

## *International Journal of Scientific Research and Reviews*

### **A Study of Socio-Political Concerns in Keki.N.Daruwallas Poetry**

**P. Phanikumar\***

Department of English, Sri Venkateswara Vedic University, Tirupati -517502. AP, India

#### **ABSTRACT**

Keki N.Daruwalla is an Indian English Poet, Novelist, Short story writer, one of the most substantial poets among the 'new' Indian English poets who radicalized Indian English poems both in theme and language. Pre Independence poets like Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Toru Dutt, Ramesh Chandra Dutt were mainly imitators they imitated the cult of romanticism of the British romantic poets like William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats and Walter Scott. Apart from them there were poets like Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya who were also romantic but their romanticism was fraught with spiritualism, nationalism, and mysticism. But the poet Ezekiel, A.K. Ramanujan, Kamala Das and Keki N.Daruwalla were fed up with romantic idealism. They produced a body of protest literature in a satirical, cynical and ironical vein. Modernism in Indian English poetry made its inroads with them leading to the origin of 'New Poetry' in the Indian literary sky. They derived much from the modern poets like T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, W.H. Auden, Wallace Stevens.

An emphasis made in this paper aims to depict the plight of his poetic vision. His themes are death, misery, social violence, disease, rot, social, cultural, traditional, superstitious, religious, mythical attitudes of the society recaptured the Socio-cultural aspects of Indian society in a realistic manner. He was recaptured the Socio-cultural aspects of Indian society in a realistic manner which makes them as the greatest artist. Although born in orthodox Parsifamily, Daruwalla are found to be freethinkers who mix the sacred and the secular with traces of sarcasm. The outstanding achievements of his post-colonial Indian-English poet validate the conclusion that Indo-English poetry is no longer be detached from the realities of life and society rather it is truly innovative and Indian in its content. From the given study the researcher aims to trace the poetic achievements from his poetry. He concluded that peace is solution to violence.

**KEY WORDS:** Socio-political concerns, Indianism, Post-colonialism, social violence

#### **CORRESPONDING AUTHOR**

**Dr.P.Phanikumar**

Lecturer in English, Sri Venkateswara Vedic University,  
Tirupati, -517502. AP, India  
Email: [ppodugu@gmail.com](mailto:ppodugu@gmail.com)

## **INTRODUCTION**

Poetry in India has a long history dating back to Vedic times. It started its journey two hundred years before with the hands of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio. He along with Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Toru Dutt and Ramesh Chandra Dutt stands as the trend setter. In their poems there is the abundance of the cult of British romanticism. They imitated the art of the British romantic poets. Their arts were inspired by their inner voice. But in the post Independence period a coterie of new poets like Nissim Ezekiel, A.K.Ramanujan, Kamala Dad and Keki N. Daruwalla ushered in a total radicalization in the field of Indian English poetry both in terms of matter and manner of presentation India has been pictured differently by Keki Daruwalla. Daruwalla presents the picture of India which has been distorted by the mass-media and presented to the West with a bit of truth and a lot of shame. K.N.Daruwalla is a poet of rural landscape. The former represents the urban ethos in his poetry whereas the later represents the rural ethos in his poetry. The above all also describes the literary scene and new aesthetic of Post Independence poets. Modern Indian poets was delayed by the idealism of nationalism and romanticism of Tagore and Naidu, the aesthetic found rapid acceptance in the disillusionment of the post Independence era. Instead of ushering golden age, independence India became a typical third world country, backward, corrupt, and hypocritical. Prior to this Indian English poetry was weak in social gesture. The World War II, partition, communal riots, the curses of casteism, misery, hunger, violence have been the chief causes for this shift in the literary world of Indian English poetry. These 'New poets' drew much from the modern dominating poets like T.S.Eliot, Ezra Pound,, W.B.Yeats, W.H.Auden and Wallace Stevens. Of them Keki N. Daruwalla has established himself as a triumphant voice who barely castigates the socio – political, cultural reality of contemporary India. His poems offer a study of social realism of the affairs of Post Independence India. In more than ten volumes Keki N. Daruwalla has expressed his personal response to the contradictions prevalent in Indian society. Like the

Black American poets, his poems openly question the values, the prevailing social order and stridently denounce social and political injustice. Around Krishna Mehrotra, Jayanta Mahapatra, A.K.Ramanujan and Nissim Ezekiel are also social critics, but their approach lacks adequate social insight, basic boldness and sense of consistency. He is like an angry young man who fights back and thinks forward against the ambient ugliness, corruption and oppressive forces operative in the society. Poetry, therefore, to him “has to be a social gesture, because on occasions I feel external reality bearing down on me from all sides with a pressure strong enough to tear the ear- drums.”(2) In his ‘Introduction ‘ to “The Poetry of Keki N. Daruwalla “ Ravi Nandan Sinha justifies what Daruwalla says : “From Under Orion (1970) to Night River (2000) each book presents itself as an argument against the contention that Daruwalla, after all, is not socially committed as writers like Mulk Raj Anand.” By virtue of being an I.P.S. officer Daruwalla enjoyed certain advantages. His profession gave him the exposure to life in the raw, created the basic boldness and sharpened his capacity for unfeigned social criticism. A selective study of his poetry would suffice to justify how Keki N. Daruwalla counts poetry as an essential part of the body of society,, an aesthetic of revival, a force for change, reorientation, awareness and future betterment. A conscious artist and craftsman Keki N. Daruwalla is sparingly critical about the moral degradation and decadence in 20th century India. With a sharp sense of unsparing satire, he highlights contradictions, paradoxes, ironies, hypocrisies, ethnicities, violence and corruption, the stark realism of contemporary Indian life.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

To explore the socio-political context of author, the researcher had taken 60 poems from his published poetry. It has been viewed that his craftsmanship towards his socio-political which is true the best of contemporary Indian society. An emphasis made in this

research paper and also said in hypothesis is that the related sources have been truly studied and analyzed by the researcher to bring out his poetic achievement of his poetry.

All the resources are relating to current research have been centre around contemporary Indian poetry with special reference from Toru Dutt to Keki.N Daruwalla. Also it is a chronological study.

### ***Analysis of K.N Daruwalla's Poetry:***

#### **Views on Women.**

Keki Daruwalla talks about the fair sex in his poetry freely and frankly. However his treatment of the female body is widely different. Keki Daruwalla on the other hand presents the miserable condition of the women who suffer a lot in the hands of their male-counterpart. In his poem 'Monologue in the Chambal Valley' (Under Orion 22) he pictured an incident of girl and woman trafficking is brought forward to depict the deplorable condition of women. Her selling off is an example of women exploitation by treating them like commodities for profit. The poet states:

*Do you recall how it was with the women?  
When we started? Taut-breasted ones from the hill  
Brown ones from Bihar-soft and overripe  
Daughter of the desert  
Daughters of the forest tribe?*

Dowry is a specific cultural norm adhered by the people of the Indian subcontinent. The ironical dilemma is seen when the discordance is caused "over some trinkets perhaps. Also, a significant cultural practice and ideology is ascertained in the male's concept of a woman's role and status in the family:

*Women must be confined to the Zenana  
Like quail in a wicker basket.*

### ***Major Themes in Daruwalla's Poetry***

In Keki Daruwalla's poem there are no fix themes because of his wide vision in capacity as an IPS officer. However, he wrote on various themes like Family, History, Social issues, Humor and Satire, misery etc. The major themes are,

#### **Family**

Family remains one of the major themes in the poetry of Keki N Daruwalla. Like Ramanujan, he also shows his love for Indian family, culture and to some extent his concern for Indian woman. His love for mother and daughter is really commendable and he wants to simplify his reflection over woman through his poems. He shows how mother love their daughters. In his poem 'Mother', he depicts the picture of crippled and aged mother in such a way that she becomes the universal figure. He mentioned some body parts in the poem, 'Mother' in the following lines:

*"Your spine goes creaking now  
across the bow of your body,  
your skin preserves the past in  
its creases.  
like mummy-wrap"*

He shows in the poem mother how woman are treated in the family. They are not happy after marriage, before marriage as always she has to suffer different problems. Familiar and marital discords prevail there often from dowry, often from poverty and often they are treated as a commercial product. She is a source of entertainment and object of domination. Even they are placed in the inner apartments of the house. In a poem from 'The Keeper of the Dead', he says:

*"Women must be confined to the zenana  
like quail in a wicker basket."*

## **History**

History is also one of the major themes in the poetry of Keki Daruwalla. He is really a poet par excellence. His poetic technique and craftsmanship are so polished and sharp that even some historical events got a new shape in his poetry. In so many poems like ‘*Al-Azhar Lecture*’ ‘*Mehdi of Sudan*’ ‘*History*’ and ‘*The Middle Ages*’ he deals with history. He also mentioned various places across the globe in his poems. In his ‘*Al-Azhar Lecture*’ he shows us Egypt's history. Mamluk Sultana was the king of that time. A devastating plague snatched away the lives of Mamluk, peasants, fellahin and many more in 1387. Here the poet shows us the devastating

*plague with his poetic creativity:*

*“Take the plague of 1350,  
which travelled like a caravan  
from China across the Pamirs  
to the caravanserai called Egypt;  
rested here, refilled its water-skins  
and moved on to Europe.  
....Loveless in Gaza  
at mill with Hamas.*

## **Social Issues**

Daruwalla is very much conscious about the society, its problems and issues. Actually very few things are left unnoticed by him. He shows various themes in his poetry. Terror, violence, poverty, slavery, pestilence, death, corruption are all present there in many poems of him. In his ‘Notes’ he shows how poverty and hunger change a person into a brutal one. But also he wants to show some high ranked persons taking advantage even such crucial times also. Here are the lines where he shows a bus full of food and the hungry people running after it but corrupted officers are making profit from the foods:

*“No end to hoarding!*

*Breaking open the lockers they find  
a briefcase full of rice.”*

He is such a conscious artist and craftsman that even religious and political condition and the hypocrisy and corruption also are shown in his poetry. In his ‘Graft’, he shows the actual condition of so called holy people. Actually corruption prevails everywhere and he also wants to throw light on that aspect. Here he shows:

*“To legalize a bastard you’ve to bribe the priest  
the catechism also has its price.  
He’ll wed you to a Turk or a Rabbi’s daughter  
even though you may be uncircumcised.”*

#### **K.NDaruwalla Zeal for Indianness**

His poems reflect aspects of Indianness which is witnessed through his attitude towards Indian; setting and subject matter, allusions to Indian myths, legends and philosophy, depiction of Indian culture, contemporary social and political issues, and the use of Indian words and sentence structure through the process of collocation, lexis, and by formal and functional nativism.

He essentially involved into the Indian scenes. Similarly, Daruwalla is also a true Indian by heart and soul. Although he is a Parsi by birth yet he relates himself with India, its culture and society. He never feels alienated from the social-structure and dogmas of Indian culture. He also loves Indian culture and language. When the discussion is about Indianism in Daruwalla then it is also mentionable that he shares his views on Indian English. He calls it his ‘Mistress’. In the poem ‘*The Mistress*’, he tells us everything about Indian English and says;

*“My love for her survives from night to night,  
even though each time  
I have to wrestle with her in bed. . . .*

*She is Indian English, the language that I use.”*

Like Nissim Ezekiel, Keki N. Daruwalla is a typical Indian poet and his poetry is full of Indianness. It is quite clear that it is a natural choice of the poet and not a deliberate one, and therefore, despite communicating foreign landscapes, historical and mythical allusions, and themes in a few of his poems, his poetry is seeped into the Indian sentiments and ethos, displaying the typical Indian atmosphere and Indian perspectives. He presents the Indian landscapes at a large scale.

A typical Indian atmosphere is always prevailing in the poems of Ezekiel and Daruwalla. The Indian society, the Indian relationship between society and nature surprise the reader with their freshness of approach and observation

## **2. Socio-Cultural Ethos**

Socio-cultural ethos is another major common aspect of Keki. N.Daruwalla. His study have inbuilt socio-cultural ethos in his poetry. His poetry had been widely read and appreciated for cultural consciousness. Similarly his poetic plight depicts the city of Mumbai in the following manner. In his poem Mandwa he states the ugliness of metropolitan city, Mumbai as, “black yeast / from here, and black salt, a wall of rotting muscle.” In this poem, the poet sketches the scenic beauty of seascape with its various moods realistically. ‘*Rumination at Verinag*’, is notable poem on scenic beauty of the place, Verinag.

Besides corruption, Daruwalla also highlights the stark reality of Indian life, particularly, the contradictory realities that are the co-existence of prosperity and abject poverty. In many poems he has dealt with dark images of death, decay, and destruction.

## **3. Poetic Techniques**

Another remarkable feature of K.N.Daruwalla was use of the poetic techniques. Contemporary Indian poets have beautifully make use of numerous techniques in their poetry viz. simile, metaphor, pun, personification, humour, satire, irony, etc.

Daruwalla in his poetry has made his ironical and satirical treatment of certain social evils. Likewise Nissim Ezekiel is also masters of the weapons of irony and satire. Daruwalla too has made a contribution in this respect. Daruwalla's poem entitled '*The people*' is a beautiful example in the field of irony and satire.

Similarly, in Ezekiel's poetry we can witness irony at large scale. An early poem, '*Background Casually*' is an excellent example of his use of irony to achieve comic effects and to hit targets of criticism. In the very opening line of this poem he ironically describes himself as poet rascal-clown. Most of modern Indian poets has been compared with Daruwalla as they have in common a powerfully satiric tone, scientific outlook and images of violence through which they give vent to their righteous anger. Myths are used by these poets to make their questions and responses more meaningful.

#### **4. Use of vernacular language.**

Like so many Indian english poets K.N.Daruwalla make use of vernacular language in poetry. Similarly, Daruwalla introduces lexical items borrowed from Urdu, Hindi, and Sanskrit to use them with English words and expression in order to present a particular socio-cultural aspect. These words may or may not have an English equivalent; therefore these lexical items are register bound. Also an instance of cultural transmission can be noticed from the use of dialectical words like *banjaras* (a wandering tribe), *Vedangas* (name of certain words, usually six, regarded as part of the Vedas), *amavasya* (night of new moon), *pinddan* (Balls of rice symbolically offered to dead ancestors, but actually fed to cows), *salagram* (black stone worshipped by the Vaishnavas), *Chaitra* (first month in the Hindu calendar corresponding to Aril-May), *barahazri* ('Pestilence in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta', *kanjars* (a tribe), *ekkas* (Two-wheeled carriage drawn by a horse), *yakshas* ('The King Speaks to the Scribe', *Agori* (a sect among the sadhus, which is not exactly known for its personal hygiene), *bhog* (sacramental food), *Alams* (Heraldic banners inscribed with Imam

Hussain's name), *fatiha* ('Apothecary', *kahin* (the dream reader), *mehrab* (A niche in the center of a wall of a mosque which marks the direction of Mecca), *qawwals* (professional singers), *Pir* (a holy man), *arti* ('Small Space',); *dhoti*, *manzil*, *mazars*, *Zenana* etc. are used by the poet.

Thus, there is strong rootedness as on his motherland. The scenes, the Nature, the cultural religious texts, the socio-cultural events and the creativity of the language are all testimonial of the poets' sense of belonging that invigorates their sentiments and the hidden emotions for the country, India. Contemporary poets studied here are socially committed and concerned with political, familial and religious-cultural realities that disturb human harmony and happiness. Indian-English poetry here is seen to promote pluralism and to posit unity in diversity. The outstanding achievements of the two Indian-English poets confirm the conclusion that Indo-English poetry is no longer removed from the realities of life and society but innovative and truly Indian in its content.

## **DISCUSSION**

It is stated in this research article how to do research on poetry. Also the related poems have covered so far major parts his poetic volumes. His themes are death, misery, social violence, disease, rot, social, cultural, traditional, superstitious, religious, mythical attitudes of the society recaptured the Socio-cultural aspects of Indian society in a realistic manner. He was recaptured the Socio-cultural aspects of Indian society in a realistic manner which makes them as the greatest artist. Although born in orthodox Parsifamily, Daruwalla are found to be freethinkers who mix the sacred and the secular with traces of sarcasm. The outstanding achievements of his post-colonial Indian-English poet validate the conclusion that Indo-English poetry is no longer be detached from the realities of life and society rather it is truly innovative and Indian in its content. From the given study the researcher aims to trace the poetic achievements from his poetry. He concluded that peace is solution to violence.

It has been suggested that the research article in the part of chronological study. Hence, the researcher has focused on how the author was truly adopted western writers like P.B Shelly, William Words Worth. And also writers like Ezekiel, Parthsarathy, Kamala Das. It has been concluded that K.N.Daruwalla is neither philosophical, nor social but he is real humanist.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the above study, it can be concluded that K.N Daruwalla deal with the wide range of common themes; i.e. love, sex, human relationships, loss of identity, alienation and exile, loneliness, ambiguities and complexities of modern urban life, frustration and discontentment, Indian contemporary scenes, disintegration of human values, crisis of spiritual values, familiar past and personal memories. In the poetry of K.N.Daruwalla these themes are very common. K.N.Daruwalla is an Indian poet, as he highlighted social, cultural, traditional, superstitious, religious, mythical attitudes of the society. He adopted various techniques and styles of writing poetry in Indian English literature.

It is notified that the contemporary writers who have refused to shut their eyes to political, social and familial conditions in the post-colonial phase of Indian life. Their themes range in the main from the tension between inner life and outer life or between aspirations and frustrations on the social front as well as on the personal plane. What makes them modernists are their use of free verse, new ideas and modern ways of expressing their sense of urban and rural cultural dislocation and their tendency to be mytho-poetic. He condemn those political demagogues who pretend and deceive the poor for their self-aggrandizement.

## **REFERENCES**

1. F.A. Inamdar. (ed.), *Critical Spectrum: The Poetry of Keki N Daruwalla*, Mittal Publications; New Delhi, 1991;69.

2. Goutam Karmakar. Indianism in the Poetry of Keki Daruwalla. *International Journal in Commerce, IT & Social Sciences*, 2015;2 (3):78.
  3. Goutam Karmakar. Indianism in the Poetry of Keki Daruwalla. *International Journal in Commerce, IT & Social Sciences*, 2015; 2 (3): 78.
  4. Goutam Karmakar. *The Craftsmanship of Keki Daruwalla: A Poet Par Excellence*, *Research Front*, 2015; 3(1):17.
  5. Goutam Karmakar, Keki N. Daruwalla and His Inclination Towards Postmodernism, *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities*, 2015; 5 (1): 355.
  6. Goutam Karmakar, Keki N. Daruwalla and His Inclination Towards Postmodernism, *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities*, 2015; 5 (1): 355.
-