



Feminism in Kamala Markandaya

□ DR. Sunita Trivedi

Abstract- *The picture of Kamala Markandaya's novels are complex picture of her views about women. She can be called a feminist writer because she shows the struggling woman to find out her identity in this man dominant society. She has presented the various problem of women as spiritual emotional and moral in her novels. Her novels are the study of time, fact, and feminine consciousness. Her women are not for clubs, picnics, frivolity and dancing. They are engaged in house hold affairs, toiling under the social and economical hardships. Her female characters are not inferior to their male counterparts. There is a new awakening of recognition of women in her novels.*

Kamala Markandaya has pictured three types of women in her novels. In First group there are the women who born in poverty and they are uneducated. These types of women have the qualities of satisfaction and have a deep belief in their fate. All characters of this type of women show that suffering in the power of Indian women. In the second group there are women who are educated and modern. They are brought up in the ways of Eastern and Western living. And the third type of women are Western women. Through her western women Kamala shows that they have more freedom, they are intellectually superior and are not at the mercies anyone. Western women possess an identity of their own, gaiety of spirit and the perfection of vision. After reading the novels of Kamala Markandaya one her deep awareness as a woman and her deep attention to women problem. It was her aim to help women to attain identity. Dignity and recognition. Her novels are a propaganda for reform. In Nectar in a sieve Rukmani who seems

to be the legendary archetype proves that the plights of women in rural India have a role in changing the society.

Rukmani in Nectar in A Sieve Suffers not only because of industrialization but also at the hands of male dominate Indian society and tradition.

Dr. Kenny tries very hard to make her aware of the tragedies of her life but Rukmani sums up what is happening to her in the fallowing manner "We are in the God's hands". (1)

And bears all his miseries silently. Similarly in A Handful of Rice Nalini suffers silently all that falls in herb lap. In the beginning she is a fun-loving young girl but soon the wheel of poverty begins to rotate Nalini and she becomes a symbol of sufferings. Kamala Markandaya shows in these women that how economic and social disorders affect women much more badly than men. Rukmani and Nalini both suffers badly in her life because they are in want of money. Kamala Markandaya has

presented the image of woman as traditional woman. She has created a new race of woman who is neither represses traditionalist nor ultra-modern but that who honours the traditions and welcomes modernity. Her heroines are awakened with the notion whether they are modern or traditional.

In her second category of women who are educated and modern Mira in some Inner fury was brought up both in eastern and western ways of living but finally caught between two ways of life. Without her mother's consent she marries an Englishman. Later she involves in the political storm of 1947. Leaving Richard (her husband) She joins freedom fighters. She in her quest for freedom and love for her country, is shown as a model to other women around her: "She lent you her vision and you saw things as they were." (2)

Roshan illustrates Kamala Markandaya's commitments to issues larger than private consciousness and women's grievances. She is the best example of an enlightened woman: "through Roshan she shows that it is possible to reconcile the need for personal freedom with larger concept of national and eventually global freedom." (3)

Other heroines of her novel like Mohini, Usha and Anasuya are all similar to Roshan. Her third category of women is western Kamala shows that they have freedom, they are intellectually superior and are not on the mercies of their husbands. Western women possess an identity of their own and wholeness of vision which is lacking in Indian women. She powerfully projects that because of man's double character the women suffer.

In A' Silence of Desire' Dandekar goes to prostitutes but rags at his faithful wife Sarojini

and calls her a thrifty whore. Domestic valence on the part of husbands is borne by her major woman character. In this connection Srinivas Iyengar observes "what is ----- astonishing is the woman's power of patient endurance, her inexhaustible capacity for love, her simple tenderness." (4)

Markandaya warns the Indian women not to copy the western style or dare to cross Lakshman Rekha drawn by traditional Indianness.

Her young Indian women are full of wisdom. It is very important fact to note that all young girls portrayed by Kamala in her novels demand so much from life but end up with nothing. Her characterization of women in her novels is bereft of any touch of humour or gentle irony, it is also very important to note that she herself has overlooked the common problems of Indian women like dowry, divorce and re marriage etc. The study of her novels proves that Indian women are made to adopt two contradictory roles.

The women with strong roots are successful while others are not. Most women in fiction and in real life have to adjust with conflict situations. Kamala Markandaya's educational and intellectual slandered have sharpened her observation of life and have given her a depth in her writings. She has portrayed a gloomy Scenario of Indian life due to changes in social, economic and political field.

She has a deep faith in togetherness and mutual understanding. Her heroines start their journey from self- sacrifice to self- realization. The efforts of rural women have an important role in changing the scene of Indian society. Her women characters are in search for autonomy, nurturance and universal sisterhood. They are

the victims of traditional Indian society. Living with a sense of isolation, fear and emotional vulnerability they are hardly able to say something to their male and society that, "I cared for him." (5)

Among the Indian women novelists, Kamala Markandaya has presented of concern in her novels. Search for identity in the main theme of his fiction. She depicts Indian women problems very deep in her novels. The East- West conflict is the major theme in Kamala Markandaya's novels. Kamala Markandaya reveals the virtues and potentialities of woman by providing that a woman is not inferior to man. She stresses the need to believe in the moral superiority of woman. Her women do not rebel but they make the society realize their presence. The feminist discernment has given a fresh ardour and animation to literary studies. Her novels reflect poverty, hunger, superstitions, customs and traditions which characterize village life in India. She is Indo-Anglican novelist who portrays the discords and apprehensions flanked by the two divergent tricks of life. Indians are extremely orthodox and the process of social change is very slow in rural area. Her main

purpose is to present social problems which are closely related to human life. She uses Indian words to create a natural Indian atmosphere. Kamala's Indianness is also seen in her language. She has used a large number of words from Indian language. Her approach is purely realistic in her novels.

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