Chapter – I
Introduction

The genre of prose, developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, can be said to be a byproduct of western influence on India’s art and literature. The early Indian social reformers like Rajaram Mohan Roy and other journalists effectively used prose to articulate their views, opinions and ideas for the elimination of social evils and superstitious beliefs. The growth of prose in India led to the blossoming of fictional writing in general and novel in particular.

The influence of Britain had an impact in the ample spaces of Bengal, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. Before 1947, the English models were the major outside influence on India. However, most of the Indian English novels of the period retain little more than antiquarian interest today. Even Toru Dutt chose European protagonists for her novel and failed to mould her art distinctively. They are predominantly acts of admiring imitation by elite whose reality had shifted from the immediate social context to a romantic past.

Indian writing in English since Toru Dutt on sundry subjects deserves to be better understood rather than condemned as suffering from superiority complex. To these writers English served the purpose of an intellectual means of expression. The Indian novelist in English had attained a dignified stature. Those Indians who settled on this foreign language for creative literature had an uphill task ahead, that
of projecting their country’s heritage in an alien idiom. Apart from the big three – Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao, a host of other writers such as Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Ruth Prawar Jhabwala, Nayantara Sahgal, Arun Joshi, Chaman Nahal, Salman Rushdie, Namita Gokhale and Amitav Ghosh are Indian novelists writing in English relentlessly exploring Indian themes. Their significant contribution demands a serious reckoning.

In due course, the novel developed into various trends, exhibiting preoccupation of writers with pre-independence and post-independence problems of Indian society. The common enemy before freedom was British Raj which inspired all energy to be channelized in opposing it and infusing people with a sense of national solidarity. But disenchantment crept stealthily in the Indian psyche after 1947 as the golden dreams charted by the leaders proved to be mirages. George H.Lewes declares that women’s literature has been “too much a literature of imitation; to write as men is the besetting sin of women; to write as women is the real task they have to perform” (*The Lady Novelists* -137).

However, cultural conditioning does affect the literary expression of women. Intellectually fed on literary models by men, women writers till recently have been creating a literature of ‘imitation’ despite the vast leadership they have enjoyed. Universally applicable to women writers everywhere, this factor of cultural
conditioning acquires an important dimension in any discussion of Indian women novelists also. Put in the historical perspective of Indian writing in English, analysis of novels by Indian women writers in English reveals new dimensions of their contribution to the mainstream of Indian literature. Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Attia Hosain, Anita Desai and Ruth Prawar Jhabwala are some of the important names. Kamala Markandaya occupies a special position among these writers. A brief analysis of her novels would reveal her South Indian identity and expatriate existence. Markandaya’s writings are a reflection of her close observation and understanding of Indian life. In her artistic creation and portrayal of Indian life, her western education has stood her in good stead. Kamala Markandaya stands apart from these novelists because of her depiction of reality in a natural way. She allows her characters to follow their own minds and face life as a natural man should do. There is no exaggeration in presenting the sufferings of the people.

In order to reveal the depression of women and to bring them out of suppressed conditions, the Feminist movement which appeared in 19th rendered a yeoman service. The name “Feminism” suggests a single ideology, but in reality the movement has many subgroups. One subtype of feminism is Radical Feminism, it considers that patriarchy is the root cause of the most serious social problems, violence and oppression of women.
Feminism is concerned with the marginalization of all women; that is with their being relegated to a secondary position. Feminist critics examine the experiences of woman from all races, classes and cultures, including African, American, Latin, Lesbian, Handicap, American Indian and third world subjects.

Elaine Showalter is an American literary critic, feminist, and a writer on cultural and social issues. She is the one who has developed the concept and practice of gynocritics. In ‘A Literature of their Own’, she shows how women’s literature has evolved, starting from the Victorian period to the Modern period. She divided the movement into three phases. The first phase is known as the Feminine phase, it refers to the initial stage of women’s writing and it includes the use of male pseudonyms in the 1840’s. During this phase women were not encouraged to develop or display their talent. The condition of female authors was very pathetic. Women’s writing was also dismissed because of religious and political thought and it was assigned a place of subordination and was treated as less rational and less intellectual than male writing.

The second phase, known as the ‘Feminist phase’ (1880) according to Showalter was the protest phase of literature. During this phase the minority group protested against the traditional stage and values, demanding their rights and wanting to be recognized as being equal to men. In this phase, women’s literature raised a note of protest in different ways. They wrote about their own sufferings and expressed their personal sense of injustice, class struggle etc. In this protest phase the women writers
rejected the male imposed definitions of them and opened the doors for the exploration of the female identity.

The third phase, known as the ‘Female Phase’ (1920) is characterized by a self-discovery and some freedom. They avoided dependency and turned to female experience as the source of autonomous art. Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, and Virginia Woolf worked towards realizing the dream of a female aesthetic. They began to think in terms of male and female sentences, and divided their work into masculine journalism and feminine fictions and redefining, sexualizing external and internal experience.

The subject of feminist critique includes the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the omissions and misconceptions about women in criticism, and the fissures in male constructed literary world. It is also concerned with the exploitation and manipulation of the female audience and female characters in literature, especially in popular culture and film.

Elaine Showalter takes Thomas Hardy as an example and represented the way in which women are viewed in literature and in criticism. Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, begins with the famous scene of the drunken Michael Henchard selling his wife and infant daughter for five guineas at a country fair. This act of Michael
Henchard shows that “Patriarchal societies do not readily sell their sons, but their daughters are all for sold sooner or later” (Women writing about women - P 34).

When an attempt is made to study the stereotypes of women, the sexism of male critics, and the limited roles women play in literary history we face the problem of male oriented world. But in this analysis we are not learning what women have felt and experienced, but what men have thought women should be.

Kate Millett wrote an essay which was circulated before the publication of her book ‘Sexual Politics’. The ideas in this essay were later incorporated into chapter-II of the book, which is a feminist classic. Kate Millett does not define the political area as that narrow and exclusive sector known as institutional or official politics but politics as a power structured relationship, an arrangement where one group is governed by another and that one group is the female and another is the male.

Women have been never placed in the high status but have been in the position of minority status throughout history and even after extension of certain minimal rights of citizenship and suffrage at the beginning of the 21st century. The male hands with their authority are felt in fields such as military, industry, the universities, the sciences, political office.

In chapter – II of Sexual Politics Millett has talked about the Ideological, Biological, Sociological, Class Differences, Economical and Educational, Force,
Anthropological: myth and Religion and Psychological differences among the two sexes.

Millett puts forward that the biological differences are restricted between the two sexes, on the ground of patriarchal religion, popular attitude and to some extend science.

Millett’s views on the heavier musculature of the male, is a secondary characteristic and is common among mammals. She accepts that it is biological in origin but she is also of the view that it is culturally encouraged through breeding, diet and exercise. Male supremacy, like other political creeds, does not finally reside in physical strength but in the acceptance of a value system which is not biological.

It is often assumed that patriarchy is endemic in human social life, explicable or even inevitable on the grounds of human physiology. Such a theory grants patriarchy logical as well as historical origin. Yet if as some anthropologists believe, patriarchy is not of primeval origin, but was preceded by some other social form called pre-patriarchal, then the argument of physical strength as a theory of patriarchal origins would hardly constitutes a sufficient explanation – unless the male’s superior physical strength was released in accompaniment with some change in orientation through new values or new knowledge.
Millett states that it is because of our social circumstances, male and female have become two different cultures with utterly different life experiences which are very crucial. The gender identity development takes place through childhood is the sum total of the parents’, the peers’, and the culture’s notions. Every moment of the child’s life is a clue to how he or she must think and behave to attain or satisfy the demands which gender places upon one. The gender identity encourages the young male to develop aggressive impulses, and the female to thwart her own or turn them inward. The result is that the male tends to have aggression reinforced in his behavior, often with significant anti-social possibilities and the same process of reinforcement is evident in producing the chief “feminine” virtue of passivity.

The sociological difference according to Kate Millett starts from the family, which is regarded as the chief institution of the Patriarchal unit. In the patriarchal state the citizens are ruled by the family heads and women tend to be ruled through the family alone and have little or no formal relation to the state. It is also found that in most forms of patriarchy it has generally led to the granting of religious support in statements such as the Catholic precept that “the father is head of the family”, or Judaism’s delegation of quasi priestly authority to the male parent. Traditionally patriarchy also granted the father nearly total ownership over wife or wives and children, including the powers of physical abuse and often even those of murder and sale and classically, as head of the family the father is both begetter and owner in a
system in which kinship is property. Yet in strict patriarchy, kinship is acknowledged only through association with the male line (Sexual Politics chapter – II).

The chattel status of a female after their marriage is their loss of name, their obligation to adopt the husband’s domicile and the general legal assumption the marriage involves an exchange of the female’s domestic service and (sexual) consortium in return for financial support says Kate Millett in Sexual Politics.

Millett has noted within the variable of class that in a Victorian society a woman is compelled to assume the function of serving as the male’s conscience and living the life of goodness he found tedious but felt someone ought to do any way.

Millett in her final analysis on class differences says that it is possible to argue that women tend to transcend the usual class stratifications in patriarchy, for whatever the class of her birth and education; the female has fewer permanent class associations than does the male. Economic dependency renders her affiliations with any class a tangential, vicarious, and temporary matter. Aristotle had observed that the only slave to whom a commoner might lay claim was his woman, and the service of an unpaid domestic skill provides working – class males with a “cushion” against the buffets of the class system which incidentally provides them with some of the psychic luxuries of the leisure class.
The difference noticed on economic and educational ground by Kate Millett confirms that the position of women in patriarchy is a continuous function of their economic dependence. Just as their social position is vicarious and achieved (often on a temporary or marginal basis) though males, their relation to the economy is also typically vicarious or tangential.

Beauvoir was one of the most famous post-war woman writers of France. Her study of woman, *The Second Sex*, (1949) has become a land mark in the history of feminism. It establishes the importance of women’s questioning about her intellectual and social status in society, in spite of the facts and myths with regard to their Biological difference. She has reversed the fact by looking at things from woman’s point of view.

Simone de Beauvoir in her *The Second Sex* tries to answer what a woman is:

She is womb, an ovary; she is a female – this word is sufficient to define her. In the mouth of a man the epithet female has the sound of an insult, yet he is not ashamed of his animal nature; on the contrary, he is proud if someone says of him; ‘He is a male!’ The term ‘female’ is derogatory not because it emphasizes women’s animality, but because it imprisons her in her sex; and if this sex seems to man to be contemptible and inimical even in harmless dumb animals, it is
evidently because of the uneasy hostility stirred up in him by woman.(132)

Beauvoir in her, *The Second Sex* asserts that “A man would never set out to write a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: ‘I am a woman’; on this truth must be based all further discussion”. *(The Second Sex -3).*

Women are considered as the other in almost all the ages. The terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers, but in actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as in indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity.

Women have never been regarded as an autonomous being by male. Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself, not her worth but as relative to him. Benda writes: ‘He is the subject, he is the absolute – she is the other’(16). Woman has always been man’s dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality.
Simone de Beauvoir has put forward with regard to the function of reproduction that neither gamete can be regarded as superior to the other. Both the individual are losing their individuality in the fertilized egg. The truth is that the passivity of the female is disproved by the fact that new life springs from the union of the two gametes and the living spark is not the exclusive property of either.

The acceptance of woman herself as other and by not turning man into other for her has reduced the status of woman in the society. Simone de Beauvoir looks forward from the point of view of Biology, Psychology and History to understand the woman’s submissive behavior, as well as society’s treatment of women. She depicts the reason for woman’s submission as seen within the entire culture and its idea of man and woman relation is not some fixed essential human nature or some mysterious element in woman. She depicts that man’s domination over woman’s body, her mind and life is like one of many types of colonization that are found in the world. She mentions different types of slavery like that of a sex, a race or a class and says:

Whether it is a race, a caste, a class or a sex that is reduced to a position of inferiority, the methods of justification are the same. The Black or the Jews are reduced to a type, a fixed image, an “other” against whom the masters recognize and established his achievement. The subjectivity, existential freedom of these persons comes into
conflict with their subordination. But the “compulsions of situation” enforce an “inessential” status and women, like other oppressed human beings, have been forced into inauthentic, inessential roles (*Woman’s Writing Page* – 138).

Feminism is said to be the movement to end women’s oppression. In Feminist Perspective on Sex and Gender, Plato says:

One possible way to understand ‘woman’ in this claim is to take it as a sex term: ‘Woman’ picks out human females and being a human female depends on various biological and anatomical features. Historically many feminists have understood ‘woman’ differently: not as a sex term, but as a gender term that depends on social and cultural factors.(78)

Most people ordinarily seem to think that sex and gender are coextensive: women are human females, men are human males but many feminist have historically disagreed that sex and gender are coextensive rather they have endorsed the sex and gender distinction. The main feminist motivation for making this distinction was to counter biological determinism or the view that biology is destiny.
The Biological determinist Geddes and Thompson view that Social, Psychological and Behavioral traits were caused by metabolic state. Women supposedly conserves energy (being ‘anabolic’) and this makes them passive, conservative, sluggish, stable and uninterested in politics. Men expend their surplus energy (being ‘Katabolic’) and this makes them eager, energetic, passionate, variable and thereby, interested in political and social matters.

These biological ‘facts’ about metabolic states were used not only to explain behavioral differences between women and men but also to justify what our social and political arrangements ought to be. Geddes and Thompson were of the that it is inappropriate to grant women political rights, as they are simply not suited to have those rights; for them it is futile right for women since women due to their biology would simply not be interested in exercising their political rights. To counter this kind of biological determinism, feminist have argued that behavioral and psychological differences have social, rather than biological, causes. The feminist critic, Simone de Beauvoir famously claimed that one is not born, but rather becomes a woman.

Since, gender is social, it is thought to be mutable and alterable by political and social reform that would ultimately bring an end to women’s subordination.
So, this group of feminist arguments against biological determinism suggested that gender differences result from cultural practices and social expectation.

One way to interpret Beauvoir’s claim that one is not born but rather becomes a woman is to take it as a claim about gender socialization: females become women through a process whereby they acquire feminine traits and learn feminine behaviour. Masculinity and femininity are thought to be products of nurture or how individuals are brought up.

Women are stereotypically more emotional and emotionally dependent upon other around them supposedly finding it difficult to distinguish their own interests and well-being from the interests and well-being of their children and partners. This is said to be because of their blurry and somewhat confused ego boundaries: women find it hard to distinguish their own needs from the needs of those around them because they cannot sufficiently individualize themselves from those close to them. By contrast, men are stereotypically and emotionally detached, preferring a carrier where dispassionate and distanced thinking are virtues. These traits are said to result from men’s well-defined ego boundaries that enable them to prioritize their own needs and interests sometimes at the expense of others needs and interests.
Venu Chittale’s novel *Intrinsic* (1950) shows a Brahmin family in Pune growing with troubled time of social reforms. The novel is a convincing portrayal of Janki’s struggle to keep her family surviving in the midst of socio-political conditions. She is strengthened in her efforts by education, which has enriched her nature and moulded her character.

The social customs and conventions are realistically described in the novels of Shanta Rama Rao. Her novel *Remember the House* (1956) portrays only the childhood and girlhood with sensitivity.

*Ruth Prawar Jhabwala’s Heat and Dust* (1975) depicts the rising business of bourgeois in North India especially in and around Delhi. Though her characters are from high-middle-class by no means sophisticated people, she peeps into Indian middle class family as if it is a comedy of the unrestricted human consciousness. There is religious frustration and disillusionment looms large in her novels. Her novels are fine socio-psychic study of Indian atmosphere and also satirize the religious hollowness of Indian *saints* and *swamis*.

The other woman novelist of this generation is Nayantara Sahgal, whose major concerns are the freedom struggle, traditional socio-cultural values and people’s attitude towards the Indian politics and personal relationships. Shahgal cares for touching to limits of helplessness of women and her focus on loveless
marriage and silent sufferings. Her fictional concern can broadly be divided into themes like tradition versus modernity. Traditional values are an important preservation for Indian populace. Religion is not confined to the temples and other religious places of worship but in fact it is a way of life. Hindu philosophy provides a definite shape and clarity to moral values. She also focuses on theme, which is set against the political crisis, and manipulation, which go on in the country. She wrote novels like *This Time of Morning* (1965), *Time to Be Happy* (1965) and *Storm in Chandigarh* (1989) which cover heated political atmosphere and at time there is domestic confusion, anger and suffering in the unhappy lives of the mismatched couples. *The day in Shadow* throws light on weakness, failure and fruitlessness of marriage. The culture and social values and political events of Sahgal’s novels act and react against each other and establish her reputation as a leading Indian Novelist.

In contrast with Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai is more interested in the interior landscape of the mind than in political and social realities. For her, writing is an effort to discover and then to underline, and finally to convey the true significance of things. Her protagonists are persons for whom aloneness is the sole natural condition. They are mostly women, who have reached different stages in life; from school girl to grandmother still, they are fragile introverts. Desai seems reluctant to accept abstractions and idealistic representation and study the disturbed
psyche and predicament of modern Indian woman. She also endeavours to strike a balance between instinctual needs and intellectual aspiration. She throws light on the intricate facts of human experiences bearing upon the central experience of psychic tensions of her characters. Her prime concern is human relationship, and theme is the existential pains and predicament of woman. *Cry the Peacock* (1963) deals with the psychic aspect of its character Maya. Bharati Mukherjee’s novel *Wife* (1976) shows Dimple’s feeling of loneliness and frustration like Maya in *Cry, the Peacock*. Like Maya, Dimple too murders her husband and *Voice in the City* (1965) depicts the miserable plight of Nirode, Manisha and Amla in the city of Calcutta, whereas *Bye Blackbird* (1971), portrays the plight of Indians in London. There is a shift in Desai’s novels that her novels switched from a woman cantered to male cantered narrative in *In Custody* (1984) which present world of Deven Sharma. Shakutala Shriganesh’s *The Knots of Vipers* has given terrifying picture of what life can become when love and trust are replaced by self-interest, suspicion and intrigue.

Some common themes run through most of the novels of Raji Narashimhan, Shashi Deshpande, Mrinal Pande, Gita Hariharan and Anjana Appachana, are the discrimination against the daughters, the silence of women, the lack of communication between the sexes and man-woman relationship with new dimensions. For this they have been labeled as ‘domestic novelists’, who are

Shashi Deshpande generally has the heroine as the narrator, and employs a kind of stream-of-consciousness technique. Almost all the eight novels of her including Sahitya Academy Award winning novel *That Long Silence* (1988) and her latest novel *Moving On* (2004) deal with a crisis in the heroine’s life at home. The narrative goes back and forth in the time, so the narrator can describe events with the benefit of hindsight, exception is *A Matter of Time* (1996), where narrator is Gopal. Her work is woman oriented, but it would not be correct to term her a feminist, because there is nothing doctrinaire about her fiction; she simply portrays in depth, the meaning of experiences of educated women in modern India. Mrinal Pande in her novels like *Daughter's Daughter* (1993) and *My Own Witness* (2000) focus on gender bias through protagonist’s eyes. She reveals the way; women are expected to deal with ‘women’s issues’ only leaving serious issues to their males.

Anjana Appachana’s *Listening Now* (1998) deals with the entirely credible recreation of Indian women’s life. In her novels, she gives a realistic account of the lives of middle class women and their painful negotiations between personal
aspiration and societal expectations. She presents a searing picture of exploitation of daughter-in-law suffers in a traditional Indian family, with a carping mother-in-law. Gita Hariharan is another significant writer who wrote *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) presents Devi, the protagonist, cannot cope with life in India and women’s lives with the drabness. It also presents domestic responsibilities of women and the pressures on them. Harrihan’s fascination with states assumes more important in her novels like *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994) and *The Art of Dying* (1993), is entirely different from her first woman cantered novel and short stories.

A number of women novelists are quite effective in revealing the true state of Indian society when it comes to the treatment of woman. An impressive feel for language and completely authentic presentation of contemporary India marks their work. They generally write about the urban middle class, the stratum of society they know best.

Indu K.Mallah wrote about social ‘Sati’ a widow is subject to in modern India in her novel *Dream-Time* (1990). She depicts deplorable condition of woman, when her husband dies and Belinder Dhanoa presents a bleak picture of girls.

Indian women over many centuries have been portrayed as picture of pain, hardship and struggle. They have always been shown as dependent. They are
without identity, dignity or individuality. Gradually with the advent of education from the west, the Indian society got a chance to see the advancement reached by the west and its liberal attitude toward women. Education opened the eyes of the simple urban and rustic Indian women. Women started coming out to experience the outside world. This was not an easy task; a lot of hurdles and hardships had to be faced by them as they ventured to create some space for themselves in fiercely male-dominated Indian society.

Some women did succeed while a number of them failed. Women belonging to the middle class and the higher middle class were fortunate in this regard. They got a chance to explore a new world through educational enlightenment. It is they who started a new revolution for women’s emancipation. A number of women writers came up with remarkable works advocating women’s issues and looking at the world from a women’s perspective. Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahegal, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy and Shobha De expressed their views on the issues of women. Shobha De novels like Socialite Evenings (1989), Starry Nights (1991), Sisters (1992), Strange Obsession (1992), Sultry Days (1994), Snapshots (1995) and Second Thoughts (1996) are marked by unreserved straightforward portrayals of a particular class of women who are filthy rich, powerful and reckless. She successfully discovers this new group of women who have started flourishing among the rich and mighty social strata.
Indian English writing has witnessed four stages. The first phase may be termed as ‘The Phase of Imitation’. It included Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s Rajmohan’s Wife (1864), one Thousand and one Nights by S.B. Bannerjee, Toru Dutt’s novel Biarica and Ramesh Chander Dutt’s The Slave Girl of Agra and The Lake of Palms. The second phase called ‘Indianisation’ saw the works of Toru Dutt. The third phase began with the advent of new century and saw increase in Indianisation. The Fourth phase commenced with post independent India. The India novel in English is said to have come of age with the publication of such novels as K.S. Venkatramani’s Kandan,(1927) The Patriot (1932), Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable (1935) and Coolie (1936) and Raja Rao’s Kanthapura (1938).

The researcher has been motivated by the frank portrayal of women’s plight and predicament in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. The novels taken up for study are to be vowed on a par with the feminist perspectives. Here an attempt is made to study the image of women who are undergoing mental turmoil in the hands of male chauvinistic society where women are object of sex, and fulfill the sexual needs of men. There are women characters pictured by Kamala Markandaya that articulate their pangs and express how they are suppressed and oppressed by the patriarchal society in the name of tradition. The women persona portrayed by Kamala Markandaya are striving hard to get freedom from the male dominated society. In this research the researcher has made an analysis of the women
characters in the novels taken up for analysis with a view to feminist perspectives in order to identify the problem of women in the tradition bound Indian society.

Markandaya is one of the major first generation Indian woman novelists writing in English. Her writing career spans almost four decades from the 1950s to the 1980s, during which time she almost wrote ten novels; and in almost all these works she is preoccupied with the social realities and the emergent national consciousness.

Markandaya was born in a well-to-do, rather orthodox Brahmin family of Mysore, South India in 1924. Before marriage she was Kamala Purnaiya. She started using this name Markandaya when she took up writing. She attended the University of Madras in 1940 where she studied history. From 1940 to 1947 she worked as a journalist and also published short stories in Indian magazines and newspapers. She was keen to know more of rural India. She lived for some time in Mysore. This gave her a first-hand knowledge of rural India—its poverty, its poor farmer’s dependence on rain, caste system, rural rituals, customs—all these facets of village life bear Markandaya’s stamp of realism and authenticity. Kamala Markandaya emigrated to England in 1948 married an English journalist Bertrand Taylor and settled there.
Markandaya produced her first novel Nectar in a Sieve in 1954. It was an instant hit and brought fame and success to her. It remains till date her best novel. In 1955, the American Literary Association named it a Notable Book... known for writing about culture clash between Indian urban and rural societies. This novel was followed by nine others: Some Inner Fury (1955), A Silence of Desire (1960), Possession (1963), A Handful of Rice (1966), The Coffer Dams (1969), The Nowhere Man (1972), Two Virgins (1973), The Golden Honeycomb (1977) and Pleasure City (title Shalimar in the American edition, 1982). In the United States, her early novels were published by John Day and Co., the same outfit that published the works of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Markandaya’s novels, in comparison with those of her contemporary women writers, explicitly reflects the awakened feminine sensibility in modern India as she attempts to project the image of a changing traditional society. The variety and complexity of her novels represent a major trend in the history of the Indo-English Novel. In her novels, Markandaya not only displays a flair for virtuosity which orders and patterns her feelings and ideas resulting in a truly enjoyable work of art but also projects the image of national consciousness on many levels of aesthetic awareness. The variety and quality of the ‘felt-life’ in her fiction renders it label-proof in that it indicates the direction to a plausible resolution rather than offering definite solutions to human problems.
The chief protagonists in most of her novels are female characters who are in constant search for meaning and value of life. In some of her novels, she presents an existential struggle of a woman who refuses to flow along the current and refuses to submit her individual self. The woman emerging out of such situation is a defeated individual undergoing much pain and suffering. Such characters exhibit a sense of insecurity due to their traumatic psychic experiences and also due to the collapse of one value system and the absence of any ending values. In her novels Markandaya traces a woman’s journey from self-sacrifice to self-realization, from self-denial to self-assertion and from self-negation to self-affirmation. The feminist voice is heard in all her novels. In her first epoch-making novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) the narrator heroine, Rukmani emerges a greater and stronger character than her husband. The author displays Rukmani’s life which is full of hopes and frustrations, pleasures and pains, triumph and defeat, rise and fall. In fact, before writing this novel Markandaya went to live in a village to seek an opportunity of getting the first-hand experience of village life and the problems of rural folk and therefore this novel is mainly a product of her personal experience in rural living. Markandaya shows that before the advent of tannery the life of Rukmani with her family was simply peaceful with her simple joys and sorrows. She was proud of the love and care of her husband. She needed nothing else, no wealth, no luxury,
and no material pleasure. Rukmani struggles hard to survive the relentless strokes of Nature and society.

When a woman is married in India whether in a city or a village, she gradually finds a name and recognition, though this name is invariably associated with her husband, for she is generally called the wife of such and such a person, still she is known by her distinct virtues. If the inmates of the house live in peace and harmony, she finds a kind of fulfillment, sharing the joys and sorrows of the family. She has got a name and a habitation. All the family members have got some recognition in that place. Their identity is not lost.

If in a village people live in peace of harmony, recognizing their selves and their identities, that life is better for them than that of so-called urban life. Peace and harmony, unity and integration provide the solid foundation on which the life of human beings rests. Markandaya highlights the stoic patience of its heroine in the face of suffering.

Harrowing poverty and terrible drought lead to the death of her younger son Raja. Her daughter Ira revolts against the false norms of traditional society because she is unable to bear the starvation of her family any more. She is forced to take recourse to prostitution to save her younger brother. Under the impact of modernity and industrialism, she thinks the preservation of life more pious than the
observation of so-called moral values which fail to feed her family. Tannery is indeed the root cause of tragedy in the life of Rukmani and her family. The author suggests here that the spirit of resignation and stoicism strengthens one like Rukmani in times of suffering.

Markandaya’s Rukmani stands out as an epitome of Indian woman who knew to be tampered in the flames of responsibilities and circumstantial pressure. She does not even entertain the least thought of rebelling against the pervading situations. Even when her heart is torn apart she never thinks of protesting against the situation. This Indian woman believes in the thought that ‘sweet are the uses of adversity’. Rukmani gathers all her strength and follows Nathan to the nearby city in search of their lost son and employment of course they could not find their lost son but find a surrogate son Puli who is a leprosy orphan. Rukmani bosoms the boy and reciprocates his affections abundantly. With the same stoicism and pain she takes the painful death of Nathan in a fatal accident. Shock after shock she receives in her little life always ever-facing new problems and troubles. She learns to remain calm and serene. She never loses her temper or courage or her sense of balance.

In her second novel, *Some Inner Fury*, Markandaya dramatizes the East-West encounter. The patriotic feelings of the Indians and their hatred towards the English rules are highlighted through a series of conflicts among the members of a
single family. Mirabai and Kitsamy belong to a well-to-do and sophisticated family. Govind is their adopted brother. Kit returns from England and brings as Englishman Richard to stay with them for a time. Negotiations begin for Kit’s marriage but he tries to evade the issue. Finally, he agrees to meet Premala, a girl who has been brought up in the traditional manner of their community. Both he and Mira find the shy and beautiful Premala pleasing and Kit marries her. The reserved and introspective Govind also falls in love with her. He leaves home and gets involved in a party that believes in violent agitation against the British. One of the leaders of the non-violent movement for independence is a colorful personality called Roshan Merchant, who influences Mira to stay on with Kit and Premala in the city and take up a job on her newspaper. Mira finds the new life fascinating. In the course of her work as a journalist, she meets Richard again and they fall in love with each other.

The year is 1939 and war breaks out. Premala, in the meantime, is finding it difficult to cope with her husband’s social obligations and English friends. She turns for fulfillment to a village re-settlement scheme sponsored by the British, where she helps an English missionary, Hickey, to run a new school for the village children. Mira and Richard go on a holiday together and return to find that political agitation has reached a crescendo in the Quit India Movement of 1942. Govind and his men set fire to the school as it is a symbol of British rule. Premala is found
inside, suffocated to death. Both Kit and Govind, torn by grief accuse each other. Kit is killed and Govind is arrested for the murder or Hickey’s evidence, though Mira is sure that he is not responsible. His trial in August 1942 ends in a mob uprising. The court is flooded with agitators who believe the Englishman to be a liar and Govind innocent. They set him free, for his innocence is never proved. In this chaotic scene, Richard and Mira are forced to part, for; he is English and she Indian.

Markandaya shows great development in thought as well as technique in her treatment of Ravi. The novel *A Handful of Rice* does not only contain a realistic portrayal of economic insecurity, but highlights moral problems of conscience by beautifully uncovering the apprehension that honesty and prosperity are not always synonymous.

*A Handful of Rice* revolves around Ravi, the son of poor peasant. He comes to Madras in search of a job. But soon, he is disillusioned. He then joins the underworld of smugglers and peddlers through his friend Damodar. He breaks into the house of Apu, a poor tailor but finds himself tied hand and foot. Apu’s wife Jayamma takes pity on him. He confesses that last night he was hungry and because of hunger he had drunk.
Jayamma frees him and lets him go. Apu’s daughter Nalini becomes the main attraction for Ravi whom he soon succeeds in marrying. He decides to give up his criminal career for the sake of Nalini. Ravi agrees to work as an apprentice with him. He works hard sincerely as a result of which Apu agrees to marry Nalini with him. Apu’s health fails and his work is affected. Apu falls seriously ill. His elder Son-in-law, Puttana steals away all his savings and runs away. After sometime Apu dies and the entire responsibility of running the house comes to Ravi. But Ravi lacks Apu’s skill. As a result his work starts suffering. Ravi, now, becomes a man of fretful nature. He starts bashing his wife Nalini. Nalini is fed up with all this and leaves Ravi. Ravi does not hesitate in raping Jayamma all in rage and frustration. Ravi faces hunger and starvation. His son Raju dies. Now Ravi goes to Damodar and finds him to be a rich man. Here too, he faces frustration. Nalini, his wife, returns to him. Ravi joins a crowd that attacks ware-houses for a handful of rice. But Ravi, somehow, returns as he somehow, manages to keep his soul and dignity afloat. Relentless blows of hunger and want fails to bring Ravi to the path of crime and dishonor.

Markandaya highlights and expresses her social vision through the problems of the city in relation to the struggle for survival. She has highlighted the theme of urban poverty and the related desperation. Though urban or rural, the problem faced by the poor is common. The novel is a realistic exploration and expression of
the problems being confronted and encountered by city-people. Due to poverty and starvation.

Markandaya seems to believe in social purpose in order to illustrate the social vision of the novel. Her fiction is rooted in the Indian soil and ethos and has a subtle social purpose. In other words one can say that she has fictionalized the sociology of India. Markandaya’s intention is “to awaken the polite society to the real problems.” This novel deals with urban life with its struggle for survival.

Like Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya is a social visionary who believes in the betterment of human lot in particular and social amelioration in general. She thinks that literature must be purposive and play a significant role in amelioration of humanity. But she does not propagate. Without being didactic or a propagandist, she firmly opines that literature can play a constructive role. It can teach humanity. For her the literature of concern or socio-literature is: The literature of concern has a part to play, therefore, and will be more effective than other media such as television. For news, is often forgotten, or people develop a kind of defence mechanism that shuts off unpleasant truths. Thus socio-literature is basically corrective and aims at eradicating social-maladies by exploring and expressing a powerful social vision.
Thus in *A Handful of Rice*, Markandaya has given a real and vivid account of the degradation and immorality of Ravi who goes to the extent of theft due to starvation, and rape of his mother-in-law due to rage and despair. It can be said that the social vision in *A Handful of Rice* is revealed through the journey of a poor young protagonist through different vices of life. He struggles but fails to get even a handful of rice.

The title of the novel is significant as it has wider ramifications regarding its theme. It is a domestic novel and begins with an epithet from a sonnet of Longfellow: “Three silences there are: the first of speech. The second of desire, the third of thought.” (718-719)

Although the title of the novel is “*Silence of Desire*”, however, more than the silence of desire, here it is a case of the silence of speech. It causes a communication gap between them. In this regard K.S.Narayana Rao has aptly remarked:

The novel is not considered so much with the silence of desire as with the silence of speech. For, the whole plot turns on the lack of pertinent communication between the husband and the wife in this novel. (350)
The theme of this novel is apparently a clash between faith and reason, superstition. There goes a popular saying that ‘Speech is silver, silence golden’, but it is turned upside down in this novel which clearly propounds the theory that silence becomes the cause of controversy and confusion at times when the dire need for human beings is to ‘unburden their hearts’. The novel is spun around the relationship of Dandekar and his wife Sarojini. Dandekar bases his life upon some certainties:

Three children, no debts, a steady job, a fair pile of saving that his wife methodically converted into gold bangles, a necklace, earrings and broaches less for ornamentation than the security is represented.(89)

Markandaya’s fourth novel *Possession* depicts the themes of the East-West encounter, human relationship along with the theme of politics. In this novel, the novelist depicts how the western culture has the tendency to exploit the innocent and the poor for selfish gains. Valmiki, twentieth century shepherd boy used to draw on the rock walls of caves. One day, he is discovered by Lady Caroline Bell who appoints herself his patron, takes him to England and makes a successful artist out of him. Valmiki is fourteen years old. They travel a good deal and return to England in 1951, but the alien surroundings seem to have strangled his talent. He is shown a letter by Caroline, who pretends that it is from the Swami, Valmini’s
friend and guide in India. As months go by, Caroline begins to plan an exhibition. All this is narrated by Anusuya, an Indian writer.

In 1953, she finds that Ellie, a Jew, was a refugee whom Caroline engages as a housekeeper, has now become Val’s inspiration and that the exhibition has been successful. Anusuya also realizes that Ellie is pregnant; she is Val’s mistress. Caroline cleverly manages to separate them. The Swami’s visit to England at this juncture is instrumental in Val’s first disillusionment with Caroline, for he discovers that the letters he has been receiving, supposedly from the Swami, are all forgeries. When Ananuya meets them, she finds that Caroline, from a cultural patron, has established physical possession over him as well. However, Val leaves her and lives in comparative poverty with eighteen year old Annabel. Caroline is too strong – willed to surrender easily. Later on Annabel is casually informed that Ellie was once an obsession of Val and that Ellie committed suicide. Forsaken by Annabel, unable to bring himself to return to Caroline, he lives in a miserable basement. His pet monkey falls ill and rather than see it die, he contemplates going back to Caroline. In a month, Caroline follows him to find that he has returned to his caves and the Swami and that he is painting again. He refuses to return with her, for, he does not want to be owned. Caroline is forced to submit to a defeat which she believes in only temporary. She assures the Swami that a day will come when Val will go back to her.
Dandekar in *A Silence of Desire* is a happily married man with three children and a submissive wife Sarojini. In the first three Chapters Markandaya gives a realistic and true account of their domesticity. Dandekar’s satisfactions are sensual when he approaches his house after a day at the office, his whole being moves in anticipation:

A woman who still gave him pleasure after fifteen years of marriage, less from the warmth of her response than from her unfailing acquiescence to his demands. Their fulfillment depends on Sarojini, whose innate strength and quite tact came through (159).

Dandekar does not want a change in this routine even in the wildest of his dreams. Even a trivial change like his daughter buying tiffin provokes him to snub his wife. This secure world crumbles when its main pivot, his wife Sarojini absents her from the house and lies about it. Dandekar starts suspecting her fidelity. Her lies and his discovery of a stranger’s photograph in her trunk leads to his suspicion. It looks strange that after fifteen years of their marriage, Dandekar should straightaway doubt her fidelity rather than consider other possibilities. Dandekar seems to be in a vicious grip of jealousy. His softness towards his colleagues Joseph and Mahadevan who believe in free love and inherent unfaithfulness of women respectively shows him to be secretly harbouring identical thoughts. But they have undergone a thorough repression.
Sarojini feels better every time she visits swami. She is aware that the pain is there but it does not touch her in the Swami’s presence. What the Swami actually ministers is not the alleviation of the pain her body experiences but the pain her psyche experiences the pain born of a sense of neglect and worthlessness. Her neurotic need for love and self-importance are amply attended to by him. It produces a temporary euphoria which neutralizes the physical pain for the time-being. Before Sarojini knows it, the Swami’s image is internalized and going to him becomes something of an addiction.

Sarojini falsely believes that “Without faith I shall not be healed.” As is evident, Swami’s method works only in the treatment of imaginary illness. Rajam, the garrulous cousin of Sarojini, has in fact been cured by the Swami of her terrible pains which the doctors have diagnosed as imaginary. While Sarojini is happy in her pain, Dandekar undergoes a period of acute mental torture. His world of certainties seems to be crumbling down.

He loses interest in home and lives under the constant bogey of doubt and suspicion. He tactfully raises the question of the photograph. Though startled, Sarojini reveals the identity of that photograph. This revelation lifts the weight considerably and Dandekar feels lightened. At night, he tries to come close but she forbids him by gently saying, ‘Not tonight’ and turns away. It hurts him deeply.
Sarojini’s withdrawal is not merely physical; it shuts out his image from her life. The larger bond between husband and wife that would make the relationship something more than the merely domestic has collapsed. (130-131)

The relationship Dandekar and Sarojini share, while able to cope with domestic problems, lacks any real means to resolve non-domestic disagreements, the chief of which is her faith and its determined practical expression. It is a weakness which remains implicit, but one that increasingly suggests itself as we observe Sarojini’s reluctance to reveal to Dandekar the true reason for her absences. She prefers to suffer the pressures and risks of his dissatisfaction. But her attitude does not seem odd as we are armed early with the reason: Dandekar will not understand her belief that faith can cure.

Markandaya has given a realistic portrayal of two types of characters i.e. credulous and rational. While Sarojini is highly credulous and religious, Dandekar is a bit agnostic and rational. Sarojini is traditional and superstitious while her husband is modern are reasoning. When Dandekar asks Sarojini why she had not told him about her illness earlier, she replies that had she done so, he would have never allowed her to go for her healing. He would have forced her to go to hospital in which she did not have any faith...It is a matter of trust with Sarojini. In this regard Shanta Krishnaswamy rightly says that:
Sarojini’s “faith comes from the innermost core of her spirit and it is not open to discussion, dispute and doubt. Her silence on this score alienates her further from Dandekar. (198)

Sarojini is successfully operated upon and gets her tumour removed. Dandekar once more goes to the Swami’s place where the dwarf snubs him for contriving the removal of the Swamy. Dandekar’s desire regarding:

the removal of the Swamy is not only an exercise in discouraging his wife from her superstitious ideas but also an inner necessity to reclaim her spiritual part from the Swamy. (142)

The ending of the novel shows Dandekar’s concern for the survival of his family and its joys and sorrows. He has grown from strength to strength and has attained new heights in the course of all these developments. Now he neither suspects his wife nor does he ignore his family and children. He definitely emerges victorious in the long crisis that engulfs him and his family. Thus Markandaya has done a wonderful character sketch in Dandekar and has explored admirably “the inner workings of his mind.” The entire novel is based on the tense domestic life of Dandekar and his wife. But there are certain other characters also, like his colleagues in the office. Dandekar’s colleagues are described in some details from Ghari who has charge, down to Kannan, the peon but equally important, to suggest
how varied they are as individuals. There is a clear structure of power, of responsibility. Parallel to it are personal attitudes which influence relationships, attitudes connected with the range or regional, linguistic and cultural types.

The influence of Western Culture is seen in the office. There is Joseph who believed in: “First Love and was even said to practice it.” Thus we see that the main theme Markandaya treats here emphasizes some of the chief forces at work in society. They are part of her vision, her reading of an area of India, at a particular time. These forces are dramatized, given impact and resonance in and through the lives of Dandekar and Sarojini, the Swami and other characters such as Chari, Sastri and Ghose. By the judicious employment description, summary and scene almost all of which involve Dandekar she succeeds in translating the set of ideas and the attendant energies into the action and consciousness of her characters. Her sense of detail, the sensitiveness with which it is assembled, the consistency of how the chief characters act, all provide evidence of her firm control.

A Careful study of the review of earlier research helps the researcher not to duplicate the topic already investigated on Kamala Markandaya. So much has been done about Markandaya by way of the social values. The findings related to Markandaya’s novels centered more about the image of India as reflected in her novels. There are themes such as Tradition and Modernity, Religions, strains, Alienation, Rootlessness, and Romantic Realism discussed by the many researcher.
Kamala Markandaya, perhaps, is a thought provoking writer with novels and short stories as her writing. She has distinguished herself among her counterparts by portraying the experience of the social consciousness its effects upon women in her writing. Many Researchers have undertaken a study on Kamala Markandaya’s writings

Rani Rekha’s *Portrayal of Feminism in The Novels of Kamala Markandaya*, depicts the Indian social reality with extraordinary convincingness. The range of Markandaya’s fiction, however, is very extensive. She does not repeat herself in her novels, and one can easily discern in them various themes—political, economic, social, cultural, moral-spiritual, artistic and so on, dealt with in a competent manner. For her graphic presentation of the Indian socio-economic scenario, she has been regarded as one of the major novelists on the Commonwealth scene.

Prem Kumar explains in his article ‘Conflict and Resolution in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya’, the conflict between two opposing viewpoints. The clash of values, a distinctive characteristic of the Indo-English novel, often stems from a nostalgic idealization of tradition or a compulsive urge for modernity, but in Markandaya's fiction it can almost always be traced to generally opposing modes of thought and behavior attributed to the East and the West. Indeed, the East-West encounter as a recurrent theme in her novels is directly related to her experience as
an expatriate who inherited Indian values by birth and acquired Western values through residence in England. Like her, most of her characters find themselves in situations where they must confront values rooted in opposing cultural milieus, historical processes, economic systems, political ideologies, and philosophical traditions. Some are able to resolve the tensions and inequities that threaten to disintegrate psyche and spirit. Others, however, succumb to their innate weaknesses or to inexorable forces beyond their control. Their defeat, nonetheless, is redeemed by their Promethean defiance or Sisyphean endeavor - an important characteristic even of Markandaya's "pessimistic" novels.

Madhusudan Prasad’s Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya consists of seventeen essays with a comprehensive critical introduction. It offers a critical assessment of her novels both thematically and technically. Rekha Jha, in her The Novels of Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala discusses the problems of East – West encounter in all their ramifications (political, Religious, socio-cultural) in the fiction of Kamala Markandaya, and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Niroj Banerjee’s, Kamala Markandaya: A Study, explicates Kamala Markandaya’s fictional rhetoric and thematic concerns by analyzing her ten novels. Margaret Joseph P in his book Kamala Markandaya evaluates Kamala Markandaya’s work and assesses her achievement and artistic excellence as a novelist. Stressing the importance of tragic vision in the novels emanating from the clash of cultures and
Joan Adkins F in his research article entitled *Kamala Markandaya: Indo-Anglian conflict as unity: Indian perspectives on the British in three English Languages Novels* in the Journal of South Asian Literature examines Markandaya’s treatment of the Indo-Anglian conflict on three distinct social and economic levels of Indian life presented in three of her novels (*Nectar in a Sieve*, *Some Inner Fury and Possession*) and evaluates her perceptions on Indo-British relations.

Alka Rani Purwar’s “*A Critique of Kamala Markandaya’s Novels*” is an illuminative study on Markandaya’s Female protagonists. L.M.Joshi’s “*Portrayal of Rural India in Kamala Markandaya’s Nectar in Sieve*” is an attempt to portray indianneness. Sudhir Arora about on “*Multicultural Consciousness in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya*” which throws light on the social Consciousness through Postcolonial lenses.

A careful scrutiny of the earlier research done on Kamala Markandaya’s writings states, the search for self and the problems of religion and culture.
After analyzing Markandaya’s novels one can fully agree with the fact that Markandaya’s novels also deal with theme of feminism. Though East-West confrontations represented by India’s contact with Britain figures prominently in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. But still we cannot ignore the fact that apart from other themes, theme of feminism is also prominent in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. In most of her works, the central consciousness is female. Most of her narrators, like Jane Austen’s, are women. Sensitive, sensible and intelligent, they are possessed of life-affirming qualities.

Hence though their lives get involved in wrecks, they come out safe, if no whole. They are loyal and generous. Her fictive universe is feminine in that it is spun by a fine feminine sensibility.

But a full-fledged research work on her novels, specially, on the critical enquiry, has not yet been taken this theme as Feminist Perspectives in the Select Novel of Kamala Markandaya, thereby making an attempt to travel the road less travelled.

At present the researcher is of the view that there is still room enough on the subjects of Markandaya’s novels. So the researcher has planned to start his research investigation by travelling the road less travelled with regard to the
novels of Kamala Markandaya. Hence the researcher has titled his thesis as Feminist Perspectives in the Select Novels of Kamala Markandaya.

Many writers such as Bhabini Bhattachariya, R.K. Narayan and Ruth Prawar Jhabvala have presented realism in their fictions. Like Markandaya, the other writers had portrayed the different types of realism in their works. There are different types of realism in literature. They are classified as follows: Social realism and Cultural realism. These types of realism are well portrayed by Markandaya in her novels, especially in Nectar in a Sieve, Possession and a Handful of Rice. The common social element found in all these three novels is hunger.

In her novels Markandaya has shown that women are not lesser human beings, rather they are sometimes more dignified than men because of their greater human virtues and qualities. Markandaya has made does here the pronounced voice of women through her fiction, as it may lead to the welfare of entire mankind. Markandaya had dealt with several problems concerning various aspects of India like social, political, national and international the form of the East-west confrontation. Reference to human degradation could be found in almost all her novels. Her tragic vision found its best expression in novels which she filled with her social concerns. She did it for the sake the betterment of on society.
Markandaya presents a true picture of rural and urban India in a number of her novels. The poor suffer for no cause. They starve and the villages are devoid of medical aid to leading to death. Money lenders exploit uneducated villagers of simple nature. Growing industrialization provides employment to some villagers. But prices rise with the arrival of townsmen. On account of them many women and girls become corrupt. Markandaya does not ignore big cities. In her novels she presents a picture of urban India too. When villagers go to big cities in search of livelihood they suffer bitterly.

In the introductory chapter, the researcher makes an assessment of the origin and development of novels in Indian Writing in English. The researcher underlines how the study of the life of Kamala Markandaya helps the readers in understanding her works and how she becomes a feminist writer in Indian writing in English. This chapter also provides Kamala Markandaya’s contribution to Indian Writing in English.

In the second chapter, the researcher has made an analysis of the image of women as portrayed in the novels taken up for study. It traces the perspectives of Kamala Markandaya with regard to women who are experiencing many untold suffering by the patriarchy. This chapter studies in detail capturing the predicament of women who are denied freedom.
The third chapter is a careful consideration of the influence of society over women as reflected in the novels of Kamala Marakandaya taken up for analysis. Here an attempt is made to study the impact of society that treats women as mere puppets in the hands of men and they have to dance to the tune of the convention-ridden society. The mental turmoil of the women characters due to the harassment and humiliation given by the society is graphically pictured by Kamala Markandaya. The pangs of women living in hostile atmosphere is discussed in detail.

The fourth chapter deals with the emergence of new women in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. The researcher’s readings of the novels of Kamala Marakandaya lead to identify such women characters who break the shackles of male–dominators society. The emergence of new women is a novel concept of Kamala Marakandaya’s oeuvre. This chapter vividly captures the women’s thirst for freedom, search for identity and how they become aware of themselves as individuals. Kamala Markandaya’s portrayal of new women with the conflict between tradition and modernity is also discussed in this chapter.

The concluding chapter sums up the fictional achievement of Kamala Marakandaya discussed in the preceding chapters. This chapter also provides the scopes for further research. An updated bibliography is annexed at the end.