Preface
and
Acknowledgement
Born into a Brahmin family in 1924 Markandaya was known as Kamala Purnaiya. Markandaya is a pseudonym. Markandaya’s father was in Indian Civil Service in the railway’s and that enabled Markandaya to travel widely. She married an English man in 1948 whose name is Taylor. Ever since 1948 she has lived in England through she has visited India several times.


In the novels of Markandaya women characters predominate. Men characters in her novels occupy a subordinate position. Kamala Markandaya writes about the “awakened feminine sensibility in modern India.” She depicts the agony and ecstasy of cultural change in India. The traditional Indian society is tremendously influenced by the impact of Western culture. Amidst all these changes man-woman relationship has been delineated as being influenced by them.

A study of man-woman relationship has become a very favorite topic among the scholars today. The importance of the study of the said relationship cannot be questioned today when so many divisive forces are at work to undermine the peace and harmony in the family and resultantly influencing the unity, integrity and development of the nation. Man-woman in
the novels of Markandaya belongs to middle and lower class. She does not concern herself with the aristocratic families of India. Bernard Shaw has said that it is the middle class in the society who shows excessive concern with morality, which is termed as "middle class morality." Markandaya has studied the middle-class morality very authentically. The presence of this morality characterizes man-woman relationship in the novels. That is why most of the characters in the novels strive to adhere to what is ethical and acceptable. e.g. in *A Handful of Rice* Ravi and Nalini stay away from the influence of Damodar who symbolises evil and immorality.

Kamala Markandaya wrote at the period when India has just achieved freedom, but the influence of the West was so pervasive on Indian Society. Markandaya thinks that India should not sell her soul to the West. Instead she should develop her own personality. India should pursue her own path sticking to her long cherished ideals while imbibing the best that West can offer.

In *Nectar in a Sieve* Rukmani could have lived more happily had she reconciled with the process of industrialization that had come to her village. Rukmani and her family is on the brink of starvation because they do not accept reality and stick to traditional and outdated system of agriculture. Similarly in *A Silence of Desire* there are characters who have been torn asunder by clining to the traditional faith and desiring for the modern knowledge. Conflict between traditional faith and modern knowledge is one of the various themes of Markandaya’s novels. This conflict goes on to influence the man-woman relationship in a very significant manner in *A Silence of Desire*:

Kamala Markandaya does not propagate the idea of a revolutionary women, through her novels. She probably thinks that the revolutionary
woman would probably make the man-woman relationship totally imbalanced deterring the growth of the family. She thinks of “a new women.” The new women must be balanced, i.e. she must accept the modern knowledge while retaining her traditional faith. For example Sarojani could have been more successful had she understood the practicability of the surgery and hospitals, along with her belief in “faith cure.”

In the present research an attempt has been made to understand and analyse the relationship not only between husband and wife but also between father and daughter, brother and sister etc. Number of critics and scholars have contributed articles and books on the novels of Markandaya from different view-points. But none of them has ever studied the pervasive theme of man-woman relationship as presented in her novels. It is the vast and varied range of the themes in the novels of Kamala Markandaya that have tempted me to conduct a full length research in her works.

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