

Feminine Voice in Indian English Poetry

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Abstract

Women's studies have presently been a subject of great interest and importance. Women are an integral part of human civilization. No society or country can ever progress without an active participation of women in its overall development. Although the place of woman in society has differed from culture to culture and from age to age yet one fact common to almost all societies is that woman has never been considered equal to men. Women who constitute half of the human population but paradoxically not treated on par with man in all spheres of human activity. They are oppressed, suppressed and marginalized in the matter of sharing the available opportunity for fulfillment of their lives, despite the fact that every woman slaves for the development of her family, her husband and children. This is predicament of women all over the world. Feminism refers to the socio-cultural movement for the assertion of female identity and implies radical reorientation of life, culture and literature. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the poems of Kamala Das from feminist perspective.

Key Words: Feminism, feminine voice, feminist perspective.

Introduction:

Woman lives in a male dominated society. In this type of society she is supposed to be an ideal wife, a mother and an excellent homemaker with multifarious roles in the family. As a wife and mother, service, sacrifice and submissiveness and tolerance are her required attributes. Her individual self has very little recognition in the patriarchal society. Under patriarchy, no woman is safe to live her life or to love, or to mother children. Under patriarchy, every woman is a victim, past, present and future. Even her daughter is victim. Under patriarchy, every woman's son is her potential betrayer and also the inevitable exploiter of another woman. In every age, woman has been seen as mother, wife, mistress and as sex object. It is in this society she is taught to be shy, gentle and dignified as a person, pure and faithful as a wife and selfless, loving and thoughtful as a mother.

Male dominance is not restricted to the woman of specific country in the world. It is a universal phenomenon. Genesis symbolizes male dominance by depicting Eve as made from, "A supernumerary bone of Adam". St-Thomas considered woman to be an "imperfect man", an "incidental being". Plato himself is thankful to God that he was created a man not a woman. St. Augustine declared that "woman is a creature neither decisive not constant. In this male dominated society woman gets secondary place.

. Feminism has always meant independence of mind and spirit and body. Feminist effort to end patriarchal domination should be to primary concern precisely because it insists on the eradication to exploitation and oppression in the family context and in all other intimate relationships. Its theory is that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially.

Kamala Das is the renowned Kerala-born writer who changed names, statements, and stances, storming the socio-literary world of South India and astonishing the readers of the world through outrageous expressions and fantastic poems. She is considered one of the greatest feminist poets of her time. She could be called radical feminist as she meets the criteria and her poetry without any doubt possesses the qualities of radical feminist. In her poetry, Kamala Das expresses every women desire. She rebels against the exploitation of women in a male dominated world. She uncovers the hidden reality of the society with a fearless attitude. Her poetic expressions provide a unique perspective on the complexities of womanhood and social constraints faced by women in the male-dominated society. Kamala Das has her own feminist theory. She encourages women to break free from the shackles of social norms and assert their independence. Her poems often embody a spirit of rebellion and defiance. Through her poetry, Kamala Das criticizes patriarchal structures and systems that subjugate women. She gives voice to the suppressed and silenced experiences of women addressing the issues such as domestic abuse, societal judgment and personal desires.

Kamala Das' most celebrated poem, **The Old Playhouse**, is the representative feminist poem which not only depicts the plight and sufferings of a married woman chained to her husband's house but also revolts against the male domination. The poem highlights and condemns the miseries of a woman, a wife who is expected to play certain conventional roles, and her wishes and aspirations are not taken into account. Kamala Das exposes the callousness and the hollowness of patriarchal society in this poem. The miserable condition of a woman in a patriarchal society has elegantly been portrayed.

The another notable poem, **An Introduction**, indicates her highly individualistic sensibility and her aloofness from the ordinary concerns of a woman. Her hatred and repugnance that she feels for traditional roles assigned to women gets an artistic expression in it: Then.... I wore a shirt and my

Brother's trousers, I cut my hair short and ignored
My womanliness.

The Freaks reflects the emotional barrenness and the loneliness that a woman feels while she is engaging in the sexual act. She presents a contrast between man and woman thinking, here man only satisfies his sexual desires on the other hand woman longs for emotional satisfaction. as famous poem, **Jaisurya** shows her intensity of maternal love and feminine sensibility.

To sum up ,the study of the feminist view point in Kamala Das's poetry reveals a complex, multifaceted exploration of gender, identity and power dynamics. Kamala Das through her poetry, has challenged patriarchy, explored female desire, criticized marriage and conventional rules, voiced the unvoiced and embraced personal identity.

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