

ISSN:2395-0609



Scholarly International Multidisciplinary Print Journal

An International Peer Reviewed, Refereed Journal

Vol - **IV** Issue - I Jan - Feb. 2017



National Seminar
On
"Multiculturalism in
English Literature"

Sponsored by



Savitribai Phule Pune University
Board of College and
University Development (BCUD)

11th February 2017

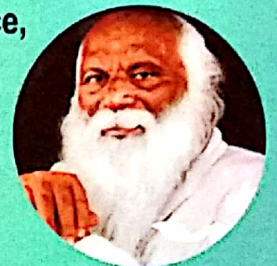
Organised by

Rayat Shikshan Sanstha's Shri Sadguru Gangageer Maharaj Science,
Gautam Arts and Sanjivani Commerce College Kopargaon,

Dist. Ahmednagar 423601 (Maharashtra)

Reaccredited with 'B++' Grade by NAAC

Department of English



	<i>Sings</i>		
22.	<i>Brick Lane: The Depiction of Ethnic Inequity</i>	Mr. Gulab Yusuf Shaikh	77
23.	Cultural Clash: A Consideration of Markandaya's <i>Nectar in a Sieve</i>	Mr. Sachin M. More	81
24.	An outline of Gender and Identity Crisis	Ms. Shalaka V.Kadam	85
25.	Social Construction of Gender in Premchand's <i>Nirmala: A Cultural Critique</i>	Mr. Vijay C. Thange	89
26.	Journey to Village as Journey into Motivation and Disillusion	Mr. Hemant R. Gaikwad	92
27.	Multiculturalism in <i>The Village by the Sea</i> and <i>The White Tiger</i>	Mr. Ramdas V. Barve	96
28.	Gender Discrimination in Mahesh Dattani's Indian English play: ' <i>Tara</i> '	Mr. Sachin B. Bhosale And Mr. Aniket K. Bhosale	99
29.	Quest for an Identity and Social Justice in <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	Ms. Renuka R. Shelke	103
30.	Indian Culture and Globalization	Ms. Harsha Chawla and Mr. Hitesh Mohapatra	106
31.	' <i>The Princes</i> ': Struggle of Elite for an Identity	Ms. Jyoti M. Shinde	111
32.	Quest for an Identity in Kamala Das' Poems	Charushila E. Gage	114
33.	<i>The Deserted Village: A Ray Focusing on Universal Countryside Culture</i>	Balnath V. More	117
34.	Woman's Revolt Against Tradition in <i>Inside The Haveli</i>	Nisha A. Randhavne	120
35.	Gender Discrimination and Socio-Cultural Politics in Arundhati Roy's ' <i>God of Small Things</i> '	Pooja J. Kavthekar Jahida A. Bhatari Dipika J. Kamble	122
36.	Multiculturalism and Quest for an Identity in Anita Desai's <i>Journey to Ithaca</i>	Mr. Sachin N. Chavan Mr. Vikram B. Kondawale Ms. Shital S. Bhopale	124
37.	Multiculturalism in Kamala Markandaya's <i>The Nowhere Man</i>	Mrs. Kavita D. Akhade	129
38.	Study of Gender Discrimination from the Feministic Perspective in the Novel: <i>The Dark Holds No Terrors</i>	Dhananjay S. Waghadare	132
39.	Cultural Competence, Machine Translation and Multiculturalism reading of Chetan Bhagat's books: A Pragmatic Perspective	Mr. Sachin S. Gadekar Mr. Isak Pathan	137
40.	Multiculturalism: A Recurrent Theme in Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's <i>Wings of Fire</i> and <i>Spirit of India</i>	Dr. D. S. Salunke	140
41.	Gender and Identity crises in ' <i>Old Stone Mansion</i> '	Mr. Pankaj C. Nikam	145
42.	Multiculturalism in ' <i>The Kite Runner</i> ' and ' <i>Kim</i> '	Prof. Santosh D. Ghangale	148



Cultural Clash: A Consideration of Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*

SachinMahadeo More
M. Phil. Scholar,
Dept. of English, SPPU, Pune

Abstract:

Kamala Markandaya, an Indian English novelist, is known for writing about cultural clash between Indian urban and rural societies. She belonged to that pioneering group of Indian women writers who made their mark not just through their subject matter, but also through their fluid, polished literary style. Nectar 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. Cross Cultural Interaction in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya is a vivid depiction of Kamala Markandaya's life and her approach to it according to changing circumstances. The paper addresses these complex interconnected issues of varying cultures: foreign and Indian, as portrayed in the novel.

Key words: *Cultural Clash, Cross-Cultural Identity, East-West Cultures, Human relationships*

Kamala Markandaya is one of the most outstanding Indian women novelists writing in English. She started writing novels when India was just at the threshold of newly-won freedom. In those days, people found poverty, hunger and starvation everywhere due to communal disturbances. Thus communal disharmony was a burning problem for the nation. On the other hand, both industrialization and urbanization were eroding the very basis of rural life. It is beyond doubt that Kamala Markandaya won name and fame all over the world with the publication of her very first novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, in 1954. *Nectar in a Sieve* has been translated into many languages including Russian in 1958 and it has brought her world-wide fame.

Rukmani and Nathan love each other and their marriage begins in relative peace and plenty. When a large tannery is built in the neighboring village, it begins insidiously destroying their lives. As the tannery grows larger and more prosperous, Rukmani and Nathan struggle to feed their children and to pay the rent on the land that gives them life. Although matters continue to worsen, they quietly resign themselves to ever-increasing hardships-flood, famine, even death-and cling to their hopes for a better future.

Dr. Kennington, or "Kenny", an itinerant English doctor, is an important presence in the novel. Although Rukmani's fatalistic attitude toward hardship exasperates him, he feels compassion for her and helps her when he can. At the end, Rukmani goes to live with her youngest son, now a doctor at the hospital Kenny has built. Throughout the novel, Rukmani is faced with struggle after struggle with no indication that her circumstances will improve. Each time her situation worsens, Rukmani endures quietly, holding on to the hope that things will soon be better.

The reason for the just fame achieved by the novel is that here, unlike in many Indian novels in English, we have authentic pictures of Indian culture and society - a society in which most people live in perceptual hunger and deprivation and often die of starvation - and of selves suffering in this society. (K.R. Chandrashekhara 1968: 62-63) presents the outline of the novel in the following lines:

The life of toil and uncertainty lived by the tenant farmers of India who comprise the bulk of the population is represented with understanding and compassion through the simple peasant, Nathan, and his family.

Markandaya is gifted with extra-ordinary vision of life. She uses fiction as a vehicle for communicating her vision of life. In her novels she depicts race conflicts, temperamental disparities cultural conflicts and sexual perversion as factors working in the form of barriers of communication. The picture of rural India juxtaposed with the glamorous westernized life of England finds a prominent place in her novels. As a writer, she has the practical experience of life in rural area as well as in urban area. She lived in a South Indian village and observed clearly the life of villagers with a view to acquiring the basic knowledge of rural life in India. After her marriage she settled in England as an expatriate writer. Her stay in England enabled her to acquire first-hand knowledge of the British policy of colonialism and imperialism. Her fiction reflects the East-West encounter. She values Indian traditions and culture more than those of west. Over and above this, she gives vent to the sufferings of ordinary Indians.

We find a sort of transparent cultural conflict in her novel *Nectar in a Sieve*. In this novel both Nathan and Rukmani represent the East whereas the rapid industrialization and Dr. Kenny represents the West. Dr. Kenny is an English social worker who loves the Indian people, but when he sees their passive acceptance of life, he feels disgusted with their follies, poverty and silent humility. He says to Rukmani:

“I go when I am tired of your follies and stupidities, your external shameful poverty. I can only take you people in small doses.” (Markandaya 1958: 57)

(All subsequent references are to this edition of the novel. In subsequent references only page numbers are given.)

These words of Dr. Kenny express an underlying feeling of sadness and real pain over the miseries of the poor innocent people. He consoles Rukmani in her sorrows, but he also scolds her for passiveness when she feels contented with a little rice and expresses her hope for better time. He says to her angrily:

“Times are better, times are better. Times will not be better for many months. Meanwhile you will suffer and die, you meek suffering fools. Why do you keep this ghastly silence? Why do you not demand- cry out for help- do something? There is nothing in this country, oh God, there is nothing.” (p. 63)

A glaring contrast comes to light between the Eastern and the Western cultures when Kamala Markandaya points out that the people of the East are passive and submissive whereas the people of the West are active and conscious of their rights. At the same time she also highlights the strong points of the culture of the East. In East marriage is a sacrament whereas in the West, marriage is simply a contract. Dr. Kennedy tells Rukmani:

“My wife has left me. My sons have been taught to forget me.” (p.97)

Marriage is not a matter of contract for men and women in India. Divorce after marriage is not a serious matter for the people of the West. In India sensible men and women go on making every possible adjustment in life. They do not allow their marriage to be a total failure as long as the circumstances are under their control. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Dr. Kenny is not socially happy at all because his wife has already left him. Over and above this his sons have been taught to forget him.

It is the lot of Nathan to till the land which belongs to another, paying exorbitant rent for it and getting hardly a square meal a day as reward even after the best harvest. There is genuine pathos and tragic intensity in her description of the youngest child of Nathan slowly dying of starvation. This story of hunger, starvation and death of poor people in Indian villages is told by Rukmani who grows from a young child into

a married girl of twelve, then a young wife and finally an old mother figure, losing, in this process of growth, many things-but most painful of all being the loss of her dearest husband - and suffering the extremity of pain and despair, and yet retaining her fundamental, loving and lovable humanity and dignity. In Rukmani, Kamala Markandaya has given us one of the finest drawn portraits of a representative Indian self in Indian fiction in English.

Rukmani's father's prestige diminished so much that she was married, Rukmani tells us, to a tenant farmer who was "poor everything but in love and care for me, his wife...." (p.2). Her husband, Nathan, brings her home - "a mud hut, thatched, small, set near a paddy field, with two or three similar huts nearby...." (p.4). Even in this humble home Rukmani began her married life on a happy note because, as she tells us,

"While the sun shines on you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eye, and your husband sees beauty in you which no one has seen before, and you have a good store of grain laid away, for hard times, a roof over you and a sweet stirring in your body, what more can a woman ask for?" (p.7)

So, Rukmani says, her heart sang and her feet were light as she went about her work, "getting up at sunrise and going to sleep content." (p.7)

Here, a general observation about the principle of existence may be made. All forms of life - from the highest to the lowest - have joy as the very nucleus of their existence. The unique phenomenon - objective but organic human consciousness - manifests itself in many forms : in great works of art, in sublime ideas in philosophy and religion, in the uniquely perceived phenomena in the field of science, and so on. But it is only exceptional individuals who become the vehicles of such manifestations of human consciousness. There are, however, ordinary individuals whose consciousness, if not corrupted or blighted by various evils rampant in our society, also manifests itself beautifully, in the sheer joy of being alive, in fellow-feeling, in making sacrifices for their near and dear ones and, above all, in trying to live a life of dignity.

The success of Kamala Markandaya in this novel is due not only to her portrayal of a representative picture of society, but of a self (that of Rukmani) with a fine, sensitive dimension on which the self can record and objectively evaluate the experiences of life, thereby bringing home to us the essence of the experiences in terms of human feelings.

To summarize it can be said that *Nectar in a Sieve* is truly representative Indian novel, representative because it gives us representative pictures of a society and also of selves that are representative. The society and the selves are also organically related so that the society and the conditions are reflected in sensitive selves in the shape of profound human feelings. As a creative writer Kamala Markandaya differs from other contemporary Indian English novelists in many ways. When she started writing novels, the themes of hunger and degradation, East-West encounter, restlessness, politics and human relationship had been greatly exploited by Indian English novelists. Markandaya provides variety and vividness to these themes. In her novels she describes the life of villages, cities, husband-wife relations, social conflicts and lure for modernism. With an intimate understanding of the traditions and values of both the East and the West cultures she has viewed the challenges of the contrasting cultures from very close quarters. She has found enough in her experience to keep the East and the West apart. Markandaya describes the relationship between the English and the Indians as that of the colonizers and the colonized in general. One of the most important features of her presentation of this theme is her neutrality of a detached observer. She brings to light the various points of weakness and strength of both the cultures.

References

Books:

1. Bhatnagar Anil Kumar, (1993). Kamala Markandaya- A Thematic Study. New Delhi Sarup & Sons.
2. Bhatnagar, M. K., (1996). Indian Writings in English, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi. pp. 160-66
3. Chandrasekharan, K.R. "East and West in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya", *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*, ed., M.K. Naik, S.K. Desai and G.S. Amur (Karnatak University, Dharwar, 1968), p. 62-63.
4. Dodia Jaydipsinh K. and Surendran K. V. (ed.) (1999). Indian Women Writers: Critical Perspectives, Sarup & Sons, New Delhi. pp. 01-06
5. During Simon, (2005). Cultural Studies: a Critical Introduction, Routledge, London.
6. Markandaya, Kamala. (1958). Nectar in a Sieve, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay.
7. Prasad Madhusudan, (1984). *Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya* in Indo- English Writers Series-5, Vimal Prakashan, Ghaziabad.

E-Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamala_Markandaya