

SUGATHAKUMARI – THE VOICE OF MALAYALAM SENSITIVITY

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Abstract: In the poetry of Sugathakumari one can find the sensitivity about man and nature. Her work was not restricted only to the expression of emotions regarding nature. She was working for the preservation of environment. She started the society named 'Abhaya', which worked for the economically weak women attacked by rape, addiction of liquor and domestic violence. Sugathakumari is the most sensitive and most philosophical at contemporary Malayalam Poets. Her poetry has always upon her sadness and unhappiness. The poems of Sugathakumari can be read in a feminist perspectives. The predominant themes in the poem are melancholy and loneliness.

Key words: Abhaya, Silent valley, Rain at Night, Mental agony, Loneliness

Life and career: Sugathakumari (22 January 1934 – 23 December 2020) was an Indian poet and activist. Her parents were the poet and freedom fighter Bodheswaram and V. K. Karthiyayini Amma, a Sanskrit scholar. She got the literary mind from her home. She did her post-graduation in philosophy in 1955. She wrote with the pseudonym and Shrikumar and became famous after publication of poetic anthology named Muthuchippikal in 1961. She published 15 poetic anthologies including Pavam-Pavam, Manav Rudhyam, Pathira Pukkal, Krishna- Kavithakal, Ambal Mani and Radhiyavide. She won numerous awards and recognitions including Kerala Sahitya Academy Award (1968), Kendra Sahitya Academy award (1978) Odakkuzhal Award (1982), Vayalgar Award (1984) Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra Award (1986), Asam Prize (1991), Saraswati Samman (2012) Mathrubhumi literary Award (2014) in 2006. She was honoured with Padmashri the country's fourth highest civilian honour. She played an important role for environmental preservation during 80's. She had taken active participation in the agitation against hydroelectric project in the silent valley of western Ghats.

Introduction :- In the poetry of Sugathakumari one can find the sensitivity about man and nature. Her work was not restricted only to the expression of emotions

regarding nature. She was working for the preservation of environment. The rights of women since past five decades. She played an important role for environmental preservation during 80's. She had taken active participation in the agitations against hydro-electric project in the silent valley of western. She was the founder secretary of progress protection committee which always insisted in the protection of nature. She started the society named 'Abhaya', which worked for the economically weak women attacked by rape, addiction of liquor and domestic violence. She was the first president of women commission of Kerala. The mission of Kutumbashri for women empowerment was a tremendous success.

Research Methodology :- Research means describing a careful, systematic, patient study and investigation in some field of knowledge undertaken to establish facts or principles, the present research is descriptive research where the first step is to decide what to find out? In this research the researcher has to find out how Sugathakumari is sensitive about man and nature. The topic of interest is selected. Before finalizing the topic, it was made sure that the data is available. The relevant information with minimal expenditure of effort and money is collected using two types of data collection as Primary data or Secondary data. To carry out this research work the use of primary and secondary sources available in English is made, such as journals, newspapers, internet sources related to the topic of research work.

As an Environmentalist :- The people of Kerala know her both as a poet and a lighter who involves in the struggle to save the environment role in the save silent valley protest 9th was the movement started in 1970's to save some of the oldest natural forests in the country. Her poem Marathinu Stuti (Ode to tree) became a symbol for the protest from the intellectual community and was the opening song of most of the save silent valley campaign meetings. She was the founder secretary of the Prakrthi Samrakshama Samiti an organization for the protection of nature.

When Kerala state electricity board declared to construct a hydroelectric dam in silent valley which was a threat to forest and lion tailed macaques. Her poem Marathinu Stuti became an anthem of the movement to save the forest following the agitation the environment featured in a large part in Sugathakumari's poetry. In Thaivakal she talks about pathetic condition of polluted river.

A dead river flows with black water
 On one side there is a city
 Immersed in smoke and
 And with oozing blood

In another her celebrated poem Rattrimazha (Night Rain) for which she won the Kendriya Sahitya Academy Award.

Night rain
 Pensive daughter of the dusky dank
 Gliding slowly like along wail
 Into this hospital
 Extending her cold singers
 Through the window
 And touching me

She is best known poet environmentalist.

Her Sensitivity : Sugathakumari is the most sensitive and most philosophical at contemporary Malayalam Poets. Her poetry has always upon her sadness and unhappiness. Though she is best known as poet environmentalist, Sugathakumari is also the founder of Abhaya an organisation which gives shelter and hope to female mental patients. Her work to launch Abhaya was prompted by an off chance visit to the Govt. Run mental Hospital in the capital Thiruvanthapuram. These women were housed in the 19th century conditions sexually abused and regularly prostituted to men in the neighbouring police camp. When she visited the hospital she saw women's bodies were covered with sores and stark naked. They were emaciated and their hair was matted. They didn't even look like human being. The horror of this experience was embedded in her mind and she decided and the spot to do something about it despite opposition to interventions from NGOS by professionals in the field.

In the poem *Rain at Night* shifting moods of people are compared with the rain at night. We can see different emotional states of woman in poem, youth, love, melancholy, mental agony, disease, loneliness etc. Rain has been companion of woman in all these different emotional stages.

Her feminism – The poems of Sugathakumari can be read in a feminist perspectives. Different emotions, states of mind of woman are seen in rain at Night. The poetess who is the speaker, speaks about her companion rain in the Rain at Night. The predominant themes in the poem are melancholy and loneliness as, 'A diseased part can be cut and removed but what can be done to the poor heart deeply diseased?'^[4]

Because of the social interventions the individual who has to suffer may be deeply diseased with melancholy loneliness also predominates the poem

When I toss and turn
 On my sweltering bed of sickness
 n the sleepless hours of the night
 And forgetting even to weep alone
 Slowly freeze into a stone

In the patriarchal society woman is devoid of her identity to suffer by social system and pathetic state of woman, routine life to women has to work suppressing her tears, having no choice.

And when it is dawn
 Your wiping your face and facing a smile
 Your hurry and your putting on an act
 Rathrimazha, Rain at night

The plight of woman with the help of rain at night, from her loneliness is her effort to find solace like Keats as romantic poet. As romantics were sensitive Sugathakumari has been described as the most sensitive and most philosophical among contemporary Malayalam poets she said.

"I have been inspired to write mostly through my emotional up heavens, few of my poem can be called joyous, but these days I fell I'm slowly walking away from it, to all work that is futile as meaningless"

Finest voices of her generation many literacy tag are associated with her poetry including her romantics and feminist. The subjects she touched in many poems as nature, anguish, devotion or the complex and ambiguous nature of love and longing.

Her quest for freedom : Sugathakumari has solemn expressions in her poetry. The woman in the poem like Abhisarika' we can see a hold Radha s captured in Gopi or Radha Series. It is her own expressing her love and devotion for Krishna. We can see bold Radha in Abhisarika like Sanskrit love poetry tradition where woman exercised a freedom seldom seen in her age Every period and generation gives rise to several poetic

voices, Sugathakumaris voice will endure Rain has captured my heart an stolen my soul.

'I believe that I have lost control
It's a feeling I never want to go away
I want to be with you every day my rain'

Sugathakumari compares the night rain to some young mad woman weeping laughing and whimpering and sitting huddled up tossing her long black hair. Sugathakumari uses the first person narration. In her poetry there is the presence of an abstract love or some spiritual being that persists in the air and rain providing for peace. The burden of the rain is ironic because it is refreshing notion. The burden is just the rain striking ground. The love is capitalized where speaker notes either the abstract notion or may be even God. In the poem Rathrimazha the poetess compares the rage of emotions she goes to that of the rain of night

Conclusion :-The poetry of Sugathakumari is most sensitive and most philosophical of contemporary Malayalam, poetry. Her poetry is about sadness and unhappiness in her words

" I have been inspired to write mostly thought my emotional upheavals, few of my poems can be called joyous but these days I feel I'm slowly walking away from it all toward that is futile or meaningless'

Her poetry mostly dealt with the tragic quest for love and is considered more lyrical compared to her later works in which the quiet, lyrical sensitivity is replaced by in which the quiet, lyrical sensitivity is replaced by increasingly feminist responses to social disorder and injustice with environmental issues and other contemporary problems are also sharply portrayed in her poetry. In the manner of Sugathakuari something memorable for us. Like Keats and Shelley she is romantic in mood and manner, wants to get solace in nature (Keats: Ode to a Nightingale) as well as fighting spirit of Shelley, as she success fully fought against Hydroelectric project.

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