



The Role Of Kamala Das In Awakening Women's Consciousness

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ABSTRACT

The world has witnessed the suffering and pain of human beings, and women are the most suffering beings. There was less glint of light of justice for those depressed ones. They were bereft of education, politics, economical issues and ownership of wealth, and understood as things of use. Ownership of wealth, writing, politics and big social issues were assumed as fixed deposit patriarchal properties. After a long time, it was women's own consciousness that brought them on the path of struggle to snatch their rights from dominated beings. With the passage of time they started to sense their suffering and pain, and on the other hand they accessed freedom of patriarchal society. Kamala Das is a fearless poetess in Indian English Poetry. She fought with her senses using her pen as a powerful weapon to awaken the consciousness of women. Through her poetry she resists the dominance of patriarchal society on women and teaches women to be aware and conscious.

Key words- Suffering, Struggle, consciousness, Patriarchal, Freedom, Dominated, Education, Politics, Ownership, Depressed.

INTRODUCTION

Women of the world have been stuck at deep rooted patriarchy. They have sensed and suffered a lot for centuries but they dare not protest this usurping system. Centuries after century went bare of women writing, politics and ownership. Though it was the twentieth century when they started to exist on the above grounds. Writers in the different regions of the world started to write about the agony, torture, suffering, subjugation, pain and plight of women. Women began to write with hesitation and fear. But with the passage of time they buried their fear and hesitation. They started writing as they wanted from centuries.

In India it was Kamala Das who played vital role in awakening women's consciousness. She threw off all the gowns of fear, hesitation and so-called shame for women on talking about love and sex. The so-called norms were attached to women by patriarchal society. She taught the world women to confess the things that is natural, that is made by almighty, not by men whether that is love, sex, desire or anything else. Claim the right of education, politics, economics, writing and decision making that would pave the path of all round development and empowerment for women.

India is set in the different cultural frames, where women live at home under certain rules implied by men. They took participation very less in politics and decision making,

She writes in her poem 'An **introduction**' that she also knows politics well from Nehru to.....

Here she gives a clear message to the patriarchal system that women can also do politics, they can read and write literature. In fact they are not weak but they are made weak. They are also multilingual, they can speak more than one language. Further she says:

"I don't know politics but I know the names,

Of those in power, and can repeat them like

Days of week, or the names of months,

Beginning with Nehru."

India is a constitutional nation, where politics controls the power through the election of the government. People elect people to make them sit on the chair of power, and power comes through politics that is named as the government. And then government makes policy for common people for their welfare. Earlier very few women got chance to participate in politics to make policy for their own welfare. In fact men made policy for them. That's why Kamala Das wants to make aware even men that women look and observe politics. Women are the most tortured being in the society, hence she gives a clear message to the common women to awake and step up in power through politics. "I don't know politics but I know the names, Of those in power- " It demonstrates that she is not involved in politics but she knows the root of politics.

Kamala Das tries to throw the patriarchal barriers and norms far away so that those can't shackle the feet of women. Very few women writers revolted against the old tattered patriarchal norms. Women were bounded to certain social norms on each and every step, made by men. Further she writes in her poem, An Introduction:

"Don't write in English", "Don't sit on wall"

Through these above lines she indicates toward the liberty of women. She makes women aware to be their own policy maker and to be the real owner of their own lives. From centuries men decided the life of women, men made policy about women, men wrote the features of women, men wrote the struggle and history of women according to their own wishes. But what is fact that men can not take always suitable decisions for women. Women can take better decision than men about what they need, and what they want. So Kamala Das says that let her speak the language that she likes and feels comfortable in. Let her walk where she wishes, let her eat what she prefers, and let her love the person that suits her.

Poetry has symbolic meaning for the human beings. Through her poetry, Kamala Das gives vivid message to women to role the wheel of patriarchal society. Through her multiple poems, she indicates that it is time to choose a role. Women must not play all the roles according to men or on the insistence of men. They must play roles according to their own need, demand, their own wishes and their own welfare. Leading this trend an American writer In 1979, Elain Showlter writes "Towards a Feminist Poetics." In this essay she

awakes women of the world to write their own literature. Because the real pain and sufferings that women suffer, can hardly be expressed by men.

Through her poem "A Relationship" she explores that love and relationship are two lungs of a person. Where there is no love, there is no humanity. A good relationship builds a good home. A family without a good relationship is a scattered family. But on the other hand Kamala Das alarms women that do not be blind in love and relationship, do not be unnecessarily kind towards your love. Be aware of betrayal of your love because betrayal destroys a good life that is innocent and kind. In her poem 'The Doubt', Kamala Das describes that there must be equal responsibility in love and relation. She indicates that equality should not be only in politics, education, economical issues and decision making, but equality should also be in human soul, because when a man or a woman dies, we do not call the corpse he or she, we call the corpse 'it'.

Amar Dwivedi criticised Kamala Das as: "Self-imposed and not natural".

In fact she wants to set a different mind set in the society. In male dominated social frame, things are set in mind and people decide things according to the that mind set. Here men talk openly and publicly about love and sex but women can't talk like men. There is a big question mark of inequality here. It is Kamala Das who wants to break the old patriarchal mind set, where women could not talk about their desires. Love and sex are inherent senses of human life. Hence why can women not talk about that. This is the fact that while Kamala Das started to write about these issues, male dominated society could not digest. Some people thought, she is going against the culture... but in fact she was setting a new dimension for women, where women can talk and write fearlessly about their needs and desires. She has no hesitation and fear in accepting the incidents that happen with her. That is why she is known as a confessional poet.

In the poem 'Looking Glass', Kamala Das tries to find the theme of femininity, love and self identity by the view of her own experience as a woman in a relationship with a man. As she writes...

"Stand nude before the glass with him
So that he sees himself the stronger one
And believes it so, and you so much more
Softer, younger, lovelier.. Admit your
Admiration."

The above lines indicate complete submission of a woman to a man in love, while a man may not submit to a woman. It shows one sided moral obligation or it leads the tradition established by our fore-fathers. It is not justice for women. Why only women should be obedient to men. It also explores the theme of male controlled love over women, while love is not a thing of control by anyone. In the poem 'The Freaks', she explores the themes of alienation, isolation, lovelessness and discomfort within a sexual relationship lacking genuine emotional connection.

There have been many writers in Indian English poetry but less poets wrote openly and fearlessly about the trauma, torture, isolation, alienation, subjugation, love and relationship as Kamala Das did. She wrote explicitly about the experiences of love, relationship and sexual issues that she saw and felt. She wrote fearlessly and without any hesitation. In Indian cultural frames, women do not talk about their sufferings publicly, but it is Kamala Das who awoke women to talk and to write fearlessly about their pain and sufferings. Through her literary work, she taught women to talk openly about all the things that pass through their lives, whether it is love, sex or relationship. She does not bring friction between men and women but she struggles to bring equality in men and women making women conscious about their present situation and even for the coming generation.

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