

**EXPLORING ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
TEACHING IN INDIA:  
THEORY & PRACTICE**

**EDITORS**

**Dr. Nidhi Sharma  
Dr. Shikha Agrawal  
Dr. Irum Alvi**

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## MEENA KANDASAMY'S "THE GYPSY GODDESS": A STUDY OF LANGUAGE STRUCTURES

**Dr. Nidhi Sharma**

Associate Professor, Dept. of English, SKIT, Jaipur

**Dr. Shikha Agrawal**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, SKIT, Jaipur

### Abstract

Meena Kandasamy's debut novel, *The Gypsy Goddess* is a convoluted, non-linear, digressional, and 'postmodern' fictional narrative based on the bloody massacre of 1968 in the Kilvenmani village, located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, India. The use of local phrases depicting the ironic, satirical and unabashed crude language similar to that of Namdeo Dhasal coupled with fragmented phrases used for creating a visual impact and breaking the fourth wall to address the audience directly present the subtlety of the work. The interesting thing to note here is that the use of digressions is used to not only place the story in a specific temporal and spatial coordination but also to present the Dalit atrocities to the readers, which has been at the centre of this work of fiction. Additionally, the use of language is to rewrite the history as the readers are already aware of her style of employing both official and unofficial narratives of history in her works. Interestingly, it is often claimed that "marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions" (Yudianto 4). While moving this argument further, one understands how the question of power structures depends on the effective utilisation of language. Hence the present paper aims to analyse how Meena Kandasamy uses various language structures to cater to her narratives.

It is often claimed that "marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions" (Resa Yudianto 2012). The validity of this argument cannot be devoid of the fact that to question the structures of power, one is dependent on the effective utilization of language. What if you are not a conventional storyteller? What if all you have is the 'truth'? What if your disparate, fragmented, and crude world lacks evidence, coherence, and power? Will you still attain justice in the court of law? Can you attain justice outside the court of law? *The Gypsy Goddess* (2014) by Meena Kandasamy is an attempt to grapple with these questions. According to James Kidd, Kandasamy's *The Gypsy Goddess* is "...a novel of self-conscious experimentalism and unmistakable fury" which "throws down a gauntlet to conservative literary and political sensibilities, especially in India" (James Kidd 2014). There are glaring postmodern traits which are employed by her. Nevertheless, they do not seem sufficient enough to claim the novel to be a postmodernist study. Kandasamy herself rejects this label. "[Most] people are tired of history..." and hence the author claims to be "...constrained to try a new way to chart and plot [her] way past their boredom" (16). Similarly, it cannot be solely confined to the canon of Dalit Literature or Communist Literature or even Trauma Literature even though it borrows some parts of them. The form of the novel escapes all structures though the language techniques and the literary