

Paradigms of Marginality:

A Critical Assessment

Edited by
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Dr Bijender Singh

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Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	9
<i>Contributors</i>	21
1. Subalternity, Marginality and Untouchability as Projected in the Current Literary Scenario	31
<i>Dr S. Chelliah and Dr Bijender Singh</i>	
2. An Appraisal of Marginality in Select Dalit Short Stories	37
<i>Harish Mangalam</i>	
3. Negotiating Marginality through Female Body: Revisiting Marginal Women Characters in Krishna Sobti's Zindaginama	49
<i>Dr Ashok Verma</i>	
4. Displacement and Marginalization of Santhals in Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's The Adivasi Will Not Dance	55
<i>Dr Shikha Saxena</i>	
5. Women's Search for Selfhood: Marginalised Women in Margaret Atwood's Select Novels	63
<i>Dr Rumana Ashraf</i>	
6. Social Stratification, a Savage: A Comparative Analysis of Dr Ambedkar and Mulk Raj Anand	69
<i>Dr C. Ramya</i>	
7. Marginalized Status of Women and the Breaking of the Barriers: A Study of Kamala Das' Poetry	75
<i>Dr Suruchi Sharma</i>	
8. Shifting Attitude of Immigrant Women in Bharati Mukherjee's Select Fiction: An Analysis	83
<i>K.M. Keerthika</i>	
9. Redefining Peripheries: Urbanization and Prostitution in Indian Literature	91
<i>Guni Vats</i>	

Chapter - 7

Marginalized Status of Women and the Breaking of the Barriers: A Study of Kamala Das' Poetry

Dr Suruchi Sharma

Kamala Das is the exponent of feminine sensibility, especially the sensibility of the modern middle class woman in Indian society. For centuries together, the Indian woman has been regarded as a door mat or a child-bearing machine. Woman has been a prisoner within the four walls of her own house. She is caged in the mould of Sita and Savitri. Kamala Das is a rebel, an iconoclast. She has revolted against the hush-hush prudery and conventionalism of the Indian society in its attitude towards woman, love and sex. She has projected a different kind of pictures of a woman. She has depicted in her poems the patriarchal pressures of the society on women. Her poetry presents the marginalised status of women but simultaneously, she has broken the barriers which are made by men for women so that they may remain under their dominion. According to her, woman is a vibrant human being, in sobbing with emotions and pulsating with passion. According to her, 'to be loved to madness is the greatest desire of a woman'.

Kamala Das was born on 31 March 1934 in Malabar, Kerala. Her real name was Madhavikutti and Kamala Das is her pseudonym. She embraced Islam in 1999 and she became Kamala Suraiyya. She wrote in Malayalam and English. She got married in 1949 when she was merely fifteen years old and her marriage remained a failure. She got Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award in 1969. She is best known for the protest poetry. She died on 31 May 2009 in a hospital in Pune. Her autobiography *My Story* was published in 1976. In the same year, she published a novel also. The title of the novel is *Alphabet of Lust*. Moreover, she wrote some poetry collections

Any survey of recent Indian literature does clearly reveal that the voice of the voiceless or protest, in some form or other, is the oft-repeated and even the most notable theme analysed, evaluated and projected by writers of all genres with an avowed social purpose so as to offer a sweeping revolt by all means against economic exploitation, subjugation of women, oppression of the unprivileged and suppression of the untouchables and the marginalized. Marginalization is nothing but a kind of social exclusion, a social boycott, disadvantage and downgrading to the fringe of a caste, community or group of a society. English language, with its global base, has served as a useful tool of Dalit empowerment. It is a window through which readers are able to acquaint themselves with the writings of Dalits or on the Dalits. Present volume includes thirty insightful papers on the subject of marginality and subalternity by eminent teachers/scholar-critics and scholars. This book will, no doubt, serve the purpose of awakening the consciousness of the poor, downtrodden and the marginalized for forging their identities, thereby ensuring a society that values the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. The kernel of this book comprises a critique of the marginalization thereby propagating the idea that Dalit writing or writing on marginality and subalternity is a social engagement. This volume is no doubt an endeavour to bring before its readers the vast areas that Dalit, subaltern and marginal literatures have travelled a lot in their journey since beginning.



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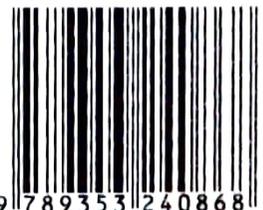
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