

# Intersectional Re-Framing: A Tool for Portraying Phoenix Like Characters in Meena Kandasamy's Poems

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**Abstract**— *The present research paper, Intersectional Re-framing: A Tool for Portraying Phoenix Like Characters in Meena Kandasamy's Poems, is a critical assessment and attempt to establish Meena Kandasamy's adventurous journey of becoming an interventionist to the mainstream literature through her scathing expressions, gory description of atrocities, discussing the facade of subjugation, registering her resistance through creativity, and demythifying the established tradition and religious hegemony of Brahmanic cultures. The backdrop of oppression, jeopardising females at gender, race, caste and class levels, transcends their level of tolerance and endurance. The functioning of intersectionality as a critical framework to define multiple and interconnected power factors such as racism, casteism, sexism, class exploitation, etc. becomes indispensable for the modern-era creative writer. By acknowledging burning issues, the writer is incited to resist, reframe, and recreate through deconstruction and dissent, demystifying the traditional standards that jeopardise females, announcing a "New Feminism" at various levels, and rejecting the entire concept of western feminism as inapplicable to all contexts, including India. She blatantly subverts the established hegemony of the patriarchal and androcentric setup with a "New Literature" for the subaltern, down-trodden, underprivileged, Dalit, and oppressed females. She successfully creates a niche of resistance literature demanding liberation in a modern, liberal, and pragmatic way. Meena Kandasamy's oeuvre exposes exploitation, from transgression to transformation, by resolving the problems through resilience and developing focused strategy through intellectualism and practical wisdom. The poetess asserts in her Introduction to the anthology, Ms Militancy, "I strive to be a sphinx: part woman, part lioness, armed with dissent and lethal with riddles." (Kandasamy 9). The paper covers the journey of Meena Kandasamy's creating the gyno-space in "New Indian Feminist Literature" through autobiographical and confessional notes, seeking liberation for her characters through the literature of resistance by selecting the path of resilient intellect and level-headed action, the resurrection of universal characters as the Indian phoenix, and self-annihilation for the sake of social justice.*



**Keywords**— *New Indian Feminism, Autobiographical and Confessional Poetry, Dislocation of Paradigms, Literature of Resistance, Patriarchal Fabrication of Society and Androcentric Myths, Archetypes, New Literature, Subaltern Literature, Dalit Literature, Hegemony, and Intersectional Reframing, Testimonial Literature, Phoenix.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ila Venil Meena Kandasamy, the first Indian woman writer writing Dalit poetry in English, is an acclaimed Indian poet, novelist, sociolinguist, translator,

and resistance literature activist from the landless, nomadic community of the Pudukottai district of Tamil Nadu.

With a doctorate in sociolinguistics, she is globally celebrated for her fierce critique and problematising the issues such as feminism, linguistic and

mythical subversions, caste liberation, dowry-related violence, rape victims, victims of lynching, the challenges faced by sex workers, the questioning of traditional hegemonic social patterns, the negotiation of rights for the underprivileged, and the intersectional reframing of society.

Kandasamy writes in the genre of testimonial literature, which enables a writer to feel empathy with the sufferer or gain an introduction to that particular instance. She feels her psyche is compelled to bring forth appalling realities, such as 'bride burning.' "In India a bride is burnt every ninety minutes." Bijay Kant Dubey, the Head of the Department of English at Chandra Kona Mahavidyalaya, has penned a plethora of writings and composed a poem entitled *Meena Kandasamy*, defining her oeuvre appropriately:

Meena Kandasamy, as a poetess has many a thing  
in her,  
She is a writer, an activist, an actress  
And what not,  
A writer of protest literature,  
First of all, a rebel  
Then a feminist  
A Dalit,  
A movementeer.

.....  
A spokesperson of the have-nots, the  
downtrodden  
Is she a Dalit writer?  
She is bent upon taking a revenge  
Like Hamlet,  
A fire brand writer she.

.....  
Rebellious, revolutionary and fiery,  
Ever ready to revolt and rebel against  
A discriminatory social order,  
Hinging on injustice and inhuman discrimination,  
A poetess, social, confessional and revolting.  
(Bijay Kant Dubey)

The title of the paper requires elaboration for the foregrounding of thematic connections in preceding findings. Kandasamy reframes mythical characters like Sita and Draupadi to subvert their idealised socio-cultural fabrications in traditional societies. Phoenix, mythical bird refuses to surrender and rises from its ashes. She glorifies the anger of her protagonists as the power to resist and rise from the ashes of victimisation, reconstructing themselves as active and dangerous and breaking the image of ideal, obedient Indian women. Phoenix and her characters can be

hurt and tortured, but they cannot be silenced or extinguished.

## II. THE CREATION OF GYNO-SPACE IN NEW INDIAN FEMINIST LITERATURE

'New Feminism' in Indian literature shifts from victimhood, universalism, and middle-class Western/Eurocentric dangerous frameworks of different fields of feminism to embrace intersectionality and foreground the lived realities of exploited, queer, Dalit, and marginalised women. The backdrop of this modern movement includes amplifying diverse regional and marginalised voices, Phoenix canonicity and tortured perspectives, translations of subtext and subversions of established mythology, queer and transgender narratives, etc. Meena Kandasamy, as a perfect new feminist writer in Indian literature, asserts and propagates a Dalit feminist perspective.

Dalit literary movement, according to Arjun Dangle, the editor of *Poisoned Bread*, a collection of Dalit discourses, writes, "Dalit literature is not simply literature. It is associated with a movement to bring about change." (Arjun Dangle p. 266)

Kandasamy's poem *Monologue* depicts the intense alienation, disappointment, and pain that lie beneath romantic relationships, with embers underneath them. The present poem deconstructs, the paradise of new feminist love that hurts literature, makes herself dumb and speechless, and points to the Dalit feminist point and smiles in the superfluous relationship. She registers her resentment as the following:

I speak alone because  
I do not know his answers.  
And yet, you want to be heard.  
I want to tell him that I have  
Closed and sealed my skin.  
Baby, I told you, love can hurt.  
I have exiled my heart.  
This is lonely, lonely world,  
Even with a lover. (*Monologue*)

Gayatri Spivak has questioned this claustrophobic situation that results in the dehumanisation of the human spirit in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (p.141). She thinks the subaltern can speak, but others won't listen because it would threaten their power.

*Becoming a Brahmin*, a poem by Kandasamy is scratching, and satirical critique of the Indian caste system that puts forth a parallel analogy between computer

algorithms and the purification process of a 'Shudra' through the consideration of caste as fluid.

The framework of a six-step, complex mathematical equation resembles a beautiful Shudra girl marrying a Brahmin male for successive generations, ultimately resulting in a Brahmin offspring. The poem exclusively lampoons the social institution of inter-caste-based marriages as the utopian solution of Mahatma Gandhi to ameliorate the status of depressed women. Kandasamy registers her distrust in all such ramifications by interpreting the inter-caste-based commodification of Shudra women for the reproductive system and gratification of the upper-caste man succinctly depicted in the following lines:

Algorithm for converting a Shudra into a Brahmin

Begins

Step 1: Take a beautiful shudra girl.

Step 2: Make her marry a Brahmin.

Step 3: Let her to give birth to a female child.

Step 4: Let this child marry a Brahmin.

Step 5: Repeat steps 3–4 six times.

Step 6: Display the end product.

It is a Brahmin.

End.

Algorithm advocated by the father of the nation at Tirupur.

Documented by Periyar on 20.09.1947.

(Kandasamy)

The Non-Brahminical Movement originated in Maharashtra as an 'anti-caste movement' by Jotibarao Phule, a shudra hailing from the Mali (gardener) community. He suggested the dire need for education to uplift the oppressed class. He opened the school for girl children of untouchables and, thereafter, established the 'Satyashodhak Samaj' (society for truth seekers). Phule's efforts laid the foundation for future reform movements and inspired many to challenge the rigid caste system. His commitment to education and social justice continues to resonate in contemporary discussions on equality and rights in India.

He strongly criticised the evil practices of child marriage and the shaving of widows' heads. According to him. "The prohibition, in the writings of Manu, of the education of Shudras arose out of the fear lest shudras should remember their former greatness, and then rebel against their authority. (Phule, p. 37) Kandasamy, by maintaining the legacy of greatness and giving a voice to oppressed, underprivileged people, challenges the sanitised

mainstream literature in both perspective and narrative techniques while also seeking a space for her creativity through a confessional or autobiographical mode, thus becoming a representative of all those suffering due to hierarchical hegemony.

The present paper is an evolutionary document of Meena Kandasamy's scathing criticism of caste-based society, exposing the hegemony of upper-caste people over oppressed ones and critically questioning the confessional position in society. Her creative writings are justifying the subversion of Brahmanical hegemony, dismantling traditional patriarchal archetypes, and successfully carving a niche in mainstream literature through registering the intersectional struggles of Dalit and marginalised communities.

She challenged the polished hypocrisies of modern Indian society and its archetypes by using aestheticism in poetry as a visceral tool, rejecting societal norms, and selecting poetry for herself in the poem *He Replaces Poetry*:

Hurt and pain that will let me scream and I wait  
for offending

Words to row me into worlds where I shall cry  
wildly for whole

Nights like the lament of lonely, old and greying  
seas.

-----

Poetry, in the end, shall replace all of him.

(*He Replaces Poetry*)

This poem is a profoundly personal one, exposing the agony and tension between passionate love and creative inspiration and her loss of artistic voice due to which the poem leaves her with passive and superficial happiness. She evokes her poetic creativity through 'madwoman's antics'—starving herself, shedding tears, etc.

The poem highlights the ultimate triumph of her art and autonomy over romantic, superfluous dependence. She pragmatically assessed the intuition behind her 'madwoman's antics', which included starving, outstanding creativity, intellect, and tears, despite their pernicious decay.

In India, Dalit literary works by women writers are entitled 'testimonials', as they are narratives of enigma, angst, trauma, pain, resistance, protest, and demands for change. Kandasamy confesses, similar to Kamala Das in her works, that she is desperately crying to be heard because her goal is to universalise the personal voice of experience, transforming it into a call to action that

supports all women. Her works and testimonial narratives are witnesses or documents of atrocity universalisation in which the voice of one (writer or poet) propagates from the individual to the collective.

Kandasamy engages herself in an act of advocacy by providing the only solution, which is to revolt against the injustice done to them through intellectualism, consciousness, struggle, and social commitment. In an interview about her second collection of poems (*Ms Militancy* 2010), which is an expressive, feminist retelling of Hindu myths, she confesses and vehemently asserts the following:

My poetry is naked,  
my poetry is in tears,  
my poetry screams in rage,  
my poetry writhes in pain,  
My poetry smells in blood,  
my poetry salutes sacrifice.  
My poetry speaks like my people.  
(*Ms Militancy*)

Driven by a desire for social justice, she sacrifices her well-being for the benefit of all women in India. Her poem *Aggression* is bold and feminist, challenging the patriarchal ideology that marginalises women and forces them to silently endure oppression, while also addressing the feminist understanding of injustice in social systems. Her poem *Fuchsia Shock*, explores the suffocation of intellectual confinement and juxtaposes poetic artifice—agonised lighting colours and dull monochromatic bleakness—to express the loss of voice and the authentic experience of the persona.

My bed smells of textbooks  
and it is more than a month or so,  
since I dreamt of sunlight and the sky's  
embrace. Even a woman's lush vanities—  
-----

I am snared in a world of aqua, fuchsia,  
and lime set dangerously against black and white.  
(*Fuchsia Shock*)

Confinement of resistance often manifests not only in a revolutionary context, but it can constitute itself in mundane acts of rebellion, courage, protest, and counterattack. As a political strategy, silence can transform into a powerful form of 'speaking out'. The acknowledgement of hegemonic mechanisms and systems of belief is required to fight back against race, caste, class, and gender discrimination in society. Tagore has outlined

this fourth type as universal literature in the following words:

Thus one must view literature as a temple that the universal man (vishvamanav) has built; writers have come from all times and all nations to work as labourers in that project. The plan of the building is not available to us, but whatever is wrong is immediately demolished; every labourer has to use his natural competence to integrate his own composition in to the whole and thereby complete the invisible plan. (p.10)

Kandasamy dives deeper into the broader context of dalit literature and Indian English poetry. She refuses to sugarcoat the hatred, caste-based atrocities, and lynchings in society. The poem *Facing the Music* explores the traumatic aftermath of a lover's caste-based lynching, which leaves the speaker in a paralysed emotional state. She ironically subverts the reference to 'music', alluding to the heavy lover's crimes and social lynching, a chorus of violence that the pariah is forced to endure and listen to:

Your lover was lynched  
For one of those readily available reasons.  
Too weak for suicide, too mute for murder  
You live. Post-traumatically, poetically.  
You live as if he has never died.  
(*Facing the Music*)

The post-traumatic reality of a survivor is one in which Dalits are presented as evil counterparts to her, 'blood bears the salt of withheld tears', and she is forced to swear not to recall the memory of her murdered lover.

### III. RESURRECTED MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS: THE ARCHETYPE OF THE PHOENIX

Defining myth, Jan Knappert, in *Indian Mythology*, elaborates:

Myth is not a subject which a scientist could study, since there is no palpable evidence for it. But if a sceptic regards as 'mere myth' while a believer presents as factual truth, then that sceptic will place himself outside the world of the believer. He will never understand other people. (*Indian Mythology*, p.10)

The Indian literature of the upper caste depicts the myths where Dalits are presented as evil counterparts of 'good' upper-caste people. In Vedic literature and in two

Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, or in *Puranas*, they provided the references of evil, demonic "Asuras" and "Rakshasas." Dalit writers, therefore, assertively condemn these descriptions as efforts to 'damn' the indigenous people of the land, including "Adivasis" and Dalits.

The counterattacks to these mythical characters, which are popular and come to the limelight, are **Karna**, **Ekalavya**, and **Vidura** from the *Mahabharata*; **Sita**, **Ravana**, and **Shambuka** from the *Ramayana*.

Meena Kandasamy, in her collection *Ms Militancy*, scornfully disapproves of and subverts traditional patriarchal myths, reframing and reimagining female characters with quintessential Phoenix-like characteristics like fiery defiance, strong psychological resilience, and continuous cycles of counterattacks from the ashes of oppression. *Random Access Man*, a poem, is fierce and feministic subversion of the *Ramayana*, deconstructing the myth of passive and chaste Sita.

By decoding the acronym for computer memory (RAM) in relation to the Hindu god Lord Ram, the poem transforms the portrayal of Sita from an obedient wife into an assertive woman who reclaims her sexual autonomy and emotional fulfilment, thereby subverting the character of Ram as an impotent and ineffective male husband who failed to meet his wife's corporeal and emotional needs.

Kandasamy vehemently reconstructs the alternative character of Sita, who instigates Ram to go to the jungle in search of the impossible chase of the golden deer to revive his manhood and provide her space to take care of her desire.

Sita's bold step to engage with a 'random man' (Ravana) symbolised the fulfilment of her own self and redefined her needs by providing a paramount parallelism between Sita's submission and Kandasamy's poetry of aggressive negotiation, seeking solutions for the characters through their own resistance instead of staying as passive sufferers. The subversion of Sita can be captured in the following lines:

Sure that he would never come  
She sent her dickhead husband  
on a wild-goose chase –

-----  
so we can make your manhood.  
(*Random Access Man*)

The underlying message of the poem is the dilution of mythological and traditional myths and the substantiality of the ideal patriarchal image of Sita, as she does not wait for Rama; on the contrary, she embraces the

tragic happening of kidnapping as an opportunity for transgression and seeking another alternative life.

Kandasamy's reinterpretation of Sita's character converts her into a phoenix who passes through radical resilience, agency over her sexuality, and subversion of patriarchal societal norms. She presents and admits her transformation in these words:

First he named the word for her womb and  
the word for her waters and  
she devoured every word and  
within her another woman  
arose, hot and forever  
hungry. (*Random Access Man*)

Stripping off the subversion of societal roles, rather than perishing into ashes, she resurrects from her trauma and recollects all her scattered pieces and strength, using her anger as the active resistance weapon against rotten patriarchal hegemony and caste structures. The subverted character of Sita tenaciously affirms the following:

By the time she left  
this stranger's lap  
she had learnt  
all about love.  
First to Last  
Mamasita. (*Random Access Man*)

The similar agony of Sita, depicted in Aditya Iyengar's *Bhumika*, portrays the subverted character of Sita admits that her step of giving "agnipariksha," in order to prove her loyalty, results diminishing in her identity. She repents: "That was the greatest mistake I ever made." (*Bhumika*) The socio-culturally depressed Sita was compelled to spend her last days of her life in the forest as she was simultaneously pondering upon the alternatives in her life, like:

What if she hadn't married Rama?---What if she hadn't come back with Rama to Ayodhya, destined to be discarded in order to save his honour?

The retaliatory spirit of Sita asks for the questioning validation of her purity in the following words:

And yet, you still had to prove your purity to him? Who decides whether you are pure or not, or worthy or not to be by Rama's side? And why do you not get a say in the matter? Why doesn't Rama have to perform the 'agnipariksha' to be worthy of Sita? I did not have to walk through fire to prove my purity to Rama and his beloved people. (Iyengar p. 179)



Sita navigates her death-in-life state through the journey of radical self-actualisation and rises above the ashes of marital abuse and reclaims her identity as an artist and liberated woman. Her poem *Monologue* presents the profound metamorphosis of the protagonist, in which she discards victimhood and seeks her unyielding strength.

I have stopped  
My frantic search  
For the Buddhas.

.....

When I thought of  
Yasodhara, his wife  
Left behind alone and  
Large with child...  
What about the good things, eh?  
Recollect them, Remember that  
Memory is a mere vending machine.

(*Monologue*)

Kandasamy bluntly criticises the existence of Buddha for the enlightenment of others, as he has discarded his own wife and child, and she subverts the archetype of Indian mythological substantiality. She incites the character of Yashodhara to reinvent herself without any patriarchal assistance.

Dismantling and demythification of the powerful indigenous South Indian goddess of rain and healing, who was traditionally associated with the marginalised section of society, in the poem *Maariamma*, is a scathing critique of the injustice of Brahmanical hierarchies to control the local deities in order to make compartmentalisation in society, such as:

We understand  
why upper caste Gods  
and their 'good-girl' much married, father-fucked  
virgin, vegetarian oh! so... pure Goddesses  
borne in their golden chariots  
don't come to our streets.

.....

Why have you stopped coming to our doors?  
(*Maariamma*)

Another poem, *Flesh Finds A Form of Address*, in which Kandasamy weaponises the ancient Bhakti texts and Hindu mythology against themselves to expose androcentric biases. She contends that for flesh to discover its authentic form of address, it must be defined by a woman's own terms, rather than by the imposition of patriarchal desires and religious dogmas. The poetic oeuvre creates a jarring effect that purposefully offends

orthodox sensibilities and dismantles the pedestal on which women are placed.

The Hindu He-poet too dreams  
Of his goddess: Her breasts, to him,  
Are golden globes, and

.....

Her slender, creeper-like waist.  
And calls this beautiful goddess 'Mother'  
(*Flesh Finds A Form of Address*)

The academic world usually ignores the oral form of myths among Dalit communities for centuries. Dalit literature emerges from the margins and negotiates the ideas of equality, justice, and liberty with dignity in Indian society. The marginalised are subjected to caste humiliation, injustice, and birth. Dalit texts perform radical politics, having the background of lived reality, and they have to represent their 'consciousness', 'activism', and 'purpose of Dalit literature' have been in them intentionally.

Being conscious of her Dalit identity and interrogating the claustrophobic caste-based society, Manusmriti philosophy, patriarchal setups, idealised Indian mythology, atrocities and lynching, political institutions, prevailing notions of characters, and the corrupted standards of society, she transgresses these set boundaries to accomplish the journey of transformation with the demythification and remythification of resurrected characters from the ashes of patriarchal submissiveness to assertive feminist subjectivity.

All the mythical characters in her poems, such as Kali, Draupadi, Sita, and Maariamma, are embodiments of the Phoenix. Resistance, being a part of decolonisation, is both a personal and group struggle. In this necessary strategy, oppressed people learn to unlearn what they have been taught about themselves and to value their birth and culture. Fanon states that

The body of history does not determine a single one of my actions. I am my own foundation. We are not victims. Independently and jointly we are accountable for ourselves within the structures we live. (Fanon, p. 21)

Kandasamy jointly reinterprets the myth of "Guru Dakshina" in the Indian education system by transforming the character of 'Ekalavya' from victim to victor through radical resistance. She violently challenges the romanticised ideals of peaceful protest and advocates for a counterattack against the systematic hegemony in the negotiation of words.

You can do a lot of things  
With your left hand.

Besides, fascist Dronacharya's warrant  
Left-handed treatment.

Also,

You don't need your right thumb,  
To pull a trigger or hurl a bomb. (*Ekalavya*)

Ekalavya is a mythological representative of the lower caste in the hierarchical pattern of "Manusmriti" and is victimised due to the accident of birth. A tribal boy rejected the Brahmin teacher 'Drona', made his statue and practised archery but was asked for his thumb as "Guru Dakshina;" due to this, he was permanently handicapped and mutilated. Drona, making this, practised archery, which needed to be re-examined from a new 'Dakshina' perspective so that the genuine voices of the downtrodden, oppressed, tribal, and women could be heard.

Jagannath Malik, an Odia Dalit poet, has subverted the *Ramayana* and written an alternative interpretation of 'Rama' as an Aryan king whose sole agenda is to vanquish the "Adivasis" and Dalits to uphold "Varna Ashrama Dharma." Rama slayed Tadka, Bali, Shambuka, and Ravana are examples used to pressure the downtrodden and agitate the tribals in ruling the established culture of society.

In the collection *Ms Militancy* (Preface), Kandasamy declares that Tadka, who is intended to represent Shambuka, finds goddesses: "My Maariamamma bays for blood, My Kali kills. My Draupadi strips. My Sita climbs onto a stranger's lap. All my women militate." The poem *Ms Militancy*, challenges the ideal Indian womanhood in a patriarchal society demanding submission, surrender, sacrifice, and patience. She subverts the narrative of Silappatikaram, where Kannaki passively endures her husband Kovalan's infidelity.

The catalyst of resistance plays an important role in Kannaki's transformation into a fierce, empowered woman who embraces her immense fury, tears off her breast, and burns down the city of Madurai to seek revenge. The poetic diction of the poem is confrontational, validating female anger and framing it as a transformative tool to dismantle systematic oppression.

Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi* is a short story where Dopdi, a tribal woman, is not only stripped naked but is also raped by soldiers in an attempt to eradicate her revolutionary zeal and passion through the objectification of her body and psyche. She comes out naked, holding her head high, and registers her resistance as a metamorphic stance.

Dopdi (Draupadi) vibrates with unyielding laughter that is incomprehensible to Senanayak, who liberates her from the authoritarian act of clothing. In

response to exploitation and oppression, the marginalised people deal with oppression directly, but simultaneously they perceive an optimistic vision and maintain hope as defined by the famous sociologist Wallerstein.

It is not oppression that mobilises masses but hope and certainty; the belief that the end of oppression is near, that a better world is truly possible.

(p. 22)

The momentum of hope inspires the oppressed women to take action and fight for liberation and equality and resist whatever comes as detrimental to their progress. The counter-attack in *Ms Militancy* depicts the strengthened spirit and powerful resistance of Kannaki. On the edge, Ms. Militancy prayed for more blood:

Watching that breast sprout back from its roots,  
the lone woman learnt to outgrow her loss.  
When the scars no longer showed and  
the faraway sea could be smelt between her legs,  
she dissolved in a mist of aftersmoke.

(*Ms. Militancy*)

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar define women's resistance to social and cultural constraints through the theory of anxiety of authorship, which challenges patriarchal influence. Oppression ignites the strengthened spirit of resistance in rejected women and works as the best defensive tool to stop further attacks. Such persistent and prevailing resistance in their psyche inspires them to create a self-driven and self-spun philosophy that transforms oppression into optimism.

Kandasamy expresses this running resistance in her poetic intensity. In an interview she says, "Hope prevents me from taking my life." She had married a man for merely four months, who tortured her physically and psychologically.

Her novel, *The Gipsy Goddess* (2014), records a fictional documentary and evidence of a gory description of atrocities followed by the murder of 44 labourers along with their families in 1968 in Kilvenmani, Tamil Nadu. The novel examines the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism, interpreting the tragedy in the context of labourers demanding better wages and working conditions, only to be locked inside a hut and burned alive.

Kandasamy's poem *Fire*, is a visceral, politically charged Dalit feminist work exposing neo-being married to structural violence experienced by marginalised communities. The poem captures the horrific burning huts and fleeing residents trying to save their lives, while the

faulty cameras merely record their misery in following pathetic lines.

Our huts are burning—  
Regular huts in proper rows...  
Dry thaches (Conspirators in crime)  
---as we rush out shrieking—crying—moaning  
open mouthed hysterical curse  
and as in an answer—when the blazing work is  
done fire engines arrive.

(Fire)

Kandasamy captured one; the physical devastation and the stance of collective mourning are political indictments.

Deliberately late  
.....  
echo, echo, echo,  
finally reach  
.....  
This double catastrophe projected in  
sights  
and shrieks evokes  
.....  
No response.  
Those above are (mostly) indifferent  
bastards.

(Fire)

The late arrival of 'fire engines' is mentioned as a larger societal conspiracy designed to watch the marginalised suffer. The poem expands its horizon by asserting poets' Dalit history and consciousness. The resistance mechanisms of minorities are not acknowledged and recognised; instead, they are categorised as rebels. Paradoxically, the marginalised create their space, as Hooks asserts:

This is an intervention. An idea from the particular space in the margin it is a stance of the creativity and power that particular space where we re-write ourselves. Where we do self-introspection in solidarity to dedicate the category colonized and colonizer. Margin is the space (site) of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there. We greet you as liberators. (p. 28).

The space in the above citation stands for focused resilience, a persistent mode of struggle, intellectual awareness, critical self-analysis, a tenacious attitude for radical change, and continuous negotiations through

proper channels, which are well-acknowledged. Meeting the social, political, and lawful rights and duties are some required essentials to paving the way to transforming their lives.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Meena Kandasamy attained global acclaim by engaging with mainstream literature through her diverse literary styles, incorporating both straightforward and distorted language, as well as a radical deconstruction of patriarchal structures and the subversion of archetypes. She has utilised art and her literary work to cultivate marginalised awareness. Marginalised and dominated Dalit and minority groups have been examined, whereas, as per her, Vidyut Bhagwat articulates Dalit consciousness in these terms:

By using the term *Dalit Women* we are trying to say that if women from Dalit castes and of Dalit consciousness create a space for themselves—for fearless expression—if they become subjects or agents of self, they will provide a new leadership to Indian society in general and to feminist and Dalit movements in particular. (Vidyut Bhagwat, p.127 )

In the course of this discussion, Kandasamy, as an accomplished author, advocates for "HUMANITY" in society as the paramount remedy for all forms of discrimination, atrocities, and exploitation. The impact of Ambedkarite philosophy is significant in Tamil Dalit literature. He assigned the utmost significance to humanism and proclaimed for authors.

Kandasamy engages deeply and passionately with the tribulations of her characters, allowing readers to experience a sense of 'cathartic pleasure' upon engaging with her works. In her poem *Their Daughters*, she showcases matriarchal humanism and legacy.

We: their daughters.

We: the daughters of their soil.

We, mostly, write.

(*Their Daughters*)

The current research paper transitioned from a subjective expression to an objective one, as the author offers solutions to life's problems and challenges through education, knowledge, and pragmatic action.

#### Objectives of the Paper

The objective of this research paper, "Intersectional Re-framing: A Tool for Portraying Phoenix Like Characters in Meena Kandasamy's Poems", is to acknowledge and sensitise mainstream literature to the



stories and struggles of the underprivileged, downtrodden, and victimised segments of society. Kandasamy establishes herself as an interventionist through her literary work, expressing herself boldly and challenging entrenched hegemonic contradictions. She serves as a representative for the deprived sections of society.

Her successful establishment of a niche in the literary landscape paves the way for emerging voices, inspiring them not only through her arduous journey but also by empowering them to negotiate their rights. Kandasamy has cast a stone at the surface of the moon, creating a spectrum of possibilities for oppressed individuals, enabling them to dream big and aspire for a better life. Kandasamy's literary creations serve as inspiring milestones for the future of Dalit literature, deserving acknowledgement and acclaim in society, both theoretically and practically, as a means to establish social equality.

Kandasamy gives voice to the rebellious energy of the underprivileged; she amplifies the negotiating energy of the underprivileged, ensuring their experiences resonate. She advocates for equality across the multifaceted dimensions of life for victims of subjugation and atrocities. Her work serves as an inspiration for active resistance to reshape unjust socio-cultural and political patterns.

Kandasamy subverts traditional Indian myths, offering alternatives for social justice. She encourages Dalit and downtrodden classes to liberate themselves from historical oppression through poetry and other literary forms, striving for their moksha, or liberation.

The aforementioned points reflect her aspirational and creative strategies for future generations to engage actively in the struggles of life through knowledge, intellect, and pragmatic solutions.

This paper aims to highlight the dynamic and resilient spirit of the poet in transforming lives, helping individuals overcome humiliation, and fostering self-respect. Kandasamy embodies a self-driven, kinetic spirit for all communities, courageously acknowledging their exploitation while suggesting pathways for liberation and social transformation.

### Literature Review of the Paper

The present research paper has been critically analysed to identify thematic gaps, with a focus on the specifications and appreciation of primary sources. This paper, entitled "Intersectional Reframing: A Tool for Portraying Phoenix Like Characters in Meena Kandasamy's Poems", establishes her as an interventionist within mainstream literature. Kandasamy effectively

provides a platform for the entire spectrum of marginalised, downtrodden, subaltern, victimised, and caste-discriminated groups in society. Through her creativity, she not only becomes their representative but also ensures their voices are heard.

This paper acknowledges the significant contribution of her poetry in reframing notions of humanity, fostering a sensitive, liberal, and pragmatic society through the 'collective consciousness' of these communities.

Furthermore, she paves the way for Dalit literature to be integrated into the curriculum of universities and colleges as an essential component of literary studies. The research conducted in this paper draws upon the following primary resources:

- **Ms. Militancy**- Meena Kandasamy
- **Breast Stories** - "Draupadi" Mahasweta Devi
- **Bhumika** — Aditya Iyengar
- **Touch** — Meena Kandasamy
- **Beginning Theory** — Peter Barry

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