



# The Real Confessions of Indian Women Writers through their Work

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Received: 10 February 2024; Received in revised form: 18 Mar 2024; Accepted: 30 Mar 2024; Available online: 07 April, 2024  
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**Abstract**— *Women writing is an important area of study. It is one of the crucial ways for women to rise against male oppression. It took longer time than expected for female writers to flourish as women were not allowed to read and write, let alone enter the domain of writing. In India women authors gained recognition only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Writing allowed women to express their emotions, frustrations and social injustice which had been meted on them from centuries. Their writings show the urge to be treated equally with men. They were influential idol for common women to rise above patriarchy and lead their life on their own terms.*



**Keywords**— *Gender Inequality, Indian Society, Women's Position, Woman Writers*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Women have long been discouraged to read books, believing books will corrupt their morale and will bring shame to their community. However, some of them did not pay heed to such futile thoughts of the society, and went ahead with expressing themselves with pen and paper. Be it Rassundari Devi, the first woman autobiographical writer in India, or Toru Dutt who was the only woman to write in both French and English in 19<sup>th</sup> century, we should celebrate the achievements of these brave female writers who took risk to rise above the societal norms in an era when women were not even allowed to step out their home territory.

Two works of Eunice de Souza and Kamala Das each and one work of Arundhati Roy are discussed in the subsequent sections.

## II. EUNICE DE SOUZA

A contemporary English poet, Eunice De Souza has always raised her voice against female injustice through her poems. She believes in equal rights of women as their male

counterparts. The common themes of her works are independence, gender inequality, status of women in male dominated society. She has also authored religion-based books and some children's books too.

In 'Advice to Women' though a short poem, Eunice de Souza has conveyed deep meanings through the symbol of cat to make women aware about their romantic rights and love rejection. She further advised that women should be independent just like cats, and respect themselves rather than losing themselves in a relationship. They should live a dignified life and live with head above shoulders even if rejected in love. Like cats' women should be strong and emotionless. This poem teaches women to embrace their uniqueness and not to allow the 'man' to destroy their self-worth. The underlying meaning of the poem lies in the fact that women should also have indifferent attitude same as their male partners.

*"In those great green eyes*

*Will teach you to die alone"* (de Souza, 10-12)

A person's main motive behind building romantic relationships is that they are afraid to die alone. Cat teaches

us to live life alone and without depending on the other for company or survival.

In her other poem 'Bequest' the status of women in Indian society was showcased using religious Christian imagery. This poem is a take on harsh reality of patriarchal society. This poem indicates the double standards of the Indian society. A woman's life is dictated by the males in society and she can move only within a territory prescribed by men. This poem pictures a state of suffering woman, who has pain in her life.

*"I wish I could be a*

*Wise Woman" (de Souza, 12-13)*

According to society, a wise woman is one who accepts the norms of the society without challenging them.

### III. KAMALA DAS

Kamala Das is one of the main female voices of Indian Writing in English. She had begun her writing career as Madhvikutty in Malayalam. Later in her career, she adopted a new pen name, Kamala Das. Her works are mainly dominated by themes of loneliness, unsatisfied married life, emotional burden. She can also be seen as a feminist, as she has supported a variety of feminine issues through her work. She is also very popular in the short stories and novels genre.

In the poem, 'The Introduction', the poet raises her voice that how men control the life of their women and this is a state of every woman in our country. Woman becomes powerless after her marriage and her life is devoid of any freedom. Every woman must become a wife, a mother, a daughter in law, but she cannot be herself.

It is a confessional poem as it reflects poets' own life and her thoughts on how a woman should not lose her freedom after marriage and how she should keep her self-worth intact.

*"Be Amy, or be Kamala. Or, better*

*Still be Madhvikutty. It is time to*

*Choose a name, a role. Don't play pretending games."*  
(Das, 40-42)

The underlying meaning lies in the fact that a woman should not forget herself in the disguise of doing her duty. A woman is expected to play several roles during her lifetime but no one asks her to take care of herself. A woman might be known by any name or the role she plays in others life but she should never forget the essence of her existence.

In her poem, 'Forest-Fire' the poet has expressed her feelings to gain more knowledge and experience in her life.

She is even willing to learn from nature. She observes the lovers hiding in a secluded place to protect themselves from the traditional society, an old man sitting on a bench reading his daily newspapers, a baby, and his innocence. The poet has a desire to absorb all the details of her surroundings and learn new things. Her desires to absorb experiences are so intense that they have taken the form of an engulfing forest fire.

*"To take in with greed, like a forest fire that*

*Consumes and with each killing gains a wilder,*

*Brighter charm, all that comes my way." (Das, 2-4)*

The poet is greedy to acquire as much knowledge as possible. Her desire has taken a shape of forest fire. She will absorb and learn everything possible be it nature or humans. She feels her knowledge is expanding day by day. She is becoming a knowledgeable and experienced as she is quenching her thirst of intellectual awareness.

### IV. ARUNDHATI ROY

Arundhati Roy won Booker Prize for debut novel "The God of small things" in 1997. Apart from being a writer, she is also an activist and environmentalist. She is a vocal voice of female issues. She has also authored many non-fiction books.

The God of Small Things, reveals the age-old suppression face by women and the degraded conditioning of minds of males in our Indian society. She highlighted the fact that if a woman tries to live her life on her own terms, then she is considered a rebel and society leaves no stone unturned in making her life miserable. If by chance she is a divorcee then she is seen as a black spot on her community.

*"Thirty-one. Not old. Not young. But a viable die-able age" (Roy, 1997)*

Her life was full of sufferings and pain.

In the opening of the novel, the lead characters, Estha and Rahel were of the same age at which Ammu died. Ammu had seen only pain and sufferings in her life. The community blamed Ammu's free spirits and her independent nature for her tragic end.

The novel very well highlights the toxic relationship shared by women influenced by the society's expectations and standards.

Baby Kochamma has always been jealous of Ammu's penchant for freedom. She tried to bind Ammu according to the rules of society of no gain. She was equally jealous of Ammu's beauty. She meted out her anger and frustration on Ammu's twin children, Estha and Rahel, by separating them in their childhood.

## V. CONCLUSION

These poems are reflections of a woman's status in life. Most of the works are confessional in nature portraying different ill treatments a woman must suffer in her life. There is always a ray of hope at the end of tunnel. Women are rising above all societal expectations and are moving forward. Men will treat her with dignity only when she is herself aware of her true value. With every passing year a woman's position in the male dominated society will only strengthen and authors are hopeful that women will tear apart all the unconventional bonds of the society and will keep raising their voice against injustice.

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