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**THE HUMILIATION FOR WOMEN IN
 INDIAN SOCIETY IN VIEW OF KAMALA DASS**

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Abstract:

It has become normal in Indian society to have the harassment and humiliation against women. Since the women are considered to be the weaker sex in the society the domination of the men is much. Many writers show the inner world of their characters through their writings. Mostly the portrayal of man-woman relationship is influenced and conditioned by the social culture and tradition. Mostly women are culturally and emotionally dependent on men and disruption in relationship proves to be a loss and self. Anta Desai, Premchand, Kamala Markandaya, Kavita Daswani, Alain Danielou, Mahasweta Devi, Shashi Deshpande, Chitra Banerjee, Tony Morrison, Nikita Singh, Durjoy Datta, Manju Kapur, Clifford Odets, Arundhati Roy, Chetan Bhagat, Philip Roth, Margaret Atwood, Kushwant Singh, Jaishree misra, Sahro Ahmed Koshin, Anita Nair, Alice Walker, Bama, Bapsi Sidhwa, Paule Marshal, Githa Hariharan, Terry Tempest Williams, Maya Angelou, Shoba De, Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Rau Badmini, Rama Mehta, Sudha Moorthi, Lorraine Hansberry, Radhika Jha, Thomas Hardy, Kiran Desai and above all Kamala Das bring out to the society what they experienced in their personal lives. They also fight for the issues related to woman gender discrimination, male domination, oppressive culture, domestic violence, sexual harassment, reproductive rights, property right, equal opportunities for career and business, liberation and empowerment of women. Since they have experienced the humiliation from the society, they are more aware that the future generation should not be affected by it.

Key Words: *Humiliation, man-woman relationship, emotionally dependent, disruption.*

Every nation has its own culture and attitude. This culture differs from village to village, city to city and so on. It forms its own norms which are to be followed by the people of the particular area. It should lead the society to growth. It should mould the human beings in a positive way. . Earlier whatever the rituals were followed, they basically tortured and humiliated the human beings in some or the other way. More than that, the women were suppressed by the men in the name of rituals. The rituals that act against the women are in various ways. They are;

The concept of marriage in itself has a kind of partiality. The rituals which are the part and parcel of the marriage are favourable only for male. Man and woman join hands together only in marriage promising that they don't part each other in any occasion and they share their joys and sorrows with each other. It should be the base of any marriage but the focus of marriage is on something else, not on unity. Anita Desai through all her novels portrays the culture of the society and its injustice to the women. The novel, *Cry the Peacock*, holds this view in a vivid manner.

How little he knew of my suffering or of how to comfort me. . . . Telling me to go to sleep while he worked at His papers, he did not give another thought to me, to either The soft, willing body, or the lonely wanting mind that Waited near his bed (*Cry the Peacock* 95).

It is not the fate of women alone to suffer in the life. Both the man and woman are the sharers of suffering. In "God of Small Things", Arundhati Roy shows that the hold of patriarchy and power dynamics in the family and the society. It is through the dynamics of relations that we learn how the domination and subjugation work. Ammu, the tragic heroine of the novel, is the most conspicuous representative of the

fourth generation who died at a young age of thirty one which is described as “not old, not young” and “viable die-able age”. Her suffering started at a very young age. Her father Pappachi insisted that college education was unnecessary for a girl, so she had to leave Delhi after schooling (Insights 95). Here, the culture holds that the women are inferior to men. It is the culture made by men and should be followed forever.

The women suffered a lot earlier as the widows in the name of widow. Except some people, others became blind to the atrocities like this. In “The God of Small things”, we also find the dowry system as the cultural phenomenon. After Ammu stopped her schooling, she waited for marriage proposals but no proposal came her way because her father did not have enough money to raise a suitable dowry. She thought of escaping from her ill-tempered father and long suffering mother (Insight 95). Prostitution has become the world-culture. It is the unwritten law for the women especially of poverty to follow it. The stereotypic rules and rituals of the patriarchal society determine the status of women which can... (Insight 29).

The custom of checking virginity in a particular village is prevailing till now. After the marriage of the couple, on the first night the sexual intercourse takes place. In order to check the virginity, a white cloth is spread on the floor and the couple celebrates the first night ceremony. The elders of the village sit and chat outside the house. Next morning, the elders go to the particular room where the couple had their first night ceremony. If they find the blood of the bride on the white cloth, then she is considered to be virgin and if it is not so, she is considered to not to be virgin and is driven away to her house.

Kamala Das has rebelled against social conventions and bourgeois morality. She shuns hypocrisy and petty-mindedness. And her confessions are intense and lucid. Here is one such confession, in lyrical prose, about her unfulfilled longing for ideal love.

I was looking for an ideal lover I was looking for the one who went to Mathura and forgot to return to his Radha. Perhaps I was seeking the cruelty that lies in the depths of man's heart. Otherwise why did I not get my peace in the arms of my husband? Subconsciously I had hoped for the death of my ego. I was looking for an executioner whose axe would leave my head into two.

This idealistic approach is also a gift of her background, a sort of inheritance, or influence as some might like to call it. Her great grandmother's younger sister, who died some thirty-five years ago, had left behind a bunch of poems and they were all about Krishna. "To him she had been faithful. My chastity is my only gift to you, oh Krishna, she wrote in her last poem. Her writings disturbed me." Kamala Das also echoes the same refrain in her life and poetry. She is a woman "broken by life's trophies." Her life story should evoke more sympathy than hatred.

In more ways than one, it is an incomplete story with a somewhat abrupt ending. It is not a literary autobiography, though poems have been included as epigraphs. The names of people and personalities have been wisely excluded and the only names that occur in the book are those of relatives. And as such what emerges from the book is just one aspect of the story of a powerful personality. One wishes Kamala Das had also taken account of her own literary personality and her experiences of literary figures, complete with their whims and fallacies.

Nearly a year ago I returned to the Nalapat house, a middle-aged woman, broken by life's bitter trophies, and found among the old books some containing Ammalu's poems. I dusted the notebooks and carried them up to my room. Most of the poems were about KRISHNA.

To Him she had been faithful. My chastity is my only gift to you, oh Krishna, she wrote in her last poem. Her writings disturbed me.

Another school-mate was plump Devaki, who once wrote me a love letter and handed it to me most furtively, hiding behind the school privy. “Don't read it now,” she said, “take it home and read it when you are alone. I have unloaded my mind, my heart and my soul.” I was mystified by the words. When I reached

home and my grandmother found the letter in my pocket, she did not allow me to read it beyond the opening sentence, "my dearest darling." My grandmother was very upset. She told me that I was not to associate with Devaki who had proved herself to be wicked, writing such letters to innocents like me.

There was a boy in the eighth standard which was adjacent to my class in the same dusty hall. He was considered an outlaw by the teachers who took a sadistic delight in punishing him every day. He was handsome and had a dimple on his right cheek which appeared only when he smiled. I could hardly take my eyes off his face. I was so infatuated with his charm. Once when he wrote some obscenity at recess on the blackboard, the class master slapped him hard. I could, from my class, see the red weals on his cheek. Govinda Kurup, the outlaw, merely smiled and muttered something to his benchmate, making him blush and hang down his head. Get out of the class, shouted the angry teacher, Govinda Kurup, leave the class immediately. The boy kilted up his dhoti and walked away whistling. At that moment I wanted to follow him and tell him that if he were wicked, I was fond of wickedness too...

American poet and activist Muriel Rukeyser once said "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open". What Rukeyser recognized was a certain unspeakability of the feminine world, in comparison with a narrative that for centuries had been exclusively male. Reading the autobiography of Kamala Das, one of the foremost poets of the Indian subcontinent, one really has the feeling that with a simple act of sincerity the world would indeed split open, letting out demons and demons. When this book came out, in fact, the prudish Indian society was scandalized at the outspoken woman who could so freely talk about her extramarital affairs and her teenage lesbian crushes. The effect for the reader is now somehow softened by the dozens of women writers who have recently made sex and desire the subject of their books, even in squeamish India (Shobhaa De, whom I haven't read and whom I will not rush to read, not because I'm prudish, but for the same reason that I don't read Sophie Kinsella!).

Kamala Das looks very determined to revolt against the conventional society's definition of womanhood. Even she challenges the traditional sex roles (Insight 122 123). Kamala was like all other girls in possession of all the qualities such as beauty, softness, shyness and etc. She, in her fifteen, was herself enthralled by a series of older women, unmarried aunts, teachers, women who were family friends. She talks of her friend who had the masculine grace:

"She kissed my lips then, and whispered, you are so sweet, so very sweet, I have never met anyone so sweet, my darling, my little darling.... It was the first kiss of its kind in my life. Perhaps my mother may have kissed me while I was an infant but after that no one, not even my grandmother, had bothered to kiss me. I was unnerved. I could hardly breathe. She kept stroking my hair and kissing my face and my throat all through that night while sleep came to me in snatches and with..."

It is not often that one comes across an autobiography which is so outspoken, so controversial, so positively honest, so lyrical in its narrative. Perhaps no other Indian woman writer has made more startling self-revelations than Kamala Das in *My Story*. There are critics who argue that much of it is a concoction of her richly fertile imagination. Even if it is so, it is just superb. But that it is mere concoction strikes one as strange if one has known Kamala Das personally. Moreover, one cannot think of any woman, more so an Indian woman, who would invite abuses, negative criticism and hatred and bring an aura of eroticism around her purely to create sensation-not even the strongest protagonist of women's liberation.

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