



# Outspokeness of Sexual Adventures and Incompleteness of Desire: Represented in 'My Story' by Kamala Das

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## ABSTRACT:

Desire never completed because it never fulfills, when we desire one thing and it is completed then our mind seeks fulfilment of another desire. This vicious circle of desire does not give any mental peace. But desire for sex is not good and extra-marital affairs are not acceptable in the Indian society. *My Story* reveals an autobiographical narrative by an Indian author and poetess Kamala Das. It recounts the ordeals of her marriage and painful self-awakening as a woman and writer. My paper deals with the work of Kamala Das's *My Story* which shows the indulgence of different relationships. Kamala Das was a conventional writer who talks about her own personal life through her literary career. She openly describes her sexual adventures and her periods of mental breakdown with her husband. She never got a truthful relationship from her husband and then she had several extra-marital affairs in her life. In *My Story* a young woman who is much younger than her highly placed husband even not much educated and haunted by unfulfilled desires of a young woman. The author exposes her bored life and physical connotation and affairs with several men. The paper, through anatomizing of the selected autobiography, explores the caves and caverns of a woman's heart. It depicts the author's intense personal experience in her passage to womanhood and throws light on the hypocrisies of a traditional society.

*“Society can well ask me how I could become what I became, although born to parents as high-principled as mine were. Ask the books that I read why I changed. Ask the authors dead and alive who communicated with me and gave me the courage to be myself. The books like a mother-cow licked the calf of my thought into shape and left me to lie at the altar of the world as a sacrificial gift.”*

**Keywords:** Sexual Adventures, Incompleteness, desire, extra-marital affairs, *My Story*.

Kamala Das is probably the first Hindu woman to openly and honestly talk about sexual desires of Indian woman, which made her an iconoclast of her generation. It talks about the very insights about adolescent age, women psychology, love and our sexually suppressed society. Kamala Das was born in March 1934. She was an Indian

English poet and as well as she is a leading Malayalam author from Kerala, India. Her popularity in Kerala, is noted for the poems and explicit autobiography. She was also a columnist reader and wrote on vast topics including women's issues, child care, politics among others. She was born in a Hindu Nair family in Malabar having royal ancestry. Her notable work is mainly 'Ente Katha' which is translated in English 'My Story'. She also awarded with many awards like *Sahitya Akademi Awards, Asan World Prize, Asian Poetry Prize, Kent Award*.

Das's also wrote many poetry collections like 'Summer in Calcutta', 'The Descendants' and 'The Old Playhouse' and other poems. Her works also included the novel 'Alphabet of Lust' and the Short Stories 'A Doll for the Child Prostitute' and 'Padmavati the Harlot'.

Kamala openly introduced her own conditions through her autobiographical novel and also came through a generation to a subject that was taboo those days. She also talks about a sexual yearnings of a woman. Kamala's writings open a mindset of those people who were very keen in nature. She also opens a thought process of female mind which is bound by the patriarchal setup. She also aware that how women quest for love and her acknowledgement of the body's carnal desires. Kamala also left behind many strong lessons for the women of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Sometimes we see that many women does not satisfies with their life, they suffers a lot in their daily life. They never got a mental peace that is why they were all desires a peace and love.

*"In Bengali the rain falls suddenly with no warnings like the hysterical tears of a woman who herself does not know why she must suddenly burst into tears."*

Kamala's autobiography also gave a picturisation of a brutally honest depiction of her childhood, coming of age, sexuality, emotional dashes, marital issues and extra-marital affairs. She explores various aspects of a woman's journey to connect with her sexuality. In her works she mentions that: "now here is a girl with vast sexual hungers, a bitch after my own heart". She explores openly about homosexuality and conditions of herself specially the sexual affairs with the man, who is very old in age.

In 'My Story', Kamala writes:

*"At this time my husband turned to his old friend for comfort. They behaved like lovers in my presence. To celebrate my birthday they showed me out of the bedroom and located themselves in. I stood for a while wondering that two men could possibly do together to get some physical rapture, but after sometime my pride made me move away".*

Sometime we came across that she rebelled against in her own way of patriarchy and the boundaries set by society. Sometime, we also seen that a women writer confused about what to write and how to write because a free drift of ink is also not allowed to her. Before writing anything, she has to censor and recensor it in mind because she also fears about the society what may think about her when writes honestly. So, she always thinks and searches for something safe to write she always prefers to write for examples, about religious, ceremonies, childbirth, weddings etc. Kamala Das also wrote about this type of domestic stories than dealing with the intricate would issues. Most women writers lack courage to write about their private life, because of her fearless honest writing, especially about sexual come across.

*“....There were no more words left, all words lay imprisoned. In the ageing arms of night. In darkness we grew, as in silence we sang, each note rising out of sea, out of wind, out of earth and out of each sad night like an ache....”*

She also discussed in her autobiography about the defiance of upper class people towards the lower class people. In those periods people have to perform different jobs according to their strata. Now a days, in India, people are free to choose their own jobs, but still the caste in which they are born fawns part of their identity. Kamala Das was also a part of that dark complexion in their own worlds. Sorrow played an important role in her life right from the beginning till her, marriage. Her very first experience with her husband was very nasty, that time she was only 15 years old girl, did not know how to say ‘NO’ to a man. Early knot of marital life gave a blow to her awareness as a woman. Das always desired for a beautiful connection and emotional bond with her husband but his chief importance was for physical love. Love was a mania for her. When her marital life crumble into lust she was troubled by determent which later leads her to seek sexual fulfilment in extra-marital affairs with other men which she openly admits.

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Kamala Das was favourite for the critics because her life has been described in the form of written, talked and gossiped. There was a girl inside her, a wife, a mother and a lover who always eager for love. She also admitted all things to her grandmother. Das was frustrated in life so much because to the early unhappy marriage and untimely motherhood, then also she did not stop writing. Das felt suffocated in the confines of her marital life and longed for freedom and self-expression.

*“Like other women writers of my class, I am expected to tame my talent to suit the comfort of my family.”*

We also came to know that despite the criticism, Kamala Das continued to write fearlessly and authentically. Her many poetry collections, such as “*Summer in Calcutta*” and “*The Descendants*”, gained widespread acclaim and established her as an influential writer. Especially her life was marked by both triumph and tribulations. She also faced hardships, failed relationships because of extra affairs, and also battles with mental health issues. However, she never allowed these challenges to dampen her spirit or hinder her creativity.

*“I do not want to live a soul without a body. Nudity is the reflection of innocence”*

Kamala Das also describes in ‘My Story’ a period when she had been also affected by a neurotic breakdown when she felt threatened by the obligations of marriage and unhappy and unpleasant Physical relation with her husband while she urged for mental and emotional link in love. It is also a Das’s inability to resolve the conflict between a ‘Feminine’ and ‘Feminist mystique’ that turned her into a helpless ‘Neurotic’. It is also happened unfortunately that the lack of emotional security leads her to seek emotional and sexual fulfilment outside marriage and ultimately she decides to have extra-marital affairs.

Her domestic violence experience, her husband's carnal desires, her disappointment about not getting love from him and her inclination towards homosexuality, everything has been explained in her book *My Story*. Santanu Saha in his research said that:

*"...Her husband, instead of providing a romantic ambience, engages himself in the continuous distancing by maintaining a cold relationship towards her. He considered her just as an object of carnal gratification. This attitude completely frustrated her. However, it will be my endeavour to show that it was the act of writing poems which helped her to get out of that claustrophobic situation."*

As Subash Chandra opines on Kamala Das in '*A Feminist Reading of My Story*', he writes:

*"Kamala Das presents a fine and relevant example of delineating her own traits and tribulations of the possibility of confronting and overcoming the constraints in the way of a woman seeing, self-awareness and self-fulfilment. An important aspect of her type of feminism which emerges in her book is that it is possible to be one's true self without denying or suppressing one's femininity. Femaleness and quest for self-fulfillment are not antithetical"*

Her book depicts the woes of a woman bounded by the rules of the society and the obligations that they put only on a woman. The duties of a woman is expected to fulfil as a daughter, a wife and a mother does not allow women to think about themselves. Her journey of a life has been full of disappointments searching for love and companionship she never got in her life. Her expectations from her parents and her husband and her feelings on their aloof behaviour have been captured in her writings. She feels very alone, In my point of view any woman of our society can flows in a different road because they never fulfil their desires. When desire once not completed in struggles in a conscious mind, that is why we have fulfil our desires then our mind has been in a stable condition. Women have to suffers a lot in the society and outside the society. Women has been used as a toys, men can play with his own way just like *lock and key*. women never works with their own mindset. In her autobiography *My Story* is says that:

*"In the orbit of illicit sex, there seemed to be only crudeness and violence. All her quests for true love end in disasters of sexual intercourse which brings only sorrow and fatigue. .... Ask me, everybody ask me What he sees in me, ask me why he is called a lion, A libertine, ask me the flavour of his Mouth ask me why his land sways like a hooded snake Before it, claps my pubis. Ask me why like a great tree, felled, he slumps against my breast, and sleeps. Ask me why life is short and love is Shorten, still, ask me what bliss is and what its price....."*

Kamala Das's *My Story* reflects the actual picturisation of the society. They always want to fulfil the desies but never completed like emotional or physical. Critics also say that being a well known writer Kamala Das should express herself more responsibly and neutrally to avoid any hatred or destruction in the society. It is said that a writer is the mirror of the society and that comes with a responsibility which should not be forgotten.

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