

MARKANDAYA'S FEMINISM IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIAN FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Kamala Markandaya, a well-known figure in Indian literature, offers a comprehensive and perceptive picture of the lives of women in post-colonial India, which is characterised by a complex social and political fabric. The purpose of this essay is to examine the feminism of Markandaya within the framework of Indian feminist movements, as well as the manner in which her works reflect the altering societal attitudes on women's rights and equality. Markandaya's works, such as A Silence of Desire, Some Inner Fury, and Nectar in a Sieve, are just a few examples of the ways in which she addresses challenges that Indian women face, such as societal discrimination, economic dependency, and cultural limitations. Through her characters, who stand for the struggle between social standards and individual agency, she manages to capture the spirit of Indian feminism, from its beginnings in the struggle for women's rights to its current feminist consciousness. She does this by capturing the essence of Indian feminism. In order to position Markandaya's writings within the greater framework of the larger battle for gender equality in India and to bring attention to her role in creating feminist concepts in Indian literature, the objective of this study is to investigate the feminist issues that Markandaya explores in her works.

Keywords: Kamala Markandaya, Feminism, Indian Feminist Movements, Women's Rights, Post-Colonial India, Gender Equality, Indian Literature, Social Discrimination, Empowerment, INTRODUCTION

The notion of feminism is, without a doubt, one that is controversial and open to debate. Before I proceed with my analysis of the concept, let's first have a look at what you mean when you say "feminism." Under the umbrella word "feminism," there are a variety of distinct philosophies, social movements, and political groups that all have the same goal of establishing complete parity between the sexes in society. In addition to this, it advocates for the elimination of sexual harassment, assault, and domestic violence against women, while providing support for the right of women to bodily autonomy and dignity. There has been a change in societal standards around proper dress and physical activity, which has been a frequent component of feminist movements. Two examples of the numerous ethnically diverse strains of feminism that evolved in reaction to critiques that mainstream feminism overlooked the experiences and perspectives of people of colour and those without college degrees are black feminism and intersectional feminism. Both of these strains of feminism are instances of several ethnically distinct strains of feminism.

My experience of living in Indian culture and reading feminist literature has left me with a limited understanding of feminism, and as a result, I feel obligated to take a fresh look at the ideology. On the other hand, I am petrified that, much like Jean Paul Sartre, I would be labelled as anti-feminist and unfriendly to women. While there are many who assert that Sartre's oeuvre contains negative statements about women, there are others who assert that he never built a philosophy that can be considered really feminist. Taking into consideration the information that I have gained from both books, I believe it is reasonable to assert that the perspectives of different cultures about women's "bodily autonomy" and what constitutes "acceptable physical" behaviour are contingent upon cultural factors. However, rather than being referred to as anti-feminist, the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre ought to be referred to as universal feminist. This is due to the fact that his concepts, such as freedom of choice, immanence, and bad faith, are not in any way abstract; rather, they have a profound basis and can be applied to any time and place. Through the application of this philosophical framework to the analysis of the texts, I have attempted to reconceive of feminism.

OBJECTIVE

1. To analyze the evolution of feminist thought as represented by the female protagonists in these novels.
2. To investigate the intersection of caste, class, and gender in shaping the lives of women characters in Markandaya's works.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jayanthi, (2024) This study analyses how *A Backward Place* by Ruth Praver Jhabvala and *Nectar in a Sieve* by Kamala Markandaya both exhibit social realism. Poverty, starvation, and exploitation are prominent topics throughout their works, which are the focus of this research project. Through the stories of the many Indian peasants who endure terrible poverty, hunger, and exploitation in her book *Nectar in a Sieve*, Markandaya exposes the true nature of rural India. In her book *A Backward Place*, Jhabvala vividly portrays the conditions of Indian poverty. She paints a vivid picture of India as an agrarian cultural centre. The impact of this societal malice is not mitigated in any way by Jhabvala's portrayal of poverty. A wide range of societal ills and malpractices will flourish in an economically depressed society. The hope for progress is based only on the moral fiber of a small percentage of the population.

Archana Brahmabhatt, (2023) The contributions of a wide range of distinct female writers have helped to broaden the scope of what is considered to be Indian literature written in English. the novels authored by Kamala Markandaya, which have the objective of investigating aspects of her female characters that have not been studied up to this point. Markandaya's feminist moral concern is finally shown via an in-depth examination of sexual and familial connection dynamics. It displays the change in women's identity, stresses the new image through an analysis of her works, and ultimately proves the transformation in women's identity. It is true that her women do not participate in acts of resistance; nonetheless, they are successful in bringing society around to the concept that they are "persons," and not only "possessions."

Rangnath Thakur, (2023) During the postmodernist era of Indian English literature, numerous powerful women writers spoke out against the patriarchal framework of literary discourse and for the study of feminist alternatives in women's writing. Menka Shivdasani is one of several prominent figures in modern Indian English poetry, including Kamala Das, Eunice de Souza, Meena Alexander, and Imtiaz Dharkar. Poet

Shivdasani has written extensively on a wide range of topics, including personal, societal, cultural, and religious themes. Her poetry books "Frazil," "Safe House," "Stet," and "Nirvana at Ten Rupees" were published in 2017 and 1990, respectively (2018). She has made an effort, via her poetry, to dismantle the patriarchal society's built female identity. But Shivdasani has not been well investigated in literary criticism; hence, she merits further recognition. Because of her exceptional poetry, she deserves more recognition as an underappreciated voice in Indian English poetry. This article will make an effort to (re)visit Shivdasani's work, focusing on her most recent poetry collection Frazil. Myth, culture, religion, memory, loss, city life worry, man-woman relationships, domesticity, and women's sensibilities are some of the themes it portrays. This article will use Menka Shivdasani's work as a springboard to examine the structural and thematic elements of her poetry, with the goal of elevating Shivdasani to the forefront of the postmodernist canon of Indian English literature.

Syed Murtaza Ali Shah, (2023) Mankind has, for a very long time, been preoccupied with the pursuit of ever-increasing material prosperity. This is an example of how he prioritizes satisfying his wants over his needs—consumerism. However, as desires are eternal, the ruling class is constantly inventing new means to amass riches, which they justify by claiming progress has been made. Both humans and the environment have taken a major hit as a result of this materialistic race. What we see as progress in today's world—depletion of natural resources, climate change, habitat loss, deforestation, floods, and severe skin and other diseases—is really just a byproduct of our consumption. The same technological and consumerist inflow and its effects on the lives of ordinary peasants were presented in Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar on a Sieve*.

Vijay Songire, (2023) In contemporary human society, women are seen as second class citizens. For a long time, people just saw them as things. The authors cared deeply about showing women as they really are in society. A central tenet of the late-nineteenth-century feminist ideology is the idea that oppressed women must resist oppression. Authors who identify as feminists fight to elevate women's place in society and defend them from oppression. This research focuses on feminist female authors whose novels explore real-life social issues through strong female protagonists. A British Indian author and journalist, Kamala Markandaya was a pen name of Kamala Purnaiya. Among the prominent female authors of Indian Writing in English, she gives readers a glimpse into modern Indian life through her books. Poverty, unemployment, and the exploitation of women are some of the topics she covers. The issues of casteism and gender inequality in Indian society are brought to light by Arundhati Roy, another notable female writer from the canon of Indian writing in English. *The God of Small Things*, her debut novel published in 1997, was awarded the esteemed Booker Prize. This paper's goal is to analyze two novels, *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) by Markandaya and *The God of Small Things* (1975) by Arundhati Roy. Identifying shared and unique treatment of gender issues in these chosen works is the major focus.

Tasneem Koser, (2022) Specifically, the purpose of this study is to shed light on the capitalist elements that are responsible for the metabolic rift and economic problems that are brought about by Kamala Markandaya's novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954). In addition, this research provides light on the commodification, objectification, and commodity fetishism of commodities, as well as the alienation, degradation, and degradation caused by discrepancies in exchange value and use value, as well as the alienation of land and labor as a result of capitalism. This paper provides an explanation of how capitalism came into existence, how individuals

struggled and endured mental unrest, and how the author ultimately felt the necessity to accept modernity and change (emerging with capitalism). Additionally, it anticipates the move from country to urban life, the emergence of the pure past into the capitalist present, and the ultimate gleam of hope that will accompany this transformation.

Rabia Zubair, (2020) Allam Iqbal Open University, Islamabad serves as the publisher of the journal of social sciences and humanities. There are many diverse feminist practices and philosophies that reflect a wide range of feminist ideals. Feminism is a multifaceted term that has its origins in this practice and philosophy. These ideas reflect a different perception of nature as well as a one-of-a-kind response to the pressing environmental issues that are currently being faced. The purpose of this study is to investigate the manner in which Kamla Markandya portrays the marginalization of either women or nature in postcolonial countries through the novel *Nectar in the Sieve*. It will be possible to investigate the link between women and nature in the texts that were described above with the assistance of theoretical insights from ecofeminism, Marxism, and postcolonial theory.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The majority of the secondary material that was used for this investigation came from a wide range of sources, such as historical documents, academic publications, scholarly journals, newspapers, and websites that are considered to be reliable. These sources provide a complete grasp of the socio-political setting that affected Kamala Markandaya's writing, providing vital insights into the backdrop of Indian feminism and the works of Kamala Markandaya.

POLITICAL THEME IN SOME INNER FURY

Political issues are the primary focus of Kamala Markandaya's novel *Some Inner Fury*. This is a political rallying cry against the dominance of foreign powers. The rage and animosity that the oppressed people feel against their oppressor, as well as their struggle for liberation, are shown in a dramatic manner by Kamala Markandaya. The challenges that young people face as they attempt to traverse the difficult dilemma of national and personal freedom are shown in a striking manner in this work. As the story progresses, the Englishman Richards falls head over heels in love with the Indian heroine Mirabai. The tale revolves on Mirabai's pals Kit, Premala, Govind, and Roshan, all of whom are highly educated, culturally literate, and slightly Westernised. Their destiny are eventually determined by the Quit India Movement and the independence fight, both of which are described in the reading material. Contrary to *The Nowhere Man*, which exclusively depicts a war between East and West, this one does not. "Lost in the political confusion of the independence struggle" is how the characters in the story are characterised in the book.

Kamala Markandaya portrays a picture that is true to life of politically conscious Indian culture in the work that she provides. One of the factors that came from the outside world was the political conflict that took place between British colonisers and Indian nationalists. In many aspects of the political discourse, the relatives have beliefs that are not only different from one another but also conflicting. Despite the fact that Govind is a violent person, the ruthless British authorities are opposed to the peaceful opposition that is being led by Mira and Kit's wife, Premala. Using Roshan, the author depicts a modern Indian woman who has gained independence

by releasing herself from the constraints of her aristocratic past, her parents, and her marriage. As she does her noble act of sacrifice, she draws inspiration from the character Rajeshwari from Kandan the Patriot, which was written by K.S. Venkataramani.

As a consequence of India's engagement with Western culture and civilisation, three distinct types of educated Indians evolved. These three types of educated Indians are shown in *Some Inner Fury* by Kamala Markandaya thanks to her unique portrayal. To begin, there are those who have been completely captivated by the English-speaking culture and who do not see any reason to refuse to adhere to the customs and beliefs that have been passed down through generations. Kit and his father are both members of this organisation collectively. The second issue is that there are radicals within the Indian community who are adamant about adhering to the principles that they have established for traditional Indian culture. Putting it gently, they have a deep-seated hatred for the British and the way they rule over India. Dodamma and Govind are both members of this group. There is a moderate middle ground that is made up of people who are liberal and open-minded, and they take their cues from the democratic and liberal ideas that are prevalent in British society. In this category of people, Roshan is included.

The fact that Mira is a product of these contending civilisations is reflected in the East-West fusions that she saw throughout her childhood. The fact that Richards exhibits practically every significant characteristic that is common to the English people makes him the archetype of the ideal Englishman. In order to make himself an excellent match for Mira, he is kind and sensible, and he is even prepared to adjust to the traditions that are prevalent in India. The bond between Mira and Richards is the primary vehicle through which the devastating consequences of East-West connection are most prominently brought to light. With great insight, Uma Parmeshwaran observes that

Personal relationships are Kamala Markandaya's forte. Step by step she builds up relationships, analyses them and dramatically makes them represent something larger than themselves.

Mira and Richards' lives are ruined and their relationship is deeply strained as a result of the independence war that is fought between the East and the West. Their divide is a representation of the fact that the East and the West are incompatible with one another. Margaret P. Joseph provides a narrative of the political environment that poses a risk of derailing a paradise that offers love opportunities:

The volcanic "Inner Fury" of the nation erupts, destroying the illusion of harmony with wider connotations of relationships between races and nations. The microcosm of individual relationships is also destroyed by the "inner fury" of love, jealousy and violence.

She exhibits her ardent patriotism by publicly supporting and associating with the Quit India Movement. Kamala Markandaya is a member of the British Commonwealth. Nevertheless, she has never shown any kind of bias towards people from the United Kingdom. While avoiding condescension and contempt, she depicts both the positive and negative aspects of their personalities. The way in which she portrays Richards makes it quite evident that she has a high regard for the Britisher as a person. When she talks about the British people, she describes them as being exceedingly honourable, disciplined, and subject to duty. Nevertheless, Roshan is being held in custody by the superintendent of the prison since it is his job to do so. It had been since she was

a little girl that he had known her. In spite of the fact that she has shown the English in all of their splendour, her attitude is plainly patriotic. In addition, she does not completely exclude the possibility of a meeting between Western and Eastern nations. When it comes to the individual level, it is always possible for these two ethnically and culturally diverse peoples to merge together. However, this can only occur if they meet on an equal basis, and not as rulers and ruled. Both the potential of love and understanding between different cultural groups and the tolerance of domination are incompatible with one another.

The Golden Honeycomb

Within the pages of Kamala Markandaya's book, *The Golden Honeycomb*, which is about traditional expectations and the creeping forces of modernity, a little Indian hamlet and the people who live there are intricately knit together. The tale provides a poignant analysis of the repercussions of change, both on an individual and social level, as it follows the characters as they navigate the complexities of tradition, family, and cultural customs. Markandaya examines the mental and emotional obstacles that individuals face when they are caught between the allure of the past and the promise of the future. The story takes place within the context of a town that is experiencing progressive transition. The book provides a peek into the delicate balance that must be maintained between conserving traditions and addressing the problems of modernity via the vivid representations of rural life that it contains.

The portrayal of women's roles within a patriarchal society is a recurrent theme in Markandaya's work, and it makes up a significant portion of the book's major focus because of this. Through the experiences of its female protagonists, the piece critiques the rigid structures that restrict gender and caste, so drawing attention to the injustices that women are forced to undergo throughout their lives. The journey that the protagonist takes serves as a metaphor for the wider societal shifts that are taking place, demonstrating how resilient individuals can be when confronted with difficulties. One of the ways that Markandaya brings attention to topics of empowerment, self-determination, and the ambiguities of identity is via the challenges that the characters have with modernisation. At the conclusion of the book, *The Golden Honeycomb* offers a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which gender, social development, and the human condition are intertwined in post-colonial India.

CONCLUSION

In her works, Kamala Markandaya dives thoroughly into feminist issues, particularly those that are relevant to India after the colonial era. Through her portrayal of the difficulties that women face in a patriarchal society, Markandaya brings to light the complexities of identity, empowerment, and endurance. His female characters may not necessary be openly aggressive, but they nonetheless question existing standards by standing up for herself and opposing the stereotypically passive roles that women are generally expected to play. This is a way that she challenges the norms that have been created. Markandaya is a feminist who takes a position that is in solidarity with bigger feminist movements in India. These groups have campaigned against patriarchy, misogyny, and the marginalisation of women. In addition to providing a critique of these oppressive structures, her writings provide a multifaceted perspective on the ways in which tradition and modernity interact, as well as the shifting roles that women play in Indian society. Markandaya's depiction of women's repressed power and agency is a major addition to Indian feminism because it provide a vision of change that goes beyond

personal resistance and proceeds towards social upheaval. This is a notable contribution to the field of Indian feminism.

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