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In the wide spectrum of her novels, Kamala Markandaya has successfully presented almost all the important aspects and the varied colours of human life viz. family life of poor persons in *Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice*; husband– wife relationship in *A Silence of Desire*; exploitation of man by man in *Possession*, *The Coffers Dams* and *Two Virgins*; racial conflicts in *Some Inner Fury* and *Coffers Dams*; love for country's freedom in *Some Inner Fury* and *The Golden Honeycomb* and a spirit of love and fraternity between the people of the East and the west in *Pleasure City*.

Markandaya has a varied experience of life. She knows the world through experience. When she writes about Indian people and their tradition she seems an insider and when she exposes the weak points and rebukes Indians through the characters of her novels she presents her outsider sight for India. Markandaya is sincere in her writing which makes her work world famous. She aims at educating humanity and believes in the betterment of man. Her fiction, 'rooted in the Indian soil and ethos, has a subtle social purpose. In a sense she fictionalizes the sociology of India. Her intention is to awaken the polite society to the real problem'. Secrete of her deep knowledge about India and the West is her direct experience with Indian and Western life. She has spent a few years observing the lives of South Indian peasants before marrying an Englishman and settling down in London. An analytical study of Markandaya's novels clears the different aspects of human life as parent-child and husband-wife relationship etc. She gives the preference to these relationships because they give us security, respectability and identity. Praising Markandaya for her perfect portrayal of the relationship, Uma Parameswaran rightly says:

Personal relationships are Kamala Markandaya's forte, step by step she builds up relationship, analyses them, and dramatically makes them represent something larger than themselves. Markandaya depicts the loving concern, practical wisdom and self-sacrifice in her novels which are the basic qualities of matrimonial bonds. Rukmani and Nathan, Mira and Richard, Kit and Premala, Sarojini and Dandekar, Ravi and Nalini all these characters fill the vitality in her novels. All of them have to face discord in their relationships and their relationship is put to the most difficult test. In *Nectar in a Sieve*; Rukmani is shocked when Nathan accepts his adulterous relationship with Kunthi. Mira in *Some Inner Fury* has to sacrifice her love due to racial, cultural and temperamental differences. Sarojini and Dandekar in *A Silence of Desire* have to face disturbance in their marriage life due to distrust and misunderstanding. Kit and Premala have to face discord in their relationship due to their different upbringing. In *A Handful of Rice* Ravi's dreaming unfulfilled desires bring the discord in his sweet married life. Although all the characters have to suffer mentally to a great extent, yet they feel that they have been happy and will remain happy with each other. Rukmani considers a simple home truth 'A woman's place is with her husband'. Dandekar confesses, 'my wife is part of me....without her I'm not whole. Ravi feels 'a deep, protective flood of tenderness' for Nalini. The reason of discord in their matrimonial relationship is betrayal, cultural and racial difference, combination of traditions and modernity and poverty.

Sometimes the cause of discord in relationship is the idealized notions of relationship and unusual expectations from those who are related to us and it leads the relationship to bitterness and despair. In *Some Inner Fury* Premala and Kit is unhappy couple. The reason of their bitter marriage life is that both of them expect from each other which they cannot fulfill. Kit wants Premala to be modern to fit in modern society

while Premala is deeply rooted with traditions. Their interests and taste are also different. That is the reason that they fail to bridge the differences of temperament and upbringing. Premala loves Kit and Kit also likes Premala but her love and his tolerant attitude towards her inadequacies cannot compensate to cheer up their married life. In *A Silence of Desire*, Sarojini and Dandekar have to face discord in their sweet married life due to lack of conversation. Kamala Markandaya also shows the importance of communication in relationships. We should not seal up our lips to if we want to maintain balance in our relationship. Many times silence on any issue becomes fatal to the harmony of relationship. As in *A Silence of Desire* it creates baseless suspicions and mortifying doubts leading, though temporarily, to disillusionment and disharmony.

Parent- child relationship has been portrayed with its charm and fascination in Kamala Markandaya's novels. The parents are affectionate, self-sacrificing and devoted to the welfare of their children. In her novels children change their attitudes towards interests to their parents but the parents are parents ever. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Nathan and Rukmani show the true affection to their sons and are not possessive in their love to their sons. The main reason of discord in parent-child relationship is age gap. Time brings many changes in society parents are unaware about these changes and children want to get benefit from these modern changes. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Nathan wants that his sons should help him in farming while his sons do not have any interest in the work of his father. They join tannery and further to earn more money, they leave their parents to go to Ceylon. In *Some Inner Fury* Kit, Mira and Govind also present the discord in parent-child relationship due to generation gap between parent-child.

In *Nectar in a Sieve* Ira conceals her passions from her parents which lead her to prostitution. In *Some Inner Fury* Mira conceals her love for Richard and she does not tell clearly even when her mother asks her about her attraction towards Richard. Kamala Markandaya presents the selfless concern of parents toward children. Nathan and Rukmani do not stop their children to go to the city for their welfare. In *A Handful of Rice* Ravi's father helps him in settling down as a respectable citizen of the society. He does not show any anger against the selfish motives of his son in calling him for his help. In *Some Inner Fury* Kit, Mira and Govind have the freedom, but parental protection is there, if they need it. In *A Silence of Desire* Sarojini and Dandekar faces hardships in their matrimonial relationship but they are sincerely concerned about the emotional needs of their children.

Markandaya laments exploitation of the poor class by the rich. Poverty makes devoid of moral thought. Her novels *Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice* have the theme of poverty. Rukmani and Nathan in *Nectar in a Sieve* calmly tolerate the pangs of poverty. Dr. Kennington, an English Missionary expresses his disgust at the poor Indian peasants' passivity and asks Rukmani why she keeps ghastly silence without demanding any help. But Rukmani shows her fatalistic attitude saying that everything is in God's hand. Poverty separates all her sons from her except Selvam. Rukmani as a mother can neither protest nor object. The pressure of extreme poverty leads Ira to the shameful profession of prostitution. She does not mind getting corrupted, adopting prostitution with the hope of feeding her little brother Kutti. Ira is corrupt in the conventional sense but she is successful in buying rice, salt and milk for the sick child. However the child ultimately dies of under-nourishment.

If *Nectar in a Sieve* is the story of the rural poor, *A Handful of Rice* is that of the urban poor. Just like Rukmani's sons, Ravi, the protagonist, also leaves his village to earn more money. His discontented requirements and extreme poverty lead him to the anti- social deeds with Damoder. He also faces exploitation at the hands of the rich shopkeepers. The death of his father-in-law adds to his misery as now he has to look after the large family of his in-laws. With his insufficient earning and mounting prices, he is unable to meet his household expenses. He cannot repay loans. He fails even to buy medicine for his sick son Raju who dies of inadequate treatment.

Through this novel Markandaya conveys the message that the true happiness is not in running after desires but in looking after the family well. The theme of exploitation is portrayed in Markandaya's novel *Possession and The Coffers*. In *Possession*, Valmiki, the protagonist, leads a life of physical and mental exploitation. He is a poor village boy of fourteen years and talented painter of a south Indian village. Being impressed by his painting, Caroline the British lady purchases Valmiki in five thousand rupees from his

parents and takes him to London. In spite of being trained in the metropolitan fashion, Val feels himself as a permanent outsider in the sophisticated London society. He is exploited to enrich Caroline and satisfy her mundane desires. Markandaya tries to convey a message that human being is not a thing which can be purchased. In the end of the novel Valmiki return to his poor village, kicking off the rich and sophisticated temptations of Caroline. Another novel *The Coffers* also shows the exploitation of poor working people by rich British contractors. Howard Clinton has no feeling towards Indian laborers. He exploits them by giving them less wages and extra work. Even the death of Indian laborers in an accident doesn't matter to him. 'The ruthless British Engineer Clinton symbolizes the state of mastership. Whenever he is reported about the labour trouble on the project site, he reacts very sharply and sarcastically.

It is a basic fact that if there is ideology, there will be discord in relationships. Sarojini, the heroine of the novel is represented as a typical Indian lady who has her own faith in spiritual power. Her husband does not give any preference to her thinking and often mocks at her. That is the reason she conceals the truth to her husband about her faith in a Swami. Her character represents the religious-minded Indian women who consider Swamis like gods and believe that they can solve their problem by their spiritual power. In this novel the discord brings husband and wife closer when they come to know the truth. Other characters such as Chari, Sastri, Ghose contribute to the progress of thought in the novel.

*Possession* is mainly concerned with to the theme of class and cultural attitude. This is a story of exploitation of a poor peasant lad Valmiki by a British woman Lady Caroline Bell. Valmiki and Caroline are two main characters in the novel. Valmiki is poor South Indian boy of fourteen years who has talent of painting. Caroline takes him to England as her possession and exploits not only his talent but also him. Caroline represents the materialistic society that takes delight having possession of the innocent persons for its selfish motives. Valmiki represents the poor section of society that gives preference to culture and tradition rather than money and luxuries. Valmiki ultimately returns to India from the golden glittering claws of Caroline.

Markandaya's fifth novel *A Handful of Rice* is a story of poverty and hunger. The novelist has aptly handled the theme of class and relationship and ideology. Ravi, the protagonist, suffers much due the poverty. It is a real touch story of life in big cities where unemployment and frustration lead the Youngman to a path of crime.

The hungry Youngman does not see the moral value and falls in the trap of the criminals. This novel is a third person narrative which helps the novelist to keep a reasonable distance from her character. She expresses the result of unreasonable ambitions and the wrong way to fulfill those desires which make life only a hell. In this novel Markandaya wants to tell the world to command and control baseless desires to live a happy life.

Markandaya's another novel *Two Virgins* is a thematic study of culture and ideology. Lalitha the protagonist, is an ignorant girl who has wings of imagination and wants to fly high keeping her eyes closed and one day falls on thorns of reality. Another memorable character is Mr. Gupta who exploits Lalitha. He represents the cunning and lusty people of the society.

Like *The Nowhere Man*, her another novel *The Golden Honeycomb*, is unquestionably a grand creation. The plot construction, characterization and exploitation of linguistic resources are praise worthy. Her technique is basically different from that of other novels but she has perfect control of her medium and craft. *The Golden Honeycomb* is "a milestone, indicating tremendous development in the literary career of the novelist". (Prasad: XII)

Markandaya wants to convey a message in her tenth novel *Pleasure City* that harmony can be establish between the East and the West through the harmonious relationship between Rikki and Tully. She wants to say that all human beings are part of a single world. Tully represents the constructive attitude of the West and Rikki represents an Indian fisher boy. Their true relationship successfully creates the *Pleasure city-Shalimar*. Markandaya's novels prove her a successful novelist. She has command on technique and plot construction:

Her novels are as crystal clear as the water of a hilly lake. There is undoubtedly a kind of classical clarity and transparency about them. The novelist does not get lost in the meanderings of a Joycean Ulysses; she rather emerges sure and successful with each successive fictional narrative. This speaks of the continual growth of her mind and art which alone can ensure her a permanent rank among the major fiction writers of commonwealth Literature.” (Banerji: 25)

Her posthumous novel *Bombay Tiger* has a literary event of the greatest significance. It tells the story of Ganguli who is emblematic of changing India, post the era of high socialism, beginning to be transformed by private enterprise and often pitted against his work and envious bullying industrialist Rao. *Bombay Tiger* shows the deep connection of Markandaya with her home country. But it shows an India of 1980's that she herself has not lived in. India in *Bombay Tiger* is mainly imaginative.

All her novels boldly and aptly convey her messages to her readers. They have bold themes in an equally bold manner. Her novels leave an everlasting impression on readers mind because of their realistic touch. Stephen Hemingway rightly observes:

Markandaya is definitely one of the most productive popular and skilled Indo-Anglian novelists and a superb representative of the growing number of Indian women writing serious literature in English. All the characters of Markandaya's novels are natural characters that face the hardships of life. They are not full of spiritual power but they are only common people who try their best to lead a peaceful life by trying to fight with circumstances. Markandaya feels disgust to see that man is becoming the greatest enemy of man. Her novel *Pleasure City* is only a plea to live friendly and happily. To sum up Kamala Markandaya's contribution to the Indian English fiction the remarks of Shiv K. Kumar seem true:

Of all the contemporary Indian novelists writing in English, Kamala Markandaya is the most accomplished, both in respect of her sensitive handling of a foreign medium and her authentic portrayal of the Indian Scene. What distinguishes her most incisively from other Indian novelists is her acute awareness of a gradual shift in values that has been taking place in this subcontinent during the past decades or so. In fact Kamala Markandaya's novels are universal in appeal. She does not favour any particular community or region. Her novels do not stick to a particular area of class also. She depicts poor people, middle class people, foreigners and higher people without showing any partiality. Describing village life and urban life she shows her firsthand knowledge about both lives. Her characters are fully immersed in the situation in which they are involved. All the four themes give authentic presentation in her novels. There is no use of vulgar language even her rustic characters have the grace and charm in their language. It is the success of her novels which provides her a prominent place in the Indian English fiction with the writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Raja Rao.

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