

Radical Elements in Kamala Markandaya's Nector in a Sieve

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Kamala Markandaya (May-1924-16-2004) was a pseudonym used by Kamala Purnaiya Taylor, an Indian novelist and journalist. A native of Mysore, India Markandaya was a graduate of Madras University and afterwards published several short stories in India newspapers. After India declared its independence, Markandaya moved to Britain, though she still labeled herself an Indian expatriate long afterwards known for writing about culture clash between Indian, Urban and rural societies. Marakandaya first published novel, “**Nector in a Sieve**”, was a bestseller and cited as an American Library Association notable book in 1955. Kamala Markandaya belongs to that pioneering group of Indian women writers who made their mark not just through their subject matter, but also through their fluid, published literary style. “Nector in a Sieve “ was her first published work, and its depiction of rural India and the suffering of farmers made it popular in the west, This was followed by other fiction that dramatized the Quit India Movement in 1942, the clash between Indians and Britishers. This narrative focuses on the story of one women living in poverty in rural India during a time of great change; some context

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clues give us a sense that the work is an exploration of socioeconomic and political issue in the novelist's contemporary India. We see these often controversial issues addressed by protagonist, Ruk India's political situation isn't explicitly discussed, but there is enough to glean that

Markandaya is writing about the changing political and economic situation in her country. She published *Nector in a Sieve* in 1954 seven years after India gained colonial independence from Britain

Many traditions in India were eroded by British rule, and the developments brought upon by the industrial revolution lured many young Indians away from their traditional roles to participate in a new economy. Such is the case with the arrival of the tannery in Rukmani's village and the decision of her sons to leave the land for work of different nature. The British introduced an educational system that allowed many Indians to explore the importance of justice and freedom. Ruku's sons rely less on traditional religious nations of the good of suffering, and more on ideas about the importance of political freedom and economic security. Markandaya describe hunger in *Nector in a Sieve* with reference to a starving people, who are sometimes willing to do anything in order to feed themselves. People's attitude towards the new spectrum of economic opportunities i.e. tempered by the cruelty of the natural environment on which they rely. Tension between Hindus and Muslims are subtly addressed in *Nector in a Sieve*. This kind of tension between two very different religions and cultures was and continues to be a controversial issue. India's independence also coincided with the creation of Pakistan, a new state largely populated by Muslims who had left India. This departure of Muslims resulted in India being a largely

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Hindu nation Rukmani's interactions with the Muslim women in the novel reveal to our protagonist that many different kinds of lives can be contained in on country. Social role for

women were also changing in post independence. Indian, and what women valued; as well as how she herself should be valued within society, is raised as questions in the novel.

NECTOR IN A SIEVE

The paper analyses 'Nector in a Sieve' as an interpretation of life in the Post-colonial Indian context and as feminist literature. Kamala Markandaya may be classified as a feminist writer on the basis of her unique perspective as an Indian woman. The heroine Rukmani's as presented in the novel, is true to her tradition and culture. She represents a women's struggle to find happiness in a changing Indian. The novel underscores the rampant hunger the indebtedness of the Indian peasant women. Rukmani is not only a central character but also the 'central consciousness' through which the events come filtered to the readers. Kamala Markandaya approach is both realistic and humanistic. She portrays Rukmani as scaling great moral heights at the end of her life-long struggle. Rukmani's tale could be any village women's tale in India of the fifties. She is the mainstay and binding force in the family. A women of great fortitude and capable of deep understanding, it is she, who bears through all the suffering to emerge triumphant. Markandaya upholds the virtues of love and motherhood. The novel presents the

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veritable saga of struggle and of the triumphant womanhood in the central character, Rukmani. Woman is not an island; she belongs to the main land, the heart land of the human race.

Kamala Markandaya is one of most distinguished women novelists on the Indian scene. Her work is inspired by a crusading spirit for the welfare of humanity and the alleviation of human suffering. A driving purpose motivates her novel which has aesthetic value and is artistically constructed. The present study analyses the novel as an interpretation of life in the post- colonial Indian context and as Feminists Literature. It tells the world the obstacles women face and disadvantages they suffer in the orthodox Hindu world.

In *Nector in a Sieve*, Markandaya pictures a women's struggle to find happiness in a changing India. The novel underscores the rampant hunger and indebtedness of the Indian peasant women Rukmani. She is not only a central character but also ' the central consciousness' as Henry James called through which the events come filtered to the readers

Kamala Markandaya approach is both realistic and humanistic. Her success in the novel results from her rights choice in Rukmani as the central consciousness of the novel. Rukmani's tale could be any village woman's tale in India of the fifties. She is the main stay and binding force in the family. A woman of great fortitude and capable of deep understanding, it is she, who bears through the suffering. Markandaya upholds the virtues of love and motherhood. She is not hard-core feminist but a writer who is realistic and humanistic.

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In the so-called modern society, humanity and human values are dead and people prey for each other like vultures. The erosion of human values continues and greater is the need

for protection of the eternal human value from decay. Rukmani faces the adversities of natural disaster when a monsoon destroys much of their home and floods the rice paddies on which their livelihood depends. She watches as her children either suffer cruel fate or leave the village to make their own lives. She and Nathan lose their land and in the end she becomes a widow.

Rukmini is not a woman who allows adversity to destroy her. She has enough in her life that fulfills her, children she loves friends and a happy marriage, to find the will to continue seeking improvement. While she is sometimes struck with despair, she never wallows in self-pity. She receives shock after shock. Her husband Nathan's infidelity. Her daughter's sacrificial going on the streets, to save the family from starvation, poverty, inertia, famishment, and disease-all these torture her till the end of her life. Even her husband leaves her on his eternal journey. As Shantha Krishnaswamy observes, She is faced with great odds like famine, death in fidelity and prostitution amidst a backdrop of bonechilling poverty, she wages a constant battle.(1984:162)At the end of novel she is at the peace with herself and her life. She is hopeful and cherishes her memories because she cleans to the happiness in her past rather than to the heart ache.

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Nectar is her immediate domestic and social circle. Women's writing can also be viewed in terms of women's psyche in a sieve is approached in terms of feminist criticism. The

Novel is written by a woman writer speaking both for and as a woman. A woman's experience includes a different perceptual and emotional life. The woman's main sphere. The psyche is a product of female culture rooted in class, race, nationality and history. It is as Elaine show alter states," a collective experience within the cultural whole, an experience that binds women writers to each other over time and space. Literature is a social institution using as its medium language, the social creation. The novel is also approached from the sociological aspects. This approach helps in the analysis of the artist's influence on the society. The relation between the writer and the work of art is reciprocal. Sociological approach is a synthesis of multifaceted aspects like social conditions, economic, political and psycho local conditions of a society.

Kamala Markandaya in *Nectar in a Sieve*, traces Rukmani, the narrator heroine, through a woman's Journey from to Self-realization from self-denial to self-assertion and from self-negation to self-affirmation. The heroine emerges a greater and stronger character than her husband, Nathan. Rukmani's Life is full of hopes and frustration, pleasures and pains, triumph and defeat, rise and fall. Before the advent of the tannery, the life of Rukmani with her family

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was simply peaceful with her simple joy and sorrows. She was proud of the love and care of her husband. She needed nothing else, No wealth, No Luxury and No material pleasure. Rukmani

feels great pain in her heart when her tranquil and serene life is spoilt by the din and bustle, the filth and the dirt. The loss not only of natural beauty and also of human virtues and values is the natural outcome of the industry. Tannery is indeed the root cause of tragedy in the life of Rukmini and her family. She searches for self-realizations in a chaotic world of conflicting cultures- 'one dead, the other powerless to be born.

Rukmani struggle epitomize women's indefeatable spirit. She brings us the message that while a woman may grow old fighting against all odds and be wholly down on her luck, she can still dare persist and thus win victory by the very manner of her losing. Her victory is a moral victory of having latest without permanent impairment of her belief in the worth of what she has been doing. Rukmani is the triumphant woman who is capable of snatching spiritual victory from Circumstances of disaster and material defeat. Rukmani thus scales great moral and spiritual heights.

The Novel, Nector in a Sieve is crafted in a simple manner. Kamala Markandaya chooses simple mode of narration. The narrator heroine, Rukmani, use the traditional omniscient

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narrative voice. She is both a witness to the cycle of changes and the narrative voice. The reader is aware of the creative process even as the narrative is taken backwards and forwards, each crisis, each detail is sharply etched for the voice belongs to a character itself. Here again there is the blend of the author and character. There is greater Psychological depth in the delineation of the characters in the novel. The narrative tightness is maintained with the reporting of the actions of characters by the narrator's creative voice. The narrator and the author blend so that textuality is highlighted. The text impart becomes metafiction for the novelist draws obvious attention to her craft. Another important feature is the fusion of the author and the protagonist.

Kamala Markandaya presents in her writing the unique female Perspective, Too long as the male vision relegated it to the background and virtually blotted it out of existence. Helene Cixous' Laugh of Medusa in women's writing encodes female experience, the feminist vision.

In the novel, the female vision is predominated. The authenticity of female experience is underscored in Rukmani, the peasant woman, the mother, true to her womanly, wifely, maternal instincts, the writer and especially her central character is part of the Indian social and national heritage being dedicated to freedom in family life, in society and in social life. The author's closeness to the central Character makes nectar in Sieve's veritable Saga of triumphant womanhood'

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Harrowing poverty and terrible drought led to death of younger son raja. Her daughter Ira revolts against the false norms of traditional society because she is unable to bear the starvation of her family any more. She is forced to take recourse to prostitution to save her younger brother. Under the impact of modernity and industrialization she thinks the preservation of Life more pious than the observation of so-called moral values which fail to feed her family.

Rukmani is the silent sufferer who according to Meera Shirvadker is the daughter of the soil who has inherited age old traditions which they do not question. Their courage lies in meek or at times cheerful ways of facing poverty or calamity. Unstrung by the bug of industrialism, Rukmani displays her faith in human dignity by assimilating the destitute leper boy, Puli in to the nectar of her love and warmth natural feminine virtue, and gets him cured of his disease. By infusing meaning in to his life she finds a new meaning in her own life.

Most women in fiction and in real life have to grapple with the conflict situations. The Indian woman is caught in flux of tradition and modernity. The burden of the past and the aspirations of the future.\the study shows that the Indian woman-passive or aggressive, Traditional or modern-serves to reflect the author's quest for psychological insight and awareness. She evokes a continues discussion of social values, she is the focal point of content between the writer's consciousness and the alien world, the writer's experience of reality and

hope for salvation. The Indian woman is resilient and emboldens her writer and the reader alike to endure and prevail. The figure of Indian woman represented by Rukmani, with her inner strength and integrity, paving her own resolute way through an exploitative, discriminatory world serves as an inspiring light of hope and endeavour. Kamala Markandaya has a message for new generation. Women is not an island, she is the main land, the heart land of the human race.

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