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## Kamala Das as a Poet: A Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

Kamala Das, one of the best poets was born on 31 March 1934. She is one of the postmodern Indian English poets who have brought revolution in Poetry in terms of writing style and subject matter.

She belonged to a well-educated family and this made her to write poetry from a very young age.

She wrote in two languages i.e. Malayalam and English. She was known by three names i.e. Maddhavikutty, Kamala Das and Kamala Surayia. Kamala Das has contributed a lot in the Indian English Poetry and by means of that she earned the label of 'The mother of Modern Indian English Poetry'. She was compared with the Sylvia Plath because of her confessional writing style. Her poetry is all about herself. The major themes of most of her poetry are quest for love and failure to find fulfillment of love in life.

**Key words:** Kamala Das, Confessional poet, Emotions

### Introduction

Kamala Das, one of the best poets was born on 31 March 1934 at Punnayurkulam in Thrissur district, Kerala, India. Her father's name was V.M. Nair, who was the administrative editor of a popular journal *Matrubhoomi*. Her mother, Balmani Amma was a Malayali poetess. Narayan Menon, a famous writer was the uncle of Kamala Das. She belonged to a well-educated family and this made her to write poetry from a very young age. She wrote in two languages i.e. Malayalam and English. She was known by three names i.e. Maddhavikutty, Kamala Das and Kamala Surayia. She was known by the pen-name of Madhavikutty while writing short stories in Malayalam. Kamal Das was the name she got after her marriage when she was writing poetry in English and Kamala Suriyia was her name after she converted to Islam in 1999. She was a well know poet writing in English who earned a respectable place in both English and Malayalam literature. Short stories and her autobiography are the main reason of her popularity in Kerala. She brought revolution in the Indian English poetry in terms of writing style and subject matter. She was one of the prominent feminist voices in the post-independence period. As per Iyengar

"a fiercely feminine sensibility that dares without inhibitions to articulate the hurts, it has received in an insensitive largely man- made world." (Iyengar 680).

Kamala Das is a great confessional poet who displays feminist ethos in her poems and in this context she is compared with A.K.Ramanujan and Nissim Ezekiel. After reaching the age of 42, her autobiography 'My Story' was published. It was actually written in Malayalam, entitled 'Ente Katha'. Later she translated it into English. She also wrote a poem 'An Introduction' that also contains autobiographical elements. It is written in a conversational style. She brought everyday conversational language into the realms of poetry.

*I am Indian, very brown, born in Malabar,*

*I speak three languages, write in*

*Two, dream in one.*

*Don't write in English, they said, English is*

*not your mother- tongue. Why not leave*

*Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,*

*Every one of you? Why not let me speak in*

*Any language I like? The language I speak*

*Becomes mine, its distortions, its queerness*

*All mine, mine alone.*

*It is half English, half Indian, funny perhaps, but*

*it is honest,*

*It is as human as I am human, don't*

*You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my*

*Hopes, and it is useful to me as cawing*

*Is to crows or roaring to the lions, it (Introduction: *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems*)*

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