CONCLUSION
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The foregoing analyses of the novels of Kamala Markandaya amply substantiate the view that the novelist shows concern with the crisis of a woman’s identity in patriarchy and suggest measures of transcendence. She indicts the evils of patriarchy and the resultant exploitation of women as a class by the anti-feminist forces who have been alive since the pre-Vedic society to smother a woman’s predicament. As a matter of fact the plight of female identity is bracketed with the predicament of male identity and the situation becomes all the more tragic if there develops feelings of misalliance between man and the woman.

Kamala Markandaya’s women characters are grouped keeping in view their degrees of victimization by the forces of history, religion, morality, racialism and culture in an impersonal universe. The major problems faced by them are of poverty, dowry, the desire to have a male child, superstition, the lure of a metropolis city and above all man’s inhumanity to man. Most of these evils are inter-connected and the truth is that the status of the husband, in turn, defines the socio-economic position of the wife. For the economically poor families marriage is the added fear of larger families and begetting daughters. In Nectar in a Sieve Rukmani recollects the agony of the discovery that the first
child was a girl, "I turned away and despite myself the tears came, the tears of weakness and disappointment... Nathan had wanted a son to continue his line and walk beside him on the land."

The first category includes those women who have lost the power of will and initiation under the overwhelming pressures of life. The husband is their Lord and a slight departure from the accepted norms of morality or a gesture of rebelliousness is taken as the sin of purgatory. Rukmani, Nalini, Jayamma, Sarojini, Vasantha, accept their fate with stoic endurance without questioning the existence of evil in the system, they are trapped in. And if there is any momentary gesture of defiance and the rebellion it is marginal. But their actions are never approved of by the novelist because a life of blind servitude devours the woman's individuality. Rather, the novelist has the sympathy for the women of the second category who show symptoms of developing 'feminine consciousness' and tries to forge with reintegrating vision by coming to terms with the conditions of living. They rebel to assert their individuality and if during the process they meet failure for harbouring delusions or romantic day dreaming they validate Heraclitus's dictum that 'a man's character is his destiny'. And the novelist is not a party to their moral ruination. Helen is a victim of Clinton's ambiguous socio-cultural
predilections and racial hatred, Caroline Bell suffers from the spiritual scar in the grip of materialism which she tries to overcome but in a highly self-centred manner. The instinct of over-ambitiousness and over-possessiveness is prominent in her conduct which prompts her to take away an Indian painter to England and 'possess' what he embodies. It is a curious case of asserting one's individuality by destroying the other's which is immoral and ends in failure. Caroline's failure to possess the essence of spirituality is because of evil which is manifest in her egoistic attitude to Annabel and Ellie, the Jewish girl. The two sisters Lalitha and Saroja feel suffocated in the village and aspire to live a life of their choices. Lalitha's adventure to the city proves to be disastrous and she loses her modesty but Saroja escapes the onslaught of male oppression, moral filth as represented by the city.

Mirabai Roshan Merchant, Manjula, Mohini, Usha, Jaya, the proletariat and Janaki, the sweepers daughter are the illustrations of the women who refuse to surrender their identity to the forces of disruption, politico-racial upheaval and alien rulers. Mira is a case of transcendence, she sacrifices her love taking it as a part of history. Mohini is not charmed by the spell of royalty, nor do Jaya and Janaki feel fascinated by the wealth and glory associated with the princely life.
What is cardinal for them is their humanity. They have come to term with the forces threatening to eclipse their identity in a princely state of Devapur under the British yoke. They are the 'initiates' to set terms on life, even Janaki's dalliance with Rabi, the prince does not pale her femininity into nothingness. Shanta Devi, the queen of Bawajiraj III suffers the shrinkage of her identity for the fact that she bears daughters, not a son who is a spiritual custodian in patriarchy. It is highly ridiculous that the presence of a sterile woman is taken as a curse on the household whereas begetting a child is purely a biological phenomenon. Ira, Rukmani's daughter, is abandoned by her husband in state of childlessness. As such, life becomes a joke and the woman appears to be like 'a slab of marble'. Ira seeks self fulfilment outside marriage and is branded as a whore. Mohini, the concubine, refuses to be a co-wife of the Maharaja to maintain her freedom. "I don't want to be your queen. I want to be free".

Markandaya thus shows concern with the wastage of young lives for want of sharing emotions and suggests that instead of converting life into an emotional dabris both man and woman should have communication, respect to each other's dignity and finally come to terms with life by transcending its trivialities. When there can co-exist faith and science, tradition and modernity,
spiritualism and materialism, where is the room for the fermentation born of the conflict which so callously crushes a woman's identity.