



Contribution Of Indian Women in Literature: Special Reference to Kamala Markandaya's Novel 'Nectar in A Sieve': A Study

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ABSTRACT

Many prominent Indian women writers, poets, and novelists have played a very important and crucial role in presenting and describing India and Indianans in various ways in their works. Anita Desai, Sashi Deshpande, Anita Nair, Manju Kapoor, Nayantara Sahagal, Bharati Mukharji, Chitra Divakaruni, Mamala Das are notable. Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) is one of the well-known novelists among them. She effectively presents rural India and the pathetic life of farmers in her novel. Her novel 'Nectar in a Sieve' is a very major novel that presents the pathetic and tragic life of a farmer and his wife named Nathan and Rukmani. In this article, a researcher has tried to show the role of a woman writer in the contribution of Indian literature with special reference to the novel 'Nectar in a Sieve'.

Keywords: Pathetic, Tragic, Rural. Patriarchy, Inequality,

I. INTRODUCTION

The contributions of Indian women novelists in Indian writing in English are very notable. Indian women novelists in English have made their permanent mark in the field of English fiction. They are being conferred not only national but international awards also. In most of their writings, they have tried their best to free the female mentality from the age-long control of male domination. In short, in their novels, the protagonists are mostly women characters desolated and isolated by an entirely sapless, hypocritical, and insensitive male domination. Today whatever political, social, cultural, and individual awareness we see in women, they are mostly the result of these fiction writers who heralded a new consciousness in the realm of traditional thinking. If these tireless efforts on the part of women for women's sake go on, the days are not far when they will be equated with men and even far better than men, in all respects, in each and every field.

During the last three decades, a large number of women novelists writing in English have attracted a great deal of attention and favorable comment. Kamala Markandaya is one of the most significant fiction writers among them. She finds a place in book reviews, journals, interviews, and seminars. In the literary scenario in Indian writing in English, there are innumerable women novelists who have presented feminine sensitivity, grievances, and every type of injustice, inequality, and ill-treatment. Kamala Markandeya has several novels: *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A handful of Rice*, *Two Virgins*, *Pleasure City* at her credit. Few of them are presenting the most adequate and sensitive problems of the world of women. And, this world is full of pathos, suffering, and subordination of women. Atiya Husain who wrote only one novel under the title *Broken Column* is from the

Muslim community and is an independent thinker. She focused light on the domestic restriction of a Muslim family.

Kamala Markandaya is a well-known Indian writer in English she has great concern with rural life in India nectar in a few is a novel about rural India the subtitle of the novel a novel of rural India travel the fact various aspects of Indian rural life has been realistically and comprehensively treated the novel is a realistic description of the tragedy of Indian peasant which is daily enacted on the stage of rural India. Rukmani and Her husband Nathan are the chief actors in this tragedy and in the background there stand a number of minor figures who also suffer like them in short the novel is about rural India and his realistic nature in it, Kamla Markandaya has made a faithful and realistic attempt to project of rural India all these facts can be studied as follows.

In rural India, the peasant is a sufferer in many ways. He suffered from man and nature Nathan is a tragic victim of the vigorous nature his crops fail others due to excessive rain or lack of it in both cases destroyed. Kunti and old granny surrender their lives and Nathan becomes as dry as bamboo due to excessive rain or lack of it. We see Kunti and old granny surrender their lives and Nathan becomes as dry as bamboo due to excessive rain and drought. Nathan and his family almost starved. Kamla Markandeya also shows the zamindari system of rural India and the Havoc created by it in the lives of the innocent peasant a tenant farmers. He is to pay his dues for the land whether he reaps or not.

The Zamindar never turns up in person but sends his agent for the exact dues. Rukmini sells her clothes etc to pay the dues to Shivaji then Nathan is evicted from his land. Eviction from the land is the greatest tragedy for a peasant. Nathan and Rukmini become homeless thus in rural India men are victimized by both man and nature as in rural pictures in the novel. They are characterized by novels that can be compared with the novels of Munshi Premchand in Hindi.

'Nectar in a Sieve' presents pictures of early marriage Rukmani is married to Nathan at the age of Twelve. Kunti is the youngest of all Three: Kali, Janki, and Rukmini. Ira is married off at the age of fourteen. similarly, in order to find a suitable husband, the girl must have a nice dowry Rukmini's father is the village head man by the time of the marriage meaning her father does not remain able to give dowry and so Rukmini has to marry a poor man, Nathan. The dowry is lowered if the bride is beautiful. This is found in the case of Ira who is as beautiful as a maiden. Rural society is dominated by men. This all the negative aspects of women are as equal as expressed by The liberal politician Carl Welcker, an elected member of the Frankfurt Parliament, expressed the following views:

Nature has created men and women to carry out different functions...Man, the stronger, the bolder and the freer of the two, has been designated as protector of the family, its provider, meant for public tasks in the domain of law, production, defence. Woman the weaker, dependent and timid, requires the protection of man. Her sphere is the home, the care of the children, the nurturing of the family...do we require any further proof that given such differences, equality between the sexes would only endanger harmony and destroy the dignity of the family.

Women are mainly considered the begetters of children. In fact, women have come to feel those differences at all levels: economic, social, and political and gender. All are manmade 'Social constructs' and gender differences in particular are not natural. Clara Nubile writes by quoting the reference of Manusmriti as: 'in childhood, a woman should be under her father's control. In youth under her husbands, and when her husband is dead under her son's. she should not have independence.' (Qtd. Clara, pg.1). Ira is written to her house by her

husband because she is barren. He takes to another woman. Nathan does not blame him because a man needs children. In addition, rural people need sons, especially Nathan is not happy with his first female baby. This condition of patriarchal suppression, depression, and artificial dominancy is expressed by Simone de Beauvoir as:

**One is not born, but rather becomes a woman,
It is civilizations a whole that produces
this Creature...which is described as feminine.**

Ira, the rural woman, is also a primary helper to the producer of food. They also help their husbands in sowing, reaping and harvesting. Kamala Marakandaya, a great woman writes of India through this novel depicted the dangerous condition of rural India. Injustice, inequality, and exploitation of women is the burning topic of today's lifestyle. Even in the past, women were the victims of exploitation and misuse at the hands of men. In all sections of humanity, women have been exploited at all levels in different forms. The sympathy for the indefinable suffering of women in the writings of Kamala Marakandaya's novels is rooted in her temperament. She has not chosen to deliberately project feminism but it comes naturally in her writings. This sensitive writer has practically seen rampant negligence of women and their exploitation at the hands of men.

II. CONCLUSION

Kamala Markandaya's contribution to Indian literature is very notable. She has very seriously depicted the heart touching the poor condition of the farmer and the fire reality of rural India. She has also depicted the secondary condition of women in rural India. This sensitive writer has practically seen rampant negligence of women and their exploitation at the hands of men. Her novel touchingly depicted the gender inequality, suppression, oppression, and exploitation of women in this patriarchal society.

III. REFERENCES

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