



COMPRISING THE QUEERNESS IN THE POETRY OF KAMALA DAS

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ABSTRACT:

A common issue facing every country is the question of women's liberty whether in Western or Indian literacy tradition the women are seen as launching themselves for their identity and emancipation; Kamala Das is no exception to it. She challenges the traditional society in her writing. She shows her awareness and consciousness of her careless position in the family and society and that is really her urge to open her inner voice against the male dominance in the society. The highly sensitive poetess Kamala Das writes her mode of liberation in various directions. She is courageous enough even to confess her every deed. She exposes existential aspects of womanhood in her poetry. She challenges the orthodoxical patriarchal social norms. It is the humble effort of mine to state the anguish of Kamala Das which she states through her pen.

KEY WORDS: Kamala Das, Queerness, Protest, society, Patriarchy.

INTRODUCTION :

An interesting poetess Kamala Das is the symbol of woman's voice who wants to be free from the traditional orthodoxical clutches of the society. Her frankness, boldness shows her wish to live according to her own choice and style in the patriarchal society. Her poetry is essentially the anger, anguish and protest against the conventional society. Through her feminine sensibility she protests the injustice, restrictions which the society imposes upon every woman. She opposes the public institutions, Harimohan Prasad remarks about her poetry:

“Her poetry has been considered as a gimmick in sex or striptease in words, an over expose of body or ‘snippets of trivia’. But the truth is that her poetry is an autobiography, an articulate voice of her ethnic identity, her Dravidian Culture. In her, the poet is the poetry fully obliterating Eliots distinction between the man suffering and the mind creating”.

Her poetry depicts her wounds and sufferings in the other orthodoxical, conventional norms of the society. Her husband's lusty treatment and carelessness about her emotional needs become the raw material for her poetry through which she expresses her victimized position in her husband's house. Her bitter and inhuman experiences made her to revolt or to protest against such unhealthy, loveless life which symbolizes the society headed by men.

From her childhood she faces the orthodoxical bondage and becomes the victim of it.

My grandmother cried,
Darling, you must stop this bathing now.
You are much too big to play
Naked in the pond.

(The Suicide)

It is nothing but the bitter command of a society, culture who brings womanliness in innocent girls. Madam S. Beauvoir's famous remark that "one is not born woman but rather becomes one."

She wants to break the traditional ways. She wishes to live life as 'man', she writes:

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

(An Introduction)

It shows her plight towards the powerful identity i.e. 'man', the dominant figure of the society. By wearing shirt and trousers, cutting her womanliness hair she wishes to go away from her which symbolizes inferiority and secondary position of the woman. She indirectly wants to obliterate her inferior status and to create her own strong identity But orthodox society does not allow her to do so: she writes:

Dress in sari,
be girl
Be wife, they said. Be
embroiderer,
be cook
Be a quarreler with servants.
Fit in.

(An Introduction)

Orthodoxical society advices her to wear sari and be a wife of her husband. It means they want to make her a 'girl' with 'feminine qualities' and does not allow her to live free life. They imposed her the decided role of a woman.

Her pains and sufferings are revealed in her poetry. She wants to live life as a human and not as the victim of the society. The dominating character 'man' has an authority. She writes:

"I am sinner,
I am a saint. I am the beloved and the
Betrayed. I have no joys which are not yours, no
Aches which are not yours. I to call myself I"

(An Introduction)

She expects that she should be treated as a human being. She is like other human beings.

The painful married life makes her the victim of the society. The innocent girl of 15 faces frustration because of brute and lusty behaviour of her husband which she reveals in her various poems. She writes:

For, he drew a youth of sixteen
Into the
Bedroom and closed the door
He did not beat me.
But my sad woman-body felt
so beaten.

(An Introduction)

Without any emotional understanding her husband treats her as an object for fulfillment. Her poetry is outpouring of woman in a male dominating society. These have universal touch and the common experiences of woman from years. Her cry symbolizes the crushed woman's psyche.

---I've stretched my two dimensional
Nudity on sheets of weeklies, monthlies,
Quarterlies, a sad sacrifice, I've put
My private voice away, adopted the
Typewrite's click as my only speech
(Loud Posters)

The suffocated condition of a woman makes her cry and shut herself in her own world. The sad state of a woman, because of male exploitation shows her grief.

The poem shows that the female seems to become a victim of male domination. She voices her own feelings and protests the patriarchal society. She boldly complains against the male community. She propagates the woman sensibility through her experiences.

She attacks on old rituals and customs. She does not believe that our glorious tradition would help us, lead better lives.

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