CHAPTER III

A SILENCE OF DESIRE
Markandaya's third novel *A Silence of Desire* includes theme based on social and political matters. The central issue in this novel is the man-woman relationship. The man-woman relationship in India is determined, influenced and regulated by customs, traditions, faith and beliefs and the way of life in Indian society. It is also opined that novel depicts the conflict between reality and spirituality, scientific objectivity and traditional faith. The fact is that the novel being the best creative work of the author encompasses large area of human experience as its theme and subject matter. Everything in the novel is seen through Dandekar’s eyes. Therefore it can be said without any dispute that Dandekar is the central character in the novel. Dandekar represents the class of people who have been tremendously influenced by science and modern developments. He is a typical modernist character. He is devidedself like, “Hamlet”. He always wavers, “to be or not to be”. He resembles the character in Joyce’s *Ulysses* - who is asked by Bellacohen whether he recognises her and he replies, “Nes”, “Yo”. This ambivalence and dualism characterise the mind of the modernist. Dandekar is a typical modernist character. He thinks on modern lines of development, when it concerns himself, and when he finds it concerning his wife and child, he refuses to accept it.

Dandekar doesn’t pray, the tulsi plant - that his wife Sarojani worships with full devotion. For Dandekar it was merely a plant.

“Dandekar didn’t pray to it, he was always careful to say; it was a plant, one did not worship plants, but it was a symbol of God, whom one worshiped, and it was necessary that God should have symbols, since no man had the power or
temerity to visualise Him. Distinctions between God and a Symbol of God, a plant and a divine reality it represents, provide room for Dandekar, to retain respect for the old ways of faith while he senses as excessive the reverence paid by Sarojani to the tulsi that, “sometimes she went too far”, he concedes - as a fine point,-

“The difference between the reverence due to a symbol and its actuality.” I

The house where Dandekar lives has in the centre a fixed tulsi plant. Tulsi symbolises a stable religion and the village in which Dandekar lives along with his wife is influenced by the changes, because of many people gravitating to science and modern developments. But people like Dandekar are neither quiet religious minded nor scientific. Therefore Dandekar doesn’t worship nor is he opposed to it.

Tulsi plant is a major symbol in the novel. It is situated in the middle of the courtyard and:

“cremmed into bright and decorative brass.” II

which suggests that materialism is concerning religion. The tulsi plant is worshipped by Dandekar’s wife Sarojani. Both the tulsi plant and Sarojani represent pure faith. The plant and Sarojani have become identical. Both are treated as immobile objects by Dandekar. In Sarojani’s absence Dandekar looks at the tulsi tree, feels surprised that the polished:

“brass of its stan reflected every stray glean of light.” III

which is symbolic of Sarojani’s devotional feelings. Both the tulsi tree and
Sarojani represent faith and as such are opposed and despicable to Dandekar. Dandekar calls Sarojani "superstitious" and "fool" for her belief in:

"healing by faith or healing by the grace of God."

Knowing well that, "faith and reason don’t go together." 4

For Dandekar, tulsi is an ordinary plant, as similarly Sarojani’s disease is common one, which could be cured in hospital. Dandekar is a man without faith. Sarojani and the tulsi plant represent faith. On the other hand, Dandekar, however, doesn’t dare forsake the faith altogether as he says to himself:

"The tulsi is not an ordinary plant, it is a symbol; I though, I had made that clear to her." 5

The relationship between Dandekar and Sarojani is quiet imbalanced. Dandekar has his own concepts and vision of a wife. A wife should remain within the four walls of the house. So long as Sarojani remain within the confines of the house, she pleases Dandekar, but the moment she transgressed the limit Dandekar is hurt. It is mobility of woman, particularly a wife, which enrages and hurts Dandekar. Dandekar, therefore doesn’t find any difference between tulsi and Sarojani. Apart from tulsi, Sarojani is also associated with kitchen. More appropriately with the sounds of the kitchen. A wife is expected to be: “the kitchen queen”

For Dandekar, as for other, a wife's presence in the house is characterised by her movements in the kitchen. Sounds emanating from kitchen shows a normal life to Dandekar. It is the absence of sounds from the kitchen which makes Dandekar realise that something was “missing”. For him, his wife’s movements, the noise of
cooking wares were part of his home coming.

Sarojani’s presence gives warmth to the household. Her absence makes the place:

“pale and chill like an unlit lamp.” 6

Dandekar associates in his mind three things together- the tulsi tree, Sarojani and the sounds from the kitchen.

The entire action in the novel revolves round the lives of Dandekar and his wife Sarojani. Dandekar is a senior clerk and happily married with three children. Sarojani is a good mother, a wife and house keeper. In India the wives are expected to be loyal and devoted to their husbands. They must live as “an angel in the house”. Dandekar claims and shows himself to be modern. He believes in the modern concept of culture, if it concerns himself but if it even indirectly tended to concern his wife and children he doesn’t accept it. That is why, he holds, “conformist view on marriage”. He has all praise for Indian woman who never flaunt their beauty before men other than their husbands. And unmarried woman is supposed to remain a virgin even after marriage woman should not look at other males. Dandekar thinks :

“a married women didn’t have men friends who were not known to the husband the family.” 7

Wives should always remain faithful to their husband - is the belief of Dandekar. Regarding the character of wife Dandakar is ruled by the traditional ideologies which require a wife to be submissive, subordinate and nonsignificant. About the role and character of a wife, R. Shastri and Mahadevan says like as follows.
Shastri thinks that:

"Wives are faithful, virtues creatures prepared like their
classical sisters to follow their husbands bear into the
jungle." 8

Similarly Mahadavan thinks that,

"No marriage was safe unless in her husbands absences a wife was
locked in a chastity girdle." 9

The changing culture is quite detestable to him. He considers divorce to be an
evidence of immorality.

In fact, the society is consisted of two types of people so far as their views
of married women are concerned. The one type of people is represented by
Dandekar, Shastri-Mahadevan. And another type is represented by Joseph Ghose
and others. Dandekar pretends to be a modern in outlook. He is modern only if it
concerns his oneself. He is conservative in the matter related to his wife, marriage
and children. He thinks that it is a bounden duty of a wife, to remain virgin for their
husbands. He thinks that Hindu wives married for life didn’t look at other men. He
believes in the changes in the society, when it satisfies his male ego. That is why he
doesn’t question his privilege of going to prostitutes. Regarding sex and love
Dandekar has a different opinion. Sex and love are two things for Dandekar. The
more intensely he loves Sarojani, the more frequently he goes to the prostitutes. It
is a routine matter for him. But he doesn’t reveal to Sarojani, that he goes to
prostitute.

"More pervasive than silence of desire is the silence of
secretes." 10
Kamala Markandaya does not seem to have any reservation in telling about the prostitutes in her novel. In this regard, Uma Parmeshwran observes:

“It is interesting to note that in several novels, Markandaya’s men go to prostitutes without any qualms. In this novel, because he is middle-class, Dandekar has qualms but only because of his ignorance of such matters. Prostitutes are often romanticised by writers William Blake, has a marginala that whores have what in wives is never found, the lineameants of gratified desire.

Perhaps Markandaya confers an common prostitutes knowledge of texts such as “Kama-Sutra’ that courtesans presumable studied and put into practice with expertise. In several novels it is mentioned that prostitutes know how to please. In The Golden Honeycomb, a dirty prostitute teaches Rabi how to, “make if better”. In A Handful of Rice, Ravi teaches his wife some of the techniques he had learned from prostitutes.”

He is opposed to superstition because he claims that science does not endorse superstitions. He wishes to keep out the changes that affects his wife and children. When he finds that his wife and children are becoming affected by the scientific changes, he becomes enraged. He says

“Yet times were changing but not so fast,” he cried furiously.

“Not so far as to touch the old generation like me, my wife, we are stable.”
Man-Woman Relationship in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya.

Dandekar is not open-minded and openhearted and hence there cannot be a balanced relationship between himself and his wife. Sarojani is on the other hand, innocent, loyal, but she is also not openhearted. She does not disclose her activities to her husband, not because she is doing anything immoral or unethical but simply because her husband would not permit her to go ahead with what she considers "faith."

Dandekar cannot tolerate the presence of a photograph in her box, because the presence of a man's photograph with Sarojani shows that she is changing with the times, and the change would threaten the stability of his married life. He cannot bear any kind of instability in his married life. Dandekar is so tormented by the thought of Sarojani having a lover, that he calls her, "a thrifty whore". \[13\] and denounces her, "Shameless affaire" \[14\] He thinks that:

"A soiled women is no good to any one not even to her children." \[15\]

But the fact of Sarojani chastity is so convincing that not only the readers but even Dandekar is taken aback. Sarojani is very bold in telling her husband that:

"The man whome I worship as God." \[16\] cannot be degraded as being her lover. Dandekar later comes to know that it was not a lover but it was her music teacher.

In India the man-woman relationship is a typical example of being unique in itself. The quarrel between husband and wife followed by patch-up is a routine matter. But what is surprising is that the quarrel and patch-up are concealed from children. Dandekar and Sarojani has to play act several times to conceal their differences from their children:

"His headached but he forced himself to listen behaving
normally. So that they would not suspect anything was wrong. Sarojani was doing the same—avoiding his eye, addressing him no more than was necessary, yet betraying no strain, like conspirators in tacit accord, they efficiently set about shielding their children. And when the children had left for school, there was maid before whom they must posture and play act.” 17

Dandekar does not like to pretend before the children, during a disturbed state of mind, he preferred privacy. What is noticed in Indian family during quarrel between husband and wife that a third person has to act as a mediator for communication. Ramesh Shriastava observes:

“The role of a go-between is fairly common in Indian families in which the husband and wife particularly the educated and decent ones. Resort to this method in order to avoid eruption of open quarrels which not only become a subject of worshipers and scandals in the neighborhood but leave a poor impression on the children. It is amusing that in the name of the stability of family, the facade of nonquarrelling, happy-looking husband-wife relationship is maintained even when the two have very serious differences and further this sort of stability is praised— as opposed to honest disagreements and possibly changing relationships even marriages in the western husband-wife relationships.” 18

Dandekar does not allow his wife to enjoy the freedom, that a woman
is entitled for. Sarojani must act at his back and call. Sarojani’s excuse for the delay is discovered by Dandekar as a lie. In addition to this the gossip in the office about the character of wives indirectly creates confusion and doubts in the mind of Dandekar. His confusion and doubts are further strengthened when Dandekar discovers that Sarojani has begun to neglect her family.

In Dandekar, Kamala Markandaya portrays hypocrisy in the name of morality which is one for wives and other for himself. In order to ascertain Sarojani’s relationship with someone he spies on her. But he himself goes to prostitutes. This is because in Indian society, there is a prescribed code of conduct for the women which requires them to be devoted to their husbands. They are supposed to be “Pativarta”. But no such code of conduct is there for the male. Dandekar goes to the prostitutes not as a symbol of change but very strangely enough to preserve the stability of the family. The prostitutes convince Dandekar that his visit to prostitutes symbolises a kind of reconciliation with the changing times. They further tells him that it is very natural, the prostitutes tells Dandekar;

“You are not the first husband that wanted a change it is natural nothing to it.” 19

And Dandekar does not consider his visit to prostitutes as something unethical and betrayal of trust. He has his own justification for his affairs with the prostitutes. He justifies his visit to the prostitutes as a sort of rehearsal to practice what life would be like in Sarojani’s absence. When she was likely to be away:

“It was a mechanical expedient like bloodletting to relieve a physical tumescence.” So that has relation with his wife remain as usual. But having changed a little with the time. Dandekar does not feed that bad in going to the whore now.

A Ph. D. Thesis. S. R. T. M. U., Nanded
He could walk through those ill-famed streets have a glimpse of waiting women, make a choice without thinking of the fact and sleep soundly. The only worry was: “It was expensive.” 20

Dandekar is a mediocre man and is routed in the Indian traditional view of marriage. He is afraid of not losing his wife but what troubles him most is that he may be branded as a “cuckold”. The Hindu marriage is a sacrament. Duty is more important in Hindu marriage than personal desires and happiness of the partners. If the husband failed to retain his wife, he is condemned for this. It is because of this fear that his loyalty to the family degenerates into irresponsibility. He starts visiting prostitutes frequently. He takes leaves from his office as frequently as he pleases to spy on his wife. He goes to brothels. Dandekar’s feeling of insecurity and powerlessness continues to grow and he begins to neglect his children and home.

Dandekar is a product of the effect of the British culture and British education. His wife is a women of faith representing Indian tradition and culture. Dandekar is in fact,

“Part Eastern and part Western.” 21

Dandekar expects his wife to be obedient and faithful but when he finds that she is not conforming to the prescribed code of conduct he is shocked. The actual reason of shock is that Dandekar can no longer pretend to have been influenced by the modern changes, like all others, Dandekar cannot separate himself from the original culture. In fact there can be no real separation. Commenting on the impossibility of the complete separation between the individual and culture. Lionel Trilling says:

“-----It is not possible to conceive of a person standing
beyond his culture. His culture has brought him into being in every respect except the physical has given him his categories and habits of thought, his range of feeling, his idiom and tones of speech. No aberration can effect a real separation; even the forms that madness takes-----are controlled by the culture in which it occurs.” 22

Therefore freedom of Sarojani is too much for Dandekar to bear. He does not think it possible that Sarojani might exercise a personal choice. Her freedom to choose makes Dandekar indignant. Dandekar is the breadwinner of the family and therefore he would be kings in the castle of the home. He loves routine relationships and fears emotional scenes. When routines is disturbed Dandekar feels disturbed. About Sarojani’s absence endless questions on the possibilities and probabilities fount the mind of Dandekar. :

“Why had sarojani lied? Had she? Was she playing some marimomal games? Was it conceivable? Feasible, that she might?” 23

Here Kamala Markandaya shows the light of her artistic skill. She rouses the curiosity of the readers to know the facts Sarojani has a image of good wife and mother. She is religious, she has not done anything wrong apart from not explaining her absence from home. She is shocked when she knew that her husband spied on her:

“So you watched me.” 24

She also says :

“You listened of this office gossip and you spied on me” 25
The question here is what is the compensation for the character of a woman being slandered what Dandekar decides to do after his wife’s innocence is restored. Sarojani’s greatness is that she replies and act in a very restrained manner with her husband while giving explanations. She does not lose control of herself.

“It is a measure of her innate strength her conviction that her action had been just in the circumstance that explain her dignified controlled replies. While obviously upset, she is composed enough the next day to carry on with her domestic chores.”

Sarojani represents faith. It is her faith in magic cure that takes her to the Swami. Dandekar comes to know about the tumour of his wife, he feels extremely sympathetic but like many husbands he does not give expressions to his sympathy. After Sarojani discloses to him, the reality about tumour, Dandekar remorsefully regrets:

“I left her to sleep on the floor, he said to himself. She was ill and I let her lie on the floor while I slept in comfort.”

He advises her to go to the hospital. But Sarojani has lost her faith in hospitals because it is a place where her mother and grandmother died. Sarojani is afraid of medical intervention because her mother and grandmother died after surgery. So for curing the tumor in her womb she turns to Swami. Swami was becoming popular for the treatment of diseases. She goes to Swami, Markandaya has highlighted the pathetic condition of the hospitals.

The money granted to the hospital is pocketed by the doctors, as a result the poor patients suffers.
The Swami is the fourth symbolic representation. The other three are Sarojani, Tulsi, and sounds in the kitchen. Sarojani feels very much drawn to Swami to warmth of her feelings towards the Swami is contrasted with her serving a cold meal to Dandekar. Sarojani is so much under the Swami’s influence, that nothing checks her from going to him—the heat, her children, her husband’s illness. The Swami has no use of money. Sarojani, however, gives him a gold chain even when the economic condition of the family is not very good. It is this influence of Swami on his wife that has troubled Dandekar. The Swami pretends to live a simple life. The Swami lives under a tree. For a critic like S. C. Harrex, the Swami.

“Symbolises, as an alternative to modern materialistic way of life, a traditional set of values.” 28

In the village the people consider Swami to be great in curing people’s diseases. But the city people take him to be fraud. Ghose goes to the extent of proving that Swami’s character is known by counting gifts he had taken and the number of wives he had seduced. But village people has strong faith in the magical cure of the Swami. It is the faith of Sarojani, which brings her closer to Swami. Sarojani is very clever. She understands that if she opposes her intention of her husband of going to the Swami, she may not be allowed. Therefore she secretly goes to meet Swami. Fearing that she may be labelled as superstitious fool for believing in the Swami. Therefore she calls it healing not by the Swami but by the grace of God.

But Dandekar fails to understand this concept of Sarojani. Sarojani reiterates her faith in the swami and she denounces the shallow nature of Dandekar’s education.

“You with your Western notions, your superior talk of
ignorance and superstitious when all it means is that you don’t know what lies beyond reason and you prefer not to find out. To you the tulsi is a plant that grow in earth like the rest an ordinary common plant. And mine is a disease to be cured and so you would have sent me to hospital and I would have died there.” 29

Markandaya shows, how the spontaneity of the relationship between Sarojani and Dandekar ends. Dandekar becomes suspicious. He has become more confused because in the office colleagues talk about infidelity of women. He becomes upset. Markandaya shows how a marital discord begins to develop. Dandekar’s suspicion goes on deepening. When Dandekar finally discovers the real cause of Sarojani’s neglect he becomes angry. Once again he persuades Sarojani to go to the hospital. But Sarojani prefers faith-healing to surgery while Dandekar has strong faith in modern western medical science. It is therefore, Sarojani keeps her visit to Swami a secret.

“You would have sent me to a hospital instead called me, superstitious, a fool, because I have beliefs that you cannot share. You would not have let me be-oh! You would have reasoned with me until I lost my faith...” 30

Sarojani has lost faith in the hospitals, because the hospitals are ill-equipped and further Sarojani’s relatives died in the hospital.

Therefore her faith in Swami’s power to cure is unshakable. Dandekar fails to change the mind of his wife despite his knowledge of science and rationalism. Dandekar fails to persuade his wife because he thinks:
And it is her faith which provides her stability as well as that to the family. To disrupt her faith would be sort of undermining her existence. She would remain nowhere. She would loose faith in her God.

When Dandekar fails, he decides to take help of Rajam, to influence Sarojani. Rajam is a cousin of Sarojani. But to the surprise of Dandekar cousin Rajam appears to be equally influenced by the Swami and the “miraculous tells”. Rajam affirms her faith in Swami. Rajam says that, how Swami had cured when the doctors failed in curing her pains. It was her faith in God that cured her. She thinks that even Dandekar’s illness is the result of, “the evil eye”. Even her aunt Seeta who was afflicted by similar disease and she was cured by a priest. Rajam proposes to burn camphor every day in his name, “Until the evil is lifted”, from him. Thus the three, Sarojani, cousin Rajam and aunt Seeta belongs to the religious minded people who have strong faith in God, and faith in cure by priest.

Dandekar feels extremely frustrated as he could not prevent Sarojani from going to the Swami. Dandekar decides to follow Sarojani to the Swami’s house. Dandekar goes after Sarojani:

“Dandekar had stopped when Sarojani stopped. Now he ran, his blood fevering until he reached the house and here he was brought to an abrupt halt. He had expected a closed door, barred to him husband and he would have buffered against this until his fary drew forth some reply. But there was no door, only an areliway, hung with a screen that swung lightly in out in out with every puff of breeze. It seemed to mock him, that screen moving incessantly yet never so much that
he could look beyond. He seized it roughly in both hands to thrust in aside, but then he held back was he to go in now after his wife? Follow even so far as their tryst their bed? He closed his eyes and his flesh cringed before the image. It was grotesques, unendurable, a gross and violent, immodesty that the body he knew should open naked before another. Yet he acknowledge that however stark his imagining the reality would be worse.”

The divided self of Dandekar renders him indecisive. Sarojani symbolises faith and trust. Dandekar symbolises there absence. The intensifying suspicion makes him oscillate between:

“Violent trust and extreme distrust.”

Dandekar feels:

“A vast overpowering sense of relief.”

When he finds that the photograph in the trunk was not of any lover but of the music teacher, he feels relieved. He does not deny faith in God.

Thus Dandekar becomes a divided self, some times very confident other times very suspicious. He is not completely modern and rationalistic or else he would not have sold watch which symbolised science and modernity. The act of selling his watch and loosing the sense of time, symbolises his desire for primitive life. Dandekar visits Swami’s place, he finds Sarojani before Swami in a roomful of people. He is utterly confused, He thinks:

“He was wrong. Yet followed his wife and seen for himself
But Dandekar is unable to decide what to do. That evening he announces to Sarojani that he had seen her with the Swami. He desires an explanation from Sarojani. She reveals that she has a growth in her womb. She is deeply hurt when she finds that the disclosure has shocked Dandekar. Dandekar, however, tries to be sympathetic but Sarojani is deeply annoyed with the suspicious behavior of Dandekar. She was shocked to learn that Dandekar kept following her for the past many days. Dandekar whispered to her,

"If only you had told me ... why could you not tell me."

Sarojani replies if she told him he would have called her superstitious, a fool. It is very much clear here that this moment of revelation is troublesome and dramatic to both. It shows that despite difference they loved each other and after disclosure their intimacy begins to reassert:

"I didn’t mean it", she was gasping for words, for breath,
"didn’t mean what I said, anger makes you say-strange, things, but I didn’t mean- how could I? After so long and our happiness, but it wasn’t.... Wasn’t me...."  "I know", He held her, stroking her banting temples, understanding more from these incoherent outpowerings than from the clear rock. Crystal of the words she had used before. "We mustn’t say any more tonight neither you not I. And you must get some sleep - it’s nearly there o’clock, did you know?"  

Dandekar fails to wean Sarojani away from Swami. He knows Sarojani’s determination to be cured by faith. Sarojani’s dislike of hospitals has something to
do with her mother and grandmother who couldn’t be saved by surgery. Dandekar now shifts his attention from Sarojani to the Swami. He wants to meet Swami and warn him of fatal consequence, if Swami didn’t release Sarojani. Dandekar also seeks the help of Shastri for the retrieval of Sarojani. Shastri advises Dandekar to persuade Sarojani to see a doctor and to ensure that Swami is genuine.

Dandekar does not feel comfortable till he meets Swami. One afternoon when Dandekar comes home he finds that Sarojani is out. Dandekar is very disappointed. He decides to persuade Sarojani to have an operation. Dandekar thinks if Sarojani agrees to see the doctor it would imply that Swami has not exercised influence upon her:

“It’s innocent and it’s curable,” he said stubbornly.

“The doctor said so, she said if you had the operation now.”

“No.”

“Why not? You must- you must be cured. I can’t-.”

“I will be cured, in my own way.”

“By this, - this faith healer?”

“Yes, I have faith in him and he will cure me.

She spoke deliberately, strangling the protesting words that were already forming in his brain. There’s nothing I can do, be thought, frozen, helpless. I can’t move, I’m trapped.”

Dandekar goes to meet the Swami. But the Swami is away. The house in which Swami lives is in charge of a dwarf. His journey to Swami’s place symbolises
Dandekar sees Swami one day when Swami is shadowing Sarojani but does not speak. Next we see Dandekar following Sarojani to the Swami's house. At Swami's house Dandekar finds that Swami lays his hand on Sarojani's head and murmurs a soft stream of indistinguishable words. Dandekar observes that the Swami has not imposed himself on Sarojani in any way. She came on her own free will. The Swami speaks to Dandekar in a small room. Dandekar feels influenced by Swami. The Swami hints that Dandekar can help by donating money. Dandekar thinks that the Swami is a fraud because he remembers that his wife has been giving away silver and gold to the Swami. Dandekar complains to Swami about Sarojani's gifts:

"Sarojani gives and gives and he does not stop her." If I were to compel her not to give, I would also be free to compel her to give. That is the other face of the coin, the other half of what you seek... compulsion is the beginning of corruption. It is the eating away of the spirit of who ever does it and who ever has it done to him. Is that what you want."  

What is most surprising is that Dandekar himself donates a five rupees note to the Swami:

"I didn’t know" said Dandekar gently.

"I didn’t realise."  

Dandekar now believes in the power of Swami. He now understood what Sarojani meant when she said that in the Swami's presence nothing material or
Man-Woman Relationship in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya

physical mattered. But whatever be the power of Swami Dandekar is firmly resolved to detach Sarojani from Swami’s influence. That is why, he seeks help of Rajam whom he never liked. Rajam however, refuses to wean Sarojani away from the Swami because the Swami had cured her of terrible pains that had baffled the doctors.

Man-Woman relationship in the novel, gets a new turn, when Dandekar becomes sick. Dandekar comes down with shingles. The doctor diagnoses the diseases as a result of worry and tension. Dandekar has been worrying a lot and that his body is fed up and making its protest. Sarojani nurses him with all devotion during his illness.

“He had not heard her so brisk, so like her old self, for a long time. Even illness has its compensation he thought, and then the thought came timid and hesitant, that if he were sick longer, more seriously, he might yet wean her away from the Swami. Then what? Then get her cured by modern means. But she won’t let herself be until the Swami goes. He thought I’ve been through all this before round and round like a squirrel in a cage. He had only seen it once a small crazed creature that frantically trod the bars of its cylindrical prison. Setting it revolving faster and faster to the delight of the crowed. Belts on the cylinder tinkled, hot sun heat down on the gray, stiff far, poor thing he thought, in a comprehension a horror after so many long years, poor thing.” 40

Dandekar’s helplessness in breaking Swami’s hold on Sarojani is compounded by his illness. He lies in the:

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"Darker stifling room," with, "arms and legs sprawled wide on the bed.... with sweet crowing down each limb." 41

During such state of utter helplessness, frustration and gloom, Sarojani continues to serve him.

"Quite suddenly in the strange clarity of his racked state, he knew that she was not really seeing him, that often as now, he no longer existed for her, although some and converse with him, rationally and even to accord him some gentleness." 42

Sarojani does not stop going to the Swami, Dandekar is too ill to stop Sarojani. Rajam tells Dandekar that there is an influence of evil eye on him, which must be removed. Dandekar however does not believe in this.

Dandekar recovers after fourteen days. After recovery there is a change in Dandekar's attitude. He looks at the sleeping Sarojani with.

"An aching tenderness." 43

There is a new maturity in them. What is more surprising is that there is a new bond of relationship between husband and wife, a new love between them springs forth. After departure of the Swami, Sarojani becomes disappointed. But Sarojani accepts because Swami has taught her how to cultivate the quality of acceptance. So Sarojani is quiet, though she is repentful.

"I formed an attachment, it is broken that is all one must accept it... He said there must be no repining" She said, "He was insisted on that." 44
Man-Woman Relationship in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya.

Dandekar is jealous of Swami's influence on Sarojani:

"Am I to be in debated to this man for giving my wife back to me? No matter, he thought wearily; he took her from me, he has given her back and that is the heart of matter." 45

Sarojani's return may be considered as victory by Dandekar. But it is a fact that Dandekar failed to prepare Sarojani for an operation. At last Dandekar succeeds and Sarojani becomes ready to undergo an operation. After the successful operation she comes back home. There is the restoration of relationship between husband and wife. Dandekar finds the sudden release from all his problems. He feels relieved. He is found resting under a banyan tree. Dandekar is very happy.

"I didn't know what I was doing... I wanted .... so little. My wife... I wanted her back, .... that was all" 46

Dandekar is no longer repentful. After the crisis is over, he becomes enlightened. He goes home to his family as a better and wiser man.

"I wanted these things and I thought for them, because they meant a great del to me.” He said, steadily.

“That is a fragment of the truth but I fought also for other things- my wife, myself, my children and these are the other fragments of which even you must be aware. You told me, once, why you came here, that your mind might not grow as warped as your body. Remember that as I shall remember all my life those who are here, derelict.” 47

What Markandaya suggests is that the relationship between man and woman, particularly that between husband and wife, should be determined and guided by

freedom from all bonds. Sarojani's freedom to go to the Swami and opt for faith cure should not have been intercepted by Dandekar. Due to interception the crisis is precipitated. On the other hand, Sarojani's desperate faith blinds her and she neglects her family responsibilities. While Dandekar's rationalism corrupts his behaviour. Both of them exercise their beliefs unreasonably.

The Swami is the effective instrument for the resolution of the crisis Swami's departure prompts Sarojani to accept the scientific spirit of the age. She remembers the philosophy of acceptance that Swami had taught her. That is why she undergoes the operation.

Further Swami's departure teaches Sarojani how to be indifferent and how to break the attachment. The swami in this novel is like one in Possession—who teaches that freedom is to remain free, through the total activity of the self. Sarojani's movement away from her sphere of duty to irresponsibility and neglect of home and then again due to persuasion back to family makes the reader expect that the harmony of the past would return to the family and after long upheaval there would be greater stability. What is clear from the behaviours of Dandekar and Sarojani is that both of them are rebels. Dandekar's rebellion is merely a withdrawal from reality which destroys his peace of mind. Sarojani's rebellion is intended to bring the recovery of her health and consequently the peace and harmony in the family. Thus Sarojani's rebellion may also be called as caused by withdrawal from reality. Therefore it may be concluded that acceptance of reality is a major factor for a balanced and harmonical relationship between husband and wife, that is between man and woman.

The reality should not only be shared between grown ups but it should be shared with the youngers also. Sarojani didn't disclose the gravity of her disease to
avoid frightening her children because Ramabai was still too small. The explanations that Sarojani and Dandekar give their children about former's frequent visit to the Swami is not acceptable and believable to the children. As a result, the children lose their faith in their parents. Ramabai starts going to the milk bar which shocks Dandekar.

"These days, he knew girls and young men went to milkbars and he also knew from hearsay what a very mixed lot was to be found there. He often said he realised times were changing. Yet he had never thought his own daughters would gravitate to one of these places." 48

Laxmi justifies Ramabai's visit because there was nothing to eat in the kitchen. The same kind of feeling Nathan and Rukmani expresses in Nectar in a Sieve when the children refuse to live in poverty and decide to go to Cylone for the livelihood. Ramabai, therefore, does not accept the advice of her father not to meet any boy. Ramabai boldly replies:

"Why not? Does not mother go to see someone none of us know? Don't you?" 49

This defiant attitude on the part of the children shows that the parents fail to accept reality, which is most important and determining factor in the man-woman relationship.

Finally it may be concluded with Ramesh Shrivastava:

"In Markandaya's world, to have peace, one should reconcile the innate imputes with social responsibilities. He can attain happiness only by going halfway in the relationship with
Sarojani. He eventfully understands that she has a right to freedom of thought, expression and action as much as he does and that he has a duty to her as much as he expects her to have it to him. The development of the theme is on the psychological level in this novel because it is in close reference to Dandekar's mental makeup as affected by his situation. The novelist highlights the points at which the culture and social background has a bearing on the mental process of the individual. Most of all she is concerned here with exploring the recesses of human thought and sensibility in the particular context of tradition and modernity as well as continuity and change." 50
# Notes & References

2. Ibid P. 5.
3. Ibid P. 44.
4. Ibid P. 87.
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7. Ibid P. 34.
8. Ibid P. 23.
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