

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Struggle for Existence in Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice*

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the Requirement for the Degree of

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Letter of Recommendation

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Abstract

The present research basically focuses on the issue of existential crisis of the protagonist of Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice*, Ravi. The central character Ravi, a representative of universal adolescent, under adverse circumstances faces so many difficulties and struggles much to find his identity from the very beginning of the novel. Coincidentally, he enters into the house of Apu while trying to escape the arrest. He had joined the exodus from arid village to an over-populated, poverty-ridden city with a great hope to improve his pitiable plight. But unfortunately, he goes to the underworld to petty criminals. He starts working as an Apu's apprentice and falls in love with Apu's daughter Nalini and decides to leave all the criminal activities and live prestigious life. But the circumstances- -the scarcity of everything and mainly the death of his son, Raju- -make him impatient and violent and he is inexorably drawn towards dangerous climax again. So, he has 'angst'; in order to assert his individuality, he leaves his society, rejoins the criminal gang by using his freedom of choice. In short, he does not listen to others but the voice of his own heart. While doing so, he does not feel any regret.

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