

## Globalisation hasn't brought changes for women: Kanimozhi

Globalisation, as Tamil poet and MP K. Kanimozhi sees it, remains masculine in gender. It has not brought liberation for India's women who still do not have the freedom to say and write what they want, says the daughter of a famous father.

'I refuse to accept that liberalisation and globalisation have come for women,' Kanimozhi told IANS in a rare interview while accompanying President Pratibha Patil on her recent trip to Latin America.

She is one of the pioneers of 'puthu kavithai', or neo-poetry in the Tamil language, which harps on unconventional poems.

The woman whom her father and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi once called his literary heir is angry about society erecting barriers for women writers, although she says people like her do enjoy some freedom in expressing themselves.

'That is a small section; I think the majority of women do not have the freedom. Can you imagine a middle class woman or a lower middle class one who comes from a traditional background - which is a large population - expressing herself openly? I do not believe it is possible and that is the population that decides the morality of a woman.

'So I do not believe that kind of freedom has really come,' said Kanimozhi, 39, who after completing her masters in economics from the Ethiraj College for Women in Chennai, worked for The Hindu newspaper. She is a DMK MP in the Rajya Sabha.

'Society is very comfortable when a man says things. There is so much violence when he talks about the body of a woman, so much vulgarity there. They are completely comfortable with it. But when a woman talks about the body, even her own body, society does not accept it.'

Kanimozhi, who is married to a businessman in Australia, says she and her contemporaries have begun breaking the barriers. 'Karuvarai Vasana', 'Akathinai Paarvaigal' and 'Karukkum Murdaniare' are collections of her poems.

She has launched a website with Karthik Chidambaram, the son of Finance Minister P. Chidambaram. Some of her poems have been released in Malayalam - she is quite popular as a poet in Kerala - and some are being translated into English too.

Her father Karunanidhi, a leading Tamil writer on whom Kanimozhi is making a documentary, once said, 'She has my poetic ability, literary craving, love for the Tamil language and the ability to work hard.'

But Kanimozhi, who is seen as her father's emissary in the capital, has a different take on that. 'You do not have to make compulsory choices in life. You can do everything you want to. There is no need to choose and do one thing.'

In what could be seen as an indication that she is here to stay and has inherited her father's literary as well as political legacy, she said she is equally comfortable playing several roles.

'It's not like if you like to be a mother or a poet or a politician. I can be all three, which I am. That is another part of me, but everything is me.' She has an eight-year-old son, Aditya.

Kanimozhi, who loves Haiku and the works of Latin American writers Pablo Neruda and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, feels that being her father's daughter also puts pressure on her as whatever she writes is viewed in that context.

'In every traditional writer's family, if you come out with something contradicting your father, it is at least a problem within your family. Here it is a wider spectrum. But every child breaks away and I also had to.'

Although she remains in the limelight, Kanimozhi says she enjoys her loneliness. 'I am basically a loner. I actually enjoy being alone. I think all of us need that space and I value that a lot. I have no regrets about it actually.'

But the Rajya Sabha MP also says she likes to work with people. She has organised the [Chennai Sangamam](#) - Namma Theru Vizha, a street festival showcasing that city's long-lost traditional art forms.

As to how she views her writings, she said: 'It's like talking to myself or to a close friend. I express whatever I go through or whatever I come across in my poems. If I am confused, that confusion also comes through in my poetry.'

*Liz Mathew* ( © IANS / India eNews)