
Registration No. V-36244/2008-09

ISSN :- 2395-0390

The journal has been listed in 'UGC Approved List of Journals' with Journal No. – 48402 in previous list of UGC

JIFE Impact Factor – 3.21

Varanasi Management Review

A Multidisciplinary Quarterly International Peer Reviewed Referred Research Journal

Editor in Chief

Dr. Alok Kumar

Associate Professor & Dean (R&D)
School of Management Sciences
Varanasi

Volume - IX

No. - 4

(October-December) 2023

Published by
Future Fact Society
Varanasi (U.P.) India

CONTENTS

"Varanasi Management Review"

➤	The Significance of Gandhi's Philosophy <i>Shubham Pratap Singh</i>	01 – 06
➤	Trends in Educational Attainment among the Scheduled Tribe Women in India <i>Dr. Naresh Kumar Salvi</i>	07 – 13
➤	Identity of Indian Women in Patriarchal Society <i>Neha Mehrotra</i>	14 – 17
➤	A Comparative Study of Job Satisfaction and Stress among Employees in Private and Public Sector Banks in Uttar Pradesh <i>Vishwa Vijay Pratap Singh</i>	18 – 26
➤	A Study of Examination Anxiety and Effect on Children's Personality <i>Dr. Smita Tripathi</i>	27 – 33
➤	Management of Sports Diet before, during and after the Game <i>Anil Kumar Rajpoot</i> <i>Prof. (Dr.) Chandrabhan Singh</i>	34 – 42
➤	The 1931 Communal Violence: Political, Social and Spatial Reconfigurations of Kanpur <i>Sameer Hasan Adil</i>	43 – 47
➤	Social Concerns in Kamala Markandaya's Novels <i>Dr. Raj Kamal Mishra</i>	48 – 51
➤	E-Governance in Health Sector in India: A Study of Privacy and Security of Personal Data under National Digital Health Mission <i>Dr. Pravin Kumar</i>	52 – 58

Social Concerns in Kamala Markandaya's Novels

Dr. Raj Kamal Mishra*

Abstract

This paper examines Kamala Markandaya's novels, focusing on her social concerns and distinctive modes of expression. Markandaya's novels, set in contemporary Indian life, showcase her skill in handling story and plot, providing relevant social commentary, and arranging material effectively. She projects individual consciousness against a changing landscape and human landscape, leaving the form open-ended. Markandaya maintains a fine artistic balance through her stream of consciousness technique, using the observer's point of view to project the consciousness of each character. Her novels are marked by their unique narrative styles.

Keywords: Unique, Western, ideal, narrative, social commentary

The modern novel has evolved over time, influenced by various schools of fiction, types of novels, plot construction techniques, and approaches to the problems of modern life. In the early twentieth century, novels were primarily focused on social issues, with psychological novelists like Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf dissatisfied with material values. Critics like Samuel Butler, Aldous Huxley, and E. M. Forster also critiqued materialism in their works.

Indian writers have also contributed to the development of Indian-English literature, which has opened doors for cultural contact between India and the rest of the world. This genre has brought India to the literary map of the world and opened up a unique field of racial intermixture and mutual impact between two cultures. Indian-English fiction has opened up a window for foreigners to see India as they would like to see it.

Among Indian novelists of the pre-independence period, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Kumara Guru, K. Ahmad Abbas, Ahmad Ali, S.K. Chettur, S. Nagarjun, A.S.P. Ayyar, and others, such as Bhawani Bhattacharya, Dilip Kumar Roy, Khushwant Singh, Rama Rao, Ruskin Bond, and Sudhin Ghose, are important figures.

Markandaya, an Indian novelist, is known for her tragic vision, which is reflected in her characters' conflicts between good and evil, honesty and dishonesty, tradition and modernity, faith and reason, Eastern value and Western one, ideal and actual, and love and hatred. Her concern for the poverty-stricken masses and their ruthless exploitation in her motherland, along with the exploitation of Indians by the English people, has further deepened her tragic vision.

The psychological factor also contributes to Markandaya's tragic vision. Her sharp sensitivity and capacity to perceive, feel, and suffer vicariously with others contribute to her tragic vision. The novel emerges from our interest in other human beings, their thoughts, passions, and social and emotional problems. It is a comprehensive picture of human life, both inner and outer, studying moral, social, and political aspects of life.

* Asst. Professor English, Rajeev Gandhi Govt. Post Graduate College, Ambikapur, Dist- Surguja, Chhattisgarh

Markandaya's first novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, is a fictional narrative that explores the responses of an elderly Indian woman reminiscing about her life. The narrative begins with a gentle nostalgia, with Rukmani, the central character, describing her husband's departure from her village.

Yet I have no fears now: what is done is done, there can be no repining and Old woman's foibles. A need for comforts. (*Nectar in a Sieve*, p. 7.)

Nathan's absence left the author feeling lost and amidst the dust and ashes, they gathered their life fragments and called to puli, a woman they don't know the words for. They made a promise to lure a child, but knew it couldn't be kept. They had no intention of giving it.

And he, compassionate creature, who drew from me the arrows of sorrow one by one, listened, and when I came home I was not alone. (*Nectar in a Sieve*, p. 188.)

The novel "*Nectar in a Sieve*" by Markandaya is a powerful and effective narrative that follows the story of Rukmani, an elderly woman who recounts her life as the wife of a peasant. The narrative is divided into two parts, with the first part focusing on Rukmani's heartbreaks and the second part detailing the wandering of the aged couple in search of their son. The novelist uses a circular pattern to create a sense of continuity and place the reader in a specific moment in the lives of the characters.

Rukmani's recollection is clear, lyrical, and captures the tragic experiences in a detached and unemotional manner. The divided chapters keep the reader interested, and the story becomes a narrative of events in the narrator's life. The use of the first person singular in the novel allows the reader to identify with the feelings of the woman narrator, and the novelist manipulates the limitations of the first person narrative to recreate them vividly.

The novel is a powerful and effective narrative technique that showcases the narrator's emotions and the author's ability to create a strong connection with the reader. Overall, "*Nectar in a Sieve*" is a captivating and powerful read that leaves readers wanting more.

Some Inner Fury has also the same narrative technique but with greater artistic success. Mira, the woman narrator, belongs to the westernised upper class society. She is young and has a delicate emotional impasse which often results into emotional outburst such as :

I had not been home for a long time and so I had forgotten the little silver box lying in my cupboard which no one ever touched. A beautiful thing of filigree, with a raised design of lotus flowers which I knew was there though I had to feel for it with my fingertips, it was so worn away. I opened it, and inside was the scrap of material. I saw tom from Richard's sleeve, from his upper arm where the flesh was like milk..... The dust was still there I trembled like a coward standing there and then the slow paid came seeping up, filling my throat with grief, flowing from throat at temple. (*Some Inner Fury*, p. 9.)

The novelist's task is to handle the constantly forming material in her mind, like a craftsman working with unfamiliar properties. The novelist must recognize the fine variations and consider them when building a wall. *Nectar in a Sieve* and *Some Inner Fury* share a circular narration pattern with female protagonists Rukmani and Mira. Rukmani is

self-conscious about her past, while Mira is unself-conscious. Both novels begin with nostalgia, but Bukmani starts with her family's disintegration from her sisters' marriage.

This and many other things betray her conscious attempt at recollection. Rukmani narrates nature, its different moods, the darkness and the brook and in this way she is over conscious of the situation around her. This is obvious in the following passage:

Sometimes now I can see quite clearly, the veil is rent and for a few seconds I see blue skies and tender trees, then it closes on me again and once more I am back in the world of my own which darkens a little with each passing day. Yet not alone: for the faces of these I have loved, things that have been are always before me; and sometimes they are so vivid that truly I can not say whether I see them or not, whether the veil is lifted to allow me the sight, or whether it is only my mind that sees. Today for instance, I could see the brook that ran near our paddy field so clearly that I felt I had put to stop to feel its water wet on my hands. Yet that brook belongs to a part of my life that is finished. (Nectar in a Sieve, pp. 10-11.)

In *Some Inner Fury*, self-consciousness is absent due to Rukmani's fresh past and Mira's tragedy ten years ago. In *Nectar in a Sieve*, the story begins years after her husband's death and follows her life from childhood to her marriage to Nathan. The narrative spans over ten years, detailing her fortune until she is widowed in her forties.

Mira in *Some Inner Fury* finds the scrap of material she had torn from Richard's shirt, after the mob had attacked him during the "QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT" of 1942 and in a moment she is transported to her past:

The dust was still there no reason why it should not be; not reddish hot and swirling madly as on that day, but faded in this sunless air and settled on the cloth in a fine greying powder. (Some Inner Fury, p. 7)

Mira faithfully recounts all the happenings right from her first meeting with Richard till her final separation from him, for the forces that pulled us apart were too strong. The concluding sentence is, "outside a wind was stirring: the reddish dust of earth, loosened by many feet, came swirling in, I and at last I turned to go".⁶

In *Possession*, Markandaya uses non-omniscient third-person narration to tell the story from an Indian point of view. The central character is a Britisher, Anasuya, who takes Valmiki, a young talented Indian, with her to England. The novelist creates mostly women characters, such as Rukmani, Kunthi, Ira, Mira, Helen, Jayamma, Nalino, Saroja, Lalitha, and Mrs. Pickering. These female characters possess rare human qualities and are nobler, wiser, stronger, and better than their male counterparts.

A Silence of Desire, *A Handful of Rice* is a well-knit story of an emotional and moral experience, with a male figure and an omniscient point of view. The novelist switches between a female and male narrator to ensure authenticity in the narrative. The story is told chronologically, with occasional flashbacks of the central character's past life.

The Coffer Dams is a mature work that integrates Indian and British attitudes into a realistic tale. The plot includes incidents that upset traditional tribal moorings, change of values, and new modes of living. The interaction and conflict of values are worked into the plot through both plot and character, revealing the artistic skill of the novelist.

The novel leaves readers aware of the depth of a seemingly ordinary tale, including the construction of a daman Indo-British Project and the liaison of an English woman with a

disillusioned tribal crane-operator. The skilful way in which the novelist weaves a conflict of sensibilities and attitudes makes it a pulsating record of human suffering and cultural consciousness against the backdrop of formidable elements of Nature.

Kamala Markandaya is a renowned Indian novelist known for her personal stories, wider conflicts, and social background. Her novels often focus on Helen, who is caught between two different systems of values, beliefs, and attitudes. Markandaya's narration is often internalized in terms of two or three characters, allowing her to dig deeper into the motives of the individuals and present the conflict of ideas within the cultural context.

Markandaya is a conscious artist who moves with precision and attention to both narrative and plot-construction. Although she may not be as deep in her characterization as Anita Desai and Arun Joshi, she has evolved her own mild-natured technique and vision of life, making her novels an index of the current time in sociological, political, economic, cultural, and communal manifestations.

Markandaya's contribution to Indian novel in English is that she presents Indian ways of life without authorial commentary. While her graphic presentation of "Indian ways of life" is unquestionable, she does not offer any "authorial commentary." However, she does have several female characters, particularly Mira and Anasuya, who have a remarkable resemblance with their creator, resulting in a sense of detachment in her novels.

In her novels, dialogues and conversations occupy more space than scenic paintings and descriptions, with the main objectives being the telling of the tale, furtherance of the plot, and revelation of socially relevant situations and characters.

Works Cited:

- *Nectar in a Sieve*, London: Putnam, New York: John Day, 1954
- *Some Inner Fury*, London: Putnam, 1955, New York: John Day, 1956

