

Human Emotions in Narrative: Interventions of Fear in R. Chudamani's Short Fictions

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Abstract—Chudamani is one of the inconspicuous writers in Indian literature who is gradually gaining prominence in the recent past. Chudamani's works are powerful and sensitive unveiling the reality of human beings in society and their psychological aspects. This research article aims to analyse a novella and three short stories of R. Chudamani and inquires about the human emotions especially fear portrayed in those stories. The major focus of the article is on the novella, *Yamini*, and the minor focus is on the three short stories: "A Knock at the Door", "The Strands of the Void" and "Drought". *Yamini* is the story of a girl Yamini, who is forced into the institution of marriage. "A Knock at the Door" is the narrative of two widows who safeguard their sister's son from his father. "The Strands of the Void" explores the system of dowry in Indian society. "Drought" is the story of a married woman who tries to escape from the torments of her husband. This paper also scrutinizes the fear in the protagonists and the central characters in the above works. It also inspects how fear transmogrifies the characters in different situations.

Index Terms—emotions fear, hatred, novella, psyche, short stories

I. INTRODUCTION

R. Chudamani is a Tamil short story writer and a novelist who has contributed numerous literary works in both Tamil and English and most of her works are translated into many languages. She has achieved mastery in the genre of short stories by penning several emotive and sensitive short stories. She creates an amalgamation of her protagonists' personal and social lives in her writings and encapsulates the psyche of human beings in her fiction. Chudamani's *Yamini*, "A Knock at the Door", "The strands of the Void", and "Drought" are the short fictions taken up for the study. She has intensified the emotions and sentiments in these works. Moreover, Chudamani has also intertwined the psychological instincts of the characters in all these works. She uncovers the psyche of men and women characters in these short stories and the novella and leads the readers towards an emotional state through her fiction.

Emotions play a primitive role in the lives of human beings. There are different kinds of emotions depending upon the situations experienced by the individuals in their personal and social life. Johnson-Laird and Oatley (2016) state "Emotions appear to be common to all social mammals. Human emotions, however, are unique in their connection to music and literature—the arts" (p.82). Happiness, sorrow, fear, and anger are the inherent emotions in human lives which are delineated by authors in their writings and that is well evident in the literary works of Chudamani. Specifically, this article scrutinizes the notion of fear in the above-selected fiction. Generally, of all these emotions fear plays a vital role in the lives of human beings which either perishes them or teaches them the mechanism of defence. In the book *Handbook of Emotions*, LaBar (2016) defines fear as "... a negatively valenced emotion elicited in response to an impending threat that motivates a defensive reaction to protect the organism. In humans, fear is accompanied by a subjective sense of apprehension or, in more intense situations, dread" (p.751). Fritscher (2022) has rightly said,

Fear is a natural, powerful, and primitive human emotion. It involves a universal biochemical response as well as a high individual emotional response. Fear alerts us to the presence of danger or the threat of harm, whether that danger is physical or psychological. (Fitscher, 2022, para. 1)

II. YAMINI

Yamini was published as *Iravuchudar* in Tamil in 1996 and was translated by Vasantha Surya into English. In *Yamini*, Chudamani displays the three generations of women from the same family in Tamil society. *Yamini* is a kind of bildungsroman in which Yamini, the protagonist is dead long before the narrative begins. Chudamani opens up the story with Yamini's mother Perundevi and subsequently introduces the other characters in the narrative. The author has textured the story with shifts of Yamini in the past and her daughter Geetha in the present. She has amalgamated and contrasted both the characters in a few chapters. Chudamani has portrayed how parental love and care disrupt the life of Yamini and the same parents of Yamini undergo a transformation in the case of their granddaughter, Geetha.

Chudamani delineates the protagonist Yamini and other central characters including Saaranathan, Perundevi, and Geetha in a state of fear throughout the novella. Yamini experiences different types of fear in her life. Although Yamini is depicted as a normal girl, in the beginning, she appears to be weird to her parents because she insulates herself and endures solitude and darkness. She never seeks companions and from her childhood, she abhors physical touch that can be perceived when she plays with other children; suddenly she goes off from the game without any reason. She tells her mother that she dislikes touching. On questioning the reason for that kind of attitude, she answers “ ‘You have to keep touching others when you play hide and seek, Amma.’ ‘My, you’re high and mighty! What’s so bad about touching?’ ‘I don’t like it. I don’t like to touch, nor do I like others to touch me.’ Perundevi stood transfixed” (Chudamani, 1996, p.27).

Secondly, Yamini got entangled in the fear of marriage. On the other hand, the very opening of the discussion of Yamini’s marriage clenched her in the grip of fear and made her retort. Perundevi wanted her daughter to get married off and live a fulfilled life as a married woman in a conservative Tamil society. Yamini’s fear is clearly reflected in her resistance to marriage “Amma, I’m not saying it in that ordinary way! I mean it! I hate the very thought of marriage, I feel revolted! It’s as though I’m being asked to die!” (Chudamani, 1996, p.25) unable to thwart her marriage, Yamini struggles and dissolves “into the speechless language of tears” (Chudamani, 1996, p.26). At this juncture, Yamini’s father Saaranathan tries to comfort her by caressing but she shrinks away from him in fear. Perundevi feels that Yamini’s “nature had remained unchanged” (Chudamani, 1996, p.27) ever since her childhood. The hatred of Yamini towards the touch, companions, and marriage takes the shape of fear in her. A study states how fear shifts into different reactions:

The emotion hate (also referred to as “immediate hate”; Halperin et al., 2012) is much more urgent and occurs in response to significant events that are appraised as so dramatic that they lead to the kind of appraisals (e.g., “the outgroup is evil by nature”) and motivations (e.g., “I would like it to be destroyed”) that are usually associated with hatred. This intense feeling is often accompanied by unpleasant physical symptoms and a sense of fear and helplessness (Sternberg, 2003, 2005). It provokes a strong desire for revenge, a wish to inflict suffering, and, at times, desired annihilation of the outgroup.” (Fischer et al., 2011, p.312)

Perundevi fixes Yamini’s marriage with her brother’s son Rameshan. Yamini shows her repudiation by escaping from the house a week before marriage but she is brought back home by police. Perundevi gets Yamini married assuming that she will change after the marriage. On the other hand, Yamini’s situation gets worsened as Vishnu Priya (2008) points out that “she is pushed into the clutches of womanhood and motherhood, which make her insane” (p.11). She returns to her natal home within a few days of marriage, saying that she won't stay there. She screams “ ‘I won’t! I can’t! I don’t like it! I’m afraid... I hate it...’ Her voice becomes ‘ragged, tore into sobs’” (Chudamani, 1996, p.33). The writer depicts how pregnancy adds fuel to fire by aggravating her fear by provoking her to try to get aborted by attempting “four or five times to abort the child by her own efforts, on the occasion outside the house and sometimes indoors” (Chudamani, 1996, p.37). In the case of Yamini, marriage is the triggering factor of her fear which makes her act insane.

After the birth of the child, Geetha, Yamini behaves more bizarrely. Rameshan tells Perundevi that the doctor has declared that Yamini has a psychological problem. Chudamani shows the psychological problem of Yamini implicitly in the novelette rather than discussing it explicitly. As Asif et al. (2020) comment “In a forced marriage, a person is forced to marry against her/his wishes. The motives behind such marriages can vary from case to case” (p.7). In the case of Perundevi the motive is very simple and clear. As a normal mother, she wants to see her daughter settled in a happy married life. But the problem is that she has not understood the fact that Yamini is not a normal girl. Right from her childhood, she had some psychological problem which was not addressed properly by her parents. As she grew up, the problem got intensified and she hated the concept of marriage and motherhood to the core. Yamini’s behaviour frequently varies, sometimes she cries, laughs, screams & shouts. As LaBar puts it, “Fear is typically associated with a specific elicitor. Although fear responses evolved in situations of imminent physical harm, such as predator-prey interactions, fear triggers in humans are often more psychological in nature” (LaBar, p.751). Yamini is hospitalized by her parents for her recovery, for a few days, she behaves normal but gets restored to the same weird behaviour later. The very sight of her husband Rameshan and child Geetha triggers her fears and she behaves abnormally. Again, she gets admitted and comes back from the hospital. Even when she is under the control of her parents, she tries to commit suicide but is saved with help of others. She is locked in a separate room. Yamini is close to her father compared to her mother. Looking at the declining condition of Yamini after marriage, Saaranathan becomes more anxious and starts worrying if he had wronged Yamini by forcing her into the institution of marriage. Saaranathan admits his mistakes and apologizes “My Child, my Yamini, is this for your fate after all? We’ve done this to you together. Destroyed you” (Chudamani, 1996, p.39). Fear grips Saaranathan before Yamini’s death and makes him doubt if he has taken the right decision in his daughter’s life. The concept of marriage and motherhood instigates fear in Yamini. The reason was that she was forced into the institution of marriage much against her wishes.

Perundevi is another central character in this novella who is gripped by fear. Perundevi gets Yamini married but Yamini’s violent behaviour frightens her a lot. Not understanding the psychological condition of Yamini, Perundevi ushers her into the shackles of marriage which provokes Yamini to commit suicide. After Yamini’s death, her daughter Geetha becomes the lifeline of Perundevi. But this again evokes a kind of fear in Perundevi when she compares

Geetha's present to Yamini's past. Since Perundevi doesn't want Yamini's past to be repeated in Geetha's life, she wants Geetha to be "a much-loved wife, as a fine mature woman, the head of household, who radiates happiness" (Chudamani, 1996, p.23). Perundevi experiences fear more than any other person in the novella. The return of Geetha from the pilgrimage and the changes in her behaviour thrust Perundevi into an awkward state. Especially Perundevi gets frightened when Geetha chants the names of Gods and the holy places. Perundevi apprehends whether she will also follow in the footsteps of her mother in a different way. Furthermore, Perundevi compares Yamini and Geetha in her mind observing Geetha's behaviour. Yamini's death has created a larger impact on Perundevi. Hence frightened to hear something adverse from Geetha, she never takes up the subject of marriage in front of Geetha. Seeing the deviation of both her daughter and her granddaughter from the normal mode of behaviour triggers fear in Perundevi.

Geetha is a contrasting character to Yamini. Geetha socializes with everyone whereas Yamini secluded herself from everyone. Like other characters, Geetha is also conquered by fear, at the very thought of revealing her love affair to her father and grandparents. She is frightened about whether her father and grandparents will agree to her marriage or not. Moreover, she tries to reveal her love initially with a "serious and unsmiling" expression "Amma, I'm going to tell you something very important" (Chudamani, 1996, p.24). Geetha is unable to disclose this matter to anyone. She keeps the secret in her mind for a long time and behaves strangely by sitting in a pooja room and "long drawn-out of rituals of worship and prayer" (Chudamani, 1996, p.24). It is the element of fear that makes Geetha behave in such a strange manner. The very thought of expressing her love affair to her family instigates fear in Geetha. At one stage Geetha unveils herself in front of everyone as "I am in love with someone, ..." (Chudamani, 1996, p.62). The family accepts her love and this liberates Geetha from the clutches of fear.

An analysis of the above characters portrays how fear is the predominant emotion in the novella *Yamini*. A detailed analysis of the protagonist Yamini portrays how her attitude of detachment from everyone instigates fear in her. Yamini's parents never understand her thoughts and problems when she resists marriage. Moreover, Yamini's thoughts and desires are unheeded by her parents which instils fear into Yamini and induces Yamini to commit suicide. The next character Saaranathan experiences fear just before Yamini's death. On seeing the pathetic condition of Yamini after her marriage he regrets that he has wronged Yamini by thrusting her into the institution of marriage. This regret later turns into fear. He fears that he wronged Yamini's life by remaining silent and not supporting her. Though it was Saaranathan who allowed Yamini to commit suicide by setting her free. Yamini's death creates a huge impact on his life. He understood Yamini after her death and isolated himself from the rest of the family in atonement for the wrong he had done to his daughter. He waited for a chance to bring a change in the life of Geetha if she wanted to go the way of Yamini but Geetha had a different plan. His unfulfilled desire of making atonement by supporting Geetha persuaded him to commit suicide. The characters Perundevi and Geetha are also gripped into fear as others. All through the novella, Perundevi experiences fear of both Yamini's behaviour till her death and later Geetha's behaviour. This fear gets intensified by looking at the eccentric behaviour of Geetha. So, she feels relieved when Geetha divulges her love and exclaims "This was the real reason... what a girl, to let me imagine such terrible things" (Chudamani, 1996, p.66). Perundevi's desire gets fulfilled with Geetha's marriage. The reason for Geetha's fear is her love and her doubts about whether her orthodox family will accept her love or not. Later the acceptance of love by her family makes her happy. Here, the fear of Perundevi and Geetha gets vanishes whereas the fear of Saaranathan and Yamini drives them off to death.

III. "A KNOCK AT THE DOOR"

"A Knock at the Door" is the tale of two widows who safeguard their nephew from his father. The story revolves around Nilamani, Vasanti, Gopi, and Somasundaram. It displays the feelings of love, affection, and care of "two childless widows" (Chudamani, 1991a, p.9) on Gopi whose mother Radha died when he was six months old. She committed suicide because of her husband Somasundaram who doubts on "parentage" (Chudamani, 1991a, p.9) of his son Gopi and Somasundaram abandons Gopi. From that moment, Gopi is under the care of Nilamani and Vasanti and he becomes their "*raison d'être*" (Chudamani, 1991a, p.9). They show enormous love for Gopi and plan to fulfil his dreams. The story evinces the fear of the characters Nilamani and Vasanti. These two characters experience fear in different situations. They experience fear for the first time when Gopi reveals the fact that his father has met him in school. He announces with excitement to Nilamani and Vasanti that "Father came to see me today. My father" (Chudamani, 1991a, p.9). On hearing this both get scared and they doubt if Gopi will go away from them. Later Vasanti fondly enquires Gopi about what has happened in the school when Gopi narrates everything. Nilamani gets scared furthermore and vociferates as:

"*Appa appa appa!* What do you mean by that?" Nilamani burst out, 'How do you know he is your appa? Some loafer comes visiting you at school after all these years and immediately you start raving about *appa*. *Appa!* Could be a child lifter all we know. Hereafter, if any stranger comes asking to see you, you are to say No, d' you hear?" (Chudamani, 1991a, p.10)

This reflects how fear in Nilamani gets intensified as she feels that Somasundaram will take away Gopi with him. Moreover, the fear of separation can be perceived in both Nilamani and Vasanti. Vasanti experiences fear in a few situations initially when Gopi questions as "How did *appa* know that I like Eclairs?" and this brings a sudden "jolt" and "she was afraid" (Chudamani, 1991a, p.10).

Fear intensifies in the minds of Nilamani and Vasanti and they both escort Gopi to school till the bus arrives, and after that Vasanti leaves for work. But in the case of Nilamani fear grips her constantly as she often watches the gate to check the safe return of Gopi. On his arrival, she hugs him, “with fervour stroking his face, his hair” (Chudamani, 1991a, p.11). While observing this, Vasanti empathizes with Nilamani and she decides not to leave Gopi, come whatever may. Then Vasanti is also scared on her return from the office thoughtful of the kind of scenario she has to face at home. Even when all the three are at home, both the sisters stay in the grip of fear “They latched and bolted the front door” (Chudamani, 1991a, p.11). A letter from Somasundaram, in which he apologizes for his past behaviour and his request to send Gopi with him instigates fear in Nilamani. After reading this letter she is unable to tolerate it and screams “That is precisely what you denied, you cad when you forsook the baby!” and “Where does the relationship suddenly spring from now” (Chudamani, 1991a, p.11).

Nilamani’s fear makes her act weirdly and she is unable to imagine a life without Gopi. The same fear grapples Vasanti after her return from work. She starts to read the letter handed over by Nilamani and gets frightened and “she stared down at the floor, the letter burning into her fingers. Without looking up she moves a hand and grasped her sister’s” (Chudamani, 1991a, p.12). Suddenly they indulge in a discussion on the issue. Nilamani screams and asks what right Somasundaram has on Gopi. Vasanti retorts in a feeble voice “It is his son, *akka*” (Chudamani, 1991a, p.12). This reply turns Nilamani crazy and she screams “What do you mean? Gopi is *our* child *We* raised him” (Chudamani, 1991a, p.12). This sudden change of behaviour in Nilamani is the result of her fear of losing Gopi. Vasanti discloses the matter to Gopi that Somasundaram has written a letter to them asking them to send Gopi with him. On hearing this, Gopi’s face revived. It silently displays that Gopi yearns for the love of his father but Nilamani and Vasanti are determined not to hand over Gopi to Somasundaram. The real reason is not only Somasundaram’s past treatment of their sister but also their affection for Gopi who has become the sole purpose of their life.

Nilamani is so affectionate towards Gopi that she cannot tolerate Gopi’s shrinking away from her on her questioning if he would go away abandoning them. Then Vasanti consoles Nilamani and both try to appease their pain. Suddenly “A knock at the front door” (Chudamani, 1991a, p.12) petrifies them. They suspect that it is Somasundaram, who has come back to take away his son, the apple of their eye. The fear of Nilamani and Vasanti can be noticed here as:

They stared at each other with eyes wide with panic. Vasanti rose slowly, her legs almost giving way under her. She staggered towards the door. She hesitated for a moment. Her heart fluttered wildly. Her hand shook over the bolt, unable to grip. Finally, she managed to draw the bolt back. She opened the door. (Chudamani, 1991a, p.12)

The fear in Vasanti is exhibited in her abnormal behaviour. She opens the door and sees that it is the man who has come to refill the gas, she feels relaxed and locked the door. The narrative ends with “The two sisters relieved. And relieved they would continue to feel till the next time someone should knock at the door” (Chudamani, 1991a, p.12). The very thought of abandonment stirs up fear in Nilamani and Vasanti.

On examining the two sisters in the narrative “A Knock at the Door” who shower love, care, and affection on the boy, we can conclude that fear is the predominant emotion throughout the story until the end. Both Nilamani and Vasanti are equally affectionate towards Gopi and want to struggle to retain him with them. But at one point Vasanti gives up whereas Nilamani continues to resist. The reason for this resistance is the fear of separation. They both try not to give away the boy to his father. The fear intensifies after the meeting of Gopi with Somasundaram. The affection of Nilamani and Vasanti for the boy turns into fear when his father meets him. The fear of abandonment occupies the mind of Nilamani and Vasanti. In the book *Overcoming Our Relationship Fears*, the fear of abandonment is outlined as:

After having connected emotionally or bonded with someone, we fear being either abandoned with our own needs or being swallowed up by the other person’s. In either case, we feel the world is not a dependable place; that we live in danger of emotional abandonment. We may become clingy and dependent or we may become super-independent—or both. (Hedges, 2012, pp.107-108)

Contrary to Nilamani and Vasanti, Gopi feels excited about meeting his father at school. This displays the yearning of a son to live with his father. Somasundaram also realizes his mistake of ill-treating his wife Radha and apologizes to Nilamani and Vasanti for the same. But Nilamani and Vasanti never forgive him. They are frightened that his father will take him away. Here, fear is dominant in Nilamani and Vasanti. It is an open-ended story which allows readers to wonder about the condition of the two sisters in the future.

IV. “THE STRANDS OF THE VOID”

The narrative “The Strands of the Void” displays the system of dowry and the bond between a father and a daughter. Mukta is the protagonist in the story who is a married woman who has come back to her natal home due to the torments in her marital home. The narrative invokes the emotion of fear in the characters. The story mainly focuses on two characters Mukta and her father. As a narrator Mukta’s father witnesses Mukta and recounts the behavioural changes in the recent past “Mukta, skin and bone, a line-sketch of beauty; my daughter; she who used to speak a lot and laugh uproariously. Not anymore. Now she talked only when necessary and smiled for courtesy’s sake” (Chudamani, 1991b, p.143).

Mukta experiences fear in several situations. Even she doesn’t divulge the reason for her coming back from her marital home. When her father enquires her if she has not slept, she replies that “Appa. If I sit near you, I feel secure”

(Chudamani, 1991b, p.144). This reflects the kind of intense fear that has overtaken Mukta. On knowing the pain of Mukta, her father also gets engulfed in fear. He comprehends and perceives Mukta's fear and says "My daughter was afraid, and I was miserable watching her. This was all the truth" (Chudamani, 1991b, p.144). He also spontaneously thinks of his daughter's life and introspects to identify the problem in Mukta's life. He questions his wife "What was it? Fear? Grief? Anxiety?" (Chudamani, 1991b, p.151). Apart from this, Mukta wants to stay in her natal home forever. The fear of her in-laws & husband provokes her to take such a decision. She discloses her decision to her father saying "Amma tells me that I should return to my husband's place soon. I...I am not going *Appa*" (Chudamani, 1991b, p.152).

On the other hand, Mukta also hides the actual reason for the scar on the palm because she is concerned that her parents cannot tolerate it. Initially, she says that it has befallen due to mishandling the vessel. Later she reveals the truth that the scar was the result of the bedevilment of her mother-in-law and her two sisters-in-law. When her father inquired if her husband hadn't opposed it, she reveals that he was also a part of the game and it was he who handed over the burning cinders to his mother. This makes Mukta's father quiver and his fear gets intensified. He loses his faith and confidence in God since the very thought of Mukta makes him tremble in fear. At one stage, Mukta discloses the reason for the abuse as dowry. Through the character of Mukta, the writer has delineated the prevalence of the system of dowry. Teays (1991) rightly comments "The dowry system and the consequent dowry problem grew out of a complex social situation; the dowry system is bolstered by tradition, mythology, and religion and is treated cursorily by the legislature, police and courts" (p.7). Mukta is determined not to go back to her marital home. Mukta's father also realizes the situation and supports his daughter, "Their surmise is that I will make you send me back with plenty of money-somehow -out of fear that I will be subjected again to the same treatment..." (Chudamani, 1991b, p.153). The physical assault by her in-laws instigates fear in Mukta to alienate from her marital home.

In the end, Mukta incessantly keeps saying that she will not go to her marital home and declares that "Not only now. But forever" (Chudamani, 1991b, p.154). Mukta's fear of her in-laws makes her take this decision. It discloses her insecure feeling in her marital home. Finally, Mukta's decision is accepted by her father "Don't worry, Mukta. You needn't go back there again. We'll pull along somehow. The world doesn't end with this" (Chudamani, 1991b, p.154). On examining the story, it is clear that fear is implicitly dominant in the characters of Mukta and her father. The situations which they faced in their life incite fear in them.

V. "DROUGHT"

"Drought" is the short narrative of a married woman, unable to face the bedevilment of her drunkard husband, Gomati who is abandoned by her natal home. It depicts the agony and woes of a married woman in society. Gomati left her husband and came back to her home. So, she stays with her mother, three sisters, and two brothers. Meanwhile, there is a drought in the village, therefore, there is a lack of food in her house. When Gomati is about to eat, one of her siblings vehemently asks her to leave the house. Gomati resists going because she is frightened of the very thought of her husband and repeats "I won't go" (Chudamani, 1976, p.49). Whenever she recalls the past life she feels, "a spasm of memory and the life she had lived with him" (Chudamani, 1976, p.49). This echoes the pain which has transformed into fear and prevents her from going back. The refusal mirrors the fear in Gomati. Gomati's mother, sisters, and brothers force her and send her back. Though she complains that "He beats me. He tortures me." (Chudamani, 1976, p.50) they don't pay any attention to her pleas. Neither do they understand her pain and fear? The physical assault of her husband triggers fears in Gomati.

Gomati even appeals to Ramanathan, the son of the Panchayat head in the village, who has seduced her and made love with her on and off to accept her and take her to his house. But he denies it for the fear of society. The fear in Gomati makes her plead with him again and again, to accept her at least as a maid but he refuses to do that and advises her to live with her husband. She again appeals saying " 'I'll stay with you!' She said, clinging feverishly to him 'Keep me. Please keep me. Don't let them send me back to him'" (Chudamani, 1976, p.51) but Ramanathan pays no heed to her pleas and refuses to take her home. Gomati's fear gets transformed into different forms. Initially, Gomati expresses her fear in the way of refusal; later in the way of recollecting her past painful experience; finally in the form of pleading to Ramanathan to safeguard her from the trauma. In the end, she is again forced by her family to return to her husband and the only reply she gives is "I won't go" (Chudamani, 1976, p.51). An analysis of the story portrays the tortures borne by Gomati which has invoked intensified fear in her and her helpless situation.

VI. CONCLUSION

Chudamani has epitomized the psychological problems of human beings in her writings. An interpretation of the above stories depicts the different kinds of problems faced by Indian women in their lives. Chudamani has limned how a woman suffers because she is forced into the institution of marriage against her wishes (Yamini), the trauma of two widows who are gripped into fear of losing their nephew, the trauma of Mukta due to the system of dowry, the escalated agony of Gomati due to drought. The author has also highlighted the fear in men as well: the fear of Saaranathan and Mukta's father who commiserate with their daughters. Chudamani has realistically portrayed human emotions in the short fiction taken up for the study. She has uncovered the psyche of both men and women through her characters. Particularly she has evinced the fear from different perspectives through the characters and represented how fear gets

transformed in the characters and makes them act differently. In *Yamini*, the characters Yamini, Saaranathan, Perundevi, & Geetha; the characters Nilamani and Vasanthi in “A Knock at the Door” undergo fear which is explicitly displayed. Fear in the characters Mukta and Mukta’s father in “The strands of the Void” and Gomati in “Drought” is expressed implicitly. According to novel research, “Fear can cause a change in organ functions and metabolism which can ultimately lead to behavioral changes, like fleeing, freezing, or hiding from the perceived threat” (*Fear - Symptom, Treatment and Causes*, 2022). As in the case of Yamini and Saaranathan, they flew away from fear in a different way. Nilamani and Vasanti freeze in fear whenever they hear a knock at the door. Gomati and Mukta want to hide from the perceived threat. Geetha and Mukta’s father; avoid fear: the former by not revealing her love and the latter by not questioning her daughter’s torments in the initial days and Perundevi also avoids fear by not taking the subject of Geetha’s marriage. It can be noted that neither of these characters is ready to confront the factors causing fear. Chudamani has also interwoven how the emotion of fear gets transformed in the lives of individuals through her fiction.

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