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Indian Sensibility in Indian Writing in English

One Day National Level Virtual Conference On

Indian Sensibility in Indian
Writing in English

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Dr. Gopalrao Khedkar Mahavidyalaya,
Gadegaon (Telhara) Dist. Akola (M.S.)

Department of English and IQAC

In Collaboration with

Arts and Commerce College,
Warvat Bakal, Dist. Buldana

on 29th March 2022

A Scholastic Endeavour By

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Dr. Gopalrao Khedkar Mahavidyalaya,
Gadegaon (Telhara) Dist. Akola



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Editorial Message...

Friends when we speak about Indian Sensibility, it is not only about national identity. It's not only about traditions, culture, and our wonderful civilisation. It's not about the way we live and the way we conduct ourselves. It's not only about the best of the religions as well. So, what is Indian Sensibility? And what is that thing when we are specific to a certain context – Indianness in Indian English literature?

Indian Sensibility is an idea that strikes one's mind and compels the emotional outburst in a person to relate to the elements involved in a particular event, in this case, it is literary work. While Indianness, as an Idea, can be a perfect mixture of all the things mentioned above, anything can constitute the simple idea of Indianness until it connects the reader's mind with India.

We can easily understand that Indian Sensibility is not merely an idea. Indian Sensibility in Indian English literature is an action that attracts reactions from the readers. Indian Sensibility is about unfolding values and history in a literary work that has originated, evolved and transformed on the Indian soil. Krishna and Ram and their teachings, when they appear in poetry mostly, constitute Indianness in Indian English Poetry that is admired and loved by the readers at large. A poor man's survival and still helping another, a fellow in need, constitute Indianness in a story or a novel that does not only draw pathos in the heart of the readers but also lets them revel in the depth of Indian philosophy that inspires us to live for others. Indian sensibility is to believe in the humanitarian concept of global harmony, fraternity and world peace. That's why India is constantly trying its best to maintain international peace in Russia Ukraine War. Famous Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore also echoes same feeling of "loving bonds of togetherness".

It is indeed very relevant that, the One Day National Level virtual conference held on **Indian Sensibility in Indian writing in English** organized by Dr. Gopalrao Khedkar Mahavidyalaya, Telhara, Department of English, IQAC and Arts and Commerce College, Warvat Bakal on 29th March 2022. More than 200 delegates had participated and 45 researchers contributed their research papers in this special issue of Vidyawarta. I am very grateful to the college management, Principals of both colleges Dr. Gopal Dhole and Dr. Jagannath Chaudhari, Keynote Speakers, Conveners, Advisory committee, Organising committee, Technical support committee and last but not least, delegates and contributors of the research papers for the fruitful outcomes of the conference.

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The Depiction of Images of Indian Women in Kamala Markandaya's 'Nectar in a Sieve'

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Abstract:

Kamala Markandaya is the most outstanding, both by virtue of the quality and quantity of her production. Her very first novel, 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1954) immediately won her international fame and recognition and since then novels after novels have flowed from her pen in quick succession. 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1954) is a genuine novel of rural India. It depicts miserable plight of simple peasant couple from south India. Her women characters are undeniably the forerunner of the doomed female of modern India. The images of women portrayed in a unique manner. Rukmani's family is tormented not only by socio-economic factors but also by the vagaries of nature. Yet Rukmani survives the ordeal by remaining the axis around which other lives revolve. She is woman of spirit. Ira represents modern progressive woman in the novel. She accepts the man of her parent's choice as her husband. Ira shows the will power and mental strength to bring forth the albino child. It is worth noting that even such an illiterate woman as the Old Granny has her own views on the status of a single woman leading an independent life.

Keywords: prominent, peasant, tannery, starvation, albino, resilience

Introduction:

Women novelist in Indian writing in English form a sizeable and significant school in post independence period. They include Ruth Pravar Jhabwala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahagal, Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Anita Desai and Bharati Mukharjee who enriched the Indian English fiction. Among these prominent novelist Kamala Markandaya is the most outstanding, both by virtue of the quality and quantity of her production. Her very first novel, 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1954) immediately won her international fame and recognition and since then novels after novels have flowed from her pen in quick succession. Her eleven novels including 'Some Inner Fury', 'A Silence of Desire' 'A Handful of Rice' broadly rooted in India, focus on Indian social and economic ills and East-West conflicts. She has been described as 'an insider-outsider'. She is an expatriate who has been living in England since her marriage with an Englishman John Taylor and writing about India and England. She was born in 1924 in a Tamil Brahmin family and brought up in south India. She was educated at Madras University and had an opportunity to travel throughout India and also in Europe. As she wanted to know more of rural India, she lived for some time in south Indian villages. Her novels are reflective of the awakened feminine sensibility in modern India. She projects the image of the changing traditional society in terms of the growth of the individual consciousness. Kamala Markandaya is pre-eminently a humanist. She believes in the betterment of human lot in general and social amelioration in particular.

'Nectar in a Sieve'

Kamala Markandaya's maiden novel 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1954) is a genuine novel of rural India. It depicts miserable plight of simple peasant couple from south India. Hari Mohan Prasad* calls it 'an epic of the Indian life at the grass-roots, a full view of the village world where peasants grow and live, suffer and endure

and emerge more dignified, more human in their elements with their tattered rags, their dying moans and their obstinate clinging to the soil like the stump withered all over but its roots delved in the earth'. N. K. Jain feels that the novel presents 'an authentic picture of village life in transition, particularly of rural poverty and hunger'. The novel deals with industrialization and its impact on rural life. The problems of rural India and the tragic predicament of Indian peasants have been depicted with moving realism. Due to establishment of tannery in the village, the lives of village people especially women, get disturbed and pastoral land is destroyed. Markandaya tries to unfold the exploitation of peasants due to the patriarchal conception of modern development. (Jain)

Images of Women:

In the novels of Kamala Markandaya, women play a significant and complex role. they have more depth more richness than the menfolk. Kamala Markandaya has a varied repertoire of women characters in her fiction ranging from the harassed, victimised peasant women to the princesses of havelis. Her women characters are undeniably the forerunner of the doomed female of modern India. The images of women portrayed in a unique manner. In her debut novel 'Nectar in a Sieve' there is a description of peasant family. Three images of women in the novel are taken for consideration – Rukmani, Ira and Old Granny.

Rukmani:

Rukmini, the protagonist of the novel and the narrator, is married to a poor tenant farmer Nathan. They have a daughter named Ira and six sons named Arjun, Thambi, Murugan, Selvam, Raja and Kuti. The peace of the village is disturbed by the arrival of townsmen to build a tannery there. The evils of industrialization like inflation and ugliness grow rapidly. Ira, who is married to a farmer, is deserted by her husband as she is barren. The family, on the verge of starvation, has no option but to assent to Arjun

and Thambi joining the tannery. But due to their raising a voice of protest they are dismissed from work and they go to Ceylon. Murugan also goes to the city. Due to terrible draught, the family starves. Raja dies and Kuti falls ill. The poor girl, Ira seeing her family starves during the famine, turns into a woman of the street and gives birth to an illegitimate albino child. Rukmini and Nathan leave the village in search of Murugan who himself has left his wife and gone away. With the help of Puli, a young orphan, they survive on charity and petty jobs. After the death of Nathan, Rukmini returns to her village with Puli. (Gupta)

Through Rukmani's eyes we watch the disintegration of her family and at last her husband's death. Yet Rukmani remains a fiercely independent and heroic woman. She struggles against the merciless whims of nature and the incurable poverty of the family. As a typical Indian wife Rukmani would never call her husband's name 'for it is not meet for a woman to address her husband except as husband'. Degradation of the female is neatly woven into the fabric of this novel. When Ira is born Rukmani sheds 'tears of weakness and disappointment, for what woman wants a girl for her first born?'. This echoes the traditional Indian peasant woman's notion of the uselessness of a girl. Rukmani's father could not afford a rich match for her because he had already paid dowries for all his daughters. Her mother would tell her, 'Four dowries is too much for a man to bear'. Rukmani supports her husband's view that a male child is an asset, the girl child is a liability to the family. Rukmani's suffering become more intensive and grim when her last son Kuti dies due to hunger and starvation. It becomes a horrible experience for Rukmani to see her own son becoming quite frail and dying gradually. Her fourth son Raja is killed by the tannery. Rukmani is terribly shocked and horrified when the dead body of her son is brought by the tannery official. (Rao)

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Rukmani's family is tormented not only by socio-economic factors but also by the vagaries of nature. Yet Rukmani survives the ordeal by remaining the axis around which other lives revolve. She is woman of spirit. She rises up against officials when they warn her not to demand any compensation for the death of her son in the tannery. She becomes heartbroken when she comes to know that her husband has betrayed her for the trivial and insignificant woman Kunthi. Kunthi blackmails her about her innocent and blameless relationship with Dr. Kennington. Rukmani accepts her husband's betrayal and moral weakness with calm resignation. She suffers silently. It does not mean that she lacks sufficient strength and courage to protest her husband. She accepts her husband because she loves him deeply and profoundly. To Rukmani, misfortunes and sorrows are the essential ingredients of life. She stands as the symbol of the all encompassing, loving and forgiving mother figure. (Srivastava)

Ira:

Ira is the first child of Rukmani. She represents modern progressive woman in the novel. She accepts the man of her parent's choice as her husband. She is soon sent back accused of being a barren woman. Men have social sanction to reject barren wives. The odds that weigh heavily against Ira toss her life. Young women like Ira trust their own judgement and stand on their feet. In times of acute famine, necessity drives Ira to sell her body. Because there is nothing else to sell to feed her ailing brother. Ira bears eloquent witness to the fact that prostitutes are made not born. A strange and bewildering change comes over her. When her father forbids her to out for her nightly rounds. She says stubbornly 'Tonight and tomorrow and every night, so long as there is need I will not hunger any more'. Ira defies everybody and sticks to her way of life. As a young girl Ira was a surrogate mother to her brothers. Though she is deprived of a happy

married life on account of her barrenness, she gives birth to an albino child. A mother does not distinguish between a legitimate and illegitimate child. But society does not welcome such a child nor does it respect an unmarried mother. Ira shows the will power and mental strength to bring forth the albino child. As P. Geeta says about Ira: 'She is simply being herself in choosing her own life..... That is move of the Indian woman towards liberation'. (Patil)

Old Granny:

Old Granny is the vegetable seller in the novel. She is the one who had arranged the match for Ira. Hence she is upset about the outcome of her marriage than anyone else. She feels guilty for this failure. She considers it as a fate of Ira. She is more worried about the girl's future. To this she replies: 'Why fear? Am I not alone and do I not manage'. She further adds that 'It is not bearable, one gets used to it'. Thus Old Granny's views suggest that she is able to put up with her single stature bravely. The situation of living alone as a female is not at all a terrifying experience. It is quite bearable and one easily gets used to it. Here it is worth noting that even such an illiterate woman as the Old Granny has her own views on the status of a single woman leading an independent life.

Conclusion:

Thus we find that in the novel 'Nectar in a Sieve' Kamala Markandaya, the images of women are inconclusive and at the end point to the ever-moving wheel of life. In this novel the women characters belong to the economically poor and middle class society. These women behave in a traditional way of quiet and helpless acceptance of pain and suffering. We also find certain social conventions and attitudes that victimise women. These women show strength and courage which they transmit to others. The soul of these women are strong and resilient. Rukmani, Ira show remarkable resilience for they know that work without hope draws nectar in a sieve and hope without an object cannot survive.

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Feminine Sensibility in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

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Novels during the Post-Independence period depict feministic problems more ardently. This period has brought to the forefront a number of noted novelists who have enriched Indian English fiction. Through their writings feminine sensibility is found woven with the contemporary social problems.

Human life is a complex phenomenon which unites the physical and the spiritual planes of human existence. The physical world embodies not only the mundane world outside but also the relations of the individual with its multifarious dimensions; while the spiritual world or psychological existence has to have its bearings on the mundane world. Thus, both, these worlds are united in a personality in the form of human sensibility. It is vital force joining the mundane and the ethereal. In the writings of Rushdie, these two sides of human existence are closely intermingled.

Though Salman Rushdie is not considered as a feminist writer, feminine sensibility is greatly discussed and analysed by him in most of his novels. He concentrates on an emotional world of female characters. He depicts the inner conflicts of his female characters who suffer from a sense of alienation, exploitation and repression and he also stresses their individuality and their quest for freedom.

Rushdie equally concentrates on an emotional world of the female characters and his works show a profound understanding of