

# Poetry for human Values in Teaching Literature in English

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## Introduction

The presenter starts this paper with a question to himself. Out of all the genres why does poetry attract people immediately? For every revolution poetry plays its own role. When Barathiyar took revolution against the British only poetry changed the Tamils and everybody went with him. Like that we have Barathidasan who followed Barathiyar. Poetry has such a power which can inspire human, illuminate the essence of emotions to do what human want. So the presenter decides to reveal the real essence of poetry for human values in teaching literature in English.

## What does poetry need to do?

Poetry is a powerful tool which can convey what a men need to convey. Poets are the keen observers towards the society, more than a politician, and poets know what the society needs. They predict the future of the society. Among all other genres, poetry has a world in itself. It talks to the writers with the right words in right order. The presenter is very much inspired by the poem of Kamala Das's poem "An Introduction" through which the poet speaks about herself from her childhood to her marriage life. This is what every girl in their life need. Here, the presenter tries to say that it is not an ordinary poem instead it is human values to the society.

## Kamala Das's poem "An Introduction" to teach the human values in teaching Literature

Kamala Das being a woman who fights for the future of women and it is the value which she wants to convey to human. The poem starts with the status of women that they do not have any rights to enter into politics.

"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.  
I am Indian, very brown, born in Malabar,  
I speak three languages, write in  
Two, dream in one."

The above lines shows that women are not allowed entering politics. She does not know politics but she is able to say all the politics. She can repeat it like the names of days and months. The important information which she wants to convey is that she is unable to live her life with her wishes.

"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,"

Immediately in the next stanza she conveys it very clearly that to free her from all the rules and regulations of the critics and the other fellow men. Men forget the values of women. She makes very clear questions to the critics, friends, and visiting cousins, why do not you men allow me to live the life which I like to live. In every aspects the surrounding men decides her life, even in small aspects like speaking the language, wearing the dress, etc...

## Crushing herself in the world of women

"When I asked 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.  
The weight of my breasts and womb crushed me.  
I shrank Pitifully."

The above lines make everyone to cry, which is the fate of all women even now in 21<sup>st</sup> century. She is asking for love but it was misunderstood by her father and he makes arrangement for marriage. Her father drew a young man of sixteen and closed the door. Men do not understand the love of women and the word 'love' is misunderstood as 'Sex'.

## They decide my womanliness...

“Then ... I wore a shirt and my  
Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and ignored  
My womanliness. Dress in sarees, be girl  
Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,  
Be a quarreller with servants. Fit in. Oh,  
Belong, cried the categorizers. Don't sit  
On walls or peep in through our lace-draped windows.  
Be Amy, or be Kamala. Or, better  
Still, be Madhavikutty.”

The above lines are the evidence to speak about the writers mind and her feelings towards her life. She is very much happy to wear the trousers of her brother, her hair cut, but for every action of the poet there are number of reactions like, be a girl, be a cook, be fit for the family in all the way. She is not allowed to live her life in the way she wanted.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, to conclude, poetry has a power to convey what you want with simple and powerful words. The above discussions clearly show that poetry is possible for human Values in Teaching Literature in English. The last two lines of the poem show that the poet does not have any joy in her life.

“I have no joys that are not yours, no  
Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I.”

She has not taken joys of others and in the same way she wants her own life or joys of her life to be given without any restrictions. Poems like this really help the teachers to teach values of human to the society through teaching literature in English.