

**Selected Poems of Kamala Das:**  
***An Introduction And The Old Playhouse --***  
**Domination of Patriarchy and the Struggles Faced by Women**

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**Abstract**

This article is an attempt to expose the grieves and sorrows of every woman of this society after getting married. Analyzing the awful experience of Kamala Das tells the sufferings of women as well as the male domination in this patriarchal society. By the people of this society she was forced to adopting the attire of males, in order to overcome her adversities. So for the sufferings and the daring innovativeness of kamala das was explored through her selected poems “An Introduction and The Old Playhouse”. This paper moves towards the failure of love or the absence of love in a woman who strives for it in a loveless male world.

**Keywords:** Domination, Struggles, Freedom, Grieves, Ignorance, Patriarchal Society, Isolation.

Indian English literature is the body of work by writes in India who writes in the English languages and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Early Indian writers used English unadulterated by Indian words to convey an experience which was essentially Indian. As an Indian writer Kamala Das is a renowned icon in Indian literature. She added thirty novels in Malayalam language and three anthologies of poetry in Indian literature.

Kamala das was noted for her many Malayalam short stories as well as many poems written in English. She was also a **syndicated columnist**. She once claimed that “poetry does not sell in this country (India)”, but her forthright columns, which sounded off on everything from women’s issues and child care to politics. Kamala Dad’s first book of poetry is “**summer in Calcutta**” was a breath of fresh air in Indian English poetry. Some other words of das is “ only the soul knows how to sing (1997)”, “my mother at sixty six (1999)”, “my story(1976)” it is an autobiographical one, and so on.

Kamala das lived between 31March 1934 -31May 2009. Dad’s “An Introduction” is an autobiographical poem written in the colloquial style. She presents her feelings and thoughts in a bold manner. She realizes her identity and understands the need of every woman to raise a voice in this male dominated society. The poet longs for love it is the result of her loneliness and

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frustration. She was never exhausted from speaking loudly for the liberation from the clutches of the male dominated society. As she complains: “they took us for granted and considered us mere puppets, moving our limbs according to the tugs they gave us I felt myself to be an intruder in any room rather than every morning I told myself from the desolation of my life and escape, escape into another life and into another country”.

An introduction is a poem by kamala das which was written about her own introduction in it. This poem exposes the grieves and sorrows of women in this society after getting married and she gave her voice against the woman’s life living in a patriarchal society. This poem was described as the poet’s own mental and emotional state against male dominated society. And this poem starts with the overwhelming power of Kamala Das that she didn’t know what is political but she can tell the names of male politicians or leaders of India like days of week, or names of month beginning with Nehru.

***“I don’t know politics but I know the names  
Of those in power, and can repeat them like  
Days of week, or names of month, beginning with Nehru.” (Lines 1 to 3)***

Kamala das states that she is an Indian, liking dark in colour and born in Malabar. She speaks three languages and she can write in two, and dream in one. Though Malayalam is the mother tongue of kamala das. She felt that she was comfortable with English language to her writings. But she was criticized by this society and they ordered her to don’t write in English language because English language is not your mother tongue and starts write or speak in your mother tongue. But kamala das oppose them and she burst like volcano and she openly asked them like.

***“.....why not leave  
Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,  
Every one of you? Why not let me speak in  
Any language I like? The language I speak  
Becomes mine.....”. (Lines 8 to 12)***

Kamala das tells that the language which she speak her own and that’s squelching and disquieting all are her own and that language is half English, half Indian, it will funny perhaps though it’s honest one and it voices her joys, her languishing, her aspiration and it’s useful to her as screech is to crows or roaring to the lions. But with the lack of women power in India. She was forced to get married at her age sixteen.

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She explored like that she was a child, and some says like her limbs swelled and one or two places sprouted hair, the time when she asked for love but she doesn't know to what to ask for. After that she felt that her husband didn't beat her but her body felt that it was beaten. The weight of her breasts and womb crushed her. So she don't want to continue the relationship after her marriage that bitter experience forced her to adopting the attire of males in order to overcome her awful marriage experience. So for she wore her brother's shirt and trousers she cut off her hair and ignored her womanliness. But that activities of kamala das was criticized by the people and they asked her to change her manly activities and be like a girl, and they ordered her to wear sarees, to be a great wife for her husband and you have to cook, don't sit on walls and so on. But she tries to establish her individuality by violating the social norms and tries to emancipate women from their doll like lives which are imposed upon them.

Kamala das met a person that man is the everyman who desires a women to satisfy his sexual desire. His identity is that he is "I". There it shows the male domination against woman. Thus she attributes herself as the sinner and saint, beloved and betrayed.

*".....I am sinner,  
I am saint, I am the beloved and the  
Betrayed I have no joys that are not yours, no  
Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I". (Lines 53 - 61)*

Eventually this poem is about her struggle against 'the categorizers' to whom she defines and asserts her identity to conquer and dominate. Kamala das was a social rebel and feminist revolts against the social perspective that takes the decision and women have to follow it silently ignoring their own power as well as her identity. 'An Introduction' can be divided into the part of politics, the struggles of women to get independence and the poet's struggle to establish her own identity as well as the status "I".

"The old playhouse" poem begins with the painful words or experience of kamala da that she compared herself with caged bird and she tells that she forgets the joy of her marriage life, happiness in her life before her marriage and her nature. So she wants freedom from the crushed life of her husband. This poem is an open protest against the male ego of her husband who never goes beyond her own sexual satisfaction. This playhouse reminds us one of the traditional gender roles and the hegemony of man over woman.

In this beginning the image of the swallow is the symbol of the beauty of the woman and her free spirit. The female persona is compared to 'swallow' who has as 'urge to fly'. As she is tied and trapped in the name of marriage, she has forgotten that 'urge to fly'.

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*“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”.(lines3-5)*

‘The old playhouse’ creates a bitter experience of women in this patriarchal society. The awful experience of kamala das with her husband was bring forth the grieves and sufferings of a women after her marriage. So she alludes to Greek mythology to refer her husband to narcissus and the wife to the nymph echo. Narcissus is known to have rejected echo’s love and fallen in love with his own appearance in the water, at which he stares to death. Kamala das used this to describe the male-ego’s love for his egoism and the female persona’s deprivation from true love.

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