

## INTRODUCTION

The word 'Veda' means knowledge par excellence and is derived from  $\sqrt{vid}$  - to know. There are Four Vedic *Samhitās*, the *Rgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Atharvavedā*. The oldest and most important of all works of Vedic literature is the *Rgveda Samhitā*, usually called simply the *Rgveda*.

In *Rgveda* we find *Rṣis* or seers like Gṛtsamanda (II), Viśvāmitra (III), Vāmadeva (IV), Atri (V), Bharadvāja (VI), Vaśiṣṭha (VIII) etc., similarly we find female seers (*Rṣikā*s) whose poetry is preserved in the *Rgveda*.

They are :

घोषा गोधा विश्ववारा अपालोपनिषन्निषत् ।

ब्रह्मजाया जुहूर्नामि अगस्त्यस्य स्वसादितिः ॥८२॥

इन्द्राणी चेन्द्रमाता च सरमा रोमशोर्वशी ।

लोपामुद्रा च नद्यश्च यमी नारी च शश्वती ॥८३॥

श्रीर्लक्षा सार्पराज्ञी वाक् श्रद्धा मेधा च दक्षिणा ।

रात्री सूर्या च सावित्री ब्रह्मवादिन्य ईरिता ॥बृहदेवता-२.८२-८४॥

We find female seers whose poetry is found in *Atharvaveda* also. According to Kapildev Dwivedi they are : Sūryā Sāvitṛī (XIV.1.2); Sarparājñī (XX.48); Indrāṇī (XV.126); Mātṛnāmā (II.2; IV.20; VIII.6); Devajāmayah (XX.93).

So also in Medieval period starting from 7<sup>th</sup> Century to 18<sup>th</sup> Century AD there are female writers from all over India who have excellently contributed to Sanskrit literature in general and poetry in particular. They have composed *Mahākāvyas*, *Khaṇḍakāvyas*, *Campū Kāvyas*, and *Muktakas*. Some prominent Sanskrit poetesses of this era are Vijjā (c. 7<sup>th</sup> century AD), Śīlā Bhaṭṭārikā (c. 9<sup>th</sup> century AD), Bhāvadevī (c. 11<sup>th</sup> century AD), Gaṅgādevī (14<sup>th</sup> Century AD), Viśvāsadevī (early half of 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD), Bīnabāyī (16<sup>th</sup> Century AD), Tirumalāmbā (early half of 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD) Madhuravāṇī (17<sup>th</sup> Century AD), Rāmabhadrāmbā

(17<sup>th</sup> Century AD), Devakumārīkā (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD) and Lakṣmī Rājñī (earlier half of 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD) etc.

Just as we find the poetesses who have contributed to Sanskrit literature, similarly there were some poetesses in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and in Maharashtra who have composed poetry in Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati languages during the medieval period.

Marathi		Hindi		Gujarati	
Mahadāisā	13 <sup>th</sup> century	Mirābāī	16 <sup>th</sup> century	Divālibāī	18 <sup>th</sup> century
Muktābāī	13 <sup>th</sup> century	Sahajobāī	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Gavaribāī	18 <sup>th</sup> century
Bahinābāī	17 <sup>th</sup> century	Dayābāī	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Gaṅgāsati	18 <sup>th</sup> century
Veṇābāī	17 <sup>th</sup> century	Sundarī Kunvarībāī	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Loyana	18 <sup>th</sup> century
		Subhadrakumari Chauhan	1904-1948 AD	Rādhābāī	19 <sup>th</sup> century
		Mahadevi Verma	1907-1987 AD		

#### MAHADAMBĀ OR MAHADĀISĀ OR RUPĀĪ (13<sup>th</sup> Century AD)

She was the first poetess who has contributed to Marathi *Bhakti* literature. She has depicted the *Svayamvara* (Marriage ceremony of Rukmīṇī with God Kṛṣṇa) and has also written a text in *Ovi* metre giving guidelines about some spiritual matters :

श्री चक्रधरांचे सीरीं धरौनिदां श्रीचरणां: मग धवलीं गाइनू  
 गोविंदु राणां : जेणे रुकमणी हरीओली : तेणे जर्भी  
 पवाडे केलें अती बहूत: पाविज परमागती: भक्तीं आइकीतां: श्रीकृष्णचरित्रूं ॥१॥

MUKTĀBĀĪ (13<sup>th</sup> Century AD) : She was the younger sister of Saint Jñāneśvara of Maharashtra. Muktābāī has composed *Abhanagas*. Very few of her *Abhangas* have come down to us. In her composition Muktābāī has expressed the significance of moral and ethical values in human life :

शांति क्षमा वसे । देही देव पैसै । चित्त समरसे । मुक्तमेळु ॥१॥  
 निर्गुणे उपरमु । देव पुरुषोत्तमु । प्रकृतिसंगमु । चेतनेचा ॥२॥  
 सजानी दिवटा । अज्ञानी तो पैठा । निवृत्तीच्या तटा । नेतु भक्ता ॥३॥  
 मुक्ताई दिवस । अवधा हृषीकेश । केशवेवीण वास । शून्य पैसे ॥४॥

JANĀBĀĪ : She ranks second after Muktabāī. Nāmadeva and Jñāneśvara were her teachers. She has composed about 350 *Abhangas* in Marathi language. She introduces herself to be Nāmāyāchi Dāsī (maid servant of Nāmadeva). Her *Abhangas* are very popular and are recited in the *Kīrtanas* and daily prayers in Maharashtra.

In her *Abhanga* she says :

देव भावाचा लंपट । सोडुनि आला वैकुण्ठ ॥१॥  
 पुंडलिका पुढे उभा । समचरणांची शोभा ॥२॥  
 उभा बैसेनासर्वथा । पाई वीट पंढरिनाथा ॥३॥  
 सर्व सुखाचा सागर । जनी म्हणे सारंगधर ॥४॥

BAHIṆĀBĀĪ : (17<sup>th</sup> Century AD) : Of the Mahārāshtra saint poetesses, Bahiṇi is unique in having left a record of her own story. She was born in a town named Deogaon. She was married to a Brahmin named Ratnakar Pathak. She had a daughter and a son. She used to hear and recite the *Abhangas* of her Guru Tukārāma :

गडे हो कृष्ण गडी अपुला । राजा मथुरेचा झाला ॥  
 टाकुनि काला कांबला । कासे पितांबर कसिला ॥  
 टाकी मयुरपिंछाला । जडित मुकुट तो त्याला ॥  
 आतां ओलखिल का आपुत्याला । राजा मयुरेचा झाला ॥  
 टाकुनि गुजाचि दाहि । घातला कौस्तुभ कंठी ॥  
 टाकुनि मुरली बेताटी । करिं घेत आयुधें मोठी ॥  
 आतां काय बागुल भय त्याला । राजा मथुरेचा झाला ॥२॥  
 गोधेन चारुं विसरला । आतां तो नृपामधि शिरला ॥  
 नारीनीं उरीं धरुनि चुरिला । तो आतां कुब्जेनें वरिला ॥  
 देतसे निजपद प्रेमेला । राजा मथुरेचा झाला ॥३॥

VEṆĀBĀĪ (17<sup>th</sup> Century AD) : Veṇābāī was the disciple of Rāmadāsa and a contemporary of Bahiṇābāī. She was born in a Brahmin family named Deshpande. In both her fathers and mother's family the worship of Rāma was traditional.

Veṇābāī's composition is as follows :

जानकी-गुणें हृदयकृपण । राजा निरविता। यच्चारण ।  
 अष्ट वर्षे केलें म्यां पालण । आतां तुम्ही करावें ॥  
 माझा प्राणाची प्राणकला । सुखदायक सुशीला ।  
 परम स्नेहे भूपाला । इचें पालण करावें ॥  
 परम स्नेहें मिथिलापति । दुहिता निरविली अयोध्याति ।  
 कन्या स्नेहाची थोर प्रीति । नेत्रोदक जातसे ॥

Other names of Marathi poetesses mentioned by Bhav V. L. are Soyarābāī, Premābāī, Bayābāī, Ambābāī, Gaṅgābāī, Rājāī, who have contributed to some extent to Marathi literature.

### HINDI LITERATURE

MIRĀBĀĪ (1516 AD-1543 AD)

This renowned Saint poetess was born in a village in Mewar and was married to Bhojaraja, the prince of Udaipur.

She has written *Padas* (Verses) praising and glorifying God Kṛṣṇa. Being a staunch devotee of Kṛṣṇa, she has expressed her desire to get united with God Kṛṣṇa. A large number of her lyrics are in pure *Vrajabhāṣā*. She has also used Rajasthani and Gujarati languages in her compositions :

मैं तो दरद दिवानी, मेरा दरद न जाने कोय ॥  
 घायल की गति घायल जानै, जो कोइ घायल होय ।  
 जौहरि की गति जौहरि जानै, की जिन जौहर होय ॥१॥  
 सूली उपर सेज हमारी, सोवन किसबिध होय ।  
 गगन मंडलपर सेज पिया की, किसबिध मिलना होय ॥२॥  
 मेरे तो गिरिधर गोपाल, दूसरो न कोई,  
 जाके सिर मोरमुकुट मेरो पति सोई ।  
 तात मात भ्रात बंधु आपनो न कोई ॥१॥  
 छांड दई कुल की कान का करिहैं कोई ।  
 संतन दिग बैठि बैठि लोक लाज खोई ॥२॥  
 भगति देखि राजि हुई जगत देखि रोई ।  
 दासि मीरा लाल गिरिधर तारो अब मोहिं ॥३॥

SAHAJOBĀĪ (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD) :

Sahajobāī was the daughter of Hariprasad Vaisya and was a disciple of Great Saint Carañadāsa :

मुकुट लटक अरकी मन मांही ।  
 नत तन नटवर मदन मनोहर, कुंडल भुलक अलक बियुराई ॥१॥  
 नाक बुलाक हलत मुकताहल, होठ मटक गति मौंह चलाई ।  
 ठुमुक ठुमुक पग धरत धरनि पर, बाह उठाय करत चतुराई ॥२॥  
 झुनक झुनक नूपुर झनकारत, तता थेई थेई रीझ रिझाई ।  
 चरन दास सहजों हिय अंतर, भजन करौ जित रहौ सदाई ॥३॥

सहजो गुरु रंगरेज सा, सबही कूं रंग देत ।  
 जैसा तैसा बसन है, जो कोइ आव सेत ॥१॥  
 साथ मिले हरिही मिले, मेरे मन परतीति ।  
 सहजो सूरज धूप ज्यों, जल पाले की रीति ॥२॥  
 जो सोवै तौ सुन में, जो जागे हरिनाम ।  
 जो बोले तो हरिकथा, भक्ति करै निःकाम ॥३॥  
 जब लग चावल धान में, तब लग उपजै आय ।  
 भज छिलके सूं तजि निकस, मुक्ति रुप है जाय ॥४॥

DAYĀBĀĪ (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD) :

Dayābāī was a cousin sister of Sahajobāī and also a disciple of Saint Carañadāsa. In her composition she expresses reverence for her teacher :

गुरु किरपा बिन होत नहिं भाव भक्ति किरतार ।  
 जोग यज्ञ जप तप दया , केवल ब्रह्म विचार ॥१॥  
 सूर सनमुख समय में, घायल होत निसंक ।  
 यों साधू संसार में, जगके सहें कलंक ॥२॥  
 स्वांस३ स्वांस विचार करि, राखै सुरति लगाय ।  
 दया ध्यान त्रिकुटी धरै, परमात्म दरसाय ॥५॥  
 वही एक व्यापक सकल, ज्यों मनिका में डोर ।  
 थिरचर कोट पतंग में, दया दूजो और ॥६॥

SUNDARĪ KUNVARĪBĀĪ (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD) She was sister of great Saint Nāgaridāsa. Her compositions are related to Kṛṣṇa and devotion to Him :

स्याम रूप सागर में नैन वार पार थके ,  
 नचत तरंग अंग अंग रंग मयी है ।  
 गाजन गहर धुनि बाजन मधुर बेनु,  
 नागिन अलक जुग सोधौ सगबगी है ॥  
 भेंवर त्रिभंग ताई पानिप लुनाइ तामैं ,  
 मोती मनि जालन की ज्योति जगमगी है ।  
 काम पौन प्रबल धुकाव लोपी पैज ता मैं ,  
 आज राधे लाज की जहाज डगमगी हैं ॥

MAHADEVI VERMA (1907 - 1987 AD) :

She was born in Farukabad in UP and was educated in Allahabad. Her father's name was Govind Prasad Verma and Hemaranidevi. She has published several works. Her poetry is permeated with the feelings and anguish of pain :

विरह का जलजात जीवन विरह का जलजात ।  
 वेदना में जन्म करुणा में मिला आवास,  
 अश्रु चुनता दिवस रस का, अश्रु गिनती रात ।  
 जविन विरह का जल जात ।  
 अश्रु से मधुकव लुटाता आ यहीं मधुमास,  
 अश्रु ही से हाट बन आती करुण बरसात ।  
 जीवन विहर का जल जात ।  
 काल इसको दे गया पल आंसूओं का हार,  
 पूछता इसकी कटा निश्वास ही में वात ।  
 जीवन विरह का जल पात ।

बीन भी हूँ मैं तुम्हारी रागिनी हूँ  
 नींद टी मेरी अचल निस्पन्द कण कण में ,  
 प्रथम जागृति थी जगत के प्रथम स्पन्दन में ,  
 प्रलय मैं मेरा पता पदचिन्ह जीवन में,  
 शाप हूँ जो बन गया वरदान बन्धन में,  
 कूल भी हूँ कूलहीन प्रवाहिनी भी हूँ ।  
 बीन भी हूँ मैं तुम्हारी रागिनी हूँ ।  
 नाश भी हूँ मैं अनन्त विकास का क्रम भी ,  
 त्याग का दिन भी चरम आसक्ति का तम भी,  
 ता भी आघात भी झंकार की गति भी,

पात्र भी मधु भी मधुप विस्मृति भी,  
अधर भी हूं और स्मित की चांदनी भी हूं ।

SUBHADRĀKUMĀRĪ CHAUHANA : (1904-1948 AD) :

Her father's name was Ramanath Singh. Her poems reflect her love for motherland (India) :

वीरों का कैसा हो बसन्त  
आ रही हिमांचल से पुकार,  
हे उदधि गरजता बाारबार,  
प्राची, पश्चिम, भू, नभ अपार,  
सब पूछ रहे हैं दिग् - दिगन्त,  
वीरों का कैसा हो बसन्त  
फूली सरसों ने दिया रंग ,  
मधुलेकर आ पहुंचा अनंग,  
विधु वसुधा पूलकित अंग अंग,  
है वीर वेश में किन्तु कन्त,  
वीरों का कैसा हो बसन्त.

#### GUJARATI LITERATURE

GAVARĪBĀĪ (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD) :

She was a Nagar Brahmin. There are about 600 *Padas* (Verses) (devotional lyrics) composed by her, which are found in the manuscript, very few of which have been printed. She is believed to be the best among the known poetesses of Medieval Gujarat :

पूर्ण ब्रह्म पूरी रह्यो अभंड अेक स्वाभी  
चौद भोवन व्यापी रह्यो हरि त्यांडी  
बाहिर भीतर जयांडी, तुंडी भोड नाभी;  
पूर्ण ब्रह्म पूरी रह्यो अभंड अेक स्वाभी  
चंदमें तुं चैतन्य तुं, सूरज में तुं तेज,  
नाडक लजे, तुं विना दशोदित जभी;  
पूर्ण ब्रह्म पूरी रह्यो अभंड अेक स्वाभी

રૂપ નહીં, રંગ નહીં, વર્ણ નહીં વિભુ,  
 નિરંજન નિરાકાર, નહીં માયા કામી;  
 પૂર્ણ બ્રહ્મ પૂરી રહ્યો અખંડ એક સ્વામી  
 ગવરી ગુરુ જ્ઞાન પ્રકાશ, તિમિર ભયો રી નાશ,  
 ભાગ્યો બ્રહ્મ ચિદ્વિલાસ, પૂર્ણ પદ પામી;  
 પૂર્ણ બ્રહ્મ પૂરી રહ્યો અખંડ એક સ્વામી.

### GAṄGĀSATĪ (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD) :

She has composed 40 *Padas* (Verses), which mainly depict God Kṛṣṇa and devotion to Him :

શીલવંત સાધુને વારે વારે નમીએ પાનબાઈ  
 જેનાં બદલે નહિ વ્રતમાન રે  
 ચિત્તની વરતી જેની સદાય નિરમાળી  
 જેને મા'રાજ થયા મે'રબાન રે.  
 શીલવંત સાધુને વારે વારે નમીએ પાનબાઈ  
 બાઈ રે! શત્રુ ને મિત્ર રે એકે નહિ ઉરમાં  
 જેને પરમારથમાં પ્રીત રે,  
 મન કર્મ વાણીએ વચનું માં ચાલે ને  
 રૂડી પાળે એવી રીત રે.  
 પી લેવો હોય તો  
 પી લેવો હોય તો રસ પી લેજો પાનબાઈ!  
 પિયાલો આવ્યો છે તત્કાળ;  
 વખત ગયા પછી પસ્તાવો થાશે પાનબાઈ!  
 અચાનક ખાશે તમને કાળ -  
 પી લેવો હોય તો રસ પી લેજો પાનબાઈ!  
 બાઈ રે! આ વખત આવ્યો છે મારે ચેતવાનો પાનબાઈ  
 માન મેલીને થાવ ને હુશિયાર;  
 ગંગા રે સતી એમ બોલિયાં રે;



હવે તમે હેતનાં બાંધો હથિયાર,  
પી લેવો હોય તો રસ પી લેજો પાનબાઈ!

LOYANA (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD) :

She has composed some 50 *Padas* (Verses) :

જ રે લાખા! બ્રહ્મમાં બળવું હોય તો હેત વધારો જ હો જ;  
અને મનના પ્રપંચોને મેલો રે હાં!  
જ રે લાખા! નૂરત-સૂરતથી ફરી લ્યોને મેળા જ હો જ;  
અને ફળની ઈચ્છાને ત્યાગી રે હાં!  
જ રે લાખા! હાર ન પામો તમે હિંમત રાખો જ હો જ;  
અને ગુરુવચન રસ ચાખો રે હાં!

In case of the following poetesses we do not get their compositions as stated by Shri Chimanlal Trivedi and Raman Soni in their book 'Madhyakalin Gujarati Pada Sanidhya'.

DIVĀḤIBĀĪ (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD) :

Her father was a Brahmin from Dabhoi near Baroda. She has composed mainly *Garbi* (one of the forms of Gujarati poetry). She has composed hundreds of poems depicting main events of God Rāma.

RĀDHĀBĀĪ : (19<sup>th</sup> Century AD)

Rādhābāī was residing at Baroda. Rādhābāī has written a number of devotional poems in a language which is a combination of Gujarati, Marāthi and Hindi.

KṚṢṆĀBĀĪ :

She was a Nagar Brahmin. Her chief work was *Sītājīnī Kāñcaḷī*, depicting an episode from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. She has also written some poems pertaining to the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa e.g. "*Kṛṣṇa nā hālaraḍā*".

**PŪRĪBĀĪ :**

She was a native of Umerath. Her Poem '*Sītā-maṅgala* is well known. Women of some castes in Gujarat recite it at the time of marriage.

**CONCLUSION :**

On the basis of the survey of Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati Poetesses, it is found that firstly most of them deal with philosophical or religious matters. Secondly, they have used only limited number of popular metres like *Pada* '*Sakhī*', *Dohā* as well as *Abhanga* and *Ovi* for expressing their thoughts. Thirdly, These poetesses have not only referred to the contemporary social, political or cultural aspects but have beautifully depicted several other aspects of human life through their compositions.

The Sanskrit poetesses like Gaṅgādevī, Rāmabhadraṁbā, Devakumārikā, Lakṣmī Rājñī of the Medieval period, however, throw a great deal of light on the historical and political development which took place in those days. Their compositions are both interesting and enlightening due to the charming diction and scholarly treatment of the subject matter.

**Modern Sanskrit Poetry – Some Observations :**

The Sanskrit compositions created during last 50 years are especially marked by variety of subject matter, novelty of presentation and peculiarity of expression.

There are several poets and poetesses even today living in different parts of India and composing in Sanskrit language. They have continued the tradition of composing different literary forms like plays, *Campū*, *Śatakakāvya*, *Mahākāvya*, *Laghukāvya*, Ballet, etc. depicting various aspects of human life.

Poetry is composed by many learned scholars of Sanskrit from different regions of India especially from Delhi, Orissa, Madhya-Pradesh, Karnataka, Madras, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The table of some modern (after independence) poets and poetesses showing their regions is given herewith :

### EASTERN REGION

SR. NO.	NAME OF THE POET	SOME COMPOSITIONS	REMARKS
१	दत्ता दिनेशचन्द्र	भारतगाथा (१९४३)	-----
२	पण्डित पुण्डरीकाक्ष मिश्र	सुदामचरितम् (१९८७)	महाकाव्यम्
३	केशवचन्द्र दास	प्रणयप्रदीपम् (१९७९) हृदयेश्वरी (१९८१) महातीर्थम् (१९८२) तिलोत्तमा (१९८२) निम्नपृथिवी (१९८३) प्रतिपद् (१९८४) अरुणा (१९८५) आवर्त्तम् (१९८५) अलका (१९८६) शिखा (१९८७) दिशाविदिशा (१९८८) ऋतम् (१९८८) अञ्जलिः (१९९०) मधुयानम् (१९९०) विसर्ग (१९९२) ईशा (१९९२) भिन्नपुलिनम् (१९९५) शशिलेखा ॐ शान्तिः ऊर्मिचूडा पताका	काव्यम् कवितासंग्रहः कवितासंग्रहः उपन्यासः लघुकथासङ्ग्रहः उपन्यासः उपन्यासः उपन्यासः कवितासंग्रहः उपन्यासः लघुकथासङ्ग्रहः उपन्यासः उपन्यासः उपन्यासः कवितासंग्रहः कवितासंग्रहः उपन्यासः उपन्यासः लघुकथासङ्ग्रहः बालोपन्यासः
४	दिगम्बर महापात्र	मानससंदेशम् (१९८८)	-----
५	प्रफुलकुमार मिश्र	चित्रकुरङ्गी (१९९५)	-----

## WESTERN REGION

SR. NO.	NAME OF THE POET	SOME COMPOSITIONS	REMARKS
१	मूलशंकर माणिकलाल याशिक	छत्रपतिसाम्राज्यम् (१९२८) संयोगितास्वयंवरम् (१९२९) प्रतापविजयम् (१९३१)	नाटकम् नाटकम् नाटकम्
२	अंबिकादत्त व्यास	शिवराजविजयम्	-----
३	मणिशंकर उपाध्याय	ईश्वरस्वरूपम् (१९५१) सूक्तार्थमुक्तावली अरविन्दमानसपूजा ब्रह्मसूत्रचतुःसूत्री सांख्यभाष्यम् श्रीमद् रङ्गावधूतमानसपूजा	----- ----- ----- ----- ----- -----
४	द्विजेन्द्रलाल शर्मा	अलकामिलनम् (१९५४)	काव्यम्
५	ग. ब. पलसुले	समानमस्तु वो मनः (१९६५)	नाटकम्
६	दत्त दिनेशचन्द्र	छन्दसन्दोहः (१९६८) भक्तिमीमांसा (१९९७) शिवलिङ्गरहस्यम् (१९९७)	काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम्
७	ओगेटि परीक्षित शर्मा	ललितगीतलहरी यशोधरामहाकाव्यम् (१९७६) अक्षयगीत रामायणम् परीक्षितनाटकचक्रम् (१९८३) श्रीमत्प्रतापराणायनं (१९८९)	----- ----- ----- ----- -----
८	रसिक पटेल	पूर्णालहरी (१९७८)	-----
९	गौरीप्रसाद झाला (मुम्बई)	सुषमा (१९८१)	-----
१०	राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी	संस्कृतपरिमल (१९८६) सन्धानम् (१९८९) अत्यतिः (१९८९) लहरीदशकम् (१९९१) षोडशी (१९९२) प्रेमपीयूषनाटकम् महाकविकण्ठकः वाल्मीकिविमर्षः भारतीयरङ्गसमुन्मेषः	काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम् ----- ----- ----- ----- -----

११	भगवदाचार्यः	भारतपरिजातम् (१९८८) पारिजातसौरभम्	----- -----
१२	वासुदेव पाठक	रसबोधः (१९८७)	-----
१३	घनश्याम त्रिवेदी	नूतनगीताञ्जलिः (१९८८) नूतननाट्यप्रस्थापनम् (१९८८)	----- -----
१४	श्रीधर भास्कर वर्णेकर	शिवराज्योदयम् कालिदासरहस्यम् जवाहर-तरङ्गिणी वात्सल्यरसायनम् रामकृष्णपरमहंसीयम् मन्दोर्मिमाला विनायकवैजयन्ती विवेकानन्दविजयम् शिवराज्याभिषेकम् श्रीराम-संगीतिका श्रीकृष्णसंगीतिका त्रिखण्डात्मक- संस्कृतवाङ्मयकोशः (१९८८)	महाकाव्यम् खण्डकाव्यम् खण्डकाव्यम् खण्डकाव्यम् खण्डकाव्यम् खण्डकाव्यम् खण्डकाव्यम् महानाटकम् नाटकम् ----- ----- -----
१५	श्री. भि. वेलणकर	विष्णुवर्धपिनम् (१९४७) जयमङ्गला (१९५९) जीवनसागरः (१९६०) कालिदासचरितम् (१९६१) सङ्गीतसौभद्रम् (१९६१) कालिन्दी (१९६४) जवाहरचिन्तनम् (१९६६) विरहलहरी (१९६७) छत्रपतिः श्रीशिवराजः (१९७४) बालगीतम् (१९७७) रामकृष्णकाव्यम् (१९७८) संस्कृतरचना (१९७८) सूत्रवाङ्मयदर्शनम् (१९८२)	खण्डकाव्यम् खण्डकाव्यम् खण्डकाव्यम् सङ्गीतनाटकम् सङ्गीतनाटकम् सङ्गीतनाटकम् भावगीतसंग्रहः भावगीतसंग्रहः नाटकम् काव्यम् काव्यम् निबंधः निबंधः

		दाल्दारीयम् द्वितीयम् (१९८३) प्रीतिपथे (१९८३) पुराणवाङ्मयपरिचयः (१९८४) उपनिषत्प्रवेशः (१९८५) स्वैरविहारः (१९८७) स्वच्छन्दम् (१९८८) किमर्थं संस्कृतम् (१९८८)	काव्यम् काव्यम् निबंधः निबंधः काव्यम् काव्यम् निबंधः
१६	हर्षदेव माधव	अलकनन्दा (१९९०) शब्दानां निर्मक्षिकेषु ध्वंसावशेषेषु (१९९३) मृगया बृहन्नला निष्कान्तः सर्वे (१९९७) मृत्युशतकम् (१९९९)	काव्यम्  काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम् ----- -----
१७	बद्रीनाथ शास्त्री	वल्लभदिग्विजयकाव्यम् मिथ्यावासुदेव मालिनी राधाविनोद रत्नावली	महाकाव्यम् ----- ----- नाटकम् नाटकम्
१८	जगन्नाथ श्रीधर पदे शास्त्री	रुक्मिणीस्वयंवरम् ताम्बूलमञ्जरी, इत्यादि	महाकाव्यम् -----
१९	रसिकविहारी जोशी	उपदेशवल्ली (१९९७), इत्यादि	काव्यम्
२०	सियाराम सक्सेना	व्यासशतकम् (१९९७)	काव्यम्
२१	गोविंदलाल शाह	भावपुष्पाञ्जलिः (१९९८)	-----
२२	गौतम पटेल	अधुना (१९९९)	-----
२३	राजेन्द्र नाणावटी	मरीचिका (१९९३)	-----
२४	जयदेव जानी	सावित्रीशतकम् (२००२)	-----
२५	रवीन्द्रकुमार पण्डा	ऊर्वी प्रतिध्वनिः (१९९६) प्रणयलहरी शतदलम्	काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम्

## NORTHERN REGION

SR. NO.	NAME OF THE POET	SOME COMPOSITIONS	REMARKS
१	जानकीवल्लभ शास्त्री	काकली (१९३५)	काव्यम्
२	रामनाथ पाठक	राष्ट्रवाणी (१९५१)	काव्यम्
३	रामकरण शर्मा	मदालसा (१९५४) सन्ध्या (१९८७) पाथेयशतकम् (१९८८) दीपिका (१९९२) सर्वमङ्गला (१९९६)	काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम्
४	मधुसूदन दत्त	संगीतसुधातरंगिणी (१९६४)	काव्यम्
५	सत्यव्रत शास्त्री	गुरुगोविन्दसिंहचरितम् (१९६७) रामकीर्तिमहाकाव्यम् (१९९०) श्रीबोधिसत्त्वचरितम् (१९९०) इन्दिराचरितम्, इत्यादि	काव्यम् महाकाव्यम् महाकाव्यम् महाकाव्यम्
६	रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी	प्रमथः (१९८८) रेवाभद्रपीठम् (१९८८) सीताचरितम् (१९९७) यूथिका शिवचतुर्दशी	काव्यम् काव्यम् महाकाव्यम् नाटकम् काव्यम्
७	रामावतार शर्मा	भारतगीतिका (१९७७)	काव्यम्
८	रमेशचन्द्र शुक्ल	सुगमरामायण (१९७८) श्रीकृष्णचरितम् (१९७९)	
९	रमाकान्त शुक्ल	भाति मे भारतम् (१९८०) जयभारतभूमे (१९८१) पण्डितराजीयम् अभिशापम्	काव्यम् काव्यम् नाटकम् नाटकम्

१०	जगन्नाथ पाठक	कापिशायनी (१९८०) मृद्धीका (१९८३) पिपासा (१९८७), इत्यादि	काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम्
११	मंगलदेव शास्त्री	जीवनज्योत (१९८१)	काव्यम्
१२	रामकिशोर मिश्र	विद्योत्तमाकालिदासीयम् (१९८४) अन्तर्दाहः (१९८६) किशोरकथावलि (१९८७) अन्योक्तिशतकम्	काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम् -----
१३	छज्जुराम शास्त्री	सूक्तिमन्दाकिनी (१९८६)	काव्यम्
१४	गोस्वामी हरिराय	जरासंधवधमहाकाव्यम् (१९८४)	
१५	इन्द्रदेव द्विवेदी	सूक्तिमन्दाकिनी (१९८६)	काव्यम्
१६	राजेन्द्र मिश्रा	नवाष्टकमल्लिका (१९७६) वाग्वधूटी (१९७८) पराम्बशतकम् (१९८१) मृद्धीका (१९८२) शताब्दीकाव्यम् (१९८७) अभिराजसप्तशती (१९८७) धर्मानन्दचरितम् (१९९२) जानकीजीवनम् (१९८८) वामनावतरणम् (१९९३) पञ्चकुल्या (१९९३) कस्मैदेवायहविषा विधेम (१९९७) अरण्यानी (१९९९)	काव्यसंग्रहः काव्यम् काव्यसंग्रहः काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यसंग्रहः महाकाव्यम् महाकाव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम् काव्यम्
१७	पण्डित शिवराम चतुर्वेदी	चर्चामहाकाव्यम् (१९८९)	-----
१८	रामाशीष पाण्डेय	प्रहेलिकाशतकम् (१९९१)	-----
१९	गुलाबचन्द्र	महारथीकर्णचरितामृतम् (१९९१)	-----



२०	हरिनारायण दीक्षित	देशोऽयं कुरुते (१९९२)	काव्यम्
२१	सुरेन्द्रनाथ वर्मा	भावगीतम् (१९९४)	काव्यम्
२२	श्रीनिवास रथ	तदैवगगनं सेवधरा (१९९५)	काव्यम्
२३	बच्छुलाल अवस्थी	प्रतानिनीः (१९९६)	काव्यम्
२४	कृष्णदत्त शर्मा शास्त्री	शतकत्रयम् (१९९७)	काव्यम्
२५	मथुरानाथ शास्त्री	जयपुरवैभवः	-----

## SOUTHERN REGION

SR. NO.	NAME OF THE POET	SOME COMPOSITIONS	REMARKS
१	कुन्जुत्रि राजा	भारतप्रशस्तिः (१९५०)	-----
२	ह. व. नारायण शास्त्री	गुणपरीक्षणम् (१९५५)	नाटकम्
३	केशवन नायर	भर्तृदानम् (१९६४)	काव्यम्
४	सुब्रह्मण्यम् शास्त्री	श्रीकृष्णगुरुकुलवासचम्पू (१९६५)	चम्पू काव्यम्
५	सोमवर्मा	येशुसौरभम् (१९७४)	काव्यम्
६	पूजालाल (पोंडिचेरी)	स्तोत्रसंहिता (१९७७) स्तोत्रसंगीतिका (१९८२) बालनाटकानि (१९८३) सुभाषितमाला (१९८६) आलापमाला (१९९१)	----- ----- ----- ----- -----
७	नारायण पिल्ले	विश्वभानुविवेकानन्द (१९८०)	-----
८	एन्. डी. कृष्णन् उन्नी	द्वादशी (१९८४)	स्तोत्रकाव्यम्
९	न. रंगनाथ	एकचक्रम् (१९९०)	नाटकम्
१०	कालुरि हनुमन्तराव	भल्लटशतकम् (१९९१)	-----
११	राम शास्त्री	लघुकृत्य (१९९७)	काव्यम्
१२	वेंकट राघवन (मद्रास)	रामलीला	-----
१३	पुल्लेलः श्रीरामचन्द्रुडुः	सुसंहतभारतम्	-----

Poetesses referred by Dr. Radhevallabh Tripathi and Shushama Kulashreshtha in their books *Sanskrit Sāhitya : Bīsavīn Śatābdī* (1999 AD) and *Kavayitrī Kaṇṭhābharaṇam* (2000 AD) :

SR. NO.	NAME OF THE POETESSES	SOME COMPOSITIONS	DATE
१	पण्डिता क्षमाराव	ग्रामज्योति	१९५४
२	वनमाला भवालकर	आधुनिक संस्कृत काव्यम्	१९६९
३	मिथिलेशकुमारी मिश्रा	सुभाषितसुमनोजलि	१९८०
४	पुष्पा दीक्षित	अग्निशिखा	१९८४
५	उमा देशपांडे	अर्चनम्	१९९२
६	प्रेमलता शर्मा	कविभारतिकुसुमाञ्जलि	-----
७	मनोरमा	संस्कृतगीतमालिका	१९८१
८	श्रीमती देवकी मेनन	श्री शारदादेवीचरितसंग्रह	-----
९	मीरा द्विवेदी	धन्यास्मदीया धरा (in the monthly 'भारतोदय')	२००२

Please refer to the Appendix given by S. B. Varnekar in his book '*Sanskrit Vāṅmaya Kośa*'. Volume I.



## CHAPTER – I

### INTRODUCTION

#### BRIEF SURVEY OF SANSKRIT POETESSES

From the most ancient times to this day we find a continuous history of literary output by the female poets. These poetesses through their compositions have shown their calibre in various Sanskrit works.

The *Bṛhaddevatā* of Śaunaka (II.82–84) enumerates as many as 27 *Brahmavādinīs*. They are Ghoṣā, Godhā, Viśvavārā, Apālā, Juhū, Indrāṇī, Lopāmudrā, Vāk, Śraddhā etc. Here I attempt to give the gist of the hymns of some *Rṣikās* :

Lopāmudrā : (RV I.179, 1.2)

The hymn composed by her consists of the dialogue between the poetess Lopāmudrā and her husband sage Agastya. Tired of her husband's practice of austerity, she feels herself neglected, and makes an appeal for his love and company :

पूर्वीरहं शरदः शश्रमाणा दोषा वस्तोरुषसो जरयन्तीः ।

मिनाति श्रियं जरिमा तनूना मप्यू नु पत्नीर्वृषणो जगम्युः ॥ऋग्वेद-१.१७९.१॥

ये चिद्धिपूर्वं ऋतसाप आसन् त्साकं देवेमिरवदन्तानि ।

ते चिदवासुर्नहन्तमापुः समू नु पत्नीर्वृषभिर्जगम्युः ॥ऋग्वेद-१.१७९.२॥<sup>1</sup>

Viśvavārā : (RV V.28)

She belongs to the Atri family. She approaches Agni with her face towards East and offers oblations to the Gods and asks for love and marital happiness :

समिद्धस्य प्रमहसोऽग्नेवन्दे तव श्रियम् ।

वृषभो द्युम्रवाँ असि समध्वरेष्विध्यसे ॥ऋग्वेद-५.२८.४॥

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<sup>1</sup> Rgveda Samhitā page 138

समिद्धो अग्न आहुत देवान् यक्षि स्वध्वर ।

त्वं हि हव्यवाळसि ॥ऋग्वेद-५.२८.५॥

आ जुहोता दुवस्यताऽग्निं प्रयत्यध्वरे ।

वृणीध्वं हव्यवाहनम् ॥ऋग्वेद-५.२८.६॥

Apālā : (RV VIII.91)

She also belongs to the Atri family. Discarded by her husband as she is affected with a skin disease, worships Indra and asks for three boons :

1. To grow hair on her father's baldhead.
2. To make fertile his barren (land) field.
3. To grow hair on her hairless limb.

Indra gets pleased with Apālā and makes her fair skinned and freed from disease :

असौ च या न उर्वरादिमां तन्वं मम ।

अथो ततस्य यच्छिरः सर्वा ता रोमशा कृधि ॥ऋग्वेद-८.९१.६॥

खे रथस्य खेऽनसः खे युगस्य शतक्रतो ।

अपालामिन्द्र त्रिष्पुत्व्यकृणोः सूर्यत्वचम् ॥ऋग्वेद-८.९१.७॥

Ghoṣā : (RV X.39,40)

Of all the women seers, Ghoṣā has made the largest contribution by composing two entire hymns. She is the daughter of Kakṣivat. She could not find husband because of leprosy and grew old in the house of her father. She invokes Aśvins, who cure her of the disease and make her worthy of marital happiness :

इमं वामहे शृणुतं मे अश्विना पुत्रायेव पितरा मह्यं शिक्षतम् ।

अनापिरज्ञा असजात्यामतिः पुरा तस्या अभिशस्तेरव स्पृतम् ॥ऋग्वेद-१०.३९.६॥

युवां ह घोषा पर्यश्विना यती राज ऊचे दुहिता पृच्छे वां नरा ।

भूतं मे अह उत भूतमक्तवेऽश्वावते रथिने शक्तमर्वते ॥ऋग्वेद-१०.४०.५॥

A study of the *Rks* and hymns composed by the Rgvedic poetesses shows that they were versed in the folklore and the traditions of the time. The hymns give us a glimpse into the religious beliefs, social traditions and

mythological traits.

The hymns composed by Ghosā (X.39.40) and Apālā (VIII.91) indicate as to how these wise ladies could bring about not only security and happiness in their own life but also of their father's family by means of their prayers, with full devotion and total surrender to the deity. Thus we see that these ladies could overcome difficulties by their prayers and patience.

According to Dr. Kapildev Dwivedi, there are five female seers in Atharvaveda but their poetry however is found in the Ṛgveda also since Atharvaveda is mainly based on the Ṛgveda, I have therefore not discussed the contribution of these female seers separately.

Till the age of 16, girls could remain unmarried. Before marriage these girls were given education. Till the beginning of the Christian era, *Upanayana* or ceremonial initiation into Vedic studies was as common in the case of girls as it was in the case of boys. This was followed by education, which was very necessary as it is said in *Atharvaveda* :

ब्रह्मचर्येण कन्या युवानं विन्दते पतिम् । अथर्ववेद-११.५.१८ ॥

Women students were divided into two classes, *Brahmavādīnīs* and *Sadyodvāhās*. The *Brahmavādīnīs* continued their studies in the philosophy while *Sadyodvāhās* studied till their marriage.

Women like Gārgī, Maitreyī, Umā Haimavatī, used to participate in the learned philosophical discussions. There were many spirited and enlightened ladies like Jabālā, Itarā who imparted proper education to their children and contributed to the academic sphere in those days. Gārgī, a daughter of sage Vacaknu, questions Yājñavalkya at great length upon the origin of all existence :

सा होवाच - अहं वै त्व याज्ञवल्क्य यथा काश्यो वा वैदेहो वोग्रपुत्र उज्ज्यं धनुरधिज्यं कृत्वा द्वौ बाणवन्तौ सपत्न्यातिव्याधिनौ हस्ते कृत्वोपोत्तिष्ठेदेवमेवाहं त्वा द्वाभ्यां प्रश्नाभ्यामुपोदस्थानम् । तौ मे ब्रूहीति । पृच्छ गार्गीति ॥ बृह. उप.-२ ॥

एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रशासने गार्गि सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ विधृतौ तिष्ठतः । एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रशासने गार्गि द्यावापृथिव्यौ विधृते तिष्ठतः । एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रशासने गार्गि निमेषा मुहूर्ता अहोरात्राण्यर्धमासा मासा ऋतवः संवत्सरा इति विधृतास्तिष्ठन्ति । एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रशासने गार्गि प्राच्योऽन्या नद्यः स्यन्दन्ते श्वेतेभ्यः पर्वतेभ्यः प्रतीच्योऽन्यां यां यां च दिशमनु । एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रशासने गार्गि ददतो मनुष्याः प्रशंसन्ति यजमानं देवा देवीं पितरोऽन्वाय-ताः ॥बृह. उप.-९॥

Maitreyī was equally interested in the spiritual progress and so she asks her husband Yājñavalkya (Br. Up II 4) :

“सा होवाच मैत्रेयी - येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्याम् । यदेवभगवान् वेद तदेव मे ब्रूहीति ॥३॥

यत्र हि द्वैतमिव भवति तदितर इतरं जिघ्रति, तदितर इतरं पश्यति, तदितर इतरं शृणोति, तदितर इतरभिभवदति, तदितर इतरं मनुते, तदितर इतरं विजानाति । यत्र वा अस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत् तत् केनकं जिघेत् तत् केन कं पश्येत् तत् केनकं शृणुयात् तत् केन कमभिवदेत् तत् केन कं मन्वीत तत् केन कं विजानीयात् येनेद सर्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानीयात् । विज्ञातारमरे के न विजानीयादिति ॥बृह. उप.-१४॥”

“इयं पृथिवी सवेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्यै पृथिव्यै सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्यां पृथिव्यां तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्म शरीरस्तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषोयमेव स योऽयमात्मा । इदममृतमिदं ब्रह्मेद सर्वम् ॥बृह. उप.-१॥”

Thus, these female seers during the Vedic age were endowed with great erudition and poetic genius.

The glorious tradition set by *Brahmavādinīs* is continued by the learned ladies during the medieval period and modern period also in India.

In the following table I have presented a list of some prominent Sanskrit poetesses who have contributed to different literary forms during last 1300 years.

### FEMALE POETESSES WHO HAVE WRITTEN *MUKTAKAS*

Every stanza of this literary genre stands by itself not being connected thematically with other verses. Like a pearl every single stanza shines with a particular message and appears beautiful.

According to *Agni-purāṇa*, *Muktaka* is defined as :

मुक्तकं श्लोक एकैकश्चैकस्मात्कारक्षम् : सताम् । अग्निपुराण-३३७.३६ ॥<sup>2</sup>

Daṇḍin defines it as :

मुक्तकं कुलकं कोशः संघात इति तादृशः ।

सर्गबन्धाशरुपत्वादनुक्तः पद्यविस्तरः ॥ काव्यादर्श-१.१३ ॥

According to Viśvanātha it is defined as :

“छन्दोबद्धपदं पद्यं तेन मुक्तेन मुक्तम् । सा.द.-६.३१५”

Sr. No.	Poetess	Date	Literary Form
1	Vijjā	700 to 900 A.D.	29 Muktakas
2	Vikaṭānitambā	900 A.D.	11
3	Sīlā Bhaṭṭārikā	900 A.D.	6
4	Tribhuvana Sarasvatī	1000 A.D.	2 Muktakas
5	Sarasvatī	1000 A.D.	2
6	Bhāvadevī	1100 A.D.	3
7	Mārulā	1300 A.D.	2
8	Madālasā	1400 A.D.	2
9	Gangādevī	1400 A.D.	Mahākāvya
10	Indulekhā	1500 A. D.	1 Mukataka
11	Viśvāsadevī	1500 A. D.	Campū kāvya
12	Bīnabāyī	1600 A.D.	Campū kāvya
13	Jayantī	1600 A.D.	Campū kāvya
14	Tīrumalāmbā	1600 A.D.	Campū kāvya
15	Madhuravānī	1700 A.D.	Translated Āndhra-Rāmāyaṇa written in Telugu by king Raghunātha Nāyaka
16	Rāmabhadraṁbā	1700 A.D.	Mahākāvya
17	Devakumārikā	1700 A.D.	Khaṇḍakāvya
18	Lakṣmī Rājñī	1800 A.D.	Khaṇḍakāvya

<sup>2</sup> Agni Purāṇa — Ānandāśrama, Pune - 1987



**MODERN POETESSES (DURING LAST 50 YEARS)**

SR. NO.	POETESS AND HER DATE	LITERARY FORM	
1.	Pandita Kshama Rao	Satyāgrahagītā	(1932)
		Kathāpañcakam (5 short stories)	(1933)
		Vicitrapariṣadyātrā	(1939)
		Śaṅkarajīvanākhyānam	(1939)
		Mīrālaharī	(1944)
		Uttarasatyāgrahagītā	(1948)
		Tukārāmacaritam	(1950)
		Rāmadāsacaritam	(1953)
		Grāmajyoti (three short stories)	(1954)
		Jñāneśvaracaritam	(1955)
		Kathāmuktāvali (15 short stories)	(1955)
		Svarājavijayam	(1962)
2.	Vanamala Bhavalkar	Ballet (i) Rāmavanagamanam (ii) Pārvatīparameśarīyam	1965 1966
3.	Nalini Shukla	Bhāvāñjaliḥ	1977
4.	Mithilishkumari Mishra	Vyāsaśatakam	1982
5.	Pushpa Trivedi	Agnīśikhā	1984
6.	Uma Deshpande	Arcanam	1991
7.	Pravesh Saxena	Anubhūti	1996

**Vijjā : (c. 700 to 900 AD)**

Her verses are found in *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva (1417 to 1467 A.D) and *Sūktimuktāvali* of Jalhaṇa (1257 AD). She is called Vijjā or Vidyā Vijjukā, Bijjākā etc. whose poems find a place in most of the Sanskrit anthologies. Madhavānanda observes “She is further identified with Vijayabhaṭṭārikā, queen of the early Cālukya prince Chandrāditya, who flourished about the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.”

J. B. Chaudhari also observes “Vijjā’s one of the stanzas is found quoted

in the *Abhidhāvṛtti-Mātrkā* of Mukula, who was the son of Kallata, a contemporary of king Avantivarman (855–833AD) of Kashmir. Hence there is no doubt that Vijjā must have flourished before this date. The upper limit of Vijjā's date, too, may be fixed from one of her verses "*Nilotpala-dala-Syamām Vijjikām.*" etc, which proves her not to be prior to Daṇḍin. (700 AD) Thus Vijjā must have flourished between the 700 to 900 A.D." The same information is given by Kulashrestha Sushama in her book *Kavayitrikanthābharaṇam* and Krishnamachariar in his book History of classical Sanskrit Literature. Twenty nine verses are ascribed to her describing great variety of subjects like King and his Sword, A woman separated from her lover, Human destiny, Nature, Seasons etc.

Dhanadadeva pays her a complement for her erudition and poetic skill :

शीलाविज्जामारुलामोरिकाद्याः काव्यं कर्तुं सन्ति विशारिस्त्रयोऽपि ।  
विद्यां वेत्तुं वादिनो निर्विजेतुं विश्वं वक्तुं यः प्रवीणस्य वन्द्यः ॥  
भूपालाः शशिभास्कुरान्वयभुवः के नाम नासादिता  
भर्तारं पुनरेकमेव हि भुवस्त्वां देव मन्यामहे ।  
येनाङ्गं परिमृष्य कुन्तलमथाऽऽकृष्य व्युदस्याऽऽयतं  
चोलं प्राप्य च मध्यदेशमधुना काञ्चयां करः पातितः ॥

In the second verse king's sword is praised as bringing reputation to the king in the warfare :

यशः पुत्रं देव त्वदसि लतिकाऽसूत समरे समीरस्तद्वलीपटलपट राशिं विकिरति ।  
शिवा गायन्त्युच्चैर्नटति च कबन्धावलिरभूदरातीनां मोक्षः समदि भवबन्धव्यतिकरात् ॥२॥

The well known verse of Vijjā is as follows :

नीलोत्पलदलश्यामां विज्जकां मामजानता ।  
वृथैव दण्डिना प्रोक्तं सर्वशुक्ला सरस्वती ॥३॥

In another verse she describes the glance of the lotus blue eyes of the king which generates love in the heart of ladies :

जनयति जननाथ दृष्टिरेषा तव नवनीलसरोरुहाभिरामा ।  
प्रणयिषु सुसमाश्रितेषु लक्ष्मीमरिषु च भङ्गमनङ्गमङ्गनासु ॥

In the following two verses quoted in *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva, Vijjā observes the courage of great people who remain firm during calamity :

प्रियसखि विपदुदण्डप्रान्तप्रपातपरम्परा-  
 परिचयचले चिन्ताचक्रे निधाय विधिः खलः ।  
 मृदमिव बलात्पिण्डीकृत्य प्रगल्भकुलालवद्  
 भ्रमयति मनो नो जानीमः किमत्र करिष्यति ॥१९॥  
 विरम विफलायासादस्माद् दुरध्यवसायतो  
 विपदि महतां धैर्यभ्रंशं यदीक्षितुमीहसे ।  
 अयि जडविधे कल्पापायव्यपेतनिजक्रमाः  
 कुलशिखरिणः क्षुद्रा नैते न वा जलराशयः ॥२०॥

Phalguhastinī : (c. 800 AD)

Her verses are found in *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva and *Sūktimuktāvali* of Jalhaṇa :

त्रिनयन जटावल्ली पुष्पं निशा वदन स्मित ग्रह किसलयं सन्ध्यानारीनितम्बनखक्षतम् ।  
 तिमिर भिदुरं व्योमः शृङ्गं मनोभव कार्मुकं प्रतिपदि नवस्येन्दाबिम्बं सुखोदयमस्तु नः ॥१॥

Poetess says : “God creates man and abode of infinite good qualities, then again makes him imperishable in an instant. Alas! This nature of fate is indeed a matter of regret.” :

सृजति तावदशेषगुणाकरं पुरुषरत्नमलङ्करणं भुवः ।  
 तदनु तत्क्षणभङ्गि करोति चेदहह कष्टमपण्डितता विधेः ॥२॥<sup>3</sup>

Vikaṭānitambā : (c. 900 AD)

She is said to have composed 11 verses. Most of her verses are found in *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva, *Sūktimuktāvali* of Jalhaṇa and *Sarasvatī-kaṇṭhābharaṇam* of Bhoja (c. 1200 AD).

Many verses of Vikaṭānitambā are found in different anthologies and rhetorical works of which eleven are reproduced by J. B. Chaudhari which depicts various subjects like the king, the beauty of a lady, the bee, the

<sup>3</sup> Vallabhadeva — *Subhāṣitāvali*, page 341, 516

spring season etc.

In the following verse as explained by the poetess, king is extolled as one whose fame has spread all over the world :

दिग्वधूवदनचुम्बि चेर्ष्या वीक्ष्य सद्युतिदिवा भवदयशः ।  
दर्शितः पृथुपयोधरोद्गमस्तेन सापि परिरभ्यतेऽखिला ॥२॥

Following verse found in *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva, the slender waist of a lady is described :

अय्ययि साहसकारिणिकिं तव चङ्क्रमणेन ।  
टसदिति भङ्गमवाप्स्यसि कुचयुगभारभरेण ॥७॥

In the next verse poetess sketches the intense joy experienced by a lady on the arrival of her lover :

कान्ते तल्पमुपागते विगलिता नीवी स्वयं बन्धनाद्  
वासश्च श्लथमेखलागुणधृतं किञ्चिन्नितम्बे स्थितम् ।  
एतावत् सखि वेद्मि केवलमहो तस्याङ्गसङ्गेषुनः  
कोऽसौ काऽस्मि रतं च किं सखि शपे स्वल्पापि मे न स्मृतिः ॥८॥

The other two verses are addressed to the bee, one of which is found in *Sūktimuktāvali* of Jalhaṇa (Śaka 1179 1257 A.D) and *Sarasvatī kaṇṭhābharaṇam* of Bhoja.

**Śīlā Bhaṭṭārikā : (900 AD)**

J. B. Chaudhari states “Śīlā is one of the greatest and most well known of Sanskrit poetesses. Śīlā must have flourished in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. She has been honoured by Dhanadadeva as gifted with great poetic genius and erudition in *Sāraṅgadharapaddhati*.” Madhavānanda also observes “Six verses are in her name. Śīlā Bhaṭṭārikā is placed by Rājaśekhara side by side with Bāṇa as having the merit of writing in a type of *Pāñcālī* style, of composition the expression Bhaṭṭārikā attached to her name shows that Śīlā was a queen, married to king Bhoja-I of Kanauj (836–85AD)” :

शब्दार्थयोस्समो गुम्फः पाञ्चाली रीतिरुच्यते ।  
शीलाभट्टारिकावाचि बाणोक्तिषु च सा यदि ॥

Of her six verses, some of them are found in *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva, *Sūktimuktāvali* of Jalhaṇa and *Saduktikarnāmrta* of Śrī haradāsa (c. 1205 AD).

In the following verse a man separated from his lady love is sketched. He is described as spending sleepless nights, thinking of her alone. In the other verse a woman who never remains content with the same lover is portrayed. She does not find pleasure any more with the old lover and is longing for a new lover :

प्रियाविरहितस्यास्य हृदि चिन्ता समागता ।  
इति मत्वा गता निद्रा के कृतघ्नमुपासते ॥२॥  
यः कौमारहरः स एव हि वरस्ता एव चैत्रक्षपा-  
स्ते चोन्मीलितमालतीसुरभयः प्रौढाः कदम्बानिलाः ।  
सा चवास्मि तथापि चौर्यसुरतव्यापारलीलाविधौ  
रेवारोधसि वेतसीतरुतले चेतः समुत्कण्ठते ॥५॥

Sītā : (c. 1000 AD)

Her only verse is found in *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* of Rājaśekhara (c. 11<sup>th</sup> century). It is a love poem where a lady encourages her frightened lover :

मा भैः शशाङ्क मम सीधुनि नास्ति राहुः खे रोहिणी वसति कातर किं बिभेषि ?  
प्रायो विदग्धवनिनितानवसङ्गमेषु पुंसां मनः प्रचलतीति किमत्र चित्रम् ॥

Subhadrā : (c. 1000 AD)

Her only verse is found in *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva :

दुग्धं च यत्तदनु यत् कथितं ततो नु माधुर्यमस्य हतमुन्मथितश्चवेगात् ।  
जातं पुनर्धृतकृते नवनीतवृत्ति स्नेहो निबन्धनमनर्थपरम्पराणाम् ॥

She says here that attachment is the root cause of the mental agonies.

Tribhuvana Sarasvatī : (c. 1000 AD)

Her two verses are quoted in *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* of Śrīharadāsa. in the following verse poetess portrays the ecstasy of Hari's joy at the sight of Lakṣmī during the churning of the ocean :

श्रीमद्रूपविटङ्कदेव सकलक्षमापालचूडामणे  
युक्तं सञ्चरणं यदत्रभवतश्चन्द्रेण रात्रावपि ।  
मा भूत्त्वद्ददनावलोकन वशाद्धीडाविलक्षः शशी  
मा भूच्चेयमरुन्धती भगवती दुःशीलताभाजनम् ॥

Cinnammā : (c. 1000 AD)

Her verse is quoted in *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharana* of Bhoja :

कल्पान्ते शमितत्रिविक्रममहाकङ्कालदण्डी स्फुरच्-  
छेषस्यूतनृसिंहपाणिनखरप्रोतादिकोलामिषः ।  
विश्वैकार्णवतानितान्तमुदितौ तौ मत्स्यकूर्मावुभौ  
कर्षन् धीवरतां गतोऽस्यतु महा मोहं महाभैरवः ॥

Sarasvatī : (c. 1000 AD)

Out of the two verses her only verse is found in *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* of Śrīharadāsa.

देव त्वमेव पातालमाशानां त्वं निबन्धनम् ।  
त्वं चामरमरुद्धूमिरेको लोकत्रयात्मकः ॥

Bhāvadevī : (c. 1100 AD)

According to Mādhavananda – there are three verses ascribed to Bhāvadevī which are found quoted in *Kavīndravacanasamuccaya* of Vidyādhara (1200 AD). Nothing more is known about her.

In the following verse she depicts a lady having ardent love for her husband :

तथाऽभूदस्माकं प्रथममविभिन्ना तनुरियं ततोऽनु त्वं प्रेयानहमपि हताशा प्रियतमा ।  
इदानीं नाथस्त्वं वयमपि कलत्रं किमपरं मयातं प्राणानां कुलिश कठिनानां फलमिदम् ॥

Mārulā : (c. 1300 AD)

Out of the two verses of Mārulā, one verse is found in *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva, and another is found quoted in *Sūktimuktāvali* of Śrīharadāsa :

गोपायन्ती विरहजनितं दुःखमग्रे गुरुणां  
किं त्वं मुग्धे नयनविसृतं बाष्पपूरं रुणत्सि ।  
नक्तं नक्तं नयनसलिलैरेष आर्द्रीकृतस्ते  
शय्योपान्तः कथयति दशमातपे शोष्यमाणः ॥

Morikā : (c. 1300 AD)

Chaudhari J. B rightly observes “The four verses of Morikā are gathered from the *Sūktimuktāvali* of Jahlāṇa, the *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva and other Sanskrit anthologies. All the verses describe a single topic of love :

लिखति न गणयति रेखां निर्झरबाष्पाम्बुधौतगण्ड तया ।  
अवधिदिवसावसानं मा भूदिति शङ्किता बाला ॥१॥  
मा गच्छ प्रमदाप्रिय प्रियशतैरभ्यथितस्त्वं मया  
बाला प्राङ्गणमागतेन भवता प्राप्नोत्वस्थां पराम् ।  
किं चास्याः कुचभारनिःसहतरैरङ्गैरनङ्गाकुलै-  
स्तुट्यत्कञ्चुकजालकैरनुदिनं निःसूत्रमस्मद्ब्रह्म ॥३॥

Lakṣmī : (c. 1400 AD)

Lakṣmī's charming stanza quoted in *Sāraṅgadharapaddhati* is full of rhythm. The verse is as follows :

भ्रमन् वनान्ते नवमञ्जरीषु न षट्पदो गन्धफलीमजिघ्रत् ।  
सा किं न रम्या स च किं न रन्ता बलीयसी केवलमीश्वरेच्छा ॥

Here she seeks to convey that the will of God alone prevails throughout nature as well as in all the fields of human life.

Madālasā : (c. 1400 AD)

One of her verse is found in the *Sāraṅgadharapaddhati* of Dhanandadeva

(1363 AD) :

परलोकहितं तात प्रातरुत्थाय चिन्तय ।  
इह ते कर्मणामेव विपाकश्चिन्तयिष्यति ॥

Here she explains that no one can escape from one's own karma and says "As you sow, so you reap". The second verse describes the condition of the separated lovers in the rainy season :

सान्द्रचन्द्रविरुतैः स्थितवाणौनिर्जितं जगदिदं मदनेन ।  
अम्बुदो दिशि दिशि प्रथमानो गर्जितैरिति निवेदयतीव ॥

Nāgammā : (c. 1400 AD)

According to Chaudhari J. B., "The name shows that she was a south Indian lady. One of her verses is preserved in the *Sāraṅgadharapaddhati*."

शुकुण्डच्छविसवितुश्चण्डरुचः पुण्डरीकवनबन्धोः ।  
मण्डलमुदितं वन्दे कुण्डलमाखण्डलाशायाः ॥

Indulekhā : (c. 1500 AD)

Her one verse is found in *Subhāṣitāvali* of Vallabhadeva :

एके वारिनिधौ प्रवेशमपरे लोकान्तरालोकनं  
केचित् पावकयोगितां निजगदुः क्षीणेऽहि चण्डार्चिषः ।  
मिथ्या चैतदसाक्षिकं प्रियसखि प्रत्यक्षतीव्रातपं  
मन्येऽहं पुनरध्वनीनरमणीचेतोऽधिशेते रविः ॥

Poetesses referred by Chaudhari J. B., Mādhavānanda. Varnekar S. B., are: Triveṇi (19<sup>th</sup> Century), Sundaravalli (19<sup>th</sup> Century), Jñāna Sundarī (1910), Kāmākṣī (1902), Sister Bālāmbāl.

Other poetesses whose names are mentioned in *Kavayitrī Kaṇṭhābharanam* by Kulshreshth Sushma are Vijayā, Prabhudevī, Manoramā Tamburatti (1760–1828 AD) and Śrīdevī Kuttitamburatti (1885–1950 AD).

Other poetess referred only by names by Mādhavānanda, are Prabhudevī of Lāṭa (Gujarat) and Subhadrā, Tribhuvanasarasvatī, Sītā, Mārulā,



Morikā, Phālguhastinī, Caṇḍālavidyā, Jaghanacapalā, Sarasvatī and Rājakanyā.

Thus we find that the verses of the Sanskrit poetesses highlight different topics of human life. The subjects delineated by them are interesting and impressive. It is clear that immense indeed is the value of the contribution of women of the Medieval period to the field of Sanskrit poetry and also to Sanskrit literature in general.

**Poetesses, who flourished in medieval period (1400-1800 AD) :**

Since I have discussed the contribution of the poetesses elaborately in various chapters, here I am presenting their brief profile.

**Jayantī : (c. 1600 AD)**

She was the wife of Kṛṣṇanātha Sārvabhauma. She is said to have been the joint authoress of the *Ānandalatikācampū*. J. B. Chaudhari observes in his book Sanskrit Poetesses “The manuscript is dated *Saka* 1574 i.e. 1653 AD., the date of Kṛṣṇanātha Sārvabhauma himself. When in this manuscript it is stated, ‘*Kāvyaṃ mayā kalpitam*’ i.e. the work is composed by me and nothing whatsoever about the help of his wife is mentioned.

Jayantīdevī cannot be accepted as the joint author of the work.”

Dasgupta S. N. observes “The *Ānandalatikā*, again, which is regarded by Sten Konow as the shadow play, a modern dramatic poem in five sections (called *kusumas*) on the love of Sama and Revā composed by Kṛṣṇanātha Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya, son of Durgādāsa Cakravartin.”

**Madhuravāṇī : (1614 AD)**

Madhurvāṇī was one of the most brilliant scholars of the court of Raghunātha *Bhūpa* of Tanjore. She translated the *Āndhra-Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit written by king Raghunātha. The work was composed by the middle of the seventeenth century.

Dasgupta S. N. states, “Another woman poet who was honoured by

Raghunātha Nāyaka with the eulogistic title of Madhurvānī translated Raghunātha's *Āndhra-Rāmāyaṇa* into elegant Sanskrit verses in fourteen cantos under the title *Rāmāyaṇa-sāra-Kāvya*. The only known manuscript of this work which belonged to the *Veda-Vedānta-mandira*, Mallesvaram, Bangalore, appears to have been lost and the work is not printed."

Mādhavānanda observes "Madhurvānī's attainments are enumerated in the introduction to her *Rāmāyaṇa*. She was proficient in grammar and prosody. She was also a gifted musician and for her skill in playing on the *Vīṇā* (lute) her royal lover (king Raghunātha) called her *Madhura-vāṇī* (of sweet tone). Her *Rāmāyaṇa* in fourteen cantos purports to be a Sanskrit rendering of Raghunātha Nāyaka's poem in Telugu, which is now probably lost."

**Gaṅgādevī : (1343-1379 AD)**

She was the wife of King Kamparāya of Vijaynagar Empire. She has composed a historical *Mahākāvya* depicting the glorious victory of her husband king Kamparāya over Kanchi and Madhura.

**Viśvāsadevī : (1516 AD)**

She has composed a *Campū kāvya* titled *Gaṅgā-Vākyāvalī* in which she refers to rites and rituals to be offered to river Goddess Gaṅgā.

**Bīnabāyī : (1518 AD)**

She has composed *Dvārakā-Pattalam* in four cantos (*Viveka*) depicting the glory of the city *Dvārakā* and the religious merit acquired by a pilgrimage to the city *Dvārakā* and its neighbouring holy places like *Beta-Dvārakā*, *Gopitank*, *Rukminī lake* etc.

**Tirumalāmbā : (1529-1542 AD)**

She has composed a *Campū kāvya* named *Varadāmbikā-Parīṇaya*, depicting two kings of the *Tuluva* dynasty of the Vijaynagar Empire namely King Nṛsiṃha and king Acyutarāya. The work ends with the

coronation ceremony of Prince Venkatāḍṭī, son of King Acyutarāya.

**Rāmabhadraṁbā : (1614 AD)**

Rāmabhadraṁbā was the queen of the Nāyaka king Raghunātha of Tanjore, who flourished from 1614 to 1634 AD. She has written *Mahākāvya* named *Raghunātha-Abhyudaya*, out of affection, love and reverence towards her husband and depicts the historical events happened during his reign.

**Devakumārikā : (1699-1711 AD)**

Devakumārikā, the queen of *Rāṇā* Amarasiṁha of Mewar, was an ardent devotee of God Śiva depicted as *Vaidyanātha* in her composition *Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti*. It also refers to the names and some important events in the life of Kings like Bāppā Rāvala, Hammīra, Kumbhā, Udayasiṁha, Pratāpasīṁha, Rājasīṁha and Saṅgrāmasīṁha.

**Lakṣmī Rājñī : (1845-1909 AD)**

She has composed a short work named *Santānagopālakāvya* which is based on the story found in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (X.89).

Like a rainbow containing several charming hues the poetry of medieval poetesses reveal magnificent, literary, historical, philosophical and mythological dimensions. These poetesses have therefore made a significant contribution not only to Indian literature but also to dynamic culture of our motherland.

