REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature helps the researcher to understand the background and base the future research on that foundation.

Various critics have assessed the postcolonial poetry of Maya Angelou and Kamala Das in terms of the feminism as well as double colonized member of society. Many research papers have been reviewed which analyze specific aspects of Maya Angelou and Kamala Das’s poems presented and published by the previous research scholars. Many articles have been reviewed which had been published on the web sites about the recent updates and biographical reminiscences including some of their poems, dictionary references of literature specific terminologies.

Gender issues: Why I was not born as a son? Aggarwal AK, Gupta N -Gender disparities exist despite educational status and financial independence. Our system as a whole is inadequate and insufficient to deal with the problem. Abuse and violence against women is another important dimension of this gender problem. After marriages, plight of women's status is not better. Working ladies have to perform dual role - Job tasks and household chores. On reaching home from job, she is expected to entertain and serve the in-laws family, while others will sit relaxed and have fun. Gender disparities exist throughout the life cycle of the individual from birth to death. Gender issues are therefore very deep rooted and affect all age groups and societal group.¹

Maliti Agarwal mentions patriarchal social practices, social clichés, superstitious beliefs and other socio-cultural taboos against women and expresses her wish to demolish the male dominant, egoistical superiority. According to her women are the representations of sentimental love and devotion²

Dr. A.Ramesh Babu in his article says that the interest of Kamala Das’s poetry deals with not only about the story of sex outside marriage but also the instability of her feelings. Her words in her poetry enact her quest, an exploration into herself and seeking of her identity. Her poems are situated neither in the act of sex nor in the feeling of love, they are instead ,involved with the self and it is varied often conflicting emotions ranging from the desire for security and intimacy to the assertion of ego, self dramatization and feeling of shame and depression.³
Mirza Aasan Baig says about Maya Angelou that Maya Angelou is recognized as a representative figure of Radical Feminism. She is one of the most renowned and influential voices of our time. An Afro-American by birth, she underwent many traumatic incidents in her life. These incidents taught her the lessons of survival, and she emerged as a woman of substance, protest, questioning nature and a radical attitude.\(^4\)

That long Silence by Shashi Deshpande — The novel is the story of Jaya, the protagonist who remains a sufferer in her childhood and adulthood. The girl is being conditioned throughout her life towards the comforts of her future life partner. Jaya finds herself in midst of domestic tension when she tries to find out about her husband’s corrupt practices at the office. The couple sinks into utter silence in a mood of frustration and depression without talking to each other and without sharing ideas. The writer through the protagonist shows the society’s adherence to Manu Smriti in the modern era. Jaya’s supportive and submissive role proves detrimental to her own creative talent.\(^5\)

Om Prakash Dwivedi writes that Postcolonial Indian English Poetry has been enriched by the marvelous talent of Kamala Das, and her writings imbibe the cause of feminism. Most of her portrayals are realistic with a focus on her sense of frustration and alienation. As one reads Das’s poetry, one comes across the resonant themes of suppression and violence in an unmistakable manner. This leitmotif of suppression and violence eventually prompts us to believe that Das suffered a lot in her personal life. The love which she gets is the physical love and this enables her to recast a new image of woman in India by willingly turning the ‘dons’ into ‘dos’. Patriarchal rules are not meant for her. She is a prototype of postcolonial Indian woman and, hence, her style of living and thinking is unconventional. She is a constant believer in the value of freedom which an individual lacks. Mrs. Das objects to male domination at the mental level. Since she is a frail woman, she fails to subdue her husband, and this fact makes her married life really boring and tiresome. She now desires to flee and live without any restrictions Alienated from the self, she constantly battles against what seems an irrecoverable situation, wherein she feels both physically and mentally threatened. Being fed up with the temporary salutary effects of physical and carnal pleasure, she resorts to the pure love of ‘Radha-Krishna. Mrs. Das always longed for true love in her life, but this kind of love was denied to her in her married life. She wanted more than mere physical love, and yearned for an ideal love of the Radha-Krishna
archetype. The ideal of the relationship of Radha-Krishna marks the culmination of her chequered love-venture in life.6

Feminism Today- The Personal is Political by Ann Farmer states that the feminist movement is more politically inclined than meant for personal development. All the developments and the changes in laws are still fixed in second or the third wave of the feminist movement. We are now waiting for the fourth movement to bring about equality of the sexes in real terms.7

Shilpa Goel’s Feminist Literary Criticism addresses the Feminist Literary Criticism as one of the crucial literary studies and specially focuses on the Waves Theory of feminism. Friedans focus on motivating feminist literary works and Kate Millers introduction of the word ,Patriarchy which represented an androcentric society, are mentioned. Bell Hooke’s sexism as a particular form of oppression, Woolf’s Modern Feminist Criticism as a subject of critical enquiry, Elaine Showalters identification of three stages-Feminine, Feminist and Female theory, Mary Wollencrafts’s the rights of women, Beauvoir’s rich lexicon of images and ideas quoting The Second Sex as an example. The article concludes with focusing on providing attention to female and social construction of gender.8

Nectar in a Sieve by Kamala Markandaya, -A novel which illustrates how Rukmani a peasant woman of pre-independence rural India resolutely struggles for survival with undaunted courage, determination, fortitude and an indomitable spirit of endurance. The traditional character Rukmani accepts and endures sufferings with innate strength of character, vigour of mind and a true spirit of tolerance and resilience. She symbolizes the indefatigable Indian rural psyche which buckles under pressures but does not break.9

Binod Mishra and Veerendra Kumar Mishra says about Kamala Das says that her poems speak the unspeakable sounds of the marginal or the subordinate or subalter class of the baffling social structure.She writes against the oppressor and oppressed social machinery in general but about the role of patriarchy in particular. Kamala Das explores and traces the construction of herself and the growth of her consciousness.10

N.M Maghoker identifies Kamala as a poet of feminine longings who stood for the restless sensitive woman in a male dominated society. She raised her voice against male tyrannies. He identified-a search of herself, a search for true love, sex based on true love in her poems. She
draws a clear cut line between love and lust. M Moghekar quotes on her poems, "Beauty was a short season" where she describes the temporary and momentary nature of beauty and “Jaisurya” which mentions the motherly love and pain. Her frustration to be in this world where the womanhood suffers and gets crumpled under male domination and male chauvinism is truly reflected in her poems. To quote him,” Kamala Das' poetry is frank and straight forward expression of feminine sensibility. Kamala Das, the pioneer of freedom in woman sexuality, a pointer of nude woman has a remarkable place in Indo-Anglian poetry.11

Ashley.E.Myles’Anthology of Indo-Anglian Poetry examines the growth of Indian English Poetry after 1940’s and its relation and link to the main stream of English Poetry especially in the Introduction section which is titled -Post-war Indo Anglian Poetry: A Survey .The flourishing sweetness and magnetic charm of the Indo Anglian Poetry has been a main focus and compliments the novel brand of Indo Anglian Poetry initiated by the poets Dam Moreas, PLal, Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Shiv Kumar who nourished the stream on similar lines of T S Eliot, W B Yeats and Dylan Thomas. Nevertheless, the standards and individuality of the stream has been maintained and specially focused on the sensibility of post independent Indian society.12

“Race, Feminism and Representation: An Inquiry in to Maya Angelou’s Poetry” Bushra Naz Mamuna Ghani’s study focuses on Angelou’s poetry to capture the phenomenon of resistance in the background of post colonialism. As her poetry is an articulation of the process of struggle for national, racial, and lingual identity. She addresses the dichotomy of black and white, feminity and masculinity, minor and major, self and other, inferiority and superiority, and orient and occident. The analysis of her poetry helps to affix her amid subversive writers who question the dominance and subordination, dealing with the imagery of interspersed themes of lost past, deteriorated present in a cultural context against the colonial enterprise.

The haunting legacy of Angelou’s life and work has shaped a romantic conception of poetry as private, personal and expressive that has governed the reception of subsequent ‘American’ women poets. The themes of women, poetry and power demonstrate how the canonization of
Angelou has consolidated limiting assumptions about women’s poetry in twentieth century America. She models an alternative reading practice that allows for deeper engagement with the political work of modern poetry. Angelou’s poetry shows how her culture, carrying a history of traumatic violence through generations, led destruction of the non-white culture and history through colonization. The life and work of Angelou are fully intertwined. Her work is autobiographical. As nobody can bypass one’s past and cannot dispense with it so do Angelou. She fails to escape from it. Angelou did not have an easy beginning as a black child and as a writer. She suffered a constant displacement; longing for one lost home after another, and experienced an episode of abuse that resulted in tragedy.\(^\text{13}\)

Janoušková Petra, Theme of Survival in Maya Angelou’s Poetry, Department of English and American Studies, Masaryk University in Brno, November 2005 Peter Janouskova in his study, “Theme of Survival in Maya Angelou’s Poetry”, wrote that Maya Angelou is sometimes called an “America’s renaissance woman” as she is an author, poet, historian, songwriter, playwright, dancer, stage and screen producer, director, performer, singer, and civil rights activist. Her best known autobiographical novels are: All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes (1986), The Heart of a Woman (1981), Singin’ and Swingin’ and Getting’ Merry Like Christmas (1976), Gather Together in My Name (1974), and I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1969), which was nominated for the National Book Award. Among her volumes of poetry are: Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now (1993), And Still I Rise (1987), I Shall Not Be Moved (1990), Shaker, Why Don't You Sing? (1983), Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well (1975), and Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water ‘fore I Diiie (1971), which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. All of these collections of poetry were published in one volume of poetry in 1994 as The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou. More volumes of poetry have been published since but they are not going to be analyzed in this thesis. Thanks to the poem “On the Pulse of Morning” which was a President Clinton’s inauguration poem in 1993, Maya Angelou has become known world-wide.

In the 1950s Maya Angelou moved to New York, where she joined the Harlem Writers Guild and took her place among the growing number of young black writers and artists associated with the Civil Rights Movement. She acted in the historic off Broadway production of Jean Genet's The Blacks and wrote and performed a Cabaret for Freedom with the actor and comedian
Godfrey Cambridge. In 1959, at the request of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Maya Angelou became the northern coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. From 1961 to 1962 she was associate editor of The Arab Observer in Cairo, Egypt, the only English-language news weekly in the Middle East, and from 1964 to 1966 Angelou was feature editor of the African Review in Accra, Ghana, where she met Malcolm X and “corresponded with him as his thinking evolved from the racially polarized thinking of his youth to the more inclusive vision of his maturity”. She returned to the United States, shortly before Malcolm X’s assassination, to help him with his new Organization of African American Unity. Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. that happened on her birthday in 1968, together with previous death of Malcolm X, left her devastated. Maya Angelou has become the first black woman director in Hollywood. She has written, produced, directed, and starred in productions for stage, film, and television. In 1971, she wrote a screenplay and musical score for the film Georgia, Georgia, that was nominated for Pulitzer Prize. She has also written and produced several documentaries, including Golden Eagle Award-winning “Afro-Americans in the Arts”.

The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy —The novelist implicitly advocates greater social reforms in the rigid positioning of women. The world of Arundhati’s novel is captured in a state of flux where values of the patriarchal society are under attack from the new world in which self interest and social equality are forcing their entry. Seeing from a feminist point of view the novel speaks of violence perpetrated on women and paternal tyranny engulfing luckless children. It ruthlessly unmasks the dual standards of morality in the society in respect of men and women, the passive submissive role of a wife in a man–woman relationship.

Sezer Sabriye focuses on Kamala Das autobiography My Story as a text written by a third world woman who struggles in a doubly colonized world. Kamala intends to express her sense of freedom and sense of expression in an andocentric, patriarchal Indian society. The fact is that her outspoken way of expression in her autobiography called for a controversy from the Indian conventional social set up. Despite these she preferred to represent the unsilenced voice of Indian women according to Sezer Sabriye which was the foundation for many of her feminine Sensible poems.
G.B. Shelkikar states that Mrs. Kamala Das presents a feminist movement through her poetry. She discovers the male-hegemony from the inner care of her feminine consciousness. Mrs. Das’s personality has its irreparable anchors in sexual love and when it is refused she feels her life meaningless, barren and waste land. Undoubtedly she is a feminist writer articulating the hopes and oppressions the concerns and tensions, of mankind, exploits, she writes about love, sex and marriage and exploitation of women.\textsuperscript{17}

Gunjate Shital V. says that Although it is difficult to generalise about postcolonial feminism, we can foreground Third World women as a broad category, within which we can explore the histories and struggles of postcolonial women against colonialism, racism, sexism and economic forces. Not only are postcolonial feminist women challenging ideologies which have belittled the status of women, they are also challenging the prevailing assumption that the white Western middle-class woman is the norm. At the same time, they are struggling to eradicate stereotypes which define them as subordinate.\textsuperscript{18}

Sunita Sinha and Deep Shikha in an article “Kamala Das: The Improper Feminine” says that In the light of feminist critical theory it can be argued that Das has provided Indian English poetry, a new discourse, the discourse of woman’s body language from the point of view of woman. Of all the women poets of the present in India, Das projects herself as a fervent feminist poetic voice always exacting for a dignified place of hour, a respect for the naturalistic freedoms and choices. Her poetry contributes for the strong reactions and justifications for the most needful awakening of woman as a living entity in being-in-the world. Women’s social unrest in respect of education and career, sexual desire and frustration, suffocation of a caged loveless marriage, numerous affairs, the futility of lust, the shame and sorrow of not finding love after repeated attempts, the loneliness and neurosis that stalks women especially and such other things which were not spoken of candidly are powerfully dealt with for the first time in her poetry. Those who say that theme in the poetry of Kamala Das is love and for Kamala Das love hardly goes beyond sex and lust do not do justice to her as they tend to neglect the seriousness of purpose in her poetry. Kamala Das protests against the marginalization of women and social injustices and communicates a powerful female sensibility in her poetry. Das celebrates the female body and female desire.\textsuperscript{19}
Ranvirkar S.G. states that Traditionally, Indian Society is a male dominated and man has been regarded as a protector, a master and a guardian of woman. Generally women seen to have been looked upon as being inferior to men. Women are always oppressed, suppressed and marginalized by men. They have been ill-treated and exploited in all walks of life. After independence, many Indian women novelists have raised their voice against the exploitation of women. Many men novelists have also portrayed women characters with great sympathy and understanding.  

M.P Singh’s article on „Use of Images and Symbols in the Poetry of Kamala Das gives a fine account of what image is and how the deficiency of these images affect the success of a literary piece. He describes image as making a picture out of words which involves the effective use of metaphors, similes, contrasts and so on. Symbols being the representation of an object, ideology and other principles help the readers to move away from the literal denotation of the same. The Pioneers of the same are Ezra pound, James Joyce and C. Day Lewis. He slides gradually to the inspiration gained by Kamala Das from these pioneers in the framing of poetry using imagist and symbolist theory to render clarity to her expressions. P Singh mentions a whole lot of images used by Kamala Das in her poems which include sun and heat, house and window, sleep, sea, grandmother, Krishna and so on. Out of all these he mentions, human body as a significant image used by Kamala Das with supportive samples from her poems, The Freaks and „The Looking Glass where she has mentioned the repulsive nature of the male counterpart bringing in the great ideas of sexual futility, sexual repulsion and sterility. Her images of sun and heat symbolize lust and corruption quoting the examples of her poems. The Dance the Eunuchs and Summer in Calcutta, The Old Play House is self -explanatory with the usage of a metaphor as the title of the poem which leads to the image of a swallow who was free now gets tamed which indicates the loss of freedom. A great recurrent image found in Kamala’ poems are the image of Sea which is a pointer for two ideas. Firstly, the poets craving to merge with the blue sea in union with perfect love and secondly an escape into the sea from the andocentric world. The Radha-Krishna and Mira –Krishna archetypes are also effective images used by Das in revealing her search for an eternal lover in this world of follies and falsities. The article sums up with a salute to Kamala Das for her functional use of images and symbols rather than a decorative one which renders an arresting appeal to her poems.
Vijay Kumar Sunwani called Amrita Pritam the black rose. Amrita did not belong only to Punjab; she was for the whole of India. Amrita’s poem, transcending geographical and communal boundaries, captured the pain of the partition. The paper begins with an introduction to Punjab, including its languages and literature and Amrita Pritam’s place in it. The researcher had keenly studied some of her writings, her life, the various awards she won, and the many languages she has been translated in to.22

Kirton, T. in “Racial Exploitation and “double oppression” says about Maya Angelou that Incidentally, Maya Angelou’s poem, “Equality” centers on the position of women in society which is authenticated by the men in their lives. The speaker in the poem is pleading for the man in her life to actually view her as a person of importance. Angelou constantly repeats the lines: “Equality and I will be set free, Equality and I will be set free”. Thus emphasis is on freedom and equality.23

Hazel Elizabeth Koshy Section Editor of Whitehead Envoy in the journal explained that the world clearly has a problem with ovaries. Throughout history almost every known culture has developed ways to suppress and subjugate women as a means of social control. In order to address the unique human's rights concerns of women in the U.S. and abroad, the Whitehead Envoy editorial board is introducing a column dealing solely with women's rights. Because the movement for gender equality is fraught with obstacles and because resiliency defines the story of womanhood, this column will be entitled Still I Rise- after Maya Angelou's poem praising the buoyant spirit of women.24

The New Woman in The Sun Also Rises by Xiaoping Yu- The New Woman was a historical figure that became prominent in the public eye as she began to redefine gender roles, go to college, and start working in the male world. The presence of this historical New Woman then generated a certain amount of masculine anxiety as women began to take over typically masculine gender roles and spheres. Based upon this prevalence both of the New Woman and of masculine anxiety; it is not surprising that these topics become thematically important in The Sun Also Rises.25