

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

In the conclusion section, where a researcher is expected to come up with a final statement of findings – a definite result of the inquiry which has led to the formation of the thesis, I must confess a research never really comes to a definite end; rather, it opens one up to further possibilities of research in associated areas that can be explored in future. Working on the research area with a special focus on two major academic fields namely ‘Translation’ and ‘Gender’ with a number of other spheres in the background like the history and anthropology of the region of Gujarat in its various formative phases of change and development – was in itself a humongous task.

With a central focus on ‘translation’ and ‘gender’ the thesis also involved a study of the literature of Gujarat with particular focus on the arrival and contributions of women writers to the Gujarati literary spectrum; a comparative analysis of the representation of women in fiction by male and female writers of the state, with a special focus on how the image of the female subject has transformed across time and literary phases of Gujarat was explored. Also, the thesis took up an extensive analysis and comparative study of Gujarati fiction by women writers with its English translations – using for the purpose, Andre Lefevere’s translation theory – ‘Translation as Rewriting of the Original’. These are some of the highlights of this thesis where I have strived to examine and compare gender representations in the Gujarati original and in its English translations. The journey has been deeply enriching and fascinating at times while at the others quite frustrating and strenuous.

As my research includes an inquiry into the translation process and the product that emerges after a lot of mental churning on the part of the translator who has to make conscious choices at linguistic, stylistic and cultural levels and undergo a psychological labour to produce a closely equivalent text which is able to produce a similar impact in a completely different language and culture, on my part I had to be cautious and meticulous while analysing the efforts of the translators, the final result that has come up and the various factors – ideology, poetics, patronage and the Universe of Discourse, mentioned by Lefevere as constraints which pose hurdle while rendering a text from one language into another, and their possible impact on the English rendering of the Gujarati texts. My inquiry analyses how far the translator has been successful in carrying forward the exact meaning and sense of the original and to what extent these constraints have manipulated the image of the original in

rewriting. Also this research has been an effort to look into the factors responsible for the selection of certain literary texts over the others by the translators and whether the translators' efforts have been reciprocated by the patrons (publication houses or literary journals publishing translations) as well as readers at local and international level.

Gujarati is my mother-tongue and the literature produced in this language has always attracted my attention since childhood. Later during my graduation and post-graduation years, with English as my major subject, fascinating world of English literature opened up for me. I happened to read the works of many famous Indian English writers along with many other writers (including many regional Indian writers) in English translations. During my student life one question often aroused in my mind regarding the scarcity of Gujarati text in English translation in the prescribed syllabus. Shortly after the completion of my masters, I registered for M. Phil where I happened to opt for translation as one of the subjects and later carried forward my research in the same field by translating a number of poems of a renowned Gujarati modernist writer, poet, critic – Suresh Joshi along with a theoretical background to translation. My bi-lingual skills along with my background in research inspired me to indulge into translation activity which I readily took up with my efforts to translate poetry and short-stories from Gujarati into English. The practical challenges I faced as a translator diverted my attention towards the present inquiry and inspired me to take up this less paved area of analysing the translations with the parameter of translation theory for a better understanding of the process as well as to inquire into the quality of translations available on the basis of how far they justify the original text and the image of the writer.

Being a woman and a feminist, I have been well-aware of the situation and struggles of my fellow sisters in society and being a student of literature, I have always tried to figure out how literature captures the images of these women and their life and to what extent these images have been associated with the women and their condition in real time. In patriarchal society, where male seems to dominate in every sphere, literature is no exception and lesser number of women writers compared to male writers in literary canon is a proof enough. While reading a text by the writers of both the genders, particularly when they deal with the theme centred around women's life, we can notice a major difference in the matters pertaining the treatment of the subject and characters. Male writers' projection of women is mostly based on the expectation of the patriarchy, as for female writers, their treatment of women characters and presentation is more often based on the real experiences at physical and psychological levels as found among women around us. This awareness led me to

examine the next research question that is the representation of women in Gujarati literature by the writers of both sexes and how they deal with the issues of women in a completely different manner. This research provided me an opportunity to peep into the world of women writers of Gujarat, who are not as copious as male writers, and the impact of their presence on the literary scenario. These writers brought forth their own narrative styles presenting fresh insights regarding life as lived in the contemporary society. Their notable contribution was their efforts to present the up till now unnoticed world of women with a wide range of their personalities, psyche, background, sentiments, aspirations and struggles. Their experiences were different from those of the male writers, leading to a different mind-set which ultimately resulted into newer ways of writing and character portrayal. Their chief contribution was in the matter pertaining the image building of 'women' as depicted in Gujarati literature till date. These women writers, although they belonged to different cultural and societal backgrounds, unanimously voiced the pressing requirement for reform in the condition and status of women in society. This research has drawn from Post-colonial and third world feminist theories to critically analyse the literary world of these writers.

Translation being a rewriting process of the original has always been associated with the questions of 'loss' and 'gain' at various levels and as language is deeply rooted in culture, no other language can exactly replicate the original resulting into loss due to factors like unavailability of exact equivalence, cultural nuances etc. The loss or alteration also occurs in the matter of the image it produces of the original theme, characters and writer. So apart from examining the world of women writers and their women characters, I have taken up a study of how these images of women appear in the original fiction by women writers of Gujarat at a given point of time, and how when transferred to a completely different target language and culture that is English, these women's images change or alter – and to what extent, what are the factors that trigger and inform these changes in the representation of women. Often a woman and her situation in the original and in translation projects a completely different aspect, leading to much obscurity or misunderstanding so I have scrutinized select excerpts from both the original fiction and their translations of my primary texts to examine any such instances with an aim to figure out the complexity of the process and the dynamics responsible for the same with a theoretical background of general translation theory and Lefevere's theory in particular with fascinating findings at the end of each chapter.

The major challenge in my case was that my research includes more than one topic and it functions at multiple levels so juggling amongst them while trying to figure out their

components and finding balance was often quite exhausting. Also trying to fathom the history of the vast geographical state of Gujarat along with the field of its literature – both mainstream as well as folk/tribal literature – to get a complete overview of not just literature but to understand how literature mirrors the social reality with special focus on the reality of the world of female was taxing. The selection of the select excerpts from the original Gujarati texts by women writers and their comparison with their translations in English, using for the purpose, Lefevere's theory of translation as a tool to study the translation process – its manipulation of the original at various levels and how translation tends to represent and misrepresent the literature, culture and the images of women – all of this called for strenuous efforts on the part of the researcher. Many factors namely translator's choice of equivalence or her/his technique to deal with challenging cultural elements or at times the translator's personal prejudices or ideology along with the general poetics and the pressure of the dominant patronage are responsible for the different reading. Compiling these factors together in one thesis was intriguing yet wearing.

My research endeavour does have a personal, academic and political dimension. During the journey I discovered more about my native region in terms of its history and the impact of various economical and political factors (including many foreign invasions) on the society and culture, especially on the lives of women of the state during various eras from pre-Medieval times. The documented literature of 'Gurjardesh' or the Gujarat region from twelfth century onwards, it is observed, underwent notable transformation and growth under the influence of changes at socio-political levels and the simultaneous development of the Gujarati dialect/language following marked shifts in focus from writing in Sanskrit to writing in the Apabhramsa and then in Modern Gujarati, in the Gandhian, Modern and Post-modern Gujarati language-literature phase. The literature has successfully captured the current situation prevailing in society by providing a vision for alternative life and society. Gujarat has produced some prominent writers who exhibited their literary talent in form of developing various genres including poetry, fiction, drama, non-fiction, criticism etc. during various literary phases like Bhakti period, Reform Age, Pundit Era, Gandhian Yug, Modern and Post-modern periods. Although women writers' entry to the horizon has been delayed, they have put their mark gradually but firmly through their creative ability to set a benchmark in the history of literature of the state.

While finalizing my thesis, I would like to take stock of the extent to which the research objectives with which I began my research endeavour have been accomplished. The

**first** objective of my research is the selection of the original Gujarati texts by women writers and their comparison with their translations in English, which exercise has been completed applying the translation theory advocated by Andre Lefevere 'Translation as Rewriting'. The **second** objective is to look for shifts / gaps in translation at linguistic and cultural level along with examining the impact of the "four constraints" of Lefevere (ideology, poetics, patronage and Universe of Discourse) to examine the role of manipulation in the rewriting process. To achieve this objective I have compared the original Gujarati texts with their English rendering minutely observing and taking note of all such occurrences which I have registered in my Chapter Two, Three and Four. The **third** objective is to conduct a survey of the female gender representation in Gujarati literature during various literary phases by male and female authors of the state. As observed in Chapter One Gujarati male writers presented their women characters within idealistic frameworks, although their women characters seem empowered and self-sufficient, when at crossroads of life, they hesitate to cross the pre-decided social and religious boundaries.

The arrival of prominent women writers on the literary scene during early nineteenth century anticipated the experimentation with the matter of thematic aspects where many unpaved areas of women's lives and experiences started to be explored with their special feminine observations. Their special input is that their representations of women characters are much closer to the actual women we encounter around us in society and family; there is in them an underlying appeal and desire for respect and better opportunities for the development of women in society. Initially women writers too were diffident to voice their innermost dilemmas and feelings – the first generation of women writes like Lilavati Munshi, Vidyagauri Nilkanth etc. portrayed their women characters who although realized their true potential and were aware of their rights, could not go beyond the conventional roles (even when they take some steps towards improved life style, the guilt feeling always did haunt them like Vanamala in *Vanamalani Diary* by Lilavati Munshi who although becomes a famous actor and is financially independent still feels the burden of her so called 'fallen status' as a theatre actress).

With the change of time the image of women in literature goes through transformation with the emergence of the second generation of women writers like Dhiruben Patel, Varsha Adalja, Kundanika Kapadia, Ila Arab Mehta, Himanshi Shelat etc. who come up with a fresh range of female characters exhibiting bolder and more confident character traits. They reflect the changing times in modern era through their decisions, aspirations and their striving for

identity, as well as the dilemma of the female subject – her need to strike a balance between social expectations and personal ambitions. At times these women characters fail, at times they compromise their dreams for family peace but often they are able to achieve their desired goals. For instance, Fateema in the novel *Vaad* by Ila Arab Mehta is successful in crossing religious and social hurdles to fulfil her aspiration to gain higher education leading to a better life style and respectable position in society. At the same times, the women characters are well aware of the things they have to put at stake to fulfil their wishes and how they must courageously deal with the outer circumstances and their inner feelings. Taru, for example, is a woman trying to find balance between her societal role as a wife of a practical minded husband Som and her need for the companionship which she finds in the lively and cheerful Chirantar in the story *Prempadarath* by Himanshi Shelat.

After examining the image of women found in literature composed by female authors of Gujarat, it can be said that women representation has matured over time successively in the literature produced by women writers with a promise to reflect untouched areas of femininity in the future to come.

The **fourth** research objective is to scrutinize how the female gender has been ‘rewritten’ in English translation and if any manipulation has occurred to make a different and more acceptable image of women of Gujarat. The translation often alters the gender connotations and manipulates the representation for easy acceptance in the target language and culture. For example, Vasudha’s character in the original novel *Saat Pagla Aakashma* seems more radical compared to her image / representation in its English rendering which has simply converted her narrative into the saga of an ordinary housewife suffering from maltreatment at the hands of her in-laws, who ultimately rebels by abandoning her marital home. The writer Kundanika Kapadia’s real aim in creating her character was to spread awareness amongst women regarding their rights and equality, this aspect is completely missed by the translators in the process of transforming.

As per the last two objectives, I inspected whether the translations have been successful in meeting the objectives of their originals and how far the translator’s personal perceptions or prejudices have altered the meaning or image of a character in the rewriting along with observing any ambiguity that has occurred while transforming the text into a completely different language and culture and how the translator has approached it. Often due to different SL and TL cultural codes, identity and poetics, the translation makes a different

reading creating much confusion for the target reader. In majority of cases, the translators have been successful in carrying forward the sense of the original writer but often the contemporary poetics and translators' personal ideologies have created a different reading. For example, the translators' of *Saat Pagla Aakashma* – Kunjbala and William Anthony fall short to reproduce the artistic effect or to carry forward the cultural values of the original to the TL along with omission of a large number of paragraphs (particularly the ones which either critique the Western culture or refer to the subject of sexuality) reflecting the manipulative mentality on the part of the translators for easy acceptance in the target language / culture and they could only produce an abridged version of this famous novel through their focus only on the thematic aspect.

Vinod Meghani while translating *Andhari Galima Safed Tapka* by Himanshi Shelat, on the other hand, has indulged into over translation (often it reads more like a critical commentary rather than translation), and his use of archaic language and his tendency of explain every now and then results in obscurity rather than clarity and it takes away the excitement to figure out any cultural code or nuances on the part of the readers. He also seems to be under the influence of Victorian mentality, particularly in matters pertaining family structure, man-woman relationship along with his rigid standards of respectable and non-respectable behaviour (refer to his treatment of the character of Chirantar in the story *Prempadarpan* in Section I of Chapter 4) which often tries to overshadow the original author and her intentions.

Rita Kothari too has taken some liberties in her translations by omitting a few paragraphs in the novel *Vaad* as well as in stories in her anthology *Speech and Silence*. Along with these omissions, she has also added certain sentences from her side once in a while expressing her own views on the situation. The incidents of omission or adding up on the part of the translators (although sometimes they give a new dimension to the entire situation) still is an act of disservice to the original author and it points to the politics of translation at the level of personal and public readership.

Translation has been part and parcel of the multi-lingual country like India since the beginning. But if we compare the situation of translation in context to Gujarat, we can note that there is a dearth of Gujarati texts available in translation in regional Indian languages as well as European languages, particularly English. Many socio-political factors are responsible for this apathy of Gujarati bi-lingual writers and academicians towards representing Gujarati

literature on a larger platform through translation and for many years Gujarati has enjoyed the status of a ‘donor’ language for many Indian and European languages and literature. However, in the recent years with the spread of English as a global language and the rise of ‘Translation Studies’ as a major academic discipline along with the emergence of vast translation industry, the scenario is changing. Many Gujarati texts are available now, in translation in English and in other Indian regional languages, also, we find around us the launch of many translation projects taken up by professional academicians at either personal level or funded by UGC, universities or publication houses. Nevertheless, the situation may not be as promising as it looks due to the commercialization of the translation industry which although looks capable of changing the scenario in form of providing ample opportunities to the translators assuring prestige and financial security to them, the point under consideration is whether it promotes quality translation or only aims for translation in large quantity. In such circumstances, it is essential to conduct a survey to analyse the quality of translations produced and to provide a better guideline to the aspiring translators to make them better equipped with translation technique and theory to help them produce good quality translations while overcoming various hurdles at linguistic, cultural and stylistic levels which are capable to represent the region, culture, society, writer and literature of the original language. This research is my small and humble initiative in this direction with an intention to learn and grow as a researcher and translator at personal levels and to spread awareness towards this much neglected aspect of translation activity with an aspiration to plunge deeper into this area in future with newer perceptions and technique.