

Women's Sensibility an Individual's Unique Creativity or a Literary Construct?

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically examines the concept of "women's sensibility" in Kannada literary discourse to question whether it represents an individual's creative uniqueness or a patriarchal literary construct. It argues that terms such as "women's creativity," "female sensibility," and "woman-specific experience" emerged not as neutral recognitions of women's authorship but as ideological markers shaped by male-dominated literary institutions. Tracing their historical formation from the Navodaya period through feminist criticism, the study demonstrates how women's creativity was defined within restrictive frameworks such as domesticity, biological essentialism, collective morality, and emotionality, while intellectual autonomy and individuality were denied.

The paper interrogates linguistic patriarchy, proxy authorship, pseudonymous writing, and biological determinism to show how literary criticism foregrounds womanhood over authorship when evaluating women's writing. It further argues that labeling women's writing through sensibility-based categories collapses individual creative identities into collective gendered representations, thereby negating women's intellectual agency. Drawing on the theoretical insights of H.S. Raghavendra Rao and Helene Cixous, the paper proposes a shift from "female sensibility" to "gender sensibility," emphasizing plurality, fluidity, and the dissolution of fixed gender binaries. It concludes that a genuinely emancipatory literary framework must move beyond biologically grounded notions of femininity and instead cultivate gender-sensitive creativity that recognizes writers as complex, plural individuals rather than representatives of a gendered category.

Key Words: Women's Sensibility, Women's Creativity, Biological Essentialism, Kannada Feminist Literary Discourse, Patriarchal Language, Proxy Authorship, Pseudonymous Writing, Sex Markers, Denial of Authorship, Gender Sensibility.

INTRODUCTION:

The theoretical premise of "Kannada feminist literature" strongly upholds the idea that there exists a "women's perspective". This raises several questions: What exactly is women's creativity? Should it be preserved separately? Does women's creativity carry meanings imposed by patriarchal interpretations? These are questions that require careful examination.

In Kannada literature, terms such as "women's sensibility" and "women's unique experience" have been used synonymously with "women's creativity." I have also explored the concept of women's sensibility within Kannada literature, under terms like "women's unique experience" and "women's creativity." When literary authors dominated the world of writing, terms like "male sensibility," "male creativity," or "male unique experience" did not emerge. Although the words "creativity" and "sensibility" in literary discourse do not inherently signal gender, they were historically applicable only to authors, who were mostly male.

The meaning of words is defined by the system in which they emerge. They reflect the values of that system. Over time, concepts of Dalit studies and gender studies have

challenged previously fixed meanings, opening new dimensions of interpretation. Ideological contexts at different historical moments transform the meanings of words, questioning embedded gender, caste, and class politics. In this context, this discussion focuses on the terms "creativity," "women's creativity," "sensibility," and "women's sensibility."

Creativity has been the source of literary creation. When the literary sphere was author-centered, creativity was expected to be a synthesis of a teacher's guidance, talent, study, worldly knowledge, and wisdom. In the course of history, individuals like Kanthi and Akkamahadevi - the rarest among the rare were very few and far between. When women writers themselves were "rare among the rare," the terms "female creativity" and "female sensibility" were not in circulation. These expressions - "female creativity" and "female sensibility" are distinctly modern.

Due to the modern system of education introduced by colonialism, a larger number of women gained access to learning. The national movement too provided a supportive context for women's writing. However, pre-independence Kannada literary space remained male-dominated. Consequently, it did not warmly welcome women who entered the domain of written literature. The colonial education system, the emergence of employment, and the national movement - all these, brought unprecedented changes in society. It was during this time that Kannada literature entered the phase known as Navodaya (Renaissance), a modern literary movement. In this same period, scholars collecting folk songs under titles such as "Garati Haadu" (Songs of a loyal wife), "Kaanteyara Haadugalu" (Songs of Mistresses), and "Hennumakkala Haadugalu" (Girls' Songs) recognized women's creativity within a communal and collective framework.

Madhura Chenna and Bendre turned these popular expressions "Garati Haadu," and "Hennumakkala Haadugalu" into terms of academic study and gave them conceptual definitions.

Madhura Chenna (1997: 248) remarks: "Just as a tender boy who dances playfully may have been born of a delicate heart, so too these waves of feeling emerge from the same heart. Hence, these songs, springing from a woman's heart, possess a natural spontaneity like the artless charm of a child's play, a child's gaze, a child's affection."

In the preface to the Garati Haadu collection, Bendre writes: "There was also a thought that this collection should be titled Grihini Geeta (Housewife's Song), for we hoped it might become a song of the woman's innate, cultured, generous heart. But a sensitive friend pointed out that the charm of the Garathi haadu is not found in the Grihini Geeta. That is indeed true." (Bendre, 2000, pp. 12-13)

The definitions proposed by Madhura Chenna and Bendre paved the main road for the concept of "female creativity." Yet, this notion of "female creativity" did not include women who had undergone modern education. Such women were derided by men as "tiss piss endu maathaduva" (gossiping women) and were kept outside the domain (Madhura Chenna, 1997: 248). In other words, women engaged in written literary production were excluded from the sphere of creativity. Thus, expressions like "Halliya Maanavathe," (cultured woman of the village) "Garathi Haadu," "Grihini Geetha" (Housewife's song) and "the cultured generosity innate to womanhood" became the defining standards of female creativity.

The national movement defined women within the framework of the household. The idea of the home was elevated into a spiritual concept. Overall, during the Navodaya literary period, women's creativity was defined within a community context; it was understood through the figure of the "village woman." When women who were uneducated, who silently accepted patriarchal norms and practices, were included in the literary imagination

as "village women," the need to define "female creativity" as something distinct seems to have arisen.

Talent that did not involve reading, continuous study, the guidance of mentors, worldly experience, or the act of writing literature was interpreted as "female creativity." Thus, female creativity emerged as part of the neo-patriarchal order shaped by the national movement. The kind of creativity defined and legitimized within the intellectual sphere did not include these village women, because it had to preserve its own prestige and distinction. How, then, could women, socially identified through their breasts, womb, and reproductive roles be extended and understood within the intellectual domain of creativity? Women who entered the sphere of thought and intellect challenged the traditional perspectives within literature. Kannada literature at that time did not yet possess the breadth of vision, courage, or humanist outlook necessary to include within the creative realm those women who broke out of the home framework and extended themselves beyond the imagery of the womb into the intellectual world. Even today, one cannot confidently claim that Kannada literature has fully embraced such perspectives.

In fact, female creativity in Kannada literature emerged as part of the masculine politics that dominated the literary field. The social expectations, beliefs, and perceptions regarding women were reflected within notions of women's creativity itself. Hence, female creativity came to be understood according to each person's specific beliefs, perceptions, and expectations.

Concepts such as "female creativity," "female sensibility," and "specifically feminine experience" are identified by H.S. Raghavendra Rao as "sex markers." He asks: "When one speaks about a man, emphasis is not placed on his masculinity. But when one speaks about a woman, it is her womanhood that is foregrounded. If I were to write a preface or a critique of a novel, and if I know it is written by a woman, that awareness shapes a distinctive kind of preface. But if the author were a man, would I ever write a preface highlighting his manhood?" (H.S. Raghavendra Rao, 2012, p. 27)

The obstacles to understanding female creativity within the literary sphere can thus be classified under two main categories: 1. Linguistic context, and 2. Narratives of literary creation.

1. Linguistic Basis

Most literary studies across the world agree with the philosophical proposition that language is patriarchal. Because language has been shaped by patriarchal structures, there is an absence of women's distinct experiences in it. The literary position that "there is an absence of women's distinct experience" also implicitly questions the philosophical assumption that "such a distinct female experience exists." The search for a "female-specific experience" within language often turns into a tendency to emphasize womanhood or femininity itself.

How, then, can women's sensibility or experience be articulated within a male-centered language? If truly distinct female experiences existed, they would have gained social legitimacy; and whatever gains social legitimacy eventually shapes language. Once language is patriarchal, it accommodates only patriarchal philosophies.

2. Narratives of Literary Construct

Even while accepting that "there exists a distinct female experience," there are approaches within our context that question the very possibility of such an experience. What the literary sphere theorizes as "female sensibility" or "female-specific experience" is, in fact, the socially constructed notion of womanhood. Hence, speaking about menstruation, puberty, motherhood, or articulating from a position of subordination, forgiving male arrogance, rejecting individual growth, and placing collective concerns at the center - all these have been identified as markers of "female-specific experience" or "female sensibility."

Thus, literary definitions of "women's creativity" and "women's sensibility" are shaped by socially prescribed meanings. Such inquiries do not face resistance either from the academic community or from society at large; hence, these definitions easily gain legitimacy within the literary world, and readers accept them unquestioningly.

In pre-Independence Kannada literature too, the definitions of "women's creativity" and "women's sensibility" have continued, with minor variations into the present. Today, "women's creativity" and "women's sensibility" are not confined merely to "village women" but encompass both literate and illiterate women.

Writers such as M.S. Ashadevi and B.N. Sumitrabai have extended the boundaries of these concepts by linking sensibility with women's struggles and have been shaping theoretical frameworks in that direction. Yet, most critics continue to believe that women possess a distinct sensibility because of their biological constitution.

There are many who nod in emotional agreement when the writer Shankar Mokashi says: "When the baby stirs in the mother's womb, she experiences something, but is there a word to express that?" The desire to fill such linguistic and literary absences lies at the root of the formulations "women's creativity" and "women's sensibility." However, the process of recognizing women's agency welcoming the evolution of her personality and her modes of self-expression beyond traditional understandings is only just beginning.

In Kannada literature, the terms "women's creativity," "women's sensibility," and "female-specific experience" are fraught with complexities, confusions, and politics. The present analysis seeks to unpack these across the following seven thematic bases:

1. Women's writing vs. Men's writing
2. Men writing on behalf of women
3. Women writing under male pseudonyms
4. Male authors writing under female names
5. Women's sensibility; denial of female authorship?
6. Does biology determine women's sensibility?
7. What should we strive to develop, women's sensibility or gender sensibility?

The following discussion analyses these seven bases in detail.

1. Discourses on "Women's Writing" and "Men's Writing"

There is a well-known saying in English about literature: "The Author is dead" Yet, within both literary and readerly circles, the author continues to be treated as the most important factor in evaluating a work. Whether the author is a woman or a man becomes a significant consideration in how a text is read and interpreted. When the author is a woman, one mode of reading operates; while it is a another mode when the author is a man. In the Western medical field, extensive research both in the past and ongoing has attempted to prove that the female brain and male brain are biologically different. However, if the brains of deceased individuals are examined, it is impossible to determine which one belonged to a man, which to a woman, which to a transgender person, which to an intersex person, or which to an eunuch orhermaphrodite.

Likewise, in writing, there is no such thing as inherently male writing or female writing. To believe that men's and women's writings differ because of biological reasons is itself a myth.

2. Men Writing on Behalf of Women

In both oral and written traditions, there has long existed a practice of men writing on behalf of women. This practice did not emerge from women's own desire for expression; rather, it arose as part of the social compulsion to define what women should be. At one time, even science carried out studies claiming that "women lack brains and think with their wombs." Likewise, transgender individuals were once classified as mentally ill. This shows

that there is a direct link between social modes of thinking and knowledge systems. The theoretical frameworks produced in the knowledge domain are, in fact, products of social ideologies. Within the literary field, this kind of proxy¹ authorship has been questioned by H.S.R. (H.S. Raghavendra Rao), who asks: "Is that truly the authentic voice of women?" And he himself clarifies: "Certainly not one hundred percent."

H.S.R. further analyzes the process of women writing on behalf of other women from a different standpoint. He argues that in any society where opportunities for expression depend on education, access to knowledge systems, social status, and survival needs, some must inevitably write on behalf of others.

He poses a significant question: "When men write about women, certain limits get imposed; in the same way, when a woman writes about other women who do not belong to her own caste or class, are not similar to her, wouldn't similar limits apply?" (H.S. Raghavendra Rao, 2001: pp. 64–65)

In other words, proxy authorship is not limited to male writers alone, it also applies to female writers. This is the crux of his position.

3. Women Writing Under a Male pseudonyms

When the literary world was male-dominated, women writers were rarely taken seriously. In such a context, many women concealed their identities and wrote under male pseudonyms. Mary Ann Evans (1819–1880), for instance, wrote under the name George Eliot. During the Victorian period, there was a widespread prejudice against women's writing: that "women only write romance-centered novels; their works are unrealistic; they lack rationality, depth, and intellectual breadth." To escape this dismissive attitude and to ensure her works were not ignored merely because they were written by a woman, Mary Ann Evans adopted a male pseudonym. She went on to write acclaimed novels such as *Adam Bede* and *Middlemarch*. Her works were appreciated by contemporary critics. Only after her writings were taken seriously did she reveal her true identity as a woman. Yet, even after this revelation, she continued to be respected as George Eliot, a revealing social irony.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no instances in India, or particularly in Karnataka, of women writing under male names. This can be explained through social reasoning. In our society, the transition from male to female has social recognition and terminology, evidenced by words such as *hijra*, *kothi*, and *jogamma/jogappa*. However, the reverse transition from female to male lacks social sanction, and there are no common terms to describe such a phenomenon. This linguistic absence reflects the societal disapproval of women "becoming" men or taking on masculine roles. Consequently, Indian and Kannada women never attempted to write under male pseudonyms. In a society that did not acknowledge women's agency, it was unconventional for a woman to even imagine claiming it.

4. Male Authors Writing Under Female Names

The act of male writers adopting female pseudonyms appears as a relatively new experiment in Kannada literary culture. Poornachandra Tejaswi wrote as Nalini Deshpande, Sumateendra Nadig as Leela Rao, and Lankesh as Neelu. When these famous male authors published under women's names, the Kannada literary world was both astonished and intrigued. People eagerly speculated, "Who is this new woman writer?" Numerous anecdotes and discussions surround these moments in Kannada literary circles, though they are not the focus here.

When it was later revealed that Nalini Deshpande was Poornachandra Tejaswi, Leela Rao was Sumateendra Nadig, and Neelu was Lankesh, the entire literary community experienced a peculiar thrill. In a milieu where writing for women and about women was considered a moral duty, writing *as* a woman became an unprecedented experiment that

enhanced these authors' fame even further. However, women like Mary Ann Evans, who wrote under male names, had to remain confined within their pseudonyms to be recognized. These intertwined phenomena : men writing under women's names, men writing for women, and women writing under men's names challenge and destabilize the use and definition of the conventional categories such as female creativity, women's sensibility, and female experience.

5. Does Biology Shape Female Sensibility?

Though a person is biologically a woman, social values do not allow her to evolve purely on biological grounds. Instead, society moulds, directs, and nurtures her according to its own expectations and norms. Even before her biological femininity takes shape, social values transform her to suit their own ideals; before she develops self-awareness, before she begins to ask who am I, social conditioning has already shaped her identity in its desired image. Therefore, the very use of terms like female creativity, female sensibility, and distinctively feminine experience becomes questionable.

In Kannada literary tradition, the emergence of terms such as female sensibility and female creativity coincided with the entry of women writers into a male-dominated literary world. These terms came into circulation as part of a politics that sought to separate women writers from the literary mainstream controlled by men. Likewise, influenced and inspired by Western feminist criticism, many Kannada women writers began to use expressions like female creativity, female sensibility, and distinctive feminine experience to articulate a sense of feminine identity. However, the literary practices of men writing under women's names or men writing on behalf of women, challenge the very relevance and stability of these terms.

Writers like Veena Shanteshwar and Vaidehi resist being labeled under the banner of feminism. They regard such labeling as a political move that isolates women writers from the literary mainstream. Within Kannada literary discourse, there exist numerous confusions around terms like female creativity, female sensibility, and distinctive feminine experience. Yet, despite these confusions, the use of these terms continues. If we look closely, every individual, whether man or woman possesses a uniqueness as distinctive as a fingerprint. In that case, how legitimate is it to divide individuality along gender lines?

The claim that "biology determines emotion" is a male philosophical construct. The categories female creativity, female sensibility, and distinctive feminine experience are themselves grounded in biological essentialism. To accept them uncritically is, in effect, to endorse the very hierarchies between male and female that society has constructed.

Is it possible, then, that feminist thought while attempting to question patriarchy has, perhaps unknowingly, embraced conceptual frameworks that reinforce and reestablish the very notions of female distinctiveness it seeks to dismantle?

6. Is "Female Sensibility" a Denial of Women Writers' Authorship?

In the realm of literary criticism, the term "female sensibility" (mahila samvedane) along with the theoretical framework it has generated, has been uncritically accepted and revered by feminist critics and scholars of women's studies. When the oppressed attempt to construct their own histories, be it literary, linguistic, or cultural - borrowing concepts and theories from the dominant groups does them more harm than good. Such borrowing suppresses their capacity for self-wisdom and forces them to build their history and identity from the perspective of the oppressor.

In the critical discourse surrounding upper-caste and majority-community writers, one never encounters terms like "Brahmin sensibility," "Hindu sensibility," or "male sensibility." Yet, the moment the oppressed or the marginalized - women, Dalits, Muslims, Christians, or Adivasis enter the literary field, labels such as "female sensibility," "Dalit sensibility," "Muslim sensibility," and "Christian sensibility" immediately surface and begin

to function as the primary standards of their literary evaluation. Be it women, Dalits, minorities, and indigenous writers, those attempting to free themselves from the hegemony of upper castes and dominant religious communities have entered intellectual production drawn by the philosophical promise that the intellectual world transcends caste hierarchies, religious domination, and gender stratification. Yet, when these marginalized writers strive to articulate their individuality and distinctiveness through their literary works, they end up being subsumed under collective labels like "female sensibility," "Dalit sensibility," or "Muslim sensibility."

We discuss great writers such as Pampa, Ranna, Kumaravyasa, Thi.nam. Sri, Masti, Anantha Murthy or Girish Karnad in terms of their unique ideological and creative individuality. Such discussions acknowledge their authorship and grant them an intellectual identity of their own. But when it comes to women writers - who too entered the literary world with the aspiration to gain such recognition find that their works are not evaluated in terms of their individual ideological vision. Instead, they are assessed through the lens of community and gender-based hierarchies.

The "literary world" a web of influence dominated by canonical male authors tends to identify as "Other" anyone outside its fold, and accordingly classifies their literature as "female sensibility," "Dalit sensibility," or "Muslim sensibility." These categories are then elevated into universal critical theories. Their influence grows to such an extent that even those who become their victims end up accepting them unquestioningly.

Thus, the concept of "female sensibility" and the theory that arises from it ultimately negate the intellectual individuality of each woman writer. Even when a woman writes as an individual, her authorship is not recognized as such; instead, she is made to represent all women as a collective. Under the heavy weight of the term "female sensibility," the distinctive intellectual and creative identity of each woman writer is pushed into oblivion.

What should we cultivate : female sensibility or gender sensibility?

Many Kannada literary critics believe in the existence of a "female creativity," "female sensibility," and "woman-specific experience." They identify women's *asmitha* (identity) through these very terms. Yet, they do not wish for these to remain isolated from the mainstream of literature. Some, like the French feminists, argue that the masculine intellectual constructs embedded in writing, and the authority structures encoded in language must be transcended. To break the hegemonical patterns of knowledge, creating literary forms that encompass the sensitivities, dignities, and rights of all seem inevitable. The birth of such literature is generally identified by them as the emergence of "female sensibility," "female creativity," and "woman-specific experience."

"Writing is a space where that the existence of the other within me enters and emerges. That existence is me, and yet not me. I do not know how I merge into my characters. But they move within me, make me alive, tear through me, disturb and transform me. I experience all this at once. Who are they? Woman or man? One or many? Some among them are strangers even to me. The dense crowd of inner selves gives me neither space nor security. This state of being unable to contain everything within, yet unable to hold anything outside is something men find frightening. They cannot bear it," says Hélène Cixous²

H.S. Raghavendra Rao, while recognizing "men" and "typical men," clarifies that this does not apply to "mahaan" (great or ideal) writers (Rao, 2012, p. 65), distinguishing writers from the male world. For him, anyone without a thin layer of femininity cannot become a writer. He applies this statement equally to women writers. He emphasizes the necessity of perceiving the voices of others from within their own contexts. That, he says, is the female sensibility.

In the world of writing, there are those who continue to firmly retain gender-based hierarchies, and there are those who have transcended them. After all, whether writers are men or women, they are children of society. It would be mistaken to assume that the moment one becomes a writer, one automatically transcends gender hierarchies and acquires a plural personality. Writers' perspectives are shaped by the kind of intellectual culture and ideological training they cultivate within themselves. The words male writer or female writer contain no magical power capable of transforming one's worldview. Any literary work that breaks the pre-established social models stands as a timeless creation. When hierarchies of gender, caste, and class are dissolved and one self melts into another, the philosophical depth that conveys a universal message can emerge within a work.

When those who are biologically female become male, and those who are biologically male become female, these processes call into question both the uniqueness and the contemporary relevance of the concept of female sensibility. Amidst all these confusions, terms like "female sensibility" and "female creativity" continue to prevail in Kannada literary discourse. They, too, are constructs born out of the entry of feminist theories. As Hélène Cixous says, "Be they women or men, they are individuals with complex and open minds, free to change. By acknowledging the other sex as part of their own being, they become richer, stronger, and more multifaceted. The more dynamic they are, the more fragile and tender they become. Only in such a state can we bring forth new births. Thinkers, artists, creators of new values, philosophers mad in Nietzsche's sense, builders and destroyers of new forms - all these are the ones who transform life. How can such people remain unshaken by the anomalies surrounding them? This much is true: one who gives birth to newness must contain within them a rich measure of the 'other,' a plurality of many faces."

The term female sensibility specifically refers to women. It does not include Jogappas, intersex persons, boddhis (transgender women), or those who have become female through hormonal changes or gender choice. Even when we theoretically accept that "women" means inclusive, we have not yet acknowledged or encompassed the biodiversity within women themselves. Evidence for this lies in the studies already conducted and the theories that have emerged from them. If the notions of "female sensibility," "female creativity," and "woman-specific experience" fail to include this diversity, they too end up reproducing a male-centric authority under the name of "female." Even when explained philosophically as inclusive, the word woman is ultimately used returns to the male-defined, male-desired domain. The very concept of "woman" is used within frameworks directed and expected by men. Hence, it does not encompass all forms of female life within biological and social diversity. The word woman cannot politicize issues relating to women. If we are to politicize such studies and perspectives, the use of gender becomes necessary. Therefore, the terms gender sensibility and gender creativity are more appropriate. The literary vision of Hélène Cixous ought to be assimilated into Indian literature.

Endnotes

1. When a person belonging to one gender writes about another gender; when a person belonging to one class writes about another class; or when someone identified within one caste writes about a person of another caste - inevitable limitations arise in writing. This calls proxy.
2. It is necessary to examine whether the literary perspectives of Hélène Cixous exist within Indian literature. Although the Indian literary tradition has been predominantly patriarchal, the entry of the Bhakti movement transformed literary concepts and terminology. The Vachana writers' ideas of 'Sharaṇa-sati and Liṅgapati,' the Radha Banakar geet gayenge (will become Radha and sing the song) philosophy of the Odissi Dusari tradition, and the Shaiva concept of Ardhanārīśvara (the half-woman, half-man deity) - all of these, during the

process of literary creation and spiritual practice, speak of the inevitable necessity for the masculine to internalize the feminine voice, courage, and worldview. However, modern Kannada literature rejected the Bhakti-era philosophy of the masculine becoming feminine. Consequently, it adopted the attitude: "Let women create poets, and let poets create poetry."

By taking the "rural woman" (halli mānavante) one who remained untouched by modern education as its base, modern Kannada literature further strengthened the domestic framework. Within this context, the notion of female sensibility was defined and legitimized. Although Dalit and rebellion literary movements provided the conditions for the emergence of women's writing, they did not define female sensibility as an independent category.

In the early 19th century, women's journals primarily centered their discussions on female education and religious morality. The debates on education and religiosity did not attach much importance to women's intellectual development. The women-run journals attempted to liberate women from local restrictions and to articulate female sensibility and female creativity through stories and criticism. The Kannada Sahitya Parishat, in its literary conferences, regularly organized mahila gōṣṭhis (women's sessions). From the pre-independence period to the present, women's journals and these women's sessions have offered distinct definitions of female sensibility and female creativity. The mainstream literary sphere, the one that identifies itself as "central" often portrayed educated women and uneducated women as antagonistic to each other. It defined female creativity based on the image of the halli maanavante (morally steadfast rural woman). This definition drew a Lakshman rekha (a limiting boundary), preventing women from engaging in continuous reading, study, and the written processes of literary creation.

Thus, while folk creativity was accepted, it did not assume the responsibility of defining or valuing women's written literature within the formal literary field. Between these two domains, however, women's journals and women's sessions gradually expanded the notion of sensibility and creativity within written literature to include women writers' positions.

Yet, this process of expansion did not suppress the masculine arrogance embedded in the language and intellectual structures of the literary world. It did not evolve toward the stance of "Radha Banakar geet gayenge", that is, the self-becoming of the feminine voice. Nor did it transform literary creativity into the Bhakti-era conception of sharaṇa-sati and liṅgapati. Because Western feminism entered Kannada, the interpretations of female sensibility and female creativity that emerged within Kannada women's literary tradition became centered on female distinctiveness. The literary establishment, in turn, appropriated these processes in ways that suited its own ideology. The female sensibility and female creativity that Hélène Cixous envisions; where the "other gender" is embraced as an integral part of oneself did not emerge in Kannada. Kannada feminist criticism did not succeed in dismantling the power structures within literature. Instead, it equated female sensibility and female creativity with the biological distinctiveness of the female body and interpreted women's writings from that standpoint.

This approach, rather than being supportive of women writers, ultimately became sympathetic to male-centered values. As H.S.R. observes, female distinctiveness in the Kannada context has taken the form of Sex Markers.

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