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TELUGU WOMEN POETS: LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS, FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS, AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract: *Telugu women poets have made significant contributions to the development of Telugu literature through devotional poetry, classical kavya, romantic expression, social reform, feminist writing, and Dalit literary movements. Despite their literary achievements, women poets have frequently received less critical attention than their male counterparts, and the historical record of their contributions remains incomplete. From Molla, Tallapaka Tirumalamma, Tarigonda Vengamamba, and Muddupalani to modern feminist poets such as Jayaprabha, Kondepudi Nirmala, Vimala, and Challapalli Swaroopa Rani, Telugu women have used poetry to express spiritual devotion, emotional experience, social criticism, and resistance to gender and caste inequalities. Their works reveal the changing relationship between women, literary authority, social institutions, and cultural identity. This paper examines the historical development of Telugu women's poetry, analyses representative poets and their literary contributions, and explores the emergence of feminist and Dalit feminist perspectives in modern Telugu literature. It argues that Telugu women's poetry should be understood not as a marginal branch of literary history but as an important tradition that challenges established literary hierarchies and expands the scope of social and cultural expression.*

Keywords*: Telugu women poets, Telugu literature, Molla, Muddupalani, Tarigonda Vengamamba, feminist poetry, Dalit feminism, gender, literary history.*

Introduction

Literature reflects the social, cultural, political, and intellectual experiences of a society. Poetry, in particular, provides a powerful medium for expressing emotions, philosophical ideas, spiritual beliefs, and resistance to injustice. In Telugu literature, women poets have contributed to a wide range of literary traditions, including devotional compositions, narrative poetry, lyrical works, social reform literature, and contemporary feminist poetry.

The history of Telugu poetry is often narrated primarily through the achievements of male poets. However, women have also participated in literary production across different historical periods. Their works demonstrate considerable diversity in language, style, subject matter, and social outlook. Some composed devotional poetry within established religious traditions, while others explored love, sexuality, personal autonomy, gender discrimination, caste oppression, and the unequal distribution of social power.

Among the important historical figures are Molla, known for her Telugu Ramayanam; Tallapaka Tirumalamma, associated with Subhadra Kalyanam; Tarigonda Vengamamba, known for devotional and religious compositions; and Muddupalani, whose Radhika-santvanamu explores love, desire, and female experience. These poets demonstrate that women's literary participation existed long before the emergence of modern feminist movements.

In the modern period, women's poetry increasingly addressed social inequality, patriarchal authority, bodily autonomy, domestic labour, and the relationship between gender and caste. Feminist poetry became a particularly visible literary movement from the 1980s onward, creating new possibilities

for women's voices and experiences in Telugu literature.

The study of Telugu women poets is therefore essential for understanding the development of Telugu literary traditions and the changing position of women in society.

Objectives of the Study

The principal objectives of this research paper are:

1. To trace the historical development of Telugu women's poetry from the classical period to contemporary literature.
2. To examine the literary contributions of selected women poets.
3. To analyse the role of devotional poetry in creating opportunities for women's literary expression.
4. To explore representations of love, sexuality, gender inequality, and women's autonomy.
5. To examine the emergence of feminist and Dalit feminist poetry in modern Telugu literature.
6. To assess the contribution of women poets to the transformation of Telugu literary and social consciousness.

Research Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative, historical, and interpretative approach. It draws on published literary anthologies, scholarly studies of Telugu poetry, research on women's writing, and critical discussions of feminist literature.

The analysis is organised chronologically and thematically. Selected poets are examined in relation to their historical contexts, literary forms, recurring themes, and contributions to women's representation in literature.

The paper is a secondary-source study rather than an exhaustive examination of original manuscripts. The surviving record of early women poets is uneven, and some biographical details are based on literary traditions rather than independently verified historical documentation. Accordingly, claims about individual lives and dates should be treated cautiously where primary evidence is limited.

Review of Literature

Scholarship on classical Telugu literature provides an important foundation for studying women poets. Velcheru Narayana Rao and David Shulman's Classical Telugu Poetry: An Anthology presents Telugu poetry as a rich tradition encompassing religious, mythological, secular, and personal expression. Their discussion of Muddupalani is especially significant because it recognises the literary and intellectual importance of a woman poet whose work addresses female desire and relationships.

Research on the history of Telugu literature also identifies women such as Molla, Tallapaka Tirumalamma, and Tarigonda Vengamamba as contributors to devotional and narrative poetry. These figures demonstrate that women's literary activity was not restricted to informal or domestic forms of expression.

Karri Syamala's doctoral dissertation, Women's Poetry in Telugu 1900–1950: A Comparative Study of Text and Context (2014), offers a particularly relevant framework for studying women's poetry in relation to its social and historical circumstances. Its focus on the relationship between literary texts and context helps connect individual poetic expression with broader changes in women's education, public participation, and literary culture.

Studies of modern Telugu feminist poetry document a shift toward direct criticism of patriarchal structures, including restrictions on women's bodies, domestic expectations, sexuality, and freedom. They also highlight the emergence of Dalit women poets whose writing challenges the limitations of gender-

based analyses that do not adequately account for caste oppression.

Taken together, these sources suggest that Telugu women's poetry should be studied through both literary analysis and social history. Nevertheless, further research is needed to recover lesser-known poets, examine regional variations, and explore how women's writings circulated through manuscripts, print publications, oral traditions, and literary associations.

Historical Development of Telugu Women's Poetry

The history of Telugu women's poetry can be broadly divided into four overlapping phases: early and classical literary traditions, devotional poetry, modern social and literary transformation, and contemporary feminist and Dalit feminist poetry. These phases are analytical categories rather than rigid chronological divisions.

Early and classical women poets

The historical record of early women poets is fragmentary. Some women are known through surviving compositions, while others appear in later literary histories and traditions. This uneven preservation makes it difficult to reconstruct a complete account of women's literary participation.

Nevertheless, the surviving works demonstrate that women participated in the composition of narrative poetry, religious literature, and courtly literary culture. Their presence challenges the assumption that classical Telugu literary production was exclusively male.

The importance of these poets lies not only in their individual achievements but also in their ability to participate in literary traditions at a time when women's access to formal education and public intellectual life was often restricted by social circumstances.

Devotional poetry and women's expression

Devotional literature provided one important avenue for women's poetic expression. Religious traditions offered established literary forms, narratives, and communities through which women could communicate their ideas.

Women poets used devotion to explore spiritual longing, personal experience, moral reflection, and the relationship between the individual and the divine. In some cases, religious poetry also created space for questioning social conventions and expressing a distinctive female perspective.

However, devotional poetry should not automatically be interpreted as feminist protest. Its significance varies from poet to poet and depends on the text, its historical context, and the nature of its engagement with social authority.

Modern women's poetry

The expansion of education, print culture, journals, and literary associations created new opportunities for women's participation in modern Telugu literature. Women increasingly wrote about education, marriage, domestic life, social reform, and the restrictions imposed by patriarchal institutions.

Karri Syamala's study of Telugu women's poetry between 1900 and 1950 provides a useful starting point for examining this transition. It encourages the study of women's poetry in relation to historical circumstances rather than treating literary works as isolated aesthetic objects.

Feminist and Dalit feminist poetry

From the 1980s onward, feminist poetry became a prominent force in Telugu literature. Poets increasingly challenged conventional representations of womanhood, including the idealisation of female sacrifice, chastity, motherhood, and domestic service. Their poetry asserted women's right to speak about their own bodies, desires, labour, and experiences.

Dalit women poets subsequently strengthened this critique by highlighting the interaction of caste, gender, class, and social exclusion. Their work demonstrated that women's experiences are not uniform and that caste discrimination can shape women's lives in ways that cannot be explained through gender alone.

Major Telugu Women Poets: Names, Periods, Writings and Literary Contributions

1. Atukuri Molla (c. fifteenth–sixteenth century)

Major work: Molla Ramayanam

Atukuri Molla is one of the most prominent women poets in Telugu literary history. She is generally placed in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, although her exact birth and death dates remain uncertain. She is traditionally described as the daughter of Kesan or Kesana, a devotee of Lord Shiva, and is associated with the Nellore region.

Her best-known work, Molla Ramayanam, is a Telugu retelling of the Ramayana. It is admired for its accessible language, narrative clarity, and relatively simple poetic expression. Rather than merely reproducing earlier versions, Molla adapted the story to the Telugu literary context.

Molla's literary achievement is especially significant because women from non-elite backgrounds faced considerable barriers to formal learning and literary recognition. Literary traditions also associate her with an independent attitude toward royal patronage. Her work remains important for understanding women's authorship, vernacular literary expression, and the history of Telugu narrative poetry**.**

2. Tallapaka Tirumalamma (Timmakka; fifteenth century)

Major work: Subhadra Kalyanamu

Tallapaka Tirumalamma, also known as Timmakka, is recognised as an early woman poet in Telugu literature. Her Subhadra Kalyanamu is a narrative poem about the marriage of Subhadra and Arjuna from the Mahabharata tradition. The work is composed in the dvipada metre, a poetic form used extensively in Telugu narrative literature.

The text is generally dated to the second half of the fifteenth century. It places a woman poet within a literary tradition that included religious narratives, epic retellings, and courtly poetry.

The poem is important not only for its literary form but also for its treatment of marriage, kinship, relationships, and female characters. It provides a useful basis for studying how women participated in the production of classical Telugu literature**.**

3. Tarigonda Vengamamba (eighteenth century)

Major writings: Venkatachala Mahatmyam, Vasishta Ramayanam, Venkamamba Narasimha Satakam, Vishnu Parijatam, and Sri Krishna Manjari.

Tarigonda Vengamamba was an influential Telugu devotional poet associated with the worship of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala. She is traditionally dated to the eighteenth century and is remembered for combining literary creativity with intense religious devotion.

Her writings include devotional poetry, narrative compositions, and works associated with religious and philosophical traditions. Venkatachala Mahatmyam celebrates the sacred significance of Tirumala, while Vasishta Ramayanam presents the Ramayana narrative in the dvipada metre. Her works also include compositions connected with Yakshagana and devotional performance traditions**.**

Vengamamba's life and literary legacy are important for understanding the relationship between women's spirituality, social restrictions, and public cultural participation. Her association with Tirumala and the continuing performance of traditions linked to her name have helped preserve her cultural significance in the Telugu-speaking region**.**

4. Muddupalani (mid-eighteenth century)

Major writings: Radhika-santvanamu and Ashtapadi.

Muddupalani was a Telugu poet associated with the court of the Maratha ruler Pratapa Singh of Tanjavur, whose reign lasted from 1739 to 1763. She belonged to a sophisticated courtly literary culture in which women also participated as writers, performers, and scholars.

Her best-known work, Radhika-santvanamu, is a śṛṅgāra-kāvya, or poetic work centred on love and erotic sentiment. It explores the emotional experiences of Radha, Krishna, and Ila, including jealousy, longing, desire, intimacy, and reconciliation.

Muddupalani's poetry is particularly important for feminist literary criticism because it represents female desire and emotional experience from a woman's perspective. Her work challenges the assumption that women in classical literature were merely objects of male desire.

The work later faced censorship and moral criticism under colonial-era standards of respectability. Its republication and subsequent scholarly attention have made it an important example of the historical marginalisation and recovery of women's writing**.**

5. Rangajamma (seventeenth century)

Major writings: Mannaru Dasa Vilasa Natakam and other courtly literary compositions attributed to her.

Rangajamma was a woman writer associated with the Nayaka court of Tanjavur, particularly the court of Vijayaraghava Nayaka. She was part of a multilingual literary environment in which women participated in sophisticated courtly culture.

Her work is relevant to the study of Telugu women's literary history because it demonstrates that women's authorship was not confined to devotional literature. Women also participated in courtly writing, drama, and literary forms that required considerable knowledge of established literary conventions.

Rangajamma's literary career, like that of Muddupalani, helps broaden our understanding of women's education and intellectual participation in early modern South Indian courts. The precise dates and attribution of individual works should be verified against specialist literary histories and critical editions**.**

6. Bhandaru Achchamamba (1874–1905)

Major work: Abala Sachcharitra Ratnamala (1901).

Bhandaru Achchamamba was an early Telugu woman writer, historian, and advocate of women's education. Her work belongs to the period when social reform movements increasingly questioned restrictions on women's education, widowhood, and participation in public life.

Abala Sachcharitra Ratnamala presents the lives and achievements of notable women and seeks to demonstrate women's intellectual and moral capabilities. Although Achchamamba is known primarily for prose and historical writing rather than poetry, she is an important figure in a comprehensive study of Telugu women's literary contributions.

Her work challenged assumptions that women were naturally unsuited to learning or public achievement. She also helped establish women's writing as an instrument of social reform and historical recovery.

Achchamamba's inclusion is valuable because the history of Telugu women writers extends beyond poetry alone and includes the prose, biography, historical writing, and reform literature that helped create conditions for later generations of women poets**.**

7. Kotikalapudi Seetamma (late nineteenth–early twentieth century)

Major writings: Ahalyabai, Sadhuraksha Satakamu, Bhaktimargamu, and Satidharmamu.

Kotikalapudi Seetamma was a Telugu writer associated with the social reform environment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She supported women's education and participated in literary and public activities that sought to improve women's social position.

Her works include devotional and moral writing as well as compositions addressing women's conduct and social responsibilities. These texts should be examined within the historical context in which women writers negotiated established expectations while seeking greater educational and intellectual opportunities.

Seetamma is also associated with the Pradhamandhra Mahilasabha, a Telugu women's meeting held at Bapatla in 1913. Her contribution illustrates the connection between women's literary activity, public organisation, and the emerging movement for women's education.

8. Jayaprabha (active from the 1980s)

Major writings: Yuddhonmukhamga (1984), VaamanuDi MooDo Paadam (1988), Ikkada Kursini Varsham, Ekkadi Maghanidi (1991), and Unforeseen Affection and Other Poems (2005).

Jayaprabha is a major figure in modern Telugu feminist poetry. Her work challenged conventional literary representations of women and drew attention to the relationship between the female body, sexuality, social expectations, and male authority.

Her first poetry collection, Yuddhonmukhamga, appeared in 1984. Her second collection, VaamanuDi MooDo Paadam, published in 1988, became particularly influential in the development of feminist poetry in Telugu. The poems Choopulu (“Looks” or “Gazes”) and Paitani Tagaleyyali (“Burn the Sari”) are associated with her critique of the male gaze, objectification, and restrictive expectations of femininity**.**

Jayaprabha's work is important because it gives women a direct poetic voice with which to question social practices that regulate their bodies and behaviour. She also contributed to literary criticism through Bhava Kavitvamlo Stree (1988), a study of women in Telugu romantic poetry, and Naalugo Goda (1991), a study of Telugu theatre.

Her contribution extends beyond poetry to feminist literary criticism, demonstrating how women's writing can challenge both social inequalities and established methods of literary interpretation**.**

9. Kondepudi Nirmala (modern period)

Major contribution: Feminist poetry addressing women's bodies, sexuality, domestic responsibilities, and patriarchal authority.

Kondepudi Nirmala is associated with the emergence of modern Telugu feminist poetry during the 1980s and 1990s. Her writing forms part of a broader literary movement that challenged the assumption that women's identities should be defined primarily by marriage, motherhood, and domestic service.

Feminist poets of this period brought previously marginalised experiences into literary discussion. They questioned the unequal distribution of household labour, restrictions on women's freedom, and cultural expectations that demanded silence or sacrifice from women.

Nirmala's contribution is best understood within this collective movement rather than through a single work. A full bibliographic account of her poetry collections and publication dates should be established from Telugu editions and specialist literary sources before assigning individual titles or dates**.**

10. Vimala (modern period)

Major contribution: Feminist poetry questioning domestic inequality and conventional ideals of womanhood.

Vimala is recognised among the poets associated with modern Telugu feminist writing. Her literary contribution belongs to a movement that made every day experiences of women—household labour, unequal relationships, social control, and limited personal autonomy—subjects of serious poetic and political inquiry.

Her work challenges the idealisation of women's sacrifice and questions the assumption that domestic service is a natural or exclusive responsibility of women. By examining the relationship between private experience and social power, feminist poetry of this kind expanded the scope of Telugu literary expression.

Vimala's writing should be studied alongside other feminist poets of the period to understand how the movement developed a collective critique of patriarchal institutions. Specific collections and publication years require verification against reliable bibliographic records**.**

11. Mahe Jabeen (modern period)

Notable poem: Physical Geography.

Mahe Jabeen is associated with Telugu feminist poetry that explores the desire for personal freedom and the social restrictions imposed on women. Her poem Physical Geography expresses a willingness to embrace what society prohibits, using striking imagery to challenge restrictions on women's lives**.**

Her work illustrates the importance of personal autonomy in feminist poetry. Rather than accepting social prohibitions as natural or inevitable, the poem treats the desire to cross boundaries as an assertion of agency.

Mahe Jabeen's writing belongs to a wider movement in which women poets questioned the cultural regulation of sexuality, behaviour, and personal identity**.**

12. Ghantasala Nirmala (modern period)

Major contribution: Feminist poetry and the representation of women's social experiences.

Ghantasala Nirmala is identified among the prominent poets associated with modern Telugu feminist literature. Her inclusion in accounts of the movement demonstrates the collective nature of feminist poetry, which brought together writers with differing styles and concerns.

Feminist poetry of this period questioned idealised images of women and explored the inequalities embedded in social relationships, cultural expectations, and domestic arrangements. Ghantasala Nirmala's work can be situated within this literary transformation.

For an academically complete entry, the titles and dates of her individual collections should be confirmed from published Telugu bibliographies rather than inferred from general descriptions of the movement**.**

13. Revathi Devi (modern period)

Major contribution: Modern women's poetry and feminist literary expression.

Revathi Devi is included among the poets associated with the development of modern Telugu feminist poetry. Her significance lies in her participation in a literary environment in which women's subjective experiences and perspectives became increasingly visible.

Modern feminist writing challenged the assumption that poetry should reproduce conventional ideals of femininity. It opened space for women's emotions, personal choices, dissatisfaction, and social

criticism.

Further research into Revathi Devi's individual publications would help establish a fuller account of her literary development, including publication dates, recurring themes, and the reception of her work.

14. Challapalli Swaroopa Rani (contemporary period)

Notable work: Mankena Poovu (మంకెన పువ్వు, 2005).

Challapalli Swaroopa Rani is a prominent Dalit feminist poet whose writing examines the intersection of caste oppression and gender inequality. Her poetry challenges the idea that all women experience discrimination in the same way.

In her writing, the violence of caste and the inequalities of domestic life are interconnected. Her poetry draws attention to the fact that women may experience patriarchal domination within the household while simultaneously confronting caste discrimination in public spaces.

Mankena Poovu is associated with her poetic engagement with these intersecting forms of oppression. Her work has become significant in discussions of Dalit feminist literature because it challenges both caste hierarchy and forms of feminism that overlook caste-based differences among women**.**

Swaroopa Rani's contribution demonstrates that the study of Telugu women's poetry must include the experiences of Dalit women and examine how caste, class, gender, labour, and dignity shape literary expression**.**

15. Jupaka Subhadra (contemporary period)

Major contribution: Dalit feminist writing and the representation of marginalised women's experiences.

Jupaka Subhadra is an important contemporary Telugu writer associated with Dalit feminist literary and political expression. Her work highlights the experiences of women from oppressed caste communities and questions social arrangements that perpetuate exclusion.

Her writing belongs to a broader tradition in which literary expression becomes a means of asserting dignity, challenging caste hierarchy, and making marginalised experiences visible. Her work is especially relevant to discussions of the relationship between gender, caste, and social justice.

Subhadra's contribution demonstrates that Telugu women's poetry cannot be adequately understood through gender alone; it must also consider caste and other structures of inequality.

16. Other Important Telugu Women Poets and Writers

The following writers can also be included in a broader research paper on Telugu women's literary contributions**.**

Poet or writer	Period	Major contribution or writing
Volga (Popuri Lalita Kumari)	Contemporary; active from the 1980s	Feminist fiction, short stories, essays, and literary criticism; The Liberation of Sita (English translation, 2016)
Vasanta Kannabiran	Contemporary	Feminist essays, social criticism, and women's rights activism
Patibandla Rajini	Contemporary	Feminist poetry and literary activism
S. Jaya	Contemporary	Modern feminist poetry

K. Geetha	Contemporary	Feminist poetry and writing on women's experiences
Savitri	Modern period	Poetry associated with feminist literary expression
Mandavarapu Hymavathi	Contemporary	Feminist poetry
M. M. Vinodini	Contemporary	Dalit feminist writing and poetry
Jelli Indira	Contemporary	Feminist literary expression

These writers are identified in discussions of the Telugu feminist poetry movement, although the titles and publication years of their individual works should be established separately from reliable bibliographic records**.**

17. Important Anthologies and Publications in Telugu Feminist Poetry

Two collective anthologies are particularly important for understanding the development of modern Telugu feminist poetry**.**

1. Gurichoosi Pade Pata (1990): This early collective anthology contributed to the emergence of feminist poetry as a recognisable literary movement. Its historical importance lies in bringing women's voices and gender-related concerns into a shared literary space.

2. Neelimeghalu (1993): Neelimeghalu became an important landmark in the consolidation of Telugu feminist poetry. The anthology brought together women's writing and helped make feminist concerns more visible in Telugu literary debate. The movement questioned conventional ideals of chastity, motherhood, domestic labour, and the representation of women's bodies**.**

These anthologies are important research subjects in their own right. A detailed study could compare the poems they contain, identify the writers represented, and examine how their publication influenced literary criticism and public discussion**.**

18. Major Themes in Telugu Women's Poetry

The historical and contemporary works discussed above reveal several important themes**.**

Devotion and spirituality

Molla and Tarigonda Vengamamba demonstrate the importance of religious and devotional traditions in women's literary expression. Their works explore spiritual commitment, religious narratives, and the relationship between individual experience and the divine**.**

Love and female desire

Muddupalani's Radhika-santvanamu is a particularly significant example of poetry that places female desire and emotional experience at the centre of a literary narrative. Her work provides an important historical perspective for comparison with modern feminist writing**.**

Education and social reform

Writers such as Bhandaru Achchamamba and Kotikalapudi Seetamma contributed to the wider movement for women's education and social advancement. Their work shows how literary activity could become a means of questioning restrictive social customs**.**

Patriarchy and bodily autonomy

Modern feminist poets, especially Jayaprabha, challenged the objectification of women and the

social control of their bodies. Their poetry made gender discrimination and women's autonomy central literary concerns**.**

Caste and gender

Dalit feminist poets such as Challapalli Swaroopa Rani and Jupaka Subhadra emphasise the interaction between caste discrimination and gender inequality. Their work demonstrates that women's experiences differ according to social location and that an inclusive feminist literary history must recognise these differences**.**

Women's literary identity

Across historical periods, women poets have challenged the assumption that literary authority belongs primarily to men. Their works demonstrate that women have participated in classical, devotional, courtly, reformist, and contemporary literary traditions**.**

Challenges in the Study of Telugu Women Poets

Despite their contributions, several challenges remain in the study of Telugu women's poetry.

Limited historical documentation: Information about some early women poets is fragmentary. Biographical accounts sometimes combine historical evidence with literary traditions, making careful source evaluation essential.

Unequal literary recognition: Women's writing has not always received the same critical attention as the works of prominent male poets. This can affect how literary histories are constructed.

Textual preservation and accessibility: Some works may be difficult to locate, and reliable editions, translations, or critical studies are not equally available for every poet.

Translation barriers: Readers who do not know Telugu may encounter women's poetry primarily through translations. Translation can convey meaning but may not fully reproduce metre, wordplay, cultural references, or stylistic nuance.

Diversity of women's experiences: A comprehensive study must avoid treating women as a single social group. Differences in caste, class, region, religious background, education, and historical period influence literary expression.

These challenges point to the need for further research based on original Telugu texts, manuscript and publication histories, oral traditions, and comparative literary analysis.

Major Findings

The study produces the following findings:

1. Telugu women's poetry has a long and diverse history, extending from classical and devotional literature to contemporary feminist writing.
2. Poets such as Molla and Tallapaka Tirumalamma demonstrate women's participation in narrative and classical literary traditions.
3. Tarigonda Vengamamba illustrates the importance of devotional expression in women's literary history.
4. Muddupalani's Radhika-santvanamu provides an important example of a woman poet exploring desire, emotional complexity, and female experience.
5. Modern feminist poets such as Jayaprabha and Kondepudi Nirmala challenged patriarchal expectations and expanded the scope of women's representation in Telugu poetry.
6. Dalit feminist poets, including Challapalli Swaroopa Rani, emphasised that gender inequality must be examined alongside caste-based oppression.

7. Women's poetry is an important source for studying literary innovation, changing social values, and the relationship between literature and social transformation.
8. Further research is needed to recover lesser-known women poets and strengthen the documentation, translation, and critical study of their works.

Conclusion

Telugu women poets have made enduring contributions to the literary, cultural, and intellectual history of Telugu-speaking society. Their achievements demonstrate that women's literary participation cannot be confined to the modern period or understood solely through the emergence of feminism.

From the narrative poetry of Molla and Tallapaka Tirumalamma to the devotional works associated with Tarigonda Vengamamba and the exploration of female desire in Muddupalani's Radhika-santvanamu, women poets have engaged with established literary traditions while expressing distinctive perspectives. Their works provide evidence of women's creativity, intellectual participation, and capacity to shape literary culture.

In modern Telugu literature, feminist poets have challenged patriarchal values, the idealisation of domestic sacrifice, and the social control of women's bodies. Dalit feminist poets have further demonstrated that gender cannot be separated from caste and other structures of social inequality.

The history of Telugu women's poetry is therefore not simply a supplementary chapter in the history of Telugu literature. It is an essential part of that history, revealing voices, experiences, and literary innovations that have not always received adequate recognition. Recovering and studying these works can contribute to a more inclusive understanding of Telugu literary traditions and the changing position of women in society.

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