

# **THE FICTIONAL NARRATIVES OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA: A NEW HISTORICIST STUDY**

(Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English)

By

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**2022**

## DECLARATION

I, Shilpisudha Goswami, do hereby declare that the thesis entitled *The Fictional Narratives of Kamala Markandaya: A New Historicist Study* submitted to Nagaland University for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is my original work and the same has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree.

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### **SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE**

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She has successfully completed her research work within the stipulated time and the thesis is the outcome of her original investigation conducted during the period of her research.

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The Fictional Narratives of Kamala Markandaya: A New Historicist Study

Submitted by Shilpisudha Goswami Under the supervision of Dr. I. Talisenla Imsong

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Chapter I

Introduction

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Indian Writing in English at a Glance

The arrival of British and their dominance over India resulted in the emergence of Indian writing in English. The Western education was introduced to India by the British and it brought new aurora of thinking to Indian minds. The renaissance in India came through the mingling of English literature and European culture from the early part of the nineteenth century, and this resulted in the emergence of a newly oriented and a totally transformed modern Indian literatures.

Indo-Anglian literature emerged as a result of consequences of both the civilizations in the process of acculturation and transmutation and thus

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar says:

Such was the moment; the phoenix-hour that bred Indo-Anglian literature, sometimes with solemn self-consciousness but sometimes as naturally-unself-consciously-as leaves grow up on a tree.... Once this started,

Indian writing in English had to range from the most utilitarian prose to the most

to the most ambitious verse-epics, for example! On the other hand,

Indian writing in English was but one manifestation of the creative urge in India—what is often referred to as the literary renaissance in India. (29-30)

In the last few decades Indo-English literature has proven its strength and maturity sufficiently to be taken seriously worldwide. It is part of English literature as it uses the English language as its medium of expression, yet isolated from mainstream literature since those are penned by Indian authors; whose native language is usually not English. The influence of Western or English on Indo-English writing is crystal clear, especially in the novel genre. However, the imitation of English style and idiom is one indication of potent Western influence in the novels written in English. Where one is not a native Indian by birth, upbringing or nationality, one can still achieve a convincing and credible amount of authenticity in one's writing by imbibing, to the fullest extent, the cultural awareness of a country. This assumption of a new cultural identity enables writers to depict situations completely culturally alien to their way of life. In this context, we can talk about Pearl S. Buck, the author of *Good Earth*, wrote convincingly about China and Chinese peasantry, though Buck is not Chinese. However, it does not matter about which part of the country or the world they write, within the great spectrum of variations and differences there is an essential familiarity that is a uniform scale of reference which applies to all Indians anywhere and hence, expects to find representation in the work of all Indo-English writers. These regional variations would, themselves, be reflected in the writing, so that if they are authentically described, the reader can immediately figure out the characters within specific frame and reference. Therefore, it is important for creative writers to be specific about their settings and to offer clues and details that would help the reader along to carry out adequate research, rather than to be deliberately vague and ambiguous about locale. This is sometimes disguised under the

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# THE FICTIONAL NARRATIVES OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA: A NEW HISTORICIST STUDY

## ABSTRACT

Kamala Markandaya's writings depict the Indian rural scenario and the persisting problems of the era. The contemporary issue like inclination towards the West has been depicted by Markandaya with the themes of poverty, degradation, fatalism and racism. Markandaya has first-hand experience of India as she has visited the South India since childhood, her writings bring forth the transformations in rural India from British Raj to freedom from British. From *Nectar in a Sieve* to *Pleasure City*, Markandaya has repeated the themes of East-West encounter, class-struggle and the conflict of tradition and modernity. Being a Brahmin daughter, she has been through the rituals and customs, superstitious believes of the people and their fatalism. This thesis emphasizes on Kamala Markandaya's presentation of the contemporary society, class-struggle and the transition from tradition to modernity. A detailed study of Markandaya's novels is studied through the lens of New historicism.

**Chapter I** deals with Markandaya's presentation of Indians, Indians living in other countries and the Indian villagers. Here I have analyzed Markandaya's perception of the society through the lens of New Historicism, Markandaya too propounds the same by representing the conflict of tradition and modernity and its outcome. Her novels are the result of her minute observation of the society. Markandaya has not only reflected the society through her novels, she also has brought out the cause and remedies along with. Her novels depict not only the past but also hint the future. From the pre-Independence era to present, the whole scenario is portrayed through the novels. Human psyche, industrialization, social change, urge for freedom are the main concern of today's world and of all contemporary writings. Here, I have focused on Markandaya's presentation of freedom movement, superstitious minds of the people, the



colonizer and the colonized, rural scene replaced by industrialization prevailing in the colonial India.

**Chapter II** reflects Greenblatt's concept of 'energia' ; the artist's representation of an art creates an image in the reader's mind. In this regard, Greenblatt discusses about the process of reception which leads to the circulation of social energy; a literary piece can circulate social energy in the process of reception while it moves through a series of negotiations, exchanges and movements. In Greenblatt's view, the concept of culture refers to two opposing ideas, which he calls *constraint* and *mobility*. This chapter emphasizes on the prevalent constraints and mobility in the societal history.

**Chapter III** emphasizes on the theory of Cultural and Acultural modernity. The inclination towards the Western value system and how blind imitation of the West can be disastrous is portrayed by Markandaya in her novels. Blind imitation has no relation to rationality, in fact it is a copy which affects the tradition whereas rational thinking moulds a culture and brings some prominent progresses. As we are amidst technology, our lives are so much accustomed to the scientific discoveries that we tend to forget what the origin was, how have we reached this stage today. Kamala Markandaya tries to study the three realities that is past, present and future and has noticed how past is neglected by the people in the urge of being modern. She emphasizes on the distinction between pastness of the past and presence of the past and suggests how a positive transformation occurs in this process.

**Chapter IV** discusses on the myriad concerns in the novels of Markandaya. Her fictional narratives, in contrast with those of her contemporary women writers, appear to be more perfect reflection of the awakened feminine sensibility in modern India. Markandaya, in her novels, exhibits the image of the changing traditional society in terms of the development of individual consciousness. The variations and complexity of the achieved content of her works redefine a major trend in the history of the Indo-English novel. In her novels,

Markandaya presents a verve for virtuosity which orders and patterns her feelings and ideas generating in a truly enjoyable work of art.

**Chapter V** focuses on the fictional narratives of Markandaya. Markandaya employs various fictional techniques to attach the readers with the plot. While reading her fictional work, one can actually visualize the setting, hear the dialogues and curiosity grows on. Moreover, her writings have the capacity to make the reader feel the pains of the people and thus they become alert to the social issues. Her intended meaning is conveyed in each novel, she has her own style, viewpoint, pace and angle of referring which created the overall effect of the novel. Stream of Consciousness, Descriptive technique and Flashback technique are employed by Markandaya to narrate her plots. She mostly uses first person and omniscient narrative. Her novels, *A Handful of Rice*, *The Cofferdams*, *Some Inner Fury*, *Two Virgins*, *The Nowhere Man*, *Pleasure City*, *The Golden Honeycomb*, *A Silence of Desire*, *Bombay Tiger* have third person omniscient narrative. The novels *Nectar in a Sieve* and *Some Inner Fury* have first person female narration. Here, I have analyzed the techniques employed by Markandaya in her novels.

**Chapter VI** brings out the outcome of this research work, it is the concluding part of this thesis. Kamala Markandaya lays emphasis on reconciliation and harmony in cultural life. In *Nectar in a Sieve* she brings Nathan's family in touch with Kennington to show the sympathy of the west for the poverty-stricken people of the East. In *Some Inner Fury* Mirabai-Richard friendship is engulfed by forces of nationalism, but the atmosphere of the family remains westernized. *A Silence of Desire* introduces reason and scepticism as symbol of western culture, but the Indian element of faith and spiritualism has its own place in culture. *Possession* shows how, Valmiki's rusticity receives the ennobling influence of the West: his manners, habits and sensibility are refined during his stay with Caroline bell in England. *A Handful of Rice* treats of Indian culture through the dealings of Ravishankar with Hindus and Christians.

*The Coffer Dams*, *The Nowhere Man* and *Two Virgins* give contrasting pictures of Eastern and Western cultures; and there is a natural and mutual perlocution of two cultures into each other. *The Golden Honeycomb* and *Pleasure City* show how the rudeness and rusticity of Indian dealings give place to the understanding of cultural values and sensibility.

As New Historicism says that literature should be studied with the history as it reflects; Markandaya's novels too reflect the history through the picture of colonized India. As Markandaya lived in India till its independence she represents the colonial India from each nook and corner. The continuous conflict of the east and the west is shown throughout all the novels with the contrast of tradition and modernity. This research work attempts to analyze the works of Markandaya in relation with colonial and present India.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Indian Writing in English at a Glance

The arrival of British and their dominance over India resulted in the emergence of Indian writing in English. The Western education was introduced to India by the British and it brought new aurora of thinking to Indian minds. The renaissance in India came through the mingling of English literature and European culture from the early part of the nineteenth century, and this resulted in the emergence of a newly oriented and a totally transformed modern Indian literatures. Indo-Anglian literature emerged as a result of consequences of both the civilizations in the process of acculturation and transmutation and thus K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar says in *Indian Writing in English*:

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penned by Indian authors; whose native language is usually not English. The influence of Western or English on Indo-English writing is crystal clear, especially in the novel genre. However, the imitation of English style and idiom is one indication of potent Western influence in the novels written in English. Where one is not a native Indian by birth, upbringing or nationality, one can still achieve a convincing and credible amount of authenticity in one's writing by imbibing, to the fullest extent, the cultural awareness of a country. This assumption of a new cultural identity enables writers to depict situations completely culturally alien to their way of life. In this context, we can talk about Pearl S. Buck, the author of *Good Earth*, wrote convincingly about China and Chinese peasantry, though Buck is not Chinese. However, it does not matter about which part of the country or the world they write, within the great spectrum of variations and differences there is an essential familiarity that is a uniform scale of reference which applies to all Indians anywhere and hence, expects to find representation in the work of all Indo-English writers. These regional variations would, themselves, be reflected in the writing, so that if they are authentically described, the reader can immediately figure out the characters within specific frame and reference. Therefore, it is important for creative writers to be specific about their settings and to offer clues and details that would help the reader along to carry out adequate research, rather than to be deliberately vague and ambiguous about locale. This is sometimes disguised under the pretence of wanting to universalize the situation: a fine excuse to justify the inferior nature of the work and the lack of concrete details.

Lack of authentic Indianness in Indo-English writing has had several unforeseen repercussions on writers and the quality of their work. The significant snag in the achievement of this impalpable quality appears to be the fact that most of the early reputed Indo-English writers lived abroad: Kamala Markandaya, Santha Rama Rao, Raja Rao and Balachandra Rajan; while these individuals might have been born in India, most of them received university education in the West and then chose to continue to live there as expatriate Indians. A few of

them tied the knot and had European spouses and grew further distanced from the land of their birth--- in terms of space, time and mental objectivity. Attempts to integrate with their adopted land and its culture led to further concoction of their own Indian heritage and cultural values of the West. Some of them clung to their Indian roots and it is evident in the tendency not to lose hold of Indian ways and virtues are reflected in their work quite consistently.

The early Indian English writing consists of pamphlets, essays and poems. Raja Ram Mohan Roy came up with his *Percepts of Jesus* which shows Roy's mastery over English and sincerity in the treatment of Indian themes. Hereafter came Toru Dutt and Romesh Chunder Dutt to contribute to the literary field. Writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Bankimchandra Chatterjee entered the creative field later followed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Motilal Nehru, Ranade, Gopalkrishna Gokhale and Sarojini Naidu. Indian English writing continued to expand with the genres of novel and short story. In the period of 1860-1920, S.K. Ghose, Manmohan Ghose, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, S. M. Mitra, Raj Laxmi Devi, Kshetrapal Chakrabarty, Lal Bihari De, A. Mahsdeviah, Behramji, S. B. Banerjee, Sardar Jogendra Singh, Balkrishna, K. S. Venkataramani were experimenting and trying to provide recognition to English fiction by writing social, historical and detective novels. During 1920-1950, R. K. Narayana, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Khushwant Singh and many other writers dealt with unlimited and unrestricted themes. Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya dealt mainly with social criticism and political emancipation and protest feudalism and imperialism of that time. On the other hand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao presented the religious and mythical Indian tradition and the post-independence writers wrote on psychological and social tensions.

Indian English fiction forms the bulk of Indian English literature from the later part of the nineteenth century to the present day. A few Indian English novels were published in the initial

period of the twentieth century (basically in the first three decades), in comparison to their copiousness in the later years. The advancement of Indo-Anglian fiction can be categorised broadly into three natural divisions. The span between 1870 and 1920 can be labelled as era of religious and political awakening; secondly, the duration between 1920 to 1947 can be termed as Gandhian era and the later period, 1947 onwards can be referred to as contemporary Indian literature. Fictional works like sketches, narratives, legends, autobiographies, presenting Indian life were published in the second phase of the nineteenth century to soothe the English public. Novelists like R.K. Narayan, Ahmed Ali, Attia Hussain, Bal Krishna, A. Madhaviah and Jogender Singh have derived their main characters from the urban middle class. Middle class manners and the conflict between tradition and modernity have been constant topic since then. Many novelists contributed to the rise of Indian English fiction. Indianization of English was an outstanding achievement of the writers of the period. The novelists representing various geographical regions harnessed English to express Indian ethos and sensibility. It is significant that post 1947 India experienced a sport of fiction writing by women. Kamala Markandaya, the observer of the colonial era marks a special position among the women writers, her writings reflect the English romantic tradition; she has sculptured a new literary wave by her creation in Indian writing in English. Like R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, Markandaya too is influenced by the Gandhian thoughts equally. Her novels are the record of Indian Independence with a significant perspective and with the reflection of Indian society.

Scriveners from various geographical areas have delineated the society and its problems since the beginning of Anglo-Indian literature and that has been continued. The real beginning of novel was *Rajmohan's Wife* by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in English. It is a lifelike tale of sufferings of a typical Hindu wife Matangini. Matangini's character is narrated through her boundless capacity for tolerance, her human consideration for Madhav, her selfless affection for her sister and her courage to make her a bold Indian woman are skilfully portrayed in this

novel. However, Matangini's husband Rajmohun is sketched as a villain who commits a series of crimes. Romesh Chunder's novel *The Slave Girl* make us revisit the Mughal times and we have glimpses of life in 17<sup>th</sup> century Agra--- love, intrigue jealousy being the inevitable ingredients of this romance. Tagore succeeds the saga with his full-length novels, of which three appeared in approved English during his lifetime. Naukhadubi appeared as *The Wreck*, *Gora* retained the same title in English and *Ghare Bhaire* became *The Home and the World*. In the beginning of *The Wreck*, two marriage parties are drowned in a boat-wreck, the only survivors being one of the bridegrooms and the other bride. These two, Ramesh and Kamala think that they are the recently married couple and try to settle down somewhere. Ramesh realizes the error sooner than Kamala, and so the inevitable complications follow. Kamala at last meets her real husband, Dr. Nalinaksha and is accepted by him and Ramesh is now free to marry Hemamalini. The novel is packed with incident and character, it has always been one of Tagore's popular novels.

Tagore's most ambitious work of fiction is undoubtedly *Gora*, written at the height of his prowess with a view to project his vision of the individual's role in nascent India. The hero, Gora, grows up as an orthodox, almost as a fanatic Hindu till he learns that he is but a founding, his mother being Irish. During the Mutiny, she had taken refuge in a Hindu home in fear of the Sepoys; her husband had been killed the previous day; she had herself died, after giving birth to the child that grew up as Gora under the care of his foster-parents, Krishnadayal and Anandamoyi. This secret remains almost till the last pages of the novel. The clash, on the one hand, between the old and new, mere revivalism and blind iconoclasm, and, on the other, between progress true and false, the genuine humanism of the renaissance and the mere show of Western apathy gives the necessary tension and edge to the novel. If love is in conflict with religious orthodoxy in *Gora*, it is in conflict with politics in *The Home and the World*. The action of this novel is set in the revolutionary Bengal in 1905. *The Home and the World* is



Tagore's artistic presentation of the impact of these forces on everyday life in an obscure Zemindari in Bengal. There are three principal characters, Nikhil the idealistic husband, Bimal his wife, and Sandip his friend and their autobiographical narratives intertwine to make the novel. Bimal, who has lived the sheltered life of a Hindu wife, suddenly hears the call of the outside world. She is thus caught between the pull of the home and the pull of the world. Nikhil is into the traditional India, and he refuses to believe that the end can justify the means. Sandip is typical of the new India that would like to fashion itself in the image of the West, and the end is everything to him and any means are permissible to attain it. In the opening decade of the present century, the issue between the cult of humanism and the cult of the bomb was fought all over the country, and with particular tartness in Bengal. Thus, east-west encounter has been an important theme since then.

The differences between the Hindu and Muslim communities in the second world war period in India, between India and Britain, the Bengal hungers, the 'Quit India' movement, and the mounting frustration and misery are covered in novels like *So Many Hungers* by Bhabani Bhattacharya, *Leaves in the August Wind* by N. S. Phadke, *Waiting for the Mahatma* by R. K. Narayan's and *Some Inner Fury* by Kamala Markandaya.

Since Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's time, the sannyasi has often figured in Indian fiction. In Bhabani Bhattacharya's *He Who Rides a Tiger*, Kalo the faux Swami takes advantage of human gullibility to be even with the pillars of society who had given a raw deal to him and to his daughter in the days of Bengal famine. In R. K. Narayan's *The Guide*, Raju is a swami by mistake, and towards the end we are left in wonder whether the lie has not really become the truth. In Kamala Markandaya's *A Silence of Desire* and *Possession*, the Swami is a faith healer, a witness-spirit, a sheet anchor; but now and then people ask themselves whether he isn't really a pretender and this concept of Swami exist even today.

Indian English fiction takes a turn after the first World War as they become mostly idealised and ambitiously representational. The novels written in this period were basically concerned with contemporary social milieu and were profoundly captivated by Gandhian thoughts. Indian English fiction starts flourishing in the thirties and forties representing the newly developed social and political affairs with the emergence of Gandhian spirit. The moment brought forth a remarkable movement in Indian English literature through the writings of R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao—the triad. Each novelist brought his own beneficence to the Indian English fiction. Malgudi is the setting of R. K. Narayan's fictional town where he portrays the lower middle-class families and their struggle throughout their lives. Another Indian author Mulk Raj Anand too realistically depicts the picture of the impoverished and downtrodden in his fictional works. The narrating style of Raja Rao follows the method of storytelling, the Puranic Harikatha tradition (autobiographically narrated story by an old lady). It is difficult for a novelist to hide himself from the social milieu. Thus, the span can be referred to as the rise and development of novel concerning rural India of the colonial period. Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* covers the events of a single day in the life of the low-caste boy, Bakha, in the town of Bulashah. The 18-year-old boy is one of the sons of Lakha, the Jamedar of the sweepers of the town and cantonment. Bakha is a child of the twentieth century, and the impact of new influences causes stirrings within him. From a Tommy he has secured a pair of old breeches, and from a sepoy a pair of old boots; he would, if he could, like to look like the white foreigner. But as the day dawns, his work of latrine-cleaning also begins; and his dreams notwithstanding, he is a steady and efficient worker. Anand describes Bakha's morning round of duties with a painstaking particularity, bringing out both the efficiency with which the beneficiaries receive it as if it is a matter of no account whatsoever. Three rows of latrines to be cleaned single-handed, and several times too, to bring cleanliness in the place of filth and possible disease: such is Bakha's daily spadework which he turns into a graceful art. The problem of caste and

poverty, insanitation and backwardness, ignorance and superstition bring no solution even after decades of Anand's novel.

If *Untouchable* is the prototype, *Coolie* is more like a cosmos that is of Indian society. *Coolie* is indubitably a cross-section of India, the crystalline India, that mixture of the unholy and the holy, the inhuman and the humane, the sordid and the aesthetic. The general effect is compendious, good and evil being thrown concurrently as in actual life; there is no time for us to pause, to think, to judge, for we are constantly shifted, a new situation submerges us at every swirl; atrociousness and fopperies pivot around us. Here, in one way or the other, by one person or another Munno is always seen exploited; and his fate is typical of the fate of millions whose only distinguishing nudge is patient sufferance. Both the novels depict evil in various ways; in *Untouchable* the evil is isolated as caste whereas in *Coolie* the evil is more widespread, and appears as greed, selfishness and inhumanity in their hundred different forms. Poverty is dissipated all over India and like a venom infects all our society and relinquishes it unsocial and inhuman.

Natural to the writer of post 1947, Kamala Markandaya's fictional work depict the transformation in the society emphasizing on the socioeconomic scenario and its outcome. She portrays her own observation of the rural setting and their alteration in course of time under the British reign; she also focuses on how the villages urge for a new beginning in the influence of Gandhi. The villages of India were agitated into a new life under Gandhi's constructive programs or else may be appeared to be so to the novelists, which is the subject matter of each of Markandaya's novels. The theme of hunger is prevalent in Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice* which is influenced by the class-struggle of Marx and the poor people of the pre independence Gandhian era. The establishment of industry and tanneries resulted in the uprootedness of Indian villages. Gandhi's concern for village economy is thus reflected by Markandaya in her novels and her *Some Inner Fury* is an outcome of the sketch of freedom

movement of the early twentieth century. Markandaya pauses to have a look back at the nature of the freedom movement and its impact in *Some Inner Fury* and tries to visualise the independent India in *Bombay Tiger*.

These novels are the representations of authors' voice which are written as the result of the Indian demand for independence, and eventually, a new stream of proficient fiction writers revamped the whole scenario of Indo-Anglian fiction. The themes of violence, bloodshed and massacre were chased by some young novelists as obvious aftermath of two terrible World Wars while some others projected a comic vision of India exhibiting a mature and objective vision towards the country.

The renaissance in modern Indian literature begins with Raja Rammohan Roy; he visited within and outside India and some business ventures at Calcutta, he served in the districts under British rule. It was when working with them, he completed his mastery of the English language and then left the company service and launched himself on the consciousness of Calcutta society. Raja Rammohan Roy's interests and inquiries ranged from the rights of women and the freedom of the press to English education, the revenue and judicial systems in India, religious toleration and the plight of the Indian peasantry. He wanted India to become an unexampled and modern country and the Indians to become a virile new people--- not, of course, by cutting off our moorings from the past, but by achieving a new integration of our traditional strength with the new scientific disciplines from the West.

After 1950s, however, Indian novelists' interest moved from public to private sphere. They began to delineate in their works the individual's pursuit of the self in all its varied and complex forms along with the problems and crisis. There was an inquisitiveness to explore the inner world of man. Writers like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Anita Desai, Manohar Malgonkar, Arun Joshi, Khushwant Singh, Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Kamala Markandaya

have brought in a change in Indian English novel by portraying various pictures of society with an urge of transformation. Fiction till 1970 dealt with the theme of social changes as the advent of urbanization affecting rural India, the disintegration of extended family, fight against machines, encounter between the East and the West. The 1970s were the gestation period for the revolution in fictional technique and national sensibility that was to occur in the 1980s. The Indo-Anglian fiction continues to grow with a concern of transfiguration in the following decades. Thus H. M. Williams remarks: "The most promising development in Indo-Anglian fiction concerns the transmission of genuine Indian themes and the absorption of Indian literary conventions and forms within the novel as conceived and developed in the Western world" (Indo-Anglian 95). During the 1980s, the Indian English novel marks its growth and development and occupies a very significant position in Indian literature. Their originality and unprecedented inventiveness as against the apishness and constraints which the earlier novelists had to suffer brought them international success. It was the time that became sensational by Rushdie's "Midnight's Children" in 1980. Rushdie's works have left an indelible imprint on the future course of the development of Indian English novel. The young talented novelists inspired by Rushdie's novel have formed a distinct genre of fictional literature in the modern period. Some of them are Amitabh Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Tharoor, Farrukh Dhondy, Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga and all other novelists have made significant experiments in fictional form and narrative techniques with their interesting thematic preoccupations. Besides these novelists various other novelists who have considerably marked their presence in the literary world Indo-Anglian fiction are R.W.Desai, Bomen Desai, Amit Chaudhari, Indira Goswami, Kiran Nagarkar, Uma Vasudev, Manoj Das and many others.

Indians educated in the western way have been enlightened and developed western pragmatism as well as rationalism. But the roots of their native culture are nevertheless strongly

entrenched in them. The fabric of contemporary Indian society is being constantly woven with the strands of indigenous traditions and imported western conceptions. Every educated Indian has become a product of the conflicts and reconciliations of this dual culture. The Indian writer in English, by his very choice of medium, indicates his awareness of and exposure to a culture other than his traditional Indian. His intimate experience of the alien culture makes him more conscious of his own Indianness. Aware of the differences in two values and using for his communication the language of his adopted culture, he is seized with the need to interpret his native values to an audience ignorant of them. He is naturally engaged in the evaluation of his own attitude towards these two aspects of his being, so that it becomes necessary for him to dwell on this dialectical and contrastive theme. We may therefore say that the Indo-English literary situation is rooted in this cultural dualism.

Literature has given form and utterance to people's hopes, despairs, enthusiasm and apathy. It mirrors their joys and pains. The Indian began at first with historical romances when the renaissance set in. A couple of decades later when the Indian masses became more resentful of the foreign government because of the humiliation they suffered at their hands, Indian writers felt it necessary to mount an offensive against the British bureaucracy in India. Indian writing has become more vocal about injustice, cruelty and exploitation. The educated Indians are disturbed and confused between the tension of tradition and modernity, the reality of India's conventional, spiritual, unsophisticated and extreme poverty have wretched their hearts. Indo-English fiction of late has turned to this new quest of East and West in individual probing, following the trends of the novel in the West. The confusion or conflict within the authorial personality finds expression in the East-West encounter of culture-shocks and contrasts, Hindu metaphysics and western pragmatism, racial tension and colonial conflict, European and Indian expatriatism. The plots of the novels emerge from man struggling with nature in its diverse

aspects of environmental hostility, caste, poverty, code, tradition and urban oppression in despondent situation.

The emergence of social and political consciousness in the post-independence era has brought the women novelists in the forefront of Indo-Anglian fiction and they have begun enriching Indian Fiction. These women novelists have vast range of themes and they dealt with the place and status of women in the Indian society with an analysis of the socio-cultural approach and values which have offered them their role with their endurance to attain a harmonious relationship in their environment. There have been remarkable changes in themes and style in the fiction after independence which reflect the fast-changing socio-economic cultural Indian scene. One common link among most of the Indo-Anglian women novelists is that they have had cross-cultural experiences which liberated them from the shackles of traditional orthodoxies and gave them kaleidoscopic view of life. Most of them have had a part of their education and experience abroad setting them apart from the silent, complying uncritical acceptance. But still, they show keen sensibility and awareness in the authentic depiction of Indian life and milieu.

Indian novelists have tried to portray the picture of changing India and the diverse aspects of the Indian society. Amitav Ghosh, an Indian writer has portrayed the conflict of rationality and the Indian scenario in almost all his novels. Ghosh's *Circle of Reason* talks about the journey from Reason to Passion to Death or darkness/destruction. Balaram, a rationalist is influenced by *Life of Pasteur*. Pasteur is his ideal and he tried to shape his life with scientific temper and nationalistic outlook. In the later part we see that Balaram's nephew Alu's effort to form co-operative community results in death and destruction. In the final part Mrs. Uma Verma unlike Balaram rejects rational thinking. Through the character of Balaram, Ghosh has represented the British colonization. His another novel *The Shadow Lines* revolves around freedom and how people try to achieve that freedom. The novel is divided in two parts "Going

Away” and “Coming Home”. There are no particular chapters, the novel in parts reflects an Indian family living in Kolkata. The family has British acquaintances and here we see the intertwined history of both. The novel can be called a commentary on his artificial nature of cultural, ideological, geographical and psychological borders in favour of a broader humanism that has traditionally been very unfashionable in the discourses of post-modernism and post-colonialism. This novel is a reflection of the triggered violence in Calcutta in 1964. Ghosh’s fiction carries anthropological details. He overtly deals with history, family lineage and provides a picturesque description of the places that forms the settings of the novels. The writer seems to reflect upon abstract things like borders of nations and very subtly shows the fluidity of the same.

Anita Desai’s novel *Cry, the Peacock* has vivid imagination and excellent powers of description relates the story of Maya, a teenaged girl is obsessed by a childhood prophecy of catastrophe which cannot be avoided. She also suffers from an obsession with her father and looks for the father image in her husband. She is all the time haunted by the prophecy that was made by an astrologer that four years after her marriage one member of the wedded couple would die. The disturbing memory of the prophecy grips her mind and soul so vehemently that she is now constantly wriggling to come out of the whirlpool of her thoughts. In this agonizing process she realizes that one of the two could be Gautama, her husband as well, and she kills him by pushing him off the parapet. She herself moves vaguely to the final break-down into insanity and a safe retreat into childhood. Her second novel *Voices in the City* (1965) is an imaginative picture of India's social transition. It describes vividly the changing value-system in the society where old values are not entirely dead and the new emerging concepts are not fully mature. *Voices in the City* symbolises the voices of the intellectuals, which are obscure, vague and inaudible. *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, Anita Desai's third novel depicts the plight of Indian migrants in London. The title of the novel refers to an Indian - a blackbird bidding farewell to



England. Dev arrives in England for higher studies, stays with Adit and Sarah and is perturbed when he finds Indians being humiliated both in public and private. In the second part Dev undergoes a change and begins to feel the charm of the country. In part three, Adit once comfortably settled in England becomes now homesick for India and leaves England while Dev stays on there. *Where Shall We Go This Summer* is Desai's another novel which is an intense story of a highly sensitive girl shredded between the desire to abandon the hypocrisy and fatigue of her ostensibly comfortable existence and the realisation that the bonds that bind her to it cannot be broken easily. The story of an anguished woman, it presents the predicament of a lonely married woman who, in fact, wants to triumph over the chaos and suffering of her unusual existence. The story also exposes superficial sophistication and self-deception, suggesting that the ideas of the generation of freedom struggle have faded like magic from the life of contemporary India.

Towards the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century women novelists made a sudden entry with variations in themes. *Bianca* or *The Young Spanish Maiden*, is Toru Dutt's incomplete novel, that picturises a romantic love story set in England; *Kamala, A Story of Hindu Life* and *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* by Sathia Nandan and *Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife* by Shavantibai M Nikamba. Indian English fiction received its significance in the third decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century in the hands of the writers like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan. As we know that literature records the history of mankind, it is the medium to decentralize one's thinking and spread it to various minds. Indian women novelists, who once have not even seen the sky of education came out with their heavy heart. The protest of orthodoxy and clash between supremacy of hierarchy came out through their writings. The quest to know the self is on the run, subject of discrimination, the discomfort of non-general categories and women become leitmotif of Indian novels. The emergence of women novelists like Mahasweta Devi, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande,

Taslima Nasrin, Shobha De, Sudha Murthy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Ruth Pravar Jhubvala, Chitra Banerjee, Manju Kapoor, Kiran Desai and Bharti Mukherjee on literary scene of India has offered a new dimension to the female literary world.

From the beginning Indian women writers have contributed to Indian English literature. Subjects of their contribution have moved through a transition. Their fiction does not reveal only a story, but it has come up to reform the society, to analyze the existing problems, attitude towards the women need to be changed are their subjects of the fictions. Women have the power to bear a child for nine months and during this period she can craft the child's mind the way she wants. Likewise, she can also change the society by her thinking and her writings and preaching.

The canvas of Indo-Anglian fiction can never be complete without the worth mention of some major women novelists who have enriched Indo-Anglian fiction. The emancipation for the humankind is the common thing that binds women community all over the globe. The overthrown of the legacy of centuries old obsession, resignation, dependence, and silence of the second sex still persists. If we trace the rise of the novel in our country, we can favourably assert that the depiction of the social scene by women novelists ranks very high sometimes even comparable to the heights. Of the different colours and shades of the women novelists, Anita Desai is one of the many voices of the modern Indian English fiction. She is a recorder of the dilemma faced by a person in the Indian urban set up. She introduces a new age of psychological realism in this genre with her novel *Cry the Peacock*. Anita Desai, like Markandaya has made human relationship as the centre of her fictional subject. The women writers of the present century have the same thematic concerns, but the treatments are their own. Markandaya depicts the changing socioeconomic scene, east-west encounter. Her women characters are of positive attitude; they are resistant and resourceful as the earth. Another woman writer of the age, Rath Pravar Jhabvala's novels deal with the middle-class family of

Delhi. She is mainly concerned with the family life, the personal relationship, and the social problems. Political issues come up only when her characters and their turmoil have any relation to it. She maintains a sympathetic and ironic tone by looking at the Indian social problems objectively. On the other hand, Nayantara Sahgal wrote novels concerned with political affairs of India. Her female characters opt out of marriage and find fulfilment in extra marital relationship. Another female novelist Shashi Deshpande has injected a new consciousness, offering varied interpretation of imperishable Indian values as well as highlighting our cultural heritage. Mahasweta Devi, Mamani Raisam Goswami, Mamang Dai too fought against the contemporary system by dealing with the social issues of the society. By taking a broader aspect they introduce their readers the existing political issues and the treatments to them.

Mahasweta Devi, being the daughter of educated parents, had a great insight. She has moved to different places along with her mother, who was a social worker and brought out the sufferings of people through her writings. She is not only a socially conscious writer but also a reformist. She has studied incessantly about the life and struggles faced by the tribal communities in the states like Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. In her *Hazar Chourashir Maa (Mother of 1084)* she portrays the other faces of the human stories that emanated from the restless political adventure of the vibrant Bengal youth. It is a story of a mother called Sujata whose son Broti, corpse name 1084 in the morgue, was brutally killed by the state because of his ideology advocating continuous brutal killing of class enemies, collaborators with the state and counter-revolutionaries within the party. This watershed novel is filled with deepening social awareness and literary maturity is one of Devi's most widely read works. It charts the emotional struggles of a mother as she tries to understand her son's involvement in the Naxalite movement, a rebellion that began in 1967 in the village of Naxalbari, northern West Bengal, and soon spread to urban areas in the region until the mid-1970s. The journey of discovery carries her to an understanding of her son's death as well as

her own separation as a lady and wife, from the complacent and hypocritical bourgeois society her son had rebelled against. The plot is condensed into the scenic space of a single day through the device of the mother recalling, a year after, the events that followed the morning when she was summoned to identify her son lying dead in the police morgue. Through this device of dramatic condensation, Devi achieves an admirable concentration of effect. It enacts Devi's own passage from urban middle-class domesticity to the larger sphere of what would be her focal subject and concern, the age-long exploitation of the tribals and the landless peasantry in rural eastern India. Later, she would return to the Naxalite Movement in works such as *Agnigarbha* (The Fire Within), four long stories about the Naxalite tribal unrest, and the novel *Bish-Ekuh* (1986). In a career of sustained creativity, she would produce a stream of narratives, fusing indigenous oral histories with contemporary events to uncover the bitter and often bloody relationship between tribal communities and India's dominant classes and systems. Her historical fiction includes *Aranyer Adhikar* (Right to the forest), a meticulously researched novel on the life and struggles of Birsa Munda and the famous Munda Rebellion against the British in the late nineteenth century; Mahasweta Devi has the first love for such persecuted adivasis. Her *Right to Forest* covers a period towards the end of the 19th century, under the colonial rule of the British. *Chotti Munda O Tar Teer* (Chotti and his arrow, 1979), which records the history of one of the tribes of eastern India in the first seven decades of the twentieth century; *Subhaga Basanta* (1980), two novels set in Bengal on slavery in eleventh century and the Sati system in the eighteenth century; and *Sidhu kanhur Daakey* (1981), a novel on two heroes of the Santhal tribal rebellion in 1855-1856. Mahasweta Devi has critically reflected on her own class position in works exploring the dilemma of the bourgeois intellectual's social loyalties. These works include *Gharey Phera*, which treats the degeneration of a once politically committed writer and *Srinkhalito*, a novel about a writer torn between an easy life and one of social engagement. The drama of divergent class realities is powerfully

communicated in the characters of the Naxalite tribal hero and the communist journalist in the novelette *Bashai Tudu* (part of the 1978 *Agnigarbha* collection). A martyred tribal hero, *Bashai Tudu*, assumes the power of myth as he periodically appears to succour the landless farm laborers when they are driven to crisis. He gets killed and then appears again at another point of crisis. As a counterpoint to the myth, Devi creates the character of the middle-class journalist who must wrestle with his shame, helplessness and guilt, as he is called upon, time and again, to identify Bashai Tudu's martyred body.

Ruth Prawar Jhabvala's expatriate dilemma creates difficulty to reconcile with insights and sounds of India. She speculates miserable condition of recently free India. No province in India was prosperous during that time. As, she came from civilized Britain, she notices difference between two countries and their human beings. She confronts many hurdles in her marital life due to the difference in customs and traditions of Indian society and her own family. She is unable to suppress her feelings about the life of Indian women; she observes the poor state of affairs in the country. Hence, she starts to preserve Indian scenario and bring forth the utmost needed change to it through the medium of writing short stories and novels. Moreover, Jhabvala has got many awards for her devoted works in Indian Writing in English. She won the Booker Prize in 1975 for the novel *Heat and Dust*. Her writings depict not only social conflict or racial integration but also reflect human beings in love or in the relationship of marriage who belong to widely different races and religions. Her novels are never about abstraction such as racial conflict or racial integration. Moreover, Jhabvala's novels are fine examples of social study of the instances when European people visit India under the religious influences. The novel also satirizes on religious hollowness of Indian Saints and Swamis. Hence, Jhabvala's fiction discloses, most comprehensively, intimate awareness in contemporary socio-cultural, economic, domestic, spiritual, and philosophical life of Indian people. Besides, Mrs. Jhabvala projects socio-cultural awareness of Indian society in her novels. She also sketches characters

from different countries, races and religions. Inter-racial and intercultural integration are the key concepts of her writings. Jhabvala has got advantage of mixed sensibility in her life. She has first-hand knowledge of diverse countries and cultures. So, she adopts an intimate understanding of dissimilar traditions and values in contrasting cultures. She also jibs fun at those Europeans who surrender under spiritual gurus and become disillusioned. Lethargy and apathetic attitude of an Indian also come under her attack. She tugs cultural disparities in social patterns; consequently, economic differences in her novels become multidimensional. Jhabvala is considered a leading Indian writer because of her depiction, of Indian experiences, foremost Indian characters, Indian scenes, Indian milieu and upper class North Indian sophisticated people and their characteristics. Moreover, Jhabvala is a ruthless critic of Indian society. She exposes hypocritical ways and double standards of Indians.

Nayantara Sahgal, as one of the significant post-colonial novelists, distinctively placed in relation to colonial/post-colonial Indian history, politics and social change, has contributed profusely to the literary tradition of the narration of an ancient civilization that had begun building itself into a nation. The continuum of historical and political representations of India in her fictional, autobiographical, biographical, epistolary and journalistic endeavours is an inevitable fall-out of the writer's genealogical proximity to the political dynasty of the Nehrus who were the widely acknowledged front runners of the Indian Freedom Movement. Having experienced the daily unfolding of the romance, optimism and dangers of the historic drama of Indian freedom struggle, the creative sensibility of Sahgal is spurred to construct her literary citadel on the Gandhian and Nehruvian influence that has merged into the mythic consciousness of the nation. Sahgal's literary transmutation of India's past and present experiences spring not from peripheral brushes, but keenly internalized political interface with the key players of the movement; the nationalist sentiment runs like a sturdy string through her entire oeuvre. Perhaps the intriguing dialectics of the contents of her well-received memoirs

and the autobiographical reflections in her fiction, inextricably enmeshing private and public aspects of her life, have ripped the patina of artistic mystique from her fiction. For some insights into the current developments on the slightly difficult and diffusive genre of “autobiography” it is worthwhile to dwell a little on the theoretical progress made in the direction, for it is apparent at the outset that real life experience, howsoever camouflaged, remains the springboard of Sahgal’s fiction. *Storm in Chandigarh*, *A Situation in New Delhi* and *Rich Like Us*(1985), each with a visibly deep connection to contemporary Indian politics, will be taken up and examined within the parameters of postcolonial discourse in totality and the Saidian influence in particular. While *Storm in Chandigarh* handles the messy aftermath of the three-fold division of the North Indian state of Punjab, with some of its areas being attached to the hill state of Himachal Pradesh, and the carving out of the new state of Haryana out of it in 1966, *A Situation in New Delhi* crystallizes the conundrum confronting the Indian nation after Jawaharlal Nehru’s demise in 1964, and the almost simultaneous rise of Naxalism, a nihilistic decade into the marginalized sections even today. Chronologically moving forward towards the transformed personality-based politics of the 1970s, *Rich Like Us* primarily enunciates a threat to political freedom from the authoritarian tendencies within, and to economic stability from the neo-imperialistic forces without. Nayantara Sahgal has perceived the struggle of women for their right and her novels deal with men and women, women struggling against oppression and injustice. In *The Day of Shadow*, Nayantara Sahgal seems to be deeply concerned with the need of freedom for women. Smriti in this novel wants to land on her own feet and enjoy individuality, self-expression and self-confidence. It is Smriti’s longing for freedom and individuality that urges her to take divorce from her husband. Smriti does not want to be known as her husband’s wife but her own self. Through the story Sahgal has tried to bring the picture of the society where women are thought to have no identity as a human being.

Indira Goswami (Mamani Raisam Goswami), an Assamese widow has faced meagre challenges after her husband's death, this inspires her to hold the pen and use its sharpness for a revolution in the society. The North- Eastern writer has perceived the problems of the society and tried to reform the society through her writings. Her *The Rusted Sword* deals with the labourers and workers and their struggle to live on. The leaders tried to exploit them by changing their minds; but they were determined to get their right back and fight against the leading power which finally results in their death. But their attitude to reform the society carries the notion of having a better environment in this earth someday. On the other hand, *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker* presents a conflict of feudalism and modernity; how modernity tries to sweep away the age old traditions and how feudalism fails in the hands of modernity. Mamani Raisom Goswami says that all her writings are part of her life and her novels express her mental condition. For her, writing was a medium to give vent to her frustrations and anger. It also enables her to face hardships of her life. Again, Mamani Raisom Goswami in her own inimitable style has presented a wide variety of themes in her writings. The settings of her novels are pan Indian. However, this is not only the unique quality of her writings, the way she presents different bold issues like sexuality of women, superstitions in the name of religion through her story and also portrays the characters, uses language and highlights the cause of the downtrodden. There are only a few Indian writers who have boldly presented the whole gamut of Indian women- childhood, puberty, unfulfilled dreams, widowhood, exploitation and oppression of women by different agencies, bodily desire, untouchability etc. Mamani Raisom Goswami is surely one of them. The amount of research that Goswami does before writing a novel, especially the later ones, brings her work closer to reality. In her novel *Chinnamastār Mānuhto*, with her extensive research she boldly establishes that animal sacrifice at Maa Kamakhya's altar is not the only way to worship the goddess. Her protagonists represent a class. Once as demanded by the subject of her story, she even visited a morgue in Delhi to



produce the real effects. On many occasions, Goswami becomes one with the downtrodden class of the society, whom she reflects in her works. She believes in collecting material for her novels first-hand instead of shutting herself in some ivory tower to let her emotions flow. That is why her Akademi-winning novel *Mamare Dhara Tarawal* (Rusted Sword) seems so authentic, so piercingly touching. She presents the horrible lives of widows, the glory of motherhood and the challenge of rearing the child amidst extreme poverty, the hope of salvation infused into the poor women's mind through religious discourse and the ultimate realization of its hollowness, puberty, sexual assault, inhuman customs related to menstruations, the biological need suppressed by customs – each issue finds authentic representation in her novels. The female in her comes very vividly to the forefront when she deals with these issues.

One of the major factors that make Goswami's writings so popular is her realism. The characters, settings, themes, language and literary devices-everything complement each other. With an interesting mingling of past history, myth and present happenings the novelist captivates the attention of her readers. Her use of language is also true to her characters. Moreover, the direct use of language by her rustic characters adds to the reality of her fiction. For her different themes and settings, the novelist has used different similes and symbols and these are all drawn from the settings and they are never out of context. She is equally apt at drawing poignant pictures of her native land as well as that of far-off places. If rural South-Kamrup comes out vividly in the novel *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Houdā*, the landscapes of Madhya Pradesh and Kashmir along with the labourers of the work sites are presented vividly in the novels *Ahiran* and *Chenābar Sôt* respectively. In the three novels that highlight the lives of the poor labourers, the machines, construction tools, cement all these have been mentioned in such a way that these things related to their profession becomes an extended part of their lives. In *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Houdā* and *Nilakanthi Braja*, the novelist has used similes

drawn from the setting itself. Her representation of the truth is direct and there is (very less) minimal stylistic and authorial intervention. Mamani Raisom is deeply entrenched in her roots and her creative pen goes far beyond the mere niceties of language to a reality that is direct and at times raw. With conviction, she authentically portrays the stubborn patterns of the society with all its rawness- like the Brahmanical high handedness, oppression by the powerful class, inhuman superstitions and rituals meant for women, particularly widowed women etc. It makes her writings realistic.

Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian-American author. She was born to Bengali parents in London but she always felt an attachment with her homeland. Her novels basically bear a picture of her homeland Kolkata. In her work *Interpreter of Maladies* and *Namesake* she travels through her antagonized experiences across India while encountering the complex cultural encounter and shifts along with emotional imbalance and relationship between parents and children, lovers, siblings, husband and wife and determination of identity in general. Society, culture, location and circumstances shift the sensibilities, understanding and self-determination of the characters in devalued directions of selfish motives. The seeking of space in alien society and native land of the protagonist is an important aspect of her novels.

Manju Kapoor has started her career as a professor of English literature and later on the surroundings of Delhi made her write novels at the age of 42. Her novels portray a picture of the present society where it is assumed that women are free to do anything but at the same time, they are pulled back by showing them their physical inferiority. Manju Kapoor's *Difficult Daughters* deals with the progression in the fictional recasting of gender. Gender identity is crafted in an interesting way by Kapoor.

Kamala Markandaya's minute observation has positioned her as a major Indo-English fictionist, her representation of various characters and the colonial rural India in a lucid

language has deciphered the pertaining issues. Her strong direction and creative sensibility have marked a significant position in Indo-Anglian literature; her depiction makes her readers visualise the contemporary scenario and quest the resemblance with an ultimate outcry. All of her eleven novels in twenty-eight years have brought her fairly substantial outcome in comparison to various other contemporary women novelists. Her novels are touched by expatriate status in her intimate, social and spiritual heritage. The novels also have a feminist perspective, she picturises the rootlessness faced by women in the changed conditions.

Kamala Markandaya, an author of the masses was born to a Brahmin family in the year 1924 in Mysore. As she was the daughter of a railway officer, she had the opportunity to move to different places and watch the lives of the people. Though she belonged to a higher-class family she could visualize the sufferings of the oppressed with her great insight. She married to an Englishman and settled there for the rest of her life. All her novels deal with the East-West encounter; she highlights the drawbacks and the qualities of both the East and the West. Markandaya attempts to eradicate the barriers of human bondages and thus her novels, decipher the message that the mass should replace the petty man-made barriers of caste, religion and culture by the spirit of love and fraternity. The east west encounter is prevalent in her first novel *Nectar in a Sieve* where the protagonist Nathan and Rukmani represent the East and on the other hand, the accelerated industrialization and Dr. Kenny symbolize the West. Markandaya makes an attempt to awaken the east by the portrait of Dr. Kenny, who is different from his natives, has a loving attitude towards the Indian people, although he too feels disgusted with their follies, poverty and silent humility and their passive acceptance of life.

On the other hand, in *A Silence of Desire* Markandaya reopens the theme of East West encounter in Indian characters having different ideologies. It is depicted in the form of a conflict between the Indian spiritualism and Western Modernism. The novel progresses showing the relation between husband and wife having western education and irrational thinking

respectively, Dandekar is a man who is left between Indian and western thoughts whereas his wife Sarojini is authentic in her Indian attitudes and spiritualism. The novel brings some references about the inclinations of the East towards the West.

Markandaya has envisioned colonialism and the consequent exploitation of Indians and their struggle for freedom from the British. She has ably depicted in one form or another the exploitation of the poor Indians by the English people in *Possession* and *The Coffer Dams*. Valmiki is badly exploited by Caroline Bell for her selfish interest in *Possession*, and the tribals are exploited by the English people in *The Coffer Dams* and the struggle for Indian Independence in *Some Inner Fury* and *The Golden Honeycomb*.

Kamala Markandaya brings forth that women are affected more adversely than men in the various dimensions of socioeconomic order. Her characters Rukmani and Nalini, are the representation of illiterate women learned through experiences but fail to lead a fruitful life for the lack of education. Hence, through them Markandaya pleads for better education and employment opportunities for women to eradicate the inherent biases in the social structure. Kamala Markandaya draws Indian span of life and also establishes a medium between East and West. The selected themes by Kamala Markandaya are the prevalent issues of society and moreover, her treatment is more effective. The structure of her novels shows fact after fact is presented within the story without commentary or criticism, one gets an idea of how life flows in an Indian village, particularly in a village in a state of transition. The technique is thus, perfectly adequate for the purpose the novelist has in mind. The characters in her novels are very simple, transparent and realistic. Kamala Markandaya must be credited for reflecting complex Indian character fused with dilemma and inconsistencies in their behavior; her ruthlessness can be seen while presenting these characters fully embedded with philosophy of life.

## 1.2 Kamala Markandaya : Life and Works

Kamala Markandaya, a daughter of an elite family starts her writing career after independence. On the publication of her first novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) she adopts the surname Markandaya. She continues to write on various prevalent issues of colonial India in her ten novels. She plays the roles in various fields before her career as a novelist, she graduated in history at the University of Madras and later worked in the Indian Army for some period of the Second World War, and then worked as a journalist and writer of short stories which brought her lots of experiences. In her working period of journalist, she marries a fellow journalist, an Englishman named Bertrand Taylor, and permanently immigrated to England in 1948. Little is known about her personal life in England before her death on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2004, her husband dies in 1986, she leaves one daughter, Kim Oliver. Markandaya's first published novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) brought her success and fame within a short period. It is awarded as a Book-of-the-Month Club Main Selection and best-seller in the United States. Later, Markandaya came with another ten novels entitled as *Some Inner Fury*(1955), *A Silence of Desire*(1960), *Possession*(1963), *A Handful of Rice*(1966), *The Coffer Dams*(1969), *The Nowhere Man*(1972), *Two Virgins*(1973), *The Golden Honeycomb*(1977), *Pleasure City*(1982), titled *Shalimar* in the American edition and the last novel, published posthumously in 2008 is *Bombay Tiger*. Markandaya comprehends the relation between ruler and the ruled and observes the racial tensions persisting in the English minds on her stay in the country which once ruled over India. These differences and inequalities all around make Markandaya visualise the shattered nation of future, hence she propounds her fellow beings to see beyond these inequalities to have a loving nation. Human intellect and philanthropy are found in all races. Accustomed to the affluence of the West, Markandaya is acutely sensitive to the grinding poverty of India. Poverty mars the individual's other desires and drags him to a depth where he forgets all desires and wishes. Markandaya represents a world where development in various

aspects is required for the upliftment of a society, whether this is India before and after Independence or England, where she lived.

Kamala Markandaya's fictional works revolve around the themes East-West encounter, confrontation between tradition and modernity during the colonial era, women in India, and the clash of values. Identity struggle is another prevalent theme in most of her novels. She pictures the rural India and Indians in foreign countries with shades of her imagination and focuses on the simplicity of her motherland, superstitious beliefs, fatalism, hunger and degradation are the result of the silence and acceptance of the lifestyle provided by the British. Through her writings, she makes an attempt to bring a transformation within the Indians with a scientific outlook. The novelist weaves a richly variegated picture of life, collaborating her ideas and philosophy with proficient touches of feminine sensibility. The consequential picture of human suffering and forbearance become a vehicle of her moral vision. She seems to wonder at the human capacity to endure, and proclaim that man is not made for defeat, and that man may be destroyed just like Ernest Hemingway. Her fictional collage brings a whole gallery of personages who stand up with remarkable courage in the face of difficulties. Her first novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* is a blueprint of this sort of sufferance and remarkable courage of Rukmani, the protagonist of the novel. All her Markandaya's work reflect an incomparably vivid picture of Indian life and recreate the confrontation of people with contrasting values of the East and the West. Markandaya is one of the first generation of Indian novelists to write about the plight of the rural peasantry, immigration, the urban middle class and interracial relationships. Markandaya's competence as a novelist lies in her contour of the struggle of the individual in a changing consortium and the other aspect is that the novels reflect on an expatriate's position through the lens of the writer. Like other diaspora writers, she too feels that her identity is at once plural and partial and thus she reflects in her writings. At times, the cultures are collided, sometimes, they fall between two stools, but however uncertain, unstable

and shifting this ground maybe it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy. Markandaya accepts the position of cultural hybridity and celebrates it through her writings; she too as Rushdie believes that her grounds are a fertile territory. From a superficial level she feels that she could be an impartial writer who is neither inclined towards the east or the west. All of her novels are either set wholly or partly in India and even when most part of the work is set in England their main characters are Indians as she has depicted the Indian rural scenario of the early twentieth century. The changing Indian social and political scene is reflected in all the eleven novels of Markandaya with a careful, conscious craftsmanship; her skilful use of the English language for creative purposes have opened new horizons for the readers. She excellently records the inner psyche of her characters, their personal perplexities and social confrontations in various situations. Through the novels Markandaya endeavours to depict her characters as individuals growing into themselves, unfolding the delicate processes of their growth and acceptance.

Kamala Markandaya perceives parts of South India during her childhood and adolescence and later but set sails for England in 1948 on marrying an Englishman. England is the country of her adoption and India is the country of her birth and upbringing. Her mind returns often to India though her husband and children are English. As Markandaya live in two countries, she herself has become a product of inter-cultural forces. This expatriate status is touched with her personal, religious and social heritage. Writings of the expatriates express that it is not easy to shed the inhibitions and drag out of a parent heritage. She offers to resolve how her innate consciousness is affected by the western values and how this conflict in other too has made loyal expression in her writings with a resolution.

Through her female protagonists, Kamala Markandaya presents women as the personality of virtues and potentialities with an endeavour to opine that woman is not inferior to man in any aspect. She emphasizes on the moral superiority of woman in upholding the sanctity of the

family and it has to be believed by the society. Markandaya has crafted 'New Woman' – a wonderfully improved race of traditional woman to make the readers believe in the superiority of women. This craftsmanship has resumed a new vista for women by awakening their spirit for the welfare of humankind and lessening the human suffering; her women characters have given a ray of hope and courage to those who are tortured, devastated and left in isolation. Characters like Mira, Rukmani, Helen have represented the courageous heart of women whereas characters like Premala, Vasantha express the silent protest of women in their ways.

Feminine sensibility is a fascinating aspect of the modern Indian Renaissance. Modern Indian Women have played various roles during the British era; their sufferings, participation in the freedom movement, articulation of the national aspiration and the consciousness of cultural change in the field of literature have been some inspiring aspects to the future generations. Thus, feminine sensibility has become an important topic of the novelists of the modern era. It has achieved a certain degree of imaginative self-sufficiency which has been acknowledged by Indian as well as foreign critics of Indian writing in English.

In modern India, Markandaya's novels occupy a significant position as they depict the awakened sensibility of the period rather than the other contemporary women writers. Markandaya projects the emerging changes in the traditional Indian scenario, struggle, conflict of minds in terms of the growth of the individual consciousness in her novels. The novels with variations and representation of human psyche in lucid language has created a trend in Indo-English novel. Her craftsmanship brings out a flair for virtuosity which gives life to her feelings and ideas making the work of art realistic and interesting although they represent the image of national consciousness and aesthetic awareness. The novels represent various dominations of humankind on multiple levels and indicates the direction to a plausible resolution of, rather than offer definite solutions to human problems. Her dialogues make the character visible to the readers, rather than the dogma of ideology she represents her characters in flesh and blood



by using the accent of their tongue. Markandaya's writings is free from propaganda and polemics as she does not make undue demands and ideological commitments of her vision and creative autonomy publicly, thus silent yet vehement protest against the dreadful is clear in her novels in an unfamiliar and interesting way. She does not give any conclusion; in fact she leaves a room for the readers to do so; she realistically depict the society in her work of art and is content to hold the artistic mirror up to society with the shades of her imaginative power. The changing image of the people in the society is thus subtly portrayed in the variegation of her art, transmitting in the process to various vignettes of life a sense of the dynamics of transformation. Markandaya's later fiction carries more evidence of her artistic competence and technical control. Her earlier fiction brings forth the changing scenario of Indian people, depict the poor condition of the Indian characters and their sufferings during the British reign is projected in a proficient manner because of her Indian sensibility.

The most interesting characteristic of Markandaya's fiction is the concept of cultural continuity during the commotion of social, economic and political reconstruction in modern India. In each of her novel, Markandaya traverses the impact of change in terms of human psyche; as, according to her, culture means basically an idea which unites a million individuals and bestows on each of them. The conscious direction of her creative sensibility presents her novels with a certain evocative character that points them out as a significant presence in Indo-English fiction.

*Nectar in a Sieve*, the first novel of Markandaya picturises the calamity of a traditional South Indian village and a couple who is peasant by profession, become the victim of the Zamindari system and the industrial economy. Rukmani is content with the happy arcadian atmosphere, which disappears soon after the construction of the tannery. Here tannery is symbolic of mechanical power that destroys a traditional Indian village. Markandaya flawlessly depicts the Indian arcadia with representational realism and suggestive illustration. The

novelist reaches a perfect equilibrium between the rural reality and the disciplined urbanity of art. The seriousness of the novel lies in the spiritual endurance of Rukmani against the harsh landlord and the soulless industry which are intimidating enemies to her culture.

Markandaya's second novel *Some Inner Fury*, is thematically more astringent than the earlier *Nectar in a Sieve*. The never-to be forgotten year 1942, as the impersonal image of militant nationalism, seals the fate of the narrator-heroine Mira. Her love for an Englishman, Richard, is foredoomed to failure, notwithstanding their deep understanding. However, an occasional, ostensible undertone of xenophobia marks the national upsurge which sweeps and swamps everything that it comes across. Richard feels wretched when Mira too is involved in the movement. In spite of herself, Mira is caught in the whirling of the current, the mass movement. Quite helplessly and inescapably, she forsakes her love for the sake of a cause, even if it means being pitied against her own Richard, "the flesh of her flesh", and his people.

The main ideas in *Nectar in a Sieve* and *Some Inner Fury* are respectively the devastation of the economy and politics in the lives of individuals as well as communities and the pathetic domestic condition that resulted in the bafflement of values in the modern set-up of a village, and the brutal interference of the unreal existence of a rootless upper class in a cosmopolitan centre of civilizations sequel to the furious political distress in the country. In her third novel, *A Silence of Desire*, Markandaya's diagrammatical presentation of the contemporary alertness shows up a new dimension of subtlety in that the fictional emphasis is on the psychological adaption of an urban middle-class family. It is essentially a 'spiritual' crisis for Sarojini, the protagonist who is a calm traditional housewife of the freshly arising middle class in the country, when she is asked by her modernistic husband to give up her faith in what she believes to be the traditional values of life. But, after all, like Rukmani, in *Nectar in a Sieve*, she too has to accept the scientific spirit of the age which does not conflict with the basic human values, though it differs from the traditional belief; it merely makes an attempt to keep the human

beings more content. Sarojini's fundamental spiritual urgency and her moral scrupulosity need not be either sacrificed or subordinated; but only her attitude to the scientific civilization needs reorientation. Her husband, Dandekar, cannot achieve this easily, or by himself. His friend's consideration and the official status of Chari and Ghosh help him in wriggling out of an embarrassing predicament involving his wife and her spiritual mentor, the Swami.

Her fourth novel, *Possession*, is a study of the hostile influence of a civilized barbarian over the native genius of an artist as an inquiry into a foreign onslaught on the autochthonic cultural matrix. *Possession*, the title itself signifies and reveals the calamitous consequences of an English woman named Caroline and her attempt to transpose an unsophisticated Indian artist into the English atmosphere; the artist is Valmiki, a South Indian boy who has an extraordinary talent of painting. Anusuya is the narrator and the witness of the whole situation and the destructive intrusion of a patron into the inner sanctum of the human.

The subject of Markandaya's fifth novel, *A Handful of Rice* picks up the thread of freedom and responsibility as represented in her very first novel *Nectar in a Sieve*. The forces of change that have been sweeping across India are too strong to be ignored. No wonder then that Markandaya returns to the theme of tragic potential of the economic compulsions in modern India. The desperate struggle for survival is where *Nectar in a Sieve* ends and *A Handful of Rice* begins. In *A Handful of Rice*, Markandaya is not content with mere fatalistic and poetic explanations of human misery; nor is she satisfied with an assessment of the superficial situations of injustice and economic inequality that continue to plague our society. She further enquires into the moral dilemmas of an individual who is forced to face disruptions in a developing country. Markandaya's technique reaches a fine artistic point towards the end by leaving it somewhat ambiguous in the development of Ravi's consciousness.

In *The Cofferdams*, Markandaya partly returns to the previous theme of techno-economic developments and its adverse effect on the indigenous people and their cultural value systems. She has earlier dealt with certain aspects of it in straightforward rural setting in *Nectar in a Sieve*. Fifteen years later, Markandaya's rendering of the trials and tribulations of a tribe, struggling for survival in the face of an irresistible technological juggernaut, doggedly pushed by a team of efficient British engineers and their Indian assistants, is more forceful. The project, sponsored by the Government of India, is concerned with the construction of a dam across a river somewhere in the hills of South India; and the contract for the execution of the project is given to a team of British Raj is merely of academic interest as an episode in history.

The angst and anguish as well as the yearning and accomplishment of the Indian and British characters are represented in the novels of Markandaya. The agony and distress as well as the enduring hope and trust of the uprooted autochthones of the hills is represented by the chief of the tribe whereas Clinton symbolizes the merciless efficiency of the business-minded British engineers. On the other hand, Helen and Bashiam brings out the forces of moderation and humane attitudes and they also share a sense of seriousness and vigour to the dramatic action and catastrophic development in the novel.

In *The Nowhere Man*, Markandaya returns to the theme of racial relations in the context of Indian immigrants in contemporary Britain. In three of her previous novels *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession* and *The Cofferdams*, Markandaya dealt with this theme in various context. In *The Nowhere Man* the scene of action is shifted to England, enfeebled by World War II and embittered by the loss of Indian empire. Her next novel *Two Virgins* dramatizes the contrastive natures of two sisters in a rural setting. It is a fictional lyric depicting two faces: one full of grace, innocence, love and poise; another filled with wild passion, dangerous desire, whim and caprice. *The Golden Honeycomb*, the novel distinctly and indisputably establishes Kamala Markandaya's honour as a leading Indian novelist in English today. Her historical novel is not

only her best imaginative effort to project the development of national consciousness but also her excellent sense of conscious authenticity and factuality which does not resemble the Indo-English fiction, but hardly evident in contemporary British novels. Kamala Markandaya's *Pleasure City* reflects of the tragic situation of Rikki who deserts his traditional, hereditary fishing trade for easy money in the face of the inevitable forces of socio-economic change.

Thus, Markandaya has been experimenting with diverse characters and contexts in her novels and she has achieved significant success in terms of the artistic representation of the essence of a fast-changing reality.

### **1.3 New Historicism: Trends and concepts**

New Historicism emerges as a reaction to old Historicism which viewed the text as an autonomous entity. New Historicism reposition the text in the original discursive reality of the age in which it was produced. Led by Greenblatt, the New Historicists view history as not just an account of events that took place in the past, but rather an intricate description of human reality which is regarded as a tenet by the society in question. While a literary work may or may not tell us about the factual aspects of the world from which they emerge, they will tell us about the prevailing ways of thinking at that particular time. Every literary work is a product of its time, place and circumstances of its composition rather than an isolated creation of a genius.

There were writers such as, J.W.Lever who talked about New Historicism before Greenblatt. But the word 'New Historicism' was coined by Stephen Greenblatt in 1982. New Historicism started by the late 1970s and 1980s. It was a response to New Criticism, which focused on 'text in itself'. New Criticism came in the middle decades of the 20th century. It emphasized close reading of the text to discover how a work of literature functioned as a self-contained, self-referential aesthetic object. The new critics think that external knowledge of

history and society, or the author's biography is not necessary to analyze literature. The text is sufficient in itself. But literature is not produced in isolation. Literature carries its time period. So, New Historicism says about the relationship between literature and history. We cannot separate literature from history. The process of historical change comes out through literature. Literature is mirror image of history. Louis Montrose defines new historicism as a combined interest in 'the textuality of history, the historicity of texts'. Greenblatt says, New historicism involves "an intensified willingness to read *all* of the textual traces of the past with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts"(Barry 126). New Historicists aim to understand the work through its historical context and to understand cultural and intellectual history through literature.

The new historical approach emphasizes the cultural context in which text is produced, rather than focusing exclusively on the formal structure of the text itself. New Historicism posits that literary works are not singular or solitary forms, but a product of different networks of socio-material practices. As such, literary works should be interpreted, not for their universal themes or historical content, but for their meaning as objects embedded in a certain socio-historical milieu. Thus, to understand a literary text, critics need to first understand the author's background and the cultural context in which the work was produced. Stephen Greenblatt is credited with launching New Historicism. He first used the term 'new historicism' in his work, *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance* (1982) to describe the permeability of literature and history. Discussing Queen Elizabeth's hostility towards Shakespeare's play Richard II, Greenblatt argues that literary criticism is always historical in nature and that there is no such thing as pure as aesthetic value. Fredric Jameson is another well-known New Historicist. Jameson is famous for his dictate—"always historicize"—commanding literary critics to pay attention to the social and historical context in which a work was produced. Another noteworthy New Historicist is Alan Liu.

Stephen Greenblatt, a critic and English professor at the University of California, Berkeley coined the word when he put together a bunch of essays and with some form of desperation to bring out the introduction, he concluded that the essays presented a phenomenon which he referred to as the new historicism.

Greenblatt is well known for his books on studies of the Renaissance which made him one of the key players in the establishment of new historicism. He inspired a great number of scholars who were particularly interested in Renaissance studies and the anecdotal approach of literature.

As mentioned earlier, William Shakespeare's work were core in bringing about new historicism as a new literature study tool. Stephen Orgel together with other new historicist critics pioneered the study of Shakespeare's works where his plays were deemed inseparable from the context in which they were written. This, in turn, led to understanding Shakespeare less as a great author than as a way of reestablishing the cultural milieu renaissance theatre and the very complex political scenario of that time.

Other prominent players in the conception of new historicism include Lynn Hunt and Michel Foucault, who also taught at UC Berkeley as it rose as a postmodern approach to history. Michael Foucault is a key figure in new historicism. His interest in issues such as ideologies, power, epistemology and subjectivity have gone a long way in influencing critics not only in literal studies but also in other disciplines. His readiness to evaluate and openly discuss somewhat controversial disciplines such as medicine, criminology, sexuality and governance coupled with his questioning of the principle of specialization has led to other critics examining interdisciplinary connections even where the disciplines have never been taught to be connected and as a consequence never really examined together. This interesting approach to literature analysis taking a keen interest in the finer details especially with regards

to the cultural, social and a little bit of the political scenes influencing the context of the text under study caught the attention of many historical critics and scholars working at the time of its production.

Stephen Greenblatt, the new historicist, has begun his essay, 'The Circulation of Social Energy' with the sentence, "I began with the desire to speak with the dead". (In the beginning of the essay we see the author's desire to have a conversation with the dead). In the first sight it seems to be impossible. The desire of speaking to the dead means to understand the reasoning behind the writings and actions which can discover textual traces of themselves. Actually, dead speeches come out only through the voices of the living. We know that there is a 'living will' in all writings. 'Living will' is the liveliness in the writing which makes a reader enjoy literature, hear the author. A writer is a product of the society. Whatever a writer writes is a reflection of the society in which he/she lives. So, their writings come up with the living will. As every writing works as a vehicle of the society which reflects its contemporary period, we can say that diachronic study of society can be done through literature, which carries history.

New Historicism is a literary theory based on the idea that literature should be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic. Based on the literary criticism of Stephen Greenblatt and influenced by the philosophy of Michel Foucault, New Historicism acknowledges not only that a work of literature is influenced by its author's times and circumstances, but that critic's response to that work is influenced by his environment, beliefs and prejudices. A New Historicist looks at literature in a wider historical context, examining both how the writer's times affected the work and how the work reflects the writer's times, in turn recognizing that current cultural contexts colour that critic's conclusions.



New Historicism is a theory that seeks to find meaning in a text by considering it within the context of the prevailing ideas and social assumptions of the historical era in which the text is produced. New Historicists such as Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose, and Jonathan Goldberg, concern themselves with the political functions of literature and the concept of power, the intricate means by which cultures produce and reproduce themselves.

Greenblatt admits that it is not possible to create or re-create any genuine dialogue with the dead. But still, he testifies to his own fascination with the power that he sees (and feels) in literary 'simulations' of life. When one engages himself/herself with the imagination of writers, artists and all those whose historical voices have left traces in the living present hear the dead prompting the imagination. This is one of the most satisfying elements in reading literature, that it provokes the imagination of the reader rather than merely displaying the imagination of the author. The textual traces carry 'resonance'. New Historicism has an affinity with resonance. It always seeks to locate the traces of the world that an object bears. Resonance is the continuation of resound. A society is always dynamic. A society is rearranged by people. The past and the literature of the past carry on a force, the force which effect the mind of the reader and hearer. This force is social energy. Circulation of social energy is a driving force in Greenblatt's theory. Social energy is a product of society. Social energy reorganizes a society.

For the New Historicists, history is not reducible to the activists of few prominent individuals implying that it cannot be linearly progressive but rather constructed out of the immense number of possible acts and interpretations of these acts.

New Historicists further assert the interconnectedness of literary text with the non-literary ones signifying that a literary work is not a product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts which are extra-literal. Since literature cannot be 'timeless', that is, it is located within a historical period, the systems of power present during the period in which the text

emerges are reflected and reinforced in both literary and cultural texts. The structure of analysis of a literary text as far as New Historicism is concerned lays equal importance to both literary and non-literary text of the same period of which both are 'allowed to work as sources of information and interrogation with each other' (Ukkan, 2004: 22-33). It is through this practice of parallel reading that the notion of intertextuality is brought into practice. Julia Kristeva uses this term to 'denote the interdependence of literary texts with all those that have gone before it' with her contention being that a literary text is not an isolated phenomenon and that any text is the absorption and transformation of another' (Ukkan, 2004: 22-33). The implication here is that any 'literary text is akin to any other texts pertaining to other disciplines of knowledge in that particular socio-cultural scenario' (Sharma, 2014: 3).

Other than intertextuality and the historical reading of the text, New Historicism contends that no reading of a literary or cultural text is definite. With the assumptions on New Historicism in place, it will be impossible to imagine a single response to the complexity presented in a text. New Historicists provides multiple reading and possibilities to a text rather than suggesting a conclusive idea to the text and it is through this provision of multiplicity of meaning that the New Historicists contends that 'a work is not an autonomous body of fixed meanings but represents a diversity of dissonant voices and unresolved conflicts in a specific culture' (Ukkan 2004, 22-33). To unlock meaning in a text, New Historicists appropriates the post-structuralist assumption that a text can only be understood by laying claim to the ideology of the age and the doctrine of textuality. (Mukesh, 2003: 118).

New Historicists locate a text's meaning within the cultural system composed of interlocking discourses of its author, the text, and its reader and that the 'three areas of concern: the life of the author, the social rules and dictates found within a text, and the reflection lays out the 'enabling presumptions' of New Historicism as put forward by Greenblatt which includes: literature has a historical base and literary works are not the products of a single

consciousness but many social and cultural forces; literature is not a distinctive human activity as previously believed, but another vision of history; it is not possible to talk of an intrinsic human nature that transcends history since literature and human beings are both shaped by the social and political forces; and that a historian cannot escape the social or ideological constraints of his own formation since he is caught in his own historicity. That a literary work is another historical document, or a text rooted in the context of a work's historical situation as evidenced in the text must always be investigated to arrive at a textual meaning. Like any other school of literary thought, New Historicism has suffered criticism by undergoing attacks all the time. Its approach of history from a neutral position and its pervasive notion of power, being deterministic and monolithic, leave no room for freedom and even resistance to oppressive practices of the state and this has fallen into disfavour with the postmodernists. New Historicism refuses the claim that the society has entered a postmodern phase, and apparently denial to make a systematic theoretical assumption and has avoided an explicit political position. By this, we find that New Historicism has weakened the struggle and resistance which Foucault states that they are naturally part of every structured system of power. Other than the postmodernists, the New Historicists also found themselves in problems with the cultural conservatives for undermining traditional conception of history and literature. The cultural conservatives viewed literature as serving the purpose of disseminating the cultural heritage and values that are the foundation of political and social institutions, but we find that the New Historicist regarded this as a failure since the historical account of the literary works of the Elizabethan age, for instance, did not serve this purpose adequately. Finally, New Historicism was criticized by the literary critic, Harold Bloom, for reducing literature to a footnote of history and for not paying attention to the details involved in analyzing literature. All said and done, we cannot overlook the fact that New Historicism has played a substantial role not only in contemporary literary studies but also in other disciplines such as history, anthropology, arts

and in other interdisciplinary fields as well. Though it grew out of a limited area in the European academy, the renaissance literary studies, its extension to other historical periods has made it to be acceptable due to its accommodation to the conventions of the academy and it is yet to give rise to other literary thoughts.

As the acknowledged initiator of New Historicism, one Stephen Greenblatt's main arguments is that there is a real social world that is constantly being shaped and re-shaped by the texts it produces. John Brannigan explains how New Historicism understands the stories of the past as society's way of constructing a narrative which unconsciously fits its own interests. Such power dynamics feature prominently in the work of Marxist thinkers, including Louis Althusser, who see history as the procession of stories favourable to the victor and literature as one of the institutions which participate in making state power and ideology familiar and acceptable to the state's subjects (Althusser, 1984 as cited in Brannigan, 1998). New Historicism builds on these approaches but scholars such as Greenblatt emphasize the use of the past as an "impetus for political struggle in the present and make it clear that the discipline of literary studies is not removed from the sphere of politics" (Brock Education Journal. 27(2), 2018, Matt Hickling).

New Historicism is again related to Cultural Materialism; it refers to the Marxist orientation of New Historicism. Kamala Markandaya has depicted the antagonistic classes in her novels, her works show the ruling class and the ruled. The term Cultural materialism was coined by Raymond Williams. Cultural materialism has a significantly visible impact on human behavior as it infuses cultural evolution, cultural ecology and Marxism within it. It is the physical world that sets the mindset of humankind though human is the product of nature. The influence of nature on a human mind becomes negligible when society has moved through commercialism. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels actually hint this doctrine long back in their works. They presented a model of society based on materialistic perspective and that contended model

evolve from tribalism to feudalism and feudalism to capitalism and capitalism to communism. Since then, materialist explanation and studies have been in progress. A universal pattern comprising of three levels of social systems have been proposed by cultural materialists that is, infrastructure in the base level, then comes structure and superstructure at the topmost level. Infrastructure is the prime level on which the other two levels rely on as the base includes the interaction between the environment and the fulfilment of the rudimentary needs of people. On the other hand, structure and superstructure deal in society's economic, social, political organisations and ideology, symbolism respectively. All these levels are inter-dependent in the sense that the change in structure and superstructure can occur at times without any initial change in the infrastructure level, but the new change must comply with the existing infrastructure to be absorbed within the culture as propounded by cultural materialists.

#### **1.4 New Historicism in the works of Kamala Markandaya**

Kamala Markandaya is one of the distinguished and established writers in India today. India is a country of her birth and England, the country of her abode, and hence her writings disclose the cultural interaction and amalgamation of both the nation. Markandaya is one of those writers who have made conscious effort of their Indianness and of the differences in the two systems of values of both the countries, that is, one rather acquired, the other inherited and often taken for granted. In her works, she deals with various social problems relating to unemployment, rural society and the urban India. As such, she merits special mention by virtue of her achievement and feminine sensibility. Kamala Markandaya presents numerous themes in her novels and thus she has a remarkable position among the Indo-English novels. Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt *In Practicing New Historicism* propound that,

The greatest challenge lay not simply in exploring the other texts ---- an agreeably imperial expansion of literary criticism beyond its borders ---- but in making the literary and

nonliterary seem to be each other's thick description. That both the literary work and the anthropological (or historical) anecdote are texts, that both are fictions in the sense of things made, that both are fictions in the sense of things made, that both are shaped by the imagination and by the available resources of narration and description helped make it possible to conjoin them... ( 31)

The most important elements of a work of fiction are plot and character; characterization is the heart of a novel. Kamala Markandaya's characters reveal tremendous variety as her novels portrays both the English and the Anglo-Indian characters. Her characters are realistic and convincing. Another Indian women novelist Nayantara Sahgal admires Markandaya's art of characterization and says:

She (Kamala Markandaya) develops her characters very well, more so than men writers.

I am not saying that because I am a woman, but her characters seem to be made of flesh and blood" (The Hindustan Times Weekly, 1975).

*Nectar in a sieve*—Reflection of rural India, her first novel, discusses the problems of rural India, in detail to the Western inhabitants. She tries her best to manifest the common problems connected with Indian farmers. Nathan and Rukmani represent Indian farmers who face unlimited trials and tribulations of life. Shashi Tharoor in *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India* describes

The British introduced the permanent settlement of the land revenue in 1793 as part of the zamindari system. Under this scheme, the Indian cultivators were charged not on the traditional basis of a share of crops produced but by a percentage of the rent paid on their land. This system meant that if the farmer's crop failed, he would still not be exempt from paying taxes. (35)

Indian peasants were the victim of this zamindari system. The cultivation was irksome and the charge was a burden; which resulted in loss of land. This novel based on the traditional pattern of life in countless villages all over India is an outcry of protest against social injustice. Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* is a relatively short novel that introduces to the Western inhabitants the life in traditional Indian villages and the visible changes of the British reign. Although easy to read, the novel is lyrical and moving and the novel can be read on a variety of levels, its lyrical and lucid language create an interest in the readers' minds. The storyline revolves around a peasant couple and their survival in one level and on another level, it is a tale of indomitable human spirit that overcomes poverty and unending misfortune. In a whole, it is a novel that represents the conflicts between a traditional agricultural culture and a burgeoning industrial capitalistic society; it approaches several important social phenomena like the importance of traditional cultural practices and people's hesitation to change, and the impact of economic change. Despite valiant efforts, the family failed to extricate itself from abject poverty caused by hardships of nature and economics. This poverty forced the only daughter into prostitution and caused three sons to leave the village to seek employment. With very little to eat, it was a miracle the family remained alive. In spite of their hardships, the family exhibited love, contentment, and hope that their situation would improve, but this hope never became a reality.

Industrialization destroys the scenic beauty of the countryside and hampers the daily life of the inhabitants. The tannery in *Nectar in a Sieve*, invades Rukmani's village and has taken the maiden from them where their children had played once; had made the bazaar prices of the commodities too high for the villagers. Here Markandaya presents South Indian life both in its traditional, conservative and rural aspects, with convincing sincerity and fascinating power. In the pre-independence era, Mulk Raj Anand too presented the peasants' tale of woe and suffering in the rural society. Kamala Markandaya, with her realistic depiction and

evocative illustration of Indian villages creates a perfect balance between the rural reality and organised urbanity of tragic portrayal of the effect of poverty, natural disaster and sudden modernization upon a peasant family. Their blissful life goes on till their village is grasped in the tentacles of urbanisation and industrialisation. Rukmani opposes this progressive induction of modernity and industrialization upon the village and its prevalent culture. The introduction of tannery in the novel brings in the essence of cultural waylay. *Nectar in a Sieve* shows how the storm of industrialization shatters rural economy and thrashes rural values. Rukmani rightly considers tannery as the cause of calamities. Three of Rukmani's sons abandon the village life for better prospects, as they are attracted by industrial economy. The other two lose their lives because of starvation and Rukmani's daughter survives through prostitution which is another social consequence of urbanization. Kamala Markandaya has chosen the title for this novel from a sonnet *Work Without Hope* written by S.T Coleridge in the year 1825; the last couplet of the sonnet clinches the reflection and also reveals the deep-seated anguish of the poet. To the poet all nature seems to be at work with hope. Even winter, unpleasant as it is, has the hope of spring following it. The poet, on the contrary, finds himself standing aloof from the rest because he feels that he has to work with ambition. He naturally thinks that his labours are most often without any aspiration of success. When one works without any hope of success, all the work becomes as useless as attempting to draw nectar in a sieve. The poet expresses his intense awareness of his personal loneliness and a note of despair in the couplet from which the title of the novel has been taken.

*Possession*, Kamala Markandaya's fourth novel; is in a sense, a continuation of *A Silence of Desire*. Here, the Swamy appears again but he in a modern way in the sense that he has admirers in the most sophisticated circles. In *Possession*, his antagonist is the formidable Caroline Bell – "rich, divorced, and well-born"; he has spirited away the Tamil rustic boy, Valmiki and made a painter and a paramour of him. In this novel the author talks in the voice



of Anusuya how Valmiki, the goatherd, is forbidden by his own family. He is a gifted painter and there is none to care about this poor boy, except Swamy. Here, hunger and degradation are represented through Valmiki's family. Hence, Val, the boy is taken away from his own people by paying a little compensation (rupees 5000) to the head of the family. His father agrees to send his son with Lady Caroline in order to save his other family members from hunger. In the later part of the novel, the author speaks about the spiritual values of India in the words of Swamy. Kamala Markandaya being an expatriate writer with understanding about the unique and at the same time vastly different cultures makes this dramatic story of contemporary east and west memorable. In this novel, the protagonist Valmiki is tried to be translocated by the western lady Caroline; Valmiki is a South Indian boy exceptional talent and sensitivity, into the English atmosphere. The Swamy, however, redeems Valmiki and assists him to get back to his motherland that is, India; hence Lady Caroline's endeavours to possess the Indian artist goes in vain and Valmiki is once again his own self. The conflict of Indian spiritual values and Western materialism is symbolised by the struggle between the Swamy and Caroline for the custody and control of Valmiki. Lady Caroline represents the western materialism and her possessiveness for Val is indeed for her own benefit. Thus, Anasuya defines Caroline as a character bearing the qualities of evil, calculating, self-willed and possessiveness. Images associated with Caroline are the ones of predatory and she remains the same till the end of the novel. Val and Ellie, on the other hand, present the flip side of possession --- for them possession implies bondage in another person. We see the peasant boy throws away the materialistic life that he got from Lady Caroline and returns to India. Ultimately the Swamy succeeds whereas Caroline fails to possess Val, the attitude of British colonisers is once again evident through the character of Caroline in this novel. Here, Markandaya tries to suggest the effects of the attitude of being master; possession, in any form implicates subjugation; anything we try to get forcibly hold of is withdrawn from us and that is presented by Markandaya through

the character of Val who loses Ellie, Annabel, and even Minou, the monkey; on the other hand, Caroline loses Val; it is offering rather than picking – that paves the way to fulfilment. At the end of the novel Caroline authoritatively says:

One day he will want to be mine again. I shall take care to make him want me again: and on that day I shall come back to claim him (PS234).

Ellie escapes by death and Val by flight. Kamala Markandaya marks a significant position in the history of Indo English fiction with her keen observation merged with feminine sensibility and socio-cultural awareness. She is given a thoroughly Western upbringing, so her novels portray East-West encounter as a main theme of her. The urge for the West, Indian ideology and discovering an alienation in abroad are the main concern of Markandaya's novels.

Morality hides behind hunger is depicted in *A Handful of Rice* which is the natural sequence of *Nectar in a Sieve*. *Nectar in a Sieve* reveals the misfortunes that one normally encounters in village and *A Handful of Rice* does the same in the town. Like Rukmani, Ravi is also thronged by misfortunes. But Ravi's misfortunes are mainly due to social injustice, and they seem natural in the novel. When the novel begins, Ravi is chased by a policeman and Ravi breaks open into Apu's house. From that moment, the course of action of the story advances clearly and smoothly. Though the whole novel is a long and continuous stretch of narrative, it is made interesting by the simple but crisp narration. The past life of Ravi is intimated to the readers only when he goes back to Damodar. Remembrances of the past and dialogues with Damodar are two of the secondary methods used to unfold the narrative. The beginning and the end of the novel is marked by an attempted act of violence of the novel. In both the cases, violence is averted in the beginning by forces beyond Ravi's control, and at the end by Ravi's own sense of goodness. Ravi has bitterly experienced these two episodes, which makes him understand stick to the right side of the conscience even in utter poverty. On the whole, *A Handful of Rice* is a well told story which begins dramatically and progresses smoothly towards

the end sustaining interest throughout and picturises a realistic picture of contemporary society. The novel records the experiences of Ravi and so the style of the novel is determined by his experience. The author is able to capture the actual moments of life on several occasions. Ravi's courting of Nalini and his marriage procession in the car are the best examples. Ravi's helplessness when he realizes that he is unable to save the life of his son for want of money and his inner temptations urging to join Damodar are all realistically described. *A Handful of Rice* picturises the class-struggle through personal failures and struggles; it also emphasizes on the complications of the city life in terms of struggle for survival, shelter and employment. Markandaya advocates uncompromising realism to portray the urban life turbulence. Markandaya attempts to visualise the Indian social conditions to foreign readers and hence, she illustrates details and events like births, marriages and festival processions which might look redundant to the native Indians. Here, Markandaya counterbalances the plaguy urban lifestyle with the fundamental value system of traditional Indian life; In a realistic manner she employs how unemployment and poverty trigger crime and underground activities which in turn worsen the urban society. She also manages to strike an anti-romantic note by showing how Ravi's golden dreams are shattered in the city. Like Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya has seen both East and West as she has lived in England and in India for a long period. In her novels particularly in *Nectar in a Sieve*, *Possession* and *A Handful of Rice* she has portrayed the conflicts and tensions between these two opposite ways of life. She presents the conflict of these two different cultures with a rare penetration, under-standing and realism. Men, as well as women characters in her fiction, react in different ways to the Indian culture and Western culture.

In *Some Inner Fury* Kit symbolizes the Oxford Educated-Anglophile in the government service and Premala symbolizes the non-violent Gandhian national movement. The novel emphasizes on the cultural differences that arise in an interracial relationship that evolves

between an Indian girl and an Englishman. The modern India which has to embrace Indian traditionalism and the Western modernism at once is represented through the character of Roshan.

*A Silence of Desire* presents the psychological insights with an extensive analysis of husband wife relationship; Dandekar and Sarojini are the two poles of the same cultural situation, it is their ideology that differs them from each other. Dandekar is a modern man who is and rational in his thinking whereas Sarojini represents tradition and blind faith. The novel presents the character of Sarojini as a strong one towards the end because of the firmness while Dandekar vacillating between faith and reason, between the Eastern values and Western pragmatism looks uncertain. The spiritual material dichotomy and conflict between faith and rationalism are the crux of this novel and they bridge the fissure between Dandekar and Sarojini. Since the beginning Indians have been observing the superstitions related to spiritual value system.

It is observed that how technology and modernization have irreversible effect on the tribal people is exhibited by Markandaya in her novel *The Coffer Dams*. The novel also employs the themes of dispossession and deculturation of the tribals who confront the tides of development. We meet the ruthless western character Clinton who not only refuses to give permission to lift the boulder under which the bodies of two tribals are buried but also overlooks the settlement of tribals and the impending monsoon as he is focused on the construction of the dam. Absence of humanitarian values is endangered by capitalism that takes the cover of technological advancement is clearly portrayed through the character of Clinton. The fiction juxtaposes Clinton's materialism with the more human attitudes of Mackendrick and Lefevre who recognize their exploitation of the tribals. *The Coffer Dams* proceeds betwixt the two worlds that is, one of English engineers who want to construct the dam and the other is the world of the tribals in the colonial era. At thematic level, it weaves into its structure East-West

confrontation, tradition versus modernity and materialism versus spiritual values. It also problematises the Western notion of progress which often results in victimization of the aborigines. The novel brings the readers into the world of rural development in the decades immediately following independence. By doing so the novel critiques the continuing imperialist attitudes and policies that reign supreme in India even after the departure of the British. In this sense, it is a postcolonial novel that critiques the neo-classical tendencies. Here, Markandaya's voice is inclined towards her motherland when she brings out the ethical issues that are often ignored by the country's full throttle journey towards economic progress. The novel is a doctrine of cultural dichotomy in the wake of the world interest in expatriate experience. It presents the diasporic angst, psychological and physical displacement and hyphenated identity that have become popular topics in the postcolonial literary discourses.

*The Nowhere Man* operates in the background of the anti-immigrant wave of the 1960s. Srinivas is persecuted by the racist and he finally dies when a fanatic sets fire to his house. His leprosy becomes an evocative symbol of his isolation and disintegration. It is the only novel of Markandaya that exclusively set in England though the readers get glimpses of colonial India in flashbacks. His alienation from India has left him in the condition of a culturally dislocated, nowhere man.

*Two Virgins* exhibits the corrupt impersonal face of the urban life where Lalitha symbolises the glamorous city life and Saroja in return suggests rural life and value-system. Lalitha moves away from the traditional life of the village, returns to it, and finally escapes again to the city. It is a symbol of amoral neutrality and anonymity. In the middle-class Indian society, even with liberal ideas as of Appa's about the need for free intermixing of boys and girls, there is no formal sex education given to children. As a result, there is an unwholesome conflict between the biological self and the social self. Education plays a vital role in moulding

character to suit social roles. It also indicates the aim of promoting education during the British reign, as Ranajit Guha reflects in *An Indian Historiography of India*,

English had become constitutive of thought itself for the educated. It cut them off from their own tradition. By the same token, it also made their own past inaccessible to them as a history. Since the contemporary mode of historicizing the past was essentially an aspect of post-Renaissance European thought made available to Indians only by the English language and ‘Anglo-Indian education’, they did not know how to think it in any way other than did their rulers. This was particularly true of the most recent past—the colonial past, for it was there that the texts constructed by the dominant culture were most active in persuading the colonized in favour of an interpretation supportive of colonial rule. Far from promoting any development towards a distinctively Indian historiography of colonial India, anglo-phone education was clearly a vehicle of ideologies that hindered it. (25-26)

In the Indian social context, we see girls as shown in *Two Virgins*, torn between desire for self-expression and the need of social obligations in a given community. This novel reveals the engrossment of an Indian woman novelist who has perceived the conflict of tradition and modernity, prevailing social evils and tensions, and the catastrophe of character arising from the changing values of modern civilization in contrast to traditional Indian society.

*The Golden Honeycomb*, though seemingly vague, in its geographical locale, achieves a convincing fusion of the political and romantic strands of the narrative. Far from being a ‘tourist’s picture of exotic India’, it is carefully researched and imaginatively controlled work of art which marks a landmark in the Indo-English historical fiction of the twentieth century. Unlike most of the Anglo-Indian writing in which the Indian princes have been portrayed as part of a colonial romance, as snake-charmers and performers or as tyrants. *The Golden Honeycomb* corrects the distorted picture of recent Indian history. Here Devapur can represent

any princely state in India with the usual Raj paraphernalia--- the precious jewels, the summer-palace, the riding accidents and hunts, the Rolls-Royces, the concubine and the duped maharani. We are shown in the persons of Manjula, Mohini and Shanta Devi the women behind the princess, their regalia, their bickering and jealousies, their possessions and legacies, their rituals and ceremonies and their personalities. Markandaya's choice of social concern as central to the action in the novel seems an excellent fictional strategy. It can light the dark avenues of tradition and lead to social change. In this sense, Markandaya's projection of character is on a more assertive and positive level than in her previous novels. This novel is set against the glittering historical background of an Indian Court and the astonishing magnificence maintained by Imperial presence. This human comedy embraces dynasties, men and women whose emotions are complicated by fierce and primitive feelings for their land, and the extraordinary, quixotic and often bizarre involvement of Britain with India for those relations for three centuries. As Markandaya settled in England after marriage, her love for her motherland India prompted her to write this novel of struggle of India's independence. Moreover, she wants to make English society aware of the exploitation of the Indians by the cruel British rulers and also the brave struggle of the Indians to liberate the country.

Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* resonates as it speaks insightfully of diasporic situations before others spoke it. Salman Rushdie, in *Shame*, says anyone who is oppressed will be driven to react in extreme violence, and later in *The Satanic Verses* he describes race riots in Britain. Markandaya's novel, set in 1968, talks not only about the violence of racism but also about other diasporic realities.

Markandaya's *Pleasure City* seems to be an attempt to connect two different worlds of the East and the West, the encounter prevalent in all her novels, the colonial and the technocrat, the traditional and the modern on the level of Indo-British collaboration in the economic development of India. This novel illustrates that individuals are bound not only to history but

also to socially determined attitudes that create particular situations. In the characterization of Rikki, the pattern of freedom and responsibility is much more complex and deeper than in the earlier novels; it is much explicit. Rikki seeks freedom from the limitations of his traditional community in a bid to join Shalimar. His friendship with Tully and his entry into Avalon seem the best possible escape. But at the end, he returns to Shalimar and accepts the responsibilities there. It is interesting to observe the development of his friendship with Tully and his slow drift away from his fishing community which begins looking upon him as a sort of privileged boy because an Englishman favours him and loads him with gifts and money. Markandaya here proves again that the individual longing for self-expression is sometimes overpowered by greater forces of society, to which, be it Rikki or Tully, the individual has to submit. The barriers that divide the races have to be eliminated only by the united efforts of all races; the individual is, at every point, determined by his environment.

Markandaya, being a socially concerned writer has studied Indians, Indians living in other countries and the Indian villagers. Her novels are the result of her minute observation of the society. Markandaya has not only reflected the society through her novels, she also has brought out the cause and remedies along with. Her novels depict not only the past but also hint the future. From the pre-Independence era to present, the whole scenario is portrayed through the novels. Human psyche, industrialization, social change, urge for freedom are the main concern of today's world and of all contemporary writings.



**CHAPTER II**  
**TRADITIONS AND RURAL CUSTOMS IN THE NOVELS OF KAMALA**  
**MARKANDAYA**

**2.1 Introduction**

The term 'tradition' has captured a significant place in English literature. Tradition in simple words, is a sub domain of culture; it is the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation or the fact of being passed on in this way. When tradition is discussed, it is obvious to take culture into account as it is the ideas, practices and social behavior of a particular social group. The authorial milieu always makes its way to the literary texts; the social conditions, education, economy is inseparable from the production and reception of literary work. Stephen Greenblatt's study of literature makes it evident as he was never blinded by the social conditions pertaining to a text. Moreover, his own implication in those histories, and of his own position as a witness to those lives. Every literary work can be regarded as a palimpsest of an earlier one. In this process cultural exchange, assimilation and alteration take place. The production of the author and reception of the reader play a significant role in this process. Greenblatt, in this regard, focuses on transformation, accumulation, communication and representation rather than the creativity of the author or the imaginative power of the reader. An author analyses his milieu, produces a reformed culture through a literary work which can pass through generations. Aristotle, in his theory of imitation has called this reformation as art which is the creation of the artist:

There are persons who, by conscious art or mere habit, imitate and represent various objects through the medium of colour and form, or again by the voice; so in the arts above mentioned, taken as whole, the imitation is produced by rhythm, language or 'harmony' either singly combined. (Poetics, 27)

This representation of the artist is the 'energia' in Greenblatt's view, which creates an image in the reader's mind. In this regard, Greenblatt discusses about the process of reception which leads to the circulation of social energy; a literary piece can circulate social energy in the process of reception while it moves through a series of negotiations, exchanges and movements. The author takes the objects and ideas from the existing society which in relation with the readers or perceivers are able to represent the social practices and encourage to cross the boundaries for a change. This change in the process is studied throughout in this research work.

As the title of the chapter emphasizes on Tradition in novels, we have to begin with the study the way in which tradition is defined by our writer Kamala Markandaya. A reading of Markandaya's collections triggered my mind about the 'constraint' and 'mobility' of a culture and tradition. In Greenblatt's view, the concept of culture refers to two opposing ideas, which he calls *constraint* and *mobility*. It is a set of beliefs and practices which are backed up by institutions and a 'technology of control', by setting a limit on the behaviour of every individual. The notion of 'technology' does not refer to the present connotation but in Greenblatt's view it is in the sense of art. Markandaya's novels constantly practice the concept of constraint and mobility in relation to the colonial period. Her novels move through a chronological tradition of rural India and the urban influence on it with the colonial impact on the people. Reading the novels one can visualise the difference India has gone through before and after colonialism. Markandaya's novels are a great manuscript of traditional change. It also discusses the follies of maintaining tradition without comprehending it. Kamala Markandaya, the modern Indian expatriate, has developed a picture of colonized India and how it put the tradition under the roller coaster by mystifying the people about their own land.

We know that tradition is the transmission of customs. Rural customs are a set of beliefs and rituals. Tradition moves through changes, but customs move through modification. Rural customs are more or less set of rules for the rural people who do not have a scientific outlook. Culture moves through the opposing ideas of constraint and mobility, as discussed earlier; education plays a significant role in this respect. The age-old beliefs and rules of people are regarded as the rural customs. The hospitable nature of Indians is also a custom that has moved through many generations. Moreover, in a patriarchal society like India domination of men over women is announced as rural custom by imposing some restrictions on them. As for example, a widow has to clad herself only in white; husband's absence is regarded as a bad omen thus a widow is restricted in auspicious occasions. Superstitious minds are the preserver of irrational customs. These are the constraints of a culture which pull back a society from advancement.

Customs are long established beliefs, and the modification of these customs is the progression of tradition. From the beginning of life, human being has experienced and learned the way of living from the ancestors. Their beliefs and customs are transferred to the next generation and thus becomes a tradition. Customs are necessary to lead a disciplined life; it brings uniformity among people as its creation is to form a society. In course of time, these customs are modified to escalate the society, these modifications are the outcome of educated minds. Markandaya's novels analyze the rural customs that pull back the tradition from progression. They describe the life of people and their faith in the customs which are regarded as constraints of a culture. Rural customs are inherited but trying to understand the custom is the way of obtaining tradition. Every society has its own tradition. So, to understand the people and the society it is necessary to have acquaintance with the customs and tradition of that society. Indian writers like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Manju Kapoor have put forth these rural customs in India in their fictional works. Markandaya's

novels too depict the Indian society, the changes and the progression of the society are reflected in a chronology of novels.

## **2.2 Conflict of Constraints and Mobility as depicted by Markandaya**

Understanding of tradition is a step towards advancement. If one is able to identify the constraints of a culture, then reformation of the constraints can be made through a process of mobility. Markandaya, who believes that only prescribed rules cannot strain and measure the society, in fact it can be done through describing the scenario and its outcome. Thus, Markandaya's novels are evidence of the society of the pre-independence era.

A society is a group of people with common values, morals, customs and culture. Traditions are a way to pass things along from generation to generation. In this global village, the age-old tradition moves through certain changes. These traditions are handed down to the newer generation, who then evaluate its relevance to their lives, which very often results into a conflicting situation. This conflict is the result of understanding constraints and mobility. Traditional behaviour passes many generations and so it becomes an instinctive behaviour as the generation follows. Instinctive behaviours cannot be detached easily. Most of the times they get an emotional attachment and thus the constraint left unnoticed. Tradition weaves a relation between the past and the present. This relation guides us to the root---the origin, tradition can become progressive through changes, but it cannot be separated from the root. The three realities past, present and future are interconnected. In order to mobilize a culture, one has to be educated, rational and analytical. A mere imitation of an advanced culture will not mobilise a culture. A tree dies if its roots are cut from it; likewise, human beings lose the aesthetic sense of life if she/he overlooks the past. Technology has developed in such a way now that the whole world has turned to a global village. Science comes up with new inventions each day, but this technological development is a result of a strain of efforts of yesterday and today. So, the process is life-long; it cannot be dissimulated in between. Similar is the case with the lives of

human beings: if they are detached from their roots it leads to destruction. If we look back to the colonial era, many people were fascinated to the western culture and hence adopted them whereas many were left exhausted in between the conflict of eastern and western culture. Blind adaption of a culture cannot mobilise it; as the historicity is cut in the midway in the process of blind imitation. Fleeing from the history through meagre adaption of western culture would cause in rootlessness. Kamala Markandaya has tried to show how rootlessness leads to annihilation through her novels which is illustrated in the following situations:

Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* picturizes the period of Indian rural society before it came under British Raj, as the story moves, we understand the British has entered their lives and livelihood along with the mindset. Nathan, an Indian farmer in *Nectar in a Sieve* is deeply attached with his ancestral land in which his father had cultivated and now under his plough. His heart lies deep in the soil; so, the pain of detaching from his land tortures him; it is like as if he falls like an uprooted tree and cannot sustain for any length of time. Both Nathan and Rukmani translocate to the city with a heavy heart and hunt for a shelter with their son, Murugan. As their search goes in vain, they employ themselves as beggars on the charity and shelter provided by a temple nearby. Then they take up the work of breaking stones in the vain hope to earn enough to enable them to depart for their village soon. But Nathan dream could not come true; one day drenched in rain, weak and exhausted Nathan passes away and Rukmani remains her sole companion. Rukmani, being a traditional Indian lady, could not cope up with the city life. At last, Rukmani gets back to the village where she has her roots:

So good to be home at last, at last. The cart jolted to a standstill. I looked about me at the land and it was life to my starving spirit. I felt the earth beneath my feet and wept for happiness. (NS, 192)

In *Possession* too Val, a young boy suffers from rootlessness as Caroline takes him to England. Though he is provided with all the comforts there he never finds himself at home in

the new soil. He experiences like a plant that is uprooted from its place and planted again in a rocky dry soil where he is sure to wither away and die; so he accuses Caroline for uprooting him:

She does not care for me. She cares only for what I can do, and if I do it well it is like one more diamond she can put on the necklace round her throat for her friends to admire; but when I do nothing I am nothing to her, no more than a small insect in a small crack in the ground. (PS54-55)

He could not find his God there; the luxurious life haunts him; he craves for his simple and traditional living. Though he accompanies Caroline in the beginning he could not stand being detached from his own tradition. Val comes back to India, to his own land where he is secure. He feels confident there. Caroline's visit to India to possess Val once again fails; Val cannot bear the rootlessness; he cannot bear being out of his own tradition. In his own land he says,

The wilderness is mine; it is no longer terrible as it used to be: it is nothing.  
(PS230)

In *The Nowhere Man*, we see, Srinivas, an Indian settles in England with his family. After spending quite a few years there he feels it as his homeland while Vasantha, his wife could neither tune in to his feelings and nor she supported his thoughts. He says:

My country: I feel at home in it, more so than I would in my own. (NM63)

But after having a cheerful life for thirty years in South London, he suddenly starts to feel lonely at his own home; the livelihood of London no more attracts him as of now he is the prey of racism. His initial perception of London as a better place for livelihood and education for his children no more persists in his mind, although it took time to realise his follies.

The country life there brings him a materialistic life which he is content with. The English way is very much welcomed by him like Kit in *Some Inner Fury*. Kit is in India but he

does not live a traditional living. His house has a western setting, and he respects the western values instead of his own land. So, he fails to understand his wife Premala. Kit says,

Really, Prem likes the oddest people...(SIF117)

*Some Inner Fury* depicts the dual mindsets of people. A way to live for themselves and the style to show others. It talks about the constant argument of mind and heart. Srinivas's failure in *The Nowhere Man* in realizing the tradition leaves him as lone person who is disconnected from every relation mentally. He is shattered and in seek of some comfort throughout the novel. On the other hand, the English people made Srinivas realize himself and his tradition. He is unable to believe the treatment received by the English youths. As time passes, he has to face many difficulties there. He feels like he has lost his tradition, no country is his own:

"Nowhere", he said to himself, and he scanned the pale anxious eyes which were regarding him for reasons that might drive him out, a nowhere man looking for a nowhere city. (NM179)

At first, the charm of English way has left the Indian tradition as a negligence in his mind. He has forgotten the Indian culture, Indian relations. But he regrets it when he finds himself who belongs nowhere now.

Markandaya's *Two Virgins* represents the contradiction of past and present. Lalita, the protagonist lives in a dream world; the urban thinking grasps her, and she desires to move away from the tradition, which is outdated for her. She feels the urban society yearns for her, the beautiful surrounding welcomes her and let her sit on its lap, the shining stars and sparkling dew drops fades away the pictures of her village, the innocent people from her memory lane. The glamorous world promises her the world of happiness if she comes out of her tradition. The fallacious city embraces her and makes her dream to the sky by leaving everything behind.

As a result, she suffers from rootlessness; which leaves her with nothing; at the end Mr. Gupta invites Lalitha to the city and it makes her immensely happy.

In the morning Lalitha was gone. This time she had taken nothing with her, nor even a rupee was missing. Her bedroll was stacked against the wall. (TV182)

Tradition helps to form the structure and foundation of our families and our society. They remind us that we are part of a history that defines our past, shapes who we are today and who we are likely to become. Once we ignore the meaning of our traditions, we are in danger of damaging the underpinning of our identity.

Tradition contributes sense of comfort and belonging and enables people to reconnect with each other. It reinforces values such as freedom, faith, integrity, a good education, personal responsibility, a strong work ethic and the value of being selfless. Tradition provides a forum to showcase role models and celebrate the things that really matter in life; it enables us to bring forth the principles of our founding fathers, celebrate diversity and unite as a country. Culture and literature walk concurrently. The behaviour of an individual is governed by law and order; whereas laws are implemented to control a society by regulatory bodies and order is the outcome of self-regulatory principles of a society within itself as law-and-order compliment in a reciprocal manner. Greenblatt's idea of constraint can be taken into account here; it is known that literature is a part of cultural reinforcement of boundaries where positive and negative conflict arise frequently. These conflicts restructure a culture as boundaries become significant with the presence of mobility, because mobility leads to improvisation of a culture.

### **2.3 Tradition and Identity**

A person reflects his/her values, culture and tradition through his/her deeds. From the first dawn to the end-of-life human beings try to keep his/her identity intact. Identity is the sense of who one is, and it plays an important role; once identity is lost, everything becomes



vague and dejected. In the hotch-potch of life, sometimes we forget the own self and try to accumulate those that attract us. Living the world of self behind, we move to the radiant rays of hypnotic force and hence suffer from identity crisis at times. Identity is not restricted only to an individual but to a group of individuals; a whole civilization too has an identity of its own. It is a feeling and an assurance of belonging and togetherness. Belonging to a group of people means having something in common with them which others don't. It does not mean that those who share a common identity are uniform or equal in every aspect. Identity is a matter of personal and social coherence and togetherness in the multiple relationships to the circumstances and conditions of life.

Kamala Markandaya, being a diaspora writer, tried to seek a place in her imaginary homeland. All her writings portray a picture of Indian society, the tradition she was acquainted with and a constant conflict between the inner self and accommodating oneself out of one's own tradition.

Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* revolves around the lives of Rukmani and her husband. Rukmani, the protagonist and narrator in the novel is a simple peasant woman whose persistent battle has been against poverty. The younger daughter of village-headman, she marries Nathan, a landless tenant. Rukmani's family fortune is exhausted in the marriage of her elder sisters that she has to have dowry less marriage. She does not complain about it, rather like a disciplined daughter she accepts her lot and cares for her husband and children. She is an epitome of the conventional Indian wife who considers her husband as her God and her children as gifts from heaven.

A mud hut, thatched, small, set near the paddy field, with two or three similar huts nearby. (NS 6)

The tannery attracts the boys, a wind of modernity touches them, and they want to leave the traditional occupation for it. Nathan, the farmer tries to console himself and Rukmani by saying:

You brood too much, and think of your trials, not of the joys that are still with us. Look at our land—is it not beautiful? The fields are green and the grain is ripening. It will be a good harvest year, there will be plenty. (NS 69)

Tradition is the most fundamental form by which identity is shaped. People are born into an established cultural life, which determines what they are. They incorporate the preconditions into the mental bodies of their own. The selfless and the acquired behaviour become the mediating field between their personal interests and objectives on the one hand and the social demands and obligations on the other. There is no identity without such a traditional basis. Tradition presents identity as self-evident, as a permanent figure in the changing world of human interrelations with others. Sarojini, another traditional Indian woman of Markandaya in *A Silence of Desire*, has depicted the society very well. She is presented as a traditional wife:

She was a good wife, Sarojini good with the children, an excellent cook, an efficient manager of his household, a woman who still gave him pleasure after fifteen years of marriage, less from the warmth of her response than from her unflinching acquiescence to his demands. He was lucky....(SD 2)

Sarojini believes Swami as the healer of all ailments. Her husband who is a rationalist could not persuade her and gradually losses everything he had as gifts for Swami. Her husband Dandekar seems neither inclined to Indian nor Western culture. Sarojini moves away from her responsibilities for Swamy while her husband suspects her of having illicit relations with someone. The fact that Dandekar is not very well acquainted with either of the cultures, his identity is brought at stake; at first Sarojini's household care provides him with an Indian identity but when Sarojini leaves herself in the hands of Swamy, Dandekar feels at loss.

*Some Inner Fury* presents a contradiction in traditions right from the opening of the novel. Mira's family has kept different sets for Indians and the British. They try to maintain both the traditions separately and at times mingle both:

The house itself was equipped to cope with both Europeans and Indians; there were two Dining Rooms, two pitches, even two sets of servants, the one lot knowing Indian cookery and service, the other trained by European memsahibs.

(SIF 19)

They let Mira work instead of getting married which their tradition does not allow. Mira, the protagonist is happy with her work in the beginning but later her love for Richard and her brother's love for the British culture leave her in confusion. Mira is brought up amidst Indian and British tradition. Her brothers Govind and Kit are inclined towards the Indian and British respectively have never let her understand her own tradition. In the shade of Indian and British culture, she can never truly become stable. It is in connection with Roshan that she tries to stabilize herself, but a fury of being British and Indian at the same time haunts her throughout.

Reddy says, '*A Handful of Rice* fictionalises the sociology of India'(Reddy, 154) by arising the polite society to the plight of the rural people. Ravi, a young boy with social values takes refuge in the city to get rid of impoverished conditions; but the city life does not embrace him. He is in quest of identity. His neck is gripped by his poor financial condition. In the suffocating urban life, he has to suffer from starvation and "the terror of losing his identity in an indifferent city, which was akin to death" (HR, 27). He is always worried about his identity whether in village or in city. In the city people are insecure and there is violence and despair. Markandaya employs the symbol of wilderness several times in the novel to designate the kind and quality of life the urban Indian offers. The author writes:

He was alone in the jungle, and in the jungle one fought or died (HR217)

Ravi does not hate his friend Damodar, the representation of an exploiter, as he knows that Damodar has different sanskara. Markandaya describes:

Ravi respected him (Damodar) for it. He himself, he knew, would have gone in for rich food, for silk shirts and enamel cuff links: Yet his upbringing had taught him to focus inward, upon the constant light within, to see the raging obscenities and miseries to their life as essentially external and ephemeral, and for all that he angrily repudiated this teaching, shreds of it obstinately clung, forcing him to admire a personal austerity he would not have practised. (HR113)

He is attached to the values inherited from his village and whenever he recalls it in Madras, he feels weak and pathetic. Srinivas Iyengar states the plight of Ravi “is caught between the pull of the old tradition that all but strangles him and the pull of a new immorality that attracts as well as frightens him” (Iyengar 446).

One’s upbringing plays an important role in shaping one’s identity. We know that tradition is dynamic and so is culture. One’s surrounding and exposure to different things develop the social values and teaches either to love or hate the old traditions. Adapting an alien culture consciously leads to progression of culture, while adapting one has to move through conflict of constraints and mobile nature of a culture. On the other hand, embracing an alien culture blindly leads to extinction of the original tradition.

In *Two Virgins* Lalitha is a child of grace whereas Saroja is a child of soil. Saroja adheres to the cultural values and is never tempted by the glamorous world. Lalitha has her education in an English school, Three Kings School. She is fascinated by her Anglo-Indian teacher, Miss Mendoza who is the symbol of her dreams. Lalitha surrenders herself to the outer world of romance, pleasure and the urban culture. According to her, the ‘city’ is a ‘heaven’, ‘a spiritual home’. Saroja is carrying in her heart the traditional belief in morality and contentment of village but Lalitha revolts against the primitive ways.

A.V.Krishna Rao comments:

...the sense of identity of her characters always comes to be tested against social values. The sense of identity operates within the social context where the clash of different value-systems and attitudes causes concern. (Rao133)

*Two Virgins* reveals the temperament of an Indian woman novelist with tradition and modernity, social evils and tensions, the identity crisis of characters and the arising contradiction of the changing values of modern civilization in relation to traditional Indian people.

In *Pleasure City*, Rikki, the fisherman undergoes a complete transformation. He loses his parents when he is a child; though he stays with Muthu and his family, he has an inclination towards the British as he is the student of Bridie's. He moves towards Tully when the Pleasure City is built. He helps Tully in every possible way and works for him. He no longer wants to be a fisherman; he is content with the life accompanied by the British. He has been hypnotized by the glamorous world of the Shalimar and hence he dislikes the pitiable life of fisherman.

According to A.V Krishna Rao and Madhavi Menon:

The situation of the novel is almost the same as *The Cofferdams*: the intrusion of technology into a non-descript fishing village jeopardizes the traditional occupations of the villagers and imposes on them alien set of values, attitudes and decisions. It upsets the traditional systems of thought and social behavior and scales for values. Commercialism, individualism and materialism enter the original lifestyles of the simple fisherfolk. (Rao & Menon 157)

Tully becomes his true friend where he finds his identity because Tully knows how to value others.

Val in *Possession* is unable to understand himself, he believes whatever he is, it is because of the Swamy. As Caroline wants to take his possession, he asks Swamy before he

leaves with her. He has a blind faith in Swamy, that is because Swamy is his constant inspiration. His work is always neglected by his parents, but it is Swamy who praises him and asks him to continue. So, Val seeks permission of Swamy when he leaves with Caroline:

While I am there, I can see my gods, so it will be two things done. They are all there in the cave. I want to take leave of them before I go. (PS 23)

Though Caroline gives him a sophisticated life which he had never dreamt of, he is never happy with her. A feeling of disgust constantly haunts him. He feels at home when Anusuya, the Indian lady is around. Caroline tries to create Val's identity through his painting, but his traditional values constantly remind him about his culture, which makes him come back to his own land.

Vasantha, the Indian woman in *The Nowhere Man* lives in England but she remains wholly Indian. She tries to preserve her Indian tradition by keeping a sandalwood box filled with Indian soil with herself and the bottle of the Ganga water, having both symbolic and realistic significance. It shows her rootedness:

Vasantha in her breath or bones had remained wholly Indian. She would have liked her remains committed to the currents of an Indian river. (NM43)

Vasantha can be compared to Ashima in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Namesake* who moves to abroad with her husband after marriage. Just like Ashima she is unable to separate herself from the motherland while she stays in another country. She tries to cope up with the livelihood in England but the Indianness within her is always evident within her; as a wife and mother she has always been Indian. Being a Hindu lady, she worships her husband, abides by him; as a mother she always thinks about her children and is not very happy when Laxman chooses an English girl for himself. She never adopts the English ways; in fact, she looked for the Indian things there. Moving from her own land, she always misses her motherland, her identity. She tries to keep the Indian traditions alive as she did not want to leave her identity as an Indian.

In *The Golden Honeycomb* the three generations of the Indian history, as represented by the three Maharajas of Devapur State—Bawajiraj I, II and III respectively, are handled in this novel. Bawajiraj III is brought up and educated strictly in accordance with the norms of British Government. He is always ready to safeguard the British. His mother realizes that her son has been alienated by his education. Usha Bande comments:

The English wanted to hold on to the country that they called “a gem in the British crown”. (Bande 104)

The identity of a particular society is derived from its traditions and culture. Traditional activities reconnect us with the past, whereas the culture defines the spatial and temporal attributes of a particular society at a particular time and place. When the influence of older tradition is slowly reduced, it is difficult to preserve the originality of a culture; to enrich one's culture one has to follow the tradition.

Markandaya has depicted the socio-cultural and economic conflict between the Eastern and the Western values. We have seen that Markandaya has reflected the colonized India in most of her novels—sufferings of the villagers, influence of the British culture, domination of the Britishers and degradation of social values. Kamala Markandaya attempts her best to accumulate the people of two diverse races and two different attitudes of life. The juxtaposition and communication of two separate civilizations, the Eastern and the Western are keenly described by the novelist. Markandaya's personality too shows shades of both the cultures. She is always in favour of synthesis of cultures. We know that a culture is not a sole organisation; it has various association with individuals, class or group, or a whole society. So, a culture has a wide range, it cannot be restricted to a geographical area. All geographical areas have cultures of its own, these cultures are not totally created but it is an assimilation of different traditions and the wealth of the land give an originality to it.

## **2.4 Rural Custom as Messenger**

Custom is a way of behavior that is common to many people. The term rural customs refer to a set of behavior and norms that have passed through multiple generations within a geographical area. People are emotionally attached to these customs and it hurts when they confront other cultures. Most of Markandaya's novels have a rural setting and the characters are created with the authenticity of village, their land and cultivation. Other Indian writers like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Manju Kapoor too have put forth these rural customs in India in their fictional works.

A novel is an art of representing the authorial milieu in interaction with the colours of author's imagination. As New Historicists say every piece of writing is the outcome of the author's experience and thus it represents the traditional value system, education and economy of the society. Novel, a fictitious narrative has the capacity to keep hold of the reader's mind and let her/him visualize the picture of the narrated society. Society in the novel is depicted with various characters and actions and these actions contain the customs which speak of social class, race and religion. They at the same time reveal the characters' values, their tastes and dreams. Kamala Markandaya, a modern Indian expatriate fiction writer has penned eleven novels in all. Her novels too portray the picture of her collected images; they describe the rural India of the Pre-Independence era which she perceived as a child back then. In the history of mankind, superstitious beliefs held a special position until science came forth with its scientific approach. These beliefs gave birth to different customs. Though science has immense progress through science it is not sufficient to eradicate all the superstitious beliefs that are followed as parts of age-old customs, which are deep rooted in the hearts of people. A constant conflict of science and beliefs prevail everywhere in India.

Conflict between Science and belief is an age-old conflict which can even be interpreted as a conflict between modernity and tradition. Kamala Markandaya has depicted this conflict



through various lives by portraying the prevailing customs of the colonial era. Fatalism was one of the main constraints in India back then, instead of searching the cause of an issue, people blamed their fate; that is the reason why sati custom, child marriage, female foeticide prevailed in India for a long span of time.

Through the novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, she reflects the common beliefs existing in the Indian society. As an instance, Indian people use a garland of mango leaves; it is hung at the entrance of a house symbolizing happiness and good fortune for a married couple:

A mud hut, thatched, small, set near a paddy field, with two or three similar huts nearby. Across the doorway a garland of mango leaves, symbol of happiness and good fortune, dry now and rattling in the breeze. (NS 4)

In another episode Rukmani, the protagonist is portrayed as an extremely religious lady with a superstitious temperament who gives her daughter, Ira, a small stone lingam, which has an association with fertility:

Wear it, you will yet bear many sons. I see them, and what the dying see will come to pass, be assured, this is no illusion. (NS 18)

Fatalism is the belief that all events are predetermined and no human being can change it; they are subject to fate. Fatalism is an important theme in Markandaya's novels. Indian people have profound faith in God. Most of the times this faith is blind and thus lacks rationality; so, it is accepted that everything happens is the result of fate. It is because of the absence of rational thinking. Markandaya has represented this in her novels through various instances. In *Nectar of a Sieve*, we see, the consequences of Ira's life; she is deserted by her husband for not being able to give birth to a child, Rukmani says it is their fate:

No fault of yours, or the girl's or her husband's. It is Fate. I do not like to think of the future. (NS 61)

Indian belief system asserts a constant need to make effort to please God. If God is unhappy, life will be shattered and so one is expected to make continuous effort to please the Almighty. Though every time their dreams are shattered because the rain fails, religious-minded Rukmani tries to make offering to the supreme creator:

I took a pumpkin and a few grains of rice to my Goddess, I wept at her feet. I thought she looked at me with compassion and I went away comforted, but no rain came. (NS72)

This novel portrays India's deep-rooted faith in the benevolence of God and Nature. Rukmani the peasant woman prays to God for rain but in vain; although her spirit and belief remain. We see that during the next sowing season, again, this religious faith is awakened:

As soon as the rains were over, and the cracks in the earth had healed, and the land was moist and ready, we took our seeds to our goddess and placed it at her feet to receive her blessings, and then we bore it away and made our sowing. (NS79)

Markandaya's *Possession* depicts, again, the Indians who consider Swamis as the representatives of God; thus, Swamis are treated as God. They become healers and guides to people. In this novel, when Lady Caroline decides to take Val with her, he before proceeding further. Val has blind faith in Swami and, therefore, he wants to seek Swami's permission before leaving:

Valmiki touched the Swami's feet while the Swami's hands rested briefly and gently on his bowed head. It was a common enough gesture, this touching of the feet, to be seen many thousand times in any temple: but there was not in it the same impassioned abandonment to god, it was more a gesture of filial reverence. (PS28)

Val says to Caroline:

He was like father and mother and friend. Always good, Always help. It was so- I do not know how, only it was so. He says good, I feel, I feel good. He say work for god, I work for god. He say you paint well, I paint well. (PS51)

The trust of Val reposed in the Swami symbolizes the faith of thousands of poor Indians in their religious gurus. They seek happiness and contentment by following the edicts.

In *Silence of Desire* too, Sarojini is deeply involved with the Swami. She has very deep faith in his healing powers. She believes that his hands on her head will vanish the tumour in her womb. Instead of seeking medical treatment, she regularly offers worship to the Tulasi plant in the courtyard. She ignores her house, her children and her daily routine. She even steals a part of the family silver to contribute to the Swami's fund. She spends her days in the ashram and nights in solitude and prayer. This sort of prayer is typical of an Indian woman who is religious. She sits cross-legged on the Swami's right and his hands are on her bowed head, he keeps on murmuring to her as if he is chanting mantras, his voice sometimes falling to a whisper like a soft stream of indistinguishable words. There is a rough circle nearby where a small group of men and women are sitting and listening to the Swami in an engrossed manner. Dandekar witnessing the scene says:

No one had even stirred; they were simply unaware of his presence. (SD 61)

India maintains a hierarchy of work since the beginning of the civilization. This work-hierarchy is called the caste system, which in course of time became an identity by birth instead of work. Caste system is deeply rooted in India. Brahmins, people belonging to the superior caste always assume a higher position in the society by maintaining various rules amongst themselves.

In *Some Inner Fury*, casteism is reflected through customs. Richard removes his shoes and rests on the floor imitating the Brahmin families:

One day we went to a Brahmin restaurant, and Richard took off his shoes and sat on the floor like everyone else.. (SIF122)

The Brahmins are mostly vegetarians. In *The Cofferdams* Gopal and Lefevre are good friends. Lefevre bestows a nickname, 'Gecko' or lizard, to Gopal Rao. But being a Brahmin, it does not suit him and Lefevre understands it:

But Gopal was a Brahmin, to whom the consumption of flesh, blood and carcasses was a necrophiliac activity unfitting for human beings, and he did not care to be associated with geckos, whose transparent stomachs grew black with the insects they bolted. Lefevre took his point and gracefully gave way. Their association bounded happily along on his give-and-take basis.(CD 62)

In *The Nowhere Man*, Vasantha always wears a nine-yard sari, the attire worn by married Indian women traditionally. She and her family take off their footwear before entering the apartment and they keep practicing vegetarianism throughout their lives. On the other hand, traditional belief propagates that ashes of the deceased person are thrown in the holy river Ganga in an urn so that her/his soul may rest in peace. Vasantha's sandalwood box and the bottle containing water from the river Ganga are disposed of with her ashes into the Thames.

Appa in *Two Virgins* is in favour of keeping pace with the growing influence of Western culture. His dealings with his wife and daughters are liberal and generous. The huge gap in the society due to casteism is also highlighted where society is divided in the name of caste. The differences in caste kept Mr. Gupta, the film producer, and Lalitha, the aspiring actress on different scales:

...the truth was that although both were Hindus, which was the important thing, their levels were different (TV137)

Further, Appa reminds Amma of Gandhi's preaching that all are the children of God but Amma rejects it. She believes that "it is their Karma, their fate" (TV29) to have been born into that

caste. Marriages are solemnized in India between couples of the same caste. Even stars play an important role:

The star you were born in under had to be in harmony with your husband's. If it were inimical the marriage was doomed...you couldn't have been allowed to marry in the first place. (TV 158)

India, being a patriarchal country, men here are considered superior to women. Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve*, the ladies in *A Handful of Rice*, elderly Amma and Dodamma in *Some Inner Fury*, the old Amma and Aunt Alamelu in *Two Virgins*, traditional Vasantha in *The Nowhere Man* are presented as typical Indian women who have to look after her families and stand beside their husbands in every situation: irrespective of the conditions. Moreover, the widows have to live a caged, colourless life inside the house:

Dodamma, as a widow should--- with shorn head and wearing no blouse under her sari.... (SIF 20)

Appa was also younger than Aunt Alamelu, but although she was older, Aunt Alamelu tried hard not to cross him. She didn't have the status. You didn't have status if you hadn't a husband...(TV 8)

Rural Customs are born to systematize the society. For instance, the caste system was originally based on the kind of work that people do; every profession belonged to a particular caste. But in course of time, it changed and caste started getting defined according to the family one is born into. Age old customs capture a special place in the hearts of people. In this era of globalization, age old customs are regarded as the hindrance to progress. But a group of people who are emotionally attached to them cannot bear negligence to it.

In a progressive culture, rural customs move through different phases and come out of the irrational restrictions; then rural customs become a better way of living. Rural customs reflect history and they maintain authenticity of the culture. These customs are what our society

has stood by since ages. There is a constant conflict between these customs and modern values of the contemporary society. This conflict helps the society evolve into a slightly different and progressive version of itself as time passes. Rural customs are the messengers of societal history; they confront a constant conflict in time and thus move through different phases.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The two opposing aspects of culture ‘constraint’ and ‘mobility’ as said by Greenblatt is well depicted in the novels of Markandaya. A collision of various cultures pave way to a mutual exchange of values and customs. This process enriches a culture; it brings out the constraints of a culture and eventually helps it progress. India, having been ruled by the British, is influenced by the Western culture and many changes have taken place since then. The rational beliefs that they brought with them affected certain individuals to think in a progressive manner and brought out changes in the superstitious practices and beliefs like Sati and Child Marriage, which were rampant in the then contemporary Indian Society.

Since Markandaya’s writings depict the picture of colonized India, they analyze the way of changing of attitude and behavioural pattern of the people in the society: the conflict between the east and the west. A culture cannot be defined in a vacuum. Culture is affected and marked by its journey in time. But in this synthesis, historical sense is very important. Historical sense provides an understanding of evolution of the culture. Without this sense an understanding of the culture at any point of time is incomplete.

Various aspects of different cultures attract people. Lack of historical sense might bring an inclination to other cultures which might result in rootlessness. In Markandaya’s creations we see that characters are inclined towards the western culture, but they cannot give up their Indian heritage entirely and thus a conflict arises in between the two cultures. Mira in the novel *Some Inner Fury*, Helen in the fiction *The Coffer Dams* and Saroja in *Two Virgins* are exposed to different culture from the one they are born into. Though they are attracted towards that

culture, they realize that being in between two different cultures creates various problems, because of which they decide to reconnect to their own root. The crisis of culture is very openly presented by Markandaya. The difference between a Hindu woman's approach to marriage and that of a woman in foreign countries is mirrored in this conversation between Rukmani and Kenny:

What then if his wife cannot accompany him? "Cannot?", I said, "she must. A woman's place is with her husband". He sighed impatiently. "You simplify everything, being without understanding. Your views are so limited it is impossible to explain to you."

"Limited, yes", I agree. "Yet not wholly without understanding. Our ways are not your ways." (NS 108)

Colonial India was a paradigm of one culture being supervised, or sometimes dominated and sometimes altered by another culture that belonged to the people in power and authority. Indian social values and traditional values were undergoing changes despite the resistance that people provided.

In *The Coffey Dams*, Clinton and Mackendrick at first establish their control over the tribals by flooding them out, and then train them to serve the masters like Macaulay's plan to educate Indians during British rule. Hence, the old traditional culture of the colony has been wiped out very strongly and the tribals are forced to depend on them for their living:

The Company of Mackendrick that paid by far the healthiest wages in the area.  
(CD 69)

Modern industrial progress causes a great loss to the traditional values. The independent peasants and villagers are suddenly deprived of their means of income and their happy and peaceful lifestyles; they were forced to adopt the unstable commercial values instead of traditional cultural moral values.

Markandaya's *Possession*, *The Coffer Dams* and *The Nowhere Man* portray the East-West encounter in the best and the most effective manner. They exhibit an element of positive closeness, not that negation or opposition, between the two cultural strands. Culture varies according to geographical areas. Every person belongs to one culture or the other. There are certain underlying elements which are common to all the cultures. Markandaya has tried to reconcile East with West in *Pleasure City*. The blending of the two cultures which stand poles apart from each other is implicitly pinpointed here. The harmonious relationship between Rikki and Tully is a brilliant example of cultural assimilation. It validates how the fact that the people of different nations can still love each other in spite of cultural differences. There is a sacred bond of humanity which binds all the people together and makes them realize that the whole world is a family and all human beings are part of it, in spite of the huge gap between different nations.

Kamala Markandaya has adequately justified how Indian people's faith in religion and passive resignation to fate empowers them to confront the struggle of life boldly; it furnishes them a sort of mental power and guards them from the dangers of tension and conflicts which influence the people of the West. However, it does not mean that Markandaya advocates the idea of fatalism. Rather, she presents the idea of fatalism to realistically depict the innocence ignorance of the oriental people. At the same time, she wants that the people of the East should learn the quality of activeness that is taking charge over the events that befall them. No doubt, in *Some Inner Fury* and *The Golden Honeycomb*, Markandaya depicts lights of politically active Indians. Govind in *Some Inner Fury* and Rabi and his associates in *The Golden Honeycomb* struggle a lot to try to liberate India from the clutches of the oppressive Britishers.

Thus, Markandaya has brought out the real picture of the colonial India by reflecting upon difference between cultures of the East and the West, traditional values and its importance, and the outcome of blindly following the rural customs. Through her fictional



creations, she has portrayed that irrespective of the geographical, cultural and political divide, human beings all over the world share common underlying feelings and emotions. Her works are thus examples of how assimilation of different cultures enriches a culture.

As Markandaya's novels indicate the conflict of constraint and mobility in the process of positive change of a culture and tradition; a reference to Greenblatt's discussion on the circulation of social energy can be taken into account. a literary piece can circulate social energy in the process of reception which moves through a series of negotiations, exchanges and movements. The author takes the objects and ideas from the existing society which in relation with the readers or perceivers are able to represent the social practices and encourage to cross the boundaries for a change.

## CHAPTER III

### RAMIFICATIONS OF MODERNITY IN KAMALA MARKANDAYA

#### 3.1 Introduction

Kamala Markandaya is a reflective writer who tries to bring forth the changes in the society. Her writings depict the confrontation of a society; we can see the constant clashes of tradition and modernity in her novels. A society becomes modern in the process of being changed. Modernism is an attitude, based on the premise that change away from the past is required in order to make the future better. The Canadian Philosopher, Charles Taylor propounds that two types of modernity prevail in the society, in his essay “Two Theories of Modernity”. Taylor differentiates cultural modernity from a-cultural modernity. He says, cultural modernity “characterizes the transformations that have issued in the modern West mainly in terms of rise of a new culture” (Taylor, Two Theories of Modernity).

On the other hand, an a-cultural theory privileges transcultural factors like growth of reason, scientific consciousness, secularization, instrumental rationality, or the distinction between fact and value.

These changes are not defined by their end point in a specific constellation of understandings of, say, person, society, good, they are rather described as a type of transformation to which any culture could in principle serve as input. (Taylor, Two Theories of Modernity)

A-cultural modernity is culture neutral. It means a-cultural modernity brings rationality to the society. Scientific consciousness, secularization can occur in any culture. Taylor calls a-cultural modernity bad one because,

A-cultural theories tend to describe the transition in terms of a loss of traditional beliefs and allegiances. This may be seen as coming about as a result of

institutional changes: for example, mobility and urbanization erode the beliefs and reference points of static rural society. Or the loss may be supposed to arise from the increasing operation of modern scientific reason. This change may be positively valued – or it may be judged a disaster by those for whom the traditional reference points were valuable and scientific reason too narrow.

(Taylor, Two Theories of Modernity)

In the previous chapter we have discussed how Markandaya presents the tradition and culture of a rural society. From one point of view, we can say that the cultural force within the depiction confer the readers a sense of resonance and wonder. The exhibition of the society through a work of art evokes a dynamic cultural force within the viewer from its birth place and the uniqueness of that culture provides a sense of wonder to attract more attention. A resonant viewer is often pulled by various questions and towards the emergence of such art. When we study the ramifications of Markandaya's novels the modern value system often pulls us back with a sense of resonance. Though the progression of a culture evokes wonder, the loss of value system within modernity elicit resonance within the perceiver's mind. Being a western, Taylor analyzes it from the western point of view and said,

I think Western modernity is in part based on an original moral outlook. This is not to say that our account of it in terms of our coming to see certain things is wholly wrong. On the contrary: post 17<sup>th</sup> century natural science has a validity, and the accompanying technology and efficacy, that we have established. And all societies are sooner or later forced to acquire this efficacy or be dominated by others (and hence have it imposed on them anyway). But it would be quite wrong to think that we can make do with an a-cultural theory alone. It is not just that other facets of what we identify as modern, such as the tendency to try to split fact from value, or the decline of religious practice, are far from reposing

on incontestable truths that have finally been discovered as one can claim for modern physics.” (Taylor, Two Theories of Modernity)

Western modernity here means the technological development. The whole world is having the advantage of technology today. It is in this regard Taylor says that all societies will come up with these benefits very soon. In India too, we see how technology has entered every nook and corner. Western ideas, science and technology have a great impact on the Indian Society. A-cultural modernity does not propound the blind imitation of a culture; but it discusses about the culture neutral aspects that uplift a society. Rootlessness (discussed in the previous chapter) does not occur here; in fact, it brings progression. Superstitious beliefs, valueless rituals are not entertained in the society that moves towards a-cultural modernity.

Kamala Markandaya has pictured the Indian society in her novels. The Indians, attracted by the Western culture, the changes occurred in the villages in the colonial period by overcoming the traditional beliefs or destroying the peace by the wind of urbanization and modernization are depicted in Markandaya's novels. The colonial period is established as a period of modernity and destruction at the same time. At a glance this period can be called as the period of knowledge, development and along with a period of destruction and loss. Markandaya's first novel *Nectar in a Sieve* brings up the rural Indian life before and after the colonialism, the novel shows the effects of colonialism with the help of a poor family. Her last novel *Pleasure City* depicts Indian families during the colonial period, the attachment of the Indians and the British. Markandaya's novels analyze the colonial India from both positive and negative aspects. Her novel *The Golden Honeycomb* actually analyze the history of India during the time of Kings and how colonialism entered the kingdoms. In this chapter we are going to analyze the novels of Markandaya; tradition is discussed in the previous chapter, now we will see how modernity has influenced the Indian people and villages during the colonial period as crafted by Markandaya.

Modernity suggests the significant difference in social existence; this difference is from past human experience. Modernization is again a transitional process from traditional to modern. In the process of being modern, we may proceed in two ways: blind imitation and rational thinking.

Cultural and acultural modernity propounds about these two ways. Blind imitation has no relation to rationality, in fact it is a copy which affects the tradition whereas rational thinking moulds a culture and progresses it prominently. As we are amidst technology, our lives are so much accustomed to the scientific discoveries that we tend to forget what the origin was, how have we reached this stage today. Kamala Markandaya, who tries to study the three realities that is past, present and future has noticed how past is neglected by the people in the urge of being modern. The great philosopher Plato opines that literature has no value as it is copy of the copy, though his theory was countered by his disciple Aristotle. But if we refer to Plato's idea in the context of culture, it is evident that culture loses its significance when it is blindly imitated. The 'aura' in the language of Sir Walter Benjamin is lost when the authenticity is lost.

Modernity, as mentioned before can exist in various forms. Markandaya's novels give us glimpses of cultural modernity, the emergence of New culture in *Two Virgins*, *The Cofferdams*, *Possession*, *Some Inner Fury* and in *The Nowhere Man* in the way of urbanization and modernization. On the other hand, *Nectar in a Sieve*, *Pleasure City*, *A Silence of Desire* depict the a-cultural modernity. In process of time, science and technology make a society modern by eradicating the good-for- nothing traditions.

### **3.2 Urbanization as a tool of Modernity**

A civilization can be called complex society characterized by urban development, social stratification imposed by cultural elite, symbolic systems of communication and a perceived separation from and domination over the natural environment. The word 'city' has a relation with 'civilization'. A city is a settlement, usually quite large, permanent; on the other

hand, civilization is a stage of development in human society, characterized by advanced agriculture, long-distance trade and division of labour.

To talk about urbanization, we can refer to Darwin's theory of Evolution, which led to the emergence of a concept called 'Survival of the fittest'; according to which only those life forms can survive in this planet who strive to make themselves fit for survival. So, today, to cope up with this modern world of science and technology, people migrate from rural to urban areas in search of better opportunities, for a higher standard of living and thus tend to make themselves fit in order to survive. Industrialization and technological advances in the urban areas act as the two major pull factors of urbanization. The benefits of urbanization are uncountable, such as easy accessibility of basic needs, better and organized society and social activities, strong and efficient economy, better interconnectivity and network between different parts of the world. Kamala Markandaya has efficiently shown the effects of urbanization in the rural India. No doubt, urbanization has developed the country's economy and the standard of living but at the same time it is the sole contributor of pollution of any kind, agricultural exploitation due to industrialization; depletion of natural resources and natural habitats, demarcation of society based on wealth etc. Enabling cities and towns to grow and turn into an urban area, invites the people promising them solutions to their problems. Craving for money, lavish lifestyle, nuclear family concept is very common in the urban scenario. Moral degradation is inevitably rampant with the sprawling urbanization. The conflict of values appears in different levels, but the most pivotal confrontation remains between the ideas implanted by Indian cultural traditions and the forces of modernity released by science and technology.

In *Nectar in a Sieve*, the tannery is a sign of urbanization entering into Nathan's village, it has taken a huge amount of the village land and tempted the youths to join it, though many had to sacrifice their lives for the tannery by the end.

Hundreds of men. They are pulling down houses around the maidan and there is a long line of bullock carts carrying bricks. (NS 27)

Everyday for two months the line of bullock carts came in laden with bricks and stones and cement, sheets of tin and corrugated iron, coils of rope and hemp. The kilns in the neighbouring villages were kept busy firing the bricks, but their output was insufficient, and the carts had to go further afield, returning dusty and brick-filled. Day and night women twisted rope, since they could sell as much as they made, and traders waxed prosperous selling their goods to the workmen. (NS 29)

The tannery also causes violence by killing a number of wild animals: “Night and day the tanning went on. A never-ending line of carts brought the raw materials in – thousands of skins, goats, calf, lizards and snakeskins – and took them away again tanned, dyed and finished.” (NS 47) It is evident from these lines, that Markandaya, even in the Fifties, was concerned about the ecological imbalance that would be created by rapid technological advancement.

The village changes its shape in the process of industrialization; the streets are crowded with human bodies and trees, all lifeless and there is little time to mourn over, tannery has taken the time and space. Uprooted trees sprawled their branches in ghastly fashion over streets and houses, flattening them and the bodies of men and women indiscriminately (NS 43). For the construction, the pathetic huts are demolished, inhabitants move to the streets for some space to live in. The tannery stood, its bricks and cement head held it together despite the raging winds; but the workers’ huts, of more flimsy construction, had been demolished (NS 43). There was water everywhere, the gutters were overflowing into the streets. Dead dogs, cats and rats cluttered the roadside, or floated starkly on the waters with blown distended bellies (NS 44).

As nectar cannot be collected in a sieve so also a handful of rice does not mitigate hunger. One after another all the young men of the village went away from their home to escape from hunger. Hunger caused Ravi to lose his power of reasoning, his decent behavior and his honest and fair idealism. Poverty stands as a great ordeal before Ravi and his family and it requires tremendous amount of patience and balance of mind to go through it without sacrificing the ethics of living. He was always conscious of his poor life. Frustration and disappointment made him violent and led him to the city in search of a better living. But the city proved no good either, and with little education, Ravi could never hope to get a decent job. Still he went on searching for a job desperately:

Was it still true to say that in this city of hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, each with a hundred needs, there was no job for him between coolie and clerk?"  
(HR 27)

Despair, frustration and hunger forced him to embrace the glitter and excitement of Damodar's society of the underworld; hunger disappeared, and hope kindled in his heart with the prospect of a secure future. Ravi passes through four stages in life, which Markandaya has very successfully patterned and narrated; the four phases are, the life of poverty in the village, migration to the city for a living and falling into the trap of underworld characters represented by Damodar, accidental entry into another phase of life in Apu's household which for a time gives the hope of transformation and address, and reversal of fortune which flings high, once again in the midst of a violent mob.

In the novels *Nectar in a Sieve* and *The Coffer Dams* industrialization is exhibited as the menace to the traditional cultural life-styles. This novel explains the value of human sensibility and connections in the face of technological progress. Like tannery in *Nectar in a Sieve* and holiday resort in *Pleasure City*, Markandaya's *The Coffer Dams* has been built on them "uniform, impenetrable green" (CD 2) of the hillside. In order to construct a dam on the



turbulent river, the jungles and hills need to be destroyed. The face of the village is completely changed with rapid construction of the dam.

Workshop and work buildings, loading and unloading bays, the car maintenance sheds, the workers' quarters, the engineers' bungalows, the amenity buildings, the water tower, ice and filtration plant, pumping and power stations. (CD 3)

As the tannery changes the village atmosphere in *Nectar in a Sieve* and causes violence, so also the newly established tourist resort called "Pleasure City" affects the life and profession of the fishermen in *Pleasure City*.

Effects of urbanisation is represented in full-length in *Pleasure City*. Here Markandaya intends to show that the impact of a new culture has its baneful influence on the lives of the villagers. The novelist points out that the ruthless modern civilization can cause calamity to the lives of those who have no idea of the outer world. The novel begins with a happy and quiet village life of the fisherman community where Mr. and Mrs. Bridie have established a school. Mrs. Bridie teaches the village kids at her residence. Rikki happens to be a fisherboy who is also kept under the tutelage of Mr. and Mrs. Bridie, the missionary couple. When he lost his parents, he was at once given shelter by Muthu's parents, Apu and Amma, the headman of the village and his wife. In course of time, we find that the AIDCORP (Atlas International Development Corporation) has started building a pleasure resort near the village, which is situated beside the sea. These villagers are fisherman by profession and earn their livelihood by fishing. The AIDCORP chooses this village to be a perfect place for the 'pleasure complex' and Mr. Tully, the engineer, has been in charge of this giant project. As the Pleasure City grows up, the village obviously experiences a new life; a transition. It affects the entire village at all levels, socially, culturally, economically, because the labour force as usual is drawn from this village. Thus, the story reveals the haunting impact of the progress on the fishing village, which gradually spreads to take hold of the land and its inhabitants: "half the

fishing tribe came in and solved the labour problem.” (PC58) The people in charge of the construction work are mainly English and they settle in this village for the completion of the work. Markandaya again compares the two different ways of living--- the traditional, represented by the villagers and the modern by the westerners.

Markandaya represents the contemporary consciousness diagrammatically in *A Silence of Desire* and it shows up a new dimension of sensibility in that the fictional emphasis is on the psychological adaption of an urban middle-class family. It is essentially a ‘spiritual’ crisis for the protagonist Sarojini, the calm and traditional wife and mother of the newly emergent middle class in the nation, when she is asked by her most modernistic husband to give up her faith in what she believes to be the traditional values of life. Sarojini, a traditional housewife was in constant conflict with Dandekar for his modernist attitude. Her belief in Swami and her maintained secrecy is an evidence of the contradictory belief among the couple. Dandekar, being educated and influenced by his western co-workers has an outlook different from that of Sarojini. He is rational, he does not believe in his wife’s belief in worshipping of the ‘Tulsi’ or the Swami—the curer of all diseases. Though he is logical in his thinking, we cannot call him as modern because of his patriarchal attitude. He believes women to be kept in the house and she must be busy in looking after her husband and children. So, he is unhappy to see the changing behavior of his wife but he does not try to dig into the matter. On the contrary, he starts spying her to know why she ignored the household work. On the other hand, Sarojini, a typical housewife, who has limited access to the outer world believed that hymns have the power to cure everything, it is above all medications and technology. She is so much attached to the philosophies of Swami that she believes Swami’s blessings as the cause of her gradual improvement in health (which is actually a psychological impact) and as a result she gives away many valuable things from her house to him. It is at last she has to give up her traditional belief and go through the operation of the tumour. Giving consent for the operation and the

successful completion of it make Sarojini realize how irrational she was and it proves her inclination towards being modern.

### **3.3 Acultural modernity in *Possession***

Acultural theory conceives of modernity as the growth of reason, defined in various ways: as the growth of scientific consciousness, or the development of secular outlook, or the rise of instrumental rationality, or an ever-clearer distinction between fact finding and evaluation. Or else modernity might be accounted for in terms of social, as well as intellectual changes: the transformations, including the intellectual ones, are seen as coming about as a result of increased mobility, concentration of populations, industrialization or the like. In all these cases, modernity is conceived as a set of transformations that any and every culture can go through--- and that all will probably be forced to undergo. Acultural theories tend to describe the transition in terms of a loss of traditional beliefs and allegiances. (Taylor, Two Theories of Modernity)

We have already talked about urbanization, though acultural theory and urbanization have some similarity, they are in no way the same. Urbanization promises change but acultural modernity is all about positive change and progress. A cultural theory embraces the consecutive changes that progresses the society. It believes that the society is developing and hence it focuses on rationality. Urbanization focuses on the infrastructure, technology and standard of living and does not keep notice of the standard of peoples' thinking unlike acultural modernity.

We know that Markandaya's writings have a rural setting, but this setting develops as the novel progresses. Development in the setting suggests the life of the characters, their way of living, their mindsets, the societal phenomena. Acultural modernity takes into account all these aspects. Cultural modernity and acultural modernity have some differences which can be explained here. Cultural modernity does not study only the progress as acultural modernity

does. Transformation is very much common in cultural and acultural modernity. In the process of transformation cultural modernity focuses on leading to a specific culture whereas acultural modernity is culture-neutral; it does not lead to any specific culture. Cultural modernity limelights on creating a new culture but acultural modernity tries to keep the individual culture intact. Every traditional culture undergoes through transformations; scientific outlook, technological development, diminishing superstitions are common in every culture; so change through these kinds can be labelled as acultural modernity. On the other hand, radical adjustment in urbanization and industrialization most of the times lead to cultural modernity where the self is changed alongwith place, ideology and traditions.

The most fascinating feature of Markandaya's novels is the notion of cultural continuity in the bustle of socioeconomic and political transformation in modern India. Markandaya's notion of culture is that it is essentially an idea that unites a million individuals and that is what she represents in her writings, her characters and their milieu through the impact of change in terms of human psyche.

In *Some Inner Fury*, the autobiographical viewpoint limits our vision of the political content of the time to a certain extent; but this story of one family makes us imagine the countless other families placed in that historical context. The freedom struggle with Gandhi, the Quit India movement in 1942 have been represented in social fiction, but there is no direct presentation of Gandhi or his work in *Some Inner Fury*. Geographical ambiguity and generalization are typical of the novel. The locale is not specified; nor are the place named except one or two references to Mysore and to Kanyakumari. In spite of vagueness, the point of view is well controlled right from the sentimental introductory paragraph when Mira (a decade after experience), travels down memory lane, to the close of her eventual tale. In her initial defiance of the Hindu family tradition, Mira makes her choice of individualism as opposed to centuries of family unity and tradition. Even Kit, like other westernized young men

of the same background, agrees reluctantly to his family's choice of a bride; but Mira rebels against conformity. Roshan, the independent English lady is undoubtedly a vital influence in Mira's life; the relative liberty which is here by birth has been escalated during her education in a foreign land which is not usual for women of the era. Thus, Roshan becomes to Mira the symbol of freedom who has moved along with her impulse and inspiration and acquired intellectual, economic and emotional freedom. Where individualism is a sign of modernity, Roshan becomes the figure of the modern woman in this fictional work. But no one can be totally free as one has to perform his duties. Even Roshan is not completely devoid of a sense of duty and shows it in her participation in the political movement. Through this political scenario Markandaya has shown the acultural modernity throughout the novel. The novel moves through a bicultural attitude from the beginning, the children here are modern, their upbringing, education and surroundings have brought rationality in them; although their viewpoints differ from each other due to the different kind of education they were provided.

Premala, on the other hand, is the representation of convention, tradition and perhaps conformity, in Mira's life. Though she does not protest, she silently disapproves of Mira's assumption of freedom:

...she could not understand why anyone should choose to leave home; and if she had asked me I could not have told her, for I did not know myself. However, she did not ask; she said nothing; and her silence was a whetstone to the knives of my guilt. And so I would have liked to go with Roshan who was as free as the wind and no man's warder, but this I could not do (SIF 75)

Being an intelligent narrator-protagonist, Mira has an awareness and sensitivity which is too deep-rooted for the ordinary superficial individual. The English language suits her sensibility well unlike the other characters like Rukmani or Ravi. The language of her narrative bears the mark of Markandaya's own deep sensitivity to the vital shades of meanings and images. Mira

is a character who moves through various phases of life but her attachment to her land remained intact. The moves of the heroine suggest the acultural modernity in the novel.

In *A Silence of Desire*, Dandekar plays the role of half-eastern, half-western abiding by the tradition of his own cultural values which ensures self-security and a sense of belongingness and proclaiming rationalism in thought and action because it affords him liberty. The traditional notion of the faithful, obedient wife and the dominant husband is a phenomenon that Dandekar unconsciously accepts and believes in, and when this is threatened, he is shaken. Markandaya's focus is thus on the spirit of the age, the tone with particular reference to the post-independence generation. Dandekar thinks if he is a wage-earner, he would be the ruler of his castle. As he is a product of a middle-class family, he loves the routine relationships and escapes from emotional situation. When routine is altered and emotional outbursts are inescapable, Dandekar feels dejected.

Dandekar visits the Swami to win Sarojini back. When he is with the Swami, his "sense of identity began to slip; he knew who he was --I am Dandekar, he said to himself, but the words have no reality" (SD 62). In fact, at this stage, Dandekar faces an identity crisis. When his "psychic needs" are not fulfilled, Dandekar becomes a dispossessed personality. This identity crisis made Dandekar analyze his views and makes him realize the pain Sarojini is going through. He tries to understand the Swami; Sarojini's disturbance in Swami's disappearance. He consoles her and convinces her to go through operation and medication which she at last accepts. The novel has a happy ending; it is because it does not lead to a new culture, in fact it has a culture with progression.

Val's movement both physical and mental, moral and spiritual forms the structure of the plot of *Possession*. At first an innocent rustic who cannot see beyond his situation, goes to England and is almost miraculously transformed into a sophisticated fop whose artistic genius gets warped in the company of his sponsor and patron. The sudden taste of luxury and attention

goes to Val's head and he begins to indulge in it as a mode of escape from his own self. His final return is to his Swamy who had once initiated him into the spiritual mode of life. This claims his artistic genius. Within the restrictions of his village life, he grows to realize his native freedom.

Val emerges as a product of culture—the culture of a nation deeply rooted in a spiritual identity. His crisis is portrayed against this intercultural background. Caroline's aggressiveness and Val's submissiveness represent the characteristics of their respective races. Here, Kamala Markandaya employs the lady journalist Anasuya as the narrator of the novel and she limits the viewpoint to Anasuya's range of vision and so Anasuya enhances the central intelligence in the novel. She plays the role of an observer-narrator of the events though the main action of the plot does not concern her though she is present through the main events of the narrative.

In *Pleasure City*, the relation between Rikki and Tully is a mirror to a prospective meeting-ground between the cultures; it exhibits how mutual understanding can surpass man-made barriers of language, class and creed. The village people leave their fishing as they have to work in Shalimar now. Shalimar --- a holiday home for the Britishers has taken away the land and the simplicity of people. The people who lived by fishing are now running after money. Urbanization is necessary. But Markandaya wants to argue that in the process of being modern we should not leave the 'self' behind.

### **3.4 Morality and Modernity in Kamala Markandaya**

Morality is the belief which concerns the distinction between right and wrong or acceptability and non-acceptability practiced by all humanity. Many philosophers have attempted to guide us in our quest for morality and moral behavior. The environment in which we develop, the philosophies and perspective we are exposed to in our lifetimes, and our personal experiences with unhappiness and what we see as the cause for moral and ethics. A

person is enriched by moral values; those are learned from the social milieu. Attraction towards the West, desire to become modern hide our original self and thus the moral values diminish.

Children of Rukmani and Nathan in *Nectar in a Sieve* represent the new generation who is aware of their rights and does not have stoic attitude. They know that they need to raise their voice against the injustice. Markandaya convincingly writes about this awareness in the new generation:

In the tannery, once they come to realize of the exploitation they resist it. They realize that the social structure of industrial production within which they function can be stifling exploitative to the social structure of agrarian production within which their father functions. The movement for national liberation raises their consciousness and they become alert to their rights. (NS 121)

The tannery is the ultimate cause of absolute disintegration of Rukmani and Nathan's family and is responsible for Ira's debasement. The novelist highlights the fact that with the arrival of industrialization, social behavior towards women changes. Poverty drives a number of women into prostitution, is substantiated to a great extent by Kamala Markandaya, "Saw her walk to the town, along the narrow lane which ran past the tannery ... a half-smile on her lips answering the jeers and calls that were thrown at her..." (NS 98). The monster of tannery engulfs Rukmani's third son Raja who is brutally killed by the guards of the tannery. The tannery officials allege him of stealing calfskin. The ruthless employers turn apprehensive that the family might claim compensations from the tannery officials. Rukmani is unable to understand this industrial jargon. She says: "'Compensation' I thought, 'What compensation is there for death?' I felt confused, I did not understand what he was getting at" (NS 91). The major drawback which a ruthless progressive society faces is the loss of human sensitivity. Mechanization diminishes humanity, modernization and industrialization walk hand in hand; though higher standard of living and progression are results of modernization and



industrialization, it makes one more individualistic, detached from the society and thus humanity fades away.

Kamala Markandaya's another novel *A Handful of Rice* resumes and concludes with the chief character's struggle for food and existence. The plight of Ravi is the plight of common man rebelling against the socio-economical order. In this respect, T. A. Dunn comments:

Ravi is a human being, not so very unlike us, instead of some strange cipher in a distant land. His problems, his family, his thoughts and hopes are not very different from ours. The meditation of common humanity to all mankind is one of the important functions of literature that is set outside the charmed circle of Western society. (Intensity and Crispness, Dunn)

In the beginning only hunger echoes Ravi's mouth. He cries, "I'm hungry, I want a meal. You let me in, do you hear?" (HR 6). Ravi represents the modern dreamy, confused youth from rural India who ventures into the city for a better life but his actions and venture turn a disastrous as even the city has nothing to offer him. This privation and hunger lead him to the world of violence and evil represented by Damodar in whose company Ravi pursues short cuts to realize his dreams of luxury. Ravi is one amongst the mass migrating from village to city whose innocent and virgin mind of the simple rustic gets blemished by the vices of the city. Ravi leaves the village to escape the vicious cycle of poverty and hunger. He recalls:

As far back as he could see they had all lived between bouts of genteel and acute poverty—the kind in which the weakest went to the wall, the old ones and the babies dying of tuberculosis, dysentery, the falling fever, 'recurrent fever' and any other names for what was basically, simply nothing but starvation. The pattern must have gone on a long time, for generations, because nobody objected, nobody protested, they just kept going, on and on, and were thankful that they were able to (HR 12)

Ravi is lured by the tantalizing sparkles of the city and this change in social structure affects the traditional mores and modes of life. The olds in the villages helplessly witness their young men moving gradually towards the shining riches of the city.

Science and technological advancements have brought abundant comforts in the lives of human beings but it has often eroded the traditional and social life. Kamala Markandaya's *The Coffer Dams* deals with the struggle of a tribe for survival against human and inhuman forces represented by British technicians and ferocious nature. S. John Peter Joseph writes about the novel:

In *The Coffer Dams* (1969), Kamala Markandaya presents the confrontation between the modern machine civilization and the culture of native tribals in a hilly region in post-colonial India. Her treatment of this theme in the novel is quite unique for she tells the whole world that like cancer, industrialization and modernization do not spare even a tribal culture which has immune from change from time immemorial. (Tensions 104)

The relentless growth of urbanization and industrialization has played havoc with the life of the poor tribals, destitute and common masses. The novel is about a British engineering firm, which is engaged in the construction of Coffer dams to check and direct a turbulent river in a hilly region of Southern India. The firm, under the supervision of Howard Clinton, a British Chief Engineer, and his partner Mackendrick, embarks on the construction of a dam across the violent river. Several other Indian people are also employed as engineers, technicians and labourers. Kamala Markandaya writes, "The Great Dam, it had come to be called. Not by him; he was too absorbed by the work in hand for adjectival excess, but by people, who had watched with awe the precipitate birth of a town in the jungle" (CD 2) Here, the construction of the dam reflects the Narmada Bachao Andolan, the movement where the native tribals, farmers, environmentalists stood against the various dam projects which were supposed create a

calamity in the natives' lives. The tribesmen are simple, acquiescent, submissive, docile and tolerant. The tribesmen are the flesh and blood embodiments of ancient culture but struggling on its last legs for survival. The tribal chief in *The Coffey Dams* laments the exploitation of his people and criticizes their easy surrender to materialism: ““they are short of food too, whose fault is it, the jungle is full of game, if they relied on that and not on the money which comes and goes”” (CD 72)

The traditional life of the tribals is vulgarized. As they go away from their roots, their life is shattered. Nature has their life element and they go away from nature. As Rao and Menon criticize:

The loss of the traditional value of stable continuity and harmony is seen as too heavy a price to pay for the modern industrial progress. The self-sufficient farmers and villagers, suddenly deprived of their means of income and their contented peaceful life-styles and forced to move to factories and industrial areas, are not only exploited by the higher classes but also compelled to accept a new set of unstable commercial values contrary to the traditional certitudes of cultural stability and of human relationships. (Kamala Markandaya 101)

Another novel, *A Silence of Desire* deals with husband-wife relationship in terms of conflict between traditional Indian and modern Western values. Sarojini symbolizes an Indian woman who is dutiful, religious and traditionalist in contrast to Dandekar who is a modernist, sceptic and rationalist and the reader realizes from the first page that these differences can lead to some serious conflicts between them in the ensuing course of action. Sarojini is authentically an Indian in her attitudes towards life while Dandekar is standing in the middle. Sarojini finds it difficult to reveal her problem to Dandekar who criticizes her beliefs and actions. She exercises her freedom in only one aspect, in her secretly going to the Swami to seek cure for the ailment. Sarojini is conscious of Dandekar's Western and scientific mind. She also knows

that Dandekar would disapprove of her associations with Swami, her spiritual guru. She incisively takes the decision to keep her visits secret. Dandekar firmly believes in medical science to be the only cure for Sarojini's ailment. But he is helpless to change Sarojini's adamant opposition to go for medical operation. At this point, even Dandekar is ambivalent and finds it very difficult to reject the traditional notions absolutely. Dandekar's beliefs are a part of collective consciousness of Indians and outcome of the matrix of myths and rituals. Therefore, Dandekar is represented as a transforming character, who accepts only the values of rationalism and scientific temper, but it is in a state of despair in the Swami's presence. When he confronts the Swami, he senses a kind of satisfaction and spiritual vacuum. This occurrence directly contends Indian traditional faith in spiritual powers and the enlightened souls who have exceptional supernatural qualities.

Indian society is undergoing great transition with the onslaught of surging modernism and technical advancement. It is vulnerably affected by this ongoing process which has led to the substitution of traditional beliefs and morals. S. John Peter writes:

The sordid and seamy features of modernization are manifested in the frantic process of urbanization and technological innovation and the robotic way of life. Man in modern society seems to have lost his long-cherished traditional roots, cultural heritage and value systems amidst the ongoing progression urbanization and industrialization. ("Tradition", Indian Women 99)

Kamala Markandaya's novel *Two Virgins* too depicts the social change under the shadows of blind westernization. The novelist shows her strong concerns for the vulgarization and disintegration of traditional life in a village community due to the intrusion of an alien culture. The novel shows the way in which modernism through its Western influence provokes the characters to launch a protest against their traditional environments and walk ahead for the fulfilment of dreams by reacting to them in their own independent ways. Lalitha and Saroja are

the two virgins in the novel whose lives are anchored in a small village. But as they attend their puberty, they have their growing awareness of the adult world. Along with this the gradual subversion of materialistic values disguised in modernism makes them move in different directions. Thus, Rao and Menon comment,

The issue of traditional values versus modern Westernised values comes to the forefront in the portrayal of the two ‘virgins’ of the story. While one chooses modernity out of free will and of free choice, the other chooses tradition (Rao, Menon 125)

In *The Nowhere Man*, Srinivas falls a victim to the cruel racial conflict when he is burnt to death by Fred. This does not mean that all the Englishmen are arrogant and cruel. Definitely there are people who have kept the image of the West. Dr. Radcliffe, Mrs. Pickering, Mr. Glass and Mrs. Fletcher belong to humanity. People like Dr. Kenny and Helen make us believe that the West is not totally devoid of human feelings. On the cultural level, wide differences between both the cultures have been presented. On one hand, Vasantha is a devoted wife who serves Srinivas sincerely, whereas on the other hand, Dr. Radcliffe’s wife ignores her husband. Dr. Kenny’s wife deserts him in *Nectar in a Sieve*. It appears that moral values of the people of the East are superior to those of the West. Srinivas’s son, Laxman, who is born and brought up in the Western culture, absorbs himself in that culture fully. He even forgets the sacred bond of love between his parents and children. He selects a girl for himself without the knowledge of his parents and leaves his parents alone in their old age to their cruel fate. The notion of dissipation of parents in old age is quite foreign to the Indian culture. In India, the sons consider it their duty to look after their aged parents. Kamala Markandaya herself settles in England and has experienced the wide gap between the two cultures.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The colonial India portrayed in Markandaya's novels can be studied co-textually and contextually. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Indian society witnessed many social changes that were against the pride and values of humanity like female infanticide, child marriage, sati, polygamy and rigid caste systems. In all these social practices women were victimized at all stages of life. Women were seized from every possible opportunity to elevate their status; they were confined to household activities. Although the aggression of British in India was accompanied with some visionary ideas gained from the renaissance and various revolutions that took place in Europe. They wanted to implement equality, liberty, freedom and human rights in the Indian society which were non-existent in the existing society. These ideas arose an urge for change in the minds of Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Aruna Asaf Ali and Ramabai which subsequently led to the reform movements and resulted in legal proceedings such as enactment of Sati Prevention Act, Sharda Act and many more. The writings of this era too indicate the same through various characters.

In *Inside the Haveli*(1977) by Rama Mehta, Geeta represents the educated Indian woman who is aware of her rights and dignity; parallelly she also understands the integration of a family. Mehta does not portray her as a victim but as a modern woman who is capable of handling the new family inside the walls of haveli and at the same time opposing the age-old customs of binding woman. Being educated in a co-educational institution, she has witnessed egalitarianism; but the confinement of women in the haveli and the purdah system do not disappoint her; her optimistic views towards the society and the urge to change the culture of the haveli is an example of the status of women in the 20<sup>th</sup> century India. Markandaya's *Some Inner Fury*, *The Golden Honeycomb* and *Two Virgins* too depict the characters of independent Roshan and Mira; Mohini as no more a submissive character; Lalitha and Saroja the two contrasting characters of tender age who is yet to attain maturity in a subtle manner. In terms

of education, they are not equivalent to Geeta, but they are out of the boundary of submissiveness. They are able to express and justify themselves.

On the other hand, Chitra Banerjee Devakuruni's *The Palace of Illusion* retells the story of emancipation of mythical Draupadi. Devakuruni has depicted the character of Draupadi as a human being who is liberated from the confinement of perfection and presumed divinity. The novelist has asserted the existence of woman through her own voice like Markandaya's Mira and Mohini in *Some Inner Fury* and *The Golden Honeycomb* respectively.

Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) portrays a young man named Sampath Chawla who transfigures himself into a 'Baba', a sage of wisdom. He becomes the centre of attraction as he resides in a Guava orchard after his termination from the job. He tells the secrets of people which he learnt by reading the postcards during his job earlier in the post-office; so he is regarded as a manifestation of God. People start visiting him with various offerings; the monkeys are attracted towards these offerings and their presence cause turmoil in the guava orchard. The serene life has intoxicated him; though he is asked to be back to his home he refused and at last elopes to the mountains and the guava found on his place make people think about his transformation to a guava. Thus, Kiran Desai has presented the image of 'baba' prevailed in the society. In *The Silence of Desire* and *Possession*, Markandaya too has depicted a similar character of Swami. In the earlier novel, the Swami is regarded as a healer and rescuer, who is able to heal the pain of a tumour or any malady just by placing his hand over the devotees head; here Sarojini is the traditional lady who believes on Swami and Dandekar on the other hand is a rational thinker, who has no faith on Swami as a healer of all ailments. Further, *Possession* portrays a modern Swami who communicates via letters and finally flies to London to assist his devotee. Here Swami is the rescuer rather than a healer. Through the persona of Baba and Swami both the novelists have presented the conflict between

faith and rational thinking and Markandaya has elevated this paradigm by upraising the character of Swami in *Possession*.

The relentless endeavors of the reformers had enormous effect on the general public. The religious developments helped numerous Indians to grapple with the cutting-edge world. The Indian reformers felt that revolutionary thoughts and culture could be best assimilated by coordinating them into Indian social stream. They assisted other compatriots to foresee that every advanced thought was not against Indian culture and qualities. The presentation of current trend guided the Indians towards a logical and discerning way to deal with life.

There were atrocious consequence of British rule exploiting the Indian economy. The colonial trade exhausted the resources of the country heavily and agriculture along with other industries faced critical problems. The downfall of Indian economy had swept away the agricultural land from many peasants. The famished situation gave rise to illegal businesses and observed degradation of moral values. The commoners blamed their fate tried to assimilate to the conditions. Markandaya has depicted the downfall of the economic condition through the lives of Nathan, Rukmini and Ravi in *Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice* respectively. British tried to uphold their power over India by setting into motion the divisive forces of communalism, regionalism and by reinforcing the depraved princely order. Social intellectuals of India noted that the reformist impulse had emaciated rather quickly. It had been noticed that the motto of the British was to educate Indians for engaging them in various clerical works for less wages. They never wanted to educate Indians to liberate them, rather they promoted literacy in terms of education. Government spent less than three percent of its budget on education, completely neglected the education of the masses and remained hostile to higher education and the spread of modern ideas. That is the reason why we witness characters like Kit and Lalitha in *Some Inner Fury* and *Two Virgins* respectively who are fascinated by the



modern education but affection for Western ideology created by the curriculum resulted in their detachment from Indian culture.

Markandaya wishes these cultures to complement each other in such an extent that mechanized West might be benefitted from the ethical and traditional values of the East and the superstitious India from the modernization of the West. Her novels *The Nowhere man*, *Pleasure City*, *A Silence of Desire*, *Possession* depict the inconvenience in holding a particular tradition and custom rigidly. Life is all about change and so flexibility must be there. To uplift the self, to elevate the society positive changes are necessary; and that is what acultural modernity propounds.

Kamala Markandaya exposes the fact that the Indian mass' faith in religion and passive resignation to fate enables them to face the turmoils of life courageously without any assistance. It provides them a sort of mental strength and safeguards them from the jeopardy of anxiety and conflict which afflicts the people of the West. But at the same time, she has pictured the rigidness of Indian people, which leads to a havoc. Clinging to some traditional beliefs and leaving life to fate is a characteristic of Indian rural society; so Markandaya has portrayed the picture of such a society with a motto to bring a change to it. She has not only depicted the rural society but through her characters she has shown the calamity faced by their meaningless rituals and traditions. Traditions which keep the identity of a culture are useful; blind imitation of one culture in another can bring destruction to the mixed culture.

Markandaya does not approve of the complete merge of both the cultures that is the Indian culture with the Western one as she has perceived the amalgamation through her expatriate status; for instance, she does not advocate the western values replacing the Indian values. It is believed that national prejudices go against the upliftment of the culture which ought to keep pace with the different cultures of the globe. One should keep the door open in

order to feel spiritedly welcome the creative advancement of an alien culture towards his own culture and interweave with it. Fanaticism and racialism, according to the novelist, are stumbling blocks in the way of the exchange of cultural values: the former gives birth to violence and bloodshed, where, as the latter creates an atmosphere of hatred and malevolence. Markandaya suggests that while contemplating the values and worth of culture religious taboos, international hostility and political biases, should not be taken into account.

Kamala Markandaya lays emphasis on reconciliation and harmony in cultural life. In *Nectar in a Sieve* she brings Nathan's family in touch with the Englishman Kennington to manifest the consolation of the west for the poverty-stricken downtrodden people of the East. Again, in *Some Inner Fury* the relationship of Mirabai and Richard is engulfed by the forces of nationalism, on the contrary the atmosphere of the family remains westernized. *A Silence of Desire* presents reason and scepticism as symbol of the western culture whereas the Indian element of faith and spiritualism has its own space in culture. *Possession* shows how, Valmiki's rusticity receives the ennobling influence of the West: his manners, habits and sensibility are refined during his stay with Caroline Bell in England. The other novel *A Handful of Rice* is a representation of Indian culture through the dealings of Ravishankar with Hindus and Christians. *The Coffin Dams*, *The Nowhere Man* and *Two Virgins* give contrasting pictures of Eastern and Western cultures; and there is a natural and mutual percolation of two cultures into each other. *The Golden Honeycomb* and *Pleasure City* show how the rudeness and rusticity of Indian dealings give place to the understanding of cultural values and sensibility.

## CHAPTER IV

### MYRIAD CONCERNS IN KAMALA MARKANDAYA

#### 4.1 Introduction

Indian fiction in English of the post-colonial era portrays the traditional Indian society in relation to its rural customs, values and practices along with the gradual change in the process of its transformation from a rural to an urban modern socio-economic society. The Indian subcontinent remained under the British Imperial rule for more than two hundred years. During the imperial rule, the natives were subjected to a number of harassments. Especially, cultural and moral lives of the natives were deeply distorted. Accordingly, the Indian writers emerged with a view to unite Indians and wipe out the colonial perspectives. The early works of the Indian English authors were set against the backdrop of the postcolonial themes of 'Nationalism', 'Racism', 'Ethnicism' and 'Identity Crisis'. The writers also dealt with a variety of sub-themes such as 'rootlessness', 'alienation', 'gender discrimination', 'class struggle', 'hybridity', 'poverty' and so on. While fictionists like Anita Desai and Ruth Pravar Jhabvala are fundamentally concerned with the complications of urbanization, Kamala Markandaya is mainly preoccupied with the problems of despondent encounter between the traditional Indian values and cultural practices on the one hand, and the industrial and urban viewpoint on the other.

Since her childhood in South India, Markandaya passed some time in rural India and thus had a first-hand experience of how men and women live in villages. The kind of schooling she had and the type of wanderings she experienced, made her inquisitive about the people around her. The attitude of the colonizers towards the Indians were transparent to her as she began to interact with Indian and British students. She understood the natives are alienated in

their own country and the British had an eye of hatred and indifference towards them. The superiority complex of the Englishmen shocked her very much. These things helped her in reaching the roots of the maligned relationship between the East and the West. She also got a chance to come in contact with the father of St. James Cathedral who influenced her because it was through him that many of her queries were solved. Her vision widened when she entered Madras University for higher education. Her friendship with Taylor helped her to visit England, countries of Europe and the experiences throughout the journeys, are reflected in her books. She learned a lot from England, its culture, its geography and its inhabitants, her job as a clerk in London and interaction with various persons influenced and shaped her mind and personality which is reflected in all her novels. Eventually tying the knot with an Englishman facilitated her to stay in England as an expatriate.

Kamala Markandaya's fictional narratives, in contrast with those of her contemporary women writers, appear to be more perfect reflection of the awakened feminine sensibility in modern India. Markandaya, in her novels, exhibits the image of the changing traditional society in terms of the development of individual consciousness. The variations and complexity of the achieved content of her works redefine a major trend in the history of the Indo-English novel. In her novels, Markandaya presents a verve for virtuosity which orders and patterns her feelings and ideas generating in a truly enjoyable work of art.

Kamala Markandaya is one of the distinguished writers of the post-colonial era, her novels are the result of the social milieu, the colonial India. Markandaya, the Indian expatriate is basically known for the common theme in her novels: the east-west encounter. Markandaya does not limit herself to the confrontation of the east and the west, she also reflects contemporary issues like hunger and degradation, politics, rootlessness, class struggle and the position of women in Society. Kamala Markandaya has poignantly portrayed the plight of common man and his eternal struggle against the hostile forces in *Nectar in a Sieve*, *The Coffin*

*Dams* and *A Handful of Rice*. These novels explore a wide range of Indian experience to bring out these subliminal rhythms and struggle.

Kamala Markandaya's expatriation made her alert to of Indianness as well as of the contrast in the two systems of values leading to interplay between the traditional mores and the raging modernity. She is quite sensitive to this cultural dynamic and has articulated the co-presence of two cultures, two ways of life representing the spirit of the West and the East. In her first novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, she explores the Western industrialization and its sinister consequences that alter the life style of Indian villagers. A tannery which is at the centre of the novel, stands for all that is evil in capitalism and the imperial West, whereas a medical missionary, Dr. Kennington balances the picture with his medical services and altruism. Kenny, the English missionary doctor, is an exception to the general English people who are usually referred to as callous people who oppress Indians in every possible way. He feels pity and love towards common Indian rustics and serves them through his medical service. He takes interest in solving the domestic problems of Rukmani. This alien man is kind and sympathetic towards the problems of the villagers. On the contrary the native people and the zamindars exploit the innocent rustics. The landlords expect the tenant farmers to pay rent even when the land produced no food for the family. Food and seed prices increase because shopkeepers have limited supplies and are selling little. Rukmani sells her vegetables to Biswas to make money; his bargaining and discouraging comments give her pain; in this way the moneylender tortures the village people. The effect of worldwide economic depression was visible in Agricultural sector and that is what Markandaya has portrayed in her novel *Nectar in a Sieve*. There was a downfall in prices of agricultural commodities from 1926 and collapsed after 1930. The demand and supply cycle had been highly impacted. As the demand for agricultural goods fell and exports declined, peasants found it very hard to sell their harvests and pay the revenue.

The theme of East-West encounter has greater significance in the novel *Some Inner Fury* in which events take place against the backdrop of the National Independence Movement. Mirabai and Richard love each other but they belong to two different races and two different community that is the ruled and the ruler. The novel examines the impact of East-West tension at both the political as well as personal levels. Through this novel Markandaya emphasizes two salient features of East-West encounter: the influence of Western education and culture on the perspectives of Indians and the clash between them due to political dominance of Britain over India. The nationalistic sentiment of the Indians and their revulsion towards the English rulers are emphasized through a sequence of conflicts among the members of a single family, the brother Kitsamy who endorses Western ways and manners whereas his cousin Govind seeks to overthrow the British Raj and has great regards for Indian culture and values.

East-West encounter is presented in the novel in terms of the characters' respective conceptions of the West. Kit with his Western zeal and pro-English inclinations looks down upon his own country, "“Nothing is impossible if one sets one's mind to it. Trouble in this country is no one makes the effort!”" (SIF 25). Kit doesn't like widow Dodamma to be visible in the house due to her shorn head and without blouse saree as it is Indian widows' attire. But Govind is agitated against this hypocritical behavior, as the novelist writes: "Govind, unexpectedly vocal, aligned himself with Dodamma. Why should she, her own kith and kin, put herself out for this Englishman?" (SIF 20)

The influence of Western culture, thinking and civilization on Indians leads to the appearance of distinct type among the educated Indians. Kit's views are totally Western and because of his Western outlook, he is unable to understand even his Oriental wife. He tries to impose his acquired cultural values on his Indian wife Premala. As a faithful Indian wife, she tries her best to adjust herself with her husband, who has hardly any attachment with his soil and his native culture: "She had taken her veena: but Kit, though he was proud of her

accomplishments, had no liking for Indian music” (SIF 62). Premala is pulled apart by these two diametrically opposite forces and her struggle quite suggestively ends with her death. Kit also dies due to the fury of the revolutionaries. It is his pseudo-cultural identity which proves disastrous for his existence. Mira’s lover Richard is among the class of liberal Westerners, who makes a symbolic attempt to bring India and England closer by imbibing the Indian culture. The English missionary Hick is also an example of sympathetic West who is devoted to the Indians and runs a missionary school which is later burnt by the extremists. Roshan Merchant represents the category of people who has assimilated the good qualities of both the East and the West. She is a liberal, independent lady with judicious frame of mind of the West and soft sentiments, generosity of heart and deep attachment for India. She is a true nationalist but she is not an extremist like Govind nor biased like Kitsamy,

It was Roshan who came nearest to him in liking and sympathy for the ways of West; but she belonged to the East too. Born in one world educated in another, she entered both and moved in both with ease and non-chalance” (SIF 107).

*Some Inner Fury* deals with the predicament of inter-racial romance and inter-racial marriage. These types of relationships are expected to bridge the widening gulf between the East and the West. The ‘Quit India’ crowds that raged through the eastern Indian towns during 1942 had weakened the system of the Raj and made everyone believe the near end. People perceive the lines of demoralised and wounded soldiers and of the white rulers’ reign. It brings a wave of hatred and anti-British feeling engulfs every relationship, even the love of Mira, who has to desert Richard helplessly to become the prey of mob fury; and death of Kitsamy who falls victim to the fury of the revolutionaries; and Premala who also dies of choking. In this way, the novelist has portrayed the gulf of hatred between the East and the West in which human values are totally ignored and innocents have to suffer. In Markandaya’s other novel, *A Silence of Desire*, the encounter of the East and West is depicted in the form of a clash between

the Indian spiritualism and Western dubiety and modernism. There are no Western characters in the novel and the encounter is depicted through the Western educated and oriented individuals like Ghose and characters of Sarojini and Rajam who are authentically Indians in their attitudes while Dandekar stands does not seem to be so. Sarojini, a traditional believer, hides the secret of getting her tumour cured from her spiritual mentor Swamy. When Dandekar gets to know about it he wants Sarojini to undergo medical operation while she has an implicit faith in the spiritual healings of Swamy, “You would have reasoned with me until I lost my faith, because faith and reason don’t go together, and without faith I shall not be healed” (SD 68). Through the character of Sarojini, the novelist makes us aware of the tussle and divergence of the Eastern and Western attitudes towards religion, society and man-woman relationship. In the novel, we find various instances and references about the feelings of the East towards the West through Dandekar’s colleagues Ghose, Chari, Joseph and Sastri. When Dandekar lies asking for leave to sort out his problem, Ghose sarcastically says: “It had become an international joke, the number of aunts and cousins Indians had whose funeral it was imperative for them to attend” (SD 48). Ghose is ashamed of the shortcomings of Indian culture and tradition, bearing the burden of Western influence and desperate to bring about changes.

The conflict of East and the West is not in politics but in the school of thoughts. The Indian approach to illness and its cure, whether through belief or medicine is extremely different from that of Western approach as the novelist analyses:

In this country the body had long taken second place, forced into that position by a harshness of circumstances which it would hardly have weathered without the sustenance of the spirit; ....by the teachings of a religion ... which sought to turn the eye inward and find there the core of being” (SD 158).



In Swamy's presence Dandekar experiences his materialism evaporating and all his Western predilections vanishing away leaving only the divine blessedness present all around. Dandekar denies the power of faith and healing as he is exposed to modern ideas, but he cannot resist Swamy's influence. He feels dazed and confused, "'I don't know,' cried Dandekar, putting his head in his hands. 'There are so many impressions, one on top of the other'" (SD 103)

Kamala Markandaya's novel *Two Virgins* depicts a rural domestic life consisting of Appa, Amma and their two daughters Lalitha and Saroja. Besides this Amma's widowed sister Alamelu also lives with them. Manikkam, school mistress Miss Mendoza, film director Gupta and the sweet seller Chingleput are other minor characters. The story of the novel is mainly the story of two sisters Lalitha and Saroja; young, vivacious, enthusiastic but entirely different from each other. Though they share common environment, they react differently to various necessities of life in the expeditious globe of a modern Indian village. The novel deals with the neo-feminine sensibility in a relentlessly changing traditional Indian society where one is cognizant of the double pull of the modern society in the form of tradition and modernity. Indian and Western values and manners, and also between one's individual dignity and one's stereo-types role of daughter, wife and mother. Uma Paramesswaran appeals, "Celebrate being a woman. Celebrate all that goes with it, the body, past strengths, future possibilities" (208). The novel shows the way in which modernism through its Western influence provokes the characters to launch a protest against their traditional environments and search for their fulfilment by reacting to them in their own independent ways. Lalitha and Saroja are the two virgins in the novel whose lives are anchored in a small village. But as they attend their puberty, they face growing awareness of the adult world. Along with this the gradual subversion of materialistic values disguised in modernism makes them move in different directions: the

dilemma of traditional values and modern Westernised values is materialised in the portrayal of the two ‘virgins’ of the narrative.

*Possession* presents the perpetual conflict between the Indian spiritualism and the Western materialism, the former winning the latter. Caroline Bell endeavours to own Val absolutely by hook or by crook, nevertheless the spiritual values of the Indian tradition are so profound in him that he achieves success in liberating himself from the clutches. The novelist attempts to accentuate the truth that the British rulers exploited the innocence of the Indians and effort to possess them both physically and mentally, however ultimately, they failed and was compelled to quit India. Caroline flies with Val to England and tries to exploit him fully through his talent. In *Possession*, through the character of Anusuya, Kamala Markandaya reveals her powerful perspective:

Possession, I thought appalled: attenuated form of the powerful craving to have, to hold, which was so dominating and menacing a part of Caroline: which left a grey and ugly trail of human misery such as, horribly swollen but not unrecognizable, one saw stumbling in the wake of power societies and empires. (PS 219)

Describing her relations with Val, Caroline says,

We go out of our way to meet, and we squabble every time we do. It’s a sort of love-hate relationship, don’t you think? Like the kind British and India used to have. (PS 69).

When Val ceases painting attributing to his relations with Ellie, Caroline does not tell him anything. While talking to Anasuya she describes her own strained relations with Val as the classic ailment where England and India never comprehend each other. The novelist tries

to convey the view that relations between England and India are strained because of spiritual and political reasons.

Through the observations of Anasuya, Kamala Markandaya expresses the view that the dry East must imbibe the colour of the West. The East should adopt the good qualities of the West but should not allow the West to overpower its soul. Anasuya is portrayed as a writer, an Indian lady from south who moves abroad for the sake of writing purpose; it seems as if our author Markandaya has become alive through the novel to her readers. Anasuya has studied the east and the west minutely and has reflected her perception by making Val realize his origin. It is Anasuya who helps Val to come back to India.

In the novel *A Handful of Rice*, the East-West confrontation becomes very evident in the form of the influence of modernism. Ravi, the village lad is tempted by the modern world of city life, although in the city, he becomes a prey to several vices and is caught dreadfully in the clutches of Damodar and his companions. He tries his level best to stabilize himself tranquilly in the modern society with his wife, Nalini, but he could not achieve anything in the city except hunger and starvation. He comes across bitter experiences in the materialistic life provided by the city. Owing to dearth of money he fails to grasp holdings for the treatment of his son, he cries:

I don't blame myself for not getting the doctor. I blame them-them, society,  
Guilty of casual murder (HR231).

In *The Coffey Dams*, the East-West encounter is on technological level as well as on human level. On the mechanical and technological level, the conflict arises between the technological power and the strength of nature symbolised by the turbulent-South Indian river on which the dam is being built by the westerns and fierce form of nature is preventing it to happen by the heavy rains which try to hinder the task of the construction work. Here, through

Helen, Markandaya expresses her views on equality among all people. Through her sympathy for these tribal people, Helen makes no secret of her feeling thus:

It is nothing to do with age. I just think of them as human beings, that's all. You've got to get beyond their skins, darling. It's a bit of hurdle, but it is an essential one. (CD 6)

There is another British lady, Milli Rawlings, who hates Indian people:

Never trust the blacks. That's my motto, and I stick to it. (CD 33)

Mr. Rawling remarks:

Slaving away at a thankless job in a thankless bloody country. (CD 88)

Markandaya brings out the fact that the Europeans are not against the East. It is due to persons like Helen, East-West encounter has not reached a stage of climax. For Bashiam's tragic death, Helen blames Clinton:

Can't you care? Don't human beings matter anything to you? Do they have to be special kind of flesh before they do? (CD 107)

A further glaring occurrence of Clinton's brutality is revealed in the course of the construction of the dam. During the first accident, two English officers, Bailey and Wilkins die, and the work has to be suspended to give them a decent Christian burial. In the second accident, forty-two poor tribesmen fall into the river. Two bodies of the demised cannot be tracked down due to the jamming of a boulder. Clinton, the western deciphers that the construction must go on and the bodies could be incorporated into the structure. This inhumane act of Clinton exposes the Western double standards concerning human values. Such as Caroline exploits Val in *Possession*, Clinton in *The Coffey Dams* too does the alike deed with

simple and honest tribesmen for attaining his own goal of completing the construction of the dam.

In *The Nowhere Man*, the East-West encounter has been depicted on both the human as well as cultural level. The wide gap between the Eastern and Western cultural values on the human level is effectively depicted by the novelist. Fred, Mike, Joe and Bill, the young men of England feel that the black people are depriving them of their jobs. Fred is so obsessed with the feeling of hatred that he challenges a coal-blackman sweeping the streets:

Here, you. You have got no right to be in this country. You bugger off, see?  
(NM 176).

But the black man retorts:

I got my right when you got carved my country (NM 177).

The racial conflict in England has been dealt with by Kamala Markandaya effectively and with an authentic touch. Srinivas's feelings are the feelings of thousands of Indians and other Asians living in England who are the victims of racial conflicts and who are forced to think like Srinivas does:

The people will not allow it. It was my mistake to imagine. They will not, except physically, which is indisputable, have me enter. I am to be driven outside, which is the way they want it. An outsider in England. An outsider in England. In actual fact I am, of course, an Indian (NM 249).

An extensive reading of Markandaya's novels ascertains that among all the novels, *The Golden Honeycomb* borrows most tremendously of India's political history counterparting the English. It is not a mere documentation of history; woven into the saga of a native princely family are political events that shaped our lives. The novel begins with the deposition of a

native ruler who had the temerity to defy the English. People are at pains to find a suitable incumbent and must abide by social custom in selecting one of a suitable caste. On the political level, it deals with the East-West conflict and the subliminal feeling of loathing towards the British rulers. On the other hand, the British rulers look down upon the Indian people exploit Maharajas for their own selfish motives on the human level. The Britishers dethrone Bawajiraj I, the ruler of Devapur state and install a commoner to the highest position. In fact, the Britishers want puppets to work under their control. Bawajiraj II dies in an accident; Bawajiraj third and his successor, Rabindranath are the central characters in this novel of Markandaya. Maharaji opposes and counsels when Bawajiraj II desires his son to acquire the British culture: "Let him learn about his own country first." (GH 20). But in the agent's view her attitude reinforces her view that Indian Women are backward:

The boy who will one day be Bawajiraj III learns about England, its geography and history, its constitution, its manners, laws, and customs and about its constitution, its manners, laws, and customs, and about its explorers, generals and statesman who from the highest motives, have annexed a third of the world. (GH 21)

Markandaya depicts the Britishers inhumane ways; they want to brain-drain Indians, thus making them fall from grace of their own culture, detest their near people. Indirectly they attempt to design an elite class to create a feeling of hatred among the countryman. However, this attempt is thwarted by Rabi who grows up as a contrast to his father. On one occasion while talking to the Resident, Sir Arthur, Rabi refers to Victoria, the queen:

Nobody wanted her to be. She became Empress by conquest; the people never wanted her. (GH 86)

The British Resident, Sir Arthur, is judicious, honest and kind towards Indians. Rabi establishes friendship with Sophie, Sir Arthur's daughter. In fact, Rabi is against the English rulers for their cruel way of ruling the country. This cruelty ultimately becomes the cause of revolt by the Indians and results in the East-West encounter. Eventually in her other novel, *Pleasure City*, Markandaya conveys the idea that the East and the West can establish harmonious relations. There are still chances of their coming closer, the only need is a better spirit of understanding and the harmonious relations between Rikki and Tully prove this. Their love grows so much that Rikki cannot bear their parting when Tully leaves for England:

Grief smarts on cheeks too young, really, to take them. He too was having difficulty, as he let in the clutch. He would not have thought it possible to feel such pain. Bunched like a fist, in his throat (PC 374).

In this novel, Markandaya seems to realize her desire to assimilate the East and the West. In *Nectar in a Sieve*, Markandaya has portrayed Dr. Kenny, a missionary as a rescuer for the village people. He sets up a hospital for the poor Indians where they may get the treatment for their maladies. Moreover, in *Pleasure City*, Mrs. Bridie too tries to uplift the society by educating the children of her locality. Through these novels Markandaya convey the idea that the East and the West can establish harmonious relations.

Through this friendship of Rikki and Tully Markandaya exhibits the mutual understanding and cooperation of the East and the West in the post-colonial period. She also proposes that this is an exemplary of how the two nations of the world can furnish their vigour to the upliftment and welfare of all and sundry.

#### **4.2 Rootlessness in the novels of Markandaya**

Writers of the colonial era depict the predicament of identity crisis caused by rootlessness. In V.S. Naipaul's *The House of Mr. Biswas* the house symbolises Mr. Biswas'

lifelong search for identity and self-recognition. And during his search for a perfect house he had always assumed a concrete house fitted with new and modern amenities, coated with bright paint, in the back of his mind; and they (he and his family) had looked at few. It was tough for him as he was an alien in a foreign land. Again, In Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner* The parentless childhood of Sindi developed in him a deep sense of emotional insecurity that stretched a veil in his vision of life. Sindi found himself in solitude and a stranger to every situation of life. Debarred from any family ties and being rootless, haunted his soul everywhere. The absence of a place to call as home compelled Sindi's soul to cry out occasionally. There was hardly any moment when his conscious mind was spared from the desolation of homely ties and notion of being a foreigner. Rootlessness can occur when one is in an alien country detached from the natives. Novels like *Namesake*, *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri, *Desirable Daughters* by Bharati Mukherjee preach the same. On the other hand, rootlessness may occur in the presence of the natives also. Imitation and emulation of other culture may result in the loss of the origin.

Kamala Markandaya has explored the theme of rootlessness in her novels by employing various form of it. The novels experiences and exhibits a real sense of life; life exists when the roots to it are intact his, on the contrary life expires mentally when roots are detached. The novelist has presented rootlessness and the resultant calamity have been set forth remarkably in all her five masterpieces, *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Handful of Rice*, *Possession*, *The Nowhere Man* and *Two Virgins*.

*Nectar in a Sieve* is an intensely distressing narrative of detachment caused by industrialization. The protagonist of the novel Nathan is passionately attached to his land, and his life goes on as long as he is not detached from his land. His sudden demise would not have occurred and would have continued to live on a content life of a peasant if he had not been uprooted from his land for the tannery. The tannery swallows up his land and he along with his



family is evicted and dispossessed. When Rukmani's third son, Arjun, decides to go to Ceylon to work in a tree plantation, she opposes the idea as she apprehends the family disintegration. The roots that were binding the family no longer remain tight. In the hope of finding shelter Nathan and Rukmani move to the city where Nathan passes away but Rukmani lives on because she has her roots in the soil. One lives as long as one has one's root intact.

In *Possession*, this theme of rootlessness is presented in a different way. Val, a promising lad, is taken to England by Caroline. Thus, he is uprooted from his soil, significantly despite all the material comforts at his disposal, he never finds himself at home in the new soil. His growth is marred and he senses the similar feeling of a plant when it is uprooted from its original position and later planted in a rocky soil where it cannot survive due to the lack of moisture. But Val returns to his soil and is eventually saved from disintegration. Finally, he passes through the traumatic experience of being rootless with nothing to fall back upon for the sustenance of his spiritual self.

*A Handful of Rice* describes the life of a youth who is detached from his own village for survival and all his endeavours to achieve and lead a worthy life in the city goes in vain. He abandons his village and attaches himself in the common exodus of the city life to escape from the rural destitution. But here Ravi gets disappointed when he faces the difficulties of the urban life. He tries but fails, falls into the clutches of Damodar, a criminal and becomes the victim of the underworld smugglers and bootleggers. Here he is confronted with the sinful life that spans in the city in various manifestations. As a result, he comprehends that this city is not suitable for poverty-stricken people like him. He realises that the city is dominated by corruption and darkness at various levels. Instead of leading a virtuous life which seems to be difficult, he merges himself in the exodus of criminals. Being a member of a gang of criminals, he observes the city life in its naked forms; its lawlessness and evil, gloomy deeds appeared to him as he is in a dense forest. Ravi tries to fix his roots in the city life, he discovers the profession of Apu

is convenient and tries to learn the tailoring skills from him and also falls in love with his daughter, Nalini, which gives him enough courage him to eliminate himself from the gang of criminals and lead a virtuous life. To the readers it seems that Ravi has found his roots and these roots are going to be firm when he marries his love Nalini. However, his life is totally shattered with Apu's death, because the family becomes a burden to him. So, here rootlessness occurs due to Ravi's adverse conditions that force him to lead a life full of sufferings.

The novel, *The Nowhere Man* deals with the problem of Indian Immigrants in England. It also deals with the individual's quest for identity. Markandaya creates a tragedy by allowing the protagonist to be a victim of racial hatred although she also reiterates that hatred destroys one who nourishes it. Srinivas and his wife, the leading characters of the novel, leave India in their youth and settle in England. They are almost uprooted from their country. After spending two-third of life in England they look upon it as their own country. Srinivas has almost forgotten India, but Vasantha remains a truly Indian lady. Srinivas proudly conveys Mrs. Pickering:

“This is my country now” and again repeats, “My country: I feel at home in it, more so than I would in my own.” (NM 63)

But Srinivas feels alienated when young men like Fred, Mike, Joe and Bill who failing to secure decent jobs in their country, begin to consider the blacks as the reason of their deprivation. They turn hostile towards them and thus he experiences the first terrible blow when Fred tells him frankly: “you got no right to be living in this country” (NM 177). At this juncture, Srinivas feels the pinch of being a foreigner settled in that country. He muses over his sad plight that “I have been transformed into a stranger” (NM 248). He is now fully convinced that India is his native land and, in fact, he cannot escape a miserable lot after his uprooting from his land of birth and now he does not belong to any country:

“Nowhere”, he said to himself, and he scanned the pale anxious eyes which were regarding him for reasons that might drive him out, a nowhere man looking for a nowhere city. (NM 179)

In *Two Virgins*, Lalita, fascinated by the modern world, the city life. She says,

It is barbaric not having a fridge (TV 18)

Lalitha opines that now a days fridge is a basic need, not a luxury. She is on cloud nine when Miss Mendoza glorifies her beauty and her potentiality of becoming a film star in near future. Her mentor Miss Mendoza introduces her to the film director Mr. Gupta, who makes her visualise the world of fame and glory. She, as a teenager, is absorbed in the ecstasy of urban life and hence she criticizes the terrible heat on her return to the village. But her pride of the city life and being an actress bursts when she is impregnated by Mr. Gupta. In spite of being dejected, tortured and exploited, her fascination for the city life does not faint. Therefore, this novel brings out the rootlessness occurs in the adolescent stage of human life when one is lured by the glamorous world, in seek of fame and glamour she is parted away from her own culture which resulted in the elimination of Lalitha from her own village as she could not retain her roots again in the village after the resentful experience with Mr. Gupta.

In the context of rootlessness, *The Golden Honeycomb* too plays a vital role. The cruel English rulers in India are suffering from rootlessness as they could not identify themselves with the Indian people. They treat Indians as slaves and consider themselves as masters. Even the Indian rulers have to follow certain instructions from the British authorities:

Bawajiraj III cannot raise levies. He is forbidden to make treaties. The first priority upon state revenues is not the state, or even the Maharaja, but the upkeep and maintenance of the Garrison force. He cannot travel abroad without the Viceroy's plain view of the prices, which is also withheld with him, is that

they are set of unruly and ignorant and rather indisciplined school boys, who cannot be let loose frequently on the pleasure trail abroad. (GD 37)

Although Bawajiraj's roots are fixed because he is loved by his people, yet slowly he gets alienated from his people due to taxes imposed on people under instructions from the British rulers. He is reduced to a puppet in the hands of the British imperialists.

Thus, it is evident that natural forces and man's own weaknesses uproot a man. Kamala Markandaya has analysed the problem of uprooting of human values and cultures in her novels.

#### **4.3 Politics in *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession* and *The Golden Honeycomb***

Kamala Markandaya experiences and perceives the concurrence of freedom struggle in the Indian History through her eyes. It is an era of political turbulence which shuddered the ground of the British empire. Many British settlements were part of the southern region of India. It incorporated many villages in the city by expanding the city's sphere. The unavoidable pitiful condition of the villagers was an outcome of the expansion. This is an era of political strife and tensions, Markandaya could not but be involved in it. This political conflict finds expression in her three novels, *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession* and *The Golden Honeycomb*.

In the movement of 1942, every part of the country witnessed agitation and processions at this moment. Though the government constantly tried to suppress the public by firings, lathi charges, and arrests; hatred towards British never calmed down. People were involved in violent activities like attacking government property, damaging the railway lines, and disrupted all possible means. The restrictions imposed by government during this time resulted in the shutting down of press and media houses. *Some Inner Fury* is politically a war cry against Britain. Struggle for independence, anger and hatred felt by the oppressed people for the oppressor have been ably depicted by Kamala Markandaya. The people are shown fully immersed in Independence movement and boycotting foreign goods. Govind incites his

followers to violence and they set fire to the newspaper office where he himself worked for twenty years. Here, Markandaya presents a true picture of India's independence-struggle in this novel. She rightly brings out the picture of the Indian society which is coloured with political consciousness. The political conflict between the Indian patriots and the British rulers is an external aspect. Even the members of a family could have divergent conflicting views on various aspects of political struggle. It is a scene of people who are extraordinarily politically alive. Govind believes in violence whereas Mira and Kit's wife Premala, are in favour of peaceful means to oppose the cruel British rulers. Kamala Marakandaya reveals her ardent nationalism and her complete identification with, and approval of the Quit India movement.

In *Possession*, the emphasis is on cultural domination, but the political theme is partly present. Caroline's 'Possession' of Val is symbolic of the Britishers' attempt to possess India. It is the spiritual values represented by the Swamy that prevent Caroline from 'possessing' Val. Likewise the Britishers wanted to possess India through various attempts, they exploited her people although the strong spiritual values kept the enthusiasm and morale status of the Indians elevated and ultimately, they succeeded in removing Britishers from India. During the struggle for independence, the spiritual morals took the formation of political clash in the struggle of Gandhi and Nehru. The main reason for the political clash between the Indians and the Britishers was the cognizance of the native people that the Britishers do not want to make them friends, rather they want to exploit them for their own selfish motives.

*The Golden Honeycomb* is a political novel in the real sense because it deals with the struggle for Independence. This historical novel is an offshoot of nationalism, an expression of a newly awakened pride in India's past. It is used as a means of arousing and fostering national pride. Due to differences in culture and aspirations of the Hindus and the Muslims, the novelists could not artistically exploit the mutiny of 1957. They concentrated only on those periods of history which offered no chance to the Muslims to doubt the intentions of the fighters for

freedom. In the struggle for freedom, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians all participated with zeal. Not those communal feelings did not erupt, but they were held in check; and whenever they dominated the mind, they wrought despoliation to public life.

Kamala Markandaya's treatment of the theme of politics is superb and depicts her patriotic feelings. She writes this novel long time after she settles in England. It is her emotional attachment with the Indian culture and history that prompted her to give an authentic picture of national movement for freedom. Through her novels on freedom struggle, Markandaya wants to present reality before the English readers also and highlights the atrocities of the cruel British rulers on poor and innocent Indians. She wants to make the English readers familiar to the cruelty imposed by the British rulers for their own benefit.

#### **4.4 Women in Kamala Markandaya's work**

The women condition in India was deplorable; education was far from their reach; they were regarded as a burden because of the high demand of dowry; child marriage, sati and torturous customs for widows were performed. Everything was accepted as the fate, the cry of the victims of this patriarchal society were always unheard. Reformists like Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyoti Rao Phule and Savitribai Phule, Syed Ahmed Khan, fought for the rights of women and tried to abolish sati and child marriage, endeavored to introduce Hindu widow remarriage, strived for the equal rights and education for the women and the downtrodden; toiled for the removal of social and educational backwardness amongst Muslims respectively. The strata of women before the introduction of Sati (Prevention) Act 1887, Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856, Sharda Act, 1929 was never regarded respectable. Their existence was considered in the presence of their father or husband only. They were never allowed to speak on any social matter, nor was their opinion considered. Novelists like Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Kiran Desai, Kamala Das, Mahasweta Devi, Kamala Markandaya tried to portray the deplorable conditions of women through their writings.

Kamala Markandaya's exploration and depiction of a feminine consciousness is mainly directed with regard to an objective account of female sentiment against the background of the Indian woman's emerging awareness of her identity in a male dominated social and moral order. Some of the circumstances reported in Kamala Markandaya's fiction give evidence of her acute cognizance of her identity as a woman and her observation to the complications faced by women.

In Kamala Markandaya's works women is portrayed in two distinct patterns: on one hand the economically poor and middle-class society and on the other hand the wealthy aristocratic society. The behaviour of the two-fold pattern of women is reflected through their living standard; the former category of women acts in traditional ways of silent and helpless acceptance of pain and suffering whereas the other category voices against injustice to women and claims a distinct identity for the Indian women in terms of close involvement in social and political occurrences and movements.

In *Nectar in a Sieve*, the tannery is the root of violence in the life of the inhabitants. Peasants loss their lands and are turned into labourers. The novelist presents the ugliness, sordidness and meanness, which invade the village with the coming of tannery. It has degraded them economically and socially; hunger not only kills, but it also degrades and dehumanizes. It drives Kunthi to prostitution and later on she resorts to blackmail Nathan and Rukmani. Here sex is represented as a commodity that can be exchanged for food; hunger leads to immoral deeds and inhumane activities.

Sex is considered an instrument for existence. Markandaya compares and contrasts the two characters, Rukmani and Kunthi. Rukmani is the mother earth and accepts all sorts of violence passively. She has resilience in her to absolve all odds, whereas Kunthi revolts. Sex is a power for Kunthi, but it is a religion for Rukmani. Markandaya presents the character of

Ira as having a great ability of sacrifice. She sells her body to keep her family alive, specially Kuti. For her sex is existence. On the other hand, we know that Indian woman grows up amidst a tradition-ridden society full of rituals and customs, here it is regarded as sin to fall in love with other man than one's husband. The novelist's revolutionary delineation of Jayamma's character in *A Handful of Rice* is a burning example of this. Nalini, the modern girl leads her sexual life normally. But Jayamma is a traditional woman with little choice. Markandaya shows how Jayamma's desire turns into fury because of long suppression and how she tries to satisfy it by looking at pictures, processions and by trying to walkover burning coals. It shows that she tries to get vicarious pleasure, which may appear by revolting to orthodox Indians.

The notion of a woman's identity is different in the East from that of the West. For Western critics a woman of the East may be regarded as a slave, whereas in Hindu society, freedom for woman is not recognised with mere self-assertion. It is important to perform her responsibilities in a spirit of self-sacrifice and to merge herself with the family. So, Dandekar, though has some Western notions cannot tolerate his wife's apparent disobedience. After knowing the reason behind, he becomes more helpless because she has received necessary protection the traditional. Dandekar's logical agnosticism averts him from complying Sarojini's faith and his confused ideas of marriage hinders him understand her right to freedom.

In *Possession*, Caroline, a Western lady leads a life of her own choice. She tries to possess Val and so takes him to London with her. Ellie is the first agent in Val's temporary rejuvenation; Ellie, the defrauded remnant of the ravages of the cruel World War II; she becomes a temporary motivating force in the revival of Val's art. Val, however, violates Ellie's honour; and the pregnant Ellie is summarily disposed of by Caroline. The other Indian lady Anasuya, the narrator of the novel is the spoke person of Markandaya. She possesses a strong character with a charming personality. Anusuya narrates the story and plays the role of Val's comfort provider. Val, the rustic Indian feels at home in the company of Anusuya. As her name



suggests, she is free from envy and jealousy, a helpful and positive character throughout the novel. In the great epic Ramayana, we meet Anusuya, the wife of the saint Atri who offered ornaments to Sita on her visit to the ashram. The motherly, loving and knowledgeable Anusuya is again portrayed by Markandaya as a strong character, who now narrates the story of Val and his way back to his root.

In *The Coffer Dams*, Helen moves away from the yoke of marital responsibility in search of an illusory freedom. She is impelled by a spirit of exploration and adventure. The constraints of marital life with Clinton prove her independent nature to a great extent; and thus, she aspires for freedom from them. Helen in the verge of being self-sufficient and self-reliant tries to seize the happiness of life by living not for public approval and acceptance but leading a life of her own. Her interest in Bashiam and the resulting love-affair is a desire for a freedom which cannot ultimately help her fulfil her social responsibilities. It is resultant of her desires to obtain a sense of union with her own true broad-minded identity. She comprehends the awareness of actual liberty only after her encounters in this pursuit.

Vasanth in *The Nowhere Man* is a modern lady who is ready to accept changes. At first, she refuses to become a Londoner but being practical she adopts the efficiency of British methods over the messy Indian ways. She has symbolized their cultural moorings which she had once forcibly rejected for a better future.

In *The Golden Honeycomb*, Mohini is represented as the symbol of Independence. It is because of her Bawajiraj III realizes of the metamorphosis in course of time. She is content to perceive him treating his people just like his father. She asserts:

For once in your life you are behaving like a father to your people. You are actually letting them keep a freedom of what's theirs, instead of grabbing the

whole lot for yourself and your bania friends. You ought to be pleased for their sake. (GH 579)

The concept of new woman defined by Manjula is represented in Mohini and depicted at-length through the character of Usha. She encourages the freedom-fighters and becomes the protective shield in Rabi's life. Usha, the courageous lady, acts boldly with those who come in their touch, she also divulges her irritation asserting that everyone longs for freedom, it is not that men has to fight for it alone. She looks after the suffering people and takes care of them in every possible way. In this way, she redefines the spirit of independence and becomes a model of encouragement and liberty, she becomes the prototype of future strong woman and the women of the era who do not want to confine themselves within four walls of their homes followed her. They wish to manifest their potentiality that they can change and form the destiny of the country by their active participation and responsibilities. In the end of the narrative, the readers meet Usha with Rabi planning for subsequent times that will apparently result in their union.

*Two Virgins* portrays a growing young girl's secret longing for sex. She opines that the girl dreams of sex, sets image in her mind and takes pleasure in intellectual sex that influences her thoughts and activities. One of such descriptions which is an exercise in the portrayal of a growing adolescent's secret desire for sex:

His hands were terrible; they were puffy and fat and they looked like a bunch of bananas, Jaya said. What terrible things those fingers, could do if they reached up under your skirts. Saroja closed up her thighs and asked exactly, but Jaya only said it was not to be described. Jaya's eyes shone when she told; she was older than Saroja, but in the same class. Saroja could not interpret that sheer disturbed her, made her feel she was missing out. (TV 13-14)

It is the latent sex that is revealed when one feels and is suppressed through intellectual intercourse. Saroja is able to suppress it on the moral ground. She will never repeat the story of Lalitha and hence she remains virgin till the end of the novel unlike her sister. Fascinated by the Western values and a higher lifestyle, Lalitha loses her honour, she bears Mr. Gupta's child and is content in that life. Her parents' efforts to bring her back go in vain whereas Saroja clings to the traditional values unlike Lalitha.

Kamala Markandaya's women characters like the peasant wife Rukmani is conscious of her self-esteem and responsibilities towards her family, perceives various possibilities of life by being positive throughout; her daughter Ira grabs the attention of the readers with her heroic self-sacrifice, slaps the face of the so-called society by showing her courage in bringing up the sickly albino; the ideological character Mira values love over marriage and advocates the marriage of two minds, deserts her lover Richard for the sake of the nation; on the contrary the Western lady Roshan is an Indian at heart who symbolizes the revival of Indian women in wake of the national movement; the contrasting character Premala, a traditional woman sets an example by setting her priority to serve the group; the silent sufferer Sarojini finds her path of rescue in the faith of Swami and understanding to save the family from future consequences; the possessor Caroline's jealousy for Annabel and Ellie depicts her narrow-mindedness, she is portrayed as a model of anti-patriarchal society; on the other hand Anasuya, the well-bred Indian is aware of the Indian tradition and culture serves as a frail bridge between eastern and western world and illustrates the events in a series of sequence, Nalini, the inspiration takes out her husband from the immoral world with her sanity and realism and the Western Helen aspires for Indian spiritualism, her belief in religion of humanity based on love and fellow-feelings is expressed by her feelings for the tribals; old Mrs. Pickering, a balanced character cares for lone Srinivas with her mature attitude, Srinivas's wife Vasantha retains the customs and traditional rules throughout as a devoted wife; adolescent Lalitha is lost in the city life and

later attempts suicide repenting her misdeeds, but her sister Saroja is remains content in her village life, she is not attracted by the glamorous city life, the simplicity of village life allures her; Manjula, asseverates her grievance, cajoles Mohini not to marry Bawajiraj III; Mohini who thrives for freedom of thought and abhors to be queen at the expense of her emancipation; Usha encourages the fighters of freedom movement, plans her future with Rabi in the subsequent times; Valli is content with her share of the household tasks taken willingly and performs well as a sales assistant in the Shalimar Gift Shop and Emporium; Corinna wishes to live in her own world though she is a great admirer of art; Mrs. Contractor with her empirical attitude, supervise all the activities of Shalimar; Mrs. Lovat with steadfast loyalty to her profession of writing, holds her ground that men are not superior to women --- are instances that familiarise the readers with Indian cultural values and moral.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Observing the inclination toward the west, Kamala Markandaya suggests that instead of imitating the Western value system India should create her own identity by eradicating outdated values and absolute attitudes. India should pursue her own path, sticking to her long-cherished ideals while imbibing the best that West can offer. Markandaya does not solely indicate to the sufferings during the colonial era. She brings forth her neutral attitudes towards the cultures, through her novels she portrays the ideologies formed in the societies of that reign. She emphasizes on the exploitation of the Indians by the Britishers and the prevailing fatalism in Indian culture. Both the cultures have to imbibe the best from each other to form a land of assimilation. This endeavour may cost lots of struggles and conflicts that has to carried out in the path of transformation.

Kamala Markandaya's fiction is crowded by characters of every kind with a depiction of a typical cross-section of the nation. Markandaya's characters represent the social classes

and their behaviour towards various things. Class consciousness in the novels of Markandaya is the principal cause of fictional tension and moral polemics. Through class consciousness she represents two types of character: one is sensitive and tries to fight against destiny in the face of anguish and suffering, on the other hand the second type of characters (particularly women) prefers to accept their fate and destiny in calm acceptance of agony and humiliation.

Markandaya visualises the Indian villages and rural lives, the society constitutes a social order that has given birth to a class-hierarchy where there are factory-owner and the wage-earner, the elite class with aristocratic families and the illiterate, poor people, the skilled trader and the conventional shop keeper, people dream for urban comforts and on the other hand some are clinging to conventional cultural practices. We can say that the emergence of technology has brought in a clear rural-urban divide leading to a duality of classes: the haves and the have-nots; the exploiter and the exploited.

Ever since mankind split into antagonistic classes, its history has been one of struggle between these classes, i.e., of the oppressed against the oppressor, the working people versus the exploiters. The history of slave-owning, feudal and capitalist societies is replete with outburst of fighting between slave and slave-owners, serfs and feudal lords, proletariat and bourgeoisie. For never could the oppressed people reconcile themselves to a situation where they – the creators of all the material values – were doomed to poverty, hunger, inequality and brutal exploitation, while a handful of overloads appropriated the fruits of their labour and grew rich on the exploitation of millions.

The class struggle has been waged in various forms ranging from passive resistance to wars that have shaken entire nations and empires. History has known a multitude of heroic deeds performed by the people in the fight for their liberation. The slaves insurrections in Ancient Rome and the Kingdom of Bosphorus, the peasant uprisings in Medieval Germany

and France, the peasant wars in China and Russia and the proletariat's revolutionary battles – the Paris commune and the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907 ---- were examples of this struggle. But each time, the ruling classes were able to retain power, preserving their economic might and political supremacy.

Here we can relate to the class struggle talked by the philosopher Karl Marx. As Marx saw the development of class conflict, the struggle between classes was initially confined to individual factories. Eventually, given the maturing of capitalism, the growing disparity between life conditions of bourgeoisie and proletariat, and the increasing homogenization within each class, individual struggles become generalized to coalitions across factories. Increasingly class conflict is manifested at the societal level. Class consciousness is increased, common interests and policies are organized, and the use of and struggle for political power occurs. Classes become political forces.

There are two main points of interests in Marx's criticism on literature. The first is the relationship between the past and the present with regard to art and literature, and the second is the relevance of base and superstructure. Marx defines the base as the social relations between men which create and produce materials which are eventually put up for exchange. From the base comes a superstructure in which laws, politics, religion and literature legitimize the power of the social classes that are formed in the base. So, for Marx, art and literature are a superstructure of society. Marx also states that the superstructure has its own tempo of development, which is not reducible to a mere expression of class struggle or the state of the economy. Despite this view, Marx also states that "art is determined by a mode of production". This seeming contradiction can be resolved with a simple example. T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land*, as a direct reflection of ideological and economic factors.

From the pre-colonial past to the post-colonial present, India has always retained some form of class-distinction based on caste and wealth. Today while the traditional system of caste is fast eroding, there still exists an insistent distinction based on economic and political power. In terms of this distinction, the Indian society can broadly be classified into three hierarchical levels; the working class, the middle class and the upper class. Though each of the economic classes tends to assure a distinctive identity and its social status and functions, it is not always true that the three classes have very clear and defined boundaries. The novels of Kamala Markandaya offer a wide spectrum of characters, places and situations which not only center round the controlling forces of the three classes but also reflect their joys and sorrows, agony and anguish as they negotiate with the challenges and complexities of life and living.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **THE FICTIONAL TECHNIQUES OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Kamala Markandaya's fictional works are extensively sociological in nature by revealing her awareness for arising Indian scenario in regard to the village. Her writings represent the social problems in a narrative way; it is her only mean to arise the people of her society, to bring a change and to uplift the nation. Markandaya's fiction has reached every nook and corner as like she herself did and portrays the various scenes with the colours of Markandaya's mind and imagination. Markandaya revisits the Indian villages, talks to the people, examines the differences of the East and the West and paints in words. Her way of presentation reflects her way of thinking, her mindset, her desire to work for the people, for the society. Studying her novels, I found some common issues present almost in all her novels and so I titled the chapters accordingly. Her way of perception is discussed in the previous chapters and here we will discourse about her way of presentation.

Fiction, as we know, is based on imagination rather than on fact. Fiction is actually fabricated account of something. It is a narrative form in novels or short stories, it can be a film or any way of entertainment like drama or a series of shows. Markandaya employs various fictional techniques to attach the readers with the plot. While reading her fictional work, one can actually visualize the setting, hear the dialogues and curiosity grows on. Moreover, her writings have the capacity to make the reader feel the pains of the people and thus they become alert to the social issues. Her intended meaning is conveyed in each novel, she has her own style, viewpoint, pace and angle of referring which created the overall effect of the novel. Stream of Consciousness, Descriptive technique and Flashback technique are employed by Markandaya to narrate her plots. She mostly uses first person and omniscient narrative. Her



novels, *A Handful of Rice*, *The Cofferdams*, *Some Inner Fury*, *Two Virgins*, *The Nowhere Man*, *Pleasure City*, *The Golden Honeycomb*, *A Silence of Desire*, *Bombay Tiger* have third person omniscient narrative. The novels *Nectar in a Sieve* and *Some Inner Fury* have first person female narration. Rukmani's narration in *Nectar in a Sieve* has a nostalgic tone. The story of *Some Inner Fury* is projected in the mind of the novelist and it is continued to be internalized. The protagonist Mira narrates the story and she is a highly educated urban girl. The silver box in the novel stimulates the memory. From the past memories of the small silver box and the piece of sleeve of the shirt of Richard bring in the experiences of heroine, one after another. The building of romantic love between the white immigrant and Mirabai, the native of India is continued. Besides it also records the sweet memories of Govind and Premala. There is a deep twist in the story when the Quit India Movement comes to the surface of freedom fighting in the nation. Now Mira sacrifices her love and leaves Richard. He is terminated from India and re-joins the English in England.

Markandaya experiments in her next novel *A Silence of Desire* by using third person omniscient narration. Here, for the first time we see the narration is through a male character Dandekar who succeeds in depicting the clash between faith and reason. The autobiographical mode is absent here. Third person omniscient narration is used in *Possession* too. Here, the narrator is a minor character named Anasuya, who narrates the story of her foreign friend Caroline.

The essential elements of a novel are the characters, action and plot. The narrative technique revolves around three main characteristics which Aristotle identifies as 'hamartia' (sin or fault), the anagnorisis (recognition or realization) and the peripeteia (reversal or turn around d). The hamartia means a sin or fault which in a tragic novel is often the product of the defect in the character which is termed as the tragic flaw. For instance, Mira boldly ventures to hold the hand of a foreigner. She crosses the limits of caste, creed, race and nation. She should

have restrained herself. As she taps up the source of the new love, new meaning and new life, she is curtailed from doing so by the national movement. It is not her fault, but it is the fault of history or the political situation in India. The biggest movement is given importance; all the other minor incidents are not regarded so. The father of the nation Gandhi would have said mother country is more important than the love of a dear person. It is true about Mira. Next the word *anagnorisis* means recognition or realization. Rukmani realizes the faults of the authorities that they have brought the tannery which destroys the lives of the poor. She also realizes that the urban life is not suitable for her. Again, she comes back to village life with Puli, the adopted son. She recognizes that she is not at fault; she does not want to quarrel with Kunthi for her unwanted curses. She realizes that poverty leads Ira to prostitution, but she could not prevent her.

Again, Rukmani realizes the truth about her own death. It is a revelation through the deaths of others. When the truth of the situation is recognized by the protagonist Mira it's a moment of self-recognition. She has realized that she has to sacrifice her true love for the sake of the nation. The situation of Quit India Movement has made the realization.

Then the word *peripeteia* means a turn-round or a reversal of fortune. In classical tragedy, this is usually a fall from high to low estate, as the hero falls from greatness. Here, the hero Richard is ready to take Mira to England. But he could not, because of the constraints. He is not failing, but he is rather failed by the situation. In the case of Rukmani, she could not save her son Raja, or Old Granny or Nathan from death.

The graph of Markandaya's career from *Nectar in a Sieve* to *Pleasure City* displays the ascending order in contents and techniques. Her narrative techniques have the different facets to highlight the characters particularly female ones focusing not only their outward personality but also the inner one. Through her male-characters, she reveals some feminine characteristics

which form the image of a woman from a man's viewpoint. Her narration leads to the verge of erotic scenes as it takes shots of the bed scene particularly of the first night of Rukmani.

The novels of pre-Independence era rarely depict the pre-marital sex. The novels written after Independence depict the pre-marital sex in small doses, with much trepidation and less thrill in heart. After 1960s, the novelists have come out of their self-deluded world to write about the reality they experience directly or indirectly. Markandaya has tried to establish her identity as a woman writer and depicted in her novels the sexual experiences of her characters, mostly female. It establishes her authenticity and sincerity. Being a woman, she has better access to the emotions of sex and violence of another woman than her counterpart male novelists. In Markandaya's novels, cultural stereotypes are discarded in favour of woman's desire, instincts and feelings.

Kamala Markandaya's deliberate representation of Indian and English women characters, manifest their own respective ideologies and religious beliefs to the point of being indistinguishable to the other. We can see that there is a scope for anticipation when a character on either side makes an attempt to understand the neighbour's religious and philosophical inclination. The economy created havoc is represented in *Nectar in a Sieve*, freedom movement and politics in *Some Inner Fury* and the conflict of traditional and rational beliefs in *A Silence of Desire*.

## **5.2 Narratives**

Kamala Markandaya succeeds in raising her protagonists' voice through her narrative techniques. Though sometimes, in the first-person narrative, she does not retain her detachment and in narrating the viewpoint of her female protagonists, it seems that the task of the narrator is performed by the author in various situations. Kamala Markandaya's novels abound in zoological imagery; she uses animal imagery as a non-linguistic device to describe linguistic

phenomenon. In *Possession* monkey image exemplifies this. It evokes the psychic complications in Val's character.

In *Nectar in a Sieve* the first-person narrative is the central character of the novel and as it feels the character herself is speaking to the reader, the storyline becomes more interesting; but it does not mean that the omniscient narrative in the other novels make them less interesting. Omniscient narrative presented in the novels make them realistic by depicting real backdrop in the novels. The characters, their appearance, dialogues and the settings bring a realistic feeling to the novels.

As this research work focuses on the concept of New Historicism, Markandaya's novels can be studied as palimpsest of her own work. Palimpsest can be defined as a manuscript which is the result of an edited manuscript. The earlier manuscript moves through effacement and the parchment leaves a way for a new one. In this regard, Markandaya's novels play an important role. Her several visits to India from a foreign land and Indian culture and literature had shaped her perception and vision towards India and its people. Her novels primarily describe the colonial Indian scenario and in reference to it she makes some clear illustration of lives in a foreign land. Which using the technique of effacement to accumulate a new notion or picture; she never negates the earlier. Through this process she endeavors to present a harmonious and beautiful nation where rationality and integrity prevail with incredibility.

Her first novel *Nectar in a Sieve*(1954) depicts the rustic lives of the Indians. Life and experience were the ways of learning; cultivation was the chief occupation of the villagers. Nathan's dream to engage his sons in hereditary cultivation while the boys' were seized by the tannery presents a vivid picture of the generation gap which is a pertaining even today. The impact of colonialism was drifting into their simple households disrupting their occupation and shattering the dreams. But they accepted everything as their fate. Urbanization and migration

towards the cities were signs of modernization; but these modern ways were creating discomposure in the rustic minds and as a result Markandaya depicts the homecoming of the protagonist. Though the novelist ends the novel while Rukmani is in her native soil; she leaves a room for the readers to comment on Rukmani's homecoming and adjustability.

Markandaya's next novel *Some Inner Fury* (1955) brings out the multifaceted personality of Indians who wanted to be an English and Indian at the same time. Here she continues to represent the class distinction in a vague manner while she emphasizes on the relationship between an Indian lady and an Englishman and finally their separation led by patriotism. By erasing the notion of conventional Indian woman as mentioned in the earlier novel; Markandaya portrays Mira independent woman in the influence of Roshan in this novel. This novel also attempts to bring out the picture of Indians by depicting the two visible divisions; one as the followers of the colonizers and other as the opposers. The Freedom struggle was an outcome of oppression and hatred for the British. Through this novel Markandaya strives to sketch the scenario of the Freedom struggle.

*A Silence of Desire* (1960) is the third novel by Kamala Markandaya which tells the story of an Indian couple with the theme of faith and reason. Dandekar, the rational government clerk became suspicious about his wife in her constant absence; through this character Markandaya presents a picture of Indian patriarchal system where women are the commodity possessed by a man and she is bound to some untold marital rules. Here she also draws the picture of Swami, who is believed as the God man, the notion which is prevalent even in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. She has moved from the Indo-British scenario in this novel and tries to perceive Indians through the lens of a rationalist. Here, Dandekar's reason overpowered Sarojini's faith on the Swami which resulted in tranquility.

Markandaya's fourth novel *Possession* (1963) carries the concept of Swami in a different form; here Swami is the rescuer, the mind healer but not as a representation of God like the earlier novel. She also brings out picture of the colonizers possessing over Indian rustics through the character of Caroline Bell and Valmiki. Startled by the paintings of Valmiki, Lady Caroline purchased him from his parents and went to England where his paintings were her way of maintaining herself in the higher class of society. The novelist also sketched the perplexities of Indian rustics led by helplessness, ravenous families in the hovels as portrayed by other contemporary writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Mahasweta Devi during the period of famine as a consequence of World War. Though Markandaya draws a thin line of famine in this novel, she attempts to build the character of Valmiki as the representation of the oppressed.

The adversity and consequences of famine led the novelist move through effacement and recreate the parchment which caused the emergence of her fifth novel *A Handful of Rice* (1966). From the title itself the ramifications of famine is evident. People were running for food, smugglers came into existence as a consequence of their agony, chaotic environment, devastation prevailed in Indian households, class distinction escalated between the haves and have-nots. The British residence became the dreams of many; but they were unable to keep themselves out of hunger. Moreover, fathers were incapable to see doctors and let their sons die which became traumatic for many and the loss of moral values persisted as an upshot. The need of supportive political and social structure was a constant cry throughout the novel.

Through her sixth novel *The Coffin Dams* (1969) the novelist pens down the simple, traditional Indians and the modern colonisers. Clinton, the engineer is engrossed in his task to build a dam, the several lives killed during this construction do not leave any trace in his heart. He believed it to be a part of the construction work, the mechanical, materialistic Clinton's wife Helen is inclined to the moral values and system of the local tribesman of India. This

novel also analyses the human qualities through the mind of Helen, the British lady became a helping hand towards the Indians in the village. During the construction and its immediate positive effect as illustrated by the colonisers made the tribals learn to adjust and adapt with the British; but later the price for it is too high as the dam leaves their lives at jeopardy.

Her next novel *The Nowhere Man* (1972) moves through the trauma of racism in an alien country. To escape from the onslaught of colonization Srinivas, the protagonist tries to feel at home in London and raise his children there. His wife dies of tuberculosis and his sons no more accompany him. He is alienated, far from the native land; the foreign land seems to be an alien country for him. Mrs. Pickering's helpful hand is a way to recover his depression; but the issue of racism burns him again. The novel presents the role of an Indian, who moves away from his own land in quest of dignity. But the alienation haunts him throughout and he became a nowhere man. The sixth and seventh novel of Markandaya attempt to find out various ways to adapt the English culture and assimilate them. But the theme of oppression and alienation within and outside persist in both. Srinivas' regret of moving from his native land indicates the relation of honesty and loyalty of his soil.

Markandaya's eight novel *Two Virgins* (1973) moves through the effacement of the earlier one and the parchment tries to locate Indians in the country itself. The modern culture fascinates a village girl and becomes a blind follower of the western culture. Her encounter with Mr. Gupta clears her way to the city and the world she dreams of. Her journey to the city in attachment with the western culture is an outcome of her detachment with the native culture. Unlike Srinivas in *The Nowhere Man*, Lalitha does not alienate herself geographically but her inclination towards the west is an outcome of her detestation for Indian values and culture. Her father's dream to educate Lalitha like an English woman is questioned due to the loss of her moral values. On the other hand, Saroja, the younger one relives in the village life and is

enchanted by the Indian culture. The novelist attempts to picturize how Indians living abroad and in the same country may face various trouble due to the complete detachment of tradition.

Markandaya's ninth novel *The Golden Honeycomb* (1977) depicts human relationships by peeping through the past dynasties. The Maharajas' amiable relationship with the British during the decline of the empire is noticeable. Prince Rabi, who was brought up in the wake of nationalism unlike his father the Bawajiraj is able to perceive India's humiliation and sufferings. He abandons his father's acceptance of the status quo and aligns himself with the Indians. His education and the mass over the throne are inevitable causes of his choice of Usha over the British Resident's daughter Sophie. Moreover, Rabi's sincerity towards Sophie and the British during the rising hostility between the Indians and the British is suggestive of Markandaya's attitude towards the Western people and culture. This novel is an indication the relationship during the colonial era. It is also suggestive how discernment wins over blind inclination.

*Pleasure City* (1982), the tenth novel of Markandaya picturizes the assimilation of the east and the West through the characters of Rikki and Tully respectively. Their relationship suggests that the two cultures can co-exist and keep the identities intact by creating a harmonious bond by enlightening each other. It is noticeable of Markandaya that the Pleasure city is a luxury complex, a transformation of the dam in *The Coffey Dams* while the dam is a replacement of the tannery in *Nectar in a Sieve*. Assimilation of modern technology and ethnic culture in this novel suggests the benevolence among the nations. Markandaya also evolves the relationships of Richard-Mira, Srinivas Mrs. Pickering and Helen-Bashiam in this novel by the amity of Tully and Rikki.

Thus, Markandaya's manuscripts develop in the theme of east west encounter and the disruptions, hunger and degradation, inhumane activities, cultural conflict caused by the



colonisation. As a witness of colonial and post-colonial India, Markandaya leaves her mark as a perceiver and suggests Indians to move towards progression by retaining the ethics and history of the Indians.

Success of a fiction depends on the author's narrative technique; it is the narrative technique that makes a novel interesting. A chronological approach to the study of the narrative techniques adopted by Kamala Markandaya in her novels has made it possible to put into perspective the development of Markandaya as novelist and artist. Written over a period of almost three decades, the novels at the two ends of her career differ in theme, content and style. *Nectar in a Sieve* and *Some Inner Fury* fall under the first phase narrative of Markandaya which are written in a conventional style and the latter two novels *The Golden Honeycomb* and *Pleasure City* use a radically different mode of narration. The novels of the middle period tend towards one or the other method, but *The Coffey Dams* marks the landmark in Markandaya's writing. *Two Virgins*, Markandaya's one attempt at popular writing did much to sully her image as a committed novelist and artist and Markandaya has not repeated it again. When we talk about fictional technique in Markandaya, we must talk about the different techniques.

### **5.3 Fictional Technique in *Nectar in a Sieve*:**

Flashback is a technique in which we move backwards in time to describe the past and its relation to the present. This flashback and flash-forward technique make the reader understand the story and characters in a better way.

Markandaya's works discuss various existing social issues. In her first novel *Nectar in a Sieve* the novelist aims to bring forth the rural problems and describes how the heavy rain drought imbalances the general life of peasants. The novelist also picturises the piteous condition of the tenant farmers; issues problem of the downtrodden women have been portrayed by her. She depicts a rural family and its poverty and miseries caused by famine.

Rukmani narrates her story by the flashback technique. The constant companions of farmers such as fear; hunger and despair are exhibited by Markandaya through various instances. Rukmani symbolizes those unhappy villagers whose spirit of acceptance strengthens more in the midst of poverty. She opens the narrative:

Sometime at night I think my husband is with me again, coming gently through the mists, and we are tranquil together. Then morning comes, the wavering grey turns to gold, there is a stirring within as the sleepers awake, and he softly departs (NS 3).

Markandaya makes the reader actually feel the situation by taking us back; she describes in detail the days Rukmani has with her husband. Eventually, towards the end we come to know that Nathan is dead.

Rukmani's description of Kali makes the reader visualise Kali's physical appearance and attractive beauty big with ample hips and thrusting breasts. On her first meeting with Rukmani she ascertains her about Nathan who builds a hut by himself for his wife. Her statement "one woman is like another" unveils a kind of interest to see and meet Rukmani which has been grown up within her due to seen motifs of Nathan's affection for his would-be wife. It also reveals her inner motifs that displays a kind of resentment she bears when she perceives Nathan's blooming of love in his heart for Rukmani. Kali is astonished at the to see the change within Nathan who is as brittle as a bamboo before it bursts out. Kali is represented as a simple village woman with curious nature and it makes her observe her surroundings acutely, she is a lady with a broad heart and is always ready to help others. Another graceful character in the novel is Kunthi who bears a thin, slight figure. Rukmani observes her quieter, more reserved qualities but she fails to understand the reason behind her silence her assistance during her delivery and the reserved quality. Later, towards the end of the novel, during famine

Rukmani is exposed to the reason of her antagonistic treatment which shocks Rukmani but still she accepts it coldly the fact that Kunthi has contact with her husband Nathan. From the beginning we have observed that Rukmani and Kunthi has different views on the issue to tannery where Kunthi does not like to be called senseless peasant woman, tannery proves to be boon as it has turned the scenario of the village. On the contrary, for Rukmani tannery has hindered the peace and tenacity of the village life because of the hubbub created by the tannery; rude young hooligans vegetating in the street, their uncultured behaviour and dirty bazaars where no man thinks for another but intrigues only for making money. Markandaya illustrates the transforming scenario of the village in great detail, the villagers, animals and the nature are depicted with accurate and minute description. Markandaya picturises the portrait of Kunthi and the patterns of her behaviour in words; she observes her head fall back, the transparent sari she wears slithers from her shoulders. Further the novelist notices that the sari is wrapped like that of a strumpet, it is tied at the waist but below the navel, it is also seen that she has spread sandalwood paste on her swelling hip and her breasts look heavy with red tipped nipples which bring a sensuous feeling.

Markandaya peeps into inner psyche of her characters and picturises the different scenes that strike the mind. Rukmani's daughter Ira is deserted by her husband as she is unable to bear a child, the pain turns into jealousy and hatred when she sees her mother being pregnant. Her mother's capacity to bears a child is a constant reminder of her failure and thus the childless grown-up barren daughter envies the fertile womb of the mother. Her brooding and resentful looks torment her mother and the feeling of hatred from her daughter paralyse the mother mentally. The novelist clearly depicts the biological phenomena and the abomination in Ira's life. Rukmani has to adjust with the changes that emerge in her life on account of tannery. Ira becomes a prostitute as she cannot see her brother dying of hunger. Rukmani has to accept the

future and Ira's lot. While sleeping she finds herself rebellious, protesting, rejecting, and no longer calm.

The concluding page of the narrative bring out the height of first-person narration. The protagonist has divulged her viewpoint of the journey of life portrays through symbols and images. She is a traditional woman who is very much attached to her roots and believes that once root is lost, everything is lost. Her return to the village with Puli after the death of her husband, is an evidence of her attachment, here she is content to feel the earth under her feet. It is evident in the lines:

The cart jolted to a standstill. I looked about me at the land and it was life to my starving spirit. I felt the earth beneath my feet and wept for happiness. The time of in between, already a memory, coiled away like a snake within its hole.”  
(NS 192)

The sight of the land gives food to her starving spirit; the jolting of the cart is the jolting of her experiences. The cart comes to a standstill finally leading her to peace. The time taken for narration becomes a memory and like a snake it coils away to take rest in its hole. The snake, coiling in its hole is the symbol which represents the journey of her life. Rukmani's concluding lines in the novel that her husband had a gentle death which she will describe later are actually ironical. She talks to her son Selvam about the gentle passing and adds that she will let him and Ira know about the lives in the city at a later period. She ironically says life in the city passes gently whereas in reality, life in the city seems to be quite disturbing and distressing where striving for livelihood has brought death to her husband and dreams. That is why she postpones saying that she will tell them later while the fact is that she does not wish to recall those bitter experiences of the city.

#### 5.4 Fictional Technique in *Possession*

*Possession* presents the perpetual conflict between the Indian spiritualism and the Western materialism, the former winning over the latter. Caroline Bell is overwhelmed by the quality of the poor lad Val and tries to possess him to upgrade her own status and benefit, but all her attempts go in vain when he comes back to India. The spiritual values of the Indian culture and his belief on his Swami are so profound in him that he is able to release himself from the grip of the foreign lady. Kamala Markandaya wants to emphasize the fact that the innocence and simplicity of the Indians are exploited by the British rulers who endeavours to possess them both mentally and physically, but ultimately, they failed and had to quit India. Caroline takes Val to England and tries to make the most of his expertised field for selfish gains though she fails in her attempts.

Markandaya intended to focus on all the three possessors and victims, both sacrifice and predator. The protagonist of Kamala Markandaya's novel *Possession* is Valmiki. Kamala Markandaya's intention in naming her protagonist is evident. Traditionally, Saint Valmiki is a poet who has composed the epic Ramayana. According to mythology, he was initially a hunter who became a poet on divine inspiration and perseverance. By chanting the holy name of Rama; turned ascetic and one day discovered that he had become a poet. The poet met the Sage Narada who narrated him the virtuous tale of Rama and Valmiki reflected it in verse named as Ramayana. The manifestation is that the artist in the novel is a painter by inspiration, not by instruction. He is introduced as a "simpleton" and a "goatherd" to Anasuya, the narrator, by a village boy. He takes her to the Swamy's cave where she meets her English friend Lady Caroline Bell, who is under the effect of rural arak. With the pride of someone who has discovered something hidden so far, she speaks to Anasuya in a perfectly clear voice.

In the beginning of the novel *Possession* Anasuya first meets the beautiful and wilful lady Caroline Bell at a party; she is rich, divorced, well born, and fashionable in the Indian society concentrating upon essentials. Lady Caroline is used to getting her own way and Anasuya, an Indian writer watches without astonishment; the humble peasant boy Valmiki who expresses himself in painting is suddenly swept away from his village and his ragged little family to Caroline's luxurious house and smart society in London. Anusuya is a Hindu, Indian woman and Caroline is Christian lady from London. As the novel opens, Anasuya describes her as "magnolia-white", "a rarity in India", "a transcendent loveliness" and "beautiful". Her skin was dazzling white and spun-silk hair between silver and pale gold. "She had a daring behavior" and all the people in the party "surrounded" her and admired her. On a bar stool she was "elegantly perched" and then she met the narrator. (PS1) It is a kind of fiction that openly comments on its fictional status. Anasuya is an old friend of her is present in the party. Caroline herself is an ex-ruler of the smaller state of India. She also receives a pension of seventy-five thousand rupees a year. Her magnolia skin colour and stature are examples of attraction. Her looks are good and a rarity of loveliness. She is remarkably beautiful.

These details evoke the sense of admiration and the reader is able to visualise a rare picture in the mind about Caroline as the novel moves. Lady Caroline Bell could recognize the narrator as a book-writer. Further, she is curious about "arak", the country liquor of India. The narrator assures her to take her to the place of arak in a village:

Presently we spotted the huts, nested in a salubrious and concealing grove, and jogging along the path a solitary toddy-tapper, across his shoulders a flexible lath from which hung the open foaming toddy-pots, toddy froth and toddy slopping over their rounded earthenware bellies at every step. (PS6)

Markandaya describes the way, the footpath is uneven; they jogged the distance. There was one “toddy tapper”. The description of the frothing and “foaming” toddy in a pot of the tapper gave out the “smell of fermentation, pungent, faintly sick and sweet” (PS6). The details are accurate and true. Then they walk through the paddy fields with “melting green”. There comes “a scraggy villager” with “a scraggy bullock” (PS6). The language is clear and smooth; it is flowing naturally; and any reader could visualize them. Suddenly the narration goes on to introduce the village boy, painter Valmiki to the luxurious smart society of London. The novelist is invisibly present throughout. Then the focal point is that Caroline’s motives are purely altruistic, simply her patronage of an artist and the development of his talent Valmiki who is a poor human being as well as an artist. He also thinks to have possession of the love of women younger than Caroline, for instance his affair with Ellie or even the adulation of the “scarlet jacked Minou”, the monkey which is living symbol of *Possession*.

The roots of Val’s too grow close to the wise and ascetic Swamy, who first recognised his gift of spirituality. The Swamy resumes waiting for his time, but the clash of wills is inevitable in the story. He could see the germination of ascetic power, but it requires certain experiences. After being shaped properly with experiences Valmiki is sure to return to become a true disciple.

Markandaya writes with the penetrating observation and true craftsman’s use of language to which her readers are accustomed to; she has woven threads of poignant and sombre hue into the fabric of the dramatic story of contemporary life. Caroline thinks Valmiki belongs to her people and won’t easily give up their possessions. This description quite attracts the attention of the reader who grabs the book to satisfy his queries regarding the truth of colonial possession over the natives. In this novel, Markandaya has given the weakest link by making Anasuya, a minor character becoming the narrator, she narrates the story through Indian viewpoint. It seems that she needs an Indian character who could be well versed in both

cultures. The story would have been narrated better if she had made Caroline the narrator. Anasuya fails to link the situations and the novelist has made her non-omniscient in real sense. The presence of Caroline is felt right from the beginning to the end of the novel.

The concluding lines of the novel are presented in form of an open challenge of Caroline. Valmiki has come back to India; he has his bitter-sweet experiences as he is detached all along. He has been non-committal to all his attachments. He is not belonging to the worldly pleasures anymore. Caroline wants to possess him by power or money or sex. He has now become a full-fledged sadhu. Caroline thinks that Val is now possessed by the Swamy. But the truth is that he is free from both. The Swamy asserts doubtfully that he might join Caroline afterwards, which would never come at all. Again, the assertion of Caroline is only to reflect the will of the ruling class the British.

That is a positive claim to connote the negative meaning that Valmiki would never again return to her either by legal means or by the attractions of sex or money or power or fame. This last scene is laid between the Swamy and Caroline. She is adamant to possess Valmiki she has a faithful but faint contemptuous remark to possess him again. The conclusion is thus reversed from the utterance.

Both the first and last paragraphs in the novel reveal the presence of Caroline who is expert in making her presence everywhere. In the party she attracts the attention of all through her English looks and in the end, she declares before the Swamy that the day would come when she will come to claim Val. Both the passages exhibit her dominating nature and her possessiveness which reveal the nature of the colonialism.

Markandaya through Anasuya presents Caroline's personality in a subtle manner. She was "frantic" to have the boy. She "wept with rage" "literally" (PS14). She was also supremely confident. This characteristic is attributed to her infallibility of colonialism. The wielding of



power is due to the empire and the job of the missionary is the armour for her that none could suspect nor deny what she wanted. She takes Anasuya to a room “Sprawled over all four walls was a monstrous vine, sprung from the realm of Jack’s beanstalk”. The giant tendrils were ‘proliferous, enormous turgid fruit” (PS15). Caroline is proud that “he did that in a week, working nights only” (PS15). These are “the discoloured, disintegrating pulps of cactus fruit” (PS16). All are enchanting pictures painted on the walls by Val.

The narration displays her innate nature that is meant only to rule by any means. The following narration shows Caroline’s triumph in getting Val as she puts her arm round him as a part of her possession. She is really proud to take the boy with her and walks with Anasuya in the darkness of the night “with one small hurricane lantern to light their way across the inky black country and a tireless host of fireflies for company” (PS20). During those days people were accustomed to the use of kerosene lamps as electricity was yet to reach the villages. When they were crossing the Black Country there were the fireflies or glow worms for their company. The description is apt and it is to the point very beautiful and fitting. She puts the Indian boy into the western set up in order to uproot him culturally. She feels pride in doing her best in taking the boy as adopted, while the hidden motive is only exploitation. She narrates with a feeling of pride and satisfaction that she is his mentor. He was discovered by her in the cave.

Valmiki, as a painter, has already drawn commendable painting. He has “lovingly carved in frieze upon frieze” of “gods and goddesses”; there are the outlines. Some of them are “precisely executed, with the symbols and attributes of each” deity clearly defined. “Flecks of paint lay on the dark earth floor, mingling with rock chips and the diamond dust of rock filings, the glitter of flakes of gold leaf” (PS26). One cave after another, they are entering and gazing at the rich and “crammed creation” of paintings. The simply marvellous and unthinkable startle them. Caroline feels like “a clodhopper straying into ethereal regions” (PS.28). Thus, the paintings on the rocks are fascinating, ethereal and charming. They then leave the place of the

Swamy. Anasuya's narration reveals the inner nature of Caroline who outwardly poses to be the benefactor but behind the fair skin there is a black layer of selfishness and possessiveness. This possessive nature is quite immune to the pathetic appeal and misery of human beings. *Possession* becomes the dominating and menacing part of Caroline's nature.

Though Anusuya narrates the story as an objective reporter, she remains enigmatic to the end. Regarding the character of Anasuya, Iyengar remarks:

Perhaps Anasuya is trying to make the story of Caroline and Valmiki something of parable of colonialism, the passing of one empire and the current insidious movement of new colonialism. (K.R.S. Iyengar, 444-445)

Anasuya's observations are very clear; it is the voice of Markandaya. Her judgement about the character of Caroline is accurate and exquisite. The narrator comments: "Caroline is a powerful maestro". Her voice is with its exquisite syllables "riveting attention". Her face, her eyes, her beautiful body in its glittering trammels, were "all touched and transfigured; uplifted by triumph" (PS111). The statements are crisp and to the point. The narrator again describes the relationship between Valmiki and Caroline; "the disparity in their ages, the differences of race above all their long association and close peculiar relationship which would bring an unpleasant whiff of incest to a carnal union between them". (PS111)

There could be no other words punching the relation between the elderly lady and the junior boy. It is evident that there are differences between the two in age, race, colour, and association. It is an "unpleasant whiff of incest". It is also described as "Carnal union". It is like animals who might not know the differences in age. Anasuya condemns the terrible sense of overpowering of Caroline. She curses at heart her madness to possess. These details of narration are remarkable. She is worthy of commendation as a narrator. It is just and unprejudiced. This could be treated as the summary of whole text. The purpose of the narrator

is to expose the inner follies and foibles of the woman like Caroline. Markandaya has made it evident for the reader to understand the hidden message of the novel.

Markandaya has described the hopeless persisting in the colonial era. Ellie is the twenty-year old Jewish girl who comes in touch with Val who feels one with her and portraits her on the canvas. She bleeds within as she has been a victim of European Nazi soldiers. The narration is marked for her hopelessness and failure. She is an orphan who has no state, no identity, no proof of her existence which is the acceptable way of social being. The plight of Ellie without parentage, country, origin and green card is very pathetic. She is the source of enjoyment for the soldiers. She is forced to be there.

The author tries to focus such narration, so that administrators or the top officials might save such people. Then she was trained and fully experienced to do domestic help. She feels at ease with Val who loves her. She is unknown to the feeling of love as she was to lie with men in the concentration camp when she was raped. But now to lie with Val is real enjoyment. She becomes pregnant with the seed of Val. Here, rape is shown as colonial suppression. Her pregnancy with the child of Val is a kind of freedom that she feels. Ellie could recall the dirty affairs of the army men coming to the orphaned woman during night times. Through her, the narration focuses on many of the women, forsaken, unquestioned and unwanted in the social life. The worst condition of them could not be fully revealed. It continues for months. Then she is not fleshy or charming. She became dry, bony and hairless. Here Markandaya has presented her as the victim of colonialism.

The novelist shows the tragic picture of lonely woman; Anasuya could not visualize sexual connection between them. Basically, Val is a Hindu and Ellie is a Jewish woman. Moreover, he has no interest in sex she assumes. His attitude and behaviour would never sanction such an act even in the relaxed societies. She is not concerned that Val has come of

the age and physically matured. She thinks of preventing the two by telling lies about them, but the reverse has happened. This is the pen portrait of Annabel who wishes to lead a free happy life with Val. But she sees the world through the eyes of Caroline who separates them as she is saying “Emotional unstable”. Foreigners are, “Dear Annabel, you must realise they aren’t like us...you would never be able to rely on one of them” (PS208).

In Caroline’s suggestion she breaks her relationship with Val and goes away without knowing the trap. Anasuya narrates the story but fails to make a grip over the consciousness of the reader who bewilders at switching over from the eastern atmosphere to the western one. Caroline represents the colonial image of exploitation and suppression. Her narrations unfold the layers of her mind displaying the concealed motives in the name of Whiteman’s burden.

### **5.5 Fictional Technique in *Two Virgins***

In *Two Virgins*, Markandaya describes the present social scenario through the story of two sisters, Saroja and Lalitha. She uses flashback and descriptive technique.

Lalitha was brave, braver than Saroja. If you dared her she would walk past the well that was haunted, which Saroja would not, especially at dusk (TV19).

Everything, Lalitha told Amma, must be just so: Miss Mendoza has high standards. And haven’t we? Said Amma, bridling; why, the place is so clean you could eat off the floor! That’s just it, said Lalitha, moodily, and she told how Miss Mendoza was used to sitting in chairs at tables, and eating with forks and spoons. Yes, and see what it’s done for her, cried Aunt; she’s the laughing stock of the village! (TV44).

In this novel, Markandaya tries to bring the contrast between East and West through some images. She presents contrast between traditional rural life and the pretentious modern city life; some direct references to the Western culture are carried throughout the novel, though there is

no direct clash between an English and an Indian. Lalitha is portrayed as a modern girl who is allured by the mystique and grandeur of urban life who believes that city life stifles her talents and ambition. Enticement of glamour and fame made her believe that life is not worth living without modern facilities.

We can say that Markandaya has chosen a South Indian village for this novel similar to the setting of her first novel. Here, the stabilized and calm younger sister Saroja becomes the ideal daughter of the family who thinks rationally rather than imitating the modern life; but Lalitha adolescent stage and the predicament occurred at this period, she represents the audacity at this age. Lalitha's tragic suffering and search of fame and glory in the city life finally leads to her moral degradation and it serves as a practical lesson in the development of Saroja. The novel lacks the structural and the technical fineness of the earlier novels but is an eminently readable story of two kinds of mood of human character.

Markandaya makes use of daily life words in this novel, Saroja's use of tone and idiom are inconsistent with her sensibility in the novel. It seems due to Markandaya's expatriation the language in the novel makes generous use of anglicized idioms. Such as Amma upbraids Appa for criticizing the English in India for all the current misfortunes, she says that he is on the back of a 'hobby horse'. There is utterance of local words, such as 'Codswallap' and 'basilisk' and Lalitha's vanishing is signified as having propelled herself out of the circle of the community. The South Indian name Chingleput is a good sweetmeat and pastry cook, he is little Saroja's confidant. These little discrepancies mark the effect of the language in this book. The simple statements of Amma's dialogues maintain a tonal rhythm of the vernacular form. Aunt Alamelu, the widow makes a mixture of crushed ginger root and sugar and spice soaked in boiling water called as 'ginger kayasam'', Saroja clothes herself in 'davani'' which does not fit her, it goes on top of her blouse and is dropped over her breasts in 'gaters and folds'.

*Two Virgins*, knocks at the treasure of basic human morals and values, especially experiences and deeds of youth in a series of well-worded, well-organised sketches.

### **5.6 Fictional Technique in *A Silence of Desire***

Stream of consciousness technique is a literary style in which a character's thoughts, feelings and reactions are depicted in a continuous flow uninterrupted by objective description or conventional dialogue. It makes the novel *A Silence of Desire* a more realistic one. The novel moves in a flow with the family life of Dandekar. The conflict of traditional and rational thinking is shown through the lives of the husband and wife and it feels like the reader too is having a role in the journey.

In this novel, *A Silence of Desire* Epigraph "Three silences are there: the first of speech, the second of desire, the third of thought" W.H. Long fellow clearly reveals Markandaya's choice of the title for her third novel *A Silence of Desire* which displays the interiority of Sarojini's mind, a traditional housewife and her husband Dandekar suffering from the torments and tortures of filial bond. The conflict of traditional and rational thinking brings forth a kind of empty space between them which is wished to be filled with speech rather than silence.

Markandaya employs the third person narrative technique in this novel but the use of it is confined to the viewpoints of Dandekar. Sarojini's perspective is engulfed in the flood of Dandekar's suspicious nature. The narrator in the novel too seems to be encountering the situations; the omniscient narrator narrates the tale in such a manner that the reader is enthralled by it the consequences and is curious to know about the crossroads of Dandekar and Sarojini's lives.

The following passage reveals that the Dandekars are a middle-class family with six rooms rented for their use. Like the altar in the temple the square of eight-foot height has the tulasi plant. It is sacred and worshipped by Sarojini. It is kept in a brass vessel and it has sharp

smells. After smelling or touching the plant, the writer indirectly points out that one could not forget it even if he is an atheist.

The six rooms that they rented were built round a courtyard, a square of about eight feet with an uneven cement floor in the middle of which stood the divine tulasi that his wife worshipped (SD 1).

It is a sacred plant of the Hindus; it is ever green plant. It is kept in a brass vessel on the high pedestal so that Sarojini would come round after taking bath. Dandekar could not have appreciated the pungent smell; he does not want to touch it because it would make the fingers smelly until they are “washed” and “scrubbed”. The wife follows the traditional path and the husband has no faith in the beliefs of tradition. To Dandekar, a plant is a plant. It need not be worshipped. He knows that it becomes a symbol of God, according to his wife as it is given the status of God.

From the point of view of Dandekar, the novelist uses a bold statement that no one had the power to visualise God in full and it is a true statement. Dandekar does not worship tulasi, he carefully calls it a plant; he looks about his rented house with six rooms and the tulasi plant in the middle worshipped by the lady.

The first sentence is diegesis – rather it is a rapid summary of a long potent sequence of events to come clearly, it would be impossible to move a plot along efficiently without passages of this kind. The remaining passage is mimesis because it reveals the conflict whether to worship or not to. Having fast-forwarded movement, the writer slows down again at the next crucial scene and begins to construct it, telling us about God and symbols; and the exact location, so that the reader could imagine the scene in the mind's eye. Mimesis and diegesis are needed to influence the readers. They often work together and it is easy to see how fundamental they are as the building blocks of narrative.

The very first paragraph reveals the clash between scientific thinking and faith that the plant tulasi as divine plant – a plant for worshipping and it is merely plant- a plant not for worshipping. The narrative makes the reader visualise and attend to the contrasting viewpoints of Dandekar and Sarojini; Dandekar believes in rationalism, his westernised thinking is different from that of his keenly religious wife Sarojini. Markandaya picturises the geography of the rooms to bring a transparent picture of the couple, the divine Tulasi plant in the middle of the house is worshipped by Sarojini while Dandekar does not believe in this kind of worship, he thinks that one does not worship the plant which is nothing but only symbol of God. On the other hand, his words like “It was necessary for god to have symbols” exhibits his sceptic nature. In the later part of the novel, he is found kicking the “fallen, dented silver vessels” and ponders that “Ramabai and Lakshmi would be leaving school about now” (SD179). Later Dandekar is when he gets back Sarojini from the Swamy and now he is immensely pleased to share his happy thoughts with his daughters.

Markandaya’s employs unique words and style of narration as she takes the reader to roam about the world where the experiences are shared. Markandaya seems to emphasize the situations where one has to keep silence at times and sometimes one has to speak out. Insensitivity in this regard may be deleterious to the continuation of joy and tranquillity. Dandekar and Sarojini are represented as victims of such a situation, the reason behind their perpetuated uneasiness is their impotence to voice out and impart the ideas with one another.

Here the image of the traditional Indian woman is depicted. Sarojini is a good wife for her husband, a good mother for her children; a good manager who manages the household, and above all, a woman who obeys her husband without protest. She is a good cook. She has given company to him. She is not at fault for the past fifteen years. She gives him pleasure. In any sense she could not be faulted. She is balanced and well knowing the children and her husband. Her nature is pious and meaningful. She is always associated with divinity. Sarojini believes



in the idea that Lord Shiva is the union of male and female is concept of man and woman life. The walls of her house speak of her religiosity. The pictures of gods and goddesses are seen on these walls.

These were all of gods and goddesses, singly and in groups, tableaux that showed them holding court in their heavens, or warring, or being miraculously born of the earth or the sea (SD 6).

Her husband calls her at one stage a soiled woman doubting her character. She is dead against Dandekar's spying on her. She states angrily that he listens to the office gossip and he spies on her. She rebukes; "But you have eyes. If you wish to see you can. See for yourself there is nothing to stop you" (SD56). She is shocked to note Dandekar's changed behaviour towards her because of his suspicious nature. Sarojini tells him that she visits the Swamy, her god for the remedy of the tumour in her womb. Dandekar is shocked to hear this and asks her why she has not informed him about it. She tells him very frankly that if she had told him, he would have not allowed her to go to the Swamy for healing. She honestly confesses for not letting him know about her going to the Swamy for the healing touch. The husband might have stopped her from going to the Swamy for healing.

Because of the chauvinism in India, he would not have allowed her to be touched for healing by a great Sanyasi. She clearly puts forward that he would confuse her by his talk on rationality and would not have permitted her to follow her faith. She would not be healed by the Swamy was the argument of her husband:

Because you would have stopped me going to be healed...you would not have let me be – no! you would have reasoned with me until I lost my faith because faith and reason did not go together and without faith I shall not be healed. (SD 68)

There is one more reason for not sharing the fact of her disease with her husband. She knows that her husband has the western notion that is against her faith. His reason is against her belief. He will force her to go to hospital for cure while she does not wish to go there. She has a kind of phobia because of her mother's death in the hospital. She is full of confidence that only healing touch of the Swamy will be effective in her case. Again, narration reveals the fact of her fear of the hospitals. "Yes, you can call it healing by faith, or healing by the grace of god, if you understand what that means." (SD68)

She does not expect him to understand her with his western notions. Whenever he argues, he takes the upper hand. He always crushes others for their ignorance and blind beliefs. But at the same time, she points out that there are many things beyond rational thinking which Dandekar evades as superficial knowledge without evidence. Without faith, if she had gone to the hospital she would have died there. But by the grace of the Swamy, she is safe. She remembers the death of her mother. The Swamy's leaving the place is painful regret to her, but she has become strong enough to assert: "I formed an attachment, it is broken that is all. One must accept it...it would be sinful to batter oneself to pieces because one refuses to recognize that another's life is his own." (SD173)

Sarojini supports the Swamy's going out, because it was his decision. She says that it must be accepted in good heart. She praises the Swamy for the preparation to get operated. It is she who has learnt the acceptance from the Swamy. Her face is calm and so is her voice. When Dandekar consoles her that she will be cured even without the Swamy she very calmly informs that she is not afraid of the hospital as she has got the strength from the Swamy. Her face is confident. Sarojini makes Dandekar realise that he has not got victory in ousting the Swamy rather she has got a kind of etherizing effect that has made her fearless of the knives and the doctors. In the struggle of "Faith" and "Reason", faith has got upper hand as it is "Faith" that has given strength to her to accept "Reason". Though the story is not from the points of

view of Sarojini she is able to impress the reader through her presence as a traditional woman and also through her protest when the integrity of character is doubted by her husband Dandekar. But it is surprising to note that even after so many years of marriage; she could not take her husband into confidence regarding the faith in the healing touch of the Swamy. If she had taken him into confidence the picture might have been different.

Next Markandaya's focalization is the "viewpoint" or "perspective", which is to say the point-of-view from which the story is told. There are many possibilities: for example, in "external" focalization or the viewpoint is outside from the character Dandekar, so that the only things which are in the opposite in the "internal focalization", are by Sarojini the focus is on what the characters think and feel, would be made accessible to the readers. The intrusion of the Swamy, prayer and meditation could be pointed out as the point of view of the novelist in *A Silence of Desire*. The internal focalization is the inner conflict of Dandekar which shapes the character towards the final goal. After the exit of the Swamy, Sarojini's focalization is internal that she could undergo the operation with the faith in spirituality. The author need not necessarily voice her persona. The narrator is not identified at all as a distinct character with a name and a personal history, and remains just a voice or a tone, which is registered simply as an intelligent, recording consciousness or a mere "telling medium" which strives for neutrality or transparency. The tone or voice is not at all connected to the real life of the author. The novelist assumes the true story of someone, gives a name, form and description to arrive at the focal point of the message. It is constructed in such a way that, it is simply the author speaking directly, but it is worth remembering that this is not in any sense the author's "true voice", since the novelist only uses this precise tone, pace, degree of detail, and so on, when narrating a work of fiction. Hence, it makes sense to think of this kind of disembodied narrator as an "authorial persona", rather than as the author in person.

### 5.7 Fictional Technique in *A Handful of Rice*

Social injustice gives rise to poverty and hunger. At the beginning of the novel, Ravi says to Apu and Jayamma, “I’m hungry” (HR 6). After Apu’s death Ravi’s business falls and Ravi cannot make both ends meet. Due to poverty and its consequences, he shows his anger upon his wife and his son; even he tortures Nalini. Because of poverty he fails to understand that his son needs instant attention of a doctor and this failure results in the death of his son. Rice is the staple food of many and very much necessary for existence and the word ‘rice’ is repeated many times in the novel and this repetition emphasizes the impact of hunger. *A Handful of Rice* is also a tale of love. The love affair of Ravi-Nalini does not run a rough course but finds its fulfilment in marriage very easily. Though affected by adversity, the married love does not alter. But the most striking feature of this love is the exalting effect of Nalini in the city which make Ravi convert himself into a decent and loving husband. The magic power of Nalini is more on Ravi especially when he is disturbed and tempted by the luxury of Damodar. From the moment he meets Nalini, she becomes his guiding spirit. He falls in love with her at first sight. On seeing Nalini, he says to himself, “what a girl, he thought. Take a girl like that, and half a man’s troubles would be over”. He yearns for her love, his passion for Nalini grows and he wants her as his wife:

Ah Nalini, he thought, Nalini. She was worth it, worth anything, even worth giving up the sweet life for. He put it all on her, for getting the trinity of hunger, drink and misery that had been intermittent companion to his sweet life, and which had forced his entry into Apu’s manage in the first place (HR 40).

Love leading to courtship is of very different nature in an Indian society. Ravi steals occasional chances to meet Nalini and succeeds in taking her to the corner shop for a drink and later on to

the riverbanks. The courtship leads to marriage and this love is not altered even after marriage, though Appa's death shakes Ravi and affects their relation later due to hunger and degradation.

This is exceptionally captivating narrative and the novelist is competent in presenting the work of art in an engrossed readable and satisfying and representing the contemporary system in the most possible way in *A Handful of Rice*. It depicts the hard struggle of life in a modern city and its demoralisation. Ravi, son of peasant, joins in the general exodus to the city and floating through the different streets, lands into the underworld of petty criminals. Nalini tries to change his way of life, but fate conspires against him and the story moves to a memorable and a hunting climax. Apu dies and Ravi tries to preserve the respectable life, facing the problems of shortage of food, illness, dwindling customers. In short, the story depicts the class-struggle and how it leads to annihilation. Omniscient narration or the authorial invisible voice is used to narrate the story. It traces the story related to Ravi being protagonist or the central character.

The novel approaches in a linear pattern as the omniscient narrator narrates the events almost in a sequential arrangement. Most of her novels have female narration but this is exceptional, it is narrated by a male character named Ravi. It is mentioned earlier that the novels follow a linear pattern of narration; but there are certain moments when the narrator employs flashback technique to depict the bygone days of his village life. In the opening scene of the novel we encounter Ravi who is trying to escape from the policeman and takes shelter in Apu's house with his resolution of not doing any vicious act because of his inner moral force and consciousness.

Ravi is drunk in the opening of the novel, he is unable to run faster; in the darkness he ceases and breaths softly close to a wall. The policeman chases him, Ravi is used to it; in repugnance he comes out. He shouts and awakens some members of a house, the old voice

yells at him and asks him to go to a resting place. He is feeling dizzy too; he giggles when the lady voice threatens him that she will refer to the police. In extreme hunger, he holds the grille, it breaks being rusty. breaks another ban; a man comes out with a shawl and lantern. When he wants something to eat to mitigate his hunger, the old lady provides him with bread, buttermilk and a small, sweet potato. Soon after the food he wants space to sleep for one night. "There was a mat, a mattress, a pillow, a shawl---luxury". (HR4) Thus Markandaya takes up a petty criminal to depict the picture of the society.

When Ravi gets up after spending the night with a stranger family, he sees a plump, middle-aged lady who sits nearby the mat with a dreadful and fierce appearance. Then she starts hitting him, the blows fell indiscriminately-back, shoulders, head. "Ravi bound like a criminal, beaten as if he were a mad dog" (HR8). He is lowering his head. It is Nalini's mother Jayamma who beats him and also brings water, a towel and rags. When Ravi is released, she dressed his wounds. The old man Apu also joins his wife to nurse him. Here Ravi has the glimpse of Nalini and it enchanted him. Ravi drinks coffee and wants to leave though he let the idea pass and gradually he becomes one of the family.

Nalini, becomes the catalyst in Ravi's life. He dreams of her and goes to Apu's house only to have a glimpse of her. He feels satisfied if he hears her footsteps, the swish of her attire as she hurtled about the house at her mother's command or a sight of her sitting cross legged like a goddess who is beyond reach.

After marriage, she makes him realise that peace is more valuable than wealth. She never runs after the city life which is full of pomp and show. She never demands for higher things which cost money. She is content with what she has. Damodar could be seen from the point of view of Ravi. Even after his marriage, he has contact with him. Damodar drinks heavily, treats him casually and asks him to drink. Damodar has the contraband goods often

which are given at cheap rate and is not bothered about the police. But now the change is coming over him: “Relaxed and mellow, he gazed at Damodar with a distant affection, and wondered why he had ever considered him substandard, unfit for the strait-laced, dull, foolish, craven and killjoy company” (HR72). With a distant feeling Ravi thinks otherwise of the company of Damodar. It is substandard and unfit. But unable to resist the temptation, Ravi had a peg. He came home drunk. Nalini threatened him “I can smell it. The whole room reeks”. (HR74) But Ravi tells her a flat lie. Nalini enunciates Ravi’s silliness of getting high and mighty by putting himself on the level of high-class folk. He is now dreaming and shouting to have the riches: “Day beds, night beds, double beds, divans”. (HR75) That night he asks her to forgiveness which leaves Nalini in tears. Ravi draws her closer and comfort her; otherwise she would raise a hostile wall between them that would mean misery for both.

Markandaya slowly and beautifully reveals to the reader when she describes their love making: “He turned on his side and began caressing her, slowly and very delicately; content to wait until she was ready for him...his excitement grew” (HR77). The expression he says wordlessly to his wife, which speaks volumes of pure and affectionate love between the two.

Nalini’s attraction turns Ravi from a vagabond to be respectable house holder, a decent citizen with decent job and a wife to support. It is the voice of realism and sanity that speaks through her. Nalini is a woman with self-respect who cannot tolerate anyone to call her husband wanderer: “I just don’t want to hear them calling you vagabond again that’s all” (HR77). This clearly reflects her sense of respect for her husband.

Ravi has a great admiration for the English and their high standard of living. He frequently wonders, running his fingertips over satinwood surfaces, sinking into rich-thick carpets. He also longed “to live like this, without worry, without wanting, every need and craving satisfied”. (HR83) He imagined aping the English.

When he is in the house, he does odd jobs undone by Apu because of old age. Though he is feverish and haunted, Ravi takes efforts to clear that area. “There was several years accumulation of dust and dirt, soot, grime, cobwebs, dead leaves and insects and inexplicable lumps and lumps of cement left by the builders which he had to chip off with a chisel.” (HR88) Markandaya’s depiction is diligent and alliterative, her language is simple, poetic and lucid. Through the character of Ravi, she brings forth the act of unemployed city youth, the shiny stupefied magazines on the table, the satinwood exterior and the thick carpet on the floor are bewitching to the relish and temperament of Ravi.

In another sense, the westerners have a rich and gay life, it is like a pretty model life that everyone craves for. They persist on the richness from the Indian soil and are entertained by the affluent life sucking the blood of the Indians. The narration exhibits a realistic picture of the colonial era by depicting contrasting image of the filthy Indian lives. The descriptive language employed by Markandaya is appealing, accurate and sublime. She has a keen sense of appreciation. Nalini starts her domestic duty: “She was winnowing rice, which nowadays she found so full of stones and chaff. She made the grains swish and rattle vigorously up and down on the winnowing tray”. (HR201)

Through the narration one can actually perceive the action of separating the small stones and husks from rice. Markandaya employs simple and engrossing way of narration to hold the reader’s attention. Ravi slowly becomes responsible for the management of the house after the collapse of Apu. When people tried to say “Bad harvest”, (HR205) it is an echo of the father, the grandfather and the great grandfather. He tries to criticise the statement because it is just a statement only. There is no truth behind it and there are many beliefs which are with the people passed on from generation to generation.



Nalini presents the ideal of good sister when she opposes her husband who is abusing Thangam and her husband for the act of stealing Apu's hard-earned money. She defends her sister stating, "You blame her, what about him, stealing taking what wasn't his there no such thing as a right and wrong. What's the matter with you that you can't see it"? (HR177). She is a good mother who takes care of her child Raju, and when he dies, she is shocked. As a virtuous daughter, she takes care of her father during his illness. Therefore, we can opine that is a traditional woman who succeeds in every relation of life, the relation of sister, daughter, mother and wife while her sister Thangam is selfish and mean.

Jayamma who is the mother of a virtuous daughter like Nalini and also a wicked one like Thangam. In relation to Thangam, the narrator uses term like "a bitch", "a sow", "an old cow" and "a goat" due to her moral degradation, on occasions like when he has to face statements like, "What for last night? Do you think I care about that? Who cares what goes on between four walls"? (HR223). Ravi asks his mother-in-law to pardon him for the sin he has committed under the effect of liquor. Surprising the audience, she shows little concern to the fact and acts as nothing has happened as she believes that no one pays attention to what happens in the four walls of house. Her thought process expresses that she is morally depraved. She as a young widow remains hungry for sex, this is the latent desire portrayed by Markandaya here. She as a traditional lady is conscious about her limitations, she feels guilty of in her wrong treatment to her husband. She imparts this feeling with her dear daughter and to some extent exhibits her justifying nature. Jayamma stated in a perplexing way to her daughter that her father was a good man, but she could not love him because he was much older than her.

In *A Handful of Rice*, Markandaya bids farewell to "First Person Narration". She succeeds well in presenting the narrative through the consciousness of a male character unlike her earlier novels with the image of female protagonist. The novelist has suggested the life of Ravi in the village and avoided from narrating it directly. She has used parallels and contrasting

techniques in order to enliven the characters she furnishes maximum exposure to them. Through comparison and contrast between the village and the city life has been emphasized. Markandaya has portrayed Nalini as a character of virtue who is able to handle any difficult situation.

### **5.8 Fictional Technique in *The Nowhere Man***

*The Nowhere Man* is penned in exploratory style and torrid monologue, silently goes into stream of consciousness along with third person narration. The novelist explores the emotional agony of Srinivasa and Vasantha, through the technique of interior monologue.

She—the brisk, weathered Englishwoman---made him see the beauty of a crisp winter morning, where before--- infected by Vasantha, shivering in unsuitable clothes--- he had been conscious only of a cold that pierced to the marrow; and if he still could not face butchers' shops, he linked these barbaric necessities of carnivorous people with their great concern for animals --- their well-fed, friendly dogs, their plump cats that roosted on walls and windowsills, secure in the expectation of amiability (NM73)

The stream-of-consciousness technique and flash-back which Markandaya resorts occasionally in some of her novels are not her favourites although she has handled them efficiently. Straight forward narration which is certainly her forte has been exploited by her with greater efficiency, dexterity and effectiveness. However, the narrative techniques of the modern novel such as confessional mode, diary mode and symbolistic mode have not found favour with her. We can hereby say, she is basically a traditional storyteller as Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Bhabani Bhattacharya are.

Kamala Markandaya envisages in Laxman a new dimension of the problem of identity. However, engrossed and integrated in the western life pattern, he feels utterly lost. As a result,

he persistently desires to return to the country, his birthplace, and existence and exertion, now not in some scepticism visualises corrosion up within it. Indians are considered in the novel by the Englishmen as intruders and as the agents of devil. Their racial prejudice surfaces very strongly in the novel. Markandaya writes in detail about the racist reactions in England towards the Indians:

Erupting like a rash on walls and the backs of buildings and scrawled tall upon the unwitting blackboards of hoardings so that onlookers could decipher from afar man-sized messages of hate. BLACKS GO HOME, they said, their fear and hate crystallized into words which opened whole new hells of corresponding fear and desolation in those at whom they were aimed. (NM 181)

The operation of modernization becomes the hub around which the Western and the Oriental cultural modes clash in Markandaya's novels. The novel has intense psychological moments as Markandaya intertwines the themes of translating location and East-West encounter within the interrogation of human connection. Srinivas' problem of alienation is compounded by his awareness that his migration to England was not by choice but by force. Through this character Markandaya tries to present a blend of both the Western and the Indian value-system and the inability to resolve the dispute is brought about through contradictory views. The novel is written as a continuous flow in the writer's mind to show the complexity in Srinivas's character.

### **5.9 Fictional Technique in *Some Inner Fury***

Markandaya follows "First Person Narrative" technique in her second novel *Some Inner Fury*. But here it is a refined, the narrator being a highly educated woman, who narrates the consequences with effectual moves and mirrors the experiences. Through the reflective mind and conscious outlook of the narrator the narration becomes clearer; it is the process of depicting a series of events and distinguished from the recollected events. The narration

becomes haphazard in the midway because of the chaotic nature of freedom struggle. She goes back to the bygone days reflected by the piece of cloth where she is found reviewing and narrating.

The opening lines of *Some Inner Fury* are very striking. The narrator Mirabai is not at home, she has not been to her house for a long time, her house is connected with her earlier days. Now when she steps in the house, her eyes catch the small silver box lying in her closet. The box has been erased from her mind and others have not touched the little box in these long years. With her fingertips she can feel the filigree flowers in it, which have almost worn away these flowers takes her back to her bygone days. She locates a piece of cloth which is the scrap of Richard's upper arm sleeve that she delicately picked up from dust long ago. It reminds her about the days and sufferings during the Quit India Movement. Richard, her lover, is from England; a man of milk like colour. It is the attachment that she feels with Richard that makes her pick up the piece of torn sleeve from dust to retain his loving memory. The narration takes a turn to flashback technique once the content of the box makes her revisit her days with Richard. It is like the events are coming out of the box like the Pandora's box. Her affair with Richard, her pleasant time in his company and the claustrophobic end for the nation visit like a series of events within her. The entire story is narrated by the spark of the flame in her heart lightened by the box:

I opened it and inside was the scrap material I saw torn from Richard's sleeve from his upper arm where the flesh was like milk and which I picked from the dusty when it was all over (SIF 1).

Markandaya represents Mira is a national figure, her patriotic feeling is evident from her sacrificial love for Richard. Mira narrates the story by depicting her past experiences and memories throughout. The opening passage illustrates that Mira has used for symbolizing

something precious about her life which she has locked in her memory and it is the silver box containing her feelings for Richard and the worn-out filigree flowers which can be felt by her even today. Mira uses the lotus that reflect the purity and also that drops of water cannot remain on its leaf forever though it may always immerse in the water of love.

Through such narration she makes that the reader ready to go through the story of pure love and the last sentence proves her viewpoint. The memory of Richard and the freedom struggle, Roshan's assistance are the memories that make her nostalgic when she looks at the piece of torn sleeve inside the box; she trembles, eyes are filled with tears the account of events recalled by the 'Pandora's box' as it is found in a diary or rock edict.

In the beginning of *Some Inner Fury*, Markandaya makes her stand clear: In the struggle for independence in India nonviolence was the rule. The novel records historical facts, the significant title itself illustrated the minds and hearts of the people during the moment of Quit India Movement. Markandaya realistically describes the India she closely perceives in the British reign; her marvellous depiction makes the reader visit those days and feel the pain within. Mira's family is a Western influenced and that is evident from the well-furnished European styled room. The room consists of "two sofas and many push armchairs" and a "gate-legged table" with "a moulded glass vase" on it. "Landscape paintings, heavy and gilt-framed" are hanged on the walls of the room. In the "jardi niere stand" there is a plaster made "bust of Victoria" (SIF7). "Gold mohur and copper beeches" (SIF9) are placed outside the house which bring a high-class English look to the house. Markandaya does not leave the exquisite descriptions of the splendid costly vessels. Moreover, on the dining table there are "silver plates", "Kashmir tumblers with rims of beaten gold" "the rose bowls of jade" and "the low ebony benches with their edging of carved rosettes". Govind, the adopted brother of Mira is along with them. He has lost both the parents in infancy; it is Mira's mother who takes a fancy for him to grow.

Richard admires the beautiful furniture of the room. Mira is anxious to receive him since the beginning. That day meal was served with “pickles” “papadams”; curry and chilli powder, (SIF10). In the evening she was waiting with “the jug of fresh lime squash sprigged with sauce, frosty with ice, tendrils of melting sugar curling up with vigorous stirring” (SIF12). On another occasion, they are in Premala’s house where he brings a “tray on which were set out small cups filled with curd, and fruit and nuts and sliced copra (coconut)...” (SIF82)

The next descriptive scene is Mira and Richard in his office room talking about the government grants, for “wells” and “paddy fields” (SIF98). She refers to the “large high ceilinged with gilded cornices” and picturises the “cool mosaic floor”, “the carved panels” and “the hangings of heavy brocade”. The exquisite ceiling fan works proficiently and the “mahogany table”, inset with “red morocco leather with a blind-tooled edging of arabesques” and the “brass ornamental inkstand and quills” are placed there in the European set room (SIF98). The family plans for the marriage of anglicised Kit with Premala who in spite of her roots in Indian tradition does her best to be ultra-modern. Kit who is posted in the state capital invites Mira to come, asking her to avail herself of the opportunity of meeting Richard but the mother knowingly deals her journey to be different so that she may not meet him. Mira comes in contact with Roshan and is much impressed by her personality. She comes to work for her paper; she is assigned to submit a report on a peasant resettlement in the neighbourhood. During this assignment Mira unexpectedly comes in contact with Richard and the meeting ignites the old acquaintance turning into love affair. Premala adopts an orphan and makes herself busy in the progress of the school building. Govind, who is accused is with her. Mira goes to the extent of burning the gazette; Roshan tells her that Richard is on a tour of the southern part of the country enjoying life fully.

Their romance is shattered when an acid bomb is thrown at Richard who is vexed at the posters meant for the English asking them to leave. Kit and Mira go to a party at the

government house, but Kit does not feel good when he comes to know that Premala has gone to the village leaving a slip. Suddenly the power supply fails and a kind of scrimmage takes place with the natives who enter the hall forcibly.

An interesting scene can be noticed in this novel that the protagonist Mira deserts her love Richard, who is a western, for the nation. The novelist acutely describes the articles in the house and there is a billiard room and a squash court which is to be identified as the ones belonging to the oriental club. The novelist narrates the story through the alertness of Mira who proceeds to the club for her training with an anticipation of her tying a knot with a man of her class. Mira goes because she is taken and learns to assimilate with the Europeans.

The narrative visibly represents the future prospect of her prospective spouse who would expect her to assimilate with the Europeans as well. Mira is educated with western manners in a western way; she learns the ways of living to submerge herself with the English, independently moves with the Europeans and proceeds to the clubs as being one of them. Her family assumes that in due course of time, as her brother Kit, someone educated from a foreign country could become her partner. Her independent way of living and loving nature has made the readers envisage her future; her visit to a foreign country will not be a type of alienation, in fact she can and move with the westerners independently without any hesitation. Yet this type of training is necessary for her to shed the feeling of traditional shyness when she garlanded Richard, she is not accustomed to being so.

The subtle view of Indian lady is represented in such a way which is unknown to the protagonist's knowledge and experience. Mirabai opines that one can explore the self when he is free from everything but unable to communicate it to the earlier generation who is in opposition to the young ones with the sensitive resistance to change.

The forthcoming narration articulates her inability to convince the older generation though she votes for dispersed feelings and sympathy, an understanding based not on the notion of rationality but on instinct. She could not get a reasonable solution to the question about her demeanour towards the foreigners. She feels that it is her intuitive essence to move with them. So, for no one of her age dared to raise the question. She feels that she could not answer the question in communicable terms. Philosophically she analyses her life and searches for choices that one makes in order to get peace. Mira asserts that it is their life by their choice. They are the destiny makers. They created their own life:

To keep our peace, we would have to go back to the world from which we came, to which we would always return because it was a part of us even as the earth was of these others who stayed, we could no more renounce it than a bird the air, or fish the sea, or any other creature its element... (SIF 149)

She opines that the life is in everyone's hand. The destiny is created by everybody; she also goes on to say that everyone has to go back to the same world where from our first journey starts. She means to say that even the other world is a part of this life. There seems to be a cycle or rotation. It is from this world, one has to go to the other world. It is very vital as the air being breathed. It cannot be separated or rather one cannot live without the element. She ventures to say boldly that the choice of coming to this life is chosen by everyone; destiny partly shapes it. She goes on to add that peace could be had from the source of its coming. Earth is inevitable and inseparable part of all human beings just as the air is to the bird and water to this fish. She is taking one road that leads her to love and from there she takes a turn and chooses the thorny path that leads to the mature love as it is a talisman that would somehow keep the people together protecting them against war with the world of everything. From mature love, she further traces out the way that leads to sacrifice which is needed for the sake of the country.



The narration moves with caution. “The office of the Gazette had been burnt down. Govind was arrested for incitement to violence”. (SIF129) It is the other day after he is acquitted; on knowing the news Roshan, who comes there, on the occasion, asks Mira to stay with her for a few weeks. Roshan is from England who writes poetry; she is introduced to Mira by Kit. She gets separated from her husband because of frequent squabbles but they are still best friends. Mira could read her face, “there was something about her that was turbulent and unafraid beneath the sparkling surface” (SIF50). Govind is her “tutelage”.

The freedom-struggle of colonial India gets momentum in the novel. Roshan begins to “boycott” the “British goods”. “She stopped smoking; she gave up using lipstick...she sorted out all her British manufactured georgette and chiffon saris... and threw them on the bonfire” (SIF133). She becomes a model Indian to participate in the rise of nationalism. “There was something in her, a flame, a vitality and drew people to her...this quality which she possessed so lightly as hardly to be aware of it, enabled her to surmount the barriers of race and creed” ... (SIF133). She becomes defiant. “She called a public meeting and led the subsequent procession through the restricted areas and was arrested” (SIF136).

Thus, she champions the cause of Indian freedom-struggle. Markandaya brings to limelight such historical facts that have not been exposed ever. She novelizes the facts about the sympathetic and charitable English people; it is seen that Roshan in due course gifts the car to Mira, in which she would take Mira out quite often for a jaunt. Thus, this minor character Roshan does noteworthy things though she is not an Indian by birth. Markandaya uses the two narrative patterns in this novel - the events of freedom movement and the love story of Richard and Mira. The first-person narrative technique reflects the controlled attitude of the narrator who exchanges words with herself to assure her:

It is all one...In a hundred years, it is all one; and still my heart wept tearless, desolate silently to itself. But what matter to universe, I said to myself, if now and then a world is born or a star should die, or what matter to the world if here and there a man should fall or a head should break. (SIF223)

At the climax of the novel, Mira solaces herself. Each phase of life is built up by short-lived moments. She failed to sustain with the man she loved; for which she weeps tearless, desolate and silently at heart. But she refers to the universe; in about a hundred years, it creates a new world or a star dies. It matters nothing to the ever-changing dynamic world. It goes on expanding and dying. So, she cajoles herself that a man might die anywhere causing depression and dejection. The wind started blowing the reddish dust out of the earth. She starts to go. She has out poured her intense and true heart in the form of the story. She is loved and she losses it because of the national struggle. It is rather a sacrifice than breakage of heart.

The love between Mira and Richard with a sense of elusive warmth and proximity is decorously portrayed by Markandaya. Mira promises to never ever leave him. She pursues to narrate in soft and soothing way: "I locked my arms about him, holding him fast. Flesh of my flesh. Beloved." (SIF154) He is quite natural and peculiar: "slowly he began stroking my hair, I felt the tips of his fingers on my face, on the nape of my neck, delicately following the line of the throat, tracing the curve of the shoulder." (SIF155) She lay quiet under that gentle caress with full of pleasure, soft touching of peaceful happiness. Then they start to go to their respective place. Markandaya in her manifestation of love is very gentle and fantabulous and she exhibits it in a tenderly manner.

In this novel Markandaya has used first person narration by Mira, the protagonist who sufficiently gives clues about Roshan that she must be comfortable in the two worlds the East where she is born and the West where she has got education. "Dual citizenship" is the right

phrase that clearly reflects the personality of Roshan who is a liberated woman because of her nature in the Western set-up. It is her love for freedom that she rebels and breaks marriage though she is on friendly terms with her husband. She has a feeling of pride in going to jail and her remark to Mira shows her passion for political struggle against Britain. She says to Mira that she is not sorry to go to the jail for she firmly stands on the side of the Indian freedom struggle. She shall not be happy to go to heaven, she minds the general good of the public than her personal safety and pleasure. Though Govind and Roshan have love for India they do not share that same notion for freedom.

It is her faith that the power of violence would lead to destruction. She makes it clear to Govind stating that everybody is interested in freedom and only they do not all agree on the means to the end. Non-violence is the weapon of Gandhi and his followers; army and fighting are the means of Subash Chandra Bose and his followers. Violence is the tool for the terrorists tempered by extremists. Thus, the goal is the same for all but only the means are different. Mira appreciates Roshan's motivating force that persuaded her to follow her example. Very candidly she admits Roshan's influence on her:

She gave me the chance to go and I took it; and though I left my home, with its peaceful ordered living, its tender setting in the countryside, its mellow sights and sounds, its myriad sense from syringa buds at dawn to queen of night at dusk: though I felt all this that I loved to live in a city that was arid and brown, still it was a fair exchange, for-more precious than any of these- I discovered at last the gateway to the freedoms of the mind and gazed entranced upon the vista of endless extensions of which the spirit is capable. (SIF50)

The novelist chisels Premala with her gentle and unassuming, and tender pleasing ways, she makes her place in everybody's heart except her husband who expects from her to be

modern. Mira narrates her personality thus: “And Premala? A lovely face, tenderly moulded, which never lost its tenderness because she could never learn to be tough” (SIF107-108). As she is a woman of compromising nature, she makes an adjustment with her husband who wishes to see his wife in shorts, not in a sari. Keeping his liking in her mind, she goes to Mira to take shorts. The passage is noted for her modesty and that, like an Indian woman, she feels modest when someone (even though he may be her husband) looks at the parts of her body. It also reflects that in the world of Kit there is no place for modesty. Premala would have done anything for him. She borrowed Mira’s shorts and put them in blushing.

The next part of the narration is about the demise of Kit and departure of her friend Premala. It is the portrayal of tragic feelings when Premala is sad. She clings to Mira “full of fright and belidermunt.” (SIF188) Kit’s body is laid on the earth; Mira’s mother travels by air to attend the funeral, does not even talk to Mira freely. Mira receives the subpoena-a piece of paper adjusting her to appear before the court and take the warning. Richard is with her.

Mira stays that night in Richard’s room. It is three o’clock when she gets up. Richard is by her side Mira could see his profile. He is wakeful: “for the half turned, drawing me to him, his arm was about me, our bodies were touching, and I felt the abundant flow of love for me and there was no passion, only this out pouring of an overwhelming tenderness.” (SIF191-192) Mira lies quietly and love enfolded her, Richard is full of tenderness, care and love for her. Again, she goes to sleep: “when I woke up it was dawn, and I was still in his arms. He had not moved; I do not think he had slept. He felt me stir, and he called softly, Mira? Are you awake?” (SIF192). As she wakes up, she is shedding tears not for Premala or Kit or for her mother; she is realizing the true love that Richard has for her throughout that night. This feeling is echoing in her for whenever she thinks of him and his love for her. The portrayal of the true love is the climax of the story as Shakespeare has said that the course of true love never runs smooth.

These two novels *Nectar in a Sieve* and *Some Inner Fury* exhibit Markandaya's skill in exploiting "First Person Narrative Technique". This technique helps in delineating the first-hand impression which is narrated only through the protagonist. The term does not mean that the narrator speaks only in the first person. She narrates as another character in the novel. This could be done only when there is the personal knowledge and experience of the other. The narrator appears as the 'I' either as a witness of the action or as an important participant in it. It is the protagonist who presents other characters and only through her or him, the other characters are portrayed. The story of narration is done well through this technique as one character narrates the story and, hence, the digression is least possible. The novelist gets a chance to make the protagonist say what she wishes. The other fact is that the reader misses others' points of view and has to confine the association with the protagonist. Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve* and Mira in *Some Inner Fury* have come out with Markandaya's viewpoints very well.

### **5.10 Conclusion**

Markandaya continues to experiment with her techniques as she is aware of the readers' interpretations and plurality of meaning. After writing her first two novels she introduces third person omniscient narrative technique and third person non – omniscient narrative technique. Employing the third person narrative brings variations not only for the novelist who is free to express, it leaves a room for the readers too to develop heterogeneous viewpoints which in turn get reflected in their own attitude.

A realistic flavour can be blended into fictional work by use of narrative techniques. The novelist makes use of dialogues and descriptive pattern to make the consequences lively and realistic. In this modern era, in the analysis of fictional narratives, the narrator visualises a person to recount the story. The writer becomes the mediator in transmitting the story, hence

the actual author is different from the implied author. It is the implied author who is the authority to select and invent the different parts of narration, most of the times the first-person narrators appear to be witnesses, or participants in the events of the story, whereas the third person narrators stand outside those events. Moreover, the omniscient narrator locates himself in the textual information of the particular character. In such context the unspoken words also gain meaning, these techniques are explored by Markandaya in her novels. Her narrating style grows metaphorical, symbolic, ironical, reflective, exploratory, elliptical, lyrical to suit the occasion, revealing her deep concern for accuracy and effectiveness. Without jeopardizing realism, her style achieves poetic heights as she depicts the scenes of nature, specially of flood and drought, in *Nectar in a Sieve* the spectacles of hill and natural beauty in *Some Inner Fury*, the sights of hills and jungles in *The Coffer Dams* and the scene of the Holi festival in *The Golden Honeycomb* and love relationships between Mirabai and Richard Marlowe in *Some Inner Fury*, between Caroline Bell and Valmiki in *Possession*, between Helen and Bashiam in *The Coffer Dams* and between Sophie and Ravi in *The Golden Honeycomb*. Markandaya undoubtedly proves to be loyal in modulating the frequency of the minds and hearts of her characters, typically in the novels such as *Some Inner Fury*, *A Silence of Desire*, *A Handful of Rice*, *The Coffer Dams* and *The Nowhere Man*. This element of her prose style is most evident in her two novels - *The Coffer Dams* and *The Nowhere Man*. She has altered her prose style in *Two Virgins*. She has experimented too with journalistic style, using the indirect form of narration; there are certain highly impressive and realistic depictions of scenic beauties in the novel. She has written naturalistic dialogues encompassing almost the entire scale of human sensations. But she has tried to keep conversations between Indian characters in a limit.

In *The Golden Honeycomb* dialogues between Bawajiraj and Mohini open up a choice either for slavery--- a stage of losing identity.

I beg you. Will you not marry me?

No.

It would make me the happiest man alive.

I can make you the happy without that. I have no wish to be your official wife.

I have no wish to be your second wife either.

(GH 37-38)

Markandaya finds a fitting solution to the problem of dialect realism by practically pulling the plug off the straight dialogue between Indians. There are very few dialogues between her Indian characters, and here she uses Indian English to make it real -such as the exclusion of articles and the transmogrification of a statement into an interrogation by adding a question-mark (the voice would be suitably inflected) at the end. Kamala Markandaya is obviously more at ease with the Englishmen style of conversation for most of these dialogues are in direct speech and sound authentic. Markandaya's Indian characters are steeped in religious beliefs and superstitions. They seem to be an integrated lot who possess a systematic set of ethical and social beliefs which are accepted norms of traditions and customs of Indian culture. No doubt they belong to various religious groups but most of them specifically represent the social group they belong to. They are distinctive and possess basic Indian cultural traits which are common to them. Yet they can be distinguished by their speech and language habits, food habits, dress patterns, occupations and religious practices and beliefs. They can also be distinguished on the basis of the caste and class structure they belong to, the family they come from and the type of marriage ceremonies that are conducted in their society. In fact, the entire Indian scenario is superbly painted in such a way that we get glimpses of the rich diversity that is prevalent among the ethnic groups that exist not only in big Indian cities but also in the rural areas.

Markandaya is remarkably successful with her women characters Rukmani, Ira, Mirabai, Premala, Roshan, Sarojini, Nalini, Saroja and Lalitha - who are noble, strong willed and judicious, and hence memorable. However, her men characters-Nathan, Dandekar, Ravi and Srinivas-are notable too. Dandekar, Ravi and Srinivas are by far her best pathetic men characters who exemplify the dilemma stemming from the contemporary chaos created by crumbling values. Markandaya's Indian character-both male and female, major and minor-appear as though we have noticed them in our neighbourhood, it seems the character is familiar to us. There is also an elaboration of other characteristics of Kamala Markandaya. She uses various imageries to keep the attention of the readers intact. Her flair for colours is the channel through which she appeals to the reader's mind. The coloured images make an immediate association of the situation and their minds are carried beyond audio and visual images, to abstract ideas. The artist, in portraying these colourful images, is selective in using the words that are apt and which traces her consciousness not only with sound but also with colour.

These narrative structures often contain references back and references forward, so that the order of telling does not correspond to the order of happening. Sometimes the story “flashes back” to relate an event which happened in the past and such parts of the narrative can be called “analeptic” means a “back-take” which comes from “analepsis” (flash-forward). This is commonly found in all the novels of Markandaya. Likewise, the narrative may “flash forward” to narrate, or refer to, or anticipate an event which happens later: such parts of the narrative can be called “proleptic”, means a “fore-take” which comes from “prolepses”. Rarely this narrative technique is found in Markandaya. The narratives of analepsis and prolepsis are often important in establishing and foregrounding themes in a story.

Her latest novel, *Pleasure City* is written in clipped sentences and crisp language which evoke the rhythm of coastal life. It also makes effective use of symbols and cultural markings. Shalimar indicates modernity and Avalon indicates colonial past. The novel captures rich



resonances of cultural exchange and negotiations that happen between a colonial artifact and a postcolonial.

Each novel stretches an extensive period of time. Rukmani's marriage at the age of eighteen is the beginning of the story. It goes on to the death of her husband, granny and her sons. The narrative time can be assumed to be around forty to fifty years but, the time is not stated explicitly. Again, in the story of Mira it could go on up to twenty years. Then in the other novel *Possession* it is around Valmiki's life which could be thirty to forty years of span. In Sarojini's life it is not less than twenty years. Thus, the time of narration or duration is not distinctive in all the novels of Markandaya.

Markandaya evidences her novels with actual fictitious information. There are no exaggerations or abnormal descriptions or displeasing dialogues. She fabricates the motif of hunger, poverty, sorrow, death, disbelief, love, separation, rationality, spirituality, art, crime, sex and motherliness. Middle-class women like Rukmani, Mira, Sarojini, and Nalini are mainly focused on by her. She portrays natural characters and a mixture of human sensibilities such as Nathan, Richard, Dandekar and Ravi. The novels abound in a lot of other immortal dramatis personae of men and women, Selvam, Thambi, Premala Thambi Kunthi, Kali, Kenny, Kitsamy, Chari, the Swamy Govind, Arikamma, Apu, Raju, Annable, Jayamma, Dodamma, Ellie, Jumbo, Puttanna, and so on.

There is visual elucidation of paddy fields, running brooks, mango plantations, restaurants both Chinese and Indian, landscapes with views of mountains and hills, thatched roofs of houses, poverty ridden localities, castle of the rich, arrangements of food items Indian and western, birth of babies, marriages, death ceremonies, bedroom scenes, religious processions, stealing and selling contraband goods. Various economically biased sections of the society like farmers, officers, housewives, club-goers, freedom fighters, petty criminals,

doctors, teachers, missionaries, tailors, servants, maids, mediators, headman, killjoy and painter find space in her novels. Instances of animals like bullocks, monkeys and birds like parrots, and kingfisher appear at different places; Tamil words like “amma”, “appa” are transliterated in her novels. Sentences varying in lengths (small sentences, very big sentences), one-word dialogues, pithy sayings, ungrammatical questions, meaningful accurate words and terminologies are all found in her writings. She never uses meaningless jargons, no round about ways of narrating; she practices lucid and eloquent style of writing and her assertions are straight up to the point. She remembers every minute details of her narration till the end. There is coherence and co-ordination in any of her stories. The stories are aptly structured and plainly show her mastery of the English language. Her proficiency of narration and tragic vision is enchanting and attractive with a smooth-sailing language skill to evoke a sense of sympathy in the readers’ psyche. She creates women characters with forbearance, stoicism, conformance and unyielding types to bring the Indianness in the characters. She brings in Hindus, Muslims, Christians and the British together to visualise the assimilation of cultures in the country. She also depicts different types of people and victims of situations and she glorifies innocence and child-like behaviour.

Markandaya makes a mention of the great people like Gandhi, Nehru, Hastings in her writings but, she never confronts to bring in direct politics or politicians. She alludes to the Mahabharata, and the Ramayana and writes about the silent suffering of women, who wait till the last moment of sorrow. She tries to propound her views that silent sufferers should not be shielded and should be brought to lime-light. By portraying the ignorant and uneducated men, she attempts for a change by educating them. Her subtle message is on the vital issue of education to both men and women. Her sensible words are directed with single idea and meaning.

Here narrative technique touch on the art of storytelling. The sequence of presentation of various episodes depends on the technicality of Markandaya's narration. She classifies the incidents according to the tastes of conventional readers. The sequence of incidents has been composed carefully. There are no recurrence of ideas or incidents other than what are essential. She has cautiously assembled, fabricated, tied and integrated them for the intended meaning. Every novel is like a baby in the womb and finally it takes its birth in Markandaya's ink.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

In the beginning of this thesis, I proposed to bring out the social concern in the writings of Kamala Markandaya. It is her social understanding and a way to make it better is reflected in her penmanship. Markandaya observes every minute detail to make the reader feel at home; she has studied the east and the west and reflected the contrasting imageries through her novels. The rationality of the west and the superstitions of the east have always been a conflict in her mind which is portrayed in her novels. Traditional beliefs and rural customs pull back a society from progression, on the other hand, modernity overlaps tradition. Markandaya argues that in the process of being modern we should not leave our tradition behind. She propagates to eradicate the superstitions and to become a bit scientific. According to her we should welcome science, think with reason but we should not imitate others. Once we start looking for monetary benefits, everything becomes artificial. Markandaya has portrayed East-West encounter in *Nectar in a Sieve*, *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession*, *The Coffin Dams*, *The Nowhere Man*, *The Golden Honeycomb* and *Pleasure City* to bring out the prevalent scenario of the time. Being an expatriate, she had the opportunity to closely witness the East and the West; these novels are the result of her East West conflicts. Indian Mysticism is seen in a detailed way in *Possession* and *A Silence of Desire*. Tradition versus modernity is a common theme in her writings; her novels, *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Silence of Desire*, *Possession*, *The Nowhere Man* and *The Golden Honeycomb* show how modernity overpowers tradition and tradition finds its way back to keep the origin intact. The impact of social change is a very important theme in Markandaya; her novels like, *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Silence of Desire*, *Possession*, *The Coffin*

*Dams, Two Virgins* and *Pleasure City* bring out the social change, the conflict in human minds, desires and the urge of becoming superior and modern is reflected in these novels.

## **6.1 Findings**

It is clear from the discussion in the foregoing chapters that Markandaya's fiction is essentially a product of the cultural ethos. It has been seen that the patterns of freedom and responsibility of tradition and modernity in terms of continuity and change, are embedded in the novels of Markandaya as she perceives and presents the ranges of tensions that occur between the individual and the environment. Markandaya's characters seem to experience the tantalising tensions of a basic opposition between the felt need for freedom from the traditional restrictions, on the one hand, and their social obligations, responsibilities and duties on the other. This initially results in the individual's defiance of the conventional norms of social codes of behavior. The invasion of the tannery brings in new sets of values which disturb the prevalent system of life. Rukmini reacts to the changing economic condition of her own life with a sense of despair and dismay. She finally learns that the individual is in the grasp of powerful social forces and that one is entirely liberated from such forces only when one accepts the social realism. Rukmini's return to the village with Puli is eventually a symbolic of the mental progression to a greater maturity. Markandaya has seeded the concept of freedom and responsibility here and has developed more clearly in later novels.

It is seen that Markandaya has presented the existing social issues. Being a contemporary writer, her novels leave a way for the reader to work for the people, for the society. One can really visit South India and depict the changes contrasting Markandaya's visual world. The vision of Kamala Markandaya concentrates on the realization of human values, a human treatment of all creatures irrespective of their creed, caste and colour. Kamala Markandaya emphasizes and studies social and economic conditions and their effects on

character, she also observes human beings as they behave and feel in the social scene. A spirit of realism always pervades her work; her novels describe various human frailty and human connections. She treats the novel as a channel to drive her expressions with a specific purpose and becomes didactic. Though her each novel contains a different theme, she is pre-eminently a social novelist. Her main objective is to outline social issues which are closely related to ingenuous human life which she depicts with moving realism the tragic predicament of Indian society. Some critics have stated that she has fictionalized the sociology of Indian society, but the fact is that she is absolutely authentic and realistic in her approach. She does not idealize her characters, but she throws sufficient light on the weakness of her characters.

I have stated that Kamala Marakandaya has presented the colonial Indian scenario in her fictions, here we can also refer to New Historicism by taking Markandaya's milieu of the certain period into account.

In *The Coffer Dams*, we see the natives are driven out from their territory for it is selected as the building site for the bungalows of the workers. The lives of tribesman are left in jeopardy. *Nectar in a Sieve* presents the scenario of tannery replacing the hereditary cultivation and diminishing cultural values, Ira has to choose prostitution for survival, Nathan and Rukmani are compelled to leave the village as their land is out of their possession; *Pleasure City* portrays the dwindling state of fishermen due to Shalimar, the Shalimar becomes a place of attraction, but it takes away their age-old tradition of fishing together. When ways of livelihood change, inclination towards the Western values increases and thus happens abatement of cultural traditional values.

The exorbitant revenue demand forced peasants to grow commercial crops like indigo, cotton and jute required by British industry as raw materials. The peasants, especially in cash-crop growing areas, became victims not only of

feudal oppression but also of the colonial oppression as appendages to the speculators' market controlled by British agency houses, exchange banks and Indian compradors. (IR 4)

In *Nectar in a Sieve*, the landlord abandons Nathan from the land as it was needed for the tannery which speak about the good relation between British and Indian merchants. The tannery takes away lands from the farmers by joining hands with the merchants and leave their lives at stake. Initially, they are told to be given jobs in the tannery but that too in the end is not on their favour. In *Some Inner Fury* too, we see Mira's family is inclined towards the British culture except Govind. Kit looks at other Indians as downtrodden----- it happens due to his western education and high standard of living. In *The Golden Honeycomb* too, we observe that the British is intimate with the Maharajah, the merchant and the bania, because they cannot survive without some trusting hands; on the other hand, these Indians too joined hands for their own growth, keeping common mass aside.

Socially and economically, the Indian big bourgeoisie, big landlords and princes, and elite intellectuals maintained close relations; despite minor contradictions, their class interests converged. (IR 17)

In *A Handful of Rice*, we see how the Western people exploit the natives, the memsahibs misbehave the Indians, try to bargain in each and every purchase. Thus, the oppressed business cannot survive and other people like Damodar try to join hands with them through political agendas.

The old class of Indian merchants was almost liquidated and a new class of compradors emerged. These served as agents of foreign capital: they procured goods from the hinterland for the foreign merchant firms to export and sold on the domestic market goods imported by the latter, when the brokers and banians

of European firms, big mahajans and those who, while serving as brokers to British firms, like the Birlas, Bangurs, Hukumchands and so on, thrived mainly as gamblers and speculators on the different commodities and share markets, invested in industry, their compradorial role, contrary to what many people assert, did not come to an end. (IR 12)

Kamala Markandaya believes India should not incline her soul to the West. Instead, she should evolve a personality of her, discarding obsolete values and absolute attitudes. For a nobler aim, personal losses do not count. India should pursue her own path, sticking to her long-cherished ideals while imbibing the best that West can offer. Markandaya does not evince bitterness about the English reign nor she flatters the West. Her balance and unbiased attitude reveal the ideologies shaped the human society during the British era in India. Her sensibility and humanitarian nature are the most significant aspects of her novels which she depicts along with cultural and political confrontation. Though the West fails to comprehend the east, Markandaya always hopes for a new political context through transformation and assimilation.

Kamala Markandaya perceives the Indian life closely during the Pre-Independence era. Thus, she acutely represents the class-struggle by depicting the two classes of people such as the wage earner and the industrialist. Emergence of industries and development of technologies have divided the society among the owner and worker, the exploiter and the exploited. This economic division exists in the society even today.

Kamala Markandaya's presentation of characters from different sections of India provides colourful shades to her novels. Portrait of these characters define her myriad concerns towards her people. Through the characters she emphasises on emerging class-consciousness in the society which is the cause of fictional tension and moral polemics in her novels. Some



characters struggle with their fate whereas some others silently accept their agony and sufferings throughout.

Markandaya's novels indicate the conflict of constraint and mobility in the process of positive change of a culture and tradition. In reference to Greenblatt's discussion on the circulation of social energy, it can be drawn that a literary piece can circulate social energy in the process of reception which moves through a series of negotiations, exchanges and movements. The author takes the ideas from the existing society which in relation with the readers or perceivers are able to represent the social practices and are encouraged to cross the boundaries for a change.

Thus, Markandaya has brought out the real picture of the colonial India by reflecting upon difference between cultures of the East and the West, traditional values and its importance, and the outcome of blindly following the rural customs. Through her fictional creations, she has portrayed that irrespective of the geographical, cultural and political divide, human beings all over the world share common underlying feelings and emotions. Her works are thus examples of how assimilation of different cultures enriches a culture.

Kamala Markandaya highlights the fact that the Indian people's faith in religion and passive resignation to fate enables them to face the hardships of life boldly without blaming anyone. It gives them a sort of mental strength and protects them from the danger of tension and conflict which afflicts the people of the West. But at the same time, she has picturised the rigidness of Indian people, which leads to a havoc. Clinging to some traditional beliefs and leaving life to fate is a characteristic of Indian rural society; so Markandaya has portrayed the picture of such a society with a motto to bring a change to it. She has not only depicted the rural society but through her characters she has shown the calamity faced by their meaningless

rituals and traditions. Traditions which keep the identity of a culture are useful; blind imitation of one culture in another can bring destruction to the mixed culture.

Markandaya does not approve of the complete merge of Indian culture with the Western one; as such, she does not like the elimination of Indian culture through westernization. Generally, national prejudices tend to repel the development of the culture which ought to keep pace with the different cultures of the world. With a view to developing one's own culture, one must keep the doors open for the creative advent of other cultures. Racialism and fanaticism, according to the novelist, are stumbling blocks in the way of the exchange of cultural values: the former gives birth to violence and bloodshed, where, as the latter creates an atmosphere of hatred and hostility. Markandaya advises that religious taboos, political biases, and international hostility must not be taken into account while considering the values and worth of culture.

Kamala Markandaya lays emphasis on reconciliation and harmony in cultural life. In *Nectar in a Sieve* she brings Nathan's family in touch with Kennington to display the sympathy of the west for the poverty-stricken people of the East. In *Some Inner Fury*, friendly attachment between Mirabai-Richard is engulfed by forces of nationalism, but the atmosphere of the family remains westernized. *A Silence of Desire* introduces reason and scepticism as mascot of western culture, but the Indian element of faith and spiritualism has its own place in culture. *Possession* shows how, Valmiki's rusticity receives the ennobling influence of the West: his manners, habits and sensibility are refined during his stay with Caroline Bell in England. *A Handful of Rice* treats of Indian culture through the dealings of Ravishankar with Hindus and Christians. *The Cofferdams*, *The Nowhere Man* and *Two Virgins* give contrasting pictures of Eastern and Western cultures; and there is a natural and mutual perlocution of two cultures into each other. *The Golden Honeycomb* and *Pleasure City* show how the rudeness and rusticity of Indian dealings give place to the understanding of cultural values and sensibility.

In her novels, Kamala Markandaya has scrutinized a discord of values between two sets - supremacy of social hierarchy and the emergence of the individual. The Western society believes in the fulfilment of personal requirements even at the cost of the family while in the Indian society, such a fulfilment is not accepted in the traditional set-ups. Kamala Markandaya is remarkably authentic because of her familiarity with the natal rural and urban life of the southern part of India. In her novels, she rarely goes out of the society as it is. In her two novels *Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice* she introduces us with poverty ridden lives of village. *A Silence of Desire* is a novel of husband-wife relationship. In *Possession*, she has written about the social exploitation of man by man and it is the existence of a bad social order that is responsible for such exploitation. *The Coffey Dams* and *Two Virgins* are sociologically coloured. She has written a new type of novel *Pleasure City* because in this novel, she talks of the enigma of love and brotherhood between the people of the Eastern and the Western civilisations. Since she has been a very acute observer of social life, traditions, complexes, superstitions, psychological built of man and woman, her concerns are always social; she has concluded that most of the men and women are found maladjusted because of the inherent defects in the social order.

The process of modernization becomes the hub around which the Western and the Oriental cultural modes clash in Markandaya's novels. It becomes a locus of a number of binary forces such as tradition against modernity, village against town, faith against reason and spiritualism against materialism. Markandaya examines the strength and weakness of both the cultures and in her treatment of the cross-cultural interface, she also suggests that a cultural synthesis is possible with a help of mutual respect and understanding.

The colonial India portrayed in Markandaya's novels can be studied co-textually and contextually. As discussed in the third chapter Indian writers during the colonial era picturized the socio-political and educational scenario through fictions and other genre, Kamala

Markandaya too highlights in her novels how patriarchy subjugates woman in the socio-economic order. She hopes for better education and empowerment through Rukmani and Nalini, so that the inherent favouritism in the social framework can be abolished. She portrays characters like Mira to reflect upon the changing mindset of the Indians towards woman, although the conflict between the rigid and progressive thoughts pertains in the older generations. She evolves towards a larger concept of universal love, caring and concord which by its very extension ensure the endurance and vitality of Indian womanhood.

It can be argued that Markandaya has employed the palimpsest narrative in the process of cultural exchange, assimilation and alteration while writing her novels. The production of the author and reception of the reader play a significant role in this process. Greenblatt, in this regard, focuses on transformation, accumulation, communication and representation rather than the creativity of the author or the imaginative power of the reader. New Historicism emphasized on the part of the reader's milieu too, the reader's reception is influenced by the socio-economic condition.

Markandaya's writings impenetrate through various outlooks, her characters play a crucial role in the civilization of human race. This thesis deals with limited study of tradition and modernity in the light of New Historicism. There is a scope further for in depth psychoanalytic study of her characters and mythological study related to her novels beyond this thesis. The characters, Markandaya draw bring out the picture of almost every section of people. One can have a better grip of India as a whole and partially the West through these characters. The actors created by Markandaya could help to upgrade the mindset of the people and guide them to blend the modern thoughts with traditional flavours.

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