his choice of expressions, imagery and strategies, it clearly points out at a Western reader for whom it is meant. His predisposition of over explanation leading him to make a lot of additions in the original, his use of sophisticated expressions, his choice of equivalent words (at times, more words than needed) – all these hint at his evident efforts to exhibit his language skill and knowledge of vocabulary (which has a clear bearing of Victorian Era) apart from his knowledge of Western literature which has markedly affected his translation efforts. For Indian reader, his translation might sound out of context, his choice of refined words might hinder the flow of reading, his efforts to build an image using archaic language might not have a desired impact as the reader might not connect to them. Even for modern Western reader, these factors might create obstacles as they seem out dated.

4. Andhari Galima Safed Tapka (Frozen Whites in a Dark Alley – White Dots in Dark Lanes)

a) Thematic Analysis

This critically acclaimed story narrates the hardship of widowhood in India and the social and religious stigma attached with this stage along with the ancient system of widow-houses where a widow could take shelter when discarded by family. It depicts the plight of widows who have got stuck in the widow-houses either willingly or out of compulsion. The title is symbolic – by સફેદ ટપકાં '*Safed Tapka*' the writer implies 'the white clothes worn by widows' and અંધારી ગલી '*Andhari Gali*' stands for 'the narrow and rigid social norms compelling them to lead a life without any ray of hope'. The story is an indirect effort of the writer to protest against the inhuman treatment of widows in our society where they are considered responsible for the death of their husbands and are forced to lead a pious life in devotion without any pleasure of the senses. In many cases, the family (in-laws) are not ready to accept such women and in such circumstances, these widow-houses become their only refuge where they spend rest of their lives with other widows in devotion of the Divine to get

rid of such misfortune in the next incarnation. As Anupama Rao aptly mentions, “The enforcement of widowhood showed how caste morality was regulated through gender. Widows became the object of upper- and lower-caste reformers’ concern... because widows’ maintenance of caste purity was really at issue... The maintenance of caste boundaries was the crucial factor in the ideology of widowhood. Though the widow might be rendered socially and sexually “dead” – tonsuring her head, forcing her to wear a white or red sari, depriving her of jewelry, demanding that she restrict her passions by controlling her intake of food and spice – she still generated anxiety because she was sexually knowledgeable” (Rao).

The story does not mention the name of any place but it is easy to make out through the description of the place (narrow, dark lanes and dirty, filthy streets) that it is Kashi or Banaras (or even Bengal, in this matter, with its orthodox and strict prescriptions for widows) where such widow houses are available in quite a huge number. The place also has an ancient association with the concept of ‘Moksha’ after death (freedom from the circle of life and death) and so thousands of people visit or shift there either at an old age to die in peace or in case of women, after getting widowed to wash their sins and to be in a company of the Divine.

In the story the narrator wanted to visit two of her acquaintances named Parvati and Sulakshana in one of the widow houses. The relationship of the narrator with these two widows was not hinted upon but they seem quite close to one another. On trying to find her way to a particular widow house named Bhagirathi Kalyandham, she had to pass through a maze of dark, narrow and filthy lanes. After a while, she could finally reach the place, with the help of a Pandit. She had expected Parvati and Sulakshana to come rushing to her on her arrival but to her surprise they came to her in a rather dull manner and they both looked almost lifeless. She had noticed many other widows studded in whites busy in *bhajan* and *pooja* or cooking behaving in the same listless way as if they were lifeless statues. She also noticed many widows outside the window rushing towards the river for holy bath in packs.

Parvati and Sulakshana tried to give her a quick tour of the house where they carried their different routine activities of singing bhajans, doing kirtan, cleaning and cooking or celebrating different festivals. From Parvati she got to know that they were building another four storey building for those widows whose names were still pending in the list, most of them were at the prime of their youth. They also took her to ‘Maiya’ – the head widow who had almost turned into an indolent old figure unable to move without the help of others.

Seeing the zestless life of these widows, the narrator felt restless and wanted to leave as early as possible. Parvati made some inquiry about a girl called Muniya (may be her daughter) and while she was bidding goodbye, they suggested her to spare a few days to spend with them in devotion which she denied as she was visiting Nepal with a group of travellers.

When they approached the veranda, she noticed a large painting of Yamraj blessing Savitri with a boon (from a very famous mythological story of Savitri's encounter with Yamraj to rescue her husband Satyavan) covering the entire wall opposite the house. This is quite ironic as such picture of iconic marital bliss has been placed opposite the widow house. She bid them farewell and went out to suddenly come across a Brahmin who applied sandalwood paste on her forehead with a blessing and she gave him a coin in return. When she reached her accommodation, she saw herself in the mirror only to notice that her red bindi had been all covered up with the sandalwood paste. The red bindi and the sandalwood paste are quite symbolic as the former indicates the marital status of a woman while sandalwood paste is normally applied on the forehead by either widows or by the people who have renounced the world.

b) Character Analysis

The story in a very restrained yet powerful manner points out the ill-treatment of widows in our society. With the use of a number of symbols and in an undertone the writer puts forward her point and this very technique makes the story quite appealing. The listless figures of widows in white going about their routine quite mechanically indicates the helplessness felt by them after widowhood which is like a dead end in their lives. This state has a deep psychological impact on women where they feel themselves worthy of nothing positive, reducing their existence to almost that of invisible person. To quote Sudhir Kakar, "...women in a dramatically patriarchal society will turn the aggression against themselves and transform the cultural devaluation into feelings of worthlessness and inferiority" (48).

The suffocation felt by the woman who visits the place outside in the narrow streets as well as inside the widow house and later the episode of her red bindi getting covered up by sandalwood paste hint at her own fear of leading such a life in case she also felt prey to widowhood. The inhuman treatment of widows has been hinted through a mention of certain rituals associated with widowhood a number of times like – a hairless head bend over rosary, widows wearing only white colour clothes considered as lifeless dots, their spending all day in religious rituals, absence of mirror in the house etc. The paradox of the last scene which

mentions the presence of a large picture of Yamraaj and Savitri is the final stroke adding up to their misery. The painting also implies the strong hold of patriarchal system where a woman still has to depend on men for a fulfilling life, in this case, first the God of Death Yamraaj granting boon of finite marital bliss to Savitri and later her husband Satyavan for whom she had taken all these troubles to seek Yamraaj as only through him she can ensure her salvation. Sharing her experience of writing this critically acclaimed story Himanshi Shelat said,

It was a very poignant personal experience of seeing widows living in dark lanes, the sight disturbed me. I have personally visited the place and had seen the condition of the widows which led me to write this story. I also watched a few documentaries on the same topic before I wrote this story. The social system (widowhood and the custom related to it) already exists so nobody wanted my opinion. But as an observer what I see becomes part of my existence. It hurts me to see that the whole existence of a widow is reduced to a droplet which has no meaning. I chose to narrate it in a controlled manner without any sentimental aggression to present the pain in a subtle, suppressed manner just like how they (widows) suppress it. So it should not be sharp, disturbing. I expressed it in a matter of fact way without getting involved so that objectivity can be preserved. That's why I chose a narrator. (2020)

Sharifa Vijdiwala in her book *Vartavishesh* expresses her opinion of the story and its treatment by the writer and the exploitative social system in the following words,

In *Andhari Gali ma Safed Tapka* the writer has depicted the pain of widows who struggle to spend rest of her life in Kashi, diluting themselves and their desires in the worship of God, squeezing their existence into mere white dots.... These widows try to survive in the narrow lanes of society moving towards the narrower and darker lanes of holy places converting their whole existence into white dots. The colour scheme depicted here has no hope for life.... A widow is never as helpless or lonely as widower still why only women have to renounce the family and move to holy places to wash their misdeeds?

Have we ever come across such groups of widowers at holy places?
Until women forsake the burden of such rotten tradition she will have
to suffer. (my tran,; ix-x)

c) Example analysis and Observations

Just like the earlier story, this too has been translated by two different translators – Meghani (2007) and Roomy Naqvy in an anthology of translated stories titled *Indian Short Stories* (2000) edited by E. V. Ramakrishnan. The title of both the versions hint at the translators' own interpretation of the story. Naqvy's title '*White Dots in Dark Lanes*' is quite literal while Meghani's title '*Frozen Whites in a Dark Alley*' implies the condition of widows indirectly through the use of the word 'Frozen'.

The main challenge with this critically acclaimed story translation is that the original story is full of culture specific symbols and connotations indicating various factors related to the lives of widows in Indian society. The title itself is quite emblematic in this matter along with numerous references to white colour in various images indicating the widowhood. The story has a strong Indian context as it tries to hint at the exploitative practice of widowhood in a certain manner unique to this country. The hints are presented in a subtle yet sharp way and to retain the impact the translator needs special skills to rewrite the story in English. There are many culture specific references making it difficult to carry forward in English with a completely different cultural and social set up. We need to analyze how both the translators have dealt with these symbols along with semantic and linguistic barriers in their versions.

To explain the different culture specific references the translator might need to give a number of footnotes which has a risk to break the flow of reading and making the translation look more like critical commentary. And without footnotes or explanations many important aspects might be missed out by a foreign reader or a misunderstanding can be created. Both the translators have tried their best to create adequate versions without giving any footnotes except one in Meghani's version and both the translations are faithful to the original to quite an extent still there are a few issues where the translation either looks obscure or too literal making a different reading. To an Indian reader unfamiliar with Gujarati, this translation still could make a better sense due to a common cultural heritage but in case of a foreign reader the risk of ambiguity is higher. Let us first look at Meghani's translation and analyze it with the help of a few examples –

i) Meghani's Translation

Passage 1.

On entering the widow house, the narrator noticed the presence of a number of widows in white clothes gathered in a big hall for *kirtan* and later they started singing *bhajan* loudly with equally loud clapping. The sudden loud din hurt her ears and she felt as if she had turned deaf.

એક મોટા ખંડમાં શેતરંજી પર સફેદ રંગનાં નાનાંમોટાં ટપકાં ગોઠવાયાં હતાં. એણે ચશ્માં સરખાં કર્યાં.

કોઈ ઘટ્ટ અવાજે ‘શ્રીકૃષ્ણ શરણં મમ’ થી શરૂઆત કરી. તાળીઓનો અવાજ કાનમાં મૂઢમાર જેવો વાગ્યો, બધું સંભળાતું જ બંધ થઈ ગયું. (134)

In English translation it reads:

Steering towards her right she saw a large hall. It was covered with a cotton carpet that was dotted with figures in white, like specks of various sizes. As she reset her glasses on her nose, a thick voice began to lead with *Shree Krishna sharanam mam*. The beat of rhythmic clapping hurt her ears; she felt as if she was being thrashed. She managed to shut out the noise... (149-150)

According to the original version, the sudden loud sound of clapping irritated her ears and the narrator thought for a while that she had lost her ability to hear. The original makes use of a word મૂઢમાર ‘*mudhmaar*’ meaning a thrashing without any visible sign of damage as a symbol to increase the impact of irritation felt by the woman. Now in translation it has been carried forward in quite a literal way with expressions like ‘she felt as if she was being thrashed’ which creates confusion for the reader. Even for the narrator’s feeling of becoming deaf only temporarily, the translation has skipped the line and added another instead ‘She managed to shut out the noise...’ which seems out of context here. Shelat has referred to the widows in white clothes sitting on a carpet as white dots of various sizes to imply how their existence has merely turned into white dots devoid of any other identity or special characteristics while Meghani has rendered this in quite a lengthy manner as ‘a cotton carpet that was dotted with figures in white, like specks of various sizes’ taking away the entire significance of the original symbol hinted upon by Himashi Shelat through his habit of over explaining things.

Passage 2.

While the woman was about to leave and they were approaching the front veranda, Parvati pointed out to an old and feeble figure of Maiya, the head widow and also informed her about how Maiya lost her husband at a tender age of sixteen.

પાર્વતીએ એક આકાર ભણી આંગણી ચીંધી. મૈયા... ભારે ભારે પોપચાં, ચહેરાની રેખાઓ થોથરમાં પૂરેપૂરી દબાઈ ગયેલી. લઈને ચાલતાં તકલીફ પડે એવું શરીર, ખૂબ ઊજળો વાન. મૈયાની ચૂડીઓ સોળ વરસે તૂટેલી. (136)

The English translation reads as follows:

Parvati pointed at a figure and shaped her lips to whisper “Maiya”. ...Heavy eyelids...lines on the face fully buried under the pale dilated skin...gross body too heavy to cart around...very fair skin...Maiya had donned her widow’s weeds at the age of sixteen... (152)

Both the versions clearly hint at how Maiya has suffered her fate of widowhood, though indirectly through the use of symbols, but through different choice of expressions led by different poetics selected as per the readers they were aiming for. The original uses the symbols of ‘breaking of bangles’, a typical Indian expression which indicates how a widow is supposed to renounce all the symbols of good fortune of wifehood like coloured garments, bindi, jewellery, especially bangles which directly indicates her marital status. The translator, however, decided to make use of another expression to imply the same sense and so he used words like ‘widow’s weeds’. Now it is important to note that both the expressions, in the original and in its translation, are typical to the poetics associated with by the author and translator. In case of the original author, it is the Indian poetics while for translator it is certainly Western poetics, especially the poetics of Victorian society as ‘widow’s weed’ is primarily associated with that era where a widow was supposed to wear black cloths with a black veil over the head to indicate strict etiquette of mourning. Apart from the constraint of poetics, the set of readers they must have in their mind might have stimulated the choices.

I also would like to make a special mention of Meghani’s use of spellings of Indian words where he makes use of ‘aa’ instead of single – ‘Bhaagirathi Kalyaandhaam’, ‘Raamaayana’ etc.

ii) Naqvy’s Translation

Let me now analyze Naqvy's version of translation with a few examples

Passage 1.

When the narrator was taking her leave from the widow house, Parvati pleaded her to visit them again in the following words

એણે હાથ હલાવ્યો. 'ફરી વાર આવજો આવી રીતે કોઈ વાર,' પાર્વતી ઝુકીને કહેતી હતી. (137)

The English translation reads:

She waved her hand saying, "Do come again like this" while Parvati said bending down,... (288)

The original expressions in the inverted comma are a typical Gujarati way to request a guest to visit again while bidding farewell. When rendered in English, they sound weird as Naqvy has translated them literally without considering the difference of the impact they might create in a target language.

Passage 2.

When Parvati and Sulakshana were giving the narrator a tour of the house, they pointed out an open space at the backyard and informed her that a new building of another widow house was soon to be built for those widows who were still left out. While describing the widows, Parvati used the following expressions

“મૈયા કહે છે કે આ બધી નાની ઉંમરની છે, છડેછડી, બચ્ચાંવાળી ઓછી છે,...(135)

In English translation it is carried as following:

“*Maiyya* says that all of them are of young age and tender not many of them are with children. (287)

The Gujarati word છડેછડી '*chadechadi*' which means a lonely woman without the burden of kids has been transferred as 'tender' here which hints more towards their being quite young. The original hints at the tendency of the widow home authority to prefer those widows without children to spare themselves of the additional responsibility. Although the original does not give a clear hint at this policy, it is easy to make sense with the help of the

words being used. The translator has rather misunderstood the word and used another word instead and a mistranslation has occurred as a result.

iii) Comparison of Meghani and Naqvy's translations

Following are some examples of how Meghani and Naqvy have respectively interpreted the original expressions and given them a different treatment.

Example 1.

Maiya's story of losing her husband has been described by Parvati and we have already seen Meghani's treatment to the episode above. Naqvy has translated it rather too literally

Maiyya's bangles were broken at sixteen. (288)

Meghani's version has Victorian influence (use of the word 'widow's weeds') still somehow it makes sense. Naqvy's translation, although he has been faithful to the original, might create confusion for a reader unfamiliar with Indian custom related to widowhood as s/he might fail to see the connection between 'widowhood' and 'breaking of the bangles'. However, an Indian reader can easily decipher it due to a common cultural heritage. The translator's personal ideology to remain faithful to the original must have resulted into this choice of expressions.

Example 2.

Naqvy has kept some of the culture specific words तुलसी (134), चंपल (134), पादुका (135) intact in italics while Meghani has translated most of them except 'Tulsi' that too with a foot note. It is important to note that a particular word '*padukas*' has a special implication in Indian religious tradition meaning a wooden sandal to be worn by God or a Saint and is thus considered pious and so it can be kept in the temple and worshipped. While Naqvy has decided to use the original word, Meghani translated it as 'holy clogs' (150). Clogs means wooden sandal and to make the point clear he added the word 'holy' to it still the cultural connotation is somehow missing making a different or confusing reading. Even Meghani has used the word '*basin of Tulsi*' (149) to indicate 'Tulsi pot' or '*name-plaque*' (149) instead of 'name-plate' to suit Western ideology and poetics. For the original word स्वाध्याय '*swadhyay*' (135) which implies the study of scriptures, Naqvy has used expressions 'religious discourse'

(287) while Meghani has rendered it as '*studies*' (150). Both these expressions used in English do not exactly carry the meaning of the original still if we compare, Naqvy's version is closer to the original while Meghani's version seems confusing as to what do these widows study in these widow houses.

Both Meghani and Naqvy have made efforts to rewrite this famous Gujarati short-story into English but both have approached it differently using different translation strategies. While Naqvy's translation sounds literal at times devoid of any artistic ability in his efforts to be faithful to the original writer, Meghani often dwells into making the translation look too out of context under the clear influence of Western ideology and poetics. Meghani's tendency to clarify any obscurity, even the symbols or images so typical to the SL culture, takes away the charm and excitement of reading. To quote Nida again in the matter pertaining over-translation where the translator, "...is not content to translate in such a way that the people are likely to understand; rather, he insists that the translation must be so clear that no one can possibly misunderstand..." ('Principles' 128)

As mentioned earlier, the story has many subtle hints and signs taken from social, cultural and mythological backgrounds, it becomes quite impossible to do justice to all in a language which does not share any common ground with the original one. Still the efforts made by both the translators are praise-worthy and they deserve their due credit.

1.3 Concluding Remarks

To conclude this section, Himanshi Shelat has composed this compelling collection of short-stories which represents human sensitivity in a restrained yet powerful way. Her women characters hardly exhibit any traits of radical female self prepared to fight for the dignity of their existence yet they reveal their strength in a more constrain way through their demeanour of self-control, understanding nature exhibiting their inner might of character. The writer promotes a concept of a different kind of feminism where the woman although aware of her exploitation, does not openly revolt against it in a traditional way but prefers to face it courageously indicating her power of consciousness, patience and sensitivity. Most of the stories in this collection hint at this power of persistence on the part of the women who prefer to face the problems instead of finding an easy escape which according to the writer is the real feminism. Shelat's brilliant narrative style makes her stories gripping and helps retain the flow.

Vinod Meghani has translated this entire collection into English and he must bear his share of credit for his endeavour. His command over English is praise-worthy and he has tried to remain as faithful to the original as possible. Nonetheless we can note that he has translated these Gujarati stories bearing in mind only foreign readers (Western that too) and the linguistic ability applied by him, which clearly bears the mark of Victorian tendencies, often take the translation farther from the sentiments expressed in the original. Also his use of over-artistic language often takes the original expression to a different level taking away the charm of simple original language inferred with a special implication in mind by the original author. At the same time, his tendency to explain everything (at times using multiple synonyms for a single word of the original) without giving any space to the readers to decipher on their own using their logical ability creates a hindrance for the readers who might get a feeling of reading a critical evaluation of the original stories rather than their translations.

The other two translators namely Rita Kothari (who translated *Badatrana Beej*) and Roomy Naqvy (*Andhari Galima Safed Tapka*) have done commendable task in rewriting these two poignant stories into English. Sharing his experience of translating the story, Roomy Naqvy comments, “I liked translating the story *Andhari Galima Safed Tapka*. The story was metaphorical but I did not find any difficulties translating it. The title is always tricky while translating a story like that” (2021). Out of the three translators Kothari, with her dynamic approach, has been well-equipped with her ability to retain the flow and flavour of the original at the same time leaving the mark of the translator upon her work. Naqvy has been faithful too to the original to an extent that he could only produce an ordinary replica of this heart-rendering story devoid of any artistic skills.

SECTION II

New Horizons in Women’s Writing: Stories by Gujarati Women

This book is an anthology of twenty one short stories by Gujarati women writers translated into English by Dr. Amina Amin and Dr. Manju Verma published by Gujarat Sahitya Academy, Gandhinagar in 2002. Both the translators have selected some of the representative stories of Gujarati literature with their special concern about issues and lives of women as portrayed in literature. Along with selecting the stories of some of the well-known authors like Varsha Adalja, Ila Arab Mehta, Dhiruben Patel, Kundanika Kapadia, the

translators have also included stories by some of the lesser known writers. I have selected four stories from the list for my present analytical purpose.

1.4 Introduction of Translators

Dr. Amina Amin (1936-2013) was a former faculty of English at Bhasha Bhavan at Gujarat University, Ahmedabad. She had also been a teacher at St. Xavier's School, Ahmedabad for a few years. Her areas of research were American Literature, African-American Literature and Women's writing.

Dr. Manju Verma (1934) was a lecturer of English at Smt. Sadguna Arts College for Girls, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad from where she retired in 1995. Her field of specialization is American Literature and she has done her Doctorate under the guidance of Dr. Amina Amin on an American writer Ellen Glasgow. She has presented several papers at National Seminars. Her field of interest is translation from Gujarati into English.

1.5 Women in Translation: Representation/Misrepresentation

In the following pages select portions from the original short-stories in Gujarati and their English rendering are listed with the aim of comparison and translation analysis along with the discussion of the theme and treatment and representation of women characters. The thematic aspect of the stories along with the introduction of the original writers is also included. Titles of the stories discussed in this section are as follows – *Dikrinu Dhan*, *Sarika Pinjarastha*, *Chandlano Vyap* and *Dukh Ke Sukh?*.

1. Dikrinu Dhan (A Daughter's Wealth)

a) Introduction of the Author

This is a story by a well-known writer of Gujarati literary field Dhiruben Patel (1926) who has contributed to various genres like novel (*Vadavanal* (1963), *Shimla Na Phool* (1976), *Andhari Gali* (1983), *Agantuk* (1996) etc.), short story collections (*Adhuro Call* (1955), *Vishrambhakatha* (1966), *Tadh* (1976) etc.), drama (*Pahelu Inam* (1955), *Manno Manelo* (1995), *Akash Manch* (2005) etc.), poetry (*Kitchen Poems* (2011) – her collection of poems in English), children's literature, humour literature and translation (Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in two parts (1960, 1966) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1967). The scale of her literature is enormous where she has covered up vast range of situations and themes pertaining people of different social strata. Her area of expertise is in

the depiction of various shades of the psychology of her characters in diverse life situations. During the initial phase of her career, her literature deliberately dealt with the lives of women and her views regarding women and their emancipation are quite radical although she doesn't want to identify herself as a feminist and she believes that, "...the root cause of women's inferior status lies in their own mental conditioning. Change in status, then, must start with a change in consciousness" (Tharu and K. 225).

b) Thematic Analysis

The present story deals with the theme of exploitation of woman but what makes this story remarkable is the choice of circumstances and the treatment of the topic by the writer. In this case, contrary to the expectation, the central character Shakuntala has to bear humiliation and negligence at the hands of her own parents who are financially dependent on her. Although Shankuntala was a professional and independent lady, she found her life to be quite dull, monotonous and suffocating. Basically she was a cheerful and lively person but due to her circumstances, where she is under the constant scrutiny of her mother, she could not lead a life of her choice. Though she was only twenty four, she looked older than her age with listless face and dull clothes. She had no friends and her attitude to work was lethargic as she found it quite tedious. It had been her dream for long to marry and settle down in life but being the only bread winner of the family who had the responsibility of her old parents and a younger brother who was studying medicine, she was forced to adapt to such life despite her personal detest. Her parents were desperately putting down any proposal of marriage for Shakuntala on one or the other pretext assuring her that once her brother completed his studies and started earning, they would find a good match for her. Shakuntala, being quite modest, could not express her desire in front of her family and suffered deep down as a result. Her parents, especially the mother, seemed heartless as they had never shown any respect for Shakuntala's efforts and her sacrifices. On the contrary, they kept on reminding her that they were not interested in her money as such a sin to expect daughter's wealth would lead them to hell after death. Shakuntala's inner frustration and sense of being neglected seeped through her behaviour in a subtle yet powerful way to make the readers realize her pain.

c) Character Analysis

Shakuntala, the central character, is an image of courage and patience who is sensible enough to understand her family's circumstances and makes efforts to help them in every

possible way. She bears negligence and insult as she well realizes that there is no one else who could come to their aid apart from her. She sacrifices all her desires for the well being of her parents and younger brother for whose bright future she is forced to toil. But the biggest tragedy of her life is that the same family for whose sake she has given up all her dreams does not value her efforts. Instead they take no notice of her needs and comfort adding up to her misery. Her mother is an example of a typical Indian woman – giving more importance to her son and his dreams while ignoring the daughter and her wishes. She is well aware of the fact that the family could survive only because of Shakuntala's hard work still she has never given her due credit and has always reminded her that her efforts and money are only a matter of temporary period as once the brother starts earning, she will be liberated of this burden. The writer has narrated a unique situation where a woman is forced to face injustice in her own house at the hands of her own parents whose selfish nature has deprived her of her freedom and dreams. Shakuntala's condition is almost pathetic as she cannot raise her voice against her own parents who have been exploiting her for their own endurance.

The original Gujarati story has been referred to from Sharifa Vijdiwala's Gujarati anthology *Shatrupa* published by Gurjar Granthratna Karyalaya, Ahmedabad in 2009.

d) Example Analysis and Observations

Passage 1.

When their neighbour Vasumatibehen came with a marriage proposal for Shakuntala, her heart missed a beat and she felt thrilled expecting the fulfilment of her much awaited dream of marriage. But the mother reacted rather indifferently putting forward excuses to refuse the proposal.

શકુંતલાનો જીવ અધ્ધર થઈ ગયો. ત્યાં તો ભારે મોઢું કરી મા બોલી : ‘ના રે ના, એમાં એમને શું પૂછવાનું છે? તમતમારે ના લખી દેજો, વસુબહેન, એ તો કહે છે કે દીકરીનો પૈસો મારે મન ગાયની માટી બરોબર છે. કન્યાદાનને બદલે એના રૂપિયા હાથમાં ઝાલું તો રૌરવ નરકમાં જવું પડે, એટલે...’ (120)

Its English rendering is as following:

Shakuntala's heart sat on her sleeves. When mother made a wry face and said : ‘No, no, why does one have to ask him? You better say no to them Vasuben. He says that a girl's money is

like cow's meat for me. If instead of Kanyadan I hold her money in my hand then I would have to go to hell, so...' (6)

This passage has three culture specific references – દીકરીનો પૈસો મારે મન ગાયની માટી બરોબર છે '*a girl's money is like cow's meat*', કન્યાદાન '*Kanyadan*' and રૌરવ નરક '*hell*'. The first one is mentioned as ગાયની માટી '*gai ni maati*' in the original which is rewritten as 'cow's meat' with a footnote given to explain the implication. This expression hints at the values associated with a cow which is considered holy and worshipped in India and how cow's meat is prohibited to Hindus. Just like the cow's meat, any belonging of a daughter is not to be used by her parents. The reason behind this is the age-old belief that a daughter has only a temporary abode at her parents' place while her actual home is where her husband and in-laws reside and all her belongings must be given to them as rightful owners. The footnote explains this point but the cultural connotation of the entire phrase would hardly make any sense to a Western reader with a different set of ideologies. The constraint of ideology might create misreading or misinterpretation in this case.

The second reference to the tradition of કન્યાદાન '*Kanyadan*' which is an important ritual performed during a wedding in India where the father of a daughter would give away the bride to the groom's family placing her right hand in groom's right hand as a request to accept her as his partner. An Indian reader can easily make sense of it but a foreign reader not familiar with Indian traditions might not make anything out of it. In the final reference, the original author has mentioned a type of hell called રૌરવ '*Raurav*' as found in Hindu scriptures according to which there are different types of hell (as many as 28) for different kinds of sinners and in the scriptures a detailed narration is given of them. As per Bhagvat Purana as well as the Devi Bhagavat Purana, this particular hell is assigned to a person who tries to harm other human being for the sake of the benefit of his own family. According to the Puranas, the persons harassed by the sinner take a form of a serpent-like beast called રુરુસ '*Rurus*' and persecute the sinner. As per the theme of the story, the parents somehow feel guilty of bothering the daughter in form of taking away her wealth and so they fear facing the punishment after death in form of going to this particular hell. When this line is translated into English it simply becomes 'hell' devoid of any implication to the Indian concepts of hell. The original writer's knowledge of her culture which inspired her to use this special reference

is lost during the process of translation. The translators' choice of simply using the word 'hell' instead of referring to the Indian concept might be due to the difference between Indian and Western poetics. Such detailed concept of post-death phenomenon as found in India and in Hinduism can rarely be found anywhere else and as a result unless one is familiar with these notions, one cannot understand the real implication of the expression. The translators might have considered the fact that even with the help of footnote, the actual nuances might not appeal to the Western reader or even a modern Indian reader and so they have simply mentioned the word 'hell'.

Passage 2.

The story also bears traces of the famous character of Shakuntala in Kalidas's world famous drama *Abhigyanashakuntalam*. When Shakuntala's brother Jayant visits home during his vacation, he would tease her by calling her Shakuben instead of using her full name saying that the poet Kalidas might faint on seeing such version of her famous Shakuntala. In the Sanskrit drama, Shakuntala, as portrayed by Kalidas, is a beautiful and graceful lady with cheerful demeanour and natural charm. Now in the present story the central character bearing the same name is portrayed as a kind of a counter image of Kalidas's Shakuntala having below average looks, listless expressions on face, no trace of pleasant personality or charm. Jayant is trying to taunt his sister with reference to the drama and the character of Shakuntala as appears in it but a reader who is not familiar with Sanskrit drama or Kalidas would miss the entire cultural connotation.

The name of the central character of the story which happens to resemble to that of the character of Shakuntala in *Abhigyanashakuntalam* is quite symbolic as it indicates the similarity of fate both the women suffer. Kalidas's Shakuntala had to bear with the humiliation in the court and separation from her husband Dushyanta due to the curse of saint Durvasa while here in this story Shakuntala has to face the contempt of her own family and sacrifice her dreams of getting married due to the financial burden. Another common factor between these two characters is that they never raise their voice against the injustice done to them and mutely suffer the pain befallen on them. Here it is important to note that the character of Shakuntala first appeared in the epic Mahabharata in the narrative of the Dushyanta-Shakuntala saga. Later Sanskrit dramatist Kalidas adapted the tale in his famous drama *Abhigyanashakuntalam* taking the entire tale, especially the character of Shakuntala to a new artistic peak making her immortal. However, it is noteworthy that the two versions of

Shakuntala have a mark difference in their demeanour and personality as in the Mahabharata, Shakuntala appears as a woman of substance who is aware of her rights and was rebellious in nature while the version of Shakuntala portrayed in the Sanskrit drama is more submissive and timid. And what is striking is that the later version gained more popularity and became an epitome of the image of an ideal Indian woman who is submissive and who must prove her chastity to be accepted and respected by a man. It also hints at the fact that we still have masculine concepts of female identity and images as men have been controlling knowledge and interpreting classical texts in the patriarchal society. Jayant's comments and his referring to Kalidas clearly suggest his and the society's endorsement of the image of the docile Shakuntala than the autonomous one of the epic. As Romila Thapar observes in her book *Shakuntala: Texts, Reading, Histories*, "In the last two centuries we have ignored the Shakuntala of the Mahabharata, the liberal woman demanding to be justly treated, and have endorsed the more submissive Shakuntala of Kalidasa, a woman waiting patiently for a recognition of her virtues" (262).

2. Sarika Pinjarastha (Sarika, the Encaged)

a) Introduction of the Author

This is a critically acclaimed story by a renowned Gujarati writer Saroj Pathak (1929-1989). She has to her credit novels (*Nightmare* (1969), *Nihshesh* (1979), *Priya Poonam* (1980), *Time Bomb* (1987) etc.), short-story collections (*Prem Ghata Zuk Aai* (1959), *Virat Tapaku* (1966), *Hukamno Ekko, Tathastu* (1972) etc.) and essays. The special characteristic of her fiction is the portrayal of the darker aspects of life, especially of the disharmonious marriage and a woman's predicament as a result.

b) Thematic Analysis

The current story deals with the theme of the inner conflict of the central character Sarika at different stages of her life due to the pressure of performing the various societal roles she was expected to perform – first as an obedient daughter and later a dutiful wife and daughter-in-law. Her inability to break the chains of the unjust social norms shatters a sensitive and intellectual woman like Sarika resulting into her final break down. At her parent's place she was not allowed to select subjects of her choice and continue her studies for the sake of marriage into a well-to-do family while at her in-law's house she was expected to groom and polish herself as per the high status of the family. Despite being an introvert

woman, she tried to adjust with this new life style only to find her husband openly flirting with his friend's wife in her presence and later being a victim of the so called high society tradition of 'wife swapping'. She bore all these humiliations meekly to fulfil a long cherished dream – to have a child of her own but it was also turned down by her husband saying that these were their hay days where they were supposed to enjoy their lives instead of taking up an unnecessary responsibility of a child.

Sarika timidly submitted to all the injustice but she could not stand against the final blow in form of an untimely death of her husband after a prolonged illness. Even during the illness Sarika was playing the role of an ideal daughter-in-law, looking after the needs of the visitors, hardly finding a moment to spend with her sick husband. Later during the funeral process she could not make herself cry as she had not come to a full realization of the tragedy and became a victim of her in-law's harsh criticism. The force of the persistent blows one after the other was so powerful that she gave in finally to end up in hospital in a semi-conscious state, constantly swaying between her past and present. She seemed to be completely devastated, losing control of her senses to be put under an iron cage ultimately due to her condition. The writer has made use of a stream of consciousness technique in this story where the entire story has been narrated through the different flashes of the past as recalled by Sarika while fighting against herself and her circumstances in hospital.

c) Character Analysis

The character of Sarika emerges well during the course of the story where her own inability to resist the wrong done to her hits hard on her consciousness and being unable to bear with it, she felt prey to mental illness causing multiple symptoms like swoon, hysteria, amnesia and babbling. In Sharifa Vijdiwala's opinion, "...*Sarika Pinjarastha* depicts the story of a mute surrender instead of a revolt of a woman against her problems... In this story Saroj Pathak has portrayed the wounded consciousness of woman chained by the traditional social set up" (my tran.; 'Shatrupa' 23).

Although Sarika appears to be weak and vulnerable, her awareness towards her exploitation makes her appealing to the readers and through her the writer has rendered the condition of thousands of women living more or less identical life in our society without any resistance. Sarika's pain comes out brilliantly through the flashes of her past and her current babbling gaining the readers' sympathy. Even without raising her voice, Sarika is able to

question the injustice done to women in the name of social norms and traditions and that is where the writer's success lies.

The original Gujarati story has been referred to from Sharifa Vijdiwala's Gujarati anthology *Shatrupa* published by Gurjar Granthratna Karyalaya, Ahmedabad in 2009.

d) Example Analysis and Observations

Passage 1.

When it was time to decide which stream Sarika would select after her tenth grade, the family insisted on her choosing Science but she was not interested in it due to her detest for dissection. Her mother was trying to explain to her why she should select Science over any other stream in the following lines

‘મા, મા, પપ્પાને કહોને, મારે સાયન્સની લાઇન નથી લેવી. મને એમાં રસ નથી.’

‘સુરિ!’ માએ આંખ કાઢી.

‘તને તારા પપ્પાના સ્વભાવની ખબર નથી? વળી આપણા જેવા સાયન્સ ન લે તો શું પેલા માસ્ટરની છોડીની જેમ આટ્સે લેશે?’

‘મારાથી વાઢકાપ નહિ થાય મા.’

‘હા, તે તારે ક્યાં લાંબું ભણવાનું ને મહેતી થવાનું છે?’ (108)

In English translation it reads:

‘Ma, Ma tell daddy, I do not want to go in for Science.

I do not have any interest in it.’

‘Suri!’ mother rolled her eyes.

‘Don’t you know your father? Moreover, if people like us will not take up Science, then will you take Arts like that master’s daughter?’

‘I’ll not be able to dissect ma.’

‘Okay, but you don’t have to study for long and become a mehti.’ (43)

The above incident is a classic example of an Indian middle class household where the parents control every decision of their children’s life – what subjects they would study, what professions they should select and when and whom to marry without taking into consideration the children’s wishes. In case of a girl the situation is even worse where the parents and their choices clearly reflect the societal expectations and the pressure is all the more powerful. In the above excerpt, Sarika’s mother unconsciously points at two of the traditional norms – one is related to the caste system prevailing in the society along with the fake status attached to the choice of stream and the other is related to the early marriage of Sarika even if she would not be able to complete her studies.

Now here Sarika belongs to a high caste, upper middle class family and she is expected to make her choices as per her family status which even includes the choice of subjects she would study. In India ‘Science stream’ always has an upper hand over other streams like Commerce or Arts and if it is the field of Medicine then it is considered the best option for a child as it is associated with prestige, status and financial security. This choice of stream is mostly associated with the percentages scored by the student at tenth/twelfth grade which makes him/her eligible for it. The student’s own interest is hardly considered in this matter often leading the child to frustration. The other options like Commerce and Arts in particular is for the average or below average students who fail to score good marks. Also the education in the field of Science or Medicine can put a lot of financial burden on the parents so only those who are financially stable would choose it. The other fields do not require such big monetary burden so a student from lower middle class or even poor family can easily afford them. The mother’s comment ‘then will you take Arts like that master’s daughter?’ clearly hints at the prevailing situation where the mother is bluntly pointing out the different of status and financial condition between their family and that of the master’s (teacher).

Later in the same example when Sarika expresses her dislike for dissection, her mother is heard telling her of another conventional norm that is Sarika, being a girl of a well-to-do family, is never expected to pursue any career after completing education as she would soon be married off to another such well-to-do family. She even refers to the career options open to Sarika as મહેતી ‘*mehti*’ which refers to a female teacher. Once again the discriminating policy of the society gets reflected here as even though highly educated, very few career options are open for women (as per the conservative society) and the most

lucrative one is that of being a teacher as it is somehow considered safe and suitable for a woman. Sarika who is forced to study Science is never expected to pursue her career and at max she could opt for the profession of a teacher which is comparatively less demanding and it clearly hints at the derogative position of women when it comes to choosing a career. As Michelle Rosaldo states, "...woman's place in human social life is not in any direct sense a product of the things she does (or even less, a function of what, biologically, she is) but the meaning her activities acquire through concrete social interactions" (400). In this case also the choices available for Sarika must add some meaning to her position in the society before and after her marriage.

This small episode is quite significant in portraying the caste and gender conscious mentality of the people of the society in India which still prevails in modern times reflecting the deep rooted ideology but the reader of translation, unaware of it might miss the entire point. Also the original word મહેતી '*mehti*' has been carried forward as it is with a footnote still the actual implication would be missed in translation due to difference of ideology in Indian and Western context towards teacher, especially female teacher. The English translation is apt still the cultural nuances are impossible to rewrite in a language-culture with different sets of ideology creating a higher possibility of misunderstanding. In words of Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn ideology, "...masks contradictions, offers partial truths in the interests of a false coherence, thereby obscuring the actual conditions of our existence and making people act in ways that may actually contradict their material interest..." (3)

Passage 2.

In a small paragraph the writer describes Sarika's wedding which did not take place as per the traditional way. It was rather an unusually quiet wedding in presence of a few family members.

ચૂપચાપ લગ્ન... વર ઘોડે ન ચડયો. શણગારેલી મોટરમાં ન બેઠો. વાજાં ન વાગ્યાં. હસ્તમેળાપ... મહારાજના મંત્રો... અગ્નિની સાક્ષી... લગ્નની વેદી... ચાર ફેરા... ચોરી... (108)

Its English rendering reads:

Quiet wedding... the groom didn't ride a horse... didn't sit in the decorated car. The bands didn't play. Hastamelaap... the mantras of the priest... the wedding fire, wedding altar, moving around the fire four times, and chori. (44)

A reference to Hindu wedding rituals has been made here where Sarika wanted to get married the traditional way but her in-laws being modern denied it so no such rituals were performed and the wedding took place quietly. The word 'quiet' is used to indicate the contrast to the traditional Indian wedding and all the thrill, excitement and hustle and bustle associated with it including the loud music of the band, the procession, the dancing etc. Two original words have been used હસ્તમેલાપ '*hastamelaap*' and ચોરી '*chori*' with a footnote to just one – ચોરી '*chori*'. Other words used in the original describing the wedding ritual have been translated but being culture specific words with special nuances to Hindu religion where each ritual having its own significance, how far the reader of this translation, unaware of them, could decipher these words is a matter of speculation. For a Western reader all these rituals might not make any sense except a reference to the Indian wedding rituals and one particular reference might confuse some Indian reader as well. The reference to ચાર ફેરા '*moving around the fire four times*' refers to the ritual of સાત ફેરા '*saatphera*' – refereeing to the seven marriage vows. Now the excerpt clearly hints at a Gujarati wedding ritual where instead of moving around the fire seven times (done in case of most of the other Hindu communities), the bride and the groom move around the fire for only four times.

The cultural difference in case of a Western reader and a variation amongst different Indian cultures in case of an Indian reader might create confusion (as within Hindus also the wedding rituals differ from caste to caste) due to the constrain of Ideology. Even if the Western reader makes any sense out of it, s/he would never be able to understand the importance of all these rituals for the bride and the groom and their families. Here more than the linguistic aspects, culture of the SL and TL pose hurdle. As Lefevere has rightly pointed out, "For the translator, the real untranslatability lies not in syntactic transfer or semantic constructions but in the "shorthand" developed by all cultures. Connotations, diction, a priori, dialects or idiolects are "cultural shorthand" difficult to render in translation... Contrary to traditional opinion, translation is not primarily "about" language. Rather, language as the expression (and repository) of a culture is one element in the cultural transfer known as translation" ('Translation' 43).

3. ChandlanoVyap (The All-pervasive Bindi)

a) Introduction of the Author

This story is penned by Anjali Khandwalla (1940-2019). She has to her credit three short-story collections – *Leelo Chhokro*, *Ankhni Imarato* (1988), and *Areesama Yatra* (2019). Her first two collections received awards by Gujarat Sahitya Sabha and Gujarat Sahitya Academy. She has written a number of women-centric stories including the present one where she tried to portray the dilemma of women in dealing with her various relationships in society.

b) Thematic Analysis

The present story depicts the predicaments a woman has to face due to her social status of either being a widow or a married woman represented by the narrator and her maid Kanta respectively and how they struggle to maintain their poise within the limitation of social norms. The female narrator had lost her husband Avinash a few years back and she lived with her son Chirag. She was an educated and professional woman; modern in thoughts and outlook who did not believe in following all the norms set by society for widows (she wore colourful clothes and *bindi* on her forehead). Kanta, her maid, on the other hand, was a married woman who was very proud of her being a '*suhagan*' and exhibited it through her make-up and jewellery (she wears a big red *bindi*, bangles, colourful clothes etc.). Both seemed poles apart from each other but their womanhood connected them emotionally.

One day the narrator got to know of Kanta's husband's illness following his untimely death. She went to Kanta's house to express her condolences but she was shaken to find Kanta in an awkward situation where as per her community tradition she had been decorated like a newlywed bride and once her husband's dead body was taken away for funeral, she was made to break her bangles and forsake all the jewellery and make-up as a sign of moaning with a loud cry and banging on her chest to grieve her widowhood at a young age. On seeing all these, the narrator was reminded of the day when she had lost her husband and her own emotional reactions to this tragic situation. After a few days when Kanta joined the work, she was complaining of her barren forehead without *bindi* and her dull coloured clothes as she really enjoyed wearing bright colours. She also whined of not being able to take part in any auspicious occasions now as she was a widow who was considered inauspicious in society.

She went on leave for a few days on the pretext of completing some final death rituals of her husband and when she returned, she was wearing colourful clothes with a big red *bindi* on her forehead just like a married woman. The narrator was surprised to see her like this and on inquiring Kanta informed her that as per her community tradition she had worn the bangles in the name of her brother-in-law without getting married to him. From then on she was able to wear all the jewellery and make-up as per her wish as she was a '*suhagan*' now. She was happy to get back her *bindi*. On hearing Kanta's tale, Chirag also insisted his mother to remarry and get him a father. The narrator got restless and wanted to scold Kanta but she was suddenly reminded of her colleague Raj who had indirectly proposed to her for marriage. She started thinking of him in a positive way and she dialled his number but suddenly she faced a dilemma that how could one *bindi* (a sign of a married woman) behold two men (Avinash and Raj) together.

c) Character Analysis

The two central women characters – the narrator and Kanta emerge well in the story where they pose as counter image of each other. The narrator is a high born, educated, career-oriented modern woman while Kanta is a low born, uneducated woman who is conventional in every way. But both have to face the consequences of the norms pre-decided by society for women sharing various status – married and widowed respectively and both deal with them in a different way. Although the narrator seems to have an upper hand, she somehow feels lagging behind due to her dilemma regarding crossing the limitations set by the society (in the matter pertaining widow remarriage). Her high caste and social status might be responsible for this while Kanta, who is a low born, does not seem to hesitate to wear the bangles in the name of her brother-in-law soon after the death of her husband to gain a more respectable position in the society. Both the women have faced widowhood which is considered a social stigma and put the women in humiliating situation but Kanta is bold enough to forsake it with the help of the convenient social system of her community while the narrator faces quandary due to the lack of any such system in high caste society. Kanta seems to gain an upper hand here as she is able to enjoy better position and freedom compared to the narrator who is not able to take an important personal decision regarding her future due to the her hesitation of crossing the line.

No doubt both the women are victims of social systems and are bound by their rules where only through following the tradition, a woman is allowed to have any freedom or joy.

But, in this regard, the women of higher caste seem to be more exploited in the name of social customs compared to the women of lower community which allows them better options related to their status. The higher communities do not allow their women to cross the fence of social norms easily by chaining them in the name of respect, tradition and social image. On the contrary, the lower communities are more liberal in their outlook towards matters pertaining to women and their status. In many of the lower communities and tribes, a woman is free to marry soon after the death of her husband, to practice live-in, to stay at her parents' house with her husband after marriage or as mentioned here in this story to wear bangles in name of another man without marriage to enjoy all the benefits of a married woman. If we consider this in regard to modern times, the higher communities have loosened their grip of conventional rules on the widows, in the sense that widow remarriages are now acceptable and even if they prefer not to remarry, they are not forced to practice widowhood in a strict manner. They can wear colourful clothes, jewellery, apply *bindi* and make-up. Still the society would on and often remind a woman of her status and widow remarriage is not practiced openly on a large scale. On the contrary, if we look at the lower communities, they may look too unyielding and superstitious in the matter of following the practice of widowhood but on the other hand, there are a number of provisions for a widow which allow her to lead a life of dignity by either remarriage (mostly with a close male relative) or to wear bangles in the name of someone to enjoy a better position in society without any sense of guilt as the society would accept such practices openly without disgracing a woman of her choice.

No doubt, in both the societies (upper and lower), a woman is supposed to follow the traditional conventions of their particular caste and they do not have freedom to move on independent ground. Even though the lower communities allow better options for women pertaining her status still these options are directly in connection with men and their generosity to allow women to enjoy better position. In case of Kanta, she could enjoy the status of a married woman only when her brother-in-law allows and in case of the narrator, her own social consciousness regarding the widow remarriage which is once again guided by the patriarchal notion of women and her position in society. As Nelly Furman has correctly said, "In a world defined by man, the trouble with woman is that she is at once an object of desire and an object of exchange, valued on the one hand as a person in her own right, and on the other considered simply as a relational sign between men. At the intersection of two

incompatible systems, woman appears as the embodiment of an impossible duality, the locus of an opposition” (61).

The original Gujarati story has been referred to from a Gujarati anthology *Ghunghat Ka Pat Khol* by Usha Thakkar published by Shrimati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Mahila Vidyapith, Mumbai in 1992.

d) Example Analysis and Observations

Passage 1.

When Kanta's husband died and was taken to the funeral ground, as per their community ritual Kanta was supposed to beat her chest violently and cry loudly but somehow she could not make herself cry. On seeing this, a few women of her community abused her bluntly for her shameful behaviour of not able to grieve the death of her husband. A little later they poured a bucket full of hot water on her as a sign of warning for her to follow the widowhood strictly.

એને ઘરના આંગણાથી સહેજ દૂર ખુલ્લી જગ્યામાં લઇ ગયા - પ્રવાહમાં મારેય ઘસડાવું પડ્યું. બૈરાંઓ રાજિયા ગાવા લાગ્યાં ને છાતી ઉપર એકીસાથે બધા હાથ ધબ.... ધબ... પિટવા લાગ્યા. ઘણીબધી છાતી ઉપર લાલ ચકામાં ઊપસવા લાગ્યાં.

એ તો જમીન ઉપર બેસી પડેલી. કેટલા દિવસોનો ઉજાગરો હતો! છાતી પીટવામાં પાવરધી બે જણીઓએ એને બાવડાં ઝાલી ઊભી કરી ને બધાંને સંભળાય એમ તાણીને એકે કહ્યું : ‘રાંડ! તારો ઘણીયે તને વહાલો નથી કે ઘોળી છાતી લઇ બેસી રહી છે?’ મને હાડોહાડ લાગી આવ્યું, પણ બહારની હું શું બોલી શકું?

એ બંને જણીઓએ હાથના ઇશારાથી બૈરાંઓને રાજિયા ચગાવવાનું કહ્યું અને હાય... હાય... તોફાની ગતિથી ધૂમરાવા લાગ્યું. એકાએક એને પણ શું નશો ચઢ્યો હોય એમ ઢળેલી એ સહસા ટદાર થઇ છાતીએ હાથ પછાડતી ગાવા લાગી :

‘મને એકલી મેલીને નાથ ક્યાં ચાલ્યા

હાય... હાય...

મારો બાગ ઉજાડી નાથ ક્યાં ચાલ્યા

હાય... હાય...

...

એટલામાં તો કાંતાએ ‘ઓ મા રે....’ કરીને ચીસ પાડી. હું ત્યાં દોડી. કાંતાની બાજુમાં ઊભેલી ડોસલીએ કાંતાને ચીમટો દેતાં કહ્યું : ‘ખાલી ઢોંગ કર મા! કાંઈ આજુ ઊનું નો’તું...’

કાંતાની બીજી બાજુએ ઊભેલી ડોસલી બોલી : ‘હું રાંડી ત્યારે મારી નણંદે બાલડી ભરી અંગાર જેવું પાણી રેડેલું...!’

એક જુવાન સ્ત્રીએ આવી કાંતાને ચીટિંચો દીધો ને બોલી : ‘ભર જોબનિયામાં છે રાંડ! નાતરે જા તો ખરી ભૂંડી!’ (129-130)

Its English rendering is as following:

They took her outside a little away from the house to an open space – I too got dragged by the crowd. The women began to sing the mourning songs and began to beat their chests in unison. Red scars appeared on their chests.

She had flopped to the ground. How many sleepless nights she had spent! Two women experts at chest-beating forced her to get up and one of them said loudly : You who are widowed, don’t you love your husband that you are sitting with an unscarred chest? I was terribly hurt, but what could an outsider like me say?

Both of them signalled with their hands for the other women to beat their chests and the sound of “hai-hai” began to resound violently. Suddenly, as if intoxication caught her too the slumped Kanta sat upright and beating her chest began to sing :

‘Where are you going my lord, leaving me alone

hai-hai.

Where are you going my lord? Ruining my garden.

hai-hai.

...

Suddenly Kanta screamed : ‘Oh ma! I ran there. The old hag of a woman beside Kanta pinched her and said – ‘Do not pretend! It wasn’t very hot...’

The hag on the other side of Kanta said : ‘When I was widowed my sister-in-law had poured a bucket full of boiling water...!’

A young woman came and pinched Kanta and said : ‘The widow is blooming in youthfulness, wicked woman, remarry if you dare!’ (113-114)

The above excerpt points out the death rituals of a particular community. As per the tradition, when a husband dies, the wife is supposed to cry loudly singing mourning songs along with a group of women while beating her chest violently till red marks appear on the skin. Such inhuman practice is considered a sign of deep grief experience by a faithful wife at the irreparable loss of the death of her husband. When Kanta seemed unable to follow this custom, the other women started abusing her of being unfaithful by using a word रैंड ‘rand’ which is a derogatory term used for an unfaithful woman. In translation it becomes ‘You who are widowed’ which does not really carry the sense of insult or humiliation aimed at. The original word is blunt and sharp while the translation has pacified its impact. The lack of exact equivalence of this culture specific word which is used as an abuse and the translators’ own ideology to avoid the use of such humiliating words have resulted into this different reading. Also at one place during the act of the beating of the chests by women the original makes use of a figure of speech ‘onomatopoeia’ by indicating the beating sound – धब धब ‘dhabdhab’ to enhance the effect. The translation has skipped it completely.

The entire episode indicates a typical Indian custom of mourning in a lower community where a special group of women gather to sing mourning songs and beat chests brutally to enhance the impact of the grief. It is a common practice in many communities. Even the pouring of piping hot water on Kanta, pinching and abusing her are part of the custom to remind her of her misfortune and beware her against violating any rules of widowhood. In India widowhood is considered the highest misfortune a woman can suffer

and a widow is made to follow some strict rules along with physical torture to divert her attention from any desire of the senses. Her head is shaved, she is made to wear white clothes and discard all jewellery or make-up, she is given tasteless food without any spices and meat is completely prohibited to her (as spices and meat are considered to arouse physical desires) along with burning her skin or beating her at times.

If a widow is young, the restrictions become ever more severe. In Kanta's case too she became widow at a young age and thus she had to bear the physical pain inflicted by other women against remarriage. The whole custom, although callous, is followed by many communities for centuries. The Indian readers, due to common cultural heritage (poetics), can decipher it but the Western reader with a completely different social poetics will surely get the wrong impression. In India birth and death have special implications and a lot of rituals are followed at the time of these two important occurrences with much variation as per different religions, castes and sub-castes. The Western concepts of these two phenomena are different due to their poetics and ideology associated with them. Thus, a Western reader, unaware of the Indian poetics, may misinterpret the episode.

Passage 2.

After a few days leave when Kanta resumed her work, the narrator was surprised to find her wearing red sari, bangles and *bindi* and on inquiring she gave the following reply

બરાબર બે મહિને એ આવી. મને થયું, મારી આંખો છેતરામણ કરે છે ! લાલ લહેરિયું... બન્ને કાંડે ઠાંસીઠાંસીને ભરેલી લાલ રંગની બંગડીઓ... દમામદાર ચાંલ્લો !

ઠમકો કરી એ મારી પાસે આવી મને પગે લાગી ને પછી મુશબધાર હસી. આશ્ચર્યમાં ખૂંપી ગયેલી હું માંડ નીકળું ત્યાં જ એ બોલી : ‘બહેન ! મેં મારા દિયરના નામની ચૂડીઓ પહેરી લીધી!’

અવાક ભાવે મેં પૂછ્યું : ‘તું દિયરને પરણી ગઈ?’

‘ના બહેન! એ તો પરણેલો છે, પણ મેં એમને બહુ હાથ જોડ્યા એટલે એમના નામની ચૂડીઓ પહેરવાની મને હા પાડી.’

‘પણ તારી દેરાણીને વાંધો નથી?’

‘મારી દેરાણીને તો એમણે ક્યારની પિયર મોકલી દીધી છે - પણ હું કાંઈ ઓછી એમને પરણી છું!- આ તો કોઈ મરદ એના નામની ચૂડીઓ પહેરવા દે તો હું સોહાગણ કહેવાઉં ને?’

મારા બંને હાથ પકડી એ બાળકવત બોલી :

‘બહેન! મારો ચાંદલો મને ફેર મળી ગયો!’ (131)

In English translation it reads:

She came back exactly after two months. I was wondering if my eyes were cheating me. She had worn a red sari and red bangles studded on both her wrists... and a majestic bindi!

She came near me coquettishly and falling at my feet she laughed uproariously. I had hardly come out of my stunning surprise when she herself said – ‘Bahen! I have worn bangles in my brother-in-law’s name!’

Speechless, I asked her – ‘You married your brother-in-law?’

‘No, he is already married, but I pleaded with him a lot, so he allowed me to wear bangles in his name.’

‘But, won’t your sister-in-law mind?’

‘He has sent her away to her parents’ long ago – but where have I married him! – this is because if a man allows a woman to wear bangles in his name, she is called a sohagan.

She held both my hands and spoke like a child –

‘Bahen! I got my bindi once again!’ (116)

The incident narrated above brings to light a provision allowed by a few communities for widows. According to it, a widow can uplift her status – from a derogatory life of a widow to a respectable ‘*suhagan*’ (married woman) by wearing bangles in the name of another man (mostly a close relative from her husband’s side) without getting married to him. With this provision, she can save herself from living a life of constant humiliation and taunting as a widow and enjoy all the benefits of being a married woman like taking part in auspicious occasions, playing garba, wearing make-up and jewellery etc. As Kanta is obsessed with her *bindi*, she decided to make use of this allowance and regain her status

along with her big red *bindi* without any hesitation. This particular provision may look favourable for woman but here also her wish is secondary as she can enjoy all the benefits only if the man, in whose name she would wear bangles, allows her the right. Kanta is well aware of this but her infatuation for her *bindi* and bangles makes her plea to her brother-in-law who ultimately gives in to her wish. Although a woman's wish regarding her life and social status is vital and respected in the social fabric, it is generally guided by the patriarchal standards. In words of Kuhu Chanana, "Though the female desire is crucial to our social fabric, yet it is recast and reformulated by men, and the depiction of truly...liberated woman is still tantalizing dream" (175).

The particular provision referred to here is only available for women of particular lower communities (mostly labour class). The upper-caste widow has to bear with the stern social restrictions to maintain the chastity of the caste system. Even in modern times where gradually the strict rules of widowhood are losing their hold, an educated and financially independent widow from an upper-caste hesitates before taking the decision to remarry due to the invisible burden of maintaining the chastity of the so called upper caste social system. Phule was a critique of such devastating codes of conduct for upper-caste women who argued that, "...upper-caste women faced the impossible burden of maintaining caste purity in their person. Thus "softer" forms of gendered domination that upper-caste women faced were no less oppressive than the expropriation of manual and sexual labour experienced by lower-caste women" (qtd. in Rao 2003).

Now the question here is how this particular scene would appeal to a reader – a Western reader or even an educated, modern Indian reader who is either unaware of such a system and who does not value these symbols – bangles, *bindi* or colourful clothes for married women as they are more or less superficial. The red *bindi* and bangles are a matter of life and death for a conventional and superstitious woman like Kanta but may not be for an educated, professional person with liberal mindset like the narrator. The entire impact of the scene the writer wanted to create through the point of view of Kanta might be missed when read by such a reader due to different set of ideologies which poses a constraint in this situation.

Apart from the above mentioned examples, there are a few culture specific words or phrases used in the original which might hinder the reading of its translation which are given as below.

i) The narrator could not forget the day her husband died and recalled it often. In her inability to forget the gloomy day of the past, she referred to it as – തക്ഷകനാഗ 'Takshak Naag' (127) had been hiding in her husband's cells which did not let her forget him or his death. Here the particular snake referred to has mythological traits from the Puranas and the Mahabharata. Takshak is considered a Nagaraja (Head Snake) as per Hinduism and Buddhism and its reference is also found in Chinese and Japanese mythology. As per Puranic tales Takshak is one of the eight naags (snakes) of the Patal Lok (the Underworld) and he is considered the most venomous snakes of all. There are many tales found in scriptures related to Takshak Naag – how Arjuna burned the forest of Khandav and as a result the entire Takshak race was forced to migrate, Takshak's efforts to bite and kill King Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna, who was cursed to die of snake bite, how Parikshit's son Janamejaya tried to take revenge of his father's death by organizing a yagna to kill all the snakes including Takshak and how a learned sage Astika came to his rescue and saved his life.

The narrator's attempt to give reference of the snake in this particular case is quite symbolic and it signifies that just like the deadly poisonous snake who is famous for taking revenge upon people, her husband also won't let her find any respite through his memories after his heavenly abode.

The translator has simply put the reference in inverted comma without giving any specification of it in form of footnotes so the reader, who has no clue of this mythological connection and the meaning emerging out of it, might not make any sense of this reference. 'Takshak Naag' is a symbol with deep mythological and cultural implications as in Indian culture a snake is never considered only as a reptile but is considered a deity and worshipped. A snake in Indian context has human traits like having its own race, family and provinces and magical powers to transform into any other being. This culture specific characteristic of a Naga is difficult to explain to a Western reader having a very different ideology and cultural background. Thus, the constraint of ideology might pose a challenge for a Western reader in this case.

ii) Kanta returned to her work after fourteen days of her husband's death. Within these days all the death rituals were performed including a particular one called ശേവസുവാല 'sevsuvala' (130) mentioned in the story. In this particular ritual, the men of the household (the close relatives) would shave their head as a sign of bereavement. Tonsure is an age-old Hindu

tradition where hair (a symbol of beauty) is offered to God in form of a sacrifice of all sorts of adornment for a temporary period to grieve the death. In earlier times and even today in certain communities, widows had to shave their heads as a part of custom to declare her status and a lifelong demise of their husbands.

The English translation uses the original word, in this case, which does not clarify the cultural significance of this ritual. So any reader Indian or Western oblivious of this particular Hindu custom would not be able to make anything out of it. The difference of poetics is responsible for the misreading in this case. Along with that the element of culture can be a major hindrance in translation as source language, by and large, reflects a particular culture. J. B. Casagrande in his article 'The End of Translation' has even gone to the extent of saying, "In effect, one does not translate LANGUAGES, one translates CULTURES" (338). And in the case of this story where the original author has referred to a number of culture specific terms and rituals, which, if unexplained, can create obstacle for the readers of the translation who belong to a different set of culture, ideology and poetics. The translators have done a fine job by recreating this story into TL that is English but the translator's apathy of not providing any explanatory foot-notes for these references might lead to a lot of confusion for TL readers with increased chances of misreading on their part.

4. Dukh Ke Sukh? (Suffering or Happiness)

a) Introduction of the Author

Sarojini Mehta (1898-1977) was a daughter of Ramanbhai Nilkanth and Vidyagauri Nilkant – famous Gujarati writers and social reformers. She had received early education in India and then went to attend London School of Economics to study Sociology. She was the superintendent at Vanita Vishram, Ahmedabad. She has written a novel *Amarveli* (1954) and three short-story collections – *Ekadashi* (1935), *Char Pathrani Ma* (1953) and *Valata Pani* (1962). Her writings reflect her deep concern for women and their position in society along with family life and issue of child marriage along with other topics of social reform. The present story also deals with a woman's struggle to find her rightful position in society.

b) Thematic Analysis

Savitri, the protagonist of the story, was suddenly put into an unusual situation in her life when her husband Dinsukh did not return for three days after a big explosion which took place on a Bombay port where he went to deliver some cash. She mutely waited for his return

but with each passing day her hope and courage seemed to fail her. Later the news of his death got confirmed through an inquiry from his office and a headless dead body wearing the similar clothes Dinsukh had worn that day. Savitri's world had collapsed with this sudden turn of events but after a while she realized that the new found condition was not as bad as she feared as now finally she could lead her life on her own terms without the dominating hold of her husband. Also with the help of her supportive neighbours she found some solace.

Although Savitri was not highly educated, she was fond of reading and she used to read whatever she could get hold of. This habit along with her own courage and confidence came to her aid during this hard time as without her husband there was no one to give her financial support. So she decided start a small lodge which later turned into a big hotel business spreading to other cities as well with her dedication and hard work. One day when she was interviewing some candidates for the post of a Manager for her new Hotel in Abu, her husband Dinsukh turned up to her surprise. He informed her that he had simply absconded with his boss's money taking advantage of the chaotic situation to enjoy a life of luxury in Calcutta. He had invested in share market and earned a fortune only to lose it one day. When money got over he was reminded of his wife and so he returned to her. Savitri could not believe the lack of remorse in her husband who deserted her for the sake of money and now as he had run out of it, he came back to her for a comfortable life.

Dinsukh was also surprised to find his naive and simple wife turning into a confident business woman and shamelessly demanded his right over the business asking Savitri to look after the house. But Savitri was not the one to give in easily as she threatened him to inform the police as well as his office of the scandal and got him arrested. Dinsukh realized that this new Savitri was tough to control and so he used another tactic to plea her to appoint him as a Manager in her hotel but Savitri bluntly denied trusting him again who had already cheated her and her boss once. His final appeal was to allow him to stay in her house which was once again turned down by her with a provision to allow him to eat in her lodge twice a day out of pity.

c) Character Analysis

Sarojini Mehta has portrayed an image of a futuristic woman who is self-assured, spirited and who takes charge of her life without expecting any assistance from anyone through the character of Savitri. In the beginning of the story Savitri emerges as an ordinary woman who seems happy to fulfil her duty as a faithful wife but gradually we realize that

how Savitri has suffered being a wife of a dominating and suspicious husband like Dinsukh. Savitri was well aware of her condition but out of sheer helplessness she used to bear with it. Only after the death of her husband she could finally relax and live as per her wish. For the first time she enjoyed a sense of freedom where she was not supposed to be on her toes all day fulfilling her husband's demands. Her marital status put her in chains and tortures her while widowhood brings liberation and this is something unique in the case of Savitri who openly confesses it. She even emerges as a strong willed person who chose to face the tough time bravely instead of surrendering. She is able to set up a hotel business on her own due to her smartness and confidence.

After running her business successfully and leading a life of self-respect, when her husband turned up suddenly one day, Savitri does not lose her calm and reacts in a mature way by her denial to identify him only to instigate Dinsukh's rage as he has never expected to see his wife to be a successful businesswoman and financially independent. Later when Dinsukh threatens her and asks her to behave like a dutiful wife she immediately reminds him of her power and denies surrendering to his authority. Her husband tries to pacify her by reminding her of the expected role of a woman in society, that is to manage the household and look after the husband and tells her to rejoice her marital status once again, Savitri bluntly tells him that her bond with him has only given her sorrow and pain while the state of widowhood has always been a reason of joy and she would like to enjoy the bliss forever. Savitri's courage to turn down her husband's proposal and to refuse giving any share in her business makes her modern in the true sense of the term. Savitri represents the third and the final phase 'female' as mentioned by a notable feminist writer Elaine Showalter in her milestone book *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) where a woman tend to accept the difference of gender and she learns to concentrate of herself rather than being dependent on or accusing the opposite sex for all her misery.

d) Example Analysis and Observations

Passage 1.

When Savitri's husband Dinsukh returned after years of absence, he was surprised to see a complete metamorphosis of Savitri – from a fearful and naive woman to a strong and confident businesswoman – and when he inquired about it, Savitri explained that having nowhere to go, she stayed with Dinsukh's uncle for a few months but they treated her badly. In such circumstances she was forced to find a substitute and so with the help of one of their

neighbours she started a lodge and established this business with a lot of hard work. During the explanation, Savitri made use of a famous Gujarati proverb – પેટ કરાવે વેઠ ‘Pet karave veth’ (89). The meaning of the proverb is that for the sake of survival one will do anything, even go to the extreme. The proverb when rewritten in translation becomes – ‘Self-interest is the strongest incitement to work’ (15). This refraction here makes sense of the original proverb and carries forward the meaning to the readers of translation. The translators have cleverly used the constraint of Universe of Discourse by finding an alternative way to carry forward the sense rather than words through the rewriting of the original proverb (in absence of the exact proverb in TL).

Passage 2.

When Savitri denied to give shelter to Dinsukh in her house or to offer the post of a Manager to him and only agreed to provide him food twice a day in her lodge that too out of her sense of pity, he could not take it and got infuriated and started taunting her in the following words

દિનસુખ ગુસ્સામાં દાંત કચકચાવતો બોલ્યો : ‘બીજાં બૈરા સૌભાગ્યસુખ માટે જાતજાતનાં વરતવરતુલાં કરે, કેટકેટલાં દેહજ્ઞ કરે ને આ બાઇસાહેબ રંડાપામાં જ રાજી છે!’ (90)

Dinsukh ground his teeth in anger and said : ‘Other women would undertake all kinds of fasts and rituals for the joyous state of wifhood. And this madam is happy being a widow.’ (16)

The words spoken by Dinsukh in anger have a sarcastic tone to them. He was instigating Savitri tauntingly that even though her husband was alive, she wanted to lead an unfortunate life of a widow instead of enjoying the bliss of marital life. He makes use of two words so typical to Indian culture – સૌભાગ્યસુખ ‘*saubhagyasukh*’ and રંડાપા ‘*randapa*’ both mean ‘marital status’ and ‘widowhood’ respectively. The translation makes use of the exact equivalence – ‘the joyous state of wifhood’ and ‘widow’ still the original words are used in an extreme sense that is the first word ‘*saubhagyasukh*’ does not just imply wifhood but a blissful state of married life. In India a married woman is often called ‘*saubhagyavati*’ which literally means ‘the one having good fortune’. For a woman marriage is considered to be the highest form of pleasure and fortune. The words used in translation to carry the sense do not really bring the actual significance of the original word. On the contrary, widowhood is the

greatest misfortune any woman could suffer and the original word ‘*randapa*’ which is a humiliating way to point out to widowhood does carry the actual sense while the translation only makes use of the word ‘widow’ which somehow falls short to convey the actual implication. Also both the words create a special impact as they stand in contrast to each other while in translation the words have somehow lost the effect and as a result the entire impact of the words spoken bluntly in sarcasm seems to be lost.

The constraint of poetics is responsible for this as Indian and Western concepts regarding these two statuses women share in the society – marital life and widowhood have completely different connotations attached to them. In India both are considered to be two extreme poles for women with a lot of speculations involved (marriage is a state of ecstasy while widowhood is a state of ruin and bad luck where often the woman is considered responsible for her fate which is, at times, connected with the misdeeds of her past life) while in Western society they are more or less considered as a part of human life without such extreme point of views attached to them. Hence, even with footnotes or alternative words, the translators might not be able to do justice or carry the sharp sarcastic effect of the original due to this constraint.

Passage 3.

At two different occasions also the translation makes a different reading due to the constraints of Universe of Discourse and poetics. When Savitri denied recognizing Dinsukh initially, he got angry and he commanded her to stop the pretence and accept him as her husband and look after his household like a dutiful wife. He also made inquiry of how she could think of this idea of setting up a hotel business in a sarcastic tone. He made use of two expressions – આવા ધંધા ક્યાંથી માંડ્યા બાઇસાહેબ? હૈં? ‘*Aava dhandha kyathi mandya baisaheb? Hain?*’ and ધણીનું ઘર માંડો ‘*Dhani nu ghar mando*’ (88) The first expression is an archetypal way of inquiring about a possible deception done by someone. Here Dinsukh used these words as he was sure that Savitri must have set up this business in a fraudulent manner just like him. The second expression is once again a typical way of telling a woman to settle down with husband in his house. Both the expressions while translated seem to lose the pungent impact they create in the original, especially in the case of the first expression. It has been translated as ‘How do you begin this trade, madam?’ (13) This sharp comment looks naive in translation as if the husband is simply curious about how she began this business.

Even the word બાઈસાહેબ ‘*baisaheb*’ (an expression used to taunt a woman) has been rewritten as ‘madam’ which looks as if he is addressing her with some respect. The word ધંધા ‘*dhandha*’ has a special cultural connotation which its refraction ‘trade’ fails to carry. In the second example the typical nuance created by the original expression seem to lose its effect with a matter of fact expressions used in translation ‘start your husband’s home’ (14).

In the former example, the constraint of Universe of Discourse poses hurdle in carrying the actual sense and the translators’ choice of words without considering the implication makes a different reading. In the later case, poetics is responsible for the loss of impact as both Indian and Western poetics and social system look at the incident of handling the house of husband from a completely different manner – in Indian context it is considered a matter of joy and pride to set up and take charge of husband’s house (although a wife is an equal partner still the house the couple shares is always considered as ‘husband’s house’).

The Indian traditional perception of household and the duties of the husband and the wife are deeply rooted in the history and social prescriptions as found in the scriptures and have been imprinted on the Indian psyche for centuries resulting into Dinsukh’s arrogant commands to his wife. Kumkum Roy has thrown some light on this customary aspect of Indian household which is also the basis of the larger social and political spheres as following

In consonance with the tradition of the Dharma Sutras and the Dharma Sastras, the *grha*, the household controlled by the patriarch, the *grhapati*, is recognized as a central institution in the *Manusmṛti*. In fact, the *grhastha* was viewed as providing support and subsistence for men in other *asramas* (stages of life)...the *Manusmṛti* contains a general prescription that men should exercise continuous control over women in order to protect birth (*prasuti*), the family (*kula*), one’s self (*atman*), and dharma. The need to control the wife was intrinsically related to the definition of procreation that was sought to be established, a definition in which the woman was viewed as the field or passive recipient of the male sex. However, male control over the produce of the field, progeny, rested not only on claims to contribute and sow the seed, but also, and more basically, on the ownership of the field, that is, his role as *ksetrasvamin*.

(72, 73)

While in Western context it is a routine matter to settle down in a separate house with a husband where mostly the responsibilities of household are expected to be shared between the partners due to the new age education, changing life style and aspiration of equal sharing by the partners and the difference between the original and its translation clearly points out this diversity of sense.

1.6 Concluding Remarks

The present anthology has compiled many of the representational stories by prominent Gujarati women writers dealing with an array of themes related to the lives of women. Shakuntala in *Dikrinu Dhan* represents a different reality of modern times where she bears injustice at the hands of her own parents for the sake of the money she earns. Just like Shakuntala, Sarika is also naive and suffers mutely the social injustice and ultimately ends up in a hospital in a half-conscious state without any hope to recover. The female narrator of *Chandlano Vyap*, although educated and career-oriented, faces dilemma concerning her decision to remarry after being widow due to the social stigma associated with it. Savitri, in *Dukh Ke Sukh?* emerges as a strong woman who could transcend the boundaries of the traditional roles of being a wife and a widow and achieve a new level of confidence through her sheer courage and self-awareness.

Both the translators have done a tremendous task of first selecting these stories and later their rendering into English which is quite admirable. They have been successful in retaining the flow and style of the original to a great extent with the help of their artistic skills and they have also been faithful to the original without much deviation. Although they have kept some of the original words in translations, they did provide footnotes in most of the cases for a better understanding of the readers. Amina Amin and Manju Verma deserve a big share of credit for their translation endeavour and for representing the world of Gujarati women writers to the wider readership as a result.

SECTION III

Speech and Silence: Literary Journeys by Gujarati Women

1.7 Introduction of Translator

This is an anthology of eighteen Gujarati short-stories (four out of which are excerpts from novels) selected and translated by Rita Kothari (1969) and published by Zuban in 2006.

Kothari is an active translator who has to her credit a number of translations from Gujarati into English – *Modern Gujarati Poetry* and *Coral Island: The Poetry of Niranjan Bhagat* (2002), Joseph Macwan's *Angaliayat* as *The Stepchild* (2013) and Ila Arab Mehta's *Vaad* as *Fence* (2015) along with three of Munshi's novels *Patan Trilogy* (novels in three parts): *Patan Ni Prabhuta* as *The Glory of Patan* (2017), *Gujarat No Nath* as *The Lord and Master of Gujarat* (2018) and *Rajadhiraj* as *King of Kings* (2019). She has also penned a few books on the topics of translation and partition. She has been a former faculty at St. Xavier's College and IIM, Ahmedabad. At present she works as a faculty at the Department of English, Ashoka University, Sonapat, Haryana. The present anthology tries to cover up the trajectory of the journey of Gujarati women writers from the beginning of twentieth century to the contemporary times hinting at the various phases and shifts the women's writing has undergone since the beginning till date. For my present purpose I have selected three short-stories from this anthology.

While sharing her experience of the selection of stories for this anthology Rita Kothari said

The understanding I derived from both canonised and Dalit texts sharpened my interaction with women's narratives in the course of selecting them for the anthology *Speech and Silence: Literary Journeys by Gujarati Women* (2006). A sociological and ethnographic bias governed the selection of stories, which I identified not only for their literary value but also, or perhaps more so, for the light they threw on women in Gujarat... I wanted the real and imagined worlds of Gujarat's women to be juxtaposed in my collection, so as to foreground polysemic readings of the nation: what women were talking about, or more significantly what they were not talking about. These were often muffled voices that did not always negotiate with the unpleasant. Despite not being radical, they needed to be heard. As a 'modern', 'radical', 'feminist' translator I did not want to quell voices of conservatism, which need greater attention than the showcasing of only politically correct material. The selection of stories in *Speech and Silence* was subjective – as would be the case with any anthology or translation – mediated in this case by my

subjectivity as a woman writer. This time I knew what I was doing, and I didn't mind it. (Kothari 'Translation' 50)

1.8 Women in Translation: Representation/Misrepresentation

Following are the excerpts from the original Gujarati short-stories along with their English rewriting selected for the purpose of analysis of the theme and gender representation in both the original and its rendering in translation applying the theory of 'translation as rewriting of the original' advocated by Lefevere. The thematic aspects and character analysis has been discussed in detail apart from analysing the treatment of women characters at the hands of the original author and the translator has been undertaken. Titles of the stories discussed in this section are as follows – *Vanamalani Diarymathi Thoda Utara* (*Adhahpatanni Ek Karun Katha*), *Madadgar* and *Mira Yagnikni Diary*.

1. Vanamalani Diarymathi Thoda Utara (Adhahpatanni Ek Karun Katha) – Entries from Vanamala's Diary (An Account of A Tragic Decline) :

a) Introduction of the Author

Lilavati Munshi (1892-1978), one of the pioneer woman writers of Gujarat, belongs to the first generation of women writers and through her significant contribution in form of novels – *Jasodano Jivana-vivasa*, *Anubhav Vinana* and *Vanamalani Diary*, short-story collections – *Jivanmathi Jadela* Part I and II (1932), one-act plays, letters, sketches of various personalities – *Rekhachitro ane Bija Lekho* (1925) etc. she has left a permanent mark on the field of Gujarati literature. Her literature reflects the dilemma of the modern woman trying to find her poise between the traditional and modern outlooks, between her inner desire and the expectations of society.

b) Thematic Analysis

The present excerpt is taken from her novel in diary form *Vanamalani Diary*, which has been published in her collection of short-stories *Jivanmathi Jadeli* (1932). This is a first attempt of its kind to experiment with a novel in diary form in Gujarati literature and Lilavati Munshi has exhibited her writing skills brilliantly in this endeavour. This short novel (novella) is a tragic narrative of the life and struggle of a widow Vanamala who has undergone a lot of turmoil in life including widowhood at the tender age of fifteen, her brutal rape by her brother-in-law and her giving birth to a child as a result, the humiliation she had

to face post child birth, her embarrassing departure from her home, her taking shelter in a drama company as an actress and her ultimate downfall in form of her accepting this unfortunate life without any grievance.

The novel began when Vanamala had finally joined the drama company as an actress on May 7, 1926 and how she was full of remorse for such kind of degrading life. She was born in a high caste, respectable family and had experienced comfort and luxury in her earlier life so to live amongst the lower class people of the drama company and to be mistreated by them was something agonizing for her initially. And in the early pages of her diary, Vanamala was seen blaming her fate for this pathetic condition. She simply could not accept such life and spent her early days in the drama company under the shadow of pain, guilt, humiliation and self-pity. Gradually her inner suffering gave way to a ray of hope when finally she attuned to this new life style and became a more refined actress. Her initial hesitation to act publically with her co-actors, especially male actors evaporated when she realized the power of her beauty and charm and she almost wished to be a successful and reputed actress to take vengeance against the society which had disgraced and discarded her without any fault on her side. A tamed and naive Vanamala slowly transformed into a confident and arrogant actress after tasting the sweet fruits of success. By the end of the novel she had almost become a selfish and manipulative person who could go to any extent to fulfil her desires. She was also conscious at every stage of her downfall but in the absence of any other alternative, she decided to accept this life without much contemplation as it would only add up to her troubles.

c) Character Analysis

Vanamala experiences a complete transformation of character and personality – from her former self as a decent, God fearing, loving girl to her later self as an egoistic, scheming and self-centred actress – not just due to the outer circumstances but also due to her inner conflict, self-awareness regarding her status and power. Her inner suffering works as a penance for her and helps her clarify her doubts to turn her into a stronger person. A defenceless prey of rigid social norms and selfish motives of others, Vanamala can rise to the peak of success later because of her belief in her inner strength. The sad experiences of her earlier life and those of the drama company later on have turned her into a fearless person who has finally come to terms with her own self and has realized her own worth in this world. By the end of the novella, Vanamala almost turns into a heartless person still the roots

of her strong moral sense do make her realize her loss of dignity while opting for a life of independence. Her taking refuge in alcohol and her affair with her co-actor do make her feel guilty and caution her of her constant ruin still she could not now opt for an alternative life as she very well realizes that in both kinds of life she has experienced, her gender played a vital role in her suffering and there is no escape from it. Mary Ann Ferguson's views regarding female sexuality and the conflicts it raises in her mind aptly suits Vanamala and her reaction in such circumstances, "A woman may be less or more desirous of sex than a man; either frigidity or lust in a woman is a negative characteristic because the male appetite is the norm. Because of the conflicts among these images, women are bewildered about their identity; they feel damned if they do and damned if they don't" (7). She could feel the burden of social expectations and to get rid of it she chooses an alternative life which although brings her much fame and glory, is still a demeaning life without any moral sense.

Vanamala's condition is pathetic as she fails to find peace and comfort in life while playing both the roles – a socially accepted role of a dutiful daughter and faithful wife and a life as a successful actress which is generally detested and looked down upon by society and that is her biggest misfortune. Still her strength and ability to adjust to the twists and turns of life and find some solace calls for our sympathy and admiration. The only cause of Vanamala's suffering is her gender and through her character the writer tries to point out the discriminating social tendencies towards woman who mostly fail to find a respectable position and a life of dignity in either type of role she performs – socially accepted roles of an ideal daughter, wife, mother or an autonomous life of freedom without any consideration of social norms. In many of her other stories too Lilavati Munshi has portrayed the dilemma of a woman in the changing face of social reality where on the one hand she is expected to play the traditional roles while at the same time under the Western influence she has to mould and groom herself without losing her moral sense to be accepted. In the quandary of finding a balance between these two contrasting expectations, a woman often finds herself struggling and suffering at both personal and social levels.

d) Example Analysis and Observations

Passage 1.

When Vanamala got to know that her co-actress Tarubala had a habit of drinking alcohol, she was taken a back and expressed her surprise in the following words

હાય હાય! બૈરી દારૂ પીએ? (33)

In English translation it reads:

A female and drinking alcohol? (7)

Vanamala's astonishment is a result of her moral upbringing in a reputed family. It is quite impossible for her to come to terms with the fact that a woman can have guts to take alcohol which is only considered possible in case of a man. And in those days it was prohibited for even men, particularly of a higher community due to the rigid and conventional social system so for a woman it was quite out of question. For a modest girl like Vanamala, who has hardly stepped out of the confines of her house, the entire situation is unbearable and so her expected outburst can be seen in the above mentioned words which reflect her sense of shock through the use of the typical Indian interjections – હાય હાય! 'Hai Hai'. Even her use of word બૈરી 'bairi' for woman is a typical derogatory way to address a woman (generally fallen) in society. This element of surprise as found in the original is somehow missing in its translation which makes it look rather subtle. This could be due to the omission of the interjections 'હાય હાય!' used in the original. Another reason could be the change in poetics from the time and society of the original writer to that of the translator. What was considered sin or derogatory matter then is quite normal and acceptable in modern times. The concept of alcohol and our mentality associated with it has changed a lot over the time and in a high society it is more or less considered a status symbol. Even women drinking alcohol is not considered out of line these days. Under the impact of the changing concepts under the ever altering poetics of society, it is obvious that the shock effect of the original is replaced by a matter of fact expressions in its English translation. Even the translator's own status and education have made her quite open minded towards such matters and her personal ideology also seems to have played its part in the rewriting of the original in a factual manner rather than trying to create an issue out of it.

Passage 2.

At two different occasions the indirect hints used by the original writer with the use of typical expressions are presented in a direct, rather blunt way by the translator. Once while condemning her fate Vanamala said about how she loved to wear stylish, colourful clothes

but earlier she was not allowed to wear clothes of her choice by her parents and later as she had become a widow, she could not enjoy such luxuries. For her widow state she makes use of the expression – અવતાર બળી ગયો ‘*avtar bali gayo*’ (31) Later on another occasion when she had become quite successful actress, she indulged into a physical relationship with her co-actor Shankar which is expressed as – હું કાલે શંકરની થઈ ચૂકી ‘*Hun kale Shankarni thai chuki.*’ (38) Both these expressions are subtle hints at how Vanamala’s life had altered since her joining the drama company and indirect expressions also suggest the prevailing ideology towards widowhood, in which case a woman’s entire incarnation was considered to be ruined as per the conventional social thinking and Vanamala’s own self-consciousness of having an affair with a man and her guilt feeling towards it made her use these indirect expressions to hint at her physical relationship with Shankar. The second expression also implied at how any discussion of intimacy was tabooed in those days (not to mention, it is prohibited even today) and Vanamala basically being a decent and bashful girl could not confess it openly. These two examples not only suggest the prevailing social norms (ideology) but also Vanamala’s own mental state, her sorrow and her guilt.

When we see these expressions in English translation, they seem to have taken a direct course devoid of any consideration of Vanamala’s personality. A clear influence of the modern day ideology can be seen in the straight forward manner of expression used by the translator. In translation the first expression is carried as – ‘And after my husband died...’ (6) and second as – ‘Last night I slept with Shankar’ (12). Although the translation makes sense still the impact of the indirect hint used by Lilavati Munshi in line with the contemporary ideology and Vanamala’s character is taken away while rewritten in English during Post-modern times. The present day ideology related to widowhood (where today a woman is not harshly blamed for the death of her husband and can lead a normal life) and an affair or sexual relationship with another man (which is still condemned but is more or less becoming a day-to-day matter for modern generation) is reflected in translation which is naturally meant for the modern readers so keeping them in mind along with the present day ideology, the translator might have decided to use a straight forward way to deal with these sensitive issues to appeal to the modern day readers.

The translator has made use of the original words at number of places without providing footnotes. Words like જીવ ‘*jeth*’ (23) (elder brother-in-law), માલિક ‘*maalik*’ (24)

(owner of the drama company), ઊસ્તાદજી ‘ustadji’ (25) (music teacher), માડી ‘Maadi’ (38) (mother Goddess) etc. which although are words related to a day to day life in India, may be confusing for a Western readers. Along with these, at two places mistranslations have occurred – the Gujarati word ભવ ‘bhav’ (24) which means ‘incarnation or birth’ has been translated as ‘centuries’ and a word ગૃહસ્થાઈ ‘gruhasthai’ (41) meaning ‘gentlemanly conduct or nobility’ has been carried forward as ‘settled and married’.

2. Madadgar (The Saviour) :

a) Introduction of the Author

The writer of this story Varsha Adalja (1940) is a multi-faceted personality who has exhibited her creative skills in form of her novels *Pachha Farata* (1991), *Retpankhi* (1974) and *Khari Padelo Tahuko* (1983) etc., short-stories *E* (1979), *Bilipatranu Chothu Paan* (1994), *Ganthe Bandhyu Akash* (1998), dramas, essays, TV serial adaptations etc. In the wide spectrum of her literature she has dealt with many topics related to social and political issues along with handling a few off beat topics like condition of lepers or life in jail etc. through her brilliant artistic talent. She does not want to write under any labels, especially that of feminism still many of her stories deal with the issues of women and Adalji represents various dimensions of the lives of women as lived in our society from various perspectives through her creative talent.

b) Thematic Analysis

The present story also deals with one such issue related to women’s life that is domestic violence but Adalja’s treatment of the theme, the thrilling narration and the surprise ending take the story to another level. A poor man Shankar lived in a wrecked and almost deserted *chawl* of Mumbai and worked as a peon in an office. His life, which was quite monotonous and uninteresting otherwise, suddenly took a new turn when he found that a young and charming woman named Seeta had come to stay in his neighbourhood with a male partner named Vijay. From the voices he heard from the next room, he presumed that Seeta and Vijay were either husband and wife or were in love with each other who had eloped from their homes and came to stay in that wretched building.

Everyday Shankar would hear the clamour of their quarrel – Vijay threatening and thrashing Seeta brutally followed by Seeta's sobs and his heart longed to reach to Seeta to help her come out of this pathetic situation. The quarrel increased day by day with the thrashing turning into a violent act of brutality and Shankar's aimless life found a goal in form of his planning to rescue Seeta. He had never spoken to Seeta whom he saw only a couple of times on his way to his room still he felt a strong connection with her and he was desperate to save her life. All day long he would constantly think of Seeta and he found it difficult to concentrate on his work. Every day he came up with a new plan to approach Seeta, to inquire about her family, to bring her parents or to take her back to her home and at times he also thought of beating a rough like Vijay who had tortured a naive woman like Seeta. But he could not gather courage to put any of his plans into action. But one night when Vijay's rage was out of control and a horrible quarrel took place where Vijay intimidated Seeta to finish her life while Seeta was pleading him to spare her, Shankar could not control himself and was about to go to the next room when suddenly all the sounds disappeared and after a while he heard a sound of some heavy object being dragged. He froze with the thought that Vijay had finally killed the only person he had adored in his entire life – Seeta.

He could not take it and decided to call the police so that the culprit could be sentenced. He ran up to the police station and came back with the inspector who forcefully entered Seeta's house to catch Vijay red handed but to their surprise they found a horrified Seeta standing next to Vijay's dead body. On seeing Shankar, Seeta felt disappointed and she quietly went away with the police. Shankar stood there like a lifeless piece of wood as he could not believe his eyes and his guilt knew no bound as unintentionally he had put Seeta, the only person he cared for in this world, into trouble.

c) Character Analysis

The story is a brilliant piece of irony and sarcasm on the conventional mind-set of men in our society and a hint at the changing approach of women. Shankar represents the male ego which always believes that they are the ones who can save women from their miseries and play the role of their saviours completely neglecting the fact that women themselves could act and save themselves without any support of men. Even Vijay's tyranny and inhuman treatment of Seeta reflects the same patriarchal mentality of ownership on women without taking into consideration women's choices or desires. But the character of Seeta, who hardly takes part in any of the actions in the story except playing a victim,

exhibits brilliant courage at the end with her taking charge of the situation and finally killing Vijay to end her trauma to prove that women do not require any saviours in form of men to rescue them. They themselves are enough and can be their own saviours and reasons for salvation. Even the name of the central woman character, Seeta is quite significant and is placed as a counter image of Seeta from the Ramayana. Unlike the character of Seeta from the Ramayana who required Lord Ram to save her from the tyranny of Ravana, the modern day Seeta is strong enough to do so without any external help.

Reflecting on the psyche of Indians which is still administered by the ancient scriptures and the portrayal of characters there, Sudhir Kakar comments, “For both men and women in Hindu society, the ideal woman is personified by Sita, the quintessence of wifely devotion,... The ideal of womanhood incorporated by Sita is one of chastity, purity, gentle tenderness and a singular faithfulness which cannot be destroyed or even disturbed by her husband’s rejection, slights or thoughtlessness...formidable consensus on the ideal of womanhood which, in spite of many banization and education, still governs the inner imagery of individual men and women as well as the social relations between them in both the traditional and modern sectors of the Indian community” (52, 55-56).

The story reflects the changing trend of the portrayal of women in literature composed during modern and post-modern periods, especially in the literature by women writers who present their women characters as asserting their existence and potential in different ways. In views of R. S. Gupta, “A truly heartening feature of portrayal of women in modern Indian literature is that increasingly women are shown, not passively putting up with oppression and injustice, but actively resisting them with courage and determination, and often coming out victorious in the end” (187).

The original Gujarati story has been referred to from a collection of short-stories titled *Varsha Adaljani Shreshth Vartao* edited by Ila Arab Mehta published by Adarsh Prakashan, Ahmedabad in 2002.

d) Example Analysis and Observations

Passage 1.

The description of how Shankar came to Mumbai from Surendranagar is as following

નામ તો હતું શિવશંકર પણ જ્યારથી ચોટલી કપાવી, સુરેન્દ્રનગરથી ઊપડતી ગાડીમાં મુંબઈ આવવા નીકળ્યો ત્યારથી એણે શંકર કરી નાખ્યું હતું... મુંબઈ નગરીની માયાએ એક ગરીબ બ્રાહ્મણને અહીં સુધી આણ્યો હતો, અને એના રંગમહેલ ચંપાનિવાસમાં એવો કેદ કર્યો હતો કે ત્યાંથી એ નીકળી જ ન શક્યો.

(33)

In English rendering it reads:

His name was Shivshankar but ever since he chopped off his *choti* and took a Mumbai-bound train from Surendranagar, his name became Shankar... The magnet-like city of Mumbai had drawn a poor Brahmin all the way here and imprisoned him in this castle called Champa Niwas in a way that made his escape impossible. (23)

The above piece indicates two matters pertaining Indian society and mentality in general. The first is related to Shankar's caste which was hinted upon by his *choti* which was considered a sign of his Brahmin hood. The reference to his *choti* implies the conventional Indian culture which prescribes different looks, clothing and life style based on one's caste. According to which a Brahmin man is supposed to keep a tuft of hair (*choti*) at the back of his head as a symbol of his higher caste. His decision to cut it off and even to change his name from Shivshankar to only Shankar due to his arrival in Mumbai were significant acts indicating the different mentality of people dwelling in villages and in cities towards the system of caste. In a small town like Surendranagar, keeping *choti* is a must for a Brahmin boy along with using his full name that is Shivshankar but in a big city like Mumbai such matters are quite trivial as nobody would be interested in your caste or full name. Realizing these things, Shankar took these decisions to adjust himself according to the tradition of a big city like Mumbai. This matter refers to the different set of mentality to be found in villages and cities of India and how one affects the other as in the case of Shankar.

The second matter is pertaining Mumbai city which is considered માયાનગરી '*Mayanagri*' – an illusory place attracting thousands of people like magnet towards it and once you come to this city, it will not allow you to leave easily. The word '*Mayanagri*' is used in reference to the development, opportunities and modern luxuries to be easily found in Mumbai, being the financial capital of the country while such things are rare to come across in small towns or villages. So a person from such a place would find Mumbai city quite

fascinating and would not be able to leave it easily. There are many references of Mumbai being a ‘Mayanagri’ found in literature as well as in daily conversations.

The point here is an Indian reader could easily understand and associate with these culture specific matters but how could a Western reader unaware of caste system and the symbols associated with it (*choti*) or the myth related to Mumbai city make anything out of them. The constraint of poetics would create a hindrance for such readers.

Passage 2.

The story takes a number of references of and from the two great Indian epics – the Ramayana and the Mahabharata at various occasions especially while narrating the scenes of quarrel. Once when Shankar reached home, the fierce quarrel between Seeta and Vijay had already begun so to refer to it the original writer had used the expressions – તો મહાભારત શરૂ થઈ ચૂક્યું હતું! ‘*To Mahabharata sharu thai chukyu hatu*’ (38)! A little later once again to refer to the verbal quarrel the writer said, કર્કશ ઘોઘરા અવાજોનું તાંડવ ચાલતું હતું ‘*Karkash ghoghra avajnu tandav chaltu hatu*’ and then Vijay’s words were heard, અરે સતી સીતાય રાવણને ત્યાં રહી હતી. તું કોણ? હૈં! ‘*Arey, sati sitay Ravanne tya rahi hati. Tu kon? Hain*’ (38)! After a while when Seeta was trying hard to set herself free from Vijay’s grip who had been threatening her in the following words, આજે તને નહીં છોડું, આજે તારું ખૂન કરીશ, સતની પૂછડી ! જા તારા રામ પાસે ‘*Aaje tane nahi chodu, aaje taru khun karish, satni puchdi! Ja tara Ram pase*’ (39).

In the first example the word ‘*Mahabharata*’ implies a scene of quarrel. It is a typical Indian habit to refer to a routine matter through such references from the epics or the Puranas or mythology. As the epic Mahabharata is about the quarrel between brothers for property and has a description of the great war of Kurukshetra, it is used as a symbol of quarrel or fight often in daily life. This peculiarity of Indian life style might pose difficulties for a foreign reader with the matter of fact translation like – ‘The Mahabharata had begun’ (27)! In the second example, another word is used to indicate the squabble – તાંડવ ‘*tandava*’ which according to Indian mythology is a dance performed by Lord Shiva when in rage with a threat to destroy the entire world. In the story it indicates the fierce verbal abuse. A reader who might only be familiar with the epic or Indian scriptures but unaware of their special

implication and these culture specific references might find it difficult to understand these references.

In the same illustration there is a reference from another epic the Ramayana and how Devi Seeta was forced to stay at Ravana's place after her kidnapping. Here Vijay is comparing himself with Ravana and taunted Seeta that as even Goddess Seeta was forcefully taken by Ravana and was compelled to stay at his palace while Seeta, the female protagonist, was merely an ordinary helpless woman who could not escape from his tyranny. It is noteworthy that the original and its translation sound different in this case. The original hints at the helplessness of Goddess Seeta whereas the translation refers to the strength of Seeta who although was forced to stay with Ravana, did not lose her chastity of character and remained a faithful wife. Even the reference of Seeta as '*sati* Seeta' (Seeta is considered a very pious *sati* and she had received a boon that amongst all the great *satis* her name will always be considered first) as found in the original has been skipped in its rewriting. The translation reads as following – 'The *tandava* of harsh-voice was on. *Arre* Seeta had survived Ravana, said a voice, who do you think you are? Hahn' (27)? The reason for this different reading might be the translator's own perception regarding Goddess Seeta who had no doubt suffered a great deal of torment yet she could stand her ground and save her chastity in front of a persecutor like Ravana. Even the omission of the word '*sati*' (which means a faithful wife and also refers to the tradition of being *sati* – giving up life by burning on the pyre along with the dead husband) could be her personal ideology along with the present day poetics where the word is only used in sarcasm.

In the third example, there is a description of how Vijay finally seemed to have lost his patience and was about to kill Seeta and his words of vengeance were expressed where he was abusing Seeta and asking her to go to her God – Lord Ram. The reference to Lord Ram has many dimensions to it. First of all the name Seeta and its association with Ram from the famous epic according to which Ram and Seeta did not unite in their life on earth due to their separation during and after their '*Vanvaas*' (fourteen years exile in forest) and later when Ram found out Seeta's whereabouts through their sons Luv and Kush, Seeta preferred to embrace death and out of guilt Ram also decided to drown into the river Saryu; second its association with death as it is believed that you go to God's abode after death, particularly Lord Ram as while taking a dead body of a Hindu person to the cremation ground, expressions of '*Ram naam satya hai*' meaning 'only Lord Ram is the final truth of life' are uttered. In this case both the implications are true. In the translation it reads. "Shan't leave

you today. Today I'll kill you, bloody paragon of virtue, go to your God" (28). Here instead of the original word 'Ram' the translator has used 'God' in association with the second implication while the first one is completely neglected by her with her choice of word. The personal ideology of the translator seems to have worked here. Perhaps her choice of word might have been inspired to avoid any confusion for a foreign reader who has no idea of these cultural and mythological nuances.

3. Mira Yagnikni Diary (Entries from Mira Yagnik's Diary)

a) Introduction of the Author

The author of this novella in diary form is Bindu Bhatt (1954), an excerpt of which has been translated in this anthology. Apart from this novel Bindu Bhatt has written another famous novel *Akhepatar* (1999) (a recipient of Sahitya Akademy Award in 2003), a short-story collection *Bandhani* (2009). She is also a critic and translator translating from Gujarati into Hindi and vice versa. Her narrative style is gripping and she has dealt with many aspects of women's lives through the portrayal of some brilliant women characters from different social and cultural background – from middle class women to a victim of partition and physical abuse following it (Kanchan in *Akhepatar*) to a modern and liberal minded woman like Mira who openly accepts her homosexuality)

b) Thematic Analysis

The present novella was published in 1992 by R. R. Shethni Company, Mumbai and it covers the incidents occurring in the central character Mira Yagnik's life during the time span of one year starting from 31st December to 30th December. It is a saga of deep emotional upheavals in the life of a young, intelligent and sensitive girl Mira Yagnik during her passing through various phases of finding and losing love, her discovery of her own strengths and weaknesses, her efforts to fulfil her aspiration and her final break down. Mira was pursuing her Doctoral in Hindi literature and she used to stay in a hostel in Ahmedabad. Her mother was a divorcee who worked as a teacher in a primary school in Navanagar. Mira had been a brilliant student since childhood but she suffered from a skin disease called leucoderma (white leprosy) and as a result had to bear with the taunting and humiliating comments of her class mates and other people. Still without losing heart Mira continued her journey towards academic excellence.

After a few days her friend Vrunda, who had been her teacher once, came to stay with her in hostel to complete her M A degree and both were physically attracted towards each other and got involved in lesbian relationship. Vrunda, who had faced disappointment in love, dreamt of a happy family life with husband and children and in her frustration and loneliness she indulged into this relationship with Mira while Mira, who was conscious of her variegated body, had accepted Vrunda out of an emotional need for love. Mira had described the moments of their physical attraction openly in her diary without any sense of embarrassment. But even while accepting Vrunda, she questioned the integrity of their relationship logically which reflected her intelligence and objective mind-set. Later when Vrunda deserted Mira to marry Dr. Ajit, Mira had a sense of being abandoned and felt frustrated but being a cheerful and positive person by nature, she tried to overcome this grief and forget the episode of Vrunda. But she had been hurt deep down and she tried to find comfort in the company of an emerging poet Ujjaas Agatsya whom she met during a Seminar. In his company she could realize her own potential and she also became aware of her womanhood. She openly confessed her love for him who also reciprocated the mutual feelings.

Through Ujjaas Mira wanted to accomplish her desire for love and warmth only to be disappointed once again. This time the experience was completely devastating as Ujjaas, who was a personification of love for Mira, only considered her as a mean to fulfil his sexual desires. The brutal act of Ujjaas's rape on Mira completely shattered her dreams and she felt betrayed in love for the second time. She went back to her mother in Navanagar and was being haunted by the deep sense of disappointment. Out of her sense of remorse and humiliation, she cut her long, beautiful hair at the end.

c) Character Analysis

Mira's confidence, courage and objective approach make her a modern woman in the true sense of the term who aspires for a respectable position in society, who is aware of her circumstances and tries to find her balance without compromising on her dreams. Mira is a thinker with analytical skills and artistic taste to appreciate literature, painting, music and drama. To hone her research and academic skills, she regularly attends workshops and seminars along from her habit of reading and her awareness of the world. She is also a sensitive person who values human relationship and believes in the mutual feeling of respect and freedom in any relationship. Her outlook is quite modern as she openly accepts her

lesbian relationship but at the same time she is aware of her equal attraction towards men. According to Ramesh R. Dave, “In reality Mira’s personality and character are quite aggregate. She experiences and analyses the world and herself with deep concern. The scope of her experience and contemplation is so wide that the centuries old abnormal attitude towards covering the female body, the loneliness and sadness bore by the human kind... get expressed through them” (my tran.; 177-178).

Through the character of a highly sensitive and intelligent girl like Mira, the writer Bindu Bhatt intends to hint at a crucial reality that in modern times although women are better equipped with education and professional avenues having aspiration to lead a life of equality and self-respect, nothing much seems to have changed on the practical ground. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese expresses the dilemma of female self in the following words, “In this century, technology, medical advances and urbanization offer women unparalleled opportunities, but these advances are mitigated by ‘new denigrations of female nature... new celebrations of female needs for protection... [which] exclude women from full social and political participation’” (21-22).

For an intelligent and highly educated girl like Mira striving to fulfil her dreams, many hurdles await her on her way in form of her gender, her patchy skin and people’s perceptions towards it etc. Still somehow Mira struggles and finds balance only to be thwarted at the end. The practical and manipulating outer world and its manners do not seem to suit a highly sensitive girl like Mira and even after her best efforts and ultimately she feels defeated.

Mira’s character exhibits another reality of the female world which hardly got expression in literature by women writers namely her homosexual side. In other regional literature, this side of female sexuality is explored to some extent like in Urdu Ismat Chughtai (1915-1991) depicts the lesbian relationship of her women characters in many of her novels (*Tehri Lakir* (1943), *The Heart Breaks Free* (2018)) and short-stories (*Lihaf*), and in Hindi Krishna Sobti (1925-2019) in her story *Mitro Marjani* (1967) and in Gujarati Bindu Bhatt pioneers in the matter of the depiction of this theme through this novel. However, Mira’s lesbian relationship with her one time teacher Vrunda bears some traits of the similarity with one of Ismat Chughtai’s novel *Tehri Lakir* (1943) which depicts the tale of a lesbian relationship of a Muslim girl Shammu with her teacher Unna. Mira as well as Vrunda have another similarity with the women characters present in the above mentioned fictions. These women – Shammu and Unna in *Tehri Lakir*, Begun Jaan and Rajjo in *Lihaf* and Mitro in

Mitro Marjani accept lesbianism as an alternative to satisfy their sexual desires in absence of any male partner (in some cases where the male partners turn out to be gay) and as soon as they are exposed to male company (at times, due to social pressure they are forced to return to their husbands), they forget altogether about their homosexuality.

d) Example Analysis and Observations

Passage 1.

For the various competitions organized for the New Year's party, Mira's friend Ujjwala had given her name for 'The most beautiful Hair contest' without her knowledge and when Mira opposed, Ujjwala reacted in the following way

ઉજ્જવલાએ જબરદસ્તથી મારું નામ વાળની સ્પર્ધામાં લખેલું. મને કહે, 'અલી મણીબેન, જો તારા જેવા સુંદર વાળ હોય ને તો હું એક એક લટમાં દસને લપેટું...' (1)

The translation in English reads as follows:

Ujjwala insisted on suggesting my name for the Hair Competition. She said to me, "Arre Maniben, if only I had hair like yours I would have about ten of them wrapped around each lock of my hair..." (116)

Here Ujjwala addressed her as મણીબેન '*Maniben*' which is a typical way of pointing out to a dumb or old-fashioned girl. In India as well as in Gujarat, this tradition to use some typical names like the one mentioned here to suggest different character traits like – ગગાભાઈ '*Gagabhai*' for a stupid man, દેવદાસ '*Devdas*' for a person who is madly in love etc. Ujjwala's calling Mira '*Maniben*' (which is an old-fashioned name) to suggest that her hair is so lustrous and beautiful that she could capture the heart of many young boys with the help of it and an Indian reader can easily make out the implication of this reference due to common cultural heritage but a Western reader with a different set of poetics may miss the entire point.

Passage 2.

One day Mira went to a book shop with her friends Salil and Ruchi and as it was getting late Ruchi was quite upset as her family was quite strict and punctual about her

timings of remaining inside and outside the house. The description of the event is given as below

એક તો સાંજના પાંચ વાગવા આવ્યા હતા, અને રુચિને માથે ઘરના ટાઇમ-ટેબલની લટકતી તલવાર...

(4)

In English rendering it reads:

It was about five in the evening already, and like Damocles' sword Ruchi's rigid curfew time hung over her... (117)

While the original hints at a hanging sword of time, the translator goes a step further by inserting a famous reference from history which is often used as an anecdote to show the risk of being in a power position. Damocles was a dubious courtier in the court of a Greek ruler Dionysius II of Syracuse in the 4th century BC. As per the myth, Damocles used to sycophant the King of his great fortune, power and luxuries and Dionysius responded by offering to switch over positions with Damocles for a day to make him taste the authority to which Damocles quickly agreed. But when Damocles ascended the throne, he found a sharp sword hanging over him tied by a thin thread, an arrangement done by the King to make him realize the anxiety and risk of being in power. In spite of having his wish fulfilled, Damocles did not enjoy the power position due to the constant sense of fear and finally he requested the King to take back his throne as he had very well realized the danger associated with power. The reference of this anecdote is found in many famous literary works including that of Shakespeare (*Henry IV*) and Horace (*Third Book of Odes*).

In this case, the translator has exhibited a creative talent by adding up a famous example to hint at the seriousness of the situation for Ruchi. Through this reference of Damocles' sword, she has tried to naturalize the constraint of Universe of Discourse for the readers, particularly foreign readers (especially European) who are well-aware of this cultural reference.

Passage 3.

In the same incident when Mira and Ruchi were waiting for Salil outside the book store, a small boy of the age of eight to ten approached them with a few packets of popcorn and was pleading them to buy one from him as he has been hungry since morning. The description is as following

સલિલ ફાઇલ લેવા દુકાનમાં ગયો ત્યાં એક આઠ-દસ વર્ષનો લઘરવઘર છોકરો હાથમાં પોપકોર્નનાં પેકેટ લઈને ઊભો હતો. કહે, ‘બેન, લઈ લો, દસ પૈસા ઓછા આપજો. સવારથી કંઈ ખાધું નથી. બેન, બોણી કરાવો.’ (4)

In English translation it is carried as:

Salil ran into the bookshop to pick up his file, while a little boy, untidy and rumped, stood near us with some packets of popcorn in his hands, “*Ben*, please buy some, give me ten paisa less, if you like. Help me make a beginning for today. I haven’t eaten a thing since morning.” (117)

The original author makes use of a particular word in this scene બોણી ‘*bohni*’ which means ‘first sale of the day’. The word has a special connotation in Indian context and many beliefs are associated with it like – the ‘*bohni*’ should be done on time, if its done the right way or by a lucky person then the entire day would be quite fruitful etc. Amongst the labour class like auto rickshaw or taxi drivers, hawkers etc. ‘*bohni*’ has a special implication. In translation it is rewritten as ‘make a beginning for today’ and the words are spoken by the boy at evening time so this might create some puzzlement for the readers. Also the special significance of the original word would anyways be lost even if it is aptly carried forward in English translation due to the constraint of poetics because of different socio-cultural value systems.

Passage 4.

When Mira went to meet the hostel warden to seek her permission to let Vrunda stay in the hostel for a few days, the warden, who was manipulative otherwise, started exhibiting her power by giving strict instructions regarding the rules of the hostel to be followed mandatorily by Vrunda. On seeing the warden’s attitude, Mira could think of a famous Hindi proverb ટકે શેર ભાજી ને ટકે શેર ખાજા ‘*Take sher bhaji take sherkhaja*’ (11) (reference based on a famous Hindi play *Andher Nagri, Chaupat Raja* by B. Harishchandra) which is used to point out to an immoral person preaching of morality to others. The warden herself had overruled many of the rules and now she was advising Mira to make her friend Vrunda take all the rules very seriously.

But when the proverb is rewritten in English translation, it makes a different reading. The translator has translated it as ‘Paints all with the same brush...’ (120). As we have seen earlier that the original proverb is based on a drama (the drama has taken its thematic reference from a famous folklore) which is a farce on the absurdity of socialism where a student by accident reaches a place where the city is in darkness and the King is a moron who has decided the same price (a penny) for everything be it vegetables or exquisite food items. The original writer is hinting at the double standards of the warden while the translator throws light on the other aspect of the warden’s character that is she is an unfair person who puts everyone in the same category without any consideration. In Gujarati there is a proverb which has a similar connotation – બધાને એક લાકડી થી હાંકવા ‘*Badhane ek lakdithi hankwa*’. The translator’s decision to use a different proverb in place of the original might be due to her own personal ideology and her efforts to deal with the constraint of Universe of Discourse.

Instead of explaining the original proverb, she has decided to replace it with another proverb more familiar to the English knowing readers. As English language does not have a proverb with similar connotation like the original one, Kothari decided to use a different proverb which although does not carry the exact meaning but is in line with the original hinting at the unfair behaviour of the warden. In her efforts to replace the proverb, she has tried to naturalize the Universe of Discourse through her selection of another proverb and thus making the translation look familiar to the readers despite the cultural and poetic differences.

Passage 5.

When Mira met Ujjaas Agatsya, a Hindi poet during a seminar, she got attracted towards him. One day they both went out for coffee where Mira confessed her love for him. On their way back Ujjaas started praising Mira’s curvaceous body by giving reference of temples located in South India.

પાછા ફરતાં સાંજ ઢળી ગઇ હતી. રસ્તામાં મને ઉજાસ કહે, ‘તુમને કભી દક્ષિણ ભારત કે મંદિર દેખે હૈ ?’

‘ના’ કહેતાં મેં એની સામે જોયું. એને મારા સ્તન પર આંખ ઠેરવતો જોઇ મારા રૂંવાડાં ખડાં થઇ ગયાં.

એ આગળ બોલ્યો, ‘હલેબીડ કી મદનિકા જૈસે તુમ્હારે સ્તન હૈ, ઇન્હે દેખતે હી...’ (143)

Its English rendering is as follows:

It was evening on the way back. As we were walking Ujjaas said to me, “Have you seen the temples of South India?”

I turned to face him to answer in the negative. My hair stood on end when I found him looking at my breasts.

He continued to speak, “Your breasts are like... when one looks at them...” (132-133)

In the above example, Ujjaas was comparing Mira’s breasts with the statues/sculpture of divine *Apsaras* (beautiful maidens dwelling in Heaven) found in the Halebidu temple (originally known as Hoysaleswara temple) situated in Karnataka. It is a Shiva temple build in 12th century during the reign of King Vishnuvardhana of Hoysala Empire. It is a very famous temple with a beautiful artwork of sculptures and relics which depict the Hindu theology and various episodes from the Hindu sacred texts like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata Purana.

In Indian tradition such sculptures depicting either the contemporary life of that era or episodes from scriptures or myths are to be found in many temples or caves and they have been a very important part of Indian architect for centuries. Ujjaas, being a poet, could not help but use this beautiful metaphor to compare Mira’s breasts with those of the sculptures of *Apsaras* found in the temple of South India he had visited and he openly expressed his views without a bit of hesitation. Mira being a scholar of literature herself could do nothing but feel thrilled on hearing this.

When the entire situation is carried forward in English translation, it loses its charm as the metaphor which takes the description to another artistic level is skipped by the translator. There is only a mention of Ujjaas comparing Mira’s breasts without the mention of the image of an *Apsara* of Halebidu temple. The narration looks quite flat and incomplete without this beautiful metaphor. The constraint of poetics could be the reason for the omission as the special architect associated with the tradition of temples in India is an integral part of Indian culture. This fundamental cultural matter pertaining India, Hinduism and temple tradition would hardly make any sense to the reader belonging to another socio-cultural background having different set of poetics. If the translator had kept the original metaphor, she would have been forced to provide a footnote refereeing to the history of the temple, the dynasty along with the history of Indian sculpture tradition associated with temples. So may be to

spare herself of the trouble to get into the vast segment of history, the translator might have decided to skip the comparison. Or may be Kothari has thought that even if the footnote had been provided, it would not be able to clarify the actual significance of the historical and cultural importance of the temple tradition so the omission has occurred.

While concluding this section we can say that Rita Kothari has covered up a range of literature by some of the earlier women writers like Lilavati Munshi to many contemporary writers like Varsha Adalja, Bindu Bhatt along with a representation of a Dalit writer in her anthology and she has done a commendable task as a translator in rendering these representative stories from the field of Gujarati literature into this anthology. This anthology represents the variety of feminine shades in form of the female protagonists from various social backgrounds voicing their feelings and fighting for survival in the patriarchal society with a hope for a better world where equality and dignity are reality for both the genders. As Vanamala in a novel in dairy form in the nineteenth century struggles for endurance but is aware of her fallen state on the moral ground and is full of remorse for the same, in the twentieth century Mira in another novel in diary form is full of confidence and courage with her acceptance of her reality and hopes for a better future. Seeta in *Saviour* is a retelling of the ancient saga in modern times with changing connotation of gender.

If we consider the translation, Kothari's translations resemble closely to the original as far as the linguistic and thematic aspects are concerned and she has been successful in maintaining the flow of the original. She has been meticulous in the selection of her vocabulary which rarely goes out of line with the original language and style of the writer and she has also been conscious of the contemporary ideology and poetics while rewriting these stories which, at times, belong to a completely different time frame to make them appealing to the present day readers (Indian as well as foreign). She has dealt with the crucial obstacle of culture which poses great difficulty in the translation process by retaining the flavour of the original culture with the use of many original words and culture specific references.

1.9 Concluding Remarks

To conclude this chapter, these three collections of short-stories (namely, *Andhari Galima Safed Tapka*, *New Horizons in Women's Writing: Stories by Gujarati Women* and *Speech and Silence: Literary Journeys by Gujarati Women*) truly represent the remarkable literary talent of Gujarati women writers from the earlier generation to the contemporary and their varied perceptions in form of their themes, characters, narrative skills and fresh

perspectives. They have projected newer realities of the world of women from different backgrounds and opened up various possibilities in the matter of representing women and their sensitivities and issues in a new light. The translators of these three texts have done a remarkable job by making these stories available for a larger readership through their efforts and taken Gujarati literature by women writers to an international level. These texts have set new standards of translation and paved way for many bilingual academics or professional translators to undertake more such projects in future.

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