

## A DESPERATE CRAVING FOR IDENTITY IN THE MAJOR WORKS OF KAMALA DAS

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### ABSTRACT

A woman's existence is of paramount importance to the society; but unfortunately, this is rarely realized by the advocators of male chauvinism. A woman is destined to play certain defined roles as performing the domestic chores, reproduction, rearing up children and fulfilling the sexual desires of the male. In the process, she is discriminated, oppressed exploited and humiliated. Women suffer mainly due to the patriarchal psyche resulting in male chauvinism and the prevalent tendency to impose their power over women. Although feminist writers have tried to challenge the patriarchal norms and ideologies, this subjugation is still widespread and kind of legitimized in the Indian set up. The present paper brings to light the plight and predicament of women and their consequent pursuit for identity by observing external behaviours and depicting their internal journeys in the psychological realm of feminine sensibilities. It shows how women are torn between their individuality and their social obligations. The paper is a poignant account of how the cries of Indian women go unheard and her pain goes unfelt. It explores how the desires, aspirations and dreams of women come to an end when a woman gets married. The researchers wish to focus on the selected works of Kamala Das such as "An Introduction", "The Freaks", "The Dance of the Eunuchs", "The Forest Fire" and "The Sunshine Cat" to analyze and evaluate the predicament of women in the conventional Indian set up. It also aims at bringing out how the women feel cheated, frustrated and self- defeated- sometimes indulging in self- destruction and at other times taking recourse to rebellion. However, the question remains unanswered whether this rebellion really brings consolation or self-destruction? This riddle is expected to be unraveled by taking up the case of female protagonists as visualized and portrayed by Kamala Das, one of the most rebellious writers of the contemporary times.

**KEYWORDS:** External Behavior, Psychological Realm, Feminine Sensibilities, Patriarchal Psyche, Male- Chauvinism, Self-Destruction, Rebellion