PREFACE

Indo-Anglian poetry has rich store of themes of love and feminine sensibility. From sensual to the sentimental, love receives pungent and pregnant expression in its every aspect. Kamala Das has established her reputation as the *femme fatale* of Indo-Anglian poetry. In her poetry, we find the best expression of feminine sensibility. Being an Indian – a woman and wife, she has a minute knowledge of feminine sensibility, its suppression, its exploitation, its hurts and its anguishes in a male-dominated society. Her poetry is autobiographical and confessional to a great extent, but at times she universalises what is personal.

Women poets have deftly poetized feminine sensibility. Besides Kamala Das, Monika Verma, Gousi Deshpande, Mamta Kalia, Malathi Rao etc. have revealed different aspects of feminine sensibility. Kamala Das’s poetry is a recordation of her own experiences and observations, her own unfulfilled love and her own sexual exploitation, frustration and disillusionment that she had to suffer in a male-dominated society. She creates a world, which is emotionally sterile and unproductive, a world where outward conceals inner vacuity.
The poetess searches an objective correlative for her own unfulfilled love longings. She is a singer of feminine sensibility and love is the central emotion in her heart, as well as women’s heart. She craves for union with man for the fulfillment of love, but she is disillusioned and frustrated when it degenerates into sheer lustfulness and bodily pleasures. Her poetry deals with unfulfilled love and the celebration of sex. She rebels against the conventions and restraints of society, which are meant to exploit womankind. Men do not see women as women but as objects or playthings. Mere sexual union, devoid of love, sickens her. The poetess reveals her own futile yearning for love, her involvement in barren and sterile sex, her subsequent agonies, tortures, disillusionments and death. Hence feminine sensibility is badly bruised and tortured by masculine callousness, heartlessness and sensuality. She has no hesitation to disclose how loveless sexual assaults are committed on a woman in the name of marriage. Like all women, she, too, is sad to think that happiness and beauty are short-lived. Her failure to realise fulfillment, in love and security and her sexual exploitation, imposed on her by the time honoured institution of marriage, disillusionment and frustrations
turned her into a social rebel. She pleads for extra-marital relationship in order to find fulfillment in love. The burden of convention-ridden life and domesticity, dull routine, loveless sexual bouts, non-fulfillment of love and subsequent frustrations and disillusionments cast a melancholy shadow over her poetry and make her think about decay and death. Her poetry is characterized by frankness, clarity and openness.

The present thesis has been divided into six chapters. Chapter I, titled as ‘Introduction’ highlights the development of the vision of the poetess. Chapter II titled as ‘The Making of the Poetess’ deals with her qualities of lyricism, openness and frankness. In her case, quality steals a march over quantity. She is verily a celebrant of the human body, and her poetry is glutted with images and symbols of love and lust. What adds pungency and authenticity to it is the distillation of her own experiences into it, the recording of her personal concerns and predicaments in it. There is an autobiographical touch in it, which makes Mrs. Das a ‘confessional’ poet of the first order.

Chapter III is entitled as “Kamala Das : A Singer of Feminine Sensibility”. In this chapter, an effort is made to
understand the poetess’s feministic vision and what makes her a singer of feminine sensibility.

Chapter IV, entitled as “Her Major Themes” Love and Sex” highlights her concerns to the celebrations of love in all its aspects. Beyond a shadow of doubt, love/sex occupies a prominent place in her poetry and emerges as one of its dominant themes. Her many of the poems are suffused with warmth and passion, with heat of an unrequited love and an unfulfilled desire.

Chapter V, entitled as “Protest Against well-Established Social Conventions” deals with the poetess’s rebel against social norms and standards. A thorough investigation of her poetry reveals that her vision is essentially tragic and pessimistic.

Her poetry abounds in details of misery and grief, loneliness and helplessness, death and disease, coldness and frigidity, frustration and dejection, and all these render her vision tragic.

Chapter VI entitled as “Conclusion” highlights the point that Kamala Das is a great poetic artist. She impresses by being very much herself in her poems and that her tone is distinctively feminine. Her diction usually tends to be lyrical
and musical. Simplicity is the hallmark of her language. In her best poems, she moves us deeply through her passionate urge and drive of the rhythm and through her haunting images of sterility. As a poet of sharp feminine sensibility, Kamala Das gives vent to the hopes, fears and desires of womankind.