

RESEARCH ARTICLE



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2636 (Print); 2321-3108 (online)

INDIAN WOMEN'S IDENTITY CRISIS AND SELF-REALISATION IN AMBAI'S "A KITCHEN IN THE CORNER OF THE HOUSE"

GOWTHAMI.M.K¹, Prof.P.PREETHI²

¹Research Scholar, Department of English, VELS VISTAS.

²Research Supervisor, Department of English, VELS VISTAS, Tamilnadu.



GOWTHAMI.M.K

Article Received: 18/09/2021

Article Accepted: 28/10/2021

Published online: 09/11/2021

DOI: [10.33329/rjelal.9.4.90](https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.9.4.90)

Abstract

The present study deal with the motive of feminist movement strives towards the aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. Though feminism is not a relatively new concept and has always formed part of the women's liberation movement, it has been changing in form and content, with gender equality being one of the aspects. There is no doubt that feminism is today a major accepted fact of modern life, with women competing with men in all walks of life and even doing better than them in some areas. The findings of the analysis as pearls of wisdom culled from deep, after a thorough study, and it brings out an assessment of the novelist. The present study aims at the causes for the problems faced by women in the Short stories of Ambai to arrive at some valid conclusion and how she foresees the emergence of Modern women in India.

Keywords: Feminism, Gender equality, Modern Life, Modern women.

Introduction

The feminist movement is motivated by the belief that women should be afforded the same rights and opportunities as men. Even though feminism is not a new concept and has always been a component of the women's liberation movement, its emphasis has shifted over time, both in form and content, with gender equality being one of the issues to consider. Feminism is without a doubt today a widely accepted aspect of modern life, with women competing with males in all sectors of life, and in some cases, even outperforming them in some areas. In most aspects of human endeavour, they are not treated on an equal footing with men. Women lag behind men in every sphere, whether they are labouring in the fields or running businesses. Over the years, there has been a favourable shift in the

attitude of feminists toward humanism and humanism towards feminists. When Simone de Beauvoir explained the relationship between feminism and humanism straightforwardly and concisely, it began a movement. The central theme and focus of *The Second Sex* is the assertion that women should be treated as basic human beings, which is a position shared by many feminists. According to her, women's expression and social standing appeared discriminatory, with women being denied the right to be recognised as independent individuals and being barred from determining their fate.

(Scholar, n.d.), a writer from Tamil Nadu, India, is at the vanguard of contemporary Indian writers who have made significant contributions to the field of world literature as a whole. Her fervent

advocacy distinguishes her books for women's rights, her wry wit, her lucid and insightful style, and a dash of realism sprinkled throughout. As one of the most prominent Tamil writers working today, she has been featured in Amit Choudhuri's recently published collection of Modern Indian Literature, titled "Picador" (Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature). The majority of her stories are about relationships, and they are filled with great observations about contemporary life that are worth reading.

(Rajbanshi, 2014) *A Purple Sea* is a collection of seventeen short stories written by Ambai. Unlike other female characters, her female characters are made of flesh and blood, and they express all of their desires and fantasies without hesitation. The majority of Ambai's short stories strike the readers completely by surprise. The awareness demonstrated in her stories is nearly solely from the perspective of the female protagonist. The Indian woman has come to the realisation that the role of "Cinderella" does not correspond to her actual existence. She has learned to keep her eyes open to fight against the societal injustices directed at her and her family. Despite the fact that Ambai shows her female characters as 'unpaid maids' and 'submissive wives,' the majority of the characters demonstrate a newfound determination and strength as they are no longer satisfied with their jobs as 'little angels.'

Diverse abstract subjects are explored, including the emancipation of women, the position of women in history and the present, emblems of freedom and the renaissance of women. "A Kitchen in the Corner of the House" is the storey of Minakshi, Papaji's daughter-in-law, who challenges the traditional belief that a woman should never provide advice to a man. When the rest of the family is unconcerned about the kitchen, Minakshi takes the risk of asking Papaji to expand it. If you don't mind, why don't you extend the verandah outside the kitchen? If you make it a little wider, we might be able to set up some chairs out there. If you then construct a wash area to the left of the vessel, you will have a very large basin for cleaning it. Furthermore, you might hang some aluminium wire to dry the clothing above the ground'.

Ambai's works express the experience of women in a colloquial language via the use of many tales. Throughout the novel, she depicts her characters negotiating with the outside world in order to achieve independence of mind and soul. She illustrates how patriarchal influences may be felt even when they are not present, and how they can exert an unseen grip over the thoughts of women in the family. She also emphasises that freedom cannot be attained via revolt, but rather through the slow deconstruction of oppressive systems.

According to the writers of the time, a woman was either the ideal of morality or a wicked and entrancing whore in the early works of fiction. She was never depicted as a human person who might be both nice and bad at the same time. It seemed that she was either elevated to the status of a Goddess or dragged through the filthy streets of vulgarity, where she was labelled a "social pariah." The misconceptions that stood in the way of realising one's potential as a "genuine woman" were demolished by contemporary writers. In the pages of a novel or a short tale, today's writers provide us with all of the pertinent details. Women are not eulogised in their works.

The progressive transition from the individual's exterior environment to his or her inner world is the primary emphasis of Ambai's writing. The depiction of states of thought, rather than the holding up of a mirror to society, is the subject of the most attention. Her short stories are written in a vertical format. Attempts are made to capture the environment of the mind and immediately include the reader in the flow of a specific state of awareness in the storey. Ambai's work demonstrates a clear tendency for reflection of this nature.

Women in Ambai's work are referred to as 'silent suffering,' and the label is earned while pointing out the farcical nature of all marriages and the false nature of all human interactions, whether between males or females. Despite their efforts, these female characters are ultimately unsuccessful. However, they serve as the fulcrum of Ambai's fictional universe, and it is through them, she discovers many of the subjects for her short fiction.

They suffer from withdrawal, alienation, loneliness, isolation, and a lack of contact, to name a few symptoms of depression. Their alienation from family, their parents, and even from themselves is due to the fact that they are not ordinary people. They are individuals who have been created to stand in opposition to the mainstream.

In the short tale 'a Forest, a Deer,' Ambai brings to light the tragic condition of Thangam Athai, who either did not have menstrual periods or did not have a working womb at the time of writing. She had been abused by her in-laws and had been given a slew of medications to start her periods or for the womb to operate properly. She, however, protests, as do the majority of Ambai's strong female characters, and even goes to the length of finding another wife for her husband for him to have children via her. At first, upon learning that her husband Ekambaram is searching for a second wife, Athai attempts suicide by ingesting a combination of deadly oleander seeds and arali seeds. She is rescued and ultimately decides to submit to the dictates of a severe patriarchal culture in Tamil Nadu, which only recognises women who possess the necessary reproductive organs. Athai communicates to her small children and the children of her relatives the suffering of a woman who is unable to mature into a woman via veiled language and the medium of a parable-like bedtime story.

It is the writer's intention to present a historical view of women's difficulties in India throughout history in order to shed insight on the approaches and treatments used to address such problems. This article provides a detailed examination of the most significant aspects of the problems, particularly those affecting women, and serves as the foundation for the conclusions reached at the conclusion of the thesis.

It is an amazing narrative that focuses on the lives of women, and it is entitled A Kitchen in the Corner of the House. There are several subjects covered, including the emancipation of women, the role of women in the past and today, symbols of freedom and the renaissance of women. The tale revolves around the lives of a group of ladies in the city of Ajmir. The kitchen is the focal point of their

lives. These ladies are symbolic of the whole female population, particularly in India, who spend a significant portion of their day in the confines of their kitchens and households. This confinement is often performed voluntarily since, in our culture, a woman's primary responsibility is to care for her family and provide for them. Ambai tells the narrative from the point of view of Minakshi, the youngest daughter-in-law of the family — a person who comes from a cultural background that is different from that of Ajmir.

It is an amazing narrative that focuses on the lives of women, and it is entitled A Kitchen in the Corner of the House. Diverse abstract subjects are explored, including the emancipation of women, the role of women in history and the present, emblems of freedom and the renaissance of women. The tale revolves around the lives of a group of ladies in the city of Ajmir. The kitchen is the focal point of their lives. These ladies are symbolic of the whole female population, particularly in India, who spend a significant portion of their day in the confines of their kitchens and households. This confinement is often performed voluntarily since, in our culture, a woman's primary responsibility is to care for her family and provide for them.

Ambai is deeply concerned about women - the silences they are locked into, the space they try to create for themselves against tremendous odds, the relationship with their bodies and the sorority they share with other women. She narrates in her stories, women's real experiences and transforms women's silences in words and images. By exploring the ways in which people describe themselves and the communities to which they could be said to belong, she underlines how human beings are made subjects. But what is more important is her search for a new language which is linked fundamentally to her political beliefs and practices as a woman and as a writer.

It is the writer's intention to present a historical view of women's problems in India throughout history in order to shed insight on the approaches and treatments available to women at various times in the country. Providing a detailed examination of the most significant challenges,

particularly those facing women, this chapter serves as the foundation for the conclusions reached at chapter's end.

It is an amazing narrative that focuses on the lives of women, and it is entitled A Kitchen in a Corner of the House. Different topics are highlighted, including the emancipation of women, the status of women in history and the present, symbols of freedom and the rebirth of women. Life in Ajmir is shown in this narrative through the eyes of a group of women. Kitchen is the centre of their universe. All of the ladies in this photograph symbolise the whole female population, particularly in India, who spend a significant portion of their time in the kitchen. Due to the widespread belief that the primary responsibility of a woman in our culture is the nurturing of her family, many women choose to remain at home. It is from the perspective of Minakshi, the youngest daughter-in-law of the family — a person who does not belong to the cultural background of Ajmir — that Ambai tells the narrative.

It is an amazing narrative that focuses on the lives of women, and it is entitled A Kitchen in a Corner of the House. Abstract topics such as the emancipation of women, their historical and contemporary positions, emblems of independence, and the renaissance of women are all explored in this exhibition. Life in Ajmir is shown in this narrative through the eyes of a group of women. Kitchen is the centre of their universe. All of the ladies in this photograph symbolise the whole female population, particularly in India, who spend a significant portion of their time in the kitchen. Due to the widespread belief that the primary responsibility in our culture is the nurturing of her family, many women choose to remain at home.

Women are becoming increasingly visible and influential in both the professional and public realms, and this trend is expected to continue. Because they are no longer seen to be a financial liability, they have gained independence and have become the primary breadwinners in the family. Indian women have a bright and prosperous future. Society is providing them with every opportunity to advance and achieve, allowing them to realise their

full potential. They are advancing in every sector, whether it be science, technology, research, defence, politics, space exploration, literature, or the arts, and they are gaining ground.

It is only through the total eradication of social ills like inequity, dowry, and female foeticide that women's prospects will be good in the future. Specific laws, policies, and regulations that empower women must be established (and existing laws, policies, and rules should be amended!) in order for them to advance more quickly in a variety of sectors.

Conclusion

Lakshmi/works Ambai's are distinguished by her unwavering commitment to the advancement of women's rights. She writes in a clear and deep style, with a dash of humour and reality thrown in for good measure. The majority of her stories are about relationships, and they are full of excellent insights about current life that readers will appreciate. There are recurring themes such as exploration of space, quiet, coming to terms with one's body or sexuality, and the necessity of communication in the quest to demystify gender and negotiate the cultural landscape to achieve re-configuration representation. Ambai discusses her definition of feminism, which is more than simply standing up for women's rights; it is also about how the conversation or discussion on gender has been dominated by the absolute binary distinctions between male and female. For this reason, one of the most important topics that will be addressed in the Paper on her short tales is: How does the author explore the feminine experience? What is the difference between a 'feminist' view and one of 'femininity'? What function does the art of writing have in reflecting the gender norms dictated by a middle-class Indian culture? What role does such literature play in drawing attention to the situation of society in which we live today, particularly in respect to its women? And, more importantly, how does such a vision manifest itself in and via a translated narrative? Therefore, an attempt will be made to focalise the transition from an in-depth linguistic/textual analysis to a broader ideological/cultural context, employing gender as an

ingress point and paying closer attention to inequalities as well as ideological values, identities, and individual choices in order to arrive at cultural reformulations of gender.

REFERENCE

1. Aishwarya, M. *Ambai's "A Kitchen in the Corner of the House": Translation as Socio-Cultural Documentation*. No. 49042, 2019, pp. 34–38.
2. Asnani, Shyam. "New Morality in the Modern Indo-English Novel: A Study of Mulk Raj Anand, Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal", *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand*. Dhawan R.K.(Ed.) New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1992. 39-49.
3. Butler, Judith. "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*." *Yale French Studies*, no. 72, 1986, p. 35, doi:10.2307/2930225.
4. "Contemporary politics: Its portrayal in the Novels of Nayantara Sahgal", *Critical Response to Indian English Fiction*. Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1985. 108-121.
5. D, Premila Swamy. *Deconstructing the Spatial Discourse of the Kitchen: A Postmodern Interpretation of Ambai's Text*. No. Iv, 2020, pp. 3737–46.
6. "Dependable and Competent". Review. of Nayantara Sahgal. *Indian Book Chronicle*, Vol.4, No.9, May 1 1979. 172.
7. Dhanaji, Thore, et al. *LangLit THE RELEVANCE OF MYTHICAL ROOTS OF GENDER BIAS AND CULTURAL IMPACT OF SITA IN VALMIKI' S RAMAYANA IN MODERN INDIA A n International Peer*. no. May, 2019.
8. "Form and Technique in Nayantara Sahgal's Novels". *The Literary Endeavour*. Vol.I, No.3, 41-52.
9. Holmstrom, Lakshmi. *ROLE OF 'SPACE' IN DETERMINING 'POWER' – A STUDY OF AMBAI' S A KITCHEN IN THE CORNER OF THE HOUSE*. no. 3, 2018, pp. 2–4.
10. LAKSHMI, C. S. "A Kitchen in the Corner of the House." *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 2, 1992, pp. 49–63, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8705.1992.tb00415.x.
11. McIvor, Charlotte. "Staging Resistance: Plays by Women in Translation (Review)." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 59, no. 3, 2007, pp. 533–35, doi:10.1353/tj.2007.0161.
12. Moreno Álvarez, Alejandra. "New Voices and Spaces in Ambai's Short Stories." *ODISEA. Revista de Estudios Ingleses*, no. 10, 2017, pp. 111–20, doi:10.25115/odisea.v0i10.307.
13. "Mistaken Identity: A Critical Review", *Indian Women Novelists: Set.II Vol.V*. Dhawan R.K.(Ed.) New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1993. 175-177.
14. Navarro-Tejero, Antonia. "Gender without Borders: An Interview with C.S. Lakshmi/Ambai." *Emerging South Asian Women Writers: Essays and Interviews*, vol. 1, 2015, pp. 181–85, doi:10.3726/978-1-4539-1577-6.
15. Patni, Gunja, and Rimika Singhvi. *Decoding Gender and Negotiating Culture: Re-Configuration and Representation in C . S . Lakshmi' s Selected Short Fiction*. no. 1, 2020, pp. 18–24.
16. "Portrayal of Man - Woman Relationship in the Novels of Nayantara Sahgal". *Kakatiya Journal of English Studies*, Vol.3,No.1, 1978. 151-165.
17. "Prison and the Chocolate Cake. A Study" *New Dimensions of Indian English Novel*. Delhi: Doaba House, 1987. 102-115
18. Rajbanshi, Rina. *Rewriting Mythology: An Analysis of C . S . Laxmi' s Forest*. no. Viii, 2014, pp. 388–95.
19. "Rich Like Us: A Note", *Indian Women Novelist: set. II Vol.V*. Dhawan R.K.(Ed.) New Delhi: Prestige Books,1993. 94-96.
20. "Review. of Nayantara Sahgal - A Study of Her Fiction and Non-Fiction." *The Journal of Indian Writing in English*, Vol.5, No.1, Jan 1977. 70-72.
21. Scholar, M. Phil. *The Creative Potential of*

Women : A Reading of Ambai' s A Kitchen in the Corner of the House. pp. 120–27.

22. Soyer, Michaela. "Off the Corner and into the Kitchen: Entering a Male-Dominated Research Setting as a Woman." *Qualitative research*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2014, pp. 459–72, doi:10.1177/1468794113488130.
23. *SPELT-ELTRJ-VOL_1-NO_1-JUNE-2021-.Pdf.*
24. Sujath, D., and S. Geetha. *Women' s Isolation in Ambai' s a Kitchen in the Corner of the House.* no. 16, pp. 34–35.