

A Critical Analysis On Kamala Das's Emotional Realism On Women'shood

Pratiti Ghosh, Dr. A. Vijayanand

Department of English, Kalinga University, Naya Raipur,
Chhattisgarh, India.

ABSTRACT:

An iconic figure in Indian literature, Kamala Das is best recognized for the unfiltered opinions she expresses in her works. Her writing style is very Indian. As she decries patriarchal dominance in her ferocious verses, Das is stereotyped as a rebellious lady who witnesses the silences of Indian women. Her poetry has thrown out its doors to subjects that female poets have traditionally avoided. Her works highlight feminine sensitivities. Most of her poetry is autobiographical and deals with themes of marriage and sexuality. By challenging the heinous roles that women have been assigned, she seeks to reassess society. Detailed in "An Introduction," which appeared in the 1965 anthology "Summer in Calcutta," is the life of Kamala Das, including her struggles with both herself and society. The poem vividly portrays a woman's paralysis by suffering and her desire for a feminine identity in a patriarchal society. An uprising against the degrading treatment of women by the male-dominated society. She is very forthright about the struggles she had as a woman.

Keywords: Marginalized, romanticized, patriarchal, womanhood, conventional, feminine.

INTRODUCTION

Kamala Das, popularly known for her fiery voice in her poems, is one of the major poets in contemporary Indian English literature. Unlike other poets, her poetry is free from 19th century romanticized love and filled with a clear note and tone of a rebel woman - the new woman. She has chosen topics that have continuously been kept decorously out. Her loud expressions of female sexuality and guiltless frankness in writing make her a rebel icon among the Indian poets. Her poems become the language of a woman who observes the marginalized Indian women's silences and denounces the patriarchal hegemony. She is an exemplary new woman trying to voice universal womanhood by sharing her experiences with all other women. In her poems, she openly talks about her subjugated position in society and shares her tales of woe.

While living in a patriarchal culture, she has made an effort to highlight her unique femininity and individuality. All of her discontent and psychological traumas have culminated in her poetry, which is characterized as poetry of resistance. The central theme of her poetry revolves around her search for love and her disappointment in never finding it. Her poetry is an honest portrayal of feminine sensitivity that depicts intensely. Her love yearnings, disappointments, and frustrations are all expressed.

Poems concerning her grandmother and her youth, as well as more universal themes, demonstrate Kamala Das's sensitive poetic sense. Within this framework, K.R. Srinivas Iyenger notes:

“Kamala Das is a new phenomenon in Indo-Anglian poetry, a far Poetic cry indeed from Toru Dutt or even Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das's is fiercely feminine sensibility that dares without inhibitions to articulate the hurts it has received in an insensitive man-made world. While giving the impression of writing in haste, she reveals a mastery of phrase and a control over rhythm – the words often pointed and envenomed too, and the rhythm so nervously, almost feverishly alive”.

As a poet, she expresses more freely than any other Indian woman poet the ambiguity of modern Indian women. No ordinary woman or embodiment of Woman, she is not. Although she writes in English, she is actually Indian. Poetry by Kamala Das, who is fluent in Malayalam and English.

The feminist viewpoint is a significant part of Indian English poetry. Poets who identify as women have produced a substantial corpus of work. The strongest statement of the contemporary Indian woman is best captured by this feature of Indian poetry written in English. Western culture had an impact on these ladies.

Two of the earliest female English poets, Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu, were heavily exposed to Western culture. Their continued adherence to conventional approaches to both their own and the Indian situations is commendable, despite this. It wasn't until after India gained its independence that women began to actively pursue their gender identity.

In this analysis, we will try to focus on a few of her poems that address this topic effectively. 'The Freaks' starts off slowly, symbolizing her lack of interest in sexual activity, and ends on an impetuous note, reflecting the compromise. Even if she despises his lovemaking, she must submit to it and even act as though she enjoys it. It is a requirement of social norms and her sense of self-respect. This is a society where men rule. A married woman has no choice but to speak out about the squalor of her life. Humanity has established a set of societal

norms that she must adhere to. There is no reason for her to speak up as she is his object, his poem, and his subordinate. The poetry of Kamala Das demonstrates how Indian women have disturbed the conventional masculine sensibilities of modesty and politeness. By embracing a new vocabulary, norm, and mode of expression—a rejection of the traditional style of poetry expression of the male-dominated culture—Kamala Das ushers in a new era for female poets. Kamala Das's projections and attacks on male dominance are honest and, at times, furious. More so than any other Indian woman poet, she expresses the modern Indian lady via her poetry.

Loving someone through a frustrating event is what drives her idea. She has failed miserably in every attempt to form genuine connections with other people. The poet portrays in *Freaks* the anguish, misery, and disillusionment felt by a wife whose husband, oblivious to her emotional needs, rejects her longing for genuine love. Her companion's brutality revolts her. Her macho ego has her feeling confined. Consequently, she was not interested in conforming to the stereotypical wife position. Her poetry naturally portrays a defiance of the male-dominated societal structure. It demonstrates her bravery in standing up for her feminine sensibilities and rebelling against the system in a male-dominated world. She makes no secret of her femininity and takes great pride in it. Within the context of her family, she is aware of a fundamental need for genuine love, a psychological need, and a need for independence. This makes her a model of a modern woman who has achieved true emancipation and who stands out for the rights of all women to find emotional and sexual fulfillment.

She uses language and diction in her literary manifesto, "An introduction," which is widely regarded as a masterpiece. She understands that English has the capacity to capture the wide range of emotions expressed by poets. Her work stands out among modernist poetry and all female Indian poetry written in English because of its singularity of voice. Topics explored in Kamala Das's poetry included her love-hate relationship with her husband, recollections of her youth spent in the family home, and the dynamics between men and women. According to Pritish Nandy,

"An introduction," her literary manifesto and generally considered a masterwork, is replete with her use of language and diction. The ability of English to convey the vast array of feelings spoken by poets is something she has come to appreciate. Due to its distinctive style, her poetry distinguishes out from modernist poetry and other English-language poetry produced by Indian women. The relationships between sexes, memories of growing up in the family home, and Kamala Das's love-hate relationship with her husband were some of the topics covered in her poems. The late Kamala Das is deeply

committed to humanism, says Pritish Nandy. It is clear from her poetry that she is aware of the societal issues in her community. She makes scathing remarks on poverty and social injustice. All oppressed communities, not just modern women, have their issues addressed in the poetry of Kamala Das.

The fact that her poetry captures the suffering of everyday women is a testament to her extraordinary strength—her refusal to run away from the truth of her experiences.

The language allows the self-aware mind to communicate. For the self-conscious, the journey to awareness has been fraught with grief, confusion, and suffering. Now that she has experienced such shame, she is afraid to come clean about who she really is. She avoided wearing traditionally feminine items in an effort to disassociate herself from gender conventions.

My Grandmother's House reveals Kamala Das's nostalgic desire for her family home, Nalappat House, in Malabar, Kerala. She memorizes the house where she acknowledged love and affection from her grandmother. But one will not ignore tone of despair and suffering in this poem also.

The poem's depiction of a window symbolizes the continuity between the poet's idyllic past and his or her harsh present. The poet's need to look mindfully into her happy past spent with her grandma through the window image symbolizes her sorrow. The prefixes blind and frozen conjure up ideas of windows and air, respectively, in this poetry. A poet's heart is like a foggy window—it lets no light in and leaves her bewildered.

The impact of woman characters and the use of personal pronoun I in Kamala Das's poetry help to recognize the poetic voice. Upon coming to terms with her sexual anxieties and frustrations, the speaker of this poem experienced the comforting embrace of love.

In her poem "Radha," the poet beautifully portrays the emotions she felt upon realizing God. When she and her husband had sexual relations, her own personal experience not provide her inner joy and contentment. Thus, the proper focus of marital love becomes devotion to Krishna. Kamala Das learned the hard way that there is no substitute for a relationship with God after her sexual disappointments in the world. Krishna poems were written by Kamala Das in response to her early life experiences. Although she has never experienced pure bliss in a lover's arms, she now knows that her spouse will never be able to provide her with the ideal love. In her autobiography, she comes to see Krishna as the perfect lover and friend, and she turns to him as a result.

It follows that when she says "ideal love," she is referring to the bond shared by the mythical couple Radha and Krishna. She can only lose herself in her fictitious boyfriend and become completely absorbed with him. An example of this is the poetry "Radha," in which the speaker describes with great emotion the bliss that Radha feels when she is held by Krishna:

She writes in 'The Descendants'

"Everything in me
is Melting, even the hardness at the core O, Krishna, I am
melting, melting, melting Nothing remains but
you"

The poet reveals God's attributes to us as she comes to know Him. God, according to Mrs. Das's poem "A Phantom Lotus," is like a lotus flower ghost. In our universe, love and truth are practically godlike. A deity who cannot be seen in houses of worship is the object of the poetess's unwavering faith.

Kamala Das compares God with a tree and narrates that in 'My Story',

I, at peace. I liken God to a tree which has as its parts the leaves, the bark, the fruits and the flowers which unlike the other in appearance and in texture but in each lying dissolved the essence of the tree, the whatness of it."

In "Ghanshyam", the poet likens God to a koel who has made her home in the poet's heart's pergola. Up until this point, the poet's existence had been like a serene, isolated forest, roused to the euphoria of love by the divine, melodic sound of koel. This koel brings both joy and sorrow to her heart, just as it does to lovers' hearts when they are apart. The koel shows her the way to unadulterated love. Even though God is close by, the poetess feels guilty because she did not seize the opportunity to be united with him. To quote the poet, says in 'Only the Soul Knows How to Sing':-

".....You have like a koel built your nest in the arbour of
my heart.
My life until now a sleeping jungle, is at last astir with
music.
You lead me along a route I have never known before
But at each turn when I near you
Like a spectral flame you vanish....."
(Ghanshyam)

About these lines Anisura Rahman remarked,

"The koel building a nest in the arbor
of heart and her sleeping life being
caressed with music are beautiful
analogues stressing the sense of

suffering and redemption through the
tradition-bound images”

She writes in her poem ‘My Story’:-

“The only relationship that is permanent is the one which we form with God. My mate is he. He shall come to me in myriad shapes. In many shapes shall I surrender to His desire. I shall be fondled by him. I will be betrayed by him. I shall pass through all the pathways of this world, condemning none, understanding all and then become part of him. Then for me there shall be no return journey”

A person's gradual realization of God and total submission to Him occurs when they are fascinated by Krishna and His flute. In ancient times, the objective of realizing God was conveyed to their pupils by the Rishis and Saints. According to what they were told, a man should devote the most of his life to seeking to understand God Almighty. However, man cannot spend his entire life seeking God because modern times have brought about new attitudes and duties for men and women. Until old age, when he is no longer constrained by earthly concerns, he is unable to devote the time and energy necessary to seek God.

Like any other socially conscious man or woman, Mrs. Das eventually gave herself up to God Krishna, and now her whole being is devoted to worshipping him. This was especially true in her latter years, when all other worldly desires faded away. This is when it hit her: her very soul, Atma, is merging with the soul of the universe, Parmatma, who is Lord Krishna. The following lines are taken from Mrs. Das's poetry "Krishna," in which she portrays this living circumstance.

Poet Kamala Das takes us on a metaphysical and spiritual quest that begins with the physical body and ends with the soul. Her poetry evolves subtly with each stage of her life. Being a victim of a young man's insatiable libido, she wrote openly and meticulously about her painful sexual encounters in her poems, highlighting the pointlessness of lust and sexual activity in a world without love. This leads her to seek solace in Krishna, who she eventually discovers to be her soul partner. A spectral image of Krishna accompanies the person. In her mind, he takes on "myriad shapes" and makes appearances.

The relevance of her Krishna poetry becomes clear when seen in this context. The film "Ghanshyam" portrays her change as a result of her dogged pursuit of love. She desires a complete union with her partner. However, she seeks for Ghanshyam, the perfect lover, because it is not possible in real life. The central theme of 'Ghanshyam' is the need for genuine love that never goes away, as well as the disconnection from reality and exploration of the imaginative realm. The individual yearns for

Krishna, the "eternal lover," just as the legendary "chataka" bird does, forever hoping to drink from the celestial spring.

KAMALA DAS AND WOMAN'S RIGHT

Kamala Das is well-known for the passionate tone of her writing. She is a controversial figure among Indian poets for her forthright treatment of female sexuality and naiveté, even though her poetry is often introspective and personal. In contrast to other writers, his poetry does not include "the novel of the 19th century, feeling, and romantic love," Her poetry resounds with the note and tone of a defiant woman as she openly explores her place in a male-dominated culture and its pervasive traditional patriarchal traditions, where "a woman is not born, Rather, she becomes a woman," Her poetry books have taken on a life of their own. She has graduated from the role of the poet. Using straightforward words, she investigates Indian women's silence and attacks patriarchal dominance. Insofar as sex and desire are discussed in Indian society, where women are expected to provide them unconditionally despite being stigmatised for doing so, Kamala Das uses them as a kind of defiance in her poems.

"You planned to tame a swallow, to hold her
In the long summer of your love so that She Would
forget
Not the raw seasons alone and the homes left Behind,
but
Also, her nature, the urge to fly, and the endless
Pathways of the sky..."
(The Old Playhouse)

Kamala Das's poetry of protest against social conventions and against the limitations and restrictions that spouses or society have a prominent place on women suggests her support for the rights of all women to an equal experience with such freedom, which she pursued and achieved. It also stresses the significance of listening to and protecting the rights of Indian women. There is little doubt that these poems' resentment and anger reflect her perception of social injustice. So, it is fair to say that Kamala Das is a fierce and committed feminist. She may be seen as a strong supporter of women's rights and a movement champion to end women's subordination to men in the home. When Kamala Das wrote these poems, the movement to free women from male authority was starting or in its middle stages (in the 1960s and 1970s of the 20th century). The movement has been wildly successful, far exceeding the hopes of its female leaders. While extramarital affairs may not have been discussed when Kamala Das wrote her poems, Indian women were expected to be submissive to their parents or spouses. Indian women are just as free as their

Western counterparts in the United Kingdom and the United States. Kamala Das was among the few pioneering women to declare and wield this autonomy to its fullest extent.

REVOLTING FEMININE SENSIBILITY

Among Kamala Das's poems, those in which she describes her husband's treatment and temperament are the most potent and unambiguous examples of her feminine sense. In her poem "The Freaks," Kamala Das complains that she and her husband have been together for a long time, but they have never fallen in love, leaving her with an empty feeling in her heart like a cistern. Then, to save face, she calls herself a "freak" and says that her "grand, flashy lust" seldom manifests itself. Kamala Das's perception of her husband as a self-centred, timid guy who neither loved nor exploited her adequately stems from her innate sensitivity as a woman, which she credits to The Sunshine Cat. Her words:

"Her husband shut her,
In every morning, locked her in a room of books,
With a streak of sunshine lying near the door, like,
A yellow cat to keep her company."
(The Sunshine Cat)

While her husband treated her like a prisoner, she had only her yellow cat (or a ray of sunlight) for company. For a man searching for sexual satisfaction, she was now "a frigid and half-dead lady" thanks to his treatment.

The poet Kamala Das argues in her poem "A Losing Battle" that women should utilise the cheapest bait available to entice males into their traps. The pleading in a poem titled "The Conflagration" for women's freedom from male dominance is even more vibrant and unrestrained.

In this piece, Kamala Das asks whether or not being in bed with a guy is the pinnacle of happiness, and then she advises women to find their own identities so they can thrive beyond the confines of a lover or husband. The poems above are not the only ones Kamala Das has written that speak to her feminism and defiance of patriarchal authority. Kamala Das takes an untraditional view of marriage, as was previously mentioned. She thinks her husband is just playing a game with her. When she begrudgingly discusses how marriage has restricted her independence, her female ego emerges. Of Calcutta is a poem about the emotional anguish she experiences due to her marriage. In this poem, she claims that her spouse kept her warm at night by talking to her with a walkie-talkie. She felt like a circus dog in training who had gone through worse, and she inquired:

"Here in my husband's home, I am a trained circus dog

Jumping my routine hoops each day, where is my soul, My spirit, where the muted tongue of my desire?" (Of Calcutta Poem)

Kamala Das's marriage ended in divorce because her husband used her for his sexual pleasure and never showed her any real love or compassion. She has detailed how her husband's cold and robotic attitude to sexual activity with her satisfies her desire but leaves her feeling unloved and unappreciated. This lack of love and affection is a source of her great disappointment, anguish, and even agony.

These poems show Kamala Das's hatred toward her husband and the outrage of other women in similar situations. Kamala Das's poetry is characterised by protest, sadness, scorn, despair, and fury. Her critic says her unrestrained poetry expresses the poet's pain from living in a harsh, artificial world. The old virtues of virginity, submissiveness, and dependence on males may be understood as having been abandoned in her announcement of a new morality. Women like Kamala Das today are out to dismantle traditional notions of male superiority and power.

CONCLUSION

Kamala Das is also famous for her openness in her writing. The importance of women's rights is a central theme in her poems. All the lyrics feature strong female protagonists who explore feminist themes. There is a distinction between feminist writing and feminine writing. Female authors in Indian English literature who explore female identities and forms of resistance help women and men develop a more progressive worldview. However, feminism in literature typically reflects a view of female superiority. The significance of the textbook is grounded in the quality of the writing rather than in the concept behind it. Feminist scholarship develops in response to patriarchy and other chauvinist beliefs. Poet Kamala Das specialises in the erotica and love poetry genres. Not all conventional or outmoded ideas are out of place in her love poetry; in fact, most of it relies on them. She takes a stand on doubt, love, and gender, which is well-known and visible as an interstitial subject in her poems.

Therefore, Kamala Das is a contemporary Indian writer aware of her vision and the responsibility to sustain it. An undeniably feminist viewpoint is presented, one that speaks out against the limitations placed on women and their ability to achieve their goals. She writes openly about relationships, sexuality, and marriage, which are central to her experience. Her poetic voice, which she has developed through time, is filled with a feminist, womanist ideology. Kamala Das, a writer on oppressed women, centres much of her poems on the history of the female senses. Her opposition to the oppression of

women and her interest in exploring how gender is shaped in society and culture permeates nearly all of her writings. She proved that women and men have remarkably similar lives. Almost all of Kamala Das's poems are protest poems that offer a strong message of feminism in a personal tone, earning her the reputation as a "furious feminist poet."

REFERENCE

- Chavan Sunanda, Kamala Das, *The Fair Voice: A Study of Indian English Poets in English*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt.Ltd.1984, p.60
- Das Kamala *Only The Soul Knows How To Sing*. Kottayam: D.C.Books,1996.
- Das Kamala, *My Story*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers,1976.p.218
- Das, Kamala & Pritish Nandy. *Tonight this Savage rite*. New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1979.p.21
- Das, Kamala, *The Descendants*. Calcutta writers workshop, 1967.p.916.
- Das, Kamala,*Summer in Calcutta*. New Delhi: sterling publishers,
- Das, Kamala. *My Story*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1977.
- Dickie,Margaret,*The Alien in contemporary American women's poetry-Contemporary Literature,(xxviii,3)WisconsinUniversity*.1987.
- Dwivedi, A. N. *Kamala Das, and Her Poetry*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors. 1983.
- Harris,V.C,*The Old playhouse and other poems*.Edited. NewDelhi :Orient BlackSwan,2014.p.xi
- Iyengar, K. R. Srinivas. *Indian writing in English*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1985.
- Iyengar, K.R.Srinivasa, *Indian Writing In English*, New Delhi : SterlingPublishers,1985,2007.Rpt. p.680.
- Iyengar,K.R.Srinivasa, *Indian Writing In English*,New Delhi: Sterling Publishers,1985,2007.Rpt. p.677.
- Iyengar,K.R.Srinivasa., *Indian Writing In English*,New Delhi: Sterling Publishers,1985,2007.Rpt.p.677
- Kaur, Iqbal, *Protest against sexual colonialism: Kamala Das MyStory*. Jeypore: Rawat Publications, 1996. p.232

- King, Bruce, Modern Indian Poetry in English. Delhi: UP, 2001. p.150
- Kohli, Devendra, Kamala Das. Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1975. p.64
- Nandy Pritish, Indian Poetry in English Today, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1981.
- Rahaman, Anisur, Expressive form in the poetry of Kamala Das. New Delhi: Abhinava Publications, 1981. p.29
- Rahaman, Anisur, Expressive form in the poetry of Kamala Das. New Delhi: Abhinava Publications, 1981. p.28
- Ramakrishnan, E. V. Kamala Das as a Confessional Poet. Journal of Indian Writing in English. 5.1. 1977.
- Rao, P.M, Body and Beyond Love Poetry of Kamala Das, ed. Manmohan Bhatnagar, p.47
- Surayya, Kamala. The Best of Kamala Das. Ed. P.P. Raveendran. Calicut: Bodhi Publishing House. 1991.
- Surayya, Kamala. The Old Playhouse and Other Poems. Mumbai: Orient Longman Private Limited. 1973.