

Q. Critically analyse the poem 'An Introduction' by Kamala Das in your own words.

Ans:- Kamala Das introduces a new trend in Indian poetry in English with her bold, original and concentrated approach to the theme of love, language, sex and self identity. Her love-experience involves the predicament of an Indian woman compelled to obey the traditional ideals of womanhood. She revolts against conventions.

The poem, An Introduction by Kamala Das was included in Kamala Das's first volume of poetry, Summer in Calcutta (1965). The poem begins with a statement that shows her frank distaste for politics, especially in politically free India ruled by a chosen elite. The poet asserts her right to speak three languages, and defends her choice to write in two—her mother-tongue, Malayalam, and English. She doesn't like to be advised in this matter by any guardian or relations. Her choice is her own: authentic and born of passion. The poet looks upon her decision to write in English as natural and humane. From the issue of the politics of language the poem then passes on to the subject of sexual politics in a patriarchy-dominated society where a girl attaining puberty is told about her biological changes by some domineering parental figure. As the girl seeks fulfilment of her adolescent passion, a young lover is forced upon her to traumatize and coerce the female-body since the same is the site for patriarchy to display its power and authority. When thereafter, she opts for male clothing to hide her femininity, the guardians enforce typical female attire, with warnings to fit into the socially determined attributes of a woman, to become a wife and a mother and get confined to the domestic routine. She is threatened to remain within the four walls of her female space lest she should make herself a psychic or a maniac.

But the poet is an individual woman trying to voice a universal womanhood and trying to share her experiences, good or bad, with all other women. Love and sexuality are a strong component in her search for female identity and the identity consists of polarities. The poem ends with repetitions of the 1st person singular 'I' to suggest vindication of the body and the self. The poet truly discloses herself and the position of women in society particularly in that time to reveal the abuses in the society.

In conclusion, we may say that the poem Introduction tells much about Kamala's thought. Through the poem, she wants to emphasize her identity as both a feminine and personal. The poem also talks about the patriarchal society, the shackle to women in daily life, fulfillment love and the superiority of males in a relationship. Even though the poem takes place in Indian context, the discrimination and inequality toward the women happen not only in India, but also in any other regions of the world. Cultural and mental revolution is needed accompanying constitutional safeguard for the rights of the women. Her poem reflects the urge to change the society. Woman deserves the equal status in the society. She complains that woman should not be considered as belonging to someone, she should have her own identity.