

Tribhuvan University

Middle Class Indian Society: Transition from Tradition to Modernity in Kamala

Markandaya's Novel *A Silence of Desire*

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By

Hem Bahadur Bhujel

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur Kathmandu
Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Hem Bahadur Bhujel has completed his thesis entitled “**Middle Class Indian Society: Transition from Tradition to Modernity**” in Kamala Markandaya’s novel *A Silence of Desire* under my supervision. He carried out his research work from February 2011 to April, 2011. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma

Professor

Central Department of English

Date:

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Letter of Approval

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Middle Class Indian Society: Transition from Tradition to Modernity**” in Kamala Markandaya’s novel *A Silence of Desire* by **Hem Bahadur Bhujel** submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

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Abstract

Kamala Markandaya's novel *A Silence of Desire* (1960), has tried to show a transition of middle class Indian society from tradition to modernity. In the process of very transition from tradition to modernity, the development of modern science and technology, globalization, urbanization, mass media play a significant role. The transition of middle class Indian society is basically represented by the major character of the novel, Sarojini. In the beginning of the novel, she seems to be a traditional type of woman. Being a traditional type of woman she worships Tulasi plant as a Goddess. Furthermore, she believes in the power of Swamiji and likes to be cured of womb tumor from him. But, in the passage of time her thinking of traditional values as all in all gets changed and makes herself ready to adopt the values of modernity. The very act of Sarojini comes into light through her successful operation of womb tumor in the hospital.

On the other hand, Dandekar (husband of Sarojini) is a modern man and does not believe in the traditional act of Sarojini whereas Sarojini believes it as the integral part of her life. The very two different ideologies give birth to the conflict and the very conflict gives rise to the distortion in conjugal life. However, the very distorted conjugal life enters the phase of harmony and reconciliation through Sarojini's acceptance to cope up with the values of modernity.

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I. Growing Consciousness of Middle Class Indian Society towards Modernity

The society where we live, our thoughts, behaviors, principles all get changed according to the time and condition. Now, human beings analyze their present conditions to be more advanced than their past. In other words, they believe they are more advanced and developed in their thoughts, social analysis, behaviors, and civilizations etc. at present than past. Modernity is a term used to describe the condition of being “modern.” Since the term “modern” is used to describe a wide range of period, modernity must be taken in context. The trend of greater improvement and the broader concepts in thoughts are the signs of modernity. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, modernity is “the condition of being new and modern.”

Basically, the modern writers while showing the modernity they use different modern elements such as symbol, dilemma, rupture, effect of science and technology, effects of globalization, mass media etc. So far as the concern of the emergence of modernity in India, we should take into account the scientific and technological development in advance. Modernity is the transcendence of the past and reorientation towards the future. Modernity in India came to have been recognized as synonymous to westernization. The emphasis on English education in India also played a vital role in changing Indian society and people towards westernization and modernization. However, modernity should not be identified with formal and generic innovation but has to be related with a shift in experience, a change in the relation between the past and the present. Modernity is the consciousness of new age, new sensibility and sense of the new attitude towards the past as well as future with experience of life. Yogendra Singh regarding the concept of modernity in his book *Modernization of Indian Tradition: A Systematic of Social Change* writes:

Modernization is an integrative process. Modernization develops through the internalization of norms represented by its role structures. This is not easier, as the values of modernity are never a finished product; they are open-ended, mostly instrumental, and non-categorical. These attributes of modernity leads us logically to conclude that society's categorical values are of necessity to be derived from sources co-existent with cultural structure of modernity. (67)

The structural transformations of society and the shifting of the political order were a common experience shared by thinkers in many world regions in the past. Also the discourses that explained and justified these rapid and profound changes were circulating at global level. Most central in this regard was the belief system in modernity as a new civilization, a belief which in many countries became a major facet of socio-political consciousness.

Kamala Markandaya (Kamala Puraniya Taylor) is one of the best modern Indian novelists. In her life time, Markandaya published ten novels, all dealing with the themes of burning issues of Indian society like post-colonial themes in modern India, themes of tradition and modernity etc. She is most famous for her novel *A Silence of Desire*, which was her third novel. Some of her other novels include *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Handful of Rice*, *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession*, *The Coffer Dams*, *The Nowhere Man*, *Two Virgins*, *Pleasure City*, *The Golden Honeycomb*, and *Shalimar*.

Markandaya's best known work, *Nectar in a Sieve* (1945) is a heart-wrenching tale that depicts the hardships and joys of a woman's life in rural India. The story follows the life of a girl, Rukumani, throughout her whole life and all that she witnesses growing up in a changing India. Rukumani witnesses the impact of modernity on India when a tannery is built in their village and changes their life drastically.

In the novel *Shalimar* (1982), Markandaya portrays two parallel societies in India. The main character, Rikki, is introduced to both of these societies during his adolescence. Rikki was born into the life of fishing. His father, brother, and cousins were all fishermen. However, at a young age his entire family falls victim to the might of the sea. Rikki is taken in by a family of missionaries. These new guardians show Rikki a completely new life. Markandaya shows that the presence of both cultures has painted the beautiful picture of what has become India. This novel depicts the evolution and development of Indian society and culture by describing the changes of Shalimar.

The above mentioned novels prove that Kamala Markandaya is a dominant modern female novelist. Being a modern novelist she has shown the journey from tradition to modernity in her fictions. Similarly, *A Silence of Desire* (1960) is a most well-known modern novel where Markandaya has traced out the life style of middle class Indian people in the post-colonial period in Indian society. Basically, Kamala Markandaya aims to show the journey from tradition to modernity in the very transitional period in India. Tradition is social activities that are practised for long time. They are based on certain conventions and customs which are contained as social values. On the contrary, modernity is the condition of being new and innovative which has generally been opposed to tradition in contemporary analysis of social and political change. It is the consciousness of time and space and self and others that is shared by all the human beings in the world. Further, modernity implies a gradual change in the attitudes, ideas and beliefs of the people because of the various factors such as urbanization and science and technology.

In the novel, *A Silence of Desire*, basically there are two major characters: Dandekar (husband) and Sarojini (wife). Sarojini advocates the traditional values whereas Dandekar represents the modern values. But, Sarojini's extreme preoccupation towards

traditional values gets changed in the passage of time. It means she becomes ready to transit herself from the dark sides of tradition to the bright sides of modernity. We know this fact from the dialogue which happens at the end of the novel: “I know, she answered. He said I would be, and not to hold back when the time came. I’m not afraid now of knives or doctors, or what they may do. All will be well. He said so” (144). Ultimately, Sarojini knows the values of modernity and becomes ready to cope with it. Her acceptance to go to the hospital symbolizes a movement to the modern world.

The novel has been set in the transitional period of India. In the very period people neither forget the tradition totally nor they accept modernity in a whole. So, while moving from tradition to modernity, there occurs dilemma which is also one of the main features of the modern novel as well. Dandekar, being a man of progressive ideas, is also in the web of tradition. He thinks, “a married woman did not have men friends who were not known to the husband, the family” (24). The very dialogue shows that the traces of tradition has not been removed from the life of Dandekar though he is a modern man, he is in the journey of modernity. Slowly and gradually he is heading towards modern world. Like Dandekar, Sarojini is also on the path of modernity.

Markandaya has portrayed Sarojini as a traditional type of woman on the other hand Dandekar as a modern type of man from the beginning of the novel. Sarojini worships Tulasi plant considering it as a Goddess. Not only this, she goes to the Swamiji for the healing of womb tumor believing in the mysterious powers of him. On the other hand, Dandekar does not worship Tulasi plant rather he takes it merely as a plant as rest. Similarly, he also does not believe in the mysterious powers of Swamiji. Being guided by the modern ideas he frequently requests Sarojini to get admitted in the hospital but his wife never becomes ready to go to the hospital for the treatment of womb tumor. But, her

obsession towards the power of Swamiji does not remain long in the course of time. At the end, she accepts herself to get admitted in the hospital. Her extreme preoccupation towards Swamiji gets withered in the presence of modern science and technology. The “hospital” itself is the great achievement of modern science and technology. The very modern science and technology is the sign of modernity. Consequently, Sarojini, accepting the norms and values of modernity transfers herself from the cave of tradition to the open horizon of the modernity. Moreover, in the passage of time, Sarojini’s mind is occupied by the sense of new ideas, new feeling, new experience of modern world which are synonymous of modernity.

From the beginning to the middle part of the novel, we can see the tussle between tradition and modernity. Behind this tussle historical reason appears to be dominant. Historically, in 1947 India gained independence from the clutches of Britain. Even after being independent, Indian society could neither negate the western values nor could they accept tradition as a whole. So, in the novel Markandaya clearly shows the impact of west on the east. To prove this fact, we can take an event which takes place at the end of the novel where Sarojini goes to the hospital for the treatment of womb tumor by neglecting the faith healing of Swamiji.

The Indian modernity is also not far away from the influence of globalization. In the novel, we can see Ramabi and Lakshmi (daughters of Dandekar and Sarojini) who are much interested to adopt the modern world neglecting the traditional ways of life. In chapter eleven, Ramabi, being fascinated by the modern ways of life, longs to be a film star and she also nags everyone to call her “Rani” instead of her old fashioned name “Ramabi.” Her infatuation to cope up with the zeal of modern ways of life is expressed as: “Ramabi,

nearly twelve, who secretly longed to be a film star, and as a first step to this end nagged everyone to call her Rani, instead of her old fashioned given name” (11).

In the novel *A Silence of Desire*, Markandaya has also used symbols to unveil the movement from tradition to modernity. Modern hospital, electricity, water pump, train, bus symbolize the achievements of modern science and technology which enforce people to move towards the modern world. Similarly, in the novel most of the characters are in the journey of modernity. Chari (boss of Dandekar), Ghose, Sastri, Dandekar have already internalized the concept of modernity. Being government officials, they have washed their thinking regarding the norms of tradition. Sastri always suggests Dandekar for the admission of Sarojini in the hospital negating the faith healing of Swamiji. Similarly, Chari, who helps Dandekar to make plan so that Swami has to leave the place. Ultimately, Chari's plan compels Swamiji to leave the place where he uses his magical power for faith healing. After this, Sarojini accepts to go to the hospital neglecting the powers of Swamiji. That's why, Swamiji's act of leaving the place symbolizes the decline of traditional values. On the other hand, Sarojini's readiness to go to the hospital is a sign of movement towards modernity. Through these events, Swamiji is rejected and science has won in the novel or tradition is defeated by modernity or the modern wins and Sarojini accepts to follow rationality.

Hence, from the above mentioned event we come to know the victory of reason (modernity) over faith (tradition). Basically, Markandaya's novel portrays the modern India interacting with the western ideas, science and technology. That's why, Markandaya in her novel *A Silence of Desire* tries to show the transition from tradition to modernity of the middle class Indian society. The impact of west is vividly seen through the mouthpiece of Dandekar. Not only this, the traditional norms and values are also seen through Sarojini.

However, the very traditional values do not remain long lasting. Moreover, the very traditional values get withered in the light of modernity.

The novel is set in India, a British colony for many years. The very setting of the novel revolves around the transitional period in India. Conditioned in the transitional period characters are facing difficulties to cope up with the modern world at first. But, later they become ready to adopt modern values slowly and gradually. The major character of the novel, Sarojini strongly believes in the faith healing of Swamiji. Further, she likes to cure her womb tumor from the power of Swamiji in the previous stage of transitional phase. Her inclination towards Swamiji's power comes into the light in the following dialogue taking place between Dandekar and Sarojini:

It's innocent and it's curable, he said stubbornly, the doctors said so. She said if you had the operation now.

No.

Why not? You must-you must be cured. I can't-

I will be cured, in my own way.

By this-this faith healer?

Yes. I have faith in him and he will cure me. She spoke deliberately. (85)

The above dialogue shows the two different ideologies germinated in the two different characters: Dandekar and Sarojini respectively. Dandekar prefers hospital over faith whereas Sarojini prefers faith over hospital. The very incident shows the characters' conflicting ideas germinating in the transitional phase.

Markandaya, however, not only presents Sarojini as a traditional type of woman rather she also presents her as a modern woman in some cases. In the novel, we can see that Sarojini does not like to confine herself within the four walls of house. On the contrary, she

wants freedom and leaves the house without informing her husband, Dandekar and her children. Sarojini's act of secret leaving of house challenges the traditional norms and values that consider woman should always remain in a four walls of house. Here, Sarojini's change of thought, behavior and understanding give birth to the new consciousness, new values which are synonymous to modernity. In this way, she transits herself from the traditional values to the values of modernity. Her act of secret leaving of house can be vividly seen in the following dialogue:

Where is your mistress?

The maid giggled. It was a habit with her, pleasing or maddening according to the moment.

Mistress gone out.

Gone out. I can see she has gone out. Where?

Mistress not say. Again the irritating giggle. Telling me look after Chandru baba and gone out. (4)

Kamala Markadaya in her novel *A Silence of Desire* presents two types of contrasting characters. One type of characters represent the traditional values like Sarojini, Swamiji, Rajam, Dwarf whereas other type of characters represent the modern values like Dandekar, Sastri, Chari and Ghose. Markandaya, presenting the two types of contrasting characters tries to show the transitional period of Indian society. In the very transitional period some characters have already assimilated the modern concepts and values on the other hand some characters are still following the traditional values. But, the reality is they are going to assimilate the modern values slowly and gradually which can be proved from the act of Sarojini, who ultimately accepts the norms and values of modernity. Moreover, traditions which have been prevalent in the society for a long time which could be irrelevant

in the contemporary society but these things are in change gradually because development in scientific technology brings change in attitudes, ideas and beliefs of the people. That's why, Markandaya's novel is in the transition from tradition to modernity.

From the date of publication of *A Silence of Desire* in 1960, the novel has attracted most of the critical reading. So, it has been reviewed in a number of ways. Most of the reviewers like Meera Bai, Uma Banerjee, Anita Mahajan etc. analyze the novel through the relationship between Dandekar and Sarojini whereas P. Geetha analyze the novel through feminist perspective.

Meera Bai finds the novel as an outcome of two different cultures which is reflected in the novel. She focuses on the experience of Kamala Markandaya having been filtered. She writes:

In the novels of Kamala Markandaya the encounter between the diametrically opposite East and the West in the context of human relationship and cultural values constantly engages her attention and gets reflected in her novels. She herself being the product of both the oriental and the occidental cultures, it is not far-fetching to see her own experience being filtered through the consciousness of her fictional characters. (10)

Bai finds that Kamala Markandaya's novels are an encounter between diametrically opposite East and West by various factors. Being an expatriate woman novelist this is quite obvious that both kinds of cultural practice could be found in her novel and her own experiences has also been expressed by means of her fictional characters.

Anita Mahajan comments on the novel as a fusion of tradition and science. She writes, "In short, the world of *A Silence of Desire* is the world of science and superstition carefully balanced, each on having its own separate entity. Markandaya does not raise one

prominently up by pulling down the other. Her attitude is that of reconciliation between the two” (16).

Mahajan finds that the novel is having been familiar with the Indian society where the tradition is deeply rooted like in Sarojini and science is also an integral part. Mahajan perhaps comments these things by seeing at the end of the novel where there are hints of reconciliation between these two – tradition and modernity.

Likewise, another critic and reviewer, P. Geetha comments Kamala Markandaya as a feminist writer and says that Indian women need enough courage to raise the questions to respond to new development strategies in the Indian social policy. In her attitude Kamala Markandaya is much influenced by the feminist school of writings. She writes, “Her novels are not, of course, didactic in the narrow sense of pleading for specific reforms but they illustrate the ambivalence of change in women and men. She is a conservative feminist, to a certain extent, and feminism is implicit in her novels” (10).

Anyway, Geetha attempts to show the strength and weaknesses of both male and female but her support to female can be found at implicit level. She finds Kamala Markandaya essentially Indian in sensibility. Though she has changed impact of Indian culture, her female characters are in the archetypal pattern of Sati-savitri, but they are in great protest of such sacrificial rule. For example, she writes, “the early novels seem to present the wife in her customary role of Sati-savitri archetypal pattern. But, underlying this suffering sacrificial role, lurks the new woman active with her emancipation cries” (12).

Uma Banerjee finds Sarojini the unconvincing middle class wife. Because of her deep rooted traditional norms and values she does not want to take even the name of hospital and also does not make herself ready to go to the hospital for the treatment of

womb tumor. On the contrary, she believes in the mysterious power of Swamiji and likes to be cured of womb tumor from him. Banerjee writes:

There are thousands of Sarojinis who automatically turn towards the Swamis religion and faith-healing because they have never known and will never know the miracle of a clean, competent hospital, stocked with all the necessary medicines and staffs. Thus, the East-West encounter is between the blindly dogmatically superstitious and the gradual flowering of real understanding and appreciation of values for their own sake. (249)

We come to know that in Indian society there was an influence of Eastern philosophy and its dogmas from the very past. Here, Banerjee finds Swami's religion and faith-healing, Sarojini's deeds of worshipping Tulasi plant etc. are all parts of eastern culture especially Hindu. Sarojini is portrayed as a true follower of tradition where she has never known and even does not want to know the miracle of hospital.

Thus, different critics have critiqued Kamala Markadaya's *A Silence of Desire* revealing an encounter between East and West, fusion of tradition and science and an echo of feminism. This research, however, does not deny these various views rather attempts to show the characters' transition from tradition to modernity.

This research is based on modernity in terms of methodology. In this research, there are three chapters: the first chapter contains general introduction of the research based on the analysis of the novel from the perspectives of modernity entitled as, "Growing Consciousness of Middle Class Indian Society towards Modernity." The second chapter embodies the discussion of theoretical tools followed by textual evidences to show the transition from tradition to modernity entitled as, "Middle Class Indian Society: Transition from Tradition to Modernity." Modernity is applied under the concept of Arjun Appadurai

and other critics who have talked about the concept of modernity. Finally, the third chapter is the conclusion of the whole thesis entitled as, “Adoption of Norms and Values of Modernity.”

II. Middle Class Indian Society: Transition from Tradition to Modernity

The novel *A Silence of Desire* by Kamala Markandaya is a platform where the issue of modernity is discussed vividly through the portrayal of middle class Indian society and the people within it. To understand modernity clearly it is to be contrasted with tradition. Tradition is social activities that are practised for long time. It is based on certain conventions and customs which are contained as social values. According to *Oxford Learner's Dictionary*, tradition is "a belief, custom or a way of doing something that has existed for a long time among a practical group of people." Generally, it is based on religion and superstition that is more rigid and dogmatic.

But, modernity tries to demolish and replace all unnecessary superstitious social norms and values and encourages all people to be more open and keep them away from worthless social practices and impositions. Basically, in the novel, there are two characters: Dandekar (husband) and Sarojini (wife). The very characters represent the values of middle class family in a whole. Dandekar follows the norms and values of modernity whereas Sarojini follows the norms of tradition. Following the norms and values of Hindu tradition she worships Tulasi as a Goddess whereas Dandekar does not pray the Tulasi plant. For Dandekar, it is merely a plant:

It was a evergreen plant, crammed into bright and decorative brass in which it languished, surviving without health, but with a sharp, imperious smell that made you forget its looks- a smell that clung to your hands until you had washed and scrubbed, and even after, and could haunt you if you didn't pray. Dandekar did not pray to it, he was always careful to say; it was a plant; one did not worship plants: but it was a symbol of God, whom one

worshipped, and it was necessary that God should have symbols, since no man had the power or the temerity to visualize him. (1)

The point which brings the difference in the characters of Dandekar and Sarojini is their attitudes and beliefs. Dandekar, being a man of progressive ideas, has no faith in superstition as Sarojini has. She worships the Tulasi plant considering it as God and tends it with due reverence. The idea of worshipping a mere plant as a god does not appeal Dandekar's mind who, while conceding it as a symbol of god, refuses to pray to the plant. In this connection Arjun Appadurai says:

One of the most problematic legacies of grand western social science is that it has steadily reinforced the sense of some single moment – call it the modern moment – that by its appearance creates a dramatic and unprecedented break between past and present. Reincarnated as the break between tradition and modernity and typologized as the difference between ostensibly traditional and modern societies, this view has been shown repeatedly to distort the meanings of change and the politics of pastness. Yet, the world in which we now live – in which modernity is decisively at large, irregularly self-conscious, and unevenly experienced- surely does involve a general break with all sorts of pasts. (2-3)

Dandekar is a modern fellow who follows the western social science which creates a break between the past and the present and innovates a new idea, a new kind of mode of thought. Dandekar does not have even a meager faith upon Tulasi plant rather takes it merely as a plant. He does not pray to it.

These some incidents happened in the novel *A Silence of Desire* displays the break from past to the present. Historically, in 1947 India gained independence from the clutches

of Britain, even after being an independent Indian society could not negate the western values. Moreover, the impact of western modernity to the east is clearly seen in the novel. In fact, modernity is decisively at large, irregularly self-conscious as Appadurai says and it creates a break between past and present.

In the novel, Sarojini frequently visits Swamiji without giving any information to her husband. Leaving of house everyday arouses suspicion to Dandekar. So, to know the reasons behind leaving house Dandekar does great effort in the novel. Once, he sees Sarojini walking on the road and he briskly follows her to know where she goes. Ultimately, with a great effort of some days he comes to know that Sarojini frequently goes to the Swamiji for faith healing. The very fact does not give any satisfaction to Dandekar but only generates pangs in his life. Similarly Dandekar, being a clerk of government office, feels modern updated person and free from the norms of tradition. So after knowing the womb tumor of his wife he starts requesting his wife to go to the hospital for treatment. But, unconvincing middle class woman, Sarojini does not lend her ear to the saying of Dandekar about the hospital. Anyway, in the passage of time, the unconvinced Sarojini comes to the right track. It is a track which leads Sarojini to the hospital for the treatment of womb tumor. Consequently, at the end of the novel Sarojini agrees to go to the hospital for the betterment of her life. In this regard, Uma Benerjee writes:

There are thousand of Sarojinis who automatically turn towards the swamis religion and faith healing because they have never known and will never know the miracle of a clean, competent hospital, stocked with all the necessary medicines and staffs. Thus, the East-West encounter is between the blind dogmatically superstitious and the gradual flowering of the real understanding and appreciation of values for their own sake. (249)

Uma Banerjee finds Sarojini the rigid type of middle class wife who is not able to cope up with the western values and ethos. In contrast, she highly valorizes the eastern traditional beliefs. However, there are many Hindu women like Sarojini as there are men with modern concept like Dandekar. Dandekar is a modern being with modern concept who does not believe what Sarojini believes on. It happens so because Dandekar is up to date with the dynamics of modern science and technology. Further, he does not like to concentrate his mind upon the traditional beliefs on which Sarojini has strong faith.

Similarly in the novel, Chari (boss of Dandekar), Sastri, Ghose, and Dandekar are the advocators of modernity. Chari, who helps Dandekar to make plan so that Swami has to leave the place. In the same way Sastri also helps Dandekar in favor of getting admission of Sarojini in the hospital instead of faith healing by Swami. Sastri is so vociferous in his opposition to faith-cure, does not want to express openly his disbelief in the Swami's powers because:

Healing by faith, the performance of the impossible, the revelation of the divine, mystery and beatitude – all these coursed in his blood were a part of his inheritance from a country that looked inwards in its quest for light. He could not deny it, and he did not wish to; yet he felt quite clearly, though loath to cloth it in words even to himself, that he did not want to be involved. (88)

In fact, all these things are part of the culture he has inherited and, as such, does not defy them. So, he persuades Dandekar to confirm his wife's disease from the hospital and also the Swami's genuineness from others. But, ultimately Sarojini is admitted in the hospital neglecting the powers of Swami. Through this event tradition is defeated by modernity or

the “modern wins” and Sarojini accepts to follow rationality. In this regard, Haydn M.

Williams finds Swami is rejected and science has won in the novel. He writes:

A wife is again the central suffering character – though this novel tends to focus on her husband Dandekar who is a “modern minded” Indian official with a fashionably modern content for superstitious old “believing” India. He is abashed when his wife resorts to a Swami for faith- healing a malignant tumor. The “moderns” win and the swami is rejected, so that the wife can be operated on in the usual modern way. (26)

Kamala Markandaya’s novel *A Silence of Desire* revolves around the clash between tradition and modernity. Swami and Sarojini assimilate the traditional norms and values. But, their assimilation towards traditionality does not remain long lasting when Dandekar convinces Sarojini to get operated in the hospital for the treatment of womb tumor.

Modernity implies a gradual change in the attitude, ideas, and beliefs of the people because of various factors such as the process of urbanization, development of science and technology. So, the various factors of modernity compel Swami to be rejected. And also the operation of Sarojini in the hospital clarifies the victory of modernity over traditional norms and values.

So far as the concern of the emergence of modernity in India, we should take into account the scientific and technological development in advance. Modernity is the transcendence of the past and reorientation towards the future. Modernity in India came to have been recognized as synonymous to westernization. It became so due to the Britain’s colonialism in India. Being a colonized country the impact of west is deeply rooted in the minds of Indian people. However, modernity should not be identified with formal and generic innovation but has to be related with a shift in experience, a change in the relation

between the past and the present. Modernity is the consciousness of the new age, new sensibility and sense of the new attitude towards the past as well as future with experience of life.

Ramabi, nearly twelve, who secretly longed to be a film star, and as a first step to this end nagged everyone to call her Rani, instead of her old-fashioned given name. She put both bangles on one wrist now, in the new way, instead of one on each as her mother did, and moved her hands gracefully, admiring the delicate glass. (11)

The Indian modernity emerged from Indian society's changing attitude towards west. It is often said that westernization is a synonymous to the modernization. So, with the great inclination towards the western ways of life, she does not like to remain as a traditional type of girl rather she makes herself adaptive and likes to be a fashionable girl. Markandaya through a portrayal of Ramabi attempts to show that people of young generation in India are interested to adopt the norms and values of globalization. Globalization helps people to create new ideology and new concepts besides the adoption of traditional norms and values. In this sense, globalization is analogous to modernization. From this point, we can say that middle class Indian society is on the path of modernity which no longer believes on the norms and values of tradition. As Appadurai says:

The experience of modernity is local, but locality itself has undergone a fundamental set of changes over the past five hundred years. We are in the process of witnessing a fundamental transformation in the every nature of world systems and global process. Various forms of global interactions have always been with us, and so have various forms of world systems. Even before maritime, expansion of the west in the sixteenth century

complex global formation did exist, but we are only now beginning to theorize the shift from these early global process to those that constitute global process today. (14)

Kamala Markandaya's *A Silence of Desire* shows the transition from the tradition to the modernity. Ramabi, the daughter of Dandekar and Sarojini, does not like to remain as a traditional type of daughter rather she likes to be modern breaking down all the traces of traditional norms and values. Ramabi, being fascinated by the modern life style, longs to be a film star and also likes herself to be called Rani instead of her old-fashioned name Ramabi. Not only this, she puts both bangles on one wrist instead of one on each like her mother does. From this evidences we can assume that she wants change and likes to become a part of modern global phenomenon. Here, Ramabi's change of thought, way of understanding and behavior give birth to the new consciousness, ideas which are synonymous to the concept of modernity. It happens so due to the process of globalization as Apparudai says. He advocates that regional culture, economics, societies have been integrated together by a process of improved communication and mass media. In the same way, Indian middle class society is also not far away from the western globalization rather it has been affecting the people of India.

Sarojini, however, is not only the product of traditional beliefs. Her worshipping towards Tulasi Plant and her rejection to go to the hospital are not only the indicators of traditional beliefs and values but in the passage of time a new kind of consciousness is also mooted in her life. People can never remain in the same position depending on tradition but they must depend on the present environment too. So, the new consciousness towards present is one of the important concepts of modernity: "Sarojini, the unstoppered bottle in her hand, was massaging a little sandal oil into her wrist, the back of her hand, the palm. He

watched her, the delicate circling motions she made, the oil extending and gleaming on her pale skin" (12).

Sarojini is conscious towards her health and beauty. She is massaging her hand with sandal oil in order to remove wrinkles which are seen in her skin. It is a kind of new thought and it is also a break from traditional beliefs to the new way of thinking. Foucault, regarding modernity brings forth the idea of Baudelaire, "modernity is characterized in terms of consciousness of the discontinuity of time: a break with tradition and a feeling of novelty" (Foucault: 261).

In the novel, Dandekar's forehead and scalp are covered with blisters, some clear, some filled with blood-streaked fluid, that look like pomegranate seed. So, Dandekar really frightens and requests his wife, Sarojini to take him to the hospital neglecting the faith healing of Swamiji as his wife believes upon:

Oh, sir, your face. It's come up red like pomegranate seed. Like the pox it is, sir. Oh, sir!

They both knew about small pox and looked at each other aghast: then they were master and servant again and abruptly he dismissed her. Shakily, he took down the glass and saw that the girl had been right; forehead and scalp were covered with blisters, some clear, some filled with blood-streaked fluid that looked like pomegranate seed. He was really frightened now; like the other government employees he has been vaccinated against smallpox, but his could be nothing else. Hoarsely he called Sarojini; then remembering he halted her at the door.

Don't come too near. You'll have to send for a doctor. It's smallpox. (142)

Dandekar, a nervy, conscientious, petty government clerk being an official, he has strong faith upon the means of science and technology. So, believing in the modern science he takes not even a minute to go to the hospital for treatment. On the other hand, Rajam, cousin of Sarojini suggests to Dandekar to get cured from Swami. She thinks that Dandekar's illness is the result of "the evil eye." She also adds that her aunt Sita was also suffering from the same kind of disease and ultimately cured by a Swami. The same incident can be found in the saying of Rajam as:

Like the evil eye. I know you will not believe me, Cousin- being educated perhaps it is difficult to believe anything- but my Aunt Sita was afflicted in the same way, all on one side like you and one eye closed and blisters bubbling up over that eye and right up between the hair and no one could tell what caused it- not all the doctors- and in the end she went to a priest. Do you know what he found? Rajam was whispering now. That it was the evil eye of her neighbor, who coveted the diamond nose- screw that she wore. (149)

The belief in the "evil eye" is a superstition and an element of religious folklore which may be found existing almost in every fraction of society in India. When the folks considered that they are affected by "evil eye" they prefer magical cure or faith healing as Sarojini does at the previous stage of her life. But, her acceptance to treat womb tumor in the hospital at the end of the novel challenges the old superstitious belief of cousin Rajam. In the presence of modern science and technology Rajam's old faith on superstition gets superseded. Like Sarojini, Dandekar also no longer believes on the concept of "evil eye" rather he takes the means of modern science and technology as all in all. Believing on the very means of

modern science and technology he suggests Sarojini to put him in the hospital. In this regard, Marshall Berman writes:

The maelstrom of modern life has been felt from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing out images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds of the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle [. . .]. (2)

The advancement of science and technology serves as the crystals for the flourishing modernity. Modern science, communication, philosophy, industrialization etc. stimulate the progress of human life, moreover, human consciousness. The emergence of modern science and technology, communication, philosophy, industrialization etc. have played a vital role to create a new human environments. Not only this, these things also contribute people to distinguish them from past to the present and also to destroy the old beliefs. That's why, the germination of new mode of thought can be taken as a synonymous to modernity. The very state of modernity is possible only through the modern means. Similarly, in the novel *A Silence of Desire* Dandekar represents as a modern being. Dandekar is not only a man of modern thought but is also a representative of so-called middle class Indian family of India who has inclination towards the fact of rationality, science and technology.

From the beginning of the novel the conflict comes as a yardstick. It happens so because of the two different ideological stands – tradition and modernity. The very traditional ideology is practised by Sarojini whereas the ideology of modernity is followed by Dandekar. Due to the emergence of two different conflicting ideologies the whole family relationship is in the process of destruction. But at the end of the novel, hope of good

family relationship is seen when Sarojini accepts herself to be operated in the hospital. It means the operation in the hospital refers to the adoption of modern way of life which is the sign of modernity. In this way, happiness comes in the members of the family when she accepts the norms and values of modernity at the end of the novel.

If one's faith overpowers, reason is caught hold. There are so many Sarojinis in India. They grow in religion and culture. They don't accept anything, which goes contrary to their faith. Sarojini's relatives die in the hospital so she believes in faith healing. Sarojini, in this way, is a traditional, religious character. The main reason behind disbelief in science and technology and unwillingness to go to the hospital for treatment is the fear of death for Sarojini. In this way, to protect her life from death, she frequently visits Swami for faith healing. She answers her husband for her secret visit to Swami:

You with your western notions, your superior talk of ignorance and superstitions when all it means is that you don't know what lies beyond reason and you prefer not to find out. To you the Tulasi is a plant that grows in the earth like the rest an ordinary common plant. And mine is diseased to be cured and so you would have sent me to hospital and I would have died there. (68)

Sarojini prefers faith healing to surgery while Dnadekar has strong faith in modern medical treatment. Being guided by the traditional norms and values Sarojini has no faith over reason. On the contrary, she believes on the traditional values and worships Tulasi plant as a Goddess. Moreover, she does not like to go the hospital for the treatment of womb tumor. It happens so because she terrifies with the means of modern science and technology and says that she would have died in hospital. However, Dandekar believes on the modern norms and values and does not give any importance to the traditional act of Sarojini. Rather he

convinces Sarojini to walk along the path of modernity characterized by the modern science and technology. As Nagendra K. Singh writes: “Kamala Markandaya’s novel deals with the modernization of India, especially through its interaction with the west, we can discern a pattern of not a smooth progress, but a troubled winging between tradition and modernity, between cultural exclusivism and pluralistic identity” (237). Markandaya’s novel portrays the modern India interacting with the western progress and modernized west. The modern Indian society is so advanced due to the achievements of modern science and technology, mass media and improved communication. The mode of thought, behaviors of its people have also been transferring from the traditional norms and values to the modern norms and values in the passage of time. The change which is seen in the life of Sarojini at the end of the novel is the indicator of middle class people’s willingness towards the achievement of modern science and technology. Moreover, Markandaya helps us to identify with Sarojini, even though the traditional woman comes to the realization of change goes ahead with the changing times. It happens so because the novel is set in the context of the influence of British colony after independence and its change in attitudes in the Indian society. *A Silence of Desire* exposes the problems when the female protagonist does not cope up with the modern ethos and values as well.

Markandaya, however, presents Sarojini not only a traditional type of woman rather she presents her as a modern type of woman who is capable of changing herself along with the changes witnessed in the contemporary society. Her novel *A Silence of Desire* reveals her deep preoccupation with the changing Indian social and political scene. The very changes are vividly seen in the activities of the characters. The novelist endeavors to portray them as individuals growing into themselves, unfolding the delicate process of their being and becoming. Sarojini, a central character of the novel, wants to be free from the four walls

of house breaking down the all norms and values of tradition which mark females to be confined in the four walls of the house. Once in the beginning of the novel, Sarojini disappears from house without giving information to any members of the family.

“Where is your mistress?”

The maid giggled. It was a habit with her, pleasing or maddening according to the moment.

“mistress gone out.”

“Gone out. I can see she has gone out. Where?”

“Mistress not say.” Again the irritating giggle. “Telling me look after Chandru babu and gone out.” (4)

Sarojini does not ask permission or she does not give any information to the family members of her secret leaving of house. It shows that she needs freedom from the old norms and values. It is a freedom from the very traditional norms and values that determine woman should always confine within the four walls of house. But, Sarojini seems to be a different type of woman and does not like to stay confining herself within the very four walls of house. That’s why, neglecting the old traditional norms and values she moves her pace to the open horizon where she can utilize her own freedom. The longing of freedom from old traditional values is a growing conscious of modern woman that is seen in Sarojini. In this connection, Madhavi Menon writes, “The Indian woman needs freedom to move beyond the sphere of home and family if she desires to, and there would be no constraint that she should bear the domestic burden solely on her shoulder, Sarojini persists in winning this freedom until Dandekar learns to give her the psychological space she has a right to” (230). Menon tries to give modernist color in her analysis. She raises her voice to give freedom to woman and to come out from the four walls of house structured by the

society. In the same way, in the novel *A Silence of Desire*, Sarojini does not long to remain as an idol of house surrounded by the four walls. On the contrary, she keeps aside all the restrictions created by the traditions and moves away neglecting the duties of wife in a house. This way of transition of behavior, mode of thought of Sarojini is the indicator of modernity.

The object of researcher in this novel *A Silence of Desire* is to expose the middle class Indian society and the influence of modernity on it. Modernity refers to the consciousness of new age, new sensibility and new attitude which germinate after transferring from old traditional values to the new way of mode of thinking. So, the change of consciousness from old traditional values is seen in Sarojini which adds a brick to clarify the modern way of life clearly. Further, the modern feminist writer Virginia Woolf writes:

Women are supposed to be very calm generationally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation precisely as men would suffer: and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than customs has pronounced necessary for their sex. (822)

Woolf says that women can also feel the same as men feel. From this point we can say that women are also able to germinate new ideas as men do. If the women are provided equal right and opportunity, they can also do strange things as men do in the cosmos. In the same way, in the novel Sarojini does not make herself busy only in embroidery rather she

disappears from home without giving information to any member of her family. Her disappearance to visit Swami for faith healing is a bold act. It is an act which consists of the ideas of change, ideas of new sensibility and break from the past where females are defined as the idols of house.

Dandekar, being petty government official, a man of progressive ideas, does not believe on the faith healing by swami as Sarojini believes on. Not only this, he also does not worship Tulasi as Sarojini worships considering it as a God. Furthermore, he does not permit her to go ahead with what she considers 'faith'. In this way, Dandekar puts her deeds in shed considering it as worthless. Both the Tulasi plant and Sarojini are treated as immobile objects by Dandekar. For Dandekar, Sarojini is superstitious and fool for she believes in faith healing. Dandekar knows that faith and reason don't go together. The relationship between Dandekar and Sarojini has become quite imbalanced because he is influenced by modern science and technology whereas she is guided by traditional and religious norms and values. It happens so due to the influence of modernity on Dandekar. Dandekar treats Sarojini as a subordinate woman only because she has strong faith on traditional norms and values. Further, he does not believe on the traditional deeds as Sarojini does. That's why, he tries to bring out her from the bay of traditionality. But the irony is that Dandekar does not know Sarojini's slow but gradual movement towards modernity. Her action of going outside of the house without informing Dandekar and any other family member is a revolutionary act regarding the traditional ways of living. Moreover, Sarojini's slow but gradual movement can be taken as her movement towards modernity. Hence, Sarojini's gradual movement toward the modern way of life is the indicator of her slow but gradual movement to cope with the modern way of life whereas

Dandekar's negligence towards Sarojini's way of life is just a male arrogance towards her gradual inclination to the modernity.

In the novel, *A Silence of Desire* we can see that most of the male characters are government officials such as Dandekar, Chari, Ghose, Sastri etc. They are quite happy in their job. It shows that it is also a kind of transition from traditional agro- based economy to the modern way of economic order attained through the government job, industrial job etc. It is also a new kind of consciousness emerged in the mind of modern people rather than to depend on agro-based economic order. Among them the male characters, Dandekar is more conscious towards his job and says "each year the universities turned out hundreds of graduates eager for jobs... and one must think of the children. He said jerkily, "I don't know what – what I am thinking of. Of course, I will go" (71). Modern people are extremely eager for job. Their strong preoccupation towards job is a hallmark of modernization. It is also a movement towards the modernizing world. In the novel most of the male characters are government officials and they are very much conscious about the modern ways of life and modern job instead of depending on the agro-based economic order. Hence, their new kind of consciousness to grasp government job is a beginning of new concept which demolishes the traditional kind of job like agriculture. In this way, characters' adoption of government job can be taken as the indicator of modern way of life and modernizing world.

When we talk about modernity, we cannot negate the concept of globalization. Globalization is synonymous to modernization. Globalization describes the process by which regional economies, societies and cultures have become integrated through a global network of political ideas through communication, transportation and trade. It is usually recognized as being driven by a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural,

political and biological factors. The term can also refer to the transnational circulation of ideas and languages. And aspect of the world which has gone through the process can be said to be globalized. Similarly, globalization leads to a world where people from all country become more integrated and aware of common interest and shared community. In this way, globalization plays a great role in the development of new consciousness, new ideas to the life of people in the globe. Due to the influence of globalization the old traditional ideas/concepts have been demolished and new concepts have been mooted in the life of people. People have been so much conscious about the global world and they make themselves ready to cope up with the globalized world. In this sense, globalization can be taken as a synonymous to modernization. Global culture follows under five dimensions: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples and ideoscaples. In this regard Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge view:

Modernity is now everywhere, it is simultaneously everywhere, and it is interactively everywhere. But, it is not only everywhere, it is also in a series of somewhere, and it is through one such somewhere, India, that this volume enters the global reality of modernity and for such a localized entry we propose an other general category. (2)

Due to the globalization all regional cultures, economies and societies have been integrated throughout the globe through mass media and improved communication. That's why a kind of change of one country is also seen in another country. Thus, the concept of modernity, though originally dates back to the enlightenment is not confined with a particular time, space and realm. Although it is apparently a western trend, it is pervasive across the world. Hence Indian modernity is the product of western modernity. The concept of industrialization came from the west. In the same manner, Dandekar follows the norms of

western modernity by making himself engaged in the governmental office. It happens so due to the effect of globalization. We can also take it as a movement towards modernizing world which is a yardstick of modernity.

Modernity deals with the condition of being new and innovative which has generally been opposed to tradition in contemporary analysis of social and political change. It is the consciousness of time and space, and self and others that is shared by all the human beings in the cosmos. Modernity can be realized when tradition has been destroyed and superseded. It is a radical threat to all history and tradition. Moreover, modernity is the qualitative transcendence of the past and reorientation towards the future. In Indian context, modernity as the category was not a development through the period of history such as renaissance and reformation, enlightenment and industrial revolution. The idea of modernity emerged in India and its literature from the inner urge of literary community to create a literature to the literary models dominating the centuries. The emphasis on English education in India also played a vital role in changing Indian society and people towards westernization and modernization. Modernity, however, can not be identified only with formal and generic innovation but has to be related with shift in experiences, a change in the relation between the past and the present.

Indian modernity is the advancement over the earlier literature, habits, customs and the progress in the different fields in accordance with time. With the influence of modernity in literature, everything- the habitat, the cities, the villages, mundane professions, trivial actions, sufferings and protests became the theme. This was the great advancement. All these changes were inevitable results of technological advancement in India. Hence, Kamala Markandaya in this novel tries to show the influence of very modernity on the middle class Indian family through the portrayal of major and minor characters of the novel.

In the novel *A Silence Desire*, Ramabi is seen as a modern type of girl. Further she does not prefer to take food which is cooked in the house rather she goes to the milk bars with her girls and boys friends. The very incident shows that the more attraction of teenagers to the food of bars and restaurants than the cooked meal in the house:

Dandekar was silent. Ramabi was twelve, verging on puberty. It did not make matters easier.

Ramabi became his next concern. He came home one night – late – to find Lakshmi alone. The maid had gone. The erratic hours they kept, she could hardly be blamed, and indeed nowadays she went than she thought fit.

Fortunately for them, she was a conscientious girl. He said frowning, “Where is your sister?”

Lakshmi was doing her sums. She said, frowning also, “Gone to the milk bar.” (109)

Here, Ramabi is seen an abnormal type of girl. In the comparison of her sister Lakshmi, she is different and is also clutched by the western modern thought to which she does not avoid in her life. Likewise, it is also a globalization which affects the people of new generation. Markandaya presents Ramabi as a representative of modern new generations who are not far away from the influence of global world. In this way, due to the effect of the tendency of globalized world Ramabi drags herself to the bars with her girls and boys friends. The very act of going bars and restaurant also indicates the new mode of thought which germinates in the life of people in accordance with the course of time due to the light of globalization.

Here, S.K. Srivastava writes the meaning of modernity as:

Primarily modernity is a state of mind. It creates and grasps such elements in human consciousness which enable the individual to adjust from his

inner being to the rapidly changing conditions of modern complex societies. It implies a scientific and rational world view and inculcates universalistic – secular values. Modernization is not an ideology but it can be the corner stone of any political ideology or policy. It is ideology free in the sense that it indicates the common needs of the modern times for an overall growth of individual and society. (20)

Modernity is a state of mind. It is a mind which transits from the old values to the new. Further, it is a new kind of consciousness which emerges in the individual in the passage of time. Ramabi's extreme obsession to visit bars with her friends is also a result of her present state of mind. New generation of female characters presented in the novel is revolutionary. Kamala Markandaya shows Ramabi in *A Silence of Desire* as a character who does not want to remain silent when she finds her liberty restrained. Her father dislikes her going to milk bar. But, Ramabi very boldly supports her freedom. Hence, we can say that to be conscious of one's own liberty and freedom is a touchstone of modernity.

We can say that modernity is the process of modernization. In the process of modernization a kind of dilemma swings like pendulum on people whether to follow the norms and values of modernity completely or to assimilate some traditional norms and values as the integral parts of human life. Anyways, people do not become a complete modern being in the transitional period of modernization. We can say that modernity is a break from the tradition even though it somehow has some kind of traces of tradition. In the same manner, Dandekar is a modern man who belongs in the transitional period of India. The whole Indian society is in the process of modernization. Hence, in this situation, Dandekar cannot make himself escape completely from the old traditional values rather he has some traces of traditional values too.

Dandekar, however, believes in the modern concept of culture, if it concerns to himself but though it indirectly concerns to his wife and his children he does not accept it. Further, he holds conformist views on marriage and says that unmarried woman is supposed to remain virgin. Even after marriage woman should not look at other males. Dandekar thinks: “A married woman did not have men friends who were not known to the husband, the family” (24). Regarding the character of wife, Dandekar is ruled by the traditional ideologies which require a wife to be submissive, subordinate and non significant. He thinks that wives should always remain faithful to their husband. For Jurgen Habermas, modernity has the great concern with the tradition. In this regard, he writes:

The word ‘modern’ was first employed in order to distinguish the present, now officially Christian, from the Pagan and Roman past. With a different content in each case, the expression ‘modernity’ repeatedly articulates the consciousness of an era that refers back to the past of classical antiquity precisely in order to comprehend itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new. This is not merely true for the Renaissance, with which “modern age” begins for us; people also consider themselves as “modern” in the age of Charlemagne, in the 12th century and in the Enlightenment – in short, whenever the consciousness of a new era developed in Europe through a renewed relationship to classical antiquity. (282)

Modernity can be defined only in the relation to the past. Modernity is a break from past to the present though some kinds of traces of past are also seen in the present. In a similar manner, people cannot forget their past in transitional period even though they try to go ahead by mitigating the traces of the past. In this context, people are caught in dilemma either to follow the norms and values of the present or to accept the norms of past as well.

They want to demolish past (tradition) but while totally accepting the present (modernity) they feel themselves in trouble because they have come from the same path of tradition. That's why in the transitional period modern people suffer from the influence of dilemma. Hence, Markandaya presents Dandekar as a modern man swinging in dilemma in the transitional phase of Indian post-colonial scenario. Anyway, Dandekar is in the verge of complete modernity.

Markandaya has also given reference of prostitution in novel *A Silence of Desire* and shows that Dandekar is a modern being regarding the sexual matters as well. He does not confine himself within Sarojini only rather he goes for having sex with prostitutes. The prostitution can also be taken as a sign of modernizing India. Moreover, Dandekar transits himself from the traditional way of sex confined between husband and wife towards the sex having with prostitutes. Once in the novel, Dandekar is walking slowly from the hospital, wondering how to kill the hour, dreading to spend it alone and have his thoughts catch upon him, yet with nowhere to go. Anyway, he is dragged by the extra-marital sex with prostitutes. In this process Dandekar is helped by the boy, who plays a role of agency to contact Dandekar with prostitutes. The conversation between the boy and Dandekar happens:

Nice woman, sir. Help you. Again the shady smile.

Help me? Do you think anyone can?

Yes, sir. Nice woman, please you much. The boy's voice grew urgent, detecting signs of wavering. He raised both hands, and Dandekar saw that the first two fingers of his left and tightly locked the forefinger of his right. Then he understood.

Something was wrong. He felt he ought to be shocked and in a way he was; yet he found he could not take his eyes from these thin, explicit fingers. It held him, the lewdness of those innocent hands, created a fever in his blood that sent it throbbing and erratic through his veins. He knew it could not be contained; and at last he drew a long breath and said, simply, “Where?” (83)

In the so-called modern society humanity and human values are dead and people prey on each other like vultures. Dandekar, being a man of modern and progressive ideas he not only believes on sex bonds between husband and wife rather he crosses the Indian folklore and goes for prostitution to quench his sexual thirst. Furthermore, prostitution is a result of modern changes. So, everyday is a new day and every change is the sign of modernity.

The prostitutes convince Dandekar that his visit to prostitutes symbolize a kind of reconciliation with the changing times. They further tell him that it is very natural “you are not first husband that wanted a change. It is natural” (84). It is not unethical or betrayal of trust, Dandekar justifies his visit to the prostitutes as a sort of rehearsal to practise what life would be like in Sarojini’s absence. In this connection, it is justifiable to put Sigmund Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis, which brought great revolution in Europe and the entire western world. People started paying more attention to the physical world. They could no longer hide their instincts, sexual desires and material gaining. The prominent consequence of tradition was seen in the sexual behaviors of people. They wanted to be free from the bound of church ideologies regarding their sexual quest. The westerners believed in feeding and fulfilling their body needs by all means.

In this way, Dandekar, being a modern man of post-colonial era, does not repress his sexual quest rather accepts it as an integral part of his life like westerners because he is

strongly influenced by the western norms and values which can be seen in his way of behaving, thinking and feeling in the novel. Basically, in India prostitution is taken as a heinous profession, but it is emerging social lore in industrial age. Hence, prostitution can be taken as a sign of modernity in the transitional phase in India.

It is needless to say that modern period is marked by the development of science and technology. It is inevitable in the modern period. Hence, we cannot negate the achievements of modern science and technology which represent the sign of modernity. We know that through the use of technology growing social problem can be solved. In the novel *A Silence of Desire*, Markandaya has shown the achievements of science and technology like water pump, bus, train, electricity, modern hospital which are the significant marker of modernity.

Due to the scientific development, the universe becomes a small village where all cultures mix into one in which Marx said, “all that is solid melts into one” (qtd. in Berman 1). Modernity unites all human beings. Scientific discoveries, transportation, communication etc make the world small and single. Different kinds of mass medias which are the result of science like radio, computer film, and television have control of our lives without ordinarily intruding on them. These medias cannot be avoidable because they are around us. It has made mass more creative, safer, more healthful and richer creative possibilities. It is the media that makes the people up to date. It gives the hot news to human beings so that people can easily mobilize themselves in the modern world.

Similarly, the means of transportation like bus, train are the milestones of modernity which are seen in the novel *A Silence of Desire*. These means of transportation have made the world small and easier than that of earlier. Due to the development of different sorts of vehicles, we modern people can travel throughout the world easily. In the same manner,

Dandekar goes to the office by bus in the novel. Various vehicles like aircraft, ships and land vehicles have made human life doubtlessly comfortable. It is the modern science that makes it possible. It has brought revolutionary change in the traditional concept of human being, for example, moon used to be taken as God, especially in Hindu religion, but modern scientists have been thinking about the settlement on the lap of moon. It is one of the greatest challenges to tradition due to the scientific development, which is case of modernity. In this connection, Arjun Appadurai writes:

For in the past century, there has been a technological explosion, largely in the domain of transportation and information, that makes the interactions of a print-dominated world seem as hard-won and as easily erased as the print revolution made earlier forms of cultural traffic appear. For with the advent of the steam ship, the automobile, the airplane, the camera, the computer, and the telephone, we have entered into an altogether new condition of neighborliness, even with those most distant from ourselves. (29)

Science and technology have contributed great effort in the field of innovation and discovery. The products of science and technology have given a great punch on the face of tradition. Furthermore, the modern achievements like bus, train, airplane, computer, camera, telephone have brought a tremendous change in the life of the people. Now, belief of people in the capacity of science and technology is growing. Old superstitious trends and beliefs have gradually disappeared. People begin to live an adaptive life but those, who are conscious of the past and tradition, are reluctant to adopt themselves to new social need to welcome modernization. Modernization can be taken as the alchemy of social change.

Kamala Markadaya in her novel has made the story revolve around the conflict between faith and reason, superstition and science, religion and materialism and oriental

backwardness and occidental progress. The so-called conflict happens in the Indian society because of the dynamic effects of modernization, westernization, scientific development and colonization. Colonization has influenced the Indian people in such a way that they commence to imitate every European modes and activities as their own. But, it is not applicable to all Indian people. So there is the emergence of disparity between the modern characters who want to reform themselves in the changing circumstances and the traditional characters who want to preserve their own ancient culture. In the novel, Sarojini says:

Yes, you. You would have sent me to a hospital instead. Called me superstitious, a fool, because I have beliefs that you cannot share. You would not have let me be – no! you would have reasoned with me until I lost my faith, because faith and reason don't go together, and without faith I shall not be healed. Do you understand that? (68)

From the above dialogue, we come to know that Sarojini is a traditional and spiritual because she gives high priority to faith healing. On the other hand, Dandekar is a modern and believes on treatment in hospital. Markandaya sketches a common background of modern Hindu culture of Indian society. It is the transitional period of politics, religious and the whole social conventions. The new generation seeks drastic change in each field of the society like Ramabi, Lakshmi, Gopal, Malati etc. whereas the old generations like Sarojini and Rajam except Dandekar, Chari, Ghose, Sastri represent the old values. In this connection, Meera Bai writes:

In the novels of Kamala Markandaya the encounter between the diametrically opposite East and the West in the context of human relationships and cultural values constantly engages her attention and gets reflected in her novels. She herself being the product of both the oriental

and the occidental cultures, it is not far-fetched to see her own experience being filtered through the consciousness of her fictional characters. (10)

Bai finds that Kamala Markanday's novels are an encounter between diametrically opposite East and West by various factors like colonization, industrialization. Markandaya's novel *A Silence of Desire* also presents the two opposite characters e.g. Dandekar and Sarojini.

Dandekar belongs to the western mode of thought whereas Sarojini belongs to the eastern ways of living. Further, Dandekar refers to "reason" on the other hand Sarojini refers to "faith". Considering faith is all in all Sarojini says faith and reason don't go together. But, her acceptance to be treated in the hospital in the course of time shows the victory of reason over faith. In this way, Indian society is moving slowly and gradually towards modernity. A kind of change is seen in the middle class Indian society. The very change is the sign of modernity.

In the novel, Rajam, a cousin of Sarojini and Dandekar, advocates traditional norms and values. She convinces Dandekar to put Sarojini in the hands of Swamiji for the healing of womb tumor. But, Dandekar is not ready to put Sarojini in the hands of the faith healer (Swamiji). Rajam expresses her absolute faith in Swamiji's power to cure diseases. On being asked by Dandekar whether Swamiji is true or fake, she tells him that he has cured the pain in her stomach which the doctors had dismissed as her mere phobia. Rajam convinces Dandekar:

Well, the Swami...Rajam's eyes grew round in her chubby face. He is a good man, cousin, and he has powers... you must believe in them, even if things don't always go your way.

Do they ever go one's way? Cried Dandekar. Sarojini has relied on his powers for several months now. Is she cured? She does not know, I don't

know- but if she is why is she still going to him day after day? She says she feels better when she is there, when she comes back, even I know he gives you some strange sort of peace, but is there anything else to it? Is there anything else?

Don't say such things, cousin. Rajam pursed her lips disapprovingly. You are belittling what you don't know. It must be your contact with Europeans- even if it was ten years ago- that makes you so rash.

And what makes you gullible, cried Dandekar, as to believe these miraculous tales, these hearsay stories, these cures that have happened always to someone else?

“He cured me”, said Rajam simply. (128-129)

The above dialogue between Rajam and Dandekar gives birth to the conflict. It is a conflict which emerges from the two different ideologies like tradition and modernity. However, Sarojini's successful treatment of womb tumor in hospital challenges the old faith of Rajam. So that, Rajam's belief on tradition is on the verge of destruction. It happens so due to the effect of growing consciousness resulted from the science and technology which have directly linked with globalization. In this regard, Sarojini's transition from faith healing to modern medicine is her slow and gradual movement towards modernity. It is an effect of globalised modern world. In the process of globalization electronic medias play a vital role and when people become aware of growing modern facilities like modern medicine, modern science and technology, media they become habituated with these things and these very things become necessary part of their life. In this regard, Arjun Appadurai says:

There is growing evidences that the consumption of the mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and, in

general, agency. Terrorists modeling themselves on Rambo-like figures; housewives reading romances and soap operas as part of their efforts to construct their own lives; Muslim family gatherings listening to speeches by Islamic leader on cassette tapes; domestic servants in south India taking packaged tours to Kashmir: these are all examples of the active way in which media are appropriated by people throughout the world. T-shirts, billboards and graffiti as well as rap music, street dancing, and slum housing all show that the images of the media are quickly moved into local repertoires of irony, anger, humor, and resistance. (7)

This is not just a matter of third world people reacting to western media but due to the contribution of media the world is growing smaller. It is an effect of growing consciousness about the modern world. The effect of media is dominant in the modern world. The western culture can also be seen in the eastern country as well. Media plays a great role to spread different cultures throughout the world. In a similar manner, India is not far away from the western norms and values.

In the novel *A Silence of Desire* Sarojini's acceptance to go to the hospital for treatment is a great challenge to the traditional thinker, Rajam. This is a sign of modernity which is possible through electronic media which helps people to germinate new ideas, feeling, sensation etc. The germination of newness itself is a symbol of modernity. Similarly, in the novel we can see Ramabi's inclination towards the bar and Lakshmi's interest to wear skirt. These actions are also the outcome of globalization. In this way, Indian middle class society is being affected by the means of globalization.

Dandekar respects British Raj in India by praising their positive aspects. Dandekar is lured by British modernity. Dandekar, being influenced by the British Raj, divorces

himself from the Indiana folklore considering it merely a superstition. Dandekar says, “The British had built roads, railways, bridges; but if they had not somebody else would have, whoever had come instead of the British, and then it would have been a benefit of their rule” (18). Dandekar believes that British contributions in making roads, railways, bridges have great impact for Indian society. The very contributions in different fields have germinated modern consciousness for Indian society and these have direct influence on Indian people like Dandekar for making them conscious about the modern world. That’s why, Dandekar has great inclination towards modernity. India was colonized by the British for many years. In the process of colonization Britain had greatly contributed in the modernization of the Indian society. The impact of growing modern consciousness is evident in Dandekar. He further says that the development of physical infrastructures became possible due to the British rule. Here, Dandekar stands for the modern youth and he is under the influence of western materialism, science and technology.

Ghose, a government official, seems to be a modern man with modern concept. He also likes change and wants to uplift the country effacing the traces of norms and values of tradition. The very traditional values are regarded as the obstacles of the modern world, which do not give birth to the modernity. Markandaya exposes Ghose’s inclination towards modernity by saying, “He wanted to be equal, he wanted his country to be the equal of any in the west; and being equal excluded even a hint of medievalism” (167). From the aforementioned dialogue, we come to know that Ghose is too much obsessive with the progress of the west and wants to make his country (India) equal to the west excluding all the traces of medievalism. Here, Markadaya has exploited medievalism as a symbol. The very medievalism symbolizes “tradition.” Hence, Ghose likes to transfer himself from tradition to modernity.

Most of the characters in Kamala Markandaya's novel *A Silence of Desire* are in the process of modernization. Some characters have already accepted the values of modernity and some are still in the process of modernity. It happens so because the novel is set in the transitional in India. In this regard, Michel Foucault puts:

Modernity is often characterized in terms of consciousness of the discontinuity of the time: a break with tradition, a feeling of novelty, of vertigo in the face of the passing movement. And this is indeed what Baudelaire seems to be saying when he defines modernity as "the ephemeral, the fleeting, the contingent." But, for him, being modern does not lie in recognizing and accepting this perpetual movement; on the contrary, it lies in adopting a certain attitude with respect to this movement; and this deliberate, difficult attitude consists in recapturing something eternal that is not beyond the present instant, nor behind it, but within it. (110)

Modernity is the consciousness of the new age, new sensibility rather it is a break from tradition which aims at feeling novelty which Foucault clarifies. Similarly, the consciousness of new sensibility, novelty can be seen in the Markandaya's characters like Dandekar, Ghose, Chari, Sastri etc whose tastes are not unlike from what Foucault defines. These all characters want to come out from the narrow spaces of tradition. They all believe on the achievement of science and technology. From these evidences, we come to know that they are following rationality. The movement of following rationality from the traditional beliefs is a sign of modernity.

Kamala Markandaya offers a bold disquisition on the conflict between faith and reason. Its elements are loaded into the life of her characters. In *A Silence of Desire*, the

whole action and its larger resonances revolve around the lives of Dandekar and his wife Sarojini. Dandekar is a senior clerk in the government office and leads a contented life with his wife, Sarojini and children. On the other hand, Sarojini secretly visits to cure the womb tumor by the mysterious power of Swamiji. The very action of visiting Swamiji germinates the seeds of conflict. It is a conflict between faith and reason respectively. Due to the different level of understanding of husband and wife adds to give birth to the conflict. But, the very conflict does not last long. The conflict becomes over when Sarojini accepts herself to get admitted in the hospital at the end of the novel. The conversation between Dandekar and the doctor takes place in this way:

My wife, he said secretly. Is she going to live? Your wife? The doctor frowned, and instantly a dozen voices had informed her who was meant, the case-sheet was efficiently delivered into her hands. Sarojini, wife of Dandekar... yes, she's all right. Did not the nurse tell you?

She did, he said quickly, before the mortified girl could speak. I wanted to make sure.

Yes, yes, she's all right, repeated the doctor briskly. Should be well enough to leave in a week. (175)

Sarojini's successful operation of womb tumor gives too much happiness to Dandekar. He begins to walk but his legs become like water reeds, and he sits in the shade of the nearest tree to recover. It happens so because Dandekar has achieved a great success which seems to be almost impossible for long time. Despite of this fact, he becomes able to walk Sarojini on the path of modernity which is characterized by the modern science and technology. No doubt, Dandekar is a modern man who believes on the achievement of modern science and

technology. Dandekar, being a man of progressive ideas, requests his wife to come in the same track from the beginning of the novel.

At the end of the novel, Sarojini comes to the same track which Dandekar adopts in his life. The reconciliation of both equal ideas spreads the happiness in their lives. Further, Markandaya ends her novel saying, “The sun had moved past four o’clock, its slanting rays gleamed on the fallen, dented silver vessels. Dandekar kicked them gently aside and went into the street. Ramabi and Lakshmi would be leaving school about now. He smiled a little. He would go and meet them, with the good news about their mother” (179). Being a modern writer, Markandaya has used many symbols to support her argument. Here, she uses slanting rays, which symbolizes the fall of tradition and the advent of the new spirit brought by modernity. Further, “past four o’clock, its slanting rays” which also symbolizes that sun is going to set and new morning is going to happen. It is a new morning which will be covered by the new rays of sun. The very new rays are the rays of modernity. Besides it, Dandekar kicks silver vessels aside and goes out into the street. Here, “silver vessels” (vessels of Tulsi plant) symbolizes the tradition and the movement towards the street is synonymous to the modern concept. His negation of silver vessels and movement towards street is a movement from tradition to modernity, movement from primitive to civilized societies. In this regard, Samuel P. Huntington writes, “Modernization involves industrialization, urbanization, increasing levels of literacy, education, wealth, and social mobilization and more complex and diversified occupational structures. It is a revolutionary process comparable only to the shift from the primitive to the civilized societies” (68). The influence of industrialization, urbanization in India also contributed so much to the people to come out from the grip of traditional values in the transitional phase. In the same manner, Sarojini’s extreme preoccupation towards traditional norms and values is defeated by the

achievements of modern world. Further, her traditional values no longer remain as the yardstick of her life in the presence of modern world determined by the science and technology as implied by Huntington.

In this way, in the novel *A Silence of Desire* (1960), Sarojini neglects to worship of Tulasi plant considering as a God and also moves herself to the hospital for treatment of womb tumor. Likewise, she transfers herself from the world of tradition to the world of modern science and technology. Moreover, her transition from old norms and values of tradition to the modern scientific world is the victory of modernity over tradition. Hence, Kamala Markandaya in her novel shows the middle class Indian society which is going to be modern day by day in the passage of time basically thorough the portrayal of Dandekar and Sarojini.

Ultimately, when Sarojini copes up with the modern world then there comes happiness in her family. So that, the disharmonious way of life withers when Sarojini transits herself to the modern world.

III. Adoption of Norms and Values of Modernity

Kamala Markandaya's novel *A Silence of Desire* exposes transition to modernity. It is a transition of characters from old traditional values to the new values of modernity. The novel is set in India, the former colony of Britain. So, the influence of British is dominantly found in the most of the characters. In this regard, modernity in India can be recognized as synonymous to westernization. However, there is no doubt that the whole novel revolves around the transitional period of India. Conditioned in the very transitional period in India some characters have already internalized the norms and values of modernity whereas some other characters have been still following the old traditional values. But, in the course of time their extreme obsession towards traditional values does not long last, rather they become ready to follow the very norms and values of modernity. Anyway, the characters of the novel have been following the path of modernity slowly and gradually.

In the novel, we can see that Dandekar is a man of progressive ideas who follows the rationality. He has strong faith upon the achievements of science and technology. On the other hand, we can see a female character, Sarojini, who has extreme faith upon the traditional norms and values. Being guided by the very norms and values she worships Tulasi plant considering it as a God. Not only this, she believes on the mysterious power of Swamii and likes to be cured of womb tumor from him. On the contrary, Dandekar, being a man of modern ideas, does not worship Tulasi plant rather takes it merely as a plant. Furthermore, he does not believe on the faith healing of Swamiji rather he convinces Sarojini to get admitted in the hospital for the treatment of womb tumor.

Dandekar, Chari, Ghose, Sastri, follow the norms and values of modernity whereas Sarojini, Swami, Rajam, Dwarf follow the traditional norms and values. Here, Markandaya has nicely presented the ambivalent nature of characters towards social change in the

transitional period. In the very condition some characters neither forget tradition nor they accept modern values in a whole. Hence, the two types of ideologies: tradition and modernity respectively give birth to the conflict. But, the very conflict does not remain long time, it ends with Sarojini's acceptance to get admitted in the hospital.

People can not remain always in a same condition depending upon the old traditional values rather they have to be dynamics to sustain their lives in the passage of time. We can not negate the fact that modern science and technology, globalization, urbanization, mass media are the determinant factors of modernity. Due to the influence of these factors the world is growing smaller. The development in modern science and technology challenges the old traditional values and makes people ready to follow the values of modernity. In this way, Indian traditional values are also in the grip of science and technology. Ultimately, in the novel *A Silence of Desire*, being defeated by the influence of modern science and technology Sarojini makes herself ready to approach hospital for the treatment of her womb tumor. The very act of Sarojini clarifies the journey from tradition to modernity.

Kamala Markandaya, being a modern writer shows the impact of globalization on Indian middle class society. Hence, Indian middle class society is also not far away from the influence of globalization. In the novel, *Ramabi*, being influenced by the modern globalized world likes to be a film star and nags everyone to call her Rani instead of her old fashioned name Ramabi. Not only this, she prefers to go to the bar with her girls and boys friends. Similarly, Lakshmi likes to wear skirt. Here, Ramabi and Lakshmi's change of mode of thought, behavior from old traditional values to the values of modern world also indicate their transition from the world of tradition to the world of modernity. In the same way, Dandekar and Sarojini can be taken as the representatives of the middle class Indian

society which is in the journey from tradition to modernity due to the influence of various factors such as science and technology, globalization, urbanization, mass media etc.

After the detail analysis and discussion of Markandaya's novel *A Silence of Desire* (1960), it is found that she has attempted to show the transition of middle class Indian society from the norms and values of tradition to the norms and values of modernity. Modernity demolishes and replaces all unnecessary superstitious norms and values and takes people to the world of new consciousness and new sensibility of life. Due to the scientific development the universe has become a small village where all cultures mix into one. Scientific discoveries, transportation, communication etc. make the world small and single. Different kinds of mass media which are the results of modern science and technology like radio, computer, film, gramophone, telephone, newspapers and television have controlled the lives of people conditioned in the modern era. These medias can not be avoidable because they are around us. It has made mass more creative, safer, more healthful and richer in creative possibilities. It is the media that makes the people up to date in accordance with the time and condition. They make people more creative and dynamics so that people can easily mobilize themselves in the complex world. Sarojini, at the beginning of the novel seems to be a traditional type of woman. Further, she does not have any faith on modern science and technology. Not only this, she also does not think things beyond the sphere of norms and values of tradition. It means she takes tradition as all in all. But, her way of thinking of tradition as all in all gets collapsed at the end of the novel where she agrees to walk along the path of modernity by preparing herself ready to enter the hospital for the treatment of womb tumor disbelieving the faith healing of Swamiji. Here, hospital represents the means of modern science and technology. Hence, the very science and technology give rise to the state of modernity. So, tradition is defeated by modernity or the

modern wins and Sarojini accepts to follow rationality in the novel. In this way, Sarojini's detachment from the norms and values of tradition and her slow and gradual acceptance of modern norms and values is the victory of modernity and also a transition of middle class Indian society from tradition to modernity which Markandaya tries to explore vividly basically through the portrayal of major character, Sarojini in this novel *A Silence of Desire*.

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