

framework of the Western nation-state. Still the nature/character of the nation – comprising of multiple divergent regional, cultural units – provided an opportunity for affirmation of faith in diversity and plurality at the time of independence. As Khilnani notes, “Nehru's idea of Indianness emerged through improvised responses to constrained circumstances; its strength was not its ideological intensity, but its ability to steer towards an Indianness seen as layered, adjustable, imagined, not as a fixed property” (167). This inclusive concept of the nation that has helped the nation to take on board the different religious, cultural minorities – albeit fundamentalism and sectarianism have reared their ugly heads time and again – gives us hope that sexual minorities will also be given pride of place as citizens in the truest sense of the term. That the Indian nation-state has started taking baby-steps towards recognizing the hijras is clear from some of the recent events. The most heartening of them has been the judgement delivered by the Supreme Court on 15th April last year (2014) that recognizes the sexual ambivalence of the hijras by instructing the state to acknowledge them as belonging to third gender beyond the male female binary (*Writ Petition (Civil) No. 400 of 2012*). The recognition of their position outside the two sex model is a seal of approval by the highest court of the land on their claims to a separate gender identity.

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Adroit Attempt of *Écriture Féminine* in Indian Women Poetics

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Abstract: A firm silence more darkly and gloomily surrounded the writings of Indian women who were ashamed of articulating the avowal of their sexual passion, sexuality and desires of body. In Indian culture the desire and the expression of sexuality is as old as *Kama Sutra*, but a conspiracy of silence regarding sexuality incase of women still exists in India. This silence has been challenged in academics as a popular discourse is contemporary women literature. The study in this paper foregrounds the creative expressions of contemporary Indian poets like Kamala Das, Gauri Deshpande, Sunita Jain, Mamta Kalia who makes a bold and frank revelations of man-woman relationship with a simply stunning frankness and a feministic discourse in which the body itself becomes the text. They have made a disclosure of feminity regarding women's issues with a spirit to liberate themselves from any cultural and patriarchal dominance. They are exemplifying Helen Cixous' *écriture féminine* through a new way of emancipation by establishing a new point of view about a woman's body through which the phallogocentri concepts and controls can be looked into and taken apart, not only in theory but also in practice. *Écriture Feminine* is a strain of literary theory, a term coined by Helen Cixous in her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" in which she asserts that "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies" because their sexuality has repressed and denied. It has laid a new way to forge language, a new way of reality that can integrate women's intelligence and experience as well as create a new sensibility by uniting their suffering reason.

Keywords: Sexuality, *Écriture féminine*, Forge language, Feministic Discourse.

Indian women poetics has become a dominant articulation of female world which aspired to reveal the latest burning issues related with women as well as those issues that exist in the society since long. Women poetry paved a new way of feminism to free women from the lineal absolutes of male literary history and to save them from the great danger of getting mute. One of the important issues of the feminism is the evolution of women's writings. It is a medium to change the way people think about women in a male world, where women are always determined biologically, and her sole destiny is to reproduce the human species. "Traditionally women's lives have been imagined in relation to men's lives as the daughters, mothers, mistress wives of men. They have in consequence been imagined either in terms of a single role psychologically important to men (virgin; temptress; bitch; goddess) or in terms of a single social and biological function in male society preparing for marriage or married." (Carrathers-p.383). Indian women poetics have made an adroit attempt of forging language in a new way of

reality that can integrate women's intelligence and experience as well as create a new sensibility as that of Cixous' "Écriture Feminine". The French feminist critic Helen Cixous (b.1937) in her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1974) asserts that "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing from which they have been driven away as violently as away from their bodies" (Cixous, p.885) because their sexuality has been repressed and denied. Though Cixous' is the representative of the new ideology of *Écriture Feminine* in 1974, simultaneously, in India, women poets explored the assertion of Cixous as their female literary expression. The precursor of Indian *Écriture Feminine* in poetics is Kamala Das (1934-2003). This style has been subsequently taken up by other women poets like Gauri Deshpande (1942-2004), Mamta Kalia (b.1940) and Sunita Jain (1940) to legitimize their feminine ego and female identity. The study in this paper foregrounds the creative expressions of these Indian writers who make bold and frank revelations of about women with stunning frankness and with a feminist discourse in which their body and sexuality becomes the text. "It can safely be asserted that the 'Fair Voice' in the Indian poetry in English is not a 'sparrow's voice', it is a true voice of feeling" (Chavan, p.12). Thereby they tend to inspire other women to bring into literature through their feminine writing as Helen Cixous says, "women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes and rhetorics, regulations and codes they must submerge, cut through, go beyond the ultimate reserve, discourse, including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word 'silence', the one that, aiming for the impossible, stops short before the word "impossible" and writes it as the "end." (Cixous, p.886). From a feminine perspective the Indian writers Kamala Das, Gauri Deshpande, Sunita Jain and Mamta Kalia perceive that in the patriarchal culture sexuality is organized around male pleasure. Women are expected to meet male sexual needs. They are supposed to satisfy the male ego by admiring man's masculinity and accept his own fragility. It was very well brought out by Kamala Das in her poem "The Looking Glass":

'Stand nude before the glass with him | So that he sees himself the
stronger one | And believes it so, and you so much more | Softer,
younger, lovelier"

Kamala Das is said to be the pioneering poetess in this new trial of emancipation for the Indian Women Writing. Her first collection of poems "Summer In Calcutta" first published in 1965, boldly opposed the phallogocentric discourse of Indian English poetry and changed its history. Her poetry deals with an Indian environment to revolt against the concept of womanhood and the male world which abused the female body. Her other collections of poems like "The Descendants" (1968) and "The Old Play House And Other Poems" (1973) have equally vociferous the feminist stance. "In her the 'feministic aesthetics' finds an expression in the compelling need to break through the conventional barriers to establish a new tradition" (Seshdari, p.126). Kamala Das' demands are what Helen Cixous talks about 'Female Experience' which was repressed once should be freely expressed. Traditionally

women have been denied to control over their bodies and sexuality. In patriarchal literature women poets have to avoid references to body in order to gain access to the public sphere of 'high culture'. According to Helen Cixous, poetry is a linguistic structure, closer to the unconscious and hence closure to the suppressed female body\ female sexuality. It is very well represented by contemporary Indian poetry to show the changing trend, specifically Kamala Das writes about swelling limbs, growing hairs, the weight of breasts and the darkness of womb. She has totally rejected male oriented language that centralizes man and marginalize woman. She dares to expose women's sexuality truly though this patriarchal society looks down upon the woman's language as Sarojini shoo says, "If a painter paints a nude of a woman, we can appreciate it to a master piece. We can enjoy the erotic sculpture showing women's nudes on temple wall. We can digest all these from the pen and brush of a male artist, but if Kamala Das writes, we feel disturbed thinking that society is in danger. When Sunil Ganguly writes about his affairs with other ladies it is cited as a literary boldness, but Kamala Das expresses her passion, it is considered as 'perverted thought.'" (Dominic, 2010,p.119) Sunita Jain is another significant woman poetess to follow the ideas of Kamala Das. She writes about her love experiences and man woman relationship. She is not revolting openly like Kamala Das and Gauri Deshpande but employs the language of irony and contrasts in her poetic collections 'Many of my Desires'(1978), 'Between You and God'(1979), 'Beneath the Frost'(1979), and 'Silences'(1982). Sunita Jain expresses her disappointment or disgust at the mechanical churning of the bodies as men treat women as objects of lust:

-take me |Still , not as a lover. |in love's renewed mystery |but in lust
parasitic-(Jain, Sensum130)

SunitaJain longs for respect, emotional bonding and tender touch and not licentious attitude of the male attitude towards female body,

'My body bruised, |By your lust marked; |The satiable searing |of our
last love |Will it outlive this despair?|Hold me love of , hold me
near.'(Jain,Sensum,116)

Sunita visualizes body as the only visible form of soul, She realizes that her soul being mellowed in the touch of the body. Rashmi Bajaj rightly observes, "both Sunita and Kamala Das realize that bodies cannot be left out, as bodies are the concrete form for the abstract soul." (Bajaj, 1996, p.55). But Aman looks upon sex as a means of self-gratification and sensual pleasure where as a woman relates it to the emotional fulfilment and meaning in life. Without which it becomes a mere dry activity that leaves her unsatisfied. Gauri Deshpande, as an Indian poetess has no reservations to talk about experience of sexuality. For her men do not penetrate into "the plunging depths" of women's "souls\ and bodies" (No More. 3-4) when she seeks for feminine urges and its redemptive measures. There is no emotional involvement because love for a man is a temporary refuge from boredom which she portrays in her poem "Rememories" with much anguish:

A stillness |You should be left with a face at the window |A heart break,
a fare-well. |Otherwise there's nothing . (10-14)