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REFLECTION OF FEMINISM IN THE ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT STORIES
PĒRAVAIK KATAIKAL.

RAJESWARI A/P ARUMUGAM



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Rajeswari Arumugam

2018





REFLEKSI FEMINISME DALAM ANTOLOGI CERPEN *PĒRAVAIK KATAIKAL*

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti imej wanita, menghuraikan emansipasi wanita dan menganalisis status wanita dalam antologi cerpen *Pĕravaik Kataikal* yang telah diterbitkan oleh Persatuan Bahasa Tamil, Universiti Malaya dari 1986 hingga 2008. Penyelidik telah menggunakan kaedah kepustakaan dan kaedah analisis teks berdasarkan teori feminisme kebudayaan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa sebanyak 43 cerpen sahaja mencerminkan feminisme kebudayaan daripada 294 cerpen yang telah diterbitkan dalam jangka masa 25 tahun tersebut. Daripada jumlah cerpen tersebut, aspek-aspek imej, imansipasi dan status wanita dapat dilihat sebagai ibu dalam 14 cerpen, isteri dalam 12 cerpen, anak perempuan dalam sembilan cerpen, remaja dalam tujuh cerpen dan anak dara tua dalam dua cerpen. Kesemua wanita tersebut diimejkan sebagai watak yang bersifat mematuhi ciri-ciri feminisme kebudayaan; diemansipasikan sebagai pejuang untuk mencapai kejayaan; dan distatuskan sebagai wanita yang berjaya dalam perjuangan mereka. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa ciri-ciri feminisme kebudayaan masih kukuh dalam kalangan wanita kaum Tamil Malaysia. Implikasi kajian ini berfaedah kepada penggubal dasar untuk memahami peranan wanita dalam keluarga dan masyarakat, seterusnya membantu mereka berdikari.





ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the portrayal of women, describe the emancipation of women and analyze the status of women in the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ* published by Tamil Language Society, University Malaya from 1986 to 2008. The researcher has used library research method and text analysis method based on the theory of cultural feminism. The findings show that from 294 short stories published in the 25 years, only 43 short stories reflect the theory of cultural feminism. Of the short stories, the images, emancipation and status of women can be seen as mothers in 14 short stories, as wives in 12 short stories, as daughters in nine short stories, as teenagers in seven short stories and as spinsters in two short stories. All of these women are characterized as conforming to cultural feminism; as struggling to be emancipated; and as attaining the status of successful women in their struggles. This study shows that the characteristics of cultural feminism are still strong among the Tamil women of Malaysia. Implications of this study are beneficial to policymakers to understand the role of women in their families and communities, thus helping them to be independent.





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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION AND DIACRITICAL MARKS

The system adopted here is the same as in the Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras, Vol. VI, p.XXVIII.

Tamil alphabets and their English symbols with diacritical marks:

VOWELS

அ	:	<i>a</i>	உ	:	<i>u</i>	ஐ	:	<i>ai</i>
ஆ	:	<i>ā</i>	ஊ	:	<i>ū</i>	ஒ	:	<i>o</i>
இ	:	<i>i</i>	எ	:	<i>e</i>	ஓ	:	<i>ō</i>
ஈ	:	<i>ī</i>	ஏ	:	<i>ē</i>	ஔ	:	<i>au</i>



CONSONANTS

க	:	<i>k</i>	ங	:	<i>ṅ</i>	ய	:	<i>y</i>
ச	:	<i>c</i>	ஞ	:	<i>ñ</i>	ர	:	<i>r</i>
ட	:	<i>ṭ</i>	ண்	:	<i>ṇ</i>	ல்	:	<i>l</i>
த்	:	<i>t</i>	ந்	:	<i>n</i>	வ்	:	<i>v</i>
ப்	:	<i>p</i>	ம்	:	<i>m</i>	ழ்	:	<i>ḷ</i>
ற்	:	<i>r</i>	ன்	:	<i>ṇ</i>	ள்	:	<i>ḷ</i>

SANSKRIT LETTERS

ஜ்	:	<i>j</i>	ஸ்	:	<i>s</i>
ஷ்	:	<i>ṣ</i>	க்ஷ்	:	<i>kṣ</i>
ஹ்	:	<i>h</i>			





CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction



In chapter one the researcher will introduce the required information for the research which is entitled ‘Reflection of Feminism in the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*’. *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ* is an annual compilation of award winning short stories mooted by the Tamil Language Society of University Malaya, which began in 1986 and proceeded till 2017. So far 32 anthologies have been published. Some of these short stories have feminism as an embedded theme in them. The researcher intends to analyze the inherent aspects of feminism in these stories. The Chapter contains research background, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of research, and limitation of the study, research source, operational definitions and conclusion all in order to assist the researcher.





1.2 Research background

A short story is a piece of prose fiction that typically can be read in one sitting within half an hour. It focuses on a self-contained incident or series of linked incidents, with the intent of evoking a "single effect" or mood. However, there are many exceptions to this. "There is in the short stories at its most characteristic something we do not often find in the novel, an intense awareness of human loneliness," says Frank O' Connor (1962). Rajam Krishnan (1978) says that "A short story can rightly be called a life portrayal... Good poetry is a spontaneous outcome. It is the same in the case of a short story also. In this fast moving time conscious world, people have not got the time to read lengthy narrative stories or poems" (Rajam Krishnan, 1978). The origins of the short story form go back to the myths and biblical verse narratives, medieval sermons and romance, fables, folktales, ballads and the rise of the German Gothic stories in the 18th century (Killick, 2008).

Although English short stories were written between 1790 and 1810, the first collections of short stories appeared in several countries only between 1810 and 1830. The earliest short stories in the United Kingdom were gothic tales like Richard Cumberland's "Remarkable Narrative", and "The Poisoner of Montero's" (1791). The earliest short stories in the United States in 1805 were Charles Brocken Brown's "Somnambulism". Washington Irving wrote mysterious tales like "Rip van Winkle" (1819) and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820). Between 1832 and 1849, Edgar Allan Poe wrote his tales of mystery and imagination. His classic stories were entitled "The Fall of the House of Usher", "The Tell-Tale Heart", "The Cask of Amontillado",





and "The Pit and the Pendulum". He also argued that a literary work should be short enough for a reader to finish in one sitting (Killick, 2008).

In Germany, Heinrich von Kleist wrote the first collection of short stories in 1810 and 1811. The Grimm Brothers who were Germans published their first volume of collected fairy tales in 1812. E.T.A. Hoffmann was a famous 19th-century German literature writer who wrote original fantasy tales, of which "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King" (1816) is the most famous. In France, Prosper Merimee wrote *Mateo Falcone* in 1829 (Killick, 2008).

Such a tradition influenced the Tamil writers to do the same due to English Education in Tamil Nadu during the period of the British rule. This was how short story



05-4506832 writing started flourishing among Tamil speaking writers (Dhandayudham, 1972). bupsi

Examples of earlier compilations of anthologies of short stories in India were: *Alli Arasāni Mālai*, *Pulantirankathai*, *Vīra Abimany*, *Mayil Irāvanan Katai*, *Satakanta Irāvanan Katai*, *Nalla Tanggāl Katai*, and *Aricantiran Katai*. Many researchers admit that the story *Paramārta Guru* by *Vīramāmunivar* (1690-1749) was the first story in Tamil print, which was printed by Chennai Education Society in 1822 (Dhandayudham, 1972).

Malaysian Tamil writing, which originated in the late nineteenth century, depended much on regular periodicals and Tamil dailies, namely *Tamil Necan*, *Tamil Muracu* and *Tamil Malar*, which provided whole Sunday issues for the development of Malaysian Tamil literature. The *Tamil Necan*, enjoying a steady circulation and due





respect from officials and public quarters, consistently fostered the growth of short stories from 1933 onwards (Bala Baskaran, 2006). As far as Tamil Literature in Malaysia is concerned, the after effects of the countries are very clear. The number of students studying Tamil and the number of people entering into the creative fields increased rapidly. Hence, it is no wonder that a new group of young writers entered the literary field. The waves of new thoughts came into the Malaysian Tamil literary field only after this development (Sabapathy, 1996).

In Malaysia, the form of short stories was first witnessed in 1930 when *Ve. Sinniah Pillai* compiled his five fictions in an anthology. But these short stories were very lengthy. Conventions of short stories were also not observed. Much awareness of short stories can be said to have begun only in the 1940s. In fact, during this period, one person who wrote more than a dozen stories in *Tamil Necan*, was *Yuvabaratan*. At the end of 1941, *Tamil Muracu*, published five short stories, which were written by local writers (Dhandayudham, 1972).

Unlike other literary forms, the development of short stories depended on the growth of periodicals. According to Rama Suppiah, "Tamils in Malaysia and Singapore had great enthusiasm for publishing". This resulted in the mushrooming of dailies, weeklies and monthlies in the field of periodicals but withered soon due to lack of funds. Most journals were also not preserved for reference and this seemed to be an obstacle in tracing the history of Tamil Short Stories in Malaysia. According to Murugu Subramaniam (1966), Tamil newspapers, which began production in 1924, took twenty-five years to get the first group of Tamil writers in the field. As A.





Murugian points out in a paper presented to the Malaya writers' conference 1962, the history of Malaysian short stories is only thirteen years. S. Velusamy, in one of his articles, states that Tamil short story writing started only in 1947. But according to V. S. Muthiah (1967), who differs in opinion from all these three, states that short story writing had begun somewhere in the thirties (Bala Baskaran, 2006).

From all these views, it can be assumed that short story writing started somewhere around the late thirties and early forties. Literary activity in the early forties was very little and the Japanese occupation further slowed down this activity. Being friends of the Japanese, the Tamil publication continued with their writings under the scrutinizing eyes of the Japanese. Few magazines and periodicals that existed either directly or indirectly attended to the output of unique situations or became tools for Japanese propaganda. Despite such a unique situation and because overseas Tamil magazines were stopped from being imported more short stories were produced during this period. One of the earliest short story writers, who wrote to *Tamil Necan*, was R. Halashanathan. Once the print tradition began to spread, stories were written in bold prints and distributed. With print, books became popular among readers because they were handy and enjoyable (Bala Baskaran, 2006).

The post war period in Malaysia was considered the period of literary awakening in this country. The Tamil reading public began showing interest in reading creative works and attempting to produce creative writing. '...the Malaysian Tamil newspapers like *Tamil Necan* and *Tamil Muracu* competed with each other to publish





many literary works. It helped to enrich the Malaysian Tamil Literature' (Sabapathy, 1996, p. 11).

Tamil Necan began 'story classes' (*Katai Vakuppu*) in its columns which became a turning point in the history of Malaysian short stories. Following *Tamil Necan*, *Tamil Muracu* also played its role in developing literature by initiating a column called 'Tamil Writers' Club'. Many discussions about modern writing appeared in the papers' columns. In 1955, the then editor Ku. Alagirisamy, who came from India to serve in *Tamil Necan*, used this literary circle as a meeting session for Tamil writers. Through these sessions, writers were trained to write short stories and those who had been trained in these sessions became novelists at a later period. Those who participated in this literary circle were able to produce noteworthy literary works



Following such developments in the short story writing genre, the year 1957 marked another turning point in Malaya. Back in those times, publications of anthologies of short stories began, because writers realized that by publishing their writings, a form of permanency was achieved. Many books, some containing standardized stories, were published. This period also saw many short story writing competitions held and prizes being awarded accordingly. Even today, the local dailies select the best story for each month published in Sunday issues and award prize monies.





Ever since 1986, short story writing competitions have spread their wings to University of Malaya as well, where the Tamils were studying at degree level. This encouraged young writers to participate in short story writing competition. The initial response was somber when the competition was open to the public and to students from the Department of Indian Studies. To further encourage participation, the department announced that prizes would be awarded for good craftsmanship and it was also advertised in the media. Prize winning short stories were published by the Tamil Language Society, University Malaya under the title ‘Anthology of *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*’, and currently it has published its latest anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ* 32, 2017.



The anthology is valued by Tamil classic lovers of the country. The journey to publish the anthology was initiated by Dhandayudham. He was posted to the Department Indian Studies of University Malaya in 1970s as a lecturer for the development of modern Tamil literature by which he was able to contribute creatively towards modern literature in Malaysia. It was his move in 1984 that initiated the birth of the collection of short stories named ‘anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*’ (Bala Baskaran, 2006).

The first step towards initiating a Tamil short story writing competition project was taken in 1982 by the Tamil Language Society’s chairpersons of 1982-1983, and





it was to be an internal affair involving young writers studying in the University of Malaya. However, the systematic planning did not achieve global standards as the published short stories were works of young student writers from the University of Malaya.

To meet the expenditure for the prizes and publication of stories in book form, Dhandayudham advised the Tamil Language Society to look for grants and sponsorships from local well-wishers to generously donate for the good course. Annually, twelve short stories written by local writers and ten stories by the students from the faculty are selected, printed and released in an anthological form. This collection of Tamil literature is still appreciated by lovers of Tamil literature. The attempt became an annual affair jointly organized by the Tamil Language Society of the Department of Indian Studies, University Malaya. According to Md. Affandi

Awang, the Assistant Registrar of Student Affairs:

I believe this anthology of short stories is not only a contribution to Tamil literature in Malaysia, but it also provides an opportunity for university students who have talents and interests to showcase their works in this field (Md. Affandi Awang, 1982, p. 1).

In 1986, the Tamil Language Society officially organized a short story writing competition on a national level. This project took about eight months to be completed in full. The beginning of the competition, though, did not have continuity and was stranded, as the response of the Tamil short story writing competition was not very encouraging.





A total of 129 short stories were received for this short story writing competition (Dhandayudham, 1986). Initially the response was cold, but the number of writers involved was overwhelming, when compared to other short story competitions organized in other parts of the country (Dhandayudham, 1986).

Many themes of the received stories were about the problems of the young Indian community in the 1980s. A total of 12 short stories were chosen as the best short stories and were published. After the publication of the first anthology of Tamil short stories, Tamil Language Society of University Malaya continued to expand its effort in the field of Tamil literature in this country. Till today, 32 anthologies of Tamil short story series have been published since 1986 and the society continues with its effort to publish the future anthologies (Anthology of *Pēravaik Kataikal*, 2017).



The '*Pēravaik Kataikal*' competitions have immensely promoted the development of Tamil Literature in Malaysia. Since then, the numbers of entries received have been very encouraging, even to the point of making the sponsors to donate generously in addition to the cash prizes. For example in 2000, the first winner received an amount of RM2, 000 while the second and third winners received RM 1,500.





1.3 Statement of problem

A statement of the problem is used in research work as a claim that outlines the problem addressed by a study. It briefly addresses the question: What is the problem that the research will address? Problem statements often have three elements: i) the problem itself, stated clearly and with enough contextual detail to establish why it is important; ii) the method of solving the problem; iii) the purpose, statement of objective and scope of the project being proposed (RoK, 2008).

The study will not just examine to what extent the women characters in the short stories bring on their own sufferings or tragedy on themselves, but also explore to what extent other people, especially men, and the society, are responsible for causing their sufferings. It also addressed how the women characters emancipated in order to come to a status.

This study has several objectives. Firstly it aims to critically identify the portrayal of women in the Indian society. Secondly, this study hopes to specify the emancipation of women. Thirdly, this study aims to analyze the status of women in the selected short stories in terms of their integrity and reveal the deep-seated social stereotypes and prejudices against women in the rural Indian women.

While reading through the short stories from the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*, it was noted that the primary concern of the writers has been current themes concerning the socio-economic condition of the women. Plantations





seem to be the center of life of the Tamils, where existed poor condition of the families, and problems arising from existing situations of poverty and take steps to improve their economic status. Some stories deal with human emotions such as trials and tribulations of love affairs and other forms of love. These writers concentrated on women who were only from the middle class of the Indian society, whereas, the upper class is completely left out. The writers could have easily included the upper class women in for their short stories.

Feminism, by definition, involves the belief and action not based only in diverse political theories and principles, but also advocate social changes intended to free women from oppressive social structures; also based on the idea that women's position in society is the result of social, not biological, factors. This includes seeking



to establish educational and professional opportunities for women that are equal to

those for men (Hawkesworth, 2006). Slavery and torture were used as themes in short stories because the authors were trying to explain things in such a way that their writings could create an awareness among their readers. In addition, in order to gain freedom for women, they were portrayed as brave and capable people in their work so as to show that women's emancipation has drawn required attention (Midgley, 1998).

The researcher had explained problems faced by the women folk in the short stories, namely devoted to sentiments of the day such as: problems faced by female childhood in the family, women and motherhood, education for women, working mothers, women's struggle for emancipation within the family, the society and the society's handling of female characters, family and the household, culture values





among women within the family circle, denial of education, women and reproduction, evils of drinking and atrocities on women.

On the whole, it was noticed that the women faced social discrepancies that were imposed on them by the family members, by other women, by children, poverty, marriage, and the society itself. The females were the sacrificing elements in all aspects faced by the Tamil speaking community in Malaysia, especially in the rural areas. Men were expected to live a public life, working in estates, in factories or socializing with friends in public places, like the toddy shops or sundry shops in the estates. On the other hand, women were usually expected to remain mainly at home. They were supposed to cook, clean, do laundry, indulge in child bearing and child rearing. They were not allowed any free time to socialize. Traditionally they were expected to continue working at home related to the maintenance of the family, from patching holes in shirts and pants to helping with the children's school work. Very few women had the same opportunities for education as men (Rajam Krishnan, 1991).

Presently, the trend of increasing female education is definitely increasing in Malaysia (Aminah Ahmad, 2009). Many policies are directed at increasing female education that has been put in place in recent decades. One type of policy involves school infrastructure. Building more schools could be a girl-friendly policy if parents were more sensitive to travel distance when deciding to send girls to schools. Toilets in schools facilitate enrollment of girls. Many developing countries have eliminated school fees for primary schools, which is of great help girls if parents were reluctant





to invest money in their daughter's education (Raja Bentaouet Kattan, Nicholas Burnett, 2004).

Throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century, women fought for equal rights under the law and most importantly for the right to vote. Women were also entirely not allowed political activity especially to vote, and in Great Britain, women were dependent on their husbands for everything. Even when going to public places, they had to be accompanied by their husbands, fathers or brothers (Prema, 1998).

Feminist movement acts to give the females chances to make sure they attain a placing in the society that they can be proud of. This would construct a change for themselves till they achieve all that they dream in their life. The society would accept feminism by allow rights accorded to the males (Prema, 1994).

According to Toril, the words 'feminist' or 'feminism' are political labels indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement which emerged in the late 1960s. She says that a feminist critic can use whichever methods or theories she likes as long as the theory in some way is relevant to the study of the social, institutional and personal power relations between the sexes. It follows that the very fact of being female does not necessarily guarantee a feminist approach. It is just not possible to say that woman centered writings have any necessary relationship to feminism (Toril Moi, 1986).





The short stories selected for the purpose of the study conform to the conservative portrayal of women. The women characters at one point or other in their lives have been the victims of male tyranny. Sometimes their indecisions cause their sufferings. In some other cases they become the silent victims of their own fate or destiny which brings harm to their lives (Prema 1998). This study focuses on such issues. This study also analyses women as individuals rather than mere shadows of men. Though women depend mainly on men for their security, they were still able to assert their own independence and show their capability of proving their own skills in bringing up their children, in partaking in business and in excelling in education (Prema, 1998).

During the research, it was well noticed that short story writers were aware of the necessity to free women from the depth of problems they became prey to. Some short stories depict that with their entry into the wage labor, economic power can break some of the barriers compared to their traditional sisters. This shows that reforms with reasonable success emancipate women towards attaining a positive status.





1.4 Research objectives

This study focuses on the following objectives:

- i) To identify the portrayal of women in the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*.
- ii) To specify the emancipation of women in the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*.
- iii) To analyze the status of women in the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*.

1.5 Research questions



This study focuses on the following research questions:

- i) How are the women portrayed in the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*?
- ii) How is the emancipation of women specified in the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*?
- iii) How is the status of women analyzed in the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*?





1.6 Significance of the research

By doing the study the researcher has been exposed to the application of feminism in Tamil short stories which depict lives of rural women in Malaysia. Most of them work in the estates where basically, they do not get 24-hour water and electricity supply, proper medical care and education for their kids, decent living conditions, and a fair wage. Almost everyone knows that estate kids get poor education. At the same time women were also estimated to have been abused by their partners. Domestic violence was significant as well. The researcher and readers will be enlightened by understanding and realizing the social problems faced by these women in the estates. Discrepancies faced by them are exposed to as many readers as possible so that this research can be used to understand solve problems faced by them in the country. These aspects are found in the selected short stories.

Future researchers will be able to unravel aspects of feminism, found in Tamil short stories written by local authors in Malaysia. Therefore this study gives the readers a clear picture about the lives of rural Indian women in Malaysia.

Future researchers will also be able to apply this research to find out the weaknesses and strengths in other genres of literatures in the country pertaining to feminism. It is also hoped that this study will add on to the collection of research on feminism in short stories written by local writers.



1.7 Limitation of the study

After analyzing the stories from the Anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*, from 1986 till 2008, a span of two decades, in detail, the researcher has limited the selection to short stories which portrayed feminism as a theme. The number of stories selected for the research is only 43.

Anthologies of *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ* short stories had been published for the past thirty two years since 1986. This study is for only twenty three years of publication, i.e. from 1986 till 2008 which involves theories of feminism. The anthologies of *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ* short stories from year 2009 till 2017 are not included. All the 43 short stories, except two were based on cultural feminism. The two exceptional short stories initially had cultural feminism embedded in them, but towards the end of the short story, liberal feminism seeped into it when the wives rebelled against their husbands when they could no longer tolerate the emotional and physical pain inflicted by their husbands. A total of 23 anthologies for the period from 1986 to 2008 were scrutinized to find only 43 short stories that contained the feministic theme.

Table 1.1

Titles of selected short stories

No.	Title of the Story	Writer	Year Published	Anth. Serial No.
1	<i>Avaṇ Avaḷ Ulakam</i>	Pon Muthu	1986	1
2	<i>Eṭṭup Pāsā</i>	Duraisamy Samivel	1988	3
3	<i>Ticai Māriya Paṛavaikaḷ</i>	Ramaiyah.M.	1988	3

(continue)



Table 1.1 (continued)

No.	Title of the Story	Writer	Year Published	Anth. Serial No.
4	<i>Cuyataricaṇam</i>	Velusamy. K.	1992	7
5	<i>Maṇṇil Intak Kātal</i>	Jayaletchumi.M.	1993	8
6	<i>Etirpārpukaḷ</i>	Paavai	1994	9
7	<i>Viṭutalai</i>	Chellaiyah.K.	1994	9
8	<i>Oru Tāi Talaimai Ēṛkirāl</i>	Ramakrishnan.R.	1994	9
9	<i>Tenralum Cuda Vēṇṭum</i>	Thanasegaran.R.M.	1994	9
10	<i>Campaḷam</i>	Radhakrishnan.S.	1995	10
11	<i>Uṇṇāl Muṭiyum Penṇē</i>	Krishnan.R.M.	1995	10
12	<i>Pātukai</i>	Sai Peer Muhammathu	1996	11
13	<i>Āṇanti</i>	Veerasami.N.	1996	11
14	<i>Maṇacukkuḷ Oru Vēḷvi</i>	Sumeethan.P	1996	11
15	<i>Etirpārppukaḷ</i>	Parvathi Subramaniam	1999	14
16	<i>Eṇakkāka</i>	Paavai	1999	14
17	<i>Vērkalai Tēṭum Viḷutukaḷ</i>	Ramaiyah.Ma.	1999	14
18	<i>Cīrai</i>	Punniyavan.K.	2000	15
19	<i>Tolaintu Pōṇa Mukavarikaḷ</i>	Gandhi.K	2000	15
20	<i>Mayakkam</i>	Kalyani.N.	2000	15
21	<i>Niḷal Tēṭum Pātaikaḷ</i>	Packiam.K	2001	16
22	<i>Vētaṇaiyiṇ Muṭivu</i>	Thilagarani Balaraman	2001	16
23	<i>Viṭiyal Veku Tūramillai</i>	Tamilarsi Thangavelu	2001	16
24	<i>Karuvarai Vaḷakkukaḷ</i>	Shanmugam.K.	2001	16
25	<i>Malaiyum Kaṭukāka</i>	Mathiyazagan.K.	2001	16
26	<i>Taḷir Onṛu Taṭukkappaṭukiratu</i>	Kalyani Maniam.N.	2002	17
27	<i>Virāṇkaṇai</i>	Kannan.K.S.	2003	18
28	<i>Muṭivillāp Payaṇam</i>	Poovarasi.P.	2003	18
29	<i>Vēlaikkāri</i>	Amutha Subramaniam	2004	19
30	<i>Laṭciyam Niṇivērumā</i>	Allimalar Manogaran	2004	19
31	<i>Uyir Vācaṇai</i>	Nila Vannan	2004	19
32	<i>Uruttal</i>	Bama.S.P.	2004	19
33	<i>Kuḷaṇtai Inṇam</i>	Rajeswari V	2004	19
34	<i>Ammā</i>	Thilagawathi	2005	20
35	<i>Avaḷukkoru Maṇam</i>	Yuvarajah	2005	20
36	<i>Eṇṇa Tappu Colluṇka</i>	Jeeva mani	2006	21
37	<i>Paḷlikku Nēramācu</i>	Thiyagarajah	2007	22

(continue)





Table 1.1 (continued)

No.	Title of the Story	Writer	Year Published	Anth. Serial No.
38	<i>Karuppāyi Makuṇṭaiya Peṭṭi</i>	Balamurugan.K.	2007	22
39	<i>Antalu Eṇ Puraṣaṇilla</i>	Gunasegaran	2007	23
40	<i>Teḷinta Ōṭaiyil</i>	Indira Manoharan	2008	23
41	<i>Batik Kailiyum Pūppōṭṭa Tāvaṇiyum</i>	Gunavathi Veeraiyah	2008	23
42	<i>Viṭṭil Pūcikaḷ</i>	Athilethumi.P.	2008	23
43	<i>Avaḷum Viṭukaḷum</i>	Karunakaran.M	2008	23

Source: Anthology of *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ* 1986-2008

1.8 Research source

Research ideas and findings are found in books, journals, technical reports, and a variety of other media. There is a distinction between primary and secondary sources.

‘Primary sources published research studies whereas Secondary sources publish integrative reviews of broad areas of research’ (Graziano, 1932, p. 379).

1.8.1 Primary data source

Firstly, primary data collection is data collected by the researcher herself, and not by a third party. It provides direct or first-hand information about an event, object, person, or work of art. The sources include historical and legal documents, eyewitness accounts, and results of experiments, statistical data, pieces of creative writing, audio and video recordings, speeches, and art objects. Interviews, surveys, fieldwork, and





internet communications via email, blogs, and newsgroups are also primary sources. The results of empirical studies are typically found in scholarly articles or papers delivered at conferences. The data collected is the raw information that can be tailored according to the needs (Boba, 2005). Books can also function as primary sources. The primary source pertaining to cultural feminism is a journal entitled *Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory* (Linda Martin Alcoff, 1988).

1.8.2 Secondary data source

Secondary data is data collected by someone else for some other purpose (Hodges & Videto, 2005). Examples of references made through printed media are books and periodicals, government sources, regional publications, commercial sources. Other than that, selected internet sites are some examples of secondary data sources. Serials may also include book reviews, editorials, and review articles. Review articles summarize research on a particular topic, but do not present any new findings; therefore they are considered secondary sources. Their bibliographies however can be used to identify primary sources.

Secondary data was collected by the researcher, mainly from e-government related articles published in both the print and electronic media. Numerous journals were referred for this purpose for example, Journal of Indian Studies U.M., Journal of Classical Tamil and Tamil Malaysiana. Apart from that, proceedings from conferences





were also collected, especially those related to feminism and history of short stories, for example, SSEAR Conference on Waters in South and South East Asia: Interaction and Religion (3rd - 6th Jun 2009: Bali, Indonesia) Paper 1 (11p). Research was carried out in the library in detail to gather facts about history of short stories in Malaysia, *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ* and about feminism.

1.9 Operational definition

The researcher has used some definitions for the research such as Feminism, Portrayal, Emancipation, Status, Short Stories and Anthology of *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*.



1.9.1 Feminism

Chris Beasley provides clear explanations of the many types of feminism. Feminist theory focuses on analyzing gender inequality. Feminism helped women get the vote, obtain equal rights for jobs, made laws to control domestic violence, help women obtain the rights to own property, to divorce, to have access to birth control and to have possession of their own bodies (Chris, 2004).

Feminism is a doctrine that advocates equal rights for women. Feminist theories first emerged as early as 1792 in publications such as *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft (1792). Feminist theory which is





established from feminist movements aims to understand the gender inequality and socio cultural role of women and stop it from continuing. It is aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for women. It is also the movement towards the social, political and economic equality of all people. This includes seeking to establish equal opportunities for women in education and employment. In general, feminists point out that in most cultures throughout history men have received more opportunities than women (Jagger, 1998).

The history of the feminist movement underwent three waves. The first wave emerged in the late 19th century involving the middle class women in developed countries who underwent suffrage and political inequality. The second wave focused on issues mainly battling against social and economic equality of women. Post colonialism movement was along with third wave feminism representing different ethnicities, nationalities, religion and cultural backgrounds, focusing on issues such as gender violence and reproductive rights (Alcoff, 1988).

Within the women's movement there have been three major ideological positions described as Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism and Social Feminism. Margaret Fuller contributed to cultural feminism (1845). Cultural feminism developed from radical feminism and, holds many opposing views, such as, proposing an ideology of a "female nature" or "female essence" that attempts to revalidate what it considers to under value female attributes (Linda Martin Alcoff, 1988). Cultural feminism is also a theory that commends the difference of women from men and is





reflected alongside Liberal and Social Feminism in local literature, such as *Pēravaik Kataika!* (Mandell, 1998).

Cultural Feminism differs in the study on women's position, power, causes of subordination and subjugation and their argument and strategies for equality. This can be seen in India, when the theory of women's rights acquired a new significance with the movement for independence, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. If India were to be successful and recapture her past glory, Indian womanhood which constituted half the population would have to be educated and contribute its share to the shaping of the destinies of the nation. Hence Indian leaders advocated female education and freedom of women in the social, economic and political fields (Desai, 1948).



Original Cultural Feminists like Jane Adams (1860–1935) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) argued that moral goodness in women's characters and behavior emphasized caring, cooperation, respecting child care in the home. These two women had Cultural Feminism in their literary works. They claim that the male power that was brutal needed female perspectives. They also claimed cooperation, compassion and nonviolence of females would settle social disputes.

It was Linda Martin Alcoff (1988), the modern Cultural Feminist, who argued in "Cultural Feminism Versus Post-Structuralism: the Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory" that led to the widespread adoption of the term to describe contemporary feminists, not their historical antecedents. Alcoff claims cultural feminism places





women in an overly determined position by what she sees as patriarchal systems. She contends that: Man has said that woman can be defined, delineated, captured, understood, explained, and diagnosed to a level of determination never accorded to himself, who is conceived as a rational animal with free will (Alcoff 1988).

Alcoff (1988) makes the point that “the cultural feminist reappraisal construes woman's passivity as her peacefulness, her sentimentality as her proclivity to nurture, her subjectiveness as her advanced self-awareness” (Alcoff, 1988). This was what the female characters portray in these short stories. Other feminist theories would not be apt to discuss about reflection of feminism in these short stories for the research.

Naturally, these movements for the progress of Indian womanhood were reflected in literature- of the different languages in India. Similarly, Malaysian Tamil story writers, influenced by the Indian writers, also followed their counterparts to include feminism in their stories (Sabapathy, 1996).

1.9.2 Portrayal

In Greek mythology, a person sees that women's rights were very limited and that women were not allowed to express much of their freedom. The women of medieval times were more frank and sexual where the ideal of femininity was Mary, the mother of Jesus (Warner, 1975). The Elizabethan literature looked at woman not as a person but as a necessity for the purpose of producing children. During the Victorian time



women were still in a subjugated and exploited role despite their desire to be freed from society's restrictions. Women's role in the 20th Century literature led them to develop into strong independent roles (Warner, 1975).

Portrayal in this present research is similar to image which is formed in the mind of a human being (Safian Husin, 1988). He also explains that it is like a picture through the lens of a camera. A portrayal is described in a literary work through the use words, phrases in a poem, a book, or a film. (Safian Husin, 1988).

According to Ezra Pound in *Theory of Literature* (1970, p. 216), portrayal reflects the complex feelings of the writer used to capture the interest of the reader.

J.A. Cuddon, 1979), says that portrayal appeals to our senses through the following

An image may be visual (pertaining) to the eye, olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), auditory (hearing), gustatory (taste), abstract (in which case it will appeal to what may be described as the intellect) and kinesthetic pertaining to the sense of movement and bodily effort (Cuddon, 1979, p. 323).

C. Hugh Holman also suggests that image is an abstract that can be evaluated through the senses pertaining to the five senses (Holman & Thrall, 1960, p. 232). Mary Anne Ferguson reflects portrayal through the works of western literary work. She classifies portrayal into different levels of female characters in the literary work such as, mother, wife, daughter, teenager, daughter, a sexual symbol and domestic help. Among them they are portrayed as negative and positive characters (Ferguson, 1991, p. 9). Some of



these different levels of woman characters are being studied by the researcher in this research.

1.9.3 Emancipation

The rise of the emancipation of women is its connection with the movement to abolish slavery. This connection is captured in the moving words of Abb Kelley Foster (1811-1887) an early emancipist. In speaking of the oppression under which women lived, she wrote referring to the work to end slavery, ‘In striving to strike off his chains, we found most surely we were chained ourselves’ (Sterling, 1992).



just happen – nor is it universal, even today. In fact, women continue to struggle for equality, whether in access to decision making, equal wages, freedom in society or access to education, depending on the country. No part of the world can be said to have attained the equality of men and women. For thousands of years women have been oppressed by all societies. And for two hundred years women (and men) worked for the emancipation of women. Many are still working to achieve a more equal world for women (Anderson, 1983).

Women’s Liberation or Women’s Rights or Feminism are terms used for movements to free women. To be emancipated is to be free socially, politically, or legally (Bullon, 2006, p. 509). Synonyms in Thesaurus declare emancipation as





to free from restraint, influence, or the like. They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life.

According to Haron Din, (1988), freedom rights mean freedom to talk, think, to voice out basic rights that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death etc. Every woman should be aware of rights to be able to emancipate herself within the society (Haron Din, 1988).

1.9.4 Status

‘Status’ of a person is a terminology that refers to a person’s social or professional rank



or position, considered in relation to other people. The status of something is a situation

at a particular time, especially in an argument or discussion (Bullon, 2006). Social status, is the relative rank that an individual holds, with attendant rights, duties, and lifestyle, in a social hierarchy based upon honor or prestige.

1.9.5 Short story

“Short story, as a branch of narrative fiction, is an exacting and demanding form that essentially requires unity, brevity and density. A short story writer has the widest freedom of choosing a theme compared to a novel writer” (Bala Baskaran, 2006. p. 1).





A short story is a fictional work of prose which is shorter in length than a novel. It is considered as a powerful literary form invented by human culture. Edgar Allan Poe (1846), in his essay "The Philosophy of Composition," said that a short story should be read in one sitting, anywhere from a half hour to two hours. In contemporary fiction, a short story can range from 1,000 to 20,000 words (Edgar Allan Poe, 1846).

A short story usually focuses on one plot, one main character (with a few additional minor characters) and one central theme, because of the shorter length, contrary to a novel which can tackle multiple plots and themes, with a variety of prominent characters. Short stories also lend themselves more to experimentation that is, using uncommon prose styles or literary devices to tell the story. Such uncommon styles or devices might get tedious and downright annoying, in a novel, but they may work well in a short story (Sabapathy, 1980, p. 1).

1.9.6 Anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*

The anthology of *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ* is a literary collection of prize winning short stories in Malaysia by the Department of Indian Studies, University Malaya. Since 1986 prize winning short stories are published annually by the University Malaya's Department of Indian Studies under the title 'Anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*'. 32 anthologies of Tamil short story series have been published so far, and the council continues with its efforts to publish the future anthologies, and currently it has published its latest anthology for the year 2017.





1.10 Conclusion

Selected stories in *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ* depict real characters of women and problems faced by them in real life. Traditionally, the women worked at home on chores related to the maintenance of the family. Their daily chores were in the form of cooking, cleaning, doing laundry. Apart from that what they cared about was child bearing and child rearing and they were not allowed any free time for socializing. Generally speaking, women had little voice in the conduct of their lives. In their younger days they were under the control of their fathers and brothers and later they depended on their husbands, who were all males. They consented to all decisions that made by them. They became attached to sentiments of old customs and beliefs and were limited to exposure to new ideas. They were also happy and contented staying within their orbits expressing that they had no ambition beyond the home and family. Some of these problems are reflected in the anthology of short stories *Pēravaik Kataikaḷ*.

Therefore, the researcher finds that this study is important as it exposes feminism in the works of short stories as well as gives the readers a clear picture about the lives of Indian women, especially lives of the Tamil women in rural Malaysia. Next, the researcher also hopes this study will encourage, especially the new generation, to make it as a guide to the knowledge of everyday life of Tamil women and not to condemn them for reasons of triviality.

