

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA OF WOMEN IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA

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ABSTRACT

Indian women novelist prefers woman character as the main protagonist in their novels. They give prospect for feminine. They portray the woman who is struggling to find out her identity in the male society. Woman characters are represented in Kamala Markandaya's novels like *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Handful of Rice*, *Some Innerfury*, *The Golden Honey Comb* and *A Silence of Desire*. She describes a sensible shade of contemporary women through her character i.e. Rukmani, Nalini, Ira, Mira, Roshan, Helen, Lalitha, Mohini, Usha, and Valli. Kamala Markandaya is one of the finest and notable novelists in Indian English literature. She has portrayed the vivid picture of Indian society in her novel when she has started her career at the time of independence, there were full of poverty, hunger, and starvation due to communal riots. Industrialization and urbanization were destroying rural life. She reflects social issues through her fiction. She dealt with the political, social and eastwest conflict of India. This paper discusses the stereotyped women who long for self-identity in their married life.

KEYWORDS: *Self-identity, Slavery, Patriarchal Society, Tradition And Modernity*

INTRODUCTION

Kamala Markandaya is not a strong novelist like Mulk Raj Anand but she is a skillful Indian women novelist. Among all the women novelist she is the most creative. Her novels are primarily concerned with human relationship and woman's imbroglio. She has written ten novels, each novel has covered a unique concept. Her concepts are not prevailing new in the circumstances of Indian English fiction. She is dealt with the difficult situation, trouble and bias of woman in India under the pressure of changing social, spiritual, economical, modern, and political forces.

Kamala Markandaya tries to stir the awareness of Indian woman opposed the conservative related society and communicates the real existence of woman. She is the most excellent modern novelist who deals with "feminism". India is a male superiority country and women are evaluated as subservience in mind and upper-level in the heart. Indian women are mostly orthodox generation in Indian culture, customs, creeds, tradition, and trends.

Markandaya's very first published novel is *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), it draws the life of the protagonist of the novel Rukmani and her family. Every Indian woman are treated like a slave after they get married. They need to be sincere and faithful in taking care of their husbands. Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* deals with Rukmani's ups and downs in

life. A village headman has four daughters, Rukmani is the fourth daughter of him. She got married at the age of twelve to a tenant peasant; Nathan is very below her status. Even she enjoyed with whatever her husband earns. She accepts, "This, mud hut, nothing but mud and thatch was my home. My knees gave. . . and I sank down" (Nectar in a Sieve 6).

She enjoys her married life at all the time and she learns so much in it. She belongs to a generation of self-sacrificing women for whom the mere happiness is only a husband's satisfaction. Rukmani bears five sons and a daughter Irrawaddy, when the couple gave birth for a girl baby at first they were not satisfied. She reacts "tears of weakness and disappointment; for what woman wants a girl for her firstborn" (Nectar in a Sieve 15). Rukmani thinks about a male child because a son can "continue his line and walk beside him on the land" (Nectar in a Sieve 16).

Rukmani's daughter Irrawaddy got married at the age of fourteen. During the five years of married life, they do not have children. Her husband had neglected her for being barren. Nathan also accepted it and supports the action of his son-in-law. Rukmani takes it in a sensible way and brings her daughter to Dr.Kenny to be treated for barrenness. This shows a rooted tradition in India. Rukmani's noble character accepts woman's domination with a spirit of nonchalance and becomes evident when she comes to know Nathan's extra-marital affair with Kunthi.

Even she knows about Nathan, she loves her husband and she is ready to protect him from any women. She never finds fault with him and she is taking much care for her family. She always supports him till his death. Rukmani faces so many troubles from her family and society but she faced boldly and solved it.

Kamala Markandaya's next novel *A Silence of Desire*, it is discussed about the problems of married life. Here, Markandaya portrayed the traditional good wife a mother who cooks well was askillful manager of her household; After fifteen years of marriage still she gave pleasure to her husband. Without expectation, she is doing her duty to her family. The theme of the novel is a clash between faith and reason and clear picture about the contemporary problem of India.

Sarojini is very truthful to her husband but he never obeys her feelings and thoughts. They even do not have mutual understanding in their marital life. Dandekar is busy at his work. He used his wife only for physical pleasure and doing household activities. He forgets that a woman is more than a wife, mother, and housekeeper. Sarojini relieved from a serious ailment, even she is not ready to convey to her husband. She believes in superstitious faith about religion; She has no idea what is right or wrong; natural feeling has totally mystified her. She continues to go to the faith-healer. She thought that "without faith, I shall not be healed" (*A Silence of Desire* 87).

Dandekar suspects Sarojini, for her absence, he thought Sarojini has an illegal relationship. So he thinks too much about it and he goes through a period of mental torture. "the pattern of his life being twisted out of shape"(*A Silence of Desire* 77). Sarojini thinks that she has not done anything wrong and she informs him: "I have a grown in my womb" (*A Silence of Desire* 86). It has stunned him and he changes his opinion.

Dandekar tries to give her a scientific treatment but Sarojini's fear make her reject it and she says, "I can't I will be cured, in my own way, By this-this faith healer?, Yes, I have faith in him and he will cure me".(*A Silence of Desire* 108)

Dandekar understands his mistakes of believing that only modernity is not a way to lead life. Tradition and rituals are needed to lead a peaceful life. Sarojini accepts to undergo scientific treatment. Dandekar welcomes her and had a peaceful ending.

Finally, she gets instruction from Swami and she agrees to get scientific treatment. At the end, she is an independent figure challenging male.

In *Some Inner Fury* (1956), Markandaya illustrates the circumstance of a rural family which is facing the tragedy of several issues. This play is an autobiography of Kamala Markandaya. Women characters in the novel are Mirabai and Premala. This novel gives importance for woman character Mirabai, Indian by birth, but educated by England. She has fallen in love with Richard, an English man, and friend of Kit. She says: “. . . the first time we met I was so shy I hardly looked up until someone prodded me and I stumbled forward and garlanded him” (Some Inner Fury 08)

Mira’s mother and brother Govind were against her love with Richard, whether she is aristocrat or poor she belongs to India. They give importance for tradition and ethics for that she dropped her love. Mira sacrifices her love for his countrymen. It makes her hate two races. Premala married Kit, She adopted an orphan girl baby even she bears a baby, it shows her patriotic thoughts related to her country. Her death makes sympathy for Mira; Women are always proud of their beauty. Novelist explains the women’s situation based on political, social, economical thoughts and decision making. Markandaya exaggerate about the women character who is always strong and bold.

Kamala Markandaya’s *Two Virgins* (1973) is a story of two sisters Lalitha and Saroja who live in a rural area and want to fulfill their goals. They want to hang high in the world of charm. This play deals with controversial thoughts between two sisters. Saroja is a sensible girl who is happy with her parents, aunt and beautiful elder sister Lalitha. Saroja’s life is simple and she is enjoying her life in the village, an even simple thing can make her happy. Saroja joined the ordinary school and she does not have an equal chance as her sister. She leads her life riding buffaloes and her wish is to get marry and have children. She has accepted her simple life and she is satisfied with them. Lalitha is elder sister of Saroja and she is a more beautiful girl than Saroja, She has blue eyes and charming personality. She goes to an expensive school of Miss Mendoza and learned maypole dance, after she thought that she is not made for the ruined life. Appa, Amma, Saroja and Aunt Alamelu are living. She is not ready to lead an ordinary life as her family members lead. She wants to come out from an awkward which externally seems bright, glamorous and charming. She was tempted by the film industry. She thinks that she is the most beautiful girl in the village. She wants to become a cine star.

Lalitha’s aunty advised her to lead a traditional life. But Lalitha is not happy with her aunty’s words. Aunty criticizes that modern youth are not ready to pay attention for old and experienced people’s advise. After getting a role in the film industry one day Lalitha meets Mr. Gupta and she had a chance to act in modern lifestyle character, it makes her happy. She felt better when compared to village life. But Mr. Gupta is a cunning director and he seduces her and makes her pregnant. She is not ready to face her village people and she tries to commit suicide.

The psychological trauma of woman in the select novels of Kamala Markandaya’s novels has important role in current society. Gender discrimination seems to be an eternal creep to the social tissue, grid, and communal movement. A woman has deep misery in their personal life. Women are powerful by nature but still, she is dishonoured and humiliated in the male-dominated society.

Markandaya clearly describes that her female characters are a mere reflection of the social environment. She has given importance for woman character. They is hiding their feelings of happiness and sorrows. One could feel proud to say

that women have the power to manage both family and workplace. It highlights the mental agony and psychological trauma of stereotyped women in married life.

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