

Critical Evaluation of Male-Chauvinism will Predominantly Focus on Sylvia Plath's and Kamala Das's Poetry

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Abstract



Feminism is a range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share common goal i.e. to define, establish, and achieve political, equal rights within marriage and to protect women from violence and sexual harassment. Male-Chauvinism is the belief that men are inherently superior over women. It is the attitude of men superiority towards women. Men are frequently considered as dominant and women are inferior not from recently but from ancient time. The feminist ideologies and the concept of Male-chauvinism also influenced the English literature. The majority of the Novels and Poetry depict the psychological sufferings of the frustrated housewives and oppressed lives of women. The poem Mushrooms represent an oppressed population most likely women who are mounting a quiet revolution, Plath speaks in the voice of one of the mushrooms that they seemingly appear overnight, growing or expanding quietly The poems have been analysed through close reading of text on the basis of male-chauvinism through the eye of feminism with selected framework Simon De Beauvoir's work The Second Sex (1952). Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das in their poems show different responses toward male- dominance. Women want to throw away oppression and get rid of male-chauvinism. Sometimes they change their identities and sometimes through their struggle show a protest against male dominancy. Mushroom and An Introduction show the same ideology. Despite the surrounding authority of men. They keep on struggling for their rights with a reflection of protest against the established system of exploitation in male dominant society, transforming into a rebellion at last.

Keywords: Male Chauvinism, Feminism, Women Oppression

Introduction

The term "feminism" comes from the Latin word "femina," which means "woman," and was originally used to refer to concerns for women's equality. Feminism refers to a collection of political, intellectual, and social groups all working toward the same goal: defining, creating, and achieving political, equal rights inside marriage, as well as protecting women from violence and sexual harassment.

Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical and philosophical realms. It contains works from several subjects, including anthropology, sociology, economics, art, history, and literary criticism.

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2017), feminism is "the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes". According to Jane Freedman (2001), Feminism is not a unitary concept but a diverse and multifaceted grouping of ideas and indeed actions:

Any attempt to provide a baseline definition of a common basis of all feminisms may start with the assertion that feminisms concern themselves.

Eisenstein (1963) interprets the term feminist or feminism as "a concept of social transformation that, as part of the eventual liberation of women, changes all humans' relationships for the better".

The essence of Feminism has a strong basic argument that simply means that there are compelling grounds to believe that women suffer as a result of the system. ChamanNahal (1991), a renowned critic, observes the essential premise of feminism as follows:

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A state of existence in which the lady is free of the dependent syndrome. Dependence syndrome exists regardless of whether it is the husband, father, community, or religious organization. My vision of feminism comes to reality when women overcome their reliance syndrome and live a normal life. (p.17) Male chauvinism refers to the view that males are naturally superior than women. It is the attitude of men's superiority towards women. Men are frequently considered dominant, and women are inferior, not from recently but from ancient times. Women's marginalisation is an old issue. Even brilliant minds and philosophers have considered women inferior to men. Aristotle, the renowned philosopher, thought that femininity was an imperfect form of masculinity. He considered that women lacked traits necessary for males. He thought that women are imperfect, genuine, and incomplete as compared to males. They are cognitively and physically inferior than males and should quietly allow them to dominate. In Greek and Roman societies, the head of the family (a male) had power and could rule the household's women. Pater Familia (the father) wielded similar influence in Roman family organizations.

As a result, women have been restricted to domestic environments and compelled to perform archaic roles such as passive mothers, sisters, and brides. Simone De Beauvoir has conducted extensive study on women, and her thesis is published in *The Second Sex*. In this book, she observes that women have historically been seen as subordinate to males. It is not a requirement for feminine characteristics, but rather the outcome of male-dominated schooling and societal traditions. Her famous claim "one is not born a woman but rather becomes a woman" contends that women's inferior status is generated by culture and civilization rather than being innate or biological.

Feminist beliefs, as well as the concept of male chauvinism, inspired English literature. The bulk of the novels and poems show the psychological difficulties of disappointed housewives as well as women's tormented lifestyles. Men, particularly women authors, have played a critical and monumental role in portraying women as downtrodden and men's dominance over them. They have included women's perspectives and feministic elements in the works. These writers want to end women's unspoken sorrows.

Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* depicts a poor, innocent country victimized by the combined forces of Victorian patriarchal society, the injustice of social law, the hypocrisy of social prejudice, and the inequality of male dominance of the protagonist, Tess, who represents rural women who were mercilessly ravaged in a male-dominated world. Alec's rape is the cruellest action Tess witnesses in the narrative; it demonstrates masculine domination over a female. Tess is sacrificed by the male-dominated culture because she breaks the traditions that support male supremacy and power over women. Her excruciating demands stem from male supremacy, as symbolized by Alec and Angel, in a male-dominated society in which everything follows male will and man-favoured values. Characters in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* battle to keep their soul. Clarissa's soul has suffered as a result of her marriage with Richard. Clarissa's marriage transformed her into Mrs. Dalloway. A name change can be viewed as a shift in one's identity. Thus, marriage represents female reliance on the male sex. Shakespeare depicts Hamlet's female character, Ophelia, as being victimized by the masculine ego. She is victimised by Hamlet's uncontrollable ego, which drives him to murder. Hamlet murders Ophelia's father, sending her into a deep despair. Shakespeare begins to depict Ophelia's despair, which is the result of her father's death and Hamlet's illness. As a result, Ophelia becomes insane. This lunacy might be seen as Ophelia's active defiance of patriarchal constraints. However, the sadness and lunacy that led to Ophelia's death were the result of Hamlet's manipulations and masculine supremacy.

In his poem *My Last Duchess*, Robert Browning used dramatic monologue to depict the harshness of Victorian males against women, subtly criticizing the position of women as slaves and inferiors. The deceased "duchess," a symbol of oppressed Victorian women, is the victim of the Duke's hubris and egoism, which represent men's dominance and control over women. Duke Ferrara addresses a picture of his late wife. The duke laments to the ambassador about his former wife, with whom he was dissatisfied because she was nice to the people and the needy. And the friendlier to others she is, the more enraged the spouse becomes. The poem concludes with the duke insisting on getting the envoy's master's daughter as his inevitable wife. He accepts to marry a lady he has never met, only because of her wealth and noble background. Due to Victorian avarice, half a million Victorian women remained unmarried, ensuring the Victorian Age.

Sylvia Plath is a feminist writer. Most of her poetry is mainly about 20th-century feminism and women's social injustices. Her poems criticise male aggression and depict men as being responsible for social injustices. Her poetry reflects a variety of themes, but most of them are love, death, the search for identity and women's liberation in a patriarchal system.

Both Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das have used poetry to explore topics of love and sex. The stark contrast between these poets is 'the restraint' that Sylvia Plath has shown towards these issues. All of Sylvia Plath's poems, including the posthumous collection *Ariel*, may be classified as love poetry. She is in love with nature, the sea, her dead father, or death itself. The typical sensual love she should have had as a young girl does not leave an effect on her as lyrical themes. Sylvia Plath's poetry lacks the traditional idea of love due to her disillusionment with it. However, she has made a genuine effort to explore the concepts of love and death. Lady Lazarus Plath's poem reveals her profound belief in rebirth and resurrection: She emerges from the ashes with her re-bair, and she devours men like air. "My red hair rises from the ashes, and I eat men like air (Lady Lazarus, 82-84)." It highlights her aversion. She believes that suicide, death, and resurrection may provide her with eternal bliss. That is why she seems to like dying.

The symbols that Plath utilizes in her poems are almost all about death, women's status in a patriarchal cultural framework, and their battle to become independent persons. Women in the poems die and change into red-haired monsters. Evaporating dew, gleaming stars, and pure acetylene. These are emblems of women's newfound freedom and power. Beautiful and self-sufficient humans. However, regardless of their shape, women's small source of effort in obtaining their individuality is their dissatisfaction with the characteristics of gender that trap them. The female protagonists of the poems face inferiority, depersonalization, and persecution, but they endure until they achieve independence and a sense of identity. In the poem *Daddy*, the woman has succeeded in murdering the guys who dominate her existence; in *Lady Lazarus*, after dying, the lady changes into a killing agent and devour the guy who has exploited her like a commodity. In *Fever 103°* and *Ariel*, the women have transformed themselves into untouchable and invisible things, rendering them superior to men; nevertheless, the woman in *Death & Co.*, despite her frailty and surrender to death, has hope for a fresh self-rebirth. In his paper, KukulPrayitnoSubagyo (2009) stated that the meanings in Plath's poems are particularly relevant for feminists since they allude to women's ongoing and agonizing search for identity, which is a common feminist issue. The ladies in the poetry indirectly declare war on males. Plath's poetry do address this.

Being a feminist writer, her poetry reflects her restlessness as a sensitive woman moving into a male-dominated society. Her poetical collections in English are *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967), and *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973). Most of them are autobiographical, in which she expresses her true self, which is characterised by extreme sincerity and integrity. Her Poetry revolves around themes of love, sex, death and the quest for identity.

The theme of] love and sex occupy a very important place in Kamala Das's poetry. She is a poet who explores themes of love and sexual relationships. In her poem, *Substitute* loses all her hope and faith in a male-dominated society and discovers that love is all blackmail and full of sorrows and frustration. Her poems can be seen questing for true love, which ended in frustration and discontentment.

Davendra Kohli (1974) comment in this context in Kamala Das: Almost. All of Kamala Das's reviewers have pointed out that her strong personality contributes to the quality of her poetry. But while the vigour of her personality appears to function pretty openly, and on the surface, it does not detract from the complexity of the woman's ambivalence, which is the certitude and precariousness of sexual love (p.15).

Death is a prevalent theme in Kamla Das's poetry. She has depicted death in her many poems. She examined death from varied angles. Death is not horrifying in her poems. In some of her poems, she regarded death as a reliever from the pain and sorrows of the world. For her, death doesn't make her sad; instead, it relieves the poetess of the suffering. On various occasions, death seems an easy escape for her from the loneliness of life. There is submissiveness as well as revolt against a man-dominant world. She wants real love but despairs when she does not get it. She wants to be dead if there is no love for her in *The Suicide*, she writes, "Love is not to be had I want to be dead". (*The Suicide*, 53-54)

Statement of the Problem

Male-chauvinism has predominantly been the focus of Sylvia Plath's and Kamala Das's poetry. *Mushroom* and *An Introduction* raise the same issue to depict male chauvinism through the eye of Feminism.

Research Questions

- Q1. How is the concept of Male-chauvinism highlighted in the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das?
- Q2. How/what are the responses of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das to male-chauvinism in their poems?
- Q3. How much are Plath and Das successful/unsuccessful in depicting male-chauvinism through the eye of feminism in *Mushroom* and *An Introduction*?

Objectives of the Study

The following are the main objectives of the research:

- > To evaluate the projection of Male-chauvinism in the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das.
- > To analyse the due responses of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das to male- chauvinism.
- > To find out how much Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das are successful/unsuccessful in depicting male-chauvinism through the eye of feminism in *Mushroom* and *An Introduction*.

The rationale of the Study

Male-chauvinism, although present in practice and in the realm of literature as a form of consent, has not been widely discussed in feminism. What is meant is that its area is still scanty in literature because of its recentness of concept. In the present study, various attempts have been made to delineate male chauvinism through the eye of feminism in the poems *Mushroom* and *An Introduction*.

Significance of the Study

The present study brings awareness about ignored and trampled creatures (Women) in male-dominated societies that will be highlighted by both poems. It provides an analysis of male chauvinism by application of feminism. This study is done for the voice of women folk because they are exploited day by day and trampled under men's feet. Moreover, this study adds a new angle to the universal challenge and will prove advantageous in the field of feminism.

Literature Review

According to Kuku Prayitno Subagy's article *Confronted Patriarchy in Sylvia Plath's Poems* (2009), women were continuously represented as subordinate citizens in American literature, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s. They had been subjected to male dominance, losing their individuality and their ability to control their own fate. They performed the roles that males assigned to them, both at home and in their social circles. This article demonstrated that a lot of Sylvia Plath's poems reflected a battle with the patriarchal phenomena in which women were inferior to and abused by males. Furthermore, further analysis took place on Plath's poems, i.e. *Lady Lazarus*, *Daddy*, *Death & Co.*, *Fever*, *103°* and *Ariel*, that the symbols and the female characters of the poems the poet used in the poems not only described women as inferior, depersonalized, and oppressed, but their struggle until they eventually achieve freedom and sense of self. Another study conducted by Maher A. Mahdi (2014), titled *From a Victim of the Feminine Mystique to a Heroine of Feminist Deconstruction: Revisiting Selected Poems Sylvia Plath*, indicates that a great proportion of Plath's poems deal with the feelings of women who are regarded as objects. A commodity is not permitted to be an autonomous person. Furthermore, this study looked at some of Sylvia Plath's poems and found that they depict Plath as a tenacious feminist writer and activist until her death. The essay tracks the poet's transformation from a helpless, destitute object to a fighter who attempted to win all of her battles against the male sex.

Dr Supriya and Sweta Singh (2015) evaluate Kamala Das from a feminist perspective in their research paper *The Image of Indian Womanhood in the Poems of Kamala Das*, stating that she is essentially a poet of the modern Indian woman's ambivalence who expresses it more clearly than any other Indian woman poet and demonstrates a strong sense of consciousness toward the feminine psyche. Through her poems, she rebels against patriarchal society's constraints and expresses the sadness of a woman emerging from a submissive status to establish her individuality, identity, and freedom. She used an uncommon and inventive method to give voice to the quiet longings of the oppressed woman to liberate herself from the secondary status, her yearning for an identity and individuality as freedom.

In their combined research *Traces of Feminist Approaches in the Poems of Kamala Das*, Abhishek Sarkar and Dr. Amit Bhowmick (2015) argued that a note of a feminist tenor is an unmistakable presence in Kamala Das' works, and her conscious attempt to reject patriarchal setup makes her a much criticized and sensational but authentic figure. According to the findings of this study, Kamala Das's works serve as an iconoclast in shattering patriarchal social marginalization and encouraging Indian women to identify their own space and recognize that they should not suppress their feelings for the sake of patriarchal dominance. They should, on the contrary, express their suppressed emotions and so build their own uniqueness beyond the shadows of masculine rule.

Dr. Aradhana Vaidya (2016) in his research *Kamala Das: A Fiery Feminist and Confessional Voice of the Post-independence Era* stated that Kamala Das poems are highly feminist in tone and confessional in nature. She dared the society which was male-centric, although she argued that she was not a feminist and confessional but bundle of her poetry proved her as fiery feminist. In many of the poems she rebelled against Patriarchal society e.g. in *An Introduction*, she states: I wore a shirt and my Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and ignored My womanliness (33-35)

Such naked confessional and fiery feministic poems have made her stand illustrious in the realm of Indian poetry in English. The present research discusses the poems *Mushroom* and *An Introduction* in the Light of Male-chauvinism through the eye of Feminism with the help of a framework taken from Simon De Beauvoir's work *The Second Sex* (1952) where she states that:

One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this Creature intermediate between male and eunuch which is described as feminine (p.301)

Methodology

According to the nature of the study, qualitative method is followed that involves data exploration for investigating the Research Questions 1, 2 and 3. The study is based on formation provided by the close analysis of the text of the poems from Male-chauvinism's perspective through the eye of feminism. The present research paradigm on the framework taken from Simon De Beauvoir's work *The Second Sex* (1952). Provided guidance to the researcher throughout the research.

The design of this research is based on the concept of male-chauvinism, the exploitative attitudes of men towards women and the voice of the poets for their rights. It is discussed through the eye of feminism in the framework provided by Simon De Beauvoir's work *The Second Sex* (1952).

The primary sources of this study are the texts of Sylvia Plath's and Kamala Das's poems, *Mushroom* and *An Introduction*. The secondary sources are taken from the existing works of different critics and writers on feminism and also research articles and Journals related to the area of this research.

The present Research is qualitative. The poems will be analysed through close reading of text based on male-chauvinism through the eye of feminism with selected framework Simon De Beauvoir's work *The Second Sex* (1952) for both poems where she states that:

A woman is not born; she is transformed. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; civilization as a whole creates this creature intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine (p.301).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for this research will be based on Simon De Beauvoir's essay *The Second Sex* (1952), in which she says that a woman is not born, but rather becomes one. No biological, psychological, or economic fate defines the figure that the human female exhibits in society; civilization as a whole develops this creature, midway between male and eunuch, which is classified as feminine (p.301).

Discussion and Results

Male-chauvinism is the belief of men's superiority over women. Women are considered worthless imperfect and domestic objects, while men are considered powerful, perfect and master in the realm of it. Women are deprived of basic rights. They are treated like slaves who are exploited from past to the present time. They are considered inferior both biologically and psychologically in male-dominant society. While men enjoy free life in every walk of life unlike women who are enclosed in home walls. It is this man made society and civilization which make them inferior and consider them as burden on society.

In different times, women through their writing voices their tender feelings This is one of the major tools for them to show how they are being treated unequally and exploited in male dominant society. Women adore men while men take opportunity of their weakness and oppress them. The poems of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das depict the same feelings.

Metaphorical Weakness

The title of the poem Mushroom is use as a metaphor for women. Who are ignored and considered weak like mushrooms. They live under the dark shadow of trees (men). They on what is left from men, as in the first two stanzas the speaker says:

Very quietly
Our toes, our noses
Take hold on the loam,
Acquire the air.
(Mushroom, 3-6)

Women are held down and suffocated by men. They are so suppressed that they cannot breath and walk darelly but "very quietly" in the presence of men. What they do, they are unappreciated and unseen to the society. Their activities and work are unnoticed, as:

Nobody sees us,
The small grains make room.
(Mushroom, 7, 9)

Nobody sees them what they are doing. No one is giving a room of appreciation for them.

They are ignored. No one is giving a shelter of bravo for them. Ironically, only men are appreciated in man-dominant society because they are considered the masters while women are unnoticed because they are considered weak and inferior.

Women's voices are not listened and their works are not seen by anybody. They have to work extremely hard to find their place in man-dominant society. In the poem the poet says the same that:

Earless and eyeless,
Perfectly voiceless,
Widen the crannies,
Shoulder through holes.
(Mushroom, 15-18)

Nobody listens to women's voices and feelings. It also makes us think how women are "earless and eyeless before men and are expected not to think of their own but only think of what men tell them. They have to stand mute and "perfectly voiceless" before men

While the men talk. Moreover, women have to work extremely hard as compared to men if they want to find their place.

Shadow of Men

Dure forced to live under the shadow of men where they have to ask little or nothing from men. In the poem these feelings are highlighted by the poet where she says that:

Diet on water,
On crumbs of Shadow,
Bland-mannered, asking
Little or nothing.
(Mushroom, 19-22)

Women have to live under men's dominance in their lives. They are supposed to do just a sort of node, smile and have no other opinion of their own. They are made stereotype as "Bland-mannered" emotionless and weak. It is not by nature but a man-made culture (Mushroom, 19-22) chores. As they are made stereotype as weak and inferior they have to live in four walls of house and have to carry the burden of house. In the same poem the poet says in which makes them so. They are expected to have no other role instead of domestic feeling the following way that:

We are shelves, we are
Tables, we are meek,
We are edible
(Mushroom, 25-27)

Just like shelves and tables they are unnoticed and are just expected to be there to support and carry the burden of household. They are totally consumed by men. They are completely dominated by men and use them for everything what men want them to do.

Man is Authority

This poem voices the longing and complaint of a woman that is related not only to herself but to every woman as she says: He is every man who wants a woman, just as I am every Woman who seeks love. (An Introduction, 46-48)

There is domination of man over woman not in terms of social existence but also in terms of sexual relationship. Man considers himself as an owner of woman's body and mind whereas woman is forced to live a marginalized class. They have to worship men and keep himself mute before them. The poet says at start of the poem that:

I don't know politics but I know the names
Of those in power, and can repeat them like
Days of week, or names of months, beginning with Nehru

(An Introduction, 1-3)

Here the poet ironically exposes the politics of male-chauvinism that women are not aware of politics. They are supposed only to abide the commands of powerful politics. Political leaders have power to do what they want subordinates to do men also have Power over women in society. And women have to obey their male authority. They are just victim of politics and their knowledge has no impact on their lives. They are not free in their choices:

Don't write in English they said, English is
Not your mother-tongue.

(An Introduction, 7-8)

Even in marriage System women are treated with bias. They are considered only a child bearer. They are married at very early ages and are not able to win true love from their husbands. In the poem the poet expresses the same feelings that:

I was child, and later they old me I grew, for I became tall, my limbs
Swelled and one or two place sprouted hair.
When I ask for love, not knowing what else to ask
For, he drew a youth of sixteen into the
Bedroom and closed the door, He did not beat me
But my sad woman-body felt so beaten.

(An Introduction, 24-30)

Women completely suffer in male-dominant society. They are not able to win love from their husbands but only sexual assault and loveless relation from them. They are being married at early age and considered only child bearers. There is no one to give them true live and listen to their feelings. The same feelings are there in other place of the poem as:

I met a man, loved him. Call
Him not by any name, he is every man
Who wants a woman, just as I am every
Woman who seeks love. In him
The hungry haste
Of rivers, in me... the ocean's tireless
Waiting.

(An Introduction, 45-50)

Woman as Domestic Animal

Here the poet explores the relationship of women and men on issue of love whereas men Seek women for lust and women seek men for love. Men make her an object for sexual pleasure. While women want them for love and wait them to get the same love but in Vain. In traditional society they are to adjust themselves to home walls and domestic ores. They are instructed by society to do different roles:

Dress in sarees, be girl
Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,
Be quarreler with servants.

(An Introduction, 35-37)

Men allow them only for domestic chores and they are instructed to put on sarees, to play role of cooking, washing, handicrafts, etc. Here women are shown as passive and submissive. Even their gestures, postures and movements inside the home are controlled and directed by male members. They have to stay inside home walls and follow the commands of men. In the following lines, the poet says the same way:

Don't sit
On walls or peep in through our laced-draped windows.
Be Amy, or be Kamala. Or, better
Still, be Madhavikutt. It is time to
Choose a name, a role. Don't play pretending games
Don't play schizophrenia or be a
Nympho. Don't cry embarrassingly loud when
Jilted in love.

(An Introduction, 38-45)

Women are cut out from center of society and are forced to live a life of inferior class under men domination. Although they have feelings, dreams, desires and demands as like men but they are being ignored. They are always confined in the four walls with domestic aching. The poet in the above lines clearly shows in a simple and candid language the winds set of male-dominant society where men not only define domestic roles of women and what they should do, how should they behave what kind of profession should they adopt, but also what they should not do. Here the repeated use of "don'ts" show male-chauvinism and act as power of men over women in male-dominant society and women have to follow them. They are made inferior by society, and it is this society and man-made civilization which imposes a name and role on woman and she has to carry it. So in using the line "it is time to choose a name, a role" the poet ironically exposes the power of male-chauvinism.

Reflection of Protest

When the freedom of one stays strengthened and the oppression of other grows increases. And if one is being made superior and the other is made inferior that person is allotted day by day in the same society. Then they compel to start a reaction against it. Same is the case with women: they are made peripheral, marginalized and oppressed by the established and conventionalized role of male chauvinism. Man is considered superior and given any sort of freedom, while woman is inferior here and of freedom. They are exploited and limited to the domestic life only. Writers in India started a reaction against this to shatter these man-made traditions and raised the voice of women. Both Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das passed through the same.

In many of their poems we find woman trying different ways of protest against male-chauvinism and wishes to throw away this. 'Mushroom' and 'An Introduction' raise the same issue of protest. The very title of the poem used as metaphor for women. Persistent struggle is shown overall in this poem. The growths of mushrooms, their growing symbolize the fight of women's for independence and rights. At the start of the poem the poet describes women's silent way of struggle:

Overnight, very
Whitely, discreetly
Very quietly
Our toes, our noses
Take hold on the loam
Acquire air.
(Mushroom, 1-6)

Here the poet shows a silent way of growing woman, although they are suffocated. But still are moving forward very wisely for their rights. Because they suffer. They are deprived of the basic necessity (even acquiring air). They are not able to endure it further.

Although in their revolution they are to endure greater pain but still are moving stronger in their protest as in the coming lines:

Soft fists insist on
Heaving the needles,
The leafy bedding.
Even the paving.
Our hammers, our rams,

Earless and eyeless
Perfectly voiceless,
Widen the crannies.
Shoulder through the holes.
(Mushroom, 7-18)

Their revolution is not violent but 'soft fist'. Even though they are weaker still they are growing. The imagery of hammers and rams making us know about their protest but by using it to mushroom it makes the protest quiet. They wisely grow. They are persistent in their struggle. Their persistence is their greatest weapon. Woman has little decision in society that impacts every one. But their painstaking efforts expanding their status and forcing themselves forward can give them acceptance. Despite their weakness which is stereotyped, they are strong in their movements and increasing in strengths day by day. The poet says the same that:

Nudgers and shovers
In spite of ourselves
Our kind multiplies (Mushroom, 28-30)

Women are strong and steadfast in their protest against male-chauvinism despite all things come in their way; they are moving. Their steadfastness will break their barrier of male-chauvinism and allow them freedom. They still have hope for their independence. They are not hopeless in their struggle. One day they will have the freedom as it is expressed in the last lines of the poem:

We shall by morning
Inherit the earth.
Our foot's in the door.

(Mushroom, 31-33)

It is evidently shown that:

That after attaining the first step i.e. preparing for independence, the second step in gaining independence and breaking away from male-chauvinism is being made satisfactory. They will achieve what they deserve.

Rebellion at Last:

Male chauvinism is not only limited to Plath's society, Indian society also suffers from it where women are beaten, exploited and conventionalized as inferior objects. Indian society made different values which are imposed only on women. These discriminations, these prejudices against women make them motivated and impel to start a protest against this male chauvinism in order to throw away these rigid restrictions. Kamala Das is not a simple woman who accepts this male chauvinism without protesting it. Like many poems in *An Introduction* she clearly shows rebellion against it:

Don't write in English, they said, English is
Not your mother-tongue. Why not leave
Me alone, critics, friends, visiting's cousins,
Every one of you? Why not let me speak in
Any language I like? The language I speak,
Becomes mines, its distortions, its queerness's
All mine, mine alone.

(An Introduction, 7-13)

The poet shows a little rebellion against male domination. She prefers to English despite the objections of society. The male-chauvinism made her crippled her growth and made her paralyzed. She wants to come out of restrictions of conventionalized system where women are bounded and men are free player. She is compelled to change her identity of Womanliness so that she may have the same freedom like men:

Then...I wore a shirt and my
Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and ignored
My womanliness.

(An Introduction, 33-35)

It shows a clear signs of protest to cope with the established system. The changing identity in wearing a brother's dress raise questions here whether women are born women or being made as woman; or if they should change their identity to gain the same freedom as men. The same questions

has been challenged by many feminist writers, Simon De Beauvoir is one of them "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman".

Conclusion and Recommendation

Male-chauvinism is belief of innate superiority of men over women. It means that men are powerful masters while women are weaker and inferior. It is actually a prejudice of men against women. It is this belief which makes women oppressed and deprived. Feminism on the other hand a movements and ideologies which raise a voice for the rights of women and want them out of the clutches of patriarchy.

Various themes reflected in the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das include thirst for love, search for identity and death, etc. showing their sufferings from male dominancy. It also shows how women are being deprived of love and rights.

Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das in their poems show different responses toward male-dominance. Women want to throw away oppression and get rid of male-chauvinism. Sometimes they change their identities and sometimes through their struggle show a protest against male dominancy. Mushroom and An Introduction show the same ideology. Despite the surrounding authority of men. They keep on struggling for their rights with a reflection of protest against the established system of exploitation in male-dominant society, transforming into a rebellion at last. Done in Sylvia Plath's and Kamala Das's other poems, bringing out the concept of male- There is a need of further research from this point of view. Future research should be chauvinism through the eye of feminism.

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