

# Socio – Cultural Emergence In Indian Society

## Abstract

Kamala Markandaya is the first generation of the Indian women novelist who delineates the untold and indescribable suffering of rural farmers, middle class city dwellers. She achieved a world wide recognition and status as significant Indian English novelist. Markandaya's novels are real social documents. The rural, moral and social picture that emerges from them, serves as an eye opener to the social reformer and philanthropist.

**Keywords:** Synthesis, Assumptions, Unscrupulous, Unopposed, Monarchy, Assimilate.

## Introduction

Socio-cultural emergence is one of the most important themes of Kamala Markandaya's novels. Most of the novels deal with the popular theme of hunger and poverty. They also remind us of the British regime resulting into East west Confrontation. But her novels that deal with a conflict between traditional values and modern values are specially interesting. The Indian women not only took active part. In the national independence movement, but they have also articulated the national hopes and aspirations and the socio-cultural emergence of Indian Society in their literary works. The Indian nightingale Sarojini Naidu is the most glaring example of this comprehensive synthesis. On the one hand, she played an active role in the political awakening of the Country. On the other, she vibrated the emotional and imaginative strings of the Indian Masses through her fine poetry. More recently, Women novelists like Anita Desai, Ruth Pravar Jhabvala and Kamala Markandaya have dealt with theme of socio-Cultural emergence in Indian post Independence Society in a very effective manner.

Markandaya aims at holding an artistic mirror up to society from realistic point of view, and leaves it to the reader to draw any conclusion whatsoever about the images created in her novels. She faithfully presents the Changing image of man in relation to the society he lives and moves in. She projects the image of Indian consciousness on many levels.

In her novels, Markandaya shows the impact of change in terms of human psychology. The quintessence of Markandaya's fictional art consists in an artistic exploration of the human psyche in the context of complex cultural values. She explores the reality behind the duel between traditional values and moral concepts on several levels such as political, moral, social, and industrial. Men and Women, rural and urban, all are shown to be torn in this conflict between the old and the new. It is so because she has witnessed, with her keen perception, the changes in India and has depicted the turmoil caused by it very minutely and realistically.

Cultural Continuity is remarkable seen in Kamala Markandaya's novels.

To her culture means essentially an idea which unites individuals and confers all of them what Lionel Trilling Calls an integral selfhood. As Trilling Observed, Culture represents the idea of "a unitary complex of interacting assumptions modes of thought, habits and styles, which are connected to secret as well as over ways with the practical arrangement of a society and which, because they are not brought to consciousness, are unopposed in their influence over men's minds. Their Concern for individual consciousness and its growth and refinement is the chief of Markandaya's fictional art. Markandaya depicts very sensitively the plight of her characters who for sake their traditional values and willingly or unwillingly, become a part of the modern changing society. And when they realize their mistake, very often it is too late.

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### Modernism

Modernity Causes havoc to the simple life of the poor people of the novels of Kamala Markandaya. Change is the law of Nature. But when it is effected with a vain hope of getting something better than one is destined to, it becomes the cause of untold miseries, as it is seen in several novels of Markandaya. In Nectar in a sieve, Markandaya shows that not only Nathan and Rukmini's family but the whole village community undergoes the similar agony. The working Class, the farm labourers, suffer mostly for the economic disparity malpractices adopted by the crooked social changes which the tradition bound rural people find it difficult to accept. First Rukmini's father, a headman of his village, becomes a victim of the changing social order.

Rukmini who represents the spirit of rural India, can afford by her own efforts vegetable seeds and even milk of her children but her placed and natural life begins to change for the worse under the impact of modernity. She reacts to the sudden change in the village thus.

"Change I had known and it has been gradual. My father had been once, a person of consequence in our village. I had lived to see him relinquish his importance, but the alteration was so slow that we hardly knew when it came. I had seen both my parents sink into old age and death, and here to there was no violence. But the Change that new came into my life, into our lives, blasting its way into our village seemed wrought in the twinkling of an eye.

In the Changing modern world, many of the traditions in the rural areas still persist as is noticed in the novels of Markandaya. The picture of the poor neglected women in the man dominated society is quite bleak. "In the male dominated society a woman, however, sacrificing and painstaking, is not allowed the right to freedom of speech and human dignity. The women labourers are paid lower wages than men. They are oppressed because of their ignorance and innocence."

Markandaya describes the change in the form of inflation, diseases, disintegration and other vices. The tannery becomes the agent of the change.

"The Coming of the tannery seems to bring bad luck; the crops fail, hunger increases and quarrels spring up. Kunthi, the beauty of the village, whose unscrupulous trading of her charms has long been notorious, is driven to more dangerous devices. The tannery eats up the land and the landlords have to exact harsher terms."

### The Effect of Industrialization on Indian Society

The effect of Industrialization is also an important aspect of socio-cultural emergence. Industrialization brings about labour unrest and unemployment in the wake of which the social and

moral standard and attitudes change in tradition bound villages. In both the novels, A Handful of rice, and Nectar in a sieve, Markandaya shows the migration from the rural to the industrial urban centers.

Ravi, like the sons of Rukmini, also wants a change for better living for the village has nothing to offer. Ravi finds the change from his village to the city a disgusting and disappointing experience Markandaya tells.

"The city was so crowded, rent so high, that even men with decent incomes searched for years, squashing themselves and their families on to which ever relative had managed to secure foothold in some house. It was a little easier for single man. but even sharing a room would cost ten or twelve rupees a month, too big a slice to take out of the twenty he earned."

In these two Novels, Markandaya presents a general scene of exodus and effects of socio economic changes on emerging new generations of people. The Youth of the village like Ravi and Murugan leave their soil with a hope of better life prospects, but there they get only disappointment, unemployment and immorality. In the novel Some Inner Fury the scene shifts from the thatched huts of the poor peasants shattered by industrialization to sophisticated and civilized upper class people. In this novel Kamala Markandaya has studied the mode of living of an affluent society in the background of the political upsurge of 1942. Mira the youngest member of an aristocratic and westernized family has been brought up with all urban sophistication. She talks of the superior states of her family.

"My mother went to play bridge and to keep my father company, I want because I was taken, and to learn; to mix with Europeans,. This last part of my training for one day soon I would marry a man of my own class, who likes my brother, would have been educated abroad, and who would expect his wife to move as freely in European circles as he himself did."

In Some Inner Fury Rohan is ultra modern and forward Journalist. She symbolizes the modern progressive woman. Markandaya differentiates Rohan from the Common Indian Women thus: "The comparative freedom which she has by birth had been augmented during her education abroad to a greater degree than most other women of her class enjoyed. But Premala stands for the traditional concept of Indian women. Thus some Inner fury is a novel of socio cultural emergence, which depicts the fury of the inner heart of the character on the individual and national level. This novel depicts the havoc caused in the life of the people due to changing trends in the society. It reveals "the pathetic domestic dislocation, resulting in the vast disorientation of values is the modern set up of a village, and the

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violent disturbance of the unreal existence of a rootless upper class." The novelist has attempted to highlight the shaking of tradition bound Indian society on account of the impact of modernity and scientific advancement. In *Possession* the native genius is shown in conflict with modern western glitter and dominance. This novel is an interesting study of the malevolent influence of a civilized barbarian over the native genius of an artist and disturbing his cultural matrix. *Possession* reveals the glaring contrast between the spiritual Indian tradition and the soulless modern European Ventures. The second is exemplified by even Anusuya who tries to depict the orthodox Indian attitude when she reports that her relatives are hardly able to comply with her British manners. She considers them as graceless. But val takes then to the ashram of the swami and Anusuya realizes the failure of the modern sophisticated society. The Change is from the native, natural and traditional to the modern, changing and alluring western influence.

Srinivas and his wife vasantha in *The Now Were Man* are projected as uprooted from their traditional ground. Their plight issues from their alienation from their own traditions. Though the attention of the readers is focused on the East –West clash of values, but the character have been shown as alienated from their tradition. In the novel the past repeatedly merges with the present and the novelist points out that in spite of the invasion of the charming and liberal new values, it is not easy to detach one self wholly from the traditional values thus the couple vacillates between the western values and the oriental heritages.

In *The Golden Honeycomb* also the traditional monarchy is shown set against the emerging new values and social set up This novel with historical overtones depicts the the new values emerging and replacing the old ones slow. The tradition of monarchy are shown on it wane going place to the influence of the new set up. The social tradition do not allow Rabi and jaya to marry each other. They are bound by their social boundaries and rarely feel comfortable in crossing it even Rabi, in the end has to compromise with the ideal and be practical."

Markandaya indicates her realization that community of race and culture binds marriages. Therefore Rabi turns to Usha, a "woman who was at one with him their lives inter locking at more than on level. Margret P. Joseph put it, "The old dreams of an ideal future world where there would be no 'clutter of colour and skin.' has been modified, Racial difference are deprecated but admitted to be unalterable, if regrettable, facts."

### Conclusion

The changing pattern of society is also reflected in the clash between the rural and urban civilization in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. The rural people desire to lead urban life, or at least the type of urban life, and the Urban people cannot accept their rural counterparts to assimilate themselves in their midst. On their part, the rural people bewildered by the harsh realities of their own lives, are affected by the activity, the market day bustle that worked up, each time nearer a town, and the lights strung along the street like neckless. Thus there is always a conflict between the newly emerging urban attitudes and the age old rural ways of life.

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