

Semester III

Kamala Das as a Confessional poet

An Introduction is a very popular poem by a prominent Indian poet named Kamala Das. It has been written in a confessional tone. It is feminine in theme and feminine in tone. The life of the poet finds beautiful expression in this poem. It has been taken from her first collection of poems named *Summer in Calcutta*. Here Kamala Das represents Indian women.

An Introduction is an autobiographical poem. It displays Kamala's own mental and emotional state. Here the poet has expressed her anger against patriarchy. The speaker of the poem feels that the patriarchal system of society is the real culprit. It puts hindrances in the way of the development of Indian women. Due to this system of society the women of India are suffering from exploitation. They are compelled to lead a life of slavery.

They are not provided proper opportunities to flourish. Their emotions are not appreciated. They have no identity at all. They have no participation in decision-making. They have no freedom at all. Injustice is their fate. Discrimination is their destiny. Everywhere there is nothing but male supremacy. In short, this poem is a revolt against male dominance.

At the start of the poem the poet talks about Indian politics. Here it has been attempted to convey the anger against male dominance in Indian political world. To show that dominance the name of Nehru has been mentioned. Indirectly the poet is of the view that there is no participation of women in politics. Perhaps the poet is of the opinion that democracy exists only in words. The following is the sarcastic remark of the poet:

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 months, beginning with Nehru.

In the next part of the poem the poet declares herself a true Indian. Here she talks about her birthplace, her colour, her language and her dreams. The poet perhaps wants to convey that women are not inferior to men in any respect. In spite of that they have to suffer from numerous restrictions. Their language, their habits and their dress are not appreciated by their friends and relatives. They are not free to enjoy their freedom. It is nothing but injustice. They are forced to be:

Be Amy or be kamala. or, better

Still, be Madhavikutty.

In another part of the poem the poet frankly mentions her physical changes. She openly shares some secrets of her own married life. With the help of her own married life the poet tries her best to narrate the true story of every woman of her country. Like the poet, the young girls of India are forced to marry. Their consent is not taken. The poet expresses the pathetic condition of her married life in the following lines:

When I asked for love, not knowing what else to ask

*For, he drew a youth of sixteen into the
Bedroom and closed the door, He did not beat me
But my sad woman-body felt so beaten.*

An Introduction is a long poem. It has no specific metrical pattern. Here there is no rhyme scheme. It has been composed in free verse. The use of literary devices like repetition, enjambment, allusion and anaphora makes the poem impressive.

To conclude, in *An Introduction* the poet expresses her feeling of the lack of power. She feels that she is forced to obey. The entire poem is an expression of the hard struggle of the poet to establish her identity. In short, this poem advocates for freedom for all women