

India in Transition Society and Culture in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya

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Abstract: Markandaya's writing needs a wide range of theoretical concern. she remained a highly sensitive human being to her contemporary issues whether it is the initiation of postcolonial discourse with the issues like neocolonialism, orientalism, Hybridity, racism, feminine orient or second wave feminism's efforts of consciousness-raising against male sexist behavior. An analysis of Markandaya's novels under cultural studies is an attempt to reveal her dissatisfaction with contemporary socio-cultural transition in India. In almost all her novels Markandaya has openly ended the story and demanded her readers active participation. Through these techniques perhaps she wants to start a debate among her readers about the transitional situations the whole Indian society and culture are going through. she wants her readers to come out with some of the solutions to improve the situations for the betterment of humanities. Further researches on markandaya's novel can be done on the topics like 'clashes between Gandhian an India and crises and issues Nehruvina thoughts on the development and modernization of post-colonial India and crises and issues in neo colonial and neo imperial situation in India.

Keywords: Consciousness raising, hybridity, neocolonialism, racism.

1. Introduction

The word society and culture are used very frequently in the above passages which are not words only but are the most complex concepts to define. These concepts came into currency in 1960s. The intrusion of industrialization changed the whole way of life including the meaning of culture. This change attracted the attention of men of letters and theorists to comprehend and define the ideas like society and culture. To execute this comprehension Birmingham centre of contemporary cultural studies was founded in 1964 which emphasized on cultural studies through the development of a close reading of literary works. Cultural studies included television and media to enhance the study of the transitions rapidly came into the whole society and culture. Richard Hoggart extended cultural studies an analysis criteria and included aesthetic values through the understanding of literary product within this approach. Stuart hall says in the essay. The emergence of cultural studies and the crisis of the humanities that Richard hoggart had planned the project cultural studies as an investigation of the forces which have transformed working class culture into a mass culture.

Margaret P. Joseph has appreciated markandaya for being the

earliest Indian women novelist of significance and master of distinguished qualities. In her critical book Kamala markandaya Joseph has said that markandaya was preoccupied with some of the particular themes like tradition versus change, search for identity and clash because of transition, josheph has analysed markandaya's novel characters, language and her "literature of concern" in separate chapters according to joseph markandaya was presented the tension prevailed in the country India through the eyes of the commoner. She further says that markandaya has frequently presented East-west clashes because this tension is inherent in the writer. Like her characters also has found herself "between two worlds".

The conflicts between two schools of ideology, western materialism and eastern spiritualism. Markandaya has optimistically presented the hopes of racial unity. Markandaya has called her writing the "literature of concern". Through which she has tried to concern her writing with every human being she has presented every type of characters like crippled, gipsy, deceased, destitute, elite, prostitute (both colonizer and forced and persecuted) tortured, dispossessed alienated and so on. Her "literature of concern" is born of tragic version which has explored a "new kind of thinking". As a subjective writer she has given her fears and doubts cathartic effects.

2. Rural India in Transition

The villages are the most important part of Indian subcontinent; not only in terms of economy unit but also for their culture and aesthetic importance. The beauty and serenity of the villages are ever sung in folk songs and lyrics by the sadhus, suffs and musicians as well as by the modern poets like toru dutt and Sarojini Naidu. In her poems Sarojini Naidu has celebrated the beauty of Indian rural culture through her wandering singers, weavers, sneak charmers, bangle seller, palanquin bearers and corn-grinders etc. villages are appreciated by the philosophers and intellectuals for their harmony simplicity and peaceful life. The green and golden fields open spaces twittering and chirping of birds in the morning and evening, shades and hues of plants, flowers and vegetarian in the spring season have attracted the creative artists for centuries whether to paint with colours or words the folk tales and legends lullabies, bridal songs and panghats, simple ways of celebrating festivals and performing rituals always

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remain a center of attraction for the literary people and for a person who wants to enjoy a life of stability and harmony with nature. The villages are different from urban areas which are designated for business administration and other officials works. At one time aesthetic, social, culture and economic needs of the rural regions were fulfilled by the rural people themselves and they had their own rules and regulations to follow. The quality of rural regions' autonomy also emphasized in Manu-smriti.

A. B. Hiramani gives a detailed description of the institute of marriage in rural India in his book social change in rural India. He says that for marriage the groom should be in good health, has a large portion of land in acquisition and high family prestige or at least not ill-reputed the bride should also be in good health and beautiful. The bride's family should be able to give dowry the most important thing is the virginity and the character of the bride. A.R Dessai comment on the important of family in his book rural sociology in India and says that there is a discipline and co-operation among family members. Togetherness is the pride and strength of this institution. But there were lesser opportunities to fulfill educational needs as well as to develop individual personality. But the impact of urban way of life has weakened the family bondages means to ruin an individual's life however by following urban ways and being an individual's life. However, by following urban ways and being an individual by separating from family bondages one can enjoy a better life. The introduction of industrial settlement starts to break the family bondage and destroys the collective production forces as well it has made the living situation awful for the villagers. Because of the transition, family transformed from the unit of production to the unit of consumption. Industrialization has brought separation from traditional skill and techniques which have been learnt because of the belongingness to a rural family.

3. Moving Towards Urbanization

The urbanization denotes the settlement for urban or non-agriculture population as a consequence of industrial settlement or center of capital and political power at a particular place. Urbanization captured the attention of the western intellectuals in the late nineteenth century when the urbanization and industrialization took a historical turn and brought rapid, radical, and unique transactions to the contemporary situations along with the strange problems for the men of every class there is a reciprocal relationship between industrialization and urbanization and both are linked with economic and capital growth, industrialization was first started in Europe during renaissance. Because of Turkish assault, Christians had to move from east Europe to west Europe which resulted in the development of coastal areas of Europe's as trading centers these movements took board turn with industrials revolution in the later 18th and the early 19th century.

In the beginning industrialization and mechanical production were rejected by the people but after sometimes they had to accept them and assimilated with their influences on the organization of society and social relationships. Gradually, industrialization became the symbol of urbanization or vice-

versa.

Markendaya has presented a polymorphous process of urbanization and industrial settlements in her novels: At first industrialization is brought by English people and the indigenous people are exploited and troubled but with the passage of time indigenous elites take the place of English people and start to exploit their poor counter parts through industrialization. In the beginning only the lands are acquired for industrial development but later the human lives are acquired to accelerate the production in the age of late industrialization and late capitalism which has increased the problem of the humanity. From her first novel to the last novel Markandaya has emphasized over the fact that there is a time when the people have to accept changes whether as a compulsion "bend like the grass that you do not break or willingly as a need of the hour," but when the wind of change blows must we not bend.

Markandaya has always presented her observations on contemporary social-cultural scenario with all its pros and cons without being subjective, she never favors either on the side. She leaves the readers to think about the situations they are actually facing in their society so that they would be able to decide how they should react in specific situation because this is the endless cycle of lift to face adverse circumstances. these situations are becoming the reason of crisis in their private and public life and may lead to the conflicts. But she has raised some of the questions which need the consideration of the whole humanity-like 'is that a part of your inner ambition' to impart diseases, sufferings and unhealthy environment in the name of modernization of the country and mechanization through the production? The presentation of late industrialization through free play of market forces and its contribution as late capitalism in accumulation of money raise the question that can "any one make that sort of money by being straight? These questions are necessary to be raised in the age of concealment, corruption, objectification and mechanization when the philosophy of life and principles of humanity have been altered thoroughly.

4. Formation of New Identity

Nowadays formation of new identity is very frequently used phrase. The media, the advanced education system, modern values and cutthroat competition in corporate world have encouraged the young people to form their identity. Young people are struggling hard to form their own identities or which they are involving in different and unique activities. the struggle for the formation of a new identity is not limited to the individual and young people alone but it includes the societal categories as well e.g. class, caste, religion, state, nation gender, sex ethnic groups and so on. The debates and literature on gay and lesbian identities have also contributed in this struggle. The theories on identity crisis and the philosophers have debated on this issue. In every sector of corporate world and every sector of corporate world and every domain of social institution the phrase identity crisis or formation of new identity can be heard, On the TV and in cinema halls we can see some of the daily soap operas and films presenting female characters who are struggling for their identity. When we listen to these phrases so

frequently, they raise several questions in our mind for example, what is the meaning of forming a new identity by birth or by their belongingness to a particular place or group then why do they want or need to form another identity? The answer to all of these questions is that they want to come on their term with themselves vis-à-vis the rapidly changing world views brought in by the material changes as well as the changes in the world of ideas. In this world of rapid transitions people are not satisfied with their inborn or ascribed identity because they do not like the idea of sameness. According to Lynne R. Baker, this kind of: sameness doesn't entail identity". That is why the people struggle to form their identity.

In the novel, A silence of desire, Markandaya has presented the identity crisis of the male character, Dandekar. He is the central character of the novel. Though he is male, he has a wife to dominate and he has a private and the only domain of home to proactive his power yet he has to confront with identity crisis within his own home. Dandekar believes in ascribed and well established sex=role which is structured on a firm and polarization of sex role can be called dichotomy Cartesian dualism or binary opposition Raja prokhovnik the deminist critiques of dichotomy say that there are four key feature of dichotomous thinking, first, two entities are divided as opposite. Though, both are dependent on each other yet both are defined on their own. Second, the division between these entities are hierarchical e.g. the stronger excludes and dominates the weaker entity. Third, this pair of entities is a whole sum. Fourth, if the weaker part wants to get more or equal value it has to be dominant like the stronger one.

Markandaya has projected the male character Dandekar in the alternative gender role. For example when Dandekar come to know that his daughter laxmibai's menstruation cycle is started he is expected to sooth her in her pain which is part of his responsibility in the absence of her mother because he is one of her parents. He remains unable to take care of his six-month-old son chandru while he is crying. Once he finds Laxmibai in a restaurant with her friends including boys and realizes that it is not easy to keep watch on their growing daughters without his wife's cooperation. Laxmibai is becoming rebellious as she has must entered in adolescence. At this age she needs a mutual interaction which only her mother can give her. Then he comes to know the problems in child rearing and education and the need for cooperation with growing children, especially daughters which are not easy tasks. he has never realized before that his wife does so many complicated tasks alone. He comes to know the difference between economic and kinship relationships. In these complicated situations he has to dismantle the separation between two entities one in which his wife lives and the other in which believes. He realizes that he is actually facilitated by his personal demands. His family is marinated because his wife has given highest priority to him and their family. Then his wife has stopped this prior treatment his world is disrupted and his identity in his own home is shaken.

5. East-West Encounter

The post-independence era has bought new challenges, new

prospects and new range of themes for Indian writing in English. Some of the examples are: the conflict between tradition and modernity or the conflict between scientific advancement and ancient traditional values, conflicts between eastern and western ways of life, conflicts and reconciliation between different cultural values, alienation, migration and so on. The period of the first few decades after the independence was a period of confusing state. The newly achieved independence gave to the men of letters strength, confidence as well as freedom to criticize the colonial impact on the nation. The newly constituted democracy gave them the liberty to give vent to their reactions against the contemporary social, cultural, psychological, political and economic chaos, which they thought was the residue of the colonial encounter. At that time the fabric of Indian civilization had become complicated for both the common people and intellectuals. This complicated fabric started to split the personality of the common man and became the central concern for the discussion among intellectuals, were the fabricated in inferiority of the orient and the introduction of capitalist western industrialization and economic pattern.

In the nowhere man (TNM) Markandaya has presented a realistic picture of colonial domination in England in postcolonial era. Markandaya has presented mainly the story of an Indian couple Srinivas and vasantha who have been geographically displaced by the colonial circumstances. Srinivas has passed his first twenty years in India. His grandfather has to shift from village to city to provide his children English medium schooling so that they would be able to get government jobs. In colonial period education through English medium was necessary in order to get government jobs. In English medium schools native people were led by white men. Through the presentation of such situation Markandaya has explored that during colonial period the imposition of English language was become aware and they accepted to live in two different worlds simultaneously: one at home and other at their working places. They did not let their indigenous civilization destroy. Fanon says about the creation of these two worlds that "the black man {non-European} has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man...that this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question".

This situation altered education system in Indian and compelled people to accept English way of schooling as natural. English education helped Srinivas's father to become a school teacher but he was unable to be the head of the school because "men in command were always English..." gradually the indigenous people understood that English medium was only to create Indian babus who fulfilled a specific purpose: that of stocking the vast army of pretty clerks without which no ruling could be done.

The Babus were called by the officials the bootlicker... who worked for British and were polite to them. Indian people endured all the hardships of colonialism till the world war I because they were assured by the British government broke this belief by saying that it was not feasible for India to govern herself. The abrogation of the right of becoming free, according

to said is an act of formulating the subjugation of imperial realms overseas rather too fastidiously and circumspectly. This betrayal provoked every young and old men to take bloody turn and both sides decisively separated into governed and governing Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place on 13th April 1919 in which 379 Indian people were killed by the police. This incident aroused patriotism and national consciousness among the indigenous people. They started to protest against the British government.

The golden honeycomb is a chronological history of an imaginary princely state devapur, India. In this novel markandaya has presented one more aspect of colonial discourse i.e., that way of seeing that world; indigenous as well as foreign through the eyes of colonizers which the explore the ways that representations and modes of perception are used as fundamental weapons of colonial power to keep colonized people subservient to colonial rule. This novel is experimental in techniques it is divided into three parts the starting of the novel is narrated by an omnipresent narrator but the second and third chapters of the novel are narrated by the first-person narrator who has just been born in 1895: the child who is the protagonist of this story or history was born in January 1895 with growth and development of the child Rabindranath the story of revolutionary thinking and nationalism also develops in this princely state. Margaret P. Joseph says about Rabindranath that he symbolizes the spirit of nationalism in the country.

6. Conclusion

In almost all her novels Markandaya has openly ended the study and demanded her reader's active participation. Through this technique perhaps she has attempted to start a debate among her readers about the transitional situations through which the whole Indian society and culture is passing. She wants her readers to come out with some of solution to improve the situations for the betterment of humanity. Further researches on markandaya's novels can be done on the topics like "clashes between Gandhian and Nehruvian thoughts on the

development and modernization of India" and "crises and issues in neocolonial and neo imperial situations in India".

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