CHAPTER - II

STUDY OF FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS OF KAMALA DAS AND SYLVIA PLATH

Women authors generally depict their inner desire which may be contradictory to the prescription of a male-dominated society because of their consciousness as women. In this state of new consciousness, they express a voice of distaste or resentment or protest against using the female body as object and against male-dominance. These self-conscious women authors reveal man-woman relationship in their works to the very extent of exposing the naked reality without reservation. The new women writers break away from the works of the traditional women writers who are still bound to write in some inherited conventional manner. A woman’s point of view is given importance in their works and expression of women’s inner-self is an important medium of their works. They do not want to express through the prism set by the outer social codes. This consciousness is mainly associated with what a woman really is and not with what a woman should be as per social system. Their restlessness as sensitive women moving in the male-dominated society is reflected through their works. The word ‘Feminine’ and its connotation set by the system do not
fit to mean the new consciousness and the new author presents the reality with a voice of distaste and so the newly coined word ‘Feminist’ is more suitable for these women writers who write with the new consciousness which is generally referred to as feminist consciousness.

Since the launching of women’s liberation movement in the nineteenth century, women have begun to seek equal rights and status with men in many walks of life beginning from demanding for franchise to demanding equal educational and economics rights, equal wage, equal access to jobs, and reproductive rights. Which are restricted for men only. The following refers to the beginning of the movement:

**Concern for women’s rights dates from the Enlightenment, when the liberal egalitarian, and reformist ideals of that period begin to be extended from the bourgeoisie, peasants and urban labourers to women as well.**  

Women began to decide their own career and life patterns very late. In 1920, women in America got their voting right. But they spent their time mostly in the company of their family and they felt frustrated and had a vacuum in their life. Thus, some women writers made an effort with their best level to express the silent grief in the hearts of the women through their works. Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949), Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics* (1970) and Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch* (1993) and *The Whole Woman* (1999) are serious works of such women
authors which have laid the basis of women’s movements in the western countries including the U.S. at different stages.

Mary Woolstonecraft provided ideas concerning women’s rights in the phase of the movement in nineteenth century by challenging the idea that women existed only to please men and proposing that women should receive the same opportunity as men in education, work and politics. Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* which is a milestone in the history of modern feminism raised a question of feminist consciousness by proposing the idea that liberation of women was the liberation of men too. She states that subordination of women has been institutionalised by patriarchy. She says in the “Introduction” of *The Second Sex*:

*Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being … … … And she is simply what men decrees; thus she is called ‘the sex; by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex—absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to men and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute----she is the other.*

Further, she says:
One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine.  

These ideas were also a source of inspirations to the later phase of women’s liberation movement. Betty Friedan, an American feminist theoretician, in her *The Feminine Mystique*, criticized the decadent domesticity which conditioned women to accept the passive role of being a mother and a wife made them depend upon men. Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics* presented the male attitude toward women with evidence criticising the works of male authors and their representation of women in their works. Germaine Greer’s book, *The Female Eunuch*, is a landmark in the history of feminist movement. Drawing from history, literature and popular culture, past and present, her searing examination of women’s suppression is at once an important social criticism and passionately argued masterpiece of feminism. Her second book, *The Whole Woman*, which revives the debate launched in *The Female Eunuch*, sets once again the agenda for the future of feminism, arguing that in spite of a widespread feeling of complacency, the woman question is far from being answered. According to her the whole woman is one “Who did not exist to embody male sexual fantasies or rely upon man to endow her with identity and social status, a woman who did not have to be beautiful, who could be clever, who would grow in authority as she aged”. Over the issue of
women’s demand for the right to control their own bodies, she has pointed out the ironical situation the contemporary women encounter in the following lines:

All the time women have been agitating for freedom and self-determination they have been coming more and more under a kind of control that they cannot even protest against. Feminist used to demand the right to control our own bodies; what we got was duty to submit our bodies to control by others. Much of what is done to women in the name of health has no rationale beyond control.\(^5\)

These ideas propounded by such type of women thinkers are the foundation of the feminist movement. Feminism aspires to fulfill greater freedom for women politically, socially, economically and psychologically independent of men. Feminists critically look at the society’s general emphasis on women as objects of sexual desire and endeavour to widen women’s self-awareness and to attain equality of women with men. In western developed countries, feminists have campaigned against discriminations of women in the media. African feminists revolted against the bride-price in their country. The Muslim women in the Middle East agitated against the modification of their dress code and the code of seclusion. These different agitations show that women all over the world have been subjugated by men. Thus, feminism as a system of thought has been developed by the ideas of women philosophers such as Mary Woolstonecraft, Margaret Fuller, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Simone de Beauvoir, and Germaine Greer, and feminism, as a movement, was led by
women activists such as Lucretia Mott, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

In its broad meaning ‘Feminism’ means advocacy of the rights of woman. Having no single accepted definition, it encompasses agitation for political and legal rights, equal opportunities, sexual autonomy and rights of self-determination. To be very brief, the feminist movement originated from the recognition of subordination of woman, from the existence of discrimination and inequality based on sex. Feminism is the set of ideas link to a social movement for change. The relationship between the ideas and movement is shifting. It has never been a single unified movement, but it has been made up of different elements . Different phases of feminist movements have gone under different levels such as suffragette, women’s emancipation, women’s liberation, women’s movement, feminism, social feminism, and radical feminism. The common agenda of these various phases is that women are human beings like men and therefore ought to be granted equal rights and women are different from men and therefore ought to be granted the right to represent themselves.

The words ‘feminism’ means different things to different people. It remains a controversial topic because the women’s movement in the 1960s and 1970s spawned both a radical and a more conservative wing. The women in the radical wing wished to challenge the whole existing order of things to repeal the abortions laws to create women’s collective to take the major decisions for
women’s health and wellbeing out of the hands of men, to rewrite children’s textbook and make them non-sexist and generally to raise the consciousness of American women to the cultural bondage of being categorized as a sex object. They also took up lesbian rights and wished to abolish gender roles together. But, the proposals of the radical members could not appeal to many women who held strong religious convictions. And even today there are often antifeminist voice among some communities of man and woman in America. Yet, the majority of American women today accept the basic tenets of the more conservative wing of the 1960s feminists that the constitutional rights of all persons in the United States, regardless of gender, must be guaranteed.

The American women have demanded to eradicate discriminations of woman in wage, employment discrimination and bias against woman in politics and the anti-female practices. The biggest changes in women’s goals and expectations came in the 1960s. Many idealistic young American women had participated in the movement as civil rights workers, taking part in sit-in-protests and freedom marches, and supporting the activities of the student non-violent coordinating committees and the students formed a democratic society. In creative writing and literary criticism of women authors also, they have started writing with self-consciousness which is termed ‘feminist consciousness’ in Europe and America during this period.
In the western civilization, the patriarchal family submitted to the outbreak of new social and economic forces in the Eighteenth century. No career or no public position was open to women unless they were queens. A woman had few property rights. On her marriage, a woman’s property was invested in her husband. Even a woman’s earning acquired belonged to her husband. In law, she was treated as a ‘minor’. A family’s economic unit was owned and managed by her husband. In America the same condition generally prevailed. It was the duty of women to serve and obey their husbands. In the 1960s in America women began to be conscious as the marginalized discriminated from the mainstream of patriarchal culture. Women writers laid a particular emphasis on the personal experiences and consciousness of women as an oppressed category to constitute its ideology and methods of propaganda.

In the early 1940s in America girls rarely went to college and women were trained to marry well, to be literal helpmates. Women had to turn whatever ambitions they had for themselves into the ways of supporting their husbands. Primary Schools made children aware of gender differences. There were multiple roles for women during the 1960s besides mothering or not mothering. Mother dominates her daughter to be a good daughter to follow the Mother roles. Girls fought for freedom from the dominance of their mothers and knew their own desires and abilities.
Women writers are tortured human beings. They are doomed poets. The forms and languages of poetry are determined and defined by a male tradition and the criteria for assessing the subject matter and the shape of writing are also laid down by men. In the annals of literary history, women poets are described as a minority. Kate Millet remarks:

As women in Patriarchy are for the most part marginal citizens when they are citizens at all, their situation is like that of other minorities, here, ... not as dependent upon numerical size of the group but on its status.6

Only a few women poets are allowed a place in the pantheon of great poets and they are often decried for their overly feminine way of writing. In the twentieth century, life had undergone a great change from the material point of view America is a very progressive country and its standard of living is very high. One can realize how women were disturbed greatly in mind after reading Mary Woolstonecraft’s “Vindication of the Rights of Women”. Sylvia Plath’s hatred of her father and husband became symbolic of a hatred of patriarchal society. Maleness is the enemy and it is the force that destroys the woman. Throughout the poems, she uses recurrence of dominant male figure such as the Colossus, the Zookeeper, the Jailor, the Nazi, the Vampire, the Bridegroom, and the Father. In this regard, Elaine Showalter, a contemporary American feminist critic in her critical reassessment of women novelists has stated that:
Scholarship generated by the contemporary feminist movement has increased our sensitivity to the problems of sexual bias or projection in literary history, and has also begun to provide us with the information we need to understand the evolutions of a female literary tradition. One of the most significant contributions has been the unearthing and reinterpretation of “Lost” works by women writers, and the documentation of their lives and careers.\(^7\)

Feminist consciousness is the new consciousness which emerged with the consciousness of women of their own subordinated condition under male-dominance in the western countries—in Europe and America. This consciousness gave rise to the raise of a new thought known as feminism to a new movement called women’s emancipation or liberation movement. According to Elaine Showalter, this consciousness as visible in women writing can be divided into three phases—feminine, feminist and female. The first phase is that of the consciousness of women writer to write about their own life after the model of men writer. At the second phase, women writers are conscious of their subordinated conditions under the patriarchal system and they consciously write to tell the truth. The last phase is the stage at which they are speaking about their own identity and they claim for it.

Feminist critics have challenged male-hegemony over the traditional canon of great works. They have fought male prejudice against stereo-typing of woman which has severely limited women’s place in society and as writers.
They have fought to identify distinct qualities of the female voice and aesthetics in literature and to define a female literary tradition. Because of the women’s movement and the work of feminist scholars and critics, Americans have not the compulsion to rethink their attitudes and assumptions about male and female roles in society and about what constitutes essential body of knowledge that all students should be exposed to in the course of their education.

Sylvia Plath was one of the leading modern poets who depicted the reality of life around her with a great freedom in the choice of themes rejecting the old Victorian tradition. The heart touching cry of the poet at the loss of her female identity is also the dominant theme of her poetry. Her poetry depicts her own portrayal of emotions, her emotional disturbances and the turmoil she comes across in her life time. Modernist poets are mainly breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions through many experiments in form and style. Modern poets emphasize the depiction of reality, themes of life and death and also the portrayal of joys, miseries and horrors of life. Plath’s poetry reveals the myth of the doomed. Her poetry belongs to confessional poetry as her suicidal tendencies are inscribed in her poems. She wrote about the frustrated wife and mother whose life-centre collapsed when her husband and she split up.

As a feminist precursor, she expresses her desire to free women from oppression and suppression in the male-dominated society. She tries to delineate her womanhood and her life experience as a woman in her poetry. Elizabeth
Sigmund writes indignantly about the Sylvia Plath’s industry, the attempts to dissect her private thoughts and writing about her life as a prelude to her poetry:

... ... ... I have had to endure reading and hearing descriptions of Sylvia and her life which are unrecognizable. To die once is bad enough but to be repeatedly crucified in this way by people who never knew her is unforgiveable. Amateur psychologists have analysed her poetry, people who never met her have analysed her poetry, people who never met her have pontificated on her depressive, schizophrenic personality that could not form relationships. Many times it has been stated that she “rejected her marriage.”

Sigmund attempts to explain her friend’s death and says that Plath is a frustrated female and deprived woman. She is a complex human being full of contradictory impulsion and feelings and, perhaps, more honestly she records those contradictions in her work. She reveals her reactions to her father’s death and her resentment towards her mother in her poems. Her last poems show a fascination with death and with pain, both physical and mental. Her poem, “Edge”, opens with the famous lines:

The woman is perfected
Her dead
Body wears the smile of accomplishment

In her poetry, Sylvia Plath expresses her pains, despair and the nothingness of existence after she loses her female identity under the impact of male-dominance. She reveals her agony at the loss of her true-self in a male-
centred society. She portrays the shattered voice of a woman in the male-dominated society. In her poems like, “Mushroom”, “Elm”, “Mirror”, “Lady Lazarus”, “Daddy”, “Tulip”, and “Fever 103 Deg”, she indicates her restless soul which is due to her divided-self. She is in the dilemma between her sense of belongingness to her father and her own self. She can not decide her own-self due to traditional views on women. Like Kamala Das, Sylvia Plath also expresses her highly, personal tones and experiences. A woman’s confession at the lost of her sense of belongingness causes an ultimate problem of loss of her identity, her true-self. She expresses her feeling of bewilderment in many poems by using the mirror imagery as reflecting her true-self, the reality and also the other, the stranger in her which lays unseen.

In the poem, “Elm”, Sylvia Plath lays forth the grim realities of her existence, the state of utter loneliness of her frightful existence. She expresses the enveloping terrible and cruel experiences of life which kill her. The agony is expressed in the concluding lines of the poem:

Its snaky acids kiss.
It petrifies the will. These are the isolate, slow faults
That kill, that kill, that kill.\(^{10}\)

Further, the utterly terrifying and the unknowable other that poet feels as existing in her is delivered in the following lines of the same poem:

I am inhabited by a cry,
Nightly if flaps out
Looking, with its hooks, for something to love
I am terrified by this dark thing
That sleeps in me;  

In the poem, “The Colossus”, Sylvia Plath expresses her feeling of hopelessness. She expresses her feelings towards her dead father who died thirty years ago but whose image remains as a colossus in her life. She exposes her feminist consciousness through the image of mushrooms which are meek as women. Plath tells several aspects of the psychology of the oppressed. The scope of the poem, “Daddy”, is Plath’s personal experience as a writer, a daughter and a wife. The poem becomes an exploration of the dynamics of the oppression of women of religious sects and ethnicities. The line, ‘I thought every German was you, reveals the inability to access the language of the oppressor. Perhaps, ‘Daddy’ is shown as the blackboard perpetuating a system of beliefs which normalizes oppressive patriarchal standards.

The poem may be called the birth pangs of feminism, the murder of patriarchy. Women had publicly fought for equal rights in mid-nineteenth century in America. Sylvia Plath links the oppression of women to the oppression of the Jews. She criticises the widespread abuse of power of the patriarchal political systems by suggesting that ‘Daddy’, the representation of the oppressive system, is responsible for the atrocities of World War II and other wars. In the last line, the poet calls ‘Daddy’ a ‘bastard’ to suggest that there is
no legitimate origin for societies which condone economic, psychological and physically violent oppression. It is a poem of an enactment of a woman poet’s struggle to get rid herself of the influence of a male-dominated literary tradition. Plath’s father whose early death plagued her and her husband who agreed to a divorce made her to write the poem. She reveals that the role of a woman in the male-dominated society is passive. She also denounces the role of wife especially in “The Applicant” in which a man goes into a shop to purchase a wife. She also expresses her internal conflict of being a mother and a writer. It is a poem similar with the poem, “Stillborn”. She also writes poems about women like “Barren Woman”, “Heavy Women”, “Three Women”, and “Zoo Keeper’s Wife”. Her novel, *The Bell Jar*, tells the story of a young American girl in England who failed in love and married.

In India, in fact, women suffered a lot at the hands of men especially in the rural areas. But the Indian women still fight within a specific limit. The main area where Indian women concentrated their activity was to bring in sanity to customs and traditions like “Sati” by which women were burnt to death on the pyres of their husbands. Such an action was treated with pomp and ceremony, with sanction of religion, denying the basic right for life to women. Such customs and traditions enslaving women have to be fought against.

Feminism as a movement did not take place in the history of Indian women. However, feminism as a system of thought has entered into the minds
of Indian women since very early times. Vrinda Nabar’s observation may be recalled here. She says: ‘My contention is that feminism hasn’t even begun in any real sense in India’. Further she says:

The Janabais, Mirabais and Bahinabais in our literature are isolated female voices who affirm the paradox of a radical defiance super-imposed upon the prevalent conservatism. They should be viewed as victims who dared to speak out, and whose writing contains a feminist consciousness in embryo. Their poetry exhibits specific problems associated with being Hindu women from very diverse backgrounds.

She made this statement in her memorable theoretical book, an Indian feminist theory, Caste As Woman (1995), an equivalent of Germaine Greer’s The Female Eunuch. She has also highlighted about the discrimination of Indian women as three-fold: sex-based, caste-based, and class-based.

Under the Hindu orthodoxy, women of India have been segregated and suppressed. Women are treated as servants of their husbands under the Hindu Law. Many traditional practices such as child-marriage, dowry and ‘sati-dah’ were the most anti-woman social evils in the Indian Hindu-dominated society. During pre-independent India, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was instrumental in bringing about some reformations in the prohibition of the practices of ‘sati-dah’. Cases of child marriage are still reported and dowry is still a burning feminist issue in the country. Still a woman in India is made to feel morally obliged to bear a son; women have been living such a subjugated life in India.
However, since very ancient days in the literary arena, there have been women authors who have transgressed the set norms. In the tradition of Indian women writing, Madhupalani, an eighteenth-century Telugu poet, wrote poetry with self-consciousness foregrounding the true self of a woman, their feeling and emotions in her classics, Radhika Santwanam (Appeasing Radhika). The woman poet subverted the received form by asserting women’s claim to sexual pleasure through Radha in her poems.\textsuperscript{14}

There are some rare cases of women authors who write consciously with such kind of assertion of woman’s own self. Modern Indian English literature has a number of Indian women authors who write with feminist consciousness; some of them write to explore the inner life of Indian women in their fictions. Anita Desai (b.1937) is such a pioneering and representative feminist writer. She is more interested in conveying the existentialist problem of her characters who are mostly women. The women in her novels become fragile introverts due to a crisis of loneliness they feel. Their emotional traumas are disturbing that they commit suicide as in the case of Maya in her masterpiece, \textit{Cry, the Peacock} (1980). Her women protagonist rebel against patriarchy in order to explore their own potential and to live on their own terms. They become outsiders in their own society. Among many women novelist mention may be made of Shashi Deshpande, Nayantara Sahgal, Mahasweta Devi, and Arundhati Roy.

In modern Indian English poetry, women poets form a sizable school of which Kamala Das is the most outstanding poet. Others are Monica Verma,
Gauri Deshpande, and Mamta Kalia. Gauri Deshpande writes on the theme of man-woman relationship as evocatively as Kamala Das. Kamala Das is the leading woman poet of Indian English Literature. She has the reputations as the ‘femme fatale’ of Indo-Anglian poetry. For instance, K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger says: ‘Her ‘confessional’ poetry has been compared with that of Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath and Judith Wright’\(^{15}\)

Mrs. Das has inherited the traits of eroticism of Madhupalani, the ancient Indian Telugu poet who could frankly speak about love and sex. M.K. Naik’s critical appraisal of the poet is worth recalling: ‘The most obvious (and to the casual reader colourful) feature of Kamala Das’s poetry is the uninhabited frankness with which she talks about sex... ... ...’\(^{16}\). In a way Mrs. Das is also the forerunning writer who fights for the rights of women through her creative works. Like Sylvia Plath, she faces difficulties in maintaining her family relations. She loves her grandmother most deeply. She has a strong impression of her father upon her. She likes her father’s affection and love but she can not get it in the way she desires. She also writes about her father:

\begin{verbatim}
Father, I ask you now without fear
Did you want me
Did you ever want a daughter
Did I disappoint you much
With my skin as dark as yours.\(^{17}\)
\end{verbatim}

She expresses her disappointment at the domineering nature of her father who selects her husband without giving her right to choose. The poem is a
criticism of the dominant father image in the Hindu society and patriarchy because Kamala Das is not happy at her father’s interference in her personal life. The poet is conscious about her personal feeling when she utters with a taste of irony in the tone of protest in the following line of the same poem:

You chose my clothes for me  
My tutors, my hobbies, my friends  
And at fifteen with first saree you picked me a husband.\textsuperscript{18}

Like Sylvia Plath, Kamala Das is very critical of her father’s interference in her life or the dominance of her father upon her in other words. She thinks that women are not mere toys which do not have their own preference. She is not a toy to be kept beside a man to be married. She expresses her struggle for her own existence and her own individuality in her poems. She exposes her dissatisfaction clearly in her poem “The Old Playhouse”. She declares her failure to establish relationship with her husband, the society and the member of her family. She has to pretend to keep company with them. In the poem, “The Suicide”, she writes:

I must pose  
I must pretend  
I must act the role  
Of happy woman  
Happy wife.\textsuperscript{19}
The confessional tone of the lines is as telling as the lines of Sylvia Plath when she confesses about her disappointment at acting. Kamala Das, like Sylvia Plath, could not get love and understanding from her husband.

Mrs. Das is one of the women poets of India who has the courage to unfold her thoughts in the manner of honesty and candour. She presents freely her right to exist as an individual with a distinctive identity. She embodies the most significant stage of the development of Indian feminine poetic sensibility not yet attained by her younger contemporaries. She writes about man-woman relationship, marriage and search for identity. Sharad Rajimwale comments:

*Kamala Das’s poetry presents Indian women in a way that has outraged the usual male sense of decency and decorum. Kamala Das inaugurates a new age for women poets by doing so, an age seeking to forge new idiom, a new medium and modes of address, constituting a total rejection of the conventional modes of poetic expression of the dominant culture. The shock generated by this is something resembling the shock created by the experimental poets of the 1920s (Hulme, Pound and Eliot) who decided that the time had come to liberate English poetry from the Georgian decadence and rejuvenate it. Though no such high claims can be made for Kamala Das, her importance as an inaugurator of a new poetic awareness for Indian woman poets is an established fact. As a critic has observed, “she deals with the conflict between passivity and rebellion against the male-oriented*
universe. Her poetry is the acknowledgement and celebration of the beauty and courage of being a woman.\textsuperscript{20}

Her own personal anguish, pain, protections, expectation and inhibitions became Kamala’s poetic world. Through her personal experiences Mrs. Das makes an effort to exhibit the private world of feminine consciousness exhibiting the burden of social convention and sexual binary that never permit a woman to seek an identity either in personal or professional life. For her poetic collections, \textit{Summer in Calcutta}, \textit{The Descendants} and \textit{The Old Playhouse and Other poems}, she was hailed in the galaxy of Indian English poets as a radical feminist. Yet, she is not a conscious champion of woman’s liberation against the order of patriarchy. She is a woman who is able to assert her own right and identify to survive as a human being.

Women in Indian patriarchal society through the ages have been victimized and exploited. Indian society remains firmly rooted in the Patriarchal ideology that is premised upon male supremacy and a legitimisation of the oppression of women. The male authority and power and female subordination and subservience, the women’s role of mother, wife and her status as the legal, economic and sexual property of her husband were socialized through the ancient Hindu socio-legal treatises. So, the status of women in India is the most intricate and complex socio-economic terrain. The position of Indian women gets deteriorated from time to time and has undergone many changes as a result of the social changes in the country. Women were supposed to worship their
husbands like God and had to obey their commands. Domestic sphere was the most important field of a woman’s activities. Dowry, child marriage, and sati were unavoidable social practices imposed upon women. The marriage of the girls was a burden to the parents because of the custom of dowry. Both the Hindus and Muslims had fallen to the practice of child marriage. The greatest tragedy in the life of a Hindu woman was the death of her husband. A widow had to burn herself with the death body of her husband. Society looked down upon the widow who did not perform ‘sati’. Tradition tries to confine a woman to its assigned role. Changes in these age-old practices have taken places in course of time with the decrease of child marriage practice, the abolition of Sati except in some rare cases and the rise of number of women having been engaged in the public activities outside their homes in the post independence era.

Mrs. Das has projected a new device to liberate the women from the bondage of slavery in male-dominated society. As a woman writer, she articulates the hopes and expectations, the concerns and tensions of womankind in the patriarchal society. Indian women raise their voice against the established order and try to affirm their distinct identity breaking the traditional taboos of love and sex which is the outcome of male-dominated society. Kamala Das’ poetry exposes the subjugation of women by the male hegemony of Indian society. She discovers the male hegemony from the inner core of her feminine consciousness. Mrs. Das searches the reality through life, nature and herself.
She becomes the mouthpiece of all women hegemonic society. In her poems, she protests against the roles of a wife, mother and daughter in a patriarchal society. She expresses:

*I want to disturb society out of its complacency. I found the complacency a very ugly state. I wanted to make women of my generation feel that if men could do something wrong they could do it themselves too. I wanted them to realize that they were equal. I wanted to remove the gender difference.*

Mrs. Das desires to keep women’s own way beyond the theories, ideologies and social practices based on the ideals of the humanitarian values. Human psyche is a complex entity and its complete evaluation is possible only through the practical experience that varies according to the climate of the social order and individual commitment to it. She said that a woman should get a distinction of personality. She longs for equal respect to every living soul, and says that the cultural value can not be accepted as the ultimate end of human survival and the basis of female suppression. She seeks a new ground of morality because the seeds of revolt are buried in her own psyche due to the negative attitude of her father towards her mother, the pricking and provocation in her childhood and the final betrayal of her freedom in the form of marriage. The sexual superiority of her husband, his sexual haste that have caused hurt to her self-respect compelled her to give a bold and frank treatment to the sexual harassment done by man to woman.
Mrs. Das expresses the loss of female identity and her true-self as a woman in a male-dominated society. In the poem, “The Old Playhouse”, Mrs. Das mourns at the total loss of her self after her married life. She compares herself to a ‘swallow’ at the hands of her husband. She is tamed and taught to forget her true past, the self, the original home left behind, her nature and desire for independence and ambitions of her life. She becomes a thing completely devoid of body and soul. She presents whatever she has learned in the conjugal life which is not about her body and self but all about her husband’s body and self, and how to appease his desire and how to cater to his demands and the need.

As in her poems, Sylvia Plath’s autobiographical novel, The Bell Jar, reveals the events that happened in the male-dominated society which does not allow the author herself to achieve her true potential. It is the autobiography of her breakdown and her suicide attempts. It indicates her alter ego which leads her breakdown and her attempts to commit suicide many times. In many ways, it is the feelings of a young woman at the suppression of her identity. Due to this condition, the woman cannot reach her goals in a male-chauvinistic society. The feminist point of view is the central purpose of the novel. It makes an effort to depict the rights of women which are not widely recognized in male-governed society. Esther, the protagonist of the novel, is a bold girl, independent and ambitious despite her bourgeois upbringing. She is portrayed as a feminist who is quite ahead of her time and does what she wants to do. She tries to be in the
top form and learn about whatever might help her to be herself and to be successful as an intelligent woman. Though she sets the goal high for herself, she meets frustration in many situations, especially when she gets involved with young men like Buddy and Irwin. The novel unfolds this swing between ambition and depression vividly in terms of clothing and unclothing.

The novel draws well the dichotomy between women who have a chance to marry well—and thereby solve all their career problems for the rest of their lives—and those who must make it on their own. Much of the narrative of the novel, *The Bell Jar*, describes the kind of interaction Esther has with the old ladies like her mother, Mrs. Greenhood, who is a successful mother and is the epitome of self-satisfied careerism and who seems to share an ability to lead non-sexual lives throwing themselves into work and their volunteerism as if they were nuns. The most important aspect of the narrative in the novel is less economic than it is sexual. It was the problem of unmarried women having sex. Sylvia Plath’s introduction of the other eleven College Board women had to do with their sexuality.

Sylvia Plath displays in her novel a strong feeling of her own independence, rebellion against male-domination and her resentment and protest against women who are agents of mindless domesticity. She is one of the American women writers of the twentieth century who tries to declare herself as a writer of professional dedication. She wants to establish her identity as a
woman and an outstanding author in a male-governed society. Her quest for identity becomes the main theme in the novel. She always tries to find out her true self as a woman. Her life is full of chaos and she feels a plenty of confusion about her own identity because of her father’s sudden death at her early childhood. She suffers from a sense of loss and confusion. With a hope, she is married to an English poet, Ted Hughes. In the beginning, her marriage seems to be perfect and to fulfill the existence of her personal and artistic life. Her hope is soon shattered by the final breaking up of the marriage and a resurfacing in her mind of a totally deep-rooted ingrained sense of alienation and loneliness in her adopted country. From such circumstances, Sylvia has to strive hard to find and keep her identity as a woman and as a writer. She is extremely ambitious and competitive. She struggles to find her own identity as a woman. She reveals her struggles to be a woman through the imagery of clothes. The novel presents a number of stylized postures and attitudes. She uses various dresses, hairstyles, accessories, jewellery, and mirrors to represent the dynamic quest of the female persona to discover her identity. She writes:

She was wearing a strapless white lace dress zipped up over a snug corset affair that curved her in at the middle and bulged her out again spectacularly above and below, and her skin had a bronzy polish under the pale dusting powder. She smelled strong as a whole perfume stare; I wore a black shantung sheath that cast me forty dollars. It was part of a buying spree I had with some of my scholarship money when I heard I was one of the lucky ones going to New-York.
This dress was cut so queerly I couldn’t wear only sort of a bra under it, but that didn’t matter much as I was skinny as a boy and barely rippled, and I liked feelings almost naked on the hot summer nights.22

The novel remains a classic in American literature, since it tells the story of a gifted young woman’s mental breakdown. In reality, Mrs. Plath committed suicide in 1963 and left behind this novel bitterly severe, sad, honest and perfectly written book which remains one of the best told tales of a woman’s descent into insanity. Mrs. Plath reveals the downfall and destruction of the heroine, Esther Greenwood. Esther attends parties and bars and leading the life of a normal twenty three years old woman. Nevertheless, she enters a downward spiral into a world of entrapping depression. She is a young woman blessed with talent and intelligence and the means to exercise them. One may see that her life is basically happy and satisfied. As the theme of the novel is originated from a male-dominated society, it is labelled as a feminist book. It is about an inward struggle to grip with depression and regaining an interest in life. Feminists see the beauty of the book and want to assimilate it into their agenda. It is very realistic as the story is drawn directly from real life of Sylvia Plath.

Mrs. Plath reveals all her characters perfectly. Everyone of the character is so real that one may know someone exactly like Jay Cee who is a crusty and Buddy Willard, a complete jerk and the entire various young women who do not bother anything of giving away their bodies to a fleeting acquaintance. Esther, heroine of the story, is incapable of achieving anything despite her obvious
talent. She plans to affirm her identity through sleeping with someone she just meets. She goes crazy and she cannot do anything with her talents. She portrays herself a self-reliant woman but is in need of help from the world that she avoids. She contemplates suicide frequently in the novel. After her multiple attempts at suicide, she finally manages, to overdose with sleeping pills as to lay herself in the hospital. Then, she is sent to psychiatric treatment to cure her depression. After her blurry days, she is stricken with pain and misery but her condition improves. She is released from the ward and is almost herself again.

The novel reveals the way in which Esther Greenhood is made the unquestionable product of her ambitious mother and family. She must deny the influence of those elements before she comes into her own. She reconciles what she wants out of life with the pain. But she causes some troubles to her family during her process in attaining her needs. So, she must stop being a good daughter and becomes a woman who wants to climb from the smallest scenes to the largest. The novel depicts women’s experiences, women’s comedy and women’s tragedy. Esther is clearly delineated as a woman who discovers and values herself as a person rather than as a set of constructed images, designed to please someone. This idea is given in the first chapter:

It was a QUEER, sultry summer, the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs, and I didn’t know what I was doing in New York. I’m stupid about executions. The idea of being electrocuted makes me sick, and that’s all there was to read about in the papers—goggled-eyed headlines staring up
at me on every street corner and at the fusty, peanut-smelling mouth of every subway. It had nothing to do with me, but I couldn’t help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves.  

This very idea is also suggested at the end of the novel when Esther leaves the hospital without giving any answer. It may be concluded that the novel is intensely feminist in tone.

Kamala Das has also written an autobiography, My story which exhibits a revolt against a system which is totally monolithic. She makes an effort to show a new concept of Indian womanhood. She presents the stages of a woman’s life such as childhood, womanhood, married life and motherhood. Whether male or female a child has the same behaviour pattern. She wrote that she and her brother were very good friends, and helping and caring each other. They were playing together with the same feeling and praised each other’s performances. In childhood, they had no rivalry based on gender. They were children concerned with their game and other activities only. As soon as they grew up they started feeling of being different. Girls are drawn to give more attention in their dress and manner while boys are treated in a different manner. From this situation, the girls feel they are two different beings — male and female. This situation makes them feel a rivalry against the opposite one. Childhood is the basic foundation of a person. Since childhood, Mrs. Das experienced such an environment which made her attitude rebellious. She, as a
woman, develops a rebellious attitude even in childhood, not against her brother who is male but against a society which is male-governed.

The author met many forms of discriminations based on colour also. She faced the problem of being a brown child in a European school when her class mate was asked to read her poem in front of the visitor. This situation made her develop a rebellious attitude. The personality of a child is shaped according to his or her parents and atmosphere. The complaining attitude towards her parents and atmosphere that affected her creativity is shown in her autobiography. In spite of her sophisticated family, she never finds herself free from loneliness. She expresses her emotion in the autobiography, My story.

Mrs. Das expresses that she does not get any emotional fulfillment from her parents. She experiences a wrong picture of family tradition since her childhood. All these situations are also responsible for her revolt and disbelief in traditions. She does not like her parents’ marriage and her mother’s attitude. She wants her mother to revolt against the situations. On the other hand, her mother can not escape from her domestic life. Whenever a girl sees her mother as a passive one or one to be satisfied with situation, it makes her attitude reactive. She learns from her family and mother that women own nothing. So, women never enjoy the dignity of a person. As soon as children grown up, they begin taking positions and making opinion based upon those situations around them, which sometimes make them curious and sometimes upset and their curiosity is
not solved. Gradually a girl child passes from childhood to youth and then to womanhood.

Mrs. Das exhibits her quest for identity as woman in her autobiography. She makes an effort to draw her inner tumult caused by her marriage. She hopes that she would get love, consolation and understanding from her husband after marriage. Therefore, her detestation of marriage is shown obviously in the novel. She considers that her marriage makes her lose the identity of a woman. She gets frustrated since her husband treats her as an object of sex only. She never gets affection or love from him. She is frustrated after marriage like Sylvia Plath as her expectation come out absolutely different. She expresses this in the following lines:

I had expected him to take me in his arms and stroke my face, my hair, my hands and whisper loving words. I had expected him to be all that I wanted my father to be, and my mother I wanted conversations, companionship and warmth. Sex was far from my thoughts I had hoped that he would remove with one sweep of his benign arms, the loneliness of my life.\(^{24}\)

The author is vocal about her intimate right by protesting and revolting against all those forces set by the society to thwart the development of woman’s personality. She puts woman’s longing, feeling, physical changes, experiences and suffering in a frank and open manner. She says marriage does not give her
any solace from her loneliness. Due to her failure to get an ideal lover, she has started thinking herself as a eunuch. It has affected her mentality. She writes:

… … … … Their voices

Were harsh, their songs melancholy; they sang of.
Lover dying and of children left unborn… … … …
Some beat their drums; other beats their sorry breast,
And wailed and writhed in vacant ecstasy. 25

She has revealed a picture of her mental state and psychological condition which is barren and sterile like a eunuch. She can never fulfil her desire in the Indian society in which men have always been superior and made women inferior. She becomes the victim of this society in which a girl has always been taught to accept it meekly and not to say anything against this since time immemorial; woman has always been tormented and suppressed by men. As time changes, the awakening comes out in her life. She begins taking steps in order to make her free from the dominance of men by searching an identity which is totally feminine, a different kind of identity which is free from masculine approach as she realizes that under male guidance or approach she has no hope. In a male-governed society, women have no opportunity of having any constructive marriage. For both, marriage is useful as well as harmful. The first aim of marriage is to maintain the cycle of society and to perform certain rituals. It makes woman passive or slave. Marriages in India are not generally founded upon love. Mrs. Das writes about marriage:
I was a burden with a responsibility
neither my parents, nor my grandmother
could put up with for long. Therefore with
the blessing of all our marriage was fixed
… … … I felt hurt and humiliated.²⁶

She states that institution of marriage allows no freedom of choice to a
girl in India. Her marriage is different from her choice. She expresses her desire
for conversations, companionship and warmth. Sex is far from her thought. She
hopes that he will remove with one sweep of his benign arms the loneliness of
her life. Therefore, her dreams are dashed into smokes. Marriage turns to her as
a sexual game which fills in her a rebellious attitude towards marriage. She
writes: ‘Was every married adult a clown in bed, a circus-performer? I hate
marriage’.²⁷ After marriage she became a defiant female. In the middle of her
life, she tried to settle and balance with the society and its norms, but she could
not. She failed and was shocked much psychologically and became insane. This
experience of Kamala Das as an Indian Hindu woman is somewhat similar with
that of Sylvia Plath who also met a failed marriage. From this experience
Kamala Das has also developed a new concept of femaleness. She has been well
criticized and praised equally for her new concept. Most women are in favour of
her stance.

Sylvia Plath also displays her eventful life and experience in her letters
to her mother which is published as Letters Home. It may be regarded as another
autobiographical work of hers. She wrote to her family during the period from
1950 to 1963. This chronological arrangement of letters narrates Plath’s story with a number of photographs of Sylvia since her childhood. Her anguish and turmoil are expressed in her letters to her mother on August 17, 1962:

… … ... I hope you will not be too surprised or shocked when I say I am going to try to get a legal separation from Ted. I do not believe in divorce and would never think of this, but I simply can not go on living the degraded and agonised life I have been living… ... ...

Her life has been indeed a tragic one. She is a complete woman but the people around her do not understand her true-self. Her destiny makes her live on in the harsh situations and her mind is too much suffocated at the situation. As Sylvia Plath had produced a novel and recorded many things that are associated with her life in her letters, Kamala Das also has written many prose works which exhibit her thought including a novel, Alphabet of Lust. As a modern novelist, Mrs. Das has explored the unfathomable historical record of the psyche that is an unwanted gift of modern age of awareness, disillusionment and frustrations. In fact, the rapid growth of knowledge and advancements of the twentieth century has led even the common people to an era of moral perplexity and uncertainty. The Indian woman has played her part quite successfully since time immemorial as mother, sister, wife and daughter. The image of the Indian woman as a goddess, which has been continuing so long in the traditional Indian society, has undergone a change with the passage of time. Woman has been the source of inspirations and a lifelong company for man since the time
immemorial; without woman, the life of man is like a fish without water.

In her novel, *Alphabet of Lust*, Mrs. Das tells a sizzling story of a beautiful woman who is also a famous poet and her sexual surrender out of greed and ambitions to some of the best placed Cabinet Ministers and her rise to power and pelf in an unimaginable manner. She draws Manasi, the heroine of the play who makes an effort to bring about change in the traditional setup of the society. She establishes an extra-marital relation with men even after twenty years of marriage just to fulfill her lust for power. The novel exhibits the inner desire of an Indian woman who is bound according to social custom to satisfy the appetite of man for the prolongation of life. Manasi, the protagonist, belongs to the same category. The inner feelings of Manasi are shown in the following lines in the novel:

She was not the kind of woman who liked sexual acrobatics. She felt shy to undress in front of her own husband. And to think that for some diamonds she was to shed her shyness, her long cherished chastity... ... she found herself looking pale in the mirror. The mirror which had held her reflection for the past twenty years suddenly made her very uneasy. Was it accusing her of greed? Of vanity? She turned her face away.
Her novel presents a clash between tradition and modernity as in Sylvia Plath’s novel, *The Bell Jar*. It depicts Manasi’s desire to enjoy sexual liberty which has already been allowed a privilege to men in Indian society. She shows the instinct of revolt against the old Indian conventionality regarding women’s right about sex. Manasi presents a case of complex morality. She feels happy to have broken the confines of orthodoxy of laws of sex. On the other hand, she feels life returning to her roots when she makes plans for her daughter. She never approves her daughter Suprana’s marriage to her boyfriend, Cyrus. She scolds her husband:

… … … My daughter to marry that Lizard? They are so ill-matched in looks and in temperament. Besides, Amol, I have great plans for my child. I don’t want her to undergo the hardships that formed the first twenty years of my married life.30

It reveals the inner mind of Manasi who would not like her daughter to live in crisis after marriage. She thinks for the welfare of her child. She makes a kind of self introspection. She comes down from the state of lust to the ground of reality of life. She has a split personality but it would be wrong to say that she is too much inclined towards money or power. She is a woman of substance and believes in the warmth of love and compassion which she fails to receive from her husband. She becomes a frustrated wife since her husband, a government official, who looks enough to be her father. Her life becomes a great
disappointment because of her maladjusted marriage with her husband. She says: ‘we are not suited to each other. He is busy with his files all the time. I like people, conversion, some show of affection’. She wants her husband to admire and adore her physical beauty. She likes him to praise the contours of her breasts and the smooth silk of her thighs. She desires him to show affection to her with surprised gifts which have no utility value. This is the sensibility that runs deep in a woman.

The contradictory ideas of Manasi are revealed obviously through her desire to be a poetess. But circumstances have forced her to get married to Amol Mitra who is a struggling government official as the man whom she really loves died in an air crash. At the time of her husband’s death, she is pregnant. It is at this worse moment that Amol Mitra marries her extending an umbrella cover to the unborn child. Manasi accepts the adversities of life in a very cold manner. In the course of time, Mansi’s attitude to life becomes changed. She is matured looking at life realistically. The novel delineates the two opposite impressions about an Indian woman. In the early part of the novel, Manasi expresses the finest values of womanhood like, love, respect for elder, simplicity, honesty and service-mindedness. Manasi is forced to lead a simple life style. Her heart longs for the luxuries and comforts. Women can not express their sentiments openly. Women become victimised because of their dependence on man. Then, Vijai arrives in her life. He is one of her old admirers, a womanizer, a young and
corrupt politician. He becomes a minister and rising star in politics. Manasi consents the offer of the corrupt politician and agrees to rent out her body to Vijai for the sake of earrings. She pays out three nights with Vijai at a hotel in Simla. It is at this stage that she is capable to understand her own body language. She becomes a victim of ‘pure animal lust’. Her sexual contact with young men like Vijai sparks off the fire of love in her. She has no repentance at her folly and no remorse in her conscience. She does not see anything injustice in her new image. She says:

Vijai, I am willing to do whatever the P.M wants me to do. It is not as if I am a chaste woman now. A pativrata. You saw to it that I became a mere tart. I rented out my body for a pair of diamond earrings. And hereafter for power shall rent it out to the most influential tenant I can hope to get.  

It shows Manasi’s advantage to climb up socially and politically. She is ready to sell her body to climb the higher hierarchy of social order. It shows uninhibited and unorthodox ideas about man-woman relationship. Suparna and Rohini, the women of new generations believe in free-sex and even see nothing wrong with their illegitimate pregnancy. Manasi presents a new Indian woman who is in search for her real identity. She has the basic instinct of a woman. She asks her husband:

If I were not a writer would you still desire me? She asked him often and always at that question he smilingly replied, you are a desirable woman, but more so because of your
intellect. This was not what she wanted to hear. She wanted him to praise the contours of her full breasts and the smooth silk of her thigh. 33

Manasi is certainty different from the majority of Indian women who are sexually ignorant. She does not hesitate to establish sexual relations with people other than her husband. She does so out of pure lust. In fact, lust makes her blind to see things in the right perspective and makes her to stoop down to the lowest level of morality. It widens the gulf between wife and husband, mother and daughter and leads Manasi to a point of a no return. As a result, she is lonely even after reaching at the summit of power and glory. It is against the settled image of womanhood.

The novel presents the story of woman’s life in modern India. It shifts the topic of social security to sexual security of a woman in India. The meaning of love undergoes a change and falls down to the level of physically wellmatched people. The transformation of love into lust is found in the novel particularly in conduct and behaviours or characters like Manasi and Suparna. Manasi never treats herself as a victim of circumstances. She considers to have emerged victorious in her new experience of love. Manasi is a representation of the emergence of a challenging female consciousness in modern India. She is found different from the kind of such woman depicted in Esther of Sylvia Plath’s The Bell Jar in that the latter became psychiatric patient whereas in Kamala Das’ creation, Manasi can manipulate everything at her advantages and
does not go through any mental crises except her loneliness as she grows older. Manasi is totally an idol breaker. In this way, Mrs. Das reveals women’s consciousness about their personal pains.

Both the poets represent their pent up inner feelings of their hurt mental state in the confessional style of writing which emerges in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Since confessional poetry is the poetry which springs from the personal or private compulsion of a poet, private experiences and feeling about death, trauma, depression and relationships are addressed in this type of poetry often in an autobiographical manner. The real subject matter of confessional poetry is the poet’s own self. This style of writing is associated with Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, Randal Jarrel, John Berryman, and Sylvia Plath. Both Kamala and Sylvia, as writers of 1960s, reveals directly or indirectly their experiences, problems and psychological complexities related to their feminist consciousness in their poetry. The confessional poets of the 1950s and 1960s are forerunners of this type of writing that forever alters the landscape of American poetry. The expression of personal pain has been regarded as a hallmark of this kind of poetry.

Sylvia Plath is the most significant confessional poet after Anne Sexton as she expresses her sufferings caused by severe personal difficulties, destructive, family relationship, traumatic childhood, broken marriage and recurring mental breakdown. Like Sylvia, Kamala Das uses the images that evoke the joy and frustration of achieving womanhood. As a confessional poet,
Mrs. Das writes in the mode and pattern of several new American poets like Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, and Sylvia Plath etc. They are highly subjective and write with considerable frankness and sincerity. Both the poets use their personal failure and mental illness as their favourite themes of their works.

Agonies of these two women authors at the loss of their true selves are obviously shown in their works. Their anguish in a confessional voice at the loss of the female identity in the crux of male-dominated world is raised in both poetry and prose though there are dissimilarities in the manner of expressions. Sylvia Plath does not express clearly her suffering while Kamala Das expresses in free and frank manner. In their poems, both the authors have expressed their pains, despair and the nothingness of the existence after they have lost their female identity under the impact of male-dominance. In the novel, The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath narrates the story of a young woman who is blessed with talent and intelligence but incapable of achieving anything despite her obvious talent. The central themes are desperations, depression, and pressure encountered by a woman living in a male-dominated society. The novel presents an inward struggle which is gripped with depression and which attempts to regain an interest in life.

Both the authors have expressed their eventful lives and experience in their works. They express their loathing of the male principle of dominance and sexual suppression. Both scorn hypocrisy and are painfully aware of their consequent degradation. They express these views in their poems like “Fever
103 Deg”, “The freaks” ,”Compositions” and “The Old Playhouse”. They visualize the colossal figure of the male as a primitive terror in identical terms. Both have expressed a fervour of homesickness in their poems. They exhibit their longing for home in their poems, “A hot noon in Malabar” (Kamala Das) and “All the Dead Dears” (Sylvia Plath). When the poet is living in a big city, far removed from her ancestral home, at noon, she is inside her house but outside the world there is none to be happy. Mrs. Das is reminded of her parental home in Malabar where things are quite different though the people stir about in the hot noon there as elsewhere. The hot noon is essentially different from that in Malabar. Sylvia Plath also recollects her time of delight when she was a girl. For instance, she longs for her days when she as a little girl lived at her grandmother’s house at Massachusetts by the side of sea. She began familiar and intimate with the sea then. She was fascinated by the magical waves of the ocean. She had, of course been enjoying the beauty of nature and recognized its power. In addition to that, when she lived at London after having married with Ted Hughes, a British poet, she recalled her past life in America, her native country. Yearning for past youthful days and nature is a dominant theme in the poetry of both the poets.

Kamala Das yearns to explore the resonance and vitality of nature in her poem, “The Suicide” whereas Plath longs her communication with the earth and the sky in her poem “I am vertical”. In the poem, “The Suicide”, Mrs. Das shows her discontent which finally turns into suicidal tendency. When she
becomes a victim of the dark forces of male-dominated society, she wishes to swim into the sea to quench her thirst for emotional contentment. Therefore, she requests the sea to take her soul which is more vital than her body. Sylvia Plath shows her desire to die more than to live though the beauty of nature makes her certain, painless, relax, calm and gives her sense of inner insecurity. Death is common to all. She does not like the courage of the flowers and longevity of the tree which are in care of the mother earth. Both the poets have presented their similar views in their poems. The feminist consciousness of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das has been found to have undergone an evolutionary change from the state of feminine sensibility to the consciousness of a forceful female voice which is impregnated with the ideas of a separate female identity in their later poems as they grow to maturity. Their feminine sensibility reflected in their poems will be discussed in the forthcoming chapter.

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Notes:


3. Ibid., p.295.


5. Ibid., p.136.


13. Ibid., p.17.


18. Ibid., p.118.


27. Ibid., p. 70.

29. Ibid., pp.494-95.


31. Ibid., p.10.

32. Ibid., pp.40-1.

33. Ibid., pp. 26-7.