CHAPTER - I

FEMINISM: THE ECHO OF RECOGNITION
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Feminism/ Feminisms is the talk of the day since Prehistoric days. It questions the position of women as women in general and in comparative norms against the patriarchal norms. Adam and Eve were born equal but what made Adam superior to Eve is anybody's guess. The state of Eve in general continued to deteriorate so much so that women in group debated the social structure and the male perspectives in relation with their counterpart. A question then arises why women suffer atrocities through her counter part: why 'was' and 'is' woman a slave to man folk? Why a woman is given a marginal status and where would the hierarchy lead the society too? In the light of these questions, feminism/feminisms is a search for a convincing answer, so that gender equality is given a Pathological Treatment. With varied societies and culture, Feminism gained branches and sub branches and the result is Feminisms. A survey of the rise of Feminism to Feminisms thereby calls upon a survey of the meaning and the nature of Feminism with their respective goals.

Reminiscencing the historical myths like Ramayana and legends like those of Shakuntala and Dushyant, Savitri and Satyavan, one finds woman equal to a man in rank, social status and individuality and powers. The present state of woman since the start of nineteenth century shows the early state of woman and a desperate need to re-establish her lost identity and individuality in Indian scenario. In India as well as in other parts of globe
Feminism has become an intensive campaign to redo the state of a woman. In this light the concept feminism, as an ideology needs an extensive survey. The early editions of the *Oxford English Dictionary* defined Feminism as a state of being feminine or womanly. The 901 edition upholds the same meaning but the 906 edition entitled *Diccionaira De Philosophy* defined Feminism as a position favourable to the rights of a woman. *Webster’s Dictionary* defines Feminism as:

- The principle that women should have political rights equal to those of men.
- The movement to win such rights for women.

*Oxford Dictionary* (2006) defines the term as ‘a movement or theory supporting women’s right on the ground of equality of the sexes’. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Eleventh Edition) defines the term as:

- The theory of the political economic and social equality of the sexes.
- Organised activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests.

Simone de Beauvoir defines the term in *The Second Sex* as:

The term masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles for men represent both the positive and neutral as is indicated by the common use of
man to designate human beings in general where as woman represents only the negative defined by climating criterion without reciprocity.... A man is in the right in being a man; it is the woman who is in the wrong. It amounts to this: just as for the ancients there was an absolute vertical with reference to which the oblique was redefined, so there is an absolute human type, the masculine, (16)

The term Feminism is derived from the Latin word 'Femina' meaning 'Woman' which is again a derivative of French word 'Feminisme'. It refers to the 'advocacy of women's rights'. On the ground of equality of sexes and gender the poetical scope of Feminism becomes broad and extensive under the influence of Marxists Ideology that not only challenge the patriarchal setup but also Sexism in connection with Capitalism.

Feminism therefore is a serious attempt to look into the relationship between men and women with a new insight. Its thrust is not only on gender and sexuality but also on the various perspectives from Biology, Sociology, Linguistic and Psychology.

Feminism has its origin in West and its genesis can be marked during the last decades of the 18th century when the struggle for women's rights become eloquent with the flux of time. In this quest recognition and contributory roles were performed by eminent voices like Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman* (1792), Fredrick Engle's *The Origin of The*...
Family (1854), Margaret Fuller's Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845), John Stuart Mill's The Subjugation of Women (1869), Oliver Scheiner's Women And Labour (1911) Virginia Wolf's A Room of Ones Own (1929) Simon de Beauvoir’s Le Deuxieme Sexe (1949), Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique (1963), Kate Millet’s Sexual Politics (1962), Mary Ellman’s Thinking About Women (1968). Shukla Mith Firestones The Dialective of Sex (1972), Sandra Gilbert & Susan Gobar’s The Mad Woman in The Attic: The Woman Writer and The Nineteenth Century Imagination (1979) Elaine Showalter’s A literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing (1977), Sara Mills and others Feminist Reading /Feminists Reading (1989) and Allan & Barbara Pease’s Why Men Don’t Listen and Women Can’t Read Maps (2001)

With late 1960 the feminist struggle became highly intensified in Europe and America. The feminist felt that women were victimised by not only male oppressions but also by the injustice done to the womankind. Betty Friedan’s questioned a women’s confinement to domesticity and child care where as a man enjoyed the complete pleasure of independent living. She also questioned as to why a woman is deprived of her need for self-fulfillment, autonomy, self-realisation, independence, individuality and self-articulation. After the 60s feminism shows a wide range of extensions and variations in its branches like Radical Feminism, Marxists Feminism, Bourgeois Feminism, Materialist Feminism etc.
Nevertheless all the branches of Feminism deal with the same end.

**Liberal Feminism** looks at a healthy interactive relationship between men and women in building a more gender equitable place. Liberal Feminists Champion issues like sexual harassment, reproductive and abortion rights and above all easily accessible higher education. Feminists who form this route are luminaries like Mary Wollstone Craft, Naomi Wolf, Betty Friedman, and John Stuart Mills. Liberal Feminism is moderate in its outlook and it demands equal natural rights for women. They uphold the view that women are equally entitled to the basic human rights as is provided to the privileged gender— the male. It refers to the traditional expression, established by John Stuart Mills *The Subjugation of Women*. It calls for liberation for women to construct their social role and to maximize their self worth. The liberals do not believe in changing the social structure but rather in transforming it for the good of the oppressed section.

**Radical Feminism** is more concerned with sexual oppressions of women. They believe that patriarchal authority and power structure are responsible for oppressions and inequality. Their reaction to capitalist hierarchy is therefore intense and over bearing. Radical Feminism is therefore antagonist to Capitalism. Radical Feminists also believe that cause of women oppression is the biological factor. Because of child bearing capacity women become dependent on men for domestic welfare and physical survival. This is regarded to the basic cause
of oppression by the Radical Feminists and is also the root cause of Racisms. The remedy suggested by Radical Feminist for women liberation is a biological revolution. They also believe that technology could be another effective tool for women liberation. Technology can beget both biological and economic security. Further dissolution of social role system could abolish male authority and assign equal status to women along with men. Such an approach of Radical Feminism is therefore labeled as Neo-Freudian. Thus the Radical Feminists intend to make women conscious of their victimization. Women regard themselves as outsiders to the society. They serve in order to make male living comfortable and prosperous. Radical Feminist seeks to discover and change such an infected attitude towards women who are otherwise equally a potent social force. The luminaries of Radical Feminisms are Mary Daly, Catherine MacKinnon, and Paula Gunn Allen.

**Radical-Cultural Feminism** asserts the belief that women should uphold their feminity with pride because it is better than masculinity. They see sex and penetration as manifestations of male domination. They also believe female subordination porn, eve-teasing molestation and abuse as varied forms of male domination. Their cry is elimination of such sexual atrocities. Radical Cultural Feminism views reproduction as female superiority over male and this had made men envious of women. Biotechnology related to reproduction is men's effort to combat a woman's superiority and hence reproduction
through scientific tool is looked upon as another form of superiority. The advocate of Radical Cultural Feminism is Michelle Stanworth.

**Radical Libertarian Feminism** advocates artificial means of reproduction so that pregnancy is made less time consuming and less demanding on a woman's career. They advocate violation of sexual norms in order to give free play and free assertion of their sexuality, abortion, use of contraceptive and birth control are its promoting thoughts. The famous Radical Libertarian Feminist is Shulamith Firestone.

**Socialist Feminism** sees the oppressions of women along with labour and exploitation as an offshoot of Marxists ideas. Prostitution, domestic slavery, child-care as modes of exploitations, which not only harm her survival but also devalue her entity. The oppression of the woman is an extensive problem for which metamorphic changes are suggested whereby individual oppression may be eradicated. Socialist Feminists regard biology as important factor in determining gender hierarchy and social status. Therefore they suggest an end to both classes in gender. They also advocate equality in all aspects of social existence like race, caste and ethnicity. The advocates of such feminism are Clara Fraser, Emma Goldman, and Donna Haraway.

**Cultural Feminism** regards fundamental biological differences as instrumental in assigning better place to men and a lesser rank to women. They believe that a woman is fine, gentle, trustworthy peaceful, Co-operative
where as men are independent, strong, competitive dominating and enterprising. Cultural Feminist, being non political, advocate spread of female values by female rule so that the society is transformed into a peaceful accommodative world. Gilbert Sandra & Gobar Susan are famous for their advocacy of this type of feminism.

Black Feminism points out the specific differences between the black & white women whereby black confronts oppression and white enjoys privileged superiority. Black Feminists are equally concerned with women's right issues and they urged complete educational opportunity for the black women's betterment. The current form of Black Feminism is an offshoot of discontentment with both the civil right movement and the feminist movement of 1970s. Black Feminism is also battling against classicism, which is a recent development in oppression against black women. The major activists are Allee Walker, Pat Parker

Lesbian Feminism is a recent emergence and they claim themselves as natural feminist, for in their views feminity is given complete ceremony and the existence of men is noticeably avoided. Lesbian Feminist defies cultural constraints on women sexuality and insists an equal recognition to feminine sexuality as a living being. They also aim to construct the sin image related to feminine sexual urges. It advocates homosexuality as a healthy biological demand. Adrienne Rich is the famous advocator of Lesbian Feminism.
**Eco Feminism** advocates a balance between ecology and immunism. They believe that women and the environment are regular victims. Both are subjected to exploitation and destruction. Eco Feminists advocate creating a healthy environment by women so that a woman can seek shelter in a natural environment. Eco Feminist by co-relating a woman’s exploitation to environment exploitation draws that state of exploitation and its range of harm. Just as a landowner exploits its land for quick and large profits, likewise suitors, lovers, husband and son for their own profits, success and pleasure exploit women. In this respect women are projected as passive and helpless being and as mute as environment. Vandana Siva, Gerda Lerner, Val Plumwood are famous advocators of such type of Feminism.

**Individualistic Feminism** fights against social ills like prostitution and temperance. It promotes self-ownership and upholds the cry for a woman’s body, a woman’s right. They out rightly express non-conformation to governmental solutions and to social problems. Besides they disbelieve in using force to impose a code of morality. They believe in equality and demand that women be treated as equals of men. Individualistic Feminism accuses not only the political system but also the existing laws and institutions for injustice towards women. The suggestion for bettering the state of women is the replacement of social system in order to secure the women’s rights. It is because of economic, psychological and sexual independence, they champion the
Individualistic Feminism, which is sometime called Libertarian Feminism. Gertrude B. Kelly was the famous Individualistic Feminist whose first article dealt with prostitution that inability of women to make their lives comfortable caused prostitution. She comments:

We find all sorts of schemes for making men moral and woman religious, but no scheme, which proposes to give woman the fruits of her labour.

http://www.wendymceltroy.com/indfeml.htm

Gynocriticism a coinage by Elaine Showalter in Towards A Feminist Poetics declares women’s writings as bitextual. It describes intertextual relation both between women writers and between women and men. She also points out the basic difference between female literature and works written by women, where the consciousness of women writers is analysed to show that female literature is and expression of women’s feelings and emotions. Showalter divides the whole range of female imagination under three heads or stages. They are:

1. Feminine – Imitation of the modes of prevailing dominant traditions.
2. Feminist – Protest against oppressive standards and values for the sake of autonomy.

Gynocriticism welcomes men’s entry in the field of feminist criticism. It also upholds the fact that through social change women conditions can be uplifted.
Feminism has branched out in different spheres as intellectual social and political movements, yet they all strive for single commitment to uplift women’s position. Foucault believed that ‘body’ determines the essence of individuality. Foucault was the one who identified ‘Queers’ ‘Lesbians’ and ‘Gays’ as biologically different entities yet representative of cultural and historical contents. He upheld the idea:

... bodies are always subject to change and can never be regarded as natural but rather are always experienced and mediated through different social constructions of the body.

(The Body and Sexuality, 83)

It was by the assertion of Foucault that homosexuals and heterosexuals were constructed as district categories. Homosexuals were then regarded as “inverts” and their pathologically perverse situation made sexuality the legitimate object of scientific study. He also laid down interesting facts related to the construction of sexuality. Foucault holds three axes responsible for the identification of sexuality. They are:

1. Knowledge about sexual behaviour.
2. Systems of power which regulate the practice of sexual acts
3. The forms, within which individuals are able, are obliged to recognize themselves as subject of this sexuality.

(The History of sexuality, 4)
Foucault’s ideas about sexuality have led to radical questioning of the relation between sexual choice and sexual preferences as well as identity. He analyses the relation between institutions and the bodies and regards that power relations are played out on the body but to this the body does not remain passive and resorts to resistance or disciplinary control. Therefore he believes that the middle class women’s bodies have been the subjects of a vast array of different practices. He believes that feminity is achieved through a long process of labour that is by putting the body into compliance with feminine deal through cosmetics, exercise, dieting and attire.

Adrienne Rich motivated by Barbara Deming’s article in *Liberation* reflects upon the changing conditions, which keep women in servitude or relative servitude. Her thoughts relating to the state of women move from political to psychological statements. As a champion of Feminism she calls herself a socialist for she declared:

> I really am a socialist and I think of Feminism an inextricable from Socialism. (110)

She adds:

> I want to put the needs of women first start from there then from other place. Because Sexism, Misogyny, Patriarchy is where it all begins. (113)

Adrienne Rich raised her voice against psychic violence perpetrated on woman. This called a form of male hostility marked as psychic seduction. In liberated
societies a woman representing token intellect is treated with benign neglect denigrating female intellect. She is cheated by the sexual dishonesty of a man who painfully pretends his anger in his lament ‘I can’t talk to my wife, but I can talk to you’ (103). This is labeled as a great loss for a woman who suffers her separation from other women and thus herself. The debate of patriarchal authority has named its place from politics to society and later to economics and is how localized in the use of language. Male dominance is now expressed as male engendered language.

The term carved by Lacan is “Phallogocentric” which claim that the marginality of woman is imposed on woman through linguistic non-entity. Lacan’s debating on Freudian Psychoanalysis asserts the view that male bias is fabric of our linguistic conventions- man or mankind or human beings in general, chairman / spokesman / key person and the gender neutral nouns like God, Engineer, Explorer, Navigator, Creator, and Maker are enough to speak the underlying intent of patriarchal perspective.

To counter attack Helene Cixous posits her coinage “structure feminine” related to mother – child, exchange of words, which forms the elementary learning of language. To Helene Cixous the world of women stand beyond knowledge, a world of searching a world of sensation, a world of bodily function and a world of elaboration of knowledge. Her cry is:

We must kill the false woman who is presenting the live one from breathing. Inscribe the breath
of the whole woman . . . . It is by writing from and towards woman and by taking up the challenges of speech which has been governed by the phallus that woman will confirm women in a place . . . .

(The Laugh of medusa)

She upholds feminine sexuality superior to masculine because it refutes tyranny and its libido is cosmic along with worldwide unconsciousness. She wishes allocation of privilege to marginality so that it can serve as “an antidote to political repression and violence. She writes with resentment:

... Phallic mystification has generally contaminated good relationship, a woman never for from mother. There is always within her at least a little of that good mother milk she writes in white ink.

(The Laugh of Medusa)

Feminism in India-The spread of Feminism in India is a product of western influence. The Pre-Vedic and Vedic ages show no sing of women exploitation. On the contrary women enjoyed considerably high status and freedom of thoughts and expressions. They enjoyed equal situations to men in fields of music, arts and warfare. The most ancient Indian scripture as well as Rig Veda depicts the state of a woman as that of acceptance and authority. It is also evident from the Shakti Cult that women were held in high esteem and they were looked up with complete respect and gratitude as female goddess like
Durga (the goddess of power), Sarswati (the goddess of wisdom), Kali (the goddess of destruction), Prithvi (the earth goddess) etc. The matriarchal system of authority began to lose ground in the Vedic Era and was gradually replaced by patrilineal organization. In the Post-Vedic period, the change in the status continued to surface. The privileges of women during the Vedic period were in concurrence to men like a right to education, right of Svayamvara (choice of husband), liberty to divorce, and even widows were permitted to remarry. The laws imposed by Manu in *Manu Smriti* in the Post Vedic period, deprived women of earlier privileges and paved way for the deterioration of women's position. Manu prescribed:

> Women should always be under the control of men: in childhood under her father's control; in youth under her husband; and when her husband dies, under her son's.

*(Manu Smriti: 5148)*

Manu even abolished the Upnayan Samskara whereby women were debarred from not only intellectual philosophical and spiritual pursuits but also from women's right to property. *Vyasa Smriti* also prescribed an excessive adherence to mental and physical chastity. The ideals of Sati and Pativrata were imposed on women. The position of women becomes all the deplorable by the prescriptions of orthodox Aryans. Women were socially and familially segregated from intellectual and spiritual attainment due to their menstruation.
Chandogya Upanishad restricts spiritual knowledge seekers from meeting a woman if asceticism is a goal. As a result female sexuality was considered polluting in nature and was denied participation in religious rituals and funeral rights. This segregation later made women undergo suffering as gender differentiation, casticism, class division and religious sanctions.

Muslim invasions 'The Arabs and The Turks' in eleventh and twelfth century AD added suffrage by introduction of rigid odds like Purdah, Child Marriage, Jauhar and Sati. This makes women completely dominated by the authority of men. The status of women continued to remain inferior even during the British rule for over two centuries. The plight added more to survival vicissitudes. From Eighteenth century onwards women were completely under the authoritative sway of father - husband - son sway triad control. The nineteenth century broughtened a number of reformist movement to eradicate social ills related to the position of women. Indian social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, Pandita Rama Bai, Jyotika Phule, Rama Bai Ranade sternly voiced against the miseries of women. Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1829 to provide rights of education, equality, opportunity and freedom for women. They also strove for eradication of sati, child marriage, and female infanticide. The British government also formed a number of laws to liquidate social evils like child marriage, polygamy, sati and inhuman treatment towards widows. British enforced the Widow Remarriage
Act in 1856 allowing financial independence and self-development through Married Woman's Act in 1874 and fixed female nubility at fourteen years through Civil Marriage Act in 1872. Later Mahatma Gandhi also slogged for the upliftment of women in Indian society. He strongly put his foot down against Purdah whereby “funeral of Purdah” was observed in many parts of Bihar. The Gandhian Movement gave new social identity to women whereby boldness and expression of identity surfaced not only in the field of politics but also in the literary world. Women poets like Mahadevi Verma, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Tara Patel, and Sarojini Naidu rose to prominence by the power of their pen.

Indian women have come a long way after the independence and have regained their lost identity of the Pre-Vedic period in the realms of home and world at large. According to Satya Saran editor of Femina:

Indian women have gained a new confidence, with a ‘new self reliance’, as more and more women have, started entering in ‘workplace’, turning professional and becoming entrepreneurs . . . . leaping a head breaking every male bastion; the striking paradox of progress in education, and consequent economic independence have not only meant the liberation of women in the real sense of term . . . (32-3)

Of the contemporary poets in the post Independence period there is noticeable concentration on themes and motives pertaining to women in Indian women poetry.
Themes like romantic & sexual relationship, marital experiences, feminine female urges, gender roles and struggle for identity and recognition were dealt by them.

The modern feminist thought was first introduced by Kamala Das into Indian English poetry who in a confessional mode voiced her dissatisfaction in love, marriage and sex. Since then a few names have come up in imitation of Kamala Das voice of protest. Of these Mamta Kalia, Suniti Namjoshi, Meena Alexander, Imtiyaz Dhargar, Monika Verma are equally eminent.

Mamta Kalia is frank and candid in discussing various aspects of man-woman relationship. In her conversational style, she relates her experiences of not only love and marriage but also family and society. Her publications *Tribute to Papa* (1970) and *Poems Sixty Eight* (1978) are works of recognition and aesthetic achievements. She has a forceful voice to revolt and express a noise against male chauvinism. In her poem ‘I Must Write Nicely Now’, she expresses disapproval against patriarchal whims:

Rejection, Dejection, Erection
You can’t adjust with your own children.
You feel the world is full of whores
Knocking hard at your bedroom doors.
You sleep with a headache
And wake up with a backache
Except yourself
You feel everything is fake.
Mamta Kalia does not speak for the disappointments and frustrations of the high-class society. She speaks not only for a workingwoman but also for homemaker. She shows special concern for a workingwoman who shoulders double responsibility, both as a homemaker and as a career woman. She not only manages care, cleanliness and health of her family members but also the drudgery of the workplace. In the poem ‘How like A fool’ the monotonous existence of a career woman with a self defeat is expressed:

Here like fool give been working all along  
when work is work’s own defeat?  
My promotion waits on your naughty knees;  
Readiness is all I now need.

Mamta Kalia believes that a woman does not enjoy complete bliss in a male dominated society. She describes a submissive living of a woman as living like an appendix – her only aim and desire is to please her man, reducing herself to a non-entity. In Tribute to Papa she puts her father in a different situation when she demands an answer for his traditional viewpoint, the futility of a man living as a royal personality. Treating her life partner with apathy makes Kalia questions the sanctity and functionality of the sacred institution called marriage:

Who cares for you, Papa?  
Who cares for your clean thoughts, clean words,  
Clean teeth?  
Who wants to be an angel like you  
Who wants it?
You are an unsuccessful man, Papa
couldn’t wangle a cozy place in the world
you’ve always lived a life of limited dreams.

*(Nine Indian Women Poets: An Anthology, 20)*

Kalia uses imagery with details of realism to announce the drudgery of an average Indian middle class woman.

Suniti Namjoshi on the other hand is more concerned with love and passion in human existence. Being satirical to man woman relationship her poems are dry and repulsive in imagery because her poetry is heavily loaded with animal imagery. There is a sense of resentment against the betrayal shown by man in the relationship with woman in ‘Beauty and the Beast’:

Beauty loved the ugly beast
And thinking it was a prince she’d wed?
Waited for his shape to change,
And found there were two beasts in bed.

*(Poems, 12)*


Meena Alexander now an expatriate is well known for her autobiography *Fault Lines* (1993). Her poems are expressive and offer intense urge for identity. She says that a poet looses her identity in the muddledom of race,
culture, language, sex and gender. She also questions how boundaries, regionalities demarcations imposed fretters on one’s existence and narrows the situational meaningfulness of life. She is not as candid as Kamala Das or Suniti Namjoshi in the expression of sexuality and womanliness, what these poets do in loudness, she does in whisper. A sense of exile or self-alienation is the resonant note in her artistic articulation.

I have come to the Hudson’s edge to begin my life
to be born again, to seep as water might
in a landscape of mist burnished trees,
a bridge that seizes crossing.

(River and Bridge.)

Sujata Bhatt is another signature in the representation of a liberated woman who is characterised by a strong will, free flowing sexuality aware of her emotional and physical potential and lives as gendered identity. Her anthology entitled Brunizem structured into three sections, are poems depicting not only distasteful realities but also women as self-agent of a new social reality. This collection also exposes the damage caused to social values and the existence of women by patriarchal:

Oh but he wanted a wife,
Shileyko did-
A wife, not a poet,
So he burnt Anna’s poems in the samovar

(She Finds Her Place)
Equally striking is her image of the new women with a new identity (as a homogenous self):

The tall woman walks alone
deeper into the woods
among a crowd of trees
she finds her place
and looks at the moon
as if it were her littlest sister
finally came alone.

Chitra Banerjee portrays women with her redefined self, cut off from her stereotypical roles of wife or mother or a beloved. Her new woman basks in the glory of self-carved identity. The charisma of individuation is described as:

She laughs like wild water, shaking
her braids loose, she laughs
life a fire, the spool a blur between her hands
to release it into space, her life,
into its bright weightless orbit.

(Woman with Kite)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni believes patriarchy to be imprisoning walls to the creativity of women she portrays both traditional and feminist value side by side in order to uphold her view that if traditional values beget emotional substances, feminist values generate new dimensions for the perseverance of motherhood whereby the glory of inner self be retained- the female biological self as superior to patriarchal order.
Kamala Das the pioneer of Feminism in modern Indian English poetry is the first to raise voice for freedom of women in terms of man-woman relationship. Considered as a candid poet Kamala Das was the first one to shed inhibitions in discussing her sexual relationship. Her predicament as a woman and as a mother articulates the desire of a woman for both love and sexuality:

By peeling off my layers
I reach closer to the soul
I shall some day see
My world de-fleshed deveined

(Composition,39)

Most of the poems of Kamala Das speak about dissatisfaction in relationship. She reflects upon contrasting attitude to love in the man and woman. On one hand there is glorification of a woman’s total surrender in love to find fulfillment which ironically is her deprivation where as to her counter part love is an erotic luxury that hungers for more and more of carnal pleasure:

Everything in me
Is melting even the hardness at the core
O Krishna, I am melting, melting
Nothing remains but you

(Radha,15)

Kamala Das also depicts the conflict between the physical and spiritual aspect of love, which shows Kamala Das’s insight into philosophical aspect of love. To her, love is not merely communion of two bodies but of two
souls reaching out to divinity. This abstraction is interestingly recorded in 'Substitute':

Our bodies after love making
Turned away, rejecting
Our words began to sound
Like clatter of swards in fight.

(Substitute,13)

Kamala Das' creativity in the realm of love is much appreciated by critics all over the world. Her poetic excellence is remarked by Professor Laila Jaychandran as:

In order to explore the emotions honesty the language should be penetrating and intensely bold. The reader is led to poetic experience through clarity in intent. It is this honesty that lifts Kamala Das's poem into prominence. (122)
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