



A Study on Socio -Political Vision in Kamala Markandaya's Select of Novel "Nectar in a Sieve"

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Abstract: Indian English Literature is an endeavor of showcasing the rare gems of Indian Writing in English. Throughout history, women have always struggled to gain equality, respect and the same rights as men. The authors have chosen the novel "Nectar in a Sieve" The novel tells the story of Rukmani, a young woman who is married off at the age of twelve to a tenant farmer in rural India. Over the course of her life, Rukmani faces numerous hardships, including famine and poverty. Through it all, however, she remains resilient and determined to survive.

Keywords: Right, resilient, famine struggle and tenant

Introduction

The women writers in India write about the enclosed domestic space, and women's perceptions of their within it. The women writers mainly expose the psychological suffering of the frustrated housewife, the depiction of the repressed and oppressed lives of women of the lower classes in their works. They wrote about the plight of traditional Hindu women who were bonded in child-marriage, dowry, prohibition on women's education, arranged marriages and life of widowhood. Many of the women writers wrote initially in their regional languages like Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and other native languages and then translated to English. Women writer's trend of writing from traditional pattern of self-sacrifice and suppression in the male dominated world has moved towards awareness of women's demands and needs. They have paved way to expose the character sketch of women in various roles and the introspection that leads to mould the womanhood through their works.

Review of Literature

Women writers like Kamala Markandaya and Shashi Deshpande have played a crucial role in highlighting the predicament of women in a patriarchal society. Markandaya, internationally acclaimed, and Deshpande both drew attention to this pressing issue. Indo-Anglian women novelists have significantly contributed to Indian literature, exploring the changing socio-political landscape and delving into the complexities of human relationships. One such notable figure is Kamala Markandaya, a prolific writer known for her ten novels published between 1954 and 1982. Her works showcase her deep engagement with the evolving Indian society and her adept use of the English language for creative expression. Markandaya's narratives often focus on the inner workings of her characters' minds, depicting their personal struggles and social confrontations. Another influential writer in this category is Shashi Deshpande, who has followed the journey of modern Indian women through various stages, assessing their losses and gains along the way. Deshpande's novels revolve around women's struggles for identity, survival, and self-realization in a patriarchal society. She depicts the challenges faced by women in contemporary India and their quest for individuality and fulfillment.

Both Markandaya and Deshpande emphasize the importance of inner revolutions, suggesting that true change begins within individuals. They advocate for a shift in mindsets and societal norms, promoting equality and understanding between men and women. These novelists highlight the significance of personal growth and self-discovery, encouraging women to redefine their roles in society. They challenge traditional expectations and inspire readers to embrace their individuality, paving the way for a more equitable and progressive future. To



foster a truly balanced environment, both genders must provide space for each other's worlds. If this were achieved, there would be no need to celebrate Women's Day. Undoubtedly, women must work hard to attain the position they seek. Indian English fiction has significantly evolved, capturing attention on a global scale. Over time, it has transitioned from being influenced by the British Raj to embracing vernacular narratives, reflecting the shifts in Indian society.

This evolution showcases a movement from socialism to individualism, from communal values to personal achievement, and from spiritualism to materialism, mirroring India's journey from tradition to modernity. While this transformation is natural, it highlights a paradoxical loss of inner happiness and self-control despite increased material comfort. As an expression of the most profound understanding of life and society, fiction holds a significant place in literature. It serves as a creative process, reflecting the powerful and intimate consciousness of the society it emerges from. Fiction has purposes to fulfill, thoughts to contemplate, and plans to implement for the betterment of humanity. By reflecting upon such diverse aspects, it witnesses and portrays the transformations occurring within society. Indian English fiction, too, engages in this reflection, expressing thoughts, feelings, and emotions in a rational and engaging manner. It sheds light on various societal changes, offering a unique perspective on the evolving landscape.

Therefore, the depiction of change in different facets of Indian society highlights the significance and relevance of Indian creative writing in English. To foster a truly balanced environment, both genders must provide space for each other's worlds. If this were achieved, there would be no need to celebrate Women's Day. Undoubtedly, women must work hard to attain the position they seek. Indian English fiction has significantly evolved, capturing attention on a global scale. Over time, it has transitioned from being influenced by the British Raj to embracing vernacular narratives, reflecting the shifts in Indian society. This evolution showcases a movement from socialism to individualism, from communal values to personal achievement, and from spiritualism to materialism, mirroring India's journey from tradition to modernity. While this transformation is natural, it highlights a paradoxical loss of inner happiness and self-control despite increased material comfort. As an expression of the most profound understanding of life and society, fiction holds a significant place in literature. It serves as a creative process, reflecting the powerful and intimate consciousness of the society it emerges from. Fiction has purposes to fulfill, thoughts to contemplate, and plans to implement for the betterment of humanity. By reflecting upon such diverse aspects, it witnesses and portrays the transformations occurring within society. Indian English fiction, too, engages in this reflection, expressing thoughts, feelings, and emotions in a rational and engaging manner. It sheds light on various societal changes, offering a unique perspective on the evolving landscape. Therefore, the depiction of change in different facets of Indian society highlights the significance and relevance of Indian creative writing in English. Women writers like Kamala Markandaya and Shashi Deshpande have played a crucial role in highlighting the predicament of women in a patriarchal society. Markandaya, internationally acclaimed, and Deshpande both drew attention to this pressing issue. Indo-Anglian women novelists have significantly contributed to Indian literature, exploring the changing socio-political landscape and delving into the complexities of human relationships. One such notable figure is Kamala Markandaya, a prolific writer known for her ten novels published between 1954 and 1982. Her works showcase her deep engagement with the evolving Indian society and her adept use of the English language for creative expression. Markandaya's narratives often focus on the inner workings of her characters' minds, depicting their personal struggles and social confrontations. Another influential writer in this category is Shashi Deshpande, who has followed the journey of modern Indian women through various stages, assessing their losses and gains along the way. Deshpande's novels revolve around women's struggles for identity, survival, and self-realization in a patriarchal society. She depicts the challenges faced by women in contemporary India and their quest for individuality and fulfillment.

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Critical Analysis of the novel

Rukmani, an old woman, reflects on her life. The educated daughter of a village headman fallen on hard times, Rukmani is married at the age of twelve to Nathan, a tenant farmer. Nathan treats her with kindness and respect as she learns the chores her new life requires. Within a year they have a beautiful daughter, Ira, and good rice harvests. During the next six years, Rukmani does not conceive. Troubled that she cannot produce a son for Nathan, Rukmani visits her ill mother and there meets Kenny, a foreign doctor. He treats her infertility without Nathan's knowledge. In quick succession, Rukmani bears five sons. With each birth, however, the family has a little less to eat. When a tannery is built nearby, unpleasant changes come to village life. Rukmani's two oldest sons eventually go to work there. They help the family a great deal with their wages but are eventually dismissed for being ringleaders in a labor strike.



The year they arrange a good marriage for Ira, monsoon rains destroy all their crops. Rukmani sacrifices her savings to buy food for the family. Ira's husband returns Ira to her parents' home because she is barren. Again Rukmani turns to Kenny without her husband's knowledge, this time to help Ira conceive. His treatments are too late, however, since Ira's husband has taken another woman. Rukmani becomes pregnant again and bears her last son, Kuti. Caring for Kuti lifts Ira out of her depression and despair until the crops fail from drought and the family once again goes hungry. They sell most of their possessions just to pay half of what they owe the landowner for their lease. Reduced to foraging for roots and leaves, the family begins to weaken and starve. Kenny secures a servant's position in the city for Rukmani's third son. Rukmani's fourth son is killed stealing a calfskin from the tannery. Kuti suffers the most from hunger, and Ira prostitutes herself to feed him. Despite her efforts, he dies. A good rice harvest arrives too late to save Rukmani's sons.

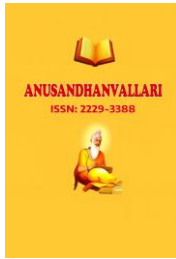
Kenny returns from one of his long absences with money raised to build a hospital in the village. He offers to train Rukmani's remaining son, Selvam, as his assistant. Some villagers speculate that Kenny is kind to Rukmani because they have an illicit relationship. Kunthi, a neighborhood wife who became a prostitute, spreads this rumor out of spite. When they were both young, Nathan fathered Kunthi's two sons. Kunthi uses this as leverage over them until Rukmani learns the truth and forgives Nathan. Now, as Nathan nears fifty, he has no sons left to work the land. He suffers from rheumatism and debilitating fevers. Rukmani and Ira try to help, but they are not strong enough. Ira has a baby to care for, an albino boy conceived in prostitution but loved nonetheless. The family experiences its greatest loss when the land agent tells Nathan and Rukmani their land has been sold to the despised tannery. No one else will lease land to a man as old and ill as Nathan, and Rukmani and Nathan must leave their home of thirty years to go to their son Murugan in the city. They leave Ira and their grandchild under Selvam's care.

Their possessions reduced to the few bundles they carry, Nathan and Rukmani try to find Murugan in the city. They rest one night at a temple, where thieves steal their bundles and all their money. A leprous street urchin named Puli helps them find the home of Kenny's doctor friend. They learn that Murugan has not worked there for the past two years and that he left the position for better wages at the Collector's house. At the Collector's, Murugan's wife informs them that Murugan has deserted her. Her older boy, their grandson, is thin with hunger. Her starving baby is too little to be Murugan's son. Rukmani sees that she and Nathan cannot impose upon their daughter-in-law. They return to the temple, where food is distributed each night to the destitute.

Rukmani and Nathan dream of home but have no means to make the trip. Rukmani tries to get work as a letter reader but earns only enough to buy rice cakes. Puli takes them to a stone quarry where there is better-paying work. He helps them learn to break stones, and they come to rely on him. They entrust him with their earnings, and, as they save, they begin to hope. One evening, Rukmani splurges on extra food and toys for Puli and her grandson. When she returns to Nathan at the temple, she expects him to be angry, but instead he is violently ill. During a week of monsoon rains, Nathan continues to work in the quarry despite his fevers and chills. One evening, after she gets paid, Rukmani begins to plan for a cart to take them home. Hurrying to catch up with Nathan, she finds him collapsed in the mud in the street. Kind strangers help carry him to the temple, where he dies in her arms after reminding her of their happiness together. After his death, Rukmani rashly promises Puli his health if he returns to the country with her, a promise Kenny and Selvam will help her keep. She introduces Puli to Selvam and Ira as the son she and Nathan adopted while they were away. Demonstrating both hope and compassion, Ira hastens to prepare a meal for Puli, and Selvam promises his mother they will manage

Conclusion

In "Nectar in a Sieve", Kamala Markandaya depicts the life of Rukmani, a strong woman who navigates the challenges of a changing India. Set against the backdrop of a remote South Indian village, the novel portrays Rukmani's journey as she faces the joys and sorrows of family life, the impact of industrialization, and the



hardships of poverty and famine. Rukmani's tranquil existence is disrupted by the arrival of a tannery, symbolizing the intrusion of Western values and industrial progress. As her village transforms, she fiercely resists the erosion of traditional values, embodying the resilience of the old ways. During times of drought and famine, Rukmani's acceptance and endurance help her cope with adversity, including the loss of her son. However, her daughter Ira rebels against societal norms and resorts to prostitution to save her family from starvation. This highlights the clash between tradition and the need for survival in the face of modernization

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