

EMOTIONAL DECLARATION IN WOMEN'S PUNJABI POETRY

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Writing poetry is a passion in the first stage of expression in almost all the languages but it is very strange that we do not find a single woman Punjabi poet for a long time in the history of Punjabi literature. A visible contribution in the field of poetry is available only in the third decade of 20th century Punjabi literature. This fact is very significant in the socio-historical perspective. Punjabi literature has been enriched by Gurus, Saints, Sufis and Kissakaars in a span of more than five hundred years. Punjabi scholars and literary historians have reconstructed the history of Punjabi literature from volumes of hand written manuscripts. None of them came across a significant contribution by woman Punjabi poet. As the position and prestige of Punjabi woman improved and due to all round socio-cultural development, a number of Punjabi women writers appeared on the literary scene during the later half of the previous century. In addition to Amrita Pritam and Prabhjot Kaur some of the well known and significant woman authors are, Mohinder Kaur Gill, Sharan Makkar, Kuldeep Kalpana, Manjit Tiwana, Amar Jyoti, Manjit Pal Kaur, Vaneeta, Pal Kaur, Bachint Kaur and Kuldeep Gill etc. In this paper only the poetry written by Amrita Pritam, Prabhjot Kaur and Manjit Tiwana is being taken into account as a reference points.

The first woman Punjabi poet was Amrita Pritam (1919-2005). She has composed twenty eight poetry books [*Thandian kirna* (1935), *Amrit lehran* (1936), *Jionda varatman* (1938), *Trail Dhote Phull* (1941), *O Geetan valea* (1942), *Badlan De Palle Vich* (1943), *Sanjh Di Lali* (1943), *Nikki Jihi Sugaat* (1944), *Lok Peer* (1944) *Pather Geehte* (1946), *Lamian Vaatan* (1949), *Main Tawareekh Hind Di* (1950), *Sarghi Vela* (1951), *Navi Saver Sunehure* (1955), *Ashoka Cheti* (1957), *Kastoori* (1959), *Nagmani* (1964), *Kagaz te Canvas* (1970), *Kagaz te Canvas ton Pehlan* (1971), *Geetan Di Changer* (1972), *Main Jamha tu* (1977), *Chetarnama* (1983), *Ikk So Iktali Kavitan* (1984), *Khamoshi ton Pehlan* (2001), *Ashuma* (n.d.), *Nau Sapne* (n.d.), and *Chhe Ruttan* (n.d.) etc.]

She was a celebrated Punjabi author who has been awarded Sahit Academy and Gian Peeth awards. She is much decorated Punjabi author. The second Punjabi woman author is Prabhjot Kaur (1924). She has twenty two poetry books to her credit [*Lat Lat Jot Jage* (1943), *Palkan de Ohle* (1944), *Azal Ton* (1946), *Kuj Hor* (1946), *Kafle* (1947), *Sapne Sadhran* (1949), *Chonvi Kavita* (1949), *Do Rang* (1954), *Pankheru* (1956), *Shah Rah* (1957) *Ban kapasi* (1958), *Pabbi* (1962), *Khari* (1967), *Vadd darshi Sheesha* (1973), *Madeanter* (1974), *Chanderyug* (1977) *Ishq Shrah ki Nata* (1985), *Paardarshi-chonvi Punjabi kavita* (1990) *Kunthit* (1990), *shiddat* (2000), *Charam Seema* (2000), and *Main tainu Mukhatab han ikk Khalsh* (2000) etc.]

She was also a Sahit academy award winner and government of India awarded her Padam Shri. The third Punjabi woman poet is Manjit Tiwana. She represents the last generation of twentieth century Punjabi women. She has composed poetry in six volumes, *Ilham* (1977), *Ilzam* (1980), *Uneeda varatmaan* (1987), *Dargah* (1995), *Jin Prem kio* (2000), and *Agg de Moti* (2002).] In this way we are taking into account a sample of Punjabi poetry written by Punjabi women during the previous century. Woman is the central referent in most of the Punjabi poetry. As a result we can see a number of dimensions which demarcate the feminine existence in Punjabi society. But most of the information is the resultant of masculine perceptions. With the advent of woman Punjabi poets we come across a fresh and all together different dimension of feminine sensibilities in Punjabi culture. The poetic writings conceptualized feminine existence at two levels, one is physical and the second is social. This is very much illustrated in the poetry of these woman writers.

As we have seen that medieval Punjabi literature does not have single woman author. This is an indicative of the fact that Punjabi woman has no significant place in the society as she can express herself in literary form. She has a dormant status and was slave to whims and wishes of her male family members. The poetry of these poets give us an insight into the psycho-social background of Punjabi woman.

For the first time, we came across the feminine perceptions about matrimonial mismatch in this poetry. These Punjabi woman writers have illustrated the psycho-social situations which are examples of the developing urban Punjabi culture. There are multiple relationships between a woman and her partner. She dreams of converting the lover into husband and husband into lover. But in reality, she faces the dichotomy of body centric and emotion centric relationships

*Sometime there is physical union
Both become one
Mind still remains wandering(1)*

The agony of many generations compel Punjabi woman to keep the balance between her individual likings and disliking under the cover of traditions and continue to suffer without protest.

*Still we have this tradition
Nothing has changed
We still believe that
During the birth of daughter
Pain is in the pelvis
Where during that of the son
It is in abdomen.....(2)*

That has converted woman into a commodity to be used. The economic dependence and coupled with a male dominated society and feudal mind has transformed a living being into a lifeless doll which can be used for entertainment and play.

*My food giver
I am a lather doll..... to be used
As you wish(3)*

This mantel make up of the male dominated society considers a living human being a thing, which has no desire and thinking. Her only use is to produce children.

*Look what can I say to your country
In which woman is used
Either a machine to produce the children
Or an oven for male lust(4)*

This existential situation compels Punjabi woman to remain in a state of imagined trans. She continuously longs for an ever lasting love

*But love is timeless
Always young
Without beginning and without end
Continuous always.....(5)*

That is why she thinks;

*For away my ultimate destination
...uneven torturous path....
...my end will or the path
either of them will end must.....(6)*

while remaining absorbed in her created psychic reality, she continues her struggle for recognition. One generation of woman struggles for a status of equality in the society, but when she realizes that the path of emancipation is unending and long then she longs for and loves her own imagined and generated and abstract reality. But this does not mean that she has stopped moving on her path of freedom from the bounds of traditions. She is still hopeful that one day Punjabi woman will achieve her long due place in the society. That is why she places her program of existential concern in the hands of next generation. She hopes that the Punjabi girl in the near future will keep the torch burning in order to reach the destination. She will generate circumstances where she is not compelled to offer sacrifice of her very human existence.

*The time has come to throw away troubles
Now the Punjabi girl starts her journey
By gone is, to be killed in the desert fire
Brave fighter she will be now.....(7)*

Punjabi woman is very sure about her social status, as man has been striving for many generations to decode her. Till now she herself never understood the reality of her existence.

Devine secret I am

None can decode it

In fact I myself is unaware.....(8)

This is the stage where the perception of Punjabi woman poets has now reached. This part of Punjabi literature has created a special status not only for itself but it has contributed significantly to Punjabi language and life. Historically we always felt proud of the fact that the first Sikh Guru, Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469-1539) in his baani has specially given an elevated status to woman by making her the very base of human existence. But after this, Punjabi language could not witness a reality of his expressed desire. At least this literature now manifests the divine idea of the Guru. Now Punjabi woman is expressing her in the form of a conscious individual. She is struggling, like her male partner, to be an existence not as a thing but as a person. This literature expresses another very important perception of these writers that Punjabi woman is becoming conscious of the processes which were responsible for her present status and she is aware of her strength also. This is why on one hand, she dreams of an ideal lover-husband reality but on the other hand, she is conscious of the fact that struggle is to be carried forward by the coming generations. The grammar of it lies in the fact that she has to understand herself first.

REFERENCES

- [1] Kai vaar tan mil v jan dohan ton ikk ho vi jan mann fir vi bhatakde ne.
- [2] Aje vi, aje vi sadi ihi prampra hai kujh vi nahi vatea ke dheer jamman same peerh sada lakk chon uthdi te puttar di pet chon
- [3] Ann data main chamm di gudditere vartan di shai... jiven chaven varat lai
- [4] Ve main ki akhan tere desh nu jihdi varti jave naar jan bache di machine samajh ke te vishe di bhathi haar
- [5] Par piyar tan kaal rehat hai sada juan, amar azar te attal niranter
- [6] Manzil meri door vi raahi.bikhra painda.....main muksan jan rasta muksi muksi kujh zroor ve raahi
- [7] Sama hun aia bipta jhagne da kuri hun punjab di tur paisi thalan vich bhujjana riha ikk pase hun bahadur di maut mar vaisi
- [8] Main raaz ilahi ki jane mera raaz koi main aap vi na sanjhan