



## CRITICAL STUDY OF MEENA KANDASAMY'S POEMS- MS.MILITANCY, THE DEAD WOMAN WALKING FROM THE COLLECTION MS.MILITANCY

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Indian poetry expresses the collective consciousness of India. It reflects the traditions of the country and exposes the glorious past. Poets have become the voice of the commoner. The realities of life across borders have been given life in their poems. In spite of many obstacles women writers have pushed aside boundaries and their poems have made way to the world out there.

Dalit literature has emerged out as separate category in Indian Literature. A young and rebellious woman poet, Meena Kandasamy in her poem collection Ms. Militancy focuses on caste oppression and women issues. The poems in the collection focus on women empowerment and psychological pressures of women and how the poet plans to grant the women an identity. Meena Kandasamy's first poetry collection was published in 2006 named *Touch*. This paper throws light on two poems of the collection, M.s Militancy and the Dead woman walking.

Dead woman walking is a poem that portrays the emotional and physical torments the subjugated of the society face, especially the women of the lower strata of the society. The poet has brought in the mythological figure, Karaikkal Ammayar who is a voice to the Dalit women who are exploited by the men through various means to satisfy their needs. Karaikkal Ammayar's merchant husband abandoned her for a "fresh and formless wife" in spite of her beauty, magic of her love. Karaikkal Ammayar's devotion and love for Lord Shiva gave a picture to her husband as if she is a mystic. Meena Kandasamy slips into the shoes of Karaikkal Ammayar in order to explain the pain women face when deserted by their husbands, "I wept in vain, I wailed, i walked on my head, I went to god."(Kandasamy 17).

In the point of view of the society, Karaikkal Ammayar was a mad woman. Her appearance was terrifying. The bulging eyes, long loose hair, etc were the images which come to the mind when she has to be given an image. Even though she assumed this form after leaving the pleasures of life, it reflects her inner trauma of dejection. The following lines explain this signifying the apt title.

I am a dead woman walking asylum corridors,  
with faltering step, with felted, flying hair,  
with hollowed cheeks that offset bulging eyes,  
with welts on my wrists, with creasing skin,  
with seizures of speech and song, with a single story  
between my sobbing pendulous breasts.(Kandasamy 20).

The poem having the title of the collection is "Ms. Militancy". This poem includes the protagonist of the story of the first epic in Tamil. The poet sends across the message that women need to be brave and a revolutionary just like Kannaki. Even though Kovalan betrayed his wife, he is welcomed by his wife after he returns from Madhavi's place. Kannaki supports him after his return by handing over her anklets so that they could start a new life. There is a complete contrast of the character of Kannaki in the first stanza of Kandasamy's poem and the last few lines. That is, a submissive and typical Indian wife to her husband at first due to the norms of the patriarchal domination changes when there is injustice done to her. She becomes a rebel and her rage outpours in an enormous way when her husband gets killed. She is bold and reinstalls justice which both the Pandiyan King and Kovalan failed to hold on to. By being a female, this is a huge success

for her against the male dominant society thus creating an identity for her. Her anger is subsided only when she burns down the city of Madurai and not by getting only the justice. Kandasamy rightly puts it as, "a bomb of her left breast" (36). Kandasamy herself demands from a woman that when she has to stand up to any injustices she has to do so. The poet is portrayed as an example for subjugated women to look up to as she has given voice to the voiceless through her lines.

Just like Mahaswetha devi does to her characters, giving voice to the unnoticed. Ms. Kandasamy takes up the main characters of epics and brings them as common people and highlights the quality which makes them to stand out of the crowd. Kandasamy herself has got a powerful voice which is capable of breaking boundaries and shattering walls. She does her best to uplift her community. Her poems are a reflection of her strong rootedness to Indian English and Dalit Literatures.

#### WORKS CITED

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