

ISSN 2277-8063

**June 2018**

Vol. VII / Issue - II / 2018



**International Interdisciplinary Research Journal  
[ Humanities, Social Sciences, Languages,  
Commerce & Management ]**

**Chief Editor**

**Prof. Dr. Ravindra P. Bhanage**  
Dept. of Political Science,  
Shivaji University,  
Kolhapur.

**Editor**

**Dr. Pyarelal Suryawanshi**  
Prof. Rajabhau Deshmukh  
Mahavidyala, Nandgaon, (kh)  
Dist.-Amravati.

**- Published by -  
HOUSA Publication, Kolhapur**

## CONTENTS

S.N.	Subject	Title	Author	P.No.
1	Commerce & Management	Working Capital Management During Recession Period of Selected Pvt. Ltd. Units in Shirol MIDC, Kolhapur	Shitalnath Mench Dr. P. B. Patil	1-10
2	Economics	Prospects of Atpadi Village Panchayat Taxation	Miss. Sawat Sulkashana	11-17
3	Sociology	Social Networking Sites in Education And Its Impact on The College Students	Mr. Vijay Kallappa Gheji	18-21
4	राज्यशास्त्र	भारतीय प्रजासत्ताक आणि त्यापुढील आव्हाने	डॉ. रविंद्र भणगे	22-24
5	राज्यशास्त्र	इंदिरा आवास योजनेचा आव्हाने	सचिन श्रीरंग चव्हाण	25-33
6	राज्यशास्त्र	स्त्री शिक्षा की वर्तमान दशा एवं दिशा	उल्का शशिकांत फरकटे	34-36
7	राज्यशास्त्र	भारतीय राज्यघटना व धर्मनिरपेक्षता	ज्योती रमेश कांबळे	37-39
8	राज्यशास्त्र	नेहरूंचा आंतरराष्ट्रीयवाद	मनीषा मधुकर कुरणे	40-43
9	समाजशास्त्र	महाराष्ट्रातील संत आणि समाज सुधारकांनी समता, न्यायासंदर्भातील प्रबोधनात्मक मार्गदर्शक विचार	क्रांती शरद कांबळे	44-47
10	मराठी	कोकणातील शिमगा : लोकविधी व लोकनाट्य	संदीप जोतीराम भुतेकर	48-52
11	संगीत व नाट्यशास्त्र	संगीतकार श्रीनिवास खळे यांच्या कारकिर्दीतील गायक-गायिका : एक दृष्टीक्षेप	श्रुती मंदार कुलकर्णी	53-60
12	English	<u>The Poetry of Kamala Das: Search for Unknown</u>	<u>Sarika J.Shinde</u>	<u>61-63</u>

## THE POETRY OF KAMALA DAS: SEARCH FOR UNKNOWN

Sarika J.Shinde, Research Student, Department of English, Night College of Arts and Commerce, Kolhapur

The poetry of Kamala Das has been interpreted and examined by many critics from various angles. Many scholars differ in their views regarding her poetry. For instance, Hari Mohan Prasad disagrees with the views on Kamala Das's poetry like 'a gimmick in sex', or 'striptease in words', 'an overexposure of body' and puts forth his view thus: "...the truth is that her poetry is an autobiography, an articulate voice of her ethnic identity, her Dravidian culture". E.V. Ramkrishnan calls her 'confessional poet' and says "She has always dealt with private humiliations and sufferings which are the stock themes of confessional poetry", Eunice De Souza forwards the same view when he says "Kamala Das writes incessantly about love or rather the failure of love, her unhappy personal life, her unsuccessful sexual encounters and relationships". P.K.J. Kurup labels Kamala Das as a religious rebel and further says, "The religiousness in her poetry lies more in her brave iconoclastic and rebellious search for value that pervades through the entire body of her poetry", Paul Vergheese points out in her poetry 'an expression of female sensibility at its best'. I. K. Shar -a says "Beneath the explosive poetry of Kamala Das... There flows a subterranean stream of bhakti heading towards its own destination 'to have an ideal love, to attain higher truth like Meera'. Dr.GD.Barche asserts "Kamala Das's poetry is essentially deep and psychologically complex."

In this paper I would like to trace out a line of thought provided by her poems and her autobiography that enables the reader to view her poetry in a different light. Though love or the quest for love seems to be the soul of Kamala Das's poetry, when we probe deeper in her poetry we seem to know that this 'love' is unique in itself, This Love for her is a never-ending search for something precious and unattainable. To know, what exactly she aspires for, through her poetry is the concern of this paper.

One of the possible approaches to evaluate and appreciate the work of any creative writer is to relate an autobiography of such a creative writer to his or her work, so as to trace the parallel development of the personality as an individual and as a writer. Literary works are subjective and as such they reveal the personality of the writer. An autobiography of a creative writer, can be, therefore a great asset to understand her creative genius and her individualism. 'My story' is the story of an Indian woman writer who has become rather controversial because of her unsurpassed candidness and her unusual frankness.

Kamala Das started writing poetry from her early childhood as she states in her autobiography, "I was six and very sentimental. I wrote sad poems about dolls who lost their heads and had to remain headless for eternity." Probably the absence of the so-called higher education forced her poetic sensibility to work out its own original ways of expressing intensely personal relationships. The quest for identity often occurs as a theme in several of her poems which stress the need for discovering and asserting her true self. For example, 'The Old Playhouse' describes that love aims at achieving an insight into one's own being. Its essence lies in the realization of one's own self and not in the loss of one's freedom: It was not to gather knowledge Of yet another man that I came to you but to learn What I was, and by learning, to learn to grow.... For love is Narcissus at the water's edge, haunted By its own lonely face, and yet it must seek at last An end, pure, total freedom ..." Love, should be, according to her, the development of personality which leads, ultimately to 'a pure, total freedom.'

Dr. Konnur rightly points out when he says, "Kamala Das' autobiography clearly shows how her urge for identity and liberation finds its fulfillment in the superimposition of her poetic self over the domestic self which, compelled her to play the monotonous and enslaved role of a wife". The life of Kamala Das has been an eternal quest for love. Love for her is understanding and sharing. Her marriage did not satisfy her need for "conversation, companionship and warmth". In turn, she received "rejection, jealousy and bitterness". In her autobiography she writes about her never-fulfilled expectations from her husband as "I had expected him to take me in his arms and stroke my face, my hair, my hands and whisper loving words. I had expected him to be all that I wanted my father to be, and my mother. I wanted conversation, companionship and warmth.....I had hoped that he would remove with one sweep of his benign arms, the loneliness of my life..." And while writing about her early days of marriage she says.... "I thought then that love was flowers in the hair, it was yellow moon lighting up a familiar face and soft words whispered in the ear.... At the end of the month, experiencing rejection, jealousy and bitterness I grew old suddenly, my face changed from a child's to a woman's and my limbs were sore and fatigued." She has failed to receive love, which is a spiritual fulfillment. Her psyche is strenuously burdened by the two opposite realities - its intense desire for appointment with the man and hence the desire for freedom, and its helpless awareness of the compulsion to live with him for the sake of security. The failure to receive true love encourages the yearning heart to search for the right man. But love remains a temporary fulfillment. Prof. S.P. Chavan rightly observes it when she states- "These love-experiences, thus, underlies another tension, i.e. her momentary joy at having found true love and the disappointment which follows". Which is reflected in one of her poems *The Sunshine Cat*-"... and, they said, each of Them, I do not love, I cannot love, it is not In my nature to love, but I can be kind to you ... They let her slide from pegs of sanity into A bed made soft with tears and she lay there weeping". Another tension that heightens the complexity of Kamala Das's love - experience is caused by the social compulsions to conform to the traditional feminine role of an ideal, moral, married woman and her soul's desire to live freely and naturally. The conservative pattern of Hindu culture with its definite ideals about a woman's role in the family and in the society makes her personal tragedy a social event. The pretentiousness of posing as a happy wife in the society is too much for her :

*"I must pose I must pretend I must act the role Of happy woman, Happy wife".*

(*Suicide*) From childhood, society has forced her to stick to the typical feminine pattern whenever she felt the inner need for freedom. She puts it as -  
 "... Dress in sarees, be girl, Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook, Be a quarreler with servants. Fit in, oh; Belong, cried the categorizers".

his suffocation, this suppression becomes unbearable for her and she puts it thus in *The Old Playhouse*: "There is No more singing, no more a dance, my mind is an old Playhouse with all its lights put out". " When she comes to describe her frustration, fear disillusionment, her helplessness and her sense of being misfit everywhere, her expression reaches the peak of intensity in her autobiography:

I

"... I was like a house with all its lights put out... My grief fell like drops of honey on the white sheets of my desk. My sorrows floated over the pages of magazines darkly as heavy monsoon clouds do in the sky". In her autobiography, she talks about poets as "... poets cannot close their, shops like shopmen and return home. Their shop is their mind and as long as they carry it with them they feel the pressures and the torments. A poet's raw material is not stone or clay, it is her personality,"

These words clearly indicate the nature of her own work and provide a valuable guide to its understanding. One of the most impressive qualities of Kamala Das being reflected in her poetry as well as her autobiography is her ability to remain greatly true to a certain viewpoint. She does not write merely to shock or startle the reader. It requires tremendous courage to be so frank and candid in narrating the account of one's life. Das's autobiography is, as Dr. Konnur puts it -

"It is a further continuation of her poetry - a great attempt to come to terms with herself in rapidly changing socio - cultural ethos. Those who consider her a writer, who is morbidly obsessed with sex, do not really see her in the right perspective". The kind of love Kamala Das seeks in her life and communicates in her poetry is unique in the sense that it is an attempt to reach something that is unattainable. This is a quest for something beyond the reach of an ordinary being. Love, for her, is not lust. It is not mere physical gratification. It is the highest and noblest experience that a human being might pine for. Love for her is not merely 'a skin communicated thing' as a casual reader may take it. Love is her dream, her hope, her aspiration. However, it is something which cannot be caught and communicated through certain sequence of words or a certain label. It is her search for a reality, which exists only in her thoughts and in her dreams! It is, for Kamala Das, a search for Unknown!

#### REFERENCE

- 1) Kamala Das, *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems*. Orient Longman Ltd. New Delhi, 1973.
- 2) Kamala Das. *My Story*.
- 3) Chavan Sunanda P. *The Fair Voice: A Study Of Indian Woman Poets in English*. Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1986.
- 4) Konnur D.R. *Post-Independence Literary Autobiography in Indian Writing in English with special Reference to Kamala Das, Dom Monies, Nayantara Sahgal and Sasthai Brata*. 1986, Ph. D. Thesis.
- 5) Bardie GD. *Anger Expression in Kamala Das' Poetry: A Study in Klesa-Vritti*.
- 6) Kurup P.R.J. *Portrait in a Tortured Woman as a Religious Rebel: The poetry of Kamala Das in Indian Poetry in English*. Old and New'ed. O.P.Bhatnagar; R. A. Joshi.
- 7) Hari Mohan Prasad (ed). *Indian Poetry in English*. Sterling Publishers: New Delhi, 1985.
- 8) M.Elias. *Kamala Das and Nayar Heritage*. JIWE Vol.6, July 1978.
- 9) E.V. Ramkrishnan. *Kamala Das as a Confessional Poet*. JIVE Vol.S (Jan. 1977)
- 10) Eunice De Souza. *Kamala Das in Indian Poetry in English. A critical Assessment* (ed) Vas ant Sraliane & M. Sivaramkrishnan. The Macmillan Publication, Delhi, 1980.
- 11) IK. Sharma. *Mary and Mira: A Study of Kamala Das' in Studies In Indian Poetry in English*, (ed) P.P. Bhatnagar. Amaravati. 1981.