

The Role of Translation in Disseminating Feminist Thought in Telugu Context

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Abstract

This paper studies the role of intermediary agencies in translating global feminist knowledge into the Telugu¹ context. Identifying translators, organisations, publishing houses and magazines as such agencies, it offers an analysis of the function of this feminist thought. The study discusses the ideologies of agents in using translation as a political instrument to construct feminist discourse in the Telugu context. While demonstrating how translation was used as a transmitter for the circulation of feminist ideas, it gauges the influence of global feminist thinking on Telugu feminist translators, writers and activists. It also throws light on the opposition met in translating feminist ideas into Telugu, intellectual efforts and the resistance provided by the feminist translators, writers, activists and publishers as agents of social change to make feminist translation work relevant in the Telugu context.

Keywords: Feminist Translation; Ideology; Travelling Theory; Agency; Telugu Context.

Introduction

The interdisciplinary approach has gained ground in recent years. In the 1990s, Translation Studies attempted to focus on the question of gender as an interdisciplinary area of research. The gender debate began in Translation Studies with Sherry Simon's *Gender in Translation* (1996) and Luise von Flotow's *Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories* (1991) and *Translation and*

¹ Telugu is an Indian language spoken majorly in the Indian states of Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.

Gender (1997). Simon's study (1996) traces the impact of feminism as a literary and political movement on translation theory and practice. The research of Luise (1991) is a critique of feminist translation theories; supplementing, prefacing, footnoting, and hijacking, etc. It inspired new research in the field of translation and gender. Luise's *Translation and Gender* (1997) is a comprehensive study of the intersections between translation and gender. It shows a new direction in the field of feminist translation through a critique of patriarchal language, the impact of feminist writing on interventionist translation practice, and an analysis on the need for recovery of 'lost' women translators. Castro and Andrews (2009) trace the role of the Canadian school of feminist translation in initiating an ideological debate. Castro and Ergun (2017) demonstrate feminist translation as a transnational perspective developed in various geohistorical and sociocultural contexts through feminist activism. Their study also shows feminist translation as travelling theory that contributes to the transnational feminist knowledge.

This article discusses the encounters of feminism as a travelling concept journeying from various linguistic contexts to Telugu linguistic context. Without the movement of ideas from one place to another and one language to another, no changes in thought or innovations could have occurred in the history of humankind. Translation is no longer seen as a simple medium to transfer the meaning of texts from one language to another. In the past two decades, the idea of translation has moved away from a linguistic oriented translation to descriptive translation studies. The study of translation is understood as a social, political and cultural space influenced by the social and political movements and ideologies. Women's movement is one of the major influences. Translation, thus, has become a space for cultural, political and gender debate.

Edward Said discussed the idea of travelling theory for the first time in his essay "Traveling Theory". Said argues that like people and schools of criticism, ideas and theories travel—from person to person, from situation to situation, and from one period to another (1983: 226). Hala Kamal, in her essay also argues that feminism as a theory has originated in different parts of the world and has

travelled in various directions – including its journeys across history and geography in the Egyptian context (2018:136). Min Dongchao (2007) discussed feminism as a travelling concept and looked at the process of translation as a dialogue (duihua) and negotiation between different languages and cultures where the self or one culture encounters and interacts with an “other” culture. The study of Kathy Davis & Mary Evans (2016) also theorised feminism as travelling theory through global conversations. Kathy Davis in her study (2007) explored the travelling of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* across the world through multiple translations into various languages. Thus, many scholars worked on travelling of feminism from one socio-political context to another context through translation. There is an interaction and exchange between translation and feminist studies due to the global feminist conversations.

The study of Hala (2018) traces the history of ‘feminism’ and ‘gender’ as travelling concepts and transnational ideologies in the Egyptian context. The research of Luise & Hala (2021) is a comprehensive study of translation, feminism and gender that covered feminist translation work from 20 countries. It shows feminist translation as a transnational approach through its engagement with the feminist work of Western and non-Western countries. Thus, Simon, Luise, Hala and others and their work played an important role in initiating an ideological thinking. Many scholars (Chamberlain 1998; Tymoczko 2000; Bertacco 2003; Hamerlain 2005; Castro & Andrews 2009; Hala 2018; Reimondez 2009; Castro & Ergun 2017; Luise & Hala 2021) contributed to the debate in feminist translation studies. Few scholars worked on feminist translation in Indian context (Spivak 1993; Niranjana 1998; Devika 2008; Kamala 2010; Tharakeshwar & Usha 2010). In light of these studies, this article aims to discuss the role of intermediary agencies in the construction of the feminist discourse in the Telugu literary context. The ideologies of feminist translators, organisations, publishers and magazines become significant for this study as it is the ideological interest of these agents that drives or motivates them to translate the feminist texts. The present research studies the role of these various agents in translating feminist thought into Telugu.

Feminism in Telugu Context

Telugu is a Dravidian language spoken majorly in the state of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, India. It is the fourth most spoken language in India after Hindi, Bengali and Marathi. There are currently 75 million Telugu speakers in India. There are many Telugu writers who raised women's issues. Feminism in Telugu literature had taken strong roots since the 1920s when Chalam began writing for gender equality and for the liberation of women from oppressive male dominated society. Telugu political parties² are not interested in the question of feminism and feminist understanding of the world. However, many women activists understood the significance of feminist theory through their readings in English. The declaration of International Women's Year (1975) and International Women's Decade (1975-85) gave impetus to the feminist activism in Telugu public sphere. Many autonomous women's organisations³ were formed from these experiences in 1970s and 1980s. Hence, the current research focused on the translated literature published post 1970s as it gave a theoretical foundation for feminist thinking in the Telugu context. "Until the 1980s, there was little writing in Telugu from a feminist perspective, and women lacked an ideological framework to articulate a political stance since the concept of 'feminism' was deemed unacceptable and the term itself was used as an offensive expression throughout the 1970s and 80s in the Telugu public sphere" (Eligedi 2020: 22). Women activists were not treated with respect by the leaders of the leftist organisations. Women were not treated with respect, as the leadership of the organisations was under the control of men. There was 'male domination' in these organisations. Women's questions were ignored. The decision making power was with male leadership. Women did not play any significant role in the decision making process of the organisations. In an interview to *The Hindu*, Volga describes how the usage of the word 'male domination' was banned

² Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), Telugu Desam Party (TDP)

³ Progressive Organisation for women (1974), Stree Shakti Sanghatana (1977), Stri Janabyudaya Samstha (1982), Anveshi Research Center for women's studies (1985), Feminist Study Circle (1988), Asmita (1991).

in these organisations: “Though Left organisations have in recent years started talking about issues of gender and caste, ‘male domination’ was not a permissible word in the Seventies and Early-Eighties because it was seen as distracting from the issue of class” (Bageshree 2013). These organisations did not recognise women for their intellect. Women also did not have any importance or any space in these organisations. Women were offered similar gender roles that they used to do at their homes. Their role as an activist in these organisations has not changed their gender roles but they had to continue with the similar kind of work. Due to this discriminatory attitude of the male leaders, women activists left the organisations and started their own organisations. For e.g., Volga⁴ started feminist study circle⁵ as she felt that there was no respect for women’s perspective in the leftist organisations. In a similar vein, though women played an important role in the Telangana people’s struggle, their contribution was not recognised by the Communist party of India (Marxist-Leninist). Communist party did not treat the women on par with men in the movement. Women were offered only traditional gender roles in the party. Members of the party were writers, poets, and thinkers. They used writing as a tool to express their politics. In this context, many feminist translators started translating feminist texts and ideas into Telugu. They also documented the life stories of women who participated in the Telangana people’s struggle as members of the communist party of India. As these translations and books raised many ‘uncomfortable’ questions about the communist party with regard to women’s issues, they were opposed by the leftist parties⁶ and revolutionary groups⁷. Feminist translators and activists continued their translation work despite the strong opposition, and eventually leftist organisations were forced to think about the questions raised by the women leaders.

⁴ Volga is a well-known Telugu feminist writer, translator and activist.

⁵ Feminist Study Circle was established in 1988 by Volga. The purpose of the study circle was to introduce the literature on patriarchy, sexuality, family and the feminist theories in the Telugu society.

⁶ Communist Party of India.

⁷ Virasam (Revolutionary Writers Association)

In 1960s, the leftist organisations disseminated the ideas of Marx through literatures in India. Chinese and Russian works of literature were also translated into many Indian languages, including Telugu, as the Indian leftist organisations were following the models of China and Russia. These organisations also built a strong network and mobilised people across the country. In this context, peasants, working class and middle class people and students were attracted to the Marxist ideas. For instance, POW was also started in 1974 by a group of women students who were influenced by Marxist thinking. In the Telugu context, feminist thinking was developed through the questions raised by women against the 'male domination' 'patriarchal nature' in the Revolutionary Groups. The entry of feminism in 1970s disturbed the Marxist groups in Telugu society, as it emerged from the women's movements and the lived experiences of women to understand the nature of gender inequalities in the society. It was also seen as an alternative to Marxism to understand the problems of women. Similarly, in the Telugu society, Feminism was termed as a western approach to split the people's movements by progressive thinkers.

Many women's organisations were formed in 1980s in Telugu society. It is in this vein that Volga's feminist study circle, established in 1988, played an important role in introducing literature on patriarchy, sexuality, family and feminist theories in Telugu society. Translators who introduced a feminist perspective into Telugu were subject to serious criticism. Despite a strong opposition, many feminist translators, organisations, magazines and publishing houses continued to translate and publish feminist texts in Telugu.

Feminist thinking is largely limited to middle class educated women who can read literature in English/Telugu. It includes students, writers, journalists, academicians, and activists, etc. who are in some way connected to the academics. It is a network of people with similar ideologies. They influence the literary thinking of Telugu people. All these people read feminist literature in English or Telugu as part of their academic courses and also during the political classes of feminist organisations. It is an academic/intellectual circle that is interested in reading, discussing, thinking

and enlightening Telugu reading public about international feminist thinking through translation.

The Influence of Global Feminist Thinking

Influenced by the global feminist thinking, Telugu feminists translated many feminist texts from English into Telugu. The life and works of feminist writers like Shulamith Firestone, Andrea Dworkin, Kate Millet, Alexandra Kollantai, Emma Goldman, Betty Friedan, Virginia Woolf, Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Germaine Greer, bell hooks, Charlotte Perkins, Tony Morrison, and Alice Walker were introduced into Telugu. The objective was to introduce these pioneers of feminist movement and their significant texts in the form of summaries.

Volga, a renowned feminist writer and translator introduced the life story of Mary Wollstonecraft and her text *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). In this book, Mary advocates for women's rights and gender equality in education (Volga 2003: 13). This translation contributed to the debate on women's access to education in Telugu context. Volga also introduced the life story of John Stuart Mill including his essay 'Subjection of Women' (1869). It opposes the male domination over women and discusses the equality between men and women (Volga 2003: 33). The idea of women's liberation was introduced through the life and work of Emma Goldman (Volga 2003: 63). The summary translation of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) suggests that women should have education, employment, decent salary and social awareness to come out of the false notion of the ideal or perfect housewife and mother. This translation challenged the ideal notion of the housewife who was expected to take care of kitchen, house, husband, and satisfy husband's sexual desires (Satyavathi 2006a: 19). The summary translation of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of one's own* (1929) suggests that, "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction". It also advocates that women can write only if they have financial independence, intellectual freedom, and their own space (Satyavathi 2006b: 23). Hence, these translations challenged existing narratives on women's education, employment, ideal housewife and constructed a narrative on women's liberation, financial and intellectual freedom.

Satyavathi in her short translation of *The Second Sex* (1949) says that it is important to know about the feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir before understanding her work *The Second Sex* (2006c: 21). She translated one of the famous statements of *The Second Sex* – “one is not born but rather becomes a woman” as “Strilu Puttaru, Tayaru Cheyabadataru” (2006d: 39). This translation gives a foundation to the feminist philosophy in Telugu context. The short translation of the life story of Kate Millet and *Sexual Politics* (1969) demonstrates how culture and society are dominated by men and how male dominated society suppresses women. It also shows Patriarchy as a system of social construction which systematically subjugates women (Satyavathi 2007: 23-24). This translation introduces the concept of patriarchy and reveals its manifestations and institutions. ‘Good girls’ are not expected to sing, dance and express their dreams and desires as per the patriarchal value system. A similar idea of patriarchy is presented in the translation of Viviana Mellet’s *Winged Women* (1997). It is the story of a woman who was discouraged whenever she tried to sing, dance, speak truth, and give her view. Thus, this story introduces a woman who is trying to be autonomous and submissive to her husband as expected by the society (Samrajya Laxmi 2001: 75-77).

Telugu feminists also wrote feminist texts in Telugu drawing inspiration from Western/Latin American feminist texts. *Manaku Teliyani Mana Charitra (our history that we do not know 1986)* was one of the first historical texts on the role of women in the social movements. It was based on *Let Me speak! Testimony of Domitila, A Woman of the Bolivian Mines* (1978) and *Sandino’s Daughters* (1995). Thus, *Manaku Teliyani Mana Charitra (our history that we do not know 1986)* is one of the first attempts to give voice to the women and narrate their stories which were never heard of. This attempt inspired many other writers to work on women’s issues.

Similarly, *Savalaksha Sandehalu: StreeLa Arogya Samasyalu (One Hundred Thousand Doubts: Women’s Health Problems, 1991)* is a complicated project. Initially, it came out in Telugu as *Savalaksha Sandehalu* (1991) because members of Stree Shakti Sanghatana (Women Power Organisation) wanted rural women to have access to it. It was inspired by *Our Bodies, Ourselves* of Boston women’s

health collective. Many of the Stree Shakti Sanghatana members read *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. They were excited by the knowledge, and power of the book. Therefore, they decided to translate the book into Telugu. It discussed and provided information on women's reproductive health, sexuality, sexual health, mental health, birth control, and gender identity. It was translated into around twenty languages and influenced women's health movements across the world.

In a conversation with this researcher, Gita Ramaswamy, one of the writers of *Savalaksha Sandehalu (One Hundred Thousand Doubts: Women's Health Problems, 1991)* opines that Telugu feminist writers and translators were influenced by the feminist movement in the west. She says:

There is so much impact of the feminist movement of the West. Why to deny it? You know we are all impacted. I got a book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* of Boston women's health collective. I read that whole book in one night. It was so exciting. Naturally we are all influenced; why not I think it is good to read material elsewhere. We are all influenced in different ways. I was certainly influenced by reading materials (Eligedi, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

It shows that many Telugu feminist writers and activists were influenced by the feminist movement in the west. *Savalaksha Sandehalu (One Hundred Thousand Doubts: Women's Health Problems 1991)* is a product of the influence of the western feminist movement. It shows that the Telugu feminists were looking towards the west for understanding women's health. Women Activists from Stree Shakti Sanghatana and other feminist organisations in Hyderabad read this book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and were impressed with the book. The first meetings of Stree Shakti Sanghatana were held in 1982 in which it was decided to translate *Our Bodies, Ourselves* into Telugu. Gradually, they realised that it was not possible to translate this book as their attempts to translate some of the chapters failed. As the focus of this book is middle class women and their experiences in the United States, feminist activists of Stree Shakti Sanghatana felt that it was not very useful for the women in the Indian context. Interviews were conducted with

women in Hyderabad to know their experiences and health problems. *Savalaksha Sandehalu (One Hundred Thousand Doubts: Women's Health Problems, 1991)* was then written in the Indian context. Although much of the information is based on the interviews, they translated scientific information related to women's sexuality and incorporated into the book. This work of *Savalaksha Sandehalu* started in 1983 and continued till 1991 for its publication.

Members of Stree Shakti Sanghatana opined that their book looks at women's health in the third world and thus, its political ramifications were more radical than *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. In fact, this book was a result of the joint work of five writers of Stree Shakti Sanghatana and one from the Hyderabad Book Trust (HBT). All these six people were active in the women's movement in Hyderabad. The primary objective of this book was to address the health issues of women in the rural areas. *Savalaksha Sandehalu* was well received. Around five thousand copies were sold soon after its release. Therefore, it is argued that this book has contributed substantially to the feminist knowledge in Telugu.

During the Telangana people's struggle⁸, most of the women leaders were inspired by Russian feminist literature that was translated into Telugu. Prominent women leaders like Mallu Swarajyam, Kondapalli Koteswaramma, Sugunamma, and Regalla Achchamamba were inspired by Russian Literature (Lalitha et al. 1989). They used to read literature and books on Marxist philosophy as part of their political classes. The people who participated in the Telangana People's Struggle (in 1940s) were inspired by the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the French Revolution of 1789. The educated women were influenced by the ideas of Russian, French and Chinese Revolutions" (Eligedi 2014: 4). Therefore, Russian feminism and Chinese feminism were a great influence on the women leaders who participated in the Telangana people's struggle.

⁸ It was a peasant struggle against the feudal exploitation of the rulers for land and liberation.

HBT⁹ published many translations on Karl Marx, and Agnes Smedley in 1980s. These translations were aimed at explaining the Marxist economic theory, feudalism, capitalism, socialist movement and the future. HBT also published books on the life and thoughts of social reformers in India and other countries like Ambedkar¹⁰, Jyotirao Phule¹¹, Mandela, and Martin Luther King. These translations were aimed at introducing in Telugu, the lives of the great thinkers and ideologues who fought against various forms of oppression across the world.

Many essays, articles and stories on the lives of feminist activists and writers were translated and published in the women's magazines like *Bhumika* (Role) and *Mahila Margam* (women's path). These translations show that they were more interested in the women's movements and life stories of women leaders from China and Russia. That is why these magazines published the stories and writings of Clara Zetkin, Kollontai, Winnie Mandela, Frederick Engels, and Jenny Marx. They published the stories about women's movements in Vietnam, Latin America, and the Philippines. It was an attempt to introduce the role of women in these women's movements through translation. These magazines tried to disseminate the ideas and thoughts of socialist feminism. Many Chinese and Russian feminist texts were translated into Telugu. People were interested to read texts from other places. For instance: Volga's translation of Agnes Smedley's *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution* (1976) as *Samannyula Sahasam* (1984), Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth* (1929) as *Bhumi Puthrika* in 1985; Alexandra Kollontai's *Three Generations* (1923) as *Mudu Tharalu* (1989) generated a lot of debate in Telugu about marriages, family, compulsory childbearing, domestic abuse, women's sexuality, male

⁹ It is a progressive publishing house in Hyderabad. It publishes literature and translations on feminism to support the feminist movement and other social movements in Telugu public sphere.

¹⁰ He is one of the architects of the Indian constitution. He theorised the caste based discrimination and fought against the caste system in India. He is known as the crusader for the rights of Dalits and other marginalised communities.

¹¹ He was a great philosopher, anti-caste crusader and a pioneer of women's education in India. He fought against the untouchability and struggled for the development of people from lower castes.

domination, sexual violence, sexual relations, free love, reproductive rights, birth control, and sexual freedom. Thus, Volga translated these texts to bring the ideas about the institution of marriage and women's empowerment into Telugu context. These texts also demonstrate the role of women in many social and political movements and struggles. Many Chinese and Russian feminist texts were translated into Telugu to encourage women activists to participate in the movements. For instance: Claudie Broyelle's *Women's Liberation in China* is translated into Telugu as *Chinalo Sthrivimukthi* in 1996. The influence of Chinese, Russian and International feminist thinking is visible in the work of feminist study circle (1988). The translations of *Mahila Margam* (Women's Path) also aimed at disseminating Chinese and Russian feminist knowledge into Telugu through translations. That is why they published most of the feminist translated texts from these countries.

Mahila Margam (Women's Path) published mostly the translations of Russian, Chinese and European feminist texts as the editorial collective was interested in these feminisms. Although *Bhumika* (Role) has also published Russian feminist translations, it focused mainly on translating and introducing the ground-breaking feminist texts and short biographies of pioneers of feminist movement. Both the magazines published at least one translation in every issue that they felt as necessary and useful for the women's movement. As stated, their objective was to make progressive literature available to Telugu readers. Telugu feminist activists were influenced by Clara Zetkin, Kollontai and Emma Goldman. They were also influenced by translations from identity movements; Jyothiba Phule's *Gulamgiri* (Slavery), and Savitri Bai Phule's *Nenu Savitri Baine* (I am Savitri Bai).

These translations were aimed at introducing the role of women in the social movements across the world and motivating women to fight against the patriarchy in the Telugu society. These books were also intended to improve the understanding of women about Zetkin's concepts on the liberation of women from oppression and to circulate socialist feminism among women to build a strong women's movement. It was an attempt to introduce the history of the women who participated in the social movements through the

intellectual community like writers, editors, novelists, students and activists who joined the struggle and contributed to writing and publishing stories about the importance of women's participation in the movement. The stories of many women heroes in the history of the Chinese and Russian revolutions are translated into Telugu to motivate the women activists in the Telugu public sphere. These translations provide an analysis on women's assertion in various roles in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, demonstrating how women challenged the patriarchal society and gave new hope to the people in the Latin American countries. It is also an attempt to introduce to the Telugu readers the struggles of the women who were transformed from the traditional gender roles like housewives and care takers of children to the agitators and activists who can voice their concerns in Latin America.

There are many translations that have introduced the life and struggles of Clara Zetkin, Kollontai, and other women leaders to the Telugu readers. From many translations, it becomes clear that these magazines are not very particular about mentioning neither the names of the translator nor the names of the source writers as their focus is mainly on conveying the texts and their messages in Telugu. There seems to be, thus, no fixed or clear policy as to how the translations are to be presented, what details are to be furnished or not to be furnished and the like. Though translation had an important place within these two Telugu women's magazines, *Bhumika* (Role) and *Mahila Margam* (Women's Path), translators' names were not mentioned in some of the translated articles in these two magazines. Similarly, the magazines did not have a practice to indicate that a text published is a translation. Articles, short essays and stories about western feminist writers, activists and movements were usually published anonymously. In case of some translated articles, the names of the source authors and publication details were also not mentioned. It is interesting to note that though translation was used by these magazines to circulate the feminist ideas, the role of the translator was neglected. On top of it, the translators also made themselves invisible in their work by choosing to go for readable and smooth translations in their attempt to make the texts accessible to everyone.

However, the editors and translators of these magazines had a different view towards the translator's invisibility. It is learnt that in the leftist and feminist movement, translation was taken as a 'political responsibility' to bring the international feminist literature within the reach of the feminist activists and feminist groups as a part of their work within the organisation. They translated texts as part of the movement and it was considered as one method of organising. The uniqueness of the translations of these little magazines is that they are done by the activists and translators to disseminate their ideology. Translation has been central to the ideology and thought of Telugu women's magazines. Feminist movement (second-wave) began in 1960s in the West and circulated across the world. Since 1980s Telugu feminists translated feminist ideas into Telugu from other languages not only to be aware of the nature of the movement and learn the experience of the women elsewhere but also to motivate and inspire themselves, to strengthen the movement and also to disseminate the feminist ideology to all sections of the society. That is the reason why these magazines have published many translations since 1990s till date. These translations have been useful in encouraging the feminist activists and to strengthen the movement when it is spearheading for women's liberation.

Black and Dalit Feminist Thinking

Dalits¹² and African Americans face inequalities and discrimination due to casteism in India and racism in USA. These oppressed communities have shared history of experience, struggles and subjugation. The existential struggles of Afro-American in the USA and the Dalits in India are struggles for dignity, self-respect, identity and better life. The Indian intellectuals like Phule and Ambedkar were inspired by the struggles of Afro-Americans. The interaction between Dalit feminist literature and Black feminist literature began at a conference on racism in Durban in 2001. Many Dalit writers have participated in this conference and laid the

¹² Dalit means broken or oppressed. It is a political term refers to the people from mariginalised sections of the Indian society.

foundation for the political solidarity between Dalit thinkers and African-American thinkers.

Satyavathi translated and introduced the life story of African American women writer Alice Walker in the June 2008 issue of *Bhumika*. Satyavathi was inspired by the African American writers after reading Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982). It narrates the life story of Celie who tries to lead an independent life despite the poverty, racial discrimination, and male domination. It also addressed the issue of sexual violence in the lives of black women and their struggles to resist the violence and to be resilient (2008a: 23-24). Satyavathi also translated and introduced the life story of Toni Morrison in the August 2008 issue of *Bhumika*. She developed an interest in the works of Morrison after reading *Beloved* (1987). The purpose of this translation is to introduce Toni Morrison to Telugu readers. This novel depicts the journey of a black woman Sethe from cruelty, sexual abuse, and slavery to freedom. It is about her hope and endurance to resist the cruelty for freedom (2008b: 25-26). The translation of Alice Walker and Toni Morrison's texts demonstrates that the black women fight against racism, classicism and sexism for freedom.

K. Suneeta Rani translated and introduced bell hooks' *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (1981) in the November 2005 issue of *Bhumika* as Samantara Strivaadam – bell hooks' 'Ain't a Woman?'. It was published under the column Kitiki (window). The translator believed that African-American women's literature would be useful for the Telugu readers to understand the identity politics. It is an attempt to introduce the black feminist theory to inspire the Dalit feminist writers and activists in the Telugu public sphere. Black women have been facing three-fold oppression by white men, white women, and black men. Mainstream feminist movement ignored the issues of black women and their experiences. Therefore, black women wrote about their struggles against racism, sexism, and classism. Bell Hooks proposes that feminist movement should work towards ending the sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression of black women (2005: 17). The main objective of this translation is to initiate a dialogue between black feminism and Dalit feminism. It has laid a theoretical foundation for the dialogue between black

feminist thought and Dalit feminist thought as it gave critical insights into the theorisation of black women's experience. It inspired Telugu scholars to discuss the Dalit women's experience in the light of black female experience and struggles.

Many Dalit women writers were influenced by black feminist thinking and their works. Telugu Dalit feminists have read the works of black feminist writers. Inspired by the black feminism, Dalit feminists started writing about dalit feminism. They borrowed slogans like 'Dalit lives matter' with the inspiration from 'Black lives matter'. Black feminism provided the critical tools for the Dalit feminists to theorise their own experiences and fight for their rights. Telangana Dalit feminist writer Gogu Shyamala edited *Nallapoddu - Dalitha Strila Sahityam 1921-2002 (Black Dawn: Dalit Women's Writings, 1921-2002)*. She was inspired by African American feminist literature to edit *Nallapoddu (Black Dawn 2003)* in Telugu. Many Telugu Dalit feminist writers were influenced by the Black feminist works. In a conversation with this researcher, Shyamala says that "when we look at such powerful expressions of Dalit's, like '*Dalit Panthers*' '*Dalit is power*' they were in fact can be said as relied on such slogans given in some other countries as: '*Black Panthers*', '*Black is Power*,' and were actually derived from English, not only as slogans but also as the theories and experiences of their movements" (Eligedi 2014: 4). These ideas and theories were translated into Telugu. They inspired the Dalit women to understand and relate themselves to the struggles of African-Americans. These translated theories helped Dalits to gain acceptability for their struggle in Telugu public sphere.

There were many translations which attempted to introduce the struggles of African-American women against the slavery and the oppression in the US. The life, struggles and works of Rosa Parks (April 2008), Toni Morrison (August 2008), Alice Walker (June 2008), bell hooks (November 2005), Sojourner Truth (March 2008) were introduced into Telugu. The purpose of these translations was to introduce these significant black civil rights activists, women writers-activists and their works to encourage the Dalit feminist writers in Telugu Public Sphere. It was an attempt to introduce the black feminist writings to inspire the Dalit feminist writers and

activists in the Telugu public sphere. Thus, these translations discussed various issues like the effect of racism on black women during slavery, the marginalisation of black women, racism within the women's movement, and black women's participation in the feminist movements. These ideas provided critical tools for the Dalit women to develop a theoretical base for the Dalit feminist writings and movements in Telugu public sphere.

The works of Savitribai Phule, Jyothiba Phule and Ambedkar were translated into Telugu. These works played an important role in strengthening the Dalit movements. Many activists are inspired by these works and ideas of Phule and Ambedkar. In a conversation with this researcher, Gogu Shyamla argues, "translations played a major role in spreading and strengthening both the movements and ideologies as well. Particularly, the Dalit and woman movements and ideologies after that of Marxist ones circulated through translation" (Eligedi 2014: 3). Thus, many Dalit feminist writers like Gogu Shyamala were influenced by translations of Phule and Ambedkar. Translations provided critical tools for Dalit writers to engage with the feminist writing and questions raised by the feminists. Thus, the Dalit feminist writers were influenced by Black feminism, Phule-Ambedkarite feminism, and International feminism. The questions that Dalit feminists raised broadened the framework of Feminism and made mainstream feminists think about reaching out to the Dalit feminist writers in the Telugu public sphere.

Conclusion

In this paper, the analysis revealed that the readings of Marx were the influence on the leftist women activists and their cadre in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1980s, they were influenced by European, American, Chinese and Russian feminists like Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Betty Friedan, German Greer, Shulamith Firestone, Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet and Emma Goldman. Similarly, Dalit feminist activists and thinkers were influenced by black feminism, and Phule-Ambedkarite feminism. Therefore, it is argued in this paper that the activities of the feminist organisations were influenced by various feminist thinkers across the world. Thus,

feminist organisations became important agents in translating feminist ideas; but such organisations are products of individual efforts, and it is the commitment and dedication of individuals like Gita Ramaswamy as a publisher of Hyderabad Book Trust (HBT) that sustained the feminist translation into Telugu to a large extent. Though HBT published Russian and French feminist books and other books on international agents of change, it focused on introducing the life of Indian feminists, and Dalit feminists into Telugu. The feminist and other translations of HBT have been influenced by an ideology and these translations in turn have influenced the Telugu reading public in a big way for the past three decades. The feminist translations have in fact emerged as powerful instruments in disseminating feminist knowledge among the Telugu reading public. These translations played a crucial role in bringing new voices, new ideas and new thoughts into the Telugu public sphere and are successful in informing, educating and enlightening the women in general.

The paper analysed the role of women's magazines and the role of the translators in the dissemination of feminist knowledge through translations. The stories of the western feminist writers and activists introduced to Telugu readers through these magazines are intended to eliminate the misconceptions about feminism that were prevalent in the Telugu public sphere. These misconceptions were particularly high in the left circles and the Telugu society in general in the 1980s and 1990s. Leftist groups did not have a proper understanding of what feminism was. Therefore, it became necessary for the women activists to educate the public on various aspects related to feminism and to bring about awareness on what feminism actually meant by introducing in Telugu the stories of the famous activists who fought for the rights of women and the liberation of women across the world. The translators, publishers, and magazines became successful in achieving their goal in bringing about a change in people's opinion about feminism and feminist movements in general. This paper established that Feminist activists, translators, publishing houses and magazines used translation as a tool to disseminate feminist ideology and the politics.

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